

# THE Work Force

May 2011

Vol. 14 No. 5



## We Are One!

*Unions fight  
back against  
attacks on  
rights, public  
sector services*

*See pages 3, 10, 11*

*Photo by CSEA Communications Specialist David Galarza*





*Photo by Jessica Ladlee*

**More than 150 supporters of the Ulster County-run Golden Hill Health Care Center demonstrated in front of the Ulster County Office Building March 29 before a meeting of the Ulster County Legislature's Health and Human Services Committee. At that meeting, legislators continued the ongoing debate over the future of the county home. Support for building a new county home is growing among legislators on both sides of the aisle. One week later, a group of eight local Tea Party members attempted their own rally calling for the sale of Golden Hill.**

# Yonkers schools facing massive budget cuts

YONKERS — Drastic cuts are again on tap for the Yonkers School District, a move CSEA leaders say will dramatically affect student safety while putting hundreds of hardworking Yonkers residents on the unemployment rolls.

At press time, Yonkers Superintendent of Schools Bernard Pierorazio said as many as 368 CSEA members will lose their jobs if the Yonkers City Council votes to approve the proposed budget for the 2011-2012 school year. As one of the state's Big Five school districts, council members instead of the general public vote the Yonkers school budget on.

"It is disgraceful that the leaders of the school district and city again want to balance the school budget on the backs of the lowest paid workers," said Yonkers School District Unit President Bobbie

DiBattista.

Pierorazio said the district is facing an \$87 million budget gap. The proposed school budget calls for the elimination of a district pre-kindergarten program, a reduction from full-day to half-day kindergarten, cuts in sports and reductions in busing. District bus monitors and teacher aides make up the bulk of the CSEA members whose jobs are proposed for elimination.

"Mr. Pierorazio and Mayor Phil Amicone have let down the thousands of students attending school in the Yonkers School District," said Southern Region President Billy Riccaldo. "Cutting the bus monitors who keep our kids safe and the teacher aides who assist in instruction will negatively impact our students' educational experience." — Jessica Ladlee

# Retirees win in health insurance ruling

CANTON — Since 1985, St. Lawrence County had reimbursed their retirees the cost of their Medicare Part B premiums. In 2009, trying to contain costs, the county legislature tried to stop paying those reimbursements for future retirees, and to freeze the payment amount for current retirees.

The reimbursement, which amounted to about \$1,200 per retiree, was a mandatory subject of negotiations and could not be unilaterally changed. CSEA filed an Improper Practice charge with the state

Public Employment Relations Board (PERB), over the change.

Recently, a PERB administrative law judge ruled in favor of the union, stating that the county legislature could not unilaterally freeze the reimbursement rate for previous retirees or block retirees from receiving the benefit if they retired after Dec. 31, 2010. It was a big win for the union, showing the county has to negotiate over changes to benefits related to health insurance."

— Mark M. Kotzin

# CSEA files lawsuit over Nassau County wage freeze

MINEOLA — CSEA has filed a lawsuit challenging the Nassau County Interim Financing Authority's actions in freezing wages following the declaration of a fiscal emergency.

Repeated good-faith efforts by CSEA to fairly negotiate work force cost-savings with the Nassau County executive may now be undermined. Rank and file Nassau County employees may face the brunt of financial control measures, despite labor and management efforts to find better ways to address the county's finances while preserving essential services.

"CSEA members do their jobs every day for the people of Nassau County and they deserve some fairness and respect," said

CSEA President Danny Donohue. "It's even more important considering that CSEA members have already provided Nassau County with considerable savings through negotiations — a process that is always better than one-sided imposition of terms."

"CSEA recently negotiated an agreement with the county that would have provided significant savings through a revised salary schedule for new hires," said CSEA Nassau County Local 830 President Jerry Laricchiuta. "CSEA members have also done our part in recent years to help address the county's fiscal challenges by agreeing to both salary deferrals and payroll lags."

From the Office of President Danny Donohue



## CSEA President Danny Donohue to meet Capital Region members on June 14 in Plattsburgh



CSEA President Danny Donohue will visit the CSEA Capital Region on June 14 to meet with members.

The meetings will be held at the Plattsburgh Satellite office, 6 Booth Drive, Plattsburgh.

Donohue will meet with union members from 1 to 7 p.m. Please call the satellite office at (518) 563-0761 for an appointment and directions.

# State budget will cripple services, ruin working families

ALBANY — The 2011-2012 state budget approved by the state legislature contains billions in cuts to vital human services, education programs, health care and state operations.

The disastrous effects the budget will have on CSEA members' ability to provide services to the public have yet to be seen, but the ability to provide public services in New York will be crippled at every level.

Meanwhile, Gov. Andrew Cuomo isn't done swinging his axe, or as he puts it, "sharing sacrifice."

Cuomo recently listed his legislative priorities for the remainder of the legislative session. They include passage of a property tax cap, local mandate relief, rent regulation and ethics reform. The governor said his staff is working on all of these issues and he hopes to have agreements on them by the end of the session.

Cuomo's legislative priorities will deepen the wounds inflicted on the middle class and workers by his budget.

Apparently the best way to avoid any budget pain in New York is to be a millionaire, slated for a Cuomo tax cut for the wealthiest New Yorkers.

## Welcome to Wisconsin

State Sen. Jack Martins, R-Mineola, introduced a package of legislation that targets the rights, benefits, and salaries of public employees.

After CSEA met with the senator and explained our concerns, he agreed to withdraw the legislation from consideration.

The bills had called for a 5 percent public employee tax to offset benefits, a wage freeze for all public sector workers, and additional reporting requirements for collective bargaining agreements.



From left, CSEA SUNY Upstate Medical University Local officers Michele Martin, Kathy Yeldon and Doreen Jacobs attend a community rally in Syracuse, attended by more than 400 union members and their supporters, to show their solidarity for public workers.

## How Cuomo's budget affects you, your job

- Total budget is \$132.5 billion, down 2.7 percent from last year
- Cuts \$10 billion
- Closes the deficit without borrowing or increasing taxes; gives a tax cut to the wealthiest 3 percent of New Yorkers.

### Local Government

- Reduces Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) by 2 percent for cities, towns and villages outside New York City
- Cuomo created the Mandate Relief Redesign Team to review local government mandates imposed by state government on school districts, local governments and other local taxing districts.

### Education

- Originally cut K-12 funding by \$1.5 billion; legislature restored \$200 million.
- Creates a competitive grant program for school districts that show improvements in student performance as well as for school districts that reduce costs and improve efficiency
- Allows school districts to withdraw excess funds in employee benefits accrued liability reserve funds
- Cuts library aid by 10 percent

### State Work Force

- Cuts spending for state operations by 10 percent
- Cuomo wants \$450 million in state employee savings or else he will layoff 9,800 state employees

### State Operations

- Cuomo has created the Spending and Government Efficiency (SAGE) Commission to make recommendations to reduce the number of state agencies, authorities and commissions by 20 percent over the long term.
- Merge Department of Correctional Services and the Division of Parole into a new department, Department of Corrections and Community Supervision
- Cuomo will have sole discretion to eliminate 3,700 prison beds; for this year only, DOCS must give 60 days notice prior to closing a facility to the legislature and must post notice on a public website.
- Merges Banking Department, Department of Insurance and State Consumer Protection Board into the new Department of Financial Services

### State University of New York

- Cuts SUNY by \$100 million
- Reduces SUNY community college funding by \$226 per student; legislature restored more than \$13 million in aid.
- Cuomo slashed all aid to SUNY Upstate, Downstate and Stony Brook teaching hospitals; legislature restored \$60 million.

### Health care

- The budget will cut Medicaid by \$2.3 billion.

Read a complete summary at: [http://www.csealocal1000.org/pac\\_index.php](http://www.csealocal1000.org/pac_index.php)



# THE WORK FORCE

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# Work Force

IN TOUCH WITH THE

CSEA President Danny Donohue

## Fleecing you is naked politics

Is it just me, or are state and national politics getting more naked every day?

Think about this:

- Congressional Republicans to try to hold our government operations hostage to their social agenda and demands for more tax cuts for the wealthiest.

- Many of the wealthiest and most profitable corporations, including General Electric, Exxon/Mobil, Bank of America and Goldman Sachs, pay no federal taxes.

- New York's Democrat governor and state lawmakers are congratulating themselves for an on-time budget that will undermine schools, local governments, the private sector and put more people out of work — while giving a tax cut to the wealthiest 3 percent of New Yorkers.

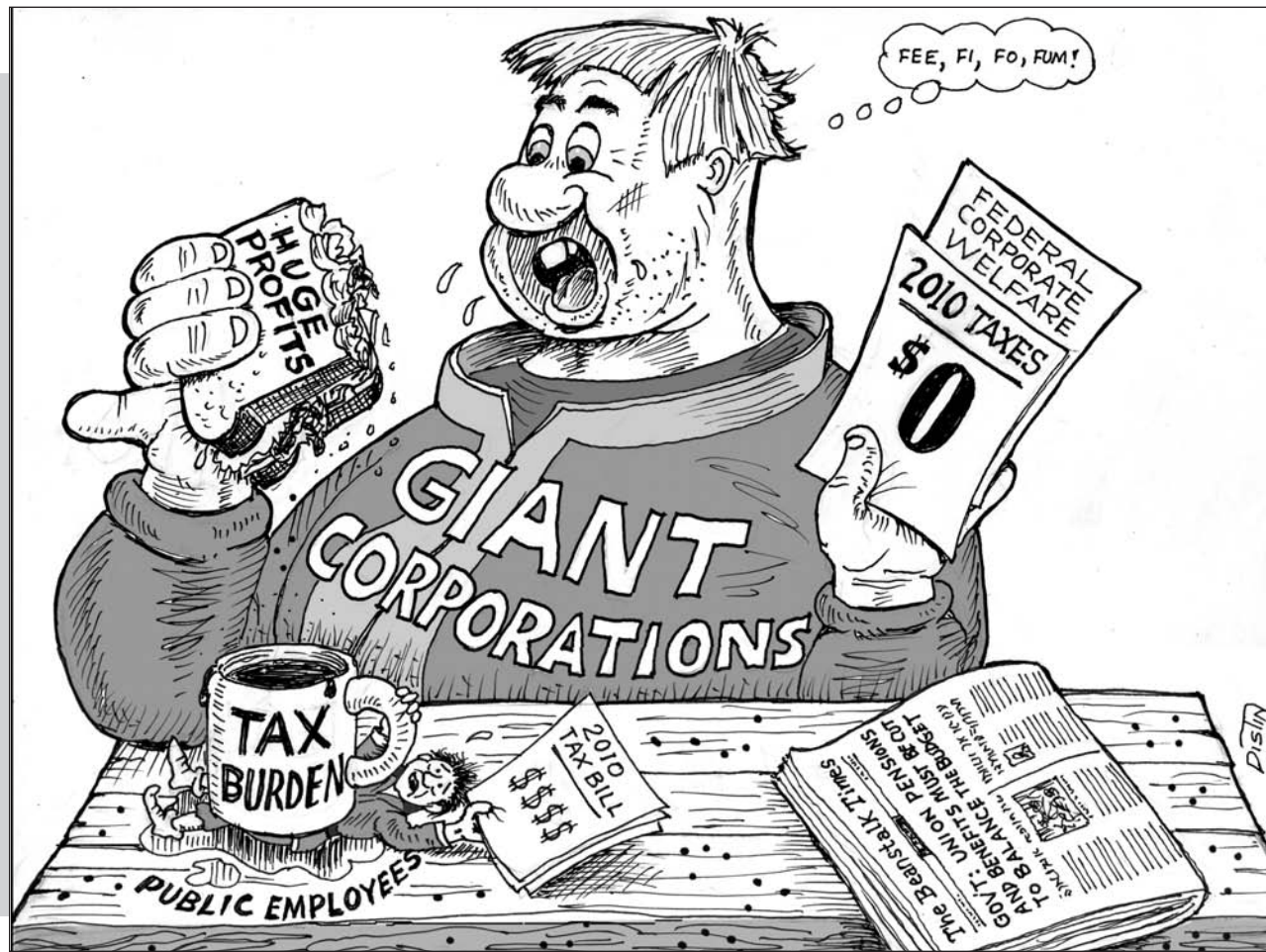
Income inequality has been on the rise for the past 30 years, as the rich get richer and the poor get poorer and the middle class disappears. Coincidentally, this inequality trend tracks with a decline in the number of American workers in a union over the same period of time. Think there's a connection?

Meanwhile, there is not a shred of evidence that "trickle-down economics" is good for our economy or our democracy, yet that's what's being shoved down our throats.

While the facts don't seem to matter to those who want to scapegoat workers for the economic meltdown that was really fueled by greed and irresponsibility, we seem to have crossed a line. There's a shamelessness in politics today that says let the public be damned as long as we serve our selfish, moneyed interests.

While many people seem to get it, the erosion of the middle class will continue until more people are willing to stand with CSEA and other unions and say enough!





## CSEA remembers the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire

CSEA participated in memorial events in New York City and Albany on March 25 to mark the centennial of Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York's Greenwich Village that claimed the lives of 146 people, mostly young, immigrant women.

The March 25, 1911, fire opened the eyes of the nation to the need for better labor laws and safer working conditions.

Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio was among the CSEA officers and activists who participated in the New York City memorial. In Albany, Capital Region President Kathy Garrison, Capital Region activist Shana Davis and other representatives of the Capital District Area Labor Federation read the names of those who lost their lives.



Left, attendees at the Albany event memorialize those who perished in the Triangle Fire.

Right, Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio places a flower outside the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory building in Manhattan.



The Triangle Fire memorial display at the Albany event.





# Conference spurs members to fight

ALBANY — CSEA women – and men – have the power to win the battle against unprecedented attacks on workers by politicians, corporate interests and the media.

That was the central message at CSEA's recent Women's Conference, at which nearly 500 activists from across the state learned that one of the most important ways to fight back is for workers to effectively communicate the value of the services they provide to their communities, specifically to focus on what services workers provide and why it is important to the public.



**Brooklyn Developmental Center Local activist Juliette Spruill looks over the Cafe CSEA "menu."**



**Green Haven Correctional Facility Local President Jim Eve shares his opinions with other conference attendees during the Cafe CSEA: Straight Talk session.**



**Sing-Sing Correctional Facility Local President Bonnie Wilber discusses the challenges facing CSEA members.**

## Fighting back

That lesson will be crucial as CSEA members fight back against threats to services and their union rights.

"When did you think a school crossing guard or a secretary would become the enemy?" CSEA President Danny Donohue said. "If we are breaking the bank, then the bank was never full to begin with. We know this fight isn't going to be easy, but we never intend to give up the principles we fought for."

National AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Arlene Holt Baker, in



**CSEA President Danny Donohue, front row, center, with Women's Committee members and first-time conference attendees.**

her keynote address to conference attendees, said workers are winning the message war against anti-worker interests.

"You must be the face of what keeps our community together," Baker said. "Nobody can tell your story better than you. You have the power of your story – use it!"

The Cafe CSEA: Straight Talk session focused on teaching members to tell their stories.

## Workers stand as one

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker tried to divide working men and women in his move to gut collective bargaining rights, Baker said. While Walker retained union rights in many professions dominated by men, such as police and firefighters, he targeted union rights in professions dominated by women, including education and social services.

But Walker's attacks brought workers closer



**National AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Arlene Holt Baker addresses the conference.**

together. "We are one," Baker said. "We will not be forgotten."

Baker said working people are the only thing blocking anti-labor leaders from pursuing agendas that benefit the rich and undermine workers.

"This isn't about balancing state budgets," she said. "This is about busting state unions! This agenda is wrong for workers, wrong for women and wrong for everyone!"



**Standing Women's Committee Chair Jacqueline Stanford welcomes members to the conference.**

Baker said CSEA has always been a leader on issues concerning women's rights, referencing the union's victory in the fight for pay equity in Nassau County in the early 1990s. She urged CSEA women to strengthen their skills and seek leadership positions.

"CSEA sisters, you have the power to fight for social justice and workers' rights," Baker said. "You must be strong enough to stand as one."

— Janice Gavin





Read more about Moultrie and Johnson at CSEA's website at [www.csealocal100.org](http://www.csealocal100.org).



Orange County Local activist Vanessa Bisone talks about involving members in the union.



CSEA Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan and Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio lead a standing ovation for AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Arlene Holt Baker after Baker's address.



Several young Capital Region Girls, Inc. members perform poetry and other readings honoring labor history.

# Moultrie, Johnson continue Carr's legacy

When it comes to improving women's and working families' lives on and off the job, Delphine Moultrie and Betty Jo Johnson are leaders.

And for their efforts, CSEA President Danny Donohue presented the union's Irene Carr Leadership Award to Moultrie and Johnson at the recent Women's Conference. Carr, a former statewide secretary, led CSEA in advancing work and family issues.

## Moultrie's call to lead

Moultrie led the union's push for the State Insurance Fund, where she is a CSEA activist, to end an overly restrictive mobile phone policy, even filing an Improper Practice charge.

"I enjoy (activism)," said Moultrie. "It's a pleasure learning, day by day, what I can do for society while also helping myself and my union."

"It was an honor to see Delphine receive the Irene Carr Leadership Award," said Metropolitan Region and Statewide Women's Committee Chair Jacqueline Stanford. "She is ambitious, determined and a hard worker and there is nothing that she can't do once



Delphine Moultrie accepts the Irene Carr Leadership Award from President Danny Donohue.

she puts her mind to it."

## Johnson stands strong

For Johnson, a social welfare examiner in the Madison County Department of Social Services' Child Support Unit, the award culminated years of fighting for working women.

During the unit's contract negotiations, Johnson fought to prove that workers' wages were artificially low because of the predominantly female work force. The workers stood firm under Johnson's leadership and it was partially rectified.



President Danny Donohue congratulates Betty Jo Johnson on the Irene Carr Leadership Award.

"I know what Irene Carr stood for," Johnson said. "She stood for the promotion of women throughout the ranks of CSEA and she stood for standing up for our rights in the workplace as women and workers."

"Betty Jo is one of the strongest advocates on behalf of working women, and she's tireless in her efforts mentoring new activists to make our union stronger," Central Region President Colleen Wheaton said,

— David Galarza and Mark M. Kotzin



Left, the CSEA Women's Committee with AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Arlene Holt Baker and Irene Carr Leadership Award recipients Delphine Moultrie and Betty Jo Johnson. From left are committee staff adviser Sharon Lovelady-Hall, Janice Beaulieu, Rose Conti, Carlotta Williams, Committee Chair Jacqueline Stanford, Baker, Karen Pecora, Moultrie, Kim Wallace-Russo, Johnson, Catherine Custance, Cathy Baretta, CSEA Executive Vice President and committee officer liaison Mary Sullivan and Sylvia Thomas.



Hudson Valley DDSO Local members Delcina Fisher, Dawn Woody, Tonya Miller and Michelle Dewitt learn self defense techniques.



Women's Committee member Catherine Custance, right, gives information to Erie County Local and Next Wave activists Alison Schoonover, Rachel Casey and Michele Weaver.



# BOCES nursing instructors leave UPSEU to join CSEA

Twenty nursing instructors employed with Eastern Suffolk BOCES (adult/continuing education) recently decertified their union with UPSEU (United Public Service Employees Union) Local 424 to join CSEA.

The group's newly elected president, Jim Van Tassel, said having a say and a more democratic union is the No. 1 reason for the switch.

"At UPSEU, there was no real democratic representation for us and we were told this is what you're getting and told what they could do for us," said Van Tassel.

"We brought issues and concerns to them that were never considered or addressed. I was even told not to speak to the members during negotiations. We had no voting rights at all. I've never had the chance to vote for any officers. Our needs were not being met."

The nursing instructors investigated their options thoroughly and looked into three or four different unions before deciding on CSEA.

"CSEA allows our membership to really be heard. Our democratic process involves

everyone in the union, from the unit level, the locals, the region and statewide. We function together, and the voice of every worker is heard. This was very

attractive to them," said Maria Navarro, Suffolk Educational Local president.

"We have a responsibility as community to take care of those around us," Navarro said. "Jim Van Tassel said to me that all the members of the bargaining unit were on board to leave UPSEU and join CSEA. I spoke to the region and the Organizing Department to get it moving."

"Maria and the organizers were very helpful. Right

away, they opened up their offices. They made sure that we met with all of the leaders and staff. We never, in the eight years we were there, never met the leadership of UPSEU, only our rep," said Van Tassel.

Van Tassel expressed hope to build a better relationship with the administration through CSEA. He said he feels very good about this decision because long after he's gone, he can rest assured that those who come to East Suffolk BOCES will benefit

*"We brought issues and concerns to them (UPSEU Local 424) that were never considered or addressed. I was even told not to speak to the members during negotiations. We had no voting rights at all. I've never had the chance to vote for any officers. Our needs were not being met."*



**From left, new BOCES Nursing Instructors Unit officers being sworn in by CSEA Suffolk County Education Employees Local President Maria Navarro: President Jim Van Tassel, Vice President Chris Villaneuva, Treasurer Christine McNally, and Secretary Kathleen Parente. The nursing instructors left their former union to get better representation with CSEA.**

from the move.

"I know what it feels like to want to be heard and I know what it means to really be listened to," said Navarro. "I once had a worker in another organizing campaign where I was a volunteer member organizer tell me, 'You know what? You're just one of us.' That touched me and made an impact. I thought, sure, there is organizational

structure in CSEA but ultimately, I'm a member."

"I may be an elected officer now, but I came from the same place — a worker just trying to do better for co-workers and have a say in my workplace. She wasn't expecting us to be that way. That's the CSEA difference," Navarro said

— Jill Asencio

## YOU NEED YOUR CSEA ID NUMBER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE YEAR 2012 ELECTIONS (Statewide, Region, Board of Directors and AFSCME Delegates)

Your 10-digit CSEA ID Number was assigned to you in 2010 and is printed on your CSEA/AFSCME membership card. It is the only number you need when conducting CSEA business. This includes Union election-related business – running as a candidate, signing candidates' nominating petitions, voting, etc.

If you are unsure of your ID Number or have lost your card, you may contact CSEA's Membership Department to request your CSEA ID Number or to request a replacement card by calling toll free at 1-800-342-4146 and asking for the Membership Department.





**“Far too frequently, public employees are painted with a negative brush and blamed for all that is wrong throughout the state. Nothing could be further from the truth.”**

**Observe Workers Memorial Day on April 28. For an event in your region, visit [www.csealocal1000.org/workers\\_memorial\\_day.php](http://www.csealocal1000.org/workers_memorial_day.php).**

# Town highway workers save man

GREECE — An elderly man might not be alive today if not for two Town of Greece highway workers.

On a blustery March weekend, as he walked between highway buildings, Ron Bandemer heard cries for help. He looked toward the highway buildings, but then realized they were coming from the opposite direction.

They were coming from an elderly man who somehow found himself in the middle of a fenced-in construction site next to the highway department.

“He was standing up to his armpits in mud and water and clinging to a post,” Bandemer said. “He was sinking.”

Bandemer called co-worker Dan O’Connell,

who came over and held onto the man until emergency personnel arrived on the scene. The two CSEA members then helped firefighters and other emergency responders pull the man from the pit.

“Hypothermia was setting in,” O’Connell said. “The man said he had been there for a half hour and he was so cold.”

“Far too frequently, public employees are painted with a negative brush

and blamed for all that is wrong throughout the state,” said CSEA Western Region President Flo Tripi. “Nothing could be further from the truth. CSEA members never hesitate to go the extra mile. In this

**“CSEA members never hesitate to go the extra mile.”**



**Dan O’Connell, left, and Ron Bandemer stand near the fence surrounding the construction site where an elderly man sank into and became stuck in mud.**

case, a man is alive today because of their efforts.”

No one knows for sure how the man, who is in his 80s, got his car into the construction site. After the car got stuck in the mud, the man walked about 100 feet before sinking into the mud pit.

“He said he was looking for the library (which is

on the other side of the highway department),” O’Connell said. “I’m just glad Ron heard him.”

The pit in the construction site has been filled in and the hole cut in the fence to save the man has been repaired.

— Lynn Miller

## Poughkeepsie school nurse hailed as hero

POUGHKEEPSIE — CSEA member Nancy Liber is proof that the job of a school nurse goes far beyond Band-Aids and ice packs.

Liber, a nurse at Poughkeepsie City School District’s Krieger Elementary School, was hailed as a hero recently after saving the life of a student’s grandfather during a school concert. Liber successfully revived the grandfather using CPR after the man collapsed because of a cardiac episode.

“I went running into the cafeteria after a parent came into my office to tell me there was a man who had stopped breathing,” said Liber, who is in her 10th year with the district after 20 years working in labor and delivery. “I was performing CPR for what seemed like 10 years when he started coughing and gagging and



**Poughkeepsie City School District Unit member Nancy Liber, a school nurse, on the job.**

coming around.”

That the man was quickly resuscitated before an ambulance arrived is amazing, Liber said. She

said that even more miraculous is that the man was completely aware of his surroundings.

Liber received a certificate of commendation from the district superintendent of schools, as well as thanks from the man’s family.

Southern Region President Billy Riccaldo said the incident is a good reminder of the importance of having a trained nurse in every school building.

“Our school nurses play an integral role in creating a safe place for our students,” Riccaldo said. “In this case, Mrs. Liber’s training means that a young kindergarten student will hopefully have her grandfather at many more school concerts to come.”

— Jessica Ladlee



## Union members fighting back

# We Are One

CSEA members are well aware of how difficult and tenuous New York's financial situation is, but much of what is affecting the state is due to national policies that over the last 30 years have undermined the middle class.

Now, the situation is growing worse. Not only are corporations and the wealthy getting away with tax breaks and not paying their fair share, they are funneling huge sums of money into organizations like the Tea Party that are attacking unions, pensions and the middle class.

Who loses? You do, and so do your communities. CSEA members across the state have been fighting back,

taking part in rallies to show support for public employees in Wisconsin and elsewhere.

A day of action was held across the country on April 4, culminating in hundreds of We Are One rallies, emphasizing workers' rights

and the growing gulf between the super rich and everyone else.

Here are some images from those rallies and others, and some of the explanations of attacks on working families across the country and here in New York.

**WE ARE ONE** Many of the biggest, most profitable companies such as Exxon-Mobil, General Electric and Bank of America paid no federal taxes last year.



Above, CSEA Rockland Psychiatric Center Local activist Sheila Dunlop takes part in a Newburgh We Are One rally. At left, Long Island Region CSEA members rally in Hauppauge against Gov. Andrew Cuomo's budget. (See story, Page 3)



CSEA and other union members take part in a Western New York Area Labor Federation We Are One rally in Buffalo.

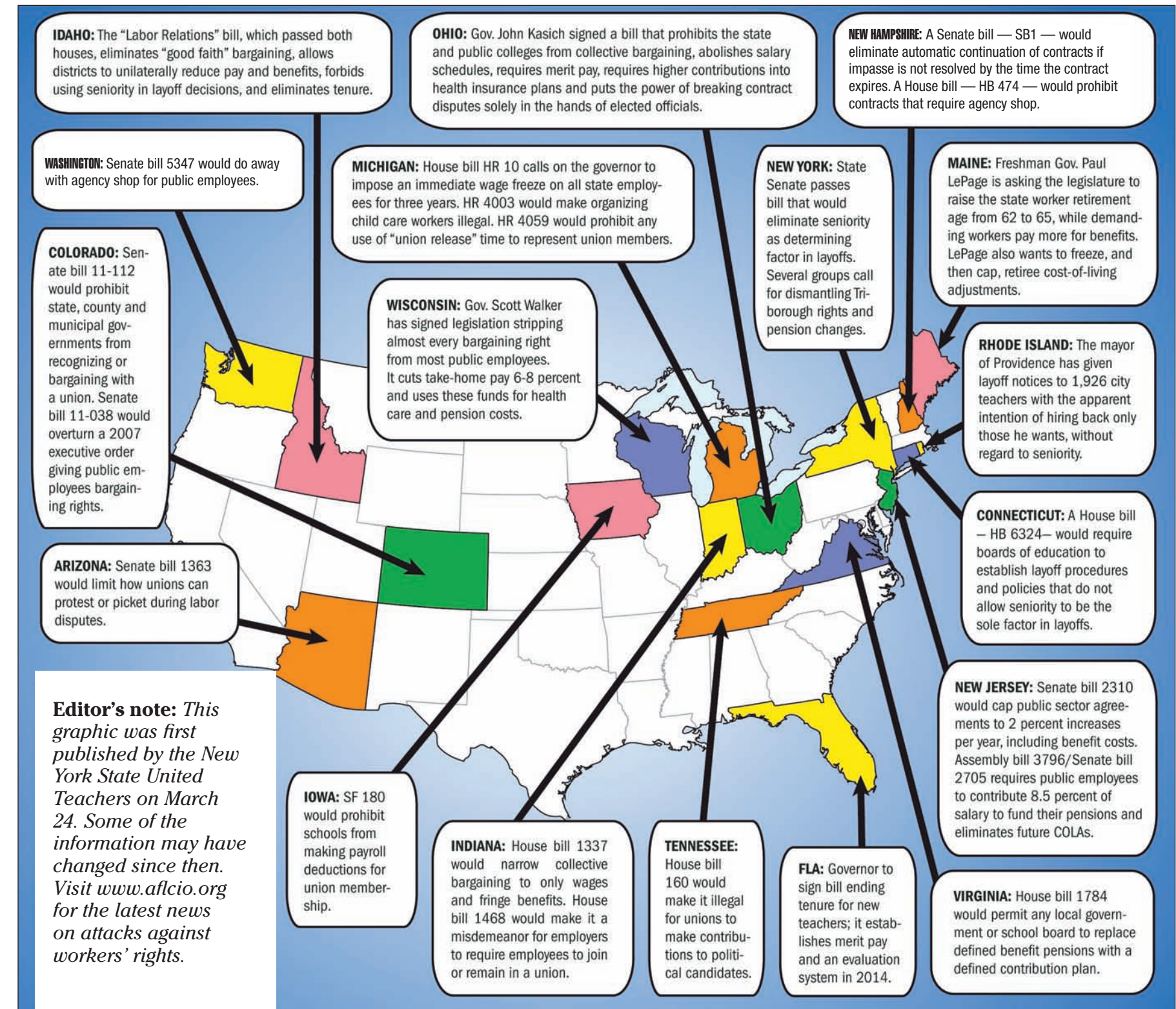
**WE ARE ONE** The government collected less in taxes in 2010 than it has in over three generations and tax rates are at historic lows.

**WE ARE ONE** The Bush tax cuts added \$1.7 trillion to the nation's debt between 2001-2008, which is more than it would cost to send 24 million kids to four-year, public universities.

**WE ARE ONE** A middle-class family with two young children receives on average \$1,200 through the federal child care tax credit, yet the cost of their child care averages \$18,000.

**WE ARE ONE** Upper income households save an average of \$5,500 thanks to the mortgage interest tax deduction.

## Across the country, workers' rights under attack



**Editor's note:** This graphic was first published by the New York State United Teachers on March 24. Some of the information may have changed since then. Visit [www.aflcio.org](http://www.aflcio.org) for the latest news on attacks against workers' rights.





# Teaching associates give district officials an 'F' for worker fairness

**“There are more administrators now than ever before. They should cut from the top.”**

NIAGARA FALLS — Teaching associates in the Niagara Falls School District took to the street recently to protest job cuts and stalled contract talks with management.

At issue is the loss of 33 jobs, as well as health insurance proposals by CSEA that would level the playing field and create fair and equitable health insurance costs for unit members.

“They are using fuzzy math like they use in Albany,” CSEA Teachers Associate United Unit President Michele Brocius said of the school board.

District officials, Brocius said, are justifying the massive cuts to the workers by stressing that it is just a 6 percent cut



**Alida Barreto, a special education associate, leads co-workers during a demonstration against budget cuts and stalled contract talks at the Niagara Falls Schools.**

to the unit. Meanwhile, cutting one administrator is an 11 percent cut to the administration.

“There are more administrators now than

ever before,” she said “They should cut from the top.”

In addition to the job cuts in next year’s budget, the district is targeting unit

members in contract talks. The associates have been without a contract since June. CSEA’s proposals have largely been ignored by the district.

Some people in the unit – among the lowest paid employees in the district – already pay half toward health care coverage. They are literally working to pay for insurance. Meanwhile, those earning larger wages – such as administrators – pay just a very small percentage of health care costs.

The unit represents 260 teaching associates. The associates aid teachers and assist students in the classroom, in special education settings, the library and the cafeteria.

— Lynn Miller

**Did you know that the Town of Hempstead includes 22 villages and 37 hamlets? It is one of only three townships in Nassau County and is the most populated town in the United States.**

## Lighting crew workers help keep town safe

HEMPSTEAD — Thanks to a dedicated town street lighting crew, Hempstead is brighter and safer at night.

CSEA activist Gary Aue, a field supervisor for the town, oversees a crew of 12 workers who are responsible for maintaining nearly 50,000 lights — enough to stretch from Long Island to Colorado if they were placed in a straight line.

“We average 21 repair calls per day and more than 12,000 in a year,” said Aue. “Over 3,000 work orders have been completed in just the first three months of 2011. Hempstead is the most populous township in the United States, but residents

are fortunate because my crew has a collective work ethic that is first rate and we are up to the task.”

CSEA members on the town’s lighting crew are not only responsible for keeping all of the town’s streetlights and public parking lot lights in top form, but maintain clocks, decorative lights, timing sensors, tree trims, pole swaps and fixture changes. Weekend emergencies are handled by on-call teams as they occur.

“This kind of work is more involved than it appears to the average person driving by on the street,” said Aue. “My crew is well-trained, knowledgeable and



**Town of Hempstead street lighting crew member Nick Acuri repairs a streetlight in North Valley Stream, a hamlet within the town.**

meticulous.”

“The skill and dedication of our street lighting crew is truly outstanding,” said Hempstead Local President Charlie Sellitto. “They

have a very tough job and limited personnel but like all true professionals, they make it look easy.”

— Rich Impagliazzo



# State librarian helped preserve history following inferno

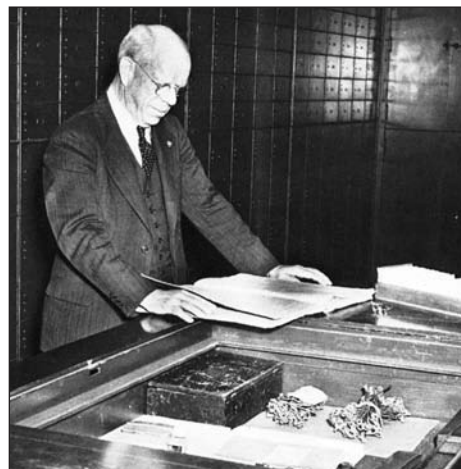
On March 29, 1911, flames tore through the State Capitol, and destroyed vast amounts of New York's history. It was a devastating event that took the life of night watchman Samuel Abbott and incinerated an invaluable collection of books, documents and other artifacts.

One of the unsung heroes was a state library worker named Joseph Gavit, who was integral in documenting what was lost in the fire and helping to identify and salvage what remained.

Later in his career Gavit was active in the Assoc. of State Civil Service Employees as CSEA was known then.

Gavit began work as a junior clerk at the state library, then housed in the Capitol in 1896 and he quickly became supervisor of the shelf section in the library. Gavit worked under library director Melville Dewey, known for developing the Dewey Decimal system, which is still used to organize books on library shelves.

Gavit's vast knowledge of the



Joseph Gavit at work in 1946.

library collection would serve him well in helping to address the fire's aftermath, a task that filled the rest of his career.

Awakened at his nearby home by the fire alarms, Gavit witnessed the library engulfed in flames. He understood that many of the books and manuscripts would be destroyed, but his memory of the shelves and sections aided with salvaging and preserving books and manuscripts.

## Devastating month

The Capitol fire came just four days after the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York City's Greenwich Village that claimed the lives of 146 workers, mostly young immigrant women, due to unsafe working conditions and poor fire safety. (See related story, page 5.)

The fires helped raise awareness of the need to reform New York's safety and health laws and fire codes. Many measures were enacted that improved the safety of public and private buildings as a result. The official cause of the Capitol fire is listed as faulty electrical wiring, but there is some evidence that a cigar in a conference room may have started the blaze.

The state library collection was scheduled to move to the new state Education Department building across the street from the capitol, but the move had been delayed because construction was behind schedule. Some of the

Photos courtesy of NYS Library



New York State Capitol engulfed in flames the evening of March 29, 1911.

documents salvaged in the fire are still being restored and preserved by state employees to this day.

## 50-year career

Gavit retired from state service in 1946 after a 50-year career. A profile of his contributions was then printed in CSEA's official publication, *The State Employee*.

After retirement, Gavit continued to work to improve standards in state service by helping to develop cooperation and morale between government leaders and public employees, and make advances in the merit system. The Capitol fire and the important role he played in responding to it with dedication and professionalism shaped a great deal of his career. In his memoirs, Gavit used the horrific event as a lesson:

"It seems wholly fitting that such a story as this should be made part of our permanent

records... While its details may cause us regret for the things we might have done or left undone, had we foreseen, it is the trend of history in all things that out of loss and failure and mistakes and misfortunes, come the better conditions," he wrote.



Gavit as a young man.

— Navar McCloud

*The story of Joseph Gavit and the Capitol fire is the subject of a new book titled *The New York State Capitol and the Great Fire of 1911* (Arcadia Publishing, 2011) by Paul Mercer, senior librarian at the New York State Library, and Vicki Weiss. It uses extensive research to go in depth about the Capitol Fire of 1911.*

*A documentary about the fire was also produced by WMHT-TV and has aired statewide on PBS stations.*



## May 15 is deadline for submitting proposed resolutions, changes to CSEA's Constitution & Bylaws

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the CSEA Constitution & By-Laws for consideration by CSEA delegates to the union's 2011 Annual Delegates Meeting must be submitted by May 15, 2011.

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 Denise Berkley, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Ave., Albany, N.Y. 12210-2303.

The 2011 CSEA Annual Delegates Meeting will be held Oct. 3-7 in New York City.



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\$20.75  
~~\$23.25~~ (2X)  
\$21.50  
~~\$24.35~~ (3X)



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The Injury Related Program is administered by the firm of FINE, OLIN & ANDERMAN, LLP through its statewide network of offices. Personal Legal Services are provided by a closed network of specially selected attorneys dedicated to quality service for CSEA members.



1-800-342-4146

Call during normal business hours, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Mon.-Fri., and follow the menu instructions for the Legal Services Program

CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12210

Web site: [www.csealocal1000.org](http://www.csealocal1000.org) (through the CSEA members-only portal)

Danny Donohue, President

### 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.



# Summary of April 2011 Board of Directors Meeting

**Editor's Note:** *The Work Force* publishes a summary of actions taken by CSEA's Board of Directors. The summary is prepared by CSEA Statewide Secretary Denise Berkley for union members.



**Berkley**

ALBANY – CSEA's statewide Board of Directors met on April 14. In official business, the board:

- Appointed Kathy Hartwig (Genesee County), Kevin Ray (Judiciary), Katherine Moran (Saratoga County) and Amy Simmons (St. Lawrence County) to the Board of Directors;
- Approved two contracts for upcoming Central Region conferences;
- Confirmed Jack Rohl as Vice

Chairperson of the Local Government Executive Committee;

- Retained the services of Pricewaterhouse Coopers for the 2011 fiscal year audit;
- Adjusted budgeted Membership Dues and Agency Shop income, reduced budgeted AFSCME Grant income and increased budget for pension and post-retirement expenses;
- Authorized capital additions to make security improvements at various region and satellite offices;
- Designated the American Arbitration Association as independent election agency for 2012 combined elections;
- Appointed Jacqueline Williams-Matthews and Toni Knight to the Metropolitan Region Political Action Committee;
- Appointed Nilda Palau-Lopez and Christine Bischoff to the Southern Region Political Action Committee;

- Appointed Stanley Rusinovich and James Courson to the Capital Region Political Action Committee;
- Appointed Chris Kraynak to the Central Region Political Action Committee;
- Confirmed Liz Piraino as Chairperson of the Publications Committee; and
- Placed into administratorship Butler Correctional Facility/Local 190; Capital Region Armory Employees/Local 250; Town of Shelby (Blue), Unit 7954-00/Local 837; Port Washington UFSD Security Aides, Unit 7567-01/Local 865; William Floyd UFSD Security Guards Unit 8766-04/Local 870; and Rockville Centre Library Unit 7234-00/Local 882.

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

## CSEA Members Great Escape Appreciation Days!

An Event for CSEA Workers, Friends  
and Their Families!  
**Aug. 6 to Sept. 5**

Thirty-one great days of fun, thrills, chills, and family fun and fond memories at the area's best family theme park and water park-The Great Escape and Splashwater Kingdom!

Tickets are on sale NOW online at: [www.sixflags.com](http://www.sixflags.com). Once entering the site, ordering is as easy as 1-2-3:

- Pick a park and choose Six Flags Great Escape and Splashwater Kingdom
- Enter promo code CSEA11 in the upper right hand corner and click "Go"
- Choose your quantity of tickets and follow the prompts.

Come enjoy the Theme Park and the Waterpark for one low price!

Tickets are priced at \$21.99 plus tax (\$5.00 per order processing fee)

That's more than 50 percent off the regular admission price of \$45.99 plus tax per person. Tickets will be good any one day of the 31 days listed above!

Cool off at the area's best water park, Splashwater Kingdom.

Also enjoy:

Sasquatch — Based on the mythical creature, Sasquatch is a legendary drop ride with two 19-story steel towers.

Alpine Fest Haus — Delight your senses with a terrific show in air-conditioned comfort while enjoying delicious European cuisine.

Mega Wedgie — An entertaining waterslide with a whimsical name, provides thrill seeking guests with an exhilarating water ride!

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**A message from NYS Comptroller Tom DiNapoli:**

# Moving forward by protecting our pensions

When times are tough, New York state public employee retirees and their beneficiaries play a vital role in keeping our economy moving. Retirees' income and spending support local businesses and contribute to local tax bases. When we talk about retirees in New York state, we're talking about keeping our state economy moving.

Over these past few months, special interests have cast a spotlight on state budgets, pension plans and public employee unions. This year's on-time state budget begins to align revenues with spending, but we are just starting to see a true recovery from the economic collapse of 2008. One reason why we are in a stronger position now than we were just a few years ago is the hard work and contributions of people like you.

While it may not get much press attention, the economic contributions



**Dorothy Breen, center, joins other CSEA activists in meeting with then-Gov. Mario Cuomo in this archival photo from the 1980s. Breen who has most recently directed CSEA's Retiree division, is retiring after 49 years of membership and service to the union. See next month's Work Force for a retrospective on Breen's remarkable union career.**



**Westchester County Local President John Staino greets Tom DiNapoli at a rally last fall.**

to our state of current and retired members of CSEA and all public sector unions have been a steadying influence on our economy. Retirees from the New York State and Local Retirement System generate \$9.5 billion in economic activity annually, and pay \$1.3 billion in property taxes. All the economic power helps put New York to work; 55,000 New York state jobs are linked to our retirees' spending.

For all of the hue and cry over the size of pensions and benefits for retirees, the average member of the Employee Retirement System takes home a pension of \$18,000 per year. Public employees contribute to their pensions and they've earned the reasonable level of economic security provided by those pensions.

I am a strong supporter of the defined benefit system. I refuse to participate in a race to the bottom to provide the least amount of benefits to retirees. New York should not be in the business of forcing public employees to choose between retiring poor and not retiring at all. We shouldn't, and more importantly, we don't need to.

We have a sustainable system that is 90 years old, well managed and recognized for its well-funded status. Eighty-four cents of every dollar paid toward pensions in our retirement system is derived directly from investment returns.

These are challenging times for all New Yorkers. But we must remember that we are all in this together. You – the public employees who keep New York running – are doing all the right things to help move our state forward. Let's keep spreading the word that we are on the road to recovery, and let's continue to make New York strong.

*Tom DiNapoli*





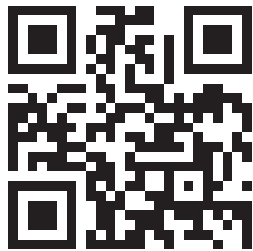
## Employee Benefit Fund now offers Quick Response

What is that strange thing that looks like a square bar code on magazine advertisements and product displays? That quirky design is a Quick Response code (QR). It is similar to a bar code.

The code consists of black pixels arranged in a square pattern on a white background. If you have a smart phone, you can download a free QR reader application, and that is what's used to scan the QR code.

The information provided could be a website address, a special coupon, or contact information. When you scan the code, it will bring you directly to the website or text that is contained in the QR code without having to type anything.

In an effort to stay on top of the latest technology trends, the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund has begun using QR codes. The benefit specialists at the EBF



The EBF's new Quick Response code.

all have QR codes on their business cards. Just scan the code, and their contact information is automatically stored in your phone.

The EBF also has a QR code on our postcard that advertises our website. When you scan that code, it brings you right to our website without having to type the web address.

Our goal at the EBF has been and always will be to provide the best possible customer service to our members. This is another example of how we're taking an initiative to make it easier to find the information you're seeking.

So what are you waiting for? Scan the QR code and see where it takes you!

**Visit EBF's website at [www.cseabf.com](http://www.cseabf.com) or call EBF at (800) 323-2732 to learn more about our programs.**

## Spring is here — Don't Zone Out!

### Don't Zone Out!

That's the advice from CSEA to motorists everywhere, especially in New York. As spring arrives, CSEA members will be working on New York's roadways and highways. You can help protect these workers with a simple message: be careful driving through roadway work zones.

Help spread the word and help save lives. Your CSEA brothers and sisters working in roadways and highways will appreciate it.

Take the pledge online:  
[www.csealocal1000.org](http://www.csealocal1000.org)



## April 30 is deadline for 2010 Empire Plan claims

Empire Plan enrollees have until **April 30, 2011** (120 days after the end of the calendar year) to submit medical expenses incurred during the 2010 plan year to:



### United HealthCare 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 for non-network physical therapy or chiropractic services.

### Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield

**NYS Service Center (Code YLS)**

**P.O. Box 1407 – Church Street Station**

**New York, N.Y. 10008-1407**

For Empire Plan and non-network Inpatient or Outpatient hospital services.

### OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions

**P.O. Box 5190**

**Kingston, N.Y. 12402-5190**

For non-network mental health and substance abuse services.

### Medco Health Solutions

**P.O. Box 14711**

**Lexington, KY 40512**

For prescriptions filled at non-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 get 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/pharmacies will submit claims directly to the appropriate insurance carrier on your behalf when provided with all necessary information. If you have a non-network claim submission, make sure you complete the requested subscriber information on the claim form, include the original billing or receipt (if requested) and don't forget to sign the claim form.

**Enrollees can call the Empire Plan at 1-877-7NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) with questions or to get claim forms.**



# STRETCH YOUR DOLLARS!



Danny Donohue, President

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## Smith is PEOPLE Recruiter of the Month

Gloria Smith of the SUNY Upstate Medical University Local in the Central Region is the PEOPLE Recruiter of the Month for March. She recruited 23 new PEOPLE members.

“As union members, we’re in the fight of our lives, with all these people trying to pass anti-union legislation throughout the country,” Smith said. “We need to use our combined strength to fight back and make sure that these attacks don’t go unchallenged. Our members should be proud to join PEOPLE and know that they’re helping our union fight on their behalf.”

CSEA’s PEOPLE program protects and improves our jobs, benefits and pensions in Washington, Albany and in your community. Your support and participation in PEOPLE strengthens CSEA’s clout in the workplace, in the legislature, in your community and in the labor movement.



Smith

## Stay up-to-date! Visit your region online and on Facebook

Be sure to stay up to date between Work Force editions by checking your region’s web page and Facebook page.

### Long Island Region:

<http://www.csealocal1000.org/r1>

<http://www.facebook.com/csealongisland>

### Metropolitan Region:

<http://www.csealocal1000.org/r2>

<http://www.facebook.com/csearegion2>

### Southern Region:

<http://www.csealocal1000.org/r3>

<http://www.facebook.com/csearegion3>

### Capital Region:

<http://www.csealocal1000.org/r4>

<http://www.facebook.com/csearegion4>

### Central Region:

<http://www.csealocal1000.org/r5>

<http://www.facebook.com/csearegion5>

### Western Region:

<http://www.csealocal1000.org/r6>

<http://www.facebook.com/cseawesternregion6>



## WASHINGTON COUNTY MOBILIZES —

CSEA recently learned that the Washington County Board of Supervisors will soon vote to issue a request for proposals for the county nursing home and public health nursing services. CSEA represents the public health nurses, who visit residents throughout the county with chronic conditions or who are unable to travel for medical visits. CSEA members in Washington County are mobilizing around the issue ... **FIGHTING IN GLEN COVE** — More than 50 CSEA members from the City of Glen Cove Unit attended a city council meeting to protest the fact they have been working with an expired contract for over a year. The members displayed “Show Some Respect” signs throughout the meeting and applauded when Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte and Nassau Municipal Employees Local President John Shepherd asked city officials to get serious about concluding negotiations ... **TOWN HALL MEETING** — More than 50 people recently attended a recent CSEA Metropolitan Region Town Hall meeting in Brooklyn that discussed the



impact of the state budget on workers and the public.

Speakers included Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio, Statewide Secretary Denise Berkley, CSEA activists Adriane Hudson and Fitzroy Wilson and a state worker who was laid off after 25 years of service, as well as state Sens. Eric Adams and Diane Savino. Representatives from other labor unions across New York City also participated in the forum ... **SPA CITY CONTRACT** — The Saratoga Springs City Council recently approved a four-year deal with CSEA’s DPW and City Hall units. The previous contract expired Dec. 31, 2008. The pact was ratified by members last week and includes increases in 2011 and 2012 as well as a switch to a new health insurance provider ... **FIRST CONTRACT** — Members of the Brookhaven Public Safety Unit ratified their initial two-year contract. The unit was organized two years ago and involved in negotiations for most of that time ... **UNIT RATIFIES** — The Eastport/South Manor School District Teachers Aide Unit approved a new one-year contract, which includes a salary increase.

## Save the dates!

CSEA has set dates and places for these statewide events:

- **Spring Workshop:** May 20-22, Niagara Falls;
- **Retiree Delegates Meeting:** Aug. 18-21, Niagara Falls; and
- **Annual Delegates Meeting:** Oct. 3-7, New York City.

*Check [www.csealocal1000.org](http://www.csealocal1000.org) for information about these events. Registration information and details about other events will be posted on the website as it becomes available.*



# THE Work Force

[www.csealocal1000.org](http://www.csealocal1000.org)

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Danny Donohue, President

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