

Connection

From the Director's Desk

Enough is Enough!



As I sit back and watch what is happening in Washington D.C., I get more and more frustrated. I am amazed at the lack of cooperation in governing. The U.S. Senate has the obligation to vote on the President's nominees to the federal court and to other branches of our government. Hundreds of very important positions remain vacant.

Currently, there are 82 vacant federal judge slots around the country, a level so high that many observers have deemed it a crisis situation. For more than a year, the National Labor Relations Board has been in limbo. Two of its five seats vacant and two others are being challenged in the courts. Gina McCarthy, the President's nominee to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, is being held back because

Republican members of the Environment and Public Works Committee boycotted a vote on her nomination. I could go on, but I think you have a picture of what is really going on in our government.

Partisan extremism has gone much too far. It is apparent; the Republican senators are actually trying to bring government to a halt. They are doing all they can to handcuff this administration to make sure it cannot function. *Where is their patriotism?*

The election is over. Barack Obama is our President and he must be allowed to lead. Our nation is in a crisis. We are slowly recovering from the worst recession since the Great Depression, in spite of failed efforts of our elected representatives. Congress and the President must be able to work together to advance our nation. It is time to stop the partisan bickering in Washington and our representatives must do what they were elected to do, govern; to make and administer public policies for the public good.

Enough is enough!

Jim Centner, SOAR Director

District 12



At the May meeting of SOAR Chapter 12-7, we honored Terry and Helen McGovern. Terry retired from ATI Wah Chang and was a member of USW Local 6163. Terry and Helen have contributed countless volunteer hours in the community and have helped make Albany, Oregon, a city everyone can be proud of. Pictured from left to right, Eileen Vetter, recording secretary, Rudy Hashberger, president; Terry and Helen McGovern, Sharon Konopa, Mayor of Albany, Garry Steffy, District 12 SOAR coordinator.

Garry Steffy, SOAR Coordinator

Connie's Korner

It is Time to Build



The SOAR Executive Board met May 15 and 16, 2013. We had a great discussion but the dominant theme throughout the two days evolved around organizing new members. The board has recommitted itself to building our retiree organization. We have developed a plan to reach out to emerging retirees and will refocus our efforts on establishing new chapters throughout the union.

In order to accomplish what we have set out to do, it is going to take a lot of work from a diverse group of activists. It will involve working with the USW District Directors, the servicing staff of our union and a committed group of SOAR activists to get the job done. We will need to build our Coordinator network and give them the skills and tools they need to reach out to our locals and retirees to bring them into our organization. We need our chapters to continue to reach out to retirees from their own locals and others in their area to continue to build their membership.

The time is ripe for success. SOAR has never been more important to our retirees and to our union. As I stated in this column in the past, retirees and working families are under unprecedented assault. Corporations are using the excuse of the global economy to gut our contracts and abandon their obligations to their retirees. Congress is attempting to balance our nation's budget on the back of the working class, while cutting the taxes of corporations and the wealthiest Americans.

We need to fight back! Let's get to work and build SOAR into the premier retiree activist organization in America. I know we can do it, but it will take all of us working together to get it done.

Connie Entekin, SOAR President



Vise President (West) Report



In April, District 12 Director Bob LaVenture; Assistant Director Chris Youngmark and District 12 SOAR Co-Executive Board Member Terry Bonds, came to Pueblo, Colorado, for a meeting with District 12, SOAR Co-Executive Board Member Joel Buchanan and myself. We agreed to divide the SOAR responsibilities in the district between Joel and Terry. They will be contacting the local unions in District 12 about establishing SOAR chapters.

On May 24, the Governor of Colorado came to Pueblo to sign a bill that will employe union workers and buy products made in the USA. It was signed into law at the USW Local 2102 Hall.

Invite other retirees to join your SOAR chapter, if they aren't already. The meetings give us a chance to visit and get good information.

Al Becco, SOAR Vice President (West)

SOAR Chapter
Connection

Published every other month
by SOAR

Phone:
574-772-3332

Email
charlieav@embarqmail.com

Address editorial material to:

Connection Editor,
6700 East S.R. 10
Knox, IN 46534

The deadline to submit material
for the next issue is July 25



Elaine Sez

When Charlie goes to D.C. or Pittsburgh, he usually takes the train and I go with him whenever I can.

I'm sure you ladies will understand when I tell you that just as soon as he falls asleep and they turn out the lights, I move to a different seat and dress like this so he can't find me.

The McNeil Report

Morris, an 82 year old man, went to the doctor to get a physical. A few days later, the doctor saw Morris walking down the street with a gorgeous young woman on his arm.

A couple of days later, the doctor spoke to Morris and said, "You're really doing great, aren't you?"

Morris replied, "Just doing what you said, Doc; 'Get a hot mamma and be cheerful.'"

The doctor said, "I didn't say that. I said, "You've got a heart murmur; be careful."



From the Editor

- In each issue, we try to have a short bio of the SOAR Board Member from each USW District. This month's issue, on page 4, features District 7 and District 8.
- *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.
- Many thanks to those who send in articles and photos. Don't forget that any SOAR member can contribute an article. Please share this newsletter with your chapter members. Please try to limit articles to 250 words.

Charlie Averill, Secretary/Treasurer and Editor



Some SOAR Photos

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/usw>

Charlie's blog:

<http://www.charlieaverill.blogspot.com/>

My Youtube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/abbysan>

SOAR Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/USWSOAR/>

Podcasts:

<https://soundcloud.com/charlie-averill>

Scott Marshall, District 7



My first union was the United Glass and Ceramic Workers Union local 192, at Ferro Fiberglass in Nashville Tennessee in the late 60's. I mention this because it was one of the unions that merged into the Aluminum, Brick and Glass Workers union that then merged into the USW around 1997. I was a shop steward there.

When I moved to Chicago I got work at Pullman Standard and joined USW Local 1834. In the local, I was a shop steward, co-chair of the local's Save Our Jobs Committee, and co-editor of local 1834's newspaper.

In the mid 1990's, I got active in the SOAR chapter that came out of US Steel Local 65 in South Chicago. It later merged with retirees from Local 1033 at LTV (formerly Republic Steel) and retirees from Local 1834 into what is now SOAR Chapter 31-9, that meets at the former 1033 hall. I was elected president of the chapter in 2012. I have been a District 7 SOAR coordinator since 2006. Through SOAR I have been active in the annual Republic Steel Memorial Day Massacre committee for many years.

Note: In March, 2013, Scott was appointed District 7 SOAR Executive Board Member upon the passing of Steve Skvara.

Scott Marshall, 2569 72nd Street, Chicago, IL 69649, Phone 773-368-5775



Bob Adkins, District 8



In 1973, Bob Atkins went to work for INCO (later renamed Special Metals) in Huntington, West Virginia, where he retired in 2008 after 35 years of service. He was a member of USW Local 40 for 35 years, served as shop steward starting in 1980, elected to the mill grievance committee in 1993 and elected as chairman mill grievance committee in 1996, where he served as chair until 2005. He was also elected and served as trustee for two terms and elected to the negotiating committee for three contract negotiations.

Bob completed the four-year West Virginia University Institute of Labor Studies Course in 2000 and was a delegate to the South West District Labor Council with the West Virginia AFL-CIO from 1996 until present, serving one term as vice president and one term as president for the council. In May of 2003, he was inducted into the West Virginia Labor Hall of Fame.

After his retiring, Bob joined SOAR Chapter 23-4 and was soon elected as chapter recording and financial secretary in 2009. He presently serves as recording secretary. In 2010 he was appointed as the West Virginia SOAR coordinator in District 8. In 2012 he was appointed to serve as temporary acting board member in District 8 and in 2013, he was appointed as District 8 Executive Board Member.

Bob serves on the Huntington Municipal Development Authority and was elected Secretary, appointed through the Labor Council. He is also the Vice President of the West Virginia Alliance for Retired Americans.

Bob also serves as trustee for the Special Metals Hourly Employees VEBA, established in 2003, after the company filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Robert (Bob) Adkins, 1106 1st Street, Huntington WV 25701, Phone: 304-634-5006

District 13



On February 13, 2013, Jim Lefton, Assistant to the Director in District 13, hosted a meeting and luncheon with retirees in the Crossett, AR area. Jack Golden, District 13 SOAR executive board member and Don Davies, sub-district director, were also in attendance. Jim Lefton brought greetings from District Director, Mickey Breaux and expressed the Union's support and concern for retirees. Jack's presentation was about the benefits of SOAR membership. Starting with what a local chapter can do for the members all the way to SOAR international activities. With this information in hand, the retirees decided to get involved.

On March 20, 2013, I also met with this group. There were the required membership applications necessary to request a charter and officers were elected. The charter application is now in Pittsburgh awaiting processing. The next meeting will be the presentation of the Charter.

The organization of this new chapter would not have been possible without the support and involvement of Jim Lefton, assistant to the director. Sub-District Director, Don Davies was also instrumental in this effort.

Dan Henry, SOAR State Coordinator



District 4



SOAR continues to be active in all district elections on the local, county and state levels. SOAR Representatives have played an influential role in the election of pro-labor Congressional Representatives in each state within District 4. They have worked along side Local Union Representatives on telephone banks and plant gates to support our labor endorsed candidates.

At the present time, we are preparing information regarding the creation of new SOAR chapters for distribution to delegates at the upcoming USW District 4 Conference in August, in Atlantic City, New Jersey. This method of informational distribution has provided many adequate responses from District Local Unions who want to create a SOAR chapter in their area.

District 4 now has 16 SOAR chapters in various states throughout the district. We are concentrating our efforts in Bangor, Maine, Albany, New York, Boston, Massachusetts and the state of New Jersey, in the creation of new SOAR chapters within the district.

Director, John Shinn, SOAR Director, James Centner and I are working with the district staff representatives to increase the number of SOAR coordinators within the district. In this way, we will be able to expand our efforts to better service our retirees.

John, Jim and I were in Corning, New York, on April 22, 2013, to swear in the officers of our newest SOAR Chapter, 4-FG1. Mike LeBarron will be the president who will represent retirees of USW Local 1000 (Corning Glass Works) and retirees of surrounding USW plants in the Corning area.

Jim Bickhart, Executive Board Member

Social Security Update

Third Anniversary of Affordable Health Care Act



Many people who receive Social Security also get Medicare benefits. But retirees younger than age 65 and Social Security disability beneficiaries in the first 24 months they receive benefits are not eligible for Medicare.

For them and other people who need affordable health care, it's good to know about the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Even people who are covered by Medicare or other medical insurance can benefit from the ACA.

You can take health care into your own hands by visiting www.healthcare.gov to learn more about the options available under the ACA.

You can also learn more about Medicare and how to qualify for Extra Help with prescription drug plan costs by visiting www.socialsecurity.gov/medicare.



New Video on How Social Security Can Help with Retirement Planning



The latest video on our webinar page will be of great interest to people who are planning for their retirement — whether it is coming soon or in the distant future.

Understanding the role that Social Security plays in retirement planning is vital to a comfortable retirement. In addition, knowing the planning tools and other help that's available from Social Security makes planning so much easier.

The new video, "How Social Security Can Help You Plan for Retirement," is about half an hour. You and your clients can view it (as well as other great offerings) at www.socialsecurity.gov/webinars.



Welcome to Our Hub



We're pleased to announce our new Social Media Hub at www.socialsecurity.gov/socialmedia. The hub will fill you in on how easy it is to sign up for free e-mails and texts that keep you informed when we update our web pages, as well as how you can connect with Social Security on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Pinterest. You also can get information about our webinars, podcasts, and photoblog.

You can find the Social Media Hub and so much more directly off of our home page at www.socialsecurity.gov.

The Affordable Care Act is giving Americans better value for their health insurance plans by:

- Eliminating lifetime dollar caps on essential health benefits, and phasing out annual caps. About 105 million Americans no longer have to fear their benefits will disappear when they need them most because their insurer put a lifetime cap on the amount it would pay.
- Prohibiting health insurance companies from denying coverage to children based on a pre-existing condition, such as asthma or cancer.
- Next year, 2014, it will be illegal for health insurance companies to deny coverage to any American or to charge more because of a pre-existing condition. No longer will 129 million Americans with health conditions have to fear seeing their premiums increased or getting locked out of the insurance market.
- The law will also make it illegal for a health insurer to charge women more simply because they are women. “That means,” Secretary Sebelius said, “being a woman will no longer be a pre-existing condition.”



More than Five Million Individuals Have Created a my Social Security Account to Conduct Business Online



[my Social Security](#) our newest online service, has hit a milestone with more than five million successful registrations.

[my Social Security](#) is an online account that allows registered users immediate access to their personal Social Security information. The service is available during a person’s working years to obtain a Social Security Statement to check their earnings record, and to obtain estimates of future retirement, disability, and survivor benefits.

One of the most popular uses of [my Social Security](#) is the ability to quickly access benefit information. People who currently receive benefits can use [my Social Security](#) to obtain a benefit verification letter, check benefit payment information, and change address, phone number, and direct deposit information.

You can try it out now at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

You can help them. Learn how at our page designed for advocates, social service agencies, and other third parties. You’ll find it at www.socialsecurity.gov/pgm/thirdparty.html.

PACE Report

The Talk of Social Security and Medicare Cuts Should Stop



Recent reports show that any efforts to cut Social Security benefits, through the Chained CPI or in any other manner, are uncalled for and unnecessary, and if anything, benefits should be increased as Senator Harkin D-Iowa, has proposed in his “Strengthening Social Security Act of 2013” (S.567), that would increase benefits by roughly \$800 per year.

Deficit projections have already been reduced by \$200 billion for this year alone. That is more than President Obama’s proposed cut in Social Security would save in ten years. Furthermore, Harkin’s bill would be paid for, and ensure solvency by scrapping the cap on contributions.

Medicare and Medicaid projected spending has fallen by \$900 billion according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). That is a combined 10% reduction (Medicare \$590 billion less and Medicaid \$311 billion less) over the 2011-2020 period.

The fiscal commission co-chairs, Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson, in 2010, called for a total of \$360 billion in cuts thru 2020 (\$300 billion in Medicare and \$60 billion in Medicaid).

Therefore, any talk of; or any proposal to cut these programs is uncalled for, and should be rejected.

It should also be mentioned, that based on two recent reports, one by the Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) and by Time Magazine “Bitter Pill: Why Medical Bills Are Killing Us” (by Steven Brill March 4th, Special report) it was shown that Medicare was the most cost effective in providing care based upon actual costs.

Bill Gibbons, PACE Representative



Food for Thought

We do not experience happiness because of what we get. We experience happiness because of how we live each moment. It is a skill, an ability we must master, just like learning how to be a good painter, or an excellent athlete. Having a tennis racket and ball does not make us a tennis player. Knowing how to play does. Having certain experiences does not make me happy; knowing how to live them with full awareness and to mindfully be in each moment will make me happy.

If you can’t be happy now, with what you have and who you are, you will not be happy when you get what you think you want. If you don’t know how to fully enjoy \$500, you won’t enjoy \$5,000, or \$500,000. If you can’t fully enjoy taking a walk around the block with your mate, then you won’t enjoy going to Hawaii, or to Paris. I’m not saying that having more money or more recreation won’t make your life easier--it will. But it will not make you happy because it can’t. Only you can do that by learning to live with more real moments.

source: I just can’t remember where I got this.

Report from the Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM)



I'm happy to report that, AAM is working on two bills to strengthen manufacturing and help workers compete on a level playing field.

1. The Invest in American Jobs Act (HR 949) will strengthen and expand Buy America preferences we already have and improve transparency so the public knows how taxpayer dollars are spent. Demanding we spend tax dollars in the U.S. is a common-sense solution to job creation, don't you think?

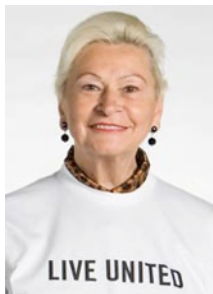
2. The Currency Reform for Fair Trade Act (HR 1276) would allow for undervalued currency to be treated as an actionable subsidy under U.S. trade law. When another country, China being the biggest offender, manipulates its currency, it acts as a subsidy for goods entering our market and as a tax on our exports overseas. We've worked tirelessly on this issue for years because it's so detrimental to our economy. Trade with China reached a record \$315 billion deficit in 2012 resulting in a loss of 2.1 million manufacturing jobs. We can't sit idly by while our jobs are being off-shored!

We're sending letters to legislators demanding they support both bills to put America back to work. Joining us will only strengthen that message. If your SOAR Chapter would like to make your voices heard, please contact me at rsteury@aamfg.org, PH: 260-633-1060 or the AAM Coordinator nearest you to get your action toolkit. Thank you for helping to "Keep it Made in America"

Rachel Bennett Steury, AAM Field Coordinator 260-633-1060, <http://www.americanmanufacturing.org>



High Drug Prices Are Enough to Make You Sick, by Barbara J. Easterling



Did you know that Americans pay the highest drug prices in the world?

Wondering where all that money goes? In 2012, the CEO of Johnson & Johnson made \$40 million. The head of Pfizer got \$25 million. The CEO of Eli Lilly had to get by on a mere \$14 million last year. Over the last decade, the 11 major pharmaceutical companies made a combined \$711 billion in profits.

But despite this, it always seems like seniors are the ones asked to sacrifice. Some people in Washington want to raise the Medicare eligibility age and have higher monthly premiums. Congress keeps trying to cut back benefits, such as the ways that the Affordable Care Act helps lower prescription costs.

Instead of targeting our Medicare for cuts, we should close some of the loopholes that enrich these big corporations. For example, Medicare is specifically prohibited from negotiating volume discounts from the big drug companies. Every savvy consumer knows that you save money when you buy in bulk. This sweetheart deal was written into the 2003 Medicare drug law which, not coincidentally, has led to record profits for the industry.

Our generation was raised to make sacrifices when times are tough. But we also know what is fair and what is not. What the big drug companies are getting away with is just not right.

Barbara J. Easterling is president of the Alliance for Retired Americans.

Report From Canada



Several years ago, my wife and I were traveling in Northern Minnesota when we decided to go up to Canada and go around the Great Lakes, down through Michigan to our home in Indiana. We had our dog with us and

when stopped at the border, weren't allowed in because we couldn't prove that the dog had had its rabies shots. It was the 4th of July holiday so our Vet wasn't open to have the proof faxed to them, so we had to turn around.

Last month I got the opportunity to go to Vancouver, B.C. to speak to the Canadian SOAR Conference delegates. This proved to be a much better experience as the conference went without a hitch.

Canada is a beautiful country with very friendly people and Vancouver is a wonderful city.

All of the delegates at the conference seemed to go out of their way to make us feel very welcomed. SOAR Canadian Coordinator, Doug MacPherson, did a magnificent job of coordinating the event and everything went smoothly.

Following the SOAR Conference was the Canadian Policy Conference. Ken Neumann, the Canadian Director, is one of the most personable people I've ever met. SOAR delegates were treated like royalty by the Steelworkers and Ken made sure that we were included in each and every event. SOAR was recognized at each gathering by Ken.

If you believe that some of our politicians are nuts here in the U.S., well, we have nothing on some of the Canadian politicians, because they have their share of crackpot legislators as well. The political pendulum has the middle class reeling in Canada too.

Charlie Averill, SOAR Secretary/Treasurer



District 6, Life On The Line, by Bill Mahoney, Resident Poet Local 1005



I worked most of my life on the assembly line;
Felt like I was serving time.
I made a good living and that was fine.
Until G.M. said it was the end of the line.

We made a good product, so I am told.
But that is not something you can hold.
I feel as if my soul has been sold;

While G.M. turned my sweat to gold...
No matter how much you give back,
Companies will still attack...
They cheat, they steal, they lie and plead.
They try to squeeze you until you bleed.
You will never satisfy their greed.
We made them fortunes with our hands,
Now they want our pension plans.
The trend to move jobs over seas is spreading like some bad disease.
What they are doing is not right.
We won't go down without a fight...

Editors Note:
This booklet of rhymes was given me by SOAR members, Margarat and

Harry Hynd at the SOAR Conference in Vancouver.

The booklet has 31 such rhymes which are pretty darned good.

"Rebel Rhymes" by Bill Mahoney are for sale at the cost of \$5 each. All proceeds from the sale will go to Wesley Center of Hamilton.

If you wish to have a copy of Rebel Rhymes you can phone Bill Mahoney at home 905-547-6162 cell 905-906-6162.

