

THE WORK FORCE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION



Local 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

MOURN for the dead

*Fight
for the
Living!*

See stories on pages 3, 4, 12, 13 and 15

September 11, 2001

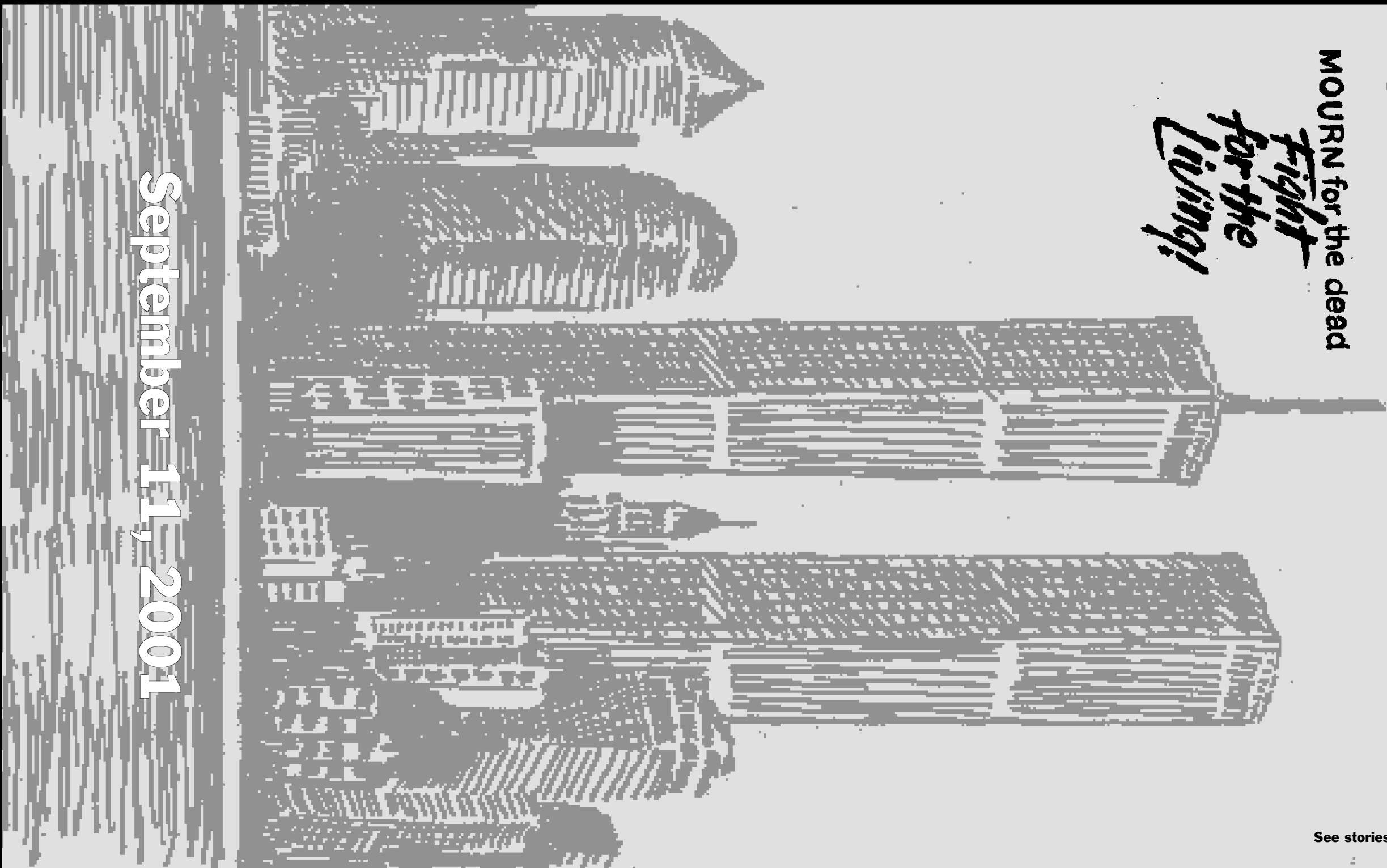


Photo of the Month



Photo by
Rolando Infante

Amy Solomon, right, prepares Eran Muto for a blood donation at Nassau University Medical Center, which was one of the many donor sites across the state following the World Trade Center attacks. See related coverage on Pages 3, 4, 12, 13 and 15.

Publication deadlines prevented *The Work Force* from including more stories in this issue about CSEA members' roles in the World Trade Center recovery.

If you have a story you'd like to share, please contact your CSEA communications associate in your CSEA region office or e-mail your stories, ideas and experiences to Ronald Kermani, executive editor, at kermani@cseainc.org.

School cafeteria workers end strike, approve contract

Food service workers at the East Williston School District on Long Island have ratified a new contract, ending an eight-day strike.

The strike by the private-sector group of CSEA members called attention to unfair wages and unjust labor practices by their employer, Fine Host.

"We wanted the residents of the East Williston School District, especially the parents of the students in the Wheatley School, to understand our intolerable work conditions and the menial compensation we received," said Sophie Talamo, president of the Local.

Poor salaries, working in unsanitary conditions without health benefits, one 15-minute break a day, and other issues sparked the strike against private vendor Fine Host, activists said.

A federal mediator tried to bring both sides closer to an agreement.

The workers approved a pact containing a wage increase, longevity pay and other benefits.

— Rolando Infante

Ready to strike, Fisher Bus drivers gain pact, respect

HAMBURG — The CSEA Fisher Bus Transportation Local has forged a chapter in labor courage in their fight for a fair contract, going to the brink of striking before hammering out a contract.

"This agreement was won because these members made a decision to authorize their negotiating team to call a strike if a fair contract could not be reached, and they were ready to back them up if the call was made," said CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Frank Bogulski.

Members mobilized around contract negotiations and showed their strength and unity throughout the ordeal, activists said.

"These hard-working members were making about five dollars an hour less than the national average, which was part of their driving motivation," Bogulski said.

"Nobody wanted to strike," said Gary Smith, president of the 88-member private sector local, "but we had to use all the weapons at our disposal."

Private sector locals are not governed by the state's Taylor Law, which heavily

penalizes public employees for striking.

"We had been in talks since December, and were getting nowhere, even going backward," Smith said.

"Somehow, the employer became aware of the potential strike, as school opening day approached," said Bogulski, "and wrote a warning letter to parents that his employees may be striking as the school year started," Bogulski said.

Both sides agreed on mediation, and a pact was forged the night before school opened.

"This is a relatively new Unit and they learned firsthand the power of solidarity and working together as a union," said CSEA Western Region President Flo Tripi.

The new contract includes pay raises over three years, increase in uniform allowances, a boost in charter-run pay and safe-driver bonuses, and two more holidays.

The CSEA members drive about 4,000 school children in Hamburg and Orchard Park.

— Ron Wofford

Paid leave now available for organ and bone marrow donors

CSEA members who work in state government may now take paid leave to donate bone marrow or organs.

After intense lobbying by CSEA and other groups, Gov. George Pataki recently signed a measure that gives state workers up to seven days of paid leave to donate bone marrow and up to 30 days of paid leave to donate organs.

"This law will help reduce the waiting list for transplantable organs, raise awareness of the need for organ donation and help supplement the increasing shortage of organs," said CSEA President Danny Donohue.

This leave will be in addition to all accrued time. The law includes a provision to prevent retaliation by an employer against employees who ask for the leave.

According to the national Kidney Foundation, nearly 5,000 New Yorkers are on the waiting list for a kidney transplant.

Nationally, 16 to 17 people die waiting for an organ transplant every day.



CSEA collecting donations for World Trade Center victims

CSEA is collecting money for the families of the World Trade Center victims.

Make checks payable to: **NYC Central Labor Council Disaster Relief Fund or to the AFSCME September 11 Fund. Send to:**

**CSEA ATTN: Disaster Relief Fund
143 Washington Ave.
Albany, NY 12210**

September 11, 2001

Blood, sweat and prayers from CSEA members

Thousands of union members across the state rallied to the call for help just hours after the two hijacked jets slammed into the World Trade Center in New York City.

Five CSEA members who worked in the state Department of Taxation and Finance office in the World Trade Center were listed as missing as this edition went to press.

CSEA members who work at the state Division of Military and Naval Affairs and the



The scene from CSEA's offices in downtown Manhattan on Tuesday, Sept. 11.

state Emergency Management Office in Albany immediately put the state's disaster plan into action.

Union members who work in state agencies such as the transportation department, State Police, and numerous local and county operations converged on Manhattan to help.

Members gave of themselves — literally — donating blood and also contributing tens of thousands of dollars to relief funds.

Vigils and prayer services were attended, and union members focused on helping their fellow New Yorkers.

To help the families of workers who were killed or injured, Gov. George Pataki said he plans to offer free state or city college tuition to affected families.

CSEA President Danny Donohue supported the governor's plan, saying: "The families of the many state workers who were lost in this terrible tragedy can take some measure of comfort knowing the costs of a college education for children and spouses will be covered."

Donohue also praised Pataki's comprehensive response to the World Trade Center attack.

Rolling up their sleeves

At the Nassau University Medical Center on Long Island, blood donations reached a feverish level.

"We have been going nonstop in receiving blood donations," said Barbara Sheridan, a registered nurse and 30-year CSEA member, about the 12-hour days she put in.

The hospital was overwhelmed by volunteers who wanted to give blood. They filled the designated blood donor unit and were relocated to an amphitheater. More than 500 donors gave blood at the hospital each day.

"This is unbelievable, how many people young and old have turned out to give blood," said Robyn August, a nursing clerk, and 22-year CSEA member.

As New York City reeled and attempted to

comprehend the terrorist-induced mayhem, union members north of the city were also giving blood.

Jane Fox, an account clerk at Westchester Medical Center and an 18-year CSEA member, gladly volunteered to escort blood donors and work at the after-donation food canteen.

"This disaster is a personal thing to me," she said. "While I don't know any of the victims personally, I feel I know them all. I couldn't sit back and do nothing — I just had to help in some way."

"I want to help people," said CSEA member Paul Clark, a union member at the East Greenbush school district, as he stood in line for six hours to donate blood.

See Members, Page 12

Members share their harrowing stories

Rosemarie Deseta had just arrived at her office on the 86th floor of the World Trade Center's south tower when she heard an ungodly explosion. The lights flickered.

"I placed my breakfast on my desk and walked over to the other side of the building and saw Building One was on fire," said Deseta.

"At that point we said, 'we're leaving.'"

Deseta, a secretary at the state Department of Taxation and Finance and CSEA member the past 24 years, moved quicker than most on her floor.

As she met with her co-workers who barely survived the worst terrorist attack on American soil, she trembled and shook at the thought of friends, supervisors and co-workers who are among the missing.

"It was horrible," said Deseta, who managed to squeeze into an express elevator after walking down to the 78th floor.

She was on the concourse and running when the second plane struck.

A few minutes later, Deseta was still running for her life when the building she had fled crashed to the ground.

"People were screaming. People were yelling and people were crying," she said.

"There was blood all over the place and people were walking around with blood on them," Deseta said.

"I was covered from head to toe in soot and dust," she continued. "I couldn't even breath for about five minutes. I kept saying to the man



CSEA Metro Region member Wanda Simmons weeps as she recalls the World Trade Center attacks.

who was comforting me that I was going to die."

Nilsa Rosa praised her co-worker, Tatiana Luina, for helping get people out of the building that housed two floors of the state tax department.

"If it would not have been for her going around, knocking on doors, I might have stayed behind," said Rosa, who was in the restroom when the first plane struck.

Like Deseta, Rosa also made it to the 78th floor.

She ignored an announcement on the

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IN TOUCH WITH THE WORK FORCE

CSEA President Danny Donohue



Words cannot describe the sadness, sickness and anger I feel following the events of Tuesday, Sept. 11. But I am overwhelmed by the way CSEA members and other union members have responded, like so many other good Americans. It truly shows our union and our country at their best.

While the human toll is still not fully known, it is likely that CSEA lost brothers and sisters working in the World Trade Center.

Our hearts and prayers go out to all the victims and their families.

It may not be possible to make sense out of what has occurred.

Still, in the aftermath of this horrific event, the outpouring of self-sacrifice and generosity is inspiring. Many CSEA members, such as Nassau County ambulance medical technicians and the state Department of Transportation workers are directly involved in the rescue and recovery efforts.

Less publicly, CSEA members in the State Emergency Management Office and numerous police agencies, along with medical workers and employees from the Division of Military and Naval Affairs, have played an essential role in keeping those efforts on track and providing back-up support.

Then there are thousands of CSEA volunteer firefighters, blood donors and others who have made or collected contributions to provide relief. These contributions are genuine and unselfish. And they are much needed.

CSEA has tried to begin telling this story in this edition of *The Work Force*. It is a story that we can never fully do justice but will continue to recognize in the months ahead. It is just one small way CSEA can offer its thanks and admiration.

Certainly none of us will ever be the same again. My hope is each of us will take something positive from the spirit of unity we are feeling and help shape that into an enduring tribute to those who lost their lives.

Danny

Lockport strike ends; CSEA members called back

LOCKPORT — Striking nurses at the Lockport Memorial Hospital have ratified a new four-year contract and laid off CSEA members are returning to work.

“Our members are being called back as patient volume rebuilds,” said CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Candy Saxon.

“Management has said they intend to call everyone back, and there has been a steady stream of patients returning to the various units,” she said.

The five-week strike by 127 United Professional Nurses Association members shut the hospital, except for emergency room and outpatient services.

About 90 full and part-time CSEA members were affected.

“We supported our union brothers and sisters,” said Bob DiCarlo, private sector Local president, “just as I am sure they would support us in any job action we deemed necessary to gain fairness.”

Western Region President Flo Tripi and other CSEA activists joined the nurses on the picket line during the strike.

CSEA also had joined a labor coalition to aid members who needed financial help because of the layoffs.

— Ron Wofford



CSEA members review the paperwork which settled the strike between unionized nurses, not CSEA members, and Lockport Hospital management. From left, CSEA Local Vice President Lorrey Bootes, Local President Bob DiCarlo and CSEA Western Region Director Roger Sherrie.

CSEA, political pressure keeps Middletown Psych ward open

MIDDLETOWN — Political heat from state and local lawmakers — prompted by CSEA activists — has kept a client ward open at Middletown Psychiatric Center.

The state Office of Mental Health (OMH) announced plans to close a co-ed ward at the facility, but kept the ward open after heated opposition from Hudson Valley politicians.

Assemblyman Howard Mills (R-Goshen), one of the Hudson Valley’s most vocal critics of OMH’s plans to close Middletown, sent a letter to OMH Commissioner James Stone after learning of the department’s plans to close the Middletown ward.

Because the state is proceeding with its plans to close Middletown and Hutchings Psychiatric Center in Syracuse, many people, including Middletown Psychiatric Center CSEA Local President Diane Hewitt, had viewed the ward closure plan as a way to speed up plans to shutter the facility.

While the ward, once one of Middletown’s largest, remains open, Hewitt said that OMH has cut patient numbers within the ward so drastically that the ward is now one of the facility’s smallest.

Putting clients on the street

OMH has been forcing the Middletown center to increasingly discharge patients prematurely, Hewitt said.

“The facility continues to discharge clients at an alarmingly quick rate,” she said.

“These discharges haven’t always been successful,” Hewitt said.

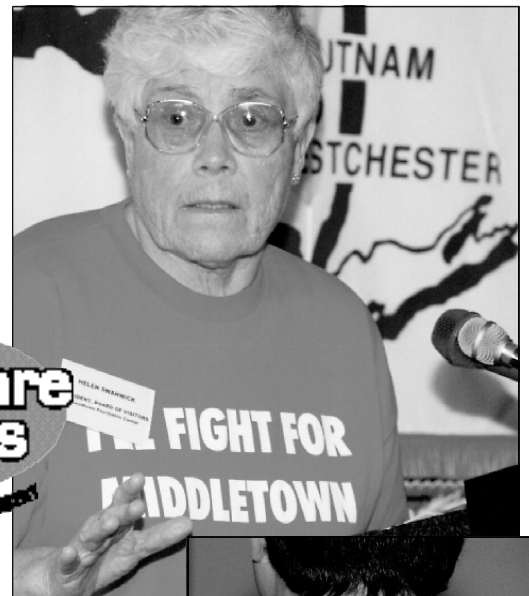
In one case, Hewitt said, the facility had prematurely discharged a client into family care. The client was forced to return to Middletown within 24 hours because his condition had rapidly deteriorated.

Hewitt is also concerned about the growing number of inmates in local jails who suffer from mental illnesses.

“There are now so many people in the Orange County Jail who have mental illnesses,” she said.

“If Middletown closes, the jail will be the largest provider of mental health services in Orange County. A lot of these people don’t belong in incarceration — they belong in treatment,” she said.

Hewitt and other CSEA officials are continuing to work with state and local



Activists such as Helen Swanwick, president of the center’s board of visitors, above, attended an OMH speakout

earlier this year to make the point (above) that MPC provides quality care.

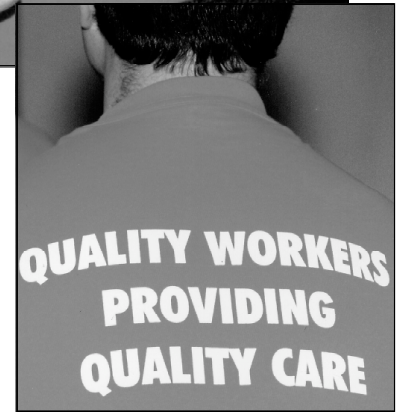
politicians and mental-health advocates to fight the proposed closures.

A final decision on the closings will be made when a state budget is passed.

“I’m glad to see the ward remain open,” Hewitt said.

“Our state and local politicians have been fighting for us. But the fight is far from over,” she said.

— Janice Marra



Voices of the Work Force

“When I first started 20 years ago, we didn’t have a lot of the medical appliances and the paperwork that we have now, or the state requirements. On our schedule, there may be four days out of 14 that we’re fully staffed with our nurses. There’s not enough time to do it all. We stay after to get our paperwork done. There’s no other way to get it done. Ninety percent of the time we never take breaks, or even take lunch half the time.”



— Robin Young, LPN at The Meadows, Otsego County’s nursing home

WORK FORCE FACTS

- The unit which CSEA members and state lawmakers saved at Middletown Psychiatric Center has seen a severe cut in the number of clients it serves. The unit had housed 22 clients. Now it serves five.
- A recent series in the *Middletown Times-Herald Record* found mental health services at the Orange County Jail seriously deficient.

Involving the public, press

Niagara County Health Department members wage campaign against cuts

LOCKPORT — Union members working at the Niagara County Health Department are mobilizing to fight a proposed 10 percent cut in their department's budget for the coming year.

"We're going to do all we can to educate the public that these cuts would hurt the most vulnerable, and that the county isn't in the poor financial position some legislators say," said Fran Faery, Unit president.

The Unit has taken a comprehensive approach to assessing the department's position, and more importantly, mobilizing

the membership to get involved in the campaign.

"These members have taken up the challenge to put their personal efforts into at least one aspect of the challenge," said Roger Sherrie, Western Region director.

"Their plan of action is one that could be used by almost any Unit facing similar situations," Sherrie added.

The revelation of a budget shortfall prompted CSEA activists to take a hard look at the projections.

"We have many problems with the county's

announcement about the

budget, and we will continue to examine it, with CSEA research and political assistance, and political action, as necessary," said Faery.

"This is not about layoffs only — and some officials have said no layoffs are imminent — but about being able to provide the services the community needs.

"We are more than willing to do our share. But there shouldn't be a meat cleaver or big scissors approach to the services we provide. And it's not only the health department. All Unit members should be aware of the need to be mobilized," Faery said.

The campaign action plan includes:

- Identifying organizations and/or individuals who may be interested and an ally of CSEA's cause;
- Creating a list of media contacts, and maintain communications with reporters;
- Developing information packets, with figures on costs of services, and costs of loss of those services to the community;
- Developing a petition that garners citizen support;
- Developing a unified plan of approach to all contacts, so the message by various members is always the same;
- Asking for specific assistance, such as public announcements of support, petition signatures, public speakers;
- Developing a check list of supporters, which includes the organization's head, board of directors, number of members, etc.;
- Developing a budget for mailing, supply costs, etc., working with CSEA region and headquarters resources.

— Ron Wofford



On the job with a million people in Syracuse

The State Fair in Syracuse reached a milestone of more than 1 million visitors during its week-long run this summer, and CSEA members were ingredients in the recipe for success.

Scores of members volunteered to staff the CSEA booth at the fair, distribute material about the union and help register voters to participate in the upcoming elections.

Other union members who work for state agencies such as the Department of Transportation and the state Olympic Regional Development Authority, among

others, were on hand to talk with fairgoers about state facilities, operations and tourism.

"Every year our members are part of the backbone of the fair, educating the public and showing them how their jobs are an integral part of the state's vitality," said CSEA President Danny Donohue, who staffed the CSEA booth.

CSEA weekend at the fair drew record crowds. Union members also marched in the annual Labor Day parade through the fair grounds.

Meeting union members and answering questions about CSEA came with the territory as CSEA President Danny Donohue greets CSEA member Yvonne Foote, a senior court office assistant in the Cortland City Court. Seated next to Donohue is CSEA member Celia Knox.



LEFT: CSEA member Dan Sidman, who works for the state Barge Canal Authority, demonstrates how locks raise and lower boats traveling the Erie Canal.

RIGHT: Registering voters for the upcoming election was another part of CSEA members' job at the State Fair. CSEA activist Elmer Crump, at left, an Onondaga County employee, helps fairgoers complete voter registration cards at the CSEA booth.



Voices of the Work Force


"We prepare 180 meals a day including meals for our homebound clients. I like dealing with the people. If it weren't for us, some of them would have no place to go. Most of them are alone. They come here to meet their friends."

— Annie Riesdorff, a 22-year nutrition site manager, Putnam County Office for the Aging



INSIDE

THE WORK FORCE

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS TOPIC:
 To see many more photos of all the labor parades, go to: <http://www.csealocal1000.net>

CSEA members "fired up" on Labor Day



▲ Buffalo ►

At right, CSEA Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan joins activists from the Erie County local and other Buffalo area locals on Labor Day.



Below, CSEA President Danny Donohue and Western Region President Flo Tripi lead the line of marchers in the Rochester parade.

▼ Rochester ►



Thousands of union members flooded the streets of cities across the state for Labor Day parades and festivities, marking organized labor's decades of accomplishments and mobilizing for the challenges ahead.

"Each year, Labor Day gives union members a chance to reaffirm our commitment to CSEA and take pride in who we are and what we stand for," said CSEA President Danny Donohue before he marched in the Rochester parade.

In Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester and New York City, CSEA members marched with members from other unions, proudly displaying banners and pennants.

"I am happy to be in New York City with my union brothers and sisters marching in the Labor Day Parade because we all have to show solidarity as union members," said Todd Dryer, a planner with the CSEA Poughkeepsie unit who marched in New York City.

"We're very proud of the turnout," said CSEA activist Joe Aravena who co-chaired the New York City parade committee along with Jackie Stanford.

"It's important for members to know CSEA has a strong presence in these events," said Long Island activist Dominic Ciaramella.

For CSEA member Thomas Madden, the New York City event was a change of scenery and a hands-on lesson on the strength of the union movement in New York State.

"I just moved to New York State from Arizona, where there are very few unions and a strong anti-labor attitude," said Madden, a planner in Westchester County and a two-month CSEA member.

"I marched in the parade because I'm really happy to be in New York. There's a lot of union solidarity and support here that you can't find in too many other places," Madden said.

Due to the tragic events of Sept. 11, the Albany Labor Parade has been rescheduled as a memorial march and service. Coverage in the November edition of *The Work Force*.



◀ New York City ▲

Below, CSEA President Danny Donohue greets members while staffing the CSEA booth during the State Fair in Syracuse. Both the fair and the CSEA events drew record crowds.



Above, CSEA-backed NYC mayoral candidate Fernando Ferrer leads CSEA's contingent up Manhattan's Fifth Avenue.

▼ Syracuse ►



Members rally

Continued from Page 3

For Jim Cummings, a state Department of Transportation worker in Albany, the call to need was close to home.

His colleagues who work for the department are part of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, part of the state Transportation Department, with offices located in the World Trade Center.

"I'm here for them," Cummings said reverently as he waited to give blood.

CSEA members working in school districts helped collect food, clothing and money to help the relief effort.

At the East Greenbush School District outside Albany, CSEA Unit President Don Pearson and his 160 members arranged for a local supermarket to donate a tractor trailer, which staff and students filled with supplies.

Thousands of dollars were also raised by CSEA Capital Region volunteers.

"Everyone gave generously," said CSEA activist Ken Koopman.

At the State University of New York at Albany campus, union members joined thousands of students and others in a unity walk the day after the attack.

"People are devastated," said Chris Ross, Local president at the university.

"In all my years, I've never seen such unity. We had a fund raiser on the day shift and got \$4,200 in donations from students, staff, and administration in three hours.

— **Rolando Infante, Janice Marra, Daniel X. Campbell**

DOT workers respond to scene

BEACON — CSEA members from the state Department of Transportation (DOT) are facing mountains of debris and carnage as they sift through the wreckage of the World Trade Center disaster.

More than 300 DOT workers, including scores of CSEA members, are clearing heavy debris from the site with 20 pieces of the department's equipment and assisting other rescue workers with tasks such as bucket brigades to extinguish smoldering ruins.

"Basically, we're all pitching in any way we can," said Dwayne Palen, CSEA president for DOT workers in the mid-Hudson valley.

While union members at DOT were prepared to witness a disaster in lower Manhattan, Palen said nothing could have prepared him for the wreckage.

"There is carnage, total devastation everywhere," Palen said. "There is so much debris — twisted metal, smashed cars are all

Stories relate terror

Continued from Page 3

loudspeakers asking workers to return to their offices, since the immediate danger was in the tower next door.

"People went back to their offices and went back to work," Rosa said. "I was already outside when the second plane hit. My supervisor didn't make it. Some of my co-workers didn't make it," Rosa said.

Carmen Pedrosa, on the 87th floor, also ignored orders to return to her office.

"My father always told me you get away from danger," said Pedrosa, a keyboard specialist at the state tax department.

"I automatically just turned around, got my pocketbook and told my co-workers 'Let's go! Let's get out of here!'" she said.

Like hundreds of others running from the debris and death, Pedrosa kept searching for a phone to call her loved ones.

There were long lines for public phones everywhere and cell phones were nearly unusable.

After calling her mother, the second plane struck. She ran toward the South Street Seaport and took refuge at a Victoria's Secret store to escape the monolithic cloud of debris racing toward her. Store attendants allowed her and others to make phone calls and hear the events unfolding from a radio.

"I am so scared, nervous and basically feeling guilty. Should I be happy (that I made it out alive)?" Pedrosa said.

Marcia Smart, a secretary who worked on the 86th floor, also ignored the order to return to work.

"If it were not for that announcement, a lot of people would have left," said Smart.

"I left because I'm scared of fire. I wasn't thinking

over the place. Even the buildings surrounding the World Trade Center, which are still standing, are unbelievably damaged. It's so much worse than what is shown on TV," he said.

Palen added a terrible odor also permeates the disaster site.

"The whole site smells like fire, like death," he said. "You can't describe it any other way."

Palen and other CSEA members were also exposed to the most painful aspect of the disaster — the bodies of some of the victims.

"I saw two bodies," Palen said. "It was numbing. I've been in the military and a volunteer fireman, but the magnitude of this carnage was so overwhelming.

"You simply get through the day by doing whatever needs to be done. It's only when you're driving home from the site that the

about a plane."

Indeed, many who were in the field or were simply arriving to work late were distraught and in a state of shock.

"When I got out of the subway, Building One had just been struck and I saw people jumping out of windows," said Margaret Ramsay, an audit investigator who worked on the 86th floor.

"While I was standing there this plane just came from nowhere and struck Building Two and made this loud sound. I just started running and didn't stop until I got to Chinatown."

Ramsay was to meet CSEA member Marion Hrycak that morning. He's missing.

From the atrium at her main office in Brooklyn, Angela Murray nervously watched as one of the most popular symbols of the New York City skyline was obliterated.

Murray was scheduled to return to her 87th floor office, but abandoned those plans when she heard about the first crash.

"I turned on my portable radio and I heard from one of my supervisors and then from five other people who were already standing outside. But then the building collapsed and the radios went silent."

Among the missing are her director, Charles Mills and her assistant director, Bill Puhlman.

"We're not a big unit but we're a close unit," said Murray, who helped with the initial effort to find survivors and search for the missing.

"I've known Yvette Anderson (a CSEA member who is also missing) for 10 years and we were on the Social Committee. She was the life of the party, a fine person. If it happens that I don't see her again, that's something that I'll always take away."

— **David Galarza**

CSEA members also listed as missing from the Department of Taxation and Finance are Florence Cohen, Harry Goody and Dorothy Temple.



Deseta



Pedrosa



Smart



Harris



Ramsay



Photo courtesy of Dwayne Palen
This scene greeted CSEA members working in the state Department of Transportation who helped recovery efforts after the terrorist attacks.

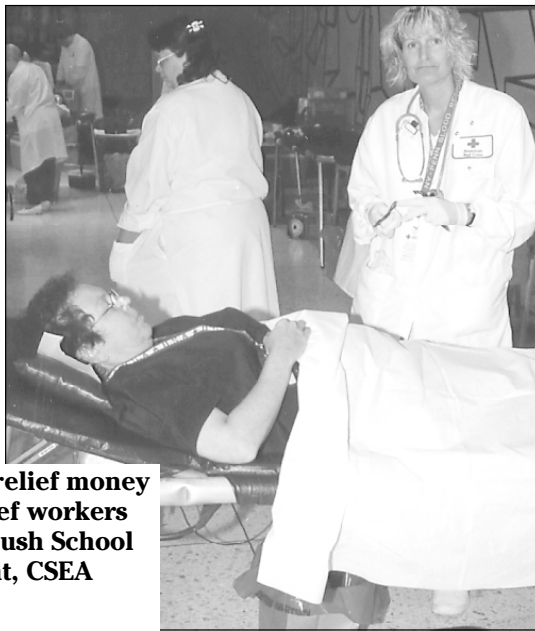
magnitude of it all really hits you," Palen said.

— **Janice Marra**

CSEA reaches out across the state



CSEA members across New York gave blood, helped raise relief money and moved donated goods to aid stricken families and relief workers in the World Trade Center attacks. Above left, East Greenbush School District members fill a truck with donated supplies. At right, CSEA member Dorothy Erck donates blood in Albany.



Union members in medical response

GROUND ZERO — The wait for three CSEA members who are members of a Long Island fire department was excruciating and unforgettable.

“We were asked to drive to Chelsea Street (near the World Trade Center) and the wait there was dimming all of our hopes that there were survivors to be found,” said Kathy Walsh, a medical laboratory technician with the Nassau University Medical Center and a lieutenant at the East Meadow Fire Department.

Walsh and two other CSEA members from Long Island — all in the fire department — were among the thousands of medical experts who rushed to Manhattan to help.

“When we got the call to drive into Ground Zero, we had to drive with oxygen masks inside the truck because it was difficult to breathe,”

said Michele Farber, a clinical technician at the Nassau University Medical Center.

“Once we got to Ground Zero, we sprung into action, helping the rescue workers by washing their burning eyes and cleaning their faces from the soot and debris,” said Patricia Brown, a five-year CSEA member and an accounting claims settlement agent with the Nassau County Treasurers Office.

“It was difficult to keep our emotions in check because of our first-hand experience with Ground Zero, interacting with the rescue workers, and seeing loved ones holding pictures over their heads,” Brown added.

— Rolando Infante

Employee Assistance Program there to help

The state Employee Assistance Program and CSEA’s own Employee Assistance Program have been mobilized to provide union members and staff with any support they may need in coping with the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center.

According to the EAP:

Critical incidents affect people differently, there are some common reactions that you may experience.

These signs and symptoms may begin immediately, or you may feel fine for a couple of days or even weeks, then suddenly be hit with a reaction.

The important thing to remember is that these reactions are quite normal; although you may feel some distress, you’re probably experiencing a normal reaction to an abnormal

situation.

Physical reactions include insomnia, nightmares, fatigue, hyperactivity or “nervous energy,” appetite changes, neck or back pain, headaches, heart palpitations or dizzy spells.

Consult a physician if you experience chest pains or dizzy spells.

Emotional reactions include excessive jumpiness or tendency to be startled, irritability, anger, feelings of anxiety or helplessness.

Inability to concentrate, increased incidents of errors, lapses in memory, increase in absenteeism, and a tendency to overwork may also be experienced.



Union unity at the scene

Much of the disaster relief effort is dominated by union members.

“There are members from so many unions in this state who are down there working constantly,” said Dwayne Palen, president of the CSEA state Department of Transportation (DOT) Local in the mid-Hudson valley.

CSEA DOT members are driving heavy equipment and helping remove debris where the World Trade Center stood.

“It’s a shining example of the best of organized labor coming together for one goal. Without the unions, I’m afraid that the relief effort would still be at Day 1,” he said.

Four heavy equipment operators from CSEA’s Palisades Interstate (Bear Mountain) Park Local also went to New York City to help.

“It was difficult for them to see all the destruction, but they were still willing and glad to help out,” CSEA Palisades Interstate Park Local President Daniel Corigliano said.

— Janice Marra

WORK FORCE FACTS

- When the World Trade Center was first opened in the early 1970s, then Gov. Nelson Rockefeller moved dozens of state offices and thousands of employees into the complex to help boost occupancy.
- Most state offices were moved out of the WTC in the mid to late 1980s as office space in the complex commanded premium prices.
- Nearly 300 state employees in agencies with CSEA representation worked in the WTC when the tragedy occurred. At press time, 42 of those employees remained unaccounted for. Five of those 42 are CSEA members. All five are employees of the Department of Taxation & Finance.

Brighton truck practice leaves little to safety

BRIGHTON — An accident waiting to happen has happened when a seasonal worker fell from a town truck as it picked up lawn debris.

The incident was foreseen by CSEA activists, who have been at odds with management on the safety issue of hanging onto moving trucks.

CSEA has filed a grievance against the town, charging a town policy of having workers hang onto truck mirrors and

door handles while picking up garbage is unsafe.

Public employees who hop on and off trucks as they make garbage or lawn debris pickups have very little margin of safety as they find a foothold or handhold.

“Even though jumping on and off moving trucks is unsafe, state law exempts public

employers, allowing them to operate this way,” said John Bieger, the union’s occupational safety and health specialist.

“It wouldn’t be allowed if it was a private sector company. This needs to be changed,” he said.

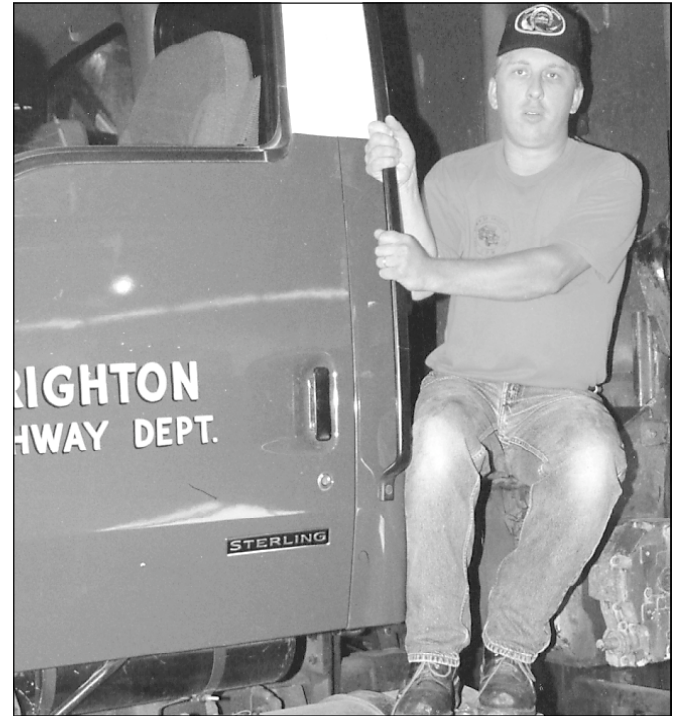
Unsafe at any speed

“We’ve received written orders to work this way, to have the guys hang from the mirrors,” said Chris Podgorski, a 13-year senior motor equipment operator and union steward, who drives a truck during lawn debris pickups.

“I would not allow the guys to jump on and off that way,” he said.

“I would have them walk and then get into the cab, even doubled up, until we got this directive. I’ve even fallen off myself, some time ago. Luckily, I wasn’t hurt, because the driver grabbed me by my shirt and held me up. But I could have been badly hurt. I almost fell under the wheels,” Podgorski said.

The practice is also unsafe because a truck



CSEA member Chris Podgorski shows the precarious perch Town of Brighton workers endure on their debris-collecting rounds.

driver’s view to the rear is at least partially obstructed when a co-worker hangs onto the mirror, CSEA members said.

“Most times guys are hanging on both mirrors because that’s usually the crew make-up,” said Ernie Heinsbergen, CSEA Unit president and a motor equipment operator.

“There should be no doubt on anyone’s part that this is unsafe,” he added.

— Ron Wofford



WORK FORCE FACTS

- Management has resisted union demands to install wider foot rests and hand holds, claiming it would nullify truck manufacturers’ warranties, according to CSEA labor relations specialist Debbie Lee.
- Town crews use several different style trucks, including dump trucks and garbage packers of various vintage. All have very little room for workers to hang onto.
- Most townships do not allow their workers to ride on the side of their trucks, as Brighton orders its workers to do, according to CSEA activists.

Healthy schools on CSEA’s state, national legislative agenda



Capital Region School District Committee Chair Judy Fremgen, left, Sen. Hillary Clinton, and CSEA Cairo-Durham School District Unit Officer Barbara Agostinoni discuss Healthy Schools Programs.

Union members and U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton are pushing Congress this year for more money to fix sick schools as CSEA leaders again will lobby state lawmakers for healthy schools.

CSEA members on the union’s Education Services Committee will this month consider supporting state legislation to bolster programs to fix unsafe and unhealthy schools and better protect children from environmental hazards.

Clinton spoke in the Albany area recently about her support of the Healthy Schools Network, in which CSEA is an active partner, and reaffirmed her pledge to get more federal money to repair crumbling schools.

Research provided by the Healthy Schools Network was used by Clinton to advance child environmental health research and

protection.

“CSEA will continue to support the important vision of the Healthy Schools Network as it continues its mission of outreach and technical assistance,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue.

Healthy Schools Network is a statewide coalition of unions and non-profit associations aimed at protecting students and school workers from health hazards found in schools — including pesticides, cleaning agents, dust and asbestos.

Many of these hazards are being blamed for rising asthma rates in schoolchildren and pose risks to CSEA members working in schools.

Latino Leadership Training Seminar: The power to organize immigrant labor

Organizing Latino and immigrant workers, voter education and workplace safety were among some of the issues and concerns addressed during the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement

(LCLAA) seminar attended by CSEA staff recently.

CSEA Deputy Counsel Mike Ortiz and Communications Associate David Galarza were among those attending the seminar titled "Trabajando – Latino Trade Unionists Working for a Better Tomorrow."



The program demonstrated LCLAA's efforts to address issues affecting its diverse

membership and the future of the Latino labor movement.

The latest U.S. Census showed large gains for the Latino community.

Ande Hernandez

of the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute said more than 100 congressional districts would have to be redrawn to reflect changes and shifts in the population.

"Hispanics have a greater possibility of gaining seats in the next congressional election," said Hernandez. "But, we need to get voter registration and education campaigns started in our communities."

The need to organize and advocate on behalf of immigrant workers was also addressed.

Without documentation, immigrants have extremely limited legal recourse to address their problems and they are unable to bargain collectively for improvements because of fear of deportation.

These workers face a multitude of problems, including low wages, non-payment of wages, sexual and physical abuse, inhumane working conditions, lack of benefits, and constant fear of deportation.

"New immigrants can and will energize the labor movement, but only if the labor movement responds to the needs and demands of immigrant workers," said Baldemar Velasquez, president of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee.

CSEA members help striking paper workers

CSEA staff members are helping striking union workers who have been picketing the Finch Pruyn paper mill in Glens Falls for about three months.

More than \$500 collected from union employees was recently donated to the strike fund.

CSEA members continue to attend rallies outside the paper mill and union activists from the Capital District collected school supplies for children of the strikers.

State Comptroller Carl McCall and State Sen. Neil Breslin have urged the strikers to put pressure on local politicians and community leaders to get Finch Pruyn managers to return to the bargaining table.

Unions help those at Ground Zero

CSEA members mirrored the huge outpouring of help and support which members of other unions across New York showed after the terrorist strike on New York City.

Donating money and blood, volunteering to help the supply lines near the World Trade Center, or being called to use their job skills at the scene, union members rolled up their sleeves and got involved.

Union members were at the heart of the rescue and recovery efforts — as nurses, firefighters, ambulance technicians, ferry workers, construction workers, psychologists and a host of other job titles.

- CSEA members who work for the state Department of Transportation in the mid-Hudson valley were called to supply heavy equipment to help with the removal of tons of debris from the World Trade Center.
- The Ironworkers union has set up three teams of recovery volunteers drawn from unions on the East Coast. The teams are being rotated in Manhattan. More than 1,000 ironworkers have volunteered.
- Because of the asbestos risk from the World Trade Center buildings, union members who specialize in asbestos removal have volunteered. Members from all 16 of the New York City Laborers local unions are helping.
- Operating engineers from New York City unions are operating the heavy equipment needed to clear the rubble, despite the dangerous and unstable conditions.
- When emergency shelters needed paper masks for volunteers at the World trade Center rescue effort, Bakers, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers & Grain Millers contacted union-contracted bakeries in the region and obtained 20,000 masks. They then helped distribute the face masks to rescue workers in various Manhattan locations.
- Firefighters and other workers at the scene need food and drink. The New York State AFL-CIO, firefighters, the Westchester Central Labor Council and the United Food and Commercial Workers teamed up to provide truckloads of food from union supermarkets.
- When it was clear fresh clothing was needed, the New York Central Labor Council set up a collection center near the World Trade Center. Other unions members used their skills and talents to help with the aftershocks of the deadly attack.
- Nurse volunteers responded en masse to the scene. Interns, residents and doctors who belong to Local 1199 in New York City provided round-the-clock emergency care.
- Emergency medical technicians in New York City and on Long Island, all part of CSEA and AFSCME, worked around the clock to help victims.
- Psychologists who belong to the New York State United Teachers formed disaster response teams and helped the survivors cope with the incomprehensible loss.

Resolutions proposed for CSEA's annual delegates meeting

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS to be presented for consideration by delegates attending CSEA's 91st Annual Delegates Meeting, Oct. 29-Nov. 2 in Buffalo.

Members wishing to see copies of any resolution should contact their delegate.

1. Support Bill A-3489/S-2061

Submitted By: Lee Pound, delegate – Local 918

The resolution proposes CSEA continue to lobby for state legislation which would prohibit all local governments (counties, towns and villages) from unilaterally reducing health benefits or increasing costs for retirees, unless a corresponding change is negotiated for current employees.

Retirees of school districts and BOCES have a year-to-year protection of their health benefits, and retirees of local government should be given the same protection.

The Resolutions Committee recommends this resolution be adopted as amended.

2. Nationwide Election Reform

Submitted By: Lee Pound, delegate – Local 918

The resolution proposes CSEA, AFSCME and the AFL-CIO start a campaign involving all members to develop a new, efficient, understandable and uniform election process for the nation.

The November 2000 presidential elections revealed glaring irregularities, not only in Florida, but other states as well.

The resolution states too many voting systems are antiquated and result in malfunctions, and it is imperative to correct these systems with an efficiency and thoroughness that can withstand the severest critique.

Whereas: election reform must include strict enforcement of voting rights, upgrading equipment, universal voter registration, safeguard to ensure that every vote counts, improve the absentee ballot to be readable, exclude punchout boxes and be clearly understandable to voters.

The Resolutions Committee recommends this resolution be defeated.

While there is concurrence with the sentiment of the resolution, it speaks to national election reform and any election reform would have to take place at the state level. Each state has the right to determine its election laws and procedures.

3. Nursing Home Improvements

Submitted By: Lee Pound, delegate – Local 918

The resolution proposes CSEA lobby for more money in the state budget for additional nursing home staffing, and that CSEA and AFSCME lobby for more staffing in nursing homes in all states.

The Health Care Financing Administration

(HCFA) said research is showing a clear relationship between staffing levels and quality of care.

A study of 1,786 nursing homes in three states showed more than half do not meet minimal requirements.

The Resolutions Committee recommends this resolution be adopted as amended.

4. Celebrate 2001, The International Year of Volunteers

Submitted By: Lee Pound, delegate – Local 918

This resolution asks CSEA to honor the time and commitment volunteers give to their communities.

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2001 the International Year of Volunteers.

Many CSEA members, both active and retired, volunteer countless hours to numerous community, social and religious organizations.

The Resolutions Committee recommends this resolution be adopted as amended.

5. Living Wage Laws

Submitted By: Patricia Sauer, delegate – Local 513 on behalf of the Standing Safety and Health Committee

This resolution proposes CSEA educate and encourage all its activists to become involved in living wage campaigns throughout the state.

The resolution also proposes CSEA advance the cause of living wage laws and thereby ensure private sector CSEA members achieve parity of wages, benefits and safety and health protections equal to CSEA's public sector members.

AFSCME and the AFL-CIO have joined the fight for living wage laws and have had some successes in various cities and counties.

The trend towards contracting out of services formerly provided by public workers has often resulted in lower wages and a lack of concern for the safety of private-sector workers.

For entry-level workers, this has meant a loss of wages and compensation ranging from 25 percent to 46 percent, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

The Resolutions Committee recommends this resolution be adopted as amended.

6. Ergonomics Standard

Submitted By: Jeannette Engle, delegate – Local 838 – on behalf of the Standing Safety and Health Committee

This resolution proposes CSEA fight to restore federal ergonomic standards which were recently repealed by the Bush administration.

The ergonomics standards that were 10 years in the making have been rescinded by the current administration as a rebuke to organized labor.

Ergonomic injuries and illnesses are the largest safety and health problems occurring in the

workplace, causing 1.6 million musculoskeletal disorders such as chronic lower back pain and carpal tunnel syndrome.

Almost half of the American work force is comprised of women and over 65 percent of repetitive motion injuries are suffered by women and minorities.

The National Academy of Sciences has released a study showing the cost of lost wages and productivity caused by musculoskeletal disorders was \$50 billion annually.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health studies have concluded that for every \$1 spent on safety, the employer receives a \$9 return in productivity and savings.

The Resolutions Committee recommends this resolution be adopted as amended.

7. Cleaning The Hudson River

Submitted By: Joel Schwartz, delegate – Local 446

This resolution proposes CSEA support the dredging of PCBs from the Hudson River.

The health and beauty of the Hudson River is critical to the economic vitality of the community of New York State and the Hudson River is a beautiful asset.

The resolution calls for CSEA to support the findings of the proposed remediation plan in the "Hudson River Reassessment" being conducted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Superfund.

The resolution also calls for CSEA to urge the EPA to complete the "reassessment" and issue a "Record of Decision" without delay.

The Resolutions Committee took no action on this resolution since the issue is moot. On Aug. 1, the EPA issued a draft report which stated "the administration is committed to clean up the Hudson River in a manner that is environmentally sound and is responsive to the concerns of the affected communities."

8. In Support of Fighting Bush's Tax Plan

Submitted By: Les Eason on behalf of the Committee on Minority Issues

This resolution proposes CSEA fight President George Bush's \$1.6 trillion tax cut over 10 years.

The Resolutions Committee concurs wholeheartedly with the sentiment of this resolution. However, it is untimely because Bush's tax plan is now law. In light of this, delegate Eason has withdrawn the resolution.



A letter written here, a letter written there ... pretty soon it added up to billions of dollars

As the first permanent COLA payments begin to appear in more than 216,000 retirees monthly checks, CSEA's Randy Goldberg, president of the Teachers' Retirement Local, feels a tinge of personal pride.

His Local helped promote the idea of a permanent COLA by writing informative letters to state lawmakers urging them to drop the 3 percent employee contribution to the retirement fund.

"Perhaps it was coincidence, maybe it was sheer luck, but I'm proud of what my local Political Action

Committee was doing and how it turned out to benefit everyone," Goldberg said recently.

Crunching retirement numbers daily, CSEA members who work in the retirement funds knew how flush the state and local government retirement accounts were.

Goldberg was determined to make sure state lawmakers knew these accounts were well-funded and some of the money could be shared with workers.

"We put together a letter which we sent to our elected local and state officials to see what they thought of our idea of using the excess retirement funds to provide not only a COLA for retirees but also have the 3 percent contribution from the hundreds of thousands of public employees absorbed by the fund," Goldberg said.

Those letters helped educate state lawmakers, who passed a permanent COLA and eliminated the 3 percent employee contribution to the retirement fund.

— Daniel X. Campbell



"This boost in my retirement will certainly help. Going to the rallies, writing letters and making phone calls over the years all helped to get this COLA."

— Jo Milano, treasurer of the retirees Local in the Capital District and a retired State Police employee


"I knew when (state Comptroller Carl) McCall got behind the COLA idea we would get it for sure. The extra money in my retirement check means a little more for my grandchildren and my wife."

— Bob Meccariello, a retired state Department of Transportation employee and president of the CSEA Schenectady retirees Local.



WORK FORCE FACTS

- The general retirement fund for public employees in New York State grew from \$59 billion to more than \$120 billion the last seven years.
- The state Teachers' Retirement System has also matched that percentage of growth during the same time.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS TOPIC
 Contact the state comptroller's Web site at:
www.osc.state.ny.us/retire

CSEA political action wins again at end of legislative session

Cooperation among unions produced solid results for the rank and file again this legislative session at the statehouse.

Although there was still no state budget when the state Senate and Assembly left Albany for the summer, several bills sponsored by CSEA and endorsed by trade and public employee unions were passed and signed by Gov. George Pataki.

"Our strong political action operation and the united front of labor in the Capitol once again help union members and their families," said CSEA President Danny Donohue.

These important bills which better protect union members' rights were signed into law:

Agency Shop Extender: This law extends for two years

provisions which require agency shop fee deductions for all non-union members of a bargaining unit to pay their fair share of the cost of contract negotiations and representation.

Without agency shop, members of a bargaining unit who do not join the union would still reap the benefits of contract negotiations, union benefits and representation at the expense of dues-paying members of the union.

Injunctive Relief Extender: This law extends for two years provisions that establish a process for a charging party to seek injunctive relief in public employment improper practice cases.

Health Insurance for School District Retirees: This law extends for one year provisions

that prohibit school districts from unilaterally reducing health insurance benefits or increasing costs unless a corresponding change is negotiated for current employees.

DOT Sign Shop
 This law allows the state Department of Transportation sign shop in Hamburg to enter into contracts with other state agencies and political subdivisions to produce and sell traffic control devices.

Several other important CSEA-sponsored bills have passed the Legislature and await Pataki's action. They include:

Hazardous Duty for DOT
 This bill authorizes the state Department of Transportation, subject to contract negotiations and approval of the state Division

of the Budget, to give hazardous duty pay to employees who work close to traffic and are in clear, unavoidable risk to injury.

SERB Check-off
 Authorizes the N.Y. State Employment Relations Board to automatically certify an employee organization as the recognized collective bargaining agent for a unit upon the showing of a majority interest of employees through card check-off.

DMNA 25-Year Bill
 Provides a 25 year at 1/2 pay retirement package for airport firefighters employed by the Division of Military and Naval Affairs.

CSEA convention planners: blueprint for success

As thousands of delegates converge on Buffalo in late October to chart the union's course for the next year, a handful of activists are breathing a sigh of relief behind the scenes.

What most CSEA annual convention delegates don't see are the countless hours committee members spend planning the blueprint for the union's upcoming year of membership mobilization, political action and organizing.

"The committee plans the convention from start to finish and we're instrumental in developing the CSEA blueprint and agenda for the coming year," said Paulette Sheridan, committee chair who works at the Long Island Developmental Center.

"This is an important duty because our union activists will take the information they gained from the convention back to their Locals and Units," she added.

"Once a year, the delegates go to decide on the union's future and on the direction CSEA is going to take," said Grace Ann Aloisi, a member of the convention planning committee from CSEA's Southern Region, and a convention delegate.

"CSEA is continually trying to find a format that is going to benefit all of the members, including the activists," Aloisi said.

As a member of the Convention Committee along with being a delegate, Aloisi finds her role in the convention planning process even more satisfying.

"It's very rewarding work," she said. "You really feel that you're helping your peers in solving problems."

Ron Hill, first vice president of CSEA Tax and Finance Local in Albany and a 26-year union activist, knows the road to a successful convention is paved with educational programs.

"We're busy seeing that the

CSEA leaders who attend have a very busy and educational program," said Hill, also a convention committee member.

"We want the people who attend the convention to be educated about new programs, new ideas and concepts. They should be bringing this information back to their members and keeping them informed of what CSEA is doing for them at convention," he said.

Blueprint for success

Aloisi views the CSEA Annual Delegates Meeting as a way to assess and address the needs of the union and its members.

And as a member of the CSEA Convention Committee, Aloisi has the opportunity to play an active role in determining the direction of CSEA.

One of the Southern Region's two representatives on the committee, Aloisi said she enjoys working on the Convention Committee because it gives her an opportunity to meet with delegates from across the state.

"You don't always meet members from other parts of the state just by being a delegate," she said. "By being on the committee, I get to work with these members."

Aloisi said the committee plays a large role in helping members feel comfortable at the event, especially for those coming from out of the region.

In addition to staffing tables and helping members get acclimated to the convention's host city, Aloisi said that the committee also helps in reaching out to the host community.

Public service for public servants

"In past years, CSEA has worked for causes that are specific to the city where we're holding the convention," Aloisi said.

"For instance, we have held fund-raisers for Hale House one year when the convention was held in New York City. Other

POWER TO THE PEOPLE — PEOPLE

payroll deduction has been secured for 680 members of the

Chemung County General Unit Local. Plans are under way to begin membership recruitment at their upcoming picnic ...

RADIO DAYS — The Wayne County Local purchased a series of radio ads that ran Labor Day weekend and reminded the public about CSEA

members who maintain the roads, drive kids to school safely, and provide many other public services. "We thought it would be a good idea to join a

couple other local unions that are putting out 'Happy Labor Day' messages," said Jim Wedman, Local vice president.

"At the same time, it drives a positive message home to the county legislators, who are currently considering possible budget cuts, that could affect our members' jobs," he said ...

FIRST CONTRACT — The initial contract was negotiated recently for 24 newly organized food service workers employed by Aramark in contract with the Harrison School District in Westchester County. The

contract, which took effect July 1, runs through June 20, 2004. It was ratified unanimously after two months of concentrated negotiations ...

LIVING WAGE LAW — The Town of Oyster Bay on Long Island recently adopted a law requiring contractors and subcontractors that do business with the town to pay their workers at least \$9 an hour. The town became the first in the state to enact a "living wage" law to help the lowest paid

years, we have held book drives and fund-raisers for breast cancer. CSEA likes to give back to the communities where we have the conventions," she said.

But the work done at the annual convention is not all about welcome wagons and fund-

raisers. Aloisi stressed the convention provides the delegates the chance to make changes to the structure and procedures of CSEA, if necessary.



employees keep up with the cost of living, which has been historically

higher on Long Island

than other parts of the state

... **LEAVE DONATIONS NEEDED**

— CSEA member Robert Phillips and his family need help.

Phillips, a motor vehicle operator for the SUNY Potsdam Grounds Department, recently returned from the hospital after suffering a brain aneurysm

which has left him unable to work. Phillips, 28, has a small child, but because of his former part-time status, he's about 18 months shy of the 10 years of service he needs to qualify for disability retirement. He's on half-pay, which will end in November. CSEA members at Potsdam have donated leave accruals to Phillips to keep him on the payroll, but about 500 days are needed for him to qualify for a disability retirement. Phillips family, including his mother who works as a janitor on campus, has asked state workers across the state to consider donating days through the leave donation program. Forms are available through your agency's personnel office ...

PEOPLE PEOPLE — The PEOPLE recruiter for July was Marie Prince of CSEA's Western Region. She recruited 27 new PEOPLE members. The recruiter for August was Gloria Smith, of CSEA's Central Region, who recruited 29 new PEOPLE members. PEOPLE is AFSCME's political action organizing program aimed at getting friends of working families elected to Congress.

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— Janice Marra and Daniel X. Campbell