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NEWS FOR THE UNITED STEELWORKERS IN

DISTRICT 4

NEW INITIATIVE JUMPSTARTS ORGANIZING EFFORTS

Organizing is one of the most important things we do as a union. Organizing is how this union came into existence. It was S.W.O.C., the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, that organized thousands of Steelworkers in the late 1930s and then formed the United Steelworkers of America in 1942. The continued importance of organizing is the reason an organizing committee is included among the five standing committees our constitution requires each local union to maintain.

The need to organize today is every bit as important as it was when this union was formed. How strong we are in any industry or geographic area depends directly on our union density in that area. That is to say, the number of members we represent in a given industry or area impacts our effectiveness as a union. The more members we have, the better the contracts we're able to bargain for our existing members. The greater our union density, the more we're able to influence the passage of labor friendly legislation like Paid Family Leave and Buy American provisions, to name just a few.

So, I think we can all agree that it's in our best interests for our union to always be organizing, and we always are. However, because of present attitudes of workers toward their employers and the leverage they have because of the tight job market, now is the time to redouble our efforts. These dynamics make this an especially good time to organize.

Unorganized workers are sick of being taken advantage of by their employers and they want to have a say in the workplace. Recent polling shows that

workers are more willing to form unions now than they have been in a long time. According to a Gallup Poll last September, 68 percent of Americans favor unions and 77 percent of young people, those who are 18-34, approve of unions. We haven't seen numbers like this since the 1960s. Backing up these numbers are several high-profile organizing campaigns that have been in the news. Starbucks locations are voting "Union Yes" all across the country, and it started in Buffalo, N.Y. Amazon in Staten Island, N.Y., voted to become union, even though Amazon waged a relentless anti-union campaign. These victories that made national news are right here in District 4 and there are plenty more all across the nation.

Recognizing this prime atmosphere for organizing, International President Tom Conway has begun a new organizing initiative to jump start our organizing efforts throughout this great union. On Feb. 23, he sent a letter to all local union leaders outlining a plan to develop a new generation of USW organizers and asking for candidates who might be suitable to become organizers.

Such candidates will have to be strong activists who are passionate about our union. They'll need to have strong communication and listening skills and not be afraid of working long hours and weekends. They'll also need to be able to be released from work on union leave for extended periods of time.

Organizing is hard work, but it can be very rewarding. It can also be an emotional roller coaster. Employers will do everything they can to keep their workers from organizing a union. Organizers are on the front lines fighting

for workers to have the same rights and benefits that we as unionized workers take for granted. As with everything in life, winning is great and losing hurts, but there's no better feeling than winning an election and knowing that we've had a hand in making better working lives for these new union members.

If you know someone who you think has the right stuff to take on this challenge, or if you think you might be able to contribute as an organizer, an application is available online at usw.org/apply. Again, this is only for people who are serious and willing to put in hard work.

As for your local union organizing committees, I hope every local has them in place and active. To help you resurrect them in case they've been dormant, we'll be offering organizing training in each sub-district in the coming months. Now is the time put our organizing efforts into high gear. If not now, when?

Solidarity Forever.



DEL VITALE
DISTRICT 4 DIRECTOR

BUFFALO JIM BRIGGS, SUB-DISTRICT DIRECTOR

The Buffalo, N.Y. Sub-District office has been busy lately with contract negotiations; in particular, USW Local 6992's long fight to get a fair contract at Dupont. That struggle ended recently with the ratification of a new five-year agreement. Across the country, Dupont has been imposing what they term "pay simplification practices" that have had the effect of drastically reducing the wages and benefits of our members.

After a long battle, Dupont pulled this issue from the table and our membership overwhelmingly ratified a contract. Congratulations to the membership of this local for standing in solidarity during this fight. This battle wasn't won at the bargaining table. It was won on the shop floor with strong showings of solidarity and support.

During this time this local also participated in an "adopt-a-family" program in Western N.Y. Many members of the local took part, through personal contributions and donations of gift cards provided by the company. Through this effort, they adopted 22 needy families in the community and provided gifts for those children so that they could have a Christmas they otherwise wouldn't have had. In addition, the union donated food to a local food bank and donated funds to the

Veterans center of Buffalo, N.Y. - all while they were in a contract battle.

Additionally, other locals have successfully negotiated contracts including Diamond Perforated (Local 1498), Chester-Jensen (Local 8823-02), Imerys Fused Minerals (Local 277-01), and Niacet (Local 58).

As we kick off the year, as I have repeatedly said in these newsletters, we must organize, both within our plants and new facilities. I would ask that you keep this in mind at your bargaining tables; the use of temporary workers in our facilities reduces the membership in our union.

In the Buffalo District alone, if we eliminated temporary language in our contracts, we would most likely add 100-150 new members to our union. Be cautious and avoid this type of language which reduces our strength on the shop floor, at the bargaining table, and in the halls of government.

In closing, I would like to remind everyone of the Health and Safety training that's being offered and encourage participation from our locals. We will also be offering Steward Level 1 training in late April and Steward Level 2 training in May. Your local will soon receive registration information and we encourage participation in these sessions.

SYRACUSE JIM VALENTI, SUB-DISTRICT DIRECTOR

In early February of this year, the Syracuse Sub-District held its Annual LM/Educational Conference at the Ramada Inn in Liverpool, New York. We had more than 110 local union delegates attend this conference. In addition to our International Auditors assisting our local union financial officers with the filings of the federally-required LM forms, the following workshops were presented by our friends from the law firm of Blitman & King: New York's Marijuana

Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA), The Union's Duty of Fair Representation, Grievance Handling and Arbitration, and Internal Union Elections: An Overview of LMRDA Election Rules and Procedures. Participation in the workshops exceeded expectations and there was a tremendous amount of interaction between the local union leadership and the instructors. We are all hopeful that we continue with these face-to-face meetings going forward.



EDISON MICHAEL L. FISHER, SUB-DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Recently, the Edison Sub-District had the opportunity to come together with the various local unions in the sub-district at our annual LM conference. While the financial officers were completing their LM filings, we had meetings with the local union presidents and spent a number of hours in round table discussions regarding the state of the membership within their local unions. These meetings took place in New Jersey and also in Puerto Rico.

I want to take this time to thank those local union officers who attended. I'd also like to give a special acknowledgement to our local unions in Puerto Rico, who gave me the opportunity to visit and tour locations such as GFR Media (Local 06135, Anardy Martinez, President), Municipality of Ponce (Local 08198, Mayra Rivera, President), and Univision (Local 9314, Miguel Rosario, President).

There has been a move towards increased retiree activism in the sub-district, with the members of Local 10-00729 (Phillipsburg, N.J.) receiving its SOAR Chapter charter, forming the first chapter in the Edison Sub-District. Local 4-380 has also applied to start a chapter in Southern New Jersey.

Furthering the work of the union, I'm pleased to announce a series of trainings on health and safety, along with stewards training sessions which will be held throughout the sub-district in the coming months.

In closing, I want to thank the members and staff here at the Edison Sub-District for their hard work on behalf of the union.



At our last LU 870 membership meeting in Elmwood Park, N.J., we celebrated the retirement of: Jose Malave – 40 years, Jerry James – 40 years and Mike Cancellieri – 20 years. They were all union activists with USW Local 870. While they will be missed, we wish them the best in their retirement.



Left to right: Dave Wasiura, Palmira Torres, Del Vitale, Luis Irizarry Pabon (Mayor of Ponce), Mayra Rivera, Mike Fisher, and Yaphet Torres.

MILFORD STEVE FINNIGAN, SUB-DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Normally I would use this format to update our members on all the good news happening in the Milford, Massachusetts Sub-District. However, what I want to do is urge our members to get involved in the campaign to organize new members into the United Steelworkers.

Union density (the percentage of workers who belong to a union) across the United States has dropped to 10.3 percent in 2021 from 10.8 percent in 2020. For those of us living in the Northeast, we have a higher percentage of workers belonging to unions but not as high as you might think. In our Sub-District, the percentage of workers who belong to a union are as follows:

Connecticut 16.3%	Maine 14.7%
Massachusetts 13.6%	New Hampshire 11.3%
Rhode Island 17.4%	Vermont 14.2%

In the past few years, due to plant closings and layoffs, our union has lost thousands of members who had good paying jobs with great benefits. It is incumbent on all of us to organize this generation of workers so they can receive a voice in the workplace and receive the wages and benefits they deserve.

This will also set up a great opportunity to organize the next generation. We need to have conversations with family members and neighbors who are unhappy with their current work situation, especially the lack of respect, wages and benefits they receive from their employers. In the companies where we represent production and maintenance workers, we may not have to look further than the clerical workforce which could be organized. In the public sector there are many

different levels, classifications and departments that are not organized but can be. These are all places to explore organizing opportunities.

It is crystal clear that when more workers are organized, they also give us more political clout with legislators to address legislation affecting workers. Now is our time to grow our union. Under the current administration, we have friends in leadership positions who are not afraid to say the word “union.”

In February, USW International President Tom Conway sent a letter to all our local union leadership soliciting local union members who want to be trained to organize and deliver the message of our union. Identifying members for this role should not be difficult. We have members of all different types of backgrounds, race, gender, etc., who are already activists in our programs such as Next Gen, Women of Steel, and Leadership/Scholarship, just to name a few.

Now is the most critical time to organize the unorganized. Nationwide polls show that over 60 percent of workers in our country would vote to join a union given the chance to do so. It's our job to identify them. As a reminder, the USW Constitution mandates every local union have an organizing committee. If any member wants to be trained to organize and has union leave language in their contract, please put together a resume and present it to your Staff Representative for review.

Lastly, if you know of a group of workers who work for a company, a city or a town who are interested in being organized, please call 508-482-5555, and we will follow up with them.



The WOS New England Council attended a presentation & exhibit concerning the plight of missing and murdered indigenous women. Pictured are Tina Fortes, Local 12003; Marie McGinley, N.E. WOS Council Chair, Local 12003; Laurie Carlson, Local 5696; Tammie Botelho, District 4 WOS Coordinator, Local 134L; and Hope Hutchinson, Local 12012-06.



The WOS Western N.Y. Regional Council recently participated in Narcan Training at a quarterly meeting, and learned how to recognize and stop an opioid overdose.

WOMEN OF STEEL

WESTERN N.Y. COUNCIL REPORT

The USW District 4 Women of Steel Western N.Y. Regional Council recently participated in Narcan training at our quarterly meeting, and learned how to recognize and stop an opioid overdose. Upon completion of the class, everyone was given doses of Naloxone that can be used to reverse opioid overdose in an emergency.

The course was facilitated by Cheryl Moore, Medical Care Administrator for the Erie County Department of Health. Cheryl is a leader in the County's

Opioid Epidemic Task Force. We were also joined by Sharon Mentkowski, an FBI Community Outreach Specialist, along with Mary Martino, President of the FBI Citizens Academy (not affiliated with the FBI).

NEW ENGLAND COUNCIL REPORT

The WOS New England Council met in Bridgewater, Mass., for our quarterly meeting in March 2022. We attended a presentation and exhibit concerning the plight of missing and murdered indigenous women. It was interesting and educational while focusing on the struggles of these women and highlighting the "Red Dress Project" which was created to bring awareness to this terrible situation.

The council also donated items to Project Pack which is a group on the college campus that provides post-assault comfort kits to victims of sexual assault.

A MESSAGE FROM TAMMY BOTELHO

Due to having to move my mother with Alzheimer's disease into my home,

I have made the very difficult decision to step down from my role as District 4 Women of Steel Coordinator effective this October.

I have been involved in WOS since the program was brought to the United States from Canada, and along with Kathy Kluczinski, worked very hard to build this program to where it is today. It is bitter-sweet for me because I am going to miss heading the program in our district and all of my sisters, but on the other hand, I am excited about the district's choice for the sister who will succeed me in this role.

Marisel Cruz Martinez from Puerto Rico has agreed to succeed me as the new Women of Steel Coordinator. I am excited about Marisel taking on this role as she is a dynamic and a motivating leader for the USW. I know she will take this program to a whole new level. I hope you all join me in congratulating Marisel and I look forward to seeing WOS grow in our district.

District 4 will be holding the Women of Steel Course June 12 through June 15, 2022. Marisel will be working along side of Cindy Marlow and myself in facilitating this course.



The WOS New England Council donated items to Project Pack that provides post-assault comfort kits to victims of sexual assault.

INICIATIVA NUEVA IMPULSA LOS ESFUERZOS DE ORGANIZACIÓN SINDICAL

Organizar es una de las cosas más importantes que hacemos como unión. Esta Unión nació de la organización. Fue el S.W.O.C., el Comité Organizador de la Steel Workers quien organizó a miles de trabajadores de acero a finales de 1930 y luego formó la United Steelworkers of America en el 1942. La importancia de la Organización continua es la razón por la cual un Comité Organizador es uno de los cinco comités permanentes que ordena nuestra Constitución y que se requiere a cada local que mantenga.

La necesidad de organizar hoy es tan importante como lo era cuando se formó esta unión. Cuan fuerte seamos en cualquier industria o área geográfica depende directamente de la densidad de nuestra unión en esa área. Es decir, el número de miembros que representamos en una determinada industria o área impacta nuestra efectividad como unión. Mientras más miembros tengamos, mejores serán los contratos que podemos negociar para nuestros miembros actuales. Cuanto mayor sea nuestra densidad sindical, más seremos capaces de influir en la aprobación de leyes favorables a los trabajadores, como la Licencia Familiar con paga y la Compra de Provisiones Estadounidenses, por nombrar solo algunos.

Entonces, creo que todos estamos de acuerdo en que lo mejor para nuestra Unión es estar organizando siempre y así lo estamos haciendo. Sin embargo, debido a las actuales actitudes de los trabajadores hacia sus patronos y la influencia que tienen debido al mercado laboral actualmente apretado, ahora es el momento de redoblar nuestros esfuerzos. Estas dinámicas hacen que este sea un momento especialmente bueno para Organizar.

Los trabajadores que no están organizados están hartos de que sus patronos se aprovechen de ellos y quieren poder opinar en su lugar de trabajo. Encuestas recientes muestran que los trabajadores están más dispuestos ahora a formar uniones de lo que han estado en mucho tiempo. De acuerdo a una encuesta de Gallup realizada en septiembre pasado, el 68% de los estadounidenses favorece las uniones y el 77% de los jóvenes entre 18 y 34 años, aprueba las uniones. No hemos visto números como estos desde la década de 1960. Para respaldar estos números, hay varias campañas de organización de alto perfil que han salido en las noticias. Las ubicaciones de Starbucks están votando "Unión Si" en todo el país y esto comenzó en Buffalo, NY. Los empleados de Amazon en Staten Island, votaron para ser unionados, a pesar de que Amazon emprendió una incansable campaña anti unión. Estas victorias que fueron noticias nacionales, están aquí en el Distrito 4 y hay muchas mas en toda la nación.

Reconociendo esta atmosfera privilegiada para la Organización, el Presidente de la USW, Tom Conway, ha comenzado una nueva iniciativa de Organización

para impulsar nuestros esfuerzos de organización en esta gran Unión. El 23 de febrero, envió una carta a todos los líderes de las locales

describiendo un plan para desarrollar una nueva generación de organizadores de la USW y solicitando candidatos que pudieran ser adecuados para convertirse en organizadores.

Dichos candidatos tendrán que ser activistas fuertes y apasionados por nuestra unión. Necesitaran tener excelentes habilidades para comunicarse y escuchar y no tener miedo de trabajar largas horas y fines de semana. También necesitaran poder salir de su trabajo con licencia sindical por periodos prolongados de tiempo.

Organizar es un trabajo duro, pero puede ser muy gratificante. También puede ser una montaña rusa emocional. Los patronos harán todo lo posible para evitar que sus trabajadores organicen una unión. Los organizadores están en la primera línea luchando para que los trabajadores tengan los mismos derechos y beneficios que nosotros como trabajadores unionados, damos por sentado. Como todo en la vida, ganar es genial y perder apesta, pero no hay mejor sentimiento que ganar una elección y saber que hemos ayudado a mejorar la vida laboral de estos nuevos miembros unionados.

Si conoce a alguien que cree que tiene los requisitos adecuados para asumir este desafío, o si cree que podría contribuir como organizador, hay una solicitud disponible en línea en usw.org/apply. Nuevamente, esto es solo para personas serias y dispuestas a trabajar duro.

En cuanto a los Comités de Organización de las Uniones Locales, espero que todas las locales los hayan establecido y estén activos. Para ayudar a resucitarlos en caso de que estén inactivos, en los próximos meses ofreceremos adiestramientos de Organización en cada sub-distrito. Ahora es el momento de acelerar nuestros esfuerzos de Organización. ¿Si no es ahora, cuando?

Solidaridad por Siempre.



**DIRECTOR'S REPORT
EN ESPAÑOL**



HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT

At the Syracuse Sub-District LM/Education Conference held in February in Syracuse, N.Y., District 4 Director Del Vitale presented Ed Moran with the Lifetime Activism Award in recognition of Ed's many years of promoting a healthy and safe workplace environment. Ed worked at Crucible Steel for 44 years and has been on the Local 1277 Health & Safety Committee for 38 of those years, including 21 as the committee chair. Ed's talents were recognized by the International's Health and Safety Department for his tenacious advocacy for workers' health and safety protection.

Brother Moran has served as a worker-trainer for the Tony Mazzocchi Center for 16 years, and was appointed in 2017 by then-District 4 Director John Shinn to serve as the District 4 HS&E Training Coordinator. In his spare time Ed serves as a District 4 ERT Responder. He's also been a certified overhead crane trainer for the last 18 years. Anyone that's taken any of Ed's classes knows that he's a great instructor and is a master at what he does. Congratulations, Ed, on your well-deserved retirement, and thank you for your commitment to working men and women.



NEW SOAR CHAPTER ESTABLISHED

SOAR Chapter 4-18 has been established in Philipsburg, N.J. as of December 1, 2021, the first SOAR chapter in the state of New Jersey. We were honored to be officially chartered by the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR). Our chapter will host retirees from USW Local 10-00729 which represents workers at Avantor Performance Materials in Phillipsburg, N.J. We are 29 members strong and counting.

Shown in the picture are LU 10-729 President Tim Sut-

ter, Staff Rep Joe Arico, SOAR Chapter 4-18 President Robin McFarland, SOAR Chapter Vice President Rich Covatta, SOAR Chapter Financial Secretary James Hanisak, Local 10-729 Recording Secretary Jodey Elekes, and Trustees Paul Williams and Richard Dailey. We believe having a SOAR Chapter will bring members and retirees much closer. The chapter will give support to our Local while fighting against efforts to compromise programs like Medicare and Social Security. To have all this knowledge present at our meetings will be an inspiration.



VETERANS COUNCIL

This past holiday season we partnered with Women of Steel to collect socks, gloves and other warm clothing for our Warm Feet for Warriors Drive/Operation Bundle Up. We delivered more than \$1,500 worth of new coats, gloves and socks to the Veterans Hospital in Syracuse, N.Y. Thank you to everyone who donated!

Now that the world is opening up again, the Veterans Council is again participating in community events. In March, we attended the St. Patrick's Parade in Syracuse to represent our working veterans and their families.

This Memorial Day we will be again encouraging folks to host Watch Fires this year – be sure to post pictures on our District 4 Veterans Council Facebook page.

At the recent district presidents meetings, one of the important initiatives discussed was having each local union pledge to enact by-laws changes to make the Veterans Committee one of the local union's committees. This pledge is part of a campaign to make veterans committees mandatory under the USW International Constitution.

Please remain vigilant as we continue to advocate for Veterans Suicide Awareness – while shining a light on PTSD and its impact on our veterans, their families and the workplace.

Lastly – watch for more details about a District 4 Veterans Council meeting on July 14, 2022.

For more information about the USW Veterans Committee, contact Cary Eldridge, District 4 Veterans Committee Coordinator, at 315-468-1623.



ORGANIZING

There are many ways local unions and our members can participate in organizing future members of our great union.

For one of the examples of how Local Organizing Committees can advance the work and goals of an organizing campaign, we can look at the campaign at Exela, in New Brunswick, N.J. Exela is a contractor with a little over a dozen employees, providing lab and mail services at the Bristol-Myers Squibb facility. USW 4-438 represents the workers there, as well as maintenance and lab service employees who work for Jones Lange Lasalle (JLL) at the same campus.

Fred Johnson, the Unit Chair for JLL, works side-by-side with the Exela workers and started talking with them about joining the union and improving their working conditions. Many of those workers hadn't seen a wage increase in years. New Jersey has raised the state minimum wage which is about what many workers at Exela are now making despite many years working for the company.

Fred was assisted by Brian Callow, who is one of our District 4 Next Gen coordinator, and vice president of USW Local 318. Fred and Brian were successful in organizing the workers at Exela after the majority of employees voted "yes" to forming their union in March of 2019 through the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

However, this is where things get complicated, and shows how important it is that we improve our political strength through organizing and mobilizing, especially around the PRO Act. Exela appealed the workers' decision to form their union every step of the way.

Exela has refused numerous requests to bargain a first contract with the USW, despite the NLRB upholding the results of the election. With a new General Counsel in place at the NLRB, the Board filed suit against Exela for failing to comply with the results of the election. Exela is maintaining its anti-union positions and is challenging the Board in a Federal Court lawsuit just to keep the workers from having the union that they voted to form. Hearings before the Federal Court of Appeals in New Orleans, L.A., are scheduled for early April.

Companies like Starbucks, Amazon and Exela continue to fight hard against unions in their workplaces – because they know that once their workers understand that they can stand together and fight for better wages, better working conditions, and a brighter future that others will follow their lead.

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CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Union membership is a human right. The right to organize, to bargain collectively, and to withhold one's labor are basic human rights enshrined in local, state, federal and international laws. The USW has been fighting for independent free trade unions around the world. Many members of the USW have been in other countries supporting the right of workers to unionize.

The Supreme Court's decision in "Citizens United" gave corporations a free pass to distort our own elections. This decision had the effect of limiting the average citizens' influence on candidates. Unions being the best and most effective effort to fill the role of a counter to that decision have been under attack, which is why everyone has a stake in the survival of unions. Unions allow workers to fully participate in their workplaces, and provide a means for participation in the political process.

The Supreme Court decision on "Janus"

(allowing public sector workers to not pay dues or fees) is further evidence of the concerted effort to weaken unions. This ruling, which divides private sector union workers and public sector union workers, is an old trick.

It was used in the southern part of the country to divide workers based on race. This trick evolved into "right-to-work" laws. These laws or versions of them are now being spread throughout the country.

Fortunately, through a great deal of hard work, in District 4 we have been successful in keeping these union-busting laws from being passed.

Voters determine the Senators and Representatives who make the laws and confirm judges to interpret those laws. We all live under the interpretation and application of these laws.

Some laws have been passed and others are pending that restrict the right to vote and the right to be a union member. Restrictions placed on either of these rights are restrictions of human and civil rights.

NEXT GENERATION

Please help us in congratulating Israel Torres, who has been appointed as District 4's Next Generation Co-Coordinator.

Israel is the President of USW Local 1702. Israel was the New England Next Gen Regional Coordinator from 2019 until his appointment by District 4 Director Vitale. Israel will now step up to join Brian Callow in the ranks as co-coordinators for the district.

Israel won the Milford, Massachusetts Sub-District "Activist of the Year" Award at the District 4 Education Conference last year, after helping lead some of the district's most difficult organizing campaigns through a pandemic, amongst other things.

Israel brings many unique skills and ideas to the table to help lead our District's Next Generation program.

Congratulations Israel!



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