

THE WORK FORCE

Pataki's budget shatters health care



— See pages 3, 4 and 5

Photo of the Month



Photo by Therese Assalian

CSEA members Kip McHargue, left, and Tommy Gorman of the Troy Department of Public Utilities work a valve to control water at the site of a water main break in the city, which experienced several water main breaks during a recent bitter cold snap. See story, Page 8.

NHCC contract passes

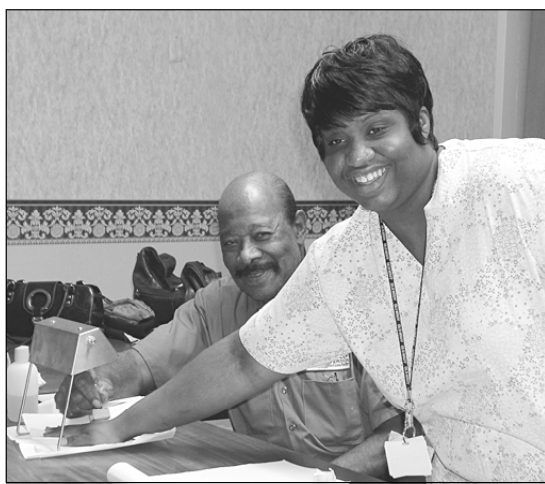
MINEOLA — CSEA members at the Nassau Health Care Corporation approved a five-year contract by a 2:1 ratio, ending a two-year fight without a contract.

The agreement includes a signing bonus, cost-of-living adjustments and maintains existing benefits. It also has an innovative job preservation clause that calls for no layoffs unless corporation income drops drastically.

The contract covers workers at Nassau University Medical Center, the A. Holly Patterson Extended Care Facility, and several health care clinics.

The contract was lauded in a *Newsday* editorial, a newspaper that has not always been sympathetic to CSEA's positions.

Wrote *Newsday*: "The chances of financially ailing Nassau University Medical Center pulling through got a whole lot better ... thanks to the hard work of CSEA and the facility's management."



A. Holley Patterson master mechanic Leroy Ledson, a 36-year employee, stamps the hand of Certified Nursing Aide Edda Saintilien so that she can cast her vote on the Nassau Health Care Corporation contract. It was her first contract vote.

Erie County leadership failing

BUFFALO — The fight to save jobs in Erie County is not over, even though at press time it appeared massive budget cuts may be on the horizon.

The Erie County Legislature failed to act responsibly and muster 10 votes for a sales tax increase by its final deadline last month. As a result, lawmakers must cut at least \$109 million from the county's 2005 budget. The cuts, to come in phases, may include as many as 3,000 county jobs.

"Political games have put the jobs of 3,000 taxpaying county employees on the line and put essential services like snow plowing, public safety and health care at risk," CSEA President Danny Donohue said. "The people of Erie County deserve better."

At press time, CSEA worked to actively mobilize its members and Erie County residents to demand a fair and responsible budget that includes needed additional revenue to keep the county running. The union has made thousands of phone calls to residents urging them to tell Erie County Executive Joel Giambra and county

legislators that their budget brinkmanship is unacceptable.

"We are seeing the spectacle of bad government and a stunningly irresponsible leadership vacuum in Erie County," Donohue said. "It is scandalous that the county executive and the legislators would bring the county to the verge of collapse."

Legislators had agreed to about \$53 million in cuts across several departments. Those cuts included an initial 240 job losses, 60 of which were to be non-civil service jobs. The cuts were also expected to strip county services to the bone, reducing or eliminating probation supervision, repairs to roads and snow plowing. County parks have been closed and libraries have severely reduced hours and staff. Cultural organizations have lost funding and Mercy Flight, an air ambulance that transports patients to the trauma center at Erie County Medical Center, had its county funding slashed in half.

— Lynn Miller

Westchester Medical situation worsens

VALHALLA — As *The Work Force* went to press, CSEA was alarmed by news that the budget deficit at Westchester Medical Center is far worse than had been previously reported.

It's the latest in a series of challenges at the facility following the installation of new, outside management that is considering outsourcing jobs, services and restructuring operations.

CSEA has been mounting a statewide campaign in recent months for health care reform such as restructuring the outdated state funding formula that shortchanges public facilities (See stories pages 3, 4).

The situation is worse at Westchester than nearly any other public facility in the state and there are apparently no easy solutions. CSEA is working to mobilize members

and communities to fight for their future. CSEA is deeply concerned about preserving jobs, services and access to quality care at the Westchester facility.

CSEA is fighting 90 potential layoffs at the center, where hundreds of job cuts in recent years have left remaining employees with a larger work load to provide quality health care.

Hospital administrators, in the latest move to cut costs at the fiscally troubled hospital, are considering contracting out the information technology and patient accounts departments.

Louisiana-based Pitts Management Group is currently operating the hospital.

CSEA represents about 1,600 Westchester Medical Center workers.

— Jessica Stone

Pataki budget full of flaws

ALBANY — CSEA has major concerns in all areas of Gov. George Pataki's proposed \$105.5 billion budget, particularly in its cuts to health care.

Also, the budget does not include funding for several work release facilities that employ CSEA members, aims to contract out the SUNY hospital system, gives more power to certain commissioners while watering down independent oversight, and would allow for more contracting out of state services.

"We're not happy with what the governor is proposing overall," said CSEA President

Danny Donohue.

"While there are some areas of the governor's plan that address some of our needs, overall this is a business and employer-friendly budget that fails to take into account the current struggles faced by working families," Donohue said.

The state is facing a \$4.2 billion deficit, which the proposed budget would close. It increases spending by \$2.5 billion over last year.

SUNY hospitals

Contained within the education budget proposal is a

provision that would allow the State University trustees to transfer the operation of the three SUNY hospitals at Brooklyn, Stony Brook and Syracuse to private not-for-profit corporations. (See related health care story on this page.)

The plan also includes a scenario reminiscent of Colonial era toll roads to allow the Department of Transportation to enter into contracting out agreements with private entities. The private businesses would lease some of New York's roads and bridges in exchange for allowing tolls to be charged by these corporations.

The budget would merge the

no planned layoffs of state employees and no early retirement proposal in the state budget, making it near certain that an ERI will not pass this year for state or local government employees.

Education

The governor proposes increasing state aid to schools by \$526 million this year with \$240 million targeted to New York City to address the Campaign for Fiscal Equity Lawsuit. To protect education funding, New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers would be prohibited from reducing their local share of education costs in the future.

The new state money for New York City schools will increase to \$4.7 billion over five years. All of this new school aid is to be funded by eight new video lottery terminal (VLT) centers across the state.

CSEA opposes Pataki's proposal to eliminate BOCES administrative aid in 2006, as well as a plan to remove the State Archives, Library and Museum from the Department of Education and create a new public benefit corporation, the New York Institute for Cultural Education.

Pataki has also proposed annual tuition increases for new students, whose tuition upon entry to SUNY would be frozen at that level over the four years in college.

The union opposes Pataki's proposal to allow SUNY to turn the operation of the SUNY operated hospitals in Syracuse, Brooklyn and Stony Brook to private, not-for-profit ownership.

(See related stories on Page 5, 10-11 and President's Column on Page 4.)

Budget's health care proposals really sick

ALBANY — CSEA is aggressively challenging parts of Gov. George Pataki's proposed state budget that would undermine the state's public health care system. Pataki's plan would cut more than \$1.2 billion from health care programs with public facilities taking the brunt of the hit.

"There's no way you can cut those kinds of dollars without hurting the quality and availability of services," CSEA President Danny Donohue said. "Public facilities have already been shortchanged by an outdated funding formula and the governor's plan will make it even worse."

CSEA has launched a statewide advertising blitz to hammer home the message that "health care reform needs urgent care now." The union is also mobilizing grassroots efforts to press state lawmakers for better approaches than what the governor has put forth on reforming the health care system.

Donohue testified before a

state Senate hearing recently that CSEA supports new approaches as long as they ensure fairness and access to quality care.

The CSEA president pointed out that Westchester Medical Center, Nassau Health Care Corporation, Erie County Medical Center, the SUNY hospitals and numerous county nursing facilities have a unique role in the delivery of health care services across the state and need appropriate help to carry out their mission.

CSEA has also advocated new models of cost effective home care delivered by qualified and capable public employees that are accountable to taxpayers.

CSEA is also renewing its repeated call for cost containment measures such as implementing a Medicaid preferred drug list to save taxpayers millions on skyrocketing prescription drug costs. CSEA believes these savings could be redirected to improve public nursing homes, hospitals and home care.



CSEA President Danny Donohue testifies before lawmakers recently on the need to reform the Health Care Reform Act.

Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) and the State Employee Relations Board (SERB) into a new State Labor Relations Board; and would also merge the Public Employee Safety and Health board with the New York Occupational Safety and Health board. Both those independent bodies would fall under the supervision of the Department of Labor's commissioner. There are

Stay updated on CSEA's state budget fight at www.csealocal1000.org. Specific health care news can be found at http://www.csealocal1000.org/pac/health_care_news.php

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IN TOUCH WITH THE WORK FORCE CSEA President Danny Donohue

Health care reform needs urgent care now!

By now, most of you should be aware of CSEA's battle cry that health care reform needs urgent care now!

Our radio and television ads airing statewide leave no doubt that Gov. George Pataki's proposed budget, which would cut more than \$1.2 billion in health care funding, is an all out assault on our state's health care system. Worst of all, publicly operated services and facilities such as Westchester Medical Center, Nassau Health Care Corporation, Erie County Medical Center, the SUNY hospitals and county nursing facilities would take the brunt of the hit under the governor's approach.

This is a fight that affects every one of you whether you work in the health care field or not. At risk is the quality and availability of health care services in every community.

The pressures on the public health care delivery system are real. They include outdated funding formulas, rapidly accelerating Medicaid costs and potentially devastating lack of support or interest from Washington in helping. Against this background, the governor's message to public facilities seems to be "do less with less and consider it reform." That's unacceptable to CSEA.

Our campaign for health care reform has just begun. Sign up online at CSEA's web site at www.csealocal1000.org/pacindex.php to receive e-mail updates on the campaign and how you can help. You can also call the political action coordinator at your CSEA region office. The offices' phone numbers are listed on this page.

We need you to help carry our message forward.

P.S. Please read the related stories on pages 3, 10-11 about some of the ways CSEA believes we can achieve real health care reform.



Middletown Psychiatric Center again slated for closure by state

MIDDLETOWN — Gov. George Pataki's proposed budget calls again to close Middletown Psychiatric Center.

The psychiatric center, which is more than 130 years old, gives treatment for mental illness to patients from Orange and Sullivan counties. Nearly 200 CSEA members are employed at the center, which now treats significantly fewer patients because of the state's downsizing of its mental health facilities. The Pataki administration has tried to close Middletown several times.

State officials claim the closure would save \$7 million. Previous years' closure plans had called for patients to move to Rockland Psychiatric Center in Orangeburg, a commute that could vary from 30 minutes to two hours for workers in

Orange and Sullivan counties. This year's plan instead calls for reinvesting money saved into opening smaller, community-based residences.

"Our concern is not about the physical structure of Middletown Psychiatric Center," CSEA President Danny Donohue said. "Our concern is that mental health services are preserved in the community, easily accessible to those who need them and that those services are provided by state employees."

While CSEA sees some encouragement in Pataki's proposal to open state-operated community services in the Middletown area, the union is seeking more details about the plan.

Southern Region President Diane Hewitt, a Middletown Psychiatric



Southern Region President Diane Hewitt, right, meets with CSEA members employed at Middletown Psychiatric Center to discuss the state's latest proposed closure of the facility.

Center employee herself, joined Middletown Local President Stewart DeGroat at a recent membership meeting to assure members that CSEA is working with the state to ensure that CSEA jobs are secure and patient care will continue to be available.

"Simply closing the facility is not an option,"

Hewitt said. "The services have to remain local and it's crucial that the highly trained state employees who have been providing quality care for years are able to continue to do so."

— Jessica Stone

CSEA fighting for overtime relief

POUGHKEEPSIE — Similar to their counterparts at Pilgrim Psychiatric Center on Long Island and other mental health facilities across the state, workers at Hudson River Psychiatric Center in Poughkeepsie are working as many as four or five mandatory overtime shifts per week.

The increasing trend at state mental health facilities has members of the Hudson River's CSEA local up in arms, Hudson River Psychiatric Center Local President Micki Thoms said.

Statistics show therapy aides and other workers at Hudson River in 2004 alone logged more than 40,000 overtime hours, the majority of which were mandated.

While some employees enjoy the opportunity to earn some extra cash, Thoms and her members are worried about the extra hours. Fatigue from such long hours makes workers less alert, she said, which means patients may be receiving a lower quality of

care. The fatigue could have even graver effects.

"Years ago, we had a worker who died after falling asleep at the wheel driving home after working a couple mandatory shifts," Thoms said.

What happens when a worker simply can't work the overtime? Disciplinary actions are up at Hudson River, thanks in part to such situations.

"I have a member who was just written up because he just couldn't stay to work," Thoms said. "He had kids at home, and he couldn't leave them there alone."

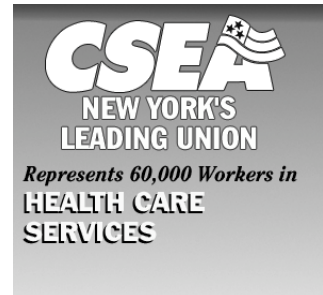
The mandatory overtime shifts are used to save money at the facility, as paying overtime is often less costly than financing more full time positions.

"People need to know what's going on here," Thoms said. "It's not safe and it's not fair."

— Jessica Stone

Key health care proposals in Gov. George Pataki's state budget

- Caps Medicaid costs of local governments, with potential state takeover of local Medicaid costs.
- Proposes more than \$1.2 billion in funding cuts and tax increases to hospitals, nursing homes and other health care programs.
- Proposes to eliminate Medicaid inflation increases for hospitals and nursing homes.
- Eliminates Medicaid coverage of some health care services.
- Increases from 5 percent to 6 percent the reimbursable assessment on nursing home receipts (sick tax).
- Proposes closing Middletown Psychiatric Center on April 1, 2006.
- Cuts \$12 million from Nursing Home Quality Improvement Grant program.



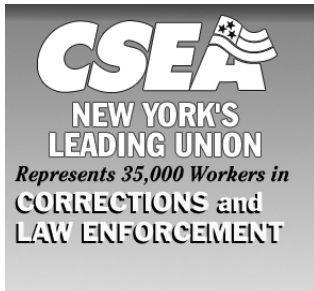
"Simply closing the facility is not an option. The services have to remain local and it's crucial that the highly trained state employees who have been providing quality care for years are able to continue to do so."

CSEA Voices



"There's not enough funding out there for public nursing homes. I think people get better care at public nursing homes, because they have to justify their decisions to the whole community, while private industry isn't like that. CSEA understands that the community needs these homes, and I'm glad the union's fighting to keep them open."

— Ruth Martanis, activity aide and nine-year CSEA member, Delaware County Countryside Care Center



“These workers really are skilled, compassionate caregivers who do an extraordinary job on behalf of the people in the community.”

CSEA Voices



“My son is going to college. He’s already working two jobs to put money away and pay for school. Now, he’s going to have this added expense.”

— Ed Timberger, five-year CSEA member, electrician, Fishkill Correctional Facility, speaking on the impacts of Gov. George Pataki’s proposed state budget

CSEA first responders save, protect residents

SMITHTOWN — If you had an emergency in Smithtown, the first person to help you would probably be a CSEA member.

Unlike most fire districts on Long Island, which are volunteer-based, the first responders in Smithtown are paid professionals and CSEA members.

“We render aid immediately upon arrival,” said Henry Pfister, an emergency medical technician and paramedic. “We stay and do what we have to do until the ambulance arrives.”

The responders’ jobs vary from bandaging wounds to inserting breathing tubes.

“We supplement the volunteer fire departments in the area. That helps cut down on response time, especially in critical situations,” said John Pettit, a critical care emergency medical technician. “We’re here and ready to respond.”

CSEA members in the Smithtown Fire District provide a valuable service. They respond to an average of seven ambulance calls per day and about 2,900 calls per year for Smithtown alone.

“The paid system is only in the beginning

stages on Long Island,” said Emergency Medical Technician Sal Guarnieri. “Maybe people are beginning to realize that there’s a real need for people like us.”

“These workers really are skilled, compassionate caregivers who do an extraordinary job on behalf of the people in the community,” Smithtown Fire District Unit President Stan Gudzik said. “In many situations, they are really the unsung heroes.”

The teamwork begins with firehouse attendants, who take the calls. Their handling of the information also makes them heroes.

Attendant Michael Ramirez has taken 911 calls for 14 years. With about 10,000 calls coming through the call center last year and about 8,000 calls dispatched, the Smithtown Fire District call center is a busy place. The district, which serves Smithtown and four other municipalities, serves more than 100,000 residents.

“We ask people questions, find out what their complaint is, and figure out how we can help them,” Ramirez said. “We get as much information as possible and send the first responders out to help.”



Smithtown Fire District Firehouse Attendant Gerard Zlotkowski at work taking a call for help. The town recently honored him for quick action that saved a woman’s life.

All of the attendants are certified in emergency medical dispatch, and as such they can give medical instructions until emergency medical technicians arrive. They are extensively trained and are recertified every three years.

Firehouse Attendant Gerry Zlotkowski was recently given an award by the Town of Smithtown Chiefs Council. His quick thinking and skillful handling of a difficult situation helped save a woman’s life.

Zlotkowski was on duty last year when a 7-year-old girl called for help. Her mother was unconscious, and the girl didn’t know if she was breathing. To

further complicate the situation, the girl wasn’t sure of her address.

Zlotkowski kept the girl calm and was able to get enough information out of her to figure out the family’s address. While the emergency medical technicians arrived on time to save the woman’s life, the situation would have been grave had it not been for Zlotkowski.

Despite the honor, Zlotkowski is modest about his role.

“It just happened to be me that got the call, but we are all trained to the same level,” he said. “Any one of us would have done the same thing.”

— Rachel Langert

Sign up for the Labor-Religion Coalition fast for health care

CSEA members are urged to participate in all or part of the 10th annual 40-hour fast sponsored by the New York state Labor-Religion Coalition. The fast begins March 1 at 8 p.m. and ends March 3 at noon.

Participants in this year’s fast will bring public attention to supporting the renewal and improvement of the

state’s Health Care Reform Act, which will help ensure that all New York residents have access to quality, affordable health care.

The fast will also raise public awareness of other inequities in the U.S. health care system, including the 45 million Americans who lack health insurance.

The coalition is planning various events across the state before, during and after the fast. For more information about the fast, contact Brian O’Shaughnessy at the New York Labor-Religion Coalition at (518) 213-6000, ext. 6294 or visit the coalition’s web site at www.labor-religion.org.

OCFS web site dangerous, misleading

Hundreds of independent day care providers across New York are demanding the state Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) modify its web site which they say places children they care for in danger and misleads parents seeking day care for their children.

Representatives of VOICE (the Voice of Organized Independent Childcare Educators) delivered more than 1,200 signed petitions to OCFS officials in Albany, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo on Feb. 16. VOICE is affiliated with CSEA.

The providers say the OCFS web site currently lists the full address of every provider in the state, along with map directions to their houses. They fear the information could easily wind up in the wrong hands, including those of child predators or non-custodial parents, putting children at risk for kidnapping or worse.

"I find it difficult to imagine why the Office of Children and Family Services, an organization that works to ensure the safety of children, would produce a web site that could easily put children in harm's way," said Wendy, a Monroe County provider who asked that only her first name be used. "With the dangers that we face in our world today, I do not think that providing a map to a home where an adult is there all day caring for a group of children is in the best interest of the children, their families, or the daycare provider."

The caregivers also want the state to provide parents with more detailed information about violations for which providers

have been cited. The web site currently indicates whether a provider has been cited for having a "serious violation" but does not indicate the nature of the violation. Since OCFS' definition of a "serious violation" can be open to interpretation, VOICE members say the web site should provide parents with details about violations and indicate whether or not they have been corrected.

"There's a big difference between abusing a child and having an exit blocked by a tricycle for a few minutes," said Erie County day care provider Kim Bannister. "We think changing the web site would allow parents to see that most of the so-called serious violations are corrected on the spot and help them steer clear of violators who actually put children in harm's way."

Soap opera

Joyce Burch, an Albany provider is one of those listed on the department's web site as having been cited for a serious violation. Burch was cited for storing a "soft soap" refill under the sink. An OCFS licensing representative called the soap a toxic substance. Meanwhile, Burch had a dispenser containing the same soap on top of the sink readily accessible to the children as required by OCFS regulations.

Kim Kutey is another Albany provider OCFS has listed as a serious violator. Kutey had installed a new fence around her swimming pool as required by law. While playing in the yard one day, some of the children Kutey cares for piled dirt up against the fence.

A department licensing representative measured the fence where the dirt pile was and declared it illegal.

Monroe County provider Sharon Foti used her fire extinguisher to put out a minor stove fire on Easter Sunday. Her husband took the extinguisher to be refilled the next day but the state still cited Foti because of the temporary lack of a fire extinguisher in the kitchen. Another Monroe County provider was cited for having a new puppy without its shots even though the puppy was due to get shots within days.

A Broome County provider was cited for having one too many school-age children in her care. The "extra" child was hers and should not have been counted, according to OCFS regulations. The licensing representative filed the report after leaving the premises without asking who the child was.

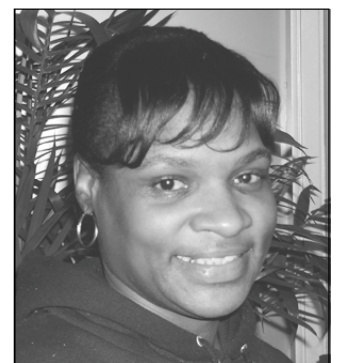
Still another Monroe County provider had an inspector come to her home just after a frantic mother from next door had run over with her infant and hastily explained that her older son had stopped breathing and was about to be taken to the emergency room. The mother pleaded for the provider to take care of her infant while she rode to the hospital with her stricken son. The provider said "yes" without hesitation. The OCFS representative cited her for exceeding the limit of children she could watch.

— Ed Molitor



VOICE is a movement of day care providers across New York organizing for power to take on the issues facing providers. From opposing unfair OCFS regulations to helping parents, politicians and the public understand our critical role for our children and our economy, we are making our VOICE heard.

CSEA *Voices*



"For me, the president's plan to privatize Social Security is like going gambling in Las Vegas. But, he's playing with my money and my life. It's not fair to people like me who have worked so hard over the years. I don't want to retire and find out there is nothing for me."

— Leandra Tucker, Legal Clerk, New York state Insurance Fund



Gaining a VOICE with CSEA

Capital Region child care provider and VOICE/CSEA activist Fran Nantista, center, was awarded the "On the Frontlines Certificate of Valor" at the Capital District Labor-Religion Coalition's 8th annual awards dinner in Albany last month. The award recognizes those who stand up for their right to organize despite pressure, intimidation and harassment. Nantista is pictured at the awards dinner with child care provider and VOICE/CSEA activist Joyce Burch and VOICE/CSEA organizer and activist Ed Gresco.

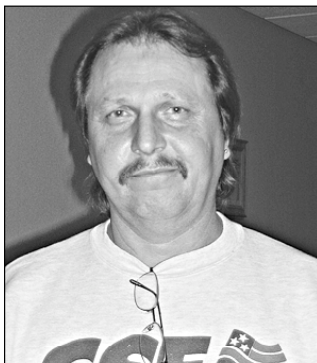


Troy crews brave frigid winter weather to fix water main breaks

Editor's note: CSEA members across the state have been scrambling to repair a series of water main breaks that have limited local water supplies, closed off streets and damaged several homes during frigid weather. The following article discusses the City of Troy's efforts to repair a series of water main breaks.

“Wear lots of layers, keep warm and work as a team. That’s the whole trick.”

CSEA Voices



“Balancing my work, family and union commitments is a tough thing to do. I have good stewards, a supportive local president, a good labor relations specialist and a lot of other people I can turn to when I need assistance. What keeps me going is the members. When they say ‘thank you’ for what I do, it means a lot. ”

— Rick Preischel, Grievance Chairman, SUNY (University of Buffalo) Local

TROY — Cold weather and old pipes are wreaking havoc this winter in Troy. The city faced nine water main breaks over a three-week period. More than 1 million gallons of water spilled in the most serious incident.

Water gushed into streets and basements, forcing CSEA members to shut off residential water supplies more than once during the coldest week in the Capital Region so far this year. Residents in the city’s South Troy and Lansingburgh neighborhoods were most impacted, as most of the broken valves were located in those areas.

“It’s been a bad month,” said Mike Hipwell, a Troy public utilities employee and CSEA member, describing the spur of water main breaks that plagued the city.

First steps

The first step in quickly controlling a water main break is to locate the break, but finding it isn’t always that simple, Hipwell said.

“It’s sometimes easy to find the break, especially when you can see the water coming out,” he said. “Other times, it’s not as obvious to see and we have to find the break

with special equipment.”

The crew must also rush to ensure that water supplies are turned off. Because many of the pipes and valves in Troy are aging, CSEA members must balance shutting off water supply while preventing further damage to old valves.

As soon as workers shut off the water, CSEA members dig to find and replace any damaged pipes.

Digging deep

Typically, a water main break forces workers to remove a significant portion of the street to allow them to dig a deep hole to locate the damage. “These holes can go down 10 feet or more,” said Kip McHargue, a public utilities department worker and CSEA member.

Crews must haul away slush, mud and dirt because the old material can’t be used again. Once the workers reach the damaged pipe, it is cut out and replaced.

Once CSEA members replace a valve, they get to work repairing the street. Crews bring in new soil to refill the hole. Afterward, they repair the street.

In addition to the constant, grueling work, CSEA members had to



Troy Department of Public Utilities workers brave sub-zero weather to repair a broken water main, one of several that burst recently.

face safety concerns related to extended exposure to the water and frigid temperatures, often below zero degrees Fahrenheit. “The cold is the hardest part, especially when working with water,” Hipwell said.

Troy public utilities workers believe that working together is the key to success.

McHargue, who has been doing public utility work for nearly 30 years, has the whole thing down to a science. “Wear lots of layers, keep warm and work as a team. That’s the whole trick,” he said.

— Therese Assalian

State budget proposals for maintenance/infrastructure employees

- Authorizes Department of Criminal Justice Services to implement photo-monitoring of highway work zones and “dangerous stretches of highway.”

- \$215 million increase for state Office of General Services and addition of 76 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, mainly attributable to capital improvements.

CSEA fights contracting out proposal

SHRUB OAK — CSEA members in the Lakeland School District Unit are doing something unusual in an effort to avoid contracting out — fighting to keep management jobs public.

Along with trying to negotiate a contract that expired two years ago, members are fighting a district proposal to contract out two of its management positions with ARAMARK, a private company whose range extends across industries such as food service, custodial services, health care, lodging and corrections.

District officials have been negotiating with the company to contract out the superintendent and assistant superintendent jobs in the district's facilities and operations department.

Despite promises from school

board members that the two jobs would be the only contracted out positions, CSEA members are worried that contracting out with ARAMARK would lead to more similar moves.

"For starters, we do have a legitimate concern that a company such as ARAMARK would use these two jobs as a way to make inroads and eventually gain more business," said Mary Miguez, unit president. "We also object on principle. We believe public jobs, including management, should stay in the public sector."

Unit members flooded a recent school board meeting, where Miguez and James O'Beirne of the New York State Association for Superintendents of Buildings and Grounds reminded board members



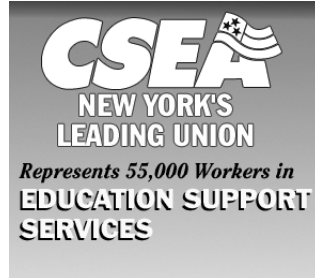
Miguez

that outsourced employees would be more likely to be loyal to their private employer than to the district.

While the school board was in negotiations with ARAMARK at press time, the CSEA effort has not gone unnoticed.

Administrators accepted the unit's offer to help in facilities and operations duties until the two positions are filled. Steve Calabrese, head custodian at Lakeland Copper Beach Middle School, will temporarily head the Facilities and Operations Department.

— Jessica Stone



"We believe public jobs, including management, should stay in the public sector."

Fighting for a contract



Unit Vice President Christine Williams, left, and Linda Larry show their displeasure with the North Tonawanda School Board during a recent informational picket. The unit's 100 members, representing teacher aides, nurses and clerical workers, have been without a contract for 18 months.

Port Jervis schools unit reaches long-awaited agreement

PORT JERVIS — The Port Jervis School District Unit has a new contract in place following two and a half years of tenuous negotiations with school district officials.

Members voted overwhelmingly in favor of the contract at a recent meeting. The new contract runs through June 30, 2007. Highlights include no increase in health insurance costs, a series of raises and the elimination of a freeze on step increase movements through the life of the contract.

The unit consists of bus drivers, maintenance workers, cleaners, clerical staff, and teacher aides.

— Jessica Stone

CSEA Voices



"I don't agree with the way President Bush proposes to reform Social Security. The poor people are going to suffer for it. But, I do think that something needs to be done to strengthen Social Security."

— **Mary Franco, member, SUNY Stony Brook Local and certified nursing assistant at the Long Island State Veterans Home.**

Key education proposals in Gov. George Pataki's state budget

- \$526 increase in school aid for a total of \$15.9 billion.
- Proposes to change the way school aid is awarded through creation of "Flex Aid," which consolidates several education funding streams into one.
- Transfers the State Museum, Library and Archives from the State Education Department to a new entity called the New York Institute for Cultural Education (NYICE).
- \$2.9 billion for SUNY state-operated campuses, an increase of \$183 million.
- \$1.3 billion for CUNY senior colleges, an increase of \$88 million.
- Proposes legislation allowing SUNY and CUNY boards of trustees to establish tuition charges based on costs of educating students at various campuses and to adjust tuition based on inflation.
- Would allow State University trustees to privatize SUNY hospitals at Brooklyn, Stony Brook and Syracuse.

INSIDE THE WORK FORCE

Otsego Manor invests in future of residents, public health care

EDITOR'S NOTE: Counties operating public nursing homes across New York face crushing burdens of Medicaid cost increases and the potential loss of millions in federal and state funding. Many are looking at selling or contracting out their public nursing homes.

Another option for many counties is to build new, up-to-date facilities that are more cost-effective to operate and which also qualify for higher state funding.

Otsego County recently did just that, showing what can be accomplished when working toward the common good.

COOPERSTOWN — On the outskirts of the town where, “build it and they will come” has significance to baseball fans around the world, the phrase has taken on a new meaning for those involved in public nursing home care.

After years of lobbying by CSEA and others in the community to keep their public



nursing home, Otsego County decided not to contract out and recently built and opened a new state-of-the-art facility. Now they're finding the old catch phrase still relevant — they built it, and many are coming.

Better care, bigger numbers

A person dropped off in the lobby of the new Otsego Manor would probably never guess they were in a nursing home. It's more like a upscale hotel lobby, complete with chandeliers, warm colors, cozy armchairs and a stone-lined fountain surrounded by plants.

Otsego Manor also doesn't operate like a typical nursing home. The new home changed from a traditional medical care delivery system to a social care, resident-specific system — a new model for care. “We're really trying to improve the quality of life for our residents,” Administrator Ed Marchi said.

CSEA member Kevin Ray, a licensed practical nurse who worked on the facility's planning committee, agrees.

“I like it for the residents' sake. It's like

going into an 'A' facility from a 'C' facility. Everything for them is better,” he said. “I'd sign up for a room,” Registered Nurse Supervisor Elizabeth Sellars said.

Residents, too, sing the praises of their new home. “The new facility is beautiful,” said resident Ed Colson. “I love it,” echoes resident Doris Brown.

Numbers improving

Not only is the level and quality of care going up, so are the numbers of residents. Already, the county has realized a dramatic improvement in its occupancy rate, up from 84 to 97 percent.

While it's too early to know what the facility's new Medicaid reimbursement amount will be, it will definitely be higher than the current rate, based on an outdated 1983 formula. With 85 percent of their residents' care funded by Medicaid, that's an important step forward. Marchi said he expects it to significantly lower the facility's county subsidy.

“Our goal is to break even. You have to spend a lot of up-front money, but eventually



Food Service Worker Rose Heustis and Cook Robert Griffith prepare food in the facility's sparkling new kitchen.



Registered Nurse Supervisor Elizabeth Sellars, left, shares a song with resident Doris Brown.

it's all going to come back to us,” he said.

Of the \$30 million cost to build the new home, the state and federal governments reimbursed \$25 million. The county agreed to spend an extra \$5 million to make sure they had everything needed for the residents. “It was more costly (initially), but the county board wanted to make that

commitment,” County Board of Representatives Chair Carl Higgins noted.

Working together to make it work

To ensure the facility remains viable, CSEA and management have been working as partners to achieve savings and efficiencies. Agreements were reached to change job descriptions, and workers who were formerly food service workers or housekeepers now hold the title of “universal worker” and are cross-trained to provide a broader range of services.

“If we can be more efficient, that's how we can lower our subsidy,” Marchi noted. “The staff really stepped up to the plate. It's more of a team trying to get things done.”

CSEA Unit President Ray Snyder agreed, saying, “It was a long process, but it's proven to be excellent. It's led to more hands-on care with the residents. That's what we've always wanted. Our workers have positively made this team concept work well.”

A work in progress

Otsego County Local President Carol Boglioli, an licensed practical nurse at the county home, said challenges lie ahead. Building design, maintenance, and staffing still have some kinks to work out.



Licensed Practical Nurse Kevin Ray gives resident Ed Colson his nightly medication.

Vast improvements

- Higher Medicaid reimbursements
- Occupancy increased from 84 percent to 97 percent of capacity
- Modern facility fully compliant with all codes and laws
- 80 percent private rooms, instead of four residents to one room
- Living areas designed around community “households” with individual kitchens, laundry facilities and living and dining rooms for groups of 12 residents
- More shared community areas like a sunroom, a private family dining area, a chapel and the lobby
- More hands-on care

Continued on page 12

Public works employee killed on the job

POUGHKEEPSIE — CSEA and the state Labor Department are investigating a work site incident that recently killed a city unit member.

Denis Keenan, 43, a city Department of Public Works employee, was unloading salt from the back of a truck when he bent down to check on its progress. A rotating shaft, attached to a conveyer belt that moved the salt, grabbed onto the collar of Keenan's shirt, strangling him.

Keenan later died at a Poughkeepsie hospital.

CSEA Industrial Hygienist Mark Stipano and Occupational Health and Safety Specialist Gary China said their investigation into the incident so far shows that a guard normally used to cover the shaft was missing. Other department trucks had the guard in place.

The department is continuing its investigation.

"We are always saddened by the loss of a member," said Southern Region President Diane Hewitt. "Denis Keenan was known in his unit as a hard worker, but more importantly, he was known as a family man who took great

interest in his children's lives and generously volunteered his time to help others."

CSEA is working with unit members and city officials to increase safety awareness on the job. A health and safety committee is already in place, Stipano said, and he and China are working closely with committee members.

Keenan, who lived in Fishkill, leaves behind a wife and two sons. A memorial fund in his

name has been established. Donations to the Denis Keenan Memorial Fund may be sent to the City of Poughkeepsie Department of Public Works, 26 Howard St., Poughkeepsie, N.Y. 12601.

Donations may also be sent to the American Diabetes Association, 200 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, N.Y. 10591.

— Jessica Stone



Outside view of the Otsego Manor nursing home. By building a new nursing home, the county is receiving more funding, cutting costs so the move also keeps the nursing home public, under county ownership.

Otsego Manor

Continued from page 11.

"It's a work in progress. Like everywhere else, we're suffering from a staffing shortage. It's tough, because there's twice the area with the same amount of staff. But it's working, because our people care — they're doing it for the residents."

"For too many years, county facilities have gotten bad reputations. I want us to be a model for everyone to see," Marchi said, adding that efforts are under way to hire more workers.

That's good news, said CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore, who said that breaking even or not, county nursing homes are a benefit to the communities they serve.

"County homes exist to provide needed services. They're like a safety net for those who

can't afford or won't be accepted into private care. Our members treat the most difficult cases and provide skilled, loving care to these people. It's hard to put a price on that," Moore said. "I can't think of anything more important to continue providing in our communities."

That's a lesson other counties could learn.

"In the end, we all come out winners. I think we've got a great facility and we're honored that CSEA is on board with endorsing the facility. We all have an opportunity to work together to make this a successful venture," Board Chairman Higgins said.

— Mark M. Kotzin

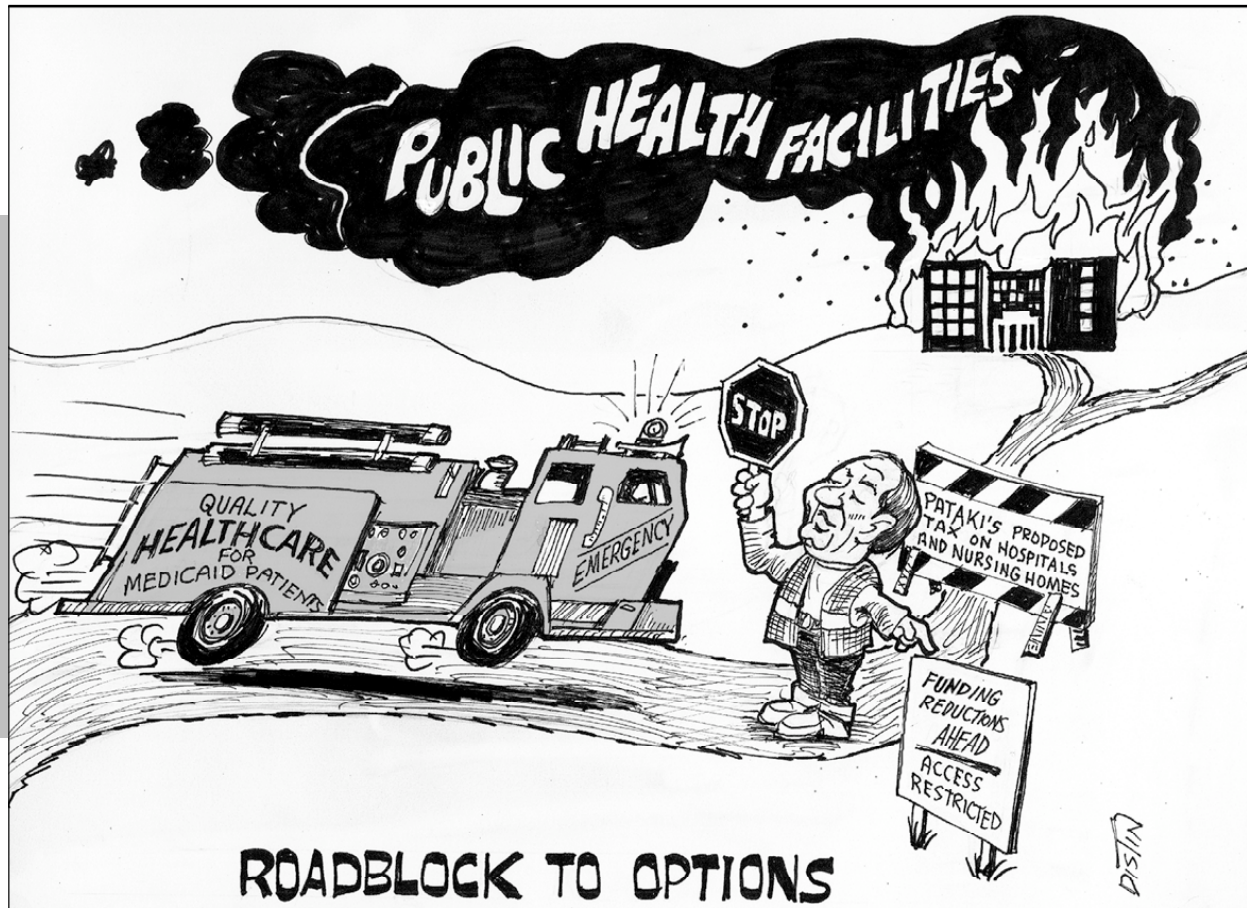
Read more about Otsego Manor at http://www.csealocal1000.org/r5/inside_wf.php



Got legal services?

CSEA does on the web!

For legal services, member benefits, news and so much more, visit the CSEA web site at: www.csealocal1000.org



70 years ago ...

In 1935, CSEA again demonstrated its leadership when the association initiated its group accident and sickness insurance plan, which is still in place today, making low-cost insurance available to all members. A state legislative committee gave a report to the full Legislature endorsing a 48-hour week, paving the way to ending the 72-hour week.

The passage of the Social Security Act in 1935 also made significant changes in the lives of Americans. This landmark legislation was drafted by U.S. Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, who had also served as the New York state Secretary of Labor under Gov. Franklin D. Roosevelt. CSEA is attempting to learn more about Perkins' connection with the association. Anyone with information about Perkins' career in New York government is encouraged to contact the CSEA Communications Department at (800) 342-4146, ext. 1271.



President Franklin D. Roosevelt signing the Social Security Act of 1935. Also shown from left to right: Rep. Robert Doughton (D-N.C.); Sen. Robert Wagner (D-N.Y.); unidentified man in bowtie; Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins; Sen. Pat Harrison (D-Miss.) and Rep. David L. Lewis (D-Md.). Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress. Perkins was the first woman to hold a Cabinet position in U.S. history.

Also in 1935 ...

- * Under Nazi rule, Germany enacts Nuremberg Laws against Jewish citizens, taking away many of their freedoms. Italy, under Benito Mussolini, invades Ethiopia.
- * Former U.S. Sen. and Louisiana Gov. Huey Long is assassinated.
- * George H. Gallup begins the "Gallup Poll."
- * DuPont chemist Wallace Hume Carothers creates nylon, the first completely synthetic fabric.
- * Amelia Earhart makes the first solo flight across the Pacific Ocean from Hawaii to Oakland, Calif.
- * Babe Ruth, playing for the Boston Braves, hits the final three of his 714 career home runs against the Pittsburgh Pirates, setting a record that stands for 39 years.

Privatizing Social Security is a gamble

CSEA continues to fight attempts to dismantle and destroy the one federal social program that has helped millions of hardworking Americans live with dignity and respect in their retirement, Social Security.

Most people would agree the system, as it currently exists, needs to be re-examined. Despite calling for such changes, Social Security will still be able to pay full benefits to retired workers until at least 2042. Another 70 percent of benefits can also be paid in the years that follow. That certainly doesn't sound like a crisis.

Reform needed

The Bush administration nevertheless maintains that the so-called 'baby boomers' will ensure the

collapse of Social Security. How is that possible when the Social Security trust fund has \$1.5 trillion in reserve?

Once again, we need reform to preserve and protect Social Security. We don't need the wholesale obliteration of this important safety net.

Let's not forget that Social Security has not missed a payment in 70 years and it provides inflation-proof, guaranteed benefits. Can the same be said about the current proposal to privatize Social Security?

The Bush proposal

Here are some of the implications of this shortsighted and ultimately disastrous proposal:

- Privatizing Social Security would cut guaranteed benefits by 30 percent even for workers who don't

choose private accounts. This would mean a loss of \$152,000 for each retiree in the 20 years after retirement. The government then takes another 50 cents for every \$1 in the account.

- Privatization would leave many retirees in poverty, leaving taxpayers and their families to provide them with the assistance that now comes from Social Security.

- Our children will be saddled with at least \$2 trillion in debt.

- Politicians will decide which private firms will make millions off our sweat from our private accounts.

Another way to reform

Many workers agree that Social Security

needs to be strengthened so it will always be able to pay full benefits for future generations.

First, we must require Congress to pay back the money borrowed from the trust fund. We must also demand the wealthiest people pay the same Social Security taxes on their salary as we pay on ours. Finally, the current tax cuts for the top 1 percent of taxpayers need to be repealed.

The current administration's attempt to privatize Social Security will be inherently unfair to all American workers, especially the other 99 percent of taxpayers.

— David Galarza



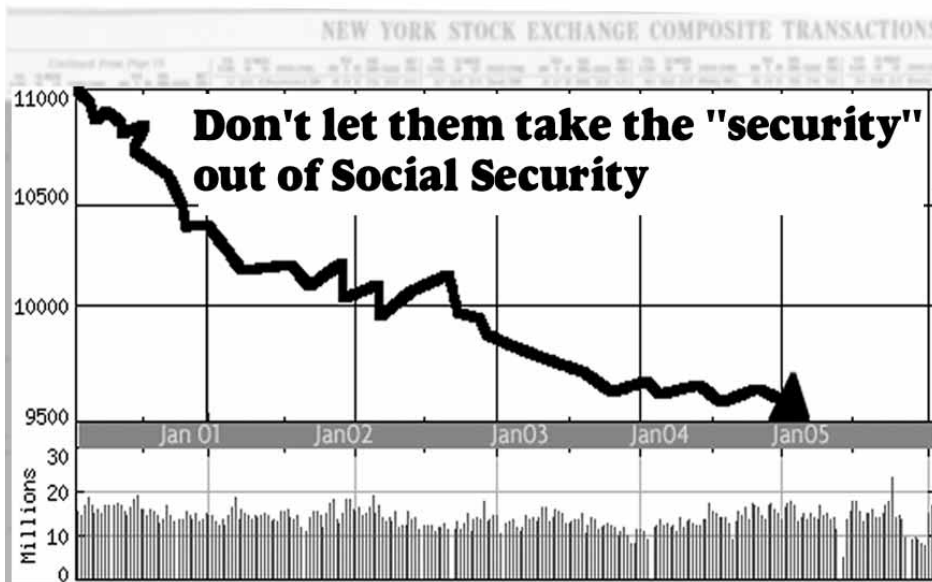
CBTU to hold annual convention

ALBANY — The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) will hold its 34th international convention from May 25 - 30 in Phoenix.

The convention theme will be "CBTU: Forging a New Vision for Tough Challenges Ahead."

The program will include general sessions, workshops, the national women's, retirees' and youth conferences.

For additional information, contact Portia Given at (518) 257-1210 or at (800) 342-4146.



Call or visit your member of Congress. Tell them to strengthen Social Security, not destroy it.

Privatizing Social Security would turn a guarantee into a gamble for millions of Americans. As anyone with a 401(k) plan has learned recently, there are no guarantees in the stock market.

Despite what the president says, Social Security is facing a challenge, not a crisis. Even with no changes, Social Security can pay full benefits until 2042 and more than 70 percent after that. Our challenge is to strengthen the system with minor and responsible adjustments, like raising the ceiling on payroll taxes so people who earn more than \$90,000 pay their fair share.

2005 CSEA ELECTIONS Info

Public Sector Local, Unit elections scheduled for 2005

Elections will be conducted for all public sector local officers, delegates and unit officers

The term of office for all current public sector local officers, delegates and unit officers expires June 30, 2005. Public sector officers and delegates will be elected to four-year terms. Balloting for local officers, delegates and unit officers will be conducted between May 15 and June 15, 2005.

Each local and unit executive board must select its own election

committee and committee chairperson. The local and/or unit election committee is primarily responsible for conducting the election.

Slate petitioning and slate voting will be an option for candidates for local and unit office (see adjacent information).

Members may run as individual candidates if they wish.

Important information about slate petitioning and slate voting

Local Elections

In local elections, a slate must contain a candidate running for the offices of president, one or more vice presidents as set forth in the local's by-laws, secretary and treasurer.

The slate may also include candidates for other offices that have been created according to the local constitution and by-laws. In locals that have created the combined position of secretary-treasurer in their by-laws, the slate must include a candidate for that office.

Unit Elections

In unit elections, a slate must contain a candidate running for the offices of president, one or more vice presidents as set forth in the unit's by-laws, secretary and treasurer.

The slate may also include candidates for other offices that have been created according to the unit constitution and by-laws. In units that have created the combined position of secretary-treasurer in their by-laws, the slate must include a candidate for that office.

Candidates should know the following:

- A member cannot be a candidate for officer and for delegate on the same slate. An officer candidate must circulate a separate nominating petition in order to appear on the ballot also as a candidate for delegate. The member will appear on the ballot as a candidate for office as part of the slate and as an individual for the position of delegate.

- Candidates who run as a slate must complete a Slate Consent Form and a Slate Petition Request Form. By petitioning as a slate, candidates who appear as part of a slate need to submit only one set of the required number of signatures to qualify as a candidate. Individual petitions are not necessary for slate candidates.

- Candidates who withdraw from a slate must complete a Slate Withdrawal Form and return the form to CSEA headquarters.

More detailed information about election slates will be available from local and unit election committees.

Attention: public sector local, unit presidents Did you send Election Committee Data Form to CSEA headquarters?

During early January, members of registered election committees will receive an election package to help them carry out their election duties. As long as election committee forms continue to be received, packages will be mailed.

CSEA headquarters cannot send material and information to any

appointed election committee without first receiving the completed committee form from the local or unit president.

Inquiries concerning election materials may be directed to the CSEA Central Files Department at 1-800-342-4146, ext. 1214.

Nominating procedure for smallest CSEA locals and units: special election rules apply

The union's election rules require a minimum of 10 signatures on nominating petitions for office in all locals and units. However, this requirement causes problems in locals and units **with 10 or fewer members.**

Special election rules apply for CSEA locals and units of 10 or fewer members.

In these smaller locals and units, completion of the Application for Election to Office replaces the requirement to obtain signatures on a nominating petition.

In locals or units with 10 or fewer members, any member who submits the application and meets election requirements under the appropriate local or unit constitution will be placed on the ballot.

Break in membership affects eligibility for union office, voting privileges

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Empire Plan deadlines for 2004 claims

Empire Plan enrollees have until March 31 (90 days after the end of 2004) to submit medical expenses incurred during the 2004 plan year to:

Health Benefits Department

Express Scripts
P.O. Box 1180
Troy, N.Y. 12181-1180

For prescriptions filled at non-participating pharmacies or at participating pharmacies without using your New York Government Employee benefit card.

participating pharmacies or at participating pharmacies without using your New York Government Employee benefit card.

Enrollees can call the Empire Plan at 1-877-7NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) with questions or to obtain claim forms. As a reminder, when using the Empire Plan's toll-free telephone number, please pay extra attention to the choices offered by the automated system.

Network providers and pharmacies will submit claims on your behalf directly to the appropriate insurance carrier. If you have a non-network claim submission, make sure you complete the requested subscriber information on the claim forms, include the original billing or receipt (if requested), and don't forget to sign the claim form.

United Health Care Service Corp.
P.O. Box 1600

Kingston, N.Y. 12402-1600
For the Empire Plan Basic Medical Program, the Home Care Advocacy Program (HCAP) and non-network physical therapy or chiropractic services.

Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield

For assistance with the claim filing process of inpatient or outpatient hospital services, contact Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield at 1-877-7NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447).

ValueOptions

P.O. Box 778
Troy, N.Y. 12181-0778

For non-network mental health and substance abuse services received in 2004.

CSEA scholarship deadline approaches

April 15 is the deadline for graduating high school seniors who are sons or daughters of CSEA-represented employees to apply for scholarships offered by or through CSEA.

A single application covers three scholarship programs. Applications are available from CSEA local or unit presidents, at CSEA headquarters, region or satellite offices, or may be downloaded from the Member Benefits section of the CSEA web site at www.csealocal1000.org.

Irving Flaumenbaum Scholarship

Eighteen scholarships will be awarded to graduating high school seniors of CSEA members. Three \$1,000 awards will be presented in each of CSEA's six regions.

JLT Award

One \$2,500 JLT Award Scholarship will be presented to a

graduating high school senior entering the SUNY system. The top 2 percent of scholastic achievers, based on high school average, class rank and SAT scores will be selected to create the eligibility pool for this scholarship.

MetLife Award

One \$2,500 MetLife Award will be presented to a graduating high school senior and is not limited to a student entering the SUNY system. The top 2 percent of scholastic achievers, based on class rank and SAT scores, will be selected to create the eligibility pool for this scholarship.

Winners will be notified in June and announced in *The Work Force*. The CSEA scholarship program is administered by the CSEA Memorial Scholarship Committee.

Summary of January 2005 CSEA board of directors meeting



The summary is prepared by CSEA Statewide Secretary Barbara Reeves for union members.

Editor's note: The Work Force publishes a summary of actions taken by CSEA's board of directors.

ALBANY — CSEA's statewide board of directors met on January 13. In official business, the board:

- Approved a tentative contract with the Field Staff Association;
- Adopted a management/confidential compensation package;
- Waived the six-month rule and directed that the names of former Statewide Secretary Irene Carr and former Western Region President Robert L. Lattimer be inscribed on the CSEA Memorial Plaque;
- Approved maximum miscellaneous allowances for 2005 CSEA events;
- Authorized office lease agreements at the Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza, concourse level, for Local 660; at 3 Courthouse Park, Cortland for Local 812; at 21 Davis Avenue, Poughkeepsie for Local 814; and at 272 North Main Street, Herkimer for Local 822;
- Approved contract agreements for HVAC system and trash removal at the Local 860 office, 595 West Hartsdale Ave., White Plains;
- Created Local 198 for members of the Ulster Correctional Facility;
- Dissolved private sector Local 719 (Loeb House) and state Local 553 (Harlem Valley Secure Center);
- Granted temporary charters to private sector Local 753 (Quality Services for the Autism

Community) and private sector Local 754 (Head Start/Ballston Spa School District);

- Changed date of the 2007 Annual Delegates' Meeting in Lake Placid to September 17 - 21;
- Adopted Retiree Election Procedure and Retiree Election Schedule;
- Appointed to the Western Region Political Action Committee/West: Thomas Warzel (chairman), Marcia Olszewski (co-chairwoman), Thomas Rogalski, Patrick McGuire, Janet Marchinda, Dominic Savarino, Candace Termer, Kevin Furlong, Donald Brisky, Rodney Fenderson, Donna Vickman, James Smith, Donald Williams, Robert Pyjas, Charles Venditte, Elaine Timm, Christine Covell, Debra Sherk, John Stading, David Celani, Barbara Biniacki, Sally Smith, Gerald Prince, Bonnie Lawrence and Sylvia Mayberry; and to the Western Region Political Action Committee/East: Thomas Warzel (chairman), Timothy Finnigan (co-chairman), Doris Cota, Terri Ferrara, Yvonne Sirkin, Judy DiPaola, Marlene Galbraith, Roger King, Debbie Fluker, Richard Wilcox, Ronald Castle, Robert Ellis, Renee Chichester, Bernadette Giambra, Cristal Zaffuto, James Volpone, Michael Jones, Jeane Dean, Carol Thornton, Judith Trost, Geraldine Wiggins, Wilma Hasser and Barbara Kreiley; and
- Placed into administratorship Nassau Colliseum Local 737; SUNY Stony Brook DEC Unit 0900/Local 614; Cato-Meridian Central School Unit 6254/Local 806 and North Florida Retiree Unit 1/Local 952.

Questions concerning the summary should be directed to CSEA Statewide Secretary Barbara Reeves, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12210, 1-800-342-4146 or (518) 257-1253.

Leading Edge



BALLSTON SPA — Between skyrocketing health care costs, aging facilities and cuts to health care programs, many public nursing homes are facing threats of contracting out or closure.

Lost in the debate over spiraling Medicare costs and long-outdated reimbursement rates are the nursing home residents and the workers who care for them.



The Work Force's Therese Assalian recently spoke with Deborah Longe, an activities aide at Maplewood Manor in Saratoga County. Longe

exemplifies the best of this special group of employees who devote their work to bringing comfort to our elderly family, friends and neighbors.

On the day of the interview, Longe was leading the Maplewood Fellowship, a non-denominational weekly service. About 40 residents gathered to hear Longe sing and share stories of faith and hope. Some residents clapped to the music, while others sang along. The service is a big hit with residents. "I come to fellowship every chance I get, because she's so good," one resident said.

WF: How did you get started doing activities?

DL: I started as a certified nursing assistant here 15 years ago. I was an aide for the first eight years, but an activity aide was retiring and a position was opening. My co-workers thought I might be good at activities and encouraged me to apply. I began to realize that I really enjoy that aspect of care more, between working with the residents, being with them and spending more personal time with them. I feel it is such a good way to most directly meet their needs.

WF: What are some of the activities that you have created?

DL: We have a dance called the Club Maplewood. We also do a music program, karaoke, movies and popcorn, Maplewood Fellowship and others. We're also planning a talent show. Residents will make an appointment, and we will tape them performing. We will then have one night when we play back each performance for residents to vote on (the best one).

WF: What are the most popular activities?

DL: Karaoke and the Maplewood Fellowship. Songbirds, a singing group, is also pretty popular. When we started the group, we brought in sewing machines and made matching yellow vests for group members. We welcome everyone, even if they can't sing. We also do holiday and spring concerts.

WF: How do you come up with the activities?

DL: I am really sensitive to what the residents and their families want. I try to listen to them and incorporate their ideas. A lot of activities, like Club Maplewood, started out small and kept growing. I had a resident who was 100 years old, and her son was about 80. One day, during a visit, he told me that he had a lifelong dream to dance and entertain. I thought then we can take this a step further and have a night when we could invite people to perform. My director suggested we contact local groups to come in. We got a disco ball and really went wild with balloons and decorations. We encouraged everyone to dress up and gave out corsages. It turned out to be such a wonderful night. The whole place just came to life. We had 80 year-olds dancing in wheelchairs and



Activities Aide Deborah Longe leads residents of Maplewood Manor in a song during her weekly non-denominational fellowship service.

walkers. Everyone loved it so much. People were talking about it weeks later.

WF: That must have been very rewarding, to see everyone enjoying themselves so much.

DL: That's what it's all about, and that's how I get my reward. I get back so much more than I give. That's why we're here; those of us who see this work as a calling. We're here to make our residents' last days on earth as nice as we possibly can.

May 15 is deadline for submitting proposed resolutions, changes to CSEA's Constitution and bylaws.

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the CSEA Constitution & Bylaws for consideration by CSEA delegates to the union's 2005 Annual Delegates Meeting **must be submitted by May 15, 2005.**

Proposed resolutions may be submitted **only** by a delegate and **must** be submitted on the proper forms. Forms for submitting resolutions are available from CSEA headquarters and region offices.

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws must be submitted no later than May 15 to Statewide Secretary Barbara Reeves, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Ave., Albany, N.Y., 12210-2303.

The 2005 CSEA Annual Delegates Meeting will be held Sept. 26-30 in Buffalo.

Procedure protects rights

AFSCME's constitution includes a rebate procedure to protect the rights of members who disagree with how the union spends money for partisan political or ideological purposes.

Article IX, Section 11 of the International Constitution, which establishes the procedure for dues rebates for members who object to AFSCME's partisan political or ideological expenditures, was amended at AFSCME's 33rd International Convention.

The amended language requires those members who object to the expenditure of dues for political or ideological purposes submit their objection in writing to both the International Union and CSEA Local 1000 by certified mail between April 1 and April 16 (dates inclusive) each year for the prior year ending Dec. 31.

The timing of the steps in the procedure is tied to the International's fiscal year. The procedure, including the requirements for submitting a proper rebate request, were modified by a constitutional amendment adopted by the 1998 International Convention. As modified, those procedures and requirements are spelled out in Article IX, Section 11 of the International Constitution. **THESE REQUIREMENTS WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED.**

Here's how it works. Members who object to the expenditure of a portion of their dues for

partisan political or ideological purposes and want to request a rebate must do so individually in writing between April 1 and April 16, 2005. That request must be timely filed by registered or certified mail with: the International Secretary-Treasurer and the CSEA Statewide Treasurer. The requests must contain the following information: name, Social Security number, home address and the AFSCME local to which dues were paid during the preceding year. This information must be typed or legibly printed. The individual request must be signed by the member and sent by the individual member to: International Secretary-Treasurer at AFSCME Headquarters, 1625 L St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-5687; and CSEA Statewide Treasurer, Empire State Plaza Station, P. O. Box 2611, Albany, N.Y. 12214-0218. Requests for more than one person may not be sent in the same envelope. Each request must be sent individually. Requests must be renewed in writing every year the member wishes a rebate.

Upon receipt by the International of a valid rebate request, an application for partisan political or ideological rebate will be sent to the objecting member. The objecting member will be required to complete and return the application in a timely manner. In accordance with the constitutional amendment adopted at the 1998 International Convention,

the application will require the objecting member to identify those partisan or political or ideological activities to which objection is being made, and no rebate will be made to any member who fails to complete that portion of the application. In determining the amount of the rebate to be paid to any member, the International Union and each subordinate body shall have the option of limiting the rebate to the member's pro-rata share of the expenses for those activities specifically identified in the application.

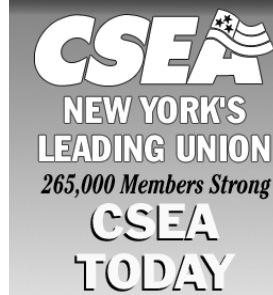
Upon receipt by CSEA of the valid, certified request, the constitutional maximum of 3 percent rebate will be processed. No phone calls or e-mail correspondence will be accepted.

Any member who is dissatisfied with the amount of the rebate paid by the International Union may object by filing a written appeal with the AFSCME Judicial Panel within 15 days after the rebate check has been received. Appeals should be sent to the Judicial Panel Chairperson at the AFSCME International Headquarters at the address listed above. The Judicial Panel will conduct a hearing and issue a written decision on such appeals, subject to an appeal to the full Judicial Panel. If dissatisfied with the Judicial Panel's ruling, a member can appeal to the next International Convention.

PEOPLE PERSON — The PEOPLE recruiter of the month of January is Barbara Rustin of the New York Metropolitan Retirees Local in the Metropolitan Region. She recruited 12 new

PEOPLE members. PEOPLE is CSEA and AFSCME's political action program. It is responsible for raising money and collecting voluntary contributions from the membership so CSEA can effectively promote our interests at the state and federal level ... **A 'YES' VOTE** — About 55 CSEA members employed at the DeRuyter School District recently ratified a three-year contract with the district. The workers will get raises each year, as well as increases in starting salaries to improve staff recruitment and retention ...

PUTNAM LOCAL PRESIDENT HONORED — The Putnam County Legislature honored Irena Kobbe, longtime president of the Putnam County Local, at its Feb. 3 meeting. County Executive Robert Bondi and



Legislator Michael Semo Jr. presented Kobbe, a 38-year county employee, with a proclamation congratulating her on her retirement ... **TSUNAMI RELIEF UPDATE** — CSEA

members across the state continue to participate in tsunami relief efforts. A mini-telethon, held jointly with the American Red Cross at CSEA Headquarters, generated more than \$100,000 in pledges from Capital District TV viewers in one day. The Red Cross is seeking to raise \$400 million for tsunami relief efforts. The Western New York DDSO Local has donated more than \$1,700 to Tamils Rehabilitation Organization's relief effort in Sri Lanka. Local member Vijay Paatpanthan lost 27 family members in the Dec. 26, 2004 tsunami. Organizations including the American Red Cross are still accepting relief donations. Visit the CSEA web site at www.csealocal1000.org for more information about relief efforts.

Working for a 'Miracle on Ice'



CSEA member David Wilcox, left, was misidentified in a photo caption with a February article about the 25th anniversary of the Winter Olympic Games in Lake Placid. During the Olympics, Wilcox did maintenance in the Olympic Complex and still holds the same job. He remembers the Olympic Center being built in 1978. During the games, Wilcox was in the Olympic Center when the U.S. hockey team defeated the Soviet Union's hockey team in the famed "Miracle on Ice" game for the gold medal. Wilcox said the game is his most vivid memory of the Olympics. "There was a lot of yelling and screaming," he said. Wilcox worked hard, as well as extra hours, to help make the games successful. "It was real busy, with wall-to-wall people, but it was exciting."

Med center to cut 144 more jobs

County Nursing Facilities Struggle

Sick Tax Ill Conceived

Contracting Out Health Care Jobs A Growing Epidemic

Care battles bottom line

THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET IS AN ASSAULT ON HEALTH CARE!

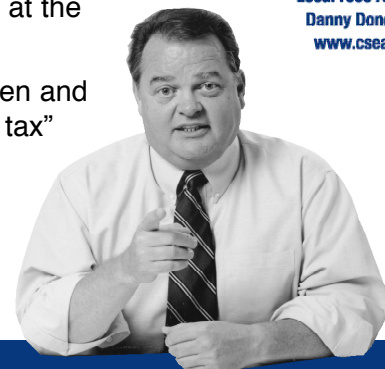
New York's health care system is in critical condition.

But Gov. George Pataki's proposed budget will undermine the quality and availability of vital health care services in every community across the state.

Public health care facilities that provide care when no other help is available, would be put at the greatest risk.

The governor's approach shortchanges local communities on their crushing Medicaid burden and cuts more than \$1.2 billion in health care funding. It also brings back an ill-conceived "sick tax" that will be a back breaker for many facilities and services.

CSEA believes there are many ways to produce millions in solid savings and boost health care resources in our communities. It requires leadership and meaningful reform, not an assault on health care services.



Governor Pataki needs to know —
Health Care Reform Needs Urgent Care Now!

Members build garage as gift to their community

GREENPORT — Members of CSEA's Town of Greenport Unit gave up relaxing on the weekends for nearly a year to give back to their community by building a double-bay garage, as a gift to their town.

"The primary reason was we wanted to give something back to the community," Unit President Pat Nolan said.

Following completion of a new town park a few years back, residents and businesses began chipping in with donations, Nolan said. "We wanted to donate too, but we're a small unit without a big treasury. One of our members suggested building a garage instead."

The idea was a winner, as the town sorely needed a new garage to store park maintenance equipment.

"We were stuffing things in

the pavilion," Nolan said.

Greenport officials agreed to pay for the construction materials, some of which were donated. Over the next 10 months, workers met on evenings and weekends, and Nolan estimates members put about 300 hours into the project.

They began construction with the foundation. In November, the workers finished the cedar-sided garage.

Along the way, other CSEA members also helped the Greenport workers. The Columbia County Local bought some meals and union member Bob Poulter, who is employed with the Hudson City School District, also lent a hand.

The project also brought with it some unanticipated benefits. The Greenport workers not only became better acquainted, and



Members of CSEA's Town of Greenport Unit stand in front of the garage they built for the town. From left to right are Mark Gaylord, Roger Rote, Chip Roberts, Dan Kenneally and Unit President Pat Nolan. Other CSEA members who helped build the garage but are not shown are Fred Fuchs, Anthony Porreca and Bob Poulter.

were able to bring their skills to bear on the projects. Nolan said unit members also benefited from the positive image-building associated with the project, but that's not why the Greenport workers built the garage.

"We all live here and we wanted to give back to the town," Nolan said.

— Therese Assalian

Family, friends and neighbors in brief

PLAQUE HONOREES — The names of former Statewide Secretary Irene Carr and former Western Region President Robert L. Lattimer will soon be added to the CSEA Memorial Plaque. The plaque honors deceased CSEA members who had served the union in an exemplary manner. Carr and Lattimer both died last year. Carr, who was from Oneonta, established the first CSEA women's committee and fought for advancements in issues of concern to women and families. Her efforts resulted in changes that include increased clerical training opportunities, the establishment of work site child care centers and increased involvement of women

in union leadership positions. Lattimer, who was from Buffalo, tirelessly fought for working people. He became a leading advocate of increasing the involvement of CSEA members in the political process. Lattimer was instrumental in creating the first CSEA Political Action Committee, and he was considered an expert in federal issues. He was elected as a delegate to the 1992 and 1996 Democratic National Conventions. Lattimer also headed the union committee that ultimately recommended CSEA affiliate with AFSCME, a move that brought CSEA into the AFL-CIO ... **NEW 'OLD GLORY'** — The City of North Tonawanda Unit and the Niagara

County Local recently raised money to donate a flagpole, flag and lighting to the new CSEA Western Region Office building in Amherst. North Tonawanda Unit member Dale Rogers and Niagara County Local President Elaine Timm spearheaded the campaign after Rogers noticed that the region office lacked an outdoor flagpole. Region members have already raised nearly all of the money needed to buy the materials, and the flagpole, flag and lighting will be installed this

spring ... **GIFT OF LIFE** — Richard Lorde, treasurer of the Long Island State Parks Local, is very ill and rapidly running out of sick time.

He is waiting for a liver transplant. State workers represented by CSEA who have a sufficient amount of annual leave time can help Lorde and his family by donating some time to him. To be eligible to help, members must have at

least 10 leave days left after the donation. For more information, call Long Island State Parks Local President Paul D'Aleo at (631) 669-6982.





Message from CSEA Local 830 President Jane D'Amico

NHCC Contract Will Guide us Through Dec. 31, 2009

I would like to thank our CSEA members for their overwhelming vote of confidence in approving the new contract with the Nassau Health Care Corporation. A record 62 percent of the CSEA membership cast ballots in the ratification vote, approving the contract by an almost 2:1 ratio — 1,263-696.

The document was forged over a difficult and often frustrating period of almost three years, the product of nearly 50 contract meetings by a negotiations team that waged a fierce fight every inch of the way on behalf of its members. The team fought off attempt after attempt by two administrations of NHCC management to batter CSEA into submission with horrific layoffs and other unsavory actions designed to bring CSEA to its knees. Today, we continue to stand tall.

In the face of it all, the team never lost its focus, and one by one challenged and cast aside the outrageous giveback demands set forth by management. All but a very few of those challenges were successful. What we ended up with was an agreement that was a far cry better than the master plan of “unconditional surrender” laid out by management when negotiations began.

Through it all, the negotiations team had to be ever mindful of NHCC's fragile financial situation, balancing an acceptable level of employee benefits with the real possibility of continued employee layoffs, cutbacks in vital services and even the very demise of public health care in Nassau County.

Overall, the job performed by our bargaining team was nothing short of masterful. It was professional, it was thorough and it was responsible. It was also extremely demanding, both of their time and of their enterprise. They took the time to painstakingly review and evaluate hundreds of items. They did a remarkable job and I have the highest praise for each and every one of them. (See names of Negotiations Committee members on Page 3.)

Let us hope that by coming to grips with reality and moving toward a more labor-friendly agreement, maybe NHCC management has finally begun to recognize the true worth of the dedicated and professional workers, our members, who together make NHCC a viable and praiseworthy health care institution.

As we now leave the bargaining process behind and move ahead, I want our NHCC members to know that CSEA will continue to be available to implement the new provisions and to assist you in understanding the

They did a remarkable job and I have the highest praise for each and every one of them.

various provisions of a contract that will guide the destiny of our members over the next five years. Thanks for your support and for your patience.

Yours in Unionism,

Jane M. D'Amico
President



CSEA members demonstrate for a fair contract last year. The union stuck to its positions in negotiation and won a fair contract for Nassau Health Care Corporation workers.

The
Work ForceCSEA Nassau County Local 830
EXPRESS

March 2005 • Vol. 10 No. 3

A Monthly Publication of CSEA Nassau County Local 830
JANE D'AMICO, PresidentTony Panzarella, Editor
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CSEA Long Island Region Communications Associate Rachel
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LES EASON, Executive Vice President
GEORGE WALSH, 1st Vice President
ROBERT CAULDWELL, 2nd Vice President
RAYMOND CANNELLA, 3rd Vice President
JEWEL WEINSTEIN, 4th Vice President
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TIM CORR, 7th Vice President
NANCY IANSON, 8th Vice President
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ROB ARCIELLO, Deputy Sheriffs
STANLEY BERGMAN, Comptroller's Office
RICHARD BREUSCH, Public Safety
RUDY BRUCE, Department of Public Works
RAY CANNELLA, Civil Service Commission
TIM CARTER, Health Department
TIM CORR, Recreation & Parks
VIVIAN CROWLEY, General Services
KENNETH DASH, SR., Administrative Unit
MARY DELMARE, School Crossing Guards
LES EASON, A. Holly Patterson Extended Care Facility
BOBBI EISGRAU, County Clerk
RAYMOND FLAMMER, Assessment Department
SUSAN GRAHAM, County/District Attorney
NANCY IANSON, Drug & Alcohol
DEBRA IMPERATORE, Police Civilians
RON KAHL, AMTS
JERRY LARICCHIUTA, Sheriffs Support Unit
DIANE RUSS, Consumer Affairs
MICHAEL TIMMONS, Social Services
GEORGE WALSH, Nassau University Medical Center
JEWEL WEINSTEIN, Nassau Community College
PETER WRBA, Probation
JOSEPH WHITTAKER, Fire MarshalWe welcome reader suggestions: Please address your
comments to Tony Panzarella, Editor, Nassau County
EXPRESS at CSEA Nassau Co. Local 830, 400 County
Seat Dr., Mineola, NY 11501-4137.

Legal Update

“Ask, Before You Tell”**Employers Cannot Silence Union Representatives During Disciplinary Interrogations**By Nancy E. Hoffman
CSEA General Counsel

Any employee who is covered by CSEA has the right to union representation during an employer interrogation, if the employee reasonably believes the interrogation may lead to disciplinary action against the employee. This right is guaranteed by the New York State Taylor Law, and is also provided in many CSEA collective bargaining agreements. It is important to know about the appropriate role a union representative should play during an interrogation.

There have been several decisions by both the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) and the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) that define the role of a union representative during a disciplinary interrogation. A recent decision by the NLRB provides further important guidance in this area.

In that NLRB case a custodial employee at Barnard College was interrogated under suspicion that the employee stole \$100 from a room he cleaned. The employer scheduled an interrogation meeting and notified a union representative to attend the meeting. The union representative was present at the beginning of the interrogation of the employee. Before the employer began questioning the employee, the employer told the union representative that he “must not say anything or interrupt [the] questioning, and that he was there only to observe the process.”

The union representative objected to this instruction by management, and the parties were unable to resolve the dispute. The union filed a charge with the NLRB claiming that the employer violated the employee's and union's rights by limiting the role of the union representative in that way. The NLRB held that the employer's actions violated the law and directed the employer to withdraw the limitation on the union representative.

The NLRB held that the employees have the right to “advice and active assistance from the union representative,” during an interrogation. Therefore, prohibiting the union representative from speaking during the interrogation was inconsistent with the legal right to have a union representative to assist the employee.

However, the NLRB also held that there are some restrictions on the role of the union representative. Specifically, the NLRB stated that “the union representative may not turn the meeting in to an adversarial proceeding.” In other words, the union representative may assist the employee but cannot cause excessive disruption. The NLRB also held that the union representative may not “prevent the employer from questioning the employee.”

Based upon prior PERB decisions, which follow the private sector NLRB in this area, PERB would likely agree with the analysis in the NLRB decision in the

CSEA representatives cannot be excessively disruptive, but they cannot be prevented from speaking or advising the employee during the interrogation.

Barnard College case. These same general principals are also usually followed by arbitrators. If the employer obtains information from an employee during an interrogation in which the union representative is prohibited from speaking, then the employer will be prohibited from using information obtained from the interrogation against the employee.

In summary, CSEA representatives must walk a fine line when representing employees during interrogations. CSEA representatives cannot be excessively disruptive, but they cannot be prevented from speaking or advising the employee during the interrogation. Employees must answer the questions asked by the employer. At the same time, no CSEA member should be subjected to a disciplinary interrogation without union representation. The key here, though, is for the employee to be sure to ask for union representation. This is a case of do “ask before you tell.”



The Nassau Health Care Corp. Contract

1. **Term:**
Jan. 1, 2003 – Dec. 31, 2009
2. **Wages:**
Annual cost of living adjustments not less than 2.5 percent, nor more than 3.5 percent, effective Jan. 1, 2005 through Jan. 1, 2009. (Not applicable for attending physicians in the RVU Plan.)
Signing bonus upon ratification of \$600 for full-time employees and \$300 for part-time employees.
3. **Health Insurance:**
For current and retired CSEA members, NHCC will continue to provide fully paid health insurance. New employees will pay 15 percent of cost for first five years of employment.
4. **Job Preservation:**
No layoffs of bargaining unit members unless net revenue decreases 5 percent or more over a fiscal quarter. (Subject to CSEA audit)
5. **PCA/CNA Parity:**
Certified Nursing Assistants will be placed in salary grade 3 and have their salaries adjusted to the next closest higher salary.
6. **Nurse Scheduling at NUMC and clinics:**
A rolling six-week schedule will be implemented to avoid the unnecessary assignment of mandatory standby and overtime. A voluntary overtime and standby system will be established. (Full details available through unit president or at CSEA office)
7. **Per Diem Nurse Scheduling:**
An employment list will be established and maintained of persons in the titles of Registered Nurse I (per diem) and Licensed Practical Nurse I (per diem) whose qualifications have been approved by the Civil Service Commission. NHCC will have the right to hire from this list in the event of nurse staffing shortages. (Full details available through unit president or at CSEA office.)
8. **Enhanced Dental Plan:**
A dental plan provider will be selected to offer increased benefits.
9. **Vacation Requests:**
New clause provides for expedited approval process.
10. **Tuition Reimbursement:**
Enhanced tuition reimbursement for completed job-related courses.
11. **Meal Money:**
Increased benefit providing for main course, two side orders, dessert & beverage.
12. **Grievances Related to Nurse Scheduling:**
Shall be subject to expedited mediation.
13. **Labor/Management Meetings:**
Regularly scheduled meetings to resolve labor/management issues.
14. **Sign-On Bonus:**
To attract new employees in various job titles.
15. **Holidays:**
Presidents' Day will replace Lincoln's and Washington's birthdays.
Columbus Day and Election Day will be converted to floating holidays.
16. **Overtime:**
Overtime shall be paid for work in excess of 40 hours worked per week. Sick leave will not be considered time worked for purposes of the 40 hour standard. (Effective April 1, 2005)

The NHCC Bargaining Team

President Jane D'Amico

Executive Vice President

Les Eason

(A. Holly Patterson Extended

Care Facility Unit President)

1st Vice President

George Walsh

(Nassau University Medical

Center Unit President)

Alice Barron

Chief Negotiator Larry Borst

Debra Buonagura

Thelma Campbell

Robert McLaughlin

Cora Moore

Garydiane Morrison

Doris Ruddock

Sheila Slezak

Vice President Kathleen Vitan

Kathy Walsh

regular fees by 20 percent for CSEA members and



Attorney Penny Kassel discusses CSEA's new Elder Law Plan at a recent workshop at the CSEA Nassau Local Office in Mineola. Kassel, an expert in estate planning and elder law administration, will be back in Nassau County for workshops on March 9 and 10 from noon to 2 p.m. each day at the Police Department Assembly Hall in Mineola.

family. Without the benefit of the CSEA Plan discount, these services would cost much more.

Members to Learn About New CSEA Elder Law Plan

A new Legal Services Plan which provides Elder Law Services for CSEA Nassau Local members will be explained at special meetings set for March 8 and March 9 at the Police Department Assembly Hall in Mineola. The program will feature a presentation by attorney Penny Kassel, an expert in estate planning and elder law administration.

Nassau Local President Jane D'Amico is urging people with elderly relatives to attend the program. "Consulting with an attorney is the best course of action when making decisions on behalf of aging parents such as placing them in nursing homes," she said.

An attorney can offer valuable advice on protecting assets and other important matters, she said.

The program will be held from 12 p.m. until 2 p.m. each day. It is suggested attendees bring their own lunch. Drinks will be provided. Because of limited seating, early registration is advised by calling Steve or Judy at the local office at 516-571-2919 weekdays during business hours.

Why was the plan created?

You and your family have worked a long time to own your home, put away retirement money and provide for children and aging parents.

Protection of life savings, the family residence and your children's inheritance can be threatened.

Events such as illness or disability requiring long term care can happen to you, your spouse, your child or your parents at any time.

What can the plan do for me and my family?

The CSEA Elder Law Plan attorneys will:

- Meet with you to review your present situation and make recommendations as to what you should do immediately.

- Prepare necessary legal documents, such as a Will, Power of Attorney, Health Care Proxy, Family Trust and Living Trust.

- * Counsel you with respect to estate planning strategies, IRA and pension fund planning, guardianships, long-term care insurance options and asset protection in the face of catastrophic illness.

Why should I take advantage of the plan?

Life's events can threaten your savings, your home and your plans for the future at any time without warning. As a CSEA member, you can have access to quality legal advice and services at discounted fees. It is in your best interests to consider using this plan now before something happens that you did not plan for.

How much will it cost?

All plan attorneys have agreed to discount their

CSEA honors Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at annual luncheon

The Unity Committee, under the leadership of co-chairmen Tim Corr and Rudy Bruce, once again put together an outstanding tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Suffolk County Clerk Janice Tinsley-Colbert and Dr. Aubrey Lewis spoke to a full house at the luncheon, held at the Coral House in Baldwin.

"The Unity Committee is to be commended for keeping Dr. King's dream alive each year with this outstanding event," said Nassau Local President Jane D'Amico. "It is highly appropriate for labor to celebrate the life of Dr. King because there are few people who fought harder for the rights of working men and women."

Union leaders attending the event included Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte, former Nassau Local President Tony Giustino, and Nassau Municipal Local President John Shepherd, a service award recipient.

The program also featured entertainment, service awards, and the presentation of scholarships to CSEA members' children. In addition to Shepherd, other service award recipients include Jerri Smith, the Rev. H. David Parker, and Lewis.

Following are some photos of the event:



Above, young violinist Jessenia Jijon performs a solo to the delight of the audience.



Above, the service award recipients.



Left, the Unity Committee steps forward to be recognized for a job well done.

Right, Nassau Local President Jane D'Amico poses with Scholarship Award winner Krystal Washington, left, and her mom, Michele Breeland-Henry, who works at the Department of Social Services.



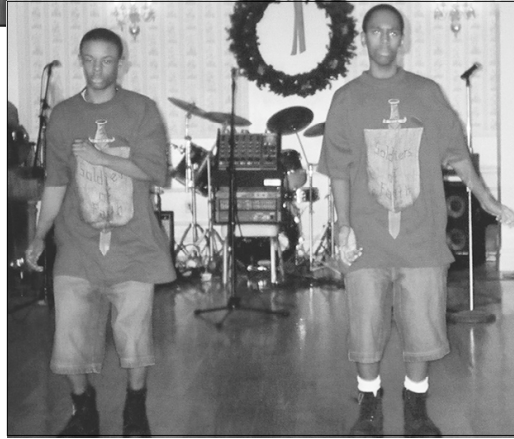
Right, Juanita Mckinnies presents scholarship awards to A.J. Reynolds and Krystal Washington.



Right, "The Gospel Sons" men's choir performs with inspirational music and song.



Left, the "Soldiers of Faith" step dancers' performance was a real crowd-pleaser.



CSEA Blasts Nassau County On Park Giveaway Plan

The following are excerpts from a letter sent by CSEA to Newsday staff writer Cynthia Daniels in response to her recent story about County Executive Thomas Suozzi's announcement that he will begin the process of selling off county owned parklands to various local municipalities. The letter was signed by CSEA President Jane D'Amico and Vice President Tim Corr, former CSEA parks unit president.

Dear Ms. Daniels:

I don't understand why Nassau County residents would want to give their recreation, parks and museum facilities away to anyone. It is mind-boggling to pay municipalities or villages to take their land.

Nassau County had, and still can have, a great park system if the new administration will stop dismantling the county parks and invest in their future.

As you enter Nassau County parks, you'll see signs that say "Your parks are on a comeback." If the parks are on a "comeback," why would the county suggest giving some of them away?

When the new administration began in January 2002, many of the seasoned employees with critical knowledge left for various reasons. The glue that held the parks together was broken up. The maintenance shops (electricians, plumbers, carpenters, welders), as well as pool and rinks maintenance were transferred to the Department of Public Works; park rangers were transferred to the Nassau County Police Department; the hot house was given to the cooperative extension and the lawn mower equipment maintenance shop was moved to Nickerson Beach, which is difficult to access. The county decreased the number of full time employees to 215 workers. The new administration has hired successive deputy commissioners with the hopes that one of them will be able to manage parks.

You can't get rid of or ignore 30 years of parks knowledge, decrease the number of full time employees, break up all the systems that made the parks function and bring in numerous administrators who lack significant parks management experience and expect the facilities to stay afloat.

It seems a little strange that Oyster Bay paid \$4.7 million for 9.2 acres of county park land last year and now Nassau County is paying \$2 million to give away almost 1,000 acres of park land. How did Nassau County acquire the park land? Was it donated, or did county tax dollars purchase the land? Is it legal to give away this land? What will the municipalities (Oyster Bay and the towns of North Hempstead and Hempstead) do with our parks? If a Nassau County resident is not happy with what Oyster Bay or North Hempstead is doing with their land, can a county resident vote Oyster Bay and North Hempstead elected officials out of office? Will generations of

Nassau County residents be able to use their parks, even though they are not residents of these municipalities? Nassau County parks property is the responsibility of the elected Nassau County officials and they should not push this responsibility to others.

After three years of rough times with parks, Nassau County seemed to be turning the tide. The department's 2005 budget allowed for the hiring of 20 new full time employees, a step in the right direction. The department hired a new chief deputy commissioner, who is hands-on. Rich Murphy is pulling the work force together using years of knowledge of the work force, and he is using a 10 point plan to triage the parks. If Nassau County is sincere that its parks are on a comeback, why give them away?

What Nassau County parks needs to succeed is a strong leader who treats the work force with respect. They need to invest in equipment so that the work force can do its job. They need to hire a few full time workers and some part-time workers each year to use the knowledge of the present work force and to train employees.

Nassau County residents should take a good look at the county's proposal to give away their land. Certainly, the control of their parks and the question of whether their parks will be there for future generations will be taken out of their hands.

Nassau County park land should remain in the hands of those who paid for it, county residents. If the county will not properly maintain our parks, then they should at least conserve them as open space for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Jane M. D'Amico, President, CSEA Nassau Local
Tim Corr, Vice President, CSEA Nassau Local

Event set for May 5

NASSAU LOCAL 830 WOMEN'S COMMITTEE OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD NOMINATION FORM

(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY OR TYPE)

1. GUIDELINES

- Applications must be submitted by a Nassau County Local CSEA member in good standing.
- Nominations must be submitted on the Official Nomination Form.
- All nominations must be received no later than April 1, 2005, at the CSEA Nassau County Local Office, 400 County Seat Drive, Mineola, NY 11501, Attn: Women's Committee.
- The awards will be presented at the annual CSEA Women in Local Government recognition dinner on May 5, 2005, at Verdi's of Westbury, at 680 Old Country Road in Westbury.

2. ELIGIBILITY

- Nominees for the award must be a member who is either:
- A current dues paying CSEA Nassau County Local member, or
 - A dues paying retiree who was a Nassau County Local member while actively employed.
- Previous award winners are not eligible, but previous nominees will be considered.
Nassau County Local Women's Committee members are not eligible.

3. CRITERIA

Nominees will be evaluated on the basis of demonstrated commitment to the concerns of women and families within the labor movement and community.

Factors that are considered are:

- Dedication to advancement of CSEA women's goals within the labor movement or the public sector
- Volunteerism and/or community service
- Outstanding job performance
- Outstanding achievements related to women/humanitarian contributions/activism/ or other special qualities.

I NOMINATE _____

DEPARTMENT _____ JOB TITLE _____

JOB DESCRIPTION _____

Home Address _____ Phone _____

Work Address _____ Phone _____

Nominated By _____ SS# _____

Work Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Address _____

Describe fully how the nominee meets the criteria outlined in Section 3 above. Be as specific as possible. Attach additional pages if necessary.

**RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO:
CSEA Nassau Local 830, 400 County Seat Drive, Mineola, NY 11501
Attention: Women's Committee**

"News 12" Anchor Carol Silva to Speak at Women's Dinner

Carol Silva, the Emmy Award winning morning anchor for News 12 Long Island, will be the keynote speaker at CSEA's 2005 "Women in Local Government Outstanding Achievement Awards Dinner."



Silva Silva, a Hicksville native and longtime Long Island news anchor, has received more than 30 journalism awards for her coverage of news and feature stories. Silva is a magna cum laude graduate of New York Institute of Technology.

"We are delighted to have someone of Carol Silva's stature as our guest speaker this year," said Nassau Local President Jane D'Amico. "Her pioneering efforts in the field of women's journalism have paved the way for the many women who have followed in her footsteps." This will be the 7th Annual dinner, which was originated by President D'Amico when she was Chair of the Women's Committee.

Women's Committee Chairwoman Sandee Horowitz said the dinner honors CSEA members who have achieved outstanding success at their jobs, in their communities, in the labor movement or in women's and family issues. Horowitz said that award winners are selected from nominations submitted by other CSEA members, and she urged members to nominate members who deserve recognition.

Award criteria include:

- Dedication to the advancement of CSEA women's goals within the labor movement and/or the public sector;
- Volunteerism and/or community service;
- Outstanding job performance;
- Other criteria, such as outstanding achievements related to women/ family/humanitarian contributions.

Members wishing to nominate someone for an award can do so by filling out the form located elsewhere in this paper and returning by the deadline of April 1, to CSEA Nassau County Local Office, 400 County Seat Drive, Mineola, NY 11501, Attn: Women's Committee.

The event, a program of the Nassau Local Women's Committee, will run from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. with a cocktail hour and a full sit-down dinner. The cost is \$35 for bargaining unit members and \$50 for guests. Tickets can be obtained by calling Jewel or Judy weekdays during regular business hours at the CSEA local office at 516-571-2919.

Veterans Corner**“Stand up” for Military Families Planned This Spring**

By Edward G. Aulman
Nassau County Veterans Service Agency

At least 2,000 Nassau County residents in Iraq and Afghanistan today. The Veterans Service Agency is working with family support groups and local social service and government agencies to conduct this spring a “Stand Up for Military Families.” Family members will be invited to attend a reception, at which representatives of U.S. Department of Defense, TRICARE, family support groups, local health care systems, U.S. Veterans Affairs and veterans organizations will offer services and information.

Military School Fair

The headquarters of the 1st Marine Corps District at 605 Stewart Ave., Garden City will be the location of a military schools and programs fair March 19 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Representatives from West Point, Annapolis, Air Force and Merchant Marine academies, plus military colleges and universities with ROTC programs will send representatives to provide information.

Veterans on the job training

Veterans who chose not to use their GI education benefits may be eligible for VA-approved on the job training or an apprenticeship program. Veterans may receive a monthly check from the VA for up to two years. Call the New York state Division of Veterans Affairs' Bureau of Veterans Education (212) 564-8414.

Civil Air Patrol Wants Retirees

The Civil Air Patrol, the auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, is looking for senior members to join in its many missions, including homeland defense. You don't have to be a pilot. Emergency services, training, mentoring of cadets, education, community outreach, media relations and administrative responsibilities are

some of the tasks to be filled. To locate the nearest squadron, go online to www.cap.gov.

VA Awards Contracts

The VA will give \$7.2 million to the Center for Restorative and Regenerative Medicine in Rhode Island for research on “biohybrid” limbs that use human tissue and space age technology to assist amputees.

The department has also awarded PricewaterhouseCoopers a \$9.6 million contract to do a study on how to “modernize” 18 VA medical facilities throughout the country.

Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund

The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund provides financial grants and other assistance to marines and sailors injured while serving our nation. Visit the fund's web site at www.semperfund.org/about/ for more information.

Cell Phones for Soldiers

The Nassau County American Legion and the New York state Veterans of Foreign Wars are collecting cell phones for soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Bring your unneeded cell phones to your local veterans' post.

VA Home Loans Increased

Veterans will now be able to get no-down payment loans of up to \$359,700, up from the previous limit of \$240,000. Banks willing to provide this service can verify the veterans' eligibility through a computer link to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The “Gift of Life”

CSEA member John Veneroni, a clinical technician in the Nassau University Medical Center's surgery department, donated his 80th pint of blood in the hospital's blood donor center in January.

Drawing the blood was Janet St. John, R.N., Blood Donor Center coordinator.

Veneroni has been donating every 56 days, six times a year during the last 15 years. Working in the surgery department and in the operating rooms at NUMC, he recognizes the critical need for blood for trauma patients and those undergoing life-saving operations.

He assists doctors in the operating rooms by setting up all the equipment needed for the surgeries. Since he has type O-positive blood, Veneroni's blood has helped many people over the years, including at-risk, premature babies being cared for in the neo-natal intensive care unit at the medical center.

Mr. Veneroni, who lives in Carle Place, is a Carle Place Fire Department volunteer who helps coordinate the blood drives held in conjunction with the NUMC Blood Donor Center. He is married to Sandra and they have three adult sons. Janet St. John, RN, coordinator of the Blood Donor Center at NUMC, congratulates John Veneroni as she draws his 80th pint.



A Message From Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte



Brothers and Sisters,

In March, many communities in parts of the Southwest hold Cesar Chavez Day to mark the birth of one of this country's great labor leaders. The day is marked with parades and memorials,

but, most importantly, the day is marked through education and *community service*. Chavez' entire life was testament to his belief that non-violent agitation, founded on brotherly love and a desire to serve, could achieve positive change.

In CSEA, there is no shortage of ways for you to contribute to the fight for dignity and justice. One way to do that is through political activity, where the goal is to support the elected officials who will do right *by us*.

One way we do that is by contributing \$2 per week to the federal political action committee for working men and women – PEOPLE. Through PEOPLE, we fight for legislation that will help working families such as maintaining union protections and public service jobs; and against proposals that will hurt us such as privatizing public

“Talk is cheap. It is the way we organize and use our lives every day that tells what we believe in.”

— Cesar Chavez, founder, United Farm Workers

sector jobs or dismantling Social Security. PEOPLE has had many successes, including lobbying for the enactment of the Family Medical Leave Act. To continue to do more, PEOPLE needs your support.

Our federal PALs (political action liaisons) recently met in Albany to develop an action plan to hold our Congressional representatives and Senators' feet to the fire on many critical issues. A similar meeting is on tap for our state PALs, who will work to beat back proposed cuts and tax increases to public hospitals, including NUMC and University Hospital at Stony Brook, and nursing homes that include the A. Holly Patterson Extended Care Facility, as well as Gov. George Pataki's plan to sell off state hospitals like Stony Brook.

Of course, every one of us can help ratchet up the pressure on lawmakers by signing up for Lobby Day on April 12. Every year, CSEA provides transportation and refreshments to members for a trip to lobby state lawmakers in Albany. Political

Action Coordinator Gretchen Penn in the region office is registering people right now so don't miss the bus! It's a unique and exciting opportunity to make the political process work for us.

“We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community. Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own.”— Cesar Chavez

It's true that talk is cheap, but that's only if you don't follow it up with action. So, get involved in your union and let's get results together!

In solidarity,

Nick LaMorte, president
Long Island Region

Openings available for defensive driving course

Classes to be held in April and May

There are still some openings available for CSEA's defensive driving course, which will save participants money on their automobile insurance.

Two six-hour courses will be offered in three-hour segments. One class will be held April 11 and 12, and the other class will be held May 25 and 26. Each night's session will be held from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Six-hour classes will be held on April 2 and May 14, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with a half-hour lunch break (bring your own lunch).

Early registration is advised because space is limited and classes will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

When the program is completed, participants are eligible for an immediate 10 percent discount on their auto liability and collision insurance for a three-year period on all vehicles for which they are the principal operator. Those who have had moving violations will receive a four-point reduction on their driving record.

All sessions will be held at the CSEA Nassau Local office at 400 County Seat Drive, Mineola, in the basement of the south wing.

Family and friends of CSEA members are also welcome to

participate, but no children are allowed in the class.

The cost is \$25 per person for CSEA members and \$35 for non-members. For more information or to register, call Judy at (516) 571-2919, Ext. 10.



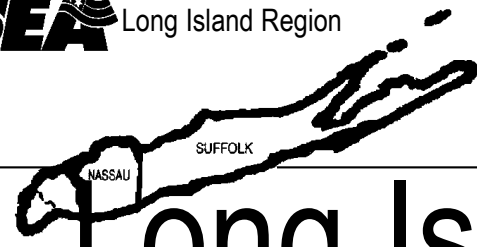
April 15 is deadline for CSEA scholarships

The application deadline for CSEA scholarships is April 15. Scholarships the union is offering this year include:

- The \$1,000 Irving Flaumenbaum Memorial Scholarship, three of which will be awarded in the CSEA Long Island Region.
- The \$2,500 JLT Award in memory of Charles Foster, which will be awarded to a high school student entering the SUNY system.
- The unrestricted \$2,500 MetLife Award in memory of Joseph D. Lochner.

All scholarships are intended for graduating high school seniors who are children of CSEA-represented employees. One application includes all three scholarships and can be obtained at the CSEA Nassau Local office at 400 County Seat Drive in Mineola. For more information, call the local office at (516) 571-2919.

A booklet listing all CSEA/AFSCME scholarships, along with requirements and application deadlines, is available at the local office.



Long Island Reporter

Blizzard of '05



This payloader cleared heavy snow drifts from the road, but got stuck after diesel fuel froze because of the cold.

OMMACK — CSEA members played a key role in digging Nassau and Suffolk counties out from the January blizzard that dropped as much as two feet of snow, with temperatures plunging to zero and winds at 45 mph.

See Blizzard continued on page 3

Blizzard continued from page 1

It was snowing lightly at noon on Saturday, Jan. 21 when Mark Gajowski and other members of the Town of Riverhead Unit were called in to start preparing for the storm. The crews salted and sanded roads until about 7 p.m., when the snowfall was deep enough to start plowing.

"The wind picked up to probably 45 miles per hour, and that's when crew leaders determined that we wouldn't be able to keep all the roads open in town," said Gajowski, unit vice president and a 16-year town employee. "We broke our workers into four truck crews and tried to keep main arteries open for emergencies. We stayed on the roads 30 hours straight before we started taking breaks."

Departments work together

Town employees from the sewer, water, buildings and grounds, street lighting and animal control departments were brought in to help.

Susan Beal and Donna Tefta, highway department clerical employees, worked the phones, communicating between the different departments. "They were key in our operations," Gajowski said. "They left their families on the weekend. Tefta left home to work during the weekend, even though her husband and two teen-age children were sick. Their personal sacrifices are greatly appreciated."

Gajowski said town governments left their highway departments understaffed and took a gamble on the risk going unnoticed — until a big storm hits. "When it comes to snow removal, the public can see how severely shortaged we are," he said.

Riverhead had 22 inches of snow. "It seemed the storm stalled right over us," Gajowski said.

Cordis Hemby, a 27-year state Department of Transportation employee and CSEA member, was called into work at 8 a.m. the morning of the blizzard. Hemby and 11 other CSEA members at the Hampton Bays Residency were told to get equipment ready for the storm. State transportation crews started clearing the roads at 10 a.m.

"As it first started, it was light and easy to handle," Hemby said. "Around 8:30 that night, the storm intensified and we had whiteout conditions. We couldn't see 50 feet in front of the truck. We had to slow down and some of the workers had to pull off the road for 30 to 45 minutes because of whiteout."

"It was almost like the storm we had in 1978, with whiteout conditions. I can't remember another one like that out here," Hemby said.

Pete Collins, a mechanic in Southampton's street lighting department, was called in about 6 p.m. on Saturday evening to help 65 town highway department workers.

Members work around the clock

Collins, along with worker Sam Oliver, plowed for 24 hours in their truck. As the evening went on, the snow became heavier. The town has 480 miles of road to plow and because a state of emergency had been declared, the workers plowed private roads as well. "The biggest problem was vehicular traffic, snowmobiles, people riding quads, little four-wheel drive dirt bikes," Collins said. "They're not supposed to be on the road, but supposedly it's a lot of fun to be on the road in the snow."

The toughest area was further east. "With farm fields, snow drifted back onto the roads," Collins said. "We had seven-foot drifts in the middle of the road. Plows became ineffective and they had to call in payloaders to create snowbanks."

The workers also got a big morale booster during the storm. "While we were working on the blizzard, we had three different calls from women going into labor," Collins said. "Our highway plows had to go with the ambulance, and drive in front of ambulance, to take them to the hospital. Everyone got a little uplift from that."

Ernie Behnke, a heavy equipment operator in Brookhaven, said motorists who took their vehicles out in the snowstorm caused problems.

"At the height of the storm, some people went out in the storm even though people were supposed to stay home," he said. "Along with vehicles parked on the street, motorists made the streets more difficult to clear. The wind was also really blowing everything around us."

At the State University of New York at Old Westbury campus, snow began falling as students were returning to the dorms for the start of the spring semester on Monday, Jan. 23.

"Our members worked from 2 p.m. Saturday through 1:30 p.m. on Sunday," SUNY



Town employees from sewer, water, buildings and grounds, street lighting and animal control were brought in to help.

Old Westbury Local President Mary D'Antonio said. "The students were able to check into the dorms, and classes were in session on time. The workers did a fantastic job in preparing the campus for the first day of the spring semester."

Bill Stodolski, president of the Department of Transportation Local, came to work at the North Merrick Residency at noon Saturday and went home Monday evening.

Soon after clearing his own driveway shortly after returning home, Stodolski was called back in to work to plow state roads in Nassau County. During the week, he worked nearly 80 hours of overtime and some other members worked more overtime hours. "We kept up with it," he said. "It was just an endless battle. It was a long, hard storm."

Stodolski expressed pride in his work and that of other CSEA members on Long Island. "We have to protect the public, that's our job. The workers are dedicated and conscientious."



Ernie Behnke, a CSEA member employed by the Brookhaven Highway Department, is one of hundreds of union members who worked long, grueling hours to clear Long Island's roads after a January snowstorm. Behnke said people who drove during the storm added to the difficulties in removing snow.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



CSEA member Rosemary Alton, center rear, wearing sunglasses, who works in the comptroller's office, and members of her family are shown on the beach before most of them plunged into the Atlantic. Colleen Silvia, City of Long Beach Unit president, is at right.

Message from Long Island Region President
Nick LaMorte



Brothers and Sisters,
In March, many communities in parts of the Southwest hold Cesar Chavez Day to mark the birth of one of this country's great labor leaders. The day is marked through education and *community service*. Chavez' entire life was testament to his belief that non-violent agitation, founded on brotherly love and a desire to serve, could achieve positive change.

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PEOPLE has had many successes, including successfully lobbying for the enactment of the Family Medical Leave Act. To continue to do more, PEOPLE needs your support.

Our federal PALs (political action liaisons) recently met to develop an action plan to hold our Congressional representatives and Senators' feet to the fire on many issues. A similar meeting is on tap for our state PALs,

who will work to beat back proposed cuts and tax increases to public hospitals and nursing homes.

Of course, every one of us can help put the pressure on lawmakers by signing up for Lobby Day on April 12. Every year, CSEA provides transportation to members for a trip to lobby state lawmakers in Albany. Region Political Action Coordinator Gretchen Penn is registering people right now so don't miss the bus! It's a unique and exciting opportunity to make the political process work for us. Get involved in your union and let's get results together!

In solidarity,

Nick LaMorte, president
Long Island Region

Polar Bears celebrate Super Bowl Sunday with a plunge

LONG BEACH — City of Long Beach Unit members and their families were among the hundreds of Long Beach Polar Bears who recently plunged into the Atlantic Ocean.

Unit members, who are part of the Nassau Municipal Local, participated in the city's 8th annual icy plunge on Super Bowl Sunday.

Several thousand others watched from the beach and the boardwalk as the intrepid bathers of all ages darted quickly in and out of the 40-degree ocean water. The day was warm and sunny, contributing to the festive air on the beach and boardwalk.

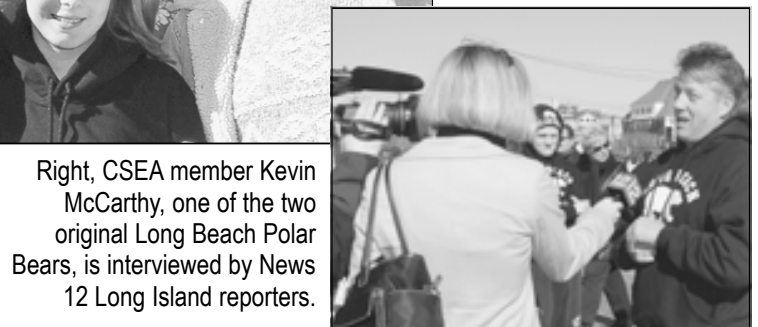
The founders of the big splashdown are Kevin McCarthy, a water purification plant operator and member of the Long Beach unit, and his friend Pete Meyers. They decided to go for an ocean swim on Super Bowl Sunday in 1998. Since then, the event has grown to hundreds of swimmers and thousands of well-wishers.

Several years ago, the event was turned into a fund-raiser for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, which helps make the dreams of terminally ill children come true. The community has responded generously with \$150,000 being contributed to the foundation in the past four years.

More information about the club is available from its website, longbeachpolarbears.org.



Left, Nikki Perrotti, 15, was planning to go in the water but her dad, Nick, a CSEA member who works at Long Beach's Beach Maintenance unit, was not.



Right, CSEA member Kevin McCarthy, one of the two original Long Beach Polar Bears, is interviewed by News 12 Long Island reporters.

Good vibes from the Air Force base

WESTHAMPTON — Gov. George Pataki has strongly hinted that the Francis S. Gabreski Air Force Base will not be closed.

While visiting the base recently, the governor spoke in a positive light about the base remaining open.

"The governor praised the 106th, and everyone working at the base, for the exceptional work they do, and the outstanding way in which they have always fulfilled their vital mission. The things he said lead me to believe the base has a positive future," said Long Island State Employees Local President George Kalamaras.

The local represents 50 equipment operators, security police, firefighters and custodians at the base, which is overseen by the state's Department of Military and Naval Affairs.

Inside Reporter

Winter work in Brookhaven

Most people think of road plowing, salting or sanding as the winter work that CSEA members perform outdoors. In addition to treating the roads, CSEA members in the Town of Brookhaven highway unit spend the winter months caring for plants and animals.

Rosa Goncalves, a horticultural worker and 12-year CSEA member, passes cold days in the colorful greenhouses at the town's Ecology Site, Park and Animal Preserve. "You're always doing different things here," she said. "I love flowers and making everything look nice. We trim the plants, put them in the dirt, water and feed them, and now we have all this!"

Goncalves and other CSEA members produce thousands of lush plants that are used to decorate senior citizen sites, town offices, and the ecology site itself. The site has become a popular place to take wedding pictures. From its current appearance, produced by CSEA members, there is no evidence today that the 88-acre site had been built on a reclaimed landfill.

"It's for the benefit of the people of Brookhaven," grounds superintendent Len Filasky said. "We provide information on ecology, composting and recycling. We also put together parade floats and the annual home and garden show, which has everything from waterfalls to landscaping; everything a homeowner could need."

A short walk down the wooded trails leads to the wildly popular animal preserve, where one can learn about buffalo, eagles, foxes, mountain lions and the black bears Honey and Pooh — except when they're hibernating.

"We clean up after the animals, and prepare their food," said Animal Caretaker Hector Cruz, a CSEA member. "So that every animal gets the right food, we have to give them a very carefully balanced diet."

Whether caring for the bearcat or cuddling with Rascal the coatiundi (a wild cousin of the raccoon), caretakers like CSEA member Kellei Burke seem to have the right touch.

"It's wonderful working here. I just love all the animals, it's so rewarding to take care of them day after day," she said.

When it snows, ecology site workers also plow streets in nearby residential neighborhoods.

"We also have to make sure that everything is safe for the public and that the animals are secure, both for their safety and for the public's," Cruz said. Thousands of schoolchildren and scouts pass through the center every year.

Street safety is also a concern of the highway department's maintenance division. Workers recently used 23 cubic yards of cement to install sidewalks so that children could walk safely to and from an elementary school in Lake Ronkonkoma.

"We transformed a dirt hill," said Lead Man John Dias. "We had to grade the sidewalk, excavate the dirt, frame it and install expansion joints. It was a technical project and we did it all ourselves."



Above, Rosa Goncalves, Len Filasky, Patty Lapp, Kellei Burke, Hector Cruz and CSEA Brookhaven Highway Unit President Richie Leute, surrounded by some of the horticultural handiwork of ecology site workers. Below, Animal Caretaker Kellei Burke gives Rascal the coatiundi some quality time at breakfast.



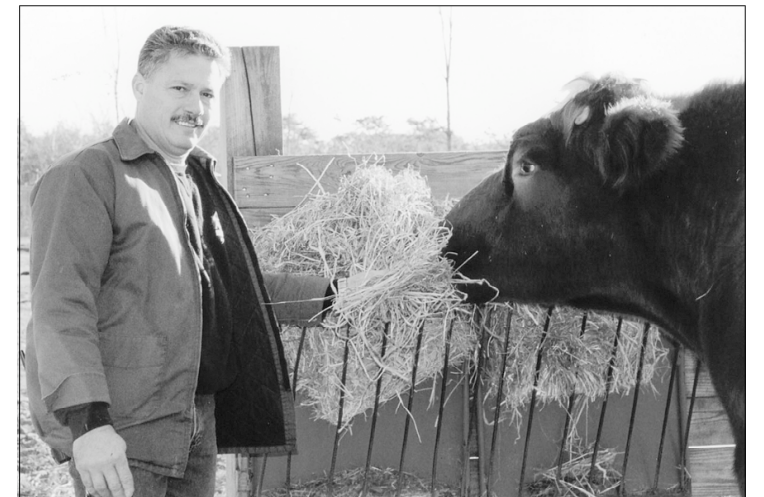
crew also does much larger concrete and drainage jobs.

When trees present a safety hazard, the highway tree crew swings into action.

"Usually we have to go up in a bucket truck, cut down the tree from the top, and then take it down to the ground," said Lead Man Mike Giglio. "Here we cut down what was left, when a car hit this tree, and now we're running it through the chipper to get rid of the mess."

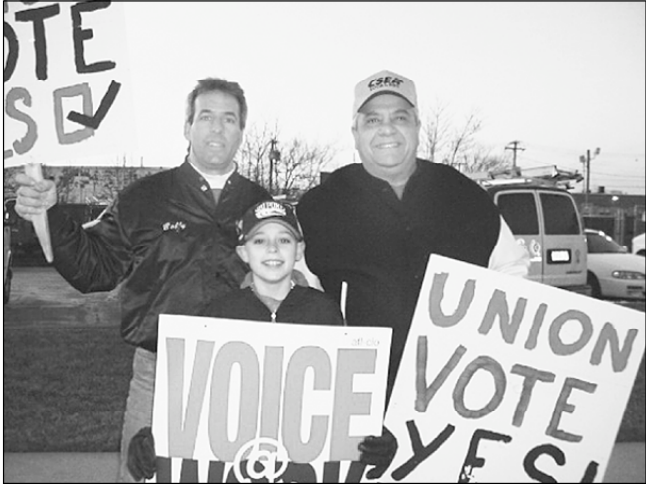
The sole tree removal crew for the town covers eight different districts, maintaining a busy schedule that also includes tree plantings and removals. "We go all over the place. We handle it all," Giglio said.

— Rachel Langert



Clockwise from top left, Maintenance division crew members complete a new sidewalk. Front to back, Mike Caputo handles the broom finishing, John Redding does trowel edging, Roger Curylo edges the sidewalk and Glen Kazel does the center cut; Lead Man Mike Giglio feeds the chipper with a downed tree while Foreman Gary Duchnowski gets rid of mess left behind by a car crash; Greg Jackson, Gary Duchnowski, Tom Webb and Mike Giglio get ready to roll; Animal Caretaker Hector Cruz feeds Norman at the Town of Brookhaven Ecology Site, Park and Animal Preserve; Kellei Burke feeds her friends, the hungry goats; horticulture worker Rosa Goncalves inserts a stick to shore up tall poinsettias.

Marching in solidarity with IBEW



Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte (right) is joined by Town of Oyster Bay Local 1st Vice President Bobby Rauff and son Robert, 10, on a recent picket line outside Cablevision's office in Lindenhurst. Despite frigid weather, demonstrators spent six hours on the line as part of a Brotherhood of Electrical Workers' effort to organize cable operator workers.

LIDDSO honors first retirees of 2005

MELVILLE — The Long Island state Developmental Disabilities Services Office Local has honored Shellie Risher, Jack Robinson and Eileen Miller as its first retirees this year.

Risher and Robinson each served the facility for 33 years, and Miller served for 24 years.

"It's not an easy task to be here that long," said Rutha Bush, local treasurer. "The union appreciates them and wishes them a happy retirement."

A local representative attends retirement celebrations for local members and presents retirees with a certificate recognizing their years of service. The certificates are signed by CSEA President Danny Donohue and Local President Willie Allen.

Risher and Miller worked in small residential units, and Robinson worked in the Bellmore IRA.

North Hempstead Housing Authority

Billy Moon, center, discusses working conditions for maintenance employees at North Hempstead Housing Authority projects with Labor Relations Specialist Heidi Horn. At left is Susan Ortega, president of the North Hempstead Housing Authority Unit of Nassau Municipals Local. Moon, who has worked for the authority for 23 years, described increasing workloads for employees and the deteriorating housing conditions experienced by the authority's tenants.

Union benefit programs serve members well

At a recent Suffolk Municipal Local meeting, representatives from the local's 36 units had a chance to meet with the Long Island Region's key vendors and get valuable information about some of the many programs and services available only to CSEA members.

"These are valuable membership benefits. They are negotiated for us by CSEA and available at a discount, but not available to non-members," said Dick McChesney from Worker's Compensation. "These benefits are just a few of the many advantages of being a CSEA member."

"If you're part time or full time, and you've got a medical problem — report it. You have two years to file a claim, and you can be covered for an 18-year period," McChesney said.

After addressing other CSEA legal services programs, such as personal injury, elder law, and personal legal matters, McChesney urged members to call CSEA at 1-800-342-4146 for more information.

Theresa Mansbart discussed the many ways that JLT Services can provide life insurance and income protection from disability. "Remember that your ability to earn a living is your most important asset. What would you do if you couldn't work any more? What would your family do?" she said.

Linda Sclafani, a representative from the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund, reminded local members that CSEA's excellent dental and vision benefits can only be acquired through negotiations.

"Remember that we can also upgrade and add to your current benefit levels. Just give us a call at the region office," she said.

With tax time approaching, Liberty Tax representatives said they could do members' taxes for a discount.

"Be aware that all these vendors are available to make personal presentations at your units. As officers, we don't need to be the experts, but we should know how to make the referral when necessary," said Suffolk Municipal Local President Irv Bitman. "Of course, all of these are *in addition* to the representation on the job that we are all entitled to as members."

Never forget that CSEA has a wealth of resources to help you help our members, and build a stronger, better future.



From left to right, Linda Sclafani of EBF, Michelle Dolinsky of Liberty Tax Service, Suffolk Municipal Local President Irv Bitman, Theresa Mansbart of JLT Services and Dick McChesney of Worker's Compensation Legal Plan discussed a few of the many benefits of CSEA membership.

The meeting closed with Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte thanking the officers for their commitment to CSEA. "We're a family of union brothers and sisters because we all believe in something fundamental: fairness and respect on the job," LaMorte said. "Never forget that CSEA has a wealth of resources to help you help our members, and build a stronger, better future."



Around the Region

Calendar of Upcoming Events: March 2005

- 7 - Human Rights Committee Meeting — 6 p.m.
- 8 - PEOPLE Committee Meeting — 5 p.m.
- 16 - Region Exec. Board Meeting — 5:30 p.m.
- 17 - Education and Training Committee Meeting — 5:30 p.m.
- 21 - Women's Committee Meeting — 5:30 p.m.
- 23 - Defensive Driving — 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
- 24 - Defensive Driving — 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.



- 29 - Political Action Committee Meeting — 5:30 p.m.
- 31 - Local 430 Shop Steward Meeting — 5:30 p.m. — Ronnie Oliver 495-1802

Workshop educates membership in Oyster Bay

OYSTER BAY — To advance the Oyster Bay Local's plan to prepare a formal policy against sexual harassment and work place discrimination, officers and shop stewards attended a recent workshop given by CSEA Senior Associate Counsel Bill Herbert.



Herbert

The workshop, held Feb. 1 at the union's office on Miller Place in Syosset, was useful and informative, 1st Vice President Bobby Rauff said.

"(Herbert) gave us ideas on how to go about the policy and focus on what we need, and how to let our members know what our policies are," Rauff said. "We have to make sure everyone knows

what sexual constitutes harassment and discrimination."

The need for a union policy became clear when management informed the union it might present a charge of sexual harassment against a local member.

"We knew we would be able to protect our member, but we wanted to have this workshop and have an up-to-date policy in place," Rauff said.

The workshop was organized with the help of CSEA General Counsel Nancy Hoffman.

The local represents more than 1,000 employees of the Town of Oyster Bay.



Above, listening to presentation at the workshop are, from left to right, local officers Alex Bard, Bette James and Barbara Huben. All officers and shop stewards attended the session.

DMV general membership meeting set

COMMACK — The Long Island State Employees Local will hold a general membership meeting of Department of Motor Vehicles employees at the CSEA Long Island Region office March 2 at 5:30 p.m. All DMV members are invited to attend.

Williams honored with King award at Long Island Developmental Center tribute

CSEA members in the Long Island Developmental Center local participated in the facility's recent tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

During the ceremony, Local President Willie Allen sang a spirited rendition of "Go Down, Moses," and several area high school choirs performed.

The 24th annual tribute to King was organized by the Affirmative Action Human Relations Committee, which includes the following CSEA members: Allen, Executive Vice President Shirley Baker, Treasurer Rutha Bush, 1st Vice President Richard Giovannetti, 2nd Vice President Willie Gwynn, 3rd Vice President Veronica Oliver, Gloria Cannon, Gail Johnson, Mary Kittles, Kendra Knight, Lizette Marrero, Betty Mack, Sherry Quails, Lenny Sermon and Michaelle Jackson.

Facility employees presented CSEA member Joseph Williams with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Award from his co-workers.

Williams has been a mechanic for the Long Island Developmental Disabilities Services Office (LIDDSO) since 1992. The committee cited the reasons for Williams' award: his years of service to the community, the disadvantaged, and his co-workers.

As a local shop steward, Williams defends his co-workers' rights on the job. He also helped win continuous training for staff mechanics. He is also a defensive driving instructor and frequently volunteers to transport the facility's senior citizens to outside functions.

"Joe Williams exemplifies the best in our CSEA state employees; he serves with pride," Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte said. "He gives his time, talents and energy to help make New York a better place for us all."

"Joe is extremely knowledgeable about anything to do with our vehicles," Allen said. "He goes to the houses and trains staff how to work with and repair things like the wheelchair vans. He's got a great personality and a fine attitude."

Williams is also a Mason, participating in their food programs for the underprivileged. He plays bass with his church choir, coaches Little League, and teaches local children to fish.



Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte, left, and Long Island Developmental Center Local President Willie Allen, far right, congratulate Joseph Williams upon receiving the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Award. Next to Williams is his wife, Angelene.

Town of Southampton prepares for negotiations

SOUTHAMPTON — The Town of Southampton Unit is preparing to enter negotiations for a new contract.

The most recent agreement of the 300-member unit, part of the Suffolk Municipal Local, expired on Dec. 31, 2004. That contract was in effect for only several months.

"We agreed to it around June 2004, so we only had it for six months," said Pete Collins, one of the negotiators.

The bargaining committee sent out a questionnaire and has held several meetings with members on their suggestions for items the union should include in the talks.

"We are very close to coming to a

consensus on what we will be laying on the table and what we hope to accomplish," said Collins. "We expect to have a general membership meeting with the members in the very near future to see if there's anything we've left out."

Unit members include white and blue collar and highway workers, fire marshals, code enforcement officers, public safety dispatchers, bay constables and animal control personnel.

Floral Park Unit declares impasse

FLORAL PARK — The Nassau Municipal Local's Village of Floral Park Unit has declared an impasse in its contract negotiations.

The Public Employment Relations Board is expected to shortly appoint a mediator, who will meet with CSEA and village officials.

"We hope the mediator will be able to take a fair and unbiased look at the situation and help us move toward an equitable agreement everyone can live with," said CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Stanley Frere, who works with the Floral Park Unit.

Floral Park Unit President Steven Cuomo said union members need higher salaries and improved working conditions in a new pact.

"Our laborers' pay scale starts at \$21,000 per year," Cuomo said. "How can anyone live on that anywhere in Nassau County? Our members are the front-line people who provide essential services to taxpayers and village residents. We deserve a fair contract that recognizes that fact and treats us with respect."

Cuomo said unit members are working with aging equipment.

"My members have to work with 15-year-old

recycling trucks and garbage trucks that are falling apart," Cuomo said.

The village administrator recently gave herself a 9 percent raise, and managers and elected officials got raises last year. "The administration's priorities are skewed," Cuomo said.

Negotiations began in April 2004, and the previous five-year agreement expired May 31, 2004.

Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte put the union solidly behind the Floral Park unit in its bargaining. "We are geared up and ready for a fight," he said.

As part of its campaign for a decent contract, CSEA is preparing a campaign to educate the community about its position. "A fair contract will benefit taxpayers, too, so we're hopeful we can gain their support in our struggle," Cuomo said.

CSEA endorses Hempstead village candidates

Region president urges members to support union-endorsed candidates.

HEMPSTEAD — The Long Island Region Political Action Committee has endorsed Mayor James A. Garner and his slate for election in the hotly contested election in the Village of Hempstead on March 15.



"During Jim Garner's four years as village trustee and his 18 years as mayor, he has always maintained an open-door policy with labor," said John Shepherd, committee chairman and Nassau Municipal Employees Local President. The local represents more than 300 village employees.

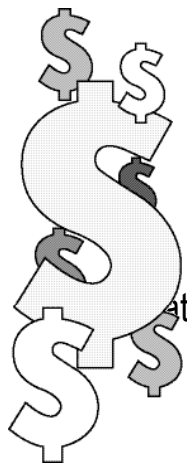
"While we don't always agree with the mayor, he maintains an open mind, which has resulted in a relationship in which the village, CSEA and the employees work together to make the village a better place for everyone."

CSEA is also backing in the March vote Don Ryan and the Rev. Philip B. McDowell for village trustees, and Lance D. Clarke for village justice.

Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte urged the 1,800 CSEA members who live in the village to support the union-endorsed candidates.

"Together we can turn the tide toward positive changes that will benefit all of us," said LaMorte. "However, this can happen only when eligible voters go to the polls and pull that lever for labor-friendly candidates."

Before making its endorsement, the Village of Hempstead Unit polled members on their preference for mayor. More than 80 percent supported the endorsement of Garner.

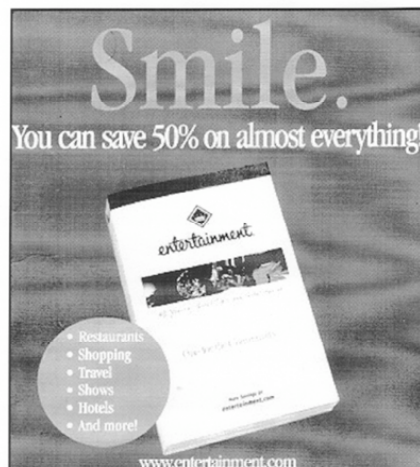


This is the last chance
for Long Island Region members to buy
copies of this year's Entertainment Book
through CSEA.

The books provide big savings
at dozens of restaurants, shops and entertainment venues in
Nassau and
Suffolk counties.

The cost is \$20 for those who pick the books
up at the
Long Island Region Office
at 3 Garet Place in Commack.

If ordered by mail,
there is an additional
\$5 shipping fee.



Members who want more information may call Lee Reynolds,
co-chairwoman of the Social Committee, at (516) 752-6503.



Members of the CSEA Village of Hempstead unit prepare a mailing to inform the membership about the union's endorsement.