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Vol. 4 / No. 2

FEBRUARY 2001

THE WORK FORCE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION  Local 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

IS YOUR LOCAL...

1000%
UNION?

See Pages 10-11

Held hostage by forced OT:

Burnout, short staffing a volatile, dangerous mix at troubled youth facility

RUSH — Union members are being held “hostage” and forced to work second shifts at a state lockup for delinquent kids, where workers are seething from burnout, short staffing, overcrowding, and forced overtime.

This explosive mix at the state Office of Child and Family Services Industry state school for young criminals is eroding morale and pushing employees to the brink of exhaustion, union leaders said.

Taut tensions envelope the facility, where CSEA members said they have been stopped at the gate as they leave work and ordered to work another shift.

Mandatory overtime is reaching epic levels at Industry.

With only \$112,000 budgeted for overtime in the 2000-2001 fiscal year, managers have spent more than \$389,000 during the first six months, state figures just released show.

They can't leave

“I was even stopped, while in my car on the way out, at the gate to the facility,” said one veteran Industry worker about the forced overtime.

“They wouldn't let me out. It's totally ridiculous. We're already tense from working understaffed with so many kids, which we're required to keep under eyeball supervision.



Youth Development Aide Annie Jenkins is a 24-year state employee who called staff treatment at Industry “plantation-style. Certain people can get time off easily, but others have to document their history to the era of slave ships.”

“So being mandated after doing a full shift is dangerous for us and the residents,” he said.

Management doesn't care

“A top management person recently made the comment, ‘if people don't like working here, Burger King is hiring,’” said another youth development aide.

“That shows the disrespect they (managers) have for us, and the work we do,” he added.

Similar comments from long-time workers at the facility show a sense of frustration and exasperation rarely expressed so openly.



Jeff Logan, a 16-year aide at Industry, works the night shift and is often directed to inform fellow night shift workers they have been ordered to work overtime.

Workers said management refuses to use an existing fund for hiring per diem workers to ease the short staffing.

Hire more staff

Union members said it's almost impossible to get approved time off in advance, which leads to morale and burnout problems.

CSEA members also demanded the hiring of more permanent youth development aides and a more reasonable staff-to-resident ratio.

Currently, two workers usually cover up to 25 residents, which leaves little room for safety.

“It's a stressful job, but most of the stress I feel is from management, not the kids,” said a union member.

— Ron Wofford

“There's a lot of frustration and anger here. The last couple of years we've seen Industry go downhill, due to mismanagement.”

— Lonnie Kleiman, a 16-year youth development aide



Youth aide Norman Bineyard has been ordered to work overtime on his unit after working the night shift.



Info coming

CSEA members who work at the state Office of Children and Family Services facility at Industry should look for CSEA action information in the mail soon, said Western Region President Flo Tripi.

“We remain committed to improvements for our members there,” Tripi said. “We won't rest until it's done.”

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143 Washington Ave.
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Danny Donohue, President

STEPHEN A. MADARASZ
Communications Director & Publisher
STANLEY HORNAK
Deputy Director of Communications
RONALD S. KERMANI, Executive Editor
LOU HMIELESKI, Assistant Editor
CATHLEEN HORTON
Graphic Design & Support Services
RALPH DISTIN, Graphic Artist
JANICE M. KUCSKAR
Communications Production Coordinator
BETH McINTYRE
Communications Secretary

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Readers:

Send any comments, complaints, suggestions or ideas to:
Publisher, *The Work Force*, 143 Washington Avenue,
Albany, NY 12210-2303.

COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATES

SHERYL C. JENKS	Long Island Region (631) 462-0030
VACANT	Metropolitan Region (212) 406-2156
JANICE MARRA	Southern Region (845) 831-1000
DAN CAMPBELL	Capital Region (518) 785-4400
MARK M. KOTZIN	Central Region (315) 433-0050
RON WOFFORD	Western Region (716) 886-0391
ED MOLITOR	Headquarters (518) 257-1272

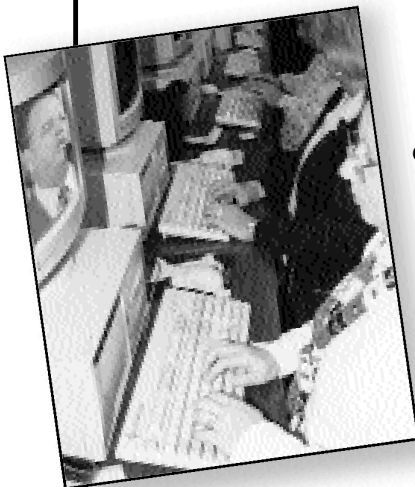
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IN TOUCH WITH THE WORK FORCE

CSEA President Danny Donohue



As we begin 2001, CSEA is taking a giant step forward to empower you. We have dramatically overhauled our CSEA Web site to make even more information, resources and benefits easily available to you.

These changes are just the beginning of CSEA's commitment to new approaches in building a stronger, more effective and unified union. While we will continue to use many of the traditional ways of communicating with you, increasing numbers of CSEA members are connected to the

Internet. CSEA is taking advantage of this remarkable medium to reach more and more of you with targeted information that makes sense for you.

Still, even as we enhance our Web presence, we have to recognize that improvements will be a continuing project. We welcome your ideas and suggestions on how to make it better. You can offer them online.

A view of CSEA's new Web site home page is depicted on Page 20 of this edition of *The Work Force*. But you really have to visit it online to appreciate the range and depth of what is available on the site.

It is our intent to eventually become a "one stop" on-ramp to the Internet with even better choices of all the information you could possibly need or want.

For now, regularly refreshed news areas keep you up-to-date on news from CSEA, news organizations from across New York and from the labor movement. Additionally, there is a much stronger region presence to keep you up-to-date on CSEA activities in your area.

Technology alone will not make a better union but it can be an important tool to help all of us get the information we need, when we need it. How well we use this information is still up to each of us.

P.S. Along with all the other changes, we also have a whole new Web address: www.csealocal1000.net.

Making history while learning to make safer arrests

WHITE PLAINS — When 35 Westchester County probation officers recently learned how to use physical force on the job, they didn't realize they were a part of county history.

It was only later in the physical force training session the instructors, Supervising Probation Officer Edith Shields and Probation Officer Helene Hodapp, told them the class was the first Article 35 training session taught by women.

"It was challenging, but the class received us well," Hodapp said.

Shields, a 21-year CSEA member, and Hodapp, a five-year member, represent a growing number of women in both the county and New York State who are becoming increasingly involved in law-enforcement jobs that were traditionally held by men.

Article 35 is the section of the state's Penal Law that justifies the use of reasonable and necessary physical or deadly physical force by probation officers, police officers and private citizens.

Until Shields and Hodapp conducted an Article 35 session, the classes had all been taught by at least one male instructor.

"We decided to pair up and make department history," Shields said.

More history in the making

Hodapp and Shields have made history in other ways at the county probation department.

Shields was one of the first women hired as a county probation officer in 1979, and also was one of the first women at her department to become a general topics instructor. Hodapp is the department's first — and currently only — female firearms instructor.

Shields, who works in the department's Family Court division, and Hodapp, who works with the DWI division, said it's necessary for more women to conduct training sessions.

"We're hoping women will want to (train officers) after seeing Helene and me do it," Shields said.



Probation Officers Helene Hodapp, right, and Edith Shields, left, conduct a physical force training session in Westchester County.

Always changing

Shields has seen her position dramatically change over the years.

Probation officers not only work at rehabilitating offenders by helping them find jobs or educational programs, but are charged with more traditional law-enforcement activities such as making arrests.

"This job is a lot more dangerous today than it was 20 years ago," Shields said. "We combine law enforcement and social work skills here, and we deal with felons every day," she added.

— Janice Marra

WORK FORCE FACTS

More than half of the 200 probation officers at the Westchester County Probation Department are women. Most of the officers have bachelor's or master's degrees, or previous professional training, in fields such as criminal justice, psychology, social work, human services or pre-law.

Jail merger won't affect union status

ALDEN — The merger of two lockups in Erie County will not affect the jobs of more than 200 CSEA members, union leaders said recently.

CSEA members, most of them corrections officers, at the Erie County Correctional Facility will not be hurt by a recent voter-approved referendum to merge the jail with the county's holding center which is run by the sheriff.

Deputies who work at the holding center, where inmates are housed before court

appearances, are Teamsters. County jail employees are represented by CSEA.

"The voters have spoken," said Mike Bogulski, Erie County Unit president, about the merger.

"We have three years left on our current contract and legislature's assurance there is no intention of interfering with union status at the two facilities. We will continue to represent, and collectively bargain for our members," Bogulski said.

Jeffrey Frank, corrections section president, met with Bogulski to review the effect of the consolidation on about 230 members at the prison.

"Our members can rest assured that CSEA will continue to be there for them," said Frank.

— Ron Wofford



Jeffrey Frank

Voices of the Work Force

"I like the fact my job is always different every day. It's a non-desk job. I have a lot of mobility, and get around quite a bit. I also like the people I work with. I'm in charge of food inventory, and it's very interesting. I'd like to see more cross training, so that when someone is on vacation, others can fill in effectively."



— Cindy Russell, stores clerk, Orleans Correctional Facility

New library long awaited:

Members catalogue, unpack, bring it on line

BINGHAMTON — Dewey would be proud.

The father of modern library science and the Dewey Decimal System would file the new Broome County Library and the union members who are making the move possible under “E” for excellent.

While boxes of books, bundles of chairs and empty carrels await finishing touches, CSEA members at the library are heralding the new library and its emergence into high-tech land.

“Our CSEA members worked far beyond the call of duty to

get this building into shape,” said CSEA Broome County Library Unit President Judy Hatt.

“We packed boxes, organized each department, and have all pitched in to get everything ready for the public,” she said. “We’re still getting there, but once it’s finished, it will be a lovely building,” Hatt added.

Bigger, better, faster

More than 1,000 packing boxes later, the new multi-million-dollar, state-of-the-art facility boasts high-speed Internet access and new equipment like a digital microfilm reader and archival digital photocopier, which will allow rare books to be digitized for preservation.

“It’s wonderful to have a facility where everything is so new,” said keyboard specialist Nancy Darrow.

“It was so crowded in the old building. This is such a contrast,” she added.



ABOVE: Head page Keith Harrison keeps busy sorting and shelving periodicals. TOP RIGHT: Reference Librarian II Mary Brigiotta puts in new updates to the “Facts on File” series.

Security a concern

The facility is a vast improvement with its large size and available storage space, although the larger building may create security problems, union members said.

“There are some safety issues because it’s such a big building and we have such a small staff,” Hatt said.

One of her concerns is staff can be in remote parts of the building where outsiders could gain access.

With no security measures in place, that could create problems, Hatt said, adding she plans to resolve these issues with management as the library comes online.

— Mark M. Kotzin



Library contract stamped “Overdue!”

OYSTER BAY — It’s overdue. While the Oyster Bay-East Norwich Library fines patrons for overdue books, 35 CSEA members who work there recently told library trustees a fair contract for them was long overdue.

CSEA declared impasse after five negotiation sessions when the library’s labor lawyer plunked down a laundry list of concessions.

“Previously, we bargained directly with the library board trustees and negotiations were fine. Now they have hired an anti-union attorney to negotiate with us and he seems to have nothing but disdain for the union and the library workers,” said CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Stephanie Teff, who is leading negotiations for the union.

Library managers want to eliminate the step schedule, reduce full-time workers’ health insurance coverage, denying CSEA access to employees during work hours, reducing maternity and paternity benefits, among several other “onerous and unacceptable” demands, union leaders said.

“The employees are angry and upset the library is paying thousands of dollars to an anti-union attorney and we want the trustees to know what’s going on at the table,” said Unit President Margaret Paider.

— Sheryl C. Jenks

Voices of the Work Force



“I enjoy meeting new people. The biggest professional challenge is we’re doing a lot of work that we weren’t doing in the local offices. What we need is more training, to be able to learn what you’re supposed to be doing, and do it quickly.”

— Danielle Johnson, senior employment services clerk, state Labor Department, and a 29-year state employee.

Plan would have taken city wallets for a ride

Poughkeepsie bus drivers steer routes from private manager

POUGHKEEPSIE — Never ones to take a back seat on contracting out, CSEA members recently stopped Poughkeepsie's bus system from being steered to a private company.

To allegedly save cash, city officials wanted private Progressive Transportation Services to manage its bus routes.

But the bus drivers only had to look in their rear-view mirrors for help.

They distributed petitions opposing the

city's plan to their riders, and within a week signatures of more than 2,000 riders were presented to city officials.

The city quickly trashed the contracting out plan.

Poor service, no job security

"The service would suffer and the price would go up," fumed Poughkeepsie CSEA Unit President Bruce Dooris.

"It would only be a matter of time before Progressive also loses money and raises fares and even cut out routes," he added.

County officials had offered to save the jobs of the 11 city bus drivers that would be affected by the change, but could not guarantee they could keep the same routes.

The drivers would also lose seniority and substantial benefits.

But the drivers weren't the only ones who would lose under the plan.

A driving relationship

"Relationships are important to us," three-year driver Charles Brennerman said. "We know our riders by name and that personalized relationship is very important to us," he added.



Poughkeepsie bus drivers like Charles Brennerman know riders by name and provide dependable service.

"We're like family," Brennerman said. "Our riders, especially the senior citizens, depend on our buses and they're afraid of the change" to a private management company.

This may not be the last stop for the city's plans to save money, union leaders warned.

"We're going to keep an eye on the situation," Dooris said. "We want the city to understand it will have a fight on its hands if this comes up again."

— Janice Marra



WORK FORCE FACTS

The City of Poughkeepsie runs six bus routes throughout the city, Town of Poughkeepsie, and Hyde Park Monday through Saturday between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. Regular fares cost 75 cents per one-way ride, with reduced rates for senior citizens and students.

Union's heat generates change for power plant workers

CSEA has repaired a big step on the promotion ladder for power plant workers by keeping the heat on the state Department of Civil Service and other key agencies.

For the first time in six years, plant utilities assistants can take the Plant Utilities Engineer 1 exam this month without first going to college.

When the state reclassified the title series at CSEA's insistence in 1994, it was a bittersweet victory for the union.

Hundreds of members got long-awaited raises, but hundreds more had their career ladders kicked out from underneath them.

Because of changing technology, greater emphasis on energy management and conservation and environmental and safety issues, the state said the assistants needed 30 college credit hours before taking the engineer exam.

Plant utilities assistants help operate, maintain and repair heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment in various state buildings.

CSEA engineered the change

For years, members of CSEA's Plant Utilities Engineer Task Force argued on-the-job training gave the assistants all the experience they needed to qualify for the engineer job.

Task force member Frank Celentano, a plant utilities engineer at SUNY Stony Brook, said the state finally agreed the college credit requirements were too restrictive.

"Agencies were having a tough time finding people who had the necessary college credits," Celentano said.

"This led to a dangerous staffing shortage in the power plants necessitating a lot of overtime. It was costing the state a lot of money," he added.

CSEA President Danny Donohue applauded the Task Force members' perseverance.

"Task Force members are to be commended for the long fight to correct this problem that dead-ended Plant Utilities Assistants and left power plants short-staffed for too many years," Donohue said

— Ed Molitor

Voices of the Work Force

"The most challenging part of the job is the safety of it. People not seeing you. They talk on cell phones, they just don't pay attention to the signs. A lady came up to me the other day at 55 mph. I asked her 'didn't you see the three signs?' She said she didn't. The first thing I do when I get to a job site is to look to see where I can exit in a hurry."

— Georgia Harrington, highway maintenance worker, state Department of Transportation, Watertown. A 20-year DOT employee, she works as a flagger for work crews and drives a snowplow in the winter.

Secrets of the CIA revealed:

Cook it and they will eat it — then ask for more

There's no mystery with the meat in the cafeteria kitchens in the North Colonie School District, where CIA graduates Peg Taylor and Mary Ellen Tehan are burning with menu ideas.

The union members are not double agents with the Central Intelligence Agency, but recent graduates of the world-famous chef school, the Culinary Institute of America, two hours south in New Paltz, New York.

Increasingly, food service workers like Tehan and Taylor are attending the CIA and other kitchen classes to help blend nouvelle cuisine into Tuesday's blue plate special of shivering Jello and mouth-burning pizza.

A three-night stay at the CIA helped the duo hone their cafeteria ways.

"I learned a lot," said Taylor, the assistant high school cafeteria manager.



Inside secrets revealed

The two women were invited to attend the CIA workshop because of their success feeding between 800 and 1,000 hungry teenagers every school day in the high school cafeteria and 400 to 450 in the middle school, where Tehan is the cook/manager.

On the average school day, the high school cafeteria will prepare gallons of soup, made from scratch.

Taylor will cook two hot items to feature on the daily menu — pasta and a hot sub. She makes sure the deli is restocked so the cafeteria crew can make anything from a peanut butter and jelly sandwich to a Dagwood.

Unlike the lunch lines of 30 years ago, this



Culinary Institute graduate Mary Ellen Tehan cooks up a hot special for high school students in the North Colonie school district.

menu also features three different pastas and three different sauces.

Tehan works with fewer students, but that doesn't make her job easier.

"We've been experimenting with our menus," Tehan explained.

"One day we have our regular selections — hot dogs, burgers, perhaps a hot turkey sandwich. Then the next day, we'll feature tacos and chicken nuggets. The students like the variety," she added.

Whatever the choices, Taylor and Tehan said they like cooking for a crowd.

"I enjoy working with this high school age group. Teens are nice people as a group," Taylor said.

Food bridges generations

Breaking bread together is also a way to break the ice in the district.

CSEA members who work in the cafeterias help host a "newcomer picnic" for parents and students new to the school district.

Parents sample the food their children will eat during the school year.

Their cooking success has created a gravy train for the district.

"We must be making a profit because we have been able to buy new equipment, everything from a dishwasher to a whole new food service line, during the past years," Tehan said, adding the cafeterias are financially self-supporting.

While both workers said they love their jobs, Tehan said the 5 a.m. alarm buzzer takes its toll.

She's on the job by 6:20 a.m., "but, I'm heading home most days by 1:30 p.m.," she said with a sigh of well-earned relief.

— Daniel X. Campbell

CSEA report: Charter schools pose hazards to public education

Cost and quality are CSEA's top concerns about the charter school movement in New York State, according to a new report by CSEA which questions whether management firms can teach children better than public school districts.

Charter schools are public schools which may be operated by private groups such as not-for-profit organizations.

While they must comply with certain laws and regulations concerning health, safety, transportation and civil rights, charter schools are exempt from most other school laws and regulations.

Instead of providing a better education through new and innovative teaching techniques as advertised, CSEA reports the curricula at most charter schools mirror those already used by district schools.

Once management firms get a foothold in the charter school industry, any new and innovative teaching techniques are abandoned, the union report said.

"We need to watch the charter school movement very carefully because they are a financial drain on public-supported school districts which are accountable to taxpayers," said CSEA President Danny Donohue.

Questions standards

The report also questions how students can receive a better education when only 70 percent of charter school teachers must be certified.

"Charter schools are not directly accountable to the voters, taxpayers, or other established education groups," Donohue said.

While their effect on the honor rolls may be negligible, charter schools' effect on the tax rolls could be staggering, union researchers said.

Charter schools divert state aid from district schools, and force local school boards to try to guess assessment needs without knowing how many students they might lose to a new charter school.

As a result, some say school taxes may nearly double over the next five years in some parts of the state, the report states.

Last year there were five charter schools in New York state. Today there are 23.

The report will be sent to all CSEA Local and Unit presidents in school districts across the state.

— Ed Molitor

Voices of the Work Force



"The people I work with are the best thing about my job. The worst thing is tardy paperwork, which delays getting needed materials on time."

— Patricia Marra, purchasing clerk, Niagara Falls School District and an eight-year employee.

Revamped ramps needed?

CSEA safety and health experts question structural safety of aging parking garage

MENANDS — Diagonal parking may be hazardous to union members' health.

CSEA health and safety experts have asked the state for reports on the soundness of concrete parking ramps at the hulk of an old Montgomery Wards warehouse which has been transformed into offices leased to state agencies.

This summer, some support columns in the garage moved, forcing building managers to ban parking for 75 cars on the upper levels of the multi-story garage.

Although some sections of the garage remain closed and temporary supports have been erected, employees are again parking there.

"If the state's reports indicate the structure is not as safe as our members have been led to believe, then CSEA will seek to have the structure closed to all parking until it is properly rebuilt," CSEA health and safety specialist Gary China said.

"CSEA would rather have our members alive and well walking from available ground level parking spots rather than injured or killed by a sudden collapse of this questionable structure," he added.

Other problems noted

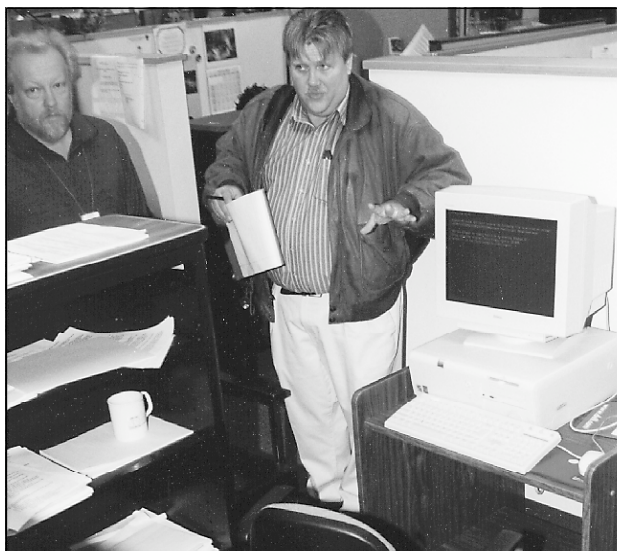
China and officers from the CSEA Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Local recently toured the offices and floors which for decades housed a Capital District retail giant.


"Most of the items we saw at the OCFS sites were housekeeping matters," China said.

"We found fire door rating plates had been painted over by the landlord. We found one work station which seems to be too small for proper use.

"One side of one office had several evacuation plans on display while the other section had none. While these are important issues, they all can be easily addressed by the office management," China said.

— Daniel X. Campbell




Safety & Health
ONLINE RESOURCES TRAINING

WORK FORCE FACTS

- The massive Montgomery Ward structure — known today as Riverview Center — is two buildings connected by walkways. The east building has eight state offices on six floors and the west building has four offices on various parts of four floors. It is located in Menands, just a few miles north of the Capitol in Albany.
- The Office of Children and Family Services will move from the facility in March to new offices across the Hudson River to Rensselaer.

At left, CSEA Health and Safety Specialist Gary China and officers from the Office of Children and Family Services Local inspect cramped office space at the Riverview Center office complex.

Money available for confined space training

Funding for the confined space training program at Eastern Correctional Facility that was profiled in the January *Work Force* was made available through the New York State/CSEA Labor-Management Committees.

The committees provide grants for employee training programs and improved conditions for state employees.

Labor-management committee funding is negotiated in state contracts, and all CSEA members under the state contract are eligible to receive funds.

To get the money, members should contact their Local presidents, who will fill out the NYS/CSEA Labor-Management Committee Grants Program application form contained in the Labor-Management "Grant Guidelines" manual.

Local presidents will then meet with their region's labor-management field staff to review the application and administer the funds.

More information about the committees and the programs are available through the labor-management committee's brochure "Resources for Achieving Joint Goals."

Members interested in securing grant funding can also contact the CSEA field associate in their regions:

CSEA Long Island and Metropolitan Regions:
Maryanne Fallman
314 Willard Ave.
Staten Island, NY 10314
Phone/Fax: (718) 727-3452
e-mail: mbonco@aol.com

CSEA Southern and Capital Regions:

Timothy Gerard
899 CR 401
Westerlo, NY 12193
Phone/Fax: (518) 797-3458
e-mail: gerard004@msn.com

CSEA Central and Western Regions:

Mark Houck
119 Falls View Drive
Montour Falls, NY 14865
(607) 535-7382
e-mail: markh@clarityconnect.com



A Hot Day in February

1991

The hottest day in February was recorded in Albany 10 years ago, when more than 20,000 members from CSEA, PEF and other public employee unions



immobilized downtown Albany with a rally against massive state layoffs.

Gov. Mario Cuomo, smarting from a string of widening budget deficits, proposed firing almost 8,000 state workers and imposing a lag payroll to close the gap.

To counter Cuomo, who wanted state workers to shoulder the burden, CSEA and the other unions organized what would become the largest union protest in Albany's history.

For hours, downtown streets were closed as a river of angry workers streamed past the Capitol and converged in front of the governor's mansion.

This enormous outcry from workers and local political leaders who feared the

economic consequence of massive layoffs forced Cuomo to abandon his call for firings.

Also in 1991:

- ❖ Operation Desert Storm ends and Kuwait is freed from Iraqi occupation;
- ❖ The remaining apartheid laws in South Africa are repealed;
- ❖ Pan American Airlines flies into the sunset for the last time;
- ❖ U.S. Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas denies sexual harassment charges.

Black trade unionist group fosters stronger union ties



CSEA and AFSCME members who belong to the CBTU rally in support of workers' rights last year.

CSEA's partnership with the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) is helping build a stronger union.

About 500 CSEA members belong to the CBTU, an organization of black workers within the trade union movement that is challenging

organized labor to be more relevant to the needs and aspirations of black and poor workers.



Given

CSEA staffers Terry Melvin and Portia Given, both leaders in CBTU, said

the CBTU gives members the skills and confidence they need to play a more active role in a labor movement which some feel has left them behind.

"Part of the problem is that they felt their needs as people of color weren't being addressed through the labor movement," Given said.

"So what we do is demonstrate how CSEA does have an interest in their needs and try to help them develop skills to be able to address those concerns with their local leadership," she added.

Breaking barriers

Melvin said CBTU helps break artificial barriers that prevent members from getting involved in their union.

"There are barriers that they set up themselves because they

don't see people like themselves at the local level in some cases," Melvin said.

"But when they come to CBTU and they see other people that belong to CSEA that have different positions in CSEA, they can talk to those individuals and find out 'well how do you get to become a steward, or how do you get to help your co-workers, or when I need certain kind of help where do I go?' And they get answers and they feel more comfortable about themselves as union members and potential leaders in CSEA," Melvin said.

Leadership training

CBTU also gives members hands-on experience to become CSEA leaders.

"They're given a chance to work on committees. They're given opportunities to be officers and take on roles and responsibilities of secretary and treasurer. They feel more comfortable then going back to their union doing this because they've had training in CBTU to do it," Melvin said.

Given, whose niece is both a CBTU and CSEA member, agreed.

"My niece volunteered for two committees, and she said she's going to get more active in her union," Given said. "She's going to try to be a shop steward," Given said.

"Before she just wasn't interested. And I know of at least eight people in our chapter that became more active in their unions including CSEA," she added.

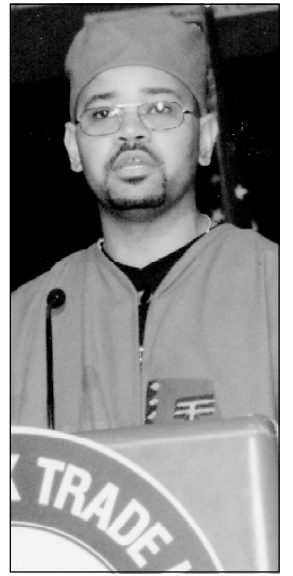
Seasoned CBTU activists get a great deal of satisfaction helping fellow members find

their way, especially the novices coming into the labor movement.

"Those are the ones that you have the most fun with," Melvin said. "It's nice when you can see their eyes open up and they say 'wow, these kinds of things are out there, I can do this.'"

Melvin

— Ed Molitor



WORK FORCE FACTS

- **CBTU has four chapters in New York State: Buffalo, Rochester, Albany and New York City.**
- **The Albany Chapter, founded in May 1999, won CBTU's national Outstanding Chapter Award for 2000.**
- **Trade unions across the country, including the CBTU, marked the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday with celebrations recently. King was in Memphis helping sanitation workers who belonged to AFSCME with their labor dispute when he was assassinated.**

CBTU slates annual convention

The Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) plans its 30th annual convention for May 23-28 in Orlando, Fla. The official convention call

goes out this month.

For additional information, contact Portia Given at (518) 257-1210.

Scheduled AFSCME dues adjustment

The scheduled adjustment in membership dues and agency shop fees is effective Jan. 1, 2001 to reflect AFSCME's minimum dues structure approved by delegates at the 1998 AFSCME convention and reported to the membership in 1999.

The change applies to annualized salaries, not including overtime or location pay, based on salary at Jan. 1, 2001. No adjustments will be made during the year for raises or increments.

New hourly and per diem employees have dues deducted at the "Under \$5,000" category of \$3.98 bi-weekly.

CSEA's membership dues and agency shop fee structure effective Jan. 1, 2001:

Annual earnings Bi-weekly rate

Under \$5,000	\$3.98
\$5,000-\$10,000	5.98
10,000-13,000	8.21
13,000-16,000	10.25
16,000-22,000	11.62
22,000-28,000	13.03
28,000-30,000	13.30
30,000-32,000	14.18
32,000-34,000	14.96
34,000-36,000	15.25
36,000-38,000	16.08
38,000-40,000	16.92
40,000+	17.34

Healthy schools guide available for members

ALBANY — The Healthy Schools Network has published an *Environmental Action Guide* that describes hazards found in schools and includes information to make schools safer and healthier.

The guide features a comprehensive overview of environmental and occupational laws and regulations covering schools.

It also notes if there are no standards or rules to protect children from hazards such as pesticides, radon, indoor air pollution, mold, toxic chemicals and other contaminants.

To order the guide, contact the Healthy Schools Network at (518) 462-0632 or visit the Web site at www.healthyschools.org.

The CSEA WORKERS' COMPENSATION LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

covering Workers' Compensation and Social Security Disability

If you are injured on the job or sustain a job-related illness, CSEA's Workers' Compensation Legal Assistance Program can help you navigate the maze known as Workers' Compensation. If you become disabled, the program can help you obtain Social Security Disability benefits.

The Program Services Are Absolutely Free, And So Is The Call

● If you have a possible Workers' Compensation or Social Security Disability case, SIMPLY CALL 1-800-342-4146 TOLL-FREE and select the proper menu options. Your call will be answered by the firm of Fine, Olin and Anderman, P.C., through its statewide network of offices staffed by attorneys who specialize in Workers' Compensation and Social Security Disability Law.

Brochures describing the program in detail and intake forms to assist you in compiling correct and complete information before making the initial call will be available from CSEA Region Offices, CSEA Local and Unit Presidents and CSEA Labor Relations Specialists.

● All calls will be accepted, no cases will be turned down and there is no out-of-pocket cost to CSEA members and their dependents for the program services.

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for instructions
to access the program



CSEA, New York's leading union, is a leading underwriter of *Inside Albany*, New York's leading weekly news magazine covering events in the state Legislature that affect CSEA members and their families. Tune in and be informed.

Albany-Schenectady-Troy	WMHT	Saturday	6:30 p.m.
		Tuesday	5:30 p.m.
Binghamton	WSKG	Saturday	4 p.m.
Buffalo	WNED	Sunday	10:30 a.m.
Long Island	WLIW	Sunday	11 a.m.
		Monday	12 p.m.
New York City	WNET	Saturday	1:30 p.m.
		Sunday	6:30 a.m.
Plattsburgh	WCFE	Sunday	9 a.m.
Rochester	WXXI	Saturday	5:30 p.m.
Syracuse	WCNY	Saturday	6:30 p.m.
Watertown	WPBS	Saturday	6 p.m.

2001 CSEA ELECTIONS Info

Local, Unit elections scheduled for 2001

Elections will be conducted for all Local officers, for delegates and for all Unit officers

The term of office for all current local officers, delegates and unit officers expires June 30, 2001. Public sector officers and delegates will be elected or re-elected to four-year terms during local and unit elections to be conducted between May 15 and June 15, 2001. Private sector officers and delegates will be elected to three-year terms.

Each local and unit executive board must select its own Election

Committee and committee chairperson. The Local and/or Unit Election Committee is primarily responsible for conducting the election.

Slate petitioning and slate voting will be an option for candidates for Local and Unit office (see adjacent information).

Members may run as individual candidates if they wish.

Important Information about slate petitioning and slate voting

Local Elections

In Local elections, a slate must contain a candidate running for the offices of president, one or more vice presidents as set forth in the Local's By-Laws, secretary and treasurer.

The slate may also include candidates for other offices which have been created according to the Local Constitution and By-Laws. In Locals which have created the combined position of secretary-treasurer in their By-Laws, the slate must include a candidate for that office.

Unit Elections

In Unit elections, a slate must contain a candidate running for the offices of president, one or more vice presidents as set forth in the Unit's By-Laws, secretary and treasurer.

The slate may also include candidates for other offices which have been created according to the Unit Constitution and By-Laws. In Units which have created the combined position of secretary-treasurer in their By-Laws, the slate must include a candidate for that office.

Candidates should know the following:

✓ A member cannot be a candidate for officer and for delegate on the same slate. An officer candidate must circulate a separate nominating petition in order to appear on the ballot also as a candidate for delegate. The member will appear on the ballot as a candidate for office as part of the slate and as an individual for the position of delegate.

✓ Candidates who run as a slate must complete a Slate Consent Form and a Slate Petition Request Form. By petitioning as a slate, candidates who appear as part of a slate need to submit only one set of the required number of signatures to qualify as a candidate. Individual petitions are not necessary for slate candidates.

✓ Candidates who withdraw from a slate must complete a Slate Withdrawal Form.

More detailed information about election slates will be available from Local and Unit election committees.

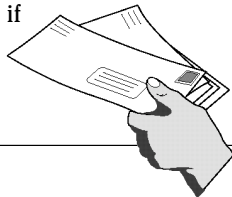
Attention: Local, Unit presidents

Did you send Election Committee Data Form to CSEA headquarters?

Election of Local officers, delegates and Unit officers will be conducted between May 15 and June 15, 2001. Each Local and Unit executive board must have its own Election Committee and committee chairperson to oversee the election. Election material and information cannot be sent to the committee until

the committee Data Form is filed with headquarters.

Local and Unit presidents may call the CSEA Records Maintenance Department at 1-800-342-4146 Extension 1214 if they have questions.



Nominating procedure for small CSEA Locals and Units: special election rules apply

The union's election rules require a minimum of 10 signatures on nominating petitions for office in all Locals and Units. However, this requirement causes problems for potential candidates for office in Locals and Units with 10 or fewer members.

Special election rules apply for CSEA Locals and Units of 10 or fewer members.

In these smaller Locals and Units, completion of the Application for Election to Office replaces the requirement to obtain signatures on a nominating petition.

In Locals or Units with 10 or fewer members, any member who submits the application and meets election requirements under the appropriate Local or Unit Constitution will be placed on the ballot.

Break in membership affects eligibility for union office, voting privileges

A break in union membership status can have long-term future implications. Your membership status affects your eligibility with respect to:

- seeking or holding union office;
- signing nominating petitions for potential candidates;
- voting in union elections, and;
- voting on collective bargaining contracts.

Only members "in good standing" can participate in these activities. To be in "good standing," your dues cannot be delinquent.

If you go on unpaid leave or for any other reason have a break in your employment status, your dues will not continue to be paid through payroll deductions. You must make

arrangements to pay your dues directly to CSEA to continue your membership status. If you are either laid off or placed on leave without pay status due to becoming disabled by accident, illness, maternity or paternity, you may be eligible for dues-free membership status for a period not to exceed one year.

Note, however, you **must** continue to pay dues to run for office. Dues-free or gratuitous membership allows members to continue their insurance coverage while out of work. It does not protect your right to run for or hold office.

You must notify the CSEA Membership Records Department at 1-800-342-4146, Ext. 1327, of any change in your status and what arrangements you are making to continue your membership in CSEA.

Six earn CSEA scholarships

Six children of CSEA members, one from each of CSEA's six regions, have been named winners of the CSEA Thomas H. McDonough Continuing Studies Scholarships.

The winners were announced by CSEA President Danny Donohue and Lamont Wade, chair of CSEA's Special Memorial Scholarship Committee.

The awards are for \$1,000 each and are intended to help the students pursue their college studies by supplementing the CSEA Irving Flaumenbaum scholarships which each winner had received as graduating high school seniors.

The continuing studies scholarships are named in memory of the late Thomas H. McDonough, a longtime union activist who served as acting president and executive vice president of CSEA.

Winners of the 2000 CSEA Thomas H. McDonough Continuing Studies Scholarships are:

Long Island Region

Cheryl Dickter of Middle Island is a student at Randolph-Macon College. Her mother, Marie Dickter, is a staff assistant at Longwood Central Schools.

Metropolitan Region

Larisa Vaynshteyn of Binghamton is a student at SUNY Binghamton. Her mother, Anna Ryvkina, is a therapist aide at South Beach Psychiatric Center.

Southern Region

Gabrielle Rizzuto of Croton-on-Hudson is a student at Georgetown University. Her mother, Rosemary Rizzuto, is a stenographer at the Croton-Harmon School District.

Capital Region

Michelle Johnson of Scotia is a student at SUNY at Geneseo. Her mother, Cynthia Johnson, is a teacher's assistant at the Burnt Hills/Ballston Lake School District.

Central Region

Ann Marie Ilczyszyn of Syracuse is a student at SUNY at Geneseo. Her mother, Danuta Ilczyszyn, is a duplicating machine operator and her father, Wasyl Ilczyszyn, is a custodian at the Syracuse City School District.

Western Region

Kendra Lee Weis of Macedon is a student at Ithaca College. Her mother, Sandra Lee Weis, is a typist/registrar at Wayne Central High School.



CSEA members in Oswego County rally recently. The unit has been without a contract for more than a year.

YEARS OF SERVICE

— CSEA's Capital Region recently saluted more than 125 years of state service among four union members. Region President Kathy Garrison presented Virginia Thomas, Ellen Burke, Thomas Jefferson and Cindy Egan DerGuarhian, all recent retirees, with CSEA Service Awards for their state service and CSEA leadership. Garrison also surprised Judy Richards with the 2000 President's Award for her unceasing efforts to serve the needs of the Capital Region during a time of challenge, transition and change ... **JOB, BACK PAY RESTORED** — CSEA has helped a veteran psychiatric center worker return to his job with five months of back pay after he was cleared of patient abuse charges. Phillip Tatta, a 17-year employee at the Western New York Children's Psychiatric Center in West Seneca, helped restrain a patient who was acting out. The patient later charged he had been hit and Tatta was suspended. CSEA took the case to arbitration, and the patient testified he was angry he couldn't talk with a female patient at the center and fabricated the charge against Tatta ... **INK ON PAPER**

— The printing of CSEA/state contracts (ASU, ISU, OSU and DMNA) has started. Contracts will be sent to all members and agency shop fee payers. The mailing will include a postcard to order a copy of the (ASU, ISU or OSU) contract in Spanish. Agency shop fee payers will also receive a membership card. Contracts should be received in early February. Meanwhile, the state Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER) is expected to post the contracts on its Web site and CSEA will have a link to it on the union's Web site ...

PROTECTING PART-TIMERS — An administrative law judge has



ruled 134 part-time Ulster County employees, in across-the-board titles, should be

placed in CSEA's existing unit. He determined there was a significant community of interest between them and part-time employees holding identical titles represented by CSEA ... **LONG BEACH WORKER RETURNED TO JOB** — CSEA helped return a Long Beach Medical Center Local member to his job after he was fired. The worker was fired because management did not realize he was out on a legitimate medical absence. The worker was very grateful for CSEA's assistance and said if it wasn't for the union he didn't know what he would have done to get his job back ... **TRAGEDY AVERTED** — One janitor and several cleaners at SUNY Canton were recently recognized for their professionalism in reporting, responding to and eliminating a potentially hazardous situation on campus. Janitor Tim Murphy, Supervising Janitor Mark Claxton, and cleaners Iva Johnson and Joe Kelly were honored by both the campus administration and their CSEA Local.

Westchester Co. Local scholarship deadline April 15

April 15 is the deadline for applications for the Westchester County Local scholarships. Twelve scholarships of \$1,000 each will be awarded to graduating seniors who are attending college whose parents are members of the county Local. Applications and eligibility rules may be obtained by calling the Local at (914) 428-6452.

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Brochures describing the program in detail and intake forms to assist you in compiling correct and complete information before making the initial call will be available from CSEA Region Offices, CSEA Local and Unit Presidents and CSEA Labor Relations Specialists.

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● Brochures

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WORKERS' COMPENSATION
LEGAL ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM

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ABOVE, 1/4 page ad

Below, 2 column ad

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Held hostage at youth facility
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Scared and scarred by
the mental health system
Page 5

CIA food secrets revealed
Page 9

Honoring Black History Month:
CBTU helps build
a stronger CSEA
Page 15

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FEBRUARY 2001

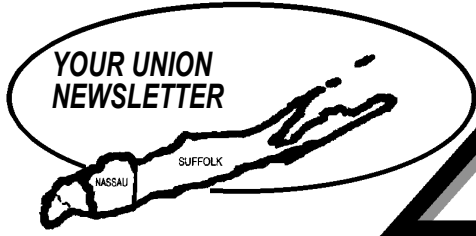
THE WORK FORCE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION  Local 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

IS YOUR LOCAL...

1000%
UNION?

See Pages 10-11



February 2001 • Vol. 6, No. 2

CSEA NASSAU COUNTY LOCAL 830 **EXPRESS**



CSEA Members Always Come Through For The People of Nassau County

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

Through their hard work and dedication, our members have on a daily basis exposed as a sham the offensive, time-worn nonsense regarding civil service workers.

And seldom is this more evident than in a crisis or an emergency.

Take the case of this season's early winter snowstorm, which dumped 15 or more inches of snow in Nassau County.

Once again, CSEA workers came through in outstanding fashion, making it through the storm to operate snow plows and sanders and to perform many vital services for the people of Nassau County.

One big problem for a union such as ours is to get that message out to the public.

People take many of their services for granted. They don't fully understand what it takes to get a small army of people out to clear the snow from hundreds of miles of county roads.

They take it for granted that emergency vehicles will arrive when needed, even in the harshest weather.

It would never occur to many that it often takes a heroic effort to brave hazardous roads to get to work and maintain vital services, such as at the medical center.

Since I've been your president, I have endeavored to get this message to the people, through newspaper ads, through our radio

show, through networking with community groups and through our Web site, among other methods.

I am dedicating this month's issue of *The Express* to the workers mentioned above.

Inside this edition is a story with pictures of many of the jobs that require our members to be on the job even in the most severe weather.

It is one way we can learn about and appreciate the jobs our fellow members perform.

I also ask each member cut out the article and share it with non-member friends and relatives.

Please accept my apology if your job was not included in the article. We tried to include as many as possible, but space limitations made it impossible to list them all.

However, whatever your job, be proud of what you do. I'm proud of our members. And the public should be, too.

Yours in unionism,

Tony Giustino, president
CSEA Local 830



Holiday Party

Social Committee Chair Beth Luttinger poses in front on the hundreds of toys CSEA members brought to the 2000 Holiday Party at the Crest Hollow Country Club in Woodbury. The toys are collected each year by the Social Committee for the U.S. Marines' *Toys for Tots* program. Flanking Luttinger are members of the U.S. Marine Corps who attended the party to pick up the toys for distribution. The 2000 holiday party was an outstanding success, drawing more than 800 people.

The
Work Force
CSEA Nassau County Local 830
EXPRESS

February 2001 • Vol.6 No. 2

A Monthly Publication of CSEA Nassau County Local 830
ANTHONY P. GIUSTINO, President

Tony Panzarella, Editor
(516) 571-2919 Ext. 15

Ronald G. Gurrieri, Chair, Communications Committee

Sheryl C. Jenks, Communications Associate
CSEA Long Island Region Office, (631) 462-0030

NASSAU LOCAL 830**Executive Officers:**

Jane D'Amico, Executive Vice President
Les Eason, 1st Vice President
Noreen Lingham, 2nd Vice President
Robert Cauldwell, 3rd Vice President
Raymond Cannella, 4th Vice President
Jewel Weinstein, 5th Vice President
George Walsh, 6th Vice President
Ron Gurrieri, 7th Vice President
Martin Stamile, 8th Vice President
Mary DellMare, 9th Vice President
Tim Corr, 10th Vice President
Nancy Ianson, 11th Vice President
Bobby Eisgrau, Secretary
Kathleen Vitan, Treasurer

Unit Presidents/Executive Board:

John Aloisio III, Treasurer's Office
Stanley Bergman, Comptroller's Office
Ray Cannella, Civil Service Commission
Tim Corr, Recreation & Parks
Vivian Crowley, General Services
Kenneth Dash Sr., Administrative Unit
Jim Davis, Assessment
Frank Debobes, Police AMTs
Mary DellMare, School Crossing Guards
Les Eason, A. Holly Patterson Geriatric Center
Bobby Eisgrau, County Clerk
Cynthia Hancock, Nassau Community College
Nancy Ianson, Drug & Alcohol
David Johnson, NC Democratic Project Unit
Eileen Jones, County/District Attorney
Jerry Laricchiuta, Sheriffs Support Unit
Louis Minghinelli, Health Department
Lillian Neumar, Police Civilian
Richard Russ, Consumer Affairs
Larry Schnurr, Deputy Sheriffs
Paul Simon, Fire & Rescue Services
Martin Stamile, Public Works Dept.
Glen Stuck, Traffic & Parking Violations
Michael Timmons, Social Services
George Walsh, Nassau County Medical Center
Joseph Whittaker, Fire Marshal's
Peter Wrba, Probation

We welcome reader suggestions: Please address your comments to
Tony Panzarella, Editor, Nassau County EXPRESS at CSEA Nassau
Co. Local 830, 400 County Seat Dr., Mineola, NY 11501-4137.

Read This Month's
Edition of

THE WORK FORCE
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION CSEA Local 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

For Important News
for All CSEA Members.

LEGAL UPDATE

CSEA offers union members quality legal services



By Nancy Hoffman, Esq.
CSEA General Counsel

Background Checks

With actor Robert Downey's recent troubles being splashed all over the front page and other public figures having virtually no privacy, one cannot help but wonder "what if it were me or my family?"

Unfortunately, privacy rights have been under attack by employers. Some might feel a "big brother" mentality has taken hold.

From employer background checks for new hires to employer discipline for off-duty conduct, the employer's reach seems to be extensive.

Asking about an arrest

The New York State Human Rights Law considers it an unlawful discriminatory practice for an employer to ask about an arrest or a criminal accusation which ended in favor of the accused.

An employer may, however, ask current or prospective employees about convictions of record or pending arrests.

Questions to current or prospective employees about convictions must relate to felony or misdemeanor crimes, not violations.

The New York State Corrections Law says an employer cannot refuse to hire based upon a conviction, absent a direct relationship between the offense and the employment, or unless employment of that person would involve unreasonable risk to property or safety.

Fingerprinting

State and local governments are exempt from the general private sector prohibition against the fingerprinting of employees.

However, the use of fingerprinting is a mandatory subject of bargaining and therefore cannot be imposed unilaterally.

One school district in New York has recently began requiring employees sign "consents" for criminal history background checks.

The consent form provides for the release of information "covering any criminal conviction" against

the employee.

As to general legality, nothing prohibits such an inquiry itself.

It is also not proper for an employer to ask a prospective employee if he or she ever received workers' compensation benefits.

The employer cannot discriminate against employees who have collected workers' compensation.

Legal services for members

With this extensive employer interest in our private lives, it is timely and important that CSEA is offering union members quality legal services for criminal matters and non-employment related private legal matters.

The new CSEA members-only benefit, the CSEA Legal Services Plan, is designed to provide members with quality legal representation at affordable rates by attorneys specifically committed to serving members with competence, compassion and expertise.

I encourage all CSEA members to review this new program and join now.

You may not think that you have an immediate need for legal advice or assistance.

Yet tonight, tomorrow, or next week, a call could come in the middle of the night because your child or spouse needs legal help.

Real estate closings, consumer product problems, wills, health care proxies, child support issues or commercial legal issues, among others, can be handled by the CSEA Legal Services Plan.

As a result of the feedback CSEA received during the pilot project, the waiting period has been shortened to seven days and the renewal fees can be as low as \$25 a year.

With the CSEA Legal Services Plan, an attorney who knows about CSEA, your work environment and your needs is only a phone call away.

If you have questions about the program, call 1-800-342-4146, ext. 1426.

Nassau Local 830 Civil Service Employees Association Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Fund Balance

The following statement of revenue and expenses for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, indicates outstanding fiscal management by your union. The statement was prepared by Local 830 Treasurer Kathleen Vitan and certified by the outside accounting firm of Palumbo & Mastrogiovanni.

NASSAU LOCAL 830
CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION, INC.
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE –
INCOME TAX BASIS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2000

REVENUES:

Dues	\$772,325	
Healthy Heart grant	6,229	
Interest income	33,668	
Delegate reimbursement	19,011	
Radio Show Sponsor	6,500	
MLK Luncheon & Scholarship	5,418	
Social 830 reimbursement	204,138	
Committee reimbursement	411	
Women Recognition	13,486	
Negotiation reimbursement	<u>21,938</u>	
		\$1,083,124

EXPENSES:

Unit rebates	189,620	
Office staff and fringes	255,005	
Honorariums	66,436	
Rent and electric	28,800	
Delegates expenses	25,998	
Newsletter	21,037	
Professional fees	25,602	
Social events expenses	193,650	
Region I assessment	200	
Depreciation expense	1,775	
Telephone	20,690	
Auto expenses	3,816	
Office expenses	18,412	
Committee expenses	30,933	
Printing	3,677	
Postage	12,778	
Officers' expenses	8,006	
Board of directors expenses	1,979	
Public relations	56,469	
Bank charges	607	
Dues and publications	490	
Education expenses	25,871	
Capital expense	259	
Healthy Heart expenses	14,618	
MLK Luncheon & Scholarship expenses	4,486	
Women Recognition	<u>12,438</u>	
Total expenses		<u>1,023,642</u>
Excess of revenues over expenses		59,482
Fund balance – beginning of year		<u>598,512</u>
Fund balance – end of year		<u>\$657,994</u>

Member Questions to be Aired On CSEA Radio Program

CSEA Local 830 President Tony Giustino will reserve time on the union's radio show to answer member questions or air their comments on labor-related matters.

The show, "CSEA in Focus," airs Thursdays at 7 p.m. and is repeated on Saturdays at 8:30 a.m. on Long Island radio station WGBB, 1240 on the AM dial.

CSEA in Focus, hosted by Giustino, has been on the air since June 1997.

Over the years, guests have included top elected officials, union leaders, union members and others who addressed topics of interest to public-sector workers.

"When we launched the show, it was a big step forward in our ongoing campaign to establish solid lines of communication with our members," said Giustino. "And it is an ongoing endeavor to make the show pertinent to the interests of our members," he added.

Giustino will reserve a portion of the show to answer members questions on the air.

Since the show is not aired live, questions may be submitted in writing by filling out the form below.

Only questions from dues-paying members will be considered.

NAME _____

DEPARTMENT _____

WORK SHIFT _____ WORK PHONE _____

MY QUESTION/COMMENT FOR "CSEA IN FOCUS" IS:

Would you like your name to be used on the air? YES ___ NO ___

PLEASE NOTE: Unless your question/comment is confirmed by phone, it will not be used. Please indicate above if you prefer we not use your name on the air.

Stay Informed. Tune in to

"CSEA in Focus"

Thursdays at 7 p.m.

repeated Saturdays

at 8 a.m. on

WGBB, 1240 AM



CSEA Members Deliver Vital Services When Snow Storms Rage, CSEA Members are on the Job

When cold winds blow and the snow swirls, most people in the private sector can find comfort in the warmth of an office building or beside a glowing hearth at home. Staying home is a viable option to escape the battle of drifts and ice. But to many CSEA members, the bitter weather that confines most people to quarters is a call to arms.

When winter storms howl, these workers are on the job. The most recent demonstration of their dedication and commitment to the people of Nassau County came during this season's early winter snowstorm, which dropped as much as 15 inches of snow locally. During the storm and in its aftermath, CSEA members were out delivering vital services. When storms hit, Department of Public Works and Parks employees mount snowplows and sanders to clear roads for emergency vehicles. The job of crossing guards, always important, becomes more vital because of weather-related hazards.



Parks Department security vehicles are lined up and ready to go during snow storm.



Recreation & Parks workers get a sander ready to make icy roads safe for traffic.



DPW worker uses a snow blower to clear snow from sidewalk at a county building.



Roadway in Eisenhower Park cleared of snow thanks to the hard work of CSEA members.

There is no such thing as a snow day for workers who deliver the health care services so essential to the operation of the Nassau University Medical Center and the A. Holly Patterson Extended Care Center.

Getting to work through the snow and ice is important for the operators who respond to 9-1-1 emergencies and to those who command the county's fire and rescue services.

The same is true for the Ambulance Emergency Technicians (AMTs), who administer life support and transport to the hospital those who are seriously injured.

Workers at the county's fleet service must get to work because they're the ones who get emergency vehicles back on the road when breakdowns occur.

"I really have to take off my hat to these dedicated individuals," said Local 830 President Tony Giustino.

"Despite manpower shortages and other problems associated with the county's budget crisis, these men and women are doing a remarkable job. They continuously demonstrate a high level of professionalism and pride in their work," Giustino said.

CSEA Department of Public Works Unit President Martin Stamile had particularly high praise for his workers.

"For most of them, it was their day off. But they came in when they were called and put in many hours out in the snow," Stamile said.

Stamile said the snow kept his crews busy for several days, clearing overpasses and walkways, spreading sand and removing snow. He also praised the DPW mechanics who were on hand to service the equipment.

Although the storm hit on a weekend, Mary DelMare, president of the Crossing Guards Unit, said members of her Unit have weekend posts at houses of worship.

"They were out in the snow doing their job," DelMare said. When schools re-opened and conditions around many schools remained hazardous because of slick streets and snow piles, guards had to take special care at school crossings, said DelMare.

Recreation & Parks Unit President Tim Corr gave much credit to a staff that has been decimated over the years.

"Many people don't realize our parks crews are responsible for clearing over 6,000 acres of parks, including 17 major parks and 10 museum facilities," Corr said.

He noted, too, that his crews are responsible for clearing the snow around the county office and court complex in Mineola and the Family Court and Children's Shelter in Westbury.

"Because we have been so short-staffed, our people have to go way beyond the call of duty to get the job done," Corr said.

Corr had special praise for the parks security guards, who were

on duty throughout the storm patrolling county parks and museums.

George Walsh, president of the Nassau University Medical Center Unit, emphasized the huge responsibility of his members to care for patients 52 weeks a year, seven days a week.

"Our members understand that responsibility well and they get to work no matter what the weather. They did so on Dec. 30 and they will continue to do so because they are dedicated professionals," Walsh said.

Les Eason echoed similar sentiments for the workers at the A. Holly Patterson Extended Care Facility, where he serves as CSEA Unit president.

"In many cases, lives depend on the services we deliver to our patients and residents. Our members were here performing those jobs during the recent snowstorm. It would never even occur to them not to be here," Eason said.

The president of the Police Civilians Unit, Lil Neumar, said the fleet service bureau "is a critical support for the Nassau County Police."

"The CSEA people in this command keep the fleet going...detailing, repairing and making sure there are proper tires on all the vehicles that have to make it through the snow when there is a cry for help," Neumar said.

"They quietly assist the public in a very special way and are vital in enabling the police department to maintain its ability to serve as an emergency operation," she added.

Speaking of emergencies, Neumar emphasized the importance of the communications bureau operators.

"They are the ones who link a call for help with police department assistance. Sending an ambulance, referring a fire call and assisting literally with land and sea rescues, they are there to support the public and the police," she said.

"They get through the bad weather first, so that everyone else can, too," Neumar added. Not all storm-related CSEA jobs are life-saving in nature, but they're important just the same, union leaders said.

Take the case of the parking enforcement aides who help to discourage people from monopolizing available parking or from cars becoming obstacles to snow plows and sanders.

When Nassau residents are warm and cozy in their homes looking out at the snow flakes swirling in the wind, they can rest assured CSEA workers are out doing their jobs — keeping Nassau County residents safe.

Fire and Rescue Services workers get to their posts during the heaviest of snow storms to handle emergencies.



Members of the grounds crew at Eisenhower Park take a breather after many hours of clearing snow from paths and roads.

Above and at right, DPW crew works to clear snow from a pedestrian walkway on Southern State Parkway overpass in Franklin Square. When the workers finished their job, pedestrians were able to walk in safety rather than take their chance in the street.



Above, civilian workers in the Police Department play a vital role supporting county police. Lillian Neumar, president of the Police Civilians Unit (standing), had high praise for her members. Debbie Imperatore, Unit vice president, commended the professionalism and dedication of the police civilian workers.



Top left and left, staff members at the Nassau University Medical Center are on the job in the worst of weather to administer vital health care services.