

# the 4WORD

The Voice of Council 4 AFSCME Connecticut

October 2011

What's Inside

## COUNCIL 4 MEMBERS:



### SAVING LIVES

New Haven Dispatcher David Mancini helps save a young boy from drowning. Story on p. 3.

### SAVING COMMUNITIES

East Haven Public Works employees work around the clock to help citizens weather Storm Irene. Story on p. 6.



### SAVING JOBS

State employees, including AFSCME Local 714 members at the Department of Social Services, vote to save jobs and services. Story on p. 4.



Executive Director Opinion p. 2

Local 1303 Scholarship Winners p. 2

Red Cross Guilty p. 5

Weathering Storm Irene p. 6

## A Long, Hot Summer



**C**andidate Malloy meant it when he said everybody would have to pitch in to get Connecticut out of its \$4.3 billion fiscal hole. But no one was expecting he meant \$2 billion from state union employees.

By mid spring there were two important changes: Governor Malloy agreed instead to \$1.6 billion; and said he would consider a proposal to reduce future health care costs by \$300 million with a plan to keep state employees healthy. Now, with a \$1.3 billion target, SEBAC negotiators realized a constructive deal in the long run was possible.

Council 4 successfully fought for the long term protections of pensions and health care and to protect municipal state support. But who we fought against this time was a surprise to us all.

For the first time we confronted groups hostile to public employees actively campaigning against the settlement, knowing full well that it would lead to misery for public workers and the public they serve. Their cheerleader? Ex-governor Rowland, one of the architects of the fiscal mess you were asked to help clean up. He knew rejection would hurt state and municipal employees and small business. Even so, he said vote no.

This is about the middle class that unions and this country's greatest presidents built together. It's about good jobs; retiring with dignity; about a healthy nation, healthy families. This is just the beginning. But for now, take a bow. You did well for Connecticut, for unions, for the middle class!

In solidarity,

*Sal Luciano*

Sal Luciano, Executive Director

## Local 1303 Announces College Scholarship Winners

**A** FSCME Local 1303, representing more than 8,000 municipal and board of education employees, awarded eight \$1,000 scholarship to the following college-bound students (with their union parents listed in parentheses):

**Elizabeth Dwan** (Marianne Dwan, Local 1303-247)

**Erin Hallisey** (Gena Hallisey, Local1303-132)

**Samantha Kuykendall** (Kimberlee Kuykendall Local 1303-201)

**James Demetriades** (Yollanda Demetriades, Local 1303-280)

**Kathleen McWilliams** (Charissa McWilliams, Local 1303-113)

**Patrick Shea** (Lisa Shea, Local 1303-132)

**Bridget Gavin** (Nancy Gavin, Local 1303-132)

**Bryan Charette** (Suzanne Charette, Local 1303-257)

**Tyler Tilbe** (Cynthia Tilbe, Local 1303-443)

Winners were selected based upon their grades, community involvement and their essay, "How being part of a union family benefits my life."

"We congratulate these students and wish them the best of luck in college," said AFSCME Local 1303 President Brian Mitchell. "They exemplify the meaning of a union family."



*Pictured, front row, l-r: Erin Hallisey, Bryan Charette and Elizabeth Dwan. Back row, l-r: Local 1303 Executive Board Member Michael Giberto; Gena Hallisey; Suzanne Charette; Marianne Dwan; and Local 1303 President Brian Mitchell..*

### LOCAL 1303 Annual Meeting Set For Oct. 22

AFSCME Local 1303 will concur its Annual Meeting and Officer Elections on Saturday, October 22, 2011 at 10 a.m. at Council 4's union hall in New Britain.

Refreshments will be served. Please spread the word!

For more information contact AFSCME Local 1303 at (860) 612-3847 or [local1303@gmail.com](mailto:local1303@gmail.com). Learn more about AFSCME Local 1303 by clicking on:

[www.council4.org/Local1303](http://www.council4.org/Local1303).

## Local 884's David Mancini Saves Drowning Boy

**D**avid Mancini of Local 884 (New Haven City Employees) has seen his share of tragedies and successes. That comes with the turf when you're a public safety dispatcher.

On a sultry day in mid-July, Mancini's decisive thinking and calm demeanor transformed a potential tragedy into a stunning success when he helped save the life of 4-year-old boy who had fallen into a pool.

"We performed CPR using a team approach, so we were able to keep the child alive until emergency crews got to the scene," said Mancini, crediting both the youngster's family and his co-workers in New Haven's 911 Emergency Communications Center for resuscitating the youngster.

Mancini, a 14-year veteran, was working at his normal post as a 911 dispatcher when a call came about a 4-year-old boy who had fallen into a pool. Family members pulled the boy out of the water and then called 911. Mancini fielded the call and directed a 20-year-old family member to successfully perform CPR on the child while waiting for emergency responders to arrive.

"The older boy was in a panic, so I had to calmly talk him through the procedure, step by step," says Mancini. "It was important to make him part of the team, and keep him focused until the EMTs arrived."

The City of New Haven Police Dispatch Center is the second busiest in the state. Mancini and his co-workers at the fire department's communications center respond to a myriad of emergencies every day.

"This was professionalism at its best," said Local 884 President (and fellow dispatcher) Ron Hobson. "It was a totally unexpected heroic moment for Dave, and a proud moment for his colleagues. Dispatchers across America feel and share the joy and results of his action."

The 6 minutes Mancini spent on the phone with the child's family saved a life – and will be forever implanted in Mancini's memory. "I'm obviously very happy, and the little boy and his family are happy," he said. "We're going to do some things to help him. I want to see how he does as he gets older."



Local 884 Executive Board presents a special recognition plaque to David Mancini. Picture, l-r: Tonya Covington, Dorothy Agnew, Carl Alford, David Mancini, Dispatch Supervisor Clayton Northgraves (who is not in the bargaining unit), Local President Ronald Hobson, Joanne D'Angelo and Doreen Rhodes.

## Local 391's Michael Whitehead Honored For Rescuing Co-Worker



L-R: Connecticut DOC Commissioner Leo Arnone, Jr., AFSCME Corrections United Assistant Director Michael Marette and Correction Officer Michael Whitehead of Local 391. Photo courtesy of Department of Correction.

**C**onnecticut correctional officers walk the toughest beat in the state. Just ask Local 391 members **Michael Whitehead** and Peter Kuhlmann, who work at Northern Correctional Institution, the state's super-max facility.

In December 2009, an inmate with an extensive history of staff assault exited his cell and violently attacked Kuhlmann, using a makeshift weapon tipped with a razor blade.

Whitehead, who had only been on the job a couple months, jumped in and secured the inmate, preventing further injury to Kuhlmann, whose neck was slashed in the attack.

"You try to prepare yourself and you can train, but you never know how you're going to react when you're in that situation. I'm grateful that I did what I did and responded and could help out a fellow officer in a time of need," Whitehead said.

In recognition of Whitehead's actions, AFSCME Corrections United (ACU) honored him with its National Corrections Officer of the Year Award. Kuhlmann joined Whitehead for the ceremony, which took place last month during ACU's biennial convention in Houston, TX.

ACU Assistant Director Michael Marette said the nomination process for the award began last September. Approximately 60 nominations were received from across the country and the committee finalized the decision in February.

"I can't say enough good things about Michael," Kuhlmann said. "He was brand new to an incredibly dangerous job. We had never met or spoken to each other before that evening and he saved my life. There is no training that can prepare someone for this type of incident. Fortunately for me, Michael is a warrior."

This is the second award Whitehead has received in regards to this incident, as he was honored with the Department of Correction's Medal of Valor in December 2010.

Portions of this story are reprinted with permission of the *Vernon Patch*, which reported on Michael Whitehead in its Sept. 7 issue. Special thanks to reporter Erin Quinlan. Go to <http://vernon.patch.com>.

## Council 4 Members Tell Why They Voted “Yes”



*Dawn Tyson, Local 538, left, and Jordyn O'Donovan of Local 714 spoke at a press conference to announce ratification of the SEBAC and unit agreements.*

State employees ratified the State Employee Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC) agreement with the Malloy administration during voting held in late August. Overall state employee support for the agreement, which provides four years of job security in exchange of wage and benefit concessions, ran nearly 3 to 1. Council 4 members voted 7,495-3,756 for the pension and health care agreement and 8,190-2,982 for their unit agreements.

“State employees once again stepped up and sacrificed,” said Local 749 member **Efrem Golden**, a forensic investigator for the Department of Criminal Justice. “But I’m happy we can focus our energy on getting back to work and providing the services we’re paid to provide.” Golden was among the more than 3,000 state workers who were slated for layoffs.

AFSCME Local 538 President **Dawn Tyson**, a processing technician for the Department of Social Services, expressed optimism. “As a single mother with two teen-age children, I am ecstatic for my kids’ future as well as mine,” she said. “These are very difficult and dark times, but by standing together we can build a brighter future for all of Connecticut’s working families.”

**Jordyn O'Donovan** of AFSCME Local 714, a DSS fraud investigator who had received a pink slip, said the vote reflected a desire by state employees to move forward. “Voting yes means I will

continue the important job of ensuring that state tax dollars and the public purse are being spent wisely and efficiently in detecting fraud and curbing abuse,” she said.

The Connecticut General Assembly ratified the revised SEBAC 2011 agreement and companion bargaining unit contracts on Aug. 30, 2011. Led by Speaker Chris Donovan, the House of Representatives also repelled legislation raised during the June 30 special sessions that would have eroded state employee bargaining rights and benefits.

State unions want the Malloy administration to begin implementing the member-recommended cost savings proposals that are part of the SEBAC agreement.

“I’m glad the agreements finally passed,” said Local 269 member **Sarah Schuyler-Galloway**, a Community Service Representative (CSR) with the Department of Labor. “Although I do not agree with every aspect of the concession agreement, I believe that it is a great compromise for state workers, middle class workers and the people of Connecticut. I did not want to see my fellow state workers get laid off. That would hurt the state and the people of Connecticut.”



*L-R: Local 749 members Efrem Golden, Jay Pelletier, Filomena Sullivan and David Sieputowski helped count and record ballot results after members voted.*

## Danbury Housing Authority Workers Sacrifice To Save Jobs

By his own calculation, maintenance mechanic Rich Schirmer took a \$3,500 hit when he and his co-workers at the Danbury Housing Authority voted to accept 18 furlough days apiece to prevent six layoffs.

“We had never seen anything like this before,” said Schirmer, president of AFSCME Local 1303-402 and a 21-year

veteran of the Housing Authority. “We didn’t want to see anyone lose their jobs.”

Facing a \$400,000 deficit, DHA executive director Carolyn Sistrunk met with bargaining unit leadership and Council 4 Staff Representative Wayne Meyers to discuss solutions that would save jobs and protect services.

In the end, Local 1303-402 members voted 18-1 to accept the 18 furlough days.

“We’re humanitarians. We care about each other. It took us only a few minutes to vote yes,” said Vice President Kathi Alba, who is the Section 8 coordinator.

Bargaining unit members say the mission of their agency – essentially to combat homelessness – and the depressed economy motivated members to accept the concessions, painful as they are.

“Hopefully we can be an inspiration to others,” said main office receptionist Shirley Rodriguez. “We feel like what we did was historic.”



## Red Cross Found Guilty of Violating Labor Law

Members of AFSCME Local 3145, representing blood collection workers at the Connecticut Blood Services Region of the American Red Cross in Farmington, are applauding a federal judge's ruling that the company engaged in unfair labor practices that precipitated a three-day ULP strike last year.

In issuing her 72-page decision at the end of August, Administrative Law Judge Eleanor MacDonald ruled the Red Cross violated the National Labor Relations Act by failing to provide information concerning proposed changes in health care coverage; unilaterally changing the employees' health insurance benefits; unilaterally discontinuing long-term disability insurance for part-time workers; and generally refusing to bargain in good faith.

Local 3145 members have worked without since April 2009.

The workers went on strike June 2-4, 2010, alleging unfair labor practices that led the NLRB to issue several formal complaints against the Red Cross.

The case was tried in Hartford, CT and

New York, NY over the course of seven days between Oct. 13, 2010 and Feb. 2, 2011. Attorney J. William Gagne argued on behalf of Local 3145.

Judge MacDonald issued an order for the Red Cross to remedy all of the above with back pay and interest and to post a notice notifying employees that the Red Cross will not break the law in the future.

"We applaud Judge MacDonald's ruling and urge the Connecticut Blood Services Region to sit down with us and negotiate in good faith so we can reach an agreement that's fair to everyone," said Council 4 Staff Representative Kip Lockhart, chief negotiator for Local 3145.

Local 3145 members voted to authorize their Bargaining Team to call a strike against the Red Cross if necessary.

**Learn more and sign our petition in support of Red Cross workers [www.council4.org](http://www.council4.org) and signing our online petition. And check out the Facebook group, "Keep Blood Drives Safe."**



## Orange School Custodians Remember One of Their Own in Vin Ricca

Local 1303-22, representing Orange Board of Education custodians, found a novel way to honor one of their own when union members dedicated a bench in the name of Vincent Ricca, a popular custodian who passed away last year.

Ricca worked for the Orange schools for 42 years. "Everyone knew Vinny and he was loved by all," said Local 1303-22 President Ron Gambardella. "He had a sunny disposition and arrived at work each and every day with a smile on his face, ready to tell someone a funny joke."

The memorial bench will be placed in the courtyard of the Mary L. Tracy School, where Ricca worked. "This bench will serve as a remembrance and a reminder of Vinny's exceptional service to our schools and our staff," Gambardella said.



*Orange School Custodians gather around the memorial bench that honors the life and work of Vincent Ricca.*

## Bridgeport Local 1522 Comes Through for Grievant



*AFSCME Local 1522 President Anna Montalvo presents union member Vin Sorrentino with his settlement check from the City of Bridgeport.*

Local 1522, representing city, board of education, water pollution control and health care workers in Bridgeport, showed the power of union representation by securing a \$2,000 settlement for Vin Sorrentino, a public facilities worker at the city Transfer Station.

The union filed both a grievance and municipal prohibited practice complaint over a change in Sorrentino's working conditions. Local 1522, with support from Council 4 Staff Representative Thomas Fascio, was able to reach an agreement with the city that was satisfactory to all parties, including Sorrentino.

"I really appreciate the hard work that AFSCME Local 1522 and Council 4 put into my case. The union came through for me, like it comes through for all our members when we need representation," Sorrentino said.

## Local 1303-119 Members Help East Haven Weather Storm Irene

Standing by his East Haven public works truck, Local 1303-119 member Chris Palmer did not hesitate when asked to assess the impact of Tropical Storm Irene. “No doubt about it,” said Palmer, who specializes in trimming and removing trees. “This was the worst storm I’ve ever seen. And I’ve been here 24 years.”

When the Irene hit the state on Aug. 28, Palmer and his DPW co-workers were out clearing up road hazards, like fallen trees, so power crews could get in and do their jobs.

“We worked non-stop, 24 hours straight, cleaning up brush, clearing debris. You name it, we did it,” said Local 1303-119’s Jim Dottori.

East Haven suffered some of the worst destruction in the state – prompting Homeland Security chief Janet Napolitano to tour the storm-wracked town and announce that the Federal Emergency Management Assistance (FEMA) would immediately set up an East Haven office.

The storm’s aftermath continues to consume East Haven’s DPW crew. “It’s been constant. We’re at it every day from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.,” said Local 1303-119 President Chuck DeMaio.

Across the state, public workers like the members of Local 1303-119 made sure the public was safe from the damage

inflicted by a monster storm. As DeMaio observed, these workers went out all out, even though they had their own storm-related problems.

“A lot of our crew members had no power and no water at their homes, but they worked around the clock. They put their jobs first.”

As Palmer put it, “We work for the people. So we helped the people out however we could.”

*Pictured, l-r, on the cover of the 4-Word: Local 1303-119 members Chris Palmer, Pete Ciopryna, Steve Kluth, Chuck DeMaio, Danny Laskowski, John Longley and Michael Lang.*



*East Haven Public Works employee Danny Laskowski, Local 1303-119, clears fallen branches at Overbrook Elementary School.*

## Weston DPW Union Settles New Contract

Weston public works employees, Local 1303-041 of Council 4, reached agreement on a new three-year contract that provides general wage increases and other enhancements.

Negotiations took 17 months, but the members’ patience and persistence paid off.

“We’re very pleased. It’s not easy getting a fair contract in this economy, but that’s what Council 4 helped us get,” said Local 1303-041 President Al Blizzard.

The new agreement includes wage increases totaling 6.25% over the life of the contract.



*Pictured l-r: Council 4 Field Representative Bob Parziale; Local 1303-041 President Al Blizzard; Local Steward Bert Porter; and Local Secretary Joe Hayes.*

## Victory in Litchfield Arbitration Case on Sub-Contracting

On June 8, 2011, the State Board of Mediation and Arbitration unanimously found in favor of Litchfield Highway Department and Sewer Plant employees, Local 1303-94 of Council 4, on their grievance challenging the subcontracting of lawn mowing work at the Town’s Sewer Plant.

The Union argued the Town violated the collective bargaining agreement when it subcontracted this work to an outside firm. The contract language that says “All bargaining unit work shall be performed by bargaining unit employees before non-bargaining unit employees may be utilized.”

Despite this language, the Town claimed the lawn mowing work is not subject to the collective bargaining agreement because its Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) is a separate and distinct entity over which it has no control.

The State Board rejected the employer’s argument, ruling that the Town plays a significant role in the activities of the sewer plant through the collective bargaining agreement and that the WPCA has engaged bargaining unit employees for a significant period of time to mow lawns. The work accordingly belongs to, and must be performed by, union members.

In sustaining the original grievance, the Board ordered the Town to cease and desist from hiring a private contractor to perform lawn mowing work at the sewer plant.

Council 4 Staff Representative Tim Oppenheimer served as the Local 1303-94’s spokesman.

## West Haven Library Workers Join Council 4

Employees of the West Haven Public Library voted unanimously to join Council 4 in a union representation election overseen by the Connecticut State Board of Labor Relations.

According to Colleen Bailie, the library's head of technology, "We need a voice at work to protect the services we provide to the public. Being part of Council 4 will make our voice stronger and fight cuts that would be devastating to West Haven's citizens."

Council 4 Staff Representative Len LaLuna will serve as the new Local Union's spokesman as the workers begin bargaining for a first contract.

Congratulations to our newest members in West Haven!



## In Memoriam: Peter Beyer

AFSCME Local 1303-94 member Peter Beyer died unexpectedly this summer just a week from retirement.

Peter was a resident of Torrington and a 12-year veteran of the Litchfield Public Work Department. He was the chief of the East Litchfield Volunteer Fire Company.

Surviving family members include Peter's wife Lisa Beyer, a Litchfield town hall employee and member of AFSCME Local 1303-392. Council 4 offers our condolences to Lisa and all of Peter's family, friends and co-workers.

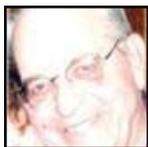


## Steve Nash

Former Council 4 Staff Representative Stephen Nash, 73, passed away April 21, 2011. Steve represented many of our municipal local unions with great dedication and commitment.

Steve was a man of keen intellect and abundant humor who served our union members with distinction.

Our condolences to his wife Judy and all of Steve's family and friends.



## Council 4 Files Complaint Over Milford School Security Layoffs

Council 4 filed a municipal prohibited practice complaint (MPP) against the Milford Board of Education, alleging that the layoff of school security guards was an act of retaliation against the workers for forming a union.

Council 4 Staff Representative Ed Thibodeau filed the MPP after the Board of Education voted to lay off four school security guards – more than half of the seven person unit deployed at Foran and Jonathan Law High Schools.

In the complaint, Council 4 is demanding the Board of Education immediately reinstate the affected employees and make them whole for any losses. The State Board of Labor Relations held an informal hearing on the case in August.



*"Our average salary is \$22,000 a year. This is a mere pittance to provide a safe and secure environment for Milford students," said Sal Follo, right, president of the Milford School Security Guards Union of Council 4. Also pictured is security guard Hamy Rabbi.*

## Election Day 2011: November 8

On November 8, voters will go to the polls to elect municipal leaders throughout the state. These elected members of local governments and boards of education will shape the budgets that impact our jobs, our pay and our benefits.

Council 4 members who volunteer on our PEOPLE Committee have recommended candidates for municipal offices around the state. Go to [www.council4.org](http://www.council4.org) for an updated list of endorsed candidates.

Find out how you can take an active role in shaping the outcome of these municipal elections. Please call Brian Anderson or Matthew Brokman at (860) 224-4000 or email [banderson@council4.org](mailto:banderson@council4.org) or [mbrokman@council4.org](mailto:mbrokman@council4.org)

## Colchester Custodians Help Stock Town Food Bank



**C**olchester Custodian Local 1303-77 teamed up with Daisy Troop 63143 for the 3rd Annual Colchester Custodian Food Drive, collecting 41 cases of food for the Colchester Food Bank. The school that raised the most was awarded a meal courtesy of Local 1303-77 and supplied by Illiano's of Colchester. The custodians provided a pizza dinner for the Daisy Troop in recognition of their wonderful efforts.

“We care about the Colchester community and the kids who come to our schools,” said Local 1303-77 President Dave Fitzgerald. “The Food Drive is an important event for our members and for the town. We’re looking forward to our upcoming Food Drive.”

**FOLLOW US ONLINE:  
WWW.COUNCIL4.ORG, FACEBOOK,  
TWITTER, AND YOUTUBE**



## Dennis O’Neil and Ed Sasso Retire

**T**wo long-time Council 4 employees retired this summer after a combined 50 years of service to our members: Dennis O’Neil and Ed Sasso.

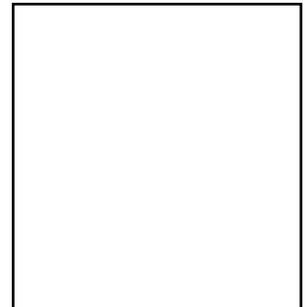
Dennis served as Council 4’s political and legislative action coordinator for 20 years and helped guide our union through the turbulent years of anti-union governors and economic downturns that brought unparalleled attacks on collective bargaining.

Ed came to Council 4 after working for the City of New Britain and was instrumental in the formation of the Supervisors Union Local 818. He also served as an AFL-CIO Vice President and headed the New Britain Central Labor Council.

We congratulate Dennis and Ed on their retirements; and we thank them for helping Council 4 build a bigger, stronger union committed to fighting for our members.



*Dennis O’Neil*



*Ed Sasso*

**Council 4 AFSCME:**  
Executive Director: Sal Luciano, Local 2663  
President: Thomas Ledoux, Local 2930  
Secretary: Clarke King, Local 1716

444 East Main St., New Britain, CT 06051  
(860) 224-4000 (ph)  
(860) 224-3041 (fx)  
info@council4.org  
www.council4.org

**The 4Word Newsletter:**  
Editor: Larry Dorman  
(860) 612-3855  
ldorman@council4.org

PRSR STD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 1038  
New Britain, CT



**Council 4 AFSCME, AFL-CIO**  
444 East Main Street  
New Britain, CT 06051