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Vol. 4 / No. 1

JANUARY 2001

# THE WORK FORCE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION  Local 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

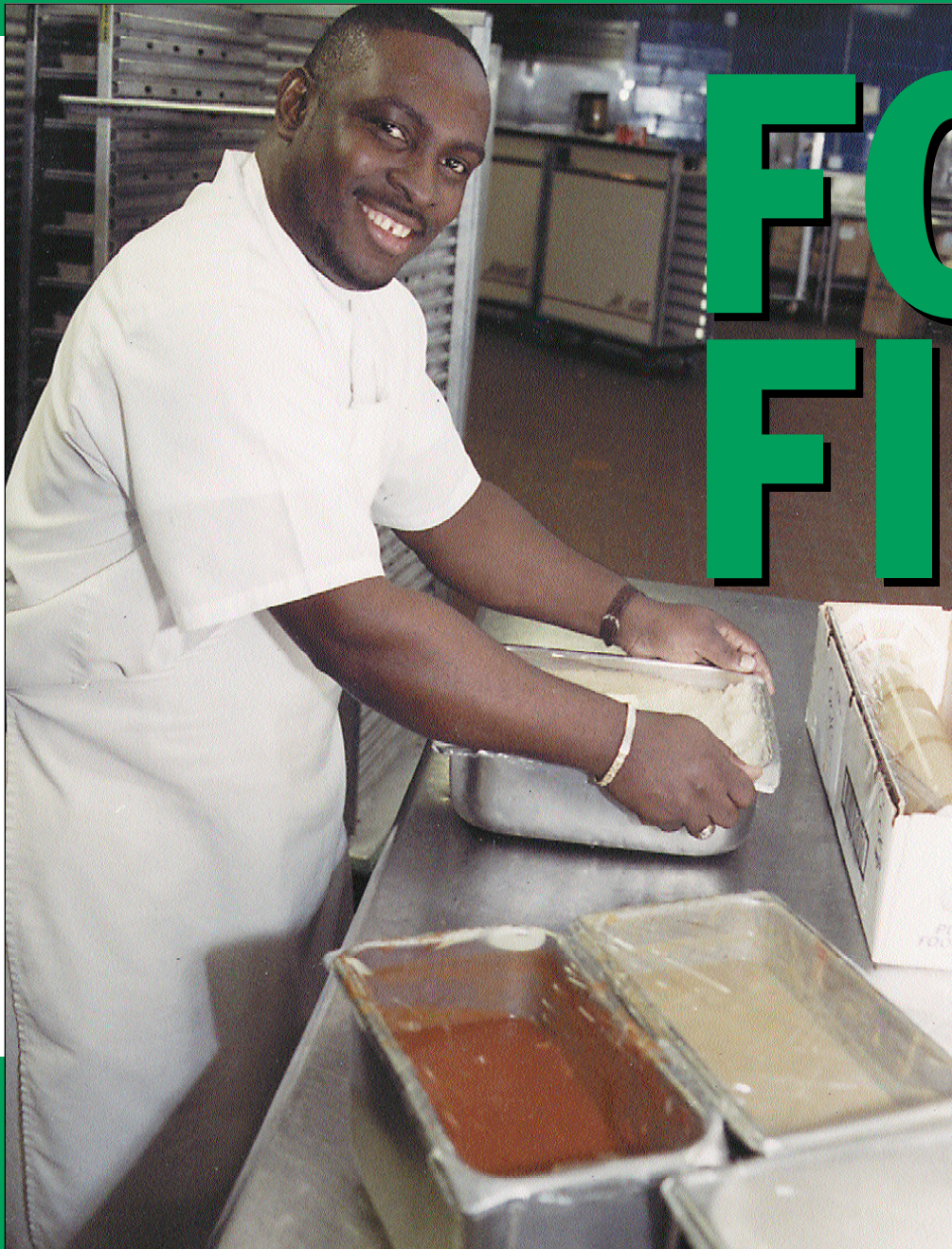


Photo by Ron Wofford

# FOOD FIGHT!

***CSEA fights  
for meatier  
contracts for  
food service  
workers***

**See Pages 10-11**



## Photo of the Month



Photo by Janice Marra

**CSEA Ulster County Unit members protest low wages in front of the Ulster County office building recently, with some added theatrics.**

## CSEA widely ratifies contract in White Plains

WHITE PLAINS — City of White Plains employees represented by CSEA got a holiday present they've been waiting three years for — ratification of a fair contract.

By a 279-7 vote, members approved a four-year pact that includes pay raises and increased employee dental insurance coverage, a sticking point during the three years of talks.

The contract is retroactive to July 1998.

"Our members in the City of White Plain have fought long and hard for this contract," CSEA Southern Region President Carmine DiBattista said.

"We look forward to the city ratifying this agreement so our members and their families can finally put these three tough years behind them and enjoy these hard-fought contract improvements," he added.

To be completed, the proposed agreement needs to be ratified by the White Plains Common Council and the city's Housing Authority and Parking Authority boards.

— Janice Marra

## Disney discount card expires

The Disney Magic Kingdom Club card will not be honored at the Disney attractions after Dec. 31, but CSEA members may still save money at the popular tourist stops.

The Disney Club, a new family membership program that offers more Disney options, is available to CSEA members at \$29.95 for a one-year membership.

This is a \$10 savings off the regular membership price.

For more information, call 800-654-6347 or visit the Web site at [www.disneysampler.com](http://www.disneysampler.com) and give the corporate/chapter number 59300.

## CSEA persistence gets results

# LBMC gains contract

LONG BEACH — After 15 months of contentious negotiations, CSEA members at the Long Beach Medical Center have approved their first contract that includes pay hikes and guaranteed health insurance.

The contract covers 445 workers at the hospital and nursing home and will run through March 2005.

"We were able to get a contract because CSEA and the workers kept up the pressure and let the public know how we were being treated," said CSEA Local President Marcene Sutton.

"We had a great ad campaign and the workers were visible in the community. I am so proud of our officers and activists and of the CSEA staff. This contract is just a start," she added.

### Tough battle, tougher members

The battle was rough. Protests, pickets, leafleting, and an advertising blitz helped produce the new pact.

The contract resolves a health insurance charge pending before the National Labor Relations Board because hospital management has agreed to refund workers the amount of money they were

overcharged for health coverage.

Management will apply the 2000 overpayments to the workers' contributions for 2001.

Nancy Forestier, a 20-year employee

and vice president of the hospital Local, called the ratification "historic."

Reubin Burney, a 26-year worker, said he is happy to "finally have the protection of a union contract."

"We now have strength in numbers," Burney said.

"Our Long Beach members hung tough and they finally got a contract. Now it is time for the local to build solidarity among all the members," said CSEA Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte.

— Sheryl C. Jenks



## Members help out in Buffalo white-out

BUFFALO — A lake-effect blizzard that crippled the Buffalo area recently didn't bury the get-it-done attitude of thousands of CSEA members who helped citizens cope with the copious snow.

From state Department of Transportation members fighting to keep roads clear in spite of high winds and drifting snow, to staying with school children stranded on the buses they drove, CSEA members met the challenge with grit and endurance.

"Many of our members worked 24 hours or more to get the job done, helping the public through it, even though they were unable to get home themselves," said Florence Tripi, CSEA Western Region president.

"Some of our office staff even opened the region office doors for stranded travelers, who ended up staying overnight. The storm brought out the best in all of us," she added.

The storm earned federal disaster area designation for Erie, Chautauqua and Cattaraugus counties.

## Employee Benefit Fund extends hours

**CSEA's Employee Benefit Fund (EBF) has expanded its office hours.**

**The office is now open from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
The phone number is 800-323-2732.**

# “A woman’s place is in her union”

## CSEA’s biannual women’s conference focuses on history, strengthening union

The joint was jumping like a revival meeting.

The 18th biannual CSEA Women’s Conference barreled into Saratoga Springs for a weekend of energy-packed programs that celebrated women’s history in the union and inspired the hundreds of participants to each “teach one, reach one” to strengthen CSEA.

Coming on the heels of CSEA’s 90th annual convention, the women’s conference presented the proud history of CSEA and how unions help working women.

### Building a stronger CSEA

The workshops also highlighted how working women build strong unions and are taught the skills needed to continue these successes.

“If we women in the labor



CSEA statewide Secretary Barbara Reeves makes some noise.

movement seek our monument, look around us,” AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson, the keynote speaker, told the pumped-up audience of CSEA activists.

**(Read the text of Chavez-Thompson’s speech online at [www.cseainc.org/lstspeech.html](http://www.cseainc.org/lstspeech.html))**

On average, union contracts raise earnings 40 percent for working women versus non-union employment.

Yet the challenge lies in giving women and all workers the opportunity to join a union, conference organizers said.

“This conference lets women see they are very important to the union: they are over half the membership and play a significant role in our history,” CSEA Women’s Committee Chair Jackie Stanford said.

Women also form a significant portion of CSEA’s leadership. Five of 10 statewide officers are women.

“We can be proud of where we’ve been, and we can be proud of where we’re going,” CSEA statewide Treasurer Maureen Malone said.

### Sharing experiences

Participants heard the moving stories of female leaders, from CSEA and other unions, involved in union organizing at all levels: union recognition, first contract fights, and organizing existing members around issues.

Debbie Warner, a community living skills instructor at Jamestown ARC, who led an unsuccessful fight for CSEA recognition at her facility in 1996 and is trying again, related what she had learned from the defeat and why it was important to keep fighting.

“We didn’t want to have to rely on food stamps to feed our families and Medicaid to provide insurance. We wanted a living wage. That’s why we have to organize,” Warner said.



Above, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson chats with CSEA Women’s Committee member Christine Mumma.

“Every generation of women has its own issue for justice. For us it is to offer more women the chance to join our movement,” said Chavez-Thompson.

Conference programs offered skills and tactics for strengthening unions and the labor movement.

### Popular programs

Participants dealt with health and safety issues, organizing, sexual harassment, leadership development, privacy issues, revitalizing CSEA Locals and Units, and the Family Medical Leave Act, among other topics.

The CSEA Standing Women’s Committee presented a historical program during which members wore period costumes and traced the changing role of women in their workplaces and their unions.

Instead of applause, macaroni and cheese boxes bearing a likeness of Rosie the Riveter were shaken, creating a din in the meeting room.

The foodstuffs were a reference to the often-competing roles of work and family that working women must balance.

CSEA Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan said the boxes illustrated the 73 cents that women make for every dollar a man earns for jobs of comparable worth.

The 27-cent spread represents the difference between hamburger and macaroni and cheese, she said.

— Ann Carroll



CSEA Women’s Committee member Carlotta Williams in period dress.



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# IN TOUCH WITH THE WORK FORCE

CSEA President Danny Donohue

What a year 2000 was for CSEA members!

There was activism like never before and it produced meaningful results that will benefit you and your co-workers for years to come. Just as important, CSEA sent a message loud and clear that we are a statewide force.

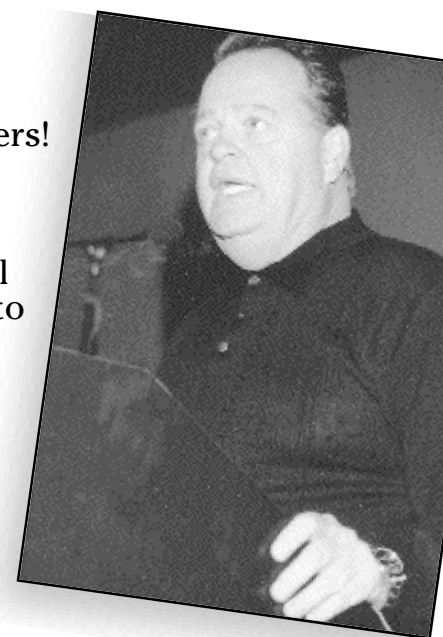
As we begin 2001, we have a tremendous opportunity to build on our success and carry our momentum forward toward an even more effective union.

The most important lesson of our recent history is that in unity there is strength.

None of us should take our union for granted — we need to go out every day and try to make it stronger. Each of us should consider some simple New Year resolutions.

None of these resolutions are complicated or overwhelming for each of us individually but they can make a big difference for our union:

1. Read or reread your CSEA contract.
2. Ask your union representative questions if there's something you don't understand about your union to be sure you get the facts.
3. Participate in CSEA meetings or other activities.
4. Bring two co-workers with you to a CSEA activity.
5. Attend at least one activity in support of other unions in your area.
6. Help support CSEA community service or charitable projects.
7. Encourage new co-workers to join CSEA.
8. Support CSEA organizing drives for unorganized workers in your area.
9. Register and vote — it does make a difference.
10. Be proud of your CSEA membership.





## **CSEA members add holiday touches**

# **Group home is where the heart is**

MIDDLEBURGH — Making a house a home is a full-time job for CSEA member Leslie Fuld, who takes a special interest in making the group home for mentally retarded adults she works in as festive as possible.

As the holidays approach, Fuld and her CSEA colleagues who work in group homes across the state put extra time and effort into making sure the consumers — their second families — enjoy the season.

Thanksgiving heralds the holiday season.

“That’s when we start really decorating the insides of the house,” said Assistant Director Wanda Johnson.

### **Holiday helpers**

In the 12-bedroom group home on a quiet street in rural Schoharie County, members of the Capital District DDSO Local gladly do the work of holiday helpers.

While the five male and seven female consumers are listed as non-verbal and

profoundly developmentally disabled, the staff communicates with them by sensing their needs.

After years of working with the consumers one-on-one, CSEA members said they know how they are feeling and reacting to life in their home and in the Middleburgh community.

“We’re in a very rural community. So far out that we can’t call in extra help from another house because that’s too far away. And we are subject to floods that close the roads,” Fuld said.

Once the snow flies, the staff has to make it happen for the consumers.

### **Part of the community**

The community has embraced the group home’s residents and employees.

“Being so rural I think the community has accepted us more,” Director Pam Bender said, explaining while some local store aisles are too narrow to accommodate wheelchairs, the residents and the community groups have gone a long way to make the consumers part of the community’s daily life.

“One of the staff is a member of the Hay Shakers, a local dance group, which has put on shows in the house for the holidays. And we have the Boy Scouts come and sing carols. The local fire department sends a special fire



**CSEA members Nicole Braun, left, and Delores Morris unpack holiday decorations to deck the halls and walls of the 12-bed Middleburgh DDSO group home.**

truck carrying Santa Claus right up into the driveway,” Bender said.

The stress and strain of the holiday season can add to the work load as staffers want to spend time with their families while meeting their consumers’ needs.

“We make it happen somehow!” Wanda Johnson exclaimed.

### **One big family**

Over the years at this residence and others throughout the system, CSEA members have opened their homes to their second family members for holidays.

Every staffer said they willingly go the extra mile to make sure eyes sparkle, faces smile and a feeling of family fills the residence.

“The Grinch never steals our Christmas,” Delores Morris said. “Never has, never will.”

— Daniel X. Campbell

## **Thanksgiving refugees gobble up attention at So. Beach**

STATEN ISLAND — They’ve escaped the roasting pan for another year — only to become gangly celebrities that cause traffic bottlenecks at South Beach Psychiatric Center.

Nine wild turkeys are roosting at this mental health facility and CSEA members there are taking a crash course in animal husbandry and looking for ways to informally use the birds as part of the patient rehabilitation process.

“We don’t know if these birds escaped from the South Beach kitchen before Thanksgiving, but we’re having fun watching them waddle around the grounds,” deadpanned CSEA Local President Joel Schwartz.

### **Bright lights, big city**

The staff at South Beach is pitching in to make sure the birds survive the bright lights and paved streets of the surroundings without creating chaos on the facility grounds.

The roaming birds cause traffic jams as they totter down the campus roads, unaware of the furious horn-honking of drivers stuck behind them.

— Ann Carroll



## **WORK FORCE FACTS**

### **Hold the Stuffing**

- **One of the worst things you can do for birds is feed them bread.**
- **Avian botulism is a fatal illness that develops in birds that are fed bread.**
- **The bread acts as a medium for harmful microorganisms when it mixes with the bird's feces and gets into their water supply.**
- **There is no cure for avian botulism.**

## **Voices of the Work Force**



“**W**orking part-time and changing shifts, it’s hard to set a schedule and make appointments. It’s hard to do evening things, like if (the kids) have sports it’s hard to get the time to do that. The good thing is you get to spend more time with your family — that’s what I wanted.”

— Pat Sergott, part-time food service worker at the Central New York Psychiatric Center, where she has worked for two years.



# Too close for comfort, members dial "CSEA" for assistance



Reaching out and touching someone on the telephone recently created serious safety concerns for CSEA members who work in a state motor vehicles call center where killers and rapists answer the phones.

CSEA recently solved the problem by insisting phone jacks be installed outside inmates' work cubicles so union members weren't forced to share the cramped cubbyholes as they monitored certain calls from the public.

The safety problems developed recently after four prisoners at Arthur Kill state prison on Staten Island, including a convicted killer with a master's degree in

computer science, were caught with more than 30 computer disks containing driver's motor vehicle information.

The inmates worked as customer service representatives in the DMV call center inside the 900-bed medium security lock-up, where they answered phone calls from the driving public.



**Morrissey**

State prison inmates at Arthur Kill and Bayview Correctional have been serving

as DMV customer service representatives since the 1980s.

The Cuomo administration initiated the prison labor program, despite tremendous pressure from CSEA, as a cost-saving method for the DMV that would also provide job training for inmates.

The Staten Island facility and Bayview Correctional Facility in Manhattan are the two prisons in the state with DMV call centers.

## Slave conditions

After the disks were discovered, the call center was closed to inmates for two weeks, leaving six CSEA members and their manager to handle the work usually done by 40 inmates.

"They worked like slaves," said union Steward Barbara Morrissey.

After an investigation discovered the disks contained no sensitive information, the call center was reopened, but the inmate's access to certain DMV computer records was reduced.

## No reaching out to touch someone ...

These changes jeopardized CSEA workers' safety, union leaders said.

Inmates could no longer pull up certain computer screens they needed to answer a caller's question.

Under the "more secure" system, when an inmate needed to access restricted information, he would signal a CSEA member, who would go to the inmate's cubicle, plug her headset into his computer

and finish the phone call.

These close quarters in the inmate's work cubicle created a problem, Morrissey said.

"The workers would end up being in the small cube with the inmates. Inmates are not supposed to touch us at all. It is a very serious issue," Morrissey explained.

"Any intentional touching is considered assault. Yet when the workers were in the small confined space with the inmates, there would be incidents of touching, brushing up against the workers," she added.

## Working with management

CSEA leaders and managers worked to solve the problem.

After the union filed complaints and scheduled meetings with management, phone jacks were installed on the outside of the inmates' cubicles.

Now, CSEA members do not have to enter the inmate's cubicle to help the phone caller.

The workers are satisfied with the solution, Morrissey said.

"CSEA complained loud and long when the DMV first began using inmates rather than civil service workers to answer telephone inquiries," said CSEA Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio.

— Ann Carroll

## Probation officers get legal protection from inmates throwing fluids

CSEA added another legislative victory to its string of successes with the recent signing of bill that penalizes inmates who douse county probation workers with dangerous mixtures of blood, urine, feces and other bodily fluids.

Gov. George Pataki signed the CSEA-supported legislation that makes it a class E felony for inmates to throw bodily fluids.

CSEA represents hundreds of county probation workers across the state who had not been legally protected from

cantankerous inmates.

Since 1996, employees who work in the state corrections and mental health departments and the state Division for Youth and Division of Parole have been protected by the law.

## Big legislative win

"This is another important legislative win for our members who face danger daily in their probation department jobs," said CSEA President Danny Donohue.

Probation officers are often required to visit correctional

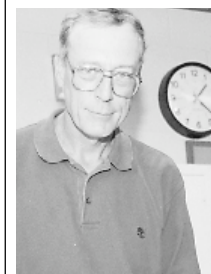
facilities and have been subjected to the same types of assaults as corrections officers.

The probation workers also regularly come into contact with inmates in dangerous settings, and the new law will provide increased security and protection, union leaders said.

"Considering the fact that probation officers must handle the

criminal population as part of their important job, they are justly entitled to equal protections," Donohue said.

## Voices of the Work Force



"I like the challenge of keeping the security equipment operational."

— Doug Lesinski, electrical equipment mechanic, Lakeview Shock Facility



# Changing a life, one day at a time, leads to national honor for case manager

SYRACUSE — More than eight years ago, Psychiatric Social Worker Assistant Carol Bascom took on the case of a young adult woman with a psychiatric illness who thought she would never work again and had little desire to live.

Slowly, deliberately, and with great professionalism and caring, CSEA member Bascom helped the woman recover.

Now, the woman is one of Bascom's co-workers who found a fitting way to honor Bascom.

Thanks to the woman's nomination, Bascom was recently named case manager of the year by the National Association of Case Management.

It's an honor that comes from years of helping people, and one Bascom wears with pride.



*“I've always felt the people we work with will show us some direction if we just pay enough attention.”*

**Deserving of praise**  
Bascom has worked for 12 years for the Onondaga County Mental Health Department, helping adults who have psychiatric disabilities maintain their independence in the community.

“I see myself as a kind of worker ant. I'm out there doing the job,” Bascom said.

The award Bascom received was

given at a national conference where the theme was “getting a life.” Bascom said the woman she helped who now works with her did exactly that.

“It is rare that someone can come into your life and have such an impact,” the woman wrote about Bascom in the award nomination.

“I went from not even wanting to live to working in the profession that I so wanted to re-enter. I now can not only advocate and feel good about myself, but am able to go out and fight the fight with my own clients. It is so rewarding to have the opportunity to give back all that I have received from Carol,” she wrote.

### A position of strength

Bascom said her philosophy for caring for her clients is focused on finding and working with the strengths they have.

“Sometimes you may have to look pretty hard, but they are there. I've always felt the people we

work with will show us some direction if we just pay enough attention,” Bascom said.

The national honor was a surprise to Bascom.

“This is a huge way of letting me know I made a difference in her life. It's a tough job in many ways, so remembering the kind of impact we have on people's lives is a reward,” Bascom said.

— Mark M. Kotzin



# The Pied Piper of millions for Essex County programs

PORT HENRY — Victor Putman is worth his weight in gold, platinum and oil stock certificates.

The CSEA member is the multi, multi-million dollar man in this old mining town perched on Lake Champlain, having shepherded more than \$100 million in state and federal grants into this economically depressed quadrant of Essex County.

Using his knowledge of the federal and state paper maze, Putman, who is also a member of the CSEA Statewide Board of Directors, parlays his sweat and determination into government checks that often contain two commas and lots of zeroes.

His total after 20 years of snagging grants ranging from \$1,500 to \$4.4 million: \$101 million to Essex County.

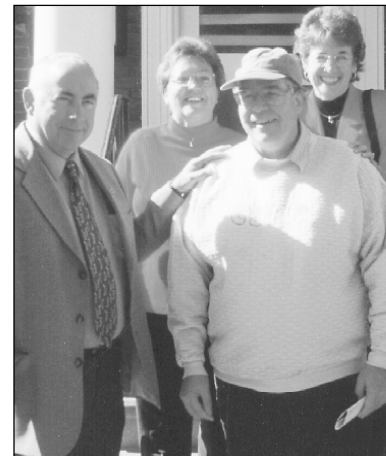
“I'm lucky to have a job where I can use my skills to improve the quality of life for Essex County residents,” Putman said in his usual low-key manner. “I enjoy it.”

Town leaders have come to enjoy the sensation of balancing the budget and paying for much-needed water and sewer improvements, among other projects, with the money Putman locates from his office in the county's Economic Development Department.

“Essex County, all of its towns and villages need all of the grants and aid they can get,” said Walt Rushby, a CSEA Moriah School District Unit bus driver and an Essex County supervisor who has served in a variety of elected positions in the county and Village of Port Henry.

“I don't know how many times that I've gotten lost in the volumes of paper work needed to be filled out properly for a grant or aid and had to call Vic for help. Vic keeps me on track,” Rushby added.

— Daniel X. Campbell



Walt Rushby, Essex County supervisor and CSEA Moriah School District Unit member; Barb Tesar, village clerk; Linda DuRoss, deputy mayor, surround Vic Putman.

## WORK FORCE FACTS

**Over 20 years, CSEA member Vic Putman, has helped bring:**

**\$84 million in grants, aid and low cost loans to Essex County;**

**\$17 million into the Port Henry-Moriah area for water quality and other projects.**

## Voices of the Work Force



*“It's essential to have CSEA as the union supporting me as an employee in the City of Saratoga Springs. Saratoga has a certain amount of politics and it would affect us severely unless we had a union backing us up.”*

— Mike Biffer, building inspector, 23-year employee of Saratoga Springs



# Yule see their harvest in front of the Capitol

When picking out a Christmas tree for this huge family, Peter Michalski remembered there was no corner of the room to hide the tree's bad side.

This season's holiday tree for the Family of New York is a spectacular 35-foot blue spruce that immediately transformed the smooth and cold marble facade of Albany's Empire State Plaza into a festive open-air holiday haven.

With St. Nick handling more pressing matters, Michalski again coordinated 14 state Office of General Services (OGS) workers and CSEA members to select, cut, transport, erect and decorate the official state Christmas tree.

The OGS crew also decorated the Capitol and erected the nearby outdoor skating rink — rendering the seat of New York's political power into a temporary yet comfortable family room enjoyed by tens of thousands of local residents and visitors.

## A big and tall one, please

Harvesting the state's official tree is no small undertaking for either elves or men accustomed to hard, heavy work.

For the Trozenski family of Schenectady, it was time to say goodbye to a front-yard sentinel that had weathered 35 winters.

For the CSEA members, it was time to deftly display their skills and talents honed by years of holiday tree cutting.

Highway equipment operator Paul Deere threaded his lift bucket through the spruce boughs and attached a thick strap near the top of the tree.

A chain saw screamed to life as three workers kneeled or lay on their backs and guided the whirring blades into the trunk. The air, peppered with chips and sawdust, was tinged with the scent of pine.

## Delicate dance

"It's magnificent," a neighbor gushed as the tree twirled in midair for a few heartbeats.

With some maneuvering, the tree was gingerly lowered onto a flatbed truck and secured with chains.

"We've got a lot of pushing to do," CSEA member Mario Rizzo told the crew, looking at branches 26 feet wide that needed to be crammed onto the 14-foot-wide truck.

Like spiders knitting a garland of silver, the OGS crew crisscrossed the tree from base to top with rope to pull in the tree's huge beautiful branches.

"It's not a brittle tree like last year's due to all the rain," one worker shouted to no one in particular. "We should be able to push the branches pretty far without losing many."

Safely transported a dozen miles from Schenectady to the state Capitol, two cranes hoisted the tree from the truck.

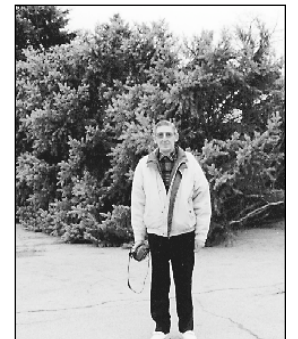
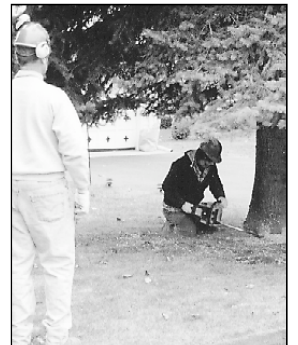
"We don't have a corner to hide a bad side in," Michalski quipped as he directed the crew to turn the tree this way and that until its best side showed.

"This tree is so well proportioned that we'll only need a few insert branches to make it just right," he added proudly.

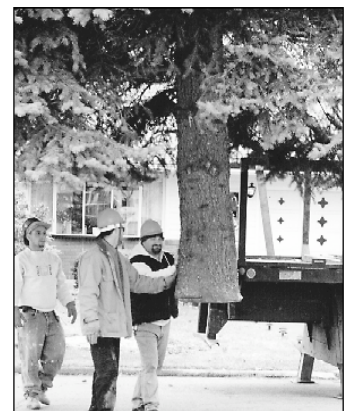
— Daniel X. Campbell



Clockwise from top right: The tree at its previous Schenectady home; workers prepare to take the tree down; donor Edward F. Trozenski before the fallen giant; guiding the tree as it whirls in mid air; loading onto a flatbed; driving a 3-foot spike into the trunk to hold the tree upright; lifting into place; and above, proud CSEA members in front of the tree and Capitol.



*"We don't have a corner to hide a bad side in. This tree is so well proportioned that we'll only need a few insert branches to make it just right."*



## WORK FORCE FACTS

Two trees adorn the state Capitol every year. One is located on the Empire State Plaza, and the other is erected in East Capitol Park;

This year's trees are both blue spruces donated by families living in Schenectady.

14 state Office of General Services workers, all CSEA members, took part in selecting, cutting, transporting, erecting and decorating the official state Christmas tree.



# Team CSEA scores on end run around private contractors

BROCKPORT — The saying “A day late and a dollar short” has been rewritten by industrious CSEA members whose new motto is: “A day early and thousands of dollars saved.”

A gleaming, new football team locker room at SUNY Brockport College, completed by CSEA members a day before

the deadline, has saved taxpayers thousands of dollars and is ample proof of the untapped skills in the college work force.



The college’s football coach wanted the old metal lockers out and new lockers installed.

Ron Castle, the CSEA SUNY Brockport Local president and facilities and planning

department staff member, literally picked up the job and ran with it.

One hundred new locker stalls, each with a seat and lockbox, were crafted from 1,200 sheets of laminated birch plywood which were double stained, sealed and joined.

## Doing it better in-house

“It’s been called as good, or better than the locker room built for the Buffalo Bills at nearby St. John Fisher College, where the Bills now hold pre-season training,” Castle said proudly.

The college initially wanted to contract out the work because of the tight deadline, but Castle and his crew knew they could beat the clock.

“I knew we had the skills to build it,” said Castle.

“The only question was whether we could get it done before the deadline, working only on overtime. We continued to do our daily jobs, while working on the project evenings and weekends, and we got it done with one day to spare,” Castle said.

The new lockers apparently brought good luck to the college football team.

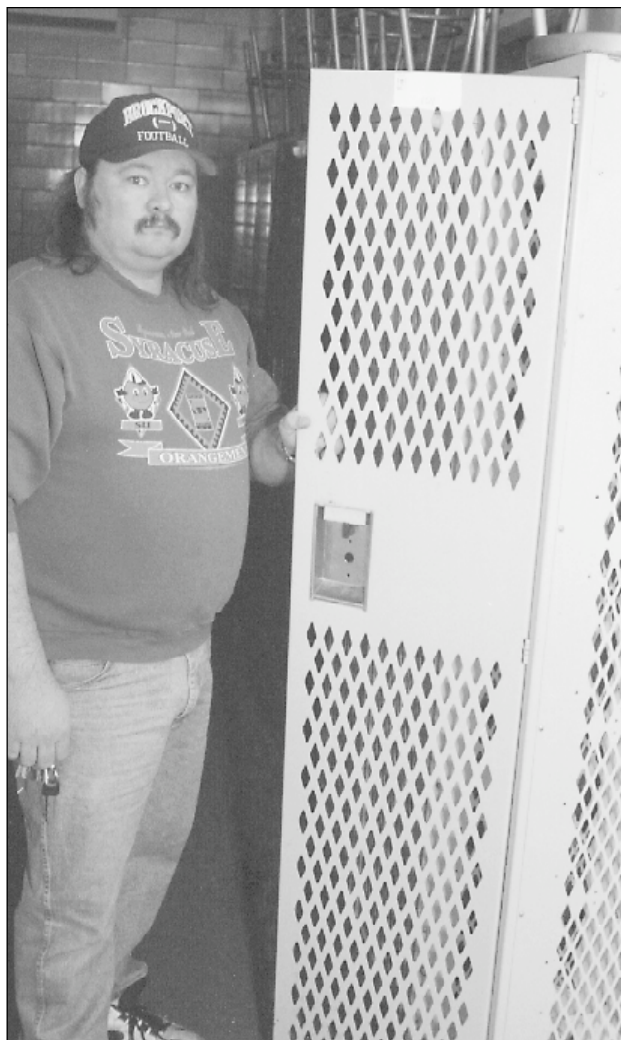
The Golden Eagles’ enjoyed their first

undefeated season, aided no doubt, by the superlative condition of their new locker room.

— Ron Wofford



Left to right, CSEA SUNY Brockport members Jesse Rios, Local President Ron Castle, Phil Livingston, Greg Campbell, Neil Fleming and Rocco Gervasi show off their skill and craftsmanship in the new lockers for SUNY Brockport’s football team.



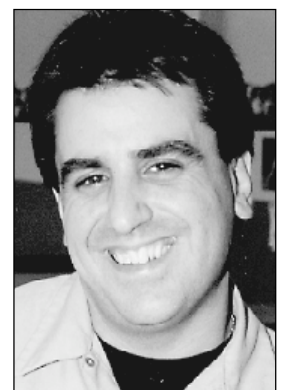
At left, CSEA SUNY Brockport Local President Ron Castle shows the old style locker that was replaced by CSEA members on time and thousands of dollars less than what a private contractor wanted for the job.

## WORK FORCE FACTS

The entire SUNY Brockport construction crew was honored at half-time of a home football game, with each member receiving a certificate of appreciation for their work.

## Voices of the Work Force

“I’ve been a custodian about three years and I like cleaning the school. The hardest part of my job is that I work 2:30 p.m. to 11 p.m., so I miss spending time with my 6-year-old son.”



— Charlie Mulea, Bayport-Blue Point School District, Long Island



## CSEA serves up food for thought



Jan Yousen, a cashier at the Peekskill High School cafeteria, stocks a snack rack.

*Food service workers say union way is only way*

**I**f it's too hot in the kitchen, get out and call CSEA.

The changing menu of food service work in the thousands of school districts and college cafeterias in the state hasn't been limited to replacing sloppy Joe sandwiches with stir-fry vegetables.

CSEA is becoming a larger voice in representing public and private cafeteria workers by negotiating meatier contracts and working for safer working conditions.

In the Peekskill school cafeterias, CSEA membership has been crucial because Quality Food Management, the private contractor that runs the cafeterias, was recently bought by a larger firm, Chartwell.

"We get to keep our jobs when the company switches," said Rosemarie Kall, a 10-year union member.

"It gives us more stability" in the midst of management changes, she added.

CSEA members have successfully handled several problems in dealing with management at Quality Food Management, and are now negotiating a contract with the new company.

It also pays to belong to the union, workers said.

"(Membership) helps us go up in pay," said Jan Yousen, a cashier at the high school cafeteria.

### If it heats up

At the other end of the state, CSEA is also making a difference in the working lives of food service employees at the Erie County Medical Center in Buffalo.

More than 550 meals are made three times a day from these kitchens staffed by Local President Greg Williams and his co-workers.

If contract issues heat up, union members said they know CSEA will be there.



Above, Tony Minor, a cook with Bateman Healthcare at Erie County Medical Center, slices fresh cold cuts for the day's sandwiches. Pictured on this month's front page is fellow cook, Keith Barrett. Both are CSEA members.



At left, Peekskill School cafeteria employee Rosemarie Kall cleans the cooking area.

"We have a good union, CSEA, backing us up for any problems, should there be a need," said Keith Barrett, a six-year cook at the medical center.

"When we have a grievance, we have no worries about whether our union representation will be there for us. It's a good feeling to know you're backed up whenever you need it," he added.

"I'm happy with CSEA as my union," said Tony Minor, whose been at the center a dozen years.

"I know they are negotiating in our behalf for a good contract," Minor said. "That's what it's all about."

*"It's a good feeling to know you're backed up, whenever you need it."*

"CSEA is my union," added Lena Rolling. "It's a necessity today to have a good union in your corner."

— Ron Wofford and Janice Marra



SUNY Cortland ASC cashiers Joann Brown, above, and Mary Tally, shown below, on duty at their check-out stations.



Above, Crystal Armentrout, a cashier employed by Auxiliary Services Corp., stocks shelves in the "Campus Corner" store at SUNY Cortland.



### CSEA, unhappy workers ingredients in food service organizing drive statewide

CORTLAND — Managers got a conscience even if they didn't order one from the Cortland State University cafeteria, where CSEA's representation of employees quickly improved working conditions and morale.

"I'm glad the union is here because it gives management a conscience and they just can't do whatever they want anymore," said cafeteria worker Paula Park.

CSEA's work to improve hellish working conditions at the Cortland cafeteria and scores of other cafeterias and kitchens in the private and public sector across the state has employees breathing easier, working safer and making more money.

#### What a difference

In Cortland, where CSEA negotiated the workers' first contract with the school's Auxiliary Services Corp., the difference is noticeable, workers said.

"I feel more secure in my job and I know my benefits won't be taken away now," said 14-year cafeteria veteran Joanne Brown.

"Before, I felt my retirement was being threatened and I didn't have any say when the insurance was being cut. Now that's been stabilized and we know what to expect. I'm happy in my decision to go union," Brown added.

"I'm pleased the union is here because it gave us our rights. We were one step ahead of a sweatshop before we got CSEA in," 18-year cashier Mary Tally said.

"They (managers) just did anything they wanted to. Now, I feel as if I've got support if I need it," Tally added.

#### Worth the effort

While the push to unionize the cafeteria workers took time, Cortland workers said it was worth the effort.

"Even though going through the process seems hard, it's worth it. Just stick with it," said cashier Crystal Armentrout.

"Look into it, study it through, and I'm sure other workers will come to the same conclusion I did — that the union would be best," said Brown.

— Mark M. Kotzin



## **Cramped and short on oxygen? CSEA pilots program to help members survive tight-space emergencies**

NAPANOCH — CSEA-represented prison maintenance workers will be able to save their own lives — and the lives of others — because of a tank, pipes and a cement mound in the backyard of Eastern Correctional Facility.

The union and prison managers have piloted a statewide confined space training program for maintenance and security employees working in state lockups.

“It makes me feel better that these people are trained,” CSEA Eastern Correctional Local President Jeff Howarth said about the only confined space training program in the state prison system.

“We don’t want to lose anyone in an accident,” he added, noting CSEA maintenance employees at the prison work in manholes and boiler rooms and other spaces with limited oxygen and light.

### **CSEA a vital partner**

Charlie Mutz, a program instructor, credited CSEA for this program.

“Without CSEA’s support, this training wouldn’t be possible,” he said.

“Our maintenance people are getting the knowledge they need to work in confined space,” Mutz said.

“They didn’t get training in the past, but we’re changing that now.”

Participants learn how to use breathing



**Prison workers participate in a confined space training program on the grounds of the Eastern Correctional Facility. Maintenance employees work in manholes and boiler rooms and other spaces with limited oxygen and light.**

devices and other types of safety equipment and are faced with simulations of real-life emergency and rescue situations, such as a worker trapped in an air-tight tunnel.

### **Sense of job, personal security**

Keith Pisons, a maintenance supervisor at Edgecomb Correctional Facility in New York City, said he felt completely safe while he was a “victim” in a tunnel rescue.

“The teamwork that you learn teaches you to solve problems in a different way,” he said.

“This is the best training the state has to offer, and I have no doubt that it will save somebody’s life,” Pisons said.

Timothy Cromie, a locksmith at Arthurkill Correctional Facility in Staten Island and five-year CSEA member, said the program is helping his department learn procedures that will benefit his and other New York City-area prisons.

“We’re going to be able to do jobs now that we used to contract out for, and it will save the state money,” he said.

“The more we get trained, the more we won’t be afraid to do the jobs,” he said.

### **Extend the program**

Howarth would like to see the program extended to prisons across the state and is urging CSEA Local presidents in prisons to support the program for the safety of the workers.

“If training sites in other areas aren’t established, I will make sure that workers across the state get through this program,” Howarth said.

— Janice Marra



## **New OSHA ergonomic standard to take effect**

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s (OSHA) ergonomic standard — a measure CSEA has fought for from the start — will take effect Jan. 16, 2001, giving workers much-needed protection from repetitive-stress injuries.

Despite numerous attempts by big business to stall the rule, OSHA determined in December the rule would take effect.

The standard sets forth rules to protect workers from repetitive-stress injuries and requires management to provide solutions to work place hazards.

Injuries can include carpal tunnel syndrome and other muscle and bone ailments caused by repeating the same movement on the job.

“This standard affects tens of thousands of our members,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said.

“We believe in this standard because we believe it’s fair. Public sector and private sector workers give the best years of their lives to their jobs, but that doesn’t mean they should be hurt by their work,” the union president said.

CSEA worked closely with AFSCME in lobbying for the new standard, and pressure from the unions was critical in moving the standard past stalling tactics from business interests.

This past fall, two CSEA members, Irene Easling and Peter Niznik, gave compelling testimony in Washington, D.C., urging the standard’s enactment.

Both testified they suffered excruciating injuries on the job that could have been prevented had management provided proper equipment and training.

For more information, visit OSHA’s Web site at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).

Read Easling and Niznik’s testimony online at [www.cseainc.org/osh.html](http://www.cseainc.org/osh.html).



### **Filing an ergonomic injury claim**

- 1. Report the injury or hazard to management, in writing.**
- 2. Report the injury or hazard to your Local or Unit president, in writing.**
- 3. Contact CSEA’s OSH specialist in your region if management fails to respond.**
- 4. Keep records of any medical help you seek.**
- 5. When seeking medical help, file a Workers Compensation claim.**

# Sharing, caring put CSEA members in holiday spirit

The year-round generosity and civic involvement of CSEA members across the state is always more apparent as the holidays approach, and this year union members again set strong examples with their generosity.

Time, money, energy and spirit were among the valuable donations CSEA members made to scores of charities and community programs this holiday season.



For example, CSEA's Madison County White Collar Unit held its sixth annual holiday bake sale and raffle, with proceeds used to purchase presents for children in foster care.

The event raised about \$2,000 which helped buy gifts for about 40 children, said Unit President Chris Munn.

In Tioga County, CSEA members again orchestrated the area's annual toy drive. After getting donations all year, CSEA "elves" purchased and wrapped hundreds of presents which were donated to needy children.

CSEA members working in Oswego County collected and

distributed toys to families served by the county's social services department.

Workers contributed money and gifts, asked businesses for donations, and helped distribute the gifts and wrapping paper to parents of needy children.

Toys for more than 900 families were donated this year.

In Schuyler County, CSEA members helped others by attending the Local's third annual holiday membership meeting/social event and donating food and money to the local food pantry. Donations exceeded last year's tally of \$500, said Local President Skip Gingrich.

## Undaunted by blizzards

Although Western New York was buffeted by back-to-back blizzards last month, the holiday spirit remained strong.

CSEA's Erie County Local used its annual holiday event to collect food for a Buffalo homeless shelter.

Union members at the Buffalo Psychiatric Center hosted a clothing and toy drive, with proceeds donated to a local women's and children's shelter.

## New York City and Long Island holiday helpers

CSEA members on Long Island raised money, collected toys and hosted parties for the



CSEA members from the state Tax and Finance Department in Albany wrap donated gifts.

less fortunate this holiday season.

Most of the Locals joined the CSEA Long Island Region by collecting toys at their annual holiday parties.

The region and CSEA Locals 830 and 880 also donated to The Children of Hope Foundation, run by the CSEA-represented ambulance medical technicians.

CSEA Town of Hempstead Local members collected toys for two Kiwanis organizations and for the Salvation Army Toys For Tots program. Additionally, they sponsored an angel tree where they collect gifts for the less fortunate.

This year, CSEA Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte was a guest on the Chanukah Telethon which raised money for many local charities.

CSEA members in New York City are sharing their generosity by collecting toiletries for a women's shelter, toys for children, winter coats for the needy and canned food for area food pantries and shelters.

## Charity abounds in Hudson Valley

CSEA members play a large role in holiday giving efforts that involve more than 100 workers at the Rockland County Department of Social Services.

More than 400 food baskets were delivered for Thanksgiving, and as many were delivered during the December holidays.

"CSEA members are lugging around 20-pound turkeys and other food up and down stairs," said Rockland County Local President Diane Watson, also a social services employee.

"But, no matter how last-minute it is, CSEA workers get it done!" she added.

CSEA members also played an essential role in an annual toy drive at a local mall, which netted thousands of toys for needy Rockland County children.

"This is just another example of the giving spirit that we have all year long in our department," Watson said.



Members of CSEA's Metropolitan Region Women's Committee stand before gift bags of toiletries they donated and prepared for needy families.



# 2001: a state odyssey



## One year later: No cops, but a contract

What a difference a year makes.

A year ago this month, more than 20,000 state employees converged on the state Capitol to protest stalled state contract talks during Gov. George Pataki's State of the State address.

It was among the largest labor rallies Albany has seen.

A phalanx of state troopers barricaded the Capitol as protesters braved the biting

January freeze to demand fair contracts.

Coupled with the demonstration and other activities, CSEA's negotiating tenacity paid off and the union led the way by reaching a contract agreement for about 77,000 state workers.

The agreement was ratified by CSEA members by a ratio of nearly 20:1.

Part of the CSEA agreement initiated a pension reform benefit that was eventually applied to all public employees statewide.





# CSEA studies solutions to a new form of workplace violence

CSEA is addressing the problem of worker-on-worker violence by creating a training program with the Institute for Labor in the Community.

The union's occupational safety and health committees have traditionally fixed dangerous working conditions — including violence against members by the public and by institutional clients.

Now, another type of violence is springing up on the job: workers fighting each other.

Last year, a CSEA supervisor at the state veteran's home at Saint Alban's allegedly was murdered by a co-worker.

## Cooling hot spots

To help diffuse other potentially volatile workplace situations, CSEA's Metropolitan Region's occupational safety and health committee is working with the Institute for Labor in the Community to develop materials that will be used to train CSEA activists from each facility in the region.

Union representatives will be trained to identify particular problems, find their causes and present solutions. These trainers will conduct classes at their facilities or other locations.

The committee also wants to personalize training and materials for each work site.

"The incident at St. Alban's is a clear-cut example of why programs like this are needed," said Wendell Rachell, committee chair.

"We have always talked about the components of violence in the workplace. Unfortunately, this incident brought it to the forefront," he said.

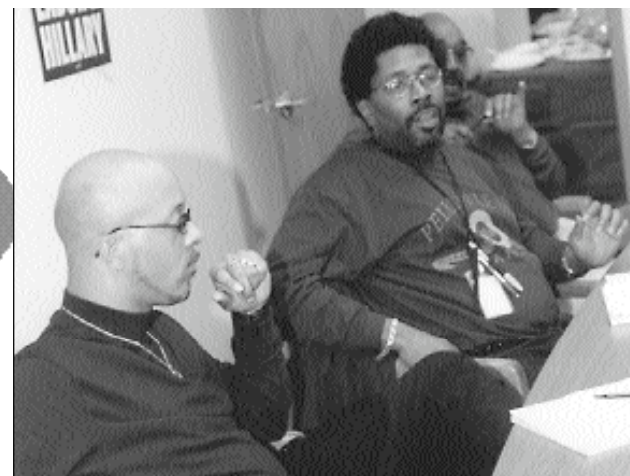
Committee members said a worker-centered program will be most

effective, as "they know these problems better than anyone else, and it has a direct impact on them," Rachell said.

## Management must be involved

Management participation is necessary, union activists said.

"The occupational safety and health committee and I feel this is a long-time coming. Management input is important, because on safety and health, they have



From left, Steven Sayles, Abraham Benjamin and Wendell Rachell discuss solutions to employee violence against each other.

sometimes been the problem, not necessarily the solution," Rachell said.

Committee member Abraham Benjamin, who works at Bronx Psychiatric Center, agreed.

"Worker-on-worker violence often stems from mismanagement. Morale is lousy due to management's poor treatment of staff, who then turn on each other," Benjamin said.

The situation is worsened by the stress created by inadequate staffing levels and other workplace issues, said CSEA Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio.

— Ann Carroll

## United Way, SEFA drives start

Known for their year-round generosity and community spirit, CSEA members across the state will again be the backbone of two charity appeals this year.

The United Way and State Employees Federated Appeal (SEFA) will rely on the generosity and goodwill of tens of thousands of union members statewide to raise money for local charities.

CSEA President Danny Donohue said he is encouraging members to participate in both drives "because we understand the needs of our neighbors and our co-workers."

"Because of the importance of services funded by United Way and because our members are directly involved in how United Way operates at the local level, I enthusiastically endorse the campaign," Donohue said.

"To make sure members are supporting organizations that support the labor movement, I encourage CSEA members to designate their pledges to the organization of their choice," Donohue added.

## Target retailers to boost Nicaraguan clothing workers' wages

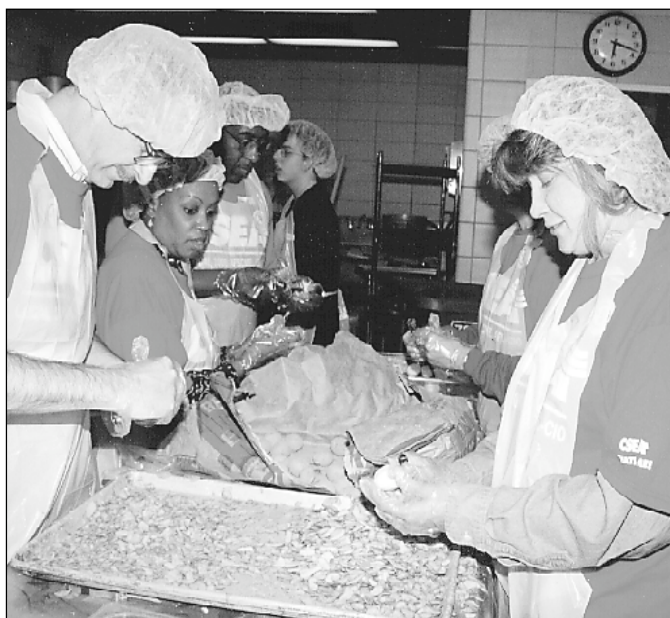
Union members are encouraged to become involved in the National Labor Committee's (NLC) drive to increase the wages of Nicaraguan workers who make blue jeans for pennies an hour.

Charles Kernaghan, executive director of the NLC, told union members in Albany recently about the targeting of the Target and Kohl's department stores that purchase from manufacturers resisting an 8-cent an hour increase for the Nicaraguan workers.

While not boycotting those stores because the Nicaraguans need the work, the NLC said it needs supporters to pressure the retailers to push for the increased workers' wages.

The NLC is an independent, non-profit human rights organization focused on the protection of worker rights — especially those of children and young women who assemble garments for export to the U.S. from Third World countries.

For more information, call the NLC at 212-242-3002 or visit their Web site at [www.nlcnet.org](http://www.nlcnet.org).



## Labor of love

Thanks to volunteers, the annual Equinox Thanksgiving Dinner held in Albany provides a traditional turkey dinner with all the fixings to anyone in the community who is less fortunate or who does not want to spend the holiday alone. Every year volunteers help prepare, serve and deliver the meals to thousands. From left are CSEA members Ed Eades, Sarah Roberts, Johnnie Yarbrough, Linda Schwabb (hidden) and Capital Region President Kathy Garrison.



## Empire Plan changes take effect Jan. 1

Several changes in health insurance coverage will begin Jan. 1 for CSEA members who work in state government and are enrolled in the Empire Plan. These changes are part of the 1999-2003 contract between CSEA and the state.

**Hearing Aid Benefit:** \$1,000 (increased from \$800) basic medical benefit which includes evaluation, fitting and purchase of the hearing aid up to \$1,000 every four years. Children 12 and under once every two years.

**Participating Provider Co-pay:** \$8 co-payment (increased from \$5) for office visits, surgical procedures performed during an office visit, radiology services and diagnostic laboratory services performed by an Empire Plan participating provider.

As in the past, if both an office visit and office surgery are performed in a single visit, only a single co-payment applies to the visit; if both radiology services and outpatient diagnostic laboratory services are rendered during a single visit, only a single co-payment applies.

**ValueOptions Substance Abuse Co-pay:** \$8 co-pay (increased from \$5) for approved medically necessary outpatient substance abuse visits. For additional information or to obtain authorization, members may call ValueOptions at 1-800-446-3995.

**Managed Physical Medicine Program:** \$8 co-pay (increased from \$5) for approved medically necessary services typically performed by a chiropractor or physical therapist.

These services include office visits and related radiology and diagnostic laboratory services performed by participating Managed Physical Network providers.

For additional information on participating providers, call MPN at 1-800-942-4640.

**Physical Therapy in the Hospital Outpatient:** \$8 co-pay for physical therapy services received as an outpatient in a hospital, when services are in connection with a recent (within six months) hospitalization or related inpatient or outpatient surgery.

**Basic Medical Deductible:** \$175 annual basic medical deductible (increased from \$161) for medical services by non-participating providers. The basic medical annual deductible is \$175 for the enrollee, \$175 for the enrolled spouse/domestic partner, and \$175 for all dependent children combined.

**Home Care Advocacy Program (HCAP):** Network benefits still paid in full when members call HCAP and precertify care before they receive services, equipment and/or supplies from an HCAP-approved provider.

If HCAP is not called or members do not use an HCAP provider, they will only be reimbursed up to 50 percent of the network allowance, after their deductible is met.

**For more information, call the Home Care Advocacy Program at 1-800-638-9918.**

## Health insurance option transfer period extended until Dec. 29

Members who are considering changing health insurance options for 2001 should weigh many factors before making a decision.

A good source of specific health insurance information is the free Choices guide available from the agency health benefits administrator.

Choices contains information on the Empire Plan and the health maintenance organizations which participate in the New York State Health Insurance Plan (NYSHIP).

There are many factors that affect health plan choices for the new year.

Enrollees and their families enrolled in Independent Health (Hudson Valley Region) must choose a new health carrier because this HMO is no longer offered to state employees after Jan. 1.

Additionally, some health insurance plans that participate with NYSHIP will change their physician visit and/or prescription drug co-pays effective Jan. 1.

CSEA members should review the Choices guide and become familiar with the plans offered under NYSHIP.

### Check the rates

Rates are another factor that will affect health plan decisions.

At the time this article went to press, the health insurance rates and deadlines publication for 2001 was being printed and mailed to enrollees' homes.

Members who want to change health insurance options must submit a signed Health Insurance Transaction Form PS-404, to their agency health benefits administrator by Dec. 29.

Whether enrolled in the Empire Plan or an HMO, New York State pays most of the premium.

For Empire Plan enrollees, the state pays 90 percent of the cost of individual and 75 percent of the cost of dependent coverage toward the hospital/medical/mental health and substance abuse components provided under the Empire Plan.

The state's maximum contribution toward HMO premiums in 2001 will continue to be 90 percent of individual, 75 percent of dependent coverage toward the hospital/medical/mental health and substance abuse components provided under the HMO, not to exceed its dollar contribution of the non-prescription drug components of the Empire Plan premium.

According to the 1999-2003 contract with CSEA, the state will pay the entire cost of individual and dependent prescription drug

premium under the Empire Plan and HMOs until Jan. 1, 2003. The 2001 biweekly health insurance premium deductions for CSEA active state employees are:

### 2001 Health Insurance Rates For CSEA Active Employees

Health Plan Name	NYSHIP Option Code	2001	2001
		Individual Code	Family Code
The Empire Plan	001	\$8.63	\$37.98
Aetna US Healthcare	210	\$21.07	\$79.36
Blue Choice	066	\$16.34	\$71.97
Blue Choice HMO (Upstate)	280	\$8.75	\$60.14
Blue Choice HMO (Downstate)	290	\$21.59	\$93.69
CDPHP (Capital)	063	\$8.14	\$45.21
CDPHP (Central)	300	\$15.54	\$75.63
CDPHP (W. Hudson Valley)	310	\$18.82	\$84.14
Community Blue	067	\$6.87	\$37.30
GHI HMO Select	220	\$10.93	\$66.29
HIP Health Plan	050	\$10.52	\$50.23
HMO Blue	160	\$29.87	\$101.34
HMO-CNY	072	\$24.40	\$106.65
Independent Health	059	\$6.34	\$34.73
MVP	060	\$13.19	\$71.98
Preferred Care	058	\$15.81	\$71.64
United Healthcare	260	\$24.93	\$104.48
Univera Healthcare (CNY)	055	\$12.13	\$74.06
Univera Healthcare (WNY)	057	\$6.61	\$35.86
Vytra Health Plus	070	\$27.62	\$112.66

### Payroll dates

Members who change health insurance options should note the effective date of the new health insurance option for employees under the administrative payroll is Jan. 4.

The earliest paycheck in which a premium adjustment will be made for administrative lag-exempt employees is Dec. 20.

The earliest paycheck in which a premium adjustment will be made for administrative lag employees is Jan. 3.

The effective date of the new health insurance option for employees under the institutional payroll is Dec. 28.

The earliest paycheck in which institutional members will see a health insurance deduction change will be the payroll check of Dec. 28.

Because of processing time, most paycheck changes will be made retroactively in mid to late January and will include retroactive deductions to the effective date of coverage.

More information about the option transfer period is available at the agency personnel office.

## Rx reminder for CSEA members enrolled in NYSHIP

Active CSEA state employees who are enrolled in the New York State Health Insurance Plan (NYSHIP) are now receiving information regarding their health insurance plans, (either the Empire Plan or HMO), premium rates and benefits for 2001.

When reviewing this information, members should keep in mind that if they are enrolled in the Empire Plan or an HMO, New York State pays the lion's share of the cost of the medical premium. Members pay only 10 percent of the cost of the individual premium and 25 percent of the cost of any dependent coverage medical premium.

Prescription drugs are handled differently. According to the 1999-2003 collective bargaining agreement, New York State is obligated to pay 100 percent of the individual and dependent

prescription drug premiums under the Empire Plan and HMOs until Jan. 1, 2003. Members pay nothing for prescription drug premiums until that date.

An enrollee covered by the Empire Plan will experience a \$4.07 biweekly savings since he or she does not have to contribute toward an individual prescription drug premium or a \$13.37 biweekly savings since he or she does not have to contribute to the family prescription drug premium.

Enrollees covered by an HMO will also experience a biweekly savings, however, the savings vary by plan. The Rates and Deadlines guide lists all the NYSHIP plans and the 2001 premiums.

Members who compare Schedule II (CSEA - not paying Rx

premiums) and Schedule I (other unions and M/C that pay Rx premiums), can determine the savings are since they are not contributing toward their prescription drug premium.

While CSEA has been able to negotiate these prescription drug cost savings for members, enrollees should be aware that they will begin to pay prescription drug premiums (10 percent and 25 percent) on Jan. 1, 2003.

Even though this is two years away, members should begin to recognize this future expense.

The escalating cost of prescription drugs may make this cost significant unless action is taken on the state or federal level to deal with this issue.



# 2001 CSEA ELECTIONS Info

## Local, unit elections scheduled for 2001

### Elections will be conducted for all local officers, for delegates and for all unit officers

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

Each local and unit executive board must select its own Election Committee and committee

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

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

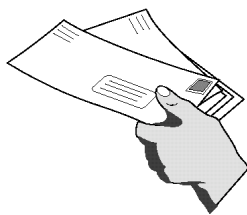
Members may run as individual candidates if they wish.

### Attention: Local, unit presidents

#### **Did you send Election Committee Data Form to CSEA headquarters?**

Election of local officers, delegates and unit officers will be conducted between May 15 and June 15, 2001. Each local and unit executive board must have its own Election Committee and committee chairperson to oversee the election. Election material and information cannot be sent to the committee until the committee Data Form is filed with Headquarters.

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



### Important Information about slate petitioning and slate voting

#### Local Elections

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

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

#### Unit Elections

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

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

#### Candidates should know the following:

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

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

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

More detailed information about election slates will be available from local and unit election committees.

### Nominating procedure for small CSEA locals and units: special election rules apply

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

Special election rules apply for CSEA locals and units of 10 or fewer members.

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

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



## Unit helps build political muscle

# Cohoes workers use power of the ballot box to improve work and city

COHOES — They took on city hall and landed on the smelly end of a garbage truck for 14 months.

During this “punishment” for the activism, they pulled the political rug out from underneath the feet of the entrenched mayor and made sure he didn’t run for re-election.

CSEA members Bob Pierre and George Hebert, the mainstays of the 42-member Cohoes CSEA Department of Public Works Unit, are prime examples of union members across the state who recognize — and use — the power of the ballot box to improve their work life.

### Contracting out sparked the fight

“The former administration wanted to contract out our water and sewage pumping station members,” Pierre said about the former mayor’s plans to solve the city’s dire fiscal woes.

“The privateer was going to advance the city so much money that all of the fiscal shenanigans of the old administration would have been covered up and the city would be in that much deeper of a hole at a future date,” he said.

“But they forgot to tell us their plan,” Hebert said dryly.

“We turned to the CSEA Capital Region and the union’s political action experts for help, first to fight the subcontractor and then to help us turn Cohoes around,” Hebert added.

### Relentless pressure

The anti-privatization battle went public and high profile quickly.

Hebert, who has a vicious cartooning pen, got up very early each morning so he could park his van



Cohoes DPW workers Bob Pierre and George Hebert talk to reporters.

covered with sarcastic cartoons across from city hall’s main entrance.

Pierre worked behind the scenes with the city’s citizens and CSEA members to help them understand the full consequences of losing this contracting out battle.

“If we let the jobs go we were letting our city crumble,” Pierre said. “We told the citizens, the taxpayers, the unvarnished truth. We could do the job if the administration knew how to manage. They didn’t and we needed a new administration interested in solving problems, not in selling out services,” Pierre said.

Bowing to CSEA-generated public pressure, the mayor killed the controversial contracting out plan.

### Immersed in politics

A private, behind-the-scenes political battle then started within the city’s century-old Democratic machine.

Hebert ran for a party committee post and won. CSEA backed John McDonald, a young pharmacist from the community, for mayor in the party’s primary.

Primary Day is Election Day in Cohoes because the Democratic party’s enrollment is 11,000 compared with the 650 Republicans in the city.

McDonald won with CSEA’s help. “We know the McDonald administration is moving forward. And we, the citizen/workers, are working with the administration everyday to make Cohoes the best city it can be.”

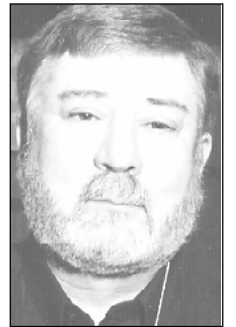
— Daniel X. Campbell

## Electing worker-friendly pols makes a difference

MAYVILLE — You can fire your boss.

Any union member who questions the power of the ballot box should call the CSEA Chautauqua County Employees Unit.

“Our members’ political activism was a prime factor in getting a new county executive, Mark Thomas, elected two years ago. The difference in labor-management relations is like night and day,” said Jim Smith, Unit president.



Chautauqua Co. Unit President Jim Smith

## Proof positive ONE VOTE COUNTS

*With the 2000 campaigns and recounts fading like candidates’ lawn signs in the sun, CSEA political activists are gearing up for an intense round of local government elections this year.*

*CSEA’s get-out-the-vote effort paid off handsomely, with 93 percent of CSEA-endorsed candidates being elected to positions ranging from city council to U.S. Senate.*

*Should union members forget the power of one vote, the stories on these pages serve as a potent reminder for next year.*

### Kept his word

“Since his election, Mark has been true to his promise of fair dealings with the union, and we are working together on several areas that will improve delivery of public services, without the fear of undermining job security,” Smith added.

The grassroots efforts of CSEA members in the campaign were outstanding, union leaders said.

“Our members were coming out of the woodwork to help with phone banking, stuffing envelopes, ringing doorbells, whatever was asked of them,” Smith said proudly.

“Many had never been active before, but they responded to the call. They also knew that the past administration’s negativism would continue, and that taxpayers weren’t getting the bang for the buck they deserved, when there are continuing labor-management conflicts clouding the workplace atmosphere,” Smith said.

Smith emphasized that the cooperation and coordination of CSEA’s political action entities, from the Local, region and headquarters, helped produce an election success.

“We couldn’t be happier about the results,” Smith said.

— Ron Wofford



## Free job skills training for state ASU members

CSEA members who work in the administrative services unit (ASU) in state government can hone their clerical and secretarial skills with free training offered by the union at locations across the state this winter and spring.

Since 1979, the Clerical and Secretarial Employee Advancement Program (CSEAP) has trained New York State's clerical and secretarial workers with courses ranging from career planning and oral and written communications to government, math and accounting.

Courses in personal computer application software, secretarial practices, stress management and work management are also offered.

All courses are one to three days in length and are held during normal

working hours at 17 locations statewide.

Applications are accepted up to the course start date.

Applications and course descriptions are in CSEAP's "Resources for Skill Development" catalogs available at the agency's training, personnel or affirmative action office or from the CSEA Local president.

Catalogs and applications can also be found on the Web site [www.cs.state.ny.un/cseap](http://www.cs.state.ny.un/cseap).

For more information about these courses or the CSEAP program, call (518) 457-6306.

**For a complete listing of course descriptions, dates and locations, visit the CSEA Web page at [www.cseainc.org](http://www.cseainc.org).**

### Break in membership affects eligibility for union office, voting privileges

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

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

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

If you go on unpaid leave or for any other reason have a break in your employment status, your dues will not continue to be paid through payroll deductions. You must make arrangements to pay your dues directly to CSEA to continue your membership status. If you are either laid off or placed on leave without pay status due to becoming disabled by accident, illness, maternity or paternity, you may be eligible for dues-free membership status for a period not to exceed one year.

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

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

### WHERE'S THE STATE CONTRACT?

— Contract language was completed in mid-November and the push is on to get the contract printed. Contracts are expected to be printed and mailed by January. All state employees will be mailed their copy of the CSEA/New York State contract for their particular bargaining unit ...

**VACATION FIGHT** — CSEA member Kevin Newcomb can take a one-day vacation from his pressure cooker job as a dispatcher in the Schenectady Police Department because the union defended his and his co-workers' right to do so. CSEA filed a grievance and cited past practice of the department. An arbitrator agreed with CSEA's position ...

**WORKING FOR A CAUSE** — Two CSEA members and a staff attorney are active in the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement. Members Edith Anguilar and Alfredo Carlo and CSEA headquarters attorney Mike Ortiz participated in the organization's recent annual



meeting... **PARKING LOT FLAP** — Union leaders warned Schenectady politicians not to deprive CSEA-

represented city workers of 60 free parking spaces they won in a hard-fought arbitration case that went to the state Supreme Court. The city council passed a resolution that would have changed the parking situation without first negotiating with CSEA. The matter was resolved in negotiations ...

**PEOPLE PERSON** — The PEOPLE recruiter of the month for November is Pat Metzger, a state Tax and Finance employee in CSEA's Metropolitan Region. She has recruited 58 new PEOPLE members. PEOPLE is AFSCME's political action program aimed at electing friends of working families to Congress ... **HISTORIC APPOINTMENT** — The New York Labor History Association has appointed CSEA Capital Region Labor Relations Specialist Art Fleischner to its board of directors.

## Summary of Nov. 2000 statewide board of directors meeting



*Editor's note: The following is statewide Secretary Barbara Reeves' report on the CSEA Board of Directors meeting Nov. 9.*

ALBANY — CSEA's statewide Board of Directors met on Nov. 9, 2000. In official business, the board:

- Authorized leases for office space and a copier for Cortland County Local 812;
- Designated dates and places for upcoming Retiree Division meetings (Sept. 13 to 16, 2001/Radisson Corning; Aug. 22 to 25, 2002/Hilton Rye Town, Rye Brook; Aug. 20 to 24, 2003/Sheraton Four Points, Buffalo; and Sept. 9 to 12, 2004/Gideon Putnam, Saratoga);
- Created Local 470 (Office for Technology) and Local 884 (Clinton County Employees), renamed Local 810 (Clinton County Municipal and School District Employees) and dissolved Local 724 (Pius XII Holy Cross Campus);

- Put into administratorship Herkimer CSD Part-Time Unit 7112-02/Local 822, Greater Amsterdam SD Teacher Aides Unit 7502-02/Local 829, Floral Park/Bellrose SD Unit 7615 of Local 865 and Potsdam SD Unit 8421/Local 873;
- Amended Local and Unit constitutions to change the term of office for Local, Unit and section officers to four years, effective July 1, 2001;
- Amended Local and Unit constitutions to require that only the last four digits of the Social Security number along with the first initial of the member's last name be required on nominating petitions;
- Extended for five years contract with Clarity Publishing Co. to publish *The Work Force*;
- Designated Bruce Damalt, Lorna Wood, Olga White and Jeffrey Darton to serve on the Central Region Political Action Committee; and
- Approved as members of the Western Region Political Action Committee Barbara Biniecki, Sandie Boyd, Don Brisky, Kathy Button, Ron Castle, David Celani, Ed Blodgett, Dave Bloom,

Yvonne Brown, Pam Cercone, Doris Cota, John Crawford, Ken Curry, Jeane Dean, Orlo Derby, Judy DiPaola, Bob Ellis, Timothy Finnigan, Mike Fulater, Bernadette Giambra, Eric Guzdek, Wilma Hasser, Steve Hurley, Don Johnson, Mike Jones, Jim Kurtz, Bonnie Lawrence, Larry Lynch, Bob Lukowski, Robert Mootry Jr., Bruce Norton, Marcia Olszewski, Charles Parsons, Paul Peters, Gerald Prince, Bob Pyjas, Linda Radesi, Tom Rogalski, Debi Sherk, Dawn Smith, Jim Smith, Sally Smith, Bonnie Sprague, John Stading, Carol Thornton, Elaine Timm, Steve Torrey, Mary Jo Tubbs, Charles Venditte, Donna Vickman, Jim Volpone, John Wallenbeck, Paul Walters, Tom Warzel, Duane Wilcox and staff consultant Bill Benfanti.

**Questions concerning the summary should be directed to CSEA Statewide Secretary Barbara Reeves, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Ave., Albany, N.Y. 12210, 1-800-342-4146 or (518) 257-1253.**



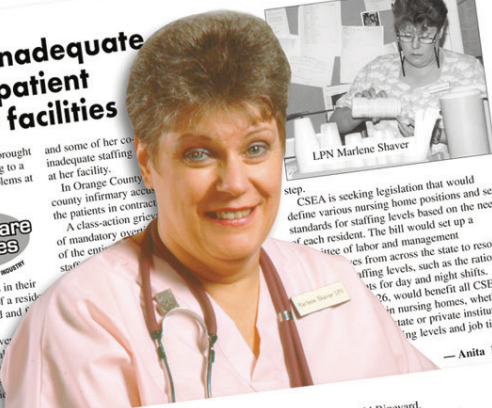
**Telling the public: Inadequate staffing hurts patient care in county facilities**

**KINGSTON/GOSHEN** — Managers brought Marlene Shaver up on charges for talking to a newspaper reporter about recurring problems at the Ulster County Infirmary.

Fifty miles away in Goshen, the commissioner of the Orange County Infirmary accused CSEA members of involving patients in their contract struggle after the daughter of a resident complained when her mother slipped and the facility.

Inadequate staffing, mandatory overtime, feeding two patients at once and waiting patients at 4 a.m. to get their ready breakfast are some of the problems members who work in both facilities face.

The state attorney general's office



**Missionary work: Africa beckons CSEA activist**

**BUFFALO** — The oppressive heat, the teeming humanity, the overwhelming poverty

like TB, polio and others are victims on the African continent inspiring to see many of our skills helping out. But some healing is still needed.

No labor organized labor presentation, a former colony "My heart went out to impressed with how hard are," she said.

Most people are independent goods at the market, or on capacities we still

"We didn't see signs of

CSEA is seeking legislation that would define various nursing home positions and set standards for staffing levels based on the needs of each resident. The bill would set up a

of labor and management from across the state to resolve staffing levels, such as the ratio of for day and night shifts.

26, would benefit all CSEA in nursing homes, whether state or private institutions, ng levels and job titles.

— Anita Manley



**Companion for foster 'dad' has noble duty in future**

**ENDICOTT** — CSEA activist Bob Campbell was grief-stricken last year over the loss of the dog he had owned for 16 years.

He wanted another dog, but the pain of losing a pet was too fresh.

Then he found a unique way to help himself and others.

A program seeking "foster families" for dogs trained to aid disabled individuals was a perfect match for Campbell.

"I wanted to do some volunteer work to help the community, and I like to help people who have needs, and I like dogs," he said.

Campbell, a meter repairman in the Endicott Light Department, and CSEA unit secretary, interviewed with Canine Working Companions to see if he would be a good foster "dad."

Shortly after, he brought home Kyle, a yellow Labrador retriever, now one year old. Campbell brings Kyle to work every day to get the dog used to being around people in the work environment.

"When he's assigned to someone in the future, they may have a job, or be one because he's there. He'll be spending eight hours with me," Campbell said.



**On and off the job, volunteer tackles important jobs with gusto**

**BUFFALO** — "I'm just giving back to my community, because without my receiving the same kind of help in my youth, I might have ended up on the streets," said Norm Bineyard.

For Bineyard, a father who works two jobs, helping young people is part of his and off the job.



the county," said Bineyard.

"So thanks to my understanding wife, I have most of my evenings devoted to coaching and helping out at the two football programs, at Farmer Carroll High as defensive coordinator and at the Buffalo Vista as league vice president (and past president).

"I help out wherever I can be of practice days, I help out with and I also like to break down and some of the sidelines helping everything, or

involved with kids for 12 years

our field lighting, yard, people grow and, who at his



**Hannibal bus driver's charges succeed in reading challenge**

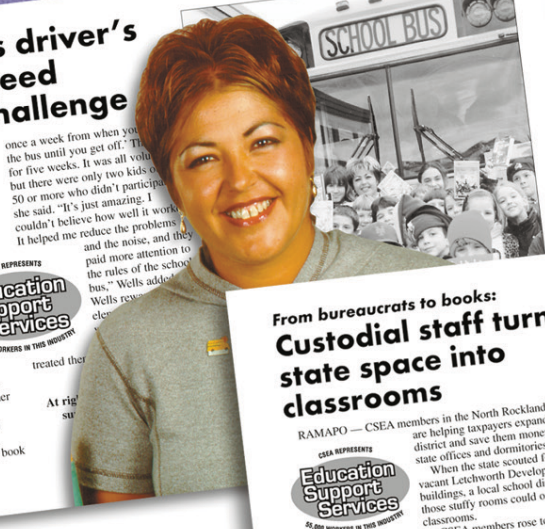
**HANNIBAL** — Like many bus drivers, Kelly Wells wanted to build a better relationship with the children she transports, but she first had to turn down the volume.

"When I first started in September, I wasn't sure it was for me," Wells said.

"It was very loud. I couldn't deal with it safely. Any attention that brings your eyes from the road is a safety problem. If I'm watching them in the mirror, I'm not watching the road," the new driver said.

Frustrated about the distracting noise and behavior problems on her 30-mile, hour-long route, Wells tossed the book at the elementary students.

"I told them 'let's just read a book once a week from when you get on the bus until you get off.' It was for five weeks. It was all voluntary but there were only two kids who 50 or more who didn't participate," she said. "It's just amazing. I couldn't believe how well it worked. It helped me reduce the problems and the noise, and they paid more attention to the rules of the school bus," Wells revealed.



**From bureaucrats to books: Custodial staff turns state space into classrooms**

**RAMAPO** — CSEA members in the North Rockland School district are helping taxpayers expand their district and save them money by recycling state offices and dormitories into classrooms.

When the state scouted for uses of the vacant Letchworth Developmental Center buildings, a local school district leader those staff rooms could one day be classrooms.

CSEA members rose to the challenge by converting dingy offices and dorm rooms which once housed bureaucrats and clients into sparkling classrooms.

"The challenge was here," said CSEA Unit President Mattie Leone. "It goes to show what everybody steps in."

Indeed, everyone joined the effort. North Rockland School District Superintendent he could count on the CSEA members of the buildings into classrooms and save

"I told the guys (on the custodial staff) to take a showpiece. They took the in"

North Rockland School



**Who are these people?**

Part of New York's leading union -- 265,000 members united to get essential work done right.

On the job and off the job members of the CSEA Work Force are a vital part of every school district, town, city and county in New York State. On the job we provide the vital services you depend on. The services that keep every man, woman and child safe, secure and healthy.

Off the job, we don't turn off our concern - we keep on helping to make New York a better place to live.

Every day of every year, in every kind of job, in every part of the state, the CSEA Work Force is getting the job done, and doing the job right.

**CSEA - That's Me!**

**CSEA**  
The Work Force  
Local 1000 AFSCME, AFL-CIO  
Danny Donohue, President