

Employee spirit is turning sewage plant into a 'showcase of east coast'; accident rate drops. See page 9

Erie welfare work is hazardous

BUFFALO — An attack on an Erie County Social Services Department welfare examiner, the second such incident in four months, has triggered employee demands for better security and safety for public employees in the execution of their duties.

CSEA Statewide President William L. McGowan and Region VI President Robert Lattimer voiced support for a list of employee proposals designed to improve safety and security of the 900-plus County social workers, following a tour of the Rath Building with officials of Erie County, CSEA Local 815.

"One of the greatest dangers facing the welfare examiners is the lax security system that allows almost anyone to walk in off the street without being challenged," said President Lattimer. "I walked into several offices without anyone asking me who I was or what my purposes were for being in the area," he continued.

Another major problem is the overcrowded space in which the social workers must interview their clients. "This is deplorable," said President McGowan. "I'm surprised that any work gets done at all under these conditions. I wouldn't have believed it was this bad."

New York State Social Services Department guidelines call for 75 square feet of interview space for each examiner, but in some cases examiners are working in "less than 25 square feet," according to Charles Carpenter, president of the CSEA Social Services Unit.

The most recent confrontation, in which a welfare client whose benefits had been cut allegedly attacked an employee with a hammer, prompted a large group of employees to express their concerns to the County's Commissioner of Social Services.

"We don't feel safe at all the way the building is set up," said one woman caseworker who declined to be identified. "We've said that a number of times and nothing seems to get done. Clients can come right in to our desks without any interference. There must be some type of screening procedure."

An OSHA complaint has been filed by the Social Workers Unit Safety Committee. An inspection by OSHA Enforcement has been completed, but results have not been announced, as of this writing.

As the frustrations mount, several meetings have taken place between Social Services officials and employees, with no final agreements reached.

Among proposals being considered by the Local's Health and Safety Committee and the County's Dept. of Public Works are the installation of television monitors, a silent alarm system, the issuing of new picture identification cards to the 1,300 workers in the building, and dealing with clients on an appointment only basis.

The Commissioner of Social Services has also asked permission of County Executive Edward Rutkowski to fill 17 welfare examiner positions that are vacant. The Executive had earlier imposed a hiring freeze on all county jobs.

Security by the County Sheriff's Department has been beefed up to include eight deputies covering the four floors occupied by Social Services. A

County exec agrees to improvements

BUFFALO — Erie County Executive Edward Rutkowski on July 22 announced approval of a series of safety and security measures designed to better protect the County's caseworkers in the performance of their tasks in the welfare offices.

The measures form the bulk of a list of proposals which had been called for by employees and members of CSEA Erie County Local 815, with support from CSEA President William L. McGowan and Region VI President Robert Lattimer.

Among the approved steps, the installation of a silent alarm in each welfare office that can be activated to immediately notify sheriff's deputies of an emergency; the hiring of 17 more welfare examiners to increase the caseworker staff to 152 by August 10; and the requiring of the county's 25,000 welfare recipients to make appointments to see their caseworkers beginning August 3.

Additionally, welfare recipients will be required to enter the Rath Building by the Pearl Street entrance where they will receive a pass from a receptionist before being allowed to see their caseworker. And doors will be installed to block four open corridors leading to welfare department offices. New identification cards will be issued to all welfare department employees as well.

Social Services Unit President Charles Carpenter said he welcomed the changes. "They sound favorable and its a boost to everyone's morale to see that something is being done about our problems. Our safety and health committee will study it to see what else is needed," he said.

year ago there were only two, according to Health and Safety Chairman John Daleo.

Following a meeting with Presidents McGowan, Lattimer and Carpenter, and Field Rep. Bob Massey, County Executive Rutkowski announced that he is studying the proposals being put forth and will make a decision based on the costs "of the entire package."

Recalling an April incident in which an examiner had to pull a gun on a client to stop an attack on a fellow worker, President Lattimer called on the County to quickly implement measures that will assure its workers of safe workplace.

"If a life should be lost through negligence or foot-dragging on the part of the county, there is no way it can be justified by the old cost-effectiveness cliché," said Lattimer. "And Reaganomics is going to force more and more people onto the welfare rolls in the near future, so they had better be prepared."

"We're not going to stick our heads in a hole and hope this matter goes away or solves itself," said President McGowan. "These hard-working employees are performing some of the most vital functions of the county and they deserve and must have a safe working environment. And we're not going to rest until we see that they get it," he concluded.



PRIME SPONSOR Senator John E. Flynn

\$2,000 death benefit extended to more retirees

Union prods governor to sign retiree benefit bill

ALBANY — The Legislature has voted to extend a \$2,000 death benefit to state employees who retired before October 1, 1966. The newly enacted bill covers pensioners in the Employees' Retirement System and the Policemen's and Firemen's Retirement System.

"CSEA endorsed this bill, and our staff, Political Action committees and retirees lobbied very hard for it, along with the pension supplementation bill," said CSEA President William L. McGowan.

"The Governor vetoed the same bill in 1979 and again in 1980, so we are pressing hard for the Governor to sign this year, and we are hopeful that he will do so."

The law currently provides a death benefit for those state workers who retired since 1966. The new measure extends the benefit to an estimated 5,600 people who retired before 1966.

CSEA lobbyists praised the efforts of the bill's prime sponsors Senator John E. Flynn and Assemblyman Joseph R. Lentol, who serves as chairman of the Governmental Employees Committee.

Other legislators who worked for passage of the measure included Senator Hugh T. Farley, chairman of the Senate Committee on Aging, and Assembly members James W. McCabe, May Newburger, Gail Shaffer and Paul Harenberg.

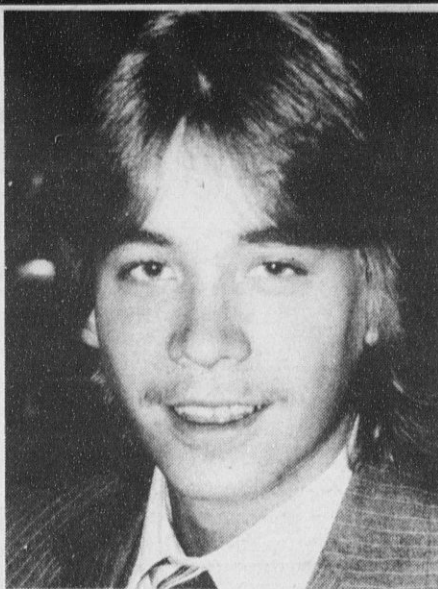
Seniors win scholarships to college

BUFFALO — Three high school seniors from western New York have been awarded \$500 scholarships by the Civil Service Employees Assn. In all, 18 high school seniors from across New York were awarded scholarships this year in memory of long-time CSEA regional president Irving Flaumenbaum.

Winners from Western Region VI are:

Lorie Ann Gadsen of Hornell, daughter of Minnie Gadsen, a caudodian at SUNY Alfred Ag. & Tech. Lorie plans to attend Onondaga Community College.

Mary Ligammari, daughter of Elizabeth and Nicholas Ligammari, a custodian for the Niagara Falls Board of Education. Mary plans to



ROBERT J. STRUBLE plans to attend MIT.

attend Binghamton State University.

Robert J. Struble, son of Geraldine Struble, a Manpower Training Coordinator with the Erie County Employment and Training Service. Robert plans to attend MIT.



MARY R. LIGAMMARI will be a student at Binghamton State.

The CSEA Irving Flaumenbaum Scholarship Committee was headed by Dominic Spacone, President of CSEA Niagara Educational Local 872. Other committee members are Sandra Delia, Thomas Stapleton,



LORIE ANN GADSDEN will use scholarship at Onondaga Community College.

Mary Majestic, Ann Worthy and Judith Wilson. The scholarship winners were chosen from over 600 applicants state-wide, and the awards were based on the applicants high degree of scholastic achievement.



NASSAU COUNTY LOCAL 830 Police Civilian Unit retiree Clare Murnan is presented a certificate upon her retirement by then Local 830 President Nicholas Abbatiello, right. Also at the presentation is Unit President Jay Cartman.

Yes to Minisink pact

SLATE HILL — By a five-to-one margin, a new two-year contract was ratified recently by members of the Minisink School District, according to CSEA President Ray Doss.

The financial package provides annual wage increases of 8.5 percent and 9 percent, and adds one new step each year to the salary schedule.

Other features of the pact, according to CSEA Field Representative Flip Amodio, are; clothing allowance raised to \$75 for maintenance, groundsmen and nursing personnel; longevity payments, based on uninterrupted service, of \$150 after ten years, \$275 after 15 years, and \$375 after 20 years; shift differential payment raised to \$175.

Also, reimbursement of \$30 per credit toward tuition for job-related college courses; grievance language simplified; groundsman granted \$350 differential; employees allowed to review personnel files, and maximum number of sick days which may be accumulated raised to 175 days.

State workers strike in Minn.

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Thousands of AFSCME-represented state workers in Minnesota put up picket lines last week in their first statewide strike. This was the third recent state employee walkout, following strikes in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Main issues in the dispute are health insurance and wages. The union, whose members average \$6.76 an hour, is seeking raises of 10 to 15

percent. The state has offered eight percent this year and a cost-of-living adjustment in 1982. The contract expired June 30, but was extended through July 20 while negotiations continued.

AFSCME represents some 18,000 Minnesota employees in five bargaining units, about 60 percent of the state workers. Minnesota law permits strikes by some state employees.

CSEA attorney praised for excellent representation

AUBURN — Atty. Stephen J. Wiley of CSEA's law firm of Roemer and Featherstonhaugh has been highly commended for his recovery of more than \$3,000 in back wages for overtime work due a former correction officer.

The former correction officer, Wilfred A. Hommel, died while extensive litigation was in the courts, but Atty. Wiley, on behalf of CSEA continued efforts to recover the back wages, which recently were awarded to Mr. Hommel's estate.

The law firm of Contiguglia and Contiguglia, representing the Estate of Mr. Hommel, recently wrote the following letter to CSEA President William L. McGowan:

"Dear Mr. McGowan:

"As attorney for the Estate of Wilfred A. Hommel, I bring to your attention the excellent results achieved by Steve Wiley, Attorney for CSEA. Attorney Wiley successfully represented Mr. Hommel in extensive litigation as a former correction officer for unpaid back wages for overtime work. Although Mr. Hommel died while his case was being litigated in the Trial and Appellate Courts, CSEA continued to represent his estate which recently resulted in an award of in excess of \$3,000. Attorney Wiley, on behalf of your association recovered the full amount of the claim against the State of New York. Significantly, the total legal costs for prosecuting this extensive claim were borne by your association with no charge to Mr. Hommel or his heirs.

"I commend your association for the excellent legal assistance program afforded your members and the top flight representation from such attorneys as Steve Wiley. On behalf of Mr. Hommel's heirs, I thank you for a job "well done."

NEW YORK STATE EMPLOYEES IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES UNIT INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES UNIT OPERATIONAL SERVICES UNIT

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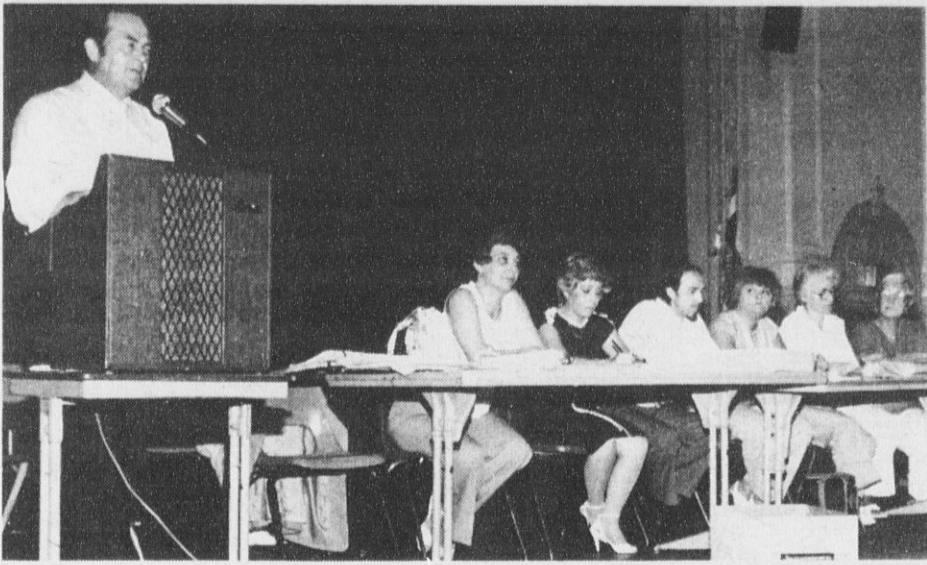
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New pact ratified before old expired



FIELD REP JOE O'CONNOR explains the tentative pact while team members listen, from left, Unit President Janice Schaff, Barbara Rosengaft, Mike Moravsky, Irene Bruno, Lucy Russo and Priscilla Royman.

YONKERS — It was a milestone in the history of labor relations in the city of 195,000 people. A public employees union was able to negotiate and ratify a contract before the old one expired.

Unit President Janice Schaff, along with Field Rep. Joseph O'Connor, led the negotiations for a new two-year pact that has a number of "firsts" for more than 1,000 employees who make up the school district's non-teaching CSEA unit.

The "firsts" include:

- * granting due process Section 75 rights to non-competitive employees with more than four years continuous service;
- * providing an employer's contribution of not more than \$130,000 in the 1981-82 fiscal year to a CSEA Employee Benefit Program;
- * allowing the unit president three hours weekly of unassigned time;
- * establishing a committee to make recommendations to the Superintendent of Schools for a "retirement incentive plan;" and,
- * agreeing to take up health and safety concerns during labor/management meetings.

The wage package includes annual hikes of eight percent, plus increments, as well as increases for hourly employees. Ten-month clerical workers will also be given the option of having salaries paid over 12 months.

The unit's negotiating team was made up of Schaff, Ray Moniz, Barbara Rosengaft, Mike Moravsky, Irene Bruno, Lillian Piorazio, Priscilla Royman, Steve Hrivmak and Lucy Russo.

Print shop employee Donald Skelley vows to fight 'till end

'Cosmetic' safety repairs not enough

ALBANY — Donald Skelley has found out what it is to fight a bureaucracy — and he's not giving up.

Skelley, an employee of the state Department of Health print shop here and the Civil Service Employees Assn. shop steward for his work location, is concerned about the health and safety hazards which plague the print shop and surrounding areas.

A broken ventilating system in an area where harmful chemicals are used, unchained cylinders of explosive chemicals, the lack of an emergency evacuation plan, uninspected fire hoses, broken fire alarm bells, automatic doors which stick closed and missing floor tiles are just some of the union's complaints.

So when the Occupational Safety Hazards Administration Law went into effect in January 1981 Skelley saw it as a prime opportunity to finally get something done. Health Department Local CSEA President Al Mead and Skelley led an OSHA inspector on a tour of all print shop rooms, pointing out each hazard. As Skelley put it, the inspector "took pages and pages of notes" and the steward anticipated a scathing report which would surely force health department officials to make some changes.

That was not the case, however. Not only did the union wait nearly three months for the return of a report which should have come back within three weeks, but in the report the inspector had overlooked most of the hazards Skelley and Mead had shown him.

The final record, Skelley said, only made note of the lack of fire exit signs in six locations. As Skelley said in a previous Public Sector interview — the lack of exit signs is a hazard, but a minor one compared to the rest.

Skelley immediately wrote to OSHA requesting another inspection and appealed to state Senator Howard Nolan to put pressure on the Office of Employee Relations to correct the problems.

In the meantime Skelley invited the Public Sector to write an article on the conditions hoping the publicity would, he said, "open the eyes of some of the officials around here."

At first it seemed the story had some effect. Soon after it appeared in early April, the floors and automatic doors were repaired and most of the pallets crowding the hallways were removed. But that was all and Skelley called the work "cosmetic." "This was just an attempt to make it look like something was being done," he said.

The struggle accelerated when OSHA wrote back to the union refusing to do another inspection. And OER's reply to this was if OSHA doesn't see any hazards, OER has nothing to worry about.

"Neither side will budge and the employees are caught in the middle," said Skelley. "This is what bureaucracy can do to you."

At this time, Skelley says, he is still waiting to see what Senator Nolan can do.

But as long as the hazards exist he'll keep fighting, Skelley said. He plans to meet with OER as often as possible to keep them aware of the problems. And he'll pursue whatever avenues come along. "The changes may come one at a time, but I'll keep trying. They haven't heard the last of me."

"And if I leave this job before all the corrections are made, I'll turn a nice hefty file over to the next guy."

Troy Unit succeeds at tabling title motion

TROY — The Troy City Council has tabled a motion that would have removed two job titles from civil service status to classify them as exempt positions after the Civil Service Employees Assn. there opposed the action.

City of Troy Unit CSEA President Joseph Cassidy spoke against the motion to reorganize the city's public works department at the council's meeting. The proposal called for reclassifying the civil service job titles of civil and senior civil engineer as the exempt titles of facilities maintenance engineer and traffic engineer.

Cassidy said civil service tests were recently given for the two positions and that several engineering department employees are on the eligibility lists for promotions. Reclassifying the titles, he told the council will "circumvent the civil service process and the concept of career ladders, thus demoralizing the entire engineering department."

The motion has been submitted to the council public works committee for further review.



OFFICERS OF FORT SCHUYLER LOCAL 014 of CSEA were recently installed at a dinner meeting in Utica. Beginning new two-year terms are, from left to right, Linda Sciortino, Second Vice-President; William F. Lonczak, Third Vice-President; C. Edward Lavin, President; Margaret Rivers, Treasurer; Stephen R. Zabko, First Vice-President; and Carol Alexander, Secretary. Nicholas J. Cimino, President of CSEA Local 505 NYSDOT, served as Installation Officer.



AS PART OF ON-GOING POLITICAL ACTION, representatives of Local 860 recently attended the annual Westchester County Legislator's Golf and Dinner Outing. Local PAC Chairperson Eleanor McDonald, from left, Board of Legislator Chairman Andrew O'Rourke and Local President Pat Mascioli took part. County Executive Alfred DeBello and 17 legislators were also present. CSEA is the largest public employee union in Westchester County.

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Palmyra 2-year pact

PALMYRA — The Village of Palmyra Unit of Wayne County Local 859 has reached agreement on a two-year collective bargaining contract with the village.

Members of the unit will receive wage increases of nine percent in the first year and 10½ percent in the second year. Other benefits include double time for family holidays, additional bereavement leave, increase in sick days, and a safety equipment clause.

Field Representative Tim Averill was aided in negotiations by Fred Trowbridge and Dave Shoulders.

Local 802 contract

WELLSVILLE — The Wellsville School Unit of Allegany County CSEA Local 802 has come to terms with the school on a three-year collective bargaining agreement.

The 100 members will receive a 10 percent wage increase in the first year of the contract with a minimum of six percent in the second and third years, plus a cost of living adjustment.

The Wellsville CSEA members also will receive a \$2 co-pay prescription drug rider and will be guaranteed promotion by seniority.

The negotiating committee included Shirley Green, Janice Gustafson, Ralph Monico, Ralph Eastlac, Sherm Graves and Patricia Lee. Chief negotiator was Field Representative Ray Ducharme.

Local 855 officers

ITHACA — Members of CSEA Local 855 Tompkins County have elected new officers to serve the next two-year term. Elected were: Marnie Kirchgessner, President; David Livingstone, First Vice-President; Mark Scorelle, Second Vice-President; Hazel Eva, Secretary; Etta Gray, Treasurer; Tom Keane, Representative.

Newly elected delegates include: Steve Ballon, Greg Kirchgessner, William Ferris, Robert Landon, Rugh Morris-Doane, and Dee Wood.

Local 855 represents nearly 1000 public employees in Tompkins County.

THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT

One hundred years of progress

As the American Labor Movement celebrates its centennial in 1981, it is appropriate to look back at the history of the trade union movement in the United States to see where we've been, how far we've come, and where

we're going. This article, second in a series, is condensed from the AFL-CIO publication "A Short History of American Labor," prepared for the 1981 Centennial.

*"Using our economic strength,
our political strength
and any other weapon
that we have the right to use,
we are going to continue
labor's efforts to make
America a better place
for all its citizens -
not merely union members."*



George Meany

President
American Federation
of Labor and
Congress of Industrial
Organizations, 1955-1979

1880's: The labor federation

As the 1880s dawned, the United States was a country in transition, an economy on the verge of tremendous growth.

America had a population of only 50 million people. Industrialization was growing. Coast-to-coast rail travel was a reality, and Edison had invented the light bulb.

Labor unions had long felt the need for federation — joining together to achieve common goals for workers. But early attempts at nationwide labor federation had died, usually due to economic depressions which marked the era.

The first effective step toward uniting the labor movement came in November, 1881, when workers' representatives from a few trades and industries met in Pittsburgh. Represented were the carpenters, cigar makers, printers, merchant seamen and steelworkers, as well as a few city labor bodies and a handful of delegates from the ineffective and idealistic Knights of Labor.

Picked to head the fledgling federation was Samuel Gompers, president of the Cigar Makers Union, who went on to serve as the leader and spokesman for labor in America for the next four decades.

Born in 1850, Gompers emigrated to America as a boy from the Jewish slums of London. He received much of his education in the cigar-making trade as a "reader" — a worker who read books, newspaper stories, poetry and magazine articles to fellow employees to help break the monotony of their work in the shop.

The new Federation was small; so small that in its third year it collected only \$508 in dues. Yet it spoke with a firm voice for working Americans. Its early call for an eight-hour workday was clearly an idea whose time had come. It touched off a strong nationwide clamor for a shorter work week.

The AFL

Just five years later, however, Gompers and some of his associates felt the time had come to reorganize the federation to make it more effective. Meeting in Columbus, Ohio, in 1886, delegates created the American Federation of labor (AFL), a giant step toward development of the modern trade union movement in America.

Gompers was elected President, and serving as secretary was Peter J. McGuire of the Brotherhood of Carpenters.

The AFL's objective was clearly stated: "To protect the skilled labor of America from being reduced to beggary and to sustain the standard of American workmanship and skill, the trade unions of America have been established."

Growing industrialization was presenting a major challenge to American workers, which AFL leaders believed could only be met through more effective unions. An early AFL statement expressed their concern: "The various trades have been affected by the introduction of machinery, the subdivision of labor, the use of women's and children's labor, and the lack of an apprentice system — so that the skilled trades were rapidly sinking to the level of pauper labor."

The new AFL soon had 300,000 members in 25 unions. The modern American labor movement was on its way.



For union activist Ernestine Lafayette, 'CSEA is my pet project'

By Tina Lincer First

ALBANY — Ask Ernestine Lafayette what her hobbies are and you won't hear "tennis," "painting," "camping" or even "reading."

Instead, "Just CSEA," is the answer you'll get.

"Oh yes, and traveling," she adds as an afterthought. "But I don't do as much of it as I used to before I got involved in CSEA."

Ernestine, a member of Department of Labor CSEA Local 670, is a senior employment security clerk in her office's unemployment insurance section, where she handles claims of former New York State residents.

She has been active in CSEA for more than a decade. Her current schedule has her putting in long hours as a shop steward, Local grievance chairwoman, Region IV PEOPLE coordinator and Political Action Committee member.

Former vice president of her Local, she is also a member of her department's Labor/Management and Safety committees, and is active with the Employee Assistance Program.

"CSEA is my pet project," she says. "I believe in the union, I like helping people and I want to do my part. I don't have any family or other involvements or obligations, so I am free to do all these things."

An attractive, slim woman with deep-set eyes, Ernestine chatted easily during a break from a recent EAP training seminar.

It was her traveling, she said, which brought her to the Capital region from her hometown of Seattle, Washington, many years ago. She lives in a mobile home in the Albany County town of Selkirk.

"I had visited New York State on one of my travels, found a place I liked, bought it and here I am," she says in the same matter-of-fact way she speaks about her CSEA activities.

"I like the union and what it stands for," she says. "I think the union tries to get — and does get — fair play for the employee."

"They try to get a decent salary to keep up with the cost of living; they try to get safe working conditions; and they try to protect the employee under the negotiated contract."

As grievance chairperson, Ernestine likes handling people's problems.

"If an employee is about to be terminated or is being disciplined for some reason, I like to help solve that problem, and I do pretty well, if I may say so."

"Unsatisfactory work performance — that's the biggest problem you come across. I take care of it on the first level. I go to the supervisor and see if we can work it out. I try everything I can, and if I can't work it out, I go to the field rep and he takes it from there."

When Ernestine talks about the future, CSEA is right up there in her plans.

"I look forward to being active in CSEA as much as I have been and more," she says, "and hope CSEA can use me as much as possible."

Continuous testing ok for caseworkers effective in October

ALBANY — Beginning in October, local civil service agencies may elect to hold examinations for Caseworkers on a continuous recruitment basis, it has been announced by the NYS Civil Service Department.

Continuous recruitment is used when the usual exam process doesn't provide sufficient eligibles to fill vacancies and where there is large turnover in a classification. Applications are received continuously, and examinations are held whenever the local agency feels they have enough applications to warrant holding the test — generally twice a year.

Cindy Chovanec of the CSEA Research Department pointed out one result of this system. "If the first exam creates a large list of eligibles, and the municipality decides to hold another exam in six months, then high scores in the second test will go to the top of the list," she explained. "Persons who receive merely a passing score then have a reduced opportunity to receive a permanent appointment."

She also pointed out that it is illegal for a municipality to hold the exam solely for provisional employees, and that continuous recruitment should eliminate the need to make provisional appointments.

Eligibles remain on the list for one year, at which time their names are removed if they haven't received permanent appointments.

If a local government opts to conduct examinations on a continuous recruitment basis, they must post an announcement in the same manner as any other exam, stating the examination date.

Mrs. Chovanec recommended that if there is no shortage of caseworkers or persons eligible to participate in an examination for caseworkers, personnel agencies should be urged to avoid holding exams for this position on a continuous recruitment basis.



Insurance Department EAP agreement signed

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) agreement covering all CSEA-represented department employees was signed recently by CSEA State Insurance Department Board of Directors representative Betty Collins and Superintendent of Insurance Albert B. Lewis.

In the photo, Ms. Collins signs for CSEA as Superintendent Lewis watches. Others present for signing of EAP agreements for departmental workers included, standing from left, Robert Nuding, department upstate EAP coordinator; Personnel Director Barbara Watson and Assistant Director of Administration Jan Goorsky.



SUNY CORTLAND LOCAL 605 Officers were recently installed at a meeting on the Cortland campus. Left to right — Nick Piedigrossi, First Vice-President; Bev Ellefson, Second Vice-President; Marianne Evangelista Grant, Secretary; Pat Crandall, President; Ed Zwack, Treasurer; James J. Moore, Regional President.

Installing Officer. Not present for photo session were: Louis Crandall, Alternate Delegate; Mary Stevens, Administrative Unit Representative; Nancy Price, John Young, Operational Unit Representatives; Larry Jebbett, Institutional Unit Representative. CSEA local 605 represents 306 State employees on the Cortland campus.



Strength that is CSEA located at grass roots level — the membership

One reason The Civil Service Employees Assn. is recognized — and respected — as a strong, effective labor union is because it is so soundly organized at the very source of its strength — the grass roots membership.

The union's very large and diversified membership is linked together through a network of nearly 315 Locals, many further subdivided into hundreds of Units.

And it is the hundreds of dedicated individuals who provide the leadership at the Local and Unit levels that unite the grass roots membership to create the basic strength of the union as a whole.

We salute those individuals who have been elected to positions of leadership by their fellow union members. A cross-section of recently elected Local and/or Unit officers are represented on these pages. Others have previously been listed, and more will be published in the future.

AN OUTING IN NORTH SYRACUSE was the site for the installation of new officers for CSEA Local 647, New York State College of Environmental Science & Forestry. Shown, left to right: Elsie Basler, treasurer; Alice Steckiewicz, president; James J. Moore, Region V president, installing officer; June Hesley, vice-president; Martha Melfi, secretary.

Barge canal officers

SYRACUSE — CSEA members of New York State Barge Canal District 3 Central Local 503 recently elected new officers to serve a two-year term.

Winning candidates include: Edgar Canavan, President; Donald McKinnon, First Vice-President; Anthony Stirpe, Second Vice-President; F. Ronald Saleski, Secretary; Charles Hamm, Treasurer. McKinnon was also elected to First Alternate Delegate, while Hamm will serve as Second Alternate Delegate.

Local 315 installation

AMHERST — Region 6 President Robert Lattimer installed the new officers of the Health Research Local 315 at a general membership meeting held June 25 at the Marriott Hotel here.

They are: James Jayes, President; Judy Goranson, Vice-president; Cheryl Melancon, Secretary; Grace Steefen-Boyer, Treasurer. Members of the Executive Committee Board include: Alforna Evans, Barbara Fauser, Jeanette Shaver, Grace Ablove and Terry Reinhardt.



CSEA STATEWIDE SECRETARY IRENE CARR swears in newly elected officers of CSEA Broome County Local 804. The new officers are: Joan Brower, president; Robert Densmore, first vice

president; Angelo Vallone, second vice president; Jennie Passemato, standing in for Kathy Baron, recording secretary; and Madeline Lane, secretary.



NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS of CSEA Broome County Unit of Local 804 are installed at a recent meeting by CSEA representative Carlo Guardi, right. Being sworn in are: John Haggerty, president; Jim Minor, vice president; Marlene Payne, second vice president; Sue Chipper, secretary; Alfredo Giorgio, treasurer.



NEW OFFICERS of Central Islip Psychiatric Center Local 404 are installed, from left, by Long Island Region I President Danny Donohue including Secretary Patricia Buret, President George Donovan, First Vice President Terence Shaughnessy, Second Vice President Carmen Perkins and Treasurer Margaret Spinks.



A BEGINNING AND AN END as new officers of Putnam County Local 840 are installed. Past President Millicent DeRosa administered the oath of office. Shown from left are Treasurer

Cathy Eckhardt, 1st Vice President Peter Brugger, DeRosa, Region 3 President Ray O'Connor, President Carmine Ricci, Sergeant-at-Arms Harry Bryant and Secretary Alice May.

Judiciary officers slate

ALBANY — Members of the Capital Region Civil Service Employees Assn. Judiciary Local 694 recently elected the following officers to serve a two year term: President Thomas Jefferson (Court of Claims); Vice President Edward Heffernan (Law Reporting Bureau); Secretary Karen Douglas (Court of Claims); Treasurer Peggy Mullaney (Court of Claims), and delegates Sondra Brodsky (Court of Claims) and Charles Ashe (Law Reporting Bureau).

Lattimer installs own Local

BUFFALO — The new officers of the Buffalo Local 003 were installed at a recent dinner meeting by Region 6 President Robert Lattimer, a member of that local.

The officers are: Patricia Pflieger, President; Edward Majchrowicz, executive vice-president; Patricia Chance, Administrative Vice-president; William Jordan, Institutional Vice-president; Gilbert Collins, Operational Vice-president; Joan Poincella, Treasurer; Sheila Brogan, Secretary; and Steven Bagel, Delegate.



TOWN OF BABYLON officers are installed by Suffolk County Local President Charles Novo, left. Taking oath of office are, from left, First Vice President Aileen Ronayne, President Cathy Green, Second Vice President Jeanne McCarthy, Third Vice President Marjorie Engler, Recording Secretary Eleanor LeBolt, Sgt. At Arms Marie Dawson, and Treasurer Doris Petlee.



JUDICIAL LOCAL 332 officers take the oath of office given by Southern Region First Vice President Pat Mascioli. The newly installed leaders are Recording Secretary Joan O'Brien, Corresponding Secretary Margaret Phillips, Treasurer Joan Marie O'Riley, 2nd Vice President Bernard F. Cohen, 1st Vice President Frank Den Danto Jr. and President Pat Nealon.



WORKER'S COMPENSATION INSTALLATION HELD — Carmen Bagnoli, left, CSEA Tax Local President installs Brian Ruff and Shirley Griffin as President and Vice President respectively of CSEA Worker's Compensation Local as guests Karen Murray, CSEA Local 653 President, Jack Conoby, Collective Bargaining Specialist and Don McCarthy, field representative witness the installation.



SOUTHERN REGION PRESIDENT Raymond J. O'Connor, right, installs the recently elected officers of Westchester County Local 860 including, from left, Sergeant at Arms Grace Ann Aloisi, Treasurer Eleanor McDonald, Secretary Marlene High, Fourth Vice President Joseph Roche, Third Vice President Cindy Wholey, Second Vice President Janice Schaff, First Vice President John Whalen and President Pat Mascioli.



CAPITAL REGION PRESIDENT JOSEPH MCDERMOTT, far right, installs the new officers of the division of Motor Vehicles. From left are Sue Waltz, first vice president; Karen Pellegrino, secretary; Dann Wood, president; Betty Carpenter, second vice president and Joe LaFreniere, treasurer.

17-year veteran employee Edith Rawlins completely exonerated

Investigation of firing attempt urged

NEW YORK CITY — The president of CSEA's Metropolitan Region II has asked the chairman of the New York State Assembly Mental Health Committee to conduct a full investigation into the expensive, unwarranted and unsuccessful attempt to terminate a mental hygiene therapy aide.

Metropolitan Region President George Caloumeno has asked Assembly Mental Health Committee Chairperson Elizabeth A. Connelly to look into the costs and motives of the State Office of Mental Health's (OMH) attempt to terminate MHTA Edith Rawlins.

Ms. Rawlins was completely exonerated of an insubordination charge in June, 1981, by Arbitrator Steven J. Goldsmith. Ms. Rawlins, a 17-year employee of the State Psychiatric Institute, had never previously been the subject of a disciplinary action.

Caloumeno was briefed on the case recently by CSEA Region II Director George Bispham and Field Representative Marcia Schiowitz. Caloumeno was told the State called 10 witnesses at the arbitration hearings, including Associate Mental Health Commissioner Thomas Sharkey, OMH Director of Employee Relations Philip Scott, and OMH Labor Relations Representative Frank Garey.

"The cost of the five days of arbitration hearings plus the salaries of the State employees called to testify must have cost the State thousands of dollars. I have asked Assemblywoman Connelly to investigate both the excessive cost to the State and the motive of OMH to terminate Ms. Rawlins.

"What was so important about trying to hang this MHTA?" Caloumeno asked.

Bispham believes the root of the problem is Psychiatric Institute Direc-



METROPOLITAN REGION II President George Caloumeno, left, is briefed on the Edith Rawlins situation by Region II Director George Bispham, right, and CSEA Field Representative Marcia Schiowitz.

tor of Human Resources Management Joseph Borgovini, the institute's personnel officer.

"Can you believe he refused to schedule an interrogation of Ms. Rawlins at 5 p.m. when she would have had proper union representation, yet he wanted her to report to his office at that same time to be suspended," Bispham said.

Borgovini suspended Ms. Rawlins without pay as of 5:30 p.m. on April 10, 1981; and charged her on April 13, 1981, with "Insubordination — Failure to cooperate with an administrative investigation," and he proposed termination as the penalty.

The Borgovini-Rawlins confrontations of April 10 which led to the misguided disciplinary charges centered on Borgovini's intent to interrogate Ms. Rawlins without giving her adequate time to secure proper union representation, Bispham said.

Ms. Schiowitz told the following story:

Psychiatric Institute Local 419 President (at that time) Felix Rodriquez was informed of the pending interrogation by Borgovini on the morning of April 10. Later that morning, Rodriquez asked Borgovini for a postponement because of his own unavailability. It was refused.

At approximately 12:30 p.m., about a half-hour after Ms. Rawlins reported for work on the noon-10:30 p.m. shift, she was handed the message requiring her to report to Borgovini for the interrogation at 1 p.m.

Ms. Rawlins sought union representation for the interrogation. None of Local 419's qualified representatives were available. Ms. Schiowitz advised her, by phone, to go to the interrogation but not to sign anything.

Ms. Rawlins attended interrogations at 1, 2:30 and 4 p.m. She was never asked any questions at those interrogations and refused to sign, as was her right, a statement of employee rights.

Meanwhile, Bispham was in contact with OHM in Albany to ask that the interrogation be postponed until 5 p.m., later that evening, or over the weekend of April 11 or 12 — when proper union representation could be provided. Bispham's request was refused.

While Borgovini refused to postpone an interrogation of Ms. Rawlins until 5 p.m., he did want her to report to his office to be suspended at that same time.

Arbitrator Goldsmith ruled that Ms. Rawlins was not guilty of insubordination, and that the State did not have probable cause to suspend her without pay. He, therefore, directed that Ms. Rawlins be paid "for all time lost by virtue of the suspension, less interim earnings."

He wrote: "On the entire record, I find that the State has failed to prove that the Union's request for an adjournment or further adjournment to later in the afternoon on April 10, to early evening, or to Saturday or Sunday was unreasonable.

"I also find that by insisting on proceeding at 4 p.m. on pain of discipline, Borgovini deprived grievant (Ms. Rawlins) of her contractual right to representation. Ms. Rawlins was not insubordinate, therefore, in refusing to submit to questioning."

He also found no probable cause that Ms. Rawlins was a "potential danger to persons and/or disruption of operations."

Caloumeno said he hoped this decision would serve notice on State management. "This region will work to protect all members in the region regardless of work location," Caloumeno said.

Bispham said: "Managers such as Borgovini are going to learn the hard way that Region II CSEA is not going to let them rewrite the rules which our union has worked hard over the years to negotiate."

Union vows to fight Huntington over unilateral insurance change effort

HUNTINGTON — "We are prepared to go to court if the Town of Huntington attempts to change our health insurance," Huntington Unit President Dorothy Goetz stated flatly.

Ms. Goetz said some members of the Town Board and the personnel director appear to be attempting to change unilaterally the health insurance of the 200 members of the unit of Suffolk County Local 852.

At present, members of the unit have available to them all options of the Statewide Plan paid by the town as negotiated in the contract which expired after Dec. 31, 1980, CSEA Field Representative James Walters said. Negotiations for a new contract are at impasse.

The proposed new insurance is supposed to provide the same level of benefits at approximately one-half the cost, Ms. Goetz said she was told.

However, insurance representatives have told her there is no way for the same level of coverage to be provided for one half the town's present premium, she said.

Walters, in a letter to Town Supervisor Kenneth Butterfield, said: "If the Town acts unilaterally,

we then put the Town on notice that we will hold the Town liable for any and all benefits the employees might lose because of its (The Town's) action, and will take all legal means to protect our members' rights."

Also in that letter, he said: "As you are aware, all benefits for employees of the Town, are mandatory subjects of negotiations, and any changes to those benefits must be negotiated with us prior to implementation."

Other legal action, should the Town Board vote the change, could be an injunction and an Improper Practice charge Walters said.

The Town Board had scheduled a vote on the change in carriers. The vote was postponed for further study after strong pressure from CSEA, Ms. Goetz said.

Walters said: "Health insurance, which is a matter for negotiations, should have been on the bargaining table since (Collective Bargaining Specialist) George Peak, Dorothy (Goetz) and her committee started negotiations in October 1980. Changing the health insurance has never been brought up at negotiations by management."



TOWN OF HUNTINGTON UNIT PRESIDENT Dorothy Goetz discusses the town's possible attempt to change unilaterally the units health insurance with Field Representative James Walters.

Now 'the showcase of the East Coast'

By Stanley P. Hornak

YONKERS — It's a whole new world for employees of the Yonkers Sewage Treatment Plant. There's a whole new attitude on the part of management and a whole new outlook on the part of employees. Chief Shop Steward Jim Abbatiello is now reaching to touch the goal he expressed to the PUBLIC SECTOR last October, "to make this plant what it was supposed to be when it opened — the showcase of the East Coast."

In the past several years, the CSEA newspaper has carried various articles wherein employees have voiced concerns about working conditions. Nowadays, those same employees

are eager to tell a different story, and this is it.

Rapid progress is being made in correcting long-standing health and safety hazards. Shop Steward Steve Wilgermein now heads an on-site safety committee and Deputy Director Adam Zabinski now serves as the plant's safety engineer. Working in concert with Chief Plant Operator Tom Conroy, they have turned around the facility and attacked problems large and small.

For instance,
 * protective fencing is now provided around open manholes;
 * a 24-hour security guard is now stationed at the old South Yonkers Building where chlorine is tapped from 90-ton tanks;

* "chocks" to prevent wheel movement have been ordered to replace railroad ties currently used to secure chlorine tanks;
 * unsafe ladders have been discarded;

* high visibility gear issued;
 * second set of lockers ordered so that the workers can keep their street clothes separate from work clothes;

* walkie-talkies are being repaired to facilitate indoor-outdoor communications;

* new, absorbent materials provided to wipe up oil and grease spills;

* special eyewashes have been hooked up in various locations where employees might suffer eye injuries;

* a new, non-skid floor surface paint has been tested and as a result is to be applied to hazardous surfaces;

* double-protective fencing has been added to reduce incidents of vandalism;

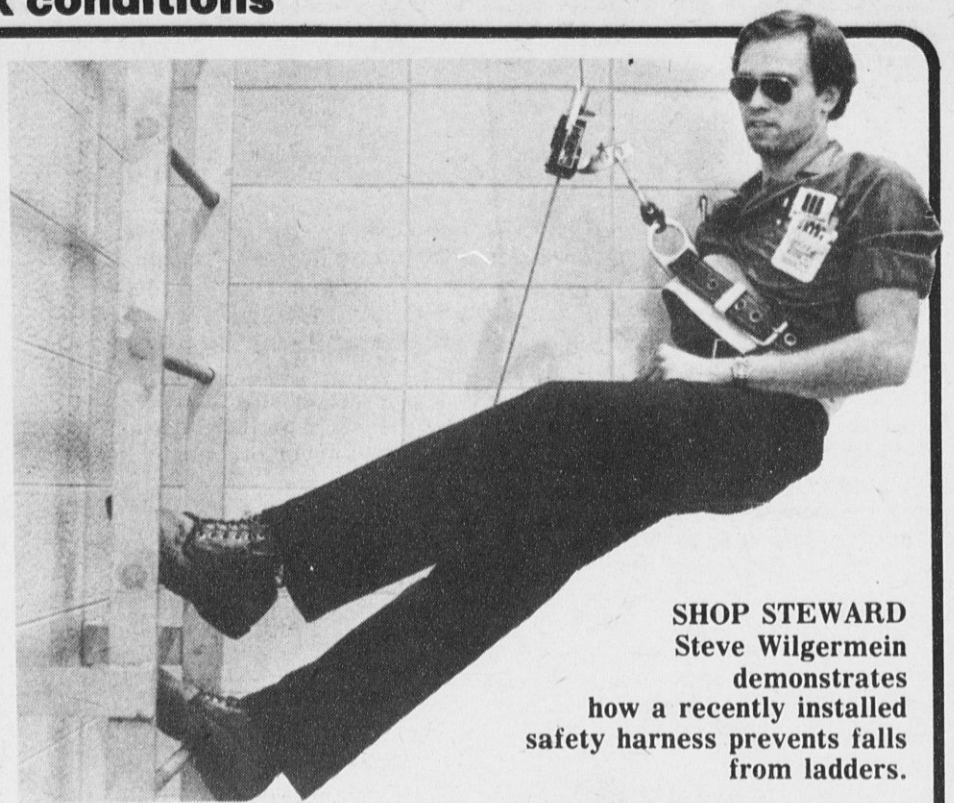
* employees given access to medical records;

CHIEF SHOP STEWARD Jim Abbatiello right, checks out a new, non-skid paint that was tested at the plant and which is now being put on all floors near slippery areas.

* warning signs and exit signs replaced;
 * housekeeping improved;
 * availability and supply of tools bettered.

Local 860 President Pat Mascioli credits progress to the shop steward's tenacity, and notes both labor and management now have, "common goals." Shop Steward Abbatiello sees morale on the upswing and especially appreciates, "Tom's (Conroy) and Adam's (Zabinski) open door policy." In fact, it's that spirit which results in 99 percent of all grievances being settled at the first stage.

The best testament to the whole new world of the Yonkers Sewage Treatment Plant is this: in previous years, the annual accident rate was between 70 and 80 incidents; this year, there have been only seven.



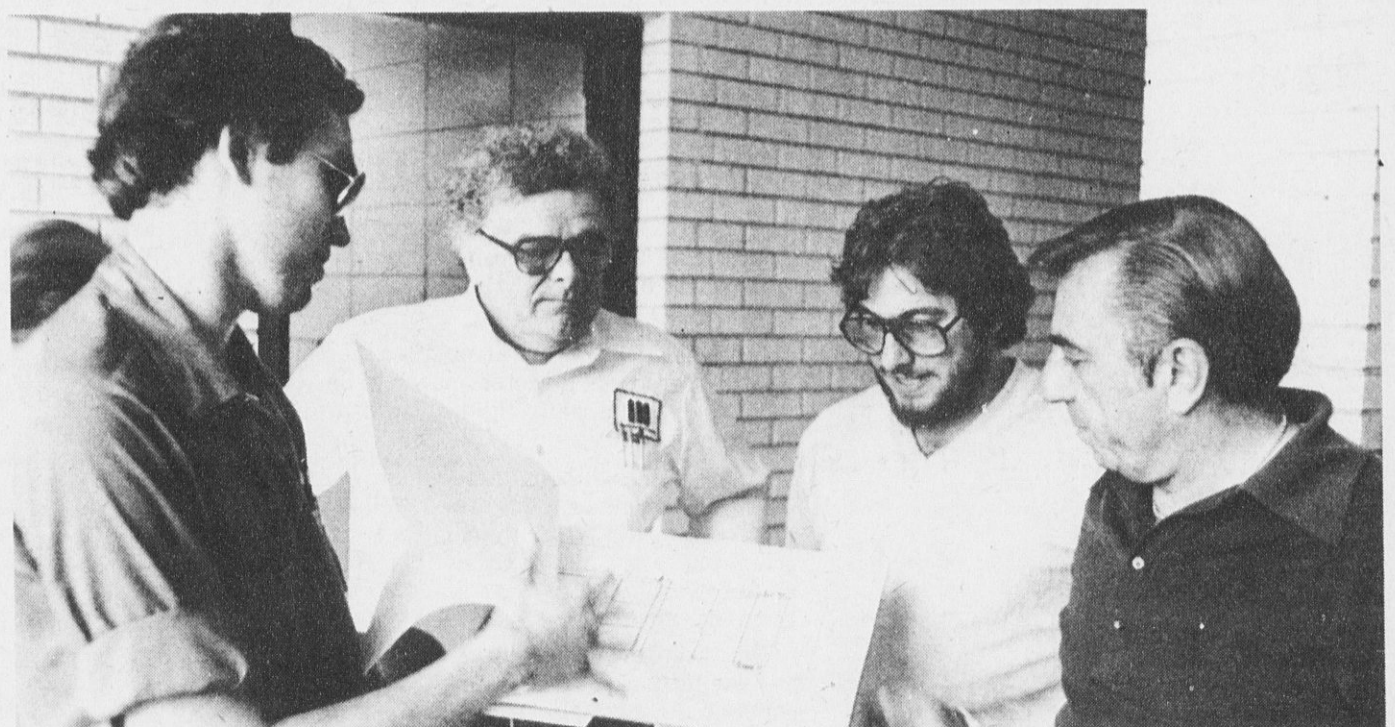
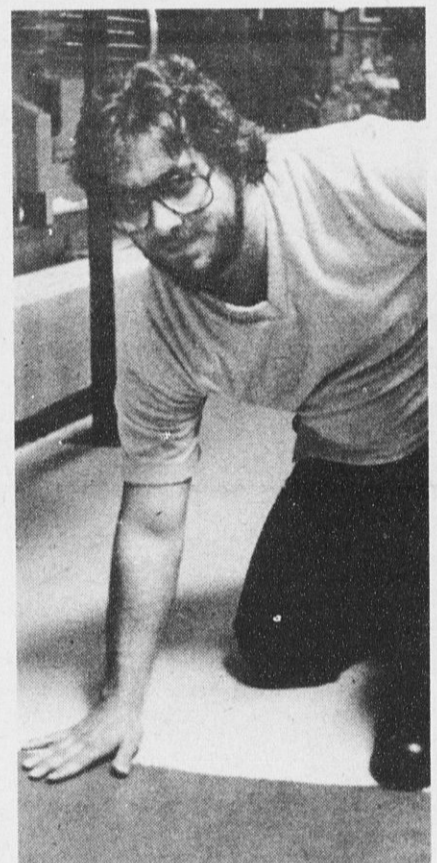
SHOP STEWARD Steve Wilgermein demonstrates how a recently installed safety harness prevents falls from ladders.



PLANT WORKER BILL BOLINSKY uses a newly provided absorbent paper to wipe up oil and grease spills and thus lessen chances of accidents.



PLANT OPERATOR TOM CONROY prepares to show off one of several special eyewashes which have been installed as an extra health precaution.



AS PART OF INCREASED SAFETY AWARENESS, plans have been developed which show all entrances and exits at the facilities which process 70 million gallons of sewage each day. Looking the plans over are, from left,

Shop Steward Steve Wilgermein, Plant Operator Tom Conroy, Chief Shop Steward Jim Abbatiello and Local 860 President Pat Mascioli.

STAFF PROFILE

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

The Civil Service Employees Assn. is an extremely diverse organization. Its membership of upwards of a quarter of a million workers perform thousands of different jobs at hundreds of work locations throughout New York State. The needs of those members can vary as much as the members themselves, and it takes a sophisticated staff organization to meet those needs. CSEA employs

a professional staff of more than 200 people to provide services to the membership. Slightly more than one-half of that total are assigned to statewide headquarters at 33 Elk Street, Albany, with the remainder assigned to the six regional headquarters maintained by CSEA throughout the state. "Staff Profiles" is an informational series designed to acquaint members with staff departments and personnel.

Director Anthony Campione estimates a caseload of 4,000 a year

The fight to secure worker's rights

In trouble at work? Has your contract been violated? Need legal advice or aid? CSEA's Legal Assistance Program offers members a wide range of legal help.

"CSEA is fighting oppressive employers at every turn and is prepared to do battle with them to safeguard the rights of employees represented by the union," says Anthony Campione, administrator of the program. "If this means legal assistance is necessary, we provide it."

The Legal Assistance Program covers three specific areas: disciplinary actions, contract grievances, and court actions concerning violations of Civil Service Law and Rules when administrative remedies have been exhausted or don't exist.

Disciplinary actions make up the bulk of the 4,000 cases processed through the program each year.

"We handle about 2,500 of these disciplinary cases annually," estimates Campione. "When a member gets in trouble on the job, in terms of

alleged misconduct or incompetence, we can help.

"This misconduct or incompetence can refer to just about anything," Campione noted, "from time and attendance abuse to murder. Nothing surprises me any more. We had a guy brought up on charges once for smoking his pipe too much, and right now I'm dealing with a case of voyeurism on the job."

Campione says his office processes about 500 county contract grievances a year. "We seek to safeguard the terms and conditions of employment of our members within our bargaining unit," he says. "We may deal with any type of abrogation of contract, such as when employees are denied overtime work or pay, personal leave, vacations, meal allowances or mileage."

Among Campione's many responsibilities is coordinating the work of the Standing Legal Committee, an advisory committee made up of eight members appointed by CSEA President William L. McGowan.

"They get together once a month to consider

certain requests for legal assistance which could have statewide impact," explained Campione. "They are 'heavy' cases in the sense that they're normally big lawsuits that are quite costly."

The Legal Assistance Program has an annual operating budget of about \$1.5 million and is "extremely successful," says Campione, who cited some figures from a study conducted about a year and a half ago. "We had about an 86 to 88 percent success rate, insofar as when the employer was going for the 'jugular,' with a very serious disciplinary case, we were able to save the member's job."

Given the scope and responsibilities of CSEA's Legal Assistance Program, it is unique among unions, Campione and others agree. "There is no other program like it in any other union, public or private sector, that I know of," he says.

"Usually, attorney services are not provided in any type of matter other than the most extreme case, or, naturally, a court matter. No other union provides the possibility of having an attorney represent a member in as many disciplinary or contract matters. At CSEA, we've selected and trained a network of 25 attorneys statewide for this program, eight in our general counsel's office of Roemer and Featherstonhaugh in Albany, and another 17 strategically situated throughout the balance of New York State."

Campione would like all CSEA members to know of the invaluable services his department provides. A CSEA member (or agency shop fee payer) with a problem should make it known to the Local or Unit president or shop steward, who, in turn, is responsible for investigating the request swiftly and thoroughly, keeping the member informed of the status of the case and working with CSEA field representatives.

"If the case is worthy of recommendation, a formal application for legal assistance would then be forwarded to CSEA Headquarters for appropriate follow-up and disposition," said Campione.

Given the tenor of the times, public employers across the state are coming down hard on their employees, insofar as bringing charges against them and not abiding by our contracts," Campione stressed.

"If any member feels any one of his rights has been violated, he or she should contact his or her unit or local representative to see if, indeed, there has been a violation and whether legal assistance might be available."



CSEA's LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM staff includes, from left, intern Bryan Cullen, Director Tony Campione and secretary Janice Kucskar.

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For answers on your questions about CSEA-sponsored Accident & Health, Supplemental Life and Family Protection insurance plans.

'Eleventh hour' negotiations come to a close

Byram school finally reaches accord

ARMONK — CSEA and the Byram Hills School District reached agreement on a new three-year contract after what Field Representative and chief negotiator Larry Sparber called "unnecessarily prolonged negotiations."

Sparber said the contract calls for three seven percent raises over the next three years, a 22.5 percent increase, for the district's approximately 90 full-time and part-time employees represented by the Byram Hills School District Unit of Westchester County Local 860.

He said other increased benefits under the new contract are:

—The district will contribute 100 percent to family dental coverage. It is expected the plan will be from the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund, he said.

—An increase in personal leave. During negotiations, management demanded the elimination of the benefit.

—Increases in district-paid life insurance and in meal allowances.

Overtime will continue to be paid in half-hour increments in spite of

management's demand that it be changed, however, one hour of overtime is no longer guaranteed, he said.

Agreement was reached while both sides sat across a table from each other waiting to present their reports to a PERB-appointed factfinder.

"It is unfortunate that the district waited until the eleventh hour when this contract could have been settled without going to Impasse," he said.

Sparber was critical of the board and its negotiators in their approach to the CSEA-represented employees.

"It would appear the Byram Hills school board considers secretaries, custodians and bus drivers second-class citizens.

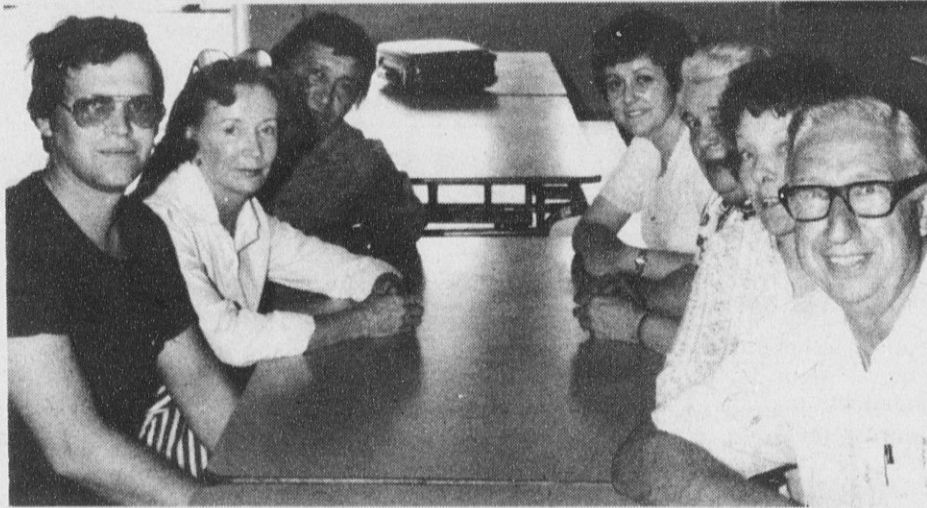
"Last year, the board settled with the teachers for seven percent, yet up until the final session their offer to CSEA was five percent in spite of no apparent financial problem in the district," Sparber said.

Also up until that final session, the board was demanding the elimination of personal leave, a benefit the teachers have in their contract, he said.

"Don't let anyone fool you. This school board would like to go back to 1930. They would like to get rid of us," Sparber said.

Unit President Doris Mikus told a recent membership meeting that the board was "trying to break our union. We are not giving in. We have a strong union here."

Ms. Mikus and Sparber led a Negotiating Committee which included Margaret Briggs, Sheri Colucci, Ralph DiMichele, William Hendershot, Ellanor Robbins and Gary Zavras.



MEMBERS OF THE Negotiating Committee of the Byram Hills School District Unit are, from left, Gary Zavras, President Doris Mikus, Ralph DiMichele, Sheri Colucci, Ellanor Robbins, Margaret Briggs and William Hendershot.

Stalemate broken; nurses get bonus, benefits

COOPERSTOWN — After four months of hard-fought negotiations laced with charges and counter charges by both sides, CSEA and the County of Otsego have reached a settlement regarding nurses' salaries at the County Nursing Home.

The break in the stalemate came when both parties reached a compromise settlement at the close of a preliminary hearing in Albany before PERB on an Improper Practice charge filed by CSEA.

According to CSEA Field Representative Jerry Phelan, terms of the agreement include a \$200 bonus in August for all permanent nurses at The Meadows (County Nursing Home), and the implementation of a 40-hour work week at prevailing hourly rates to replace the former 37½ hour week.

In addition to the bonus and change in hourly schedule, the County of Otsego has agreed to implement the following articles, effective immediately:

1. Recruitment of LPN's and RN's be authorized at Step 1 of the appropriate salary grade;
2. All RN's and LPN's working the 11 P.M. to 7 A.M. shift will receive an increase of \$200 per annum;

3. LPN's employed as "Charge Nurse" on the 3 P.M. to 11 P.M. and 11 P.M. to 7 A.M. shifts receive an increase of \$.20 per hour;
4. The positions of Supervising Nurse, Head Nurse and Health Services Supervisor will be raised one salary grade.

Since the beginning of negotiations, CSEA contended that the primary reason the County (Otsego) was unable to increase its staff of qualified RN's and LPN's was because the salary structure in those professional categories was far below other facilities in the area.

In return for the settlement, CSEA agreed to drop four Improper Practice charges against the County.

Following the announced settlement, Mabel Wannamaker, President of CSEA Local 839 Otsego County, expressed satisfaction with the settlement by saying, "We are gratified that an agreement has finally been reached. It was a tough struggle, but one we were determined to see it through until the RN and LPN salaries were improved. It is unfortunate that an agreement wasn't reached months ago. It could have been, but the bottom line is we won our 'fight,' and now everyone can get back to concentrating on patient care."



CSEA REPRESENTATIVES MEET television newsman Gabe Pressman, left, at the WNBC-TV Long Island Town Meeting which was broadcast live from SUNY Farmingdale to the New York City metropolitan area. Representing CSEA among the 200 persons at the meeting are, from left, Region I Mental Hygiene Board Representative Jean Frazier, Region I Legislative and Political Action Committee Chairman Michael Curtin and Region I Education Committee Chairman Carol Craig.



A VICTORY OVER CONTRACTING OUT in the Averill Park School District is shared by Shirley Ponkos, outgoing Columbia County CSEA Local President, and Rensselaer County Education Local President Ed Evans, who is also a member of the Averill Park Non-Instructional Unit. Newspaper article they hold describes how union convinced school board to hire a transportation department manager instead of contracting the department out to a private firm.

Seneca sheriff hit with IP charge

WATERLOO — The Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) has filed an Improper Labor Practice charge against Seneca County Sheriff Kenneth J. Greer, citing alleged violations of Article 14, Section (a), sub-sections (a), (b), (c) of the Taylor Law.

According to CSEA Field Representative, Jack Miller, the IP Charge — believed to be the first of its kind brought against a law officer in Seneca County — was filed after he (Miller) received a letter from Greer. The letter threatened Miller with "arrest" if he persisted in his attempt to contact the sheriff or undersheriff in regard to union problems

involving members of the sheriff's department, a unit within the structure of CSEA Local 850.

In a comment following the announcement of the charge, Miller said that the relationship between CSEA and Sheriff Greer has been strained for the past several months.

"At one time, we had good rapport with Ken Greer. We got along fine until recently when CSEA attempted to resolve several problems involving sheriff's department employees. It's my job to protect the rights of those employees under the contract, and that's exactly what I will continue to do," Miller said.

John Bell: A true professional

CSEA attorney admired for enthusiasm, confidence

Editor's note: Up in the most northeastern section of New York State when a CSEA-represented public employee requires some form of job-related legal representation, chances are Atty. John Bell will provide it. Atty. Bell is one of a number of local attorneys retained across the state by CSEA to serve the union membership locally. Atty. Bell's been working with and for public workers for more than a dozen years now, and his reputation for professionalism and accomplishments is nearly legend.

By Deborah Cassidy

PLATTSBURGH — Barbara LaForest had only been president of the Plattsburgh City School District Unit Civil Service Employees Assn. for a short time when her first major arbitration case came up in April, 1980. Library aides and clerical workers were required to work on Good Friday that year, despite the fact the rest of the school was closed and the CSEA contract called for employees to have a day off in such a situation.

The arbitration was handled by John Bell, a local attorney retained by the union's law firm to conduct much of the legal representation in the Capital Region's northern counties of Clinton, Essex and Warren.

CSEA won the case; the school administration was ordered to grant all affected workers compensation time off.

Following the victory, LaForest confided that before she met with Bell, she had been "leary and apprehensive." It was Bell's calm, professional manner, his enthusiasm and optimism, that put her at ease and gave her the confidence to get through the litigation, LaForest recalls.

All north country CSEA representatives who have worked with Bell share LaForest's opinion that the energetic dynamic attorney is indeed special.

"For one man he handles a phenomenal number of cases and wins just about all of them. In all the years I've worked with him I can recall him losing only one or two cases," says Capital Region CSEA Field Representative Charles Scott. "Though CSEA is just one of several contracts for Bell, he has always shown a strong devotion to us."

A partner in the Plattsburgh based law firm of Lewis, Bell and Niles and acting city judge in Plattsburgh, Bell began working for CSEA in 1968. He is responsible for all disciplinary cases in state and local government and all local government arbitrations, there. Bell is also called upon for legal advice and counsel.

After graduating cum laude from Albany Law school in 1961, Bell began his career as a confidential law assistant for the Appellate Court, third division. In 1963 he joined the firm of Jerry, Lewis and Harvey, and became a partner there in 1965. He formed his present partnership in 1968. From 1963 to 1969 he served as confidential assistant to James Gibson, presiding justice for the Appellate court. He is currently on the Executive Committee for the trial lawyers section of the New York State Bar Assn.

Bell reacts humbly to the praise he receives from CSEA officials, saying only that his work for the union has been "gratifying and novel." A friendly, affable man, he says he enjoys meeting the great number of people associated with CSEA. Since working for the union his knowledge of labor and the local government has been greatly increased, Bell added.

When asked to reflect on his most memorable experience, with CSEA, Bell talked of several cases and found it difficult to single out just one. He recalled the excitement of several years back when he aided CSEA in its fights to resist decertification attempts by the Teamsters in various school districts. The most satisfying victories, he said, were arbitrations against the Essex County

Board of Supervisors when it unilaterally ruled against meal allowances for county social workers who were on the road at lunch time and county intirmary workers who were on duty during the dinner hours. In both cases the courts ruled in favor of the past practice of meal allowances.

Most recently he mentioned the case in Clinton County where workers were denied a holiday on January 29, which was proclaimed a Day of Thanksgiving by President Reagan for the return of the hostages from Iran. The employees contract called for an additional holiday on days proclaimed by either the president or the governor. In a decision which Bell said could have implications for other areas of CSEA, the courts ruled the employees should be paid back double time for the loss of that holiday.

"He has never said a case was a bad one," says Clinton County Local President Jean Kelso, who finds Bell to be understanding and easy to talk to. "He may think so, sometimes, but he knows the officers are sincere and he takes that seriously."

"No matter what we give him, he works diligently, even on weekends sometimes to accommodate my schedule," she said.

Bell's special appeal is summed best, perhaps, in the words of Essex County Local President Margaret Bronson and SUNY at Plattsburgh Local President Betty Lennon, who says members in the north country are fortunate to have Bell as their attorney.



CLINTON COUNTY CSEA LOCAL President Jeanne Kelso, right, discusses a newspaper article on the recent arbitration ruling that Clinton County denied a legal holiday to CSEA Local members with Region IV First Vice President C. Allen Mead. Atty. John L. Bell represented the union in the successful arbitration.

**Over
\$28 million
approved in
state aid for
select schools**

ALBANY — The State Senate and Assembly have approved more than \$28 million in aid to selected school systems.

Benefiting under the new bill will be school districts that are at or near their constitutional tax limits, due in part to the "HURD" decision. In this decision, the courts struck down a law allowing

districts to exclude retirement and Social Security payments from their expenditure caps.

Receiving the largest appropriations are: Mount Vernon, \$5.9 million; New Rochelle, \$4.2 million; Newburgh, \$3.8 million; Long Beach, \$3.3 million; Poughkeepsie, \$3 million; Kingston, \$2.9 million; Lackawanna, \$2.5

million; and Peekskill, \$2 million.

Aid will also go to school districts in Albany, Auburn, Binghamton, Cohoes, Corning, Elmira, Fulton, Glen Cove, Hornell, Hudson, Ithaca, Jamestown, Lockport, Middletown, Niagara Falls, North Tonawanda, Olean, Oneonta, Plattsburgh, Port Jervis, Rensselaer, Rome, Salamanca, Schenectady, Tonawanda, Troy and Utica.