

MiARA Newsletter

April 2018

Convention Report MiARA Biennial Convention Hosted by UAW Region 1

On April 28, 2018, nearly 100 Michigan Alliance for Retired Americans (MiARA) members and allies attended the Spring Biennial Convention held in Warren, Michigan at UAW Region 1 headquarters.

MiARA President Dick Long called the meeting to order and Secretary Judy Foster presided over the roll call of officers. The following Executive Board members were recorded as present: Dick Long, Henry Lykes, Richard McInerney Charlie Robinson, Judy Foster, Warren Danford, Jack Schneider and Bob Sisler.

In his opening remarks, President Long reminded the delegates that the November 2018 election is extremely important for seniors. "New legislators will be making policy decisions on our health care and pensions." Long stated. "We need to make our voices heard."

Next, delegates recited the Pledge of Allegiance and an Invocation was given. Rita Yancy and Lorenzo Rivera then presented the Convention Rules, which were adopted unanimously by the

membership. Then Credentials Committee members, James Blane and Rick Lyons reported on the election. Treasurer Charlie Robinson gave the Treasurer's Report, which the attendees approved unanimously, before moving on to the convention speeches.

The convention featured three guest speakers, including State Senator Vincent Gregory (D-11), Oakland University Professor David Dulio, and attorney Mark Brewer.

Sen. Gregory serves on the Michigan Senate Appropriations, Capital Outlay, Corrections, Health and Human Services and Oversight Committees. He brought delegates up to date on current legislation in Lansing and encouraged MiARA to stay vigilante and be proactive in contacting their representatives on issues important to them. The Senator emphasized the importance of the upcoming elections for Michigan retirees.

(Continued on page 2)

In this Issue

1	Convention Report MiARA Biennial Convention
2	MiARA Activist Spotlight Jay McMurran
3	Earth Day



Michigan Senator Gregory updates delegates on legislation, policies, and programs that affect Michigan retirees.

Convention Report

Continued from p. 1

Following Sen. Gregory, David Dulio gave the keynote speech. Professor Dulio is Chair of the Political Science Department at Oakland University, where he teaches courses on campaigns and elections, Congress, political parties, interest groups, and other areas of American politics.

Professor Dulio runs Oakland University's Center for Civic Engagement, which attempts to engage not only Oakland University, but the surrounding community by:

- Informing the campus and community about important issues of public concern through non-partisan dialogue.
- Supporting and undertaking efforts to enhance civic engagement and civic literacy.
- Promoting research related to public policy to inform policy makers and the public.
- Encourage student involvement in civic engagement and public policy through volunteerism and experiential learning.



MiARA delegates enjoyed Professor Dulio's presentation and participated in a vigorous question and answer period about civic engagement.



Attorney Mark Brewer updates delegates on his work with The League of Women Voters to end the practice of gerrymandering in Michigan's elections.

Mark Brewer spoke to the delegates about the unfair distribution of Michigan's political boundaries, i.e. gerrymandering. Brewer has served as the Chair of the Michigan Democratic Party. He has served on the Democratic National Committee and he served as president of the Association of State Democratic Chairs.

Mark is now a member of the Law Firm Goodman Acker P.C. In addition, Brewer has donated substantial time to pro bono work primarily through the American Civil Liberties Union.

Currently, Mark is working pro bono with the League of Women Voters and others on a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the current redistricting plans for both chambers of the Michigan Legislature and for Michigan representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The League and those voters believe that the current plans are unconstitutional partisan gerrymandering. Mark hopes the lawsuit will end this rigged system and restore free and fair elections to Michigan.

(Continued on page 3)

Convention Report

Continued from p. 2

Following the speakers, the election of officers was held. MiARA 1st Vice-President Richard McInerney chose not to run again. Richard has represented the United Steelworkers (USW) as a founding MiARA board member. Richard's valuable insights and knowledge of labor history will be sorely missed on the board.

Tim Foley chaired the election. He presented a slate of Dick Long, President, (UAW); Henry Lykes, Executive Vice-President, (AFSCME); Jay McMurran, 1st Vice-President, (USW); Charlie Robinson, Treasurer, (AFT-MICHIGAN); and Judy Foster, Secretary, (MEA).

A motion was made from the floor to elect the Slate by acclamation and the motion was passed unanimously.

Following the vote, national ARA Treasurer Joe Peters conducted the Installation of Officers and the meeting was adjourned.

All delegates enjoyed a delicious lunch to conclude the convention, and attendees each received a beautiful portfolio with the MiARA logo imprinted to take home.



Newly-elected MiARA officers take the pledge of office. Left to Right: Charlie Robinson, Dick Long, Jay McMurran, Henry Lykes, and Judy Foster.

MiARA Activist Spotlight

Jay McMurran

Our April MiARA Activist Spotlight is newly-elected MiARA 1st Vice-President. Jay McMurran. Jay is a retired member of the United Steelworkers Local 2659 in Southgate, Michigan. As an employee of McLouth Steel, Jay joined the steelworkers in 1973. Three weeks later, he was elected shop steward and has continuously served the union in various appointed and elected positions until his retirement in 2017.

Jay has served his local union in many capacities, including: Shop Steward, Safety Committee Representative, Inside Guard, Trustee, Recording Secretary, and Cooperative Partnership Facilitator. In addition to his work at Local 2659, Jay served on Staff of the Michigan State AFL-CIO under State Fed's Jobs Corps youth employment and training program until its termination, when Jay was appointed to the Metro-Detroit AFL-CIO Staff, working with the Union's Home Weatherization and Michigan Employee Ownership Center programs.

In 1983, the Steelworkers Union negotiated an employee buyout of McLouth Steel, which was in financial trouble brought on by a flood of imported cheap steel products. At the completion of that deal, Jay accepted an assignment to help implement the contract's new employee involvement program. Jay remained in that position until the company closed its doors in April 1995.

Following McLouth's closure, United Steelworkers Local 2 Director Harry E. Lester appointed Jay to fill a vacancy on the union's organizing staff. In that capacity, Jay became a member of District 2's most successful organizing team which helped more than 3,500 workers join the Steelworkers union during a 24-month period.

(Continued on page 4)

MiARA Activist Spotlight

Jay McMurran *Continued*

In 1997, Lester appointed Jay to be the USW District 2 Rapid Response Coordinator. Jay also took on the duties of the union district's Political Action and Legislative Participation Coordinator roles. In that capacity, Jay was charged with mobilizing members to get involved with the USW election and citizen lobbyist programs.



Jay McMurran is ready to bring his considerable organizing skills and experience to the fight to save Social Security and Medicare from Trump's tax cuts for the rich

Following the United Steelworkers of America and PACE International Union mergers, the political and legislative rolls were reassigned with Jay heading up the legislative efforts. He remained in that position until his retirement.

In addition to his union activities Jay is a proud husband and father. He and wife Marian have been married for 45 years. They raised three children: Nathan, 43; Marisa, 40; and Sam, 26. They have two granddaughters: Joanna, 17 and Isabella, 15, and a great grandson, Marshall, 1.

Mom, Dad and the kids were born, raised, and still reside in the Downriver Detroit area.

Jay got involved with the MiARA because of the Trump tax cuts for the rich and other retiree issues. "I am convinced we will have one hell of a fight to save Social Security and Medicare during this fall's lame duck congress. In addition to help stop future attacks on those programs we simply must flip the U.S. House and Senate back to Democratic control this November. I want to use my experience with the Steelworkers to mobilize Union Retirees and community activists to make the difference in those very critical fights,"

Earth Day 2018 Emphasizes Plastic Pollution

Plastic waste is an increasing threat to the life of our planet. According to the New York Times, about 300 million tons of plastic is produced globally each year. Only about 10 percent of that is recycled. Of the plastic that is simply trashed, an estimated seven million tons ends up in the sea each year

This year the Earth Day Network is focusing on reducing plastic pollution. Earth Day is observed every year on April 22 to celebrate the birth of the modern environmental movement on that date in 1970 when 20 million Americans demonstrated in massive coast-to-coast rallies.

MiARA Executive Board

Dick Long, President, (UAW)
Henry Lykes, Executive Vice-President, (AFSCME)
Jay McMurran, 1st Vice-President, (USW)
Charlie Robinson, Treasurer, (AFT-MICHIGAN)
Judy Foster, Secretary, (MEA)

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Arthur Kroll, (USW)
Jack Schneider, (MEA)
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Copy Editor: Krista Schneider
