

THE WORK FORCE

Making the Games special



CSEA members help make Special Olympics a success, Page 13

Photo of the Month



Photo by Daryl Wilson

Long Island Region Veterans Committee members Herm Williams, left, and Ed Hussey stand at attention as color bearers at a Memorial Day observance at Calverton National Cemetery. Committee members decorated the graves of more than 60 former CSEA members buried in Calverton. The committee also conducted a Flag Day ceremony on June 14, where committee members properly disposed of worn, torn and tattered U.S. flags.

Civil Service exam series set

Prepare for the upcoming Secretary I and II exams for positions in state government! Visit CSEA's Work Institute website at <http://www.csealocal1000.org/wi> or call 1-866-478-5548 or (518)782-4427 for more information.



ALERT



CSEA President Danny Donohue sets member visits in three regions

CSEA President Danny Donohue is launching his next series of "meet the members" visits with stops scheduled in Latham, Commack and East Syracuse.

The meetings will be held in region offices between 1 and 7 p.m. Call the region office to make an appointment and get directions.

Here's the schedule:

Capital Region - Aug. 12

Region office located at 1 Lear Jet Lane, Suite #2, Latham
To make an appointment, call (518) 785-4400 or (800) 874-7344

Long Island Region - Aug. 20

Region office located at 3 Garet Place, Commack
To make an appointment call (631) 462-0030

Central Region - Sept. 2

Region office located at 6595 Kirkville Road, East Syracuse
To make an appointment, call (315) 433-0050 or (800) 559-7975

CSEA, courts contract ratified

CSEA members by 25-1 ratio have overwhelmingly ratified a tentative agreement with the Unified Court System.

The four-year pact, retroactive to April 1, 2007, includes salary increases in every year of the agreement, improved downstate and MidHudson location pay, enhancements in longevity bonuses for

long term employees, improved payments to the Employee Benefit Fund and labor-management programs, and increases funding for body armor for security personnel. There were no significant changes to health insurance provisions.

Ratification ballots were counted June 25.

Bruno era ends in Senate

ALBANY — News that state Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno will not seek re-election resonated throughout CSEA as Bruno had been a powerful union ally for many years.

"CSEA is greatly saddened by Senator Joe Bruno's decision not to seek re-election. Senator Bruno is a great man and great lawmaker who truly cares about making New York a better place," said CSEA President Danny Donohue, noting that Bruno "has been a great friend to CSEA through three decades of

his public life, rolling up his sleeves and working tirelessly to solve very complicated problems."

Donohue praised the selection of Sen. Dean Skelos of Long Island to replace Sen. Joe Bruno as Senate majority leader.

"We have supported the state Senate Majority in the past and are committed to continuing that support in the future," Donohue said.

"We congratulate Sen. Skelos and look forward to working together with him and the Senate Majority," Donohue said.

Former CSEA leader Rita Wallace, 85

MERRICK — Former CSEA Nassau County Local President Rita Wallace, known as a tough, smart and direct leader, died May 19. She was 85.

Wallace spent more than 60 years as a registered nurse working at various institutions, getting involved with the union in 1968. Wallace once cited "misalignment of salaries between



Wallace

public and private sector," as spurring her on to union action.

"Rita Wallace was the heart and soul of CSEA," said CSEA President Danny Donohue.

"She was a tough lady and a terrific union activist," Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte said.

"She believed in things that were right," Wallace's daughter Joan said. "She would never back down if she was fighting for what she believed was right."

Wallace was the Nassau County Local president from 1988 to 1995.

CSEA secures important legislative gains

Several pieces of major importance to CSEA on statewide basis cleared both houses of the legislature in the final days of the state legislative session.

Topping the list of accomplishments was legislation making the state's agency shop fee law permanent. The law requires free riders who benefit from union contracts and representation to pay an agency shop fee equivalent to union dues. The law has been renewed periodically for more the past 30 years, requiring significant CSEA effort each time.

Both houses of the legislature also approved CSEA's priority legislation

establishing a one year moratorium on localities unilaterally changing retiree health benefits.

"These are important actions for the benefit of all CSEA members," said CSEA president Danny Donohue. "They represent important gains but also demonstrate that we must always be vigilant and do whatever we can to better protect our rights and benefits. The measures must now be signed by Gov. Paterson to become law. Visit www.csealocal1000.org for more details on these and other legislative gains.

CSEA pushing to end mandatory overtime

CSEA members employed as nurses recently gained a major victory when Gov. David Paterson announced a three-way agreement with legislative leaders to pass a bill banning mandatory overtime in hospitals, nursing homes and other public and private health care facilities.

This action is a first step toward eliminating mandatory overtime for direct care workers such as certified nursing assistants and therapy aides in the Office of Mental Health and Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

CSEA-supported legislation recently passed to create a task force by the end of this year to address mandatory overtime in direct care, and CSEA will demand that funding be provided next year for the jobs that are needed to fix a broken system.

The demand for overtime by employers has created low morale and a shortage of nursing professionals that is now endangering the overall quality of health care delivery throughout New York state.

Morale problem

Short staffing has been a perennial problem at Office of Mental Health (OMH) and Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) facilities throughout the state.

At some facilities, solutions have been found to work around the need to mandate overtime, but CSEA is committed to getting legislation passed to increase direct care jobs and eliminate the need for mandatory overtime.

At South Beach Psychiatric Center, agreements establish how voluntary overtime will be distributed to mental health therapy aides (MHTA) in work locations throughout the center to avoid mandatory overtime.

While the distribution of overtime is not perfect, Gloria Burnett is still grateful for the overtime agreements developed at South Beach.

"Nobody wants to be mandated," said Burnett, a therapy aide. "It's fine if you want to volunteer, but sometimes if you come in early in the morning, at 4 p.m. you just want to go home."

Finding solutions

Mandated overtime is on the decline at Capital District Psychiatric Center (CDPC), in part through increased staffing.

"The mandates were horrible" said Jim Reedy, a licensed practical nurse and CDPC Local president. "At their peak there were anywhere from four to eight mandates per day. Now, they are around two to three per week."

The key factors contributing to the reduction in mandated overtime are increased staffing, better scheduling of outside appointments and the use of "facility floats."

The "floats" are two workers designated to make staff available to cover shortages before overtime is mandated. Floats handle emergency visits and step in when there is an increase in activity on units.

But more workers continues to be the best solution. Between late last year and this spring, CDPC filled almost 45 positions in several titles, including therapy aides, secretaries, and food service. CDPC acted quickly to fill positions before a statewide hiring freeze was put in effect.

Of the improvements, Reedy said he remains cautiously optimistic, "right now everything seems to be going smoothly, but that could change tomorrow."

CSEA members and management at Taconic DDSO have come together to form an overtime committee tasked with cutting back on constant overtime mandates that have left direct care staff overworked and fatigued.

"When you're getting mandated two to three times per week, by the third shift, you're pretty exhausted," Taconic DDSO Local President Deborah Downey said, explaining that the resulting fatigue often leads to workers being less alert on the job. "It hurts the consumers, because they might not get the care that is needed."

The constant need for workers to stay for overtime is directly related to the need for more workers. Replacements are needed for workers who are out on extended sick leave or administrative leave.



Workers at South Beach Psychiatric Center check their watches in unison, symbolically showing how their work days are often extended by mandatory overtime. CSEA is pushing for an end to mandating overtime for workers.

Downey said management has created a central pool of 10 workers who are dispersed to different group homes and other facilities when a worker is needed. Those workers are already full-time employees, so they are not on overtime. *See related story, Page 5*

— David Galarza, Therese Assalian and Jessica Ladlee

Coming in the September Work Force

CSEA members in the Office of Children and Family Services continue to struggle with outdated policies affecting their safety.

CSEA supporting Obama for president

ALBANY — CSEA is supporting Sen. Barack Obama for United States president.



Obama

"We are very proud of our Senator, Hillary Clinton, and her historic campaign. Senator Clinton is now supporting Senator Obama. After polling our members and speaking with union leaders, the time has come for us to come together and unify in supporting Barack Obama for President of the United States," CSEA President Danny Donohue said.

Obama is the logical choice for American workers, following eight years of devastating leadership that has ruined the economy, lost hundreds of thousands of jobs, and left working Americans with far less than they had a decade ago.

Barack Obama Supports

- * Tax cuts for working families
- * Keeping Social Security
- * Taxing windfall profits of oil companies

John McCain Supports

- * Tax cuts for the rich
- * Privatizing Social Security
- * Huge tax breaks for oil companies

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143 Washington Ave.
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Danny Donohue, President

STEPHEN A. MADARASZ
Communications Director & Publisher

STANLEY HORNAK
Deputy Director of Communications

LOU HMIELESKI
Executive Editor

JANICE MARRA
Associate Editor

CATHLEEN FEBRAIO
Graphic Production Specialist

JANICE M. KUCSKAR
Graphic Production Specialist

BETH McINTYRE
Communications Assistant

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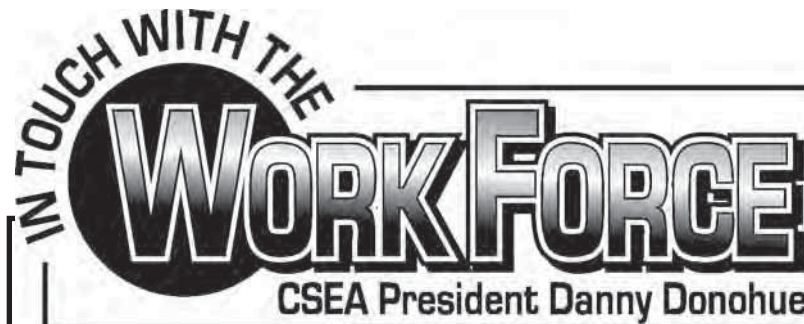
Send any comments, complaints, suggestions or ideas to:
Publisher, *The Work Force*, 143 Washington Avenue,
Albany, NY 12210-2303.

COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATES

RICHARD IMPAGLIAZZO	Long Island Region (631) 462-0030
DAVID GALARZA	Metropolitan Region (212) 406-2156
JESSICA LADLEE	Southern Region (845) 831-1000
THERESE ASSALIAN	Capital Region (518) 785-4400
MARK M. KOTZIN	Central Region (315) 433-0050
LYNN MILLER	Western Region (716) 691-6555
ED MOLITOR	Headquarters (518) 257-1272
JILL ASENCIO	(518) 257-1276

The Publications Committee

Brenda Chartrand
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School tax cap avoids the real issues

It's no surprise that a property tax cap has become a political hot potato in New York.

None of us want to pay more in taxes than we should to protect public safety, provide a good quality of life and most importantly, have a first-rate education system. We have a lot of services in this state and there is a high cost to our government. We also have a lot of issues that need to be addressed and it's certainly fair to expect that we get value for our tax dollar.

That's why it's so troubling to see the idea of the tax cap on school districts gaining so much support, as if it's some kind of magic bullet. It's not. There are no simple, quick-fix answers.

Putting aside the issue of the scandalous inequity between the success of our suburban school districts and the continuing challenges that plague our inner city schools, the real driving force in the rising cost of public education is health insurance costs for school employees. That's a problem that affects us all in New York in both the public and private sector. No school budget cap will address it except to provide a convenient means to shift more burden onto the employees.

It's not right and it doesn't solve anything except to shift debate away from the real problem.

Real political courage would mean focusing on true health care reform and taking a good, hard look at the way we fund education in this state. Otherwise, all we're getting is the same old scapegoating of public employees.



Mandated overtime taking toll on workers

BATAVIA — Think you might want to go to a concert or a baseball game? Don't buy tickets in advance.



Blujus

Need to get your child off the school bus? Better have a backup plan.

Want to go back to college to get a degree and improve your career options? Good luck making it to class regularly.

These are the challenges CSEA members working as certified nursing assistants at the state Veterans Home in Batavia face daily due to large amounts of mandated overtime. It's a problem, union officials say, which affects quality care for the residents and the well-being of the worker.

"Working excessive amounts of overtime is dangerous both for our CSEA members and for the residents in their care," said CSEA Western Region President Flo Tripi. "We need to find a way to balance the needs of the facility with the needs of the workers so that both the residents and employees can be healthy, happy and safe."

A longtime problem
Mandatory overtime is nothing new; it's been happening for at least a decade, said Buffalo State Employees Local Vice President Paul Blujus, a CNA at Batavia.

Recent state legislation will prohibit mandated overtime for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses, but it does nothing for CNAs. (See related story, Page 3)

"When people are hired, they aren't told how bad the mandation is," Blujus said. "You really can't plan anything, like going back to school, because you never know when you will need to work. It's like a trap; the benefits are pretty good, the pay is pretty good but it is nearly impossible to advance yourself and your career."

Buffalo State Employees Local officers acknowledge the facility needs necessary staffing levels to provide quality care for the residents. But quality may suffer when people are repeatedly working 12 or 16-hour days with just a few hours off between shifts.

"The problem is when people are out for any reason," said Local President Tom Rogalski. "If you don't have the bodies to fill the spots



Ginny Dolph, a certified nursing assistant at Batavia Veterans Home, stands with a device for safely lifting patients. The veterans home has instituted safe lifting policies for workers, reducing injuries, but many direct care workers are still subjected to mandatory overtime.

you end up needing to mandate."

Zero Lift a help
"Zero Lift," a system in which mechanical lifts are used to move residents, has helped reduce the mandation slightly by reducing employee injuries. The Batavia Veterans Home is a leader in the implementation of "Zero Lift."

The problem, however, still persists. Several CSEA members, including Blujus, have been stopped by police while traveling home after a double shift.

"The officer said I was weaving," Blujus said. "He asked if I had been drinking. I told him 'no, I

had just worked a 16-hour shift."

Harmful to families
In addition to the safety risks, there is damage to the family. At Batavia, workers can volunteer for extra duty in order to keep their name off the mandation list. That helps keep the employees in control of their own schedules, but it does not address the number of hours being logged each week.

"I believe the mandation has harmed marriages and relationships," Blujus said. "It puts a lot of stress on the family. It is very hard on family life."

— Lynn Miller

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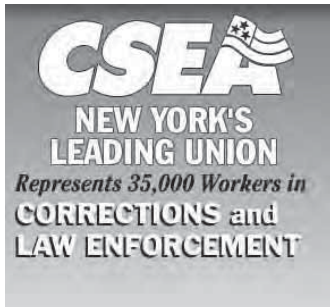
"You really can't plan anything, like going back to school, because you never know when you will need to work."

CSEA Voices



"The rising cost of gasoline has caused me to be more prudent. I just can't drive around anymore. I have to plan trips and be conscious of the route I am taking. I am trying to drive only if I really need to go someplace."

— Louis Rouse, Roswell Park Local, on how the rising cost of gasoline has affected him.



Clinton, Greene corrections officers demand fair contract

“Morale is very low.”

Two CSEA corrections officers units in the Capital Region are fighting for a fair contract.

In Clinton County, corrections officers are in fact-finding after three sessions with a mediator failed to result in a contract. Meanwhile, Greene County corrections officers are starting their campaign for a fair contract after 10 negotiating sessions and a declaration of impasse. The previous contract expired Jan. 1, 2007.

Speaking out in Clinton

On June 11, the Clinton County officers held a demonstration before a county legislature meeting to protest stalled contract talks. Their previous contract expired Jan. 1, 2008.

Corrections officers were joined by CSEA members from the county unit, SUNY Plattsburgh and Peru School District, along with representatives from other area labor unions. The

crowd, more than 100 strong, shouted “No contract, no peace,” “Contract now,” and “Overworked and underpaid.”

Following the demonstration, CSEA Capital Region President Kathy Garrison addressed the crowd outside the county building. She said the fight will continue for as long as it takes and blasted the sheriff for not supporting his own employees.

“It’s disgusting that he isn’t here tonight to support you,” Garrison said.

At the meeting, Garrison urged county legislators to give the corrections officers a fair contract.

“This has gone on for too long; shame on you,” she said. “You gave the sheriff a \$17,000 raise and you won’t even offer corrections officers a cost of living increase.”

A fact-finding meeting is scheduled for June 30 and correction officers are



Clinton County Local President Joe Musso, front center left, and Clinton County Corrections Officers Unit President Terry Guynup listen as Capital Region President Kathy Garrison, not shown, addresses the crowd.

hoping for a resolution.

The unit has taken its plight to the public, running several radio and print ads.

“We’re hoping legislators will take a look at the conditions we’re working under,” said Unit President Terry Guynup. “They need to find out for themselves. If they did, they might be friendlier.”

Fighting in Greene

Corrections officers working at the Greene County Jail are also battling for a fair contract. Workers there have also been contending with many issues at the jail, including understaffing, high turnover, trouble getting time off and poor working conditions as a result of working in an old building.

“It’s very frustrating; the working conditions are poor and we have no contract,” said Unit

President Karen Jaycox. “Morale is very low.”

Key issues holding up negotiations include the officers’ desire to be reallocated to a higher grade in line with other professional titles such as probation officers and deputies. Salary increases and longevity stipends are also an issue.

“The things we are asking for are things we should have had anyway,” Unit Vice President Alan Scully said.

Jaycox said that for too long, corrections officers’ issues have been on the back burner. “We need the county to start focusing on us. We are trained professionals and we deserve to be acknowledged and compensated.”

— Therese Assalian

CSEA Voices



“I live, work and play in the same area. I don’t travel a lot, but when I do, it hurts. The cost of gasoline impacts the price of the food you buy and everything right on down the line.”

— Steve Chase, Wende Correctional Facility, Alden, on how the rising cost of gasoline is affecting him.



Clinton County Jail corrections officers and their supporters demonstrate for a fair contract.

Early intervention boosts babies

SARATOGA SPRINGS — Public health nurses in New York are assisting the state's youngest residents through their work with the Maternal Child Health Program.

The program helps families with all aspects of infant care from pre-natal to post-partum, with an emphasis on early detection of developmental issues.

CSEA member Lorie Urquhart, a registered nurse employed as a Saratoga County public health nurse, visits families in their homes starting as early as when infants are a few days old.

Urquhart fields questions, offers advice on general care and looks at the home beyond the baby. "You take the whole family into consideration," she said.

She also assesses babies for development in areas of gross and fine motor skills, language, social and adaptive-thinking skills. "If we can pick up on things early enough, we can get services and get them up to age-appropriate," Urquhart said.

If needed, a referral is made to the Early Intervention Program. Pediatricians also make referrals to the program.

"We try to get them where they need to be; whatever services they need," Urquhart said.

The frequency of visits is determined as needed. Urquhart may visit a family once or make weekly visits over an extended period, depending on the particular situation.

Though the Maternal Child Health program is state-mandated, not all counties operate the program in the same way.

Urquhart said she considers herself lucky to be working directly with families in their homes, and she visits between three to five families each day. "It's interesting to meet different families and monitor their progress over time," she said. "I've met some great families."

To Urquhart, her job is an easy one.

"I get to spend time with babies and play with blocks, it's not like working."

— **Therese Assalian**



Saratoga County Public Health Nurse Lorie Urquhart cares for infants and families in her work with the Maternal Child Health Program.

CSEA

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SERVICES**

"We try to get them where they need to be; whatever services they need."

July and August CSEA calendar of events

Statewide:

July 27 - Aug. 1: **AFSCME International Convention**, San Francisco
Aug. 30 - 31: **CSEA Weekend at the New York State Fair** (See Page 20 for more)

Long Island Region:

July 22: **Steward Workshop**, Registration: 8:30 - 9 a.m. Workshop: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Long Beach Ice Skating Arena
July 23-24: **Defensive Driving**, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m., Long Island Region Office, Commack. To register, call (800) 942-6874.
July 26: **Defensive Driving**, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Long Island Region Office, Commack. To register, call (800) 942-6874.
Aug. 6-7: **Defensive Driving**, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m., Long Island Region Office, Commack. To register, call (800) 942-6874.
Aug. 23: **Defensive Driving**, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Long Island Region Office, Commack. To register, call (800) 942-6874.

Metropolitan Region:

July 12: **State Government Grievance Representation Workshop**, Registration: 8:30 - 9 a.m. Workshop: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Bronx Psychiatric Center

Southern Region:

July 9-10: **Defensive Driving**, 6-9 p.m., CSEA Rockland County Local Office, New

City. Call 1-800-942-6894 for reservations.

July 12: **Defensive Driving**, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., CSEA Rockland County Local Office, New City. Call 1-800-942-6894 for reservations.
July 12: **Defensive Driving**, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., CSEA Westchester County Local Office, White Plains. To register, call 1-800-942-6874.

July 22-23: **Defensive Driving**, 6 - 9 p.m., CSEA Westchester County Local Office, White Plains. To register, call 1-800-942-6874.

Aug. 6-7: **Defensive Driving**, 6 - 9 p.m., CSEA Westchester County Local Office, White Plains. To register, call 1-800-942-6874.

Aug. 16: **Defensive Driving**, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., CSEA Westchester County Local Office, White Plains. To register, call 1-800-942-6874 to register.

Capital Region:

July 29-30: **State Government Grievance Representation Workshop**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m. Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., SUNY Plaza, Albany

Central Region:

July 9-10: **State Government Grievance Representation Workshop**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m. Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Upstate Medical Center Local Office, Syracuse

July 15-16: **Local Government/Private Sector Grievance Representation Workshop**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m. Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Holiday Inn, Oneonta
July 22-23: **Local Government/Private Sector Grievance Representation Training**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m. Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Ridgeview Lodge, Lowville
Aug. 11-12: **State Government Discipline and Interrogation Training**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m. Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Central Region Office, East Syracuse
Aug. 11 & 18: **Contract Negotiations II: Negotiating Team Training**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m. Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Binghamton Satellite Office, Binghamton
Aug. 12-13: **State Grievance Representation Training**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m. Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Binghamton Satellite Office, Binghamton

Western Region:

July 9: **Private Sector Contract Negotiations II: Negotiating Team Training**, Registration: 9:30 - 10 a.m. Workshop: 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Western Region Office, Amherst
July 12: **Defensive Driving**, 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., CSEA Rochester Satellite Office. To register, call (585) 272-0800.

CSEA Voices



"I've been thinking about riding my bike to work. It's about 20 minutes on the bike. I'm also hoping the state will go to a four-day workweek with 10 hours a day. That would help us all save money."

— **Brenda Parson, New York State Museum, Albany, on how the rising cost of gasoline is affecting her.**



CSEA members have been hard at work preparing the park for the anticipated surge of visitors.

CSEA Voices



“I am hoping for change for everyone, from youth to seniors. I am hoping the next president will look out for all of us and make things better. Times are tough right now.”

— Gwen Owens, Office of Mental Hygiene, Albany, on the economy.

Playland offers summertime fun for fewer dollars

RYE — The sign that greets visitors to the Westchester County-run Playland amusement park reads: “Vacation close to home.”

With gas prices at historic highs, more people are doing just that.

What that means for CSEA members employed by the Westchester County Parks Department and stationed at Playland is, summer at the popular facility is expected to be even busier than usual.

The park, which is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year, boasts more than 50 attractions and rides, mini-golf and a small lake with boat rides, in addition to an adjacent pool and beach complex that draws thousands of visitors.

Though the facility is smaller in size than theme parks in nearby New Jersey and Pennsylvania, the cost of a day at Playland makes it an unbeatable value.

“We’re close by and



CSEA members Joe Greco, left, an electrician at Playland, and Anthony Fogal, an electrical helper, prepare a vacant site where a ride called the Yo-Yo is slated for installation. In the background is the Kite Flyer ride.

we’re a free admission park,” said CSEA member Kenneth Puccia, who runs Playland’s marketing operation. “You can spend as little or as much as you want. Unlike other parks, parents don’t have to pay extra if they are not going on rides.”

CSEA members have been hard at work

preparing the park for the anticipated surge of visitors. The park’s maintenance staff, which consists of carpenters, electricians, plumbers and other tradespersons, work long hours making sure the park is in top shape.

“Our workers do daily inspections of every ride,

to make sure everything is working properly and is safe,” said CSEA member Frank Carrieri, a maintenance supervisor at Playland. “That is in addition to New York state doing its own inspections.”

— Jessica Ladlee



Derrick Graham, a plumber at Playland, makes repairs to an outdoor shower at Playland Beach.



Louis Carrieri and Antonio Piloni, painters at Playland, spruce up a curb in a parking lot.



John Fabro, left, and Jim Cody, maintenance mechanics at Playland, prepare to replace fencing at the park. The Log Flume ride is in the background.

County workers push early strategy for new contract

WAMPSVILLE — Gone are the days when CSEA members would only get involved after negotiations went sour.

Gone also are the days when members would simply write “wish lists” for negotiations on a blank piece of paper. And gone are the days, as CSEA members in Madison County are hoping, when management holds too much power in the contract negotiations process.

CSEA members and leaders in the Madison County White Collar Unit are re-writing the rules about how they go about their entire approach to the contract negotiations process and they are already seeing positive results.

The process of change actually started after their previous contract was ratified, when many CSEA members felt they settled for a contract that didn't meet their needs. Shortly after, new unit officers were elected.

Different approach

From the start, said Madison County White Collar Unit President Russell Stewart, they vowed that the negotiations process would be far different the next time around.

Stewart and the unit executive board's first order of business was to create an advisory committee, made up of representatives from each of the departments. Their idea was that if members were more involved before getting to negotiations and communications were improved, more people would be informed and involved at start of the next negotiations.

They also initiated regular membership “blast” updates via an e-mail distribution list they set up to provide regular information to rank-and-file members.

They continued to meet regularly with CSEA Field Mobilization Specialist Michael Ottaviano and other union staff who helped them set up a steering committee to set priority issues and actions, as well as work on contract language, wages



CSEA Madison County White Collar Unit officers speak with county Board of Supervisors Chairman John Becker at the unit's recent “Meet the Supervisors Picnic.” From left are unit Treasurer LeeAnn Andrae, President Russell Stewart, Becker, and Secretary Betty Jo Johnson. Not pictured, but also present, was unit Vice President Wayne Perkins.

Local Government Contract News

and title, and health insurance proposals.

This ongoing work includes research on salary levels, membership surveys regarding the current contract and ideas for the upcoming negotiations and a review of the county's budget documents. The workers put a lot of time into these efforts, resulting in a much clearer direction for the start of negotiations.

Also clearer was the support of unit members. When membership meetings were called, member turnout increased and unit members strongly supported their leadership's efforts. “It was like our members were finally getting more aware of and engaged in the process of their contract,” Stewart said.

New approach

The unit has also tried new ways to build support for the process, including recently holding a “Meet the Supervisors Picnic,” where members and elected representatives from the county Board of Supervisors mingled for a

picnic lunch in a relaxed setting to discuss concerns informally.

Members wore stickers bearing the contract campaign theme “Madison County Workers Taking Care of Madison County Families.” In addition to creating a brochure that was delivered to 16,000 homes through the daily newspaper, the unit is also planning television and radio advertising to build public visibility and enhance the reputation of the CSEA work force.

“We realize that we're not going to change everything overnight, but we're committed to making lasting changes that will strengthen our union and our position at the bargaining table,” Stewart said.

Despite the unit continuing to negotiate in its sixth month without a new contract in place, Stewart said that the changes have made a difference.

“We're going to do everything we can to build on that momentum towards getting a fair contract for our members,” Stewart said.

— Mark M. Kotzin



“We realize that we're not going to change everything overnight, but we're committed to making lasting changes that will strengthen our union and our position at the bargaining table.”

CSEA Voices



“I am looking forward to a new president. The economy is very scary right now when you think about all that is going on. What a mess; it's frightening.”

— Penny McNally, High Peaks State Employees Local Vice President, Department of Environmental Conservation, on the economy.

INSIDE THE WORKFORCE

CSEA activists 'Fight to Win'

NIAGARA FALLS — Hundreds of CSEA activists recently met in Niagara Falls to learn ways they can "Fight to Win."

More than 800 union members gathered in the Cataract City for the annual Spring Workshop. The weekend focused on building skills that will carry CSEA well into its next 100 years.

CSEA President Danny Donohue also presented the union's Mission Achievement Awards to distinguished union activists in the state, local government and private sector divisions. (*Stories on Page 11*)

"We are meeting at a time when we must respond to a world and a workplace that are changing at a pace few dreamed possible just a few years ago," Donohue said. "Economically,



Long Island DDSO Local President Daryl Wilson makes a point during a workshop.

financially, technologically, politically and personally so much is happening that we can no longer do 'business as usual.' We must respond to change in kind by accepting it, learning from it, and turning it to our advantage."

Participants had the opportunity to attend numerous workshops to build their union leadership skills. Sessions focused on ways to increase member participation, the CSEA Web site, tools for communication, workplace violence prevention and building an activist network.

"I'm pretty new to CSEA," said Casey Shantie, a St. Lawrence County Department Social Services worker. "This workshop is a good opportunity for me to learn about the union and how I can be involved."

Peacemaking in the Workplace

The session "Peacemaking in the Workplace" empowered members to address violent or potentially violent situations in their workplace and in their communities in a non-violent and life-affirming way.

"We learned how to be peacemakers and to hear both sides of the story," said Jeanne Kreavy, an Erie County Local activist. "We learned to consider where people are coming from;



CSEA members under age 35 take part in a plenary session on the "CSEA Next Wave" initiative to engage younger union members in the union.

maybe something happened at home that they brought to work. When you see a potentially violent-situation taking place, don't walk away from it. We now know how to react and what to do to stop it while it is at a low level before it peaks."

Another workshop, "Creative Membership Meetings," allowed activists to discuss what works and what doesn't when it comes to increasing attendance at meetings.

"I've enjoyed listening to people from groups that are larger than mine," said William Montgomery, new president of the Rye City School District Unit. "It is amazing to see that we all have the same problems getting people to meetings. I'm going

home with some good ideas that I hope to implement."

CSEA members under age 35, like Shantie, had a chance to share their concerns with the union during a special focus group. The "CSEA Next Wave" project will help the union grow and develop as it nears its centennial mark. The initiative will help officers develop mentoring and transition programs to help today's rank and file young people become tomorrow's leaders and activists.

— Lynn Miller

CSEA's 2008 Mission Achievement Award winners

CSEA President Danny Donohue presented the union's 2008 Mission Achievement Awards during the CSEA Spring Workshop's June 6 dinner program. CSEA's Mission Achievement Awards are the union's highest honor and salutes members who exemplify CSEA's mission.

Private Sector winner

Wayne Schultes, a vehicle maintenance operator at Albany International Airport, heard how working conditions were going to improve once a new contractor came on board to assume airport management.

He discovered quite the opposite just before Baltimore-based AvPORTS replaced TBI Airport Management in July 2005 as the airport's manager. The private-sector airport workers called CSEA in June 2006 after meeting together to discuss their options, fought for and won the right to join the union, and now have their first contract in placed.

Schultes received the 2008 Private Sector Mission Achievement Award at CSEA's Spring Workshop, which he was unable to attend due to work obligations.

"Wayne Schultes and all the



Private Sector Mission Achievement Award Winner and AvPorts Local President Wayne Schultes.

other workers who stood up for what they believed in deserve to be commended. Winning a private sector union election in the current labor environment is no small achievement, but this group showed that when pushed, workers can push back," said CSEA Capital Region President Kathy Garrison.

"I'm just a mechanic but I feel honored. Everyone was talking about needing a union. Somebody had to step up and start the legwork to get our union started. The way our company was headed, we needed something on paper so they couldn't arbitrarily take things away, Schultes said.

Local Government winner

CSEA activist Theresa Palmer believes enough in unions that she spent her own time going door to door to sign up new union members.

The president of the Binghamton City School District Clerical/Custodial Unit, Palmer, an account clerk typist at the MacArthur Elementary School, first became active in the union 15 years ago.

"She didn't get release time to work on our VOICE campaign. She gave up her own vacation time to work hard on behalf of these workers, and she's well deserving of this award. She should serve as an inspiration to all union members," Central Region President Colleen Wheaton said.

"It felt really good to be recognized for doing something that needed to be done, to help out when help was needed," Palmer said.

Palmer is also active on the Region's Political Action and Schools Committees, and graduated from CSEA's LEAD program in 2005. Along the way she's worked calling people on phone banks, helped set up union workshops and sold T-shirts to



State Mission Achievement Award Winner Paul Blujus, a certified nursing assistant at the New York State Veterans Home in Batavia, and Buffalo State Employees Local Vice President, and Local Government Mission Achievement Award Winner Theresa Palmer, the CSEA Binghamton Central School District Unit President, stand with CSEA President Danny Donohue after winning their awards.

raise money for CSEA flood victims.

"I do whatever they ask me to if I'm free and available to do it. I guess it's just in my blood to help my fellow union brothers and sisters. It's a great feeling, knowing you helped someone else."

State Government winner

Paul Blujus couldn't believe it when he learned he'd been selected to receive CSEA's 2008 State Mission Achievement Award for his efforts to bring "zero-lift" to the state Veterans Home in Batavia.

"At first, I thought someone was playing a joke on me," Blujus said. "When it finally sunk in that I was receiving the award, I felt a bit of guilt. Zero-lift has been a team effort, by far."

Zero-lift has been a few years in the making. With zero-lift, direct care workers at the Batavia Veterans Home use a series of mechanical lifts and assistive devices to raise and transport

residents. Since they no longer have to manually lift and carry residents, the risk of injury — both to workers and residents — is significantly reduced.

"Paul has done so much for CSEA members working at the Veterans Home, but he doesn't plan to stop with just Batavia," said Western Region President Flo Tripi. "The ultimate goal is to see zero-lift in every nursing facility throughout the state. I commend Paul for all that he has done and for all that he will do as zero-lift develops and expands."

"I think of all the people I've worked with throughout the years," he said. "I think of people I work with now who have constant pain from their injuries suffered at work. They are my motivation."

Blujus has been a certified nursing assistant (CNA) at the Veterans Home for more than a decade.

— Jill Asencio, Lynn Miller, Mark Kotzin

Aug. 13, 2008, is the Sept. 11 registry deadline!

Sign up now to protect your rights

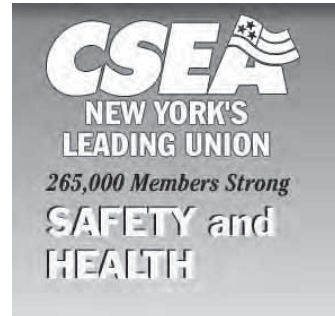
If you aided in the rescue, recovery or cleanup efforts at the World Trade Center site after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, it is important that you register with the state Workers' Compensation Board no later than Aug. 13, 2008, to be eligible for compensation claims related to the attacks.

By registering, you will preserve your right to file a workers' compensation claim, in case you get sick in the future.

In the aftermath of the attacks in lower Manhattan, tens of thousands of people rushed to help. Among those people were CSEA members from across the state, who not only pitched in through their jobs but gave their personal time to the recovery effort.

The registry is open to workers who were assigned or volunteered to participate in the effort.

Thousands of people worked at the site in the year after Sept. 11,



2001, and now, many of those responders are becoming sick and some are dying.

Rescue, recovery, and cleanup workers were exposed to a "toxic soup" of airborne containments. This is a historic exposure;

no event to date has exposed workers to such a wide array of substances under similar circumstances. No research exists to speculate what may happen in the future to workers who were exposed. There is no way of telling what may happen to your health, protect yourself by registering.

For more information, contact the CSEA Occupational Safety and Health Department at (800) 342-4146, visit the NYCOSH website at www.nycosh.org, or call the toll-free, 24-hour hotline at (866) WTC-2556.

Information is available in Spanish and English. Register now before it's too late.

What is the registry?

The New York State Workers' Compensation Law has been changed to allow someone who was exposed to toxic air, but is not sick, to register with the board to protect their right to file a workers' compensation claim if you become sick from a Sept. 11-related illness at any time in the future.

What is the deadline to register?

The deadline for registering is Aug. 13, 2008. If you do not register before the deadline, you will never be able to collect workers' compensation if you develop a Sept. 11-related illness later.

Who is eligible?

Most people who did rescue, recovery or cleanup work, either as a volunteer or for pay, between Sept. 11, 2001 and Sept. 12, 2002, anywhere in Manhattan south of Canal or Pike Streets, on the barge operation between Lower Manhattan and Staten Island, at the Staten Island landfill or at the New York City morgue or temporary morgues during that time. Hundreds of CSEA members are eligible.

How to register?

On the Internet, go to www.nycosh.org and click on the link near the top of the page. Or call 1-866-WTC-2556 to request a form. On the form, you must write the dates and locations of the rescue, recovery or cleanup work you did and the name of your employer, or the organization you volunteered with. If you did rescue, recovery or cleanup work for no pay, you should register as a volunteer, even if you were not a part of an organized group of volunteers, giving the details of the work you performed. The registration form must be a sworn and notarized statement, so it is very important to make certain it is accurate and complete.

From www.nycosh.org.

Unit and local scholarship winners

CSEA locals and units across the state recently awarded scholarships. Please check CSEA's website at www.csealocal1000.org for additional winners.

Long Island Region:

Port Washington School District Custodial, Maintenance and Transportation Unit: \$500 scholarships to **Amie Garcia** and **Sadiyah Hoque**.

Copiague School District Full-Time Custodial and Maintenance Unit: \$500 scholarships to **Duane Stewart** and **Stephanie Amedeo**.

Capital Region:

Saratoga County Educational Local: Academic Achievement Award: **Matthew Goodwin**, whose father,

Mike Goodwin, is head custodian in the Saratoga Springs School District.

Community Service Award: **Mitchell Wheeler**, whose mother, Carol Wheeler, is an attendance clerk for the Shenendehowa School District.

Charles Luch Memorial Award: **Melissa Iaquina**, whose mother, Betsy Iaquina, is a clerk at Saratoga Springs High School.

Albany County Local: The local awarded \$1,200 George Sheffield Memorial Scholarships to **Joseph Kral**, whose mother Linda Testa, works at Albany County Children, Youth and Family Services, and **Patrick Kane**, whose father, Bill Kane, works for the City of Cohoes and whose mother, Kelly Ann Kane, works for the Cohoes City School District.



Visit your Company Store at
<http://cseastore.sm-pm.com>
or www.csealocal1000.org

All Products are Union-Made in the USA

In-Stock Items - Order in quantities as small as 1 item
Special-Order Items - Imprint with local information - Minimum quantities apply

Third Quarter Specials

CSE-151 Long Sleeve Denim Shirt	CSE-152 Navy T-Shirt
• 7.5 oz denim • features an embossed logo • button down	• red embossed CSEA logo • 100% cotton
COLOR: blue	COLOR: navy
COST/SIZE:	COST/SIZE:
\$25.20 \$28.00 (M-XXL)	\$12.80 \$14.25 (M-XL)
\$32.10 \$35.75 (3X-4X)	\$14.10 \$15.70 (2X)
	\$15.40 \$17.10 (3X)
	\$16.65 \$18.50 (4X)



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While Supplies Last

CSEA helps make the 2008 Special Olympics Summer Games a success with volunteerism and unity

It's all fun and games

BINGHAMTON — CSEA volunteers of all sorts came out to help make the 2008 Special Olympics New York Summer Games a success.

Members participated through planning, fund-raising, distribution of water and lunches, and coaching gold medal winners. Some were veteran volunteers, others participated for their first time, but all agreed on how important it is for CSEA members to give back to their communities.



New to the Games



Lee

“Society has changed so much. People used to volunteer for the 4H Club or other civic organizations. We need to get back to that,” said SUNY Binghamton Local President David Lee, a first-time Summer Games volunteer.

“As a union, we need to reach out to each other and get involved. We have 750 members on this campus alone we can reach out to. We often seek community support but we need to support the community too,” Lee said.



Clugstone

CSEA member Linda Clugstone, also a first-time volunteer, served on the Games Organizing Committee in addition to assisting with

Special Olympics Facts

- 2,200 athletes and coaches participate
- 1,500 volunteers
- 500 family members and spectators
- There are eight sports venues: aquatics, bowling, basketball, gymnastics, powerlifting, track and field, tennis and volleyball
- The Special Olympics is a year-round cost free program due to the various fund-raising programs like the Polar Plunge and Million Dollar Duck Race.

getting the word out via the Internet.

“I had just had an annual review and my boss said to me ‘Linda, you need to get out of your comfort zone.’ So, I thought, what better way than to act as volunteer coordinator for CSEA at the Games.”

Clugstone reached out to CSEA members, made numerous phone calls, sent e-mails, distributed fliers and posted information about the games on all union bulletin boards around campus.

“After I went to the first committee meeting, I was hooked. I really felt like I could do something for someone else. Plus, the enormity of it; the number of athletes this program benefits. I thought, ‘We’re going to do this for 2,500 athletes?’ It was so impressive to see the team come together and make it happen.”

Longtime CSEA volunteers

Mario Papa, an electrician at the Staten Island DDSO and CSEA member for 20 years, has been volunteering as a swim coach since he was 18. Twelve years ago, his son was born with autism.

“I became a coach first and parent of a disabled child next,” Papa said.

Often this is the other way around for Special Olympics coaches, but Papa continues to volunteer his time because he



Staten Island DDSO electrician Mario Papa has volunteered at the Special Olympics Summer Games more than a decade as a swim coach.

believes it is so important to the athletes.

“I tell my athletes, all that matters is that you have fun. They are all gold winners in my book. The athletes teach you things we take for granted that they have to work for.”

— Jill Asencio

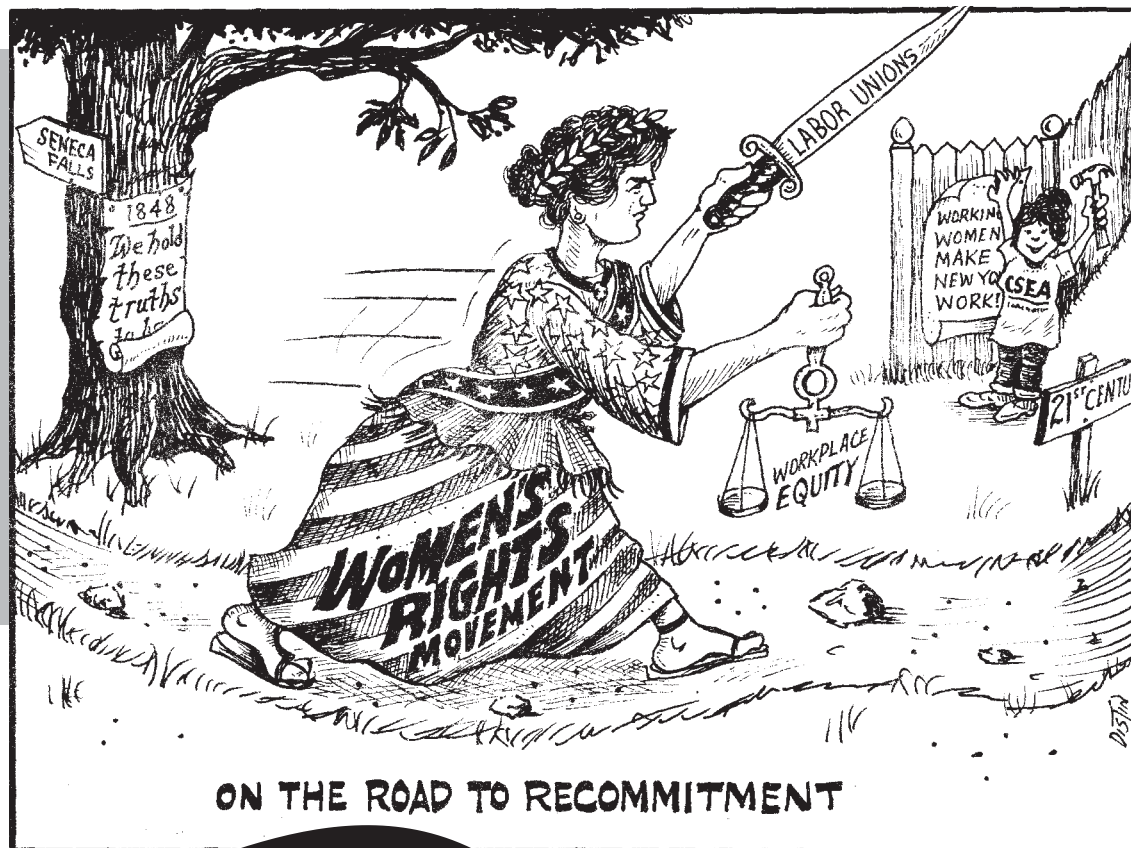
On Page 1



Dave Cohn, a developmental aide at Broome Developmental Center, coached his Special Olympics Division 2 basketball team to an impressive 16-2 win. Cohn is pictured above with two of the athletes he coaches.

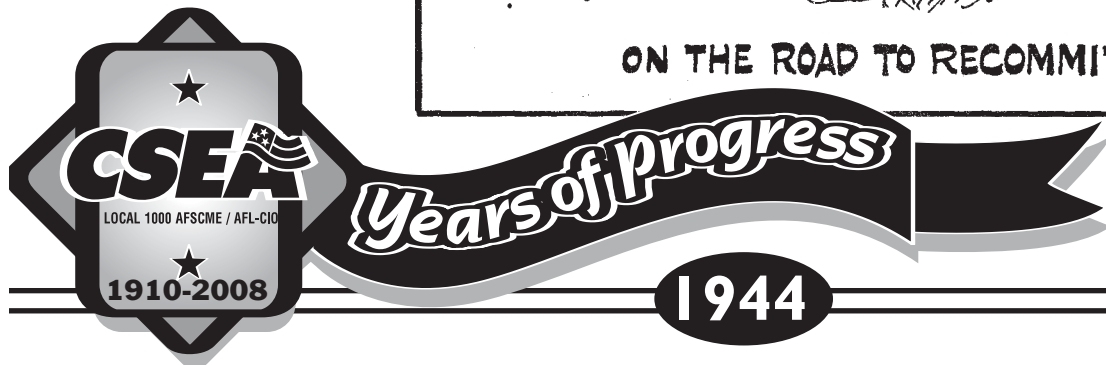


Staten Island DDSO electrician Mario Papa, right, poses for a photo on the winners podium with his gold winning swim team at the Special Olympics. They are joined by co-coach Beth Lawrence, left.



From our history

A vintage cartoon by CSEA artist Ralph Distin that first ran in CSEA's official publication, *The Public Sector*, in July 1998.



64 years ago ...

In July 1944, one month after D-Day, New York's public employees on the home front were preoccupied with the annual "Miss Civil Service" contest. In what seems to be a cultural phenomenon of a past era, the contestants were nominated on their beauty and employment as a federal, state or municipal worker. No other qualification or accomplishment is mentioned in the nominating process.

The judging for the semifinals of the competition took place in the office of the New York City Council President Newbold Morris, who was serving on the panel along with magazine illustrator Russell Patterson and 20th Century Fox talent scout Joe Holton.

The contest, sponsored by the *Civil Service Leader* newspaper, featured a first prize of \$350, along with a fur coat. In announcing the contest results, the newspaper described the eventual winner, Mary Nelson, as an "attractive, brown-haired girl," and detailed her height, weight and measurements, a reminder of that era's chauvinism. How times have changed!



Above, two semifinalists in the *Civil Service Leader's* 1944 "Miss Civil Service" contest. Women employed in civil service competed in the newspaper's beauty contest for a fur coat, a reminder of the era's chauvinism.

Also in 1944 ...

- * U.S. and other Allied forces invade the beaches of Normandy, France on June 6, in what would become known as D-Day.
- * U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt is re-elected to an unprecedented fourth term.
- * Anne Frank and her family are located by the Gestapo on a tip and sent to concentration camps.
- * The G.I. Bill of Rights is passed, providing benefits for armed services veterans.
- * The Dumbarton Oaks Conference, consisting of leaders from the United States, the British Commonwealth and the Soviet Union, propose establishment of United Nations.
- * "Casablanca" wins the Oscar for Best Picture.
- * Disney's "The Three Caballeros" becomes the first film to combine live action and animation

2008 CSEA Special Board of Directors Election

Contested Board of Directors races are under way for the Universities board seat and the Rockland County board seat. Ballots were mailed to the voting membership on June 11, 2008, and replacement ballots were available beginning June 19, 2008.

The remaining schedule is as follows:

July 2, 2008: Deadline for receipt of ballots (9 a.m.). Ballot count commences (9:30 a.m.). Election results will be announced after the ballot count is complete and certified. Candidates will be notified by mail of the results.

End of Protest Period: 10 days following Statewide Election Committee certification of results.

September 2008: Results printed in *The Work Force*.

Voting Eligibility Date: Only CSEA members in good standing of Local 844 (Rockland County seat) and in SUNY Locals (Universities seat) as of April 1, 2008, will be eligible to vote in this special election.

Election Oversight: The CSEA Statewide Election Committee will oversee the election process.

Break in membership affects eligibility for union office, voting privileges

A break in union membership status can have long-term future implications. Your membership status affects your eligibility with respect to:

- seeking or holding union office;
- signing nominating petitions for potential candidates;
- voting in union elections, and;
- voting on collective bargaining contracts.

Only members "in good standing" can participate in these activities. To be in "good standing," your dues cannot be delinquent.

If you go on unpaid leave or for any other reason have a break in your employment status, your dues will not continue to be paid through payroll deductions. You must make arrangements to pay your dues directly to CSEA to continue your membership status. If you are either laid off or placed on leave without pay status due to becoming disabled by accident, illness, maternity or

paternity, you may be eligible for dues-free membership status for a period not to exceed one year. If you are called up for active military duty you may also apply for dues-free status.

Note, however, you **must** continue to pay dues to run for office. Dues-free or gratuitous membership allows members to continue their insurance coverage while out of work. It does not protect your right to run for or hold office. This does not apply to members who are on leave due to being called up for military duty. Members on active military duty, upon return, are considered to have had continuous membership status for all CSEA election purposes.

Please notify the CSEA Membership Records Department at 1-800-342-4146, Ext. 1327, of any change in your status and what arrangements you are making to continue your membership in CSEA.

CSEA helps fight Multiple Sclerosis



Southern Region CSEA members recently participated in National Multiple Sclerosis Society's local Walk MS events. Eastern Correctional Facility workers, shown above, recently participated in Walk MS Sullivan County in Monticello. The Eastern Correctional local raised nearly \$900 through the walk. "It was really wonderful to participate in the walk and we would like to do it again," Local President Jen Camisa said. Also, Putnam County Unit President John Mulreany and Putnam County Local 2nd Vice President Mark Semo and other CSEA members employed by the county participated in Walk MS Putnam County in Carmel. CSEA members also recently participated in Walk MS Westchester County in Rye. Shown above are Eastern Correctional Facility workers, including CSEA members Jen Camisa, local president; Tracy Travis, Cindy Gillepsie, Roni Dupree and her daughter and Ellen Scott, and non-CSEA represented workers Sue Lewis and Jim Wilson also participated in the walk.

Leading at CBTU



CSEA Secretary Denise Berkley, right, recently received the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists' Rising Star award at the CBTU's national convention in St. Louis. The award is given to CBTU members in recognition of their commitment to the CBTU agenda and all AFL-CIO constituency groups. Berkley is pictured with CSEA Human Resources staff Portia Given at the recent CSEA Spring Workshop. Given and Nassau County Local member Rudy Bruce were both elected to the CBTU's National Executive Council this year.

Have you checked out the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund website?

The CSEA Employee Benefit Fund website at www.cseaebf.com can answer many of your questions about our programs and benefits, and save you time and phone calls.

Our website is an informational tool used to guide our members about their benefits with the CSEA EBF, and you may only be a few clicks away from getting answers to your questions.

Please take a few minutes and navigate through our website, and see some of the great features we have to offer. Listed below are many features on the EBF website:

Provider Search

Our provider search is our most frequently used feature on the website. Changes are made to the website as soon as

EBF forms

Download the following forms from our website:

- HIPAA Authorization Form
- Student Proof
- Prescription co-pay reimbursement form (state employees)
- Prescription/Physician co-pay reimbursement form (UCS)
- Vision Care Reimbursement
- Legal Services
- Remove Dependent

new providers come on or off our panel. Please call the provider to make sure they are participating with CSEA EBF.

Plan Summaries

You can download and print plan booklets pertaining to your benefits. State, Unified Court System, Olympic Regional Development Authority and State Liquidation Bureau employees should click on "Plan Brochures" under the Library menu and then choose the brochure you need.

Local Government employees should click on "Plan Brochures" and then select from Dental, Misc., or Vision options under Document Library.

HIPAA

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) requires the employer to maintain the confidentiality of health information that identifies the member. This extends to any other businesses that the employer must share information with.

EBF cannot disclose any personal health information that includes dental, vision and miscellaneous benefits information about a member or their dependents under age 18 to anyone other than the member.



EBF must have a signed HIPAA Authorization form on file before answers can be provided. This also applies if a spouse

is calling about the other spouse or a child 18 years of age or older. To access the form, please go to the left side bar and click on "HIPAA Statement" or contact EBF at (800) 323-2732. Forms on file are valid for two years from the date authorized.

Retiree Dental Program

Retirees have a section on the website that explains the dental program available. This program is for retirees who were previously covered by an EBF dental plan with continued dental coverage from the date of retirement.

Application for coverage must be made no later than 90 days from the date of retirement, end of COBRA or termination of another dental plan. For local government retirees, a Memorandum of Agreement must be signed by your employer before benefits are available. Please check with EBF to see if you are eligible to participate.

Contact Marketing Representatives

Under the "Benefits Specialists" heading, you will find the e-mail addresses of each marketing representative, as well as, the marketing director and marketing coordinator. Always feel free to e-mail any questions or concerns you may have regarding your benefits with EBF.

Links

There are two links on the front page of our website: CSEA's website, located at www.csealocal1000.org, and Davis Vision.

On the Davis Vision link, you can access your eligibility date with CSEA EBF for vision benefits. You can also call us to check your eligibility at (800) 323-2732, ext. 880.

We would like to take this opportunity to get your feedback on our website and give us some ideas on how to improve it for our members. You can e-mail us at jbalander@cseaebf.org with your questions or comments. We are always welcome to new ideas!

Visit the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund website at www.cseaebf.com.

An Ever Better Future

Protecting Your Benefits

Health insurance changes effective July 1, 2008

Editor's Note: The following information is intended for CSEA represented Executive Branch enrollees — enrollees employed by the state of New York covered by one of the following CSEA collective bargaining agreements; Administrative Services Unit, Institutional Services Unit, Operational Services Unit or the Division of Military and Naval Affairs.

The CSEA Health Benefits Department would like to remind New York State Health Insurance Program enrollees that the following changes will take effect on July 1, 2008. Two of the changes affect all NYSHIP (Empire Plan & HMO) enrollees. The remainder of the plan changes are Empire Plan “only” changes.

July 1, 2008, changes affecting all NYSHIP enrollees (Empire Plan & HMO enrollees):

Eligibility (Dependent Student): Enrolled full-time dependent students, age 19 or older, who complete a semester will continue to be covered under NYSHIP for an additional three months following the successful completion of the semester (this enhances the current benefit of additional three months coverage upon graduation).

Workers' Compensation: A permanent, full-time employee who is removed from the payroll due to an assault as described in the collective bargaining agreements' Workers' Compensation article, and is granted workers' compensation for up to 24 months will remain covered under the New York State Health insurance Program

(NYSHIP) for the same duration and will be responsible for the EMPLOYEE share premium contribution.

July 1, 2008 changes that affect Empire Plan enrollees:

Empire Plan Prosthetic Wigs: Retroactive to Jan. 1, 2008, wigs will be covered under the Basic Medical Program (not subject to deductible or coinsurance) when hair loss is due to an acute or chronic condition that leads to hair loss (no coverage for male or female pattern baldness). There is a lifetime maximum of \$1,500 per individual regardless of the number of wigs purchased.

Diabetic Shoes: Diabetics are eligible for one pair of custom molded or depth shoes per year as a covered expense under The Empire Plan. Enrollees **must call** the Empire Plan's Home Care Advocacy Program (HCAP) for pre-notification. After you call, when you use a network provider for medically necessary diabetic shoes, you receive a paid-in-full benefit up to the annual maximum benefit of \$500. If you do not call or use a non-network provider, services are subject to annual deductible and 75 percent of network allowance.

Empire Plan Outpatient Surgery Center: All covered outpatient surgery performed by an outpatient surgical location that has an agreement with United HealthCare will be subject to a \$30 co-payment. The \$30 co-payment covers your elective surgery, anesthesiology, and radiology and laboratory tests performed at the

Health Benefits



participating outpatient surgical location on the day of surgery.

Herpes Zoster Vaccine for Shingles: This vaccine, used to prevent shingles, will be covered as an adult immunization under the Participating Provider Program for individuals age 55 or over and is subject to the \$12 office visit co-payment. There continues to be no non-network benefit for adult immunizations.

Empire Plan Prescription Drug Program: There is no change in the generic and preferred brand name co-payments. The only change affects “Non-Preferred” prescription drug co-payments as follows:

Up to 30-day supply from a participating retail pharmacy or through the Medco Mail Service will increase from **\$30 to \$40**.
31- to 90-day supply from a participating retail pharmacy will increase from **\$60 to \$70**.
31- to 90-day supply through the Medco Mail Service will increase from **\$55 to \$65**.

Empire Plan Prospective Procedure Review Program: The current program that requires pre-notification of elective (scheduled non-emergent) outpatient MRIs will be expanded to include pre-notification of elective (scheduled non-emergent) outpatient MRAs, CAT & PET Scans, and all Nuclear Medicine procedures. Please be sure to call United HealthCare at 1-877-7NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) before having outpatient radiology services performed to avoid out-of-pocket penalties.

Empire Plan Centers of Excellence (COE) Programs: Cancer, Transplant and Infertility COE travel allowances will be consistent with the mileage allowance permitted by the IRS (for medical). The plan's reimbursement for meals and lodging will equal the rate provided by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA).

Empire Plan Diabetes Education Centers: Diabetic educators provide education on basic disease management, home management and improvement of lifestyle. The Empire Plan will contract with Diabetic Education Centers accredited by the American Diabetes Association Education Recognition Program to provide diabetic education. The \$12 office visit co-payment will apply to participating facilities.

Implementation of Disease Management Programs: Enrollees and/or family members diagnosed or treated with ADHD, eating disorders or chronic kidney disease may be invited to participate in a disease management program established for their particular condition. Participation is voluntary, free of charge and confidential. Enrollees who agree to participate will receive information and educational material that will help them better understand their condition.

If you have any questions regarding your health benefits, please contact the CSEA Health Benefits Department at 518-785-4774 or 1-800-286-5242 (JCHB) or your agency health benefits administrator, usually located in the personnel office.

Promoting Good Health

Meet your leaders



New Region presidents on the job

Editor's Note: Throughout this year, The Work Force is devoting the *Leading Edge* to interviews with CSEA's 10 statewide officers and region presidents. This edition we feature the union's two newest region presidents: Central Region President Colleen Wheaton and Southern Region President Billy Riccaldo.

Wheaton, a CSEA activist for more than 20 years, has served as SUNY Potsdam Local president for more than a decade. Originally from the Albany area, Wheaton has long been a familiar figure in CSEA activities not just in the North Country but throughout her region.



WF: How did you get involved in CSEA?

Wheaton: I didn't like something that the local president was doing. She made a policy for the local that I didn't think was right. So I checked out the facts and addressed it and people started asking me if I would run for president and I did. Looking back, I realize that she was a pretty good local president but I had an issue and challenged her over it.

WF: What did you learn as a local president?

Wheaton: I started out trying to please everyone and learned that you can't. You need to get the majority of people behind you, but some will never be pleased. I was always comfortable as long as I felt in my heart of hearts that I was doing the right thing for the membership.

WF: CSEA's Central Region is the largest geographically – what challenges does that present?

Wheaton: It means a lot of mileage, but we have the same issues whether up in the North Country, in the Southern Tier or anywhere in between. We're all in it together.

WF: You have been through the CSEA LEAD program (Leadership, Education and Development), which is designed to train and support leaders at all levels of the organization. What was that experience like for you?

Wheaton: It was the best education program I've been through. It educates and inspires you to be more confident, active, creative and motivated as we continue on with our mission.

WF: What are CSEA's strengths?

Wheaton: We actually listen to our members and act. We're made up of people who are willing to act and act, quickly, when needed.

WF: What are the greatest challenges CSEA faces today as a union?

Wheaton: The challenge is to get people active. People have to care. Everyone is too wrapped up in what's all about me – we need to be all about us. We have a lot of contract battles under way and the issues are bigger than any of us individually. But it's tough to get people involved. A lot of people are afraid to speak out, afraid for losing their jobs – I've never understood that.

Clearly we also have a generation gap that we need to overcome to get younger people more involved.

WF: What have you learned about yourself since you became Central Region president?

Wheaton: I haven't had a lot of time to think about it.

WF: What do you want the rank and file members to know about you?

Wheaton: I'm willing and able to listen and I want to know what the members think. Whether we agree or disagree, we should walk out of any debate and still respect each other.



A CSEA member since 1973, Riccaldo began balancing his position in the maintenance department of Rockland County's Robert L. Yeager Health Center with his union activities when he was elected vice president of the Rockland County Unit in 1998. He became Rockland County Local president in 2001. He became Southern Region president earlier this year.

Why did you become active in CSEA?

Riccaldo: I got involved because the county was doing a pay equity study at the facility where I worked. People were concerned because they thought they were going to get fired. I called the unit president and didn't get the answer I wanted. I found out some people were putting together a slate to run for office and they ended up putting my name on it and I was elected.

WF: What did you do when you took office?

Riccaldo: I found there were a lot of misgivings, misreadings about the union, communication needed to be better. I addressed it with the CSEA labor relations specialist assigned to our unit. We had lots of discussion about process, about how to get things addressed. It was clear that we had to be politically willing to do things.

WF: What were some of the specific issues you wanted to address?

Riccaldo: We had an issue with "relief" workers, part-time employees who would fill in to provide help since we were a 24/7 facility. Someone got hurt and went to Human Resources, where he was told he did not have coverage. People were

working 40 hours and not getting benefits. The county was taking advantage of people.

We've made improvements in this area – we have pro-rated benefits and a process for moving people into full time positions – but it's still not fully resolved.

WF: How do you bring pressure?

Riccaldo: The greatest challenges are political. We need to be politically active to get results. Politics and contracts go together.

Our members don't always understand that link and what it means to be politically active. The key is getting people to put in the time. It's all about relationships. You have to meet with elected officials, get to know them personally, meet one on one. It makes a huge difference in understanding when we invite elected officials to events, bring them into facilities and give them a chance to talk directly with members. When you're trying to work out issues you talk privately and you don't embarrass them publicly. But we always have to be willing to hold elected officials accountable. We need to do more to show that to members.

WF: What are some of the challenges you've seen in representing different generations of CSEA members?

Riccaldo: We represent so many different employees at different stages of their lives and different pressures – finances, day care, after care and other demands before they even get to work. We have to adjust to meet their needs and we have to get employers to understand it better, too.

Flex time is a great example of adjusting to needs in a way that works for everyone. Letting people come in to work at 9:15 so they can see their kids get on the bus. Think about the stress that relieves and the improvement in productivity. The employer and the union have to figure out



how we can get more employees involved in finding solutions to other issues like that.

On the union side, the key to reaching out to younger workers is benefits. Cost is always an issue and most just don't understand why that is. We need to use benefits as issues to organize around.

WF: What would you like the rank and file to know about you?

Riccaldo: I grew up in the Hudson Valley. I live here. I spent 35 years working for Rockland County. My relationships with people are important to me and I'm just like so many other CSEA members.

I also always try to find time to read. I especially enjoy books about the Civil War and Gen. George Custer. He fascinates me. He was very hands-on and didn't hesitate. I've always been amazed by the books I've read about him.

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