

the 4 WORD

The Voice of Council 4 AFSCME Connecticut

February 2012

What's Inside

Supporting Our Communities



Across the state, Council 4 local unions are supporting their local communities. Pictured here: Principal Lisa Eells (L) and students from Gaffney Elementary School in New Britain accept a donation to purchase technology equipment from AFSCME Local 1214's Nancy Taylor, far right, and Lila Guillet. Local 1214 represents Charter Oak State College/CT Distance Learning Center employees. Story on page 4-5.

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Red Cross Workers Settle Strike



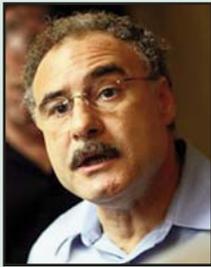
AFSCME Local 3145 members like Lisa Oakes (left) staged a 10-day strike against the American Red Cross. Also pictured at far right is Robert Facey, president of AFSCME Local 3713 (Metropolitan District Commission), one of many union members who supported the Red Cross workers. Story on page 6.

Members Mobilize for Legislative Action



Taffy Womack of AFSCME Local 704 (NP-3 State Clerical Bargaining Unit) makes a point during a Council 4 legislative lobbying workshop in January. Legislative preview on page 6.

Paging George Bailey & All The Good Bankers



President Obama was right to bail out the big banks, even though their greed was what triggered the continuing economic mess. The reason is simple: without a banking system, virtually all commerce stops, which leads to massive unemployment. That's what led to 25% out of work for a decade following the crash of 1929.

So, are all banks bad?

Not if you believe the movie "It's a Wonderful Life," starring James Stewart as George Bailey, the owner of a savings and loan that keeps the community healthy by helping families buy homes, and small businesses stay afloat. His enemy in this 1940's classic is the owner of the big commercial bank in town. So, was this a fantasy or is there such a thing as a "good banker?"

The answer may surprise you: there was – and is.

Meet Patrick J. Cullen, President of the Bank of Cattaraugus, the smallest independent bank in New York State. He is a real life George Bailey. Big banks have repeatedly tried to buy the bank, telling him he could be rich (Cullen is a banker; he knows that). His bank makes money, just not much money. The profit last year was \$5,000, but Cullen favors helping people over big profits.

Carol Bonner had a mortgage with Cattaraugus Bank when she retired to take care of her disabled sister. When inflation ate away at her savings, she could no longer pay the mortgage, so Mr. Cullen did what any bank would do — sort of. He had his son buy the house, but he didn't evict Bonner.

She now pays rent she can afford. That's just one of dozens of stories of how this little bank helped the community and put people first, profit second. Mr. Cullen's bank also buys failing business

property and restores it before blight sets in.

Compare this to Bank of America. Rather than help a family with a mortgage, it throws them out in the street (literally) and lets whole neighborhoods collapse as vacant houses deteriorate.

This is more than cruel, it's stupid: their own investment loses value. But the BoA doesn't care about families, nor does it care about small businesses that rely on small short term loans. In 2010 BoA made a total of two such loans in Connecticut, preferring to force small businesses to use expensive credit cards. The Occupy Wall Street is right: these big banks are squeezing America and Americans dry. It's time to stop them.

Last year was a tough year for us, but we weathered it. We're more hopeful for 2012. But until America gets a handle on the disproportionate distribution of wealth, we "99 percenters" are going to continue to have problems: we'll pay more for food, fuel, housing and a lot more for our children to go to college.

The problem started in the 1970s, with laws that made union organizing extraordinarily difficult, and the beginning of wages not keeping up with inflation – now it's a trend.

Are the Cullen's a dying breed? Not when we turn America around, and rebuild the middle class. In November alone 650,000 Americans dumped their big bank accounts in favor of credit unions. This is only one small part of the solution, but it's something meaningful in the quest to restore the great middle class that our unions helped build.

In solidarity,

Sal Luciano

Sal Luciano

Executive Director

Region 10 School Cafeteria Workers Say "Union Yes!"

Region 10 school cafeteria workers, serving the towns of Burlington and Harwinton, are the newest members of Council 4 after voting 16-3 to join our union. The workers now belong to AFSCME Local 1303-457.

"We needed to come together and join the union to gain respect. We've seen how Council 4 fights for other workers in town" said Cafeteria Aide Andrea Alevrides, who will serve as union President.

"We cook for approximately 900 kids," added Cafeteria Aide and union Vice President Jackie Wolstencroft. "We need somebody to have our back. That's why we turned to Council 4."

Along with Alevrides and Wolstencroft, union members elected Stephanie Chiappa as Secretary and Maryann Pease as Treasurer. Council 4 Field Representative David Testa helped organize the workers. Staff Representative Kelly Cashman will serve as spokesman for the new local union as it begins negotiations for a first contract.

Council 4 also represents Burlington school custodians and town hall employees.



*Congratulations to our newest union members:
Region 10 Board of Education cafeteria workers.*

Local 318's Amy Xie: Artist and Union Steward

Amy Xie of AFSCME Local 318 (State Administrative-Clerical) is a multi-dimensional woman. She is a proud Chinese-American with strong family ties and vivid memories of her childhood in China. She is an Office Assistant in the Labor Department's Office of Research. She is a union steward and member of the Local 318 Executive Board.

And, she is an accomplished artist whose paintings were the subject of a recent one-woman show, "Flight, Flora & Fantasy," at the Hartford Public Library's ArtWalk.

"My painting is inspired by my traditional Chinese culture and the beauty of nature. I love to watch the seasons change. I transfer the beauty of nature onto paper," said Xie, who grew up in Shanghai and came to the United States with her family 24 years ago.

Xie's work melds two traditional styles of Chinese painting – realistic detail and quick sketching – with Western styles. She studied art in China and graduated from Shanghai International Studies University, where she studied under two famous master artists, Jin Zheng Hui and Qian Jun Tao.

Xie was especially proud on the evening of Dec. 2, 2011, when more than 230 people – including her sisters and many of her Department of Labor friends and co-workers – attended an opening night reception. Xie's 84-year-old mother Ji Jin Xie, who resides in Vernon, could not attend the artist's opening, but saw the exhibit a few days later.

Xie has found parallels between her painting and her union activism. During a guided tour of her exhibit she proudly pointed to the companion watercolors Eagle Hunting, calling them a metaphor for union representation.

"These two eagles represent success and power, in the same manner that our union represents success and power to me," she reflected. "I appreciate what the union has done for me. I have learned so much."

To see Amy Xie's works online, go to <http://artwalk.hplct.org/>. Many of her paintings are for sale, with 25 percent of the proceeds going to the Hartford Public Library.

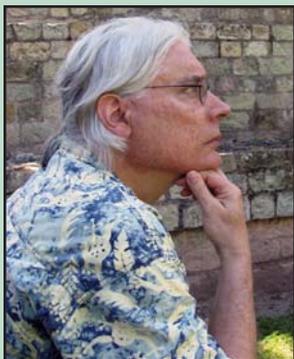


Amy Xie of Local 318 stands by her "Eagle Hunting" paintings.

In Memoriam: Richard Sivel

Rich Sivel, who served as Council 4's Online Publications Coordinator, died Dec. 18, 2011. Rich brought a deep concern for working families to Council 4, where he trained numerous union leaders and members to master the latest advances in the world of online communications and social media.

"Rich spent his whole life working to improve life for those with less," said Council 4 Executive Director Sal Luciano. "From his first day, that passionate commitment was evident. Rich was a pacifist who believed strongly in health care for everyone and was one of the most decent people I ever met."



Council 4 extends our deepest condolences to Rich's family and friends.

Donations in his memory can be made to the Peace Valley Nature Center, 170 Chapman Rd., Doylestown, PA 18901; or to Connecticut Citizen Action Group, 30 Arbor St., 6N, Hartford, CT 06106.

State Labor Board Rules for Council 4

The Connecticut State Board of Labor Relations ruled in Council 4's favor when it dismissed the effort of a Massachusetts-based business seeking to represent our NP-4 Corrections Bargaining Unit. In a decision issued Dec. 14, 2011 the Board said the National Correction Employee Union (NCEU) failed to meet the criteria required under law to open a contract window.

The Board called NCEU's petition "untimely" and their claims in support of it "without merit."

"We are pleased with the Labor Board's decision. It affirms that we've been fighting for our members," said Council 4 Executive Director Sal Luciano. "That's what real unions do. They fight to protect jobs and services."

Council 4 represents more than 5,000 front-line Department of Correction employees – including correction officers, parole and treatment officers, counselors, maintenance and transportation – in AFSCME Locals 387, 391 and 1565.

Attorney J. William Gagne successfully argued Council 4's case before the State Labor Board.

Council 4 Members: Supporting The

AFSCME Local 1214



AFSCME Local 1214 members who work for Charter Oak State College in New Britain and the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium in Newington, donated \$955 to Gaffney Elementary School in New Britain for the purchase of 3 video projectors; and a new Gateway laptop to Pathways/Senderos Center of New Britain. *Pictured, l-r: Local 1214's Adeline Yllanes and Lila Guillet; Pathway-Senderos' Heather Mills and RoseAnne Bilodeau; and Local 1214's Nancy Taylor.*

AFSCME Local 287



AFSCME Local 287, representing New Haven School Custodians, donated 32 gift cards worth \$25 each to elementary school students throughout the city. *Pictured, l-r: Mauro-Sheridan Principal Denise Coles-Cross; Zamaya Harrison; Jamel Lowery; and Local 287's Mark Bohannon and Rafael Crespo.*

AFSCME Local 1186



AFSCME Local 1186, representing New Britain City, Board of Education and Housing Authority employees, has donated \$1,500 to area organizations, including a \$1,000 gift to the Mitten Tree, a gift and food program administered by the New Britain Youth & Family Services. *L-R: Local 1186 President Michael Thompson; Christopher Montes; Mayor Timothy O'Brien; and Local 1186 member Claudia Havelevitch.*

AFSCME Local 1303-266



AFSCME Local 1303-266, representing Region 1 school employees (paraprofessionals, secretaries, custodians and IT) donated \$500 to each of the social services agencies in Canaan, Cornwall, Falls Village, Kent, Lakeville and North Canaan. The Local Union also contributed \$500 each to the town food banks in Kent, Lakeville, and North Canaan. *Pictured, l-r: Local 1303-266's Kevin Whitney, Beth Ann Krupa, Jonathan Warren, Robin Beaujon, Katie Wood, Julie Lang, Sue Harris and Gina Jasmine.*

AFSCME 1303-26



AFSCME Local 1303-26, representing Southington Public Works Employees, held a successful, first-ever food drive, filling three full-sized pickup trucks and collecting an additional \$3,200 for the town's food pantry. *Pictured, l-r: Local 1303-26 members Al Masacaro, (Treasurer); Ralph Nocera, (Vice President), Steve Pompei (President); Michael Hubeny (Secretary). Gerry Moore and Tony Mangafico. Local 1303-26 member James Carredu is Santa Claus.*

AFSCME Local 2930



AFSCME Local 2930 Union President, Joseph Cirigliano, right, presented the Newington Human Services with a \$1,400 contribution to benefit the Newington Food Bank. Financial and food donations from the community provide emergency assistance for the food bank throughout the year. *Pictured with Cirigliano are Ken Freidenberg and Karen Futoma from Newington's Human Services Department.*

AFSCME Local 991



AFSCME Local 991, representing Manchester Town and Board of Education Employees, donated nearly \$1,000 in food, gifts and money to Manchester Area Conference of Churches' Charities, serving residents in Bolton and Manchester. *Pictured, l-r: Local 991 Executive Board Terri Carter, MACC Executive Director Beth Stafford and Local 991 President Thomas Stough.*

AFSCME Local 184



AFSCME Local 184, representing workers at the Metropolitan District Commission, donated \$500 each to End Hunger CT and Foodshare, Inc. *Pictured, l-r: Local 184 President and Gil Bironi; End Hunger CT! Executive Director Lucy Nolan; and Local 184 Executive Board members Tom Mathiau and Dean Gozzo.*

State Police Dispatchers Fight Consolidation Plans

The unions representing state police dispatchers and state police troopers are raising concerns over the state's proposed consolidation of dispatch operations. The DESPP (Dept. of Emergency Services and Public Protection) is pushing to consolidate dispatch centers around the state, starting in early 2012 with the Canaan-Litchfield-Southbury operations.

Council 4 represents more than 70 public safety dispatchers, and is urging policy makers to slow down and examine the public safety impact, especially in the aftermath of two violent storms.

"You can't put dollar signs in front of public safety," said Council 4 Staff Representative Jeff Scanlon, who negotiates for the AFSCME administrative clerical bargaining unit that represents the dispatchers.

Robert Klepps and Brian Johnson of Local 562 of Council 4's NP-3 Administrative Clerical Bargaining Unit joined Scanlon and Connecticut State Police Union President Andrew Matthews at a press conference in Waterbury to air their concerns over how consolidating dispatch operations would impact the public's safety and well-being.



Public Safety Dispatcher Robert Klepps of Local 562 talks to Channel 30's Amanda Raus.

Red Cross Workers Continue Fight for Safe Blood

The members of AFSCME Local 3145, representing nearly 200 Connecticut Red Cross blood collection workers, voted to ratify a new collective bargaining agreement,



House Majority Leader Brendan Sharkey addresses union members at a solidarity rally for AFSCME Local 3145. Also pictured: State Rep. and Council 4 Service Representative Joe Aresimowicz (l) and State Rep. Greg Haddad.

officially ending a 10-day strike triggered by the employer's bad faith negotiations and unlawful tactics.

Local 3145 members ratified the agreement by a nearly 3-to-1 margin.

The new contract goes into effect immediately and expires March 31, 2015. Terms of the agreement include general wage increases totaling 8% over the life of the contract and the settlement of several National Labor Relations Board complaints against the employer.

The ratification brings to an end a nearly three-year struggle to reach agreement on a new collective bargaining agreement. While the Red Cross did not concede on the health care, pension and staffing issues, union

leadership recommended ratification of the tentative agreement.

"This is not an ideal settlement, but it is the best way to move forward and continue advocating for our workers and donors," said AFSCME Local 3145 President Nancy Newton, a Quarantine & Labeling Technician. "We thank our members for their sacrifice throughout this campaign, and the many AFL-CIO union members and state legislators who supported us."

Union members from Council 4 and many AFL-CIO unions turned out for a solidarity rally Nov. 9 to support the workers. Several high-profile politicians showed up as well.

The Local 3145 bargaining unit includes phlebotomists, nurses, driver technicians and laboratory technicians.

Council 4 Pursues Legislative Agenda

The Connecticut General Assembly convened its 2012 session on Feb. 5 and is scheduled to adjourn May 9. Our union's legislative agenda includes:

Health Care: Following significant victories on both the federal and state level to reform our health care system, multiple state legislative committees have been established to monitor the development and implementation of municipal pooling, the creation of a public option plan, and holding health insurance companies accountable. We will monitor these committees to make sure our members have access to quality, affordable healthcare.

Pensions For All: As part of our union's Pensions For All program, we will urge legislators to convene a study commission focused on workers who currently do not have access to a quality retirement plan or are close to retirement without adequate income. Our goal is to get legislators to address the impending retirement crisis and to create a new, publicly managed retirement plan.

State Employee Pensions: Thanks in part to our advocacy, Gov. Malloy has proposed increasing the state's annual required contribution (ARC) to shore up the state pension employee pension fund. This is a dramatic contrast to other states, and we will support proper funding of the system.

Budget/Spending Cap Restrictions: Republicans are expected to push back against any efforts to provide reasonable relief from the state spending cap. This could affect the governor's proposal to exempt increased state contributions to shore up Connecticut's underfunded pension system. It could also lead to severe cuts to state services and aid to municipalities, giving cities and towns more ammunition for layoffs and wage and benefit cuts.

Education Reform: The Governor says this will be the education reform session. Too often, we have seen education reform efforts open the door for privatization of public education; we will remain vigilant to prevent this. Additionally, any proposed legislation must show that it will actually reduce the achievement gap not simply demonize teachers, paraprofessionals and other folks who work in the schools.

Stay tuned to www.council4.org for the latest legislative news and be sure to join our e-mail and text message list to receive regular updates.

Governor: Fund State Pensions

Governor Dannel P. Malloy announced a proposed change in the state's pension-funding plan to stabilize finances over the long term. Malloy's plan to shore up a woefully under-funded pension plan includes eliminating provisions that were part of the 1997 agreement between the State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC) and former Gov. Rowland and allowed the state to backload its contributions.

Eliminating these deductions will increase the state's annually required contribution (ARC) by about \$125 in the next fiscal year and similar amounts in future years. All told, the savings to taxpayers will be about \$5.8 billion — with no negative changes to the pension plan design and benefits.

"What the governor has proposed is not a concession," said Council 4 Executive Director Sal Luciano. "In fact, it will securitize state employee pensions over the long term to the benefit of beneficiaries and taxpayers."

The Malloy administration has asked SEBAC leadership to approve his plan to increase the state's contributions to the pension fund. SEBAC leadership was scheduled to meet at press time.

Local 391's Kevin Brace: An Officer and a Gentleman

When State Corrections Officer Kevin Brace of AFSCME Local 391 took a week-long vacation, he did not spend his time relaxing at a beach or hiking in the woods.

Instead, the Windsor Locks resident and married father of three young children volunteered to help townspeople cope with the aftermath of Storm Alfred, which hit the state Oct. 29 and left towns like Windsor Locks without power for a week or more.

"I would do it again in a heartbeat. It was something that needed to be done," said Brace, the Chief Union Steward at Northern Correctional in Somers, the state's super-max facility.

Brace helped town officials move the emergency shelter to Windsor Locks High School. He and other volunteers got local hotels to donate toiletries. He also helped distribute MREs (meals ready-to-eat) to residents unable to travel to the town shelter and checked on the elderly and other home-bound residents.

Brace vividly remembers delivering food to a cancer-stricken woman in town. "It was a freezing night. This frail woman was lying in a hospital bed right in her living

room. She had a caretaker who couldn't leave her side. So I just stayed and talked with them, did a lot of reassuring. I still get emotional thinking about this woman, about the people who couldn't leave their homes."



Local 391's Kevin Brace

Brace also used social media tools like Facebook, YouTube and his own Save Windsor Locks blog to update citizens.

Storm Alfred hit just as Brace was heading down the home stretch in his campaign to get elected to the police commission. He did not discuss his candidacy when helping people cope with the storm's aftermath.

"The last thing that anybody thought about was the election," he said.

Brace still won his election. He says it's important for union members to hold local elected offices.

"We can share our ideas about fair labor practices, wages and benefits with other municipal leaders," he reflected. "Otherwise we run the risk being overrun by people don't understand public employees and unions."

Watertown Local 1049 Ratifies New Agreement



Local 1049's Bernie Bonfiglio, left, and Tom Romano.

Members of AFSCME Local 1049, representing 40 Watertown school custodial, maintenance and information technology employees, approved a three-year collective bargaining (CBA) with the Board of Education. The new contract includes general wage increases totaling 6.5% over the life of the agreement. It raises employee contribution caps for health insurance, but holds the line on the premium cost sharing.

"This is a good agreement that's fair for our members and for the taxpayers," said Local 1049 President Tom Romano. "It keeps us on the job, doing what we do best: keeping the schools clean and safe."

Local 1049's Bargaining Team included Tom Romano;

Rodney Clark; John Marburger; Ron Norby; Hank McGough; and Dave Tartaglia. Council 4 Staff Representative Victoria Lynn DeFrank was Local 1049's spokesperson in negotiations.

Union members previously agreed to help the Watertown school system by extending their last collective bargaining agreement for one year with no raises or step increases.

Somers School Nurses Settle

Somers Board of Education Nurses, AFSCME Local 1303-290, have a new three-year contract in place that includes general wage increases totaling 4% and improved language for such things as personal leave. "We're pleased with this contract," said Local President Carol Meagher, head nurse at Avery Middle School. "These are difficult times. We'd be in trouble without a union. We appreciate having Council 4 represent us."

Staff Representative Tricia Cardin of Council 4 served as the Local's spokesperson during the contract talks.



Council 4 Staff Representative Tricia Cardin, left, and Local 1303-290 President Carol Meagher.

Get Union Smart! Text message "CT" to AFSCME (237263) for the latest updates and alerts *standard rates apply

Local 1303 College Scholarships

A FSCME Local 1303, the union representing more than 8,000 municipal and board of education employees, is offering eight \$1,000 scholarships to exceptional students.

We are now accepting completed applications from any college-bound freshman (Fall 2012) whose parent or legal guardian is a Local 1303 member in good standing. **Applications must be postmarked by April 15th, 2012.** The application process includes an essay, "How Being Part of a Union Family Has Benefited My Life."

Interested members can request an application by contacting our office, or they may be downloaded from our website: www.council4.org/local1303.

The children of retirees or members of other locals, as well as currently enrolled college students (entering a year other than freshman) are not eligible for this particular scholarship; please ask your union representative and/or search www.AFSCME.org for more scholarships offered by AFSCME and its affiliates.

Retiree Chapter E-Board Sworn In



Congratulations to the newly sworn-in officers and trustees of the Council 4 Retirees Chapter. Seated, l-r: Doug Evans (Vice President); Carol Perry (Ex. Board); Lillian Sewell (President). Standing, l-r: Sandy Dearborn (Ex. Board); Calvin Bunnell (Ex. Board); Ann Evans (Recording Secretary); Joe Manes (Trustee); Lil Aucaigne (Sec.-Treasurer); Antoinette Forino (Ex. Board); Lois O'Connor (Ex. Board); Shirley Grande (Asst. to Treasurer); and Lois Maitz (Trustee). Missing: Trustee Lorraine Varley. To learn more, go to <http://www.afscmechapter4.org/>

HOLD THE DATE:



Council 4 Conference & Convention

Saturday, April 21, 2012
Hartford Plaza Hotel
100 East River Drive
East Hartford, CT

This year's conference is a one-day event that will include workshops, guest speakers and officer elections.

Go to www.council4.org for more info

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