



## **NEWS RELEASE**

• Apr. 6, 2022 •

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### • **Battle of Homestead Foundation hosts Apr. 20 talk on 1940s “Labor Board Crew” that influenced U.S. social and economic policies into the 21st Century**

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**WHAT:** The Battle of Homestead Foundation presents an online panel, **How the 1940s “Labor Board Crew” Revolutionized Union Mediation in America**, featuring commentary by Pittsburgh history professor **Ronald W. Schatz**, labor historian **Jack Metzgar**, union organizer **John Lepley**

**WHEN:** Wednesday, Apr. 20, 2022 from 7:30-9:00 p.m. via Zoom

**WHERE:** Program is free but viewers must register at [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com)

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**HOMESTEAD, PENNSYLVANIA** — The second half of the 20th century was notable for many landmark legal precedents, often resulting from behind-the-scenes mediation by teams of attorneys tackling issues from school desegregation in the American South to free agency and salary arbitration in major league baseball.

On Apr. 20, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. Battle of Homestead Foundation presents a free Zoom panel discussion, **How the 1940s “Labor Board Crew” Revolutionized Union Mediation in America**, exploring a little-known wartime bureau of young attorneys and economists with an outsize influence in shaping America’s economic and social progress for the next 50 years.

In 1942, by order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, an unlikely assemblage of technocrats and utopian reformers came together as the National War Labor Board, charged with mediating and heading off the scores of potential labor disputes that might threaten U.S. military production.

The board was disbanded after the war, but its “graduates” would go on to handle thousands of grievances and strikes that impacted civil rights, union negotiations, student protests, corporate regulation, professional sports and, ultimately, the end of the Cold War.

A new book by Pittsburgh resident and retired history professor **Ronald W. Schatz**, [\*The Labor Board Crew: Remaking Worker-Employer Relations from Pearl Harbor to the Reagan Era\*](#), provides the background for discussion, with commentary by Dr. Schatz, labor historian **Jack Metzgar** and union organizer **John Lepley**.

“With the renewed unionizing strength we’re seeing across the U.S.,” says Battle of Homestead Foundation president **John Haer**, “it’s important to understand the legacy of the Labor Board Crew and what it can teach organizers and mediators today about achieving true equity and genuine social change.”

The program is free but viewers must register at [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com).

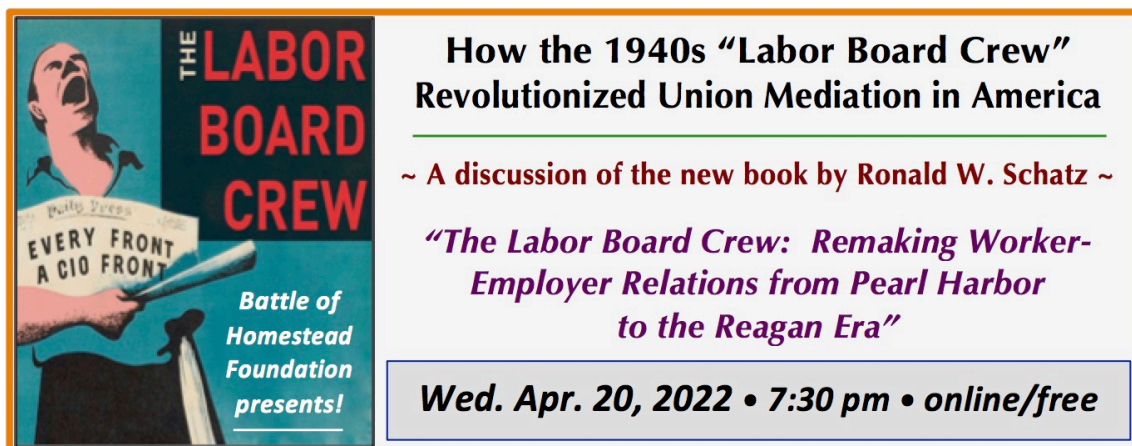
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- \* The **Battle of Homestead Foundation** is an educational nonprofit promoting Western Pennsylvania’s vibrant industrial and labor history starting with the 1892 Homestead Steel Strike and connecting with current labor issues involving economics, the environment, healthcare, racism and other social concerns.
- \* Tune in to the Foundation’s public affairs podcast series *Essential Work: Exploring the Past, Present and Future of Jobs* podcast series at [www.essentialworkpodcast.com](http://www.essentialworkpodcast.com)

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### **PANELISTS: How the 1940s “Labor Board Crew” Revolutionized Union Mediation in America**

- **Ronald W. Schatz** earned his doctorate at the University of Pittsburgh and recently retired from Wesleyan University as professor of U.S. history. He has taught and published widely on labor history, the conservative movement, labor and religion and American Jewish history. He is the author of *The Electrical Workers: A History of Labor at General Electric and Westinghouse, 1923-60* and of many journal articles. Dr. Schatz’s new book, *The Labor Board Crew: Remaking Worker-Employer Relations from Pearl Harbor to the Reagan Era*, chronicles the team of young economists and lawyers recruited to the National War Labor Board to resolve union-management conflicts during the Second World War, and then exerting broad influence on American social and political policy for the next half-century.
- **Jack Metzgar** is professor emeritus of humanities at Roosevelt University in Chicago, where he is a core member of the Chicago Center for Working-Class Studies. A former president of the Working-Class Studies Association, his books include *Bridging the Divide: Working-Class Culture in a Middle-Class Society* and *Striking Steel: Solidarity Remembered*.
- **John Lepley** is former president of Pittsburgh-based USW Local 3657 and currently a member of the USW Education and Membership Development Department.



**How the 1940s “Labor Board Crew” Revolutionized Union Mediation in America**

~ A discussion of the new book by Ronald W. Schatz ~

**“The Labor Board Crew: Remaking Worker-Employer Relations from Pearl Harbor to the Reagan Era”**

**Wed. Apr. 20, 2022 • 7:30 pm • online/free**