

the 4WORD

The Voice of Council 4 AFSCME Connecticut

June 2009

What's Inside

State Workers Sacrifice To Protect Public Services With \$700 Million Agreement

The State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC) announced May 8 that public service workers voted by a 3 to 1 margin in favor of the agreement that was negotiated between SEBAC and the Rell Administration.

The SEBAC agreement calls for increases in insurance premium share and prescription drug costs, and also provides thousands of state employees with the opportunity of a retirement incentive program.

In addition, 29 state bargaining units reached individual agreements with their employers that provided 26 months of job security in exchange for a one-year wage freeze and seven unpaid furlough days in the current and ensuing two fiscal years.

Carol Carney, President of Council 4 Local 269,



Judicial Local 749 members tally SEBAC and bargaining unit votes. From left: Geddes Clark, Filomena Sullivan, Council 4 Field Rep Kelly Martinez, and Local 749 President Tony Duarte. In back from left: Council 4 Service Rep Bob Parziale and Local 749 member Dave Raccaro.

said the SEBAC and unit agreements, while painful, were necessary for protecting public services, especially in an economic crisis.

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In the Public Service: Ansonia Nature and Recreation Center Employees



Donna Lindgren, left, and Alison Rubelman are members of Local 1303-208 (Ansonia Town Employees) and the linchpins of the Ansonia Nature and Recreation Center.

It's not often you can talk about unions with someone who is caring for a Red Tailed hawk, rehabilitating injured owls or nurturing motherless baby possums.

Then again, it's not often you get to spend time with Donna Lindgren and Alison Rubelman, who are the public face of the Ansonia Nature and Recreation Center, a 150-acre preserve that is rare in its own right

as a municipally owned and operated nature preserve.

Lindgren serves as Director and Rubelman as Assistant Director. They are equally dedicated to protecting animals and the environment – and they are proud union members who belong to Local 1303-208, Ansonia Town Employees.

Lindgren has worked at the ANRC since 1979. "There was no union then, but when the opportunity came, I joined up immediately," she said. "I think being in a union lends a certain amount of security. I'm happy to be part of the union."

Lindgren, who holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Southern Connecticut State University, puts in long hours spearheading educational and recreational opportunities for the thousands of children and adults who visit the Center annually.

"I think we do a lot to contribute to the quality of life in Ansonia and the surrounding towns," Lindgren said. "We try to be an all-service nature center appealing to people of all ages."

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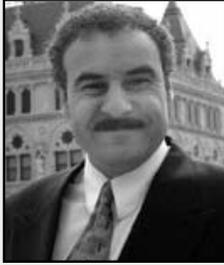
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A Fight That Is Far From Over



Summer is almost here, but the economic reality facing us is neither sunny nor warm. It's no surprise we all know at least one person who has been laid off. At 8.9%, the unemployment rolls are the highest that they have been in 25 years, and they continue to grow.

Economists predict almost every state will continue to hemorrhage jobs. By this time next year Connecticut will have lost 110,000 jobs – the pink slips know no boundaries.

It is under the light of this horrible economy that Connecticut state employees, including 17,000 AFSCME members, voted provide to \$700 million in savings to protect public services.

The savings will come from a variety of sources, including a retirement incentive program, as well as wage and benefit concessions and unpaid furlough days in exchange for 26 months of job security. But even with our record setting cost-saving agreement, Connecticut continues to face an almost \$8 billion budget deficit. That's far too much to cut.

Budget cutting proposals by Governor Rell and a few legislators will destroy our state's quality of life and hurt the most vulnerable among us for no gain.

State funding reductions to cities and towns will result in higher property taxes and fewer municipal services provided by our members who work for local government and boards of education.

Job cutbacks will actually damage our economy. Economists calculate that for every dollar spent on "main street" \$1.38 is added to the economy. So the way out of this recession is not to cut. The solution is fair taxation.

As Warren Buffett and George Soros (both billionaires) observe, the wealthiest residents and large corporations, who benefited the most, haven't even been asked to pay their fair share in taxes.

A report issued in April by Connecticut Voices for Children found that Connecticut's wealthiest families paid only 4.5 % of their income in taxes to the state and local governments, after federal tax, whereas middle income families paid 9.3 % and the poorest paid 12.1 % of their income.

Balancing the state budget on the backs of middle class families, while ignoring the wealthy and corporations, is plain wrong.

But in every crisis lies an opportunity.

Our leaders can no longer go about business as usual – they must comprehensively overhaul our tax system so that it is fair and protects the services we all need.

As part of this recovery plan, they also must pass a high quality public health insurance option, so every resident has affordable health care.

As you can see, our fight for a fair budget and a decent Connecticut is not over.

In solidarity,

Sal Luciano, Executive Director

Frances Perkins Rides to the Rescue—Again

By Kirstin Downey

Americans' fears about the economy worsened when the Department of Labor reported that unemployment had skyrocketed to 8.5 percent in March, the highest rate in 25 years.

These are not just statistics; they represent real people.

It is in alarming times like these that some of the key programs of the New Deal demonstrate their continuing significance.

In this case, the economic shock absorber system is unemployment insurance. It is the FEMA of economic hurricanes, keeping more than 6 million households afloat during the bad times.

The unemployment insurance system was propelled into existence by Frances Perkins, the canny but little-known social worker who was President Franklin Roosevelt's secretary of labor.

Frances Perkins is most famous today for her role as primary architect of Social Security. But in 1933 and 1934, the program she championed most fiercely was unemployment insurance.

It is a program designed to help workers who lose their jobs through no fault of their own, so they can keep their families fed while they look for new jobs. It is a short-term program, because Perkins and FDR had complete faith in capitalism's ultimate recovery.

At the time, unemployment insurance was attacked as a socialist scheme. In some right-wing circles, it continues to be excoriated.

Today, many people don't know who Frances Perkins was. But more than 6 million households will pay their bills and eat their dinner because of her handiwork. And regardless of their political ideology, many people will have reason to offer her their thanks.

Journalist Kirstin Downey is author of "The Woman Behind the New Deal: The Life of Frances Perkins, FDR's Secretary of Labor and His Moral Conscience." This article was reprinted with permission from the AFL-CIO Now news blog.

Health care pooling a smart solution for tough times

Labor and municipal management officials are calling on lawmakers to use the recession as a strong motivator to adopt H.B. 6582—An Act Establishing the Connecticut Healthcare Partnership—to enable towns and cities to reduce health care costs.



“If legislators needed some reason to take decisive action on health care for municipal employees, then they’ve got it with the recession,” said Council 4 Executive Director Sal Luciano, seen above with Stamford Mayor Dan Malloy.

H.B. 6582 would open the State Employee Health Plan and allow municipalities, small businesses, and non-profit organizations voluntarily to join the state employees’ health insurance pool. Labor and municipal management officials believe that the increased bargaining power and reduced administrative costs associated with joining the state plan should be irresistible to cash-strapped taxpayers looking to reduce expenses.

Mayor Malloy said, “The high cost of health care only adds to the burden of taxpayers during this recession. I encourage members of the legislature to take action so that we can offer affordable and high-quality coverage.”

Wallingford Town Workers Turn Up The Heat

Members of Local 1183, Wallingford Town Employees, turned out in force for a recent Town Council meeting to air their concerns over Mayor William Dickinson’s demands for a wage freeze and his suggestion that layoffs may be in order. Bargaining Unit President Mark Rolan (pictured below left on bottom step, holding paper) got a standing ovation after his testimony before



the Council. “We believe it would be irresponsible to balance the town budget by cutting vital services without regard for the impact on residents and businesses,” Rolan said. “In this time of economic challenge people need to be able to rely on their public services.”

Organizing Updates: Bristol School Secretaries

More than 80 members of the Bristol Educational Secretaries Association, pictured below, voted to affiliate with Council 4. According to President Joan Lindquist, “School board and city employees in Bristol already have a strong voice with Council 4. Joining the AFSCME family will improve our bargaining strength and our ability to speak out for educational services that benefit students and families.”

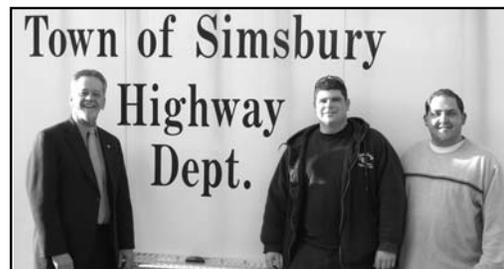


New Haven County Marshals

Members of the New Haven County Marshalls Association have voted unanimously to join Council 4. The marshals association is the voice of more than 60 marshals in the region stretching from New Haven to Waterbury. The marshals are independent contractors and cannot form a union, but according to Marshal Dominic Jannetty, “Being part of Council 4 will enhance our effort to promote professional standards and to improve our working relationship with state agencies and legislators.”

Simsbury Town Employees

Simsbury public works and parks employees voted overwhelmingly to join Council 4. “We’ve seen the effective representation Council 4 provides in neighboring towns,” said Local President Travis Cromack. “We’re excited about gaining that same quality representation to help protect the services we provide to Simsbury residents and businesses.” The unit is comprised of 46 members. Pictured below, from left: Council 4 Organizing and Collective Bargaining Director Kevin Murphy; Union President Travis Cromack; and Vice President Tim Michaud.



"Better Choices" Rally Stresses Good Services, Fair Taxes



Marsha Tulloch of Council 4 Local 269 speaks at the Better Choices for CT Rally.

Nearly 1,000 state residents converged on the State Capitol in Hartford to urge the Governor and Legislature to stop the cuts, enact fair taxes and help Connecticut overcome the economic crisis. Their voices were part of a rally sponsored by Better Choices for Connecticut, a community coalition whose membership includes Council 4 and other unions.

Marsha Tulloch of Council 4 Local 269 spoke eloquently about the struggles faced by thousands of unemployed workers who call in to the state Department of Labor for help.

"Every day we try to help unemployed workers who have to wait on the phone lines to get through," she said. "There aren't enough of us to keep up with the calls."

"This is no time for government to hide money in a mattress," Tulloch added. "Let's tell our governor and our legislators, loudly and clearly: Do not kill the services you were elected to protect."

Rally speakers highlighted the many ways in which the fiscal crisis is wreaking havoc on people's lives and how much worse it will be if Connecticut's budget is balanced solely with cuts to life-saving services.

Lindsey Matthews, whose son lives in a group home for people with developmental disabilities, explained that his care-givers are substitute parents: "The people who help feed, bathe and clothe him every day do it because I can't be there. I can't imagine what life would be like for our family without this critical service — and we're just one family out of thousands."

The Better Choices plan includes raising income taxes on the state's wealthiest residents making over \$200,000 per year, as well as closing corporate tax loopholes. Governor Jodi Rell has proposed a budget based almost entirely on cuts. While giving lip service to "shared sacrifice" she has not even asked the state's wealthiest residents to pay their fair share of taxes.

Virtually all economists agree that reducing public spending in an economic crisis, when services are needed the most, would send the economy into a steeper downward spiral. For more information, go to www.betterchoicesforCT.org.

A Message from the Alliance for Retired Americans:



What You Need to Know About the \$250 Stimulus Payment

President Obama recently signed into law an economic stimulus plan that includes a one-time \$250 payment for many seniors. Special thanks to Alliance members who contacted their elected officials in support of this bill.

Who is Eligible?

Individuals who currently receive Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Railroad Retirement or Veterans' benefits.

When Will I Get It?

Payments will be mailed out in late May. Social Security asks that you wait until June 4 to contact them if you did not receive it.

How Do I Get It?

You do not have to do anything. If you currently receive benefits through the mail, look for it that way. If you have direct deposit, it will come that way.

Beware of Scams!

Watch out for anyone saying you need to provide your Social Security number or other personal information in order to get your payment.

Questions?

Contact the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213 or www.socialsecurity.gov.

 Alliance for Retired Americans www.retiredamericans.org | 1-888-633-4435

Catch Us On Facebook

Council 4 has a new look for our website (www.council4.org) and we now have our own Facebook page as well. Log onto facebook.com and type "Council 4" in the search box. It's another way to stay on top of what our union is doing on the job and in our communities. For more information, contact Rich Sivel of Council 4 at (860) 224-4000 or rsivel@council4.org.



LOCALS HELP THE HUNGRY IN CONNECTICUT

Local 1186 Helps New Britain Food Center



Front row (l-r): X. Jill Thayer (United Way), Enrique uncadella (Hospital of Central CT), Liz Buczyncki (United Way). Back row (l-r): Maria Sanchez (American Savings Foundation), Local 1186 Vice President George Davey, Jr., Officer Carol Zesut (New Britain Police Department and United Way), Local 1186 President Jim Amato, Reverend Elisabeth Aurand (First Lutheran Church of the Reformation), Michael Bartley (CT Department of Labor and United Way).

Local 1186, representing New Britain city and board of education workers, donated \$300 to the New Britain Food Security Collaborative, a new effort to address food insecurities and social health needs in town.

The union's donation will specifically support the recently opened New Britain Food and Resource Center.

"We are so proud to welcome and support The New Britain Food & Resource Center," said Local 1186 President Jim Amato, a park foreperson with the Parks & Recreation Department. "With New Britain residents struggling in tough economic times, we want to do our part to help the community we serve."

Foodshare estimates that nearly 21,000 New Britain residents, or approximately one in three people in the city, are at risk of hunger. Also, a University of Connecticut study in 2005 ranked New Britain 168 out of 169 towns in Connecticut on an index of food security.

The NBFRC enables individuals to choose nutritious food they like at the center. According the United Way, the NBFRC will also provide individuals with access to services leading to financial security and eliminate the need for crisis services, such as free income tax preparation, literacy services and job skill training and referrals.

"Our collaborative is an example of people with a common vision coming together to change community conditions," said Barbara Kirejczyk, chair of the New Britain Food Security Collaborative. "We applaud Local 1186 union members for their support and their concern."

New London Local 1378 Collects Food for the Hungry



From left: Local 1378's Jimmy Hall; Paul Jakoboski of the Gemma Moran Food Center; Local 1378's Bill Barlow, Kathy Harrington and Deb Sommers; Valerie Tamano of the New London Public Schools; and Local 1378's Marianna McGuirk.

Local 1378 of Council 4, the New London Public Works Union, collected more than 5,600 pounds of food for donation to the Gemma E. Moran United Way Food Center for distribution to local agencies to help those in need.

Union members sponsored the Food Drive right before Easter Sunday.

"You see a lot of food drives around the holidays, and that's great," Local 1378 President Bill Barlow told the New London Day. "We do a food drive at Thanksgiving and people are always very generous. But we realize that people are hungry the rest of the year, too."



Local 1378 President Bill Barlow talks to Channel 3 reporter Jill Konopka about the union's food drive.

Local 1378 members conducted the food drive with the cooperation of Shop Rite in New London, which not only provided space and posted promotional material about the food drive, but also prepared \$5 packages of non-perishable food for customers to buy and donate to the Center.

Sharon Peccini, the AFL-CIO's United Way Labor Liaison for Southeastern Connecticut, helped coordinate the drive.

"Our union members rose to the occasion, and so did all of the people and organizations that donated food," said Local 1378's Marianna McGuirk. "The economy is tough, but so is our resolve to make a difference."

CT Red Cross Workers Fighting For Blood Safety



Local 3145 members, including phlebotomist Christine Holschlag, at podium, address the media about their contract dispute.

Call it a campaign against tainted blood. Members of Council 4 Local 3145 who work at the Connecticut Blood Services Region of the American Red Cross in Farmington are joining with workers nationwide to hold the company accountable for putting corporate profits ahead of blood safety.

The collective bargaining agreement between the Red Cross and Local 3145 expired March 31 and was extended to April 26. At press time, no settlement was on the horizon, as the Red Cross continued efforts to roll back wages and benefits while instituting blood drive staffing proposals that union members say would negatively impact the quality and safety of the blood supply.

“The Red Cross has presented proposals that make us very apprehensive and very concerned – both for our livelihoods and for public safety,” said negotiating team member and Red Cross phlebotomist Christine Holschlag.

Working at or behind the scenes of blood drives across Connecticut, Local 3145 members are on the front line of protecting the blood supply. They are phlebotomists, nurses, drivers, technicians and more.

As technician-driver Bruce Haag puts it, “We make the Red Cross happen.”

The company’s hard line in negotiations, however, has left Local 3145 members with little choice but to unanimously authorize their leadership to recommend a strike if the sides do not reach agreement.

“A strike is a last resort, and one we hope we don’t have to use,” said Local 3145 President Debra Lenentine. “Our goal is to reach a just and fair settlement that protects the blood supply.”

Local 3145 joined a coalition of Red Cross local unions across the country facing the same union-busting activity. Union members from AFSCME, CWA, SEIU, Teamsters and OPEIU were planning a national day of action at Red Cross headquarters in Washington, D.C. on May 29.

Council 4 has asked its local presidents and union members to send a letter to Connecticut Red Cross CEO Paul Sullivan, telling him that in the event of a strike, our members will use hospitals to give blood, instead of Red Cross drives. You can see a copy of Executive Director Luciano’s letter at www.council.org.

SEBAC, from p. 1

“Our members understood that we needed to do our part to avoid cuts in services and layoffs,” Carney said.

Council 4 Executive Director Sal Luciano said state public service workers made a difficult but significant contribution toward solving the state’s \$9 billion deficit by supporting the agreement, which will provide \$700 million in savings.

SEBAC is the health and pension bargaining agent for approximately 50,000 state workers.

Gina Grasty-Peele of Local 562 (Administrative-Clerical) faced a difficult decision when voting on concessions. After her husband lost his plumbing job in January, she knew she would vote ‘yes.’

“It’s going to be a little snip here and a tightening of the belt there. But it’s keeping jobs and helping the citizens with services,” said Peele, who works for the state Workers Compensation Commission in Stamford.

Leadership of SEBAC’s 13 unions ratified the agreement after two weeks of voting by the members of the coalition’s individual bargaining units. Overall support for the SEBAC agreement was better than 3 to 1, with 26,408 members voting in support and 8,475 members voting in opposition. Council 4 members ratified the agreement by a nearly 2-to-1 margin.

On May 14, both chambers of the Connecticut General

Nature Center, from p. 1

The ANRC has two-and-half miles of nature trails, a butterfly and hummingbird garden, an award-winning woodland wildflower and fern garden and an interactive visitors’ center filled with plant and animal life.

The Center also has town-operated recreational fields, including soccer, baseball, and softball, as well as several acres reserved for community gardening and a large playscape for younger children.

The surrounding community has embraced the staff.

“Parents who came here when they were young are now bringing their own kids because of the wonderful experience they had. Donna and her staff do a fabulous job,” said Betty Laurella, a retired Ansonia teacher.

Lindgren appreciates the praise, but also recognizes the public service component of her mission.

“I love my job. I’ll do anything I can to promote the care and stewardship of the environment,” Lindgren reflected. “As a society, we can’t be healthy without a safe and clean environment.”

The Ansonia Nature and Recreation Center is free and open to the public daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It’s located at 10 Deerfield Road in Ansonia. For information, go to www.ansonianaturecenter.org or call (203) 736-1053.

2009 COUNCIL 4 RECOGNITION AWARD WINNERS

RECIPIENTS

David Clout
 Carol Carney
 Mark Bohannon
 Thomas DeLucia
 Joanne Roberge
 David Michaud
 Barbara Hawkins
 Timothy Walker
 Ester W. Luong
 Joan Massey
 Terri Farrar
 Thomas Stough
 Laura Waller
 Pamela Ryglisyn
 Vanetta Lloyd
 Donald Haggerty
 June Hartunian
 Beverly Manes
 Charles T. LaVoie
 Marcia Goldson
 William Barlow
 Debra Sommers
 Luke Leone
 Brett Owen
 Joseph Manes
 Harold Brooks
 Pamela Slocum
 Linda L. Ceneviva

LOCAL

233
 269
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 287
 355
 387
 391
 610
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 714
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 991
 991
 1186
 1303-102
 1303-234
 1303-276
 1303-329
 1303-332
 1303-398
 1378
 1378
 1565
 1565
 1579
 3144
 3817
 3886

About 200 Council 4 members attended our Annual Conference April 3-5 in Meriden, CT. Highlights included the Recognition Award Ceremony as well as great guest speakers, topical workshops and the PEOPLE political action breakfast.



Special Education van drivers from Local 1522 (Bridgeport Board of Education) were honored for community volunteering and fighting privatization.



Hartford City Councilman Kenneth Kennedy, Jr. gave the keynote address at our Civil Rights Luncheon on April 4, which is the anniversary of Dr. King's murder.



Local 287 (New Haven Board of Ed) received the PEOPLE Star of the Year Award for signing up 40 PEOPLE MVP members in one membership meeting. From left: Local 287's Robert Montuori; Council 4 PEOPLE Project Coordinator Joyce Evoy; Local 287's Mark Bohannon and Tom DeLucia.



Congratulations to the newly elected Council 4 Statewide PEOPLE Steering Committee. From left: David Dumaine (Local 714), Blair Bertaccini (Local 269), Anna Montalvo (Local 1522); Tom Stough (Local 991) and Jim LoMonaco, Local 2836. Montalvo and Stough are co-chairs.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION: BRIDGEPORT SPECIAL EDUCATION VAN DRIVERS,

LOCAL 1522

Vernette Coleman
 Bernadette Klicin
 Karen Matthews
 Juan Romero
 Ana Concepcion
 Jaime Colon
 Richard Tompkins
 Hardow McCray
 Giuseppe Pontoreiro
 Maria Morales
 Nayda Villanueva
 David Alvarez
 Raleigh Little
 Mary Hargrove
 Luz Febus
 Twana G. Taylor
 Christopher Huff



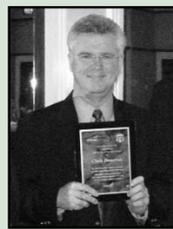
Joe Manes of Local 1579 (Torrington) and Beverly Manes of Local 1303-329 (Litchfield) are local union presidents and the first husband-wife winners of our Recognition Award.



Council 4 honored more than 30 members for their work as union members on the job and in the community.



Pamela Slocum, left, of newly organized Local 3817 (Glastonbury part-time paras) celebrates her recognition award with Council 4 Staff Rep Laurie Webster.



Council 4 honored Connecticut House Speaker Chris Donovan of Meriden for his legislative efforts on behalf of workers.

Rock Cats Baseball To Hold Organized Labor Night June 27

Council 4 and the New Britain Rock Cats Class AA Eastern League baseball team are teaming up for **Organized Labor Recognition Night** on Saturday, June 27, 2009 at 6:35 p.m. at Rock Cats Stadium in New Britain.

Pre-game activities will include an on-field ceremony (including the first pitch) featuring Council 4 union members.

Free tickets to the game are available for Council 4 members, along with their family and friends. Just contact Scott Soares of Council 4 at (860) 224-4000 or ssoares@council4.org with your ticket request. You will need to stop by Council 4 headquarters in New Britain to pick up your tickets.



Rock Cats pitching prospect Ryan Mullins. Photo courtesy of New Britain Rock Cats baseball team.

Get the latest news, info and opinion by clicking on: www.council4.org.

Be sure to bookmark our page and sign up for our email alerts!



SUSTINET Health Care Reform Advancing

SustiNet (HB 6600) is the most complete Connecticut-specific health care reform plan ready for action at the state legislature. It will guarantee all Connecticut residents access to their choice of high quality health coverage and health care.

SustiNet is built on the experience and input of people who know firsthand the good and bad of our current health care system – doctors, nurses and hospitals; small business owners and corporate leaders; people without health insurance and with inadequate coverage; labor unions; faith leaders; and health care advocates. They worked with Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut and leading national experts to design the best plan for our state that delivers quality, choice, better health and economic sustainability.

Council 4 is working hard to see SustiNet become the law of our state. Be sure to log onto www.council4.org to send a message to your legislators. Learn more about SustiNet by logging onto www.healthcare4every1.org.



Council 4

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