

THE WORK FORCE ROAR!



*Child care providers strong
and proud in CSEA Yes vote!
See Pages 10-11*

Photo by CSEA Communications Associate Jill Asencio

Photo of the Month



CSEA activist Steve Abramson, left, joins Town of Oyster Bay Local President Bob Rauff in 'Freezin' for a Reason' in the Long Island Region Polar Plunge. *Read more about CSEA's successful fund-raising for the Special Olympics on Page 5.*

Fort Ann school workers OK pact after long fight

FORT ANN — CSEA members employed at the Fort Ann School District overwhelmingly approved a new four-year contract following tough negotiations.

The agreement, retroactive to July 1, 2006, includes wage increases each year, a new salary schedule with step placements based on years of service and hourly increases for bus drivers for certain runs.

Sullivan BOCES worker dies

John E. Doty Sr. of Cohecton, 57, a CSEA-represented laborer employed at Sullivan County BOCES, died Feb. 29 as a result of injuries sustained in an on-the-job incident last December. Doty and a co-worker were moving office furniture using a BOCES-owned truck.

Doty reportedly slipped from the truck and hit his head. He passed away after 11 weeks at Westchester Medical Center.

CSEA Occupational Safety and Health Specialist Gary China and PESH investigated the incident. PESH did not issue any workplace citations.

Doty was an avid outdoorsman and leaves behind a wife, two children, and grandchildren. Funeral services were held March 4 in Wurtsboro.

CSEA looks ahead with Gov. David Paterson

ALBANY — Gov. David Paterson was sworn into office March 17, taking over following the resignation of Eliot Spitzer.



Paterson

CSEA has a long and positive relationship with Paterson who previously served as a state senator from Harlem for 20 years.

Paterson has supported and assisted CSEA on many issues throughout his career. CSEA looks forward to working with the new governor to address many challenges facing our members and the people of New York.

Paterson is the first African-

American governor of New York, as well as the first legally blind governor in the nation.

Paterson was elected Senate Minority Leader in 2002, becoming both the first non-white state legislative leader and the then-highest-ranking black elected official in the history of New York state.

Paterson, who was born in Brooklyn with no sight in his left eye and severely limited vision in his right, has optic atrophy. Paterson received a bachelor's in history from Columbia University in 1977 and later his law degree from Hofstra Law School.

For more, read President's Column, Page 4. Read Gov. Paterson's biography at: http://www.csealocal1000.org/pac/paterson_bio.php

CSEA responding to layoff threat in Putnam County

CARMEL — A bleak 2009 budget proposal from Putnam County Executive Robert Bondi includes the possibility of layoffs that could affect CSEA members employed by the county.

In his annual State of the County speech, Bondi said issues such as uncertain sales tax revenues due to the state of the current economy along with unfunded mandates for counties in the proposed state budget, force him to seek cuts in all areas of the county budget.

"It's a very alarming prospect," said Putnam County Unit President John Mulreany. "Our work force is spread thin as it is. We've had reductions in the past and even

now there are many vacant jobs. We're already doing more with less."

Mulreany said that while Bondi mentioned in his speech layoffs as a possible cost-cutting measure, CSEA has not been formally approached about possible job cuts. If reductions were to occur, it is expected the process would begin through attrition. Mulreany said he expects county officials to wait to see how the proposed state budget affects the county before making any decisions.

CSEA represents more than 350 Putnam County workers.

— Jessica Ladlee

CSEA members face double standard

CSEA-represented school district workers face a double standard in light of allegations that some school boards have allowed attorneys to financially double dip.

State and federal investigators have targeted 11 Long Island school districts, charging they lavished financial perks on law firms representing the districts. Meanwhile, the union has had to fight for everything it can get when negotiating fair contracts for school workers.

CSEA-represented school district workers literally keep the schools running, but many of them are being exploited by district officials who seem to be more concerned with paying outside attorneys instead of treating their own employees fairly.

The current investigation by state Attorney General Andrew Cuomo has focused on Long Island but has recently expanded to Westchester County and could potentially reach other school districts across the state.

"We're talking about the people who cut the grass, fix the plumbing, answer the phones and drive the buses," said CSEA

Long Island Region Director Ron King. "Our units in Mattituck-Cutchogue and East Williston have been working without a contract for almost three years while their respective school boards nickel and dime them to death under the guise of preventing yet another increase in property tax levels."

"Their commitment to fiscal discipline is quite selective to say the least and must now be called into question," said Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte. "Frankly, it is hypocritical to draw a line in the sand as these school boards negotiate with our units and simultaneously enable lawyers and law firms to siphon thousands of dollars from the public trough."

In addition to the Mattituck-Cutchogue and East Williston units, CSEA-represented workers in the Baldwin, Garden City, Jericho, Wantagh and Sewanhaka school districts are also fighting for contracts.

Ingerman Smith, one of the law firms that the state and federal authorities are investigating, handles legal matters for the school board in Mattituck-Cutchogue, where the CSEA custodial unit has been without a contract for more than three years.

Mattituck-Cutchogue is not one of the Long Island school districts named in the state and federal investigation, though that district is one of many in the area who had retained Ingerman Smith to handle its legal matters.

A now-former partner at Ingerman Smith collects an annual state pension of \$61,000 after being credited with working full time by five school districts while he was employed as a partner at the firm.

State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo has expanded his investigation to include school districts statewide.

— Richard Impagliazzo

Fight against closings



CSEA members and staff joined correction officers and other union members as well as concerned citizens at a recent rally to save Hudson Correctional Facility from closing. A state plan to close Hudson and three other upstate correctional facilities has met with strong opposition from workers, political leaders and community members. As this edition of *The Work Force* went to press, the state's funding situation for correctional facilities remained unclear.

Grievance win means no jackpot for would-be lottery thieves

MANHATTAN — Would-be thieves attempting to score a different kind of jackpot have run out of luck.

Thanks to a successful grievance by the CSEA Taxation and Finance Department Local, Lottery representatives will no longer be required to use their laptop computers to transmit Lottery information from locations they deem too dangerous.

"Our members provide a valuable service to the New York Lottery, but we have to place a greater value on their lives," said Local President Patricia Metzger.

Several Lottery representatives shared stories of unsafe locations, car break-ins and even a knife incident by a deranged store customer.

"We don't want anyone getting

hurt or robbed. There have been many laptops stolen over the years," said representative John O'Brien. "It's our job to make sure that none of us are hurt or injured during our job."

At a recent meeting members also expressed concerns over a proposal to create an endowment by leasing the state lottery to a private company which, proponents claim, would add \$200 million a year toward higher education.

Members were reassured that CSEA had publicly testified against such a move by the state and that the proposal lacked sufficient support from the legislature.

— David Galarza

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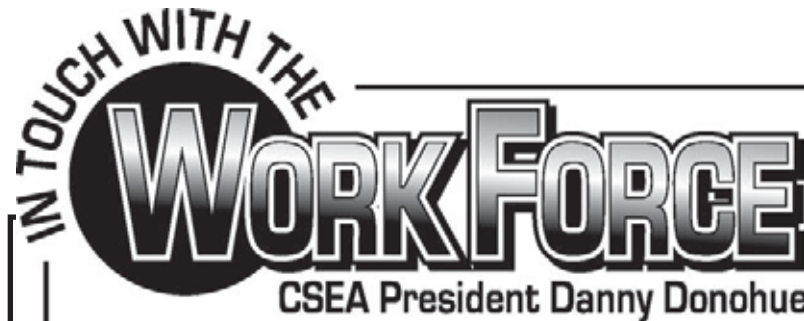
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Move forward with hope and courage

As a lifelong New Yorker and someone who still believes in the greatness of the Empire State, the Eliot Spitzer scandal and resignation is a sad and disappointing situation for us all.

Obviously it's an awful personal tragedy for Spitzer and especially his family.

There's also a broader impact. In this case, the disappointment in Spitzer's failings appears even more glaring because there were such high expectations for his leadership. There is a great sense of loss for what might have been.

Unfortunately, it will also make some people even more cynical about government and public officials and that's harmful. Like you, most public officials work hard to do a good job every day. It's not right or fair to tar everyone and everything with the same brush because of individual actions.

We all need to move forward and focus on the task ahead of making New York a better place to live and work. CSEA has had a long and positive working relationship with our new governor, David Paterson. We will assist him in whatever way we can to help rebuild public trust and face up to the serious challenges ahead of us.



Aide wrestles gun-toting man

BROOKLYN — When Kenneth Ricketts took the written test to become a safety officer early one morning he had no idea that a frightening physical and emotional test would arrive later in the day.

Ricketts, a mental health therapy aide at one of the Kingsboro Psychiatric Center's residential homes, was about to go on his break after serving snacks to his consumers when he got a call from an anxious co-worker warning him about a consumer with a gun.

While authorities were being summoned Ricketts, afraid for the lives of other staff and consumers at the facility, ran from the first floor to the third floor of the building to see if the consumer had gone to his room.

Unable to find him in his room or the recreation room, Ricketts soon got another call warning him that the 230 pound, 6'3" consumer was now on the second floor.

Ricketts quickly emptied his pockets of keys, phone, change, and anything that might make noise and alert the consumer. As he made his way downstairs and toward the door it quickly sprang open and he was soon face to face with the consumer.

"I said immediately where is the gun!" Ricketts said. The consumer said he didn't have a gun but then reached for something in his pockets.

"When I looked down and saw the bulge in his pocket and that he was about to bring it out, that's when I tackled him and pushed him up against the wall," said Ricketts who is a burly 6'4" and weighs about 260 pounds.



Mental Health Therapy Aide Kenneth Ricketts disarmed a gun-toting consumer at a Kingsboro Psychiatric Center residential home, an incident that has CSEA calling for more security.

"He already had his hand on the gun handle when we started wrestling," said Ricketts, who was miraculously able to block him from squeezing the trigger with his own fingers even though the consumer still held the handle.

After wrestling with the consumer for several minutes, yelling for assistance and making his way toward the first floor of the building, Ricketts eventually subdued the consumer and was able to force him onto a courtyard outside and hold him until police officers arrived.

"When the first cop came he said, 'Don't move or I'll shoot you,'" said Ricketts. "That's when I really got nervous," since he was so close to the consumer.

The police officer quickly disarmed the consumer and placed him under arrest. "Had it not been for the quick thinking and courageous actions by Ricketts, this situation could have turned into a horrific tragedy," said Kingsboro Psychiatric Center President Fitzroy E. Wilson.

"Management needs to make sure that our workers and consumers are not facing a grave risk every time they walk into one of our facilities."

At the precinct, Ricketts would later learn that the 9 mm Smith & Wesson gun he held in the consumers pocket was loaded with 12 bullets, had another in the chamber and its safety feature was off.

"If I had to do it again I know I would do the same thing," said Ricketts. "I'm just sorry it took this incident to prove what I have been saying all along (about unsafe conditions)."

According to Ricketts, who was sore but suffered no serious injuries during the incident, consumers at this facility have the freedom to come and go as they please. Upon returning, safety checks are shoddy at best and there are no metal detectors.

After this incident, Ricketts said, management has reluctantly agreed to provide additional safety officers and they are awaiting metal detectors.

"I would strongly suggest that if management really wants make this place secure then they have to sit down with the workers and ask us, 'what would make you feel safer?'"

— David Galarza



"He already had his hand on the gun handle when we started wrestling."

CSEA *Voices*



"My biggest safety concern would have to be getting residents in and out of bed, with or without lifts. This process is problematic because employees are susceptible to arm strain or back injury during the process and residents are prone to fall on the floor, which could result in serious harm."

— Carol Low, Supervising Licensed Practical Nurse, Long Island State Veterans Home, SUNY Stony Brook, when asked about the most important safety and health issue in her workplace.

CSEA Polar Plungers net \$9,300 for Special Olympics

PORT WASHINGTON — CSEA members from the Long Island Region braved periodic torrential rains and chilly temperatures to jump in the Long Island Sound to raise money for the Special Olympics New York during the recent Polar Plunge at Bar Beach in Port Washington.

CSEA members across the state raised a total of \$9,300

in three Polar Plunges.

Long Island Region members raised more than \$5,000 for Special Olympics New York, the most money CSEA has raised at a Polar Plunge this winter.

Among the plungers were the "Port Washington Bathing Beauties," a team that included CSEA members Jerry D'Agostino, Rich Acevedo, Mark Ell, Jim

Olford, Amado Garcia, Mike Prudente, Bob Rauff, Jeff Perez, Herm Williams and Steve Abramson.

CSEA members from across the region cheered on the plungers as they made their mad dash into the sound, demonstrating CSEA's commitment to quality care for individuals with developmental disabilities and and

community involvement.

"I'm very proud of our people here," said Nick LaMorte, Long Island Region president, who watched the plungers. "It just goes to show what we can accomplish when we stand together in solidarity."

— Richard Impagliazzo



Bright idea saves money, wins award

“Economically, it’s good for OGS, it’s good for Frank and we have a lot of other good members who do things like that every day.”

CSEA *Voices*



“Traffic is always a concern, because of the high volume of students and staff crossing the campus. We just had a staff member hit by a car. Even though we have crosswalks and school zone signs, we have to be extra careful. New students or staff may not always know where they’re going, which makes them vulnerable as pedestrians. ”

—Karen Reid, senior clerk, Orange County Community College Student Life Office, when asked about the most important safety and health issue in her workplace.

ALBANY — A CSEA member’s idea to improve outdoor security lighting at the Empire State Plaza has won him \$500 and will save the state much more in energy costs.

State Office of General Services electrician Frank Salvagio recently won the state Civil Service Department Merit Award for his suggestion to replace outdated magnetic light ballasts in the plaza’s 420 security lights with more efficient electric ones. Ballasts are transformers that are connected to and power on bulbs when the switch is turned on.

Longer lasting light

The new electronic ballasts will last five times longer and use less energy than the magnetic ones. Salvagio said he and his co-workers were constantly replacing the old ballasts, which burned out prematurely due to exposure to the elements.

“We were chasing after them all the time,” Salvagio said. “They’re not meant to be exposed to harsh weather and fluctuations in temperature.”

Besides saving money in energy and maintenance costs, the new lighting will improve security on the plaza. Although they use less wattage, Salvagio

designed new, reflective fixtures for the lights that produce more light output.

“The new fixtures actually push the light out into the roadway and reflects it off the marble walls on the other side,” he said.

Salvagio credited CSEA members Bill and Joe Adalian for fabricating the fixture he designed.

Need to conserve

Though he likes to tinker around the house, Salvagio doesn’t consider himself an inventor. He said he simply saw the need to reduce energy costs and began doing research online.

“It’s great for OGS that Frank came up with this savings,” said CSEA OGS



State Office of General Services electrician Frank Salvagio installs an improved light fixture he designed into a marble wall at the Empire State Plaza.

Local President Tracy Carnavale. “Economically, it’s good for OGS, it’s good for Frank and we have a lot of other good

members who do things like that every day.”

— Ed Molitor

Clinton County Jail workers declare impasse

PLATTSBURGH — Corrections officers, sergeants and lieutenants working at the Clinton County Jail are calling for a state mediator to come in and try to resolve their contract stalemate. The workers, represented by CSEA, declared an impasse in contract negotiations on Feb. 8, frustrated after two months of bargaining yielded no progress.

At issue, according to CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Emy Pombrio, the union’s chief negotiator, are wages and staffing related issues. She said a union comparison of the officers’ salaries with those of officers working at jails of the same size in other counties found Clinton County correction officers were paid 10 percent below average; sergeants were paid 25 percent below average; and lieutenants were paid 73 percent below average.

Despite the union’s findings, Pombrio

said the county had only offered the employees wage increases of 1.5 percent per year in a five-year deal. She said the offer was particularly disheartening since the county relied on a similar salary comparison with other county sheriffs to justify a 30 percent pay hike for Sheriff David Favro.

“The sheriff and the county are able to justify a \$17,000 raise for the sheriff,” Pombrio said. “But they can’t find reasonable money for the people who keep the jail running.”

Pombrio said the county can afford to bring the officers’ salaries more in line with those of officers in other counties using some of the millions in revenue the jail generates in housing inmates under federal contracts.

— Ed Molitor

County exec gets free gas; union fights for contract

GOSHEN — More than 14 months without a contract, with negotiations in mediation, Orange County Unit members are not sitting quietly by the sidelines.

Members turned out en masse to show their solidarity at a contract demonstration following Orange County Executive Edward Diana's State of the County speech, where Diana told attendees that CSEA should accept the county's contract offer.

At press time, that offer consisted of a proposed 35-hour workweek for new hires, a hike in health



Orange County Unit members and supporters demonstrate for a fair contract outside the county's government center.

insurance contributions and a minimal wage increase.

"Mr. Diana has told the 2,200 members of CSEA that they should take what basically amounts to a pay cut, while his salary recently went up to over \$161,000 and he just received a shiny new Chevy Tahoe paid for with county dollars," said Unit President Ron Greene. "It's hard to ignore the hypocrisy in this situation."

Diana's salary tops even that of Westchester County Executive Andrew Spano,

who runs a county with a population three times larger than Orange County. A recent newspaper article reported that Diana's salary is just under that of a U.S. representative, which in 2006 totaled \$165,200 for base pay. Diana also enjoys personal use of the Tahoe, a large SUV, with free gas.

The cost of gas is just one of the many factors CSEA Orange County Unit members are struggling with on their salaries. The ever-increasing cost of living in Orange County, with home prices



Orange County Unit activist Mary Collins and unit Secretary Rosemary Kukys fight for a contract.

remaining high in response to New York City commuter demand, motivates CSEA members to continue to fight for a fair contract.

"The services that CSEA members working for Orange County provide are essential ones that some county residents may inadvertently take for granted, but the county would not run without this dedicated work force," said Southern Region President Billy Riccaldo. "It's time County Executive Diana acknowledges the hard work CSEA members do with a fair contract offer that honors the cost of living in Orange County."

— Jessica Ladlee



Orange County Unit President Ron Greene is interviewed by a television news station.



Did you know that 82 percent of respondents to a Zogby poll favor increasing state aid for purchasing library books?

CSEA Voices



"My biggest concern is the children. They always want to get out on the ice and I worry about them jumping in front of me while I am driving the Zamboni. If the rink doors are left open, they're ready to go. With kids, anything can happen. I can't just watch the ice; I need to watch them as well."

— John Zlotek, Depew Parks and Recreation Department, on the most important health and safety issue in his workplace.

CSEA members lobby for libraries

CSEA members employed at libraries across the state came to the state Capitol in Albany recently for the New York Library Association's (NYLA) Library Lobby Day. CSEA has sponsored and supported the event for the past few years.



Overmyer

"I'm proud of the CSEA members who staff our local libraries across the state," CSEA President Danny Donohue said. "They perform a vital service for their communities and they take pride in providing top-notch service."

Library workers urged state officials to increase state aid and close the gap in funding for libraries so they can better provide library resources to their communities.

One of those workers is Ove Overmyer, president of the Rochester City Library Workers Unit, who urged CSEA members to continue to contact their state representatives to fight for library funding.

This year, CSEA members and other library supporters focused on restoring \$5 million in state operating aid that builds upon the investments made in the 2007 state budget. The library community also requested lawmakers to amend the Contracts for Excellence Initiative to permit increased funding for the purchase of books for school libraries as well as hiring school library media specialists in those high need districts.

For more about the fight for library funding, visit NYLA's website at www.nyla.org.



CSEA members Robert Knight, a Rockland County employee and vice president of the Board of Trustees for the Ramapo-Catskill Library System; Jo Ann Reuben, an Ulster County Clerk's Office worker and an officer of Friends of the Rosendale Library; and Jennifer Ogradowski, a department head and librarian at the Guilderland Public Library, at Library Lobby Day.



CSEA members give animals a second chance



A rescued rabbit.

CSEA Voices



“We try to be aware of safety all the time. We try to be cautious while out on the ice. In 22 years, I’ve only fallen twice.”

— **John Bullock, Depew Parks and Recreation Department, on the most important health and safety issue in his workplace.**

OYSTER BAY — Thanks to CSEA members employed at an Oyster Bay animal shelter, a group of animals now have a second chance at a healthy, happy life.

CSEA members recently played a key role in their rescue, after a Jericho veterinary technician noticed the same woman repeatedly brought in sick and injured animals over the course of several weeks. The concerned technician alerted authorities.

A Nassau County judge then issued a search warrant for the woman’s Syosset home. CSEA members helped in the resulting search, including Animal Control Officers Tom Licata and Donna Zura, and Kennel Attendants Viola Rauff and Heather Engvik.

Deplorable conditions

The rescuers found the animals confined in filthy crates in the cold home that was in disarray.

Many of the more than 100 animals, including dogs, cats, rabbits, ferrets, birds, fish, guinea pigs and sugar-gliders, an exotic marsupial



A cat rescued from a Syosset home.

similar to a flying squirrel, also had low body temperatures and possibly suffered from hypothermia for some time.

All were removed from the house and taken to the Oyster Bay animal shelter. The woman was hospitalized for psychiatric evaluation.

“We knew there was something going on in that house, but we weren’t expecting anything like this,” Licata said. “We thought she had 10 or 12 dogs at most. It was quite a shock.”

A second chance

At the shelter Animal Control Officer Anthony



A Yorkshire Terrier rescued from a Syosset home.



CSEA member Viola Rauff with two dogs rescued by a nearby home.

Parga, Kennel Attendant Debbie Nocerino, shelter Assistant Director Christopher Tresham and shelter Director Charles Yodice helped the CSEA members involved in the rescue.

The workers provided the animals a clean and comfortable living space, food and water, proper hygiene and veterinary care.

Arrangements were also made with animal rescue groups to house the animals the shelter could not accommodate due to

limited space. Soon afterwards, some of the animals moved into foster homes.

The animals’ health is improving. Within a week after the rescue, many of the animals were beginning to gain weight, eat and drink more regularly and exercise.

“These animals were in severe distress and we were proud to participate in their rescue,” Yodice said. “My staff did a great job. They deserve all the credit.”

— **Richard Impagliazzo**



Viola Rauff and her husband, Oyster Bay Local President Bob Rauff, check on a Great Dane rescued along with 100 other animals.

A scrape with injustice

GROTON — CSEA and community supporters are fighting for the reinstatement of Sheldon Clark, president of the Groton School District CSEA unit, who was unjustly fired in January.

Clark, an 18-year bus driver with a safe driving record, was fired by the board in January following a December incident when he accidentally turned too sharp, scraping the side of his bus against a bridge railing.

Five children were on the bus. There were no injuries and the students were unaware of the incident.

"I felt the bus go over a snowdrift and I heard a scratching noise, but I just thought it was crunching snow," Clark said.

Later, seeing minor scratch damage to the bus cargo door, he immediately reported it to his supervisor. "That's all it was, a scratch," he said.

What happened next seemed more worthy of a



Sheldon Clark addresses the Groton Board of Education



Central Region President Colleen Wheaton offers support to Groton Schools Unit President Sheldon Clark over his recent firing.

circus tent than a bus garage.

No charges warranted

His supervisor reported the incident to the district superintendent, who ordered Clark to take a urine test for drugs and alcohol and suspended him from driving his route. Five days later, when the test came back clean, the superintendent had State Police investigate Clark for leaving the scene of a property damage incident. Police determined no charges were warranted.

The superintendent called the parents of the five children who were on the bus to check if the children were OK following the "accident." None had any idea what she was referring to.

Parents outraged

Days later, in a closed-door executive session and without any other disciplinary action proposed, the school

board voted unanimously on a motion by the superintendent to terminate Clark.

"It felt just like getting kicked in the gut," Clark said.

Clark said he really doesn't understand why the district seems to have it out for him over such a minor incident. "I don't know; it just baffles my mind."

The parents on Clark's route were outraged and began holding meetings to support the driver and get him reinstated. Mark Howser, whose 4- and 8-year-old sons were on the bus at the time of the incident, led the community charge to reverse the board's decision.

"As far as I'm concerned, his record has been exemplary. He has a love for the children and it's reassuring that I can put my kids on his bus and not have to worry that they'll be safe and well behaved," Howser said. "He runs a tight ship and I like that, and my

kids enjoy riding on his bus."

Do the right thing

Howser and other community members collected signatures from more than 150 village residents, including every parent on Clark's route.

He presented the petitions at a recent school board meeting packed with Clark's supporters, urging board members to reconsider.

More than a dozen CSEA activists, including Central Region President Colleen Wheaton, were present to lend their support, wearing stickers the union printed bearing the motto, "Do the Right Thing."

Recently, 28 of Clark's bus students got soaked demonstrating in the rain on Clark's behalf. "That just crushed me," said Clark. "For the kids to do that for me; that was something."

Board unconvinced

Despite the public outpouring of support, board members said they would not reconsider their decision. CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Will Streeter Jr. said the union already has an arbitration date in June over Clark's improper firing and fully expects to get him reinstated.

Clark said he's grateful for the overwhelming support. "It's just unbelievable. I'm going to remember that all my life," he said.

— Mark M. Kotzin



"That's all it was, a scratch."

CSEA Voices



"Our most important safety and health issue in our workplace would have to be back injuries from lifting. We have nurses and home health aides that are regularly lifting and moving patients, and we have building and grounds workers who often are lifting heavy items."

— Joan Kellogg, principal account clerk, Tioga County and Tioga County Unit President, on the most important health and safety issue in her workplace.

INSIDE THE WORKFORCE

Child care providers join CSEA

Childcare Providers Together-NY voted with an overwhelming majority ... a 96 percent win to be a part of CSEA. The Work Force spoke with several of our newest members about why they voted "YES!" for CSEA.

Rita Crawford attributed her quick 'yes' vote to CSEA organizing to her past work experience. She had worked as a nurse's aide at Valley View Nursing Home in Altoona, Pa., before becoming the director of a day care center and eventually providing child care in her home.

In 1975, Crawford witnessed the fight between her employer and the workers at the nursing home as workers fought for benefits and a living wage. There were layoff threats made and conditions were such that she said, "you could say something but you wouldn't be working there the following week if you did."

Management even tried to offer the workers free lunch in return for not forming a union.

Crawford said they

were told, "you get a free lunch. If you have a union, you won't get your free lunch anymore." Crawford said she and the others replied, "Thanks for the lunch but I'd rather have my union."

Now, Crawford's niece works in the same nursing facility and in the same position Crawford had in 1975, and has the benefits of a union. She makes a good living with full benefits and doesn't have to deal with the same challenges that made Crawford's job in 1975 so difficult.

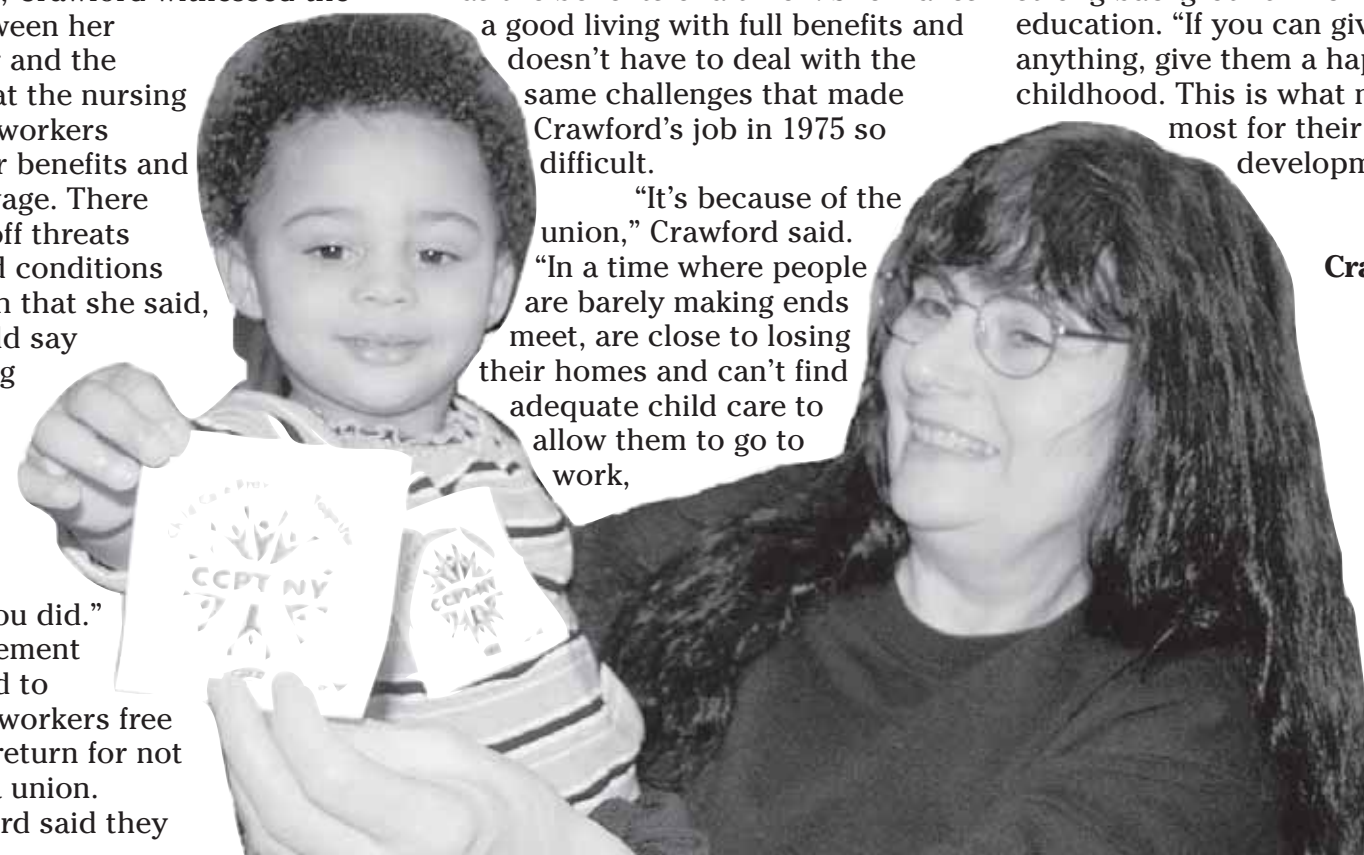
"It's because of the union," Crawford said. "In a time where people are barely making ends meet, are close to losing their homes and can't find adequate child care to allow them to go to work,

you have to have a level playing field. The union does this," she said.

"This is just what child care in New York needs. If you don't have a union you don't have anyone to go to for help."

Crawford's master's degree in elementary education and bachelor's degree in psychology give her a strong background in child care and education. "If you can give children anything, give them a happy childhood. This is what matters the most for their development."

At left, Rita Crawford in her day care.



'I voted yes because ...'

"I voted 'yes' because I think we need better pay. That was my main concern. We spend our time caring for and educating children, helping our communities and find it difficult to manage, ourselves," said Sheila Smiley of Syracuse. "I was a cake decorator for 10 years until I developed carpal tunnel and tendonitis in my hands, so I can't do that anymore. I love children and thought, 'Why don't I look at it. I am taking care of my grandkids already so, I might as well offer the service to others.'"

Smiley specializes in care for children of young single mothers on public assistance. She only accepts what public assistance will pay and does not charge above that because she believes that there is a need to help young, struggling mothers.

—Text and photos by Jill Asencio



Sheila Smiley of Syracuse applies first aid cream to a child's arm at her child care located in her home.

CSEA/Child Care Providers Together-NY, a new CSEA child care union (CSEA Local 100B), won with 96 percent voting in favor of a union. Representatives from Local 100B will now join CSEA/VOICE Local 100A at the table for negotiations with the Office of Children and Family Services, which began in February. One contract will cover both child care locals, a similar structure that CSEA uses for state contracts. The CSEA campaign for representation began in June 2007, culminating in a vote of nearly 17,000 potential members in February. After more than 5,000 authorization cards were signed in 60 days, the New York State Employment Relations Board (SERB) made a motion to hold a vote to expedite the process. The result was overwhelmingly pro-union.



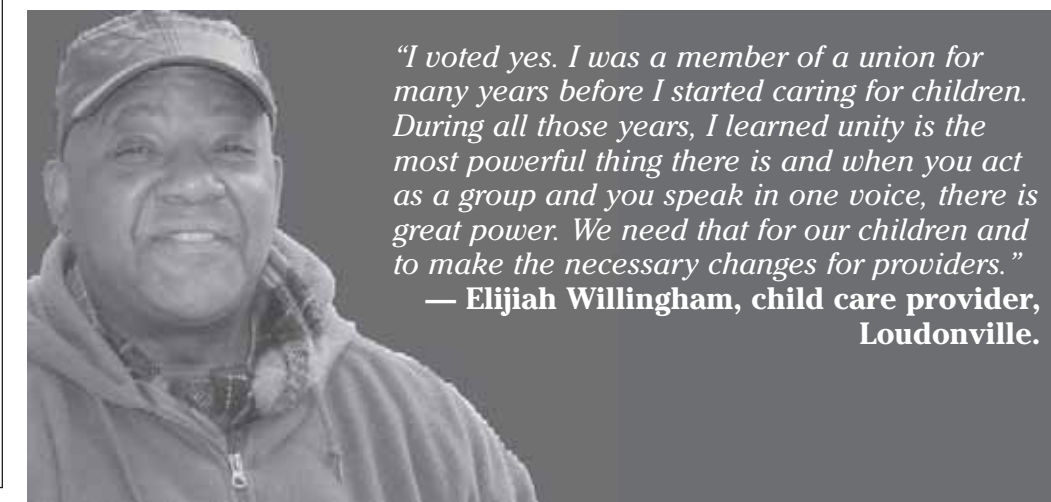
"I voted 'yes' for CSEA because we need to be protected. With a union our concerns can be voiced by someone who understands what it means to care for children. No matter where you go — rural, suburbs or the cities — and no matter whether you have been in a union before or not, all child care providers have the same concerns. No. 1: our kids, No. 2: our parents and No. 3: taking care of our own families with adequate pay and benefits."

— Jennifer Causer, Addison



"I voted yes. I was a member of a union for many years before I started caring for children. During all those years, I learned unity is the most powerful thing there is and when you act as a group and you speak in one voice, there is great power. We need that for our children and to make the necessary changes for providers."

— Elijah Willingham, child care provider, Loudonville.



Remember fallen CSEA members on Workers' Memorial Day

The most important job CSEA does each day is to fight to keep all of our members safe at work.

April 28 is Workers' Memorial Day, when union members remember other workers who passed away or sustained severe injuries while doing their jobs. CSEA and other unions also use Workers' Memorial Day as an opportunity to continue our fight for safe and healthy workplaces.

CSEA will honor fallen members at the union's Statewide Conference on



Occupational Safety and Health in Lake Placid this month. Other Workers Memorial Day events will be held across the state. Visit your region page on CSEA's website at

www.csealocal1000.org

for updates on events near you.

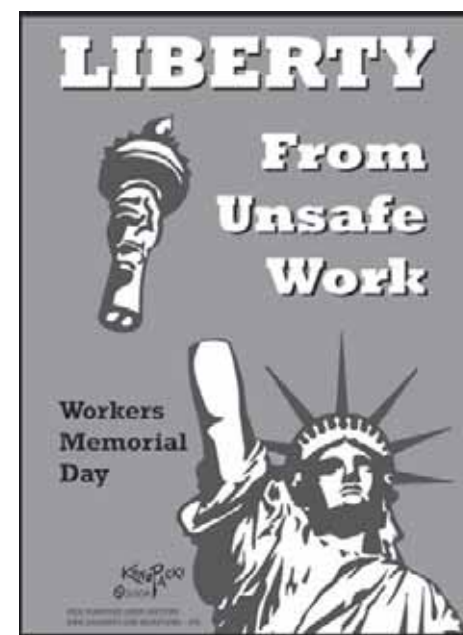
You can also download Workers' Memorial Day materials and resources at the AFL-CIO's website's Workers' Memorial Day page at www.aflccio.org/issues/safety/memorial.

CSEA mourns three members who recently passed away while doing their jobs:

William White, 61, a garage foreman at the Westchester County Department of Public Works Road Division, died Feb. 14, 2007, from a heart attack while loading salt into a truck.

Henry Williams, 63, a laborer at the SUNY College of Technology at Farmingdale, died June 19, 2007, while operating a tractor on the job.

John Doty Sr., 57, a CSEA-represented employee at Sullivan County BOCES, died Feb. 29, 2008, after sustaining severe injuries due to falling from a truck while working on the campus in December 2007.



This cartoon, by labor cartoonist Mike Konopacki, depicts the Statue of Liberty with her torch removed from her arm.

Workplace violence prevention rule not yet final

More than a year after the Worksite Security Act went into effect, CSEA members are still waiting for the state to complete a workplace violence prevention rule.

The state Department of Labor is in charge of promulgating a standard, or rule, for the law that CSEA led the way to being enacted in 2006. The rule seeks to add clarity and direction to the law so that public employers can comply with the requirements.

Once a proposed rule has been drafted it must be published in the State Register and 45-day comment period for interested parties must be provided. The process also often includes public hearings.

CSEA President Danny Donohue testified before the Labor Department on Nov. 20, 2007, in support of the then-proposed rule. "This rule will have a profound impact on the working lives of

thousands of public employees and it will save lives," he said in his testimony.

While CSEA strongly supported the then-proposed rule, several public employers, led by New York City, vehemently opposed the proposal and threatened legal action against the state.

The Department of Labor again revised the proposed rule to avoid legal action. The revisions of the proposed rule were significant enough to warrant a notice of proposed rule making in the State Register and to hold another public hearing on the matter.

The state is expected to publish a revised proposed rule and hearing date soon, though a final rule for the Public Employers Workplace Prevention Law is not expected before June.

Workplace violence a universal concern

CORNING — CSEA members from across the Western Region came together recently to talk about workplace violence and to learn how they can have a role in stopping it.

The Western Region isn't alone; workplace violence concerns CSEA members across the state.

At a recent workshop in Corning, Western Region members shared stories of being kicked, punched and bitten by patients, students, the general public and even co-workers. They have been threatened with physical violence, chased by someone wielding an ax and threatened with knives and guns. They have felt frustration when employers ignore the threats until violence happens to a member of management.

These stories could be told in every region.

"When CSEA members are asked to discuss incidents of workplace violence, there is no hesitation, no pause," said CSEA Occupational Safety and Health Project Developer Matt Kozak, who presented the workshop. "This drives home the point that enforcing the workplace



Buffalo Psychiatric Center Local President Tony Brown discusses workplace violence during a recent region workshop.

violence law is essential."

The law requires most public employers to go through a process of identifying and correcting potential problems and requires employers to make CSEA members a part of this process.

"This is an example of labor driving public policy," Western Region President Flo Tripi said. "CSEA made this law happen. We initiated it, we screamed the loudest for it and we made it happen. This law is an opportunity for us to make our workplaces the safest they can be."

— Lynn Miller

Unit shoots hoops for children's health

PORT WASHINGTON — CSEA Port Washington School District Custodial, Transportation and Maintenance Unit members recently helped raise more than \$6,000 in a charity basketball game benefiting a mobile medical clinic that would bring health care to medically underserved children.

The Children's Health Fund, which has mobile medical clinics that serve children across the country who lack access to health care, is trying to expand its fleet of clinics to allow more children to receive health care.

Ten Port Washington Unit members staffed the event, which pitted basketball teams from the Port Washington Police and Fire departments against one another in a game that entertained community residents and fostered a sense of civic pride.

Proceeds from ticket sales were donated to the school district's ongoing effort to raise \$250,000 to add another mobile medical clinic to the Children's Health Fund's



existing fleet of clinics. "We've raised \$160,000 over the last two years through fund-raising projects like this basketball game and the CSEA unit has served as the backbone of every one," said Elaine Ajello, one of the

seven community residents leading this effort. "We simply could not have done it without them and are very grateful. Great things can be achieved when people work together like this."

CSEA members from the unit, including John Ciotoli, Ralph Clemente, Orlando Donato, Monty Vane, Mark Ell, David Albury, John Thomas, Edwin Hernandez, Jerry D'Agostino and Unit President Rich Acevedo have put in a great deal of time and effort before, during and after every event to ensure that they are successful.

For the basketball game, the CSEA members set up tables and chairs before the game, sold refreshments to patrons as the game progressed and restored order to the high school's main corridor and gymnasium after



From left, Port Washington School District Custodial, Transportation and Maintenance Unit members John Ciotoli, David Albury, Ralph Clemente, Jerry D'Agostino, Unit President Rich Acevedo and Monte Vane help staff the concession stand at the charity basketball game benefitting the Children's Health Fund.

everyone had left. Thomas and Hernandez even played in the game as part of the police department squad.

"Our unit continues to bond with the community through its participation in charity events like basketball games, art auctions, fashion shows, lemonade sales and musical activities," said Acevedo. "We don't just work in

the schools; we're a tangible component of the local population."

The unit also played a key role in CSEA's support of the Special Olympics New York's Polar Plunge. (See Page 5 for more.)

— Richard Impagliazzo

Let the WORK Institute help you study for the PATT exam

Are you studying for the state Public Administration Traineeship Transition (PATT) exam being given on May 31, 2008?

If so, three of the four subject areas for that exam are available on the WORK Institute's Online Learning Center.

Go to the website at www.csealocal1000.org/wi for a link to the Learning Center's free demo as well as for other important information regarding the PATT exam, including a schedule of classroom-based workshops.

You can also contact the WORK Institute by telephone at (866) 478-5548.



April 15 is coming up fast!

File your taxes online with Union Plus!

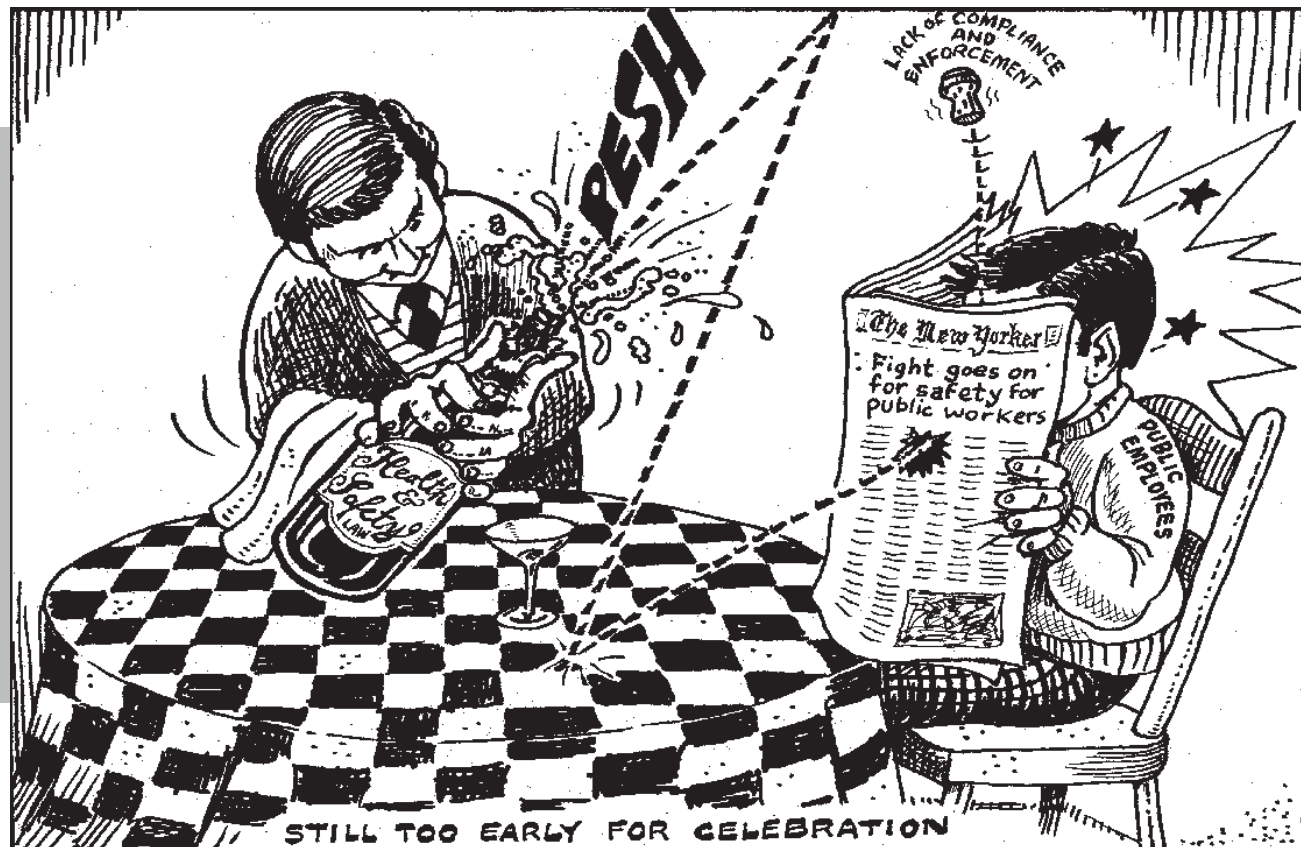
With the Union Plus Online Tax Preparation Service, CSEA members and their families can use an online tax tool to prepare and file their taxes.

CSEA members are assured reputable, secure online tax service with Union Plus.

With this simple and easy-to-use service, the online tax preparation tool automatically calculates your taxes and helps minimize errors. Union Plus also costs less to use than other online tax services.

To use the Union Plus Online Tax Service, visit its website at www.unionplus.org/taxes. You can also access the service by visiting CSEA's website at www.csealocal1000.org and clicking on the "Save Money" button in the left menu, then selecting "money and credit."





This vintage cartoon by CSEA artist Ralph Distin appeared in the April 17, 1989, edition of *The Public Sector*, then CSEA's official publication, to mark the first observance of Workers' Memorial Day in April 1989.



1989

19 years ago ...

In 1989, CSEA had already been a longtime leader on workplace safety and health issues, spearheading the successful passage of the state Public Employee Safety and Health Act of 1980.

Even with strong laws that protect thousands of workers across the state, workers are still killed or injured on the job. That is why on April 28, 1989, CSEA and other unions observed the first Workers Memorial Day to remember those who have suffered and died on the job and to renew the fight for safe workplaces.

CSEA members came out in force to mark Workers Memorial Day, organizing and participating in events such as memorial services, moments of silence and memorial dedications to honor fallen workers. Every year since then, CSEA members have continued to observe Workers Memorial Day.

The unions chose April 28 because April 28, 1971, is the date when the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Act took effect. Workers Memorial Day is observed in more than 100 countries and April 28 is an international day of mourning for workers.

CSEA is committed to continuing to keep every member safe on the job and leading the fight for worker safety. (For more on Workers Memorial Day, see page 12.)



Above is the original Workers Memorial Day logo that appeared on Page 1 of the April 17, 1989, edition of *The Public Sector*. The phrase comes from legendary labor organizer Mother Jones, who said "Mourn for the dead, but fight like hell for the living."

Also in 1989 ...

- * The Berlin Wall separating East and West Germany is dismantled, prompting the fall of communism in Europe.
- * Mikhail Gorbachev is named president of the Soviet Union.
- * A federal jury convicts Oliver North in the Iran-Contra affair.
- * The Exxon Valdez oil tanker ruptures and spills 11 million gallons of crude oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound.
- * Salman Rushdie's novel "Satanic Verses" is published, leading the author to go into hiding when Islamic militants put a price on his head.
- * The Dalai Lama wins the Nobel Peace Prize.
- * "Rain Man" wins four Academy Awards, including one for Best Picture.

Standing up for prescription drug savings



CSEA Treasurer Joe McMullen speaks out for affordable prescription drugs and taxpayer savings as part of a recent news conference in Albany. The event brought together an unprecedented alliance that includes the American Association of Retired People (AARP), New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), the Business and Labor Coalition of New York (BALCONY), the Public Employees Federation (PEF), Consumers Union, New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) and the Center for Medical Consumers. The alliance is calling on state officials to make prescription drugs more affordable and accessible to New Yorkers through marketing and purchasing reform. CSEA has long supported the idea of using the state's buying power to negotiate the best possible prices for prescription drugs.

Are you a CSEA member under age 35? CSEA wants to hear from you!

CSEA is changing. Like many other organizations we are seeing a population shift as the Baby Boom generation passes into middle age and beyond.

The future of CSEA depends on a new generation of leaders, activists and members. Much of what lies ahead will require CSEA to change and adapt to new realities and priorities, involving more younger people.

To assess the needs and interests of younger members, CSEA has prepared an online survey to hear your perspective. You can complete it at the CSEA website www.csealocal1000.org. You must sign in and authenticate your membership and age to participate. All survey responses will be confidential and will not be correlated with specific respondents. You will also be asked in the authentication process if you are interested in being considered to participate in a focus group in your area in the near future. CSEA will be conducting focus groups across the state to learn even more about younger members' interest and attitudes about the union. **Please participate — we need your point of view!**



Summary of January Board of Directors meetings

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

ALBANY — CSEA's statewide board of directors met Jan. 10. In official business, the board:

- Approved adjustment to the General Counsel's salary;
- Approved contribution to the Martin Luther King Memorial Foundation;
- Adopted a resolution asking all CSEA/AFSCME officers to set an example by becoming MVP PEOPLE (Public Employees Organized to Promote Legislative Equality) contributors; the resolution also makes increasing PEOPLE contributions a top priority;
- Amended calculations for chargeable and non-chargeable fees under the Hudson/Beck (public sector/private sector) decisions;
- Established maximum miscellaneous allowances for 2008 CSEA events;
- Approved lease agreements for office space at

2 Court St., Delhi for Local 813 and for a new copier for Local 828;

- Resolved various personnel matters such as creating position of Communications Associate (UUE Grade 14A/16A/18A), reclassifying position of Secretary/Receptionist in region offices from UUE Grade 5/6 to UUE Grade 6/7, revising job specifications for positions of Senior Secretarial Office Assistant (UUE Grade 9) in region and satellite offices and Secretarial Office Assistant (UUE Grade 7/8) in region offices, reclassifying vacant Field and Member Services Department position of Secretary I (UUE Grade 7/8) to Secretary III (UUE Grade 9), combined job specifications of Audit Clerk (UUE Grade 5/6/7) and Cashier (UUE Grade 5/6/7) to Audit Clerk-Finance Office (UUE Grade 5/6/7) and approved changing minimum typing speed from 40 wpm to 35 wpm for positions of Secretary I (UUE Grade 7/8);
- Increased Region 3 expense items and Capital Additions to establish an office in the Local 860 building for LRS's assigned to area, adjusted funding for a new Rochester Satellite Office,

increased funding for personnel committee referrals and for the position of Director of Legal Services/Chief Counsel and adjusted Region 5 Capital Additions for an additional Laptop computer; and

- Placed into administratorship Geneseo Faculty Student Association Local 629, Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance Local 688, Bethpage UFSD Cafeteria Workers Local 723, Albany County ARC Janitorial Service Local 750, Schenectady Community Action Program Local 755, JCEO of Clinton & Franklin Counties, Inc. Local 757, Hope House, Inc. Local 760, Westchester Medical Center Food Service Local 761, Mahopac CSD Clerical Unit 840-8157-00, Schenectady County Library Unit 847-8500-05, Town of Erwin Unit 851-8709-00, Town of Corning Unit 851-8722-00 and William Floyd UFSD-Security Guards Unit 870-8766-04.

Questions concerning the summary should be directed to the Office of the CSEA Statewide Secretary, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12210 (800) 342-4146 or (518) 257-1253.

Protecting Your Benefits

Important prescription drug update for Empire Plan enrollees

Effective Jan. 1, 2008, United HealthCare began to insure and jointly administer the Empire Plan's Prescription Drug Program with Medco, its pharmacy benefit manager. Coverage was previously

through Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield/Caremark.

The Empire Plan and the prescription drug administrators have made every effort to ensure that participating pharmacies are aware of the change in administrators and know how to submit claims. However, since no drug information is listed on your health insurance card, you should bring the following information with you the first time you go to a retail pharmacy on or after Jan. 1, 2008:

- United HealthCare and Medco administer the Empire Plan's Prescription Drug Program.

- Rx Group: UH0712959
- Bank Identification Number: 610014

New addresses you need to know

Addresses for using the mail service pharmacy, submitting claims for prescriptions from

nonparticipating pharmacies and sending written appeals and prior authorization documentation are *changing*. Use the

addresses below on or after Jan. 1, 2008:



Mail prescriptions to the Medco Mail Service at:

Medco
P.O. Box 747000
Cincinnati, Ohio, 45274-7000

Mail completed claim forms for prescriptions from retail pharmacies to:

Medco
P.O. Box 14711
Lexington, Ky. 40512

Mail written appeals, grievances, prior authorization documentation and general correspondence to:

The Empire Plan Prescription Drug Program
P.O. Box 5900
Kingston, N.Y. 12402-5900

For more information, call the Empire Plan at 1-877-NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447).

What's In It For You?

Local government units: Fight for better benefits with EBF

Salary increases are usually one the most important issues during contract negotiations, but the sluggish economy may make it difficult for many CSEA local government units to negotiate raises.

As your unit begins to plan for negotiations, remember there are other ways to be compensated fairly for your hard work. Asking for increased benefits is a great way to enhance your local government contract, and the Employee Benefit Fund can help.

While EBF is known primarily for its competitive dental plans and vision plans, we also offer legal, maternity, hearing aid, annual physical, physician co-payment reimbursement and prescription drug co-payment reimbursement plans.

An EBF Senior Benefit Specialist can help you get these benefits by presenting to both your contract



negotiation team and management. We are also available to determine interest for the plans we offer, provide benefit information and answer any questions your

members might have regarding our benefits at a membership meeting or information day.

Please do not hesitate to call your region specialist for guidance in addressing EBF benefits during negotiations. Call EBF at (800) EBF-CSEA. Our website at www.cseabf.com is also a great resource for general information about what we can offer you.

Many CSEA local government units across the state are gearing up for negotiations this spring and summer. Now is a great time to get more involved with your union by attending your unit's meetings and information days, where you can learn more about the EBF and other CSEA benefits available to you.

An Ever Better Future

Important Notice to Current & Former Insureds Under the CSEA Sponsored Group Disability Income Program under Group Policy G-11628 Underwritten by New York Life Insurance Co. and Administered by Pearl Carroll and Associates:

The New York Court of Appeals has recently decided that disabilities due to a preexisting condition, as outlined in New York Insurance Law Section 3234, are to be treated as an extended waiting period instead of a permanent bar from benefit payments.

As a result of this decision, New York Life and Pearl Carroll and Associates will automatically be undertaking a re-examination of claims denied based upon preexisting conditions since June 27, 2004, under the above Group Disability Policy. All Members who had a claim denied due to a preexisting condition since this date will be notified of the results of their claim review.

If you believe you may have had a disability claim denied by New York Life due to a preexisting condition during the above period, please call Pearl Carroll and Associates Disability Claims Unit at 1-800-697-CSEA (2732).

Promoting Good Health

CIVIL SERVICE LAW: SECTIONS 71, 72 AND 73

Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of Civil Service Law articles to provide valuable information regarding important areas of protection available through the CSEA Legal Assistance Program (LAP). Get more information about legal services in the LAP by calling CSEA Headquarters at 1-800-342-4146, extension 1443, or by visiting www.csealocal1000.org, and clicking on the legal programs and services menu item.

This article provides an overview of Sections 71, 72, and 73, a few of the various sections of the Civil Service Law that provide employees protection in the workplace. Other Civil Service Law sections will be addressed in future articles.

Section 71

Civil Service Law Section 71 concerns reinstatement of permanent public employees who have been separated from service by physical or mental disability after an **occupational** injury or disease. Section 71 provides that an employee shall be entitled to a leave of absence of at least one year, unless a disability is of such a nature as to be permanently incapacitating. The employer is free

to permit a longer leave. Further, Section 71 provides that the employee may, within one year after the termination of the disability, apply to the Civil Service Department for a medical examination which is conducted by a medical officer selected for that purpose by the Department. If, after the medical examination, the medical officer certifies that the person is physically and mentally fit to perform his/her duty, then the employee is to be reinstated to his/her former position if it is still vacant.

Section 72

Civil Service Law Section 72 is applicable to the removal of permanent employees for physical or mental disability after a **non-occupational** injury or disease. Section 72 provides where, in the judgment of the appointing authority, an employee is unable to perform his duties by reason of a disability other than one resulting from occupational injury, the employer may require the employee to undergo a medical examination. This can include a mental



examination. If the results of the medical examination indicate that the employee is unfit to perform his/her job duties, the employer may place the employee on a leave of absence up to one year. This section further provides that

the employee may be terminated in accordance with the provisions of Section 73 upon the absence of a year or more. However, prior to placing an employee on a leave of absence, the employee is entitled to notice of the facts on which the employer's determination is made and to a full adversarial hearing.

Civil Service Law Section 72(5) provides that if there is probable cause to believe that an employee is a danger to persons or property, or would severely interfere with operations, he/she may be suspended immediately and allowed to use any sick leave, vacation and overtime and other time allowances pending a hearing.

Section 73

Civil Service Law Section 73 governs the leave rights, reinstatement and termination of employees who are disabled by a

non-occupational disease or injury. Section 73 provides that where an employee has been continually absent and unable to perform the duty of his/her position for one year or more by reason of a non-occupational disability, his/her employment may be terminated. An employee terminated under Section 73 may apply to the Civil Service Department for reinstatement within one year from the date of termination if the disability has ceased. The employee must then undergo a medical examination from a doctor from the Civil Service Department. If the doctor determines that the employee is fit, the employee will be reinstated to his/her former position, if vacant. Although Section 73 lacks explicit due process protections, the Court of Appeals has held that employees are entitled to a hearing under that Section when there is a dispute concerning the facts.

The Legal Assistance Program provides legal representation in Civil Service Law Section 71, 72, or 73 matters to employees who provide medical documentation that refutes an employer's findings and/or confirms that the employee is medically fit to perform the full duties of his/her position.

Break in membership affects eligibility for union office, voting privileges

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

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

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

If you go on unpaid leave or for any other reason have a break in your employment status, your dues will not continue to be paid through payroll deductions. You must make arrangements to pay your dues directly to CSEA to continue your membership status. If you are either laid off or placed on leave without pay

status due to becoming disabled by accident, illness, maternity or paternity, you may be eligible for dues-free membership status for a period not to exceed one year. If you are called up for active military duty you may also apply for dues-free status.

Note, however, you **must** continue to pay dues to run for office. Dues-free or gratuitous membership allows members to continue their insurance coverage while out of work. It does not protect your right to run for or hold office. This does not apply to members who are on leave due to being called up for military duty. Members on active military duty, upon return, are considered to have had continuous membership status for all CSEA election purposes.

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

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

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the CSEA Constitution & Bylaws for consideration by CSEA delegates to the union's 2008 Annual Delegates Meeting must be submitted by May 15, 2008.

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the CSEA Constitution & Bylaws may be submitted only by a delegate and must be submitted on the proper forms. Forms for submitting resolutions are available from CSEA headquarters and region offices.

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

The 2008 CSEA Annual Delegates Meeting will be held Sept. 22-26 in Washington, D.C.

Meet your leaders



Solidarity is Sullivan's priority

Editor's Note – Throughout this year, The Work Force is devoting the Leading Edge to interviews with CSEA's 10 statewide officers and region presidents. This month we feature Mary Sullivan, who recently began her fifth term as Executive Vice President.

Sullivan, of Herkimer in central New York, has a long and active history in the union dating back to the 1970s. She has served at every level of CSEA and is a tireless advocate of member involvement. A former chair of the statewide Board of Directors' Local Government Executive Committee, she was elected by the board as statewide Treasurer in 1986 to fill the remainder of the term of the retiring incumbent, Barbara Fauser. She was elected by the full membership to the post in 1988 and re-elected in 1991 before seeking and winning the Executive Vice President position in 1994.

Sullivan also serves as an International Vice President of AFSCME and coordinates CSEA's involvement with the AFL-CIO's Area Labor Federations across the state, making sure CSEA's strong voice is heard throughout the labor movement.



CSEA Executive Vice President
Mary Sullivan.



She is actively involved in CSEA education and safety & health efforts and serves on the board the United Way of New York, encouraging union participation in community activities.

WF: How did you get involved in CSEA?

Sullivan: Honestly, I was sitting at my desk in the Social Services Department and the woman who was unit president at the time asked me if I would be interested in running for union office. I said 'Oh yeah' – at the time I'd been on the job for a year and I didn't really know anything about CSEA except that I paid dues. So she asked what office I'd be interested in and I said, jokingly, 'president.' And the next thing I knew, I was the unit president.

I had no idea what I was doing, immediately went into contract negotiations and, after a couple of meetings where the management team wasn't taking us seriously, I called for an impasse. I guess that no one had ever done that before because it nearly gave my former high school guidance counselor, a county legislator who was negotiating for the county, a heart attack. It all worked out in the end and we ended up with a good contract.

I realized quickly that I had a lot to learn. Frankly, I wouldn't suggest trying that today. Things are much more complex.

WF: What do you find are some of the common misconceptions that members have about CSEA?

Sullivan: Too many of our members believe that because "you" got elected everything's on "you" – there's no need for participation – there's no need to know what the union does and can and can't do.

There's not enough understanding that unless everyone's involved we don't have any real power.

WF: In what ways is CSEA a better organization today than when you first got involved?

Sullivan: One of the major things is that we have an excellent education program. When I started as a local president I learned by reading the contract and having discussions with my labor relations specialist. There was a rudimentary grievance training program but it wasn't required then.

Today, our Education and Training Department trains a whole front line of people beyond the elected leadership, on how to administer contracts, which is the lifeblood for any union.

Having some of the best lawyers in the world in our Legal Department says a lot ... We have an excellent Safety and Health Department. We do Communications better than we did back then ... We have huge clout in the Legislative and Political arena which we have to have and I think our members undervalue that.

We're much more visible. I think our field staff is better. They're better trained; they're better "up" on things. They're accessible in the field and they mentor and coach new leaders.

I think that we do a great job. Could we do better? Sure, but who couldn't?

WF: What is the LEAD program?

Sullivan: The LEAD (Leadership Education and Development) program is an idea that came out of several discussions that Danny Donohue and I had regarding the need to ensure that CSEA has strong leaders in the future. We believe it is our responsibility to develop the future leadership so CSEA is prepared when today's leaders decide to move on.

The LEAD program is designed to train new leaders for every level of the organization. We are not training groups of people to all at once run for statewide president. It's really about training activists to be good committee chairs, unit officers, local officers, region officers as well as statewide leaders.

There is a formal application process for the program and a candidate must meet minimum qualifications. Each candidate must also be interviewed by members of our selection panel. Hopefully, even more of our younger activists will apply for a position in our future programs.

WF: We often hear from members that they don't get involved because no one's ever asked them and we hear from leaders that they ask and no one wants to help?

Sullivan: I'm not sure that our leaders have a lot of time to ask someone to help even though I'm sure they'd like to. And, conversely, members are reluctant to volunteer because they're not sure what they might be getting into. An effective way to get someone involved is to ask them directly. The problem is finding the time to do it. We need to find better ways of communicating with our members to get them interested in their union.

WF: What are some of your fondest memories as a CSEA activist and officer?

Sullivan: I had a lot of fun coming up in the ranks and I learned so much from so many people. I loved the CSEA conventions at the Concord Hotel in the Catskills. We were all under the same roof, literally captive in that place with no one to talk with but each other. I met a lot of great friends who taught me so much about their particular part of the union.

I'll also remember that great rally we had in January 2000 in Albany to protest not having a contract for our state members. It was a bitter cold day but no one seemed to mind. And (former statewide Secretary) Barbara Reeves almost got herself arrested!

But my fondest memories will always be of the many wonderful brothers and sisters, members and staff, who I've met and of the ones I look forward to meeting in the future.

April CSEA calendar of events

Statewide:

- April 25-27: **CSEA Statewide Conference on Occupational Safety and Health**, Lake Placid
- April 28: **Workers Memorial Day**. Contact your region office for more information on local events. (See Page 12 for more.)

Long Island Region:

- April 2-3: **Defensive Driving**, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m., Long Island Region Office, Commack
- April 26: **Defensive Driving**, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Long Island Region Office, Commack

Metropolitan Region:

- Check for upcoming events at the Metropolitan Region page at CSEA's website at www.csealocal1000.org.

Southern Region:

- April 2-3: **Local Government Grievance Workshop**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m.; Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Westchester County Local Office, White Plains
- April 9-10: **Defensive Driving**, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m., Rockland County Local Office, New City
- April 12: **Defensive Driving**, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Rockland County Local Office, New City

Capital Region:

- April 1-2: **Local Government/Private Sector Grievance Representation Workshop**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m.; Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., UNITE/HERE Office, Gloversville

Central Region:

- April 1-2: **Steward Workshop**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m.; Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Holiday Inn, Oneonta

- April 8-9: **Contract Negotiations I: Maximizing our Leverage Workshop**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m.; Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Central Region Office, East Syracuse
- April 14-15: **Contract Negotiations II: Negotiating Team Training Workshop**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m.; Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Best Western University Inn, Canton. *NOTE: This workshop was originally scheduled on Feb. 26-27, 2008, but was canceled due to weather. If you previously registered, please re-register to confirm your attendance.*
- April 29: **CSEA Sponsors the WPBS Television Auction**, 6 - 9 p.m., WPBS, Watertown from 6 - 9 p.m. Volunteers are needed. Call the Central Region Office if you're interested.
- April 29-30: **Contract Negotiations I: Maximizing our Leverage Workshop**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m.; Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Howard Johnson Hotel, Norwich
- April 29 & May 8: **Local Government Discipline and Interrogation Training**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m.; Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Chemung County Human Resource Center, Elmira

Western Region:

- Check for upcoming events at the Western Region page at CSEA's website at www.csealocal1000.org.

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

KINGSTON CONTRACT — City of Kingston Unit members have ratified a new contract that takes them through 2011. The four-year deal includes competitive wage increases in each year. Members also gained an additional holiday, longevity improvements and enhancements in uniform language ... **CELL PHONES FOR SOLDIERS** — The Nassau County Local is collecting used



cell phones to donate to the national "Cell Phones For Soldiers" program, which recycles the phones. Proceeds from recycling the phones are used to buy phone cards for soldiers deployed overseas to call home. Soldiers have received more than 400,000 phone cards through the programs. For more information or to donate, call the Nassau Local at (516) 571-2919.

Mujica is PEOPLE Recruiter of the Month

OYSTER BAY — Rodrigo Mujica, an activist and member of the Oyster Bay Local in the Long Island Region, was named the February PEOPLE Recruiter of the Month.

He recruited 18 MVP members and recently added an additional 15 MVP members, one VIP member and a member who contributed \$250.

"I try to convey the message that it's important to be involved and know what's going on in the union," said Mujica. "I also stress that the PEOPLE program can help make our voices heard in Albany and Washington, which will certainly benefit our livelihoods."

When asked to become the local's PEOPLE Committee chair, Mujica took the initiative by learning all he could about the program.

Armed with all that knowledge, Mujica began to design informational brochures and fliers on the PEOPLE program to distribute throughout the local membership. He also reached out to Oyster Bay local members in the highway department, the parks, the bay constables, the animal shelter and the recycling center.

"Instead of trying to reach out to these members on my own and from my perspective as a sanitation worker, I asked friends



Mujica on the job as an Oyster Bay sanitation worker.

to organize meetings and introduce me to their colleagues before making my PEOPLE pitch," said Mujica.

It's all worked out very well for Mujica and the local. "We're on a roll, but there's more to be done," he said. "I don't see why we can't try to sign up every member."

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

— **Richard Impagliazzo**

Pearl Carroll & Associates is now offering HEALTH INSURANCE FOR PETS!

Since your pet is a member of your family, you will want the financial freedom to do everything medically possible to save your pet's life. With an affordable VPI Pet Insurance policy, you can have real peace of mind. The great news is that CSEA members can receive a 5% discount and payroll deduction making a VPI policy even easier and more affordable!

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