

# Connection

## Connie's Korner - Playing Defense, Again



Unfortunately, due to the polarizing nature of our political establishment in Washington today, it seems like our work is never done. We need to make sure that the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress does no harm to the programs that working class Americans so desperately need and depend on.

Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid must be protected. You will be hearing a great deal about the “Chained CPI” in the days and weeks to come. This proposed approach to control the cost-of living adjustment for Social Security recipients, will take money out of retiree’s pockets in an attempt to address our nation’s deficit. This is the wrong approach to deficit reduction.

Medicare does have a long term projected budget imbalance, but that can be addressed by making the delivery of health care more efficient. Medicare and Medicaid can both be improved, but it makes no sense to squeeze costs out of both of these programs, only to see them piled onto the back of the current beneficiaries, or shifted to private sector health insurance.

We need to support policies that promote full employment and family sustaining incomes that will continue to grow us out of this recession. Good paying jobs, elimination of tax breaks to companies that outsource jobs overseas, regulating Wall Street and ending two unfunded wars would be a good place to start, if our elected officials are really concerned with the debt issue. We need to fight! We must protect these vital programs that retirees depend on. However, it cannot happen without all of us staying involved and working as hard as we can to protect the policies and programs that built the middle class.

*Connie Entrekin*, SOAR President

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## District 7, *Gary Gaines*, Chapter 7-34-2

December 4, at the Illinois Labor History Society Union Hall of Honor Awards Dinner in Chicago, Illinois, Frank Lumpkin, Alice Puerala and Ed Sadlowski were recognized for lifetime achievement.

At left is Bea Lumpkin accepting the award for her late husband, Frank Lumpkin and at right is Ed Sadlowski, accepting his award.



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**The deadline to submit material  
for the next issue is March 25**



**Elaine Sez**

I tried to log on to the internet on my iPad. Turns out it was an Etch-a-Sketch and I don't even own an iPad! Also, I'm out of wine.

**The McNeil Report**

**Husbands are Husbands**

A friend of mine was sitting down reading his paper, when his wife hit him on the back of the head with a frying pan.

"What was that for?" the man asked.

His wife replied, "that was for the piece of paper with the name Jenny on it that I found in your pants pocket."

My friend then said, "When I was at the races last week, Jenny was the name of the horse I bet on."

The wife apologized and went on with the housework.

Three days later the man is watching TV when his wife bashes him on the head with an even bigger frying pan, knocking him unconscious. Upon regaining consciousness, the man asked why she had hit him again.

The wife replied **"YOUR HORSE PHONED YOU"!!!!**



**From the Editor**

- You will notice in the upper right hand corner that this issue of the Connection newsletter covers January and February. As we told you in our last edition, this newsletter will be published every two months until further notice. The deadline for articles and photos for our next issue will be March 25.
- In each issue, we will try to have a short bio of the SOAR Board Member from each USW District. This month's issue on page 5 features District 3 and District 4.
- *Reminder:* SOAR has opened its membership to any retiree who agrees with our policies and principles. Any questions should be directed to the SOAR office at (866) 208-4420.
- Rod Bezo has been appointed by USW International President, Leo W. Gerard as SOAR Executive Board Member in District 3.
- Bob (Big Red) Rankin has stepped down from the SOAR Executive Board, due to family issues. Joel Buchanan, has been appointed by USW President Leo W. Gerard to fill Bob's unexpired term as District 12 SOAR Executive Board Member. Bob did a great job as I'm sure Joel will. Joel resides in Pueblo, Colorado. We'll have more information about Joel in our next issue.
- Please try to limit articles to 250 words so we can get more articles in a limited amount of pages and thus save on postage costs.
- Many thanks to those who do send in articles and photos. Don't forget that any SOAR member can contribute.

*Charlie Averill*, Secretary Treasurer and Editor

**District 13 Welcomes Another New SOAR Chapter**



Left to Right are: EldridgTePetre; David Jones; Jack Golden, soar executive board member; Ed Siguee, trustee; Robert Davis; Joe Stewart; Mary Jane Dawson, president; Michael Liedy; Carlton Henry, vice president; Karyl Dunson, recording secretary; Doc Bailey; Dawight Price; and Joe Smith, trustee.

On November 13, 2012, Jack Golden, District 13 SOAR Executive Board Member, presented a SOAR Charter to Chapter 13-PC-2 located in Beaumont, Texas.

This chapter was formed with retirees from Local Union 13-243. This chapter will be very active in community activities. They encourage all retirees to join their chapter.

District 13 Mickey Breaux, Assistant to the Director; Jim Lefton, Texas Coordinator; Emmett Sheppard, and Secretary-Treasurer of Local Union 13-243, Darrel Kyle, were very instrumental in forming this new chapter.

*Jack Golden*, SOAR Executive Board Member



**Budget Battles in DC... Seems Like They Never End!**

by Barbara J. Easterling



These past few years, it seems like every time you turn on the news there is another budget battle, another budget crisis in Washington. There is one thing that all these budget fights have in common: politicians and TV commentators telling us we have no choice but to cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. I don't think this is true, and to me, it would make much more sense to get rid of sweetheart tax deals for big business and for millionaires.



So brace yourself for yet another year of hearing about how we need to lower Social Security COLAs, or raise the Social Security and Medicare eligibility ages, or how there just is not enough money for Medicaid to help seniors with the cost of long-term or nursing home care.

Instead of cutting these programs, there are ways to actually make them stronger. We could strengthen the Social Security Trust Fund by having the highest income earners pay their fair share in taxes. Right now a millionaire pays almost the same amount of Social Security payroll taxes as a middle class worker. We can save Medicare millions by ending a Bush-era loophole that prohibits Medicare from negotiating volume discounts from the big drug companies. Savvy seniors know you can save money when you buy in bulk.

While it gets tempting to just tune these seemingly never-ending budget battles out, please don't. The stakes are too high for both today's seniors and our children and grandchildren. Instead, become a politician's worst nightmare: a politically savvy senior who knows the truth about these issues, who educates their friends and neighbors, and who makes their voice heard; not just on Election Day, but every day!

*Barbara J. Easterling is president of the Alliance for Retired Americans. She was previously the secretary-treasurer of the Communications Workers of America. For more information, visit [www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org) or call 1-800-333-7212.*

### From the Director's Desk - Don't be Fooled by Congress



The right-wing conservatives in Congress have Social Security and Medicare in their sights. They are once again threatening to hold our economy hostage. Since they failed to extract draconian benefits cuts in the recently negotiated "fiscal cliff" deal, they are threatening to refuse to lift the debt ceiling and demanding Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security cuts.

Our economic problems are not caused by overly generous Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid benefits. Social Security has not added one dime to the deficit. We do have a projected budget imbalance over the long term that is driven by health care cost growth, but the solution is to make the health care system more efficient, not shift costs to the beneficiaries. If Congress was serious about reducing the debt, they would not be demanding wasteful tax cuts for corporations and the richest 2 percent of Americans that explode the deficit.

Conservatives in Congress want to make the next two months a fight over how much to cut vital programs to reduce the deficit and they plan on holding raising the debt ceiling hostage to get what they want. This tactic will prevent the government from paying the bills we already owe and will destroy our fragile economy. Our side needs to make the opposite case, that we need a lot more revenue to grow the economy, create jobs and achieve balanced deficit reduction. Clearly, there is a lot of work to do.

*Jim Centner*, SOAR Director

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### The Election is Over - Let Us Move Forward



I don't know about you but I thought the election for President of the United States was over and decided in November 2012. However, many people out there in America do not want it to end. I am sick and tired of reading the newspapers and seeing articles that are submitted by right-wing conservative Republicans.

The name calling (especially in the south) with regards to the President of the United States is *shameful!* I never knew there were so many bigots and hateful people in America. I was amazed to read several articles in my local hometown paper in New York about President Obama, but since I have arrived in Florida, I have read a couple of articles every day in the local papers that chastise and insult President Obama for every decision he makes as President. I truly wish these people would put their bias aside and accept the mandate of the people of the United States. President Obama won both the popular and the electoral vote in our country. The people have decided, so let us move forward and be thankful that we live in the democracy of America.

On a personal note, it is with a heavy heart, that I inform you of the passing of one of our District 4 SOAR President's, Tom Boyle on Nov.10, 2012. Tom dedicated many years to SOAR and Chapter 4-UR1 in Buffalo, New York. He will be sadly missed. On behalf of District 4 Director John Shinn, the staff and SOAR members, our condolences go out to his wife Ann and family.

*James Bickhart*, District 4 Executive Board Member

**Rod Bezo, District 3 SOAR Board Member**



In 1960, Rod Bezo began his work career as a Machinist at the Dominion Glass Company in Hamilton, Ontario, and he became a member of the United Glass and Ceramic Workers Union.

Rod served in several positions with Local Union 203 in District 6, including Grievance Person, Chairman, Vice-President and President. In 1973, he began working for the International Union as a Staff Representative in Toronto, Ontario.

Six years later, Rod was elected Director of District 6. A few years later, his union merged with the Aluminum and Brick Workers Union and he became the Executive Officer for District 6 in Canada. In 1995, Rod was elected as the Canadian Director and International Vice-President for the Aluminum, Brick and 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 and his wife moved to Calgary. He was elected to his current position in a special election to fill the unexpired term of Gerald Edwards, who stepped down due to health related issues.

Rod Bezo, 41-72 Millside Dr. S.W., Calgary Alberta Canada, T2Y 3G8, PH: 403-873-0294



**Jim Bickhart, District 4**



Jim Bickhart started working for Allegheny Ludlum in 1967 as a mill-hand in Dunkirk, New York. It wasn't long before he was appointed union steward for the mill and has been involved in the Steelworkers Union ever since. Jim held various positions with the local union including Vice President and President. Jim was Vice President of the New York State AFL-CIO and also served as President of the Dunkirk Area Labor Council (AFL-CIO) for 30 years.

In 1976, Jim received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in economics from the State University of New York in Fredonia. In 1985, he was appointed to the USWA Staff by then International President, Lynn Williams.

In 2003, Jim retired. He is also a 23 year retired Veteran of the United States Naval Reserve. While on active duty, Jim served aboard the USS Mattaponi (AO-41), an oil tanker stationed at Hunters Point, California.

In 1988, Jim was elected as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. He also served as a delegate to numerous National AFL-CIO Conventions, over the past years.

Jim has spent 45 years serving the American Labor Movement, is currently President of SOAR Chapter 4-1 and is a USW District 4 Coordinator for the Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM). Has been elected to SOAR's International Executive Board as the representative from District 4 at the 2008 SOAR Conference.

Jim Bickhart, 133 South Martin Street, Dunkirk, NY 14048,  
PH: 716-366-1485 in Summer, PH: 352-629-4277 in Winter

## Report from the Alliance for American Manufacturing



The historic inauguration of President Barack Obama brought a lot of media attention to some very trivial issues: Why did Michelle Obama cut her hair? Did Beyoncé lip-sync the Star-Spangled Banner? Never mind that, our first African American President and Nobel Peace Prize recipient, was sworn into office for his second term on the day we celebrate Nobel Peace Prize recipient Martin Luther King Jr.'s life. Inquiring minds want to know, did Kelly Clarkson lip-sync too?

President Obama reinforced his commitment to addressing unfair trade in his inaugural speech, explaining that ‘a free market only thrives when there are rules to ensure competition and fair play.’ With his pledge to create one million new manufacturing jobs by the end of 2016, you need only look to his inaugural threads to add to the jobs meter.

For his 2013 inauguration, the President chose a suit from Brooks Brothers, a company started in New York City 195 years ago. In his 2009 inauguration, the President sought out a home town favorite, Chicago-based Hart Schaffner Marx, a company in the

suit business for 125 years.

For the 500,000 workers remaining in the US textile Industry, the inauguration brought a glimmer of hope. For an industry that’s lost three million textile mill and apparel manufacturing jobs, when our leaders believe in our products enough to wear them on inauguration day; First Lady Michelle Obama’s bangs are the farthest from our minds. OUR inquiring minds want to know; is our President leading by example to Keep it Made in America? *Indeed he is.*

*Rachel Bennett Steury*, AAM Field Coordinator [www.americanmanufacturing.org](http://www.americanmanufacturing.org) 260-633-1060

## Emeritus Report - Canada



The holidays are over and it is a brand new year. I have to get used to writing 2013. This will take some time. I hope Santa was as good to you and your family as he was to mine.

Here in Ontario, nothing has changed as far as the Liberal government and the teachers. Legislation Bill #115 has been imposed on the teachers and probably on all government employees. Basically, they have taken away the right to collective bargaining and have simply held them to the terms of their old expired contract for a further two years. Unfortunately, the ones who are taken the most advantage of are the parents and students. They are definitely not happy campers.

This coming week end, the Ontario Liberal party will be holding their leadership convention on January 26 and 27. There are six people running and it appears it is too close a race at this time to predict who will be the next leader and Premier of Ontario.

Meanwhile, our Federal Government has been extremely busy cutting back on services by axing more than 10,000 jobs in the past six months. A nice Christmas gift for these people and their families.

Now that it is 2013, it means that our Chapters have to renew their various affiliation fees, e.g. the Congress of Union Retirees Canada (CURC) and Provincial Union Federation of retirees, Provincial Health Coalition, etc. These very important organizations need our help.

I hope all SOAR chapters have held their Executive elections. A big “thank you” to all members who were prepared to accept the responsibility of the various positions they have been elected to. The best of luck to all the chapters. I wish all SOAR members and their families a very “Happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.”

*Dan McNeil*, SOAR Emeritus Board Member

**Stay Vigilant**



With the election behind us, many of us felt some relief from the on going attack on the middle and working class. But beware. Recent, and on-going events, show an ill wind blowing from right wing, big money interests in their ongoing attack on workers’ rights and social programs including; Social Security and Medicare.

For example, there is still talk among some Republicans to eliminate Medicare as we know it and going to a voucher system, plus, talk of increasing the Social Security eligibility age and cutting benefits.

We are also seeing efforts by Republicans, at the state level, pursuing so called Right-to-Work laws to undermine and destroy our Unions. As the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “these laws do not create any rights or work. They do just the opposite.”

The facts are clear. Workers in the so called right to freeload and work for less states, are paid less, have less workers rights, and have fewer benefits and less pension and insurance coverage than states that do not have such laws.

A recent study, by the Department of Labor, shows that Union workers’ median weekly pay is over \$200 more than non-union workers or over \$10,400 more per year thanks to the unions; not to mention better pension and insurance benefits.

Furthermore, the arguments for such Right to free load laws are lies and wrong. Selecting Union representation involves a very democratic process protected by law.

*Bill Gibbons*, PACE Representative



**To Better The Communities in Which We Live**



All across Canada SOAR, members are quietly but consistently working behind the scenes in order to make their communities better. One example is Margaret Hynd, wife of SOAR Vice President Harry Hynd (photo right).

For many years, Margaret has spent her spare time quietly knitting hats, or toques as we say in Canada. First, for homeless children of Covenant House, when Harry was based in Toronto, and since moving back to Hamilton, for homeless people in her community.

Margaret, shocked and dismayed that in this day and age there are so many homeless people living on the streets, contacted the Salvation Army, who nightly drive a van around the poorest areas of the city delivering hot soup, coffee and sandwiches to the homeless. They welcomed her offer of knitted hats, scarfs and mittens to hand out to the homeless. So far this year, Margaret estimates that she has made in excess of 70 hats and scarfs etc. for the homeless.

Every time Margaret sits down, she grabs the needles and starts knitting. Actions like this, multiplied by the thousands who perform similar acts of kindness, is what makes our commitment to the SOAR purpose of “making our communities a better place to live,” a reality.



*Doug MacPherson*, Canadian National Coordinator

**District 12 - We Have Much to be Thankful For**

This past Thanksgiving we all looked back at all that we had to be thankful for. We must also give back, however. When I first joined the union in 1962, our wages, benefits and working conditions were the result of the many sacrifices that many unionists had endured and gave to us.

This November, the “bad” people here in California tried to “give” us Proposition 32, which under the guise of reforming money in politics, actually would have silenced Labor completely. Actually, putting Proposition 32 on the ballot did something that most of us did not figure. Labor was mobilized like never before. In every SOAR meeting since June, Proposition 32 was discussed and analyzed over and over again. Then the election happened. Not only, did we defeat Proposition 32 but we also voted for President Obama and Vice-President Biden, as well as Senator Feinstein by big numbers. We also increased our Democrats in office. California has 53 Representatives in Congress of which 38 are now Democrats. We have 80 members in our State Assembly, 54 are Democrats and 28 of the 40 members of our State Senate are Democrats. By the way, all of our statewide elected officers are also Democrats.

In a way, I am grateful for Proposition 32. It gave us an opportunity to illustrate the difference between us and them and what we stand for and what they stand for.

Now comes the tougher part. We Democrats cannot blame the other side. We must deliver. As members of SOAR we must continue to have our voices heard. At a union function recently, a young union member came up to me and shook my hand and said how honored he was to meet me. He said he realized that a lot of the benefits that he is receiving was because of the union work our generation did. I felt grateful and knew the torch was being passed, but I also knew our work was not done.

*Bob (Big Red) Rankin*, SOAR Board Member



Left to right are: Kurt Hyiri, trustee; Art Ramos, secretary treasurer; Joe Correa, vice president; Art Salazar, president and Victor Delgado. Missing from the photo is Wesley Parker, trustee.

**New Chapter Organized in Central California**

A new SOAR Chapter was recently organized in Central California. The membership is made up of retirees from USW-474, USW-555, USW-9490 and IAM-653. They meet the third Monday of the month at the American Legion 509, 3509 N. First Street, Fresno California at 3 PM.

The membership was very active in defeating Proposition 32. We are very proud of that.