

May 2001 • Vol. 6, No. 5

CSEA NASSAU COUNTY LOCAL 830 EXPRESS



Our Fight for New Hiring Finally Paying Off

A Message From Nassau County Local 830 President Anthony P. Giustino

After years of fighting, I am pleased to see my call for new county hiring has become a reality.

At long last, Nassau County is taking steps to correct staffing problems so acute that services are teetering on the brink of collapse.

The effort is commendable and welcome, but I should say right from the start it will take years of positive staffing action for the county to climb out of the hole it has been digging for itself since 1992.

I am delighted the county has finally come to its senses.

Budget problems aside, it takes only a glancing look at the problem to come to the inescapable conclusion that continued staff reductions would literally sink our county into an abyss so deep that services may never recover.

Staffing levels have been plummeting for more than a decade and are now at historic lows.

Our once proud county now finds itself struggling merely to maintain mediocrity.

Lost in the absurd notion that taxes must stay the same forever is the simple fact that the people of Nassau want quality services.

One must ask the question: Was it politically wise to hold the line on taxes for 10 years while county finances and services were collapsing around us?

Most Nassau residents I know either moved to Nassau or stayed here because of the superb services we once enjoyed.

They knew our parks and recreation services were the best in America. They knew Nassau County departments were always at the cutting edge of new technology to best serve the residents.

They knew the employees who

made Nassau run were the most dedicated and hard-working civil servants anywhere in the world.

And yes, they knew quality services come with a price tag.

Those employees who remain on the job after years of staff reductions remain loyal and hard-working.

They have performed duties far and above that which was asked of them because their pride in their jobs would not allow them to offer less.

As the work force dwindled, they struggled to maintain services at respectable levels, often doing the work of their departed colleagues as well as their own.

There comes a point, however, at which the workload simply can no longer be handled by so few. Consequently services deteriorate.

Even as I fought to avoid layoffs and furloughs, I was pressing for new hiring levels.

If we truly believe, as I do, that we as Nassau County residents expect and deserve a decent level of services, we must commit ourselves — on behalf of our members and our neighbors — to continue the fight to raise county staffing levels.

I can think of no other way our county can be restored to the prominence it once knew.

Yours in unionism,

Tony Giustino, president
CSEA Nassau County Local 830

Giustino Vows to Defend Current Contract While Negotiating a New Agreement

Local 830 President Tony Giustino has told members he will defend the current CSEA bargaining agreement against any and all attacks right through its expiration date at the end of 2002. At the same time, he said the Local 830 negotiating team will soon begin the fight for a successor contract "that will meet and exceed the last one."

Giustino said he will be calling a meeting of the negotiating team in September this year to begin the fight for a fair contract. He said he will seek input from the membership in the same way it was done for the current contract.

The last time around, Giustino put together a negotiating team that was the largest in the union's history, a team that included every Local 830 officer and every Unit president.

"It is important all of our Units have a voice, from the smallest to the largest, and that we remain united like we did the last time," Giustino said.

Giustino noted the vote for the last contract was a historical one in the total number of members who voted and in the percentage of those who voted yes (96 percent).

"We have a winning team and a formula for success," Giustino said. "Now's the time to start putting together the thoughts and ideas that will guide us into the future," he added.

Loosening Up the Grip On Hiring & Promotions

The hiring freeze is thawing out in several county departments. Nassau County is now "staffing up" in areas that have been decimated over the past decade. (See President Giustino's column)

Requests are expected to be approved for promotions and hiring in all divisions of the Department of Recreation and Parks, affecting nearly 30 percent of the personnel. Much of the activity is "in-house" — moving up part timers and seasonals to full-time positions and rewarding loyal and hard-working employees who have not seen a promotion in 10 years or more.

In the Public Works Department, hiring is now taking place in several crucial areas, including traffic engineering and construction.

In the Assessment Department, a report recently published in *Newsday* called on the county to undertake a thorough review of salaries.

"Unfortunately, county starting

salaries are so low that attracting good candidates who have the skills necessary to improve the county's productivity in this process is becoming increasingly difficult," the report stated.

"In addition, the county should strive to create civil service titles that provide maximum management flexibility while providing a reasonable wage for the experience required."

The report also addressed a concern that affects virtually every county department.

The report stated: "Too often a county department will lose a highly qualified employee to another department or jurisdiction altogether because a well-deserved promotion was not forthcoming."

The report is currently under advisement by the county administration and the county Legislature.



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A Monthly Publication of CSEA Nassau County Local 830
ANTHONY P. GIUSTINO, PresidentTony Panzarella, Editor
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Ronald G. Gurrieri, Chair, Communications Committee

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Joseph Whittaker, Fire Marshal's Office
Peter Wirba, ProbationWe 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.**Union Building**

In response to an invitation from Nassau University Medical Center CSEA President George Walsh, CSEA Education and Training Specialist Eric Muldoon from CSEA headquarters in Albany has been conducting union building workshops at NUMC. NUMC employees can learn more about the program by calling Walsh at 572-6364.

LEGAL UPDATE

By Nancy E. Hoffman, Esq.
CSEA General Counsel

"Three Strikes and You're Out!" These Days Doesn't Just Apply To Baseball

In *Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama v Garrett*, the conservative majority of the U.S. Supreme Court recently issued the second of three judicial blows to the rights of American workers to be free from unlawful discrimination.

In its Feb. 21, 2001 decision, the Supreme Court ruled Congress did not have the power or authority to allow state workers to sue state governments in federal court for disability discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

In other words, CSEA members who work for the state can no longer directly sue the state under the ADA.

However, the Supreme Court did leave open the possibility that the federal government could sue a state government for a violation of the ADA.

The Supreme Court had already ruled state workers did not have direct individual rights of action under the federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) or the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Please note, as local government employees, the Supreme Court has not ruled the ADA or ADEA are unconstitutional as applied to local government employees.

On March 21, the U.S. Supreme Court issued the third blow in another startling decision in *Circuit City Stores, Inc. v Adams*.

In that case, the justices ruled a private employee had waived his statutory right to pursue a discrimination case in state or federal court by signing an employment application containing language agreeing to arbitrate such claims.

This most recent Supreme Court decision is consistent with these earlier rulings by the same conservative majority.

Presently, the federal courts in New York have continued to rule a provision of a collective bargaining agreement negotiated by a union cannot waive the statutory rights of individual union

members to litigate discrimination claims in federal or state courts.

Nevertheless, there is a genuine possibility the U.S. Supreme Court in the near future may, in a situation involving a union contract, determine a union can and has waived the rights of its members to seek relief in the courts based on the specific provisions of a collective bargaining agreement.

Just what do these decisions, a couple dealing with only state employees, have to do with you?

The important message here is the present U.S. Supreme Court is not "worker friendly."

Nor will it prove to be "union friendly."

And when and if there are any vacancies to fill

And when and if there are any vacancies to fill on that bench, or even on the federal bench sitting in Nassau County, members can be sure the individuals selected by the current administration in Washington to fill those vacancies will not be union or worker friendly either.

on that bench, or even on the federal bench sitting in Nassau County, members can be sure the individuals selected by the current administration in Washington to fill those vacancies will not be union or worker friendly either.

We must be more vigilant than ever before about our contract rights and our state law rights.

We anticipate some employers will attempt to use *Circuit City* to some employer

advantage, either with new negotiation proposals on statutory claims or by applying existing contract language to achieve a *Circuit City* result.

Because of this very real threat, we must seize every opportunity to expand the worker base in unions, thereby giving contractual protections to more and more workers that cannot be taken away by the courts.

We must also use our political action power to leverage state law protections in those areas that have now been seriously eroded by federal court actions.

Legislature Approves Renewal of Voluntary Leave Program

The Nassau County Legislature has approved the renewal of the voluntary leave program for county workers, retroactive to Jan. 1, 2001.

The program allows employees to voluntarily take leave without pay for an agreed upon time without affecting their benefits.

The provisions are:

- Employees who participate will continue to accrue vacation, sick and personal leave at their regular rate;
- There will be no adjustment of anniversary

date and/or leave progression (longevity) dates while on leave;

- Employees will continue to receive fully paid health, dental and optical insurance benefits;
- A maximum of 60 days leave may be taken in a calendar year;
- At the discretion of the department head, employees may spread the cost of their payroll deduction over a specified number of pay periods;
- The 60-day approved leave would not stop an employee from participating in a retirement incentive, but it would affect years of service for

pension calculation purposes;

- Members who take advantage of the voluntary leave program are responsible for paying their CSEA dues, JLT insurance and credit union payments.

Members wishing additional information on the program may speak to their personnel officer or call CSEA at 571-2919.

Credit for Prior Service Requires Letter

If you've ever worked for any school district, village, town or county in New York State, or for any subdivision of state government, you can apply that time toward your service in Nassau County.

Under the terms of the current CSEA contract, employees who have previous government service in New York State can receive credit for that time in their current jobs. Here's how to apply.

Get a letter from your prior employer on official government letterhead stating the following:

Your full name and Social Security number.

The exact dates you started and concluded your employment.

Your job title, including whether your employment was full time or part time.

The letter should be submitted to your department head, who, in turn, will submit it to the county Personnel Department for processing.

The CSEA Unity Committee

Discrimination, Human Rights, Diversity Task Force

AVAILABLE TO EMPLOYEES OF NASSAU UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

OUR GOALS

- Deal with discrimination/human rights issues in the work place.
- Provide guidance, outlets and methodology to CSEA members in discrimination/human rights issues in the work place.
- Update, communicate with and inform members about CSEA structure, election process, officer selection, staff and employment opportunities.
- To listen.

THE FOLLOWING CSEA TASK FORCE MEMBERS ARE AVAILABLE MONDAY MORNINGS. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR WANT AN APPOINTMENT, PLEASE CALL THEM AT THEIR LISTED NUMBERS.

Rudy Bruce -- 571-7200
Carolyn Jones -- 571-0911 / 527-6678
Tim Corr -- 571-2919, Ext. 14

WORKSHOP FOR ACTIVISTS

LEARN HOW TO ORGANIZE WORKERS AROUND ISSUES

Wednesday & Thursday — May 9 & 10

6 - 9 p.m. (5:30 p.m. Registration)

Workshop directed toward new and experienced activists including:

- Local/Unit Officers
- Stewards
- Grievance Officers
- Committee Members
- Members-at-Large
- Anyone committed to strengthening the power of our union

Participants will learn how to systematically identify workers, analyze their issues and work with other activists to create and develop strategies for building worker participation and workplace solidarity. Workshop satisfies requirements for appointment as shop steward.

It is important to pre-register for the workshop by calling 571-2919 because class size is limited and a light supper will be served.

LOCATION:
 CSEA Local 830 Office
 400 County Seat Drive
 Mineola
 South Wing- Lower Level

CSEA Pay Equity Campaign Will Benefit All CSEA Families

CSEA Local 830 has launched a sweeping campaign for the passage of pay equity legislation designed to help all CSEA families by eliminating gender-based discrimination in paychecks.

Local 830 President Tony Giustino characterized the legislation as "important to both men and women" and urged members to "support this fight for fair pay" by calling and writing their elected officials.

In a letter sent to members, Giustino and Executive Vice President Jane D'Amico said: "This issue is important to men and women alike. Your participation in this campaign can help to end a basic form of gender discrimination and can result in raising your family's annual income and quality of life."

The campaign primarily targets the state Senate, which has failed to adopt any of the four pay equity/comparable worth bills that have been introduced the past four sessions.

Similar bills have passed each year in the Assembly, including this year. The Senate bills were sponsored by Sen. Carl Marcellino (S.483 & S.486) and Sen. Mike Balboni (S.4124 & S.2068).

Speaking out for legislation

In an event called a pay equity speakout, more than 100 CSEA members attended a special meeting of the Nassau County Legislature to ask them to support the state legislation.

Lending a sympathetic ear were the Legislature's Presiding Officer Judy Jacobs, Minority Leader Peter Schmitt and legislators Richard Nicholello, Patrick Williams, Fran Becker, Jeff Tobak, Vince Muscarella, Brian Muellers, Ed Mangano, David Dennenberg, Norma Gonsalves and Craig Johnson.

At the speakout and during a press conference held earlier in the day, D'Amico called pay equity "a very serious problem facing Long Islanders."

72 cents on a dollar

D'Amico pointed to statistics which reveal that working women earn only 72 percent of men's salaries for jobs of comparable worth.

Said D'Amico: "Gender-based salary inequities hurt working families, both with women as heads of households and those in which the female wage earner's salary is necessary to maintain the family's standard of living."

"If equal pay for women were the rule," she said, "poverty rates would drop for both married and single working mothers."

CSEA's fight has been joined by other concerned organizations which were represented both at the press conference and the speakout.

They included the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), the National Organization for Women (NOW), Women on the Job Task Force, Business and Professional Women, the League of Women Voters and the United Public Service Employees Union.



At left, Peter Schmitt, center, minority leader of the Nassau County Legislature, meets with CSEA representatives and others before the pay equity speakout. They are, from left, Jeanne Bezko (NOW); Leg. Ed Mangano; Local 830 President Tony Giustino; Lillian McCormack, Women on the Job; Tillie Krupitsch, Local 881; Jane D'Amico, CSEA Executive Vice President (also representing CLUW), Cathy Pipitone, CSEA Local 881; Kim Nowakowski, United Public Service Employees Union (UPSEU), and Judy Schmertz, League of Women Voters. Bottom left, Nassau County Legislature Presiding Officer Judy Jacobs (third from left) poses for photo with several speakers at the pay equity speakout. Speakers are, from left, Dr. Pearl Kramer of the Long Island Association; Lillian McCormack, Women on the Job; Leg. Jacobs; Local 830 President Tony Giustino; Executive Vice President Jane D'Amico; Kim Nowakowski UPSEU & BPW; Jeanne Bezko, NOW; and Judy Schmertz, LWV.



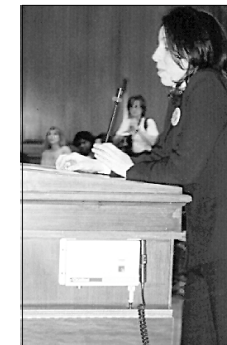
At left, 12 of the 19 members of the Nassau County Legislature were on hand for the pay equity speakout.

Right, Local 830 Executive Vice President Jane D'Amico, center, discusses the pay equity press release before the press conference with, from left, Lillian McCormack (Women on the Job); Jeanne Bezko (NOW); Judy Schmertz (LWV) and Kim Nowakowski (UPSEU and Business & Professional Women).



Above, Nassau County Local 830 President Tony Giustino checks his notes prior to the pay equity press conference before the speakout.

Support this fight for fair pay



Right, Robyn Katz spoke on behalf of her boss, Assemblyman Tom DiNapoli, who has successfully ushered pay equity legislation through the state Assembly.



At right CSEA Local 830 Executive Vice President Jane D'Amico was one of several speakers who was interviewed by a News 12 Long Island reporter. A three-minute piece on the pay equity campaign was aired on Channel 12 that evening and again the following morning.

Resolution Deadline is May 15 For Annual Delegates Meeting

Statewide CSEA Secretary Barbara Reeves has sent a letter to Nassau Local 830 reminding members that resolutions to be considered at the Annual Delegates Meeting this fall must be submitted to her office no later than May 15.

"Such resolutions will be forwarded to the Resolutions Committee for study and recommendation to the delegate body. The Resolutions Committee will publish such resolutions with its recommendations in the official newspaper (Work Force) at least 15 days prior to the Annual Delegates Meeting," Reeves said.

Resolutions may be submitted only by a delegate and must be received on an official form, available at the Local 830 office in Mineola. Fax copies will not be accepted.

The Annual Delegates Meeting will be held this year in Buffalo from Oct. 29 through Nov. 2. Members wishing additional information can call the Local 830 office at 571-2919.

Fighting Stress

James Kresse and Bruce Berman conduct a Women's Committee workshop on stress reduction before capacity audience in the CSEA multi-purpose room in Mineola. Two more stress-related workshops are scheduled soon. A program on the use of laughter to reduce stress will be held Thursday, May 20 at 5:15 p.m. featuring Bryn Catapano of the Employees Assistance Program. A workshop on aromatherapy and stress reduction through massage therapy is set for Thursday, June 14 at 5 p.m. Both programs are free and will be held at the CSEA office, 400 County Seat Drive, Mineola. Refreshments will be served.



See Page 7 for more information on the use of laughter to reduce stress and other health-related information.



Hot Off the Presses

Top, General Services Unit President Vivian Crowley, second from right, was on hand as the CSEA contract booklets rolled off the presses at the DGS print shop in Mineola. Print shop staffer Chris Norrby, right, takes the last of the booklets from the cutter and boxes them for distribution. Looking on are print shop supervisor Bob Sholl, left, and Unit Treasurer Bob Coyne.

Bottom, the print shop staff takes a breather after printing, stapling and folding about 12,000 CSEA contract booklets for distribution to the members. Standing, from left, are Fred Biddle, Paul Lamberg, Nick Reginella, Paul Heiselman, Douglas Lyon, Steven Goldschein and Ray Palazzo. Seated is Chris Norrby.



Catch Us Online

For up-to-date CSEA information and the latest news from your union, be sure to visit us online at www.nassau-csea830.org

Tuition Discounts & Scholarships Available for CSEA Members

Three local colleges are now providing substantial tuition discounts for CSEA members, according to CSEA Education Coordinator Jewel Weinstein.

In some instances, family members also qualify. The college discount programs and contact numbers are listed below.

C.W. POST — Provides a one-third discount off the cost of all undergraduate and graduate degree courses for full-time and part-time students. Call the financial assistance office at (516) 299-2338.

THE N. Y. INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY — Public sector grant offers all public sector employees and their spouses and dependent children a 20 percent discount of tuition for graduate and undergraduate courses. Call the financial aid office at (631) 348-3220.

BRIARCLIFFE COLLEGE — Offers CSEA members, spouses and their dependent children a 20 percent discount off tuition for undergraduate courses. Call the financial aid office at (516) 918-3643.

In the March edition of *The Express*, a list of college scholarships available to CSEA members and their families was published.

Since that story ran, two additional scholarships were brought to members' attention. They are:

NASSAU CREDIT UNION — For information and application, call Jim Alisi (516) 742-4900.

JERRY CLARK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP for children of AFSCME/CSEA members (\$10,000 per year for junior and senior years) — awarded to a sophomore majoring in political science. Application must be postmarked no later than July 1, 2001. Applications and qualifications can be obtained by writing: Jerry Clark Memorial Scholarship, c/o AFSCME Education Dept., 1625 L Street, NW, Washington DC 20036.

News from Drug & Alcohol

Wearin' and Sharin' O' the Green

By Alison Conroy and Nancy Ianson

Nassau County Department of Drug and Alcohol held its fourth annual Morning Tea/Coffee and Soda Bread for St. Patrick's Day at the 40 Main St. Administrative Office in Hempstead.

The price of admission was an item from the "wish list" submitted by the Mary Brennan Inn, a soup kitchen located in Hempstead and part of the Interfaith Nutrition Network (INN).

Participants showed their usual full-hearted generosity, and a significant amount of cash was donated, along with several cartons of sheets, towels and personal care items.

Employees also remembered Liz Doherty, a co-worker who died in December after a brief illness.

The Elizabeth Doherty Fund is being established in her honor to continue her work. Doherty was a recipient of the Nassau Local 830 Women in Local Government Award for her work with substance abusing clients and their families.

The event featured soda bread, Irish music, and good conversation.

Those who contributed also received a small pot of shamrocks to celebrate the day and welcome spring.

CSEA/HIP Healthy Heart Program**Keep Healthy and Have Fun! Join CSEA's Free Bicycling Program**

CSEA members who are looking for some healthy exercise during off hours should contact the CSEA/HIP Healthy Heart Program.

The program provides 10 bicycles for free use by CSEA members.

Five bicycles are located at Eisenhower Park Security Headquarters off Parking Field No. 2 and the other five are at the Wantagh Park Administration Building.

Before using a bike, CSEA members will first need to obtain a Cycling Program ID Card from Tim Carter at the CSEA office in Mineola, 400 County Seat Drive.

Members can visit the office Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. to obtain their card.

Bicycles may be borrowed by CSEA members who present their card to the security station at Eisenhower and the Administration Building representative at Wantagh Park.

Each employee may borrow up to two bikes for any two consecutive hours between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. at Wantagh Park and from 8 a.m. to dusk at Eisenhower Park.

"This program allows members the convenience of riding a bike without the necessity of transporting their own bike. It enables them to get out and exercise on a regular basis in a park setting," said Jane D'Amico, Local 830 executive vice president and project director of the Healthy Heart Program.

Both Wantagh Park, located off Merrick Road in Seaford, and Eisenhower Park, located in East Meadow, feature bicycle paths.

For more information call CSEA at 571-2919.

Aromatherapy & Stress Topics of Workshop

Popular demand has prompted the CSEA Local 830 Women's Committee to combine and present two highly successful workshops on one date.

"Aromatherapy" and "stress relief" will both be discussed and demonstrated at 5 p.m. Thursday, June 14 at another in the series of free workshops presented throughout the year by the Women's Committee.

The workshop will be held in the multipurpose room at the CSEA office in Mineola. Although the program is presented by the Women's Committee, Jane D'Amico, executive vice president and Women's Committee chair, said men and women may attend.

The program will feature guest speaker Marielena Cirolia, president of Your Gentle Spirit, who will demonstrate how to use aromatherapy to enhance healing and achieve "body balance and psychic serenity."

Cirolia's last presentation at a CSEA workshop was in March.

The program will also feature a demonstration of massage therapy, including sample massages.

This part of the workshop will demonstrate the basic skills of managing stress in the work environment.

The presenter will be licensed massage therapist James F. Kresse of Cresera Wellness Center in Williston Park.

Kresse's presentation in April was delivered to a capacity audience.

Because space is limited, reservations are requested and may be made by calling Judy at 571-2919. Refreshments will be served.

The program will be held in the multipurpose room at the CSEA office, 400 County Seat Drive, Mineola. CSEA is located on the lower level of the south wing.

Laugh Your Stress Away At CSEA Workshop

CSEA members will be asked to check their frowns at the door when they attend a free workshop, "The Use of Laughter in Stressful Situations," on May 24.

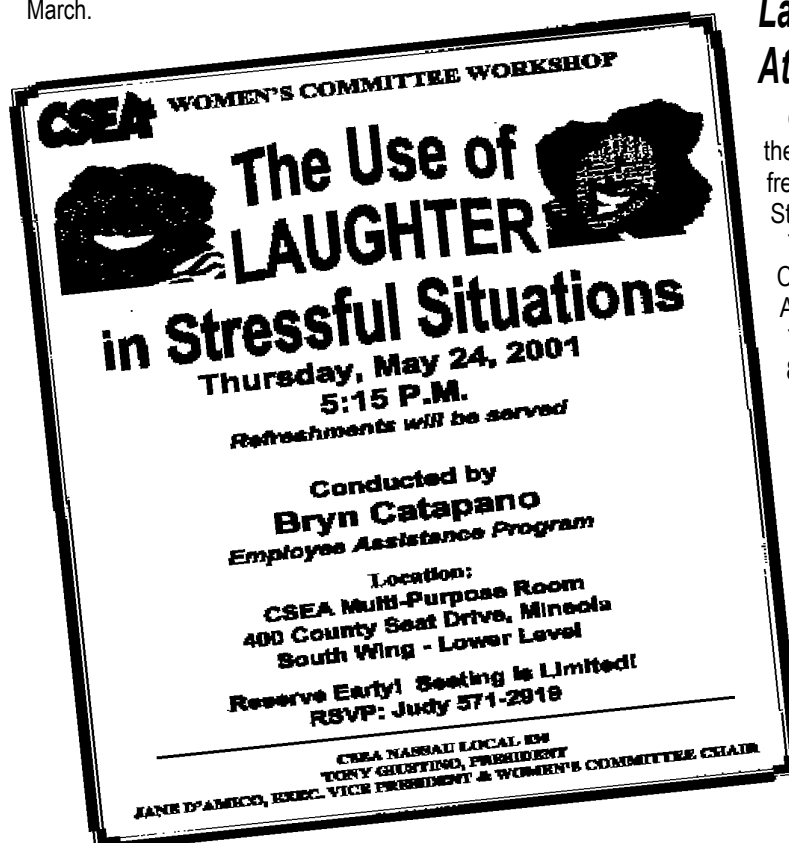
The program will be conducted by Bryn Catapano of the Nassau County Employee Assistance Program.

The workshop, sponsored by the Local 830 Women's Committee, will begin at 5:15 p.m. in the multi-purpose room at CSEA's Mineola office, 400 County Seat Drive, in the south wing, lower level.

Refreshments will be served.

Women's Committee Chair and Local 830 Executive Vice President Jane D'Amico said the program is open to both men and women.

Because seating is limited, members who want to attend should register early by calling Judy at 571-2919.

**Free Asthma Screening May 17th at NUMC**

Adults and children who experience breathing problems, such as coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath, can learn if asthma is the culprit at an Asthma Screening Program on Tuesday, May 17, at the Nassau University Medical Center in East Meadow.

The program will be hosted by NUMC's Allergy Immunology Division directed by Dr. Marianne Frieri and sponsored by the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology.

"Undiagnosed or under-treated asthma not only diminishes a person's life quality, it can also cause serious long-term damage to the lungs, especially in children. Anyone who experiences breathing problems should attend the screenings to find out if they are at risk for the disease," said Frieri.

The screening program is free and will take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the NUMC auditorium. For more information call Arlene Guenot, RN, at 572-4949.

CSEA
IN CONJUNCTION WITH

NASSAU UNIVERSITY
medical center
(Formerly Nassau County Medical Center)

Center of Primary Care

ANNUAL PHYSICAL

- No co-pay for CSEA members and family
 - All testing done at one facility
 - Permit for free parking
- Test results sent to your own physician or NUMC physician

Center of Primary Care can be used for all your comprehensive health care needs with the same benefits

HOURS:
Tuesdays — 5 - 7:30 p.m.
Wednesdays — 1 - 3:30 p.m.

For further details and appointments call:
572-5380

CSEA NASSAU LOCAL 830 — TONY GIUSTINO, PRESIDENT



It's A Quality of Life Issue. Well-Staffed Schools Are Important To All Of Us

A Message from Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte

With summer just around the corner and another school year coming to a close, I want to ask you to support your fellow CSEA members who work in our schools by voting for CSEA-endorsed school board candidates on May 15.

Each and every school day we entrust these dedicated employees to provide an educational and nurturing experience for our children in a safe and caring atmosphere. And each and every school day they accept that trust, caring for and caring about our children as if they were their very own.

From the bus drivers who carry them safely to school and back, to the cafeteria workers who serve them the wholesome meals their growing minds and bodies need, to the custodians and cleaners who keep their buildings and grounds clean and safe, to the nurses who comfort them when they aren't feeling well, these CSEA members treat our children like family.

Like you, they take pride in the services they provide. Also like you, they must rely on elected officials for the resources they need to keep providing those services. As a former school employee, I know the difference a school board can make.

If you live in a district where CSEA has made a school board endorsement, you will receive a post card listing the CSEA-endorsed candidates. Like all CSEA-endorsed candidates, these candidates have undergone a rigorous selection process and have been chosen based on their record or position on worker issues.

But this is more than just a worker issue, it's a quality of life issue. Well-run, well-equipped and well-staffed schools are important to all of us here on Long Island. So let's get out and vote on May 15. Our brothers

**Stay Informed. Tune in to
"CSEA in Focus"
Thursdays at 7 p.m.
repeated Saturdays
at 8 a.m. on
WGBB, 1240 AM**

Get Out And Vote On May 15

and sisters are depending on us, and so are our kids.

Fraternally yours,

Nick LaMorte, president
CSEA Long Island Region

CSEA Members Help TPV Exceed Revenue Projections

The Nassau County Traffic and Parking Violations Agency has once again outstripped its annual revenue projections and the agency's executive director is crediting his staff, made up mostly of CSEA members, for the achievement.

In a staff memo, Thomas Carroll told his workers the agency exceeded its mandatory revenue projection of \$6.8 million by more than \$54,000.

"This is to thank each and every one of you for your efforts over the past year," Carroll wrote to his staff.

Said Nassau CSEA President Tony Giustino: "At a time when revenue enhancements are sorely needed, it is satisfying to see that our members are receiving the proper credit for helping to ease the county's budget crisis. It underscores once again what I've been saying all along, that our members are part of the solution, not part of the problem."

CBTU Chapter



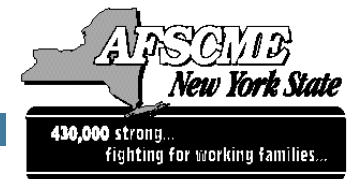
African American CSEA members met recently at Local 830 headquarters in Mineola to plan the establishment of a Long Island Chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU). Heading up the effort is CSEA activist Rudy Bruce of the Nassau County Department of Public Works. Members of several other unions have also expressed interest in joining the chapter, which is required by bylaws of the parent organization to have representatives from at least five unions. The others include: Public Employees Federation (PEF), Communication Workers of America (CWA), Teamsters and Service Employees International Union (SEIU). The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists consists of members from 77 international and national unions with 42 chapters across the country.

Easter Bunny Helpers

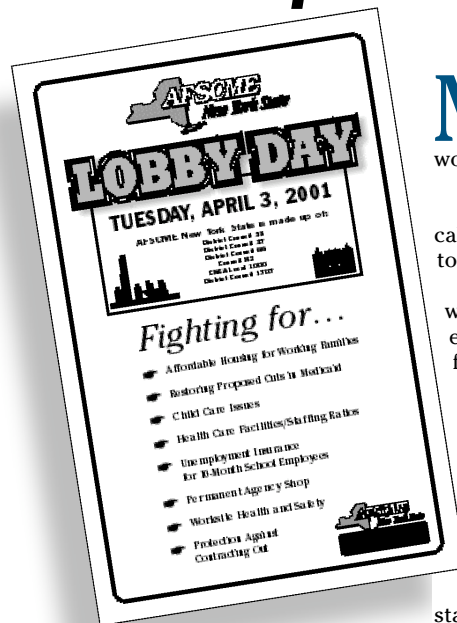


Members of the Kiwanis Club of Nassau University Medical Center (all CSEA members) take time out at the end of a busy day to put together Easter baskets for the children in the pediatric ward. The NUMC Kiwanis Club is the only hospital-based Kiwanis Club in the country. All the goodies were paid for with Kiwanis funds.

"The only way things get tough in this state is if we don't stand up together"
 — CSEA President Danny Donohue



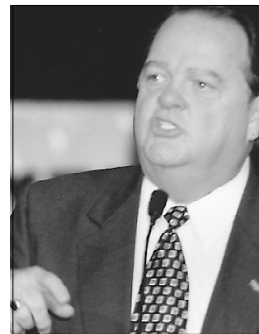
AFSCME Lobby Day 2001: Members put a face on the union's top issues



More than 1,200 American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) members converged on Albany recently to lobby their lawmakers on behalf of working families.

Leading the way was CSEA, AFSCME's largest affiliate. "Like you, I'm a public servant. I think that's the highest calling someone can have," state Comptroller H. Carl McCall told the cheering throng of union activists.

McCall pledged to continue to fight for fair wages and safe working conditions for union members, and reassured public employees that last year's permanent cost-of-living allowance for pensions is in no danger from recent stock market fluctuations.



CSEA President
 Danny Donohue

The political landscape

Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno told attendees the Senate will fight against efforts to cut \$330 million in nursing home funding this year.

"You are the people who make it happen in New York State all across the state," Bruno said.

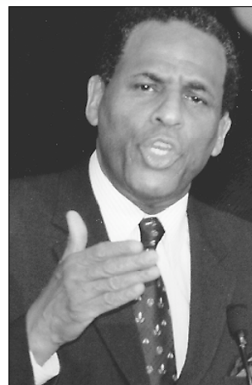
Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver had similar praise for the union members.

"The biggest reason why this great state enjoys the quality it does is in no small part to your hard work and dedication. Your agenda is our agenda. Your priorities have always been our priorities," Silver said.

In introducing AFSCME President Gerald McEntee, CSEA President Danny Donohue noted the awesome power AFSCME had assembled in Albany for the lobby day.

"The only way things get tough in this state is if we don't stand up together," Donohue said.

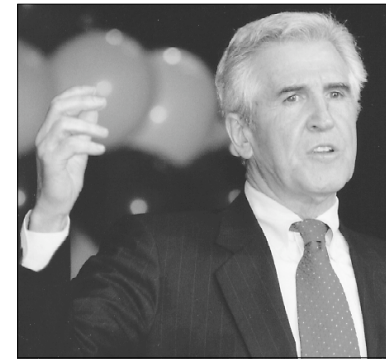
McEntee praised the union's efforts in the November elections, noting many battles lay ahead as President George Bush pushes an agenda intent on stripping many protections from working families.



State Comptroller
 H. Carl McCall



CSEA Executive Vice President
 Mary E. Sullivan



Senate Majority Leader
 Joseph Bruno



Assembly Speaker
 Sheldon Silver

Members meet lawmakers

For union members, it was an opportunity to put a face on CSEA's political message for state lawmakers.

"They were very supportive of our issues and I think we had an influence on them," said Al Ackerman, a 31-year CSEA member and a development aide at Taconic Developmental Disabilities Service Office.

"They were very receptive to us," said Yvonne Dixon, a Westchester County Court clerk who was attending her first lobby day. "I will definitely go to Lobby Day next year," she said.

For Denise Berkley, president of the

Brooklyn Developmental Center Local, participating in lobby day "helps to secure the future for our members. It helps us to have a voice and not be afraid to speak up about the issues."

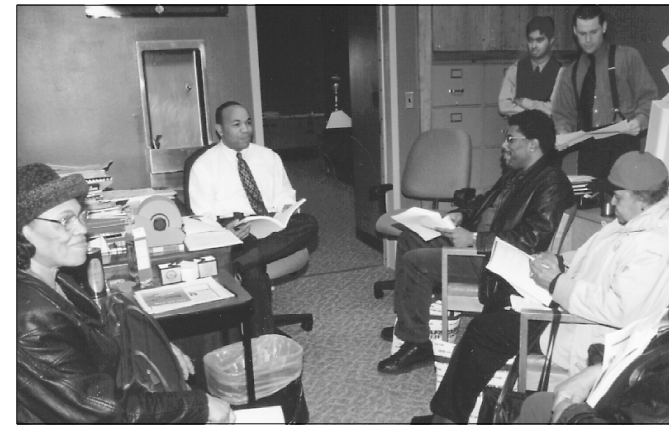
Lobby day also united union members from across the state.

"You hear so often 'what's the union doing for me?' and this is an opportunity to be involved and learn about the union," said Leon Stannard, Local president at the Willard Correctional Facility in central New York.



AFSCME President Gerald McEntee

Neil Olmstead, an Otsego County Highway Department mechanic, said his first lobby day in Albany was "incredible. You feel good about being with the union."



CSEA members on AFSCME Lobby Day, helping "to secure the future for our members."

Legionnaires' scare prompts clean sweep in Erie Co.

BUFFALO — In an extensive search for the cause of two recent cases of suspected Legionnaires' disease, an Erie County task force including union activists will monitor efforts to wipe out breeding spots in Erie County Hall.

The two recently reported cases occurred in workers at a private title search company who work in the county clerk's office.

That discovery prompted a promised comprehensive county plan for cleaning and disinfecting the aging building.

"There has been lip service to cleaning up this building of cleanliness and bad air problems in the past, by a different administration without any real follow through," said Inez Mirco, CSEA probation section president.

"Just this past winter in our department, we've had eight people come down with pneumonia, and about 15 with other respiratory problems, so we're very concerned," she added.

"Hopefully, we'll find some answers and see the end to this," said John Bieger, CSEA occupational safety and health specialist.

Sick building

CSEA members have long felt the building was unhealthy, and some have experienced illnesses such as pneumonia that could be

caused by the legionella bacteria.

Legionnaires' disease produces severe cases of pneumonia in infected people. The disease can be treated with antibiotics, but can be fatal in some cases.

"Our members are extremely upset and worried about this situation," said Ann Marie Hawes, county clerk section president.

"And they were aggravated when news reports made it seem as if the county had already done something about the

problem, when they hadn't," she said.

The county hall complex includes a landmark 19th century building connected to a modern annex. It includes the probation, motor vehicles, county clerk, probation departments and courtrooms where many CSEA members work daily.

CSEA on task force

Bieger will be part of a task force that will oversee and review a six-point plan that will include water testing, superheating and disinfecting the water system, installing ultraviolet treatment technology, removing aerators from faucets and disinfecting all window air conditioners.



CSEA occupational safety and health Specialist John Bieger meets with Office of Court Administration Local President Barbara Epstein, center, and county clerk section President Ann Marie Hawes.

Any standing water, where the bacteria grow, will be drained.

"Our members complain incessantly about colds, coughs and sinus problems they attribute to the building's condition," said Barbara Epstein, the union's Office of Court Administration Local president.

"They want to know if complete testing will be done, and done right," she said.

— Ron Wofford

Employers must provide Lyme disease protection

CSEA members working outside must be protected against Lyme disease if they are working in a known hot spot for the disease carrying ticks, under a new Public Employee Safety and Health (PESH) law — lobbied for by CSEA.

Disease transmission seems to peak from April to July, which corresponds to the time when union members are often cleaning roadsides and brush, according to the state Health Department.

Under the law, employers must provide workers with adequate disease protection, which can include a new vaccine, repellents and protective clothing.

The Centers for Disease Control recommend employers not rely on the vaccine alone.

At risk employees include DPW workers, park employees, state DOT workers, DEC rangers and foresters and animal control officers.

To find out if you qualify for protection, contact your county Department of Health to determine if you are in a high-risk area for Lyme disease.



Workplace safety and health Web sites to save:

www.aflcio.org/safety — Learn about health and safety rights at this site. Employees have a legal right to a safe workplace under the landmark 1970 Occupational Safety and Health Act. The law requires employers to provide workplaces free from recognized hazards and protects workplaces by setting and enforcing safety standards.

www.aflcio.org/rightsatwork/index.html — Learn about workers' rights at work and find help when employers violate those rights. In English, Spanish, Chinese and

Vietnamese, the site links to government agencies and advocacy groups that advise workers.

www.osha/as/opa/worker/index.html — Visit this site for questions and answers about employee rights under the OSH act. The site includes information on federal and state job safety programs, how to file a formal complaint with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and whistle-blower protections against retaliation by employers.

www.csealocal1000.net — Download CSEA's popular OSH booklets.

ValueOptions: The Empire Plan's Mental Health and Substance Program



Empire Plan enrollees need to contact ValueOptions (administrator for GHI) at 1-800-446-3995 before seeking treatment for mental health or substance abuse, including alcoholism. Enrollees with Medicare or another health insurance plan that is primary must also call. ValueOptions' Clinical Referral Line is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

In an emergency, ValueOptions will either arrange for an appropriate provider to call you back (usually within 30 minutes) or direct you to an appropriate facility for treatment. For life-threatening situations, go to the emergency room. You must call ValueOptions within 48 hours.

Benefit	Network Coverage	Network Maximum Benefit	Non-Network Coverage	Non-Network Maximum Benefit
*Inpatient Mental Health and/or Inpatient Substance Abuse	No copayment	MH - unlimited when medically necessary SA - 3 stays per lifetime (more approved case-by-case)	After \$2,000 deductible, the plan pays up to 50% of network allowance. Enrollee pays deductible and remaining balance.	MH - 30 days per year SA - 1 stay per year, 3 stays per lifetime
*Outpatient Mental Health	\$15 copay per visit Up to three visits per crisis paid in full	Unlimited when medically necessary	After \$500 deductible, the plan pays up to 50% of network allowance. Enrollee pays deductible and remaining balance.	30 visits per year
*Outpatient Substance Abuse	\$8 copay per visit	Unlimited when medically necessary	After \$500 deductible, the plan pays up to 50% of network allowance. Enrollee pays deductible and remaining balance.	30 visits per year

* All benefits apply to treatment determined medically necessary by ValueOptions. To learn more about the Empire Plan's mental health and substance abuse program, call ValueOptions at 1-800-446-3995.

Express Scripts (The Empire Plan's Prescription Drug Program)

The Empire Plan's Prescription Drug Program, administered by Cigna/Express Scripts, offers CSEA-represented state enrollees and their eligible dependents the choice of filling prescriptions at a participating pharmacy, the Express Scripts mail service pharmacy, or at a non-participating pharmacy.

Participating Pharmacy:

At a participating pharmacy, Empire Plan enrollees pay \$3 for generic drugs and \$13 for brand name drugs that have no generic equivalent. If members fill a prescription for a brand name drug that has a generic equivalent, they pay their brand name copayment plus the difference in cost between the brand-name drug and its generic equivalent. One copayment covers up to a 90-day supply.

Mail Service Pharmacy:

Members may fill their prescription through the mail service. To receive an envelope contact Express Scripts at 1-800-964-1888. The same copayments and rules for generic/brand name drugs apply as if members were using a participating pharmacy.

Non-Participating Pharmacy:

At a non-participating pharmacy the same rules for generic/brand name drugs apply as if members were using a participating pharmacy. In addition, members pay the full cost and then submit a claim for partial reimbursement to:

**CIGNA/Express Scripts
Member Reimbursement/
Claims Review Unit
P.O. Box 1180
Troy, N.Y. 12181-1180**

To find an Empire Plan participating pharmacy or to learn more about the Empire Plan's Prescription Drug Program, call Express Scripts at 1-800-964-1888.



WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

I Didn't Know You Did That

For years, the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund (EBF) has provided dental and vision programs for local government units throughout the state, but members may not know the extent of the plans the EBF offers.

Even in terms of dental and vision care, some local government members don't realize the fund has several levels of programs to choose from and options to help tailor benefit to the needs of a particular unit.

Many members also don't know the fund offers these programs:

Hearing Aid Plan

This plan provides a benefit of up to \$450 per ear once every three years towards the cost of a hearing aid, including charges for its fitting. Both employees and their eligible dependents are covered.

Legal Benefit Plan

This plan is sometimes confused with the AFSCME Legal Services Plan and the Legal Services Plan offered through CSEA. The fund's program provides financial help meeting legal expenses. Members may choose any attorney and reimbursement is sent directly to the member. There is a \$1,000 per calendar year maximum and many services cover the spouse and dependents. More information on this benefit will be featured in a future *Work Force* article.

Maternity Benefit

This program provides a \$200 benefit upon the birth of a child to either the covered member or that member's spouse to help cover the costs of maternity care.

Prescription & Physician Co-Pay Benefit Plans

These two plans provide reimbursements for co-payments paid for prescription and doctor visit co-payments. The reimbursements are processed once annually up to a maximum of \$125 for prescription and \$120 for physician co-pays.

Annual Physical Benefit

This plan reimburses eligible members and their spouses once every year for up to \$95 for the out-of-pocket cost (charges not covered by your primary insurance carrier) of a routine annual physical.

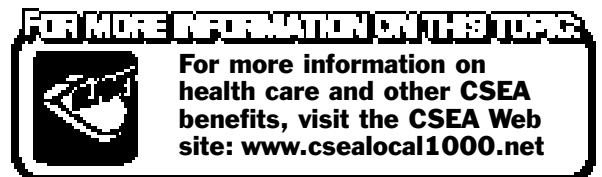
These plans and their cost, must be negotiated into your collective bargaining agreement for the fund to provide benefits.

Should any of these EBF plans be negotiated, all members are covered free of charge for the fund's workplace security plan, which insures members for trauma associated with an assault or hostage situation while performing his/her job.

For more information about the CSEA EBF and these programs, visit the EBF Web page at www.csealocal1000.net and click on the Employee Benefit Fund in the Member Benefits section.

The fund may also be reached at 1-800-323-2732 or 1-800-EBF-CSEA.

AN EVER BETTER FUTURE!



AFSCME activist conference

Honing skills that make a difference in Albany, Washington and at the polls

The walking was tough, but at the moment, Rose Belton didn't seem to mind. At least she wasn't yawning.

"I always thought political action was boring, that it had nothing to do with me," said Belton, a CSEA member and keyboard specialist for the state Education Department.

After attending AFSCME's political action training conference in Washington, D.C. recently, Belton said she was on her way to becoming a full-fledged political activist.

"It (the conference) helped to open my eyes to the political side of my life," Belton said. "I plan on becoming heavily involved."

Dozens of CSEA members from across the state attended a two-day political action training program sponsored by CSEA's international affiliate, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

"CSEA was not only the largest group there, but I think we also made the largest impact with Congress," said CSEA Westchester Local President Gary Conley.

"Working people really have a lot of influence on all levels of government when we work together," he added.

For some veterans, the training provided them with an opportunity to hone their skills.

Inside view of the Beltway

For others, the conference was an excellent opportunity to learn about the inner workings of government, gain invaluable lobbying tips and get a rare opportunity to speak with their federal legislators.

"One of the most important highlights was when we met with senators Clinton and Schumer," said Louis Smith, a 32-year CSEA member.

"I think they will be very attentive in protecting the rights of unions and helping to slow down attacks by conservative forces," he added.

Smith also boasted about the CSEA training he and other members have received over the years.

"It gave us an opportunity to see how far ahead we were when compared to other unions in the country and how much experience we have," said Smith.

Among some of the key topics discussed by Sens. Clinton and Schumer were the president's tax cut plan, prescription drugs and health care.

"It was great meeting people from all over the

United States and seeing that our issues and their issues are all the same," said Leonita Wilson, a clerk for the Law Department.



At left, CSEA members and leaders lobby U.S. Rep. Michael McNulty, standing in the front row, during their two-day political action training and lobbying in Washington, D.C., recently. Below left, CSEA President Danny Donohue and U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton tell union activists about the importance of lobbying for working family issues on Capitol Hill. Below, Maureen Malone, CSEA's treasurer, talks with U.S. Rep. Sherwood Boehlert during a lobby day in Washington. CSEA PAC Chair Dorothy Breen is at center.



Working people really have a lot of influence on all levels of government when we work together.

—Westchester Local President Gary Conley



Build confidence, commitment

With the knowledge she gained during the training, Wilson said she felt confident about talking to people about politics, registering them to vote and keeping her members better informed.

With some larger battles looming for the union movement, members like Tom Warzel seemed poised to organize and fight back.

"The program helped train and educate members for the fights ahead," said Warzel, co-chair of CSEA's Western Region Political Action Committee.

"It won't be just one battle. It will be an ongoing fight, and this really helped us prepare," he said.

Southern Region activist Micki Thoms will make sure her colleagues share the knowledge gained in Washington.

"In light of the attacks on organized labor and working families in recent months, any information I can bring back to the members will make us all better educated and in the long run, a stronger affiliate of AFSCME," Thoms said.

For Alfredo Carlo, a CSEA Local president at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, this was his first lobbying trip to Washington.

It reinforced the need to get and keep union members involved in the political process.

"I brought back copies of the lobbying fact sheets and faxed them to my members," explained Carlo.

"We are getting union members involved in political action because the federal budget affects all of our jobs," he said.

— David Galarza and Janice Marra

It's "Yes!" on contract deal for Oswego Co. workers

OSWEGO — Oswego County workers represented by CSEA have overwhelmingly approved a new contract with Oswego County.

Union members voted 2-to-1 to accept the five-year deal, which is retroactive to January 2000 and offers wage increases during the life of the agreement.

"This has been a difficult negotiation, but our members gave us a great deal of support and we remained dedicated in our efforts to address the pay equity issue, so that our members are paid more fairly for the work that they do," said CSEA Oswego County Co-Op Unit President Bill Reed.

The previous agreement for the 700 county workers expired Dec. 31, 1999.

CSEA waged an informational campaign the past year to build public support for pay equity for employees, which had been the sticking point in negotiations.

With the help of a state Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) factfinder and after the county agreed to compromise on the pay equity issue, an agreement was reached.

With wage increases in each year of the agreement, the new contract includes reallocation upgrades for about 60 titles.

It also features an expanded plan that allows employees to spend pre-tax dollars toward medical benefits, child and elder care expenses.

Difficult talks

"We felt that this agreement makes strides towards addressing the issue of pay equity for our members, and we're glad that we can put this all behind us and move forward together," Reed said.

"We had a state survey from six years ago that showed many of our members were underpaid," said CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore about the pay equity issue.

"Our members made a good case for that with the public," Moore said.

— Mark M. Kotzin

Serious Shortage of Essential Health Care Workers

"We are very concerned not only with the number of violations, but also the severity," Kenny said. In addition, the department is

gather data and identify systematic problems would help resolve these issues. Moreover, the council asked legislators to increase funding for the Long Term Care

Health Care System Strained Across New York State

Adding to the slew of press conferences held by coalitions of concerned citizens was the New York StateWide Senior Action Council, which met in Albany on Wednesday to present its 10-point 2001 Older New Yorkers Health Care Consumer Protection Platform. According to Assemblyman Steve Engebright, D-Suffolk, who spoke at the

Pataki proposed a comprehensive plan to increase nursing home protections on Jan. 14. However, there have been no recent developments in the Governor's Nursing Home Quality Improvement Act, which is stuck in the Legislature. The act calls for criminal background checks to be conducted on potential employees providing

increase nursing home protections on Jan. 14. However, there have been no recent developments in the Governor's Nursing Home Quality Improvement Act, which is stuck in the Legislature. The act calls for criminal background checks to be conducted on potential employees providing

When the people of New York are sick or elderly, they deserve good health care from trained professionals to help them get better. But today, our health care system is not keeping up. It is strained across New York State. It is suffering from a serious shortage of the essential health care workers who make the whole system work. Now it's a crisis that affects all New Yorkers and our families.

CSEA
The Work Force

Local 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO
Danny Donohue, President

HANYYS

HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE

See Related Story on Page 5

Members of CSEA and
The Healthcare
Association of New York State
support the cure:

More State funding to hire and train health care workers to care for New Yorkers today

Health care staffing and funding shortages has been a hot topic for citizens and legislators recently.

The Health Department responded to Young's comment, stating that the \$1.8 billion figure was calculated by subtracting expenses from all revenues, as reported to the department by the nursing home industry.