

*See Page 3*



## Photo of the Month



A CSEA member working for the state Office of General Services resurfaces ice on the Empire Plaza rink across from the State Capitol in Albany. The rink is open free to the public.

### Former CSEA activist, World War II hero Ed Carafa, 84

NEW ROCHELLE — Former CSEA Westchester County activist Edward “Frank” Carafa, 84, credited with saving former Sen. Bob Dole’s life in World War II, died in November.

Before his retirement, Carafa worked in the county’s Department of Environmental Facilities.

“Ed’s contributions to the union as an officer were great, as was his duty to his country, and we’re saddened to hear of his passing,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue.

Carafa’s heroism in World War II went largely unnoticed until 1996. As a sergeant in the 10th Mountain Division’s fierce Italian campaign, Carafa risked his own life to drag a young Lt. Robert Dole to safety after Dole was gravely wounded.

Before 1996, Carafa had thought the comrade he had saved was named Bob “Doyle.” Dole visited the 10th Mountain Division’s Fort Drum in upstate New York during his presidential campaign, and it was then that Carafa made the connection.

Carafa and Dole had since become friends, with Dole attending Carafa’s wake in November.

#### MAY 15 IS DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS, CHANGES TO CSEA’S CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the CSEA Constitution & Bylaws for consideration by CSEA delegates to the union’s 2006 Annual Delegates Meeting **must be submitted by May 15, 2006.**

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the CSEA Constitution & Bylaws 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 Barbara Reeves, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Ave., Albany, N.Y., 12210-2303.

The 2006 CSEA Annual Delegates Meeting will be held Sept. 25-29 in New York City.

## Public health care at risk

# Governor’s budget reveals bad choices

ALBANY — CSEA is gearing up for a fight over key elements in Gov. George Pataki’s proposed \$110.7 billion budget. The governor released his budget Jan. 17.

“Give Gov. George Pataki credit for the sleight of hand at work in his proposed budget, but the trick’s on all New Yorkers when you look closely,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said.

The budget plan significantly shortchanges health care facilities including struggling county nursing homes while proposing to cut income taxes for the super rich.

“New York has avoided fiscal chaos in recent years because lawmakers of both parties have insisted that the wealthiest of the wealthy New Yorkers — those who can most afford it — help shoulder the load. The governor’s proposal to give the super-rich a tax break is simply irresponsible,” Donohue

said.

CSEA’s initial review of the state budget revealed alarming evidence of net losses in funding in numerous areas, especially health care and education at all levels.

The governor’s proposal pays lip service to an overhaul of the outdated funding formula for public nursing facilities, an issue CSEA has pressed for more than a year. Other aspects of the plan would ensure a loss of funding for health care facilities overall and defeat the purpose of the reform.

CSEA is also furious over a proposed Early Retirement Incentive that will not benefit the majority of CSEA members or other New York taxpayers. (See *president’s column, Page 4*)

For more updates on the proposed budget, visit [www.csealocal1000.org](http://www.csealocal1000.org).

## CSEA renews fight for work site security

ALBANY — CSEA is renewing its efforts to enact comprehensive security standards for public work sites across New York.

Last year, Gov. George Pataki vetoed CSEA-backed legislation that had been overwhelmingly approved by both houses of the legislature. It was just the latest evidence of the Pataki administration’s lack of priority on the issue.

CSEA is now working with state Sen. Nicholas Spano and Assemblywoman Susan John to have revised legislation introduced that addresses what the governor indicated in his veto message were “technical flaws.”

CSEA has led the fight for safer public work sites since the murder of four CSEA-represented social service workers in Watkins Glen in 1992.

In the wake of that tragedy, CSEA worked effectively with scores of localities to assess the risks in their public buildings and work sites and develop appropriate, cost-effective measures to protect employees and the public, but it was clear there was a need for baseline statewide standards. CSEA sought those standards through the state Labor Department until it was clear that it would not act on the measure.

“These measures will protect people and provide New York with the opportunity to lead the nation in public work site security,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue. “We’ve been making this argument for 10 years now, and it’s time for the Pataki administration to do something about the problem instead of simply paying lip service to the importance of security.”



# CSEA launches push for better quality care

CSEA is preparing to introduce state legislation that will help preserve the quality care standards in the public and not-for-profit sectors of the developmental disabilities field. The quality care act will help boost the substandard pay and benefits of non-union employees of not-for-profit centers while protecting the hard fought rights and contractual protections of CSEA members.

Today, more than 16,000 CSEA members provide life skills, medical services and healthy community connections for nearly 10,000 group home residents of all ages and ability levels, around the clock.

Most are employees of the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. The union has recently made strong inroads in representing employees in not-for-profit agencies. The experience has demonstrated the benefit of CSEA affiliation for both the employees and employers.

“CSEA has decades of experience advocating for the needs of the Developmental Disabilities system and

today it is a model for the nation,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said. Not only that, OMRDD Commissioner Thomas Maul recently pointed to the agency’s relationship with CSEA as the model for labor-management cooperation.

Residents at the OMRDD network of group homes have a wide range of needs and disabilities, from autism and deafness to behavior and eating disorders. CSEA members receive regular training to best meet the needs of the consumers and share their expertise throughout numerous specialized programs and facilities.

## Not-for-profit worker turnover affects CSEA members

One of the greatest threats to the overall quality of care in the developmental disabilities system is the high turnover rate among employees of not-for-profit agencies. Not-for-profit agencies provide an increasingly higher percentage of the overall services to individuals with developmental disabilities in New York. Most of the agencies also receive up to 95 percent of their operating budgets from public funding.

Many of these operations have promised to deliver services **cheaper** than state operations. They do this largely by hiring employees at low wages and usually few benefits and prevent the employees from unionizing through fear and misinformation. Even in economically depressed areas, it’s not surprising to see employees turning over frequently under these conditions.

The CSEA-initiated legislation would require not-for-profit agencies receiving at least 50 percent of their funding from New York state to better account for their spending priorities. It would also require them to pay front-line workers baseline salaries comparable to CSEA-represented OMRDD employees along with decent benefits.

“Fair pay, decent benefits, adequate training, reasonable working conditions and a voice in the worksite cannot be disregarded as important factors in recruiting and retaining a qualified, capable and engaged work force,” Donohue said.



CSEA member Terri Gilbough of the Finger Lakes DDSO Local and client Richard at a group home in Rochester.

“These factors are at the heart of maintaining quality care standards. They are also what CSEA is all about.”



Carla Hayes, a developmental aide, works with a client at the Fenway Circle Residence in Lake Luzerne.



Michelle Lang, left, a CSEA member in the Finger Lakes DDSO Local, and client Marie at a group home in Mt. Morris.

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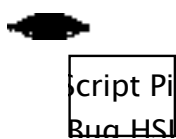
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PostScript Picture  
(Inside)

## Governor's retirement incentive is patronage payback

**B**y now, I am sure you are aware that Gov. George Pataki is proposing a targeted Early Retirement Incentive (ERI) as part of his 2006-07 Executive Budget.

Don't be fooled — the governor's proposal won't do any good for you or New York taxpayers.

Few issues create more interest and excitement among CSEA members than talk of an Early Retirement Incentive. But the reality of ERIs over the past 20 years does not even come close to meeting members' expectations.

The governor is proposing a targeted Early Retirement Incentive to help "streamline" state government. That means the Pataki administration will pick and choose what job titles will qualify with the intention of eliminating those jobs when they are vacated. (Localities would have the choice of opting in.) In the past, ERIs have been offered as an alternative to layoffs and even under those circumstances, the vast majority of targeted positions were not CSEA-represented titles.

It doesn't take much of a stretch to recognize that this year's ERI proposal is a self-serving attempt by the Pataki administration to provide a "golden parachute" to high-level administration political appointees. It will not be good for CSEA members and will have an enormous cost to the state pension system as well as other associated costs to New York taxpayers.

If the governor's true objective is streamlined state government, he would do far better to look at the enormous burden caused by the excessive use of temporary workers and per diem employees by his administration.





# Manhattan Psychiatric Center workers get training, promotions

MANHATTAN — A measure that initially generated controversy and fear at Manhattan Psychiatric Center has resulted in promotions and training for nearly a dozen CSEA members employed there.

Several months ago, Gov. George Pataki began placing convicted sex offenders into a ward at the center. The move ignited CSEA to demand the state increase safety while providing additional training and staff.

"I commend the officers and members of the Manhattan Psychiatric Center Local for moving quickly to protect our members while also working with management to resolve this dilemma," Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio said. "I believe these promotions and the training will be beneficial to everyone."

Shortly after these patients began arriving, management met with union leaders to listen to their demands. After hearing about several patients threatening workers, management quickly transferred patients deemed

dangerous to a secure ward at another facility.

"Our members are professionals and know how to deal with our consumers," said Local President Sam Koroma. "However, this population requires better training and promotions for the workers who will be caring for them."

The sex offenders currently at Manhattan Psychiatric Center are coming from prisons across the state after they have finished their sentences.

Currently nine mental health therapy aides have been promoted to secure care treatment aides. Psychiatric center management hired four more secure care treatment aides from the outside and two more positions may soon be filled internally. Training for these new secure care treatment aides was to begin in late January.

"This will basically allow us to continue providing the very best in quality care," Local 1st Vice President Joey Horsford said.

— David Galarza



Manhattan Psychiatric Center Local member Tommy Blakes, left, discusses work site safety with Local President Sam Koroma, right. Blakes was among the workers threatened by sex offenders who had entered the center after being released from prison. Blakes was recently promoted to a secure care treatment aide.



**"I believe these promotions and the training will be beneficial to everyone."**

**CSEA** *Voices*



**"Working here with the residents is more like a family to me. We have a family setting here, and it's just like being at home. It becomes like an extended family. "**

— Donnie Smith, Developmental Aide, Central New York Developmental Disabilities Services Office and 12-year CSEA member, on his direct care work

## Keep those New Year's resolutions with EAP and LifeWorks

Many of us make resolutions at the beginning of a new year to make changes that will impact our lives and the lives of our families in a positive way, but often we aren't able to follow through on our resolutions.

Common resolutions include:

- Exercise more
- Stick to a budget
- Take a college course
- Stop arguing with my children
- Make a will
- Plan a vacation with my spouse
- Find a summer camp for my child.

We all know that change is difficult, but it can happen. State employees can get help keeping their resolutions from the New York State Employee Assistance Program and LifeWorks.

The New York State Employee Assistance Program is a peer assistance program jointly sponsored by labor and management. EAP provides confidential information, assessment and referral services to employees and their family members.

The program addresses problems ranging from child care information to serious difficulties with alcohol or drugs. EAP

makes more than 35,000 referrals each year, plus an additional 60,000 contacts for information and follow-up.

To find your work site EAP coordinator, visit the EAP website at [www.worklife.state.ny.us/eap](http://www.worklife.state.ny.us/eap) or call (800) 822-0244.

LifeWorks is a free phone consultation and referral service that is available to state employees. Call (800) 362-9874 to speak with a trained LifeWorks consultant 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call to request information, deal with a crisis, locate a resource or discuss a situation. Free educational materials are also available

on many topics. You may also access LifeWorks online at [www.lifeworks.com](http://www.lifeworks.com), User ID: NYS Password: 2670.

Every day, LifeWorks provides state employees with support and information on many issues that include parenting, elder care, planning for the future, budgeting, education and disabilities.

Reach out to the state Employee Assistance Program or LifeWorks to help keep those New Year resolutions.





**“The system lets us become proactive in the community.”**

## CSEA Voices



**“I’m with the consumers more than I am my own family. I like them and I enjoy doing the work. They look forward to me coming in the door. I have the best bonds with them. I take them home, out, and even camping, and I enjoy doing that. You have to be a special, different person to do this.”**

**— Frank Woodward, Developmental Aide, Central New York Developmental Disabilities Services Office and 21-year member, on his direct care work**

# Bus security cameras help fight crime, save lives

BUFFALO — They might not be police officers, but CSEA members Tim Ryan and Dave Sniatecki do their part daily to fight crime.

Ryan and Sniatecki, members of CSEA’s Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority Supervisory Unit, are responsible for reviewing, capturing and distributing footage from the security camera system on the authority’s Metro buses. It’s a job that has helped the authority deter crime on the buses and in the community.

“The original concept for the cameras was to fight fraud,” said Ryan, the unit’s secretary/treasurer and a 35-year employee. “At the same time, we’ve noticed people tend to behave better when they think they are being filmed. That’s an added benefit.”

### Fraud buster

With the cameras, the authority has a permanent record of the facts. When an attorney’s office called to say its client suffered a severe neck injury in an alleged “bus crash,” transportation officials encouraged the law office representative to look at the client sitting in her seat, unaffected by the very minor fender-bender that broke the exterior mirror of the bus.

“Every organization has stories about people who would see a bus in an accident, get on and lie on the floor,” Ryan said. “That’s a real good example of the types of things that happen.”



**Dave Sniatecki, left, and Tim Ryan point out a security camera in the aisle of one of the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority’s Metro buses. The camera system, originally installed to fight fraud, has also helped discourage rowdy behavior and solve criminal cases.**

The cameras — about half of the authority’s fleet is equipped with them — can also make the early morning and late afternoon ride a bit more pleasant for fare-paying customers.

Buses filled with high school students have always been noisy, but the students on these buses are generally well behaved and are unlikely to fight on board.

What they may not realize, Sniatecki said, is the cameras are capturing every punch. Ryan and Sniatecki can isolate that footage and pass it on to the appropriate school officials. It’s not uncommon, Sniatecki said, for the public school district to revoke the bus passes of those who cause trouble.

### Crime-fighting tool

The camera system also helps protect members of the public who do not ride the buses. Cameras

mounted on the top and sides of the buses capture the happenings in front of and around the bus. Law enforcement officials can sometimes use this footage as they pursue criminals.

A few years ago, Ryan said, camera footage helped police investigating a domestic incident in which a woman was stabbed. The cameras caught the suspect as he approached the victim and committed the crime. They also recorded the hero — a nurse who got off the bus to apply pressure to the victim’s wounds, possibly saving her life.

“The system lets us become proactive in the community,” Ryan said. “At least once a week, we get a call from a police department for incidents where the bus is not involved, but nearby. For the most part, it results in convictions.”

The authority began to

install the video system in its buses about five years ago. The first cameras sent back a black and white videotape-quality image. Today, a high-resolution digital image is the norm.

### Improving technology

“These types of systems became popular in the late 1990s,” Ryan said. “As technology has advanced, these have become something almost all (public transportation companies) are asking for; they are so good at what they do. The longer we have it, the more uses we find for it. It’s an extremely useful tool for the company, the union and the bus-riding public.”

Ryan is the supervisor in the authority’s electronic systems department and Sniatecki is the assistant supervisor. CSEA members in the department supervise work on systems dealing with radio communication, passenger counting and fare collection.

The department also maintains an automatic fire suppression sprinkler system used on the buses and a global positioning system that lets buses automatically announce cross streets and bus stops as the driver travels the route.

The authority also has a light rail rapid transit subway system, and it is also affiliated with the area’s airports and waterways.

**— Lynn Miller**



# CSEA members build security, solidarity on the job

FONDA —A new window is adding up to safety for Montgomery County Department of Motor Vehicles workers, and CSEA members made it happen in more ways than one.

The window, recently installed by county Department of Public Works employees, became a reality after several workers from the motor vehicles department expressed interest in such a protective barrier at department counters. The window now helps protect workers who serve the public.

CSEA has been pushing for a work site security law for more than 10 years to address such situations. While the legislature has passed the union's sponsored bills, the current and former governor vetoed the bills.

CSEA intends to introduce and fight for the measure again this year.

County Office Building Unit President Roberta Bly said the request, after being made to the union, was sent



Montgomery County Department of Motor Vehicles worker Angie Pettingill serves a customer from behind a new window designed to protect motor vehicles workers on the job.

to the county's Safety Committee, of which she is also a member. "There were some concerns about safety in the event that a customer becomes really angry," she said.

Once the request was approved the committee had to decide who would do the work. The normal process for the county would be to get approval from the board and then put

the project out for bid.

The committee felt confident that county employees could do the job instead of an outside contractor. "We knew we could get it done quicker and at lower cost," said Edward Russo, Montgomery County local president and a Department of Public Works employee.

Russo, also a member of the safety committee, said

the entire project was finished within three months.

Glen Supervisor John Thomas, who chairs the Safety Committee, supported the plan and said "the county saved time and money by looking inward." Thomas was confident in the high quality work that public works employees bring to any job. "They do good work with whatever they do," he said.

Public Works employees Larry LaBarge, Al Auspelmyer and Randy Hernigle were chiefly involved in the construction and received support from other employees in the department.

The shield was built of Plexiglas, with oak trim cut and stained for the project. The construction materials cost \$200.

— Therese Assalian

See related story about CSEA's efforts to pass a work site security law on Page 2.



**The U.S. Department of Justice reported that while public sector workers total only 18 percent of the work force, they make up 30 percent of workplace violence victims.**

**CSEA** *Voices*



**"I'm proud of the work I do with the clients, teaching them new skills, getting them out into the community and helping them to lead productive lives. It takes a special kind of person to do this work. You have to have a lot of patience and be calm and understanding. Not too many people can do this type of work."**

— Dashamali Jennings, Developmental Aide, Central New York Developmental Disabilities Services Office and 12-year CSEA member, on her direct care work.

# Paycheck delay has workers seeing red

AMHERST — CSEA members employed by Amherst thought they'd be paid as usual Jan. 5.

Instead, their paychecks had been delayed by new town Supervisor Satish B. Mohan, who was determined to "scrutinize" each payment and sign each check himself.

"Our workers were expecting to receive their paychecks Thursday morning, as usual," Amherst Unit President Nick Paolini said. "At the end of the day, the checks were still in the hands of the town supervisor and not in the hands of our employees."

CSEA has filed a grievance on the employees' behalf, because the workers' contract with the town states



Paolini

the employees must be paid on the same day each pay period.

Although paychecks are actually dated for Friday, employees have historically received them on Thursdays. They are able to cash those checks on Thursdays once the banks change to the next day's business.

"Because of the delay, some people have had personal checks and automatic payments bounce and now they face bank overdraft fees," Paolini said. "Other workers were waiting to be paid Thursday so they would have money to buy gasoline on the way home or stop at the grocery store to buy a gallon of milk for their children to have with dinner."

In addition to being inconvenient, the delay may have violated employees' privacy. Personal information, such as the amount of deposits to bank and retirement accounts, is printed on the pay stubs.

In December, Mohan lobbied to have Town Board members table CSEA's newly ratified contract, which was before the board for approval.

While board members delayed its approval of the agreement for two weeks, it voted to ratify the contract during the board's final 2005 meeting. Mohan took office Jan. 1.

The contract provides major savings for the town through a change to a single health insurance provider.

— Lynn Miller





**“We’re just trying to help out with our knowledge of the streets. We’re glad we had the opportunity to do this.”**

## CSEA Voices



**“I think I’m a people person. I think I have a very tender heart, so caring (for our consumers) just comes naturally. I put in a lot of extra hours trying to make sure that all the consumers’ needs are being met. Some of them don’t have a lot of family that are involved, so we try to provide a caring atmosphere.”**

**— Tawanna Wright, Developmental Aide, Central New York Developmental Disabilities Services Office and 12-year member, on her direct care work.**

# DPW workers dash dastardly crows

AUBURN — The CSEA members working in the city Department of Public Works have a lot to “crow” about.

For about a week in January, the group set aside their usual job duties and instead went on the hunt to scare up some crows.

For years, the city has played host to guests unwelcome by many city residents — a flock of crows numbering about 64,000 last year. During the day, the birds leave town in search of food.

At evening, they gather at various “staging areas” throughout the city before settling down for the night at their main roost along the Owasco Outlet in the heart of downtown Auburn.

In large numbers, their noise and droppings have proved an annoyance to many city residents.

No more, thanks to the efforts of the CSEA

members, teamed up with specialists from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Wildlife Services. In early January, eight CSEA members received training from USDA staffers on non-lethal methods of crow dispersion and how to monitor the size of the flock. Then it was on to the roads to let the hunt begin.

The human-and-crow game is cat-and-mouse. The workers break up into four teams, one USDA worker with one DPW worker.

They drive around the city, craning their necks looking to the treetops, seeking their elusive prey. As the week goes on, it’s getting harder to find the birds, as many are already scared off.

When they find the birds, they use a combination of laser lights, amplified crow distress calls and bottle-rocket style



**Left to right, Auburn DPW workers Jason Brown, Anthony Lupo, Tim Clark, James Buschman, David Ganey, Mark Malenick, Jeff Brown and Bill Gronau, along with some of their crow-hunting tools.**



**Auburn DPW worker Anthony Lupo gets ready to fire a small pyrotechnic rocket that will frighten away the crows in the trees behind him. Four city workers received federal training to help disperse flocks or “murders” of the birds.**

pyrotechnics to scare the birds from their location. It’s an impressive sight to see the birds take flight.

“Actually, it’s pretty amazing to see a small tree hold so many birds and then just erupt,” said CSEA member Jeff Brown, a parks maintenance worker.

This is the first time the USDA experts have teamed up with municipal workers, and this pilot project has been hailed as a success.

“It’s been really good. We get the benefit of their knowledge of the city. I can honestly say we couldn’t do it without them,” said Ken Preusser, USDA Wildlife Services District Supervisor.

“We’re just trying to help out with our knowledge of the streets,” said Brown. “We’re glad we had the opportunity to do this.”

Brown said some city

residents like the crows and have been upset over the dispersion tactics. He said their efforts don’t injure the crows in any way, just scare them away from the city center. He said he’s gotten many more positive comments from city residents pleased to have the crows removed from their yards.

“We’ve gotten a lot of nice comments. A lot of people are really appreciative of what’s going on.”

Their work is being met with success. What began as an estimated flock of 33,000 crows this year had shrunk to about 500 birds after a weeklong hazing. Now, if the birds come back, the city workers will have the skills and knowledge to drive them away again.

**— Mark M. Kotzin**



# Asbestos found in state Education Department warehouse

ALBANY — Traces of asbestos discovered in a state Education Department records warehouse have led to a multi-agency investigation to find where contaminated boxes of records may have been sent.

Representatives from CSEA's Occupational Safety and Health Department were set to meet with state Education Department representatives as this edition of *The Work Force* went to press.

The discovery was made in Building 12 in

the state's Harriman Office Campus. Sometime in the late 1980s or early 1990s, asbestos was discovered in insulation used to fireproof Building 12's structural steel.

Options at that time involved removing the material, encapsulating it or enclosing it. The state chose to enclose the material by building boxes around it.

Since then, the material has begun to fall from the beams and leak from the boxes. It

was noticed in December, and samples were taken and tested, which came back positive for asbestos at levels that require remediation.

While the material tested positive, air samples in the building were at levels low enough to be safe.

Samples of dust taken from the tops of records boxes in the building indicated contamination. State officials are trying to determine where records in boxes were sent from the building

in the past fall. A total of 5,300 boxes were moved from the building in that time.

About 330 of the boxes were shipped to the new Department of Environmental Conservation building in Albany, which recently was closed and tested for contamination. The tests came back essentially negative, with two asbestos fibers found in the entire building.



**While the material tested positive, air samples in the building were at levels low enough to be safe.**

## Work for justice — join the 11th annual 40-Hour Fast

- Begins Wednesday, March 15 at 8 p.m.
- Ends Friday, March 17 at noon

Sponsored by the New York State Labor-Religion Coalition

The Bush administration has cut taxes for the wealthy, and made massive cuts in programs that help the poor, such as Medicaid and food stamps. About 37 million U.S. citizens live in poverty.

As working families, we have the power to take action and make some real changes in the way America does business. While standing in solidarity with the millions of Americans who struggle each day, we can — and should — demand that our federal, state and local governments make a change.

CSEA is a longtime supporter of the 40-Hour Fast, and the union urges you to help fight against poverty by fasting for all or part of the event.



## CSEA Voices



**“We have had a significant drop in staff injuries since the pilot program began.”**

— Paul Blujus, member of CSEA's statewide Health Care Ergonomics Committee, on the establishment of 'no-lift' policies at his work site, the New York State Veterans Home in Batavia, and other veterans' homes across the state.

To sign up for the fast or for more information on 40-Hour Fast events in your area, call Brian O'Shaughnessy at the state Labor-Religion Coalition at (518) 213-6000, ext. 6294 or visit the coalition's website at [www.labor-religion.org](http://www.labor-religion.org).



# INSIDE

# THE WORK FORCE

## Into the Internet

A broad avenue of knowledge and communication that is expanding every day, the Internet has become an increasingly popular tool for organizations trying to reach a wider audience.

CSEA is no exception. More and more CSEA local and unit websites are cropping up to instantly provide our members with information they want and need.

What made them decide to create a website in the first place? Three union officers agreed that it was the easiest, quickest, and most convenient way to get information to their members.

"Sending out e-mails to everyone is just too much work," explained State Executive Local President John Vinson. "Some people

don't even want them. This way those who are interested in the information have somewhere to go."

One of the pioneers of CSEA's local Internet sites, the state Executive Local website was one of the first CSEA-related websites, created in 1999. The website for Westchester Medical Center unit was the first CSEA local Web site, while the Executive Local's was the first link from CSEA's official Web site, John Vinson said.

The executive local's site has very extensive links and connects to information from contracts (which get the most hits) to CSEA bulletins and news.

"Anything that's sent to me, I like to put out there," Vinson said. He tries to put up any CSEA information that he receives as soon as he receives it.

### Constant posts

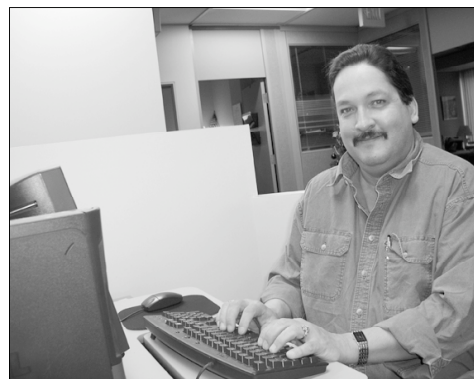
"Every time I get a new bit of information, it's up on the site within the hour," he said. He can update it from anywhere, and does, from his office or when he's away in Canada, and he does it all himself.

"It's fun," said Vinson, and it's evident he has fun with the site. For a little something extra, he includes links to daytime television and members' personal pages.

It's worth it, judging by the response the website gets. At one point it popped up as the first result for CSEA in a search engine, said Vinson, even before CSEA's own official website ([www.csealocal1000.org](http://www.csealocal1000.org)). Although it doesn't display the most aesthetic layout, it's packed with information and is a popular site.

"It's a convenience for the members," said Vinson. "When it stops being a convenience, I'll take it down."

Another well-maintained and successful



John Vinson, state Executive Local president, updates the local's website.

website that has received a good response for a long time now is the Westchester County Unit's, built in July 2001.

Voluntarily created and mastered by unit members, Westchester County Unit and Local President Jack McPhillips is very pleased with it. "We are glad to have such a great tool to stay in touch with our extensive membership," he said. For such a large unit, with 4,000 members and 20 departments in 100 locations, it is the only way to get to as many people as possible.

### Reaching members

"We have a monthly meeting," said McPhillips, "but only 50 to 100 people come, which is only 1 percent of our membership. With the website, we can reach our entire membership," he said. McPhillips said anyone who is thinking about making his or her own website to, "Do it. It is an immeasurably helpful tool to contact and stay in contact with your membership."

Niagara County Local President Elaine Timm cannot boast the same results, but her Web site is still in its infancy. Her website went online in November, during which she promoted the site with a postcard mailing to

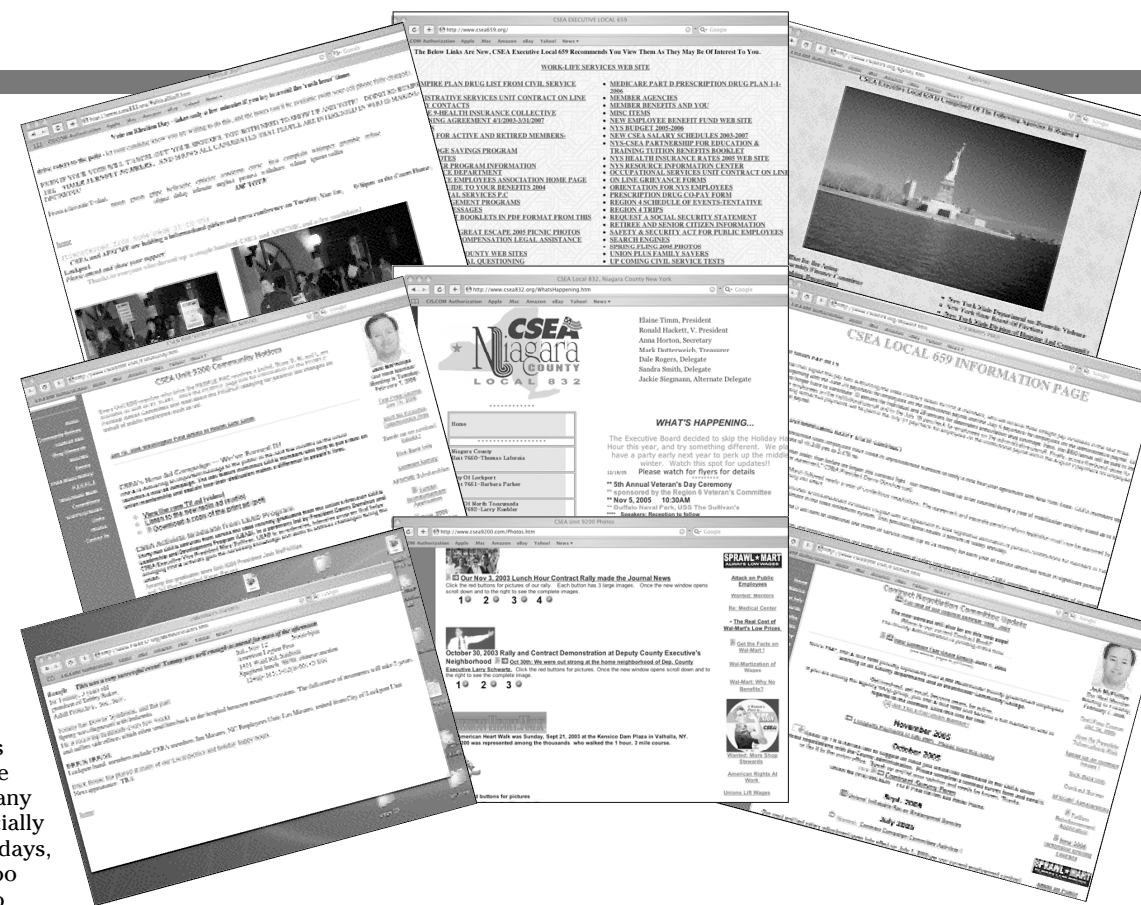
her local members (nearly 1,100). She hasn't received many hits yet, but especially with the busy holidays, she realizes it is too soon to expect too much.

Timm remains optimistic about her local's website. "You've got to start somewhere," she said hopefully. "I'm going to just keep plugging along." She recommends the same attitude for other future Web masters. "Just keep at it," she said, "and eventually you'll get more hits."

Find these websites and other CSEA local and unit web sites on the Links page from the official CSEA website or go to the following links: <http://www.csea9200.com/> (Westchester County Unit 9200), <http://www.csea659.org/> (Executive Local 659), and <http://www.csea832.org/> (Niagara County Local 832).

— Alex Egan

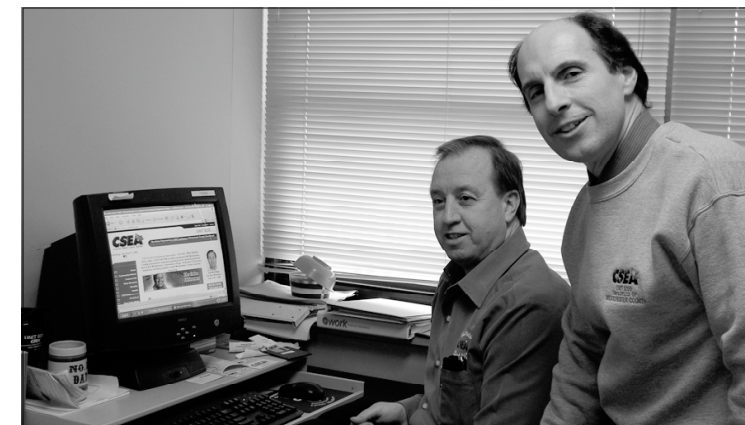
Visit the main CSEA website at [www.csealocal1000.org](http://www.csealocal1000.org) to learn about all the benefits of union membership.



Pages from the state Executive Local website, some screen shots of the Westchester County Local Web pages and the recently built Niagara County Local website.



Elaine Timm, Niagara County Local president, and Tom Laforia, unit president, work on the local's website.



CSEA Westchester County Unit President Jack McPhillips speaks with Elio Giuliani, unit treasurer and webmaster, about their unit website, which is the most-frequently visited site of units and locals in the Southern Region. Giuliani currently maintains the website, which was created by unit member Pedro Baez.



# PESH cites school district for violations after worker's death



COMMACK — Following an intensive, months-long investigation into the death of CSEA member Michael Sallee, the state has hit his employer, the Miller Place School District, with serious safety and health violations.



Sallee

The state Department of Labor's Public Employee Safety and Health Bureau concluded the district was in violation of numerous regulations when Sallee was electrocuted while working on the lighting in the boy's locker room in August 2005.

PESH issued three serious violations:

- The employer did not establish a program of

electrical safety and employee training for serving or maintenance of equipment, which could cause injury, such as lighting.

- Procedures were not developed, documented and used for the control of potentially hazardous energy during the maintenance and service of electrical equipment.

- Where exposed live parts were not de-energized, work practices were not used to protect employees who could be exposed to the electrical hazards involved.

PESH gave the district strict deadlines to comply with safety and health standards or risk the bureau imposing fines.

"PESH backed up CSEA's work site inspection and interviews," CSEA Occupational Safety and Health Specialist Komilla John said. "The employer did not do everything it should have to ensure the safety of maintenance workers like Michael Sallee."

"We commend PESH for conducting a thorough and timely investigation into this tragedy," Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte said. "We pushed for this probe to protect the employees we represent. Our goals were to understand what happened to Michael Sallee and to prevent this from ever happening again."

— Rachel Langert



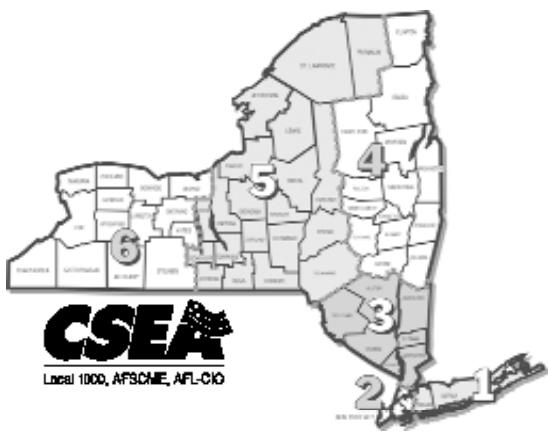
CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Jim Wall examines the site of an electrical accident that killed Michael Sallee at Miller Place High School in this file photo from 2005.

• Did you know that you may be missing out on great CSEA discounts on sporting events, travel and shows?

• Do you want to know where to get great deals on cell phones and other items at places near you?

• Do you want to be in the loop about the latest CSEA happenings in your community?

For all of this and more, visit your region's page on the CSEA web site at [www.csealocal1000.org](http://www.csealocal1000.org).



Stay informed about what state government is doing through

## INSIDE ALBANY

CSEA is a longtime, major underwriter of this award-winning public television program. See the times below for the 2006 broadcast schedule in your area.



### Saturday

Binghamton	WSKG	2:30 p.m.
NYC	WNET	1:00 p.m.
Rochester	WXXI	3:00 p.m.

### Sunday

Albany	WMHT	12:00 noon 11:30 p.m.
Buffalo	WNED	10:00 a.m.
Long Island	WLIW	6:30 a.m.
NYC	WNET	6:00 a.m.
Plattsburgh	WCFE	9:00 a.m.
Syracuse	WCNY	2:00 p.m.
Watertown	WPBS	7:00 a.m.

### Monday

Long Island	WLIW	7:00 p.m.
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# Reaching out to the Gulf Coast, world

LITTLE VALLEY — After Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast, CSEA members in Cattaraugus County reached out to help.

CSEA members recently donated nearly 7,500 pounds of clothing to Allegany Region Missions, a multi-denominational faith-based group that distributes clothing and other supplies to people in need across the world.

“After Hurricane Katrina, we thought this would be a good way for county employees and CSEA members to help,” said Cattaraugus County Department of Motor Vehicles worker Denise Wenke. “The mission collects clothes and sorts, repairs, folds and stores them by male or female, adult or child, size and season. When the Red Cross calls for help, people from the mission just walk into the warehouse and pull what they need.”

Mission representatives set up one truck at each of three work



**From left, Kathy MacKay, Sandy Lyons, Candie Luczyn and Rose Teachman load clothing donations onto a truck at a Cattaraugus County work site. CSEA members conducted a clothing drive to benefit Allegany Region Missions, which provides clothing to those in need in the community, throughout the United States and abroad.**

sites throughout the county. CSEA members could drop off their donations at any time.

“We held the drive over a long weekend so people would have

that day to clean out their closets,” Wenke said. “We took donations for more than a week.”

CSEA members helped fill the

mission’s trucks with clothing.

“I had trouble closing a truck door,” Wenke said. “We had a lot of people donate. I was shocked by the amount of clothing we had collected.”

Wenke said the clothing drive appealed to CSEA members because it will help so many people across the world. She hopes the unit’s community service efforts will continue, possibly with a food drive in the future to assist local food pantries.

— Lynn Miller



## Cosentino inspired by World War II hero father

It’s not too difficult to see where longtime CSEA Metropolitan Region activist Frank Cosentino draws his inspiration and zeal.

His father, Arthur Cosentino, was among the first wave of soldiers to land on Utah Beach during the D-Day invasion. Not only did he survive the invasion, the elder Cosentino went on to be awarded two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star.

“He was in the first wave,” said Frank Cosentino. “Everything you saw in ‘Saving Private Ryan’ he experienced.”

Arthur Cosentino died of natural causes on Christmas Day. He was 87.

Hearing Frank Cosentino, treasurer of the New York City State Employees Local, talk

about his dad, one can better appreciate why journalist Tom Brokaw described his father and his contemporaries as “The Greatest Generation.”

Arthur Cosentino was sent to England as part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. He was wounded once in France and went to England to recuperate. His superiors called him back to duty when the Germans launched another offensive.

He was wounded a second time in November 1944 when he stepped on a mine.

While fighting in France he helped save a wounded soldier, Frank Uzzo, whom he refused to leave for dead on the battlefield. The two became best friends and after the

war were soon working as letter carriers in the Bronx.

Arthur Cosentino served as the best man in his friend’s wedding and that’s where he met the love of his life and Frank Cosentino’s mom, the former Rose Socci.

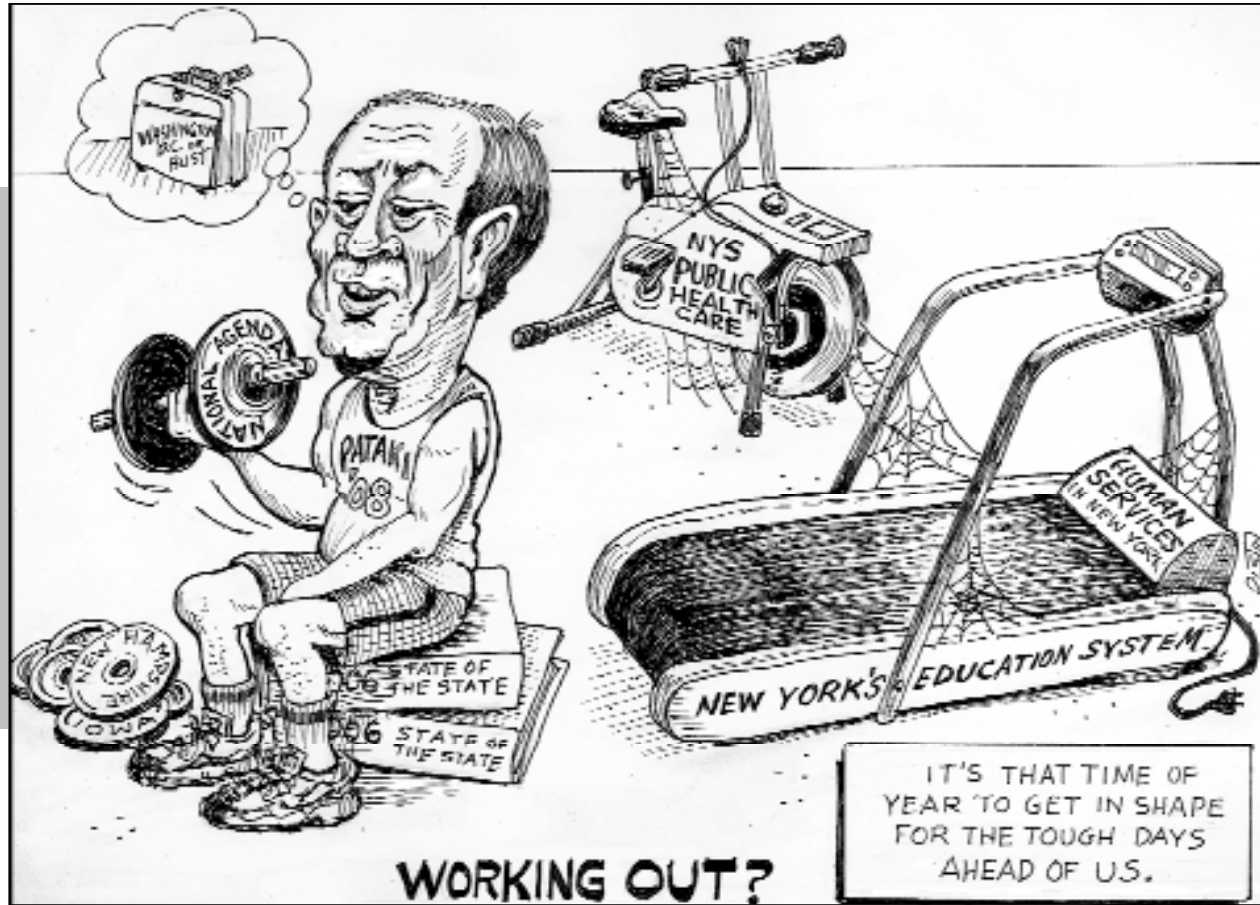
“My dad was the best man and my mom was the maid of honor,” said Frank Cosentino. “They didn’t know each other. They met at the wedding.”

Frank Uzzo died earlier this year.

Arthur Cosentino retired from the U.S. Postal Service in 1977 after 30 years. His wife, Rose, died in 1977.

— David Galarza





1982

24 years ago ...

President William McGowan continued CSEA's transformation into a national labor powerhouse by strengthening its role as the largest affiliate of the fastest-growing union in the country, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

McGowan's many accomplishments during this transformation period included building the union's political and legislative muscle.

CSEA played a leading role in Mario Cuomo's 1982 gubernatorial campaign to succeed Gov. Hugh Carey. Cuomo won an upset in the Democratic primary against New York City Mayor Ed Koch and prevailed in the general election largely because of CSEA's strong support and grassroots efforts.

In the top right photo, from left, Carey, then-United Federation of Teachers President Albert Shanker, Cuomo, McGowan and then Sen. Majority Leader Warren Anderson are shown at a Public Employees Conference legislative breakfast.

CSEA recently honored McGowan through naming the new Western Region office in Amherst after him. The dedication plaque is shown in the bottom photo at the right.



Also in 1982 ...

- \* British troops defeat Argentina in the two-month long Falklands War.
- \* The proposed Equal Rights Amendment fails Constitutional ratification.
- \* John W. Hinckley Jr. found not guilty of attempting to kill President Ronald Reagan because Hinckley pleaded insanity.
- \* Michael Jackson releases *Thriller*, which sells more than 25 million copies and becomes the best-selling album in history.
- \* Actor John Belushi dies at age 33 of a drug overdose.
- \* Dr. Barney B. Clark receives the first permanent artificial heart to be implanted in a human.
- \* The New York Islanders defeat Vancouver for the Stanley Cup.



# Orchard Park DPW stands tall

ORCHARD PARK — CSEA members working in the Orchard Park Highway Department sent a strong message recently to candidates running for town office: Negotiate with us in good faith.

The workers stood shoulder-to-shoulder during a candidates' night forum, silently reminding the candidates — particularly those running for town supervisor — that Orchard Park's roads are well-maintained because of the efforts of CSEA members.

The highway employees have been working without a contract for almost a year and negotiations have hit impasse. Town Councilman Stan Jemiolo, a member of the town's negotiating team, ran for town supervisor and that prompted the highway crew's protest.

Jemiolo lost the election, and his current term as councilman ended Dec. 31. Negotiations have been at a standstill in recent weeks, and three impasse sessions with a mediator have



Members of the Orchard Park Highway Department, from left, Al Marino, Les Locker, Mark Brown, Dean Welch, Ryan Wooliver, John Blesy, Tony Delmonte, Paul Tuttle and Dave Magill, stand in silent protest during a candidates' forum. Contract negotiations with the town were to resume in January.

been held. Meetings are expected to resume sometime early this year.

The negotiations in Orchard Park have been particularly difficult, said CSEA Unit President Toby Zintz. Workers on the union's negotiation team have attended multiple

sessions lasting six hours or more, yet the town will not work with the union to reach an agreement.

Similar to contract battles statewide, health insurance coverage is the main issue. CSEA has proposed a change that would have saved the town an estimated \$175,000 and enhance employees' coverage, but the proposal met with resistance from Jemiolo and the town's negotiating team.

By standing at the candidates event — in their bright orange highway shirts — the workers hoped to bring attention to the costly situation created by the town.

"We want to educate town residents about the health insurance savings CSEA has proposed," Zintz said. "With each passing month, the town loses almost \$15,000 in savings. A fair contract will benefit taxpayers, so we're hopeful we can gain their support in our struggle."

CSEA represents the 27 blue-collar employees in the highway department. CSEA also represents white-collar employees in the town.

— Lynn Miller



## CSEA sets elections

### ELECTION NOTICE 2006 AFSCME Delegates Election

The AFSCME Convention is scheduled for Aug. 7-11, 2006, in Chicago. Nomination meetings will be held for each CSEA Region on **Saturday, Feb. 11, 2006, commencing at 11:00 a.m.** The CSEA Long Island, Metropolitan, Southern, Central and Western Regions will hold nomination meetings at their respective region offices. The Capital Region will hold its meeting at the Best Western (Albany Airport Inn), 200 Wolf Road, Albany. For directions to your meeting location, please contact your Region Office at:  
Long Island Region, 631-462-0030; Metro Region, 212-406-2156; Southern Region, 845-831-1000; Capital Region, 518-785-4400; Central Region, 315-433-0050; and Western Region, 716-691-6555.

The Board of Directors approved

election schedule is as follows:

- Feb. 11/Saturday:** Region Nomination Meetings/11 a.m.
- Feb. 13/Monday:** Receipt of Original Nomination Forms
- Feb. 24/Friday:** Voter Eligibility List Date
- March 6/Monday:** Declination Deadline
- March 8/Wednesday:** Local/Unit President Labels Available
- March 13/Monday:** Inspection of Voter List Period Begins (30 days before election)
- April 11/Tuesday:** Ballots Mailed
- April 18/Tuesday:** Replacement Ballots Available
- May 1/Monday:** Ballots Due/9 a.m.
- May 1/Monday:** Tally Commences/9:30 a.m.
- June/July Edition(s):** Results Printed in *The Work Force*
- August 7-11:** AFSCME Convention

Ten (10) days after SEC certifies result, protest period closes.

## ELECTION NOTICE 2006 Special Mid-Term Election for Statewide Board of Directors

Ten (10) seats are unfilled on the CSEA Statewide Board of Directors. Those seats are STATE: Civil Service; COUNTIES: Chenango, Essex, Franklin, Oneida, Ontario, Rensselaer, Schoharie, Tompkins; and LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATIONAL: Central. The Board of Directors approved election schedule to fill these seats is as follows:

- Feb. 21/Tuesday:** Start of Petitioning Period
- Feb. 28/Tuesday:** Local/Unit President Labels

- Available
- March 10/Friday:** Deadline for Receipt of Petitions/5 p.m. at CSEA Headquarters
- March 10/Friday:** Deadline for Review of Invalid Signatures
- March 17/Friday:** Deadline for Declination/Name Confirmation
- March 21/Tuesday:** Drawing for Position on ballot
- April 11/Tuesday:** Ballots Mailed
- April 18/Tuesday:** Replacement Ballots Available
- May 1/Monday:** Ballots Due/9 a.m.
- May 1/Monday:** Tally Commences/9:30 a.m.
- June/July Edition(s):** Results Printed in *The Work Force*
- July 1/Saturday:** Term begins (through June 30, 2008)

Ten (10) days after SEC certifies results, protest period closes.



# Social Security disability benefits important to know

Social Security disability benefits (SSDB) is a complex and important issue, and that is why CSEA has made SSDB assistance a part of its Legal Services Program.

If, after reading this article, you want to know more about SSDB, call the CSEA Legal Services Program at (800) 342-4146 and follow the prompts for *Legal Services, Injury-Related Matters* to be connected to the law offices of Fine, Olin & Anderman (FOA), our SSDB attorneys, where your questions will be answered at no cost or obligation to you.

Social Security disability benefits is a federal program intended to provide regular monthly payments and Medicare coverage (after two years of SSDB eligibility) for persons unable to "perform substantial gainful employment" (the disability test). Complete disabilities as well as conditions such as a herniated disc, bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome and depression are among the many health conditions that could qualify an applicant for the program. The applicant's entire disability picture is examined, so several ailments taken together

can result in the applicant meeting the disability test.

Past work history doesn't have to be significant nor do earnings have to have been very substantial, e.g. for most people, having worked five out of the past 10 years (while paying into the Social Security system) will bring them over this threshold. The majority of CSEA members have already met this requirement.

### What are the benefits?

SSDB recipients do not have to reach "normal retirement age" (65 – 67 years old) before receiving everything their earnings records would entitle them to without a reduction based on age. If recipients are eligible to collect a pension, they can receive both SSDB and the pension. It is possible to also receive workers' compensation payments. Two years following the recipients' date of eligibility for SSDB, they become entitled to receive Medicare benefits without having to wait until age 65. The Medicare coverage is of particular value to those who will not have employer-provided medical coverage after

retirement.

Applying for Social Security Disability Benefits is easy because the application can be filed in person at a local Social Security Administration Office, by phone at (800) 772-1213 or online at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

Though an applicant's chances of receiving a favorable decision upon the initial application are about 50/50, the odds improve considerably for those who persevere. If you are initially turned down, it is important to ask for a hearing within 60 days of the rejection letter. Those who attend a hearing, represented by counsel experienced at SSDB issues, have a greater chance of successfully winning benefits. There is nothing to lose because attorney fees are contingent upon success (If you lose, there is no fee.) and fixed by the Administrative Law Judge.

It is easy to see that CSEA members who are discharged under sections 71 and 72 of the Civil Service Law are prime candidates for SSDB, even if they are ineligible for a disability pension, provided they meet the SSDB eligibility requirements.

Likewise, CSEA members reaching retirement who are under the age of 65 should consider whether they are eligible. Anyone interested in more information concerning their eligibility, or that of a family member, and how to apply for SSDB should call the CSEA Legal Services Program at (800) 342-4146 and follow the prompts for *Legal Services, Injury-Related Matters*. With help so easy to get, there is no excuse for not "getting everything that you are entitled to."

Your Insurance Service Team at JLT Services Corporation is now...

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& ASSOCIATES

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Same people, same great service and now with in-state ownership!

Visit <http://www.cseainsurance.com> for more information on available programs.

## 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 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.

Local 1000 Members **CSEA** LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM AFSCME, AFL-CIO

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!**

This members-only benefit program provides attorney representation for **WORKERS' COMPENSATION; SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY; PERSONAL INJURY and PERSONAL LEGAL MATTERS** for members **AND** their dependents.

Quality legal representation at little or no out-of-pocket cost for injury/illness related matters. Also, representation is available at pre-negotiated, pre-published fees for other personal matters.

Call **1-800-342-4146**  
and Follow Prompts for  
CSEA Legal Services Program

## Protecting Your Benefits

# Empire Plan claims deadline is March 31

Empire Plan enrollees have until March 31, 90 days after the end of 2005, to submit medical expenses incurred during 2005 to the addresses listed below.

**United Health Care Service Corp.**  
P.O. Box 1600  
Kingston, N.Y. 12402-1600  
For the Empire Plan Basic Medical Program, the Home Care Advocacy Program (HCAP) and non-network physical therapy or chiropractic services.

**Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield**  
For help with the claim filing process of inpatient or outpatient hospital services, contact Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield at (877) 7NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447).



**ValueOptions**  
P.O. Box 778  
Troy, N.Y. 12181-0778  
For non-network mental health and substance abuse services received in 2005.

**Express Scripts**  
P.O. Box 1180  
Troy, N.Y. 12181-1180  
For prescriptions filled at non-participating pharmacies or at participating pharmacies without using your New York government employee benefit card.  
Effective Jan. 1, 2006, Empire Blue Cross

and Blue Shield will insure and jointly administer the Empire Plan prescription drug program with Caremark, its pharmacy benefits manager.

Enrollees can call the Empire Plan at (877) 7NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) with questions or to get claim forms. When using the Empire Plan's toll-free telephone number, please pay extra attention to the choices offered by the automated system.

Network providers and pharmacies will submit claims directly to the appropriate insurance carrier on your behalf. If you have a non-network claim submission, make sure you complete the requested subscriber information on the claim forms, include the original billing or receipt, if requested, and sign the claim form.

## Promoting Good Health

### What's In It For You?

## The Employee Benefit Fund offers great plans, service

For years, the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund has provided exceptional service to our members. EBF provides state and local government employees with negotiated dental and vision benefits along with many other benefits.

Anyone enrolled in an EBF plan automatically receives the Workplace Security Program, in which employees are insured for trauma associated with an assault or hostage situation while performing job duties.

State employees receive a negotiated dental, vision and prescription drug co-payment reimbursement benefit package.

Local government employees have a list of EBF plans to choose from in negotiations. Locals and units can choose from a list of four dental plans and three vision plans with rider options, and other benefits

that include a hearing aid plan, maternity benefit, legal services benefit and an annual physical benefit.

The EBF customer service unit is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Our staff is always available to answer questions about your benefits. Call EBF toll free at (800) 323-2732 (800-EBF-CSEA), and follow the prompts.

The EBF Marketing Department is also available to help you. The department consists of two state benefits specialists and five local government senior benefit specialists. The specialists are available to attend membership meetings, information days, health fairs and other events. They are also available to come to your facility and provide



benefits presentations for members who aren't sure how to fully use their EBF benefits.

Senior benefits specialists are also available to help local government negotiations teams get EBF benefits negotiated into their contracts. Units and locals not covered by EBF benefits should consider the fund when negotiating their next contracts. Benefits specialists are listed below. Unless otherwise noted for your region, call EBF at (800) 323-2732, press '4' for the Marketing Department and then follow the prompts.

#### Local Government:

**Long Island Region:** Linda Sclafani — Senior Benefits Specialist — (631) 462-5224.

**Southern Region:** Geoffrey Switts — Senior Benefits Specialist.

**Capital Region:** Carisa Haberl — Senior Benefits Specialist.

**Central Region:** Meghan Pastiglione — Senior Benefits Specialist.

**Western Region:** Mike Wagner — Senior Benefits Specialist — (716) 691-6555, ext. 5131.

#### State Government:

**Long Island, Metropolitan, Southern and Capital regions:** Chuck Guild — State Benefits Specialist.

**Capital, Central and Western regions:** Dave Reed — State Benefits Specialist.

## An Ever Better Future



# Leading Edge

CSEA Nassau County Local member A. Douglas Thomas has been working as a Youth Group Worker Aide 1 at the Nassau County Juvenile Detention Center for four years. The 49-year-old essentially provides day-to-day care for delinquent, dependent and neglected minors who end up on the wrong side of the law.

*The Work Force's* Rachel Langert recently spoke with Thomas about his difficult job.

WF: Did you come to this from a background of social work?

ADT: I have a long history of working with youths. I've coached basketball, softball, taught karate. I've always been active with the youth in the community.

WF: Why bother?

ADT: Because today's youths are going to be the leaders of tomorrow and the way that things are in our community now, we have so many youths that are just not on the right track. So, in an effort to break the negative cycle, I'm compelled to try and redirect their energies in a more positive vein.

WF: Basically you try to keep kids from ending up where you work.

ADT: In the community sense, yes. I also try to reach the kids who have also been impacted by the system and redirect them to a more positive way of life after their debt to society has been paid.

WF: What program are you a part of?

ADT: There are many different organizations. I'm the chairman of the youth committee with the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists. I'm also a freelance writer for the *Community Journal* (a local newspaper.) I also refer children to several different schools of martial arts. I'm in the process with (a local legislator) of initiating a high school summer basketball league at Centennial Park in Roosevelt.

WF: So, do you think that your work at the facility has influenced your drive to serve the community?

ADT: Absolutely, because of the high rate of recidivism that I see at my facility. Every thing that I do at that job is from a standpoint that says there

are rules, regulations, policies and procedures and that minors should understand that they have to adhere to and understand that there are limits to what society will tolerate behaviorally.

WF: What about union activism?

ADT: With the help of my unit president, I have been able to maintain and make inroads into some of the issues at the juvenile detention center.

WF: Like what?

ADT: There have been improvements in the building. We were without a cohesive alarm system, and money was released for that. There was a cleaning of the duct system, that hadn't been cleaned in 10 years, so we brought somebody in. I petitioned a deputy county executive who in turn worked closely with civil service to get a promotional open competitive test for the title of youth group worker 1, there had been a moratorium on that test for several years. From the day I got to the juvenile center, and saw the conditions, the battle was on. I couldn't believe that people were existing in conditions like that.

WF: What kinds of conditions?

ADT: Filthy working rooms in which you spend four to seven hours a day with the kids. Unsanitary bathroom conditions, horrible plumbing, inconsistent heat and air conditioning, and I had a guy tell me that it had been like this for years. I couldn't believe it.

WF: So through the union you were able to attack this?

ADT: I was able to address some of these issues, and am still doing that.

WF: Are you a shop steward?

ADT: Yes, and a grievance representative.

WF: So why do you think that things were the way they were for so long?

ADT: Part of the problem is by and large most of the youths are minorities. Most of the youths don't come from affluent homes or communities, so the powers



A. Douglas Thomas stands outside the Nassau County Juvenile Detention Center, where he has been an advocate for better working conditions for CSEA members and better living conditions for youths at the center.

that be don't put a lot of energy into whether their needs are being met. Most of the policy makers don't come home to these kids in their communities. I go home and I see some of these kids at the park, in my neighborhood, in the stores.

WF: So, you feel kind of in limbo?

ADT: That's a nice way of putting it. I feel that we're being discriminated against, and even if it's just an act of omission, there's still no excuse.



## Step up to the plate

### Become a PEOPLE recruiter

Join a growing team of activists who are working to raise money that will be used to fight for pension protection, to protect health benefits and to protect our jobs.

PEOPLE (Public Employees Organized to Promote Legislative Equality) is CSEA's legislative and political fund-raising program that gives us a voice in Washington, D.C., on issues that matter to working families.

You will recruit your co-workers to donate to PEOPLE by making them aware of the importance that politics has in all of our lives, and giving them an opportunity to take action.

**For more information on becoming a PEOPLE recruiter, call the CSEA PEOPLE department at (800) 342-4146 ext. 1404.**

#### PEOPLE PERSON —

The PEOPLE recruiter of the month of December is Julie Sandoval of the Hudson Valley Developmental Disabilities Services Office Local in the Southern Region. She recruited 15 new PEOPLE members. PEOPLE is CSEA and AFSCME's political action program. It is responsible for raising money and collecting voluntary contributions from the membership so CSEA can effectively promote our interests at the state and federal level ...

#### UNION SPRING BREAK —

AFSCME is launching the first-ever Union Spring Break, a week long crash course for college seniors who are interested in union organizing. Students will learn the basics of union organizing while working alongside AFSCME organizers and workers fighting to form a union. For more information, visit AFSCME's web site at [www.afscme.org/springbreak](http://www.afscme.org/springbreak) ...

#### ERIE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

**FOOD DRIVE** — Members of the Erie County Local Women's Committee recently donated \$600 and several barrels of non-perishable food to the Food Bank of Western New York. Committee members collected donations for the food bank during the local's annual holiday party. This is the second year the committee organized the food drive ... **CSEA MEMBERS ON TV** — RNN, a cable news channel that broadcasts throughout the Southern Region, has kicked off a series of spots titled, "Spotlight on the Workforce." The brief spots, broadcast before the lead-in of RNN's nightly news, feature a different CSEA member each week, explaining how he or she goes above and beyond at the workplace or in the community ...

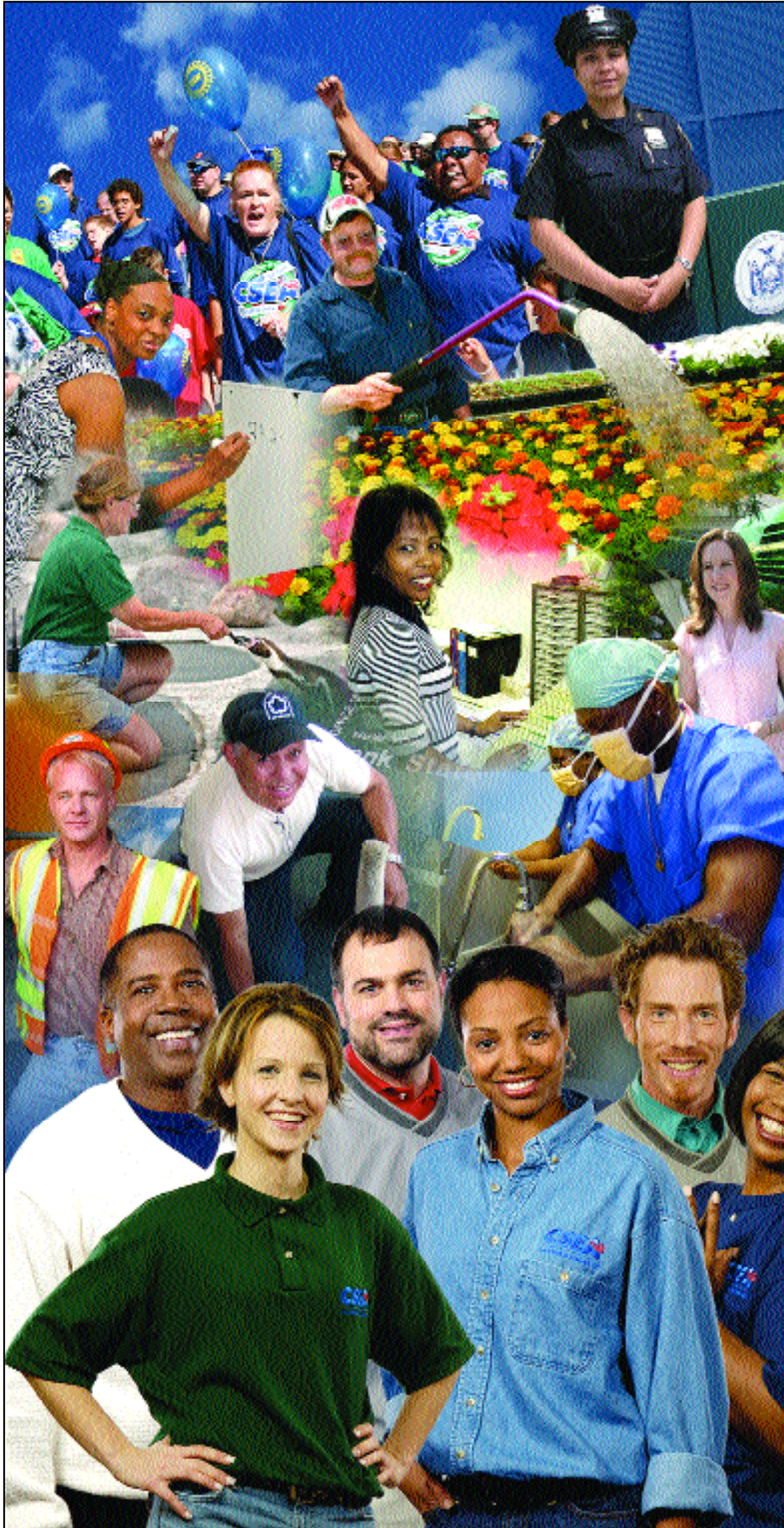
**RATIFIED** — CSEA members in the Sodus Central Schools Unit in Wayne County ratified a new four-year agreement by a vote of 81 - 1. The contract includes annual



raises and maintains the same level of employee contributions to health insurance ... **GIVING A HOLIDAY DINNER** — Eight families in need were able to have a complete holiday

dinner thanks to CSEA members working in the Erie County Department of Social Services. Members of the department's Women's Committee planned and organized a fund-raiser which provided grocery cards to families recommended by caseworkers. In all, the committee raised \$758 for the initiative, said department Confidential Aide Naima Porter-Sparks ... **ONONDAGA CONTRACT UPDATE** — Onondaga County workers recently took to the streets to voice their support for the services they provide and for their upcoming first mediation session. CSEA members held rallies outside multiple county work sites to remind the public about their valuable services. The workers are frustrated over the county's low contract offer that doesn't even cover cost-of-living increases. The last increase for the 3,500-member county work force was in January 2004 ... **NEW CONTRACT** — CSEA's contract with the Iroquois Central School District, to take effect July 1, has been approved by the unit and the district. The four-year deal includes a raise each year and a change to the sick day accumulation incentive. The contract also includes a change to a single health insurance provider offered by the district and new language regarding longevity and stipends. The contract negotiated without the use of attorneys by the district. CSEA Unit President Cheryl Kaczmarek led the union's negotiating team.





## Our Reputation: New York's Leading Union. **We've Earned It!**

We're CSEA – a positive force throughout New York State for nearly a century.

We're 265,000 members strong. Dedicated. Keeping our skills sharp and our knowledge current. Doing the vital work that all New Yorkers depend on. And doing it right.

We fight for fair pay, decent benefits, fairness and respect. It's not just the right thing to do – it's a great investment.

Quality. Effectiveness.

And a better community for all.

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Danny Donohue, President  
[www.csealocal1000.org](http://www.csealocal1000.org)