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1910-2010 *January 2010*

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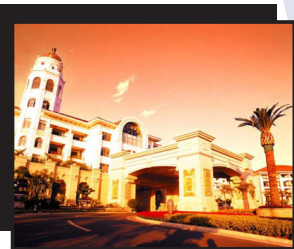
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Danny Donohue
CSEA President



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Visit www.csealocal1000.org for details or call 1-800-342-4146, ext. 1395.



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CSEA provides members with the training, resources and advice necessary to advance their careers in civil service and the private sector. While many of the programs are only for union members, there is also information and materials to help just about anyone looking to advance their career.

Visit http://www.csealocal1000.org/career_resources.php for complete information about civil service test preparation, the New York State Partnership for Education and Training, civil service job listings and scholarship information.



“As a unit president, I encourage my members to take advantage of CSEA’s wide range of benefits and have vendors attend membership meetings to share all of the details.”

Reuben Simmons
City of Beacon Unit President

CSEA LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM (LSP)



WORKERS’ COMPENSATION

If you are injured at work or you have a work-related medical condition (such as carpal tunnel syndrome), notify your employer, see a physician who accepts Workers’ Compensation and file for Workers’ Compensation.

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS

If your physician says you cannot work for at least a year due to medical conditions that prevent you from working, and you are under ages 65-67, even if you are collecting a pension or ready to retire, you may be eligible for Social Security Disability Benefits.

PERSONAL INJURY CLAIM

If you have been injured in an auto accident outside of work, from a dog bite, from a non-work-related slip and fall or due to a malfunctioning product, you may have a Personal Injury Claim.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS PLAN

If you are interested in protecting your assets and life savings and you want to plan for the future if you become ill or disabled requiring long term care, a will, health care proxy, power of attorney, or special needs trust for a child or other loved one, you should take advantage of the Taking Care of Business Plan.

PERSONAL LEGAL SERVICES PLAN

If you need legal assistance for traffic infractions, real estate matters, criminal matters, adoption, divorce, custody case or family matters, or other personal legal matters to insure your legal rights are protected, you should take advantage of the Personal Legal Services Plan.

The LSP provides affordability, accountability and quality of service to CSEA members and their families

The CSEA Legal Department oversees the Program and the attorneys who were specially selected for their expertise and their commitment to you and to CSEA Program standards. CSEA has endorsed the statewide law firm of **Fine, Olin & Anderman, LLP** to administer the Workers’ Compensation, Social Security Disability Benefits and other Injury related matters.

For More Information

Call CSEA Headquarters at 1 (800) 342-4146. Select menu option for Legal then follow prompts for Injury Related matters and/or Non-Injury Related matter.

CSEA Website: www.csealocal1000.org through the CSEA Members-Only area

Photo of the Month



Photo by Mark M. Kotzin

Nurse Assistant Certified Sarah Kennedy, left, and Nurse Assistant Martina Donnelly, right, lift a New York State Veterans Home at Oxford resident into his bed using one of the facility's new ceiling lifts. CSEA members worked with CSEA's Occupational Safety and Health Department to urge the state to install the lifts in the new home. The lifts greatly reduce patient and worker injuries, reducing insurance costs for home operators. A story about the lifts will be in next month's Work Force.

Almost time to retire?

Your local may pay the first year of CSEA retiree dues, which is only \$24!



CSEA retiree members enjoy many of the benefits and discounts of belonging to a union. In return, you get access to a wide variety of money-saving benefits such as:

- Access to insurance plans at CSEA's low group rates
- Travel discounts
- A discounted consumer items buying service
- Discounted dental and vision care programs
- A personal legal services

referral network

- The Retiree News quarterly

Being a CSEA retiree member also makes you part of a growing statewide body that can effectively advocate on your behalf:

- Legislative and political action programs designed to enhance and protect retiree pension and health benefits
- Participation in a CSEA retiree local
- Effective lobbying against Social Security reform
- Informative publications

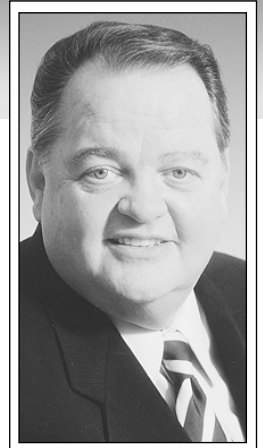
For more information, visit www.csealocal1000.org and select "retirees" from the "Member Benefits" menu item.

From the Office of President Danny Donohue

Since 1910

CSEA
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ALERT



New CSEA/AFSCME membership cards will protect your identity

CSEA members have spoken!

Because you asked, Social Security numbers are being replaced by CSEA ID numbers for CSEA business. In January, you will receive your 2010 CSEA/AFSCME membership card with a new CSEA ID NUMBER. You will no longer have to use your Social Security number to identify yourself as a CSEA member.

KEEP THE CARD IN A SAFE PLACE SO YOUR CSEA ID NUMBER IS AVAILABLE WHEN YOU NEED IT.

Best wishes for the holiday season.

Danny

OCFS finally adopts Workplace Violence Prevention program

ALBANY — Following a recent meeting with top-level CSEA staff, state Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Commissioner Gladys Carrion has finally signed off on a Workplace Violence Prevention program for OCFS employees.

CSEA President Danny Donohue also personally urged the agency head to act on the program. In a letter to Carrion, Donohue reminded her that CSEA-represented youth division aides now suffer more on-the-job injuries than any other job title in the state, and that workers' compensation cases at the agency had increased by 33 percent last year.

CSEA has long been expressing concern that agency policies under Carrion have put staff and the public at risk. Such policies include the irresponsible practice of closing facilities and transferring dangerous individuals, who clearly need closer

supervision, into the community or less secure surroundings.

Many consider the new OCFS Workplace Violence Prevention program a model of how such programs should be designed, and union officials are hopeful that the commissioner's approval of the program may signal a shift toward a more responsible approach toward worker safety at the agency. However, Donohue warned that the union would be watching to make sure the program is being enforced.

"In agencies throughout the state, we see minimum staffing levels violated every day, supervisors circumventing established procedures and other policies that are outright ignored," Donohue said. "Just because an employer has a nice looking program on paper does not necessarily mean it's being practiced."

— Ed Molitor

THE WORK FORCE

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IN TOUCH WITH THE WORK FORCE

CSEA President Danny Donohue

Celebrate CSEA's extraordinary history

You only turn 100 once.

A benchmark event like a 100th anniversary provides an opportunity to look back and reflect on where we've come from and how we got here. More importantly, it provides an opportunity to look forward to the future and think about how we can become better.

And so the recognition of CSEA's centennial year begins.

The story of CSEA is extraordinary in so many ways. It is a story about individuals but it is also a story about collective action — people working together. Most importantly, it is a story about aspiring to excellence. From the very start on Oct. 24, 1910, the story of CSEA has been about people wanting to do better and believing it could help make New York a better place. That's still true today.

But consider all that has occurred between CSEA's founding and now. When CSEA came into existence, America was just becoming a world power, Theodore Roosevelt was the dominant political figure of the time, women did not have the right to vote, people of color were considered by many at best second-class citizens, cars were just being mass produced and radio broadcasting was in its infancy.

Since then, we have come through two world wars, a Great Depression, Communism rose and fell, endless other wars and conflicts and terrorism. We've also endured cycles of boom and bust, as well as social, cultural, sexual and technological revolution. Throughout it all, CSEA has grown, changed, adapted and yet still remained true to our core values.

"Extraordinary" is the only way to put it.



CSEA fighting threat to state aid

ALBANY — There are no simple solutions as Gov. David Paterson is withholding promised aid to localities and school districts to deal with the state budget shortfall.

But CSEA is urging the governor and local leaders not to gut services and jobs in knee-jerk politics. Instead, CSEA has ideas to save money and keep people working.

“Rough times lie ahead for municipalities across the state, we know that. But what we also know is that CSEA is presenting cost-saving alternatives that can help, and can prevent job losses, if only elected officials will listen and adopt these measures, instead of trying to balance their budgets on the backs of workers,”

CSEA President Danny Donohue said. Paterson is withholding aid in response to the state’s current negative cash flow. There is less money in the state

coffers than the present budget outlines in spending. Lawsuits challenging the governor’s authority to do this appear imminent.

By withholding the aid now, the governor can wait until January when the state begins to receive revenue from first-quarter taxes. If he chooses to not make the aid payments after money starts coming in from taxes, it’s essentially a way for Paterson to

make further cuts without having to get them passed in the Assembly and Senate.

Meanwhile, some municipalities are adopting measures to save money, in turn, saving jobs.

Erie County recently consolidated its health insurance plans under one carrier, helping the county to save jobs. CSEA continues to urge counties to adopt the Canadian prescription drug program CanaRx, which has saved counties that have adopted the program millions of dollars in the past few years.

Here are some of the other areas where CSEA members are fighting:

Albany County

CSEA members recently helped fight off proposed budget cuts in Albany County that would have devastated public services.

Albany County Executive Mike Breslin had proposed in

his 2010 budget 23 layoffs from CSEA’s bargaining unit. Following the union’s campaign of e-mails, calls, demonstrations and attendance at county committee and budget meetings, members’ efforts proved successful. On Dec. 7, Albany County legislators passed a 2010 budget that restores 22 of the 23 positions scheduled to end on Jan. 1, 2010.

Albany County members have been fighting all year, first against



More than 80 educational support workers for the Potsdam School District recently turned out to protest a stalemate in their contract negotiations. The high cost of health care forced the workers to reject a district proposal that would have raised workers’ out of pocket expenses. At the same time, CSEA members are upset that they earn the lowest wages, but pay 13 percent higher premiums than district teachers.

Breslin’s ill-conceived furlough plan and then the county executive’s budget proposal.

White Plains School District

Unit President Adele Herzenberg said she hopes her district won’t feel the mid-year crunch some districts are anticipating, but acknowledged that the 2010 budget process will be painful. Last year, the district cut 49 positions through layoffs and attrition, though 22 of the 23 workers laid off were eventually hired back. CSEA represents 520 workers in the district.

“We are doing so much more with less,” Herzenberg said. “We’ve been informed that projected cuts in the budget will be huge, which seriously impacts our district.”

Westchester County

“We’ve succeeded in fighting a proposal for furloughs,” said Westchester County Unit President Karen Pecora, who

represents 3,800 county workers. “We will continue to look for cost savings opportunities that we can present to the county. We’ve already made suggestions to our incoming county executive, Rob Astorino, and the county legislature, which have been well received.”

Highway safety concerns

“The money needed for proper snow clearing and salting just isn’t there this year,” said Christian Espejo, president of the state Department of Transportation Region 8 Local, which covers Dutchess, Putnam, Westchester, Rockland and Ulster counties. “Our salt sheds are at a quarter of the capacity they normally are, and we’ve only had two storms so far. I’m not sure what we’re going to do come February.”

— Therese Assalian, Jessica Ladlee and Mark M. Kotzin

Wantagh Public Library workers fight for fairness

“Actions such as this make it clear that coming to an agreement with us is not the first priority of this board.”

WANTAGH — Nearly 30 CSEA members from the Wantagh Public Library Unit and Nassau Municipal Employees Local recently demonstrated in front of the library to urge library board officials to settle a contract with CSEA-represented library employees, who have been working without a contract for six months.

CSEA's negotiations with the library board have stalled for more than a year because library board members seem not to want to bargain in good faith and have showed contempt for the collective bargaining process. The demonstration coincided with a heavily attended library book fair.

Wantagh Public Library Unit President Fran Lucchese

and Vice President Diane Giannone decided to demonstrate because the library board has routinely cancelled scheduled negotiating sessions. Library board representatives also merely presented three insulting proposals to the union over the past year.

The demonstration is part of a unit contract campaign to raise public awareness of CSEA members' fight for fairness at the library. Unit members are also wearing “Contract Now” and “Show Some Respect” buttons on a regular basis to make library patrons aware of their circumstances.

Library board member Laura Dupkin-Memisha spurred unit members to stage the demonstration



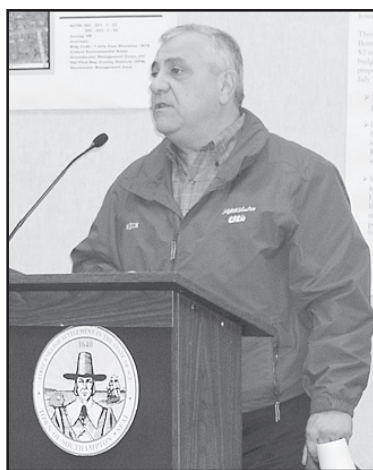
Wantagh Library Unit members demonstrate in front of the library.

when she offered smiley-face stickers to unit members in attendance at the last library board meeting, suggesting they be displayed next to their CSEA buttons.

“Actions such as this make it clear that coming to an agreement with us is not the

first priority of this board,” said Lucchese. “That is why we will continue to take proactive measures and not just settle for the crumbs they want to throw at us.”

— Rich Impagliazzo



Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte urges the Southampton Town Council to not balance the town budget on the backs of CSEA-represented workers.

CSEA fights Southampton budget proposal

SOUTHAMPTON — CSEA members from across the Long Island Region recently demonstrated outside Southampton Town Hall to speak out against Supervisor Linda Kabot's budget proposal that would lay off 49 town workers, close the town animal shelter and contract out two of the four town waste transfer stations.

“This budget will effectively eliminate 10 percent of the town work force and severely curtail the quality of resident services in the process,” said Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte. “These CSEA members should not lose their jobs due to years of



Town of Southampton Unit members Philip Milo, Marie Deuel and Tom Cartino fight for respect.

fiscal mismanagement in Southampton.”

“This is not simply a matter of adding and subtracting numbers on a page,” Southampton Unit President Pete Collins said.

“The lives of real people and their families will take a turn for the worse.”

The drastic 2010 budget proposal came after CSEA effectively countered an attempt by Southampton

administrators to spread misinformation about the one-year contract the two parties negotiated for 2009.

“Our unit members voted to go along with the town's wishes in the spirit of goodwill and cooperation,” said Collins. “We may have come to a different conclusion had we known what was coming down the pike.”

Kabot lost her bid for re-election. CSEA had endorsed her opponent, who had spoken out against the budget proposal.

— Rich Impagliazzo

Workers turn to CSEA in tough times

Tough times often bring out the best in CSEA. More than 25,000 new members organized with CSEA in the past year.

ALBANY — In these tough economic times, CSEA has once again proved to be a leader in holding the line against devastating cuts to public services.

And unorganized workers across the state are taking notice, forming unions with CSEA to gain respect at work.

During the past year, more than 1,000 public employees formed a union with CSEA. This is in addition to the 7,500 licensed family child care providers (VOICE) and the 17,000 license-exempt child care providers (CCPT) who now have a first contract with the state Office of Children and Family Services.

“CSEA has been standing up and fighting to hold the line on cuts to our jobs and benefits, as well as holding the line on furloughs,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said. “Unorganized workers are increasingly feeling unsafe in this economic climate and they feel more vulnerable than ever.”

Food service victory

At SUNY Canton, 43 food service workers employed by the campus' private sector College Association formed a union with CSEA, with the great help of SUNY Canton Local President Joe Kelly and Central Region President Colleen Wheaton, who helped the workers generate support from CSEA and other campus unions.

Kelly, a maintenance worker at the college, reached out to the food service workers. In addition to helping the workers, he made the organizing drive his class project for CSEA's Leadership Education And Development (LEAD) Program.

Kelly worked with CSEA Organizer Brian Cornelius, and SUNY Canton Local Vice President Christine Ormsbee to help the workers form a union. “Overall, they were looking for respect, a better say in their scheduling, and getting the protection that the union offers,” Kelly said. “It wasn't even about money.”

Kelly said the College Association workers “were elated” after the vote, and have already established a negotiating team for contract negotiations at the beginning of the year.

“We're confident that they made the right choice



Wendy Nashid-Jackson, a licensed family child care provider and VOICE member from Mount Vernon in Westchester County, cares for two young children in this 2009 file photo. Child care workers recently got their first contract with the state Office of Children and Family Services.

to join us, and we're looking forward to working with them to build a strong union on their behalf,” Wheaton said.

Other workers organize

The Central Region also played a strong role in helping 15 bus drivers at the Odessa Montour Falls School District who are employed with First Student Bus form a union with CSEA, as well 50 State Fairgrounds employees who work for the Industrial Exhibit Authority.

In the Long Island Region, more than 300 part-time Brookhaven town employees have organized with CSEA and have requested recognition as a union. They join 120 town public service officers who organized with CSEA earlier this year.

In the Village of Rockville Centre, 126 employees who had previously been members of their own independent association decided they needed greater protection and strength and have organized to join CSEA.

With the help of Nassau County Local President Jerry Laricchiuta, Nassau Municipal Employees Local President John Shepherd and Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte, an overwhelming majority of these workers signed to join CSEA and dissolve their union. They await final certification from the state Public Employment Relations Board.

Other workers who have organized and joined CSEA this year, include those at the Island Trees Public Library, monitors at the Pawling Central School District, security officers at the Baldwin Union Free School District and food service workers at the Dunkirk School District.

— **Janice Marra and Mark M. Kotzin**

Special Rate for CSEA members!

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Archives Partnership Trust

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The Archives Partnership Trust is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to sustaining the excellence of the New York State Archives.

Make a New Year's resolution: take the Polar Plunge



CSEA Oswego County Local President Ken Greenleaf and Central Region Executive Vice President and St. Lawrence County Local President Betty Thomas react to the 44-degree water of Oneida Lake as they take the plunge.

CSEA members are kicking off the union's centennial year 'freezin' for a reason' through the Polar Plunge to benefit the Special Olympics.

Central Region members were among those who recently got into the spirit.

The Central Region "Polar Peeps Team" plunged into chilly Oneida Lake, raising more than \$17,500 for the Special Olympics.

The Central Region is now the frontrunner for the CSEA President's Polar Cap award, which will be presented to the CSEA region that achieves



Freezin' For A Reason
POLAR PLUNGE



More than 45 CSEA Central Region "Polar Peeps" Team members were among the first "plungers" to enter Oneida Lake at the Polar Plunge at Oneida Shores. The team, led by Central Region President Colleen Wheaton and Team Captain Jeffrey Colburn, not pictured here, was the largest team and largest fundraisers at the event, bringing in more than \$17,500.

the best combination of participation and fundraising results for this season's Polar Plunge events.

CSEA President Danny Donohue will award the

Polar Cap at the Spring Workshop in May.

Teams can set up their own lists on the Special Olympics website at www.specialolympicsny.org to allow CSEA members to find CSEA teams.

Upcoming Plunges

Feb 14: Rochester Polar Plunge, Rochester, Lake Ontario, Charlotte Beach

Feb. 27: Queens Polar Plunge, Rockaway Beach, Queens

March 13: Long Island Polar Plunge, North Hempstead Beach Park, Port Washington

Subscribe to *The Canary!*

The Canary is a quarterly newsletter that informs members of the latest safety and health regulations and trends, and provides valuable information for labor/management safety and health committees. To subscribe to *The Canary*, fill out the form on this page and return it to the address below. **Please clearly print the following information:**

Member's Local or Unit Name: _____

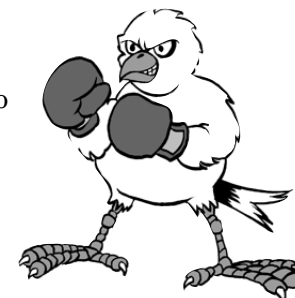
Member's Name: _____

Member's Address: _____

Phone Number: Work: () _____

Home: () _____

Personal e-mail: _____



Please mail this form to the following address:

CSEA
 Attn: Membership Department
 143 Washington Ave.
 Albany, N.Y. 12210

You can also fax this form to (518) 465-2382.

REMINDER TO PRIVATE SECTOR LOCAL PRESIDENTS: ELECTION NOTICE

The term of office for current Private Sector Local officers will expire on June 30, 2010. Elections for office must be conducted and completed before the new term begins on July 1, 2010.

A letter was sent by the Statewide Election Committee (SEC) on September 21, 2009 to each Private Sector Local President requiring each Local Executive Board to select an election committee and chairperson prior to October 15, 2009.

If you have not selected an election committee, please do so immediately. Please refer to the SEC's September 21st letter for procedural requirements.

If you did not receive a copy of the September 21st letter, or have questions pertaining to it, please contact the SEC at 800-342-4146, ext. 1447.

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. If you are called up for active military duty you may also apply for dues-free status.

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. This does not apply to members who are on leave due to being called up for military duty. Members on active military duty, upon return, are considered to have had continuous membership status for all CSEA election purposes.

Please notify the CSEA Membership 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.

Westchester Medical Center blocks leave for WWII hero's son

VALHALLA — CSEA has filed for arbitration on behalf of a member who was blocked from using his contractual bereavement leave to bury his father, a World War II hero.

Management's excuse? The death occurred 65 years ago, when a plane carrying Arthur C. Miller Sr. was shot down in the South Pacific. A supervisor in the Facilities Department at Westchester Medical Center instructed his son, CSEA member Arthur C. Miller, to take vacation time instead.

"Here you have a worker who was looking to use his

contractually allotted bereavement time to bury his father, who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom," said Southern Region President Billy Riccaldo. "These supervisors should have been sending a sympathy card to Mr. Miller, not denying him time off."

The elder Miller's death occurred more than 65 years ago when the U.S. Navy ruled him Missing in Action after his military aircraft was shot down over the Palau Islands on Sept. 13, 1944. Only recently were the elder Miller's remains positively identified through DNA tests and returned to his son for burial with full military honors in Poughkeepsie. The younger Miller was only 3 months old when his father was ruled MIA.

Westchester Medical Center Unit

President Peter Piazza filed a grievance with hospital management on Miller's behalf. Due to management's resistance to settling the grievance, CSEA filed for arbitration.

"I think it is deplorable that a public benefit corporation like Westchester Medical Center would not grant bereavement to the son of such a war hero," Piazza said.

"I think it is deplorable that a public benefit corporation like Westchester Medical Center would not grant bereavement to the son of such a war hero."

"Who benefits the public more than someone who has given his life in battle to defend our country? Mr. Miller is owed a sincere apology, not to mention the approval of

the bereavement leave."

In the arbitration filing, the union is asking the hospital to grant Miller the bereavement leave and restore the vacation time he was forced to use.

"There is no language in our contract that says when the death has to occur," said Miller, who added that he has received overwhelming support from his hospital co-workers. "No one even asked me to come in and explain my situation. Maybe if someone in management had given me a chance to explain, they would have changed their minds. There could be other CSEA members who might be faced with a similar situation in the future, so we want to get this cleared up."

— Jessica Ladlee

A page from our history ...



Throughout 2010, The Work Force will be marking CSEA's 100th anniversary taking a look back at CSEA's history by reprinting pages of past and present publications.

On this page is a reprint of page 1, January and February 1933, The State Employee, then the official publication of the Association of State Civil Service Employees, as CSEA was then known. This issue was produced during the height of the Great Depression, when the association experienced some of its greatest growth. In the bottom article, association leaders urge members to be more active in the association.

THE STATE EMPLOYEE

Volume 2

January and February, 1933

Number 1 and 2

Published by The Association of State Civil Service Employees of the State of New York
Room 156, State Capitol, Albany, N. Y.

W. F. McDONOUGH,
President

BEULAH BAILEY,
Vice-President

Officers
CHESTER A. LEWIS,
Recording Secretary

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FRANK O. BAUER,
Treasurer

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Counsel

JOS. D. LOCHNER,
Business Manager

For God, and Home, and State

Liberality and brotherly love are coming into their own. The great problem of woe and want is serving an important social purpose by humanizing the visions and policies of the peoples of the earth. No longer are "our ears so close to the ground that we cannot hear the heartbeats." If here and there, the leaders of society falter in their recognition of the facts, it can at most only slightly delay the final acceptance of the doctrine of mutual helpfulness and brotherly love. Humanity is learning again as it has on so many previous occasions that selfishness imposes hardships and unhappiness greater than those attaching to any other human error.

Public servants have a call to stir themselves anew and to keep ever before their eyes the sacred responsibility of evolving a constantly higher standard of service. In this period of widespread distress, the civil army of public workers must respond to every demand for sacrifice and devotion necessary to assure that the essential services of government shall not lag, but that they shall fulfill in every way their substantial part in safeguarding the home and the state and in sustaining a right regard for the fundamental virtues instilled in the hearts of mankind by Divine Providence.

YOUR ASSOCIATION

YOUR ASSOCIATION IS TODAY THE OUTSTANDING STATE-EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATION IN THE UNITED STATES. IT EXEMPLIFIES THE REAL PURPOSES OF ORGANIZATION OF CIVIL EMPLOYEES, NAMELY, TO IMPROVE THE CHARACTER AND EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, TO FOSTER A SPIRIT OF LOYALTY, GOOD WILL AND CHEERFUL COOPERATION AMONG ALL WHO SERVE IN PUBLIC LIFE, AND TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT EMPLOYEE INTERESTS.

THIS IS THE ONLY STATE-WIDE ASSOCIATION OF STATE EMPLOYEES IN NEW YORK STATE. IT REPRESENTS ALL STATE EMPLOYEES IN WHATEVER LINE OF STATE ENDEAVOR OR PART OF THE STATE THEY MAY BE. ITS MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES DOCTORS, LAWYERS, ENGINEERS, INSPECTORS, CLERKS, STENOGRAPHERS, TYPISTS, HOSPITAL WORKERS, PRISON WORKERS, PARK WORKERS, FOREST FIRE OBSERVERS, GAME PROTECTORS, HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE WORKERS, CANAL WORKERS, AND EVERY OTHER CLASS OF STATE EMPLOYEE.

THE ASSOCIATION IS NOW GOING FORWARD 10,000 STRONG. WE APPEAL TO YOU WHO ARE NOW MEMBERS TO SEE TO IT, FOR THE WELFARE OF ALL STATE EMPLOYEES, THAT ALL WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS JOIN IN THIS EFFORT FOR 20,000 MEMBERS IN 1933. NEW YORK STATE WORKERS CANNOT AFFORD TO BE WITHOUT A SINGLE, UNITED, STATE EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION. THIS ASSOCIATION HAS ALREADY BUILT UP A HIGHLY EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION WITH HEADQUARTERS AT THE SEAT OF STATE GOVERNMENT IN THE CAPITOL AT ALBANY. THE OFFICERS, COMMITTEES AND COUNSEL ARE CONTINUOUSLY ACTIVE IN REPRESENTING EVERY STATE EMPLOYEE IN EVERY STATE EMPLOYEE MATTER. IT IS NOW SQUARELY UP TO THE STATE EMPLOYEES EVERYWHERE TO GET BACK OF THEIR OWN STATE ASSOCIATION AND SUPPORT IT BY MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVE INTEREST IN CARRYING OUT ITS PROGRAM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM, A FAIR COMPENSATION PLAN, SOUND RETIREMENT PRIVILEGES, REASONABLE HOURS OF WORK, AND EDUCATION AND RECREATIONAL HELPS.

Kick off 2010 with the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund

The CSEA Employee Benefit Fund has sights set on a healthy and prosperous 2010.

We should all do our best to stick to our resolutions and make new ones for better benefits during our contract negotiations. We all know that in a difficult economy, it is hard to negotiate a salary increase, so why not ask for more in benefits? Unlike salaries, benefits are non-taxable.

Local government units can



negotiate dental, vision (with vision riders), legal, maternity, hearing aid, prescription co-payment and

physician co-payment benefits in addition to their medical coverage at very affordable rates.

An EBF senior benefits specialist can help you get benefits on your negotiation "wish list" by attending bargaining sessions, membership meetings, benefit

presentations and information days.

Do not hesitate to call your region's senior benefits specialist for guidance during critical points in negotiations when accurate information is needed quickly. You can also get your senior benefit specialist's contact information, as well as benefits information, on our website at www.cseabf.com.

This is also a good time of year to get more involved with your union and attend the information days and membership meetings that are scheduled for your unit. We urge you to get involved, ask

To learn more about the benefits available through EBF or to find your region's senior benefits specialist, visit CSEA EBF's website at www.cseabf.com.

questions and have a wonderful 2010.

Visit www.deansbeans.com and www.equalexchange.com now. Enter "CSEA" as your promotion code. Help yourself to great flavor, while you help others live better.

Keep warm this winter while buying 100 percent Fair Trade!

The Labor-Religion Coalition Fair Trade Project is supported by



May 15 is deadline for submitting proposed resolutions, changes to CSEA's Constitution & Bylaws

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the CSEA Constitution & By-Laws for consideration by CSEA delegates to the union's 2010 Annual Delegates Meeting **must be submitted by May 15, 2010.**

Proposed resolutions may be submitted **only** by a delegate and **must** be submitted on the proper forms. Forms for submitting resolutions are available from CSEA headquarters and region offices.

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws must be submitted no later than May 15 to Statewide Secretary Denise Berkley, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Ave., Albany, N.Y. 12210-2303.

The 2010 CSEA Annual Delegates Meeting will be held Oct. 18-22 in Albany.

An Ever Better Future

CSEA membership/agency shop fees effective Jan. 1, 2010

The scheduled adjustment in membership dues and agency shop fees is effective Jan. 1, 2010, to reflect AFSCME's minimum dues structure approved by delegates at the AFSCME convention.	up to \$5,000	6.00
	\$5,000-\$9,999	8.97
	\$10,000-\$12,999	12.30
	\$13,000-\$15,999	14.98
	\$16,000-\$21,999	16.78
	\$22,000-\$27,999	18.66
	\$28,000-\$29,999	19.00
	\$30,000-\$31,999	20.17
	\$32,000-\$33,999	21.19
The change applies to annualized salaries, not including overtime or location pay, based on salary at Jan. 1, 2010. No adjustments will be made during the year for raises or increments.	\$34,000-\$35,999	21.57
	\$36,000-\$37,999	22.66
	\$38,000-\$39,999	23.77
	\$40,000-\$44,999	24.56
	\$45,000-\$49,999	25.19
	\$50,000-\$54,999	25.82
	\$55,000-\$59,999	26.46
	\$60,000 & above	27.09

State approves 2010 employee health premiums

The state Division of Budget has approved the Empire

Health Benefits



To change your health insurance plan during the Option Transfer Period, see your

agency health benefits administrator as soon as possible. Ask for the Health Insurance Transaction Form PS-404 and return the completed form to your agency Health Benefits Administrator by Dec. 31, 2009.

You can also change your option online using MyNYSHIP at <https://www.cs.state.ny.us/mynship>. Note: You must register and receive an activation code by mail to use MyNYSHIP.

The chart on the right lists the 2010 biweekly rates for CSEA New York state active employees. This list is organized by region and includes the cost difference from 2009 rates. Please review the 2010 rate options carefully.

Although the Empire Plan has experienced a modest premium increase this year, some of the HMOs have experienced significant increases. New York state pays 90 percent of the cost of the individual premium and 75 percent of the cost of the dependent premium for HMOs, but the state's contributions toward HMO premiums are capped at the state's contribution to the Empire Plan premium. Enrollees in an HMO with premiums that exceed this Empire Plan cap will experience higher enrollee biweekly contributions.

agency health benefits administrator as soon as possible. Ask for the Health Insurance Transaction Form PS-404 and return the completed form to your agency Health Benefits Administrator by Dec. 31, 2009.

You can also change your option online using MyNYSHIP at <https://www.cs.state.ny.us/mynship>. Note: You must register and receive an activation code by mail to use MyNYSHIP.

The chart on the right lists the 2010 biweekly rates for CSEA New York state active employees. This list is organized by region and includes the cost difference from 2009 rates. Please review the 2010 rate options carefully.

Health insurance changes effective Jan. 1, 2010

The CSEA Health Benefits Department would like to remind New York State Empire Plan enrollees that the following changes will take effect Jan. 1, 2010.

Basic Medical Deductible: Increase from \$225 to \$250

When a CSEA active state Empire Plan enrollee uses a non-participating Empire Plan provider, claims are paid under the Basic Medical Program. The Empire Plan pays 80 percent of reasonable and customary charges for covered services after the "annual deductible" is met. The annual deductible for a non-participating provider effective Jan. 1, 2010 will be \$250 per enrollee, \$250 per spouse/domestic partner and \$250 for one or all dependent children.

Hospital Outpatient Surgery: Increase from \$30 to \$40

Effective Jan. 1, 2010, CSEA active state Empire Plan enrollees will pay \$40 for hospital outpatient surgery provided in the outpatient department of a network hospital or a network hospital extension clinic. This co-payment is waived if you are admitted as an inpatient directly from the outpatient department or the clinic.

Hospital Emergency Room: Increase from \$50 to \$60

Effective Jan. 1, 2010, CSEA active state Empire Plan enrollees will pay \$60 for emergency room services (which includes use of the facility for emergency care and services of the attending emergency room physician and providers who administer or interpret laboratory tests and electrocardiogram services). This co-payment is waived if you are admitted as an inpatient directly from the emergency room.

2010 NYSHIP rates for CSEA-represented active state employees

Biweekly employee contribution

The following lists those HMOs approved in the counties physically located in the region. Under NYSHIP rules, to enroll in an HMO, the individual must live or work in the HMO's NYSHIP service area. There may be some region overlap of HMO eligibility for this reason (e.g. someone may work in a county outside the region).

Long Island Region:

	Individual	Family
The Empire Plan (001)	\$23.47 (\$1.01 increase)	\$101.38 (\$3.22 increase)
Aetna (210)	\$112.26 (\$15 increase)	\$410.75 (\$47.72 increase)
Empire BC/BS (290)	\$118.73 (\$36.11 increase)	\$388.41 (\$101.44 increase)
HIP (050)	\$54.20 (\$19.28 increase)	\$182.61 (\$53.08 increase)

Metropolitan Region:

	Individual	Family
The Empire Plan (001)	\$23.47 (\$1.01 increase)	\$101.38 (\$3.22 increase)
Aetna (210)	\$112.26 (\$15 increase)	\$410.75 (\$47.72 increase)
Empire BC/BS (290)	\$118.73 (\$36.11 increase)	\$388.41 (\$101.44 increase)
HIP (050)	\$54.20 (\$19.28 increase)	\$182.61 (\$53.08 increase)

Southern Region:

	Individual	Family
The Empire Plan (001)	\$23.47 (\$1.01 increase)	\$101.38 (\$3.22 increase)
Aetna (210)	\$112.26 (\$15 increase)	\$410.75 (\$47.72 increase)
CDPHP (310)	\$63.31 (\$13.07 increase)	\$226.61 (\$38 increase)
Empire BC/BS (290)	\$118.73 (\$36.11 increase)	\$388.41 (\$101.44 increase)
Empire BC/BS (320)	\$148.81 (\$43.12 increase)	\$467.07 (\$119.93 increase)
GHI HMO (350)	\$85.60 (\$26.36 increase)	\$315.86 (\$78.84 increase)
HIP (050)	\$54.20 (\$19.28 increase)	\$182.61 (\$53.08 increase)
MVP Mid Hudson (340)	\$65.66 (\$9.47 increase)	\$238.75 (\$29.66 increase)

Capital Region:

	Individual	Family
The Empire Plan (001)	\$23.47 (\$1.01 increase)	\$101.38 (\$3.22 increase)
CDPHP (063)	\$20.79 (\$1.88 increase)	\$115.98 (\$22.94 increase)
CDPHP (300)	\$55.95 (\$11.47 increase)	\$207.89 (\$33.91 increase)
Empire BC/BS (280)	\$92.61 (\$32.44 increase)	\$320.02 (\$91.82 increase)
GHI HMO (220)	\$68.55 (\$26.01 increase)	\$260.81 (\$75.03 increase)
HMO Blue (160)	\$58.74 (\$26.97 increase)	\$211.71 (\$41.78 increase)
MVP East (060)	\$20.39 (\$2.71 increase)	\$119.95 (\$32.09 increase)

Central Region:

	Individual	Family
The Empire Plan (001)	\$23.47 (\$1.01 increase)	\$101.38 (\$3.22 increase)
Blue Choice (066)	\$18.08 (-\$4.45 decrease)	\$91.30 (-\$15.48 decrease)
CDPHP (300)	\$55.95 (\$11.47 increase)	\$207.89 (\$33.91 increase)
Empire BC/BS (280)	\$92.61 (\$32.44 increase)	\$320.02 (\$91.82 increase)
GHI HMO (220)	\$68.55 (\$26.01 increase)	\$260.81 (\$75.03 increase)
HMO Blue (160)	\$58.74 (\$26.97 increase)	\$211.71 (\$41.78 increase)
HMO Blue (072)	\$74.38 (\$8.10 increase)	\$227.97 (-\$4.51 decrease)
MVP Central (330)	\$46.83 (\$8.79 increase)	\$189.06 (\$27.71 increase)
MVP North (360)	\$74.99 (\$15.58 increase)	\$262.88 (\$45.46 increase)
MVP Rochester (058)	\$36.54 (\$18.98 increase)	\$141.63 (\$58.43 increase)

Western Region:

	Individual	Family
The Empire Plan (001)	\$23.47 (\$1.01 increase)	\$101.38 (\$3.22 increase)
Blue Choice (066)	\$18.08 (-\$4.45 decrease)	\$91.30 (-\$15.48 decrease)
Community Blue (067)	\$43.09 (\$4.23 increase)	\$216.53 (\$14.33 increase)
HMO Blue (072)	\$74.38 (\$8.10 increase)	\$227.97 (-\$4.51 decrease)
Ind. Health (059)	\$37.79 (\$16.53 increase)	\$165.40 (\$38.41 increase)
MVP Rochester (058)	\$36.54 (\$18.98 increase)	\$141.63 (\$58.43 increase)

Note: All premiums listed are biweekly contributions.

Tubbs is PEOPLE Recruiter of the Month

DANSVILLE
— Mary Jo Tubbs of the Livingston County Local in the Western Region has been named the PEOPLE Recruiter of the Month for November. She recruited 41 new PEOPLE members at the MVP level.



Tubbs

“I believe being active in the PEOPLE program helps us retain our benefits in these troubling times,” she said. “The more CSEA members we have active in the program, the stronger our union will be. For just 27 cents a day you can be

an MVP PEOPLE member and I would be more than willing to sign you up.”



CSEA’s PEOPLE program protects and improves our jobs, benefits and pensions in Washington, Albany and in your community. Your support and participation in PEOPLE strengthens CSEA’s clout in the workplace, in the legislature, in your community and in the labor movement.

— Lynn Miller

BEDFORD SCHOOL UNIT RATIFIES

— Three years of solidarity during a tough contract fight has paid off for members of the Bedford Central School District Unit in Westchester County. After going through the fact-finding process, members overwhelmingly approved a five-year contract that includes wage increases in each year of the agreement, a reduction in time between step increases for



TODAY

bus drivers and monitors, and the addition of two job titles into the bargaining unit. The contract is retroactive to July 1, 2007 ... FIGHTING FOR A CONTRACT — CSEA members from the New Hyde Park School District Custodial and Transportation and Nurses units demonstrated before a recent school board meeting there. The units have been working without a contract since June 30.



New library branch

The Albany Public Library recently celebrated its newest branch in the city’s Pine Hills neighborhood. The grand opening on Dec. 5 drew hundreds of patrons and families to the new library. CSEA members staff the library. In photo at left, Collection Management Librarian Diedre Lisio shows off the large collection of Japanese Manga, or Anime.

January CSEA calendar of events

Long Island Region:

- Jan. 7, 14, 21 & 28: **Skills for Success: Workplace Writing**, Belmont Lake State Park*
- Jan. 11 - 12: **Contract Negotiating Team Training**, Sign-in: 5:30 - 6 p.m.; Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Hampton Bays Senior Center, Hampton Bays
- Jan. 12: **Skills for Success: Organizing Your Writing**, Belmont Lake State Park*
- Jan. 12: **Skills for Success: Writing for Clarity**, Belmont Lake State Park*
- Jan. 12-13: **Local Government/Private Sector Grievance Representation Workshop**, Sign-in: 5:30 - 6 p.m., Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Suffolk Educational Local Office, Medford
- Jan. 12-13: **Local Government/Private Sector Grievance Representation Workshop**, Sign-in: 5:30 - 6 p.m., Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Glen Cove Fire Department, Glen Cove
- Jan. 19: **Skills for Success: Conflict Resolution Skills: How To Be Your Own Mediator**, Belmont Lake State Park*
- Jan. 21: **Skills for Success: Take Control of Your Time**, Pilgrim Psychiatric Center*

- Jan. 21: **Skills for Success: Taming Your Tasks**, Pilgrim Psychiatric Center*
- Jan. 26: **Skills for Success: Critical Thinking**, Belmont Lake State Park*

Metropolitan Region:

- Jan. 4, 11, 25 & Feb. 1: **Skills for Success: Introduction to Spanish: Level 2**, Department of Motor Vehicles*
- Jan. 20: **Skills for Success: Writing Reports and Evaluations**, CSEA Metropolitan Region Office*
- Jan. 20: **Skills for Success: Writing for Your Audience**, CSEA Metropolitan Region Office*

Southern Region:

- Jan. 5 & 7: **Contract Negotiating Team Training**, Sign-in: 5:30 - 6 p.m., Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Rockland County Local Office, New City
- Jan. 26-27: **Steward Workshop**, Sign-in: 5:30 - 6 p.m., Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Orange County Local Office, Middletown

Capital Region:

- Jan. 19: **Skills for Success: Critical Thinking**, Department of Civil Service*
- Jan. 19-20: **Contract Negotiating Team Training**, Sign-in: 5 - 5:30 p.m.,

Workshop: 5:30 - 8:30 p.m., Hudson High School, Hudson

Central Region:

- Jan. 5-6: **Steward Workshop**, Sign-in: 8:30 - 9 a.m., Workshop: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m., Holiday Inn, Auburn
- Jan. 26: **Skills for Success: Take Control of Your Time**, Hutchings Psychiatric Center*
- Jan. 23: **Local Government/Private Sector Grievance Representation Workshop**, Sign-in: 8:30 - 9 a.m., Workshop: 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Oswego High School, Oswego
- Jan. 26: **Skills for Success: Taming Your Tasks**, Hutchings Psychiatric Center*
- Jan. 26-27: **Steward Workshop**, Sign-in: 5:30 - 6 p.m., Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., CSEA Binghamton Satellite Office
- Jan. 26-27: **Steward Workshop**, Sign-in: 5:30 - 6 p.m., Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Gallagher’s Restaurant, Malone
- Jan. 30: **Steward Workshop**, Sign-in: 8:30 - 9 a.m., Workshop: 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Holiday Inn, Oneonta

Western Region:

- Jan. 6-7: **Local Government Discipline: Representing Members**

- in **Interrogations Workshop**, Sign-in: 5:30 - 6 p.m., Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., CSEA Rochester Satellite Office, Rochester
- Jan. 12-13: **Local Government/Private Sector Grievance Representation Workshop**, Sign-in: 5:30 - 6 p.m., Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Pine Valley Central School, South Dayton
- Jan. 26-27: **Steward Workshop**, Sign-in: 5:30 - 6 p.m., Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Moonwinks Restaurant, Cuba
- Jan. 26-27: **State Government Grievance Representation Workshop**, Sign-in: 5:30 - 6 p.m., Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., CSEA Western Region Office, Amherst

* Learn more about Skills for Success courses by visiting the NYS & CSEA Partnership for Education and Training website at www.nyscseapartnership.org or by calling 1-800-253-4332.

For more information on the listed events or to participate, contact your region office (phone numbers are listed on Page 4) or visit your region page at CSEA’s website at www.csealocal1000.org. Please note that additional events may be scheduled in your region, so check your region calendar page on the website.

Leading Edge



Activist's 'homework' is CSEA

Editor's note: During CSEA's centennial year, the Work Force's Leading Edge will profile union members who are helping to make the union stronger through their actions in the union, in their communities, or in other ways that reflect the spirit of solidarity in CSEA.

This month features a profile of Western Region activist Sheri Ambuske, who is involved in CSEA's Next Wave initiative.

LITTLE VALLEY – Think of the Olympic torch run, with each teammate passing the flame to the next. Without each individual, the goal would never be accomplished.

Now, think of CSEA. Without each seasoned activist and leader passing on his or her knowledge, experience and advice to the next, the union just might burn out.

That's where Next Wave comes in. The "Under 35 initiative" is designed to extend a hand to younger CSEA members and develop the union's future.

"It is inspiring to think of the simple beginnings of this union compared to the power it has now," said Sheri Ambuske. "We are the next set of leaders. We need a group like Next Wave to help us gain the skills we need – skills we don't have when we walk in off the street."

Some more "seasoned" CSEA members have commented to Ambuske that Next Wave excludes them or even discriminates against them. Nothing could be further from the truth, she said.

"People should not look at Next Wave in that way," Ambuske said. "It is my hope that seasoned leaders will take this opportunity to pass on their legacy. Take the time to mentor a younger member and show them the proper way to do things. Help us learn about important issues. Help us become the leaders who will follow in your footsteps and continue the great work you have done. If you want to have a lasting impression on CSEA the best way to do that is to mentor us. Your experience is very valuable and we need to learn from you."

Two-way street

On the other side of that coin, younger members must be willing to accept input and criticism, constructive, of course, from current leaders and activists.

"Newer members need to embrace the knowledge seasoned members have," Ambuske said. "We have a lot to learn from them."

Ambuske knows how difficult it can be to juggle all life's puzzle pieces. Like many Next Wave members, she is married and she has young children.

"Of course, sometimes it can be difficult to find balance," she said. "Family life takes up a lot of my time. My husband will joke that I have 'union homework,' but this is so important."

In addition to participating in Next Wave, Ambuske is the Cattaraugus County Unit secretary. She has served as a grievance representative and on the negotiating team.



CSEA activist Sheri Ambuske is part of CSEA's Next Wave initiative.

"I have seen the loss of benefits. I have seen the loss of jobs. I have seen contracting out," Ambuske said. "If we don't step up and fix it, management will continue to try to weaken us and break us down."

– Lynn Miller



State of our Union 2010

Challenge, opportunity for CSEA members

There's a lot we can take pride in about the way CSEA stood strong in the past year — standing up for jobs, services and fairness. That goes for a lot of our history, too. But if there's any lesson for us as we start our 100th anniversary year, it is that we must always keep fighting for what's right.

There was good reason why CSEA formed in 1910. It was about making sure that association members got the fairness and respect they deserved. It was about ensuring merit and fitness in public services and holding self-serving politicians accountable.

We may have gone through a lot of change over the decades and had our share of success, but the past year should be a reminder that nothing has really changed when it comes to what CSEA is all about.

CSEA still has to fight for fairness and respect every day. And there is still no shortage of self-serving politicians at all levels of government trying to scapegoat public employees.

CSEA knows today's reality

We know that times are tough. We know it because we are on the front line delivering services to people in need every day and finding it harder and harder to do the job because we don't get the help and materials we need while the demand keeps increasing.

We know times are tough because we feel the squeeze, too. We might have things a bit better than most

**A message from
CSEA President
Danny Donohue**



workers because of the strength of our union, but we still have to keep struggling to make ends meet. All of us have to pay more for our gas and groceries and let's not forget health insurance premiums. And we pay our increasing share of taxes, too!

While big-shot bankers and Wall Street executives may be benefiting from government bailouts and cashing in their bonuses in spite of their reckless irresponsibility, we still put in a full day's work and then some to earn our pay — sometimes doing work that no one else will do — and always making New York a better place because of our efforts.

We continue to offer ideas, big and small, about better ways to get the job done because we also want smarter, more efficient government. Real, meaningful ideas that improve the way things work, enhance our working lives and save money should always be considered

Continued inside back cover



Continued from inside front cover

because that's a good practice. Unfortunately, too often our ideas are ignored in favor of hare-brained quick fixes and attempts to score cheap political points.

Community service

At the same time, we continue to be the backbone of every community in this state – contributing our time, talent and money to every kind of organization and charity out there.

And still we find ourselves up against politicians who want to knock us. They want to blame us for budget shortfalls, benefit pressures, a bad economy and even their own mismanagement. It's just not right because we didn't cause these conditions.

Let me say this for the record: People who have something bad to say about CSEA don't know CSEA.

We are proud of who we are and what we do. We will not apologize for negotiating contracts that seek fair payment and decent benefits. We will not apologize for trying to protect services that New Yorkers need. We stood strong in 2009, but there will be much more to do in 2010.

Our historic moment

In preparing for the arrival of our centennial year, we kept our focus, even as we were involved in a lot of soul searching. We began an unprecedented project to give members a chance to have their voices heard as never before and to help shape our future.

More than 60 town hall-style meetings were held across the state providing an opportunity to state what was on your mind. We heard from hundreds of you and we collected and reviewed everything that was said. Those comments and ideas framed the discussion at our Annual Delegates Meeting in September where more than 1,000 delegates heard presentations and participated in small-group discussions about how to make CSEA better during an historic electronic town meeting.

Those ideas are now helping to set the agenda for the start of our second century. They are not being developed into a plan that will gather dust; they are actually

being implemented as part of our activities as we try to improve and make CSEA more effective every day. Considering what we're up against across the state, that's a matter of necessity.

CSEA is bigger than any of us alone, but we are only as good as the collective strength of each of us coming together in common cause. The union is not some outside entity acting independently, it's all of us, working together.

There is no force in New York more powerful than CSEA when we work together. We saw lots of examples of that in the past year when locals and units organized and faced up to the challenges before us.

But don't take anything for granted. We have to communicate and support each other. There is a responsibility on the part of leaders to provide information, create understanding and build solidarity, but there is also a responsibility on the part of each individual member to stay informed and involved.

No one should expect things just to get better unless you are willing to participate.

The original founders of CSEA understood that and acted on it. In every generation since, CSEA members have had to renew that commitment and they did. It's why we have such an extraordinary history and more importantly, why we're still here today.

Now is the hour for all of us to once again renew our union by our activism and begin the hard work of securing our future.

