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Vol. 3 / No. 7

JULY 2000

THE WORK FORCE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION **CSEA** Local 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

PAC-edged Deal



CSEA delivers legislative package of COLA, state contract, pension reform

See Page 3

Your Nassau County Local 830 Express newsletter is enclosed

Photo of the Month



Photo by Mark M. Kotzin

Food service worker and CSEA member Joyce Willis stocks a cooler on the SUNY Cortland campus. The workers battled hard to join CSEA, and are now enjoying the fruits of their fight. See story at right.

Cortland food service workers get a taste of first CSEA contract

CORTLAND — Several days of marathon bargaining and a surprise visit from Cookie Monster helped forge the first pact between 125 food service workers at SUNY Cortland and their boss, a private food service vendor.

Stalled contract talks with the Auxiliary Services Corp. were jump started in May when CSEA activists on campus organized a huge petition drive and met with the college president.

A guest appearance by the cartoon character Cookie Monster, which highlighted the discipline of a CSEA member for eating a cookie on the job, also galvanized public support for the food service employees.

"The outpouring of support from the campus community really got us going," CSEA chief negotiator Mark Higgins said.

"We're pleased that the workers accepted this contract. It addresses many of the concerns that the workers had from the very beginning

when they chose to join CSEA," Higgins said.

Local President Debbie Place agreed.

"After months of hard work and long nights, our bargaining team members have won a fair overall package," Place said.

CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore said he was pleased the new CSEA members have gotten their first contract.

"We were glad to welcome these new activists to CSEA in January and we're proud that the Local has approved its first contract," Moore said.

— Mark M. Kotzin

As *The Work Force* went to press, CSEA members in the Town of DeWitt were waiting to vote on a tentative contract after several years of bitter negotiations. Look for complete coverage in the August *Work Force*.

Two local gov't units reach pacts

The union's powerful negotiating skills brought home two contracts for members working at either end of the state — one an eight-year pact for nurses and clerical workers.

About 85 nurses and clerical workers in the Schenectady School District, flogged by persistent

financial woes, are now covered by an eight-year agreement, retroactive to 1997 and expiring in 2005.

Although pay raises are not retroactive, all workers will see more than 13 percent raises, union leaders said.

More than 300 miles away, nearly 100 CSEA members at the Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency are celebrating a new three-year contract, with nearly two years of it retroactive.

The pact expires in July 2001.

"Our team was intent on hanging in there to reach a good agreement for the membership," said Pam Walker, unit president. "Our teamwork paid off, and the members appreciated it," she said.

The workers will receive raises of 3 percent in each year, and a longevity increase.

President Donohue to visit Central Region

CSEA President Danny Donohue will be available to meet with Central Region CSEA members, one-on-one, July 20 between 1 and 7 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Horseheads, 2666 Corning Road, Horseheads.

Please call the Region Office at (315) 433-0050 for an appointment and directions.

HRI workers OK contract

Private sector CSEA members at Health Research Inc. overwhelmingly approved a new four-year contract, 366-1.

The new deal includes pay raises and pension contribution eliminations similar to those in the new contract for state employees.

The agreement also calls for HRI to pay more toward health insurance for participating employees and grants CSEA-represented workers five personal days.

"This contract breaks new bargaining ground for our members in the private sector and should be a model for successful negotiations down the road," CSEA President Danny Donohue said.

"This contract addresses the issues that our members at HRI told us were important. The bargaining team worked hard to negotiate those issues at the table, and we're proud of what the team accomplished," Donohue said.

Health Research Inc. is a non-profit corporation formed in the early 1950s to secure research grants for the state Department of Health. HRI has offices in Albany and the Buffalo region, and is primarily focused on cancer and AIDS research.

— Lou Hmieleski

DONE DEAL

CSEA's legislative action yields breakthrough victories

ALBANY — CSEA's power has produced the most sweeping pension improvements in a generation for public employees.

A year of mobilization that saw state, local government and school district employees take to the streets demanding fairness and respect has paid off.

Mobilization won state employees a generous contract that included pension reform legislation that will now apply to all public employees. The union also won a permanent cost-of-living adjustment,

or COLA, for retired public employees.

The combined victories — pension changes and COLA — will put more money into the pockets of hundreds of thousands of active and retired public employees. CSEA's leadership opened the door for all other unions.

Solidarity pays off

"The strength and unity of our membership in every part of the state made this happen," noted President Danny Donohue. "Our members in local governments and school districts stood in solidarity with their state brothers and sisters throughout a yearlong contract fight and they will now benefit too."

The contract agreement reached with the Pataki Administration quickly won approval of state legislative leaders, including Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno. They followed CSEA's lead to include all public employees in the pension changes.

Effective Oct. 1, 2000, the CSEA measure eliminates the 3 percent employee contribution for members of Tiers 3 and 4 in the Retirement System with 10 years of participation in the system. This change will put an additional 3 percent of salary into their pockets.

Employees with less than 10 year's service will reap the same benefit when they reach the 10-year mark.

The pension changes are also a big plus for members of Tiers 1 and 2 in the form of enhanced retirement benefits. They will gain an additional month's service credit for each year of service, up to 24 months additional credit.

The cost of the enhanced benefits will be totally absorbed by surplus funds earned by the pension systems' investments. Since 1993, the fund's worth has increased from \$56 billion to a record \$127 billion.

CSEA wins COLA wars

The much needed pension boost has been a chief legislative goal for years.

Eligible retirees will receive the automatic

pension adjustment every year beginning September 2001. The amount will be 50 percent of the 12 month increase in the Consumer Price Index or CPI with a minimum increase of 1 percent and a maximum of 3 percent. Increases will apply to the first \$18,000 of pension. There is also a catch-up provision for older retirees.

Support for COLA reached a groundswell on May 9 when thousands of retirees converged on Albany to demand pension reform. Senate Majority Leader Bruno, Assembly Speaker Silver and Comptroller H. Carl McCall made good on their promise to deliver the legislation this session.

Pay bills OK state contracts

At the same time legislators OK'd the pension changes, they also approved the pay bills authorizing state contract raises.

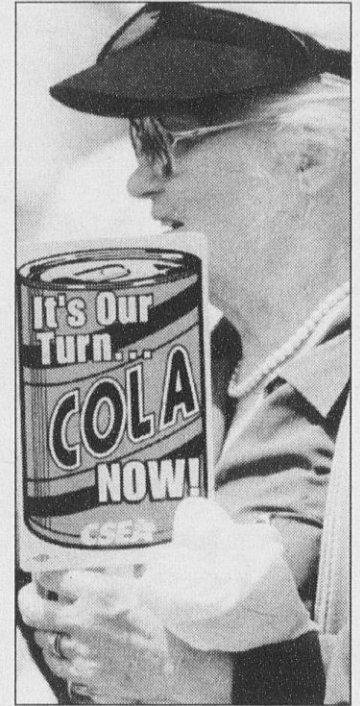
The union won contract raises which total 13 percent over four years. Employees will also get a \$500 bonus.

Once the pay bills are signed by the governor, the comptroller's office indicates it will take at least two payroll periods to process the bonus and the retroactive raises.

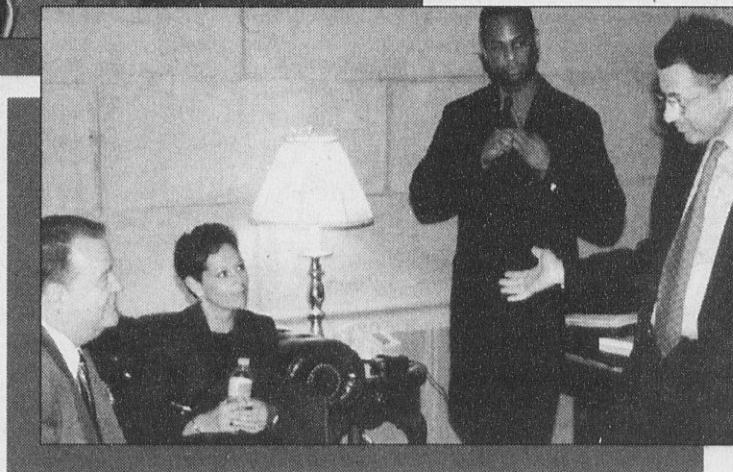
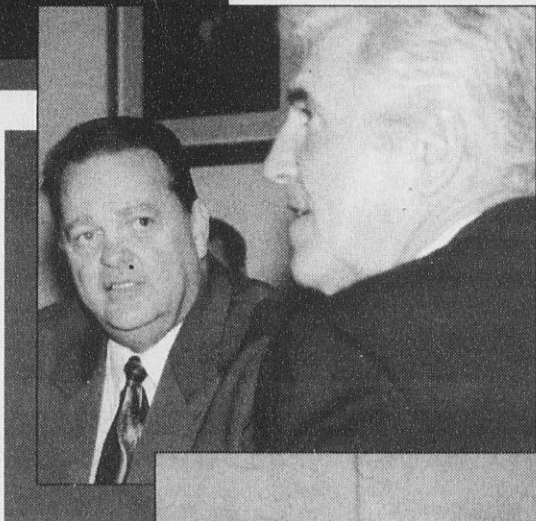
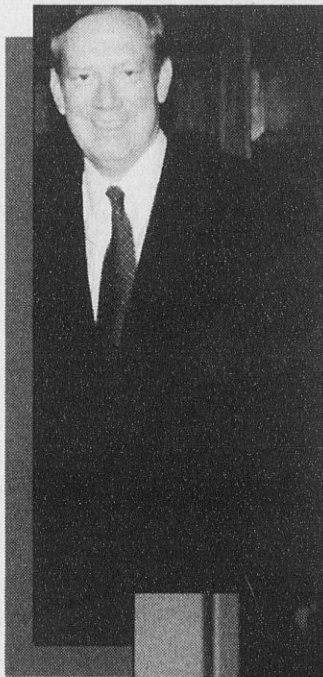
The \$500 bonus will be paid first. Retroactive raises will then be paid in the next paycheck.

For updates, go to the CSEA Website at www.cseainc.org or call the CSEA Current Issues Update at 800-342-4146.

The legislative session was ending as this edition of *The Work Force* went to press. The August *Work Force* will carry a full report of this year's legislative action affecting CSEA.



CSEA retiree at May COLA rally.



Leaving nothing to chance, CSEA Statewide President Danny Donohue met with the state's top leaders in the waning days of the state

Legislature's latest session to press CSEA priorities. At top, Gov. George Pataki enters a meeting with Donohue and AFSCME leaders. Middle, Donohue confers with state Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno. Below, a meeting with Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver.

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IN TOUCH WITH THE WORK FORCE

CSEA President Danny Donohue



Some said it couldn't be done, but CSEA members proved them wrong.

Your unity and your persistence have resulted in breakthrough legislative victories for all public employees in this state.

For the first time New York's public employee retirees will have a permanent Cost of Living Adjustment — a COLA — to help make sure pensions can begin to keep up with inflation. COLA has long been a priority objective and CSEA has delivered and we can all share in the victory.

CSEA also led the way in pension legislation resulting from state contract negotiations that will also benefit all public employees. We have successfully secured pension enhancements for all members of Tiers 1 and 2 of the Retirement system, while eliminating the 3 percent pension contribution for all members of Tiers 3 and 4 of the system who have more than 10 years service. The benefit will apply to all when they reach 10 years of service.

The agreement to seek this legislation was first agreed to at the state bargaining table with the Pataki administration and was later broadened with the support of the state legislative leaders, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Senate Majority Leader Joe Bruno, to include all public employees (especially CSEA local government and schools workers) as the right and fair thing to do.

Taken as a one-two punch, COLA and the pension enhancements pack quite a wallop. They stand out as perhaps the most significant pension reform achievements in a generation.

Not to be overlooked either is the legislative approval of the state contract which means state members will soon be seeing some sizable and well-earned retroactive raises in paychecks.

None of this would be reality if not for CSEA members standing up for what's right and fair, and standing together through adversity.

Danny

From sordid warehouse to group home

Willowbrook survivor lives the changes

Kenneth Stropak's memory of his eighth birthday is keen.

The nose-numbing stench, the horrid living conditions, the daily struggle to endure another 24 hours remain sharp-cornered images on his dark personal landscape known as Willowbrook.

This one word — Willowbrook — painted a thousand pictures a generation ago, when this infamous state warehouse for the mentally retarded on Staten Island was exposed by reporters.

Stropak, now a CSEA member and maintenance assistant in a state-run group home in Manhattan, knows all too well the horrible conditions CSEA has labored to change the last 30 years.

"It was so bad it would make you sick to your stomach," said Stropak about living at Willowbrook for 13 years.

"When you walked in the door, you wished you were turning around and walking back out," he said.

There was no turning back for the state, however.

Exposed as the human warehouses which they were — with developmentally disabled children and adults living in filth and excrement — state leaders were forced by the public's outcry to dramatically change the system for caring for the mentally retarded and developmentally disabled.

CSEA was there to help spawn the changes, union leaders said.



CSEA member Kenneth Stropak at work

Consent decree stops neglect

The Willowbrook Consent Decree, signed by state officials 30 years ago, established minimum staffing levels at state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) facilities.

"Before the consent decree, everything was lacking: staff, programming, physical plant, and activities," said CSEA Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio, a long-time mental hygiene activist.

"We have seen the monumental differences these things make. That is why CSEA is fighting so hard to keep staffing levels up and to ensure care is provided by qualified workers," Boncoraglio added.

No longer would the woefully inadequate staffing levels and horrendous conditions found at Willowbrook be repeated.

Sitting in the dark for years

At the age of 3, Stropak was placed in the Rome State School. Five years later, in 1952, Stropak was transferred to Staten Island, "where I survived Willowbrook."

"The environment was so poor," Stropak said.

"I'd just sit on the ward all day. It was like sitting in the dark, no one knows you're there," said Stropak.

"The education was very poor at that

time. I didn't start my education until I was 10 years old, which was too late.

"The teachers didn't want to be bothered with teaching. They didn't have any grades, you learned a little bit of arithmetic and spelling, but 10 years old is too late to start when you've never had an education. It's like sitting in the dark," Stropak explained.

Better conditions today

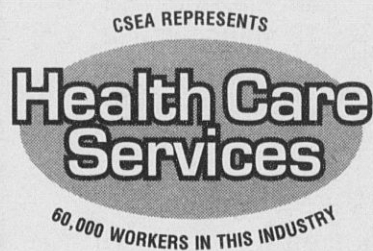
"Today the individuals — I call them individuals — are living in a lot cleaner environment. I keep it that way, I try my best. It's not an institution, it's a home," Stropak said about his job maintaining the group home.

As a maintenance assistant, Stropak helps with the painting, plumbing, gardening, and the other tasks necessary to make the group home comfortable for the residents.

"Today, when they come back from their state programs, they have activities, then snack, then activities, then community trips. There is just a huge difference in the way they're treated and cared for," he said, comparing the way he was treated at Willowbrook with today's programs.

"This is my group home," said Stropak. "I've become a sort of client's advocate, so they have a better life than what I went through. I'm glad these changes have happened, but I'm also kind of upset in a way because it should have been done 20 years earlier," he lamented.

— Ann Carroll



WORK FORCE FACTS

The unbearable conditions at Willowbrook were exposed by a young investigative TV reporter, Jerry Rivers, who won several awards for his expose.

Rivers went on to change his name to Geraldo Rivera, making a name for himself as a tabloid TV reporter and host.

Voices of the Work Force

"I prepare food for the patients here. Three meals a day for 450 patients. We don't face too many challenges here, our equipment is all new, we have enough staff, and we have proper training. As far as the patients go, food is really important to them. They don't have much, so they really look forward to meals and snacks. We treat patients as you would want your family members to be treated if they were in the hospital."

— Chris O'Day, food service worker and 23-year employee at South Beach Psychiatric Center



From hospitals to handcuffs



Sol Wachtler

If anyone knows more about what's wrong with New York's treatment of the mentally ill than front-line CSEA members, it's former New York State Chief Justice Sol Wachtler.

Wachtler's tragic story is familiar to many New Yorkers. He was the state's top judge and a highly respected legal mind, who was considered a strong

potential gubernatorial candidate in the early 1990s.

But his political and legal career was suddenly brought to ruin when he was arrested by the FBI for a bizarre series of incidents involving his former lover.

Although he was diagnosed with a bi-polar mental illness, he was sentenced to prison.

"If I hadn't been under private psychiatric care while under house arrest before I went to prison, I wouldn't be functional today," Wachtler said.

"I saw a psychiatrist once while in prison ... I don't know how he was trying to help me or teach me because I never saw him again," Wachtler said.

Today, Wachtler is speaking out as a powerful voice for the mentally ill and also working with the court system to help judges

understand what mental illness is really all about. His painful and moving personal story struck a responsive chord at a recent public forum, "From Hospitals to Handcuffs: The criminalization of mental illness."

The program was presented by the Mental Health Association in New York State and co-sponsored by CSEA and other groups.

For decades, New York has dumped clients out of its psychiatric centers without adequately developing alternative treatment.

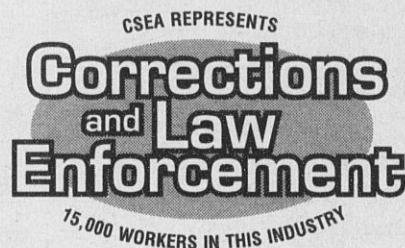
Increasingly, these individuals are ending up in the state's jails and prisons where they receive little appropriate help for their psychiatric conditions.

Ironically, in the 1840s, advocates for the mentally ill convincingly argued to treat patients in hospitals instead of jails because they were sick, not criminal.

Yet today there are more mentally ill persons in jails and prisons than there are in the psychiatric system.

Wachtler and other speakers at the forum, including former State Senator and New York City Corrections Commissioner Catherine Abate, said there is clear evidence that better treatment of mentally ill individuals in and out of prison is not only more humane but also cost-effective.

Wachtler, meanwhile, is working on a project with the state Office of Court Administration this summer to better educate



WORK FORCE FACTS

The vast majority of individuals with mental illness are neither violent nor dangerous to themselves or others. Yet more and more mentally ill

individuals are ending up in jails and prisons nationwide.

Nationwide there are an estimated 10 million people with at least one mental disorder.

WHERE ARE THEY:

- * At home: 6 million
- * Homeless: 500,000
- * Hospitals, nursing homes, residences, institutions: 500,000
- * Jails, prisons: 3 million

* Source: The Information Exchange

judges about mental illness.

The approach is to help them determine how to sentence individuals to prisons where they can receive treatment or divert them to non-prison settings.

— Stephen A. Madarasz

CSEA members see increase of mentally ill inmates in jails, prisons

CSEA members who work in New York's jails and prisons see the problems that individuals with mental illness face every day.

CSEA Licensed Practical Nurse Phil Dinan waits in the receiving area of Downstate Correctional facility every day for inmates to be checked in.

Dinan and his partner interview the inmates one-on-one to determine their health problems and refer them accordingly. Health issues range from asthma and diabetes to HIV and psychiatric problems.

"We keep an eye out for inmates who suffer from mental problems and refer them to the mental hygiene unit," said Dinan, a 12-year veteran of the 1,200-bunk facility.

"Those who have severe mental problems have a hard time coping," he said. "It makes everyone's job just a little bit harder. We don't have the staff to monitor one-on-one."

CSEA member Ruth Miller has worked as an LPN at Downstate since 1987. In her opinion, a large percentage of the prisoners

she interviews suffer from mental health problems.

Miller's co-worker Michelle Taylor agreed as she finished interviewing a 20-year-old inmate charged with sexual assault.

"This person has never been schooled and was not competent to stand trial and doesn't belong here — he acted out what he knew," she said.

The problems are just as real for CSEA members in many local jails and correctional facilities.

"People who are mentally ill need a whole lot more one-on-one management in a correction setting," said Onondaga Department of Corrections Sgt. Fred Carlton a CSEA member and 17-year Housing Unit supervisor at the County Correctional facility outside Syracuse. "The Correctional setting can be pretty harsh for someone with

mental illness ... a treatment setting would be more appropriate for many," he said. "We're not really prepared or capable of helping them and that causes more problems."

— Lynn Thompson and Mark M. Kotzin

Voices of the Work Force



"I have been a dental assistant in both the public and private sector. They are different, but they are both good. It gets difficult dealing with the attitudes of the inmates.

"They are always demanding and wanting more than the guidelines entitle them to. They don't always listen when you explain to them what they are entitled to."

— Maria V. Resto, dental assistant, Queensboro Correctional Facility, Long Island City

Probation officer uses books to write crime-free chapters in convicts' lives

SYRACUSE — They've had the book thrown at them and landed in jail.

Now CSEA member Brian Mayock is handing them the book to keep them out of the slammer.

Mayock, an Onondaga County probation officer, has combined his passion for work and his love of books to help keep those he works with out of jail.

Mayock, CSEA Unit president for the county Probation Department, first heard of the innovative reading program to give books to probationers at the annual meeting of the American

Probation and Parole Association. The premise of the program is simple and effective.

Take a group of probationers, introduce them to literature with themes familiar to their lives, and in a group setting with authority figures they can relate to.

In group discussions, allow the ex-cons to relate to literary characters and understand their actions have consequences and they can change their lives.

"What we're hoping they're doing is taking a look at their own life and experiences in examining what the characters in the books went through," Mayock said. Mayock brought the program idea to his supervisors and successfully applied for a grant to fund it.

Reading sets them free

A dozen men, ages 18 to 41, who would otherwise be in jail, agreed to take part in the year-long venture.

The group read books, took field trips to book lectures and went on a book-buying trip to Barnes & Noble, which donated gift certificates.

All who took part liked the program.

"It was extremely positive. There were some doubters going into it; afterwards, they all expressed gratitude and

thought it was helpful," Mayock said.

"A few of them have talked about wanting to go back to school. They're little victories, but they are victories," he added.

Hoping the program reduces recidivism as it has in other states, county officials will seek funding to offer the program next year.

Union activism at work

Mayock credits his CSEA activism with giving him the confidence to approach managers with new ideas and knowing he'll be taken seriously.

"My activity as a union president has increased my standing with the administration. They know that I'm somebody of action and if I come to them with an idea, they know it's something that I'll follow through with," Mayock said.

Everyone benefits

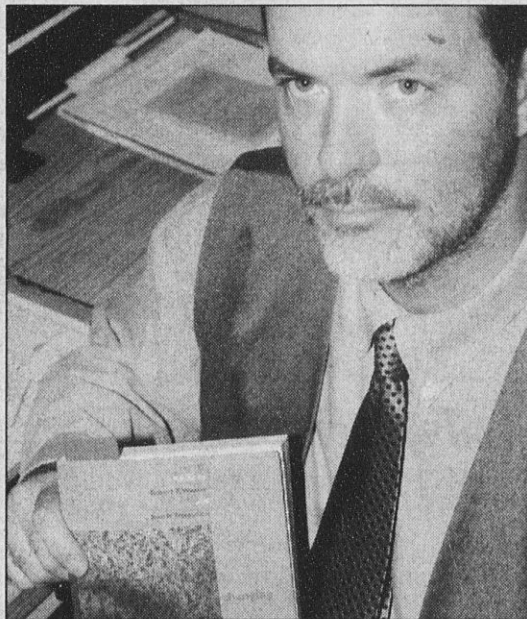
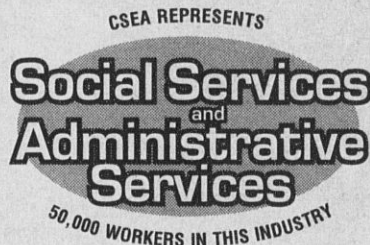
Mayock said he's proud the program is successful.

"This has been fantastic. It's given me pride in taking on a challenge, trying something new and discovering a lot of other people thought it was a good idea," Mayock said.

Mayock says it will also help him professionally in working and communicating with probationers.

"I learned just as much from these guys, in how they look at the world," he said.

— Mark M. Kotzin



CSEA member Brian Mayock shows materials from a reading program he instructs to probationers.

Voices of the Work Force



"I love my job, working with the people here I window contact with the managers and children, I get to meet and greet them all, ages 0 to 100. It is very interesting, because everything is different, day-to-day. I have no problems here — the experience, meeting people, the medical technology is great. Everything is rewarding, so I love to come to work.

— Madeline Ann Tinney, Institute for Basic Research
Keyboard Specialist II

WORK FORCE FACTS

- Probation is the hub of the criminal justice system
- Probation is the most used corrections sanction
- 179,208 people are on probation in New York State

— New York State Probation Officers Association

CSEA's Sullivan

tells lawmakers:

Connections does not compute

ALBANY — The state's bedeviled Connections Child Welfare Computer System simply doesn't work, CSEA Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan told three Assembly committees recently.

"It does not help protect the state's most troubled children, and is forcing social services workers to spend more time with paperwork than with troubled kids," Sullivan told the committees.

"According to our members, the system frequently crashes, is inefficient and wastes time that should be spent investigating child abuse cases. It has not saved the state any money or improved services to children in any way," Sullivan said.

CSEA members who work for county social service departments have said the cantankerous, unforgiving and hugely expensive computer program — installed by a private contractor — is impossible to work with and even prevents them from making corrections to mistakes appearing in files.

Several audits by state Comptroller H. Carl McCall have found serious problems in the purchasing, installation and accounting of the \$176.4 million boondoggle.

"Connections was supposed to better coordinate the child services work of the state with counties and private agencies that provide child welfare services, but it doesn't.

Information reported to the child abuse hotline was supposed to be readily available to social services workers across the state who could follow up, but it isn't. Other information such as past complaints was supposed to be included, but it's not," Sullivan testified.

— Lou Hmieleski

Their job is "boring"

Always on edge, drilling crews go deep

ALBANY — It's strangely quiet in the middle of a once traffic-snarled highway artery leading into Albany.

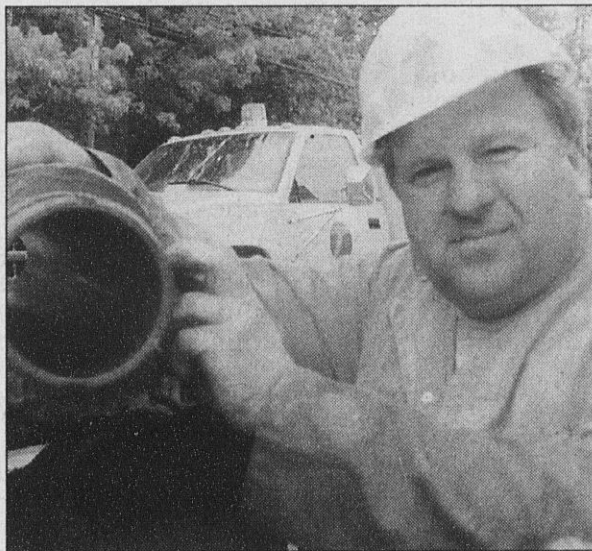
A 300 foot-long section of road and one business lie broken and crumbled at the bottom of an unstable 400-foot slope.

Rain, unneeded and unwelcome, pelts the drilling crew huddled next to a big rig planted only feet from the abyss.

It's another day of being coated with muck and mire for CSEA members Donna Okoski, Andy Johnston, Todd Knight, and Greg Piascik, who are punching yet another hole into the earth to find out why the road and business slid into a raging stream hundreds of feet below.

Shake, rattle and roll

The union members belong to an elite state Department of Transportation drilling crew, which bores deep into the earth to find the causes of landslides, building shifts, and other earthy problems under buildings and highways.



Above left, CSEA member Greg Piascik at the work site. Above right, the chasm created in Delmar after a massive landslide. Below right, Andy Johnston, left, and Donna Okoski work on a drilling rig.

The soil samples taken by the drill bits are sent to DOT engineers for analysis.

Often perched with their rigs precariously near the edge of cliffs — as they were in Albany recently — these drillers weather all types of bad weather to get the job done.

"Going good, going good," Johnston repeated as Okoski cleaned a hollow drill section wide enough to swallow her two fists.

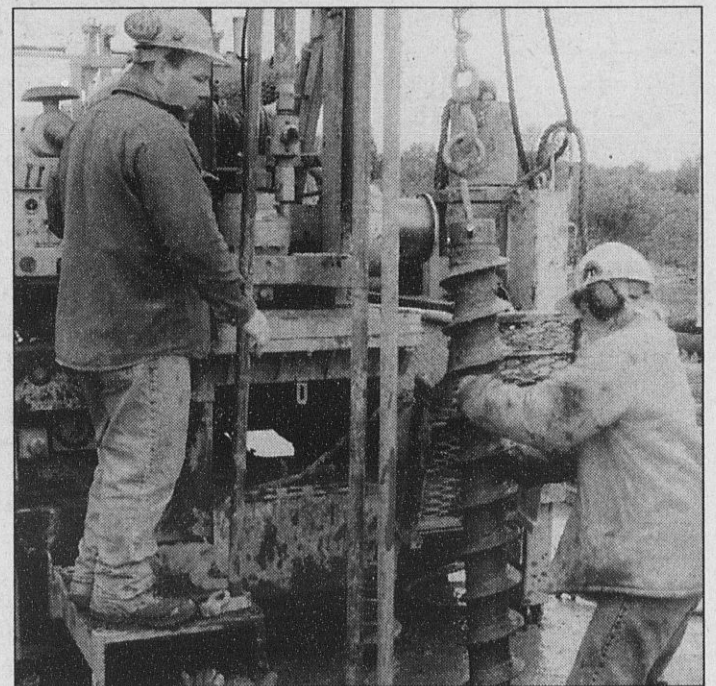
The new hole, 120-foot deep, will house either a ground movement or water level sensor.

The strain of a long string of 17-hour days since the rain-induced landslide closed the major highway between Albany and a suburb is starting to show.

The work is backbreaking. The deepest hole is 184 feet with others almost as deep. Each hole is drilled slowly and carefully — one five-foot drill section at a time.

"The lab which gets these soil samples is saying that we're sending them the best samples they have seen in years," Piascik, of Syracuse, said. "This crew is just the best," he added.

— Daniel X. Campbell



Layoffs put drill crews between rock and hard place

The CSEA members who punch holes into the earth have seen crews downsized over the years, leaving the state short of drilling crews when emergencies like the Albany mud slide occur, union leaders said.

The state Department of Transportation (DOT) had drill crews in every region of the state, but layoffs have thinned the ranks.

"We used to have 17 or 18 drill crew members in Buffalo," a union member and longtime veteran of the DOT budget battles recalled.

Utica doesn't have a drill crew, although the

state is trying to assemble one. "That's hard to do without people having the skills needed to do the job," said another union source.

Private contractors also can't fill the void, CSEA members said.

"Contractors can't do the job the way it should be done," an experienced driller added.

"They have too high of a turnover rate. And they're in it for the money — not for doing the job right. For the public employees, it used to be the way to a real solid career of doing a hard job the right way," the union member said.

CSEA REPRESENTS

Waste
Management,
Maintenance &
Infrastructures

30,000 WORKERS IN THIS INDUSTRY

Voices of the Work Force

"The state has been taking away guard rail work and bridge work that we could be doing, by giving it to private subcontractors. And if they do a poor job, and leave with the money that could have been used to hire more workers, the public blames us, and we had nothing to do with it. I like keeping the roads open for my community, my family, my friends and neighbors. We're working short-handed on crews, and have been for quite a while."

— Gerry Baader, state Department of Transportation bridge crew supervisor in Pittsford



A day in the life of school workers may involve saving a life

Saving lives isn't in their job descriptions, but for three union members who work in schools, keeping kids breathing was part of a routine work day.

Two CSEA members in the North Country and one in the mid-Hudson Valley recently saved the lives of three school children who were choking on food and candy while riding school buses or eating in the cafeteria.

"I'll never forget that day," sighed Eleanor Stafford, a bus driver in the Willsboro School District who helped save the life of 7-year-old Sydney Sweatt.

Seconds of terror

Stafford's normally tranquil bus ride was shattered when fourth grader Ryan Pierce screamed: "Sydney's choking!" The boy tried to help his classmate by administering the Heimlich maneuver, but his size frustrated his valiant efforts.

Stafford quickly wheeled the bus to the curb and rushed to Sweatt.

"Her eyes were wide open and her face was changing color," the driver said.

Stafford performed the Heimlich maneuver twice and a sour ball candy another child had given Sweatt flew from her mouth.

"I took Sydney home on the bus,"

Stafford said, "and told her mother what had happened."

Sweatt's mother, Alyson Hutchins, thanked Stafford and the young Pierce for their heroic efforts.

"You never think that when you send your child off to school they might not come back. Eleanor's a wonderful person. If it wasn't for her quick actions, who knows what would have happened?" the mother said.

Danger at Dannemora

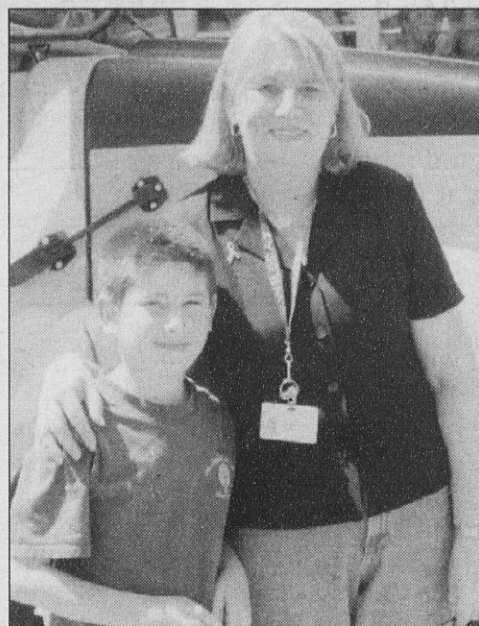
A few miles away, head cook and CSEA member Annette Miner quickly stopped a bad situation at the Dannemora Elementary School from getting worse.

Edward "Billy" Bouvia, 10, started choking on some Jello. Miner dropped the plates she was washing and rushed to his side.

"Billy was reddish blue in the face and his body was very limp," Miner recalled. His body was so limber that when Miner put her arms around him to perform the Heimlich maneuver she was unable to get a good grip around his torso. She finally succeeded, and Bouvia recovered.

Later in the day, a few sixth grade girls went up to Miner and gave her hugs.

"I kind of needed it, at that point," Miner said about the ordeal. Bouvia's parents stopped at the school to thank Miner and Saranac Central Schools Superintendent



Above left, bus driver Celia Ross and Brendan Henne. At right, bus driver Eleanor Stafford with Ryan Pierce, left, and Sydney Sweatt.



Photo by Michael Phillips

Michael Derrigo praised the 11-year public employee, saying, "We could have had a fatality on our hands without Annette."

Fireball chokes child

CSEA member Celia Ross drew on her first aid skills learned years ago to prevent a fourth grade Warwick student from choking to death during her school bus run recently.

"One of the kids told me Brendan Henne was choking," Ross said.

The 10-year-old student had been given a fireball jawbreaker which lodged in his throat when the bus hit a bump in the road.

"He was wheezing, turning bright red and holding his throat," said Ross.

Ross pulled the child from his seat and administered the Heimlich maneuver about five times before the candy was expelled.

Henne recovered and went to school. Ross completed her run.

Henne's mother, Kathleen, noticed her son was acting oddly when he returned home that afternoon.

"I had to console him for 45 minutes after he told me what happened," said the mother. "He's the love of my life — thank God Celia was there," she added.

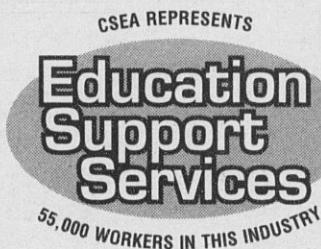
— Daniel X. Campbell and Lynn Thompson

Voices of the Work Force

"I work in the school district and I love the children. Seeing all their beautiful faces each day is the best part of the job. I work one-on-one with special needs children and I do projects for the principal. I also coach the boys' varsity bowling team. I have a degree now and I am currently taking law classes."



— Donna Smith, Bayport/Bluepoint School District teacher's aide



WORK FORCE FACTS

The recently approved state budget includes an **8.7% increase in education aid for a total of \$1.2 billion in additional money for school districts. The new aid will support pre-K programs, reduce class sizes, pay for services that CSEA school district members provide and help ease the local tax burden. CSEA supported increased aid ... AND WON!**

INSIDE THE WORK FORCE

Boaters' hell and high water: CSEA members showcase smiles along miles of Barge Canal

Come hell or high water they worked, turning a boater's floating hell created by surging high water in the state's Barge Canal into a memorable, pleasant delay for inland mariners.

As a week-long deluge temporarily closed parts of the canal, scores of stranded boaters on their way from here to there were treated royally by CSEA members who tend the 524-mile waterway.



Meet Bob Barratiere, a CSEA member and state Canal Corp. lock operator in Niskayuna who became the unofficial goodwill ambassador and canal concierge to the bivouacked boaters.

Ask and Bob will deliver

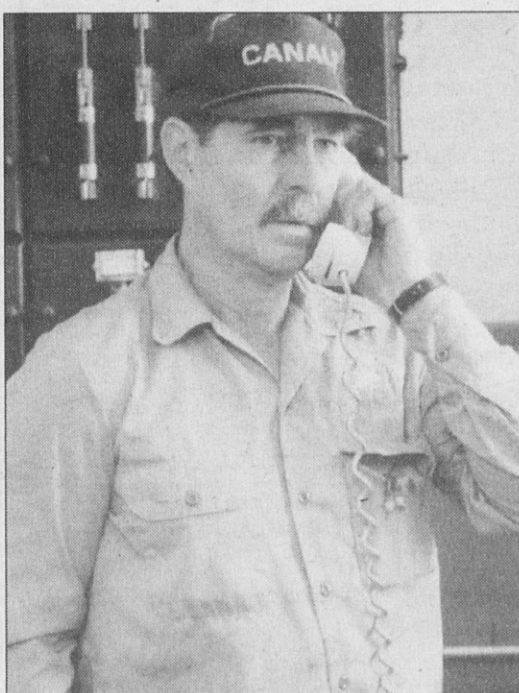
Need some milk? No problem. A fax machine? Bikes for the kids to ride? No problem.

As good as a five-star hotel concierge, Barratiere quickly became aware of the boaters' needs.

Each morning he arrived at work loaded with bread, milk, coffee and cold cuts and then would begin making arrangements for the boaters to get hot showers, do their laundry and make phone calls.

So hospitable was Barratiere and the Canal Corp. managers that cars were made available so CSEA members could drive the stranded boat crews to appointments. The staff at Lock 23 in Brewerton drove a stranded boater to a doctor for treatment of a yacht-sized case of the flu.

"As far as the boaters, anything they need, we try to help them out," said Larry Haskins, a lock operator and CSEA member working on the locks near Syracuse.



Not cruising on the canal created cabin cruiser fever among some of the skippers and crew, but John Waloven, chief lock operator at Oswego, said everyone went with the flow.

"The boaters are anxious, they want to get where they're going, but they realize that there's nothing we can do about the conditions," Waloven said.

"They've all been pretty congenial," he added.

World-class hospitality

CSEA members working the locks from Waterford to Syracuse used the five-day rain delay to showcase their professionalism and upstate hospitality.

One stranded captain needed a part for an engine repair. Skilled union members solved his problem by fabricating the part for him; canal workers are accustomed to such restoration projects since they are part of a living museum stretching the width of New York State.

"We're working with metal fabricating equipment dating from the late 1800s. Making a part for a current piece of equipment was a snap," Barratiere said proudly.

James Allen, captain of the 60-foot "Hat Trick," said he and the other stranded boaters were amazed at the hospitality shown to them.

"I grew up in Florida," said Allen. "We don't have that type of hospitality down there."

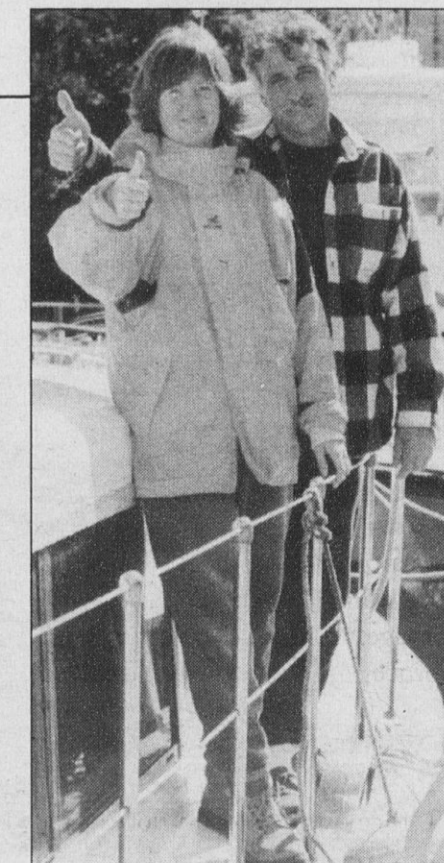
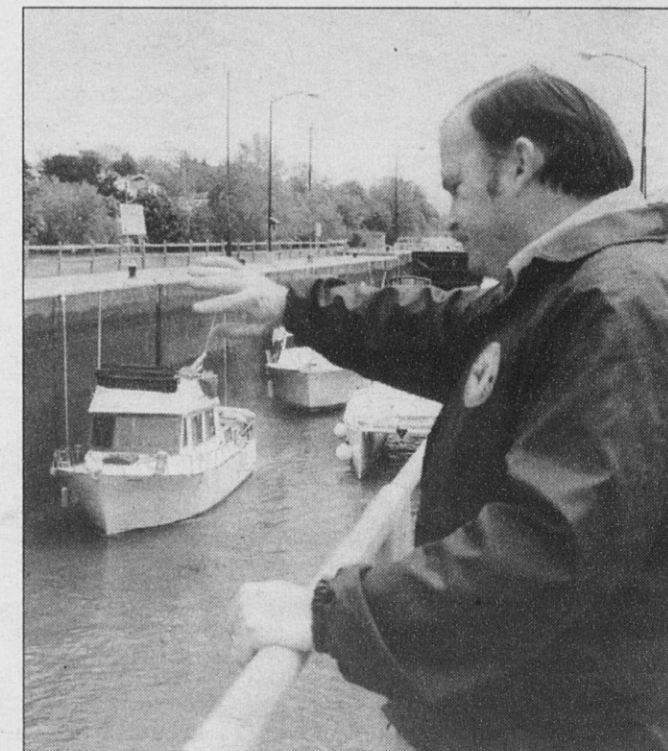
Going nowhere fast

A few hundred miles away, a small flotilla of sailboats and yachts bobbed aimlessly at the Barge Canal locks

holding pen for anxious sailors waiting to get underway.

Mario and Maria Tirone surveyed the swollen canal waters and mentally charted their course from Florida to Buffalo where they would visit their grandchildren.

"The staff here are phenomenal," gushed Maria Tirone about CSEA

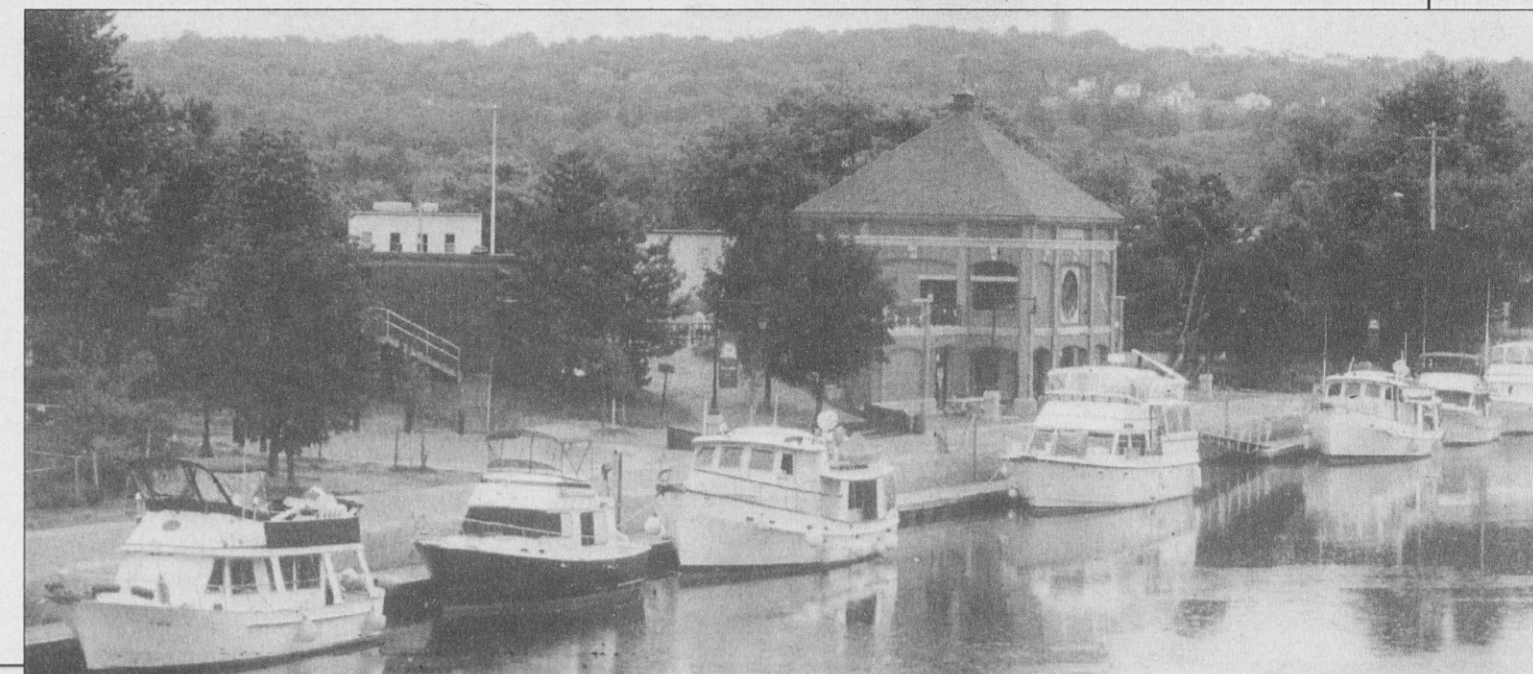


members who made their delay more bearable.

"Helpful beyond belief. These wonderful employees should be applauded by everyone," chimed Mario.

"The whole system — everyone has been super!" he added.

— Daniel X. Campbell and Mark M. Kotzin



On opposite page, top photo, CSEA Canal Corp. employees Jas Yolks and Bob Barratiere at Lock 7 in Niskayuna helped make stranded boaters as comfortable as possible.

Center, Barratiere shows some of the equipment dating back to the late 1800s used to operate the lock.

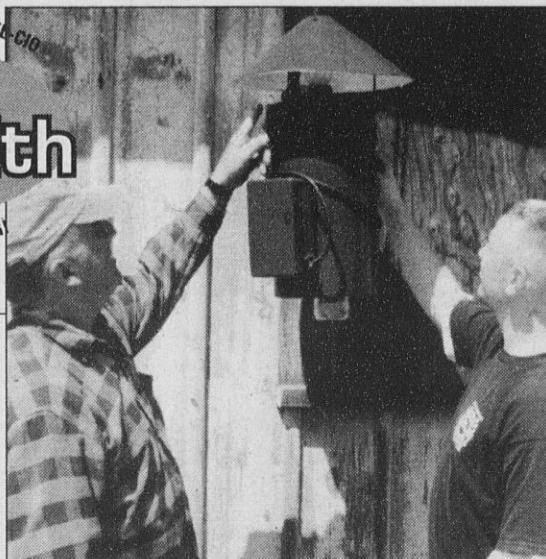
Bottom left, the oldest boat in the Canal Corp. fleet, the Urger, was caught in the flood in Waterford.

Bottom right, Lock Operator Larry Haskins in the powerhouse at Lock 23 in Brewerton, where he gave tours to stranded boaters.

This page, top left, Chief Lock Operator Josephus Wills in Oswego waves to boaters as they pass through the locks. "There's no such thing as a boring day on the canal," he told some boaters waiting to pass through his lock.

Top right, boaters Maria and Mario Tirone give a big "thumbs up" to the canal workers.

Bottom, boats stranded at Lock 2 in Waterford when the canal system between Waterford and Syracuse was closed because of unusually heavy rains.



CSEA members Joe Brodtman and Michael Chicarelli check out the light box.

West Nile virus battle plan includes educating public

LONG ISLAND — CSEA member Greg Terrillion is among the legion of workers fighting the West Nile virus — a deadly disease carried by mosquitoes which doctors and bug experts said may be on the move across New York State this summer.

As a mosquito control supervisor for Nassau County for 28 years, Terrillion has a battle plan that includes working with other agencies to educate citizens about reducing or even eliminating the need to spray pesticides to control the menace.

“These mosquitoes breed in stagnant water that can be found in old tires, garbage can lids, toys, gutters and pool covers. We are educating people on removing these breeding grounds,” said Terrillion.

The West Nile virus can be deadly, especially for the elderly and those with weak immune systems.

Last year one person’s death was attributed to the virus.

At Hecksher State Park in Suffolk County, several marshy areas have been sprayed. Park managers have set up bat houses and the county maintains light boxes which trap mosquitoes for testing.

“The bats eat the mosquitoes so it’s a natural form of control,” said Park Manager Dave Auguste.

“These mosquitoes peak mid-June to mid-August and our goal is to reduce the use of pesticides by eliminating stagnant water around people’s homes and doing community clean ups,” Terrillion said.

— Sheryl C. Jenks



Keep cool on the job

Working indoors or out, your body needs more fluids in the summer.

Signs of heatstroke include:

- nausea or “feeling funny”
- light headedness
- shortness of breath

Workers’ comp legal program helps members heal, return to work

WRIGHTS CORNERS — The CSEA help she received to endure repetitive motion or carpal tunnel syndrome surgery, and the needed time off for recovery, has made Kate Balistreri a staunch advocate of the CSEA Workers’ Compensation Legal Assistance Program (WCLAP).

“I can’t say enough about how the program helped me through some very trying times,” said Balistreri, a 15-year senior library clerk for the Nioga Library, which serves Niagara, Orleans and Genesee counties.

“And I’m glad that my experience with carpal tunnel syndrome has led to measures that will help prevent or lessen its severity for my co-workers,” she said.



Kate Balistreri shows one of the scars left after surgery for carpal tunnel syndrome.

Hurts to type

Balistreri had surgery on both wrists and elbows after enduring six months of pain and tingling in her hands and wrists, which began in 1993. “I had waited about six months before deciding to see a doctor,” she said. “It was frustrating, because I didn’t know what was happening to me. Repetitive strain injury was new at the time, and I thought I might be off maybe six to eight weeks. But my doctor advised it could be longer, and it turned into two years,” she said.

Fears allayed by CSEA program

A single mother at the time, Balistreri said she worried about losing her job because no one in her office had taken that much time off and returned to work.

That’s where WCLAP was supportive by having the correct legal information and needed guidance, through CSEA’s representative law firm, Fine, Olin and Anderman, she said.

“Before I decided I had to see a doctor, I had prayed about it,” Balistreri said.

“And the next morning at work, I noticed, on the CSEA bulletin board in our break room, a flier that said ‘Know your rights’ which was the very information that led me to help I would receive.

“It spelled out what workers’ compensation is, eligibility, how to file a claim and get coverage — everything I needed. And the tax-free two-thirds pay during recovery was so helpful. It eased my fears,” she said.

Her case prompts changes

Balistreri said the library’s insurance provider has surveyed her workplace, and instituted measures such as keyboard wrist pads, foot rests and other preventive steps for employees.

“I’m still limited to a four-hours maximum on the keyboard, but I can do many of the duties that the job calls for,” she said.

“I really love my job, and I’m thankful to CSEA and Fine, Olin and Anderman for helping me return to work,” Balistreri said.

WCLAP information is available at all CSEA region offices, and CSEA headquarters at 1-800-342-4146.

— Ron Wofford



EXPRESS



*A Message From Nassau County Local 830
President Anthony Giustino*

Safeguarding the Workplace Is a Major Concern for CSEA

The protections that CSEA offers its members are wide ranging. Yet, many people tend to think of us simply as the guardians of salaries and benefits such as health insurance and holidays.

One of the truly important aspects of CSEA activism is also one that receives little notice on a day-to-day basis. It has to do with the health and safety of our members while on the job, usually referred to with the catch phrase "working conditions."

In many ways, this responsibility is more difficult and more daunting than other issues. For instance, air quality in a building has to be certified as "poor" before corrective action can even begin. That means installing a special machine over the course of several days and then waiting for the result to be analyzed by the Health Department. Armed with that information, we are then able to petition for corrective action.

Fortunately, federal safety guidelines have been established through the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, better known simply as OSHA. We are also fortunate to have a county administration that is responsive to our complaints regarding unsafe or unhealthy working conditions. A labor/management health and safety committee attempts to resolve complaints and correct problems as quickly as possible.

Each year, the county celebrates Workers' Memorial Day in April to memorialize those who have died on the job and to focus on workplace safety.

On page 4 in this edition of *The Express*, you will find a story about several recent successes we have had regarding working conditions. I think you will find it interesting.

CSEA members who become aware of any health or safety problems at their work sites should report them immediately to the CSEA office — 571-2919.

Yours in unionism,

Tony Giustino, President
Nassau Local 830



**A Message from
Long Island Region President
Nick LaMorte**

Summer is upon us and the heat is on. Speaking of heat we recently turned up the temperature on the first contract campaign for the private sector Long Beach Medical Center workers by staging a major labor rally in the City of Long Beach. (See Page 16 in *The Work Force*.) My sincere thanks to so many who made the event a success.

My installation dinner was a wonderful event and it was great to be surrounded by my esteemed officers, friends and family.

As we went to press the county was putting the final touches on the state deal to avail itself of financial aid in return for finding \$50 million in cuts this year.

The county found that money, thanks to all of you who voted to accept the lag payroll rather than see 500 layoffs.

CSEA is proud of your selflessness and we know that it is your hard work and dedication that makes Nassau County work.

I hope all our dads had a wonderful Father's Day and that you all enjoy a happy and healthy July 4th. My hat is off to all our veterans whose sacrifices allow us to celebrate our freedom.

Fraternally yours,

Nick LaMorte, president
CSEA Long Island Region

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.**

CSEA Nassau County Local 830
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Robert Cauldwell, 3rd Vice President
Raymond Cannella, 4th Vice President
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Eileen Jones, District Attorney/County Attorney
Louis Minghinelli, Health Department
Lillian Neumat, Police Department Civilian
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Paul Simon, Fire & Rescue Services
Martin Stamile, Department of Public Works
Michael Timmons, Social Services Department
George Walsh, Nassau County Medical Center
Joseph Whittaker, Fire Marshal's Office
Peter Wrba, Probation

We 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.

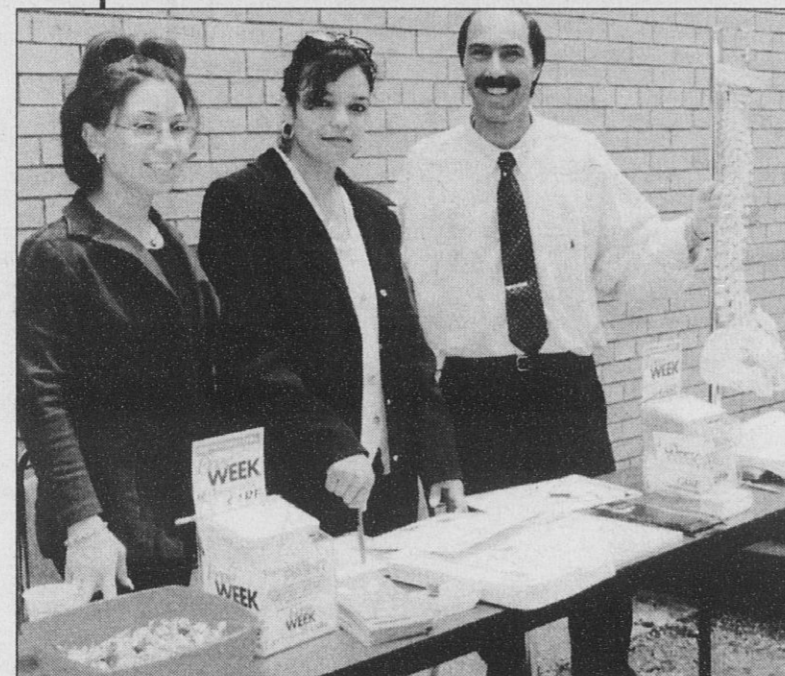


Season's Opening at Healthy Heart Haven

Raffle prizes, gifts, food and valuable information were all in evidence at the official season opening of the Healthy Heart Haven in the courtyard of 400 County Seat Drive, Mineola. The Healthy Heart Haven was established with grant money as part of the CSEA/HIP Healthy Heart Program, designed to encourage a healthy lifestyle among CSEA members.



Above, CSEA members relax at Healthy Heart Haven.



Above, CSEA officers pose at booth of Marielena Cirolia, second from left, a member of the Crossing Guards Unit and owner of "Your Gentle Spirit" aromatherapy products. CSEA officers are, from left, Crossing Guard Unit President Mary DelMare, Local 830 Executive Vice President Jane D'Amico and 5th Vice President Jewel Weinstein.

At left, Dr. Allen Kaplan and staff members were on hand to give out information on the benefits of chiropractic care.

NCMC Expands Hours at "Doctors After Hours" Center

Sunday hours at the "Doctors After Hours" Center have been expanded. Effective immediately, the Center will open at 2 p.m. instead of 7 p.m. on Sundays. It will continue to be open until 7 a.m.

The facility at the Nassau County Medical Center in East Meadow offers medical care to the whole family all night long. Its hours from Monday to Saturday are 7 p.m. to 7 a.m.

The center provides prompt medical attention for the treatment of flu, sore throats, minor cuts and other illnesses. Staffed by board-certified internists and pediatricians, the program provides patients with quality medical attention in 30 minutes or less or the basic visit is free.

Patients who are found to have more serious medical problems will be transferred to the adjoining Emergency Department. Free parking is available directly in front of the entrance on Hempstead Turnpike.

For more information, patients can call 572-0108.

Great CSEA Discounts Available for Summer Fun

CSEA members who are planning to take the family on outings this summer should be aware that Local 830 provides some great discounts to several amusement parks.

They include:

- Hershey Park, Pennsylvania
- Dorney Park, Pennsylvania
- Six Flags/Great Adventure, New Jersey
- Sesame Place, Pennsylvania

Discounts vary, but all are money-saving and some include area lodging and other local attractions.

CSEA members interested in any or all of the above discount tickets should call Judy at 571-2919, ext. 10, weekdays during business hours.

The CSEA Unity Committee Discrimination, Human Rights, Diversity Task Force

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.

PLEASE CONTACT THE FOLLOWING CSEA TASK FORCE MEMBERS WITH QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:

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

CSEA
NASSAU LOCAL 830 - TONY GIUSTINO, PRESIDENT
**Women in Local Government
Annual Recognition Dinner**
JOURNAL - ADVERTISING ORDER
Thursday, September 21, 2000 - Jericho Terrace, Mineola
5:30 - 10:00 P.M.

YOU ARE HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO INSERT THE ATTACHED AD IN YOUR SOUVENIR JOURNAL, TO TAKE UP THE SPACE OF _____ PAGE, FOR WHICH I/WE AGREE TO PAY THE SUM OF \$ _____.

FIRM NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

AUTHORIZED BY: _____

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- | | | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> BACK COVER | \$200 | <input type="checkbox"/> BUSINESS CARD | \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FULL PAGE | \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> MEMORIAL PAGE | \$5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HALF PAGE | \$50 | (NAME ONLY) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> QUARTER PAGE | \$25 | | |

PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: NASSAU LOCAL 830, CSEA

MAIL TO: NASSAU LOCAL 830, CSEA
ATTN: JEWEL WEINSTEIN
400 COUNTY SEAT DRIVE
MINEOLA, NY 11501

COPY MUST BE RECEIVED BY:
JUNE 30, 2000
PHONE: (516) 571-2919 EXT. 20

PLEASE PRINT OR ATTACH BUSINESS CARD OR AD COPY HERE

Stay Informed. Tune in to
"CSEA in Focus"
Thursdays at 7 p.m.
repeated Saturdays at 8:30 a.m.
on WGBB, 1240 AM

CSEA Fights for Workplace Safety

Following are some sites where CSEA has recently addressed workplace concerns:

40 MAIN ST., HEMPSTEAD

The old building was gutted and rebuilt. When completed, it will house the offices of Drug & Alcohol, Civil Service Commission, Youth Board and others. Since construction began, CSEA has made several site visits as well as meetings with the building owner. The CSEA team has checked many aspects of the construction that impact health and safety, including the heating and ventilation system. In addition, CSEA has met with representatives from the Hempstead Police Department to discuss parking and security.

16 COOPER ST., HEMPSTEAD

Building houses the Traffic and Parking Violations Bureau. CSEA has responded to several complaints dealing with indoor air quality, fire exits, improper storage of office supplies and improper storage of garbage. All problems have either been addressed or are in the process of being corrected.

RALPH G. CASO BUILDING (1 WEST ST.) MINEOLA

Building houses many departments. CSEA is addressing problems in the County Attorney's Office on the second floor. These include improper ventilation and improper wiring that has led to tripping hazards.

COUNTY COURT BUILDING, MINEOLA

Building houses several county departments. CSEA has addressed and had corrected a dangerous problem with the elevator.

We wish to thank the CSEA officers who continue to work diligently to improve then working conditions of our members: President Tony Giustino, Tim Corr, Ellen Misita, Dan Morra (Health & Safety Specialist), Nancy Ianson and Ray Cannella.



UPDATE on Social Services Building

The following improvements are the result of three separate arbitrations concerning working conditions at the Social Services Building in Mineola:

- An employee cafeteria built within Contractor Cafeteria (in the basement). The cafeteria has access to the outside area.
- Eight refrigerators purchased by the county and distributed throughout the building. (Three refrigerators were donated.)
- Pest control meetings throughout the building.
- Fire damaged area ready to be occupied again.
- An inspection by the NYS Fire Underwriters found non-compliance with National Electrical Code. Many of these violations have been corrected and a re-inspection should take place in the near future.
- A \$10 million to \$12 million capital project is being created to

address the HVAC and asbestos removal. The asbestos is deemed safe in its present, undisturbed condition. The county will inspect the current HVAC system to make sure it is operating properly.

- The Probation Department may be moved to a new location. CSEA has requested that the union be a part of the planning to relocate the 3rd floor.
- The cleaning and basement cafeteria contractors will be addressed to ensure proper cleaning procedures.

CSEA members who have been instrumental in the above agreements include Social Services Unit President Mike Timmons, Local 830 3rd Vice President Robert Cauldwell and OSHA Committee member Loretta Butler. Co-chairs of the OSHA Committee are Tim Corr, George Walsh and John Aloisio.

Missionary work:

Africa beckons CSEA activist

BUFFALO — The oppressive heat, the teeming humanity, the overwhelming poverty and a symbolic return to her motherland has had a profound effect on CSEA

member Pam Watson, who traveled as a church missionary to western Africa earlier this year.

"I am so thankful to be living in America," said Watson, a union

activist at the Western New York Developmental Disabilities Service Office, about her missionary trip to Abijan, Ivory Coast.

"We take so much for granted living here, when there are still so many people in the world in need of very basic necessities, like clean running water, indoor plumbing and so much more," Watson said.

Watson said she was touched by the friendliness of the people, many of whom mistakenly think all Americans are wealthy.

"I made what I feel will be lasting contacts with some young school students, who I will be writing, and staying in contact with," she said.

"They are so friendly, and flock to you, knowing you are American. And it's hard to convey to them that we are not all rich, except maybe in comparison to the average citizen there," Watson said.

"Our group brought money, medicine, clothing and Bibles, which beside the spiritual lessons, are used to help with learning reading skills.

"Many illnesses we thought were conquered, like TB, polio and others are still afflicting victims on the African continent. It was inspiring to see many volunteers with medical

skills helping out. But such a large task of healing is still needed," Watson said.

No labor unions there

As a unionist, she noted a decided lack of organized labor presence in the west African nation, a former colony of France.

"My heart went out to them, and I was very impressed with how hard-working the people are," she said.

Most people are independent workers, selling goods at the market, or on the street.

"We didn't see many public employees in the capacities we have in America, and not many signs of unionism, but of course the people are still struggling on a much more basic level.

"We were 5 kilometers from the equator, so it was pretty hot every day — 95 to 100 degrees," she said.

"And their diet, consisting mostly of fish, rice and fruit, seems to keep them from becoming overweight. You don't see many fat people in Africa," Watson said.

A moving experience

A particularly moving experience for Watson was seeing the former slave castles that housed those who were sent into slavery in America and elsewhere during the 19th century.

"A soldier speaking to our group, as we passed through Ghana, apologized to us for his ancestors having sold some of our forebearers into slavery," Watson said, adding "It was quite touching."



CSEA member Pam Watson shows off some items she recently brought back from Africa, where she traveled as a church missionary.

Members helped

She received some help to fund her trip from fellow CSEA members.

"I am so thankful to so many CSEA members who helped me make the trip, especially Delores Russell and Joanne Rogers, who really went to bat for me, and collected donations from other members. I couldn't have done it without them.

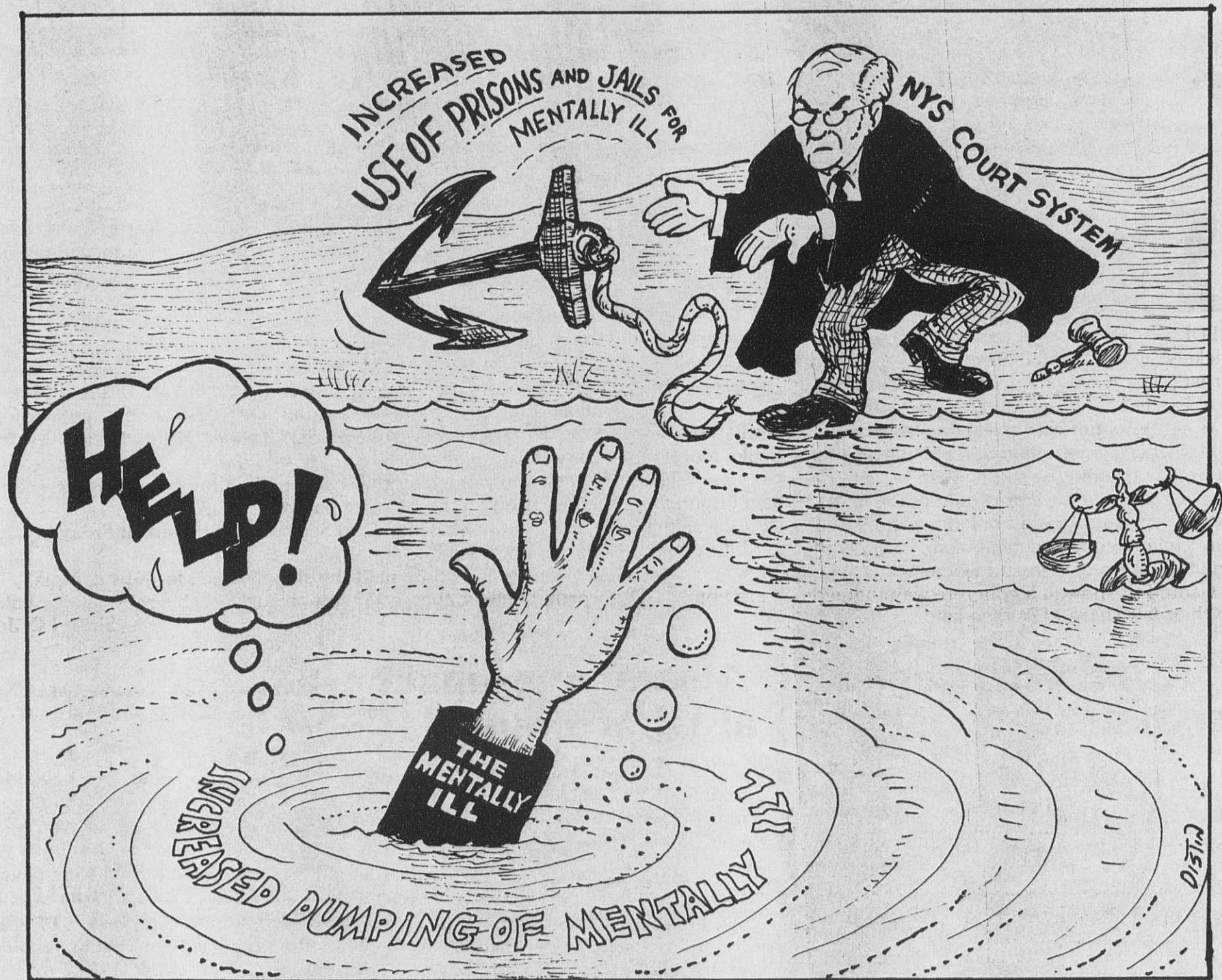
"But I'm more conscious now and sensitive, when I hear about, for instance, the flooding in Mozambique, other disasters or happenings in my motherland," she said.

"It was truly a life-changing experience," Watson said.

— Ron Wofford

CSEA • LOCAL 1000 AFSCME • AFL-CIO
**Family,
Friends and
Neighbors**
265,000 MEMBERS STRONG!

In deep water

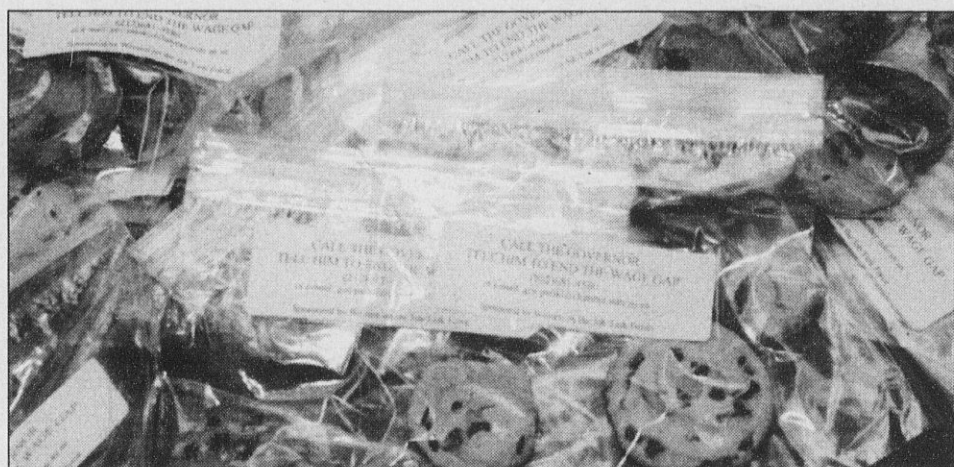


If I hadn't been under private psychiatric care while under house arrest before I went to prison, I wouldn't be functional today."

— Former New York State Chief Justice Sol Wachtler
(See story, Page 6)

A tasty way to deliver an unpalatable message:

“Food” fight for pay equity



MINEOLA — For years, Jane D’Amico has dispensed everything from tickets to union news, but one recent early morning found her thrusting large and small chocolate chip cookies into the hands of harried Long Island Railroad commuters.

The tasty treats not only packed calories, but an unpalatable pay equity message for commuters to digest — men make more money than women in the same jobs.

D’Amico, executive vice president of the CSEA Nassau County Local on Long Island, was among dozens of CSEA activists who used the yummy circles of symbolism to show the disparity between the wages of men and women.

“We wanted to show in a concrete way that women are not getting their fair share,” D’Amico said.

“Women earn 73 cents for every dollar a man earns for jobs of comparable worth,” she added.

Pushing for pay equity bills

Pay equity has been on CSEA’s state legislative agenda for several years and is again being pushed by union lobbyists and members.

The commuter cookie caper, sponsored by the Coalition of Labor Union Women and Women On The Job, featured a small plastic bag holding a small and large cookie and adorned with a sticker which read: “Call The Governor. Tell Him To End The Wage Gap.”

Later that day, members of the CSEA Nassau County Local and Long Island Region Women’s Committee held a pay equity rally on a busy street corner in Mineola.

Supporters included state Assemblyman Tom DiNapoli, a sponsor of the pending pay equity bill, CSEA Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte and CSEA Nassau County Local President Tony Giustino.

Men and women stopped at the CSEA table to gather information on the pending pay equity bill.

CSEA Town of Hempstead Second Vice President Frank Verity marched with the women.

“Women should be paid the same as men for jobs of equal worth. I believe that, so I came to support this rally,” Verity said.

— Sheryl C. Jenks

CSEA leads way in New Alliance compact designed to boost central labor councils

NEW YORK — CSEA is front and center in a new pilot project launched by the

national AFL-CIO to reinvigorate central labor councils and build a more effective local labor movement.

CSEA President Danny Donohue was one of the featured speakers when AFL-CIO President John Sweeney initiated the project, called the New Alliance, in New York City recently.

Central labor councils are the regional bodies of the AFL-CIO and are designed to coordinate the activities, agendas and issues of local unions in a region.

The New Alliance will create a greater sense of common purpose and cooperation among local unions, organizers said.

Sweeney said the AFL-CIO is looking to CSEA for leadership

on this project for many reasons.

“CSEA is committed to strengthening our movement in every community by rolling up our sleeves and doing whatever work is necessary to build relationships and effectiveness,” Donohue said.

Sweeney said CSEA’s size and statewide reach puts it in the forefront on important labor issues.

He added CSEA’s presence and involvement in nearly every local community in the state are tremendous assets as Labor works to mobilize working people.

Cooperation among unions, working together on a common



agenda and sharing labor’s challenges must become real, practical actions, not top-down “concepts,” Donohue told the union activists

and leaders gathered for the program.

“The New Alliance will meet our needs for a strong labor movement at the local level — CSEA members will be a part of it and those same members will also benefit from that stronger local alliance,” Donohue said.



Allies Sweeney, left, and Donohue

Labor rally promises unrest

Long, hot summer ahead at the Beach

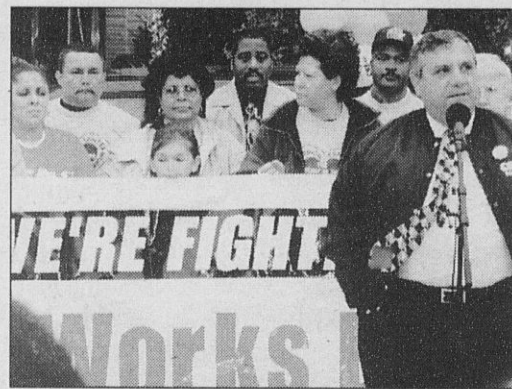
LONG BEACH — Nearly 200 union members marched through Long Beach on a chilly June night, bringing attention to the plight of CSEA Long Beach Medical Center Local workers fighting for justice on the job.

Multi-hued signs, banners and balloons bobbed along with the diverse group as it cheered and chanted its way from City Hall to Long Beach Medical Center.

CSEA Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte pledged to continue the fight for a fair, first contract for the private sector local, fighting for a contract for nearly a year.

"We are fighting for you and you can see by this crowd of supporters we are not alone in this fight. CSEA is part of a union family that includes the members of AFSCME and the AFL-CIO and when we fight we have the strength of all our members behind us!" LaMorte announced to the cheering crowd.

June marks a full year since workers at the Long Beach Medical Center voted for CSEA to be their collective bargaining agent.



CSEA Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte addresses the crowd as Long Beach Medical Center workers and families stand behind him with their banner.

After many contentious months at the negotiating table, LBMC management has failed to bargain in good faith. Instead, it unilaterally began charging union members more than two times as much for health insurance as their non-union co-workers, enacted unfair disciplines on union activists and violated workers' civil rights by forcing them to remove union stickers from their clothing.

CSEA has filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regarding these issues. The charges are pending.

The rally ran in conjunction with the AFL-CIO "VOICES AT WORK"



CSEA members are bolstered by support from members of AFSCME and the AFL-CIO. Here marchers have arrived at their final destination — the Long Beach Medical Center.

campaign, which includes activities throughout the country aimed at empowering workers to have their voices heard on the job.

Long Island Federation of Labor President Jack Caffey said to the crowd "We are going to stand together as a union family and support your efforts to get a contract!"

— Sheryl C. Jenks



CSEA Long Beach Medical Center Local President Marcene Sutton accepts a CSEA hat and a promise of support from CSEA Nassau County Medical Center Unit Second V.P. Noreen Lingham.

Kick-off to active summer at Beach

It will be a long, hot summer for the bosses at Long Beach Medical Center on Long Island, where hundreds of CSEA members are fighting for their first contract.

There will be no lazy, hazy days of summer for these CSEA members, who have pledged to make management feel the heat until a contract is hammered out.

Here's a glimpse at their summer "beach brawl" plans:

1. Let the sun shine on management's unfair treatment of employees;
2. Think of each visitor to Long Beach Medical Center as a new opportunity to tell CSEA members' story;
3. Ride the wave of summer protests that started with a march and rally in June;
4. Tan the hide of any supervisor who tries to hurt our members' rights on the job;
5. Turn every Long Beach protest and union activity this summer into a public education campaign about the contract fight;
6. Wave at the plane carrying CSEA's message banner above the beach on the weekends.

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.

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.

You must 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.



Long Beach Medical Center workers and families face the crowd of supporters.

Prescription drugs to be paid by New York State starting July

Beginning in July, the state will pay the entire premium for prescription drug coverage for active state employees in the Administrative Services Unit, the Institutional Services Unit, the Operational Services Unit and the Division of Military and Naval Affairs.

The amount deducted from members' biweekly paychecks will be reduced according to the health plan they are enrolled in.

Members' reduced health insurance payroll deduction will start with the paycheck of June 29 for those who are on the institutional lag payroll, or July 5 for those on the administrative lag payroll.

Biweekly premium rates are:

	Individual	Family
001 Empire Plan	\$ 7.86	\$ 34.31
210 Aetna U.S. Healthcare	\$20.24	\$ 75.74
066 Blue Choice	\$ 7.64	\$ 43.04
280 Blue Choice HMO of Empire BCBS	\$ 7.93	\$ 55.26
063 Capital District Physicians' Health Plan (CDPHP)	\$ 7.69	\$ 48.97
067 Community Blue	\$ 6.18	\$ 33.54
220 GHI HMO Select, Inc.	\$ 7.70	\$ 49.04
050 HIP Health Plan of New York	\$ 9.44	\$ 47.13
160 HMO Blue	\$15.85	\$ 72.85
072 HMO-CNY	\$ 7.72	\$ 56.79
120 Independent Health-Hudson Valley Region	\$27.84	\$110.53
059 Independent Health-Western New York Region	\$ 5.76	\$ 31.66
060 MVP Health Plan Capital District	\$12.83	\$ 75.13
100 MVP Health Plan Central	\$ 8.99	\$ 60.53
055 PHP	\$20.21	\$ 95.15
058 Preferred Care	\$ 7.08	\$ 34.14
260 United HealthCare	\$18.06	\$ 83.68
057 Univera Healthcare	\$ 5.94	\$ 32.20
070 Vytra Health Plans	\$17.60	\$ 83.45

For more information, members may contact their agency's health benefits administrator who is usually located in the agency's personnel office.

Empire Plan enrollees: July 1 brings changes

Beginning July 1, Empire Plan enrollees will see a number of benefit modifications to their health care plan.

For detailed information, refer to the June 2000 edition of *The Empire Plan Report/At a Glance 2000* which was mailed recently to all Empire Plan enrollees at their homes.

Topics Covered:

Skilled Nursing Facilities
Prospective Procedure Review
Military Activation
Prescription Drug Premium Contributions
Pre-admission/Pre-surgical Testing Copay
Physical Therapy Outpatient Hospital Copay
Prescription Drug Copay
Routine Adult Immunizations
Routine Newborn Allowance
Routine Physicals
Pediatric Immunizations
Organ/Tissue Transplants
Infertility Coverage
Disease Management
Nurse Line
Basic Medical Reduced Coinsurance Maximum
Hearing Aids
Earned Sick Leave

Members who have not received a copy of the June 2000 Empire Plan Report may contact their health benefits administrator for a copy.

July 31 deadline

Nominations sought for 2000 Irene Carr Leadership Award

When Irene Carr joined CSEA, she found herself in a situation not unlike many women today — she was a single parent who had to work to raise her son.

Perhaps that's why she became a crusader for women's issues within CSEA.

However, Carr was not a one-issue woman. Whatever the issue, she was one person you could count on, someone who would take the lead, speak out and take action on issues of concern to women.

This is the type of person CSEA honors with the Irene Carr Leadership Award.

Current or former members and staff are eligible, whether they are men or women. The qualification is that they demonstrate a commitment to the concerns of women within CSEA.

The issue can be day care, pay equity or political action. It can be about discrimination, harassment, or equal treatment.

As statewide secretary for 17 years, Carr said she was "dedicated to the idea that if you hold the office of secretary in your union, you should be more than a note-taker. You should

Empire Plan Health Care Changes: CORRECTION

The Health Care Changes for CSEA state government members, effective 7/1/2000, listed in the June issue of *The Work Force* had an error in the Empire Plan Basic Medical section under Pediatric Immunizations. The correct version is:

Pediatric Immunizations: The influenza vaccine will be added to the list of covered pediatric immunizations, not subject to office visit copays. **Basic Medical coverage subject to deductible and coinsurance.**

Empire Plan enrollees may be eligible for out-of-pocket reduction

Employees earning \$23,017 or less in base salary are eligible to apply for a reduction in the coinsurance maximum from \$776 to \$500 per calendar year.

The employee must be the head of the household and the sole wage earner in the family.

Members who meet those criteria may contact their agency's health benefits administrator for information about applying for the reduction.

2000 CSEA Irene Carr Leadership Award NOMINATION FORM

The issue could be day care, pay equity or political action. It could be about discrimination, harassment or equal treatment. WHATEVER THE ISSUE, TAKE IT ONE PERSON YOU CAN COUNT ON. SOMEONE WHO WILL TAKE THE LEAD, SPEAK OUT AND TAKE ACTION ON BEHALF OF CONCERN TO WOMEN.

Those individuals are the ones CSEA honors with the Irene Carr Leadership Award. Current or former CSEA members and staff are eligible, whether they are men or women. The real criteria is that they demonstrate a commitment to the concerns of women within CSEA.

• Nomination Guidelines:

1. Applications must be submitted by a CSEA member in good standing, or a CSEA employee.
2. All nominations must be received by July 31, 2000.

• Eligibility: Nominations will be evaluated on the basis of her/his demonstrated commitment to the concerns of women within CSEA.

• Award Presentation: The award will be presented at the Women's and Legislative Breakfast at the Annual Delegate Meeting, September 28, 2000.

Please Print Clearly Or Type

I nominate: _____
 Member Local/Unit: _____ Staff Position: _____
 Home Address: _____ Other: _____
 Work Address: _____
 Home Telephone () _____ Work Telephone () _____
 Home Address: _____ Social Security # _____
 Home Telephone () _____

PLEASE ATTACH A STATEMENT THAT FULLY DESCRIBES THE MEMBER'S CONTRIBUTIONS ON BEHALF OF WOMEN AND HOW SHE/HE HAS IMPROVED THE QUALITY OF WORKING LIVES WITHIN CSEA. INCLUDE THE ISSUE, CONTRIBUTIONS MADE, AND POSITIVE RESULTS OR WORKPLACE IMPACT OF THESE CONTRIBUTIONS.

ALL NOMINATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY JULY 31, 2000

Standing Women's Committee, Attention: K. Cabaret
 CSEA Headquarters, 142 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12210
 FAX: (518) 473-0221 or E-MAIL: nom@seainc.org

take an active leadership role in all the affairs of your union."

This philosophy and wisdom resulted in many women becoming involved in leadership roles in CSEA, and is clearly represented in the leadership role women play in CSEA today.

For nominating petitions, call the CSEA Human Resources Department at 1-800-342-4146, ext. 1208, or download a nomination form from CSEA's Web site at www.cseainc.org.

All nominations must be submitted by July 31.

CSEA awards annual scholarships

CSEA has announced the winners of the Irving Flaumenbaum and Jardine/MetLife Scholarship Awards for 2000.

The Flaumenbaum Scholarship awards 18 \$1,000 scholarships annually to high school seniors. Three awards are granted in each of CSEA's six regions.

Two additional scholarships sponsored by the Jardine Group Services Corp. and the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company are being awarded. These awards are \$2,500 each.

Members of the CSEA Special Memorial Scholarship Committee are: Lamont "Dutch" Wade, chairperson; Kathy Martinez-Walsh, Anita Booker, Lorraine Johnson, Helen Fishedick, Sandra Delia, Bruce Norton, Jeanette Newman and Barbara DeSimone.

IRVING FLAUMENBAUM MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

The Irving Flaumenbaum scholarships are named in memory of the former longtime CSEA Long Island Region and Nassau County Local president who died in 1980.

The awards go to graduating high school seniors planning to attend college and are given on the basis of academic and personal achievements. More than 900 applications were considered.

The 2000 winners of \$1,000 Flaumenbaum scholarships are:

LONG ISLAND REGION

Melissa Rocco of Oceanside, whose father, John Rocco, is a senior code enforcement officer with the Town of Hempstead. **Kia Canzonieri** of Plainview, whose mother, Ruth Canzonieri, is a teachers aide at Nassau BOCES.

Deborah Cohen of Jericho, whose mother, Judith Cohen, is a clerk with Nassau County and whose father, Michael Cohen is an accountant with Nassau County.

METROPOLITAN REGION

Marina Frimer of Whitestone, whose father, Yefim Frimer, is a plant utilities assistant engineer at SUNY Maritime College.

Doyan Robinson of Brooklyn, whose mother, Clova Lewis, is a cook at the Brooklyn Developmental Center.

Tiffani Evans of Brooklyn, whose mother, Donna Evans, is a senior stenographer at the SUNY Health Science Center.

SOUTHERN REGION

Christopher J. Werner of Hurley, whose father, James W. Werner, is a buyer for Ulster County.

Lee Van Put of Livingston Manor, whose father, Edward Van Put, is a principal fish and wildlife technician with the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

Todd Matthew Derkacz of Huguenot, whose father, Gary P. Derkacz, is a bus mechanic with the Port Jervis School District.

CAPITAL REGION

Melanie Kathleen Sloan of Castleton, whose mother, Kathleen Sloan, is a secretary with Schodack Central Schools.

Kristin Poole of Slingerlands, whose mother, Elizabeth K. Poole, is a secretary with the state Court of Claims.

Cheryl Spitz of Palenville, whose mother, Tracy C. Spitz, is a probation assistant with Greene County.

CENTRAL REGION

Megan L. Falsetta of Laurens, whose father, Albert P. Falsetta, is a maintenance assistant mechanic with the State Police.

Patricia Poindexter of Parish, whose mother, Dorothy Poindexter, is a distance learning aide with the APW Central School District.

Cassandra Phillips-Sears of New Hartford, whose mother, Annette Phillips, is a public health nurse with Oneida County.

WESTERN REGION

Elliotte Bowerman of Farmington, whose mother, Sheila Bowerman, is a food service worker with Victor Central School.

Paige Patterson of Newfane, whose mother, Darbe Corser, is a teaching

consultant with Newfane Central School.

Megan Zaffalon of Dunkirk, whose mother, Denise Zaffalon, is a teachers aide with Dunkirk Public Schools.

JARDINE GROUP SERVICES AWARD

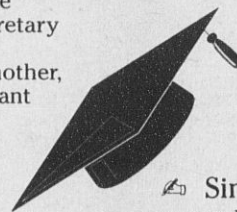
The Jardine Group Services Award of \$2,500 is named in memory of Charles Foster, a longtime CSEA activist who began his career with CSEA in the 1930s and was also the first business officer of the SUNY system. The recipient must attend a SUNY school.

The 2000 winner is **Alexis C. Cavaluzzi** of Hartsdale. Her father, Nicholas Cavaluzzi, is a civil engineer with the state Thruway Authority.

METLIFE INSURANCE COMPANY AWARD

The MetLife Award of \$2,500 is given in memory of the late Joseph D. Lochner, CSEA's first employee and former executive director who was a CSEA employee for more than 40 years.

The 2000 winner is **Daniel DiMaggio** of Carmel. His father, Gerard DiMaggio, is a driver with Putnam County.



Since 1980, CSEA has awarded \$319,700 in scholarships.

CSEA has helped send 512 children of CSEA members to college.

In 1999, CSEA doubled the amount of the Irving Flaumenbaum and Thomas H. McDonough scholarships from \$500 to \$1,000 each.

April CSEA board of directors meeting report



Reeves

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 Barbara Reeves for union members.

ALBANY — CSEA's statewide board of directors met April 14. In official business, the board:

- Put into administratorship the Western Region, Cape Vincent Correctional Facility Local 187 and Village of Woodridge Police Department Unit 8809-01-Local 853;

- Approved a diversity in hiring policy;
- Authorized Locals 861, 856, 814, 010, 860 and 813 to lease office space;
- Approved a new management/confidential salary schedule, adjusted the M/C longevity system and authorized funds for salary adjustments;
- Created Local 631 (Auxiliary Services Corporation of SUNY Cortland);
- Authorized funds to provide a toll-free 800 phone

number for members in the Western Region;

- Designated Buffalo as the site of the 2001 Annual Delegate's Meeting;
- Adopted special election schedule for Western Region president and a Westchester County statewide board of directors seat; and

- Approved as members of the Southern Region Political Action Committee Mickey Thoms (chair), Steve Bardin, April Shuback, Irena Kobbe, Gene Benson, Jeff Howarth, Diane Hewitt, Sandra Reynolds, Sue Ronga, Kevin Dumond, Lee Pound, Art Townsend, Norma Condon, Margaret Capriola, Tim Ippolito, Judy Watts-Devine, Tom Murray, Debbie Downey, Gary Conley, Pat Brown, MaryJane MacNair, Diana Harris, Diane Watson, Cecily Lieberman, Ellen Witte, Pat Nikkels, Pam Alexander, Sabina Shapiro, Mike Titone, George Henry, Constance Fox, Dwayne Palen, Lenny Beaulieu, Ron Greene, Barbara DeSimone, Richard Colson, Rose Impallomeni, Lizabeth Piraino, Jacky Cooper and Al Ackerman.

Questions about this summary should be directed to CSEA Statewide Secretary Barbara Reeves, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Ave., Albany, N.Y. 12210, (800) 342-4156 or (518) 257-1253.

Special Election

CSEA Western Region President

A special election is being held to fill the CSEA Western Region (Region 6) president's office.

Any CSEA member meeting the requirements to run for office may enter this race.

Only eligible voters (members who were on the CSEA membership lists as of Dec. 1, 1999) will receive ballots. Newer members who do not meet the eligibility requirements will not receive a ballot.

The election schedule printed below was adopted by the Statewide Board of Directors on April 14.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| June 2: | End of petitioning period |
| July 11: | Ballots mailed |
| July 19: | Replacement ballots |
| Aug. 1: | Ballots to be received, counting begins |
| Aug. 11: | End of protest period |

More detailed information is available from CSEA Local and Unit officers.

Members with questions about the election may call the statewide Election Committee at 800-342-4146 ext. 1477.

Conley on CSEA Statewide Board of Directors

Gary Conley was the only candidate to file a petition in the special election for a seat on the CSEA Statewide Board of Directors representing Westchester County.

Since he was unopposed, no ballots will be mailed, and he is deemed elected.

The board term began July 1.

New contract continues LEAP tuition benefits

The new contract with New York State covering CSEA-represented State employees in the ASU, ISU, OSU and DMNA bargaining units continues the LEAP tuition benefit.

Program Highlights

- ✓ **Flexible** — Apply anytime between April 1, 2000 and March 31, 2001. Now available for summer courses.
- ✓ **Guaranteed Approval** — Every eligible member will receive one tuition benefit.
- ✓ **Easy Application** — Apply by mail, fax or by phone.
- ✓ **Many Schools** — Your voucher can be used at over 130 participating schools statewide.
- ✓ **Credit by Examination Fee Reimbursement** — Receive reimbursement for College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), DANTES and Regents College Exams in addition to your LEAP tuition benefit.

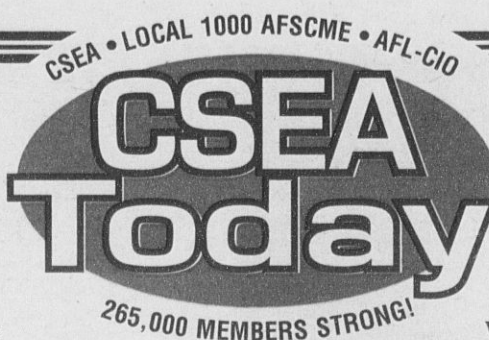
Catalogs with details about LEAP tuition benefits were mailed in June to any eligible member who applied in 1998-1999. New York State Agency Personnel and Training Offices also have a small supply of catalogs. Eligible members who did not receive a catalog in the mail may request a copy by calling LEAP at 1-800-253-4332.

PEOPLE PEOPLE —

The recruiter of the month for April is Mattie Campbell of CSEA's Southern Region, who recruited 33 new PEOPLE members. The PEOPLE recruiter of the month for May is David Kircher, of the Capital Region, who recruited 40 members. PEOPLE is AFSCME's political action program aimed at getting friends of working families elected to Congress ...

CSEA WEB SITE UP AND RUNNING FOR OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION MEMBERS —

CSEA Office of Court Employees leadership has established a Web site so OCA members have access to the latest news and information from the Unified Court System. Check it out at www.cseajudiciary.org ... **MAJOR HEALTH INSURANCE WIN IN GREENE COUNTY —** The Public Employee Relations Board recently ruled in favor of the CSEA Greene County Unit in a major health insurance arbitration. In September, 1999, Greene County unilaterally implemented changes in the Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) health coverage. Greene County Unit



President George Greiner filed a contract grievance, and a PERB arbitrator ruled in the union's favor ... **THE VERDICT:**

WATROUS IS A WINNER —

CSEA member Robert Watrous, a principal office typist at the Syracuse City Court, has won the judiciary's highest public service award. As part of a recent Law Day celebration at the state Court of Appeals in Albany, Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye



Watrous

presented Watrous the 2000 Merit Performance Award for superior work performance. Watrous was chosen for his ingenuity and superior day-to-day work performance which helps ensure the smooth functioning of the court, the judge said. Among other things, Watrous has incorporated a number of cost and time-saving functions into the court's computer system. He also keeps the court's telephone system up and running and trains all new employees.

Tell us how You've Made A Difference!

CSEA needs your story now!

Tell us how your actions at work have improved services to your community. Did you come up with a new way of doing your job that made it more efficient, safer, cost less? Do you participate in an activity off the job that benefits the community? And, how has your membership in CSEA helped you realize these achievements? Training, networking, informational resources?

If being part of the CSEA Work Force has helped you make a real difference in the quality of life on the job or for your community - *tell us about it.*

Send us the facts -- today.

We'll follow up later for more details.

The story: (use as much space as necessary)

Results of your effort (check all applicable):

- A more efficient way to do a job
- A new service to the community
- A safer worksite
- Saving money
- Community improvement
- Other (please explain)

Efforts instituted on what level (check all applicable):

- Local
- County
- State

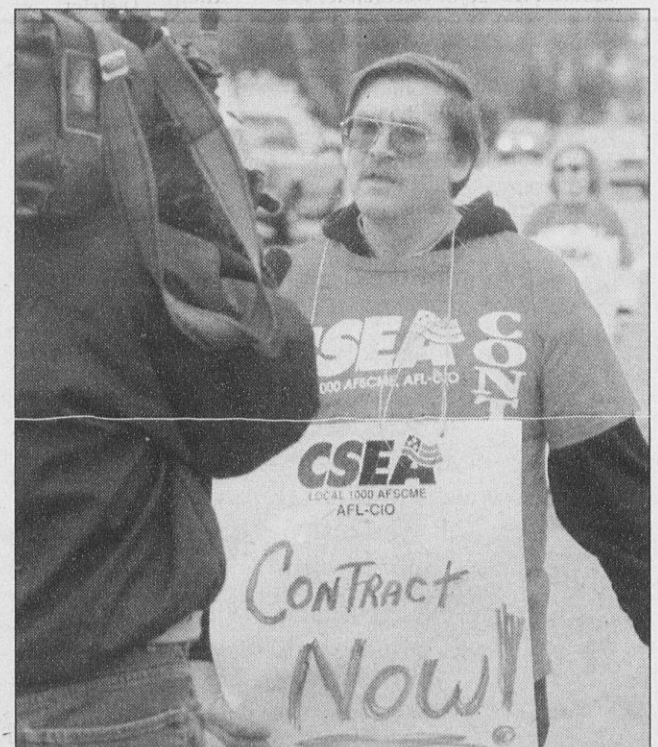
How CSEA empowered you to take action (check all applicable):

- On the job training
- Seminars
- Safety programs
- Other (please explain)

Recognition (check all applicable):

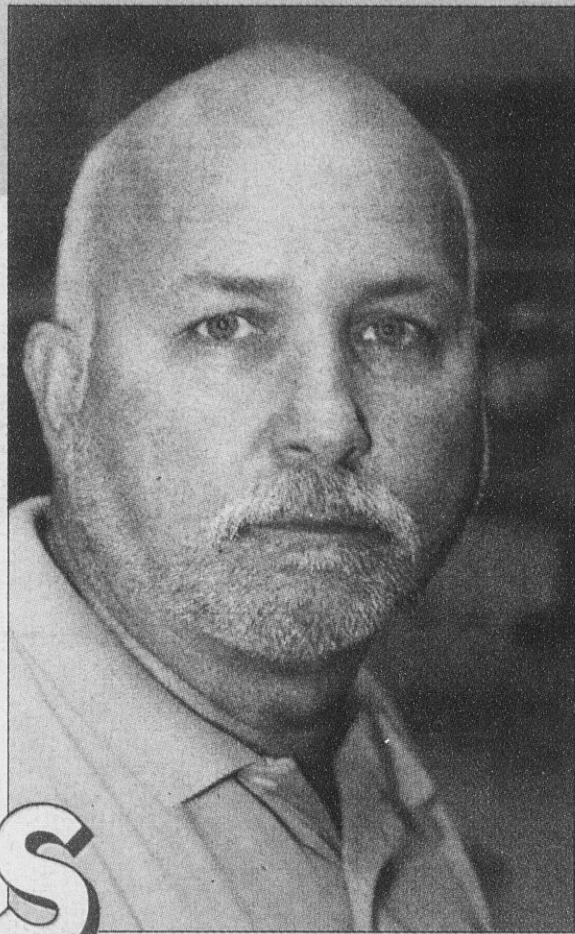
- Awards
- Certificate of appreciation
- Newspaper article
- Other

Your Name _____
 Local # _____
 Address _____
 City _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____



PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF — Tom Raczka, Cheektowaga School District Unit president, is interviewed by a television reporter recently as members picket during a school budget vote. The Unit has since gained a tentative agreement.

"A gentleman in blue jeans"



SARATOGA — Bob Travis, this year's CSEA Local Government Achievement Award winner, is a "go to kind of guy."

For more than three decades, CSEA members and leaders have been plying Travis with questions big and small about the Saratoga Springs school district where he works as a head custodian.

His resourcefulness, unabashed willingness to help with any union activity including difficult contract negotiations has thrust this unassuming union activist into the limelight.

"It was a total surprise to me," a beaming Travis said about winning the vaunted annual union award.

"It was quite the honor to just be nominated and to be chosen from so many people ... just overwhelming," he

Travis wins union's annual local government achievement award

said, quickly moving from behind his office desk to point to the trophy nearby.

Saw the union could help

Travis immersed himself in CSEA activities 33 years ago when he started as a laborer with the city of Saratoga Springs.

"I saw the union could make a difference. It was an unfair situation we were facing and the union helped correct the problem. I think that's why I've stayed involved because CSEA can make a difference," Travis said about the workplace problems he's faced over the years.

With that credo firmly in place, Travis has been a perennial member of contract negotiating teams and served as the treasurer of the City of Saratoga Department of Public Works CSEA Unit.

He has been elected treasurer, president and vice president for the Unit and Local.

Travis now serves as the Saratoga County Educational Local Vice President, a position he has held since 1982 after serving as Unit president from 1979-1981.

Travis' admirers are legion and they include managers he's butted heads with at the bargaining table.

"I have admired Bob's labor negotiations skills which have allowed us to move the district forward in good and poor financial times," Saratoga schools Superintendent John MacFadden, also a 30-year school veteran, said about Travis.

Can't say "no"

"Bob Travis is a true gentlemen and one of the genuinely fair people I have ever known," said CSEA Saratoga Unit and Local President Betty Egan.

"He has the rare quality to look at both sides of a dispute and come up with a common solution," she said.

"His relationship and dedication to his membership should be cloned. He is always available and willing to pitch in with whatever the task is at hand. Bob has never said 'no.'" Egan added.

Works well with others

The man in blue jeans is also highly regarded by his members.

During his biannual "walk throughs" at work sites, Travis not only knows everyone but is greeted without exception with a handshake, slap on the back or a hug, CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Jim Martin said.

"When negotiating history and intent of a subject need to be determined, often both labor and management turn to Bobby," Martin said.

"His memory is remarkable," Martin added.

Travis agreed he has a knack for being a union activist.

"I guess I'm the 'go to guy' people say I am. I'm a person who recognizes that I may not agree with some people. They may not like me, that's OK," he explained.

"But we have to work together or else we'll be pulling apart and that's not going to help solve the problem," Travis said.

His secret to helping everyone?

"I ask people to put their personalities aside, and work together to resolve a situation in a way that benefits everybody," Travis said.

— Daniel X. Campbell

