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superhighway
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Member finds cash cache
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Vol. 2 / No. 6

JUNE 1999

THE WORK FORCE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION **CSEA** Local 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO



Photo by Ann Carroll

**Fed
up?
Stand
up!**

**CSEA members protest
budget cuts, demand
fairness for working
families.**

SEE PAGE 3.

Your Western Frontier newsletter is enclosed

Photo of the Month

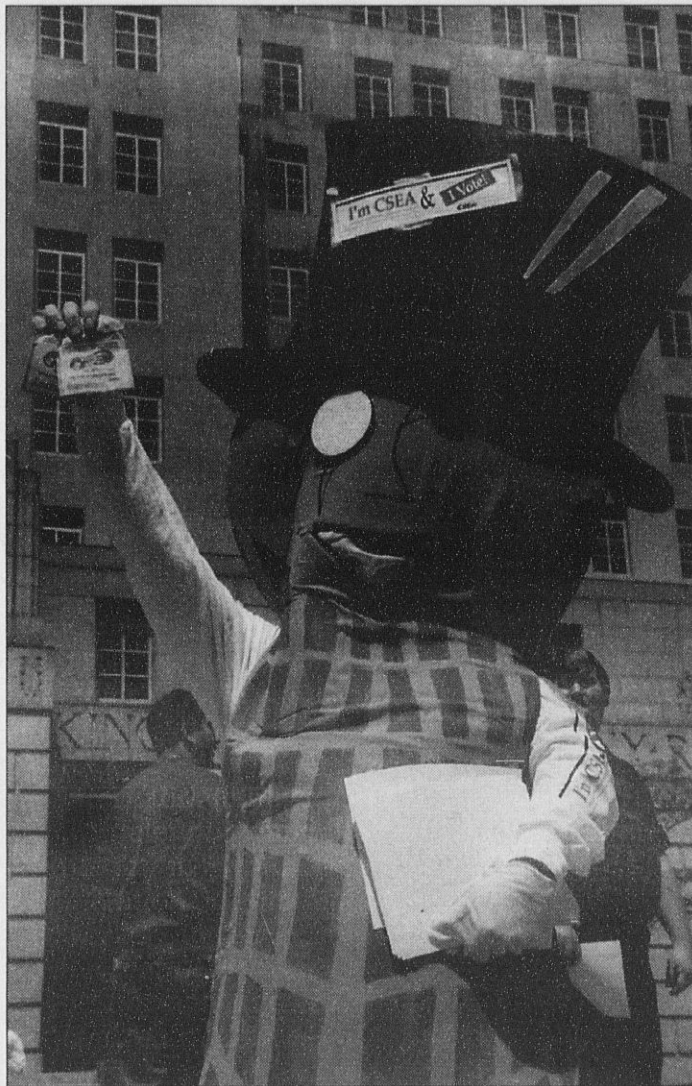


Photo by Ed Molitor

Ken Koopman, Capital Region Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Local secretary, taunts Gov. George Pataki during a noon rally outside the state Capitol. The "Peanuts from Pataki" protest drove CSEA's point home to thousands.

State workshop hammers home demands for a fair contract

LAKE PLACID — Contract fever was in the air in Lake Placid as representatives from state division locals participated in a two-day CSEA State Workshop, jam-packed with contract information.

Article by article, line by line, members of the CSEA negotiating team went over the list of demands both

CSEA and the state presented in the second round of contract negotiations, including the CSEA demand for a three-year contract with 6 percent increases each year.

"You sent a message loud and clear that you want some respect. You want more money. You want your benefits left alone. You want your raise in April. You're tired of doing more with less," said CSEA President Danny Donohue as he kicked-off the State Division Workshop.

"Let me make this pledge ... We will fight until CSEA members have the respect they deserve."

Members from across the state then told the negotiating team what demands they thought most important, and what demands they felt needed to be strengthened even further.

"The state should pay all workers' compensation costs, because by making us do more with less, they are causing accidents," said David Celani of the Western Region DOT local.

"They claim they support safety, but they don't walk the walk."

"We have formulated our demands based upon

what you have told us you want. And they are just, fair demands," said CSEA Statewide Secretary Barbara Reeves.

"But for these demands to become a reality, we must stand up and fight for them. We must stand up and speak out all across the state, wherever the governor goes, and let him know that we demand respect. We demand a fair contract."

... **AFSCME President Gerald McEntee** used the Fairness for Working Families rally in New York City last month to take the governor to task for the lack of progress on a new CSEA state contract.

"Governor Pataki, it's time to hammer out a contract that everyone can not only live with, but live on!" McEntee told more than 50,000 unionists at the rally.

The next day, CSEA activists including Western Region President Bob Lattimer confronted the governor on the steps of Buffalo City Hall about the state contract issue.

See Page 3 for more news on the state budget crisis.

Talk with your union president

CSEA President Danny Donohue meets regularly with members across the state to discuss important workplace issues affecting workers in local and state government and in the private sector. A Western Region meeting was held in April.

Central Region

June 3, 1-7 p.m.
Jefferson County Local 823 Office
Globe Mini Mall
302 Court St., Watertown
Call 315-433-0050 to schedule an appointment.

Capital Region

June 15, 1-7 p.m.
Plattsburgh Satellite Office
6 Booth Drive, Plattsburgh
Call 518-563-0761 to schedule an appointment.

Southern Region

Sept. 15
Region 3 Office
735 State Route 52
Beacon

Metropolitan Region

Nov. 9
Region 2 Office
40 Fulton St.
22nd Floor
New York

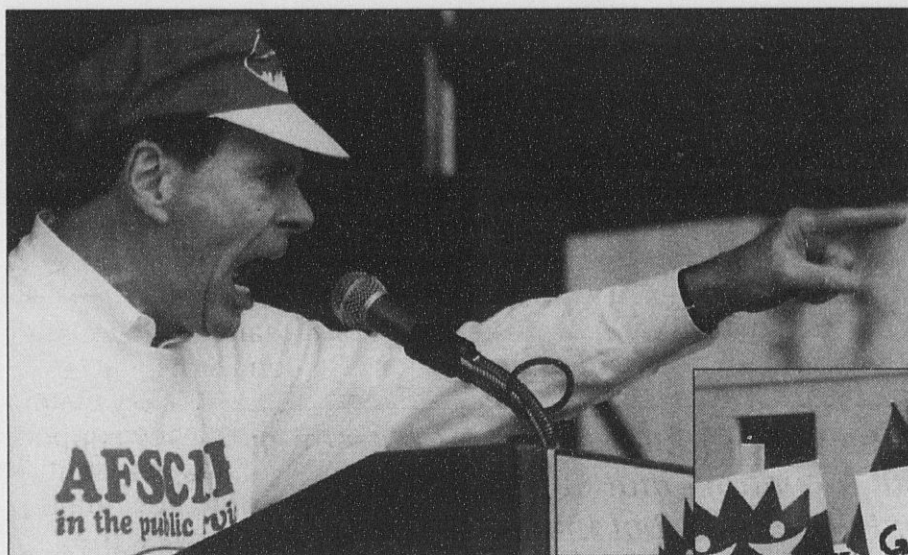
Long Island Region

Dec. 9
Riverhead Ramada
Route 25 at Exit 72
Riverhead

CORRECTION — Frank Celentano was inadvertently left off the list of state negotiating team members in the May *Work Force*. He is Plant Utilities Engineer II in the SUNY Stony Brook. Local. Also, several job titles were incorrect. The correct titles follow: Tony Bailous, Plant Utilities Engineer III; Tom Moylan, Clerk II; Debora Boyd, Secretary I.

State budget snafu fueling labor's fires

ALBANY — As the state Legislature lurches toward adjournment this month without an on-time budget for the 15th straight year, union members continue to fight for their jobs and the vital services they provide.



Above, AFSCME President Gerald McEntee stirs the crowd at a 50,000-plus labor rally in New York City. At right, CSEA members demand a fair budget. Below, CSEA members confront Gov. Pataki during a public appearance in Buffalo.



This indecision on the state budget is creating havoc for CSEA members and their jobs.

State agencies, local governments, school districts and even the private sector are sweating the budget impasse as their money dwindles without knowing when the next cash transfusion will arrive.

"The governor's proposed budget hurts working families and it's not acceptable!" said CSEA President Danny Donohue.

Not sitting still

CSEA is countering this Capitol inaction with union action.

From the jammed streets of a Manhattan labor rally to the halls of the statehouse, CSEA members took Gov. George Pataki to task for pushing a budget that would gut vital public services.

The union's barrage began at a New York City labor rally last month that brought out more than 50,000 activists who heard American

Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) President Gerald McEntee blast Pataki's spending plan.

"It's time for (Pataki) to listen to working men and women instead of (his) Wall Street friends," McEntee told a huge Manhattan crowd, which thundered its approval with applause and cheers.

"It's time for you to do the job we elected you to do. It's time for you to stop holding the people of this state hostage!" McEntee shouted.

Hundreds of CSEA members, led by Donohue and CSEA Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio, converged on Manhattan for the rally, carrying placards that said: "Budget Cuts: No Gain, More Pain!" and "Show Some Respect!"



Albany's budget laziness means trouble for working families

For months, the governor's proposed budget has been a lightning rod for criticism from unions and other groups.

More than \$2 billion would be slashed from health care, including drastic cuts in Medicaid which would leave counties with gaping holes in their health care budgets.

"The governor has proposed Medicaid cuts to hospitals, nursing homes and home care service which will hit the public facilities the hardest," said Nick LaMorte, Long Island region president, during a legislative hearing on budget cuts.

LaMorte said Pataki should visit public hospitals such as the Nassau County Medical Center "to see the important and lifesaving work that is done there. Perhaps

he would rethink his cuts when he realized vital services like these would be in jeopardy."

Education, mental health in jeopardy

Proposed budget cuts of equal severity would trash important education programs, including some offered by BOCES.

Pataki also proposes cutting almost \$1 billion from public schools and colleges, and CSEA members are lobbying to restore the money so students can meet the Regents new higher standards.

The union continues to fight the proposed budget cuts in mental health, where an estimated 970 full-time workers

may be fired and 470 beds in state Office of Mental Health (OMH) facilities may be lost. The New York Cares initiative, which would eliminate waiting lists for services for the mentally retarded and developmentally disabled, is on hold.

CSEA is lobbying to make sure that program includes a commitment to use union members to work with those new community-based beds.

"We don't approve of (Pataki's) deep cuts in education funding, health care funding and job creation — especially in a year in which the state has budget surpluses that could easily cover those cuts," AFSCME President Gerald McEntee said.

THE WORK FORCE

ISSN 1522-1091

Official publication of
CSEA Local 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO
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Albany, NY 12210-2303
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The Work Force (USPS 0445-010) is published monthly by The CSEA Publication Office: 143 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12210. Periodical Mail Postage paid at Post Office, Albany, New York 12288.

Postmaster: Send address changes to:
CSEA, Attn: Membership Department,
143 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12210.
CSEA online: The CSEA Web site
can be accessed at www.cseainc.org

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Albany, NY 12210-2303.

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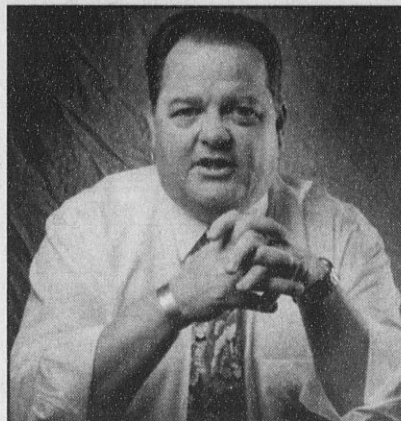
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In Touch with the WORK FORCE



CSEA President Danny Donohue

Fed up?

Stand up!

That's just what CSEA members and tens of thousands of other unionists did at a recent New York labor rally (See pages 1 and 3 of this edition).

It was exciting and energizing to see CSEA members demand fairness for working families.

It made me proud to see CSEA members stand up for what's right when it comes to the governor's budget priorities. It made me proud to see CSEA members demonstrate loud and clear that you won't settle for peanuts.

And it made me proud to see CSEA members standing up to demand some respect.

The governor and the other politicians in this state had better wake up fast because CSEA and the other unions of this state are standing up to be counted. And what's more, we've earned our fair share.

Since it was first proposed in January, CSEA has said repeatedly the governor's budget is not acceptable. More than a billion dollars in Medicaid cuts will undermine the stability of hospitals and other health care facilities in the public and private sector in every part of this state. It will hurt the quality and availability of health care services. It will also mean the loss of jobs in the health care field.

Cuts in education funding, the elimination of more than 800 mental health jobs and failure to adequately cover road and bridge repair are also not acceptable. All this while the state is sitting on a multi-billion dollar budget surplus that CSEA members helped create through hard work and sacrifice.

The governor's hands-off approach to any kind of budget negotiations is even worse. It must also be pointed out that this same arrogance is increasingly apparent in the lack of movement from the governor's side in our state contract negotiations.

Whether it's the budget or contracts, it's time for the governor to get to work to reach agreements that treat CSEA families with fairness and respect.

Judging from the spirit and strength CSEA members are already showing, the governor ignores these issues at his own peril.

Danny

Hanging tough at two health care centers swamped in red ink

CSEA members are hanging tough at two private sector health care facilities in Western New York as they endure threats of firings, hospital closings and payroll checks that may bounce.

The union has filed unfair labor practice charges against Lockport Memorial Hospital, wracked by a three-year, \$7 million deficit caused in large part by faulty bookkeeping.

The crunch has forced the hospital to ask its creditors — including the city — to forgive large chunks of debt and ask its employees in four unions to accept a 10 percent cut in pay and benefits.

CSEA members and those in three other unions overwhelmingly rejected any cuts.

“Our members support the hospital and want to keep it open,” said Stephene Sanmarco, local president.

“CSEA members are already among the lowest paid at the hospital, and would be least able to sustain pay cuts.

“Our members are working hard to maintain their high

standards, even in the face of the uncertainty of the hospital’s future, and they should be saluted for doing so,” Sanmarco added.

The unions’ stance has been met with threats of the hospital’s imminent closing, layoffs (three so far, but 17 workers received pink slips) and pay days with warnings by management to “cash their checks right away, because they might bounce.”

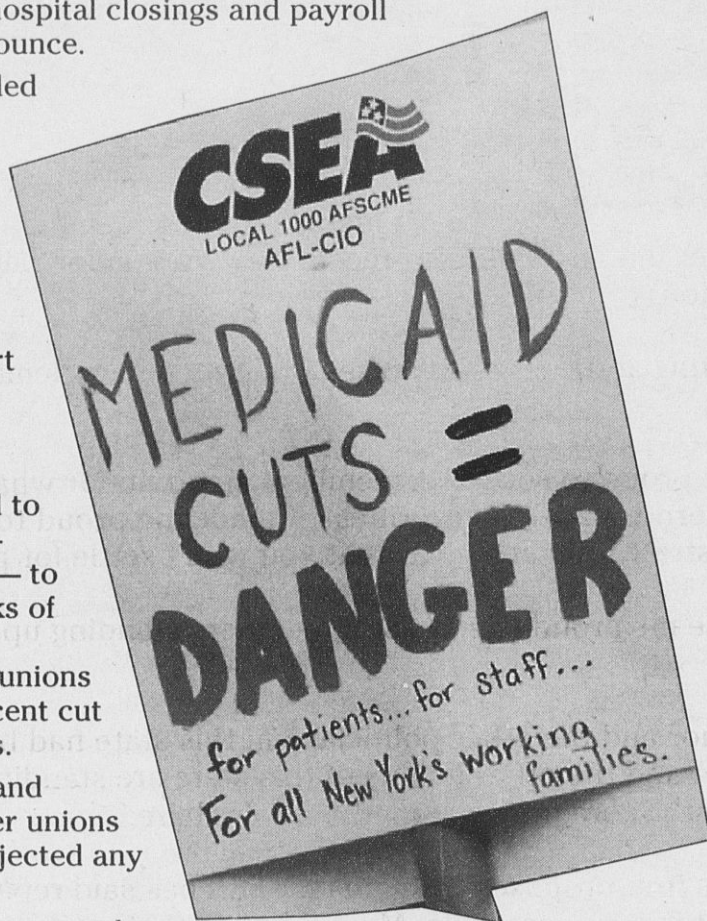
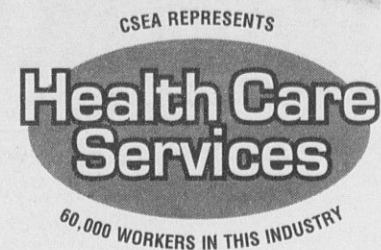
“Our members are working hard to maintain their high standards, even in the face of the uncertainty of the hospital’s future ...”

LOCKPORT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
LOCAL PRESIDENT
STEPHENE SANMARCO

Geneva B. Scruggs Center, a Buffalo community outpatient health care facility with an intermediate care facility for the developmentally disabled where most CSEA members work, are also unsure of their future.

Three health care systems, including the non-profit corporation running the facility, are battling over a promised \$1.2 million federal grant, which will help the center through tough financial times.

— Ron Wofford

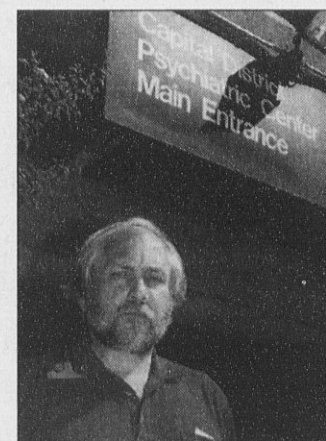


Voices of the Work Force

“The toughest part of the job is fundamentally being understaffed — doing too much, with too few. Just taking a break creates a dangerous situation on the unit.

“Patient care has deteriorated. We don’t have enough people to follow needs closely, especially when we have to be much more security conscious.”

Steve Trimm, MHTA
Capital District Psychiatric Center



"The girls are worse than the boys!"

Fighting on two fronts stresses members at Tryon

JOHNSTOWN — When teen-age girls get in CSEA member Joe Melita's face, they do it with a vengeance.

He's been sucker punched, pushed, kicked, scratched, slapped, and most recently, dealt a vicious backhand smash to the face which broke his glasses — for the seventh time.

Melita isn't half of a new World Wrestling Federation tag-team duo or a dastardly skater on Roller Derby.

He's the hard-working, punch-taking union leader at the Tryon Limited Secure facility for girls who's battling management about short staffing, on-the-job injuries, and continuing problems with the 30 female teenagers who are doing time here for serious crimes.

"I'm sore as hell," Melita said a day after his latest assault by a female resident. "

Constant battles

Melita and hundreds of other CSEA members working in former state Division for Youth facilities across the state who check into work in the morning not knowing if they'll end the shift in one piece.

"These are the worst girls in the state here," Melita said about the teens who are serving time for everything from murder to armed robbery.

As many of the teen-age girls coming to Tryon are more violent and hooked up with

gangs, Melita said the number of restraints and escorts needed to keep the girls in line, and resulting workplace injuries, are very high.

According to state figures, girls at Tryon had to be restrained or escorted by staff 1,002 times last year.

More than 790 work days were lost because of workplace injuries during the same time, state figures show.

In 1997, the number of work days lost because of job-related injuries soared to 1,159.

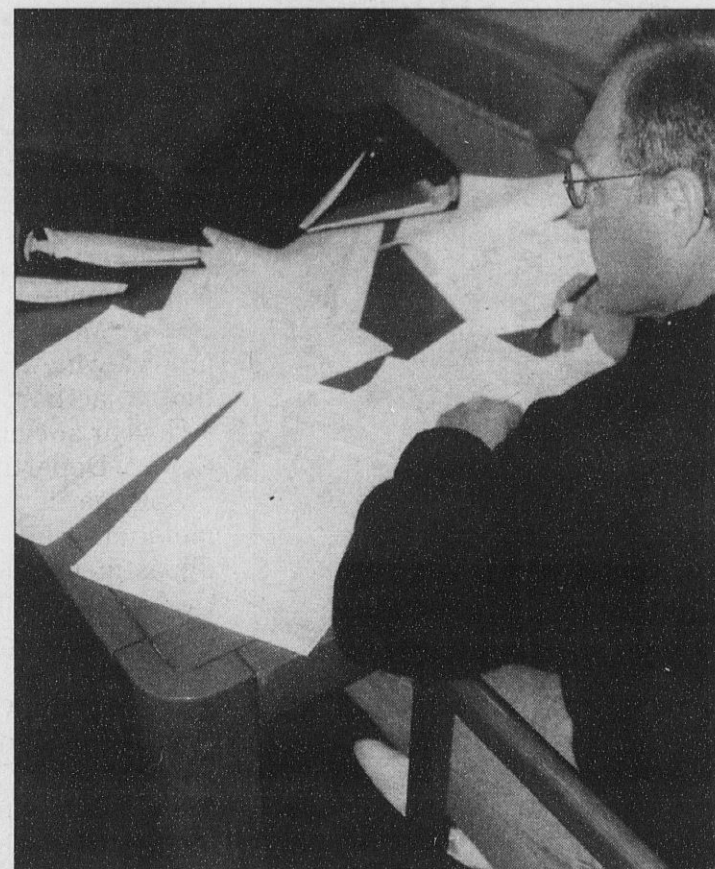
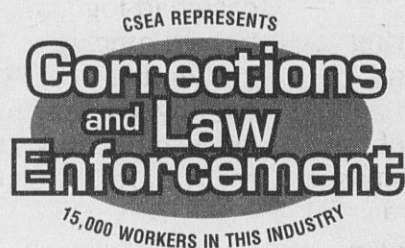
"We get hit and punched by the girls and management is afraid of lawsuits from them," Melita said. "We continue to do the job but we pay the price" as management ignores the escalating stress and injury rate in the facility, he added.

Many of the teens at Tryon should be receiving treatment at state mental health facilities, "but they dump them here instead," Melita said.

Pushing early retirement

Melita and other CSEA leaders at Tryon are pushing for 25-year retirement packages for direct-care staff, similar to those received by state corrections officers and deputy sheriffs.

Nancy Havlicek knows the danger of working at Tryon. She has one plastic knee



CSEA member Joe Melita working at the Tryon Limited Secure facility.

because of a serious on-the-job injury, another knee scarred by an operation, a broken thumb, a broken finger, and a heel cut from trying to subdue belligerent girls during her 21 years at Tryon.

"Management expects you to teach them (the girls) values and help them out with school ... and you know you can't trust them," said Havlicek, who retired in 1995 after more than two decades at Tryon.

"These kids are the best con artists going," she added. "If they murdered their mother, how can they have any concern for anyone else?" Havlicek asked.

Voices of the Work Force



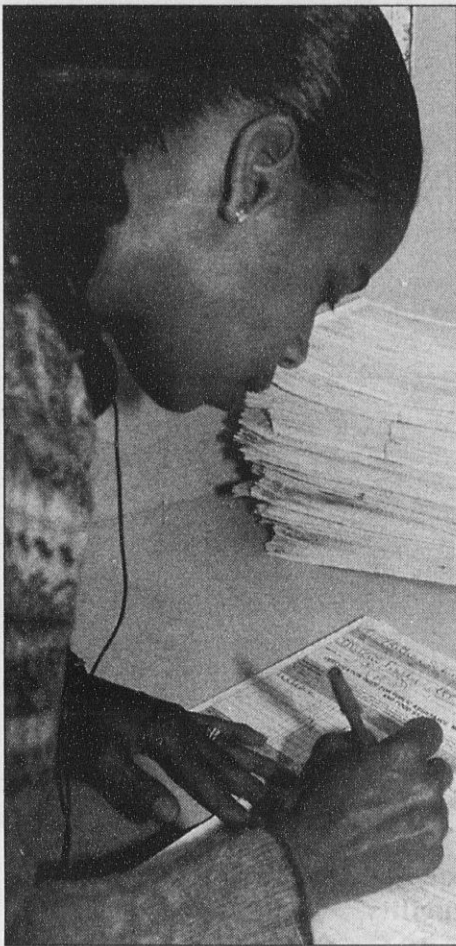
"I left a private sector job after eight years because I wanted better benefits for my family — a husband and daughter.

"I'm concerned about health insurance costs going up. Emergency room costs have already doubled and prescription, eye and dental benefits only run until the end of June.

"My husband's job doesn't provide benefits. Now I'm worried."

**Corinna Gordon, Clerk
Department of Criminal Justice Services**

Maxed out in Mineola:



Social welfare examiner LaChonne Springer adds another Medicaid interview sheet to her pile.

Members endure massive Medicaid case overload

MINEOLA — CSEA member LaChonne Springer is doing the very best job she can. But it simply isn't enough.

"The Medicaid units are so backed up I am interviewing 15 people a day and I don't get any time to actually open their cases," said Springer, a 13-year social welfare examiner in the Nassau County Department of Social Services.

Springer is among thousands of union members who work in social service departments across the state who are bearing the brunt of budget cuts, staff shortages and increasing caseloads.

"It's hard for me because I see the faces of the families and I want to help them. I had a woman who needs Medicaid for her aunt who is in a nursing home. The woman was crying because the nursing home will not accept pending Medicaid," Springer said.

"They told her they are a business. I told the woman to have the nursing home call me and I tried to comfort her," she added.

That scenario is played out over and over again in the woefully understaffed units.

Doing more with less

Unit President Mike Timmons said CSEA members who have the title Social Welfare Examiner I are being told to do the work of next level employees because the department doesn't want to promote them.

Overtime is being requested and the workers simply can't handle the volume.

"I had two employees written up in the past month for not moving fast enough. How's that for blaming the victim?" Timmons asked.

When a Long Island newspaper wrote an article

about the long waiting periods for appointments and Medicaid benefits, county officials claimed they were hiring 10 people.

According to Springer, only two employees have been hired for the Medicaid units.

"These people can't handle cases yet, they're just learning. As for 10 new hires ... they never came to the Medicaid units," she said.

The county claims staff attrition is causing the caseload log jam, yet county leaders have not moved quickly to hire other employees.

"I do the best I can as do the other employees," Springer said. "It's tough. I see the faces and I know they need the Medicaid. It's really hard," she added.

— Sheryl C. Jenks

WORK FORCE FACTS

CSEA backs Empire State Jobs

This pending jobs bill would:

- Use welfare funding to create 4,000 entry-level jobs for people moving from welfare to work.
- Place clients in temporary jobs with real wages and health and child care benefits for 18 to 24 months.
- Provide eight hours a week in on-the-job and classroom training and at least two months in job search programs.
- Offer an effective alternative to unpaid "workfare" programs that don't provide skills training and push people off welfare and not into jobs.

CSEA REPRESENTS

**Social Services
and
Administrative
Services**

50,000 WORKERS IN THIS INDUSTRY

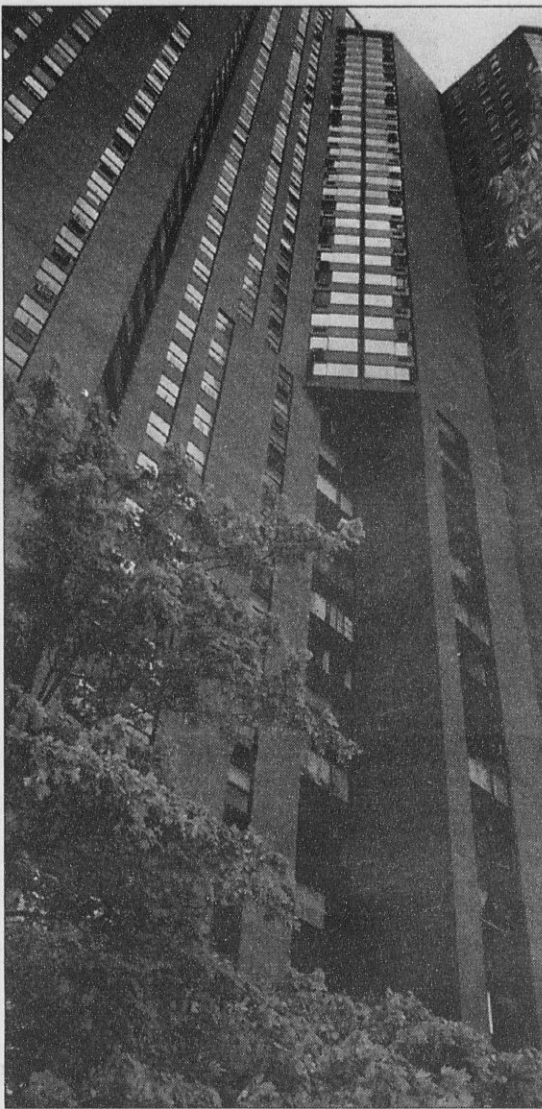
Voices of the Work Force

"The acoustics are so bad in our booths that the clients can't hear us well and we can't hear them well.

"It's so loud in this area and there are a lot of echoes. It doesn't help to serve the clients' needs when we can't hear what their needs are and they are distracted."

Nancy Hoehn, Social Welfare Examiner
— Nassau County Department of Social Services





Above, the dizzying height from which debris is tossed at CSEA members working in Roberto Clemente State Park in The Bronx. At right, the park grounds are strewn with trash tossed from an apartment building only hours after a was cleaned by CSEA workers.

Workers face danger from the sky

“Heads up!”

That warning, shouted by co-workers, is all the protection workers at Roberto Clemente State Park in the Bronx have against the garbage and debris constantly raining down from the windows of a nearby apartment complex onto the park grounds.

CSEA members who maintain the park work in pairs near the apartment buildings — one person to clean and one “spotter” to watch for falling trash.

The problem is that the area is so big that by the time the spotter sees something falling and yells to his partner, it is often too late,” said Willie Castro of CSEA Metro Region Local.

“Garbage, bottles, car batteries, sand bags from the roof, even refrigerators and air conditioners are all thrown into the area we are working in,” said Castro.

“I was hit in the shoulder by part of a shopping cart that was thrown from the building,” said Louis Cassetti. “I am just lucky that it hit me flat, and not with a point — that would have been like a spear.”

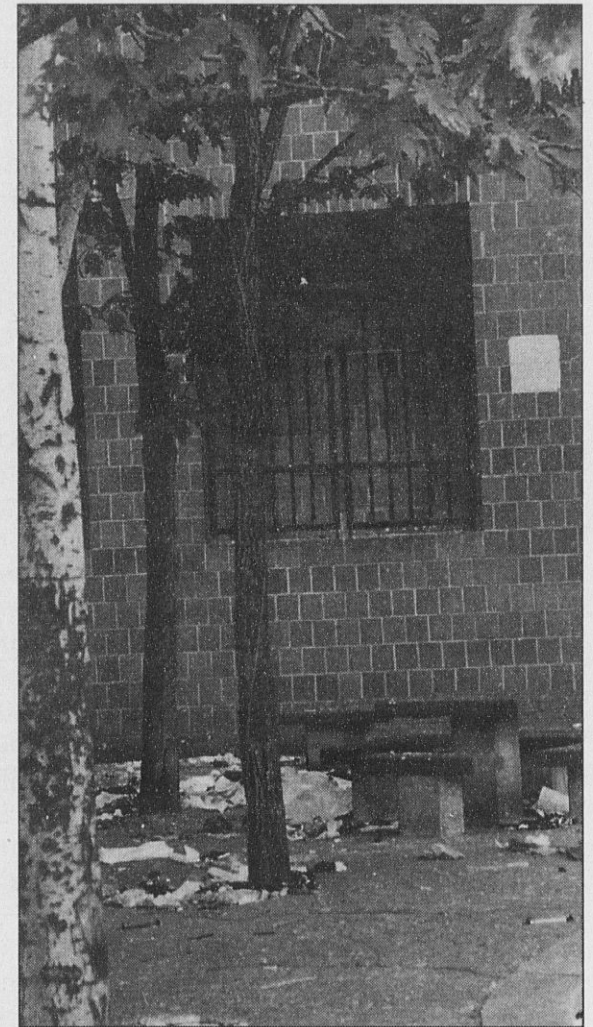
“From 40 floors up, a quarter could inflict considerable damage,” said Daniel Morra, a CSEA Occupational Health & Safety specialist. “Imagine what an air conditioner or a brick could do.”

While the management of the otherwise well-maintained park has made some effort to protect workers — assigning spotters, cleaning before residents wake up, and notifying the police — these improvements have not helped and CSEA workers remain in danger. “Once when the police came, they threw something at the cop car and dented the trunk,” said Castro.

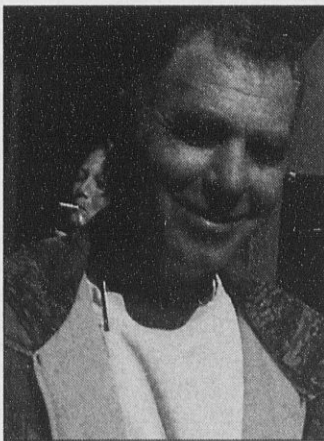
CSEA won a recent PESH ruling over situation, and the state is studying how to handle the situation.

“CSEA’s top concern is to make sure that our members are protected, whatever the state has to do to ensure that,” Morra said.

— Ann Carroll



Voices of the Work Force



“**S**afety is a major issue for DOT workers.”

“We need to keep by educating the public and the employees and we are working on that.”

Bill Stodolski — DOT local president
(See related feature, Inside the Work Force, Pages 10-11)

School sleuth's paper chase leads to big-bucks bonanza

NORTH SYRACUSE — If North Syracuse School District Secretary Donna Cooney ever wants to change careers, she should consider detective work.

Her diligence, hard work and investigative efforts paid off with a windfall of more than \$700,000 for the district that would have gone unnoticed if she hadn't poked around.

"Detective" Cooney found the money by plowing through reams of paperwork after a state audit showed the district didn't claim Medicaid reimbursement funds for special education services. Cooney's mission — and she chose to accept it in true "Mission Impossible" form — was to find out how much money the district could get and then get it.

"I knew there was more money out there," Cooney explained. "I reviewed the audit and found we had some unclaimed money. I kept pursuing it to the point where we got an OK from the state to go back past the two-year usual limit," she said.

Cooney said the money was earmarked by Medicaid for ongoing case-based management. Her challenge was to document those services had been delivered to the more than 1,400 special education students served by the district during that time.

For her efforts, and after the recommendation of CSEA North Syracuse Clerical Unit President Suzanne Lepkowski, Cooney received the district's first Dedicated Service Recognition Award from the school superintendent and board of education.

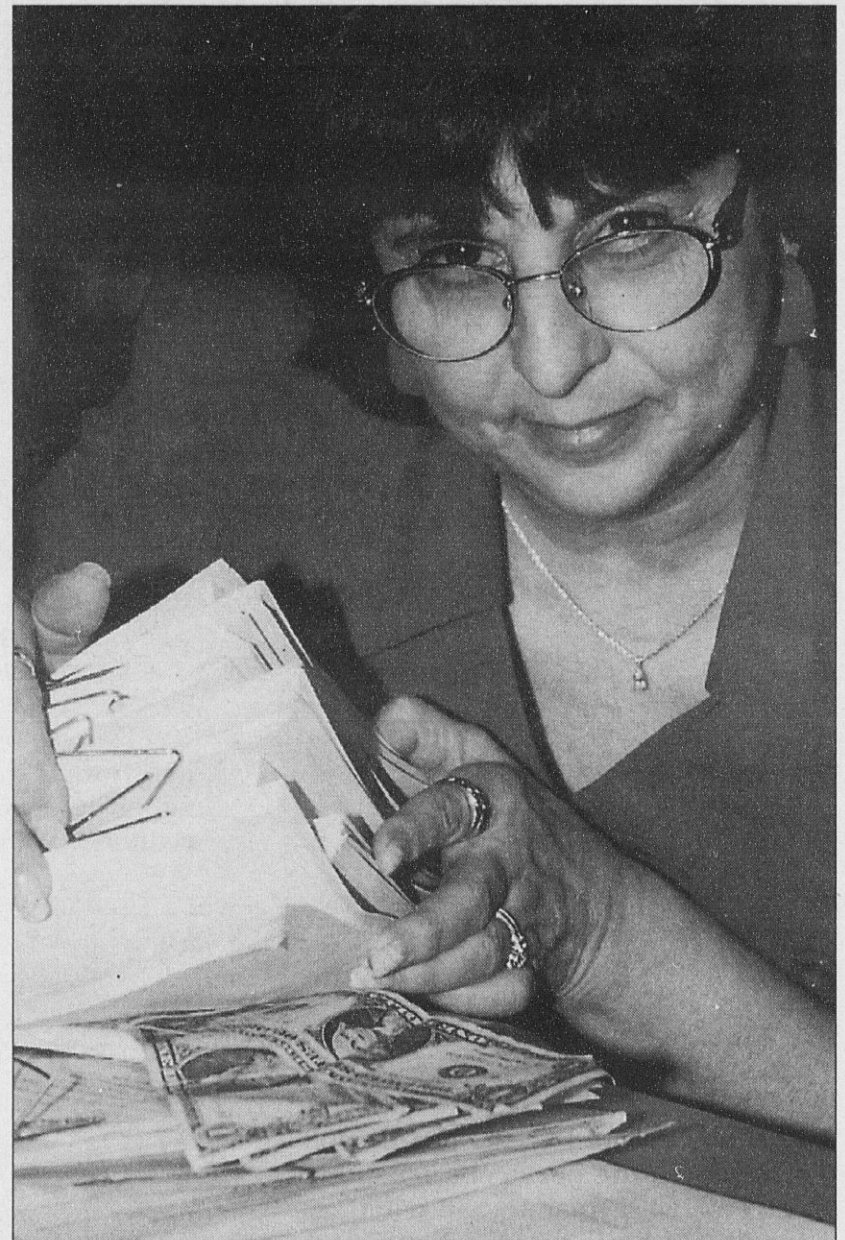
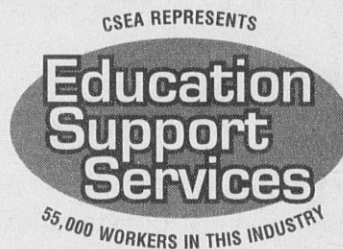
"Members like Donna Cooney make us all proud," said CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore. "I'm glad the district recognized her accomplishment, and I wish that all the other workers out there who regularly do outstanding work and benefit their employers would get recognized as she did," Moore said.

Cooney said she was happy she found the money, which was used to offset tax increases.

"Since I'm a taxpayer, that's a big consideration," Cooney said.

"It made me feel that I was contributing to helping everybody, not just special education students. As a former student from this district, I feel like it's kind of a paying back, also," Cooney said.

— Mark M. Kotzin



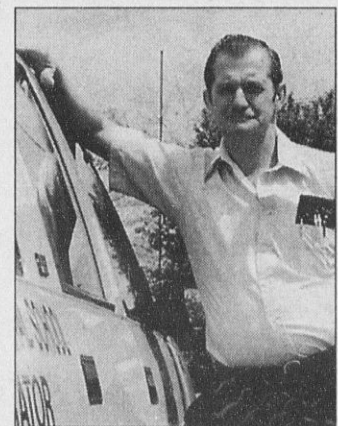
SHOW ME THE MONEY — North Syracuse School District Secretary Donna Cooney knows how to search through the paperwork to find money for the district.

Voices of the Work Force

"My biggest challenge is driving the bus, keeping your mind on the job with 60 children behind you.

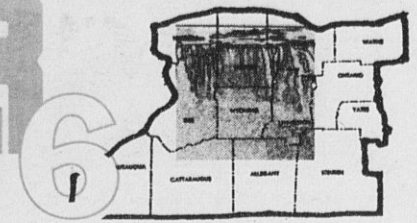
"On the bus I have a few kids that don't want to sit still and have language problems."

**Larry Pushlar, bus driver/food service helper
— Sherburne-Earlville Middle/Senior High School**



WESTERN FRONTIER

Official publication of CSEA Western Region



JUNE 1999 Vol. 2 No. 1

Niagara County's Mount View Health Facility members to share bonus

LOCKPORT — A new program aimed at improving efficiency is paying off for CSEA members.

More than 60 CSEA members working at the Niagara County Mount View Health Facility will share a huge bonus, based on unspent money in the facility's 1998 budget.

"It's much more than getting the bonus, although that is very nice. But the new method allows much more freedom in purchasing. It eliminated a lot of bureaucracy, and made things much more efficient," said Mary Mohr, an 11-year central supply coordinator.

Participating employees who worked 50 weeks at 35 hours a week would take home an average bonus check of \$2,795 under the agreement that was endorsed by CSEA.

The county had a balance of more than \$714,000, some \$334,000 above the agreed-upon \$380,000 unspent threshold of the four years before 1998.

The county keeps half the excess, and the other half, about \$167,000, is divided among participating employees.

The bonus formula is based on straight time worked, excluding overtime, comp time and vacation time. Employees will be paid \$1.70 per hour for every straight-time hour worked in 1998.

"This was one of several side agreements we entered into, to help the facility get over the hump a few years ago, when it was in dire financial straits," said Lou DalPorto, a CSEA labor relations specialist.

"This proves our vision was correct, that we could help in making the facility viable. We hope to expand such employee incentive programs in the future," he said.

"This was a trial that proved more than worth the effort. It eliminated so much waste. We're very proud of how it worked out," said Candy Hoolihan, a seven-year central supply support clerk.



Central Supply Coordinator Mary Mohr, left, and Support Clerk Candy Hoolihan, right, are among about 60 Mount View Health Facility workers and members of the Niagara County Local who are sharing a bonus based on a budget surplus for 1998.



GRAND CANYON OF THE EAST

The Sunshine Fund Walk-a-Thon, an annual event that raises money to help region members in need, will be held in picturesque Letchworth State Park in October. Those planning to walk should start gathering pledges now, so their hike will be healthy and also benefit the cause.

Western Region meeting, PAC conference aim to involve, educate members

Western Region union members honed their political action and arbitration skills and mobilized around the important CSEA Cares campaign as part of the union's ongoing program to involve more members in vital union activities.

Hands-on political campaign work and an eye-opening look at the statewide CSEA Cares campaign to keep new group homes beds for the developmentally disabled in the public sector were part of several recent meetings and workshops.

THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE

The theme of all events was simple: Knowledge is power.

"We want to have our officers and activists as well-versed as possible for the coming political campaigns and battles facing CSEA," said Bob Lattimer, Western Region president.

The CSEA Cares campaign is heating up as the state plans to increase group home beds for the developmentally disabled by nearly 5,000 but is making no plans for any of them to be in the public sector.

"The CSEA Cares campaign will affect so many of our direct-care, OMRDD members' jobs, and the clients they care for," Lattimer added.



At left, Bill Benfanti, left, PAC coordinator for the Western Region, and DOT Local President Dave Celani look at a document during a break in the recent Western Region meeting. Benfanti and others who conducted the meeting stressed the need for all union members to help show the public CSEA provides first-rate care for those in need.

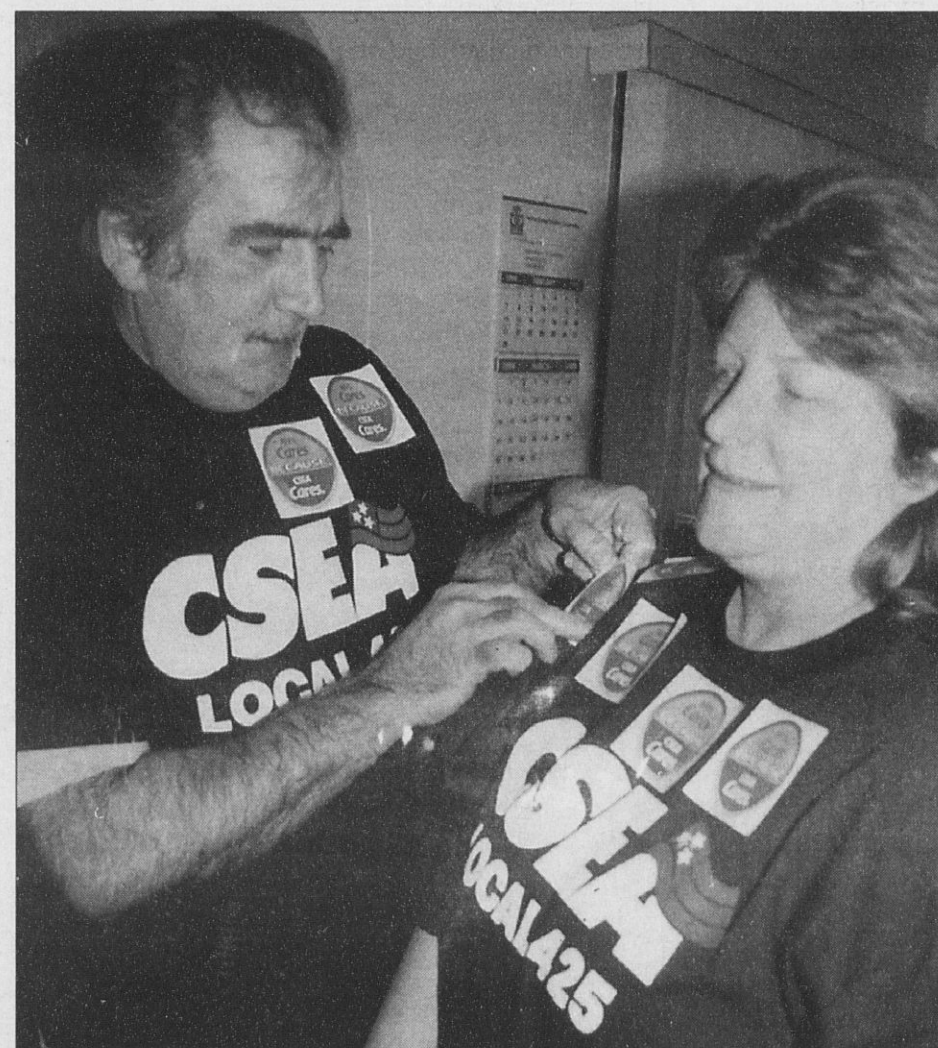
The theme for all events was simple: Knowledge is power.

Fran Turner, director of CSEA's legislative and political action department, PAC co-chairs Tom Warzel and Flo Tripi and Bill Benfanti, region political action coordinator, stressed the need for all union members to help show the public CSEA provides first-rate care for those in need.

Thousands of developmentally disabled are waiting for placement in group homes that provide them with life skills, medical services and healthy community connections, the type of care more than 16,000 CSEA direct care workers provide every day, the union activists said.

"We don't want the CSEA Cares campaign to be 'against' the private sector providers," said Turner. "There is a place for both. But our members have the experience, and many families prefer their loved ones continue to be cared for by CSEA members," she added.

To succeed, the CSEA Cares campaign will require persistence, consistency and endurance, the workshop leaders said.



At right, Gary Brown places "CSEA Cares" stickers on Western New York DDSO President Dawn Smith as part of a recent CSEA Cares Action Day. This theme was part of the Western Region meeting that stressed the importance of the type of care more than 16,000 CSEA direct-care workers provide every day for the developmentally disabled who are currently in group homes.

WESTERN FRONTIER
CSEA Union News For Region 6
Published bi-annually • June 1999

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Florence Tripi, *Vice President*
Marie Prince, *Vice President*
Kathy Button, *Vice President*
Barbara Epstein, *Secretary*
James Kurtz, *Treasurer*

HAVE WE GOT A CANDIDATE FOR YOU

Voting isn't the only way CSEA members have a stake in politics.

Union members learned the nuances of a political campaign during a separate intensive training program that energized and inspired members to work on campaigns this fall.

With workshops focusing on political campaign components and techniques, participants coordinated mock campaigns by gathering nominating petitions, raising the needed cash and producing TV and radio ads.

The workshops gave practical advice on campaign policy and operations, including structure and planning, campaign message, and campaign budget and laws.

The campaigns also had deadlines for filing financial disclosure forms, election petitions and independent petitions.

"This conference was very educational and fun at the same time," said Sylvia Mayberry of SUNY Buffalo Local 602.

THRILL OF VICTORY, AGONY OF DEFEAT

"I now know a lot more about the inner workings of a political campaign. I also know the agony of defeat, as our candidate lost in the mock election!" Mayberry exclaimed.

"It was great the participants absorbed the material and put it into practice. We hope in the near future to put those learned skills into action in the real world," said Bill Benfanti, the region's political action coordinator who organized the workshop.

The region's political action committee co-chairs, Flo Tripi (eastern section) and Tom Warzel (western section) helped with the program which featured a fictional race for the county legislature.

All participants were given a fictional history of both candidates, including positive and negative details.



Western Region Political Action Coordinator Bill Benfanti, standing, outlines the weekend workshop schedule.



Participants in the Western Region PAC training weekend pause for a group photo.

Campaign ads written and produced by CSEA members were played and a final vote for the two candidates was held.

Campaign banners, fliers, speeches, and even some attempted "dirty tricks" enlivened the University Conference Center as each campaign team worked for its candidate.

"This experience strengthens our members individually and CSEA as a whole," Benfanti said.

ARBITRATION LESSONS

As part of another recent Western Region program, members got an inside look at the arbitration process.

In a mock arbitration hearing, professional arbitrator Mike Lewandowski presided over proceedings that included labor relations specialists Debbie Lee, Penny Gleason, Dean Adams, Terri Menkiena, Jim Jayes and Jim Gleason.

They formed a management and union team with a defendant, and a case that allowed the audience to see tactics often used by both sides in seeking a favorable conclusion.

"Arbitration is similar to a trial, but there are important, subtle differences and they were pointed out very well," said Joe Jones, of Roswell Park Cancer Institute Local 303.

"This will help me help our members deal with an important aspect of working life," he added. "These are the tools we need to operate in our members' behalf."

— Ron Wofford

Western Region Women's Conference

'Looking back, looking forward'

ROCHESTER — A focus on the proud history and a look to the future of working women highlighted the region's annual women's conference.

A workshop on safe schools and preventing violence in them rounded out the well-attended event, which was visited by newly elected U. S. Sen. Charles Schumer.

"We wanted to honor the groundwork and foundation laid down by those brave women who came before us in the labor movement," said Judy DiPaola, women's committee co-chair. "That's why we were happy Linda Donohue, director of the Cornell School of Industrial and Labor Relations in Rochester, could give a presentation on the history of labor union women."

"And we also know looking ahead, trying to get a fix on what trends the future will bring, and being prepared is important," said Elaine Timm, committee co-chair, "and having a distinguished panel discussion on women in the new millennium really fit the bill."

A timely session on school safety and preventing violence was led by Trooper Neal Gallivan of the State Police. The officer led participants through scenarios of potential school bus and classroom dangers, and suggested precautions and responses that could help restore or maintain safety.

The panel discussion on the new millennium, moderated by Florence "Flo" Tripi, region first vice president,

Western Region President Bob Lattimer introduces U. S. Sen. Charles Schumer at the Western Region Women's Conference.

included Francis Weisberg, director of Lifespan Elder Services; Ramona Gallagher, a former assistant commissioner at the state Labor Department; Assemblywoman Susan John and Bill Benfanti, region political action coordinator.

The panel addressed the health care problems that may intensify with aging, the role of women in the political arena of the future, and the continuing challenge of achieving pay equity.

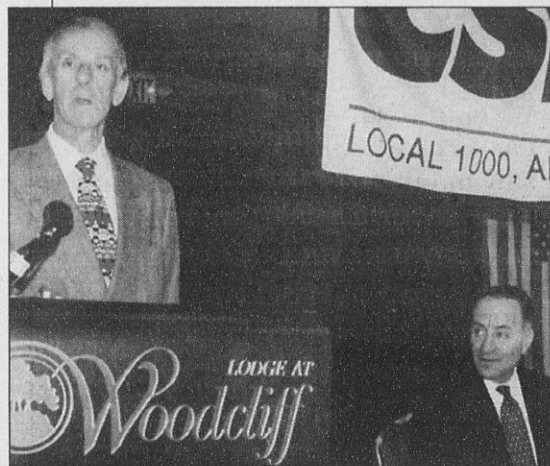
During his brief visit, Schumer discussed bills he planned to introduce concerning women's issues.

Schumer also praised Western Region President Bob Lattimer, a longtime friend, for his labor leadership.

The conference received high marks from members.

"We're really thankful to all the committee members who helped put this conference together," said Timm, "and we're especially grateful to region office manager Sharon Thomas for a tremendous amount of work to make it successful."

"Evaluation forms submitted by participants show they agree the conference was useful and worth attending," said DiPaola. "Now it's time to work on plans for next year."



Women's committee co-chairs Elaine Timm, center, and Judy DiPaola, right, welcome U. S. Sen. Charles Schumer to the Western Region Women's Conference.

On the Western Front ...

A REGION PAC WEB SITE and an e-mail address have been installed to update members on legislative, election and other activist information by Bill Benfanti, the Western Region PAC coordinator. Dial up <http://come.to/csea6pac> for the web page, (which contains other links), and send e-mail to csea6pac@email.com. ... STATE CONTRACT CAMPAIGN will be gearing up in each state local to let the governor know "we're not starting at ground zero."

... BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE LOCAL SCHOLARSHIP has been established in memory of late member Robert J. Elmes Jr. The fund provides grants to members of any CSEA bargaining unit enrolled in any credit-bearing course at the college each fall and spring semester, according to Dale Swain, Local 640 president. A plaque in Elmes' honor also hangs in a campus building, placed by the local. ... DAY OF CARING, a United Fund event in Rochester prompted Monroe County Local 828 members to answer Monroe Unit President Flo Tripi's request to help with the Journey House hospice facility's rehabilitation.... NEXT REGION MEETING on June 4 and 5, at the Corning Radisson Hotel, will feature an extensive presentation by CSEA General Counsel Nancy Hoffman and the union's legal staff. They'll discuss members' legal concerns and give practical guidance for analyzing workplace situations, gathering information, and determining if legal assistance is needed.

INSIDE THE WORK FORCE

Hot, dirty and dangerous

Back-breaking work keeps superhighways in shape

ON THE ADIRONDACK NORTHWAY — The rush of air from a passing 18-wheeler is strong enough to yank a cap from your head.

These blasts of air from trucks, cars and tractor trailers whizzing by on this superhighway outside Albany are reminders of the split-second dangers state Department of Transportation (DOT) road crews must dodge as they patch pavement with hot asphalt.

"We're providing the safety for the whole project," a DOT supervisor explained as he read a confusing map covered with X's and dashes.

CSEA members faced a full day of nerve-wracking, back-breaking work, filling cracks and gouges on a stretch of pavement which had initially been paved by a private contractor.

Oddly enough on this day, the state DOT workers who are CSEA members must work alongside private bridge renovation contractors.

Although the union workers believe they are fixing and patching a poor paving job done by a private contractor, those thoughts are secondary to working safely out here on the highway.

Like their state DOT sisters and brothers, thousands of CSEA local government highway maintenance and public works employees confront similar dangerous and difficult work zone projects every day.

Making an oasis of safety

"First we have to close down one lane, then after moving the traffic over to the middle lane, we have to close that one down too, set up all the cones, and replace the contractor's signage with ours," said Jeff Coonradt, highway maintenance supervisor.

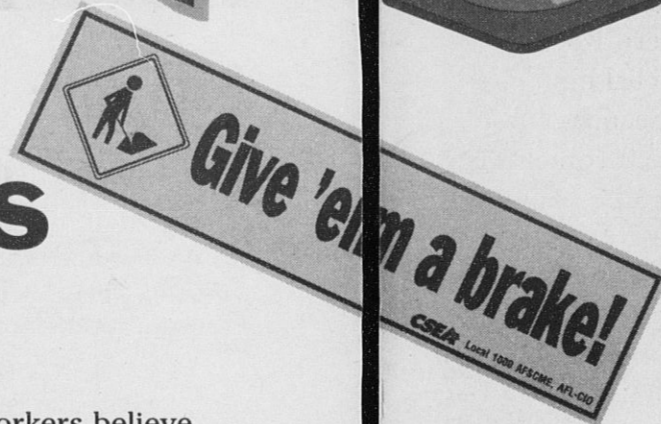
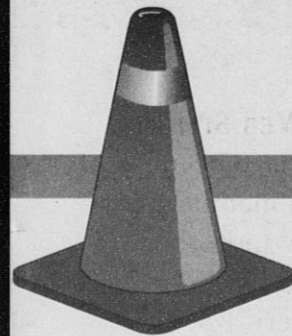
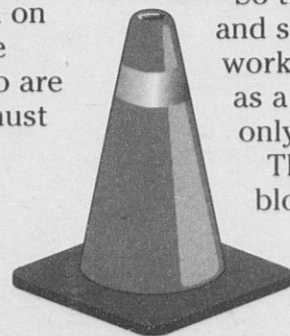
Beneath overcast skies, DOT trucks line the side of the roadway.

The job involves closing one travel lane to funnel traffic to the middle lane, then shutting the middle lane.

"And we have to wait until 9 a.m. to begin so that we don't disrupt southbound traffic during the workday commute," said laborer Richard Jones.

"So the drivers see us on the roadside and say — 'Look at those lazy state workers,'" a senior crew member said as a worker adjusted orange cones only inches from speeding traffic.

The huge DOT trucks move over to block the second lane but traffic continues speeding past, trying to beat the lane closure.



Patching up

From inside a car traveling 65 mph, it's hard to see yard-long, several-inch deep gashes in the roadway.

These gouges were repaired over the winter by a private contractor and have returned.

"We have to clean the road area, perhaps even dig up the seam patch material, put down hot asphalt, 275-degree stuff, rake it, tamp it down and roll it all while moving ahead with traffic that keeps flowing around us," Jones said.

The brutal dance begins.

Hot asphalt pours from the lead truck. Crew members fill wheelbarrows with asphalt hot enough



to singe their work gloves.

Steam fills the air with asphalt's acrid smell.

Two workers clear the joint patches and the pock-marked road surface.

Two others pour hot asphalt into the gaping crevices from a steaming wheelbarrow and move on. Two more workers spread the fill into the gaps. A raker back-fills and smoothes the mound, tamping it down seconds before a small paving roller forces the black gooey fill into the hole under several tons of pressure.

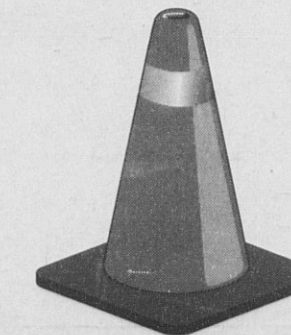
The workers dart to the very edge of the orange cone safety area, seeking to do the job right the first time.

Traffic flows at a safe pace but occasionally a distracted driver brakes to avoid rear-ending a car that is traveling slower.

Sweat pours off the workers' brows.

"Is everybody having fun yet?" a voice from the crew called out.

— Daniel X. Campbell



Pedal to the metal tests her mettle

CSEA DOT Main Office Local President Donna Diaz is furious. While returning from a recent Lake Placid CSEA workshop, she saw many cars speeding through DOT construction sites.

She recorded the license numbers of those with a lead foot and tried to turn them in to the State Police.

The cops told her, however, they couldn't issue tickets because troopers did not witness the speeding.

According to one DOT supervisor, public works projects have to request a police detail, while private contractors get the details as a matter of course.

For years, CSEA has pushed for greater safety at highway work sites and started the "Give 'em a brake!" campaign to educate drivers about the hazards of speeding through work zones.

When Cohoes, a city north of Albany, put a police cruiser with a mannequin at the wheel on the side of its heaviest traveled roadway, speeding violations dropped substantially.

Also, CSEA members suggested using technology that New York City authorities have to ticket drivers who run red lights.

A camera could be erected at highway work zones and speeding cars would be photographed and the driver ticketed.

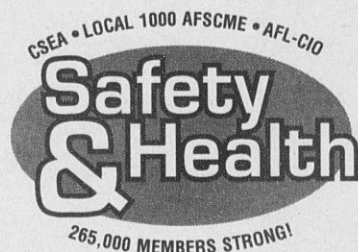
CSEA, Workers' Comp aid carpal tunnel sufferer

CANTON — The pain and stiffness in Jean Deese's hand was so great, she couldn't straighten her fingers at night.

Sometimes, her hand would go dead and she had to sleep with a pillow under her shoulder to relieve pressure on her nerves.

Deese now knows those symptoms more than 10 years ago were the start of carpal tunnel syndrome, a sometimes crippling musculoskeletal disorder brought on by the repetitive stress of typing or other keyboard work.

What she did not know years ago was that with CSEA's help, she could file a Workers Compensation claim for her job-related injury.



"I would have to take the other hand to straighten my fingers out, which was painful. It would range from being an annoying ache to being very painful," said Deese, the St. Lawrence University Local's chief steward and a secretary in the philosophy and history departments. Deese has been dealing with the pain since 1987, when she first noticed her

shoulder getting stiff and her arm swelling.

At that time, not much was discussed about the illness, and her doctor sent her for physical therapy.

Later, she realized the injury was related to how she sat at work.

"I did a little research and realized that this was all related to carpal tunnel syndrome."

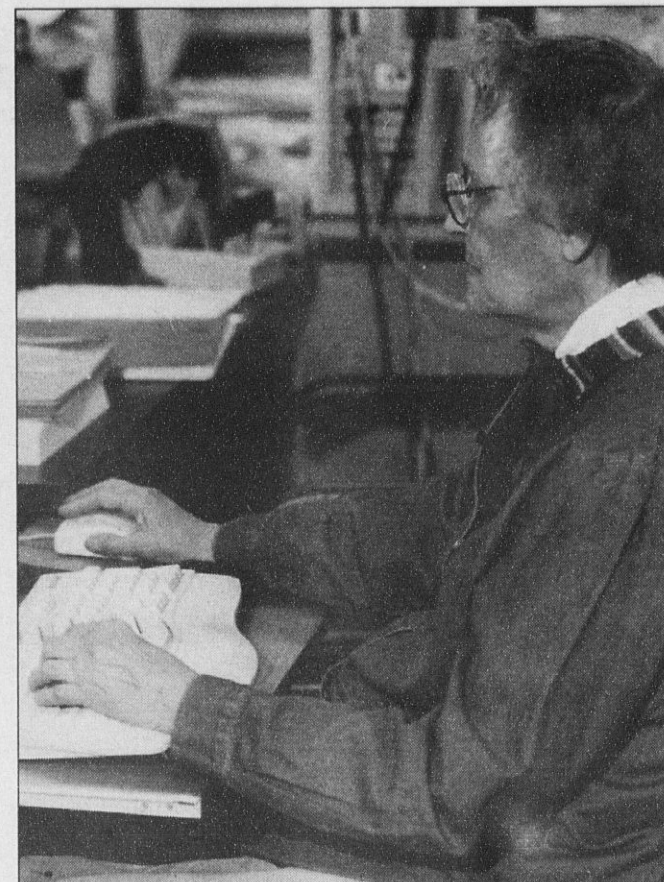
In 1995, she mentioned her difficulties to CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Steve Ragan, who sent her a brochure on legal services available to carpal tunnel sufferers from a CSEA-endorsed law firm specializing in workplace injuries.

Union benefit at work

CSEA's Workers' Compensation Legal Assistance Program is available to all union members suffering any workplace injury.

It took several years, but Deese won a compensation claim against the university's insurance company, which insisted Deese did not have carpal tunnel syndrome.

Deese praised CSEA for giving her information about carpal tunnel syndrome and telling her she was entitled to compensation.



Jean Deese, still 15 percent disabled in each hand, uses an ergonomically correct keyboard.

"I knew that I couldn't afford a regular lawyer and that I was going to have to do something about it. I thank CSEA for guiding me toward the information. If I hadn't had it, I don't know what I would have done," she said.

Despite corrective surgery, Deese still deals with the pain from her carpal tunnel injuries.

She's been designated as 15 percent disabled in each hand. She now uses ergonomic equipment, but it can't correct the damage.

"I think people need to know how to prevent it so that they don't get it in the first place. They need to get the proper knowledge and the proper equipment."

— Mark M. Kotzin

The mouse that roars, and OSHA roars back

Poorly designed equipment bears much of the blame for repetitive stress injuries among communications workers, according to a survey by the Communications Workers of America.

The survey identified one particular culprit, the computer mouse and its design.

"In all occupations and in all companies, a significant number of union members reported that mouse equipment wasn't well designed," the survey stated.

The survey findings indicate that a major problem with mice is that they are located on the worktable, while the keyboard is on a tray.

Meanwhile, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has released a long-overdue draft ergonomics standard.

Labor organizations are urging OSHA to apply the standard as protection for office workers before they are injured.

Repetitive stress disorders account for more than a third of all serious workplace injuries, affecting more than 600,000 workers each year.

**For more information, contact the
CSEA Occupational Safety and Health
Department at 800-342-4146,
ext. 1465 or 1466.**

Remembering workers lost on the job



Above and below, Central Region union members demonstrate for stricter worker safety laws.

Leaving behind the 'Stone Age'

AUBURN — CSEA City of Auburn Unit President Anthony DeCaro has helped bring Auburn "from out of the Stone Age" when it comes to safety and health.

That's according to CSEA Central Region occupational safety and health specialist Ed King, who's worked extensively with DeCaro to make sure city workplaces are safer.

DeCaro works hard to resolve safety and health issues through labor-management committees.

For DeCaro, a watershed inspector for the city's Department of Municipal Utilities and a member of the Central Region Safety and Health Committee, the keys to his success are persistence, education and cooperation.

Persistence paid off

His involvement with safety and health issues started when he was a shop steward in the mid-1980's.

At the time, he realized many worker concerns revolved around safety and health issues.

When he became unit president in 1990, DeCaro started pushing for a joint labor-management forum on safety issues.

His persistence paid off. A joint committee formed in 1995.

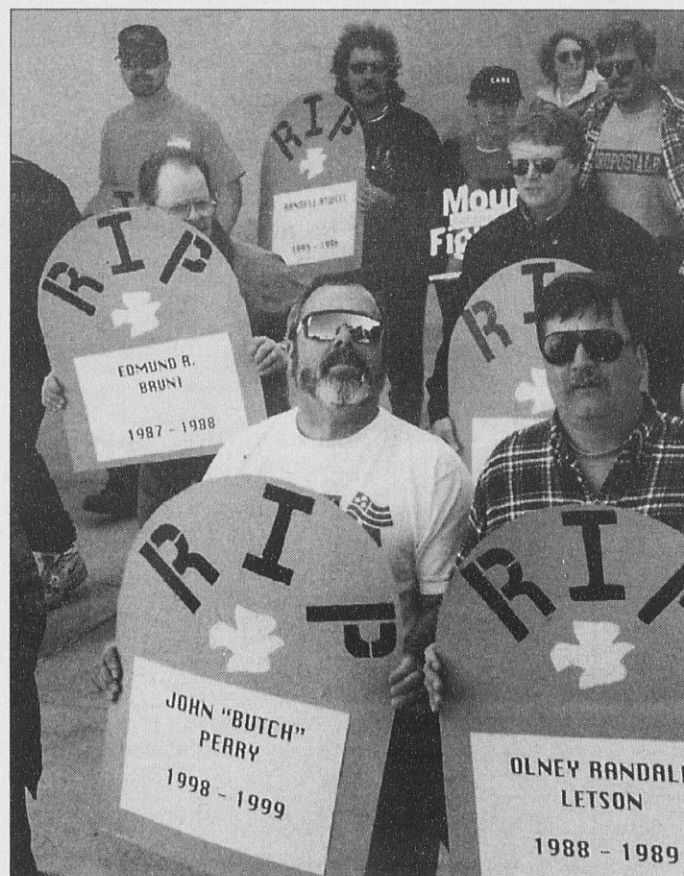
For education, DeCaro relies on CSEA's occupational safety and health experts and the various trainings he's attended.

Every day, CSEA members who work in health and safety positions protect union members and the public from a long list of potentially deadly materials and hazards.

Chemicals, toxic waste, bad water, radon gas and a host of other materials which can injure or kill are part of the daily work for a group of dedicated CSEA members.

One day a year, Workers Memorial Day, is a fitting tribute to the men and women who have been injured or killed on the job in New York State.

However, the fight for safe workplaces and communities is a daily effort for CSEA members like Anthony DeCaro and Bryan Mently who work in local health and safety departments.



"Before, the city was in the position of not knowing the potential hazards that existed and the liability they could incur," DeCaro said.

"We've now raised that awareness as well as the benefits of compliance," he added.

"The department heads have been very cooperative, and we've made a lot of progress," DeCaro said.

That's the attitude of cooperation that DeCaro and CSEA are happy to see continue.

— Mark M. Kotzin

Hunting for a silent killer

MAYVILLE — In a county identified as a high radon risk area, Bryan Mently's work is important to the safety of Chautauqua County residents.

Radon is an odorless, tasteless radioactive gas that is created as uranium in soil, rocks or water naturally breaks down.

The National Academy of Sciences has pegged radon as the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S., causing between 15,000 and 22,000 deaths each year.

"We're working with a state grant to identify areas throughout the county where radon is at elevated levels," said Mently, a program manager in the Chautauqua County health department.

"Once a home is verified to have elevated radon levels, we recommend some form of mitigation. It might mean sealing it out or venting it out."

Mently's program includes a high-tech component that maps homes with high radon levels for a global positioning satellite, which helps researchers get a global view of the radon problem.

—Ron Wofford

This dog don't hunt



AFL-CIO language grant speaks to members' needs

VALHALLA — CSEA member Tony Valencia, a two-year housekeeping employee, said he came to the United States from Peru for a better future.

An AFL-CIO grant, which CSEA helped secure, is ensuring Valencia's dream.

Two days a week, Valencia and other laundry and housekeeping employees at Westchester Medical Center spend their lunch hour learning English.

"I felt there was more opportunity here," Valencia said about the United States. "I know I have to work very hard."

"It gave me a lot of satisfaction to be able to make this opportunity available to the members of Local 731," said CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Al Sundmark.

"Our members really appreciate it and it's going to benefit them in so many ways," he added.

The Westchester/Putnam Central Labor Council applied for the AFL-CIO literacy grant that funds the class, said Carol Craft, a labor council coordinator.

Helping them succeed

CSEA sought the grant because many of the local's workers speak little or no English.

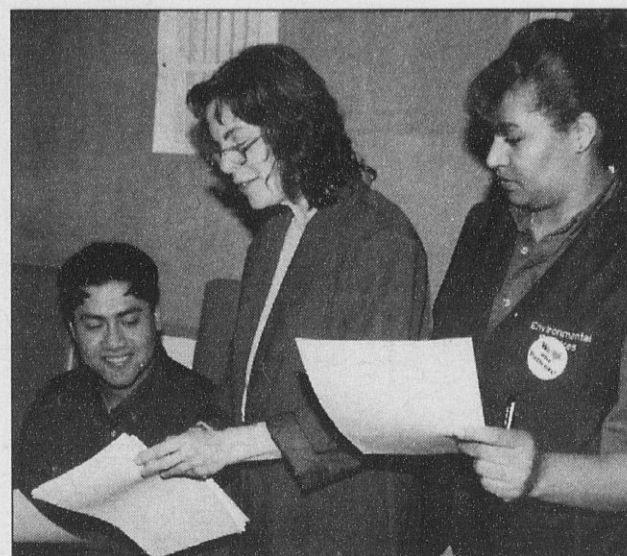
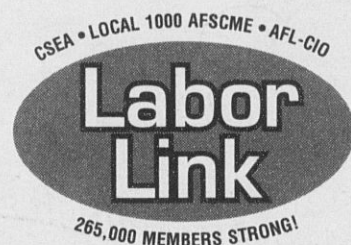
Teacher Judy Wine is impressed with her enthusiastic students.

"They're sweet, loving students and they're learning," said Wine, who works for the Southern Westchester BOCES.

"They do their homework, they're learning vocabulary and grammar. Some are learning basic stuff and

some are more advanced," she said.

Wine, a teacher for 10 years, has told her English students there are several free BOCES courses they can enroll in.



Judy Wine, center, teaches English to students Tony Valencia and Lucy Perez.

Valencia said he plans to take computer courses and hopes he can study to be a physical therapist. The English class will help him attain those goals, he said.

Lucy Perez, who came from Santo Domingo, has two children and wanted to learn to speak better English so she can communicate with her children's doctors and their school teachers.

"The class is helping," she said. "Every day is better."

— Anita Manley

Making labor stronger:

With Hughes at helm, state AFL-CIO charts aggressive course

Newly elected New York State AFL-CIO President Denis M. Hughes promises to strengthen the federation's power and influence.

"Mobilizing, strengthening and building an even more powerful and active (labor) movement across the state will be my

focus and priority," Hughes said recently after settling into New York's highest post in organized labor.

"This will be a movement that will always be heard, one that will always be at the forefront of economic, social and political decisionmaking," he added.

The 50 vice presidents of the state AFL-CIO unanimously elected Hughes to succeed Edward J. Cleary, who retired after 15 years at the helm.

Good for labor, CSEA

CSEA President Danny Donohue, who serves as a vice president of the state AFL-CIO, was one of Hughes' earliest supporters and hailed his election as "good for labor and great for CSEA."

Hughes said he will expand and strengthen the federation's already formidable political and legislative operation.

"We will provide vigorous leadership to harness and direct the full political and legislative potential of our more than 2 million members into a force that no

legislator or candidate for office will be able to ignore," he said.

He also announced a groundbreaking organizing initiative — The Solidarity Project — aimed at bringing the benefits of union membership to unorganized workers.

"The right to organize is a civil right — a fundamental human right," Hughes said. "Only through unions can workers and their families have any real power to protect their interests and insure they share in the wealth they create," he added.

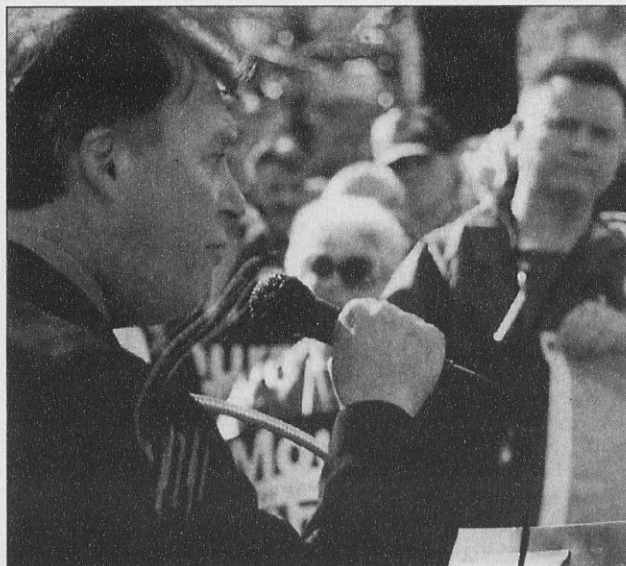
Partner with CSEA

Hughes said he is relying on CSEA to help achieve his vision for the future.

"As we look to make this a more active, mobile and assertive movement, we need to look no further than CSEA as a role model for our initiatives," he said.

"CSEA has always been a leader in the labor movement and has traditionally been at the forefront in efforts to educate and mobilize its members on issues that affect their lives," Hughes added.

— Ed Molitor



Hughes speaks at a Workers Memorial Day observance in Syracuse.

CSEA welcomes Special Olympics

CSEA is again supporting the efforts of hundreds of athletes competing in the New York Special Olympic Summer Games and union members are encouraged to attend the two-day festivity in Albany this month.

The union will have a hospitality tent on the grounds of Albany State University, where opening ceremonies on Thursday, June 17 and some events June 18 and 19 will be held.

At the CSEA tent, members can learn more about their valuable union membership benefits and other union activities and programs.

Dozens of CSEA members from across the state serve as volunteer coaches for



CSEA member Gary Emery, in white shirt, a volunteer track and field coach for the Special Olympics, helps competitor Dan Schaudel warm up for his track event.

the special athletes in events ranging from track and field to bowling.

"As a volunteer coach, I get great satisfaction from giving these athletes the opportunity to succeed," said CSEA member Gary Emery from Scotia, a volunteer coach for the track and field event and employee of OMRDD.

Opening ceremonies will be held at 8 p.m. June 17 at the university's main field.

Competition will be held June 18 and 19 at the university's athletic fields and at other Albany locations.

For a schedule of events, call 1-800-836-6976 or visit <http://www.nysso.org> on the World Wide Web.

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.

Summary of the April 1999 CSEA Board of Directors meeting

Editor's note: The Work Force publishes a summary of actions taken by CSEA's Board of Directors. The summary is prepared by CSEA Statewide Secretary Barbara Reeves for union members.

ALBANY — CSEA's statewide Board of Directors met April 22. In official business, the board:

- Placed into administratorship the Hudson City Schools Custodial Unit of Local 811 and Copiague Memorial Library Unit of Local 852;
- Approved the appointment of Tony Giustino as a Political Action Fund trustee;
- Authorized leases on office space for Local 882 and Local 828;
- Endorsed the CSEA Violence and Health Resolution for community

mental health workers;

- Retained for fiscal year 1999 the services of accounting firm Pricewaterhouse Coopers;
- Changed the name of the Binghamton State Employees Local to Southern Tier State Employees Local;
- Created Waste Management of New York, Hillburn Local 740;
- Designated New York City as the location for the 2000 Annual Delegates Meeting;
- Selected two firms, True Ballot and Newkirk, to conduct elections next year for statewide officers, region officers, statewide board of directors and AFSCME delegates;
- Named to the Southern Region Legislative and Political Action Committee Rita Begleiter and Diane Harris; and

- Adopted a number of organization changes (revised the job description of internal auditor to senior internal auditor, created two internal auditor positions, reclassified the position of support systems specialist to production support specialist, and reclassified the position of LEAP program assistant).

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.



Barbara Reeves

One good turn deserves another

A union member who volunteers for the Red Cross found himself on the receiving end of that organization's good deeds when his apartment building caught fire.

Bill Cody, a maintenance worker at Helen Hayes Hospital, had just returned home from an evening out with his wife.

"I laid down," he said, "and there was a knock at the door."

It was Cody's neighbor shouting there was a fire in the next apartment.

"I told my wife to call 911 and I banged on all my neighbors' doors to get everyone out. There were about 40 adults and 14 kids," said Cody.

He immediately started calming and reassuring his neighbors who quickly

congregated outside as the fire department arrived.

Red Cross volunteers also arrived and made sure all the residents had places to stay.

Cody and his family stayed in a motel for more than a

week, during which time Cody checked on his neighbors to see if they had everything they needed.

"The Red Cross is like a foreman on the job," said Cody.

"You call your volunteers, meet at the Red Cross building and get the van. The van has coffee, blankets, pillows and first aid kits."

Cody said the Red Cross arranges with local stores, supermarkets and fast food restaurants to pick up needed supplies when there is a fire or natural disaster.

Volunteer power is the most valuable resource for the Red



CSEA member Bill Cody stands before a painting of Broadway diva Helen Hayes at Helen Hayes Hospital. Cody, a Red Cross volunteer, recently was on the receiving end of the group's care.

Cross and although Cody works two jobs and is a volunteer fireman, he finds the time to volunteer for the Red Cross.

Also in his spare time, Cody

teaches fire safety to school kids. Members interested in volunteering with the Red Cross should contact their county Red Cross chapter.

— Anita Manley

AFSCME scholar's winning essay lauds importance of CSEA

GRAND ISLE — Vivian Gerard wasn't having much luck "trolling" for scholarships to send her son to college, but a CSEA flier that came in the mail was the bait that hooked a big one.

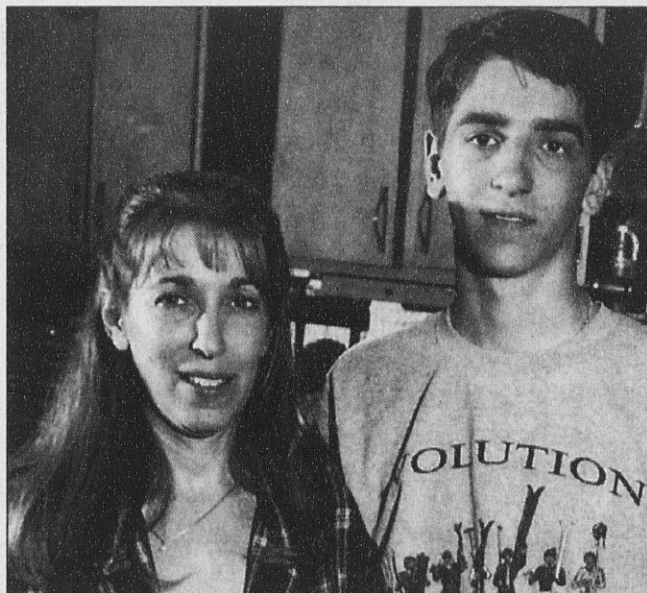
Gerard's son, Devin Dilley, was one of 10 students picked from 900 applicants nationally for an \$8,000 scholarship sponsored by CSEA's international affiliate, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME.)

Dilley's essay on the importance of our union to his family, and strong recommendations from teachers and advisers, propelled him to the head of the scholarship class.

"My mom's CSEA newsletter was my first exposure to the union," Dilley said about the flier which contained information about the AFSCME scholarship.

"My mom pushed me to get the scholarship essay done by the deadline," Dilley mused, noting he'd rather be sailing or pulling apart engines as part of his fascination with things mechanical.

"I later thanked her for making me do it," the teen-ager laughed.



AFSCME scholarship winner Devin Dilley and his mother, CSEA member Vivian Gerard.

Gerard is a 10-year CSEA member who is a program coordinator with the Niagara County drug abuse program.

"We were concerned about mom losing her job a few years ago," Dilley said. "CSEA made a big difference in her keeping it."

Dilley wove that theme into his scholarship essay, which netted him \$2,000 a year for the four years he plans to attend Clarkson University to study mechanical engineering.

Since he was old enough to hold a wrench, Dilley has toyed, tinkered and tampered with machines. Dilley and his father, a chimney sweep who he said "is the handiest person I know," built a dune buggy together.

When he's not reading short stories or competitively sailing large boats on Lake Ontario, Dilley is elbows deep into the

new engine he's dropped into a 1982 Chevrolet Caprice.

"I want to go into business for myself" and manage a mechanical engineering firm, Dilley said, adding the AFSCME scholarship will help him get a degree and achieve his goal.

DEC wildlife technician's place is

In the wild

NEW PALTZ — A bear in your garbage, a deer in your den, and a gaggle of geese overhead are all in a solid day's work for outdoorsman Carl Lindsley, a CSEA member whose work life is New York's wildlife.

Lindsley, a wildlife technician for the state Department of Environmental Conservation, (EnCon) said he is fortunate to have the outdoors as his office and a job that involves his life-long love of animals.

"I'm only in the office three times a month," he said. "I'm in the field the rest of the time," said Lindsley, who was raised on a Hudson Valley farm.

Lindsley's job — depending on the season — includes stocking pheasants on state land, answering animal nuisance calls, posting land, monitoring cooperative hunting areas, banding waterfowl, and helping preserve the exquisite and rare bald eagles which build their nests along the shores of the Hudson Valley's rivers and reservoirs.

Working closely with state "eagle specialist" and EnCon biologist Peter Nye, Lindsley counts eagles during the annual survey. He bands the nestlings and observes the eagle's wintering areas.

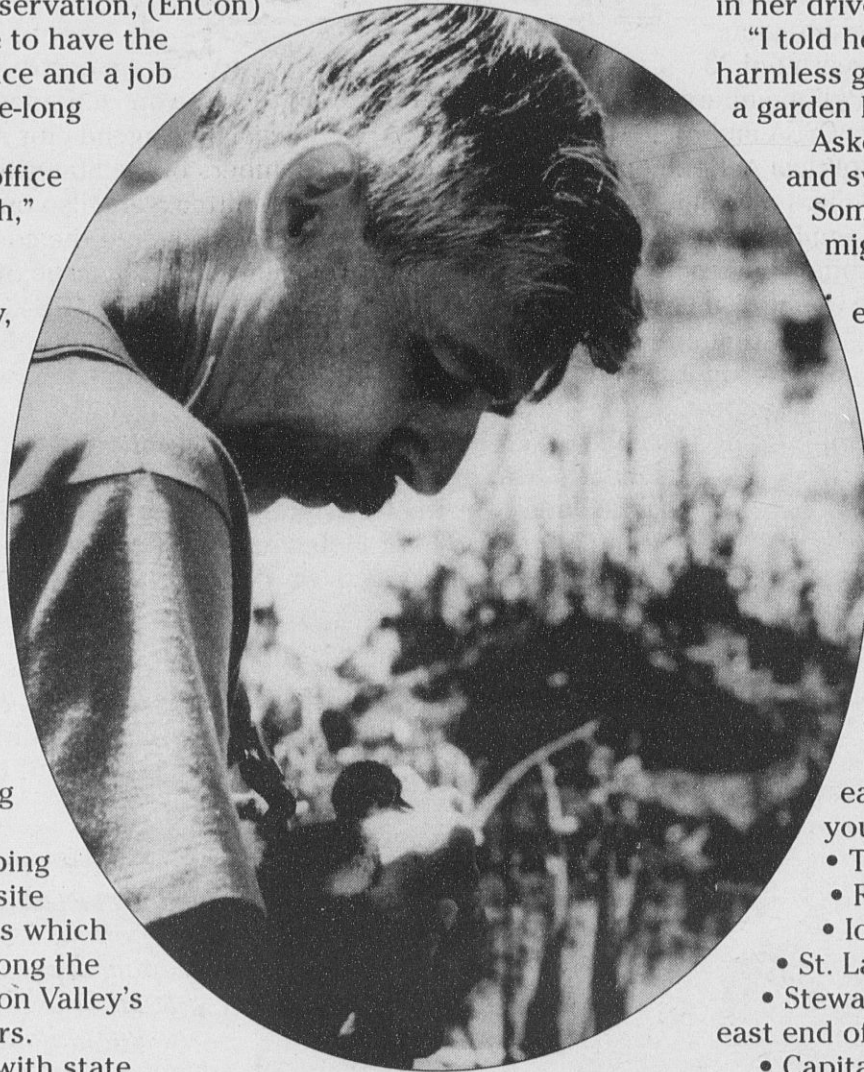
"Once a year, in February, we get a helicopter and fly the same route down the Hudson River and around the reservoirs and we count the eagles," Lindsley said. "This year was the most ever with 181 eagles."

Turkeys ahoy!

Other projects Lindsley worked on include stocking hunting areas with pheasants which are raised in Ithaca and the Wild Turkey Restoration Project in which he and his father, who also worked for EnCon, brought turkeys from Pennsylvania and western New York into the Hudson Valley.

Now the turkeys, which have successfully mated, are captured in the Hudson Valley and shipped across the country to stock other hunting grounds.

Lindsley also nonchalantly handles animal nuisance calls —



DEC wildlife technician Carl Lindsley tends to a wood duckling. At right, Lindsley bands a young eagle.

even if it's a bear in someone's garbage, a deer eating an apple tree or a beaver building a dam that floods the neighborhood.

Lindsley recalled a panicky woman whose imagination got the best of her.

"She said there was a seven-foot-long python as thick as her arm in her driveway," Lindsley said.

"I told her to calm down. It turned out the snake was a simple, harmless garden snake about three feet long and the thickness of a garden hose," he added.

Asked how to get rid of it, Lindsley told her to take a broom and sweep it away.

Some calls are referred to EnCon wildlife specialists who might tranquilize and relocate a wandering bear.

Other specialists may be called in at the homeowner's expense to get rid of a bat, skunk or squirrel in the attic.

People are sometimes truly frightened when they see a wild animal, Lindsley said.

"This region is a hot spot," said Lindsley. "There are a lot of city people who don't know how to deal with an animal. They're scared of skunks and deer. They're not prepared to see wildlife."

Where to watch wildlife

New Yorkers can be proud their state is home to a record number of bald eagles, thanks to the restoration project by Department of Environmental Conservation wildlife workers.

Nature lovers who would like to see the elegant bald eagles should visit these areas in New York State: (Bring your binoculars!)

- The Lower Mongaup River Valley in Sullivan County;
- Route 97 along the Delaware River in Narrowsburg;
- Iona Island, just below the Bear Mountain Bridge;
- St. Lawrence River, near the 1000 Islands Bridge;
- Stewarts Bridge Reservoir, below the Conklingville Dam at the east end of the Sacandaga Reservoir;
- Capital Region, along the Hudson River at the Corning Preserve in Albany and the Cohoes Falls in Cohoes; the confluence of the Hoosic and Hudson rivers at Stillwater and the Tomhannock Reservoir on Route 7 east of Troy;
- At the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge in Genesee County, where a closed circuit television system monitors a bald eagle nest site;
- Another site where the eagles are viewed through a television monitor is in Alabama, Genesee County;
- Nesting birds can also be observed at the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in Central New York.

For more information, contact your local EnCon office.

— Anita Manley

— Photos courtesy of DEC



Local president gets bullish with Bullwinkle

CANANDAIGUA — When Donna Dobbler called the local Moose lodge to schedule a once- or twice-a-year meeting of her CSEA local at the group's meeting hall, she never expected to lock horns with the head moose.

Nor did she plan on defending unions and union activities.

But Dobbler did all three splendidly.

A new national Moose directive claims "labor unions are not community-service oriented," a requirement for groups that want to use a Moose lodge for meetings.

"I was flabbergasted, offended and angry," said Dobbler, the local Ontario County CSEA president.

Dobbler took her gripe to Moose International headquarters in Mooseheart, IL., defending unions and presenting labor history in a spirited letter.

"Unions have fought for the rights of workers in this country since the Revolutionary War," Dobbler wrote.

Starting with the Mechanics, who resisted the British from 1765 to 1776, Dobbler recounted years of labor history, showing how labor has fought for fairness, safety and justice as the nation grew.

"We continue to advocate for improvements for all working people, for the destitute, and for retirees," she wrote.

"Labor unions aren't community-service oriented? I would argue there is no more community-service oriented organization in the history of this country," she wrote.

Dobbler's letter prompted a phone call and letter from Moose International General Governor David Chambers.

After explaining that, as a private organization, the Moose must be careful not to allow public access that could lead to the federal government to call the meeting hall a public place, Chambers allowed Dobbler's local to hold infrequent members-only meetings at the lodge.

"It reflects positively on all in the labor movement, especially CSEA," said Western Region President Bob Lattimer of Dobbler's quick work and letter.

"We all owe her a 'thank you' for her writing this letter," he added.

— Ron Wofford



PEOPLE PERSON —

April's PEOPLE recruiter is Michael Flaherty, a CSEA member in the Western Region. Flaherty recruited 33 new PEOPLE members.

PEOPLE is CSEA and AFSCME's Federal Political Action committee — it helps elect members of Congress who are friends of working families ... **MERIT WINNER —**

Jawaad Abdur-Rasheed, a hearing examiner in Oneida County Family Court, received the Office of Court Administration's Merit Performance Award for Community Service for his effort at improving the lives of youths in his neighborhood ... **GETTING THE GOVERNOR'S EAR —**

In the first three days of CSEA's radio ad airing statewide over the state contract, 1,500 calls were logged to the governor over the toll-free line ... **SCHOOL WORKSHOP WELL-ATTENDED —** CSEA

Central Region held a well-attended workshop for region educational support workers in Syracuse this past weekend. About 200 members attended.

Among the topics discussed were school violence and CSEA's legislative agenda for school issues. All the members of the Statewide Special Schools Committee were also on hand. Two area TV stations covered the conference in regard to dealing with the issue of school violence. ...

COMMUNITY OUTREACH — Southern Region President Carmine DiBattista has appointed George Henry chairman of the new Southern Region Community Action Committee. Henry is president of the Goshen Secure Center local. The committee will mobilize members in projects aimed at helping with community improvements and also with fund-raising for organizations.

Vital training for an effective union



CSEA Treasurer Maureen Malone, right foreground, reviews several important financial duties local union leaders must handle during a recent workshop in Poughkeepsie. Above, CSEA Secretary Barbara Reeves reviews training material with trainees.

Each year, CSEA Treasurer Maureen Malone and Secretary Barbara Reeves train hundreds of newly elected union leaders on the important financial and record-keeping aspects of running a CSEA local or unit. A recent training session in Poughkeepsie attracted dozens of activists. It is work that is critical to the success of CSEA as an effective union.



If you want it done, give it to Keesler

CSEA Local Government Mission Achievement Award winner known as problem solver

LIBERTY — If it has to get done, ask Toni Keesler.

That's the consensus at Sullivan County BOCES, where Keesler, a 13-year employee, has been a mover, shaker, advocate and problem solver for her co-workers.

Keesler, this year's winner of CSEA's local government Mission Achievement Award, started moving and shaking shortly after she was hired as a teachers' aide for special education students.

"We had no union leadership at the time," she said. "They switched our health insurance coverage without warning us. It meant a deductible that we couldn't afford.

"I was angry," Keesler said. "No one knew they were going to do it. I said, 'What do I have to do to become president?'"

On-the-job training

"Toni has acquired a good understanding of the legal and contractual environment in which public sector labor relations are conducted, which are bolstered by her keen instincts for knowing the right thing to do — and not to do," said CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Bob O'Connor.

"I am so proud of our Mission Achievement Award winner," said Southern Region President Carmine DiBattista.

"Toni is one of those activists who jumps right in and does what needs to be done for her members. You never hear her say, 'It can't be done.'"

Keesler's most recent victory not only boosted her members' credentials, but also will mean a more educated and qualified staff for her BOCES facility.

"Since I started here, I've been looking at ways for the teacher aides to move up. We began fighting for an accurate job description because most of us were doing the job as a teacher assistant," Keesler said.

Keesler developed a committee and was able to negotiate with BOCES officials so there would eventually be a teacher assistant in every classroom. But, each teacher aide would need six college credits to qualify as a teacher assistant.

Movable classrooms

Since Sullivan County is a long way from the closest university, Keesler arranged with the State University of New York at New Paltz to have the courses taught at the BOCES facility in Liberty with BOCES providing the books and materials.

In addition, Keesler publicized the courses so teacher aides in other school districts could participate. There are now 25 in the class.



CSEA Local Government Mission Achievement Award winner Toni Keesler works with a student at Sullivan County BOCES.

Keesler also negotiated with BOCES for a career ladder so teacher aides would receive a pay increase and a stipend and move up to a fully licensed teacher assistant. The teacher assistants will be phased in over three years, beginning with the most senior 13 aides each year.

Capable and compassionate

Keesler said most of her co-workers have been out of school for many years and were nervous about attending school again. But now, "The attitude is good," Keesler said. As a teacher's aide, Keesler is working with Ann Schumacher, a teacher who also started as an aide years ago.

Schumacher said Keesler "is an excellent second teacher. She's capable of taking over if I'm not here and she's got a great rapport with the kids. When she and I are here, she does such a great job."

Advice for novice unit presidents? "Make sure you know what you're getting into," Keesler said.

"Seek help from your colleagues. My first mistake was trying to do everything on my own."

— Anita Manley

CSEA's Mission Statement

*As working men and women
— every one and everywhere
— we are our greatest resource.*

*We organize and represent
workers to ensure our voice is
heard, our place at the table is
kept and the American dream
is ours in the 21st Century.*

*As a labor union, we hold
these values as our working
principles:*

Honesty: *We are honest
with ourselves and each other.*

Inclusiveness: *Every group,
every idea is welcomed.*

Full participation: *We
encourage and expect full
participation in all union
matters.*

Respect: *We respect each
other and honor our
differences.*

Diversity: *We celebrate our
diversity and use it to
strengthen us.*

Open Communications: *We
listen and provide for open
communication across all parts
of our union and in all
directions.*

Accountability: *We are
accountable for our actions and
decisions.*

Fiscal Responsibility: *We
conduct our business in a
fiscally sound manner.*

*As a labor union, we are
committed to union democracy
and we follow these values
with integrity.*