

The **Work Force**

November 2012

Vol. 15 No. 10

VOTE

as if

YOUR FUTURE

depended on it



See Pages 3, 10 and 11



Photo of the Month



Photo by Jessica Ladlee

CSEA member Richard Stutzman, right, a motor vehicle clerk at the Dutchess County Department of Motor Vehicles, assists a customer recently at the Poughkeepsie DMV branch. DMV clerks across the state helped register hundreds of voters for the upcoming elections.

Congressman: vote out 'enablers'

WASHINGTON — U.S. Rep. Steve Israel of Long Island urged CSEA members to get everyone they know to vote for candidates who will support working people in the upcoming election.

Israel, who also serves as the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee chair, addressed delegates to CSEA's 102nd Annual Delegates meeting as this edition went to press. Complete ADM coverage will appear in the December Work Force.

"The current extremist leadership in congress are the enablers in the war on workers. This is why we need to elect responsible leaders who will bring back some balance and responsibility," Israel said.

"We're at a critical point for CSEA and labor in general. These elections will determine our course for the foreseeable future, and we need to vote for candidates who will support labor and the American middle class," said CSEA President Danny Donohue.



U.S. Rep. Steve Israel addresses CSEA's 102nd Annual Delegates Meeting.

Israel has represented Long Island in Congress since 2001.

See CSEA candidate endorsements on Pages 10, 11.

Patient dumping allegations probed

BROOKLYN — A grand jury is soon expected to probe allegations of improper patient discharge, fraud and coercion by management at Kingsboro Psychiatric Center.

The investigation follows an explosive report by the state Inspector General that describes a systematic failure by management to implement newly created resident discharge policies. It also blasts management for compelling staff to sign and submit fraudulent documents to back their claims.

The report cites then-Acting Deputy Director of Program Operations Tanya Priester with orchestrating "a deliberate plan of deception" and testifying "untruthfully to the Inspector General during this investigation."

The report did not come as a surprise to union activists at Kingsboro.

"We hope that a proper investigation will look at the all the appointees from 2009 to 2012," said Crispin Booker, CSEA Kingsboro Psychiatric Center Local vice president. "There is a long history of cronyism and corruption by this management during that period and many of the same people remain in control of this facility."

Kingsboro management and discharge practices came under fire after an initial complaint was made to the State Commission on Quality of Care Advocacy for Person with Disability in May 2010.

"The (commission's) investigation revealed that after a resident had rejected numerous attempts by the center to find community placement and failed to adhere to Transitional

Living Residence rules, the resident was taken by center staff and simply left on a street near a local shelter," the commission's report noted.

The act evoked images of the mass dumping of patients from state mental facilities onto the streets of New York years ago.

On two separate occasions, investigators were given patient discharge forms that were originally unsigned by appropriate personnel, but months later were presented to investigators as signed documents.

A footnote in the report states: "Priester was absent from Kingsboro Psychiatric Center in excess of 45 days during the period at issue, yet her signature appears on numerous discharges that took place in her absence."

Staff members testified that Priester also forced them to sign discharge papers despite their reluctance or even their absence at the time of discharge. "What are you supposed to do when your supervisor tells you to do something?" Deborah Jordan, chief of Community Services, told investigators.

Earlier this year, workers were successful in their fight to save the facility from closure despite a study released by powerful Wall Street banker Stephen Berger that recommended Kingsboro's closure.

While the state Office of Mental Health has taken disciplinary action against Priester and other Kingsboro officials, Booker said he wonders why Priester in particular continues to collect a six-figure state salary.

— David Galarza

Online option available for leadership mailing!

Attention CSEA activists and leaders: The CSEA leadership mailing is now available online. No more paper, if you choose this option! Go to www.csealocal1000.org, log into the members only area, and select the Leadership Mailing application from My APPS.

From the Office of President Danny Donohue

NEW YORK'S
LEADING UNION
CSEA
Local 1000 AFSCME, AFL-CIO

ALERT

CSEA President Danny Donohue to meet Metropolitan Region members on Nov. 27.

President Danny Donohue will visit the CSEA Metropolitan Region on Nov. 27 to meet with members.

The meetings will be held at the Metropolitan Region Office, 125 Maiden Lane, 5th floor, Manhattan. Donohue will meet with union members from 1 to 6 p.m. Please call the Metropolitan Region office at (212) 406-2156 for an appointment and directions.



Your vote means your future

On Election Day, Nov. 6, CSEA members need to vote as if their future depended on it — because their future will depend on how they vote.

“Public workers are under attack across the country and in New York. We need to make sure that whoever is in elected office, they have our members interests in mind,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said.

CSEA is endorsing a limited number of candidates for office this year, following extensive review within CSEA. Some of CSEA’s endorsements are in critical races, which the union has declared “priority races.” (See pages 10, 11)

“We are working hard, especially in these priority areas, to send our elected leaders the message that public employees are not going to stand on the sidelines and watch critical and necessary public services be sold off to the lowest bidder. We not only demand respect and fair treatment on the job, we demand it for our communities as well,” Donohue said.

Grassroots support

CSEA members are reaching out to support the union’s endorsed candidates by staffing phone banks, knocking on doors, handing out literature and helping maintain candidates’ visibility in their communities.

“CSEA has great strength in its numbers. When we are united, there is no limit to what we can accomplish,” said Long Island Developmental Center Local President Rutha



Bush, who is also chairs CSEA’s PEOPLE program, which is CSEA and AFSCME’s political action program.

Two congressional races in particular, Bill Owens in the Capital Region and Tim Bishop in the Long Island Region, have CSEA members energized and mobilized.

“We need candidates like Bill Owens, who looks out for working people and is going to make sure [working

“It’s really important that we have candidates who are on our side because there is a lot at stake in these elections. Public services have been attacked by corporations and by other politicians unfairly. Millions of dollars have been put into these elections to blame working families for the fact that the economy is slow when in fact, that really hasn’t been the case.”

— Ira Bethea,
State Dormitory Authority Local



Activists Michele Martin, Diane Burton, Don Meenan and Don Page are part of the teams of CSEA activists who recently went door-to-door visiting labor households in the Syracuse area to get out the vote for union-endorsed candidates, including Dan Maffei for Congress and Al Stirpe Jr. for state Assembly.

families] can put food on the table, make a decent living, send their kids to college.



Whalen

Nationally, if we fail to re-elect President Barack Obama and we elect Mitt Romney, I don’t know what kind of a future is going to be possible for working people to have,” said State Education Department Local member and political action volunteer Pat Whalen.

“The issues now are: who is standing up for working people

and working families? Who is going to support our unions? It’s vital for our members’ jobs and for jobs 10 years down the road. We need to be able to provide those services, those jobs still need to be there and these candidates have to understand that,” said John Ellis, a CSEA member in the Saratoga County Education Local.

— Jill Asencio

CSEA is urging members to get involved and vote. Contact your region office to help in races in your area. (Phone numbers are on page 4.)

THE WORK FORCE

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Work Force

IN TOUCH WITH THE

CSEA President Danny Donohue

Our future is in your hands

Stand up for your rights! That's a message of hope and empowerment for us all.

Throughout our 102-year history, CSEA has always looked to the future. We have not been afraid to change, to grow, to transform. We have always recognized the need to adapt to the times, but we have never lost sight of the future.

CSEA members have hopes and dreams. We have a commitment to serving our communities.

It is not acceptable that public services have been run down, so that it's harder every day for current employees to do a decent job.

It is not acceptable that you and your co-workers are doing more with less and are told by politicians and high-priced shills that you're not worth your pay and benefits — pay that averages around \$38,000 and pensions that average a whopping \$16,000 annually.

CSEA members must continue to stand strong in solidarity and speak with one voice, in our nation, in our state, in our county, city, town, village, school district and work site.

We must call out politicians and others who put down public services and demean our members. We must challenge them with the facts and hold them accountable for their words and actions. No one should get off easy.

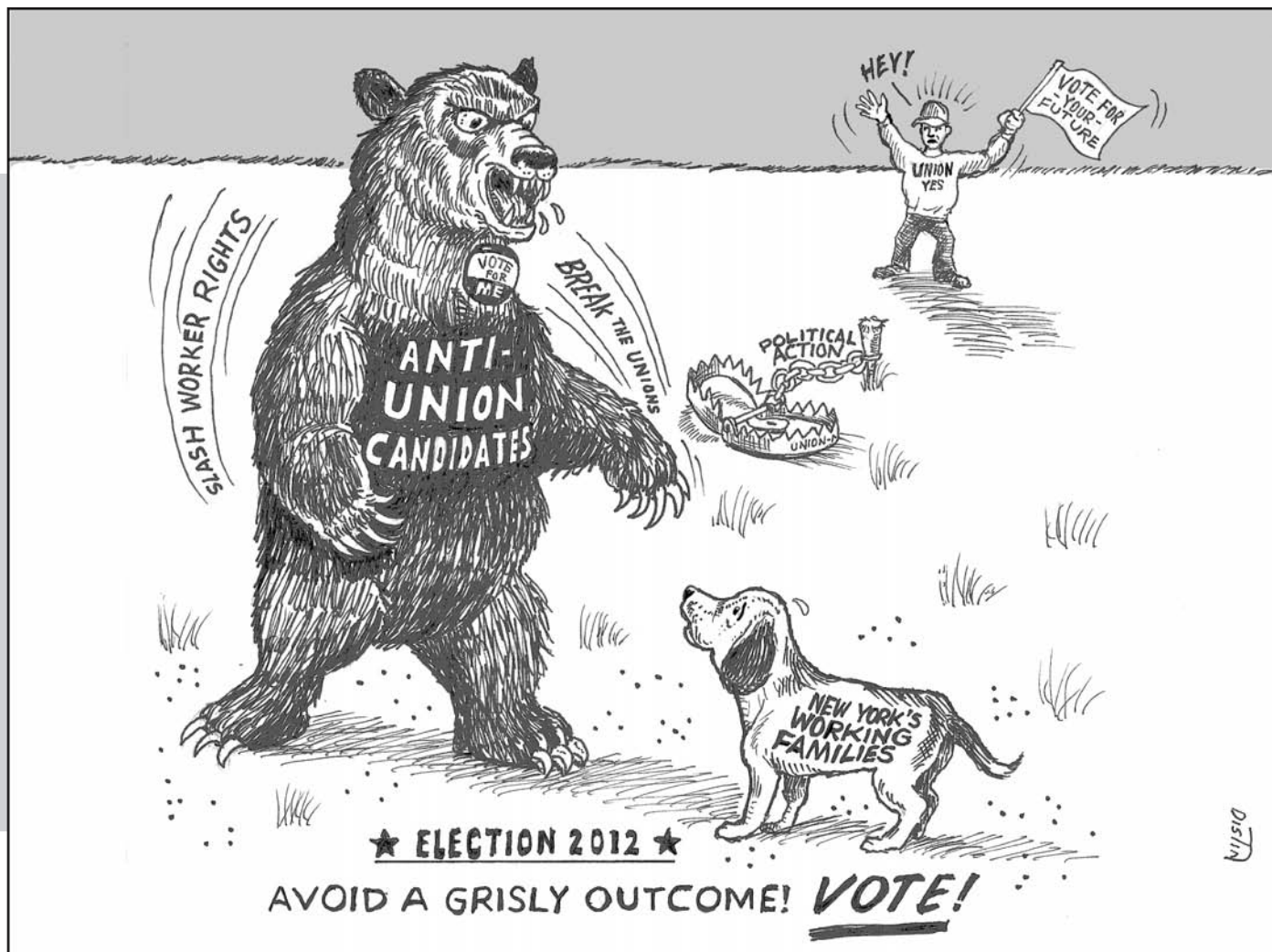
We must build stronger alliances with our brother and sister unions and with family, friends and neighbors in our community. We must be proud of who we are and what we do — and be willing to stand up and say so.

CSEA is still 300,000 members strong and more than that, when we work together, we are even stronger than the sum of our parts.

So, brothers and sisters ... Look to the future. Stand up for your rights.

P.S. Read the information in this edition about why CSEA's endorsements are so important this year especially. Vote Nov. 6 as if your future depended on it.





Delaware County nursing home closes, dumps patients

Recently, Delaware County's former county-owned nursing home, the Countryside Care Center, shipped its last remaining residents to other nursing homes out of the area and shut its doors, possibly for good.

This was the result of the facility's private for-profit operator, Leatherstocking Healthcare, LLC, racking up dozens of deficiencies and citations over the last three years and, when threatened with closure by the federal government if not corrected, they simply walked away from their ownership and the promises they made to Delaware County residents.

Promises broken, privatization gone bad

When Delaware County was looking into privatizing its publicly owned and operated nursing home, people opposed to the sale asked what would happen if it didn't make money for a new operator who decides to close it down or cut services?

They were accused of using "scare tactics." The public was promised the new private operator would improve the quality of care, and never turn away county residents needing care.

"This is one of the most challenging issues facing New Yorkers today, and how we

respond is a measure of our humanity," said CSEA President Danny Donohue.

Six years after going private, the new for-profit operator couldn't make money.

As the operator ran up citations, it also stiffed county taxpayers for more than half a million dollars owed from the original purchase. The operator broke its promises, and worse, walked away from its responsibility to the residents of Countryside and their families.

It's easy to make promises. It's easy to blame others when things don't work the way people planned. But what about the responsibility we all

have toward our community's seniors who spent their lives in Delaware County, paid their taxes and relied on knowing that if they needed it, the quality care provided at our public nursing home would be there for them?

Don't they deserve better?

It's easy to say "we won't be another Delaware County."

The leaders in Delaware County never thought they would be where they are now. Beware the promises of privatization.

— Mark Kotzin

Community colleges reinvent to meet growing need

VALHALLA — New York's 30 county community colleges have long served as an affordable starting point for college or a steppingstone to a bigger university.

Today's community colleges are that and much more.

With the economy spurring more students to forego pricier four-year institutions, community colleges are changing. They are expanding in size, helping displaced workers seek new careers, and even giving high school

“When the economy really went downhill in 2008, that’s when we saw a spike. We had lines out the door for registration. It’s not quite as busy this year, but enrollment is still much higher than it was before the recession hit.”

students a jump on college-level work.

CSEA members who staff the majority of non-instructional positions in New York's community colleges are doing much of the work that is reinventing the community college experience in the 21st century.

Economy, costs driving college choice

At Westchester Community College, CSEA activists have seen the growth firsthand.

“When the economy really went downhill in 2008, that’s when we saw a spike,” said

Westchester Community College Unit President Carol Ann Zavarella-Vasta. “We had lines out the door for registration. It’s not quite as busy this year, but enrollment is still much higher than it was before the recession hit.”

According to the Pew Research Center, community college enrollment has historically risen during times of economic decline. But the recent surge in private college tuition costs means community colleges may not see a notable decline in enrollment. The 2012-13 tuition rate for private Columbia University is \$47,246, according to U.S. News and World Report. That same cost at Westchester is \$4,280 for a full year.

“What’s great is the students see they are getting the same quality education as they would at a four-year institution, for a much lower price,” said Westchester Community College Unit Vice President Gina Pelliccio.

Growing to accommodate demand

Campuses are expanding to accommodate enrollment growth. At Westchester, renovation of the existing student center is under way while the college’s new, expansive Gateway Center serves current and prospective students and aids the college’s growing foreign-born student population.

Other campuses are expanding, too. Orange County Community College recently opened its new Newburgh Extension Center and work is under way on new facilities at

CSEA represents more than 2,600 workers at 18 county community colleges across the state, doing a variety of work to keep college campuses operating efficiently, cleanly and safely.



Westchester Community College workers Jennifer Dawkins, left, a former WCC student, and Claudia Romano, office assistant, help keep the college running as the school, like many community colleges across the state, faces a swelling enrollment.

the main campus in Middletown.

Going back to school

Adult students make up a significant chunk of the increased student population.

“There are so many people who are, unfortunately, losing their jobs so what they’re trying to do is get training in other areas to get employment in other fields,” said Pelliccio.

The Continuing Education Division is the largest of its kind in the State University of New York system. It allows adults to pursue not only various degree programs, but also non-credit programs in the construction trades and certificates in specialties like phlebotomy.

to do college-level work at a reduced rate and gives them the experience of coming to the college,” said Romano. “It’s really a great program.”

Doing much more with less

Hiring here and at other colleges hasn’t kept up with the increased enrollment. CSEA members continue to do an outstanding job despite increased workloads and fewer resources, union officers say.

“We’ve been working with the same amount of staff and we even lost workers after the retirement incentive,” said Zavarella-Vasta.

It’s the CSEA work force’s behind-the-scenes work that allows students a smooth introduction to campus life.

“As we’ve grown and as they’ve expanded on campus, our members have been the glue that have held things together,” said Zavarella-Vasta.

— Jessica Ladlee



Westchester Community College Library Technicians Carrie Carpenter, left, and Linda Roberti, make sure study materials are available and accessible for students.

CSEA members even provide support for mature adults returning for career retraining via the college’s Mainstream program, which assists the increasing number of working adults forced to seek new employment in their 50s and 60s.

An early chance for college learning

CSEA members’ work also helps high school students get a chance to delve into college-level work. CSEA member Claudia Romano is an office assistant working with faculty to coordinate the Advanced College Experience, a program allowing area high school students gain college credits through college-level courses taken at their high schools. “It gives [students] the opportunity

CSEA members interested in furthering their education can visit the Partnership for Education and Training to learn about tuition reimbursement benefits.

The Partnership can be reached at (518) 486- 7814 or (800) 253-4332, or visit the Partnership’s website at: www.nyscseapartnership.org

Frequently asked questions of the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund

What is the EBF?

The EBF is the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund, a not-for-profit labor trust fund that administers dental, vision and other miscellaneous benefits for CSEA members.



reimbursement schedule listed in each plan booklet.

What if I go to an out-of-network vision provider? You must file a claim to receive an indemnity payment

according to the schedule listed in each specific plan booklet.

Why doesn't the EBF cover all dental procedures? Procedures are covered that benefit the majority of the members and their dependents. Not every dental service is covered by any dental plan and there are times that you may have out-of-pocket expenses for the dentistry that you need. Your dental plan is designed to assist you in being able to afford the dentistry that you need and to help you maintain your oral health. Treatment decisions are always between you and your dentist. If a procedure is being recommended by your dentist that is not covered by your plan or is restricted by a frequency limitation, make sure you understand what the doctor is recommending and know if there are any alternatives. If the recommended treatment is completed, you will be responsible for paying the provider directly.

Is a dental crown only allowed once every five years? One crown *per tooth* is allowed every five years.

Where do I get forms (Claim, Student Proof, Prescription Drug Co-Payment, etc)? Forms are available via the EBF website by clicking on "Download Forms" or you can call the EBF at (800) 323-2732 to request forms.

My name changed. What should I do? Please call the EBF at (800) 323-2732 and notify the enrollment department, which will further direct you.

Do my union dues pay for EBF benefits? No, your dues do not pay for these benefits; they must be negotiated into your collective bargaining agreement.

Does the EBF have a website? Yes, the EBF website address is www.cseaebf.com. The EBF website is a great resource where you can access a wealth of information.

Do I need an EBF ID card? Yes, if you have EBF benefits then you are assigned an EBF ID member number and need a card to access your benefits. To get an EBF ID card, you may call the EBF at (800) 323-2732 or visit the EBF website and click on 'Look up Your EBF ID' to view, print and/or order an ID card.

How do I know what EBF benefits I have? Visit the website and click on "Benefit Search."

Up to what age are my children/dependents covered? Covered dependents are eligible until they turn 19. Coverage may continue until age 25 for full-time college students if a student proof form is filed with the EBF each year.

Can I look online to see my claim history? No, you must call the EBF at (800) 323-2732 and speak with a claims representative.

Can I go to any dental provider? Yes, if you go to a non-panel provider you will be responsible to pay the difference between the provider's fee and your specific EBF dental plan

2013 Empire Plan benefit changes: What's new?

Empire Plan enrollees will notice changes in



care services, including certain contraceptive medication

some benefits effective Jan. 1, 2013. These changes are the result of negotiated benefits and legislative changes (U.S. Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and state legislation). Please watch your mail for The Empire Plan Report, which describes the changes in further detail.

New to You Benefit Plan Design: In accordance with the Executive Branch collective bargaining agreement, an Empire Plan enrollee or dependent who receives a prescription for a maintenance medication, which is new to the individual, will be subject to the "New to You" benefit plan design effective Jan. 1, 2013. Under the New to You benefit plan design, an enrollee is required to obtain two 30-day supplies of a new maintenance medication before obtaining a 90-day supply.

Contraceptive Coverage Mandate: Effective Jan. 1, 2013, the U.S. Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requires that the Empire Plan provide first-dollar coverage for certain women's preventive

and devices. "First-dollar coverage" means that there will be no co-payment or cost-sharing requirements. Contact the Empire Plan's Prescription Drug Program at 1-877-769-7447 for specifics on the program.

Breast Pump Mandate: In accordance with the U.S. Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, effective Jan. 1, 2013, the cost of renting or purchasing breastfeeding equipment received from a participating provider will be a covered medical expense under the Empire Plan. Contact the Empire Plan's medical carrier at 1-877-769-7447 for additional information.

Autism Mandate: Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed legislation that requires health insurance plans to provide coverage for autism spectrum disorders effective Jan. 1, 2013. Additional information regarding coverage of autism spectrum disorders can be obtained by contacting The Empire Plan's medical carrier at 1-877-769-7447.

Flex Spending Account 2013 Open Enrollment Period

The Flex Spending Account is a state employee benefit that saves you money by letting you pay for health care and dependent care expenses with tax-free dollars.

The Health Care Spending Account (HCSAccount) lets you to set aside any amount from \$100 to \$2,500 for the 2013 tax year to pay for medically necessary health care expenses that are not reimbursed by health insurance.

The annual open enrollment period is Oct. 9 through Nov. 9, 2012. Enrollees should carefully review additional information and program guidelines regarding the Flex Spending Account at the Flex Spending Account website at www.flexspend.ny.gov or enrollees can call the FSA Hotline at 1-800-358-7202 for more information.

ATTENTION: Public Sector Local and Unit Presidents and Private Sector Local Presidents

Did you send your Election Committee Data Form to CSEA Headquarters?

Beginning in January 2013, registered Election Committee Chairs and Election Meeting Chairs will receive an election package from CSEA to assist them in performing their election duties. This material is necessary for you to have to run a proper election.

Election packages will **only** be mailed to those Chairs whose Local or Unit President has sent in the required Election Committee Data Form (ECDF). CSEA Headquarters cannot send material and information to any Chair, without first receiving the completed ECDF from the Local or Unit president.

Inquiries regarding election committees may be directed to the CSEA Statewide Election Committee at 1-800-342-4146, ext. 1447.

Coming soon! BJ's Wholesale Club membership discount

CSEA members: Look for information in the next Work Force edition (December) regarding a new discount buying benefit featuring a reduced membership cost for CSEA members to BJ's Wholesale Club.



**CSEA has teamed up with
JJT Energy as the CSEA's
New Energy Provider**

FOR ALL MEMBERS!

**Save a minimum of 5% off
your current natural gas
utility bill on an annual basis.**

**Enrolling with JJT Energy
is seamless and without risk.**

**No cost to switch
No contract required
No change in billing**

To start saving money on your natural gas,
please sign up online at
www.jjtenergy.com/csea
or fax the form to 516-594-8227.

Account Name _____

Billing address _____

City _____, NY, ZIP _____

Email _____ Phone (____) _____

Utility Company _____

Account number _____

Monthly budget billing amount, if applicable _____

Should you have questions, please email us at csea@jjtenergy.com

JJT Energy is a NY State-approved Energy Service Company (ESCO) and works with all major New York utilities.



CSEA's 2012 candidate endorsements

CSEA endorsed a limited number of candidates in New York state legislative races this fall.

The limited endorsements come following extensive review within CSEA. For two years, lawmakers rubber-stamped state budgets that undermined state operations, and shortchanged localities and schools and they forfeited oversight responsibility on important public policy issues. They also imposed a property tax cap that is causing fiscal chaos in local government and school district budgets.

Additionally, lawmakers made a dark deal with Gov. Andrew Cuomo last spring trading support for onerous and unnecessary public employee pension tier changes in exchange for favorable legislative redistricting.

"Many lawmakers who have long enjoyed CSEA support will not have it this year because they abandoned the working people of this state," said CSEA President Danny Donohue. "CSEA is holding lawmakers accountable for their actions. The CSEA endorsement has to be earned or else it has no meaning."

CSEA's limited endorsements are only going to candidates who stand with working people.

CSEA's state Senate endorsements

Senate District 4: Ricardo Montano
Senate District 11: Tony Avella
Senate District 12: Michael Gianaris
Senate District 13: Jose Peralta
Senate District 15: Joseph Addabbo Jr.
Senate District 18: Martin Malave Dilan
Senate District 20: Eric Adams
Senate District 21: Kevin Parker
Senate District 23: Diane Savino
Senate District 27: Brad Hoylman
Senate District 28: Liz Kruger
Senate District 33: Gustavo Rivera
Senate District 34: Jeffrey Klein
Senate District 40: Justin Wagner
Senate District 55: Ted O'Brien
Senate District 60: Michael Amodeo

Not sure of your Senate or Assembly District? Visit:

<http://nymap.elections.state.ny.us/nysboe/>
to look up your state Senate and Assembly District.

CSEA's state Assembly endorsements

Assembly District 3: Dean Murray
Assembly District 5: Alfred Graf
Assembly District 6: Phil Ramos
Assembly District 9: Joseph Saladino
Assembly District 12: Andrew Raia
Assembly District 14: David McDonough
Assembly District 25: Nily Rozic
Assembly District 31: Michele Titus
Assembly District 32: Vivian Cook
Assembly District 34: Michael DenDekker
Assembly District 35: Jeffrion Aubry
Assembly District 38: Michael Miller
Assembly District 39: Francisco Moya
Assembly District 42: Rhoda Jacobs
Assembly District 43: Karim Camara
Assembly District 47: William Colton
Assembly District 49: Peter Abbate Jr.
Assembly District 52: Joan Millman
Assembly District 54: Rafael Espinal
Assembly District 59: Alan Maisel
Assembly District 60: Inez Barron
Assembly District 66: Deborah Glick
Assembly District 76: Micah Kellner
Assembly District 77: Vanessa Gibson
Assembly District 78: Jose Rivera
Assembly District 79: Eric Stevenson
Assembly District 81: Jeffrey Dinowitz
Assembly District 85: Marcos Crespo
Assembly District 86: Nelson Castro
Assembly District 87: Louis Sepulveda
Assembly District 90: Shelley Mayer
Assembly District 91: Steve Otis
Assembly District 92: Thomas Abinanti
Assembly District 93: David Buchwald
Assembly District 94: Andrew Falk
Assembly District 97: Ellen Jaffee
Assembly District 98: Annie Rabbitt
Assembly District 99: James Skoufis
Assembly District 101: Claudia Tenney
Assembly District 103: Kevin Cahill
Assembly District 104: Frank Skartados
Assembly District 106: Didi Barrett
Assembly District 107: Cheryl Roberts
Assembly District 109: Pat Fahy
Assembly District 110: Phil Steck
Assembly District 111: Angelo Santabarbara
Assembly District 113: Carrie Woerner
Assembly District 118: Marc Butler
Assembly District 127: Al Stirpe Jr.
Assembly District 128: Sam Roberts
Assembly District 135: Mark Johns
Assembly District 141: Crystal Peoples-Stokes
Assembly District 149: Sean Ryan

CSEA's 2012 candidate endorsements

CSEA's statewide federal endorsements

CSEA has made endorsements in many of the federal elections that affect New York, including the presidency.

President: Barack Obama

U.S. Senate: Kirsten Gillibrand

- 1st Congressional District:** Timothy Bishop (*CSEA Priority Race**)
2nd Congressional District: No Endorsement
3rd Congressional District: Steve Israel
4th Congressional District: Carolyn McCarthy
5th Congressional District: Gregory Meeks
6th Congressional District: Grace Meng
7th Congressional District: Nydia Velazquez
8th Congressional District: Hakeem Jefferies
9th Congressional District: Yvette Clarke
10th Congressional District: Jerrold Nadler
11th Congressional District: No Endorsement
12th Congressional District: Carolyn Maloney
13th Congressional District: Charles Rangel
14th Congressional District: Joe Crowley
15th Congressional District: Jose Serrano
16th Congressional District: Eliot Engel
17th Congressional District: Nita Lowey
18th Congressional District: Sean Patrick Maloney (*CSEA Priority Race**)
19th Congressional District: Julian Schreibman (*CSEA Priority Race**)
20th Congressional District: Paul Tonko
21st Congressional District: Bill Owens (*CSEA Priority Race**)
22nd Congressional District: No Endorsement
23rd Congressional District: Nate Shinagawa
24th Congressional District: Dan Maffei (*CSEA Priority Race**)
25th Congressional District: Louise Slaughter (*CSEA Priority Race**)
26th Congressional District: Brian Higgins
27th Congressional District: Kathy Hochul (*CSEA Priority Race**)

Not sure of your congressional district?

Visit: <http://nymap.elections.state.ny.us/nysboe/>
to look up your House Representative.

**CSEA Priority Races are areas where turnout for our endorsed candidates is crucial to protecting workers' rights and the middle class.*



Vote on Nov. 6

This year's elections include the state Assembly, Senate, congressional races and a presidential election. CSEA members need to support candidates who support unions and working families.

- General Election Day: Tuesday, Nov. 6

Please remember to get out and vote!

THE Work Force

www.csealocal1000.org

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An Important Message from CSEA

TWO VISIONS: ONE CHOICE FOR MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES



CSEA Recommends Our Endorsed Candidate President Barack Obama

President

Barack Obama

- ✓ **Keeping Jobs in America:** Obama will eliminate tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas.
- ✓ **Protecting and Strengthen Our Retirement Security:** Obama will strengthen and protect the most successful bi-partisan program in America's history — Social Security.
- ✓ **Protect and Strengthen Access to Health Care:** Obama fought to make it illegal to deny health insurance due to pre-existing conditions, he made Medicare stronger, closed the prescription drug loophole that cost seniors thousands, and provided coverage for young people up to the age of 26.

Bain Capital CEO

Mitt Romney

- ✗ **Outsourcing American Jobs:** Romney has been called a "pioneer" of outsourcing as CEO of Bain Capital, and supports a tax plan to encourage companies to ship more jobs overseas.
- ✗ **Taking apart Social Security:** He supports raising the retirement age and allowing workers to invest in private accounts, the first steps to wholesale privatization of Social Security.
- ✗ **Eliminating Health Care Protections:** Romney will gut Medicare and has signed on to a plan to forever change the program. This new plan will cost seniors thousands of dollars more for their health care.

President Barack Obama — the clear choice for America's middle class.
Register and Vote Tuesday, Nov. 6. • See Pages 10 and 11 for CSEA's endorsements.

Officers' Reports to the delegates of the 2012 Annual Delegates Meeting



Danny Donohue, CSEA President



The choice should be very clear to CSEA members and other working Americans. President Barack Obama's vision is about rebuilding our economy from the ground up, strengthening the middle class and ensuring opportunities for all Americans.

A Clear Choice for the Future of America's Middle Class

Like the rest of the American middle class, nothing is more important for CSEA members and our future than Election Day, Tuesday, November 6. The Presidential Election in particular is a choice about two very different visions for our country.

The choice should be very clear to CSEA members and other working Americans. President Barack Obama's vision is about rebuilding our economy from the ground up, strengthening the middle class and ensuring opportunities for all Americans. The Romney-Ryan agenda is about slashing the social safety net to give more big tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans. The Romney-Ryan ticket also has made clear their intention to further restrict union and collective bargaining rights.

Americans should be concerned about what Mitt Romney has actually done in making his billions at the expense of an American middle class: He used all the questionable practices of the business world that have undermined our economy and eroded the middle class over the past 25 years – leveraged buyouts, excessive debt financing, junk bond sales, layoffs, outsourcing, selling off profitable operations and declaring bankruptcy, outsourcing jobs to China and avoiding taxes through legal but ultimately outrageous dodges and loopholes that make a mockery of a fair income tax code.

It paid off for Romney and his Bain Capital partners but others paid the price.

Romney's running mate, Congressman Paul Ryan, is the architect of the House Budget plan that among other things, would replace Medicare – perhaps the

most successful and effective social program ever – with an inadequate voucher program that could require seniors to pay thousands more to maintain decent coverage.

Keep in mind also that Congressman Ryan is from Wisconsin – ground zero in the war on public services.

Forward

By contrast, President Obama inherited an economy in freefall and he stabilized it despite dealing with an opposition party in Congress who has made clear their intention to oppose his policies even if that would harm Americans! Against this backdrop, the President successfully bailed out the American auto industry (when Mitt Romney favored letting it fail), instituted policies that have created more American jobs than eight years of George W. Bush's tenure and restored America's standing in the world.

There is no question that the Obama Administration stands for fairness and a balanced approach to our nation's economic and social challenges.

In a year when numerous states have enacted questionable (and constitutionally challenging) restrictions clearly intended to suppress voter turnout, do not waste your vote.

In a year when obscene amounts of private and corporate dollars will flood the media with unsubstantiated, misleading, and outright dishonest assertions, make sure your voice is heard.

The Presidential race sets the tone for this year's election but the congressional

President, continued on page 8

Mary E. Sullivan, CSEA Executive Vice President



Working people have to come together like rich people have come together. We have a lot more in common than we do differences and we've got to stand together for the values we believe in and elect leaders who share those values with us.

For generations, labor unions, in both the public and private sector, have been the constant and unwavering champion of working class Americans and the values we hold dear.

Working people share the same hopes, the same dreams and the same values, and unions have gained important benefits that have become part of the American way of life — things like the 40-hour work week, Social Security and Medicare, paid vacations, holidays and sick leave; pensions; health insurance; paid overtime; and health and safety protections.

Unions helped build the middle class and for generations have helped millions of workers climb the economic ladder to become proud, middle class Americans. But now the ladder is being kicked out from beneath us. Today, working people risk losing much of what we've gained because of the misguided ideology of some politicians who don't appreciate what we have, what we do, what we stand for or what we strive for. Our wages, pensions and benefits have been under attack in recent years and it's been tough enough trying to fight that battle. But sisters and brothers, things are going to get a hell of a lot tougher if certain politicians and the wealthy individuals and corporations who have them in their pockets get their way.

They want to cripple public employee unions by eliminating our right to collective bargaining like Gov. Scott Walker did in Wisconsin last year.

They want to enact a nationwide "right-to-work" law that would prohibit unions from collecting agency fees from workers who choose not to join the union, even though the union would still have to

spend its resources representing those employees.

They want to eliminate payroll dues deductions for state and local government employees, forcing unions to collect each member's dues individually.

They want to silence our political voice by banning the use of dues money for political purposes, including campaigning for worker friendly candidates or pushing for worker friendly legislation.

They want to bar the use of "card check" as a way for workers to form a union, forcing workers to endure often unfair elections where the employer has the upper hand and the ability to intimidate workers.

They want to repeal the Davis-Bacon Act, which requires that workers on federal construction projects must be paid the prevailing wage that union workers earn.

Finally, they want to undermine the authority of the National Labor Relations Board, claiming that it has given labor too much power over businesses. Unbelievable!

Clearly, the most important thing to some people in this country is establishing and maintaining wealth. They are known as the "one percent" and one of the ways they remain wealthy is by paying a lot less taxes than working people do. What is important to the rest of us is the American Dream: a simple dream about having a decent place to live, food on the table for your children and quality, affordable health care and public education that gives people the opportunity to achieve beyond the means of their parents or the

Vice President, continued on page 7

Denise Berkley, Statewide Secretary



We need to make the public understand that union or not, we are fighting for the middle class, for decent jobs and fair treatment, and to end the 30-year slide that began with the malicious PATCO firings.

We are in, and have been in, the fight of our lives. Unions, whether private or public sector, have been facing well-coordinated, well-financed attacks from corporate and conservative interests that want us out of the picture.

We're at a critical point in labor history in the United States, and we've been here before. This time, we need to play our hand differently.

We need to stand up for our rights as union members, and we need to stand up for the rights of all workers, and make them part of the fight.

Unions cannot continue to exist without engaging non-union workers. There are too few of us left to only fight for organized labor. We need to bring the fight to all workers, union or not, or there will be no more middle class in the United States.

Conservatives in Congress want to cut funding to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which they say has too many "job-killing" regulations for employers. What about worker-killing job practices? Are we really at a point in time in our country where the bottom line is more important than workers' safety and health? Will it take another catastrophe like the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, where 146 workers perished in mostly preventable deaths, to get our elected leaders to understand that people should not die because they went to work?

We need to reach out to non-union workers in this fight, because they are already being taken advantage of by corporate greed and unsafe work practices. We need to help them, and we need to help each other.

In 1981, President Ronald Reagan fired 11,345 striking Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) workers who were seeking better working conditions. Reagan broke the union and ended the strike, but he also began a 30-year slide for American workers that has yet to be slowed. Since the PATCO firings, wages have remained stagnant, working conditions have worsened, attention to worker safety has declined, and the once sure-guarantee of a decent retirement — the defined benefit pension

— has all but disappeared.

We can blame President Reagan all we want, but in doing so we must also blame ourselves. The AFL-CIO was nearly silent in support of PATCO strikers. Public and private employee unions stood on the sidelines and watched one of labor's greatest train wrecks unfold. We cannot let this happen again.

Our members need to know that CSEA's leadership stands with them in these fights. We need to prepare the Next Wave group, the LEAD Program graduates, and all other aspiring union leaders, and give them the support they need to take on and take over this difficult fight. Our top leadership must be engaged in this transition. We need to serve the membership and lead by example, by being team players. We need to give our rank-and-file members the tools to become leaders. Some of these members may be holding down two jobs to make ends meet. They will need our support if they choose to serve and lead.

If we do not take these bold steps now, what sort of labor movement will we have in 20 years? What sort of retirement security will there be? What will Social Security, pensions, and health insurance be like 50 years from the PATCO firings.

As bad as President Reagan's PATCO firings were, attacks on working people are not solely from Republicans and conservatives. One need only look at Democrat Gov. Andrew Cuomo's record on public employee labor relations to know that we cannot rely on our traditional political allies to help us in this fight.

From our newest members to our most seasoned veterans, we need to engage each other and the public about how threats to workers eventually become threats to the middle class. We need to fight back in our communities when full-time jobs are made part time; when public services are contracted out; when we perceive a lack of communication between labor and management; when pundits in the press begin casually tossing around the idea of repealing important protections such as the Triborough Amendment. We

Secretary, continued on page 8

Joe McMullen, Statewide Treasurer



History has shown that together, we have the power to do great things through solidarity and collective action. We have the power to fight and make a real difference for each other and the greater good of our communities.

Greetings CSEA!
Welcome to our Nation's Capital and our 102nd Annual Delegates Meeting.

We have all seen and had our share of sacrifice and strife both in our work and in our households. We are fighting harder than ever when we negotiate contracts to hold on to what we already fought for. Many of our friends, co-workers and relatives have lost jobs and struggle to get back into the job market. Others are on the brink of job loss themselves.

All across the country we've seen collective bargaining rights continuously challenged or tested. Local governments are struggling with their budgets. This keeps us face to face with the reality of layoffs, facility closings, widespread privatization, and program cutbacks. It means increased costs of contributions to health insurance and reduced retirement benefits.

Just as job loss in the public sector lagged behind the private sector, so will the recovery. We are not out of the woods yet and it is important that we do not become complacent. We must not fall into the trap of feeling falsely secure as we hear the private sector is on the mend. We can't let our fight end.

Nationally, I have no doubt; we are on the right track. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding has done its job by saving our economy from the brink of total meltdown. After the Wall Street mess and housing sector collapse, the President's plan to save the auto industry worked and saved more than a million jobs. Reports show the private sector is hiring again with modest jobs increases every month.

Yet, even as the economy recovers, unions will still be in the crosshairs. Our foes will not let the momentum of their attacks decrease just because our financial situation gets better. I caution you all to not let your guard down for one second, but don't despair.

Just as our brothers and sisters before us took on the challenges of their day and advanced us with weekends, equality, safety, security and so much more, so can we.

We too, can take on the challenges of our day and win but we most VOTE and ACT.

VOTE to ensure those hard working families' voices are heard loud and clear. VOTE for labor friendly leaders who support OUR concerns and community struggles, not leaders that think we can rebuild our economy from the top down.

History has shown that cutting taxes for millionaires and billionaires does nothing to strengthen the middle class. It just drives the wedge of inequality further between us. As I have heard many, including our president, say we need to build this economy "from the middle out and the bottom up."

The upcoming presidential election is one of the most important in our entire history. There is so much at stake. The Romney/Ryan crew made it clear how they feel about unions.

They simply don't even know who we are.

One of Romney's main talking points is that he stands for teachers and children NOT teachers' unions. There is an important point here of perceived separation between the worker and the union. It is obvious he doesn't get who we are.

Politicians must be held accountable for preserving things like Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare. We have spent our working lives paying for these things and it is apparent that nothing is safe from being cut in the name of debt reduction.

So, get out there. VOTE and ACT.

Even if you don't personally feel the urgency, ACT anyway. It is our responsibility to fight for what is right, rebuild our communities and to be there in solidarity with our brothers and sisters.

You never know when it could be your job on the line. We are aware there could be thousands of jobs at risk as the plans to privatize unfold at OPWDD. Westchester Medical Center faces massive layoffs and county nursing homes could fall like dominoes. Nassau County is in for the fight of their life. The battles are everywhere in New York state.

Treasurer, continued on page 7



NICK LaMORTE,
Long Island Region President



Greetings and Peace from CSEA Long Island Region One!

So much has happened in the Long Island Region since we gathered last year in Manhattan for the 2011 Annual Delegates' Meeting, and I think this is an appropriate time to summarize some of the more significant events that have transpired since then. Time will not allow me to detail every action so here is an abridged account.

Long Island Region activists participated in the New York City Central Labor Council Labor Day Parade to mark the 10th anniversary of the World Trade Center attacks of 2001. We were joined by members from the Metropolitan and Southern Regions and formed a large CSEA contingent to honor the victims of that tragedy, as well as the significant societal contributions of working people everywhere.

Nassau County Local 830 activist Terence Hopper earned Citizen of the Year honors from the Long Island Press for speaking out on the range of safety and health issues that have historically plagued the Cedar Creek Water Pollution Control Facility in Wantagh where he works as Plant Maintenance Supervisor.

John Damato and Michael Browne work for the Nassau County Department of Public Works (DPW) in the respective capacities of Sewer Maintenance Worker and Equipment Supervisor. These two Local 830 members operate out of the DPW yard in Hicksville, but it was their dedication to union building and peer training with regard to matters of Occupational Safety and Health that led to their being honored with the Charles A. Noble Outstanding Service Award at a CSEA peer training class.

Levittown School District unit officer Lisa Vanderburg was awarded the prestigious New York State Public High School Athletic Association Excelsior Award, which recognizes a CSEA member who best promoted and fostered athletic spirit in their school district. She was nominated for her integral role in supporting the programs and activities available to students through the Health, Physical Education and Athletics Department.

When DOT Local 508 crew members Fred Whitaker, Daniel Martinez, Ralph Maldonado and Matt Connolly spotted a car crashed in the woods, they spearheaded a joint rescue operation with the Holbrook Fire Department to free a woman trapped inside the car. The crew removed trees surrounding the car so firefighters could

When an editorial appeared in Newsday that distorted the true intent of the Triborough Amendment to the Taylor Law, we responded immediately with our own letter to set the record straight. In this instance we smartly tied the duplicitous actions of state politicians in the Tier 6 pension reform debacle to the deceitful dealings of legislators in Nassau County who stopped at nothing to gain full authority to open union contracts.

facilitate the rescue and transport the woman to an area hospital for treatment.

CSEA members working for municipal highway, sanitation and parks departments all over Long Island were on call and ready to deal with whatever came their way before, during and after Hurricane Irene made landfall as a strong category one storm. City of Long Beach Unit members created large barriers of sand all along the ocean and bay beaches in an effort to prevent surging walls of water from flooding the streets.

Conditions in the City of Glen Cove were not much better and CSEA members working there in the Department of Public Works (DPW) were also out in force prior to the storm situating sand bags in vulnerable low-lying areas as part of their precautionary measures. Out in Brookhaven Town it was all hands on deck as CSEA members there worked 44 hour shifts as the storm began and then put in 14 hour days for the next week to cover the entire town. And a multi-faceted approach was employed in Hempstead Town that relied on the skills and expertise of CSEA members in the highway, sanitation, parks and street lighting departments.

DOT Local 508 members also responded well to mitigate the damage caused by the hurricane. Personnel from the main yard in Central Islip worked closely with counterparts from ancillary facilities in Smithtown, Commack and Hauppauge to keep state roads safe and passable as the storm raged and in the days that followed.

The Long Island Region Women's Committee members once again coordinated the CSEA involvement in the annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk at Jones Beach. Walkers were recruited from practically every local and \$5,600 was raised for the cause.

CSEA members from the Baldwin School District Special Education Unit and Nassau Educational Local 865 staged a spirited rally

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LESTER CROCKETT,
Metropolitan Region President



The primary objective of the regional leadership has been to prepare our members to fight to their fullest abilities for this great union. Additionally, we continue to make sure our focus is in representing members of CSEA and supporting any union member facing challenges in the state of New York.

Brothers and Sisters, I take great pride in writing and submitting my first Annual Delegates Report. Since our last delegate convention held in New York City, many things have transpired in the Metropolitan Region. The primary objective of the regional leadership has been to prepare our members to fight to their fullest abilities for this great union. Additionally, we continue to make sure our focus is in representing members of CSEA and supporting any union member facing challenges in the state of New York.

CSEA faces some serious challenges in the medical health area, starting with the proposed closing of Kingsboro Psychiatric Center. Records show that Kingsboro failed three consecutive accreditation evaluations. Based on those evaluations, a recommendation was made to close the inpatient services at Kingsboro and send the patients to other hospitals. Members joined Local President Fitzroy Wilson and his team and with a strong fight they prevented the closing of Kingsboro Psychiatric Center and were successful in stopping the closure of the inpatient services.

Another serious challenge is occurring at SUNY Downstate Medical Center located in Brooklyn up the street from Kingsboro Psychiatric. At Downstate, management also wants to transfer the patients to another facility which would result in layoffs. CSEA has attended several rallies and demonstrations concerning Downstate. The unions will continue to rally and protest these changes at Downstate Medical Center. With the hard work of Local President Althea Green and the other officers at Local 646, we have avoided losing hundreds of jobs at SUNY Downstate.

The previous year has been extremely busy. I attended several information days throughout the Metropolitan Region. Information days were held at Metro DDSO, New York State Insurance Fund, Brooklyn Developmental, Queensboro Correctional, Downstate Medical Center, Creedmoor Psychiatric Center and Local 010 which has over 90 different locations.

Also, at three different rallies held at Bronx Psychiatric, CSEA supported the effort of the local leadership to prevent the layoffs of over sixty employees. Local

President Abraham Benjamin, along with his officers, worked diligently to avoid these unfortunate layoffs that were being forced upon the facility by the Governor.

On a better note, this summer a few locals, including Taxation and Finance and Brooklyn Developmental, held picnics and barbecues where information and food and refreshments were offered. The Region 2 Education and Women's committees also participated in the annual cervical cancer walk. The region sponsored a bus to Washington D.C. to participate in the cancer walk attended by over 40 activists from the region. The region raised over \$500 to defeat cervical cancer.

The chairs and members of the Region 2 Education and Women's Committee also coordinated the annual Region 2 Workshop in Ellenville at Honors Haven Resort and Spa. The workshop had over 160 participants. The theme of the workshop was "United in Unionism, Empowering our Future."

Also, activists and members from across the region have participated in the annual West Indian Day, the Central Labor Council Labor Day parade and the Veterans Day parade.

In closing, I would like to say Region 2 will continue to work hard for this great union.

In solidarity,

Lester Crockett

Metropolitan Region President



**BILLY RICCALDO,
Southern Region President**



Throughout 2012, we have gained a clear picture of the vision the 1% has for New York. The seemingly endless flow of money to the Committee to Save New York has provided Governor Cuomo a financial cushion that has allowed him to start making ill-advised cuts in state services under the guise of efficiency. It is not efficient to eliminate needed public services from communities.

steady stream of revenue from the Mid-Orange work force.

The consolidation of Hudson River Psychiatric Center with Rockland Psychiatric Center should really be billed as a closure, though the state has labeled it a consolidation. The closure of the Hudson River campus again took mental health services out of the Dutchess County community, which has already lost county services. For many of our members, the offer of jobs in Rockland was not enough as the lengthy commute was simply unaffordable for workers on a middle class salary. Now we have received the news that Taconic DDSO will merge with Hudson Valley DDSO, which means the eventual closure of the Taconic campus in Amenia. These consolidations are hurting our communities more than they are helping the state budget, in my opinion. Local access is an important component of getting people the help they need. I truly fear we will have more people wandering the streets in need of help because the services they need are no longer accessible. Shutting these facilities and putting community members out of work is not the answer.

Cuts in our New York State Unified Court System have had a significant impact on the CSEA membership. Cutting the work force at a time when caseloads are at a high means that the wheels of justice turn slower for the residents of our state. The cuts also have the potential to cause a health and safety risk. We are so grateful that no serious injuries occurred following a shooting that took place at the Middletown City Court. Everyone working that day of this awful incident responded professionally and appropriately. Nonetheless, we must continue to push for staffing levels to be increased so the patrons of the courts and the work force are safe. It was appalling to see judges serving in this court system pushing for raises at a time when the rest of the courts work force is either being laid off or dealing with an impossible workload because of the cuts.

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**KATHY GARRISON,
Capital Region President**



The American Dream can become reality again if we elect politicians who are interested in advancing the middle class, not corporations or billionaires. When you cast your vote this November, think of the generations before you, and think of your grandchildren.

The American Dream is becoming a fantasy. There was a time in this country, as recent as my parents' generation, when a family could, on a middle class salary, enjoy the trappings of the American Dream: a home, a car, a decent job and wages enough so that you could feed your family, pay your bills and take a vacation.

Those same families lived this dream with three or four kids and still managed to squirrel away money and pay for their kids to go to college. They did not lay awake at night worrying about poverty in retirement as they were guaranteed a pension.

Those days are gone. As a parent and recent grandparent, I fear for this generation of young parents today, and I fear more for the new generation — those just arriving and those yet to come.

This country was built on a tide of immigrants who came here for a better life. Many came to this country traveling through Ellis Island, carrying nothing but their hopes and dreams for a better life. These immigrants were our grandparents and great grandparents and for many that dream came true. They were able to give their kids a better life than their own. Isn't that what all parents want, for their kids to have things better?

In the 1930s when the term American Dream first entered the lexicon, the National Labor Relations Act was passed in Congress establishing the right for collective bargaining. With government support for labor and a commitment to education, the middle class grew and so did equitable wealth. In the late 1970s when union membership was at its peak, at 21 percent of the work force, a backlash formed in response to a worsening fiscal crisis. Big business had had enough and began to organize and lobby. So here we are today on the back end of the worst fiscal crisis in decades and the big money crowd with their Super PACS are going all in, demonizing unions and public employees who dare to seek the American Dream.

The fact that Scott Walker is still in office proves the effectiveness of their demonization and half-truths. A local teacher, Babette Faehmel from Schenectady County Community College wrote in a recent editorial, "The attack

on public-sector unions is only one battle in a longer war for political influence between organized labor and organized management. The outcome will affect us all. What we increasingly see in retrospect is that the end of union strength was also the beginning of the shrinking of the middle class and growth in wealth inequality not seen since the Gilded Age."

The U.S. Census Bureau released in September its annual report Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage In the United States 2011. Not surprisingly, median household income declined last year to \$50,054, a level last seen in 1996. Of course, not all earners were affected. The share of income for the top 5 percent of earners increased by 4 percent. Economists call this Income Inequality.

In 2011 the family poverty rate and number of families in poverty was 11.8 percent and 9.5 million, respectively. For families with a female head of household, a shocking 31.2 percent lived in poverty. United States poverty levels are at the highest levels since 1965.

Health insurance coverage was the one bright spot in the report. The number of people without health insurance coverage declined from 50 million to 48.6 million, attributed largely to parents' being able to add their college-aged students to their coverage where they were previously aged out. This is a direct benefit of the Health Care Reform Act that many continue to deride as "Obamacare."

As much as the Romney camp promises a brighter future, the fact remains that as working Americans and union members we simply can't hand over the reins to an administration that seeks to undermine our way of life and further erode the American Dream.

In November, voters heading to the polls will face a choice between two very different candidates with two very different visions for our country's future.

As Ms. Faehmel warns, "We are in danger of becoming a nation of worker drones ruled by quasi feudal lords. It

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Greetings Brothers and Sisters:
By the time you are reading this, there will be mere weeks before one of the most important elections in our history. Hopefully we all realize the votes we cast this November will directly impact our future as workers. The damage being done to working class America can only be stopped if we support the candidates who support us. We cannot allow ourselves to get caught up in heated rhetoric and then vote against our own interests. There is too much at stake.

If you have taken the time to read up on the issues in the presidential campaign you will see it is imperative we do not allow Mitt Romney to bring to the White House his previous pattern of job destruction and outsourcing that he has the nerve to tout as his private sector success. Supporting President Obama is crucial. Within CSEA we need to take a ground-up approach, getting involved in those small local races directly impacting the rank and file workers who make our union great. Involvement in a town supervisor or city council race can make a direct difference in your work life. Join me in the coming weeks for phone banks, for labor-to-neighbor campaign walks and for Election Day leafleting as we get out in support of the candidates who support the majority of Americans, not just the richest few.

Throughout 2012, we have gained a clear picture of the vision the 1% has for New York. The seemingly endless flow of money to the Committee to Save New York has provided Governor Cuomo a financial cushion that has allowed him to start making ill-advised cuts in state services under the guise of efficiency. It is not efficient to eliminate needed public services from communities. It is not wise, either, to strangle local governments and school districts with a property tax cap that sounded good in theory but, as we knew it would be, has been disastrous in reality. We are seeing the impact of these moves in the Southern Region, as we have faced consolidations and closures of state facilities as well as devastating budget scenarios in our local government and school districts.

The closure of the Mid-Orange Correctional Facility in Warwick eliminated many decent jobs in Orange County. There has no doubt been a ripple effect, as small businesses in the area no longer have that



**COLLEEN WHEATON,
Central Region President**



In this slow-moving economy, and with all the well-financed and well-coordinated attacks against us, we are in serious trouble, and America is in serious trouble. This is why we need you, the membership, to be strong, stand together for each other and get involved in your union. If we all stand up for our rights, then we have the ability to turn back this anti-worker trend we are seeing across the country.

Sisters and brothers:

First, let me start by thanking our Region officers, staff, activists and all of you for the hard work and dedication you have for CSEA.

Over the last several years, we all have been struggling to keep our rights in the workplace. The attacks on workers' rights and unions have been increasing, and their message is getting louder. That message was very clear at the recent Republican Convention, as they talked openly about destroying unions because in their eyes, unions and "big government" are destroying this country. As a union of mostly government workers, they see US as the biggest target and threat.

Imagine if you will, what American life would be like if they got their way and we had no unions. Workers in this country would become just like those in any other third world country. There would be no health insurance, because we could not afford it. There would be no defined pension plans, and if we were lucky enough to have a pension plan, it would be a 401K that could take a nosedive at any moment. But then again, who could afford to contribute? We all would be working 50, 60 even 70 hours a week on minimum wage or less. There would not be any grievance rights or disciplinary protections; if your employer did not like you or you question anything, you would be out the door. We would lose our homes, our livelihoods and be at the mercy of any employer. There would be no middle class, just the working poor, and of course the super wealthy.

Now imagine what life would be like without what they call "big government," which is partially made up of all the services WE provide. They would privatize all services they could, then when companies do not make enough profits, they would close down and disappear, or extort taxpayers for even higher-paying contracts. There will be no public nursing homes, no mental health facilities, no good public schools, no good roads, no clean water, no parks, and so on. They would also get rid of our social safety nets, with no Social Security or Medicare, no unemployment

benefits, no Medicaid services – all the services that help Americans during a time of struggles. ALL GONE.

Does this sound like a future we want? Does this sound like an America we want? Not for me and I'm hoping not for you either.

How do we prevent it? We stand up for our rights, and we fight the forces that are trying to get rid of unions. At the same time, we continue our efforts to educate people about how unions are protecting our middle class, how unions are good for our economy, and how people can't take our public workers and their services they use every day for granted.

We must stand up for our rights!
We must stand up for our communities!

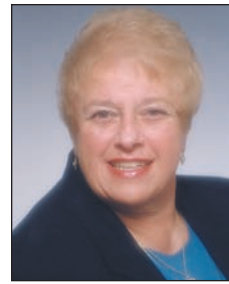
We must stand up for the middle class!

We must stand up, and we must fight back!

In this slow-moving economy, and with all the well-financed and well-coordinated attacks against us, we are in serious trouble, and America is in serious trouble. This is why we need you, the membership, to be strong, stand together for each other and get involved in your union. If we all stand up for our rights, then we have the ability to turn back this anti-worker trend we are seeing across the country. We need you out in your communities, telling the public what we do, and the services that we provide. I will be working every day to move our cause forward, but we need you to stand up with us.

No matter how tired we are, now is not the time to lie down, and give up in defeat. Now is the time to stand up, get involved, and fight like hell. I cannot

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**FLO TRIPI,
Western Region President**



We are working people. We scrimp and save for everything we do. We must look ahead to our own and our children's' future. We are products of the American Dream. Let us join together and let this world know who we are, what we do, and never ever apologize for receiving a modest pension that will help us through our retirement. We've earned it.

Brothers and Sisters in CSEA: I look forward to this year's Annual Delegate Meeting. As summer begins to wind down, we begin to get into the convention mode. While I always look forward to the convention and the business of this union that is conducted, I especially like seeing friends and colleagues who spend their lives "Standing Up for Our Rights." As you know, no matter where you live or work in this union, every day is a challenge. Every day is another test of our endurance. Every day is another day that the attacks intensify on public employees, working families, and labor unions. It is impressive to watch us come together and fight these battles.

CSEA's Western Region has had a year of challenge. After many struggles in many of our counties, we are settling contracts. We continue to battle for good contracts. Our members deserve good salaries and benefits and we will continue to work toward that goal. Erie County recently voted down a tentative agreement. Monroe County recently approved a contract.

The attack on public employee pensions has escalated by the creation of Tier 6, enacted by our state Legislature, which was held hostage by our governor. The ink on Tier 5 was hardly dry when Gov. Andrew Cuomo proposed Tier 6. I am so proud of our members who stepped up and fought hard. While many of our politicians did not stand by us, there were significant modifications to the original proposal. Some of the legislators did stand by us and we will remember and stand by those who did.

We continue to battle to save public nursing homes. For some reason, many local governments feel they should not be in the business of caring for our elderly and disabled. Many areas in our state and especially in our counties are trying to either privatize or close many of our nursing homes. These facilities are jewels in our communities. They are places where our elderly and disabled can live close to family and friends. The residents live their lives in dignity because of the dedicated CSEA employees caring for them. We are dealing with challenges in Chautauqua County, Steuben County, and Ontario County. We have forged significant campaigns in all those areas. Bless those officers and members that

have taken on this battle. It is not easy to stand up at legislative meetings, to stand for hours handing out fliers telling our side of the story, put hundreds of signs in our communities, and give up any leisure time you might have to contribute just a little more. I continue to be impressed by the energy and dedication of these wonderful CSEA members and those community groups that have joined us. In Cattaraugus County, the potential of the outsourcing of our Mental Health Division looms, and again we are actively involved in that fight. Along with the battles are the day-to-day activities. We attend many meetings and we stay in constant touch with our CSEA leaders and members. Training is and continues to be a major priority in our region and we encourage all to take part in the trainings that are offered.

Along with the intensity, we do have time in Western Region to have fun together. We have held very successful conferences with new programs for our leadership. We held our annual Polar Plunge where 25 of our Region 6'ers jumped into cold Lake Ontario and raised \$7,000 for the Special Olympics. We also participated in the Summer Special Olympics held in Buffalo in early summer. Our biennial Women's Conference was held in March. It was a great conference with innovative programs that brought us together and gave us great enjoyment. We are hosting a school conference in November of this year so that we can offer our school district members information and camaraderie, showing the diversity of those we represent and that we are not alone in our struggles. Our annual Veterans Ceremony will be held in November. This ceremony serves as a remembrance to our members and all who have served our country. It is a great reminder of their sacrifices. After the holidays, we begin the election cycle

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SOUTHERN REGION PRESIDENT, continued from Page 4

Moving on to infrastructure, I have to commend our members working for the New York State Department of Transportation. Their department is not getting the state funding to handle all the responsibilities with which they are tasked. With our recent extreme weather, they are constantly on the go.

I am proud of our members working for the New York State Bridge Authority. It troubles me to hear that there are talks of merging the Bridge Authority with another state authority. Our members have played a huge role in making the Bridge Authority run smoothly and efficiently. The bridges under their responsibility are some of the safest, the staff is top-notch and the finances are sound. It makes no sense to dismantle an agency working so well.

Moving on to local government, we are dealing with a lot of privatization issues. Emboldened by other counties that have pursued privatization of county nursing homes, we are dealing with uncertainty at our county homes in Orange and Rockland Counties. Every county's financial situation differs. Using another county's issues to justify privatizing a crucial resource for our seniors is shameful, in my opinion.

If there were an award for the worst county executive ever, Orange County Executive Ed Diana would be a strong contender. During the past year, we have learned that over the past decade Diana has intentionally run the finances of the county-owned Valley View nursing home into the ground. He has overseen an incompetent administrative team that has mismanaged the nursing home finances and contracted with various consultants that all seem to have personal connections to the management team. This team, amazingly enough, has ties to the chair of the county Republican Party and, we learned, was publicly speaking about the eventual privatization of Valley View years ago when trying to push their services to the Essex County Board of Supervisors. Our involvement and work with the pro-Valley View legislators led to the creation of a special investigatory committee on the operation of Valley View, which brought to the public's attention Diana's deliberate mismanagement of our county home. We know Valley View can be run efficiently and kept county-owned.

Diana's legacy as county executive will be tarnished by his treatment of the Valley View residents and work force. I would like to thank all the Democrats on the Legislature and the one lone Republican who has consistently fought for Valley View. Needless to say, in the midst of all this, it has been quite a challenge to get anything accomplished in the unit's contract negotiations.

In Rockland County, we are fighting for the Summit Park Hospital & Nursing Care Center. Rockland has a vastly different financial situation than Orange County, but we believe there are options that will allow us to preserve Summit Park's public mission. When Summit Park opened nearly 40 years ago, it was hailed as a state-of-the-art facility known for exceptional care. We can preserve that mission. As I write this, we have reached a tentative contract agreement that achieves needed savings for the county. The members of CSEA have been willing to be part of the solution, but we cannot do it alone.

If Ed Diana gets the worst county executive award, Mike Israel will win the prize for worst CEO. Israel, the CEO of Westchester Medical Center, is destroying the hospital little by little. Department by department he has cut staff and outsourced jobs, replacing loyal, experienced workers who have earned the hospital its "World Class Medicine" motto. Israel is bringing in contract workers who are working for Wal-Mart wages. This year alone, Israel has cut hundreds of workers via layoff and outsourcing. It was

no surprise to see a Consumer Reports ranking listing WMC as one of the least safe hospitals in the country. This ranking comes purely because Mike Israel and his overpaid suite of executive flunkies have cut what has made this hospital great – the work force that actually delivers care. Israel has laid off hundreds of CSEA members in his effort to destroy WMC's public mission. The members of the WMC board of directors should be ashamed of themselves for being such a rubber stamp for Israel and putting profit above the long-established safety net mission of the hospital. CSEA has filed numerous improper practice and grievance charges against the hospital. We have rallied, held press conferences and even led the charge to get a town hall forum on the hospital held. We will continue to hold the administration accountable. The community depends on WMC. It is time for the public to demand this erosion of the hospital stop once and for all.

On to Westchester County, we continue to work on contract negotiations in the county unit. Negotiations are a two-way street. Even though Republican County Executive Rob Astorino is quick to tout his own union membership from his broadcasting days, he either refuses to comprehend this concept (doubtful) or he is ignoring it so he can imply he is the one meeting resistance. Our negotiating team has presented numerous cost savings opportunities to the county that would still allow them to maintain the level of service currently provided. The problem is, Astorino does not want to acknowledge that because it would ruin his credibility with his pals in the corporate world. Unit President Karen Pecora and her activists are doing a terrific job getting the word out about the value the county work force brings to Westchester communities.

On the other hand, we are having a more positive experience further north in Dutchess County with the new county executive, Marc Molinaro. Make no mistake, the county's budget situation is challenging. However, unlike during the three decade tenure of the previous county executive, we now have an ongoing conversation with County Executive Molinaro. That open dialogue is crucial. Local President Liz Piraino and her team are working hard on negotiating a new contract and working to ensure the county's budget constraints have as minimal as possible an effect on the work force.

In Ulster County, we just reached a tentative agreement in the county unit as I was writing this report. This year has been a tough one for our Ulster activists. It was unexpected to say the least when Ulster County Executive Mike Hein pushed to form a local development corporation to sell the Golden Hill nursing home. This is something that has never been done before and this type of use of an LDC is something our state comptroller disagrees with. We are working closely with our members through this process. We are also fighting to preserve the county Mental Health department, Hein's newest target. Our members do a fantastic job ensuring that those struggling with mental illness having the community-based services they need. Local non-profits lack the resources to take over this work without vulnerable citizens falling through the cracks. Hein broke his promise to let legislators decide on Golden Hill; it is time for him to work within the checks and balances of county government with regard to Mental Health.

In Putnam County, we are again working through a transition as we adjust to a new county executive. There is always a period of adjustment, especially when the executive's predecessor was such a longtime incumbent.

In all our county bargaining units, I am concerned

about the future of certain social service and mental health job titles. Case management, eligibility examiners, home health aides and other workers are titles that should remain with counties. This push to squeeze a profit out of essential government services needs to stop. The workers caring for our most vulnerable citizens cannot be farmed out to some middle man making a profit off of them. It is time for people to wake up and realize government is not a business! Government services can be run efficiently if there is proper management, but the push to put a profit margin on Grandma has to stop.

In our school districts and libraries, we are seeing the impact of the tax cap. I do not think the average citizen had any idea of the impact this tax cap would have. Now that people are seeing how the cap is forcing drastic service cuts that impact our children's education, I hope more school districts and other municipalities will lobby their legislators to overturn this cap. Every district or municipality's finances are different. It is not feasible to apply an arbitrary number and expect it will work for all.

Despite all the bumps of the past year, we are continuing to organize new locals and units in the Southern Region because more people are realizing they need a union to ensure fairness in the workplace. To those who have joined us this year, welcome aboard!

In closing, I would like to thank all the officers in the Southern Region for their hard work. I would also like to thank the region staff and our work force in Headquarters. They are always working behind the scenes to make our union the best in the country and I appreciate their hard work.

Respectfully submitted,
Billy Riccaldo
Southern Region President

CAPITAL REGION PRESIDENT, continued from Page 5

is this sorry state of affairs, rather than the idea of collective bargaining or activist government, that should be considered hopelessly out-of-date and un-American."

The American Dream can become reality again if we elect politicians who are interested in advancing the middle class, not corporations or billionaires. When you cast your vote this November, think of the generations before you, and think of your grandchildren.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Garrison
Capital Region President

CENTRAL REGION PRESIDENT, continued from Page 5

say it enough – members are and have always been the backbone of CSEA, and we need your solidarity, now more than ever before.

Together, we will stand, and we will prevail.
In Solidarity,
Colleen Wheaton
Central Region President

CSEA EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, continued from Page 1

circumstances of their birth.

But, for the first time ever, most people truly do not believe their children will be better off than they are. The only people who have reason to be optimistic are those who happen to be part of the one percent. What seems to be forgotten is that it is us, the 99 percent, who made the one percent what they are. It was the toil and labor of average working men and women that built this country and it's working men and women who continue day to day to make the products and deliver the services that the one percent profit from.

There is a lot at stake for working people in the upcoming presidential election and in every election. Sure, it's great to elect the appropriate person to be our president. But if we don't elect the right people on our school boards, the right people in the villages, the right county and state legislators, we're doomed. We have to be involved in the political process at every level because that is the way to protect our values.

So between now and November, and the next November and the next one after that, we must go out and deliver our message to everyone we know who will listen. We have to talk to our colleagues, our barber, our waiter, our neighbors on either side, the members of our

church, the people we go bowling with. Remind them we have the same values, and that we're looking for the same things out of life. We may not be millionaires but we want to be comfortable. We don't want to have to worry about where the next mortgage or rent payment is coming from. We don't want to worry that we won't have food on the table for the kids tomorrow. We want to be appreciated for the hard work that we do every day and compensated at a level that's going to be enough to sustain us with a little bit more to put away for our future comfort and security.

Working people have to come together like rich people have come together. We have a lot more in common than we do differences and we've got to stand together for the values we believe in and elect leaders who share those values with us.

In Solidarity,

Mary E. Sullivan

CSEA Executive Vice President

CSEA STATEWIDE TREASURER, continued from Page 2

CSEA is affected by the same problems that affect the state and local government. Staff health insurance, prescriptions and retirement costs are causing major budgeting challenges. With all the reductions in work force, closures and layoffs in Local Government, we are in for some very tough times ahead.

But rest assured; CSEA continues to be fiscally responsible with our own in-house situations. We once again are working closely with all departments to keep our budget numbers in line. There is a job freeze and the only jobs that are being filled are the ones needed to continue day-to-day operations in representing our members.

The threats are real folks and we must vote and take action to put an end to it.

History has shown that together, we have the power to do great things through solidarity and collective action. We have the power to fight and make a real difference for each other and the greater good of our communities. I look forward to working with everyone over the next year in the battles that lie ahead.

Respectfully Submitted

Joe McMullen
Statewide Treasurer

LONG ISLAND REGION PRESIDENT, continued from Page 3

to protest the fact that Teacher Aides there have been working with an expired contract for nearly three years. The vocal assembly also sought to inform local residents that contract negotiations have stalled for over a year because school board members have little regard for the collective bargaining process.

The Oyster Bay Town Local 881 members participated in a charity softball tournament to benefit Canine Companions for Independence. Participants from various departments donated a monetary sum and non-perishable food item to assist the good work of this volunteer organization that trains and provides companion animals for people with all types of developmental disabilities.

Southold Town and Greenport Village Unit highway crews were recognized as public servants of the year for 2011 by the Suffolk Times, a weekly publication serving Long Island's North Fork. The paper noted that "the effects of the miserable weather of 2011, from the blizzard-filled winter to the fury of Tropical Storm Irene, would have been much worse if it weren't for the dedication of these highway department workers."

We responded quickly with a forceful reply after learning about a self-serving crusade initiated by two special interest groups that threatened the very existence of Sanitation District Number Two along with the jobs of 68 CSEA members affiliated with Nassau Municipal Employees Local 882. Our letter was printed in the Long Island Business News and the Baldwin Herald.

Then, when an editorial appeared in Newsday that distorted the true intent of the Triborough Amendment to the Taylor Law, we responded immediately with our own letter to set the record straight. In this instance we smartly tied the duplicitous actions of state politicians in the Tier 6 pension reform debacle to the deceitful dealings of legislators in Nassau County who stopped at nothing to gain full authority to open union contracts. Our response to these reprehensible incidents was printed in Newsday.

The Long Island Region Bathing Beauties participated in the Special Olympics Polar Plunge at Bar Beach in Port Washington for the fifth consecutive year. These

hearty activists from Nassau Educational Local 865 and Oyster Bay Town Local 881 raised more than \$2,000 to complement the nearly \$1,000 raised by Brookhaven Town White-Collar Unit members in the Mount Sinai Polar Plunge at Cedar Beach. These two events offered CSEA members the chance to make a difference in the lives of people with developmental disabilities and the strong union presence at both locations demonstrated our genuine desire to improve quality of life for all state residents.

More than 100 Region officers and activists filled two buses bound for Albany to personally relate their legitimate concerns to state legislators as part of the annual CSEA involvement in Lobby Day. These dedicated members joined their counterparts from the five other CSEA Regions across the state to speak with Assemblypersons and Senators from their home districts about issues vital to working people.

CSEA members in the Smithtown Fire District, along with their union colleagues in the Brookhaven Town White Collar and Highway Units, responded effectively when wild fires broke out in the Pine Barrens region of Suffolk County. Smithtown Fire District Unit members used their skills as Dispatchers and Emergency Medical Technicians to help coordinate the efforts of volunteer firefighters from all over Long Island while aiding persons on the scene suffering from smoke inhalation or other injuries.

The Brookhaven Town Fire Marshals provided their technical expertise by assisting personnel from various fire departments to recognize possible dangers and environmental variables at the scene to mitigate detrimental effects. They also assisted authorities to investigate the causes of the fires and develop strategies to avoid similar occurrences. Brookhaven Town Highway Unit members were instrumental in fire containment and their ability to operate large vehicles such as brush removal trucks in tight spaces allowed for the creation of much needed fire breaks and work trails.

Southold Town Unit President Tom Skabry received the William L. McGowan OSH Award from CSEA President Danny Donohue at the union's OSH Conference in Lake

Placid. Skabry is especially dedicated to the principle of promoting safety and health in the workplace, while serving as Chair of the Region Safety & Health Committee and a member of the Statewide Standing OSH Committee.

President Donohue also presented the 2012 Local Government Mission Achievement Award to City of Long Beach Unit President John Mooney at our Spring Conference in Buffalo. John earned the award for being a direct, honest and very effective advocate for union principles and ideals and personifying precisely what CSEA seeks in its leaders.

Suffolk Educational Local 870 President Maria Navarro hosted an open house at the local office in Medford to foster interaction between members and local officers and provide a forum to detail the many ways CSEA works to enhance quality of life for its members. Labor Relations Specialists assigned to the various school district units and CSEA vendors were also on hand for the occasion.

Four CSEA members received \$500 scholarships to subsidize the cost of sending their young children to summer day camp programs in a random lottery drawing. The lucky winners included Laurie Zito from Suffolk Municipal Employees Local 852, Glenn Tripi from Nassau Municipal Employees Local 882 and Edward Gutman and Jacqueline Drake from Nassau County Local 830. Funding for the "Send a Kid to Camp Scholarships" was generated through our annual Long Island Region Golf Classic.

Finally, members of the Long Island Region Veterans Committee staged a Flag Day ceremony to properly dispose of worn, torn or tattered American flags in front of the Region office and raised more than \$700 by using the space in our parking lot to conduct a charity car wash for the benefit of homeless or needy veterans.

Thank you for your attention to this review of major events in the Long Island Region.

Respectfully submitted,

Nick LaMorte
Long Island Region President

CSEA PRESIDENT, continued from Page 1

and state legislative races are also very important to CSEA members. It makes a big difference who is elected to office at every level and how we hold them accountable.

CSEA's endorsement must be earned

CSEA marked its 100th anniversary in 2010 but the past few years have been among the most difficult in our history. The years ahead are likely to be challenging too. It will not be easy but we have a lot of experience dealing with adversity. Still, it does make a very big difference who is elected to office.

CSEA members need to be more active in the political and legislative process than ever before. Even more important is holding elected officials accountable at all levels for what they say and do.

CSEA was extremely selective about who we endorsed for the state legislature after thorough review of our policies and expectations earlier this year. We are making only a limited number of endorsements. Many lawmakers who have long enjoyed our support did not receive it this year because they abandoned the working people of this state. The CSEA endorsement has to be earned or else it has no meaning.

For two years, state legislators, Senate and Assembly

members, on both sides of the aisle, rubber-stamped state budgets that undermined state operations, shortchanged localities and schools, and they forfeited oversight responsibility on important public policy issues. They also imposed a property tax cap that is causing fiscal chaos in local government and school district budgets.

Additionally, lawmakers made a dark deal with Governor Andrew Cuomo last spring trading support for onerous and unnecessary public employee pension tier changes in exchange for favorable legislative redistricting.

Enough is enough.

CSEA members will aggressively campaign for our endorsed candidates – people who stood strong against the prevailing tide. We will provide mailings, phone calls, printing, grassroots volunteers and other benefits. Just as important, beyond this election we will work to mobilize members like never before – regularly communicating with elected officials to do what's right for working people.

Our future begins with casting our votes November 6 for President Obama and other candidates who will lead us forward. A lot of hard work will have to follow.

In Solidarity,

Danny Donohue
CSEA President

CSEA STATEWIDE SECRETARY, continued from Page 2

need to make the public understand that union or not, we are fighting for the middle class, for decent jobs and fair treatment, and to end the 30-year slide that began with the malicious PATCO firings.

The public has been turned against us, and our political allies have abandoned us, but that does not mean we are without hope. Hope is the fuel that fires our fight, and we are the match that sets that fuel ablaze. We can turn back the tide of anti-worker and anti-union sentiment in this nation. We need each other to do so, and we need all workers to engage in this struggle.

In Solidarity,

Denise Berkley
Statewide Secretary

WESTERN REGION PRESIDENT, continued from Page 6

for our locals and units. That should make for a busy winter and busy spring for many of our CSEA leaders.

In addition to all the day-to-day activities, our region conferences, the Statewide Occupational Safety and Health Conference, and the Statewide Spring Workshop were held this year. Our leadership and members attended these educational workshops, training all of us in the latest ways to deal with issues in the workplace. Of course, the culmination was the AFSCME Convention, held in June. There was an excellent showing of delegates and staff from CSEA. As you all know, CSEA President Danny Donohue ran for AFSCME president. This convention again presented CSEA Delegates in their best form. We worked together day and night to let AFSCME know that CSEA was in the house. We showed them tremendous solidarity, persistence, and what CSEA is all about. While Danny did not win the election, he was a great competitor. He ran a strong campaign, but more importantly, he had a unified, determined and very hard working group of CSEA Delegates. We worked hard. We worked together. We were all winners. It was an incredible experience. I thank every one of our CSEA delegates for their dedication to this cause. I know AFSCME took note of our commitment to our president.

In August, I was privileged to attend the New York State AFL-CIO COPE Convention. Labor Unions from across the state came together to discuss the field of candidates for the November elections and to plan for the future of the labor movement. The theme of the convention was "Standing Together." If there was ever a time in history that standing together is important, it is now. While the public sector seems to be whipping boy at this time in history, our union brothers and sisters in the private sector have been under criticism in the past few years. The convention emphasized solidarity. That means all of us coming together to work to change the minds of those who think we are not important — that the services we provide are not necessary or that the private companies can do the jobs better. The convention brought together all facets of the labor community.

Returning home, my thoughts have been on the message projected during the COPE Convention. Brothers and Sisters, these are tough times. We are caught in economic

turmoil. Things are improving, but not as quickly as was hoped. That is why contracts are more difficult to negotiate. That is why those of us in union leadership experience much tougher conditions to get problems resolved.

We face county executives, mayors, town supervisors, school superintendents and yes, our governor, who claim to be restricted by finances but are not willing to look elsewhere for savings. It is so easy to just abolish positions, slash funding for essential services, and they have made it their goal to take away what we have bargained and earned over the years. It is a time that we must stand together. We must begin to talk about who we are, what we do and how important we are to our communities. You, our CSEA members, are the very heart and soul of our communities. When we accepted a job as a public servant, we agreed to lower salaries. We took on the responsibilities for caring for our children in schools, and our elderly and disabled. Our police, correction officers and probation officers keep our communities safe. Our transportation workers keep our streets and highways clean for travel through the most inclement weather.

We work in the courts, in Department of Motor Vehicle offices, public hospitals, public nursing homes, keeping our food safe and water clean. I could go on and on. We have to come together as workers but also as union members. It is the unions that have set the standard so that we can be whatever we want to be. We have the opportunity to learn and be educated because we are guaranteed a free public education. Unions created the middle class. It is being a part of the middle class that has allowed us to move forward. My dad was an Italian immigrant and came to this country when he was 12 years old. He worked hard, raised a family and worked to make sure his children had every opportunity to succeed. My dad was not alone. He was part of a generation that believed in the American Dream. My dad did not have a union. When he was 60 years old, he went to work one morning and the gate was locked. His company had moved to North Carolina and locked everyone out. He had no severance pay, no health insurance and a very small pension, which didn't last very long.

What helped was that he was able to go on Social

Security and Medicare shortly after his unemployment ran out. That was a life changing experience for all of us, and it reinforced my belief in the labor movement and in unions, especially CSEA. We need to believe in the labor movement. We must inform our neighbors and co-workers of the importance of our unions. We must elect politicians that appreciate our service and comprehend our passion to serve. We must elect politicians who recognize our worth as public sector workers and recognize that we are taxpayers and contribute greatly to our communities as citizens.

This is a big year for us. We must elect politicians who will work with us to save our jobs, our dignity and our pensions. We must start at the top. We must elect a president who has walked in our shoes, who knows what it is like to juggle work and family with a limited income. We must elect a president who cares about the middle class, who cares whether families have medical insurance. We must elect a president that will appoint members to the Supreme Court who will bring fairness to laws governing the working families of this country. We must elect a president and politicians who know that Medicare and Social Security bring dignity and solvency to our elders.

I believe strongly in our President, Barack Obama. The AFL-CIO and many other unions feel we would be much further ahead if Congress had allowed the president to pursue his mission. We are working people. We scrimp and save for everything we do. We must look ahead to our own and our children's' future. We are products of the American Dream. Let us join together and let this world know who we are, what we do, and never ever apologize for receiving a modest pension that will help us through our retirement. We've earned it.

Brothers and Sisters, every day I thank the Lord for my family, for my position as your Western Region President, and for each of you who have become our CSEA family. Bless you all.

In Solidarity,

Flo Tripi
Western Region President