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NEWS FOR THE UNITED STEELWORKERS IN

# DISTRICT 4

## REMEMBERING TOM CONWAY



**I**t is with a heavy heart that I write that our United Steelworkers International President Thomas Conway passed away on Monday, September 25, 2023.

I first met President Conway nearly 20 years ago. I did not know him as well as some, but it was evident from our first meeting that he lived for his family and our members.

There was never a moment where President Conway would not stop to interact with his USW family. If he was at a conference, international convention, or at our headquarters in Pittsburgh, he always took time to talk to members and get to know them. He always identified with their struggles and took the time to talk through issues to help in any way he could.

President Conway was a fierce and skilled bargainer. He loved being across the table from an employer. He had an instinct that allowed him to be one step ahead of whoever was sitting across the table from him. This allowed him to find the deal and get the best possible agreement, regardless of the sector.

If you were able to attend the memorial service held at our headquarters or watched on the USW livestream, one thing was obvious: Tom loved his family. Every speaker who came to share their memories told stories of Tom's sons and

grandchildren. Even though he spent countless hours serving our members, he always found the time to be present for his family.

Throughout his life, President Conway set an example for all of us to follow. From his love and dedication to the USW and the labor movement and to the time and care he took for his family, he showed us what it means to be a labor leader.

Moving forward, our international union is in excellent hands. Our new president, David McCall, is a long-serving member of the International Executive Board. He was first appointed District 1 Director in 1998 and re-elected from 2001 to 2017.

Before being appointed to serve the remainder of Tom Conway's term as International President, McCall served as the USW International Vice President (Administration) since 2019. He was re-elected to the post in 2021.

I have worked with International President McCall since my time with the USW Political Department in 2010. He has been a friend to District 4 and even attended our most recent District conference that took place in Atlantic City, N.J., in August.

On October 13, the International Executive Board met in Pittsburgh and appointed Emil Ramirez to fill McCall's former position as USW International Vice President (Administration). Emil most recently served as Director of District 11, a position he's held since 2014.

The IEB also swore in Cathy

Drummond as the new District 11 Director. Cathy comes out of Local 9460 at what is now Essentia Health in Hibbing, Minn., and most recently worked as Assistant to the Director.

All too often, it takes a tragic event like this one for us to stop and look around and remember what is important. Our family, our members, our union and the middle class are what drive us every day. So, in memory of Tom, hug your family, fight like hell for our members, say something good about your union and be kind to one another.

To the entire Conway family, you are in the thoughts of the members and staff of District 4. Rest in Peace, Tom.



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

**DAVID M. WASIGURA**  
DISTRICT 4 DIRECTOR



## MILFORD JOHN BUONOPANE, SUB-DISTRICT DIRECTOR

### Labor Day

The Labor Day holiday weekend is the unofficial end of summer. As members of the labor movement, we know what many unfortunately don't: like a lot of the benefits working people enjoy, there wouldn't be a Labor Day holiday weekend without unions. That's why it's important during this time off that we continue to recognize and reflect on everything our union has accomplished.

### Labor Day in the Sub-District

At the Central Massachusetts AFL-CIO Labor Day event on Sept. 1, our friend and retired staff representative from the Milford office, Lowell Alexander, received a well-deserved 2023 Labor Hero Award. President Joe Carlson presented Lowell with the award, while a number of staff and union delegates were in attendance. Congratulations, Lowell!

**The annual Greater Boston Labor Council Labor Day breakfast** was held on Labor Day at the Park Plaza Hotel. A number of current elected government officials spoke in support of our unions. Following the event, everyone marched through downtown Boston to a very spirited rally in support of the striking SAG-AFTRA members.

**The New Hampshire AFL-CIO Labor Day breakfast** was well attended by our USW members. Sean O'Brien, President of the International Teamsters Union, was the keynote speaker.

**Local Union Back-to-School Event:** On Aug. 26, Local 14323 President Freddie Vazquez helped sponsor a back-to-school event in Waterbury, Conn. A large amount of back-to-school supplies were donated. The event was organized by Jeep Enthusiasts of Connecticut and led by Freddie's wife, Ivy Vazquez.

### Two Longtime USW Local Leaders Retire

Kathy Laflash has retired after more than 27 years as Local Union 12004 President and 42 years as an Eversource employee. Kathy was also the chairperson of the New England Gas Workers Alliance. Kathy has been one of the most determined and dedicated local union leaders within the Sub-District, and has led her local union through some very demanding times. We wish Kathy a happy and well-earned retirement.

Rick Sutton served as president of USW Local 4-845 for the last 32 years and has retired from Vanderbilt Chemicals in Bethel, Conn., after 47 years. Rick's father was one of the local union's founding members when it was chartered by the OCAW in 1966. The president of the company once told Rick, "We like you as a worker, friend, and neighbor, but as far as negotiating with you is concerned, you are the least enjoyable person we have ever dealt with." Rick took this as a compliment. Congratulations, Rick. Have a fruitful and enjoyable retirement.



Pictured left to right are Joe Carlson, Israel Torres, Mary Fusco, Keith Odume, Lowell Alexander, Steve Finnigan, John Buonopane, Christine Finnigan and Juan Roman.



Local 9158 officials attend GBLC Labor Day Breakfast. Pictured from left to right are David Hinton, Michael Mackin, Ann Roper Quinn and Keith Henderson.



Pictured left to right are USW Local 12012 member Dave Dell Isola, International Teamsters President Sean O'Brien and Local 12012 member Stephaun Gonslaves.



Retired Local 12004 President Kathy Laflash.



Retired Local 4-845 President Rick Sutton.



## EDISON MICHAEL L. FISHER, SUB-DISTRICT DIRECTOR

### One Day Longer, One Day Stronger

At the heart of the sub-district, one of our major events has been the struggle of Local 4-200 with their employer, Robert Wood Johnson Hospital located in New Brunswick, New Jersey. On Aug. 4, 2023, some 1,700 nurses and USW members hit the streets with the only tool at their disposal: to withhold their labor in an effort to achieve a fair and equitable contract.

It was only after many bargaining sessions and with an ongoing dispute with a profound impact on working conditions in the area of safe staffing that the proud members of Local 4-200 voted to go out on an unfair labor practice strike.

It should be noted that safe staffing is a concern nationwide in health care. Registered nurses, who have their licenses on the line, have been dealing with the overwhelming numbers of patients they are assigned. The end result is a devastating effect on job security and patient care.

We have had the benefit of union solidarity, with support from other USW locals and affiliates of the New Jersey AFL-CIO visiting the picket line. The local union officers, staff and members express deep appreciation to all who took time and resources to keep the powerful momentum going, standing with them in solidarity, and encouraging them to stay strong.

The Local has had an impressive number of members serving in various capacities, as picket line captains, strike assistance committee members, and all those who have shown outstanding presence in the trying time that they are faced with.

With the above, I want to thank USW District 4 Director David Wasiura and Assistant to the Director Steve Finnigan for traveling long distances to show the full support of the District to the members of Local 4-200; and a special shout out to Staff Representative Joe Arico, who has been shoulder-to-shoulder with the members of Local 4-200 throughout this great effort.

Additionally, there were other events in the Sub-District that were noteworthy, such as the showing of union pride at the New York City Labor Day Parade, as well as the annual Labor Day Picnic in Delaware. Additionally, a group of Steelworkers recently met with Congressional Representative Mikey Sherrill to discuss her bi-partisan effort to promote a national manufacturing policy, and protection of domestic intellectual property.



The USW District 4 contingent to the NYC Labor Day Parade, led by Director David Wasiura.



Above, from left: Tom Carberry (Local 318), Luke Gordon (Staff Rep), Steve Green (Staff Rep), Cong. Mikey Sherrill (D-NJ), a Laborers Union brother, Sub-District Director Michael Fisher and Local 318 President John Seckrettar.



## SYRACUSE JIM VALENTI, SUB-DISTRICT DIRECTOR

The Syracuse chapter of SOAR met on Sept. 20. Our union is stronger when Steelworker retirees are involved as activists, advocates and volunteers. To join SOAR, visit the USW website: <https://www.usw.org/act/activism/soar/resources/membership>.

Membership is only \$1 per month.

We also held Bargaining and Grievance Committee Trainings in September. Members are stepping up to learn how to help shape the future of their union!

Future classes are just \$35 per day, and are held from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The class descriptions are below:

- ADVANCED GRIEVANCE HANDLING**  
Advanced Grievance Handling is for experienced grievance handlers or newer grievance handlers that have successfully completed basic grievance handling to improve their ability to write, document and present a grievance in a manner to maximize success. Learn what your legal rights are and how to use those rights to win grievances.
- LEADERSHIP LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONSHIPS**  
Winning an election is just the beginning. Learn how to be an effective leader and how to influence and inspire others. Learn how to be a professional. Learn the elements of a labor-management committee and how to break down barriers to have an effective L-M relationship.

The next presidents meeting will take place on Dec. 8. We are all mourning the loss of Tom Conway, our International President who died at 71 this month.

We have lost an extraordinary champion for working people and families. Our thoughts go out to his immediate family and his union family.



## BUFFALO JIM BRIGGS, SUB-DISTRICT DIRECTOR

The Buffalo Sub-District office has had many successes over the last several months. We were happy to announce at the District 4 Educational Conference in August that a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was finalized between the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in Niagara Falls, N.Y., and the union. This was done with the help of the International Health and Safety Department, led by Director Steve Sallman and Nick Miclaus, the union's safety representative for the Goodyear tire division. It also took the commitment of the local union to finally get this MOA secured and signed.

The agreement sets forth the OSHA permissible limits for chemicals of concern and establishes that the right limit is the lowest possible number we can achieve through the hierarchy of controls and other safety measures. A part-time paid safety representative will be put in place to address situations as they occur, and a stop-work process will be instituted so that workers are allowed to halt a job that may cause danger or exposure.

These wins were only possible because the union decided not to wait for OSHA, but to move ahead with a far more effective plan than the current OSHA standards. It was achieved through the process of continuous bargaining, which was started by the filing of a safety grievance.

If you are dealing with issues like this in your facilities and would like more information, please feel free to contact the Sub-District office in Buffalo and we will point you in the right direction moving forward.

We continue to perform Health and Safety trainings, and encourage our locals to send members to these trainings. What we do for our members at the bargaining table with regard to wages

and benefits is important, but making sure that we have the proper safety training to ensure our members go home at the end of every shift is a far greater measure of success.

The Buffalo Sub-District office was represented by our locals in both major Labor Day parades in Buffalo, N.Y., and Youngstown, N.Y. We had a great presence at both events. We encourage you to participate in Labor Day events in your area!

The success of the District 4 Education Conference made it clear that the District is headed in the right direction under the guidance of Director David Wasiura and Assistant to the Director Stephen Finnigan. They have put in place an agenda for our members to succeed, but it will be up to us to ensure the plan is enacted at every location and local.

In closing, as we head into the holiday season, please take the time to enjoy family and friends, be safe, and continue to do the fine work that you do in our locals!

Solidarity!

Steve Sallman (Director USW Health, Safety & Environment), Justin Mauer (Unit President), David Wasiura (Director, District 4), James Briggs (Sub-District Director), George Hall (Local President), Dustin Pietricone (Unit Griever), Dan Oswald (Safety Coordinator), Rick Palmer (Local Recording Secretary)





DIRECTOR'S REPORT  
EN ESPAÑOL

# RECORDANDO A TOM CONWAY

Es con gran pesar que escribo este artículo. El lunes 25 de septiembre de 2023, falleció nuestro presidente de la United Steelworkers Internacional, Thomas Conway.

Conocí al presidente Conway hace casi 20 años. Yo no lo conocía tan bien como algunos, pero era evidente desde nuestro primer encuentro que vivía para su familia y nuestros miembros.

Nunca hubo un momento en el que el presidente Conway no se detuviera a interactuar con su familia de la USW. Si estaba en una conferencia, convención internacional o en nuestra sede en Pittsburgh, siempre se tomaba el tiempo para hablar con los miembros y conocerlos. Siempre se identificó con sus luchas y se tomó el tiempo para hablar sobre los problemas para ayudar en todo lo que pudiera.

El presidente Conway era un negociador feroz y hábil. Le encantaba estar al otro lado de la mesa de un empleador. Tenía un instinto que le permitía estar un paso por delante de quien estuviera sentado al otro lado de la mesa. Esto le permitió encontrar el acuerdo y conseguir el mejor contrato posible independientemente del sector.

Si pudiste asistir al servicio conmemorativo celebrado en nuestra sede o verlo en la transmisión en vivo de la USW, una cosa era obvia: Tom amaba a su familia. Todos los oradores que vinieron a compartir sus recuerdos contaron historias de los hijos y nietos de Tom. A pesar de que pasó incontables horas sirviendo a nuestros miembros, siempre encontró el tiempo para estar presente para su familia.

A lo largo de su vida, el presidente Conway fue un ejemplo a seguir para todos nosotros. Desde su amor y dedicación a la USW y al movimiento sindical y hasta el tiempo y el cuidado que se tomó para su familia, nos mostró lo que significa ser un líder sindical.

De cara al futuro, nuestra Unión Internacional está en excelentes manos. Nuestro nuevo presidente, David McCall, es miembro de la Junta Ejecutiva Internacional desde hace mucho tiempo. Fue nombrado Director del Distrito 1 por primera vez en 1998 y reelecto de 2001 a 2017.

Antes de ser nombrado para servir el resto del mandato de Tom Conway como Presidente Internacional, McCall se desempeñó como Vicepresidente Internacional (Administración) de la USW desde 2019. Fue reelecto para el cargo en 2021.

He trabajado con el Presidente Internacional McCall desde mi época en el Departamento Político de la USW en 2010. Ha sido amigo del Distrito 4 e incluso asistió a nuestra Conferencia de Distrito más reciente que tuvo lugar en Atlantic City, Nueva Jersey, del 21 al 23 de agosto de 2023.

El 13 de octubre de 2023, la Junta Ejecutiva Internacional de la USW (IEB) se reunió en Pittsburgh y nombró a Emil Ramírez para ocupar el puesto anterior de McCall como Vicepresidente Internacional (Administración) de la USW. Emil se desempeñó recientemente como Director del Distrito 11, cargo que ocupa desde 2014.

La IEB también tomó juramento a Cathy Drummond como nueva Directora del Distrito 11. Cathy proviene del Local 9460 en lo que ahora es Essentia Health en Hibbing Minnesota, y más recientemente trabajó como asistente del director.

Con demasiada frecuencia, se necesita un evento trágico como este para que nos detengamos y miremos a nuestro alrededor y recordemos lo que es importante. Nuestra familia, nuestros miembros, nuestro sindicato y la clase media, son lo que nos impulsa todos los días. Así que, en memoria de Tom, abracen a su familia, luchan como demonios por nuestros miembros, digan algo bueno sobre su Unión y sean amables los unos con los otros.

A toda la familia Conway, ustedes están en los pensamientos de los miembros y el personal del Distrito 4. Descansa en paz, Tom.



# HEALTH AND SAFETY

District 4 held its Educational Conference in Atlantic City in August. Hundreds of our members attended to learn and to educate themselves to better the union.

District 4 Health and Safety Coordinator Jim Valenti rang the workers' memorial bell to honor one fallen member since the last District 4 education conference: Guy Peck of Local 180M. It is our hope that through continued health and safety education, we will never have to ring the bell again.

It was announced at the conference that Ken Gomeringer will become the District 4 Health and Safety Coordinator after Jim Valenti retires at the end of the year.

The primary goal of the USW Health and Safety Committee is to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses,

and deaths. To that end, we offer a variety of training programs each year across the District. Below is a list of the trainings that are available to your Local this fall. For more information on any of these trainings, contact your Staff Representative. Most trainings are open to management participants as well as union members.

Health and Safety classes offered this fall:

- **October 19: HAZWOPER REFRESHER** This course offers a basic refresh on Hazwoper regulations, safety and health plans, hazardous chemicals, safety hazards, air monitoring, medical surveillance, site control, decontamination, PPE and respiratory equipment.
- **November 9: NEAR MISS** This course prepares workers to lead and/or take an important role in a worker-developed and led Near-Miss program. This is achieved using investigative techniques, which produce important fixes to hazards identified with incidents.



## *In Memoriam*

GUY PECK, LOCAL 180M

# VETS OF STEEL

The Sixth Annual Golf Tournament had a record turnout. Thanks to the support of the International, District 4 Sub-Districts, many USW Local Unions and area businesses like Excellus, MVP, NILICO, Blitman & King, we surpassed our fundraising goal! Save this annual date of the Monday following Labor Day to join in on the fun. Next year the event will take place on Sept. 9.

If your Local knows of a worthy Veterans program, please contact

USW Veterans Council Coordinator Cary Eldridge with the details, and he will present it to the committee for consideration. Small grants will be given throughout the District in support of Veterans programs. Thank you to everyone who supported our annual fundraiser!

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





# WOMEN OF STEEL

Last August at the District 4 Educational Conference, I had the opportunity to address my Women of Steel present for the first time. I can only describe the emotion and satisfaction I felt when speaking to those present about the extraordinary work that you do with love and fervor. You all fill me with pride every time I see the achievements made and the grain of sand deposited in each heart that you impact with your work. Once again, thank you for all the stars reached in the sky and for making Women of Steel in District 4 a five-star program.

The WOS Western N.Y. Regional Council held its quarterly meeting in Olean, N.Y., at the Cutco Union Hall. Along with our regular agenda, our Sisters worked extremely hard at making scarves for the homeless and for those in need. Our annual tree wrapping event will be held during the month of November. Thank you to Local 5429 for their wonderful hospitality. And thank you to our awesome Sisters who continue to work to better our communities.

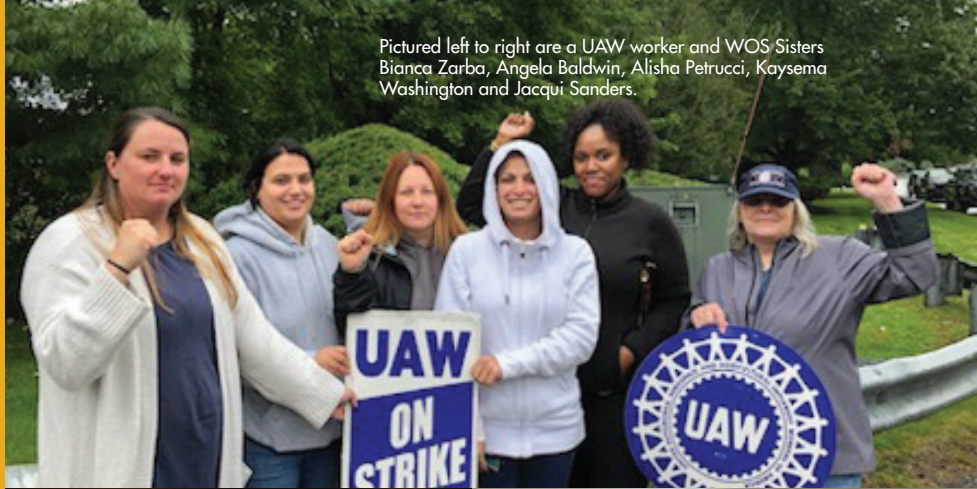
The Southern Tier WOS Committee in Corning, N.Y., has finalized its annual Breast Cancer Awareness T-shirt Fundraiser. This year's recipient, Guthrie Breast Cancer Center, was awarded a check totaling \$5,670 from these sales. Local 1000 would like to extend their sincerest appreciation to all who participated and we hope to see continued success in future endeavors.

The New England Regional Council kept quite busy as well, making donations to the veteran's shelter and Simple Gestures Food Pantry. The council also contributed to Sister Karen Blood's Local's fundraiser for Learning School for the Deaf.

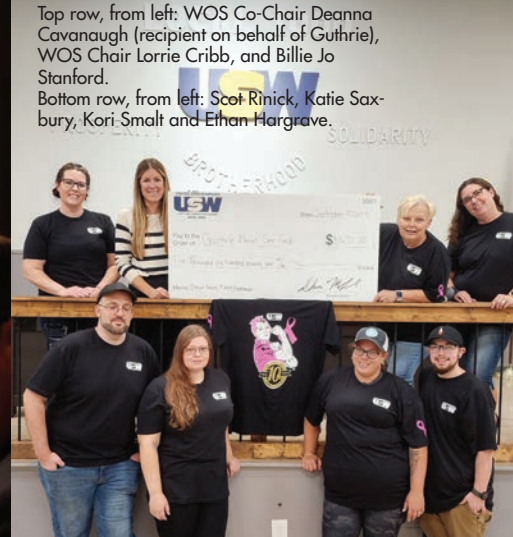
As pictured, New England council members stood in solidarity with the UAW on their picket line in Mansfield, Mass.

Finally, union members Matt Denn (Lowell I&R) and Paul Gangi (Lowell C&M) recently welcomed newborns. As a way to congratulate our members on their growing families, Women of Steel members Bianca Zarba and Alisha Petrucci put together baby baskets with a few essentials.

Pictured left to right are a UAW worker and WOS Sisters Bianca Zarba, Angela Baldwin, Alisha Petrucci, Kaysema Washington and Jacqui Sanders.



Mariel Cruz Martinez addresses the D4 Education Conference with Director David Wasiura.



Top row, from left: WOS Co-Chair Deanna Cavanaugh (recipient on behalf of Guthrie), WOS Chair Lorrie Cribb, and Billie Jo Stanford. Bottom row, from left: Scot Rinick, Katie Saxbury, Kori Smalt and Ethan Hargrave.



Pictured are the New York Council Chair Julie Searle and other members of USW District 4.



Baskets assembled by Shaena Christophe (left) and Laurie Carlson (right).



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### DISTRICT OFFICE

1911 Sheridan St  
Buffalo, NY 14223  
(716) 565-1720  
(716) 565-1727 (Fax)

**DAVID M. WASIURA**, DIRECTOR  
**STEVE FINNIGAN**, ASST. TO THE DIRECTOR  
**LISA O'SHEI**, DISTRICT SECRETARY  
Staff: Mark McDonald, Mary Quirk

### SUB-DISTRICT OFFICES

- **BUFFALO, NY** (716) 565-1720  
Staff: Jim Briggs, Valerie Thomas, Joe Vertalino, Holly Rudolph
- **EDISON, NJ** (732) 287-4011  
Staff: Michael Fisher, Joe Arico, Ken Gomeringer, Luke Gordon, Steve Green, Matt McCarty, Robin Carberry  
Staff Office **BAYAMON, PR** (787) 780-0885  
Staff: Yaphet Torres, Nancy Arizmendi
- **MILFORD, MA** (508) 482-5555  
Staff: John Buonopane, Abdellitif Elberchoui, Mary Fusco, Mike Higgins, Keith Odume, Al Smith, Israel Torres, Juan Roman, Amy Durand
- **SYRACUSE, NY** (315) 468-1623  
Staff: Jim Valenti, Cary Eldridge, Rick Sauer, Jack Vanderbaan, Wendy Colucci

**LUKE GORDON & MARK McDONALD**, CO-EDITORS

Send comments and suggested articles to:

[lgordon@usw.org](mailto:lgordon@usw.org) or  
[mmcdonald@usw.org](mailto:mmcdonald@usw.org)

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# NEXT GEN

District 4 has become the first USW district to hold a Level 3 Next Gen training. The training was held the week of July 24 at the Linden Hall Training Center. It consisted of internal and external organizing, officers training and an overview of the industrial relations process (organizing, negotiations and contract administration). District 4 Director David Wasiura and Assistant to the Director Steve Finnegan spoke to the class during the week and expressed how important Next Gen is to our union and handed out certificates for completion of Level 3 to the class. International Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn spoke to the class at the graduation dinner.

“We are so proud of our Level 3 graduates and can’t wait to see all the great work they will be doing in the future,” said Shinn.

Congratulations to the first-ever Level 3 Next Gen graduates: Matthew Anderson, Justin Assise, Pedro Balbuena, Connor Brown, Andrew Cunnif, Anthony Dzeiman, Kristy Elekes, David Garcia, Brian Pabis, Nolan Rice, John Savage, Matt Vassalo and Samuel Veres.

District 4 Next Gen sends our deepest condolences to the family of President Tom Conway as we all mourn the loss of a great leader.



## GET INVOLVED

### HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT

**JIM VALENTI**  
(315) 468-1623 • [jvalenti@usw.org](mailto:jvalenti@usw.org)

### CIVIL RIGHTS

**ABDELLITIF ELBERCHOU**  
(508) 482-5555 • [aerberchoui@usw.org](mailto:aerberchoui@usw.org)

**MIKE FISHER**  
(732) 287-4011 • [mfisher@usw.org](mailto:mfisher@usw.org)

### VETERANS OF STEEL

**CARY ELDRIDGE**  
(315) 468-1623 • [celdridge@usw.org](mailto:celdridge@usw.org)

### ORGANIZING

**BRIGITTE WOMER**  
(716) 565-1720 • [bwomer@usw.org](mailto:bwomer@usw.org)

[WWW.JOINUSW4.ORG](http://WWW.JOINUSW4.ORG)

### NEXT GENERATION

**BRIAN CALLOW**  
(917) 750-4205 • [bcallow74@gmail.com](mailto:bcallow74@gmail.com)

**JOHN SAVAGE**  
(978) 979-0824 • [jsavageiv@gmail.com](mailto:jsavageiv@gmail.com)

### RAPID RESPONSE

**MARK McDONALD**  
(716) 553-0239 • [mmcdonald@usw.org](mailto:mmcdonald@usw.org)

### SOAR

**AL POLK**  
(508) 482-5555 • [alpolk138@gmail.com](mailto:alpolk138@gmail.com)

**MARTY MANASCALCO**  
(716) 836-0937 [MartyManascalco2@roadrunner.com](mailto:MartyManascalco2@roadrunner.com)

### WOMEN OF STEEL

**MARIEL CRUZ MARTINEZ**  
(787) 929-3340 • [marielcruzmartinez@gmail.com](mailto:marielcruzmartinez@gmail.com)