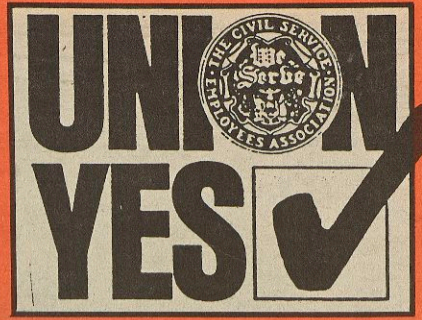


THE PUBLIC SECTOR

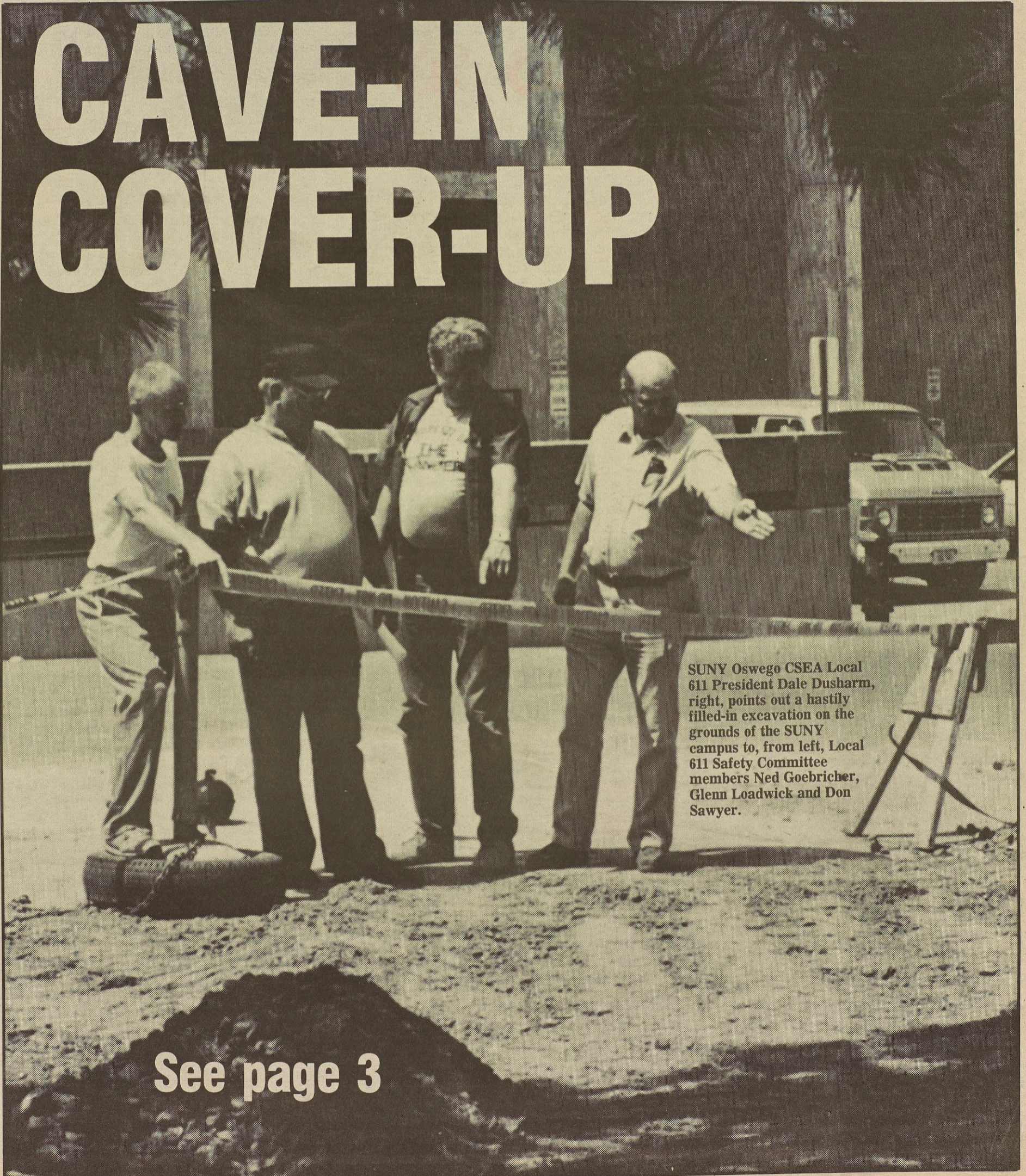


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CAVE-IN COVER-UP



SUNY Oswego CSEA Local 611 President Dale Dusharm, right, points out a hastily filled-in excavation on the grounds of the SUNY campus to, from left, Local 611 Safety Committee members Ned Goebriker, Glenn Loadwick and Don Sawyer.

See page 3

INSIDE

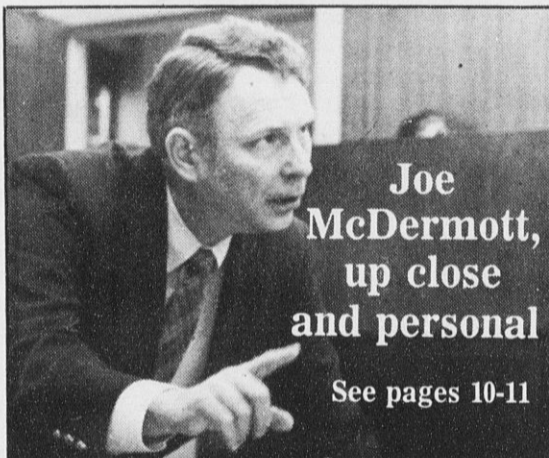


BOARD OF DIRECTORS Summary of meeting

CHASS

Handicapped but capable

See pages 14-15



Joe
McDermott,
up close
and personal

See pages 10-11

New feature:

Activist

With this issue, *The Public Sector* introduces a new feature. The **Activist** page will provide you with valuable information about services, issues, education — a whole variety of topics you can use as an active CSEA member.

Our first page covers the Public Employment Relations Board, on page 9. Check it out to get a real understanding of the agency that has so much influence on your workplace!

Notice: Due to a change in the publication schedule, the next issue of *The Public Sector* will be dated Sept. 5.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Public Sector regularly publishes a summary of actions taken by CSEA's Board of Directors at the Board's official meetings. The summary is prepared by Statewide Secretary Irene Carr for the information of union members.

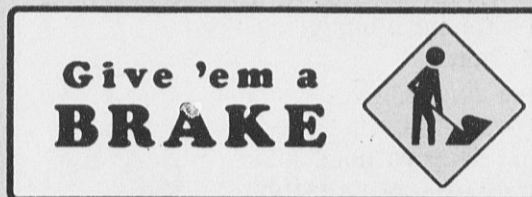
ALBANY — CSEA's statewide Board of Directors met here on July 14. In official actions, the Board:

- Agreed to organize Bronxville school district employees;
- Elected Candy Saxon as a CSEA Political Action Fund trustee;
- Rescinded "the rule of 25" which required Board OK to organize bargaining units of less than 25 employees; hereafter, organizing decisions will be made by director of organizing in consultation with regional offices;
- Approved paying statewide officers salaries for one month after they leave office upon completion of full term;
- Elected Richard Canniff to the Board's personnel committee;
- Approved special elections to fill Board vacancies from Essex, Nassau, Orleans and Otsego counties and for a new Region I

Local Government educational representative;

- Extended for two years a contract with Finserv Computer Corporation;
- Approved leases for various office equipment for Nassau County Local 830;
- Deferred because of budgetary considerations the reallocation of three secretarial positions; and
- Approved the following as the Region I Political Action Committee: John Aloisio, Jeanne Angiulo, Nick Avella, Eugene Cammarato, Jeanne Cooke, Tim Courtney, Jack Geraghty, Catherine Green, Dorothy Goetz, Pat Hahn, Al Henneborn, Nancy Hernandez, Roosevelt Jackson, Nicholas LaMorte, William Maccaro, Gloria Moran, Robert Specht and Rita Wallace.

Questions from CSEA members concerning the union's Board of Directors should be directed to the member's Board representatives, local president or to the office of the Statewide Secretary. Copies of the minutes of Board meetings are sent to all Board representatives and local presidents.



NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MARIO M. CUOMO, Governor FRANKLIN E. WHITE, Commissioner

Many activities scheduled for Labor Day 1988

CSEA officials and members are expected to participate in parades, picnics and various activities in conjunction with the celebration of Labor Day 1988 on Monday, Sept. 5.

In western New York, Erie County CSEA Local 815 will sponsor a float in the annual Labor Council-sponsored parade that begins in Williamsville. For details, call the Local 815 office at (716) 896-1640.

Monroe County Local 828 members will march in the annual Rochester Labor Day parade. For information, call Local 828 President George Growney at (716) 428-5594.

Chautauqua County Local 807 members will join in a picnic and labor awards ceremony sponsored by the area Labor Council. Contact Local President Jim Kurtz at (716) 753-4481 for details.

Public SECTOR

Official publication of The Civil Service Employees Association, Inc., Local 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO, 143 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York, 12210

ROGER A. COLE Editor
KATHLEEN DALY Associate Editor

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BURIED ALIVE!

OSWEGO — Ditches can be dangerous, sometimes even deadly.

That's why CSEA is alerting all CSEA members who may be asked to work in ditches, trenches or excavations to take extra precautions.

CSEA President Joe McDermott advises employees to visually inspect such areas before entering them and to notify a union representative if they have concerns about safety precautions.

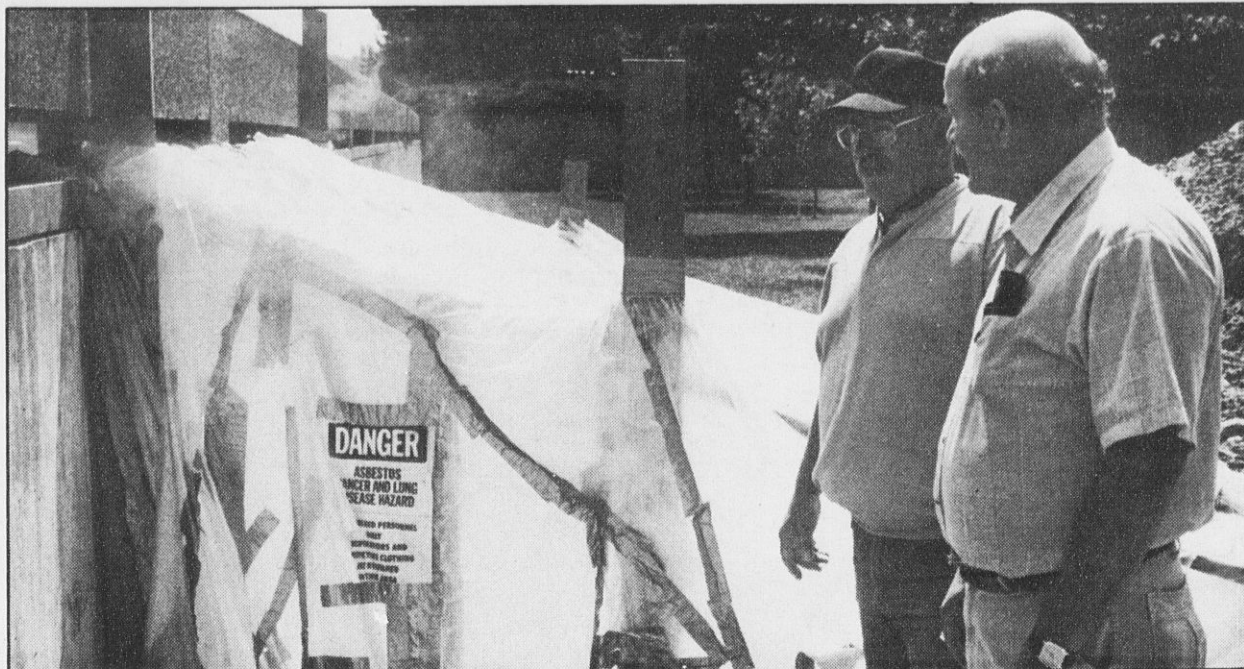
McDermott's advice comes on the heels of a tragic accident recently on the campus of SUNY Oswego. CSEA member John Sawyer, 29, remained hospitalized in Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse as this issue of *The Public Sector* went to press, three weeks after being buried alive when the sides of a deep ditch caved in on him.

McDermott, by occupation an assistant to the safety director of the state Department of Transportation, said the Oswego tragedy reinforces the need for action by the state Legislature on CSEA-sponsored legislation known as the "Safety/Health Exception" bill.

"It would allow an employee to refuse to perform a work assignment when the employee has a good faith belief that there is a real danger of death or serious injury," he said.

"If you're unsure about safety precautions around excavation sites, notify your CSEA shop steward, your local president or other union representatives so we can inspect the site as soon as possible," McDermott said. "Too many of my members have been seriously injured over the years in cave-ins in ditches and trenches that were not properly prepared."

CSEA is charging SUNY Oswego officials with failing to administer proper safety



OTHER HAZARDOUS EXCAVATION SITES on the SUNY Oswego campus, near the site of the recent accident, are inspected by CSEA Local 611 Safety and Health co-chairman Glenn Loadwick, left, and Local 611 President Dale Dusharm.

measures at the work site. State Department of Labor officials conducted an investigation of the July 26 accident at the request of CSEA but have not yet issued a report. Union officials say SUNY officials have not responded to repeated requests by CSEA for a labor-management meeting to discuss circumstances surrounding the mishap.

"The fact that John Sawyer was permitted to enter a 10-12 feet deep trench . . . without benefit of proper wooden shoring or protective cribbing is unconscionable and appears to be in complete disregard of every basic safety law covering work below ground level," said CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore.

CSEA also is angry that SUNY officials ordered the ditch filled in less than an hour after the mishap, hindering later investigations.

Sawyer and fellow employee John Bricker were working in a ditch estimated to be 10 to 12 feet deep without benefit of required shoring or protective cribbing when the cave-in occurred. Bricker shouted a warning to Sawyer and scrambled to safety.

Sawyer was pinned against an underground steam line and buried alive

beneath several feet of dirt and gravel for more than 20 minutes before rescuers digging with shovels, hands and anything available were able to uncover his face and head. He was trapped for as long as 45 minutes before being pulled out.

He suffered severe burns from the steam pipe and multiple injuries to his arms, legs, chest and back.

There's no excuse for ignoring the safety regulations

"There is no excuse for requiring people to work in unsafe trenches or excavations," says CSEA Occupational Safety and Health Director Jim Corcoran.

Corcoran says Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards are very specific concerning requirements for shoring trenches, ditches and excavations.

"Anyone who supervises such operations must be familiar with and enforce those regulations," he says.

According to Chapter XVII, Part 1926, Subpart P of Title 29 Labor, *Code of Federal Regulations*, "Banks more than 5 feet high shall be shored, laid back to a stable slope, or some other equivalent means of protection shall be provided where employees may be exposed to moving ground or cave-ins." The requirements also state "Sides of trenches in unstable or soft material, 5 feet or more in depth, shall be shored, sheeted, braced, sloped or otherwise supported by means of sufficient strength to protect the employees working within them."

CSEA says employees were working in a 10 to 12 feet deep excavation without any shoring or other protective measures at the time of the cave-in on the SUNY Oswego campus.

When in doubt, call the union

CSEA is advising members who are asked to enter ditches, trenches or excavations to visually inspect the work area to determine whether it is safe to do so.

If you have doubts, here's what the union recommends you do:

"Immediately contact your CSEA shop steward, local president or union representative if you feel an excavation is unsafe," CSEA President Joe McDermott said. The CSEA regional headquarters will be notified immediately and the regional CSEA occupational safety and health specialist advised of the situation.

"CSEA representatives will quickly respond to such situations and the site in question will be thoroughly inspected," McDermott promises. "If we find the area is unsafe, the union will take it from there."

"I believe most sites our people are asked to work in around the state do meet safety standards but obviously not all do; the SUNY Oswego site certainly did not," McDermott said.

Trust fund established

A "John Sawyer Benefit Fund" has been established in the Oswego area to assist Sawyer and his family, according to CSEA Local 611 President Dale Dusharm.

Sawyer was severely injured and his recovery period is expected to be lengthy. Among other injuries, the 29-year-old husband and father lost his lower left arm and three fingers from his right hand in the mishap.

CSEA members statewide may contribute to the "John Sawyer Benefit Fund" by sending check contributions to:

John Sawyer
% CSEA Local 611
SUNY Oswego
Oswego, N.Y. 13126



protecting the rights of workers

Herkimer Community College guilty of giving a bad order about Good Friday

HERKIMER — Herkimer County Community College (HCCC) was wrong when it directed several CSEA members not to report to work on Good Friday 1987, an arbitrator has ruled.

CSEA filed a grievance on behalf of

several clerical employees who were told not to report to work on Good Friday even though the college remained open. CSEA later took the matter to arbitration when it could not be resolved through the grievance procedure.

The arbitrator has ruled HCCC must pay those employees one day of overtime at one-half the daily rate or one-half day of leave at the option of the employees to compensate for the holiday pay they would have received.

CSEA's contract with Herkimer County provides for 13 paid holidays per year, one of them being Good Friday. Because HCCC's academic calendar differs from the work calendar of other county employees, unit members employed at the college are required to work some holidays.

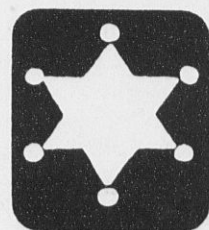
CSEA regional attorney John Scholl successfully argued that since Good Friday fell during the regular work week and the college was open and the work load not reduced, there was no reason or evidence to support the reduction of the workforce.

"It is clear that all unit employees are expected to work on those holidays falling within their normal work week if the college is open . . . the county violated the contract by directing employees not to report to work on Good Friday 1987," the arbitrator ruled.

Herkimer County CSEA Local 822 President Pat Labrozzi called the decision "an important victory not only for the clerical employees at the college but for all CSEA members in the unit and local." He praised the work of Unit President Sharon Morris, Unit Steward Candy Mancini, CSEA Field Representative Ercole Ventura and attorney Scholl for their work.



GOOD (FRIDAY) NEWS — Unit Steward Candy Mancini, center, indicates Good Friday on a calendar while Herkimer County Community College employees Josephine Sanganetti, left, and Mary Lou Cavanaugh, right, give "A-OK" victory signs.



Court gives CSEA justice from stubborn Lewis County sheriff

LOWVILLE — The Appellate Division of state Supreme Court has ordered an arbitration hearing for a former Lewis County deputy sheriff who, CSEA says, was fired for union activities as a shop steward.

And CSEA is also demanding immediate arbitration in the case of another former Lewis County deputy sheriff who was fired after he ran unsuccessful primary and write-in political campaigns against the sheriff last fall.

CSEA says Lewis County Sheriff Floyd A. Martin illegally terminated both deputies and then refused to submit the cases to arbitration when the union protested the firings. CSEA filed a lawsuit against the sheriff.

A state Supreme Court justice last year ordered an arbitration proceeding in the case of former deputy Charles W. Leviker. Sheriff Martin appealed that ruling and the Appellate Division recently unanimously upheld the lower court order.

That, says CSEA Field Representative Tom Dupee, should also clear the way for a hearing for former deputy Donald W. Sawyer. Sheriff Martin had refused to take the Sawyer case to arbitration pending the outcome of the sheriff's appeal in the Leviker case.

CSEA says Leviker's firing in January 1987 was motivated by his activities as a shop steward for CSEA Local 825. Martin claims he fired the 10-year veteran deputy for alleged misconduct and failure to perform duties. The union protested the firing and filed the lawsuit after the sheriff refused to take the issue to arbitration.

CSEA says the sheriff fired Sawyer as a retaliation measure after the eight-year veteran deputy conducted unsuccessful primary and write-in political campaigns against the sheriff in 1987.

One day after winning re-election, Martin suspended Sawyer for 30 days without pay, later refusing to submit the case to

arbitration. The sheriff later terminated Sawyer, claiming the deputy allegedly failed to report a complaint. CSEA has filed two Improper Practice charges against the sheriff, claiming anti-union bias and refusal to submit the case to arbitration.

CSEA's Dupee called the Appellate Division ruling "a landmark decision" that is gratifying but long in coming. Dupee said both Leviker and Sawyer "have suffered a lot of mental and financial hardships since being terminated" and are looking forward to a resumption of their cases.

"The next step is up to PERB (Public Employment Relations Board). Hopefully a hearing officer will be appointed soon. We've waited patiently for more than a year for this decision and every member of CSEA Local 825 is anxious to see a resolution," Dupee said.

Leviker is currently employed as a state parks police officer at Lake Ontario beaches while Sawyer works as a laborer at Lowville Academy and Central School.

Binghamton blow-up

Suppressed report contradicts official state assurances

BINGHAMTON — A recent story in the *Binghamton Press and Sun Bulletin* revealed that the State concealed a 1984 report on extensive contamination in the structure's duct system. CSEA has obtained a copy of the report and has found that the data contradicts statements made by Office of General Services (OGS) safety and health Director David Rings and other OGS officials during a meeting with CSEA and other groups in Aug. 1985. CSEA is now reviewing the report for other inconsistencies.

"It's time for the state to come clean on the Binghamton State Office Building and release all the information now," said CSEA President Joe McDermott. "CSEA has worked very hard with the state to develop a level of trust and understanding over the clean-up work — but this information undermines the entire effort."

Following the disclosure of the cover-up, McDermott contacted Gov. Mario Cuomo urging that Rings be replaced for lack of credibility. The state responded through OGS Commissioner John Egan.

Egan expressed "astonishment, puzzlement and disbelief" at CSEA's

position, claiming that the newspaper account had been shown to be "substantially in error."

But CSEA documents appear to back up details of the published report that Rings knowingly misled the employee unions and the state's expert panel on the clean-up, when he told them that 40 miles of ducts had been cleaned but that no testing had been done prior to the undertaking.

"The real issue is credibility — David Rings no longer has credibility on this issue or any other situation that we have to deal with him on," said CSEA Director of Occupational Safety and Health James Corcoran.

Corcoran also pointed out the Versar, New York Inc. which conducted the testing for OGS backed the state's claim that no testing had been done. The suppressed 1984 report found PCB contamination in the ducts 40 times higher than the safe limit.

"If Rings lied and Versar, Inc. backs his lie, how reliable is any of their data?" asked McDermott. "Obviously since the state was paying the bills they felt compelled to say whatever the state wanted said."

Because of the extent of the contamination and the concealment of the information, CSEA has serious questions about whether OGS cleaning removed the toxins from the ducts, even though the state Health Department has declared the building safe.

"Had this information come out at the time the report was written it would have been understood that more clean-up was needed," commented Corcoran. "Now it raises serious concerns about whether we're getting the whole picture."

The Binghamton State Office Building has been closed since a 1981 fire spread PCBs and other toxins throughout the structure. The clean-up effort, estimated at \$40 million, was expected to be completed and the building reopened this winter. CSEA believes this new information puts the building's future into serious doubt.

"From the employees' point of view, I'm not sure what impact this new information has," said CSEA Binghamton State Employees Local 002 President Tim Henehan. "As far as we're concerned the state lost credibility over this issue a long time ago. Back in 1981 we were told we'd be back in the office in a week — it's now seven and a half years later, so we remain skeptical."

The Binghamton
State Office Building
as it once looked.

Photo by
Keith
Hitchens,
*Binghamton
Press &
Sun
Bulletin*





They play

By Daniel X. Campbell
CSEA Communications Associate

ALBANY — For nearly 10 months a year you see them everywhere — bright yellow school buses transporting hundreds of thousands of children to and from hundreds of schools across the state.

Behind the steering wheels are some of the most skilled professional drivers on the roads, delivering the most precious cargo of all. Many thousands of those drivers are CSEA members employed by school districts where CSEA represents non-teaching personnel.

Many of the finest school bus drivers in the state were at the wheels of buses recently even though schools were in summer recess. The drivers were competing in the statewide finals of the ROAD-EO competition sponsored by the New York Association for Pupil Transportation (NYAPT) during its annual workshop here.

Finalists had already earned their way into the statewide competition by winning at regional events held earlier this spring and summer. Many of the statewide finalists were CSEA members.

"I enjoy the competition, but I like being a good bus driver," CSEA member Janet Lindquist from the Carmel Central School District said explaining why she was at the statewide finals. "I won second place in the lower Hudson competition in May and I'm here to do my best."

To do their best seemed to be the ultimate goal of all of the 40 plus competitors from around New York state.

"This is a very good experience for bus drivers and transportation supervisors no matter their employment status," said Judith Clemente, a transportation supervisor from the Connetquot School District. "It's a good experience and it shows the public what they can do, what they must know to handle a bus safely."

Peter Carson, a public employee bus driver in the Wappingers Falls area was really keyed up after the pre-trip bus inspection test.

"This is a fun competition. It adds something to the job — pride in doing your best and pride in your fellow co-workers' efforts to do their best," he said.

A group of CSEA members from the Middle Country Central School District

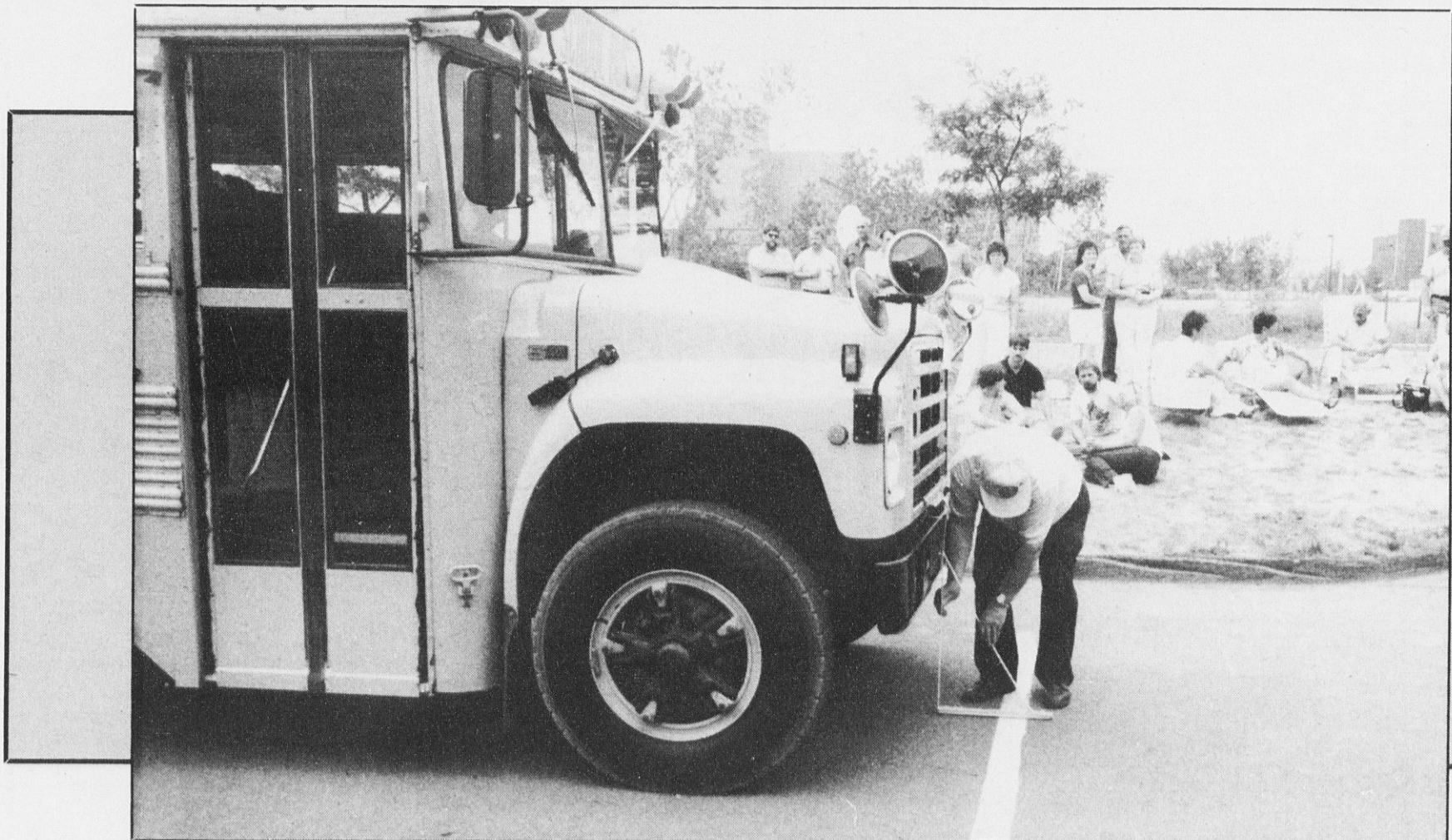
Local 870 were in attendance to cheer on their co-worker Yoland Cannizzo.

"I felt nervous during my run. I've won the Suffolk County competition three times," she said. "But here you're up against the best and it's a tighter course with a lot more personal pressure."



"I enjoy the competition, but I like being a good bus driver . . . I'm here to do my best."

— Janet Lindquist



TOO CLOSE — ANOTHER DEMERIT — for a stop that's off by just inches.

it safe!

Edna Keenan, a fellow CSEA member from Long Island Middle Country has strong feelings about the contests.

"I believe contests really improve school bus drivers' safety," she said, wearing a T-shirt proclaiming the superiority of school bus drivers.

Despite missing out on making the top three spots, CSEA members Kathy Dunn and Kathy Force from Horseheads Central School, were both excited about being in the finals no matter what the outcome.



"We came to compete and we did," they said after the final results were announced.

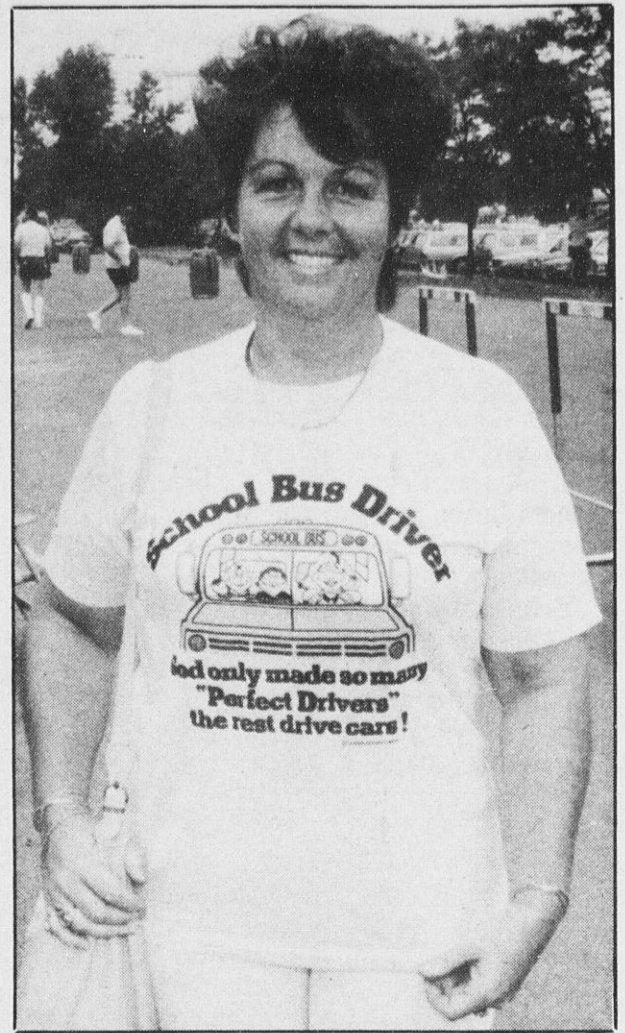
The top three van drivers for 1988 are: first, Thomas Johnson with a score of 77.75 out of 100; second, Barbara Dilworth, 75.25; and third, Louis Riley, president of AFSCME Local 1671.

In the big bus competition Bonnie Kaiser won with the highest score ever in state competition 94.25; second was Michael Competillo 92.25; and third was Stanley Tosedlowski, 89.00.

At a luncheon banquet for the competitors NYAPT President Paul Sharpe noted that all of the drivers should be congratulated on their dedication to transportation safety.

"You have spent countless hours developing your driving skills so that you can carry our most precious cargo — our students — to and from school more safely," he said. "You should all be congratulated for this dedication."

**"We came here to compete and we did!"
— Kathy Force, right,
and Kathy Dunn**



**"I believe that contests really improve school bus drivers' safety."
— Edna Keenan**



THE BACK TENNIS ball is not touching, but how about the front one? A judge checks it out as a driver guides a big bus through the test area.

Stopping the cycle.

Parks Department ends seasonal hire-fire system

ALBANY — CSEA has won a major victory for longtime seasonal workers in the state Parks Department.

Under a new policy, seasonal workers will not be laid off simply so the department can avoid giving them benefits. CSEA represents about 5,000 seasonal workers in the Parks Department.

"These loyal employees will now get the benefits they deserve," said CSEA President Joe McDermott. "Many of them have worked the 'hire-fire' cycle for years.



"I think it's about time"

Chris Sheehan

Finally, they are going to get the respect they deserve."

Previously, the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation regularly laid off its seasonal employees just before they were eligible for benefits including vacation, sick and personal leave, paid holidays and health insurance coverage. Under CSEA/State contracts, employees must work at least 19 consecutive pay periods to be eligible for those benefits.

After 15 days, the employees would be rehired, only to face the same cycle again, some for years.

For Chris Sheehan, an employee at Saratoga Spa State Park, the policy is a welcome relief.

"I think it's about time the state reward the longtime seasonal employees for their dedication," Sheehan said. "I went through the hire-fire cycle several times about every nine months, sometimes twice a year. Each time, I lost five weeks. That's unfair."

Co-worker Joyce Linen agreed.

"Park employees were the only state workers who were left going through this hire-fire cycle," she said. "The worst time for me was when I was fired at Christmas time. It's hard because you're off and when you're hired, it's a five-week pay lag. If you have a mortgage or a car payment, it's really hard to make ends meet."

CSEA has been trying to resolve the issue for years. It was raised again during contract negotiations, when both parties agreed to find a solution through labor/management discussions.

"The end of the 15-day break represents a significant betterment in working conditions for seasonals," McDermott added. "It's a big boost to morale and I certainly congratulate Parks Commissioner Orin Lehman for his cooperation in finally ending this longtime abuse."



"The worst . . . was when I was fired at Christmas."

Joyce Linen

AMERICA WORKS BEST
WHEN WE SAY...

UNION
YES

Nominations deadline set for L/M awards

ALBANY — The deadline for nominations for the 1988 Labor/Management Awards presented by CSEA and the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER) is less than a month away.

The awards are made annually to acknowledge employees who promote labor/management cooperation at all levels in the state.

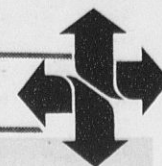
The deadline for nominating an individual, team or committee for the 1988 awards is Sept. 1.

Nominations should be sent directly to the GOER/CSEA Labor Management committees.

To get a nomination form, contact your personnel and employee relations office or CSEA regional field staff and local presidents.

If you have any questions about the programs, contact:
New York State GOER/CSEA Labor/Management
Committees

Suite 1930
One Commerce Plaza
Albany, New York 12260
(518) 473-3416



"The kinds of things we advocate for unions and management, we have ourselves."
 — Ralph Vatalaro, PERB executive director

The state Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) was established more than two decades ago to assist public employee unions and organizations and agencies of state and local governments in resolving labor relations disputes arising under the Taylor Law.

By Kathleen A. Daly
 Associate Editor

ALBANY — Most public employees never see the Albany offices of the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB), but the work of this small state agency affects all of them.

"PERB acts as an umpire in a baseball game," said Executive Director Ralph Vatalaro. "Somebody has to make a judgment call to be sure employers and employees play by the rules set by the legislature."

The agency was created in June 1967 with the passage of the Taylor Law, which gives public employees in New York state the right to bargain collectively.

In more than 20 years, PERB's role has changed, but it has maintained its status as the chief voice of reason between employers and unions during stalled contract talks and as arbitrator in disputes over employment practices.

PERB consists of a three-person board and a staff of 55. Currently, the board has a vacancy created when Jerome Lefkowitz left to join CSEA as deputy counsel last year.

The agency is waiting for the appointment of the third member to join Chairman Harold Newman and Walter L. Eisenberg, Vatalaro said, and break tie votes in several cases.

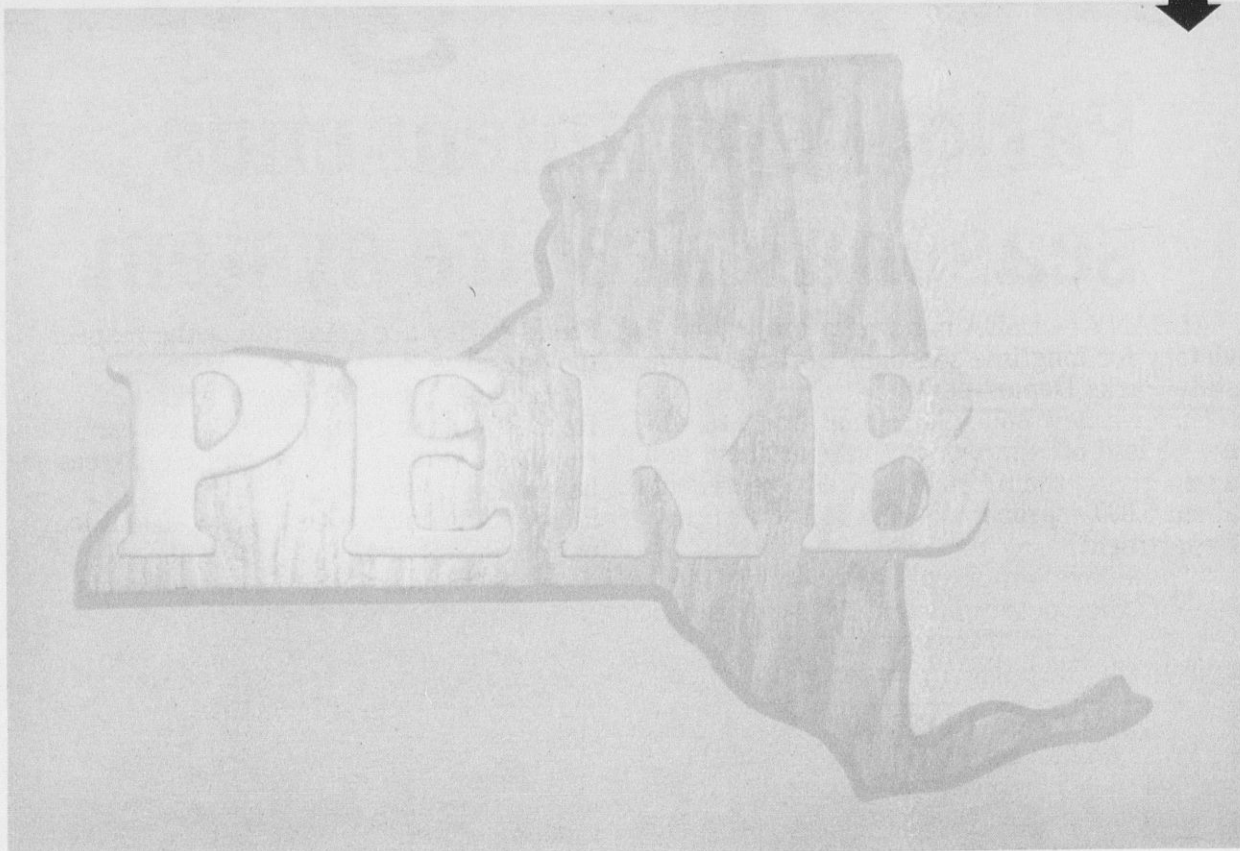
The functions PERB serves is broken down into three departments: Conciliation Office, Employment Practices and Representation Office and Counsel's Office.

CONCILIATION OFFICE

The Conciliation Office goes to work when an employer and a bargaining unit reach impasse in contract talks. A mediator is appointed to help both sides come to a resolution, Vatalaro said. The mediator may be a PERB staffer or one of many who work for the agency on a per diem basis.

"The mediator goes in under the first step of the impasse procedure and uses persuasion to try to cajole people into agreeing. He is as familiar with the issues as the people involved," Vatalaro said. "He really comes in with nothing but a lot of expertise."

A mediator cannot force the parties to agree. If they don't agree, the impasse goes to fact finding. Often the mediator will also act as fact finder. In that role, he listens to each side present its case and writes a report recommendation. Again, that recommendation is only an option, Vatalaro stressed. The parties



do not have to accept it.

"The report and recommendation go to both parties," he said. "We routinely announce it to the press after five days. It becomes public information. The theory is that the public will put pressure on the unreasonable parties to settle."

The only time a PERB mediation carries the force of law is in interest arbitration involving police and fire fighters.

"These types of employees are considered so critical to the well being of the community that the legislature decided not to take any risks that there would be an interruption of services," Vatalaro said.

The mediators and fact finders who work for PERB all have advanced degrees, Vatalaro said.

"We require all of them to have a master's degree," he said. "Most of our jurisdiction is school districts. Our people, we feel, have to be at least as educated as the people they're dealing with."

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

In 1969, the law was changed to give PERB jurisdiction over employment practices. That is, unions can allege an employee is guilty of certain types of improper actions. If an administrative law judge agrees, the unions can win some kind of remedy, Vatalaro explained.

"This kind of jurisdiction gives us a kind of watchdog role over employers and employees," he said.

The Employment Practices and Representation Office also handles representation procedures and petitions by employers who want employees designated as management or confidential.

COUNSEL'S OFFICE

The main job of the Counsel's Office is to

"PERB acts as an umpire in a baseball game. Somebody has to make a judgment call . . ."
 — Ralph Vatalaro

defend board decisions in court. When an administrative law judge makes a decision in a case, it can be appealed to the three-member board. At that point, the board's decision becomes case law, Vatalaro said, unless one of the parties wants to appeal to the state Supreme Court.

"The track record (of court appeals) is fairly clear," Vatalaro said. "Courts don't usually second-guess an agency like PERB. They trust our expertise in labor relations. The court will only step in or intercede if PERB oversteps its bounds. In other words, they leave to PERB the substantive issues."

WORKING FOR PERB

"Because we are a labor board, we set an example, or we try to," Vatalaro said of his own agency. "Everything that's come up in the last four or five years, like job sharing, we've had for quite a while."

Labor management programs, a key tool the agency likes to promote among public employers and unions, is a big part of the PERB office.

Based on its own success, PERB has been trying to build more labor/management committees between public employers and their employees. In the last four years, PERB has helped start 75 committees.

"It results in fewer grievances being filed, fewer IPs being filed and an easier contract settlement," Vatalaro said. "We think it's critical that government and unions join together to promote their enterprises, whether it's running a city hospital or a highway department. The unions and the government have far more to agree about than to disagree about. When they do have problems, they're easier to settle because the parties have a channel of communication that's open all the time."

"The kinds of things we advocate for unions and management, we have ourselves," he said. "We literally knocked down walls to make people happy. We're restructuring an area to make people more comfortable . . . for more room. It's a credit to the employees. We make it happen, but they make the recommendations."

JOE McDERMOTT

EDITOR'S NOTE: Joseph E. McDermott, CSEA's newest president, recently sat down to discuss his views, his plans and his hopes for CSEA. The following interview resulted, and gives a picture of the man now heading the state's largest public employee union.

By Kathleen Daly
Associate Editor

ALBANY — In 45 days as president of the state's largest public employee union, Joe McDermott has begun to implement his unique meld of old-time union philosophy with his faith in modern management — all part of his plan to make what he calls "a damn good union" better.

"We've got to run CSEA more like a business," McDermott said. "We've grown so big in the last 20 years and we didn't keep up from the standpoint of how to manage ourselves as an organization."

McDermott, in his quest for efficient, cost-effective service, still believes the core of the union lies in the dedication and activism of the members.

ACTIVISM

"At some levels we've lost some of the desire to get involved, to do for other folks; I don't know why. Maybe the members think that now that we've got laws on the books and the dues are more expensive, we should take care of all these things with our staff," McDermott said. "But we can't survive as a union just by paying staff to do the work. We're too big. If we lose the volunteerism, we're never going to be able to serve our members the way they ought to be served. I prefer the volunteerism, too, because that builds leaders. Those are the people that ought to ultimately be running the union."

Now chief officer of CSEA, McDermott became a leader through just those channels of leadership — from the worksite to the local to the region, and finally, to headquarters and the large corner office on the second floor.

HIS HISTORY

McDermott has been involved with CSEA for well over two decades but it was a fluke 22 years ago that thrust him into activism. As a technical inspector for the state Department of Transportation, he was holed up in the Adirondacks for weeks.

"Those were the type of jobs that were away from everybody. You spent the whole week there, you worked 16, 18 hours a day. If you came home one weekend day, you were lucky," McDermott recalled. "I got my ballot for our local DOT CSEA elections and my name was on the ballot to represent the technicians in the region. I didn't know anything about it. Some of my 'friends' figured, 'he's got a big mouth, he always speaks up, so he'd make a good candidate.'" McDermott paused for a laugh. "I was elected. That's how I became an activist in CSEA."

The election led him to what has been his career. He hasn't been at his job with the state DOT since his election as Region IV President in 1973. Instead, he has battled his way up the ranks of CSEA. And through it all, McDermott has remained motivated by what kept him going in his DOT local.

"I don't like to see people get stepped on. So any time I saw an injustice, I would always speak up," McDermott noted.

He had a favorite uncle who years ago



warned him never to work for the government because it was huge and cared little for the people it employs.

"He said they're a tool, they don't care about people, all they care about is pushing paper and growing. They don't care about the little person," McDermott recalled. "Well, somebody has to worry about the little person. We don't have anybody to do it except our union."

"People who think the employer gives them something are very naive. A lot of people think public employers give us something. They don't give us anything we haven't fought for."

CSEA improves the employees' odds in the battle for good wages, benefits and security, he said.

A DAMN GOOD UNION

"CSEA is a vehicle to accomplish good for public employees. It's a damn good union. We do a lot of things wrong, we drop the ball maybe once too often. But we are a clean union. Most of the people involved are good people, they volunteer their time and services because they care about other people," he said. "While we don't see eye to eye on politics or on how to accomplish things all of the time, generally speaking, in their hearts they're good people and that's what makes this a good union."

McDermott is not afraid to admit that he has often had disagreements with other union leaders and just as often has found himself at the center of controversy.

"I have a big mouth, that's why. I'm not afraid to say what I think. I never run and hide from an issue. Never," he said emphatically. "Sometimes I say the wrong thing, make the wrong decision, but I never run and hide."

Those disagreements should be handled quickly and in a businesslike way, and then the leaders should move on to new issues, McDermott said. Paramount in his dealings

with people is honesty; he is honest and he demands honesty of others.

"I don't lie. I may take very circuitous routes to get to a place that I want to be sometimes, but I'm straightforward in what I say to people. I always level with people and I don't like people who don't level with me. When people oppose me and they're up front and tell me that, I respect them."

GETTING THINGS DONE

Some people may not see him as "upfront," he said, because he will wait and work to achieve his goals a piece at a time.

"I'm a nickel and dime man," he said. "I want the whole bag of money, but I'll take it a nickel and a dime at a time. I'll do something a piece at a time to get to what I want. Most people don't see what I'm after and they'll go out and talk about how I'm moving this person or changing this piece of the structure. But I do have a picture of the whole puzzle I'd like to put together."

That puzzle is a complex one; McDermott sees CSEA's situation as far from simple. He wants to develop what he calls a sense of mission, provide a businesslike way of running the union and increase the respect of the members for the union.

A SENSE OF MISSION

"The growth of CSEA has caused even our staff to lose that central ethic that we're here to serve the members. It isn't just a job to the people who we use the dues money to employ. It's a whole social movement," McDermott said. "If that means we have to educate our staff to make sure that when they come to work for us they know that they're not here just to do a job, that we have a mission, then we have to do it."

"I don't think we've ever defined what the mission is. That's one of the first things I'm going to do. We're going to define in writing what our mission is so everybody knows it. That's why I've created these transition teams; they're spending a lot of time on it."

McDermott has been working not only to create a sense of purpose, but also to instill pride in the staff. He recently distributed a card, each with a CSEA pin, to the staff, telling them to "Be proud of who you are and what you do." But more than offering symbols, McDermott is giving staff an opportunity to make decisions and recommendations.

MAKING DECISIONS

"You can't run an organization this size or a business this size with one person making every little decision," he said. "I believe in decentralized decision-making with one authority. Anybody who comes in here and says, 'What do I do about this?' I say to them, 'What are you recommending?'"

"It's a way of building their posture. They have a job. I want them to make decisions on behalf of this union and to come and make recommendations if its not their decision to make, not to say 'What do I do?'"

And when they make the wrong decision?

"You obviously tell them that wasn't the correct decision and tell them why,"

McDermott said. "Everyone learns by their mistakes. You don't fault someone for making a mistake. I fault somebody for failing to make a decision."

BUILDING RESPECT

One thing he has decided is that the members of CSEA have lost some of their respect for the union.

"I really don't think the union has the respect of its members. I'd like to get that respect back," he explained. "That doesn't necessarily mean solving everybody's problems. It means that the members know that you are working on their behalf, in the best interests, that you're not going to let problems lie around and not seek solutions."

McDermott is very clear about what he hopes to accomplish as CSEA president.

"If I leave without having gained a lot of benefits for the members sometime in the future, I think I will at least leave it so that it is representing those members in a more ready fashion than it has in the past," he said. By the end of his three-year term, he said he'd like to see "that every problem that came to our attention would get attention within 24 hours; not solved, but get attention. This isn't happening. I think we sweep too many things under the rug and we put them off because we have so many pressing issues. We never quite pick them back up."

"What I'd really like to see is that our staff visit every worksite in the state. I think that's probably impossible, but if I had a map, I'd like to know that within a few years there would be a pin stuck in it for every worksite and somebody would have been there."

AWAY FROM THE UNION

McDermott is willing to work hard to achieve his goals. He recently took his second vacation in 10 years simply because he knows it will be at least three years before he has another chance. He often puts in two hours of work at home before he gets

to CSEA headquarters at 8:30.

"I don't come here and sit here 18 hours a day on some days just to collect a paycheck. I think I could do pretty well out there on the outside. This isn't just a job to me," McDermott said.

If CSEA is more than a job, does McDermott have a life of his own, beyond CSEA?

"My wife would tell you that I don't have a life outside of this union," he said. "I am extremely fortunate that right from the first time I ran for local president, my wife encouraged me. It hasn't been easy with five children."

McDermott and his wife, Laura, have raised four sons and a daughter, and he has "made all the graduations and parties," but he admits he hasn't always been there for his kids. Many times, they didn't understand why their father wasn't home.

"My younger boy said to me one time, 'Another meeting, Daddy? You're going to another meeting?' I've put up with that for a lot of years. As he got older, he said to me, 'You don't do anything except go to meetings and dinners.'"

McDermott is quick to credit his wife, calling her the bedrock of the family. Despite her devotion to the family, she has also found she has a life of her own, he said.

"We're very fortunate that she has learned that. She has her own circle of friends, and now when I manage to be home for an evening, many times I find that she's out."

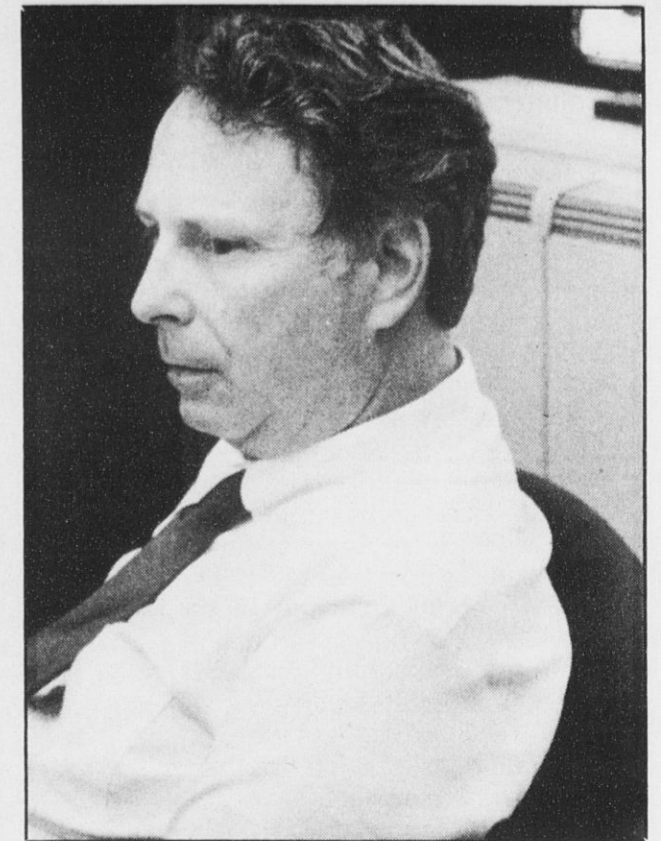
McDermott no longer golfs or bowls; his real joy is found in books.

"I am an absolutely crazed reader. I read like you wouldn't believe," he said. "It's my relaxant and my escape. I love history and historical novels and spy novels."

IN THE FIELD

It doesn't take long for McDermott to direct the conversation back to CSEA — his most consuming concern.

He plans to get out and speak to members



and staff, so that he clearly understands the problems and can take advantage of the ideas in the field.

"I go to other peoples' offices as often as they come to mine," he said. "It lets me know what's going on around here. I can't come in here at eight o'clock in the morning and lock myself up in this office and expect to know what's happening in this union."

In fact he's planning to travel to all the regions with the other three officers, Executive Vice President Danny Donohue, Secretary Irene Carr and Treasurer Mary Sullivan.

"I think our employees and our elected people have a lot of good ideas and a lot to offer. I'm willing to listen," he said. "We represent so many different constituencies and jobs out there that we couldn't begin as individual officers to understand the work-related problems and personal problems of the members unless we do get out and talk to them."

THE FUTURE

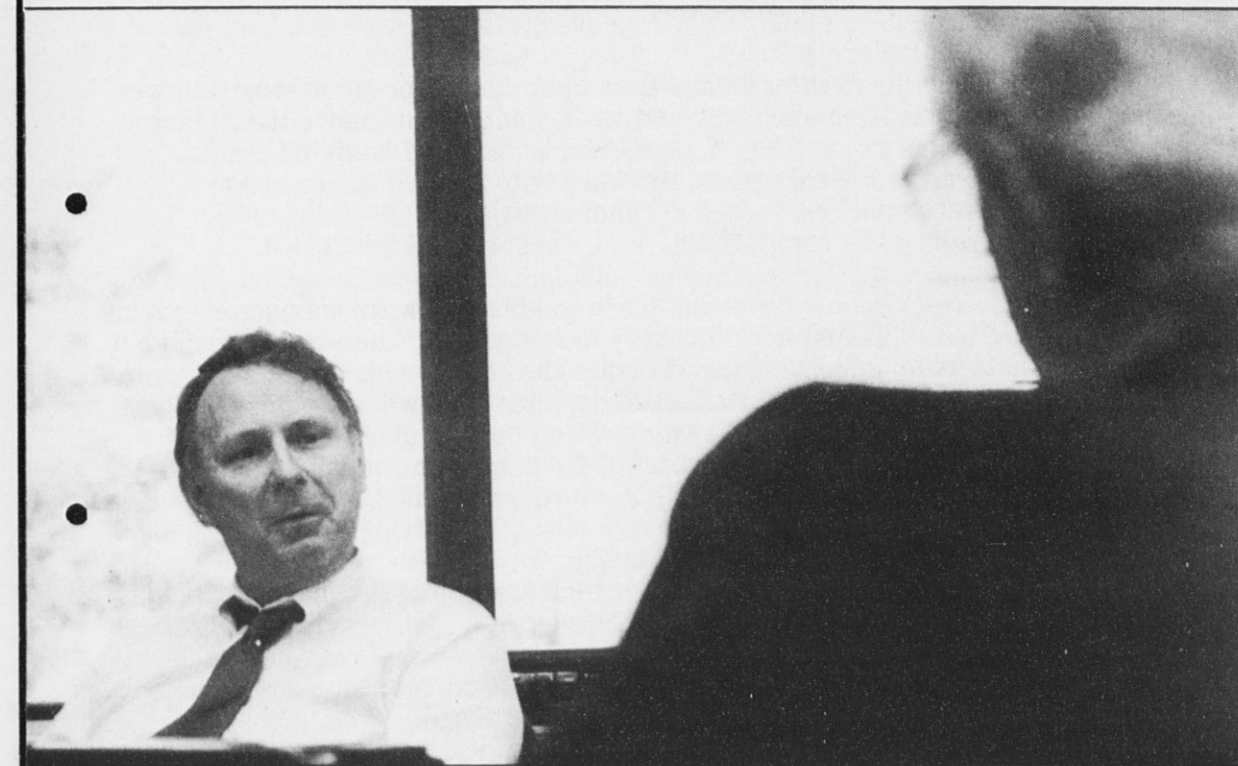
That's important in a world that is changing so quickly, McDermott pointed out. The union must continue to meet those changing needs.

"CSEA represents people from the cradle to the grave," McDermott said. "We're concerned about our members' children, about their parents, about what's going to happen to our members after they leave service. You have to look at all those issues as they socially impact on people, as they financially impact on people."

"The members need to know that the union cares about them and their problems and the future," he continued. "We have to look to the future here."

McDermott is planning to appoint the "Committee for the 21st Century" to do just that.

"This union is going to be around when I leave. I hope it's going to be stronger and better. It's important that we begin to look at what this union is going to be in the 21st century," he said. "It's close, awfully close. I probably won't be around as a union leader in the 21st century, but I want to make sure that the union is ready for it."



Snafu leaves pay raises weeks away

The state Legislature should finally stop playing volleyball with what should have been a routine pay bill when members of the state Assembly return to Albany next week.

Administrative problems and delays in the legislature means CSEA-represented state workers will have to wait even longer before receiving their retroactive pay increases contained in new contracts negotiated by CSEA with the state.

Typographical errors in a pay bill passed July 16 by the Assembly rendered the bill useless and the Assembly is expected to quickly pass a corrected version when members return from an extended summer recess on Aug. 23. Members of the state Senate, which skipped town in July without considering the pay bill, returned for a brief session in early August and passed the bill.

The state Comptroller's office will begin processing the 5 percent pay increases retroactive to June once the pay bill is passed and signed but that is a lengthy process. The state Comptroller has yet to announce specific dates when the increases will appear in employee paychecks.

Delay angers union, members

The long wait for CSEA members to receive their negotiated pay increase, caused in part by legislative delays in passing the pay bill, angered union officials and members alike. CSEA mounted a campaign to have members call and write legislators to complain about the delays.

Among the many letters from CSEA members received at union headquarters was one which said, "I am writing in disgust of what is happening with the pay raise we are yet to get.

"We are tired of being used while they try to balance the budget. . . I feel as others do, that we should collect interest on our money. . ."

Another member sent a copy of a letter she wrote to her state senator.

"The Senate left Albany for its vacation

leaving 110,000 CSEA members hanging in limbo. This is an insult to dedicated state employees."

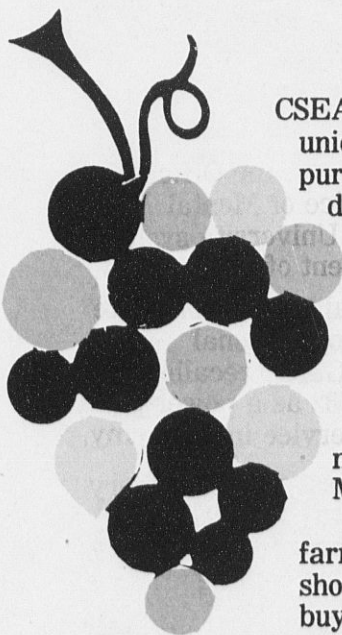
In addition to the 5 percent increase retroactive to June, employees will also get a 5 percent hike next April and a 5.5 percent increase in April 1990.



EMPLOYEES OF THE VALLEY HEALTH SERVICES (VHS) nursing home and health care facility in Herkimer will be voting Aug. 25 and 26 in an NLRB-supervised election to decide whether to join CSEA. More than 150 non-union workers are eligible to vote at the facility between 2-4 p.m. Aug. 25 and 6:30-8:30 a.m. Aug. 26. CSEA will sponsor a "Meet The Union" night program for VHS employees from 5-10 p.m. Aug. 23 at Thurston, Frankfort.

DON'T BUY CALIFORNIA TABLE GRAPES!

Support the campaign to unionize farm workers



CSEA has joined with its international union, AFSCME, in urging members to not purchase California table grapes as a demonstration of support for efforts to unionize farm workers.

"Cesar Chavez and his United Farm Workers (UFW) union are engaged in a literal life-and-death struggle with California grape growers in an effort to improve working conditions for farm workers and stop the poisoning of grapes sent to market," said CSEA President Joe McDermott.

"Until grape growers recognize the rights of farm workers, the very least we can do is to show our support for their cause by refusing to buy California table grapes."

UFW President Chavez began an unconditional water-only fast on July 16 to dramatize the struggles of farm workers. As this issue of *The Public Sector* went to press Chavez was continuing his fast despite severe weight loss and danger to his health, according to a doctor who recently examined him.

CSEA President McDermott and AFSCME International President Gerald W. McEntee have both telegraphed messages of encouragement and support to Chavez on behalf of their memberships.

McDermott recently asked CSEA local presidents statewide to organize teams of volunteers to visit all supermarkets in their area and ask store managers to remove California grapes from their stores.

"Farm workers in the California vineyards work under awful conditions," McDermott said. "They suffer from abnormally high incidence of cancer and birth defects resulting from long-term exposure to deadly pesticides used on grapes in the field. Some of those poisons don't wash off and unwary consumers purchase grapes with a health-threatening residue."

While gains are being made on behalf of farm workers in some agricultural areas, California grape growers continue to resist all efforts to unionize farm workers. The UFW wants to allow free and fair union representation elections, ban the use of the five deadliest pesticides used on California table grapes, require the testing of grapes for pesticide residue before shipping to market, and create good faith collective bargaining throughout the California agricultural industry.

"They need our help, the help of labor people everywhere and the help of all decent, caring Americans," McDermott said. "Not buying California table grapes is one way we can make a difference. We can get by without grapes as long as we have to, but the California growers cannot get along without consumers very long."

STATIONARY ENGINEERS

Keeping it all together in boiler rooms, power plants

By Lilly Gioia
CSEA Communications Associate

QUEENS — Sweltering their way through summer's sizzling hot spells, most folks don't generally stop to think about where vital services in state buildings come from; services like lights, air conditioning or heat.

If suddenly there is no more cool air conditioning in summer, or no heat in winter, only then they might take notice. "Hardly anyone ever goes down to the basement or power plant to see what's going on down there," says SUNY Maritime College Professor Aaron Kramer, a staunch advocate for better training of power plant workers. Kramer is one of the architects behind a new "Casualty Control Program" for stationary engineers that is being sponsored by the CSEA/State Joint Apprenticeship Committee.

Charged with maintaining over 5,200 buildings, the state's stationary engineers have very critical jobs requiring a high degree of technical knowledge, noted Joint Apprenticeship Committee Program Administrator Paul McDonald.

"There is a definite need to train workers how to prevent explosions and loss of life," McDonald pointed out, reflecting on a recent boiler room accident at Brooklyn's Downstate Medical Center where scalding steam burned CSEA members.

According to McDonald, the Casualty Control Program not only enhances the skills of stationary engineers, but builds on knowledge about handling boiler room emergencies. The course not only protects the workers, but the public as well, he emphasized.

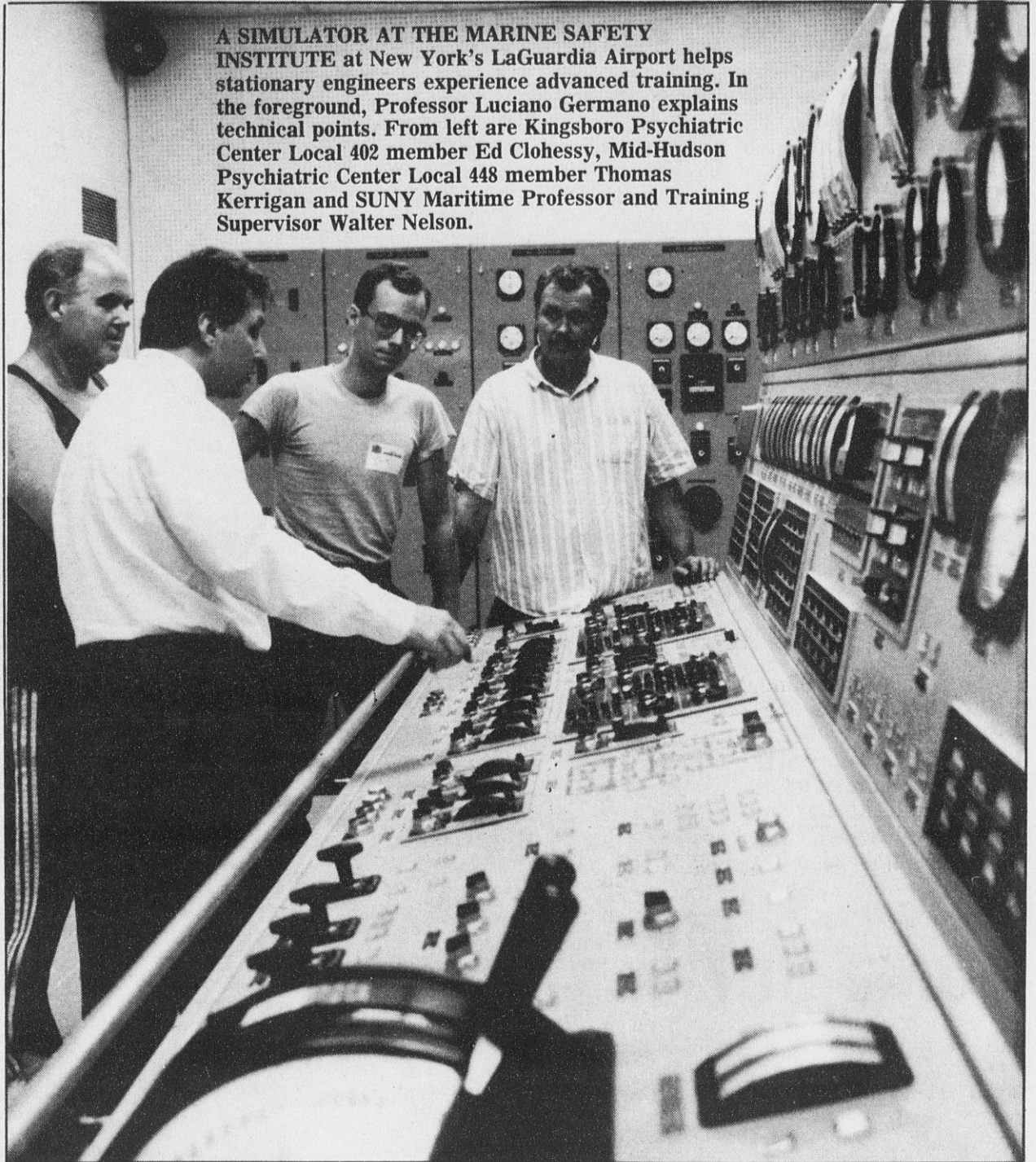
The 64 stationary engineers from Long Island's Stony Brook University to Buffalo Psychiatric Center who have attended so far give the course great reviews.

"It was excellent training," said Gerald DeGaray, assistant stationary engineer and CSEA member in Local 428 at Willard Psychiatric Center in Seneca. "The expertise shown by the instructors was the best I have ever encountered; they really know their business."

DeGaray said the course included studies of casualty situations like overheating boilers, loss of power, kicking in emergency generators or using stand-by pumps to keep water in the boilers. Calling the teachers "fountains of knowledge," he hailed the quality of the instructors from both Maritime College and the Marine Safety Institute at LaGuardia Airport, where simulators provided actual hands-on experience.

Having spent 17 years of his previous military career as a bomb disposal sergeant with his own bomb squad, DeGaray can appreciate high quality training for quick-

A SIMULATOR AT THE MARINE SAFETY INSTITUTE at New York's LaGuardia Airport helps stationary engineers experience advanced training. In the foreground, Professor Luciano Germano explains technical points. From left are Kingsboro Psychiatric Center Local 402 member Ed Clohessy, Mid-Hudson Psychiatric Center Local 448 member Thomas Kerrigan and SUNY Maritime Professor and Training Supervisor Walter Nelson.



thinking whether it's a bomb or a boiler about to explode.

"In our boiler room we had one boiler blow out a few years ago, buckling out the sides of the boiler with the pressure," said 24-year veteran stationary engineer Ed Clohessy, a CSEA member who works at Brooklyn's Kingsboro Psychiatric Center power plant.

"In an emergency you can't get into a panic and you have to know what to do," he stressed. "If one thing doesn't work, this training showed you what else you can do to avert various emergency situations."

Expressing a desire to take additional training for air conditioning technology, Clohessy observed that the "better you know your job, the easier it is for everybody else. The less money it costs the state when you know what you are doing."

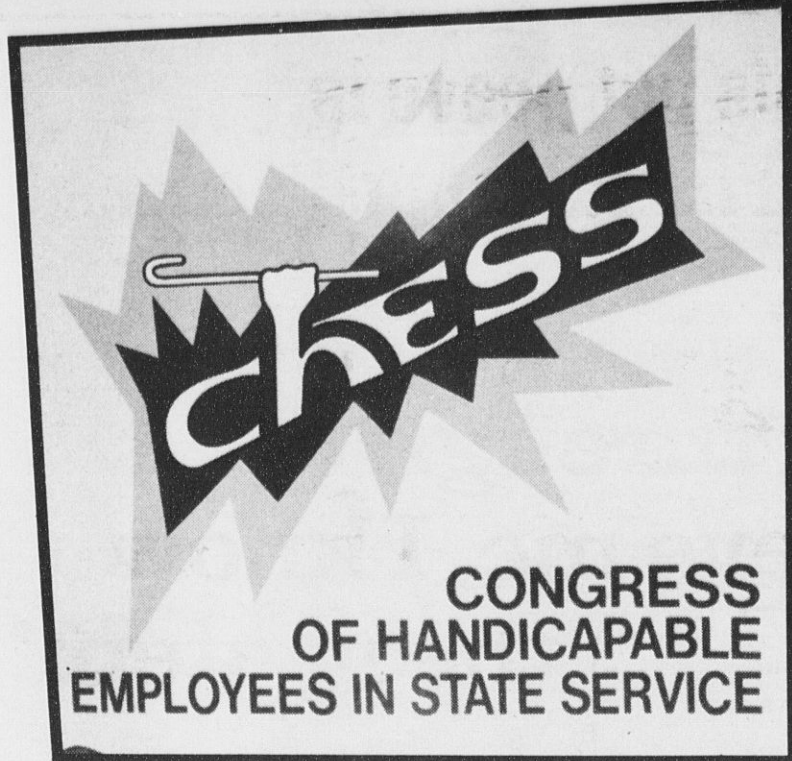
The highly successful Casualty Control Program, jointly funded by participating agencies and the CSEA/State Joint Apprenticeship Committee, is currently training stationary engineers from the state

Office of General Services, the Office of Mental Health, the Office of Mental Retardation, the State University system and the state Department of Corrections.

Reflecting on the quality of union/state training programs for operational employees, Gerard DeGaray recalled joining state service in July 1982 as a power plant helper after 22 years service in the Army.

"I later became an assistant stationary engineer and am half-way through the apprentice training to be a full stationary engineer a year from this coming December.

"I was over 40 with a degree when the state hired me and I told them if they did, they would get two things from me, punctuality and loyalty." Priding himself on his dependability on the job, DeGaray is enthusiastic about becoming a full stationary engineer soon and now feels even more confident of his ability to act swiftly and correctly in the event of any power plant emergencies.



Many people refuse to let disabilities stand in their way

The Congress of Handicapable Employees in State Service (CHES) seeks to improve the quality of worklife for disabled persons who are employed in state government. CHES was founded in 1981 during the International Year of the Disabled. From its beginning CHES has been a leading advocate for the rights of the disabled.

By Lilly Gioia
CSEA Communications Associate

More than 800,000 working-age residents of New York state have disabilities. Some people are disabled from birth while the vast majority — 80 percent — of people with disabilities acquire them during their adult years.

An estimated 600,000 workers nationwide become disabled each year, having to leave work on long-term disability. Only about half of them will return to work. Here in New York an estimated two-thirds of the disabled are not working.

Many of those disabled people who are working are employed by the state, and of those, several recently participated in the 1988 annual Convention of CHES at the World Trade Center in New York City. CHES is the Congress of Handicapable Employees in State Service, founded in 1981 as an advocate organization for disabled state employees.

Joe Montalvo, a claims examiner with the state Crime Victims Board and a member of New York City State Employees CSEA Local 010, was among the convention participants. Montalvo doesn't mince words when it comes to equal rights for disabled workers.

"Disabled employees are conscientious; they have to be," Montalvo said. "You're always under a microscope with others watching so you've got to produce."

"Unless you have a family member or went to school with a disabled person, or perhaps have a friend or acquaintance who is disabled, you don't necessarily project yourself into that kind of situation or think of being disabled yourself," he pointed out.



AMONG DELEGATES attending the annual convention of CHES was Gerald Gollinger, left, a disabled CSEA member of New York State Public Service Commission Local 450.



CHES MEMBERS register for the organization's 1988 annual convention in New York. Each arrived with one or more forms of disability overshadowed by their sense of pride in overcoming their disabilities to become productive members of society.

Frances G. Berko of the state Office of Advocate for the Disabled told convention delegates that "qualified workers with disabilities must not be overcome by the rejection we have all experienced. Fortunately, the industrial age is dead." She noted that in today's competitive workplace employees need different characteristics such as creativity, self-direction, self-responsibility and education.

The new computer/information age ushers in a "window of opportunity for persons with disabilities that has never existed in all of history," Berko maintained.

CHES delegates arrived at the convention on crutches, with canes, accompanied by seeing-eye dogs, sitting in wheelchairs and wearing hearing aids and leg braces. Other disabilities are not as visible, such as heart conditions, hearing or vision impairments, epilepsy or breathing impairments.

CHES members attending the annual convention received copies on a new state Supervisor's Guide titled "Working With People With Disabilities." The manual was partially funded by negotiated monies through the CSEA/State Joint Labor/Management Committee on Worklife and Productivity.

Delegates were reminded that as recently as 1970 people with disabilities had few rights. In 1973 Congress passed the landmark Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act which provides equal employment opportunities. Executive Order 6 signed by Gov. Mario Cuomo in 1983 assures "full and equal opportunity for minorities, women, disabled persons and Vietnam-era veterans at all occupational levels of state work."

A 1986 poll by Louis Harris showed 90 percent of employers rated the performances of workers with disabilities as good to excellent. Polls also show disabled workers as reliable, punctual, hard-working individuals who do their jobs as well as or better than employees without disabilities.

And Peter Elmendorf, director of the Division of Policy Analysis for the state Department of Civil Service, reminded CHES members that they may file discrimination complaints if they have been denied reasonable accommodations at their worksites.



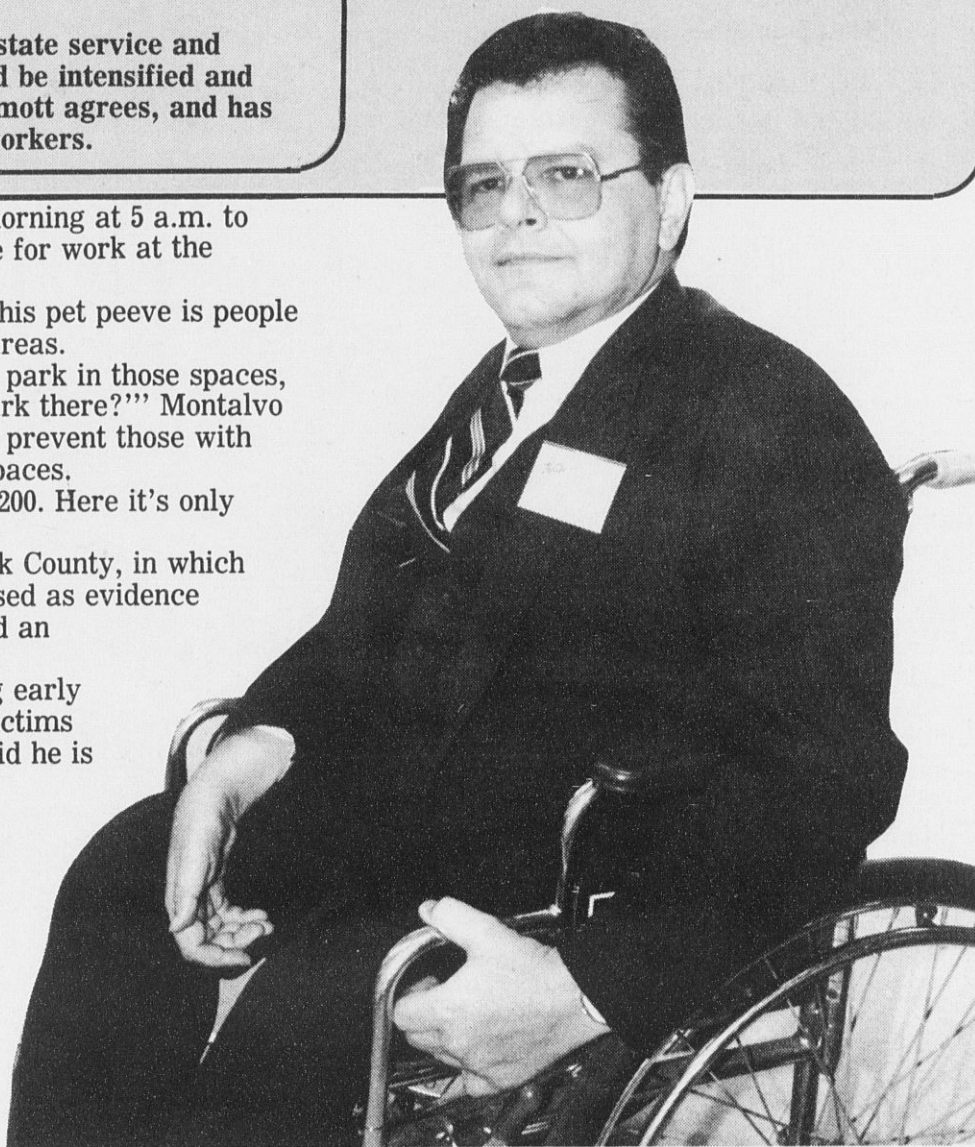
Not surprisingly, his pet peeve is people who park in handicapped spaces

Joe Montalvo

'because I've been through it myself, believe me, I know the system'

Joe Montalvo is a 42-year-old CSEA member stricken with polio at age seven. The lifelong Manhattan resident, a claims examiner for the past three years with the state Crime Victims Board, understands well the issues of disabled workers. He spent two years in an iron lung and is confined to a wheelchair.

Montalvo is highly motivated to advancing himself within state service and believes networking with other disabled CSEA members should be intensified and facilitated by his union. CSEA statewide President Joe McDermott agrees, and has pledged to work to protect and expand the rights of disabled workers.



NEW YORK — Joe Montalvo's alarm clock blasts off every morning at 5 a.m. to enable him to beat the New York City rush-hour traffic and arrive for work at the Crime Victims Board offices between 6:30 and 7 a.m.

Montalvo uses a van equipped with a wheelchair lift. He says his pet peeve is people without disabilities who park in designated handicapped parking areas.

"I have gotten into several heated exchanges with people who park in those spaces, especially when I hear my son asking me, 'Dad, why do people park there?'" Montalvo said. He said he becomes incensed when perfectly healthy drivers prevent those with very limited range of movement from using designated parking spaces.

"In Florida the fine for parking in a disabled parking space is \$200. Here it's only \$10," he noted.

Montalvo applauds a program in the Town of Huntington, Suffolk County, in which volunteers take pictures of parking violators and the photos are used as evidence to issue \$35 summonses. The money generated will be used to fund an employment program for disabled persons, he said.

Montalvo is very conscientious about his job, not only arriving early but frequently staying late. When it comes to assisting innocent victims of criminals, especially those disabled by criminal violence, he said he is effective because he "knows the system."

"I know where to tap sources to help them. From my own experience I know what red tape is all about. I know where to get information and services and what happens at the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Because I've been through it myself, believe me, I know the system," he said.

Montalvo readily agrees much has been done in recent years to raise public awareness of people with disabilities, but believes much more should be done.

"Let's roll up our sleeves because there's still a lot of unfinished business when it comes to career development for New York's disabled workforce," he stated.

CSEA to maintain leadership role for disabled

CSEA President Joe McDermott has pledged his union will maintain a leadership role in protecting the rights of working people with disabilities.

"CSEA will continue to be in the forefront of efforts to protect and expand the rights of disabled workers and to improve workplace accessibility so they may gain greater independence in their lives," promised McDermott.

"We have an obligation to do everything we can to help people overcome obstacles to reach their potential."

Handbook available
Free copies of a "Handbook on Disabled Rights" are available by writing:
Advisory Committee on The Rights of The Disabled
% AFSCME Research Department
1625 L Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

CSEA rips SUNY New Paltz for giving member "raw deal"

By Anita Manley
CSEA Communications Associate

NEW PALTZ — CSEA says SUNY officials are harrassing a 10-year veteran employee of SUNY New Paltz who suffers from allergies irritated by pollutants in the air of buildings on campus.

"There appears to be a continual harrassment of Gayle Weisberg," charged SUNY New Paltz CSEA Local 610 President Diane Lucchesi.

"She's getting a raw deal and we'll fight it all the way," Lucchesi pledged. She said SUNY officials have filed notices of discipline against Weisberg, threatened her with termination from her job and placed her on half-pay because of physical problems associated with allergies.

Weisberg had complained that allergies activated by pollutants in the unventilated Smiley Arts Building on campus make it physically impossible for her to work in that building.

Weisberg's personal physician has certified she suffered hypersensitive reactions to pollutants in the building. An inspection by representatives of the state Department of Labor in June, requested by CSEA, revealed serious problems in the Smiley Arts Building which would cause allergic reactions in anyone who was hypersensitive to certain pollutants.

Weisberg, who works a "split assignment" for two departments in two buildings, had been required to work part of each day in the Smiley Arts Building. After suffering physical ailments, she refused to work in that building upon advice of her physician. SUNY officials served her with a notice of discipline.

She has been assigned for a half-day to an office used by Empire State College, but there are apparent health problems associated with that location also.

Lucchesi said that when Weisberg first reported to that office she immediately began to suffer from symptoms of her allergies again.

"The office is right over a room with oil tanks," Lucchesi said, adding a photo-copy machine and chemicals in the office add to Weisberg's discomfort. Additionally, according to Lucchesi, the building is poorly maintained.

College officials recently served Weisberg with three notices of discipline. They charge she:

- 1) violated her split assignment from September 1987 until February 1988 (the period that Weisberg was assigned to the Smiley Arts Building but, with documentation from her physician of serious allergic problems and advice not to enter the building, she refused to work there);
- 2) Weisberg refused to report to work at the Empire State College office; and
- 3) Weisberg refused to report to the Employee Health Services office (Weisberg did report to the office as directed but refused to submit to certain procedures of a physical examination covered in a report



'We proved that the building was dangerous'

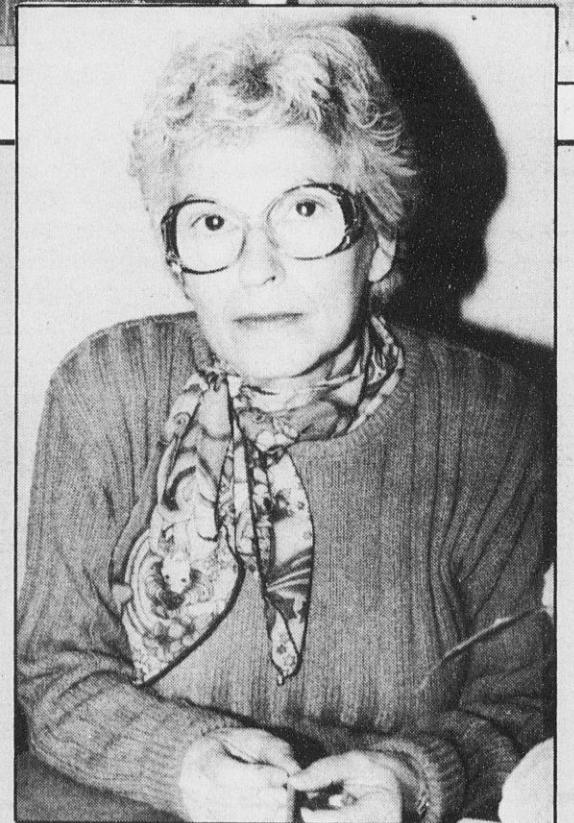
State Department of Labor investigators found five violations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act when they inspected the Smiley Arts Building in June. The inspection was prompted by a complaint by CSEA Local 610 President Diane Lucchesi after member Gayle Weisberg was served with a notice of discipline for refusing to work in that building.

Not the least of those violations was a faulty exhaust system in the building. "There was a distinct possibility that material being exhausted from the building was being recirculated (through the building)," according to the Department of Labor report. Investigators also found unsafe lead accumulations in clay dust in a pottery studio.

The college has been ordered to clean up the building and repair the exhaust system before classes resume next month.

from her personal physician as to problems she experienced in connection with her assignment in the Smiley Arts Building).

Lucchesi said college officials warned Weisberg that if she refused to report to the Empire College office she will be accused of



GAYLE WEISBERG suffered several health problems after working in the Smiley Arts Building.

Lucchesi said the findings were no surprise to her. She noted that several employees had requested transfers out of the Smiley Building because of illnesses caused by pollutants in the building.

"We proved that the building was dangerous," said Lucchesi. "I think that's enough evidence that Gayle is being unfairly singled out."

job abandonment, which carries a penalty of dismissal. SUNY officials have already implemented a directive that Weisberg be placed on half-pay, which reduces her income and ultimately affects her retirement benefits.

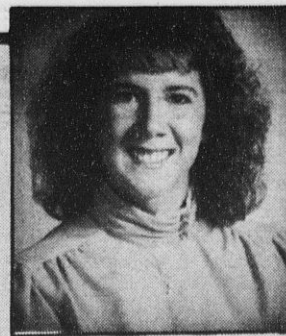
Lewis County scholarship total tops \$23,000



Perfetto



Sweet



Lyndaker



Nortz

LOWVILLE — For the 12th consecutive year, CSEA Lewis County Local 825 has awarded scholarships to outstanding sons and daughters of its members.

The five 1988 awards bring the grand total to \$23,200, a crowning achievement for a CSEA Local with less than 400 members.

According to scholarship co-chairpersons LaVonne Allen and Donna Cooper, the 1988 winners were selected by evaluation of academic achievement, school and community activities and financial need. Each winner received a check for \$500 to be used for further education.

THE 1988 AWARD WINNERS

LEANN LYNDAKER, daughter of Christian and Fern Lyndaker, Lowville, is a graduate of Beaver River Central School. A National Honor Society member, as well as being enrolled in the Gifted and Talented Education Program, Leann has been active in sports, music and cheerleading. She plans to major in business management at Syracuse University. Her mother, Fern, is a registered nurse at Lewis County General Hospital.

JASON PERFETTO, son of J. Susan Reutling of Castorland, is a graduate of

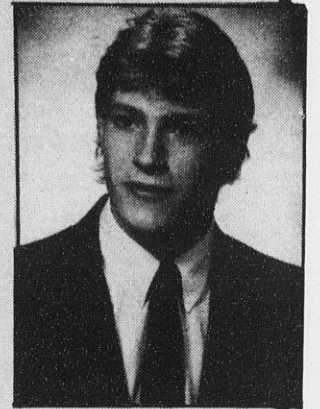
Beaver River Central School. He is also a member of the National Honor Society and the gifted and talented program. He was active in band, chorus and musicals during high school, and hopes to pursue a career in physical science. His mother, Susan, is employed as a laboratory technician at Lewis County General Hospital.

JULIA SWEET, daughter of Thomas and Wendy Sweet, of Lowville is a graduate of Lowville Academy. She is a National Honor Society member and was active in sports and music while in school. She plans to major in chemistry at Rochester Institute of Technology. Wendy Sweet is a registered nurse at Lewis County General Hospital.

ANDREW KRAEGER, son of Dennis and Patricia Kraeger, of Lowville, is a graduate of Lowville Academy. His school achievements include president of National Honor Society, class vice president, and varsity soccer team captain. He plans to attend Niagara University as a four-year ROTC student majoring in pre-law. His mother, Patricia, is also a registered nurse at Lewis County General Hospital.

WENDY NORTZ, daughter of Ronald Nortz and Susan Gyore, of Glenfield, is a graduate of South Lewis High School and was active in sports, cheerleading, and served as senior editor of the yearbook. Her mother, Susan is a registered nurse at Lewis County General Hospital.

Rita Bero, president of Local 825, extended best wishes for successful careers to the winners, congratulated the parents, and on behalf of CSEA members in Local 825, issued special thanks to the scholarship committee.



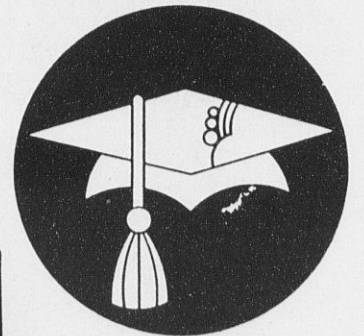
Kraeger

"For 12 years we have continued to show our sincere concern for deserving children of CSEA members in Lewis County by helping with their pursuit of more education. We hope these financial awards will encourage other students to work for scholarships in future years," Bero said.

Scholarship time

CSEA takes special pride in its annual scholarship awards at the local, regional and statewide levels to the deserving children of members. The awards recognize outstanding academic achievement and help defray the high cost of a college education.

In this edition of *The Public Sector*, we present the winners in two excellent local programs. In a future edition we will present the 18 recipients of CSEA's statewide Irving Flaumenbaum Scholarships. Winners of those scholarships have been notified.



St. Lawrence County Winners

CANTON — Continuing a tradition that has surpassed the quarter-century mark, St. Lawrence County Local 845 recently announced the names of its two 1988 scholarship awards. Both winners received increased awards of \$400 at their high school graduation ceremonies.

THE 1988 WINNERS

JAMES CRUIKSHANK, son of John Cruikshank, of Lisbon, is a graduate of Lisbon Central School. He plans to attend SUNY Potsdam and major in Liberal Arts. His father is employed by the St. Lawrence County Department of Weights and Measures.

JEREMY SCHWARTZ, son of Verna Schwartz of Canton, is a graduate of Canton Central School, and will attend Tufts University to major in science. Verna Schwartz works for the County Department of Social Services.



Cruikshank

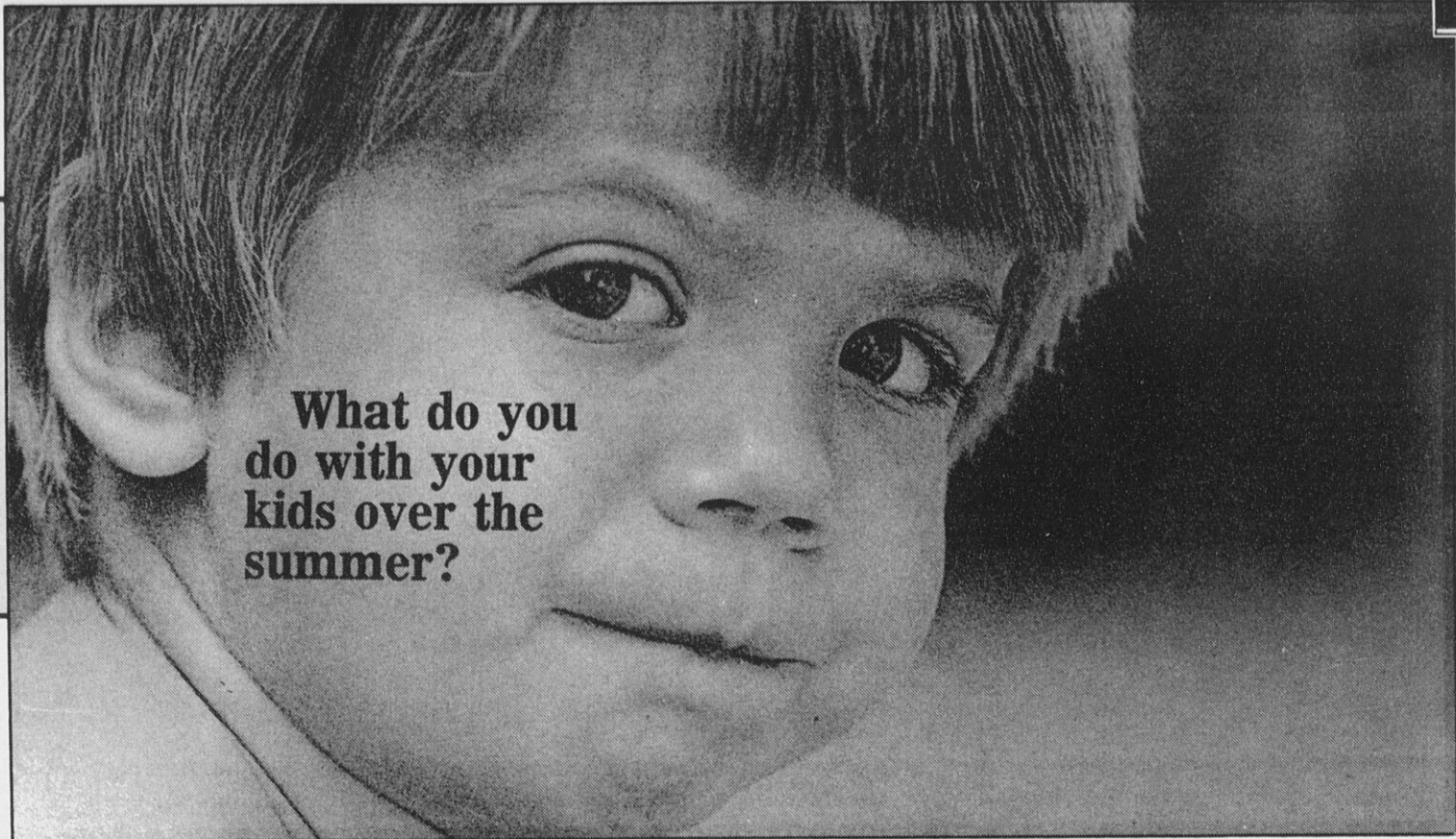
Speaking for scholarship committee members Dick Reno, Key Walton, Joan Whitmarsh and Ada Warner, Chairperson Linda Todd said the two winning finalists were selected after careful screening of candidates submitted by parents or guardians from within all units of Local 845.

"We had 17 entries, but the committee's careful selection narrowed down to two candidates with the combination of high academic achievement, good community service record and financial need."

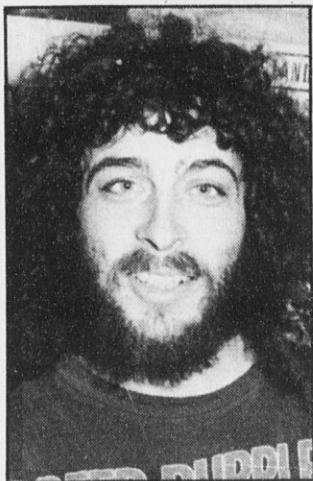
"I would like to personally thank the members of the committee for their effort. And I also want to encourage St. Lawrence County students to work and look forward to those 1989 awards. We have increased the scholarships from \$300 to \$400 each to help with the higher costs of college education," Todd said.



Schwartz



What do you do with your kids over the summer?



DAVID BLOOM
Ontario County
Local 835
Region VI

"He's only four months old, but my wife, Anne, takes our son, Casey, to Canandaigua Lake Beach every day. He's the only four-month-old with a tan."



LINDA FRANCIS
New York City State
Employees Local 010
Region II

"Now that my teenage daughter is of age to obtain a learner's permit, her first priority is learning to drive. This summer's leisure time will be spent behind the wheel of a car learning how to safely and competently enjoy the roadways."



KATHY CORDONE
Tioga County
Local 854
Region V

"In July they attend a recreation program sponsored by Newark Valley School System. Other than my August vacation time, I use a baby sitter."



LINDA SCHRIMPE
Suffolk County
Educational Local 870
Region I

"My son's 19 and he's working now putting in above-ground pools. My son is a hustler!"



HELENA A. BROWE
Teachers Retirement
System Local 658
Region IV

"This summer, my two children, ages 7 and 11, attended a school program for the month of July from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. everyday. For the rest of the day, they were at home with a responsible child care worker. I also use my accumulated vacation time to travel and do special things with my children."



RISTINA WIGG
Dutchess County
Local 814
Region III

"My son, Zack, is in day care and they have a wading pool, an outdoor playground and a sandbox."

Book a cruise on the S.S. Newburgh

Newburgh Free Library employee Regina Angelo puts the finishing touches on a wall hanging made from fabric which is on display in the library as part of a program to encourage youngsters to read this summer. Angelo uses her artistic talents to promote the many programs held at the library as well as projects she is involved in as a councilwoman in the City of Newburgh. Angelo is a member of Orange County Local 836.



Service is honored

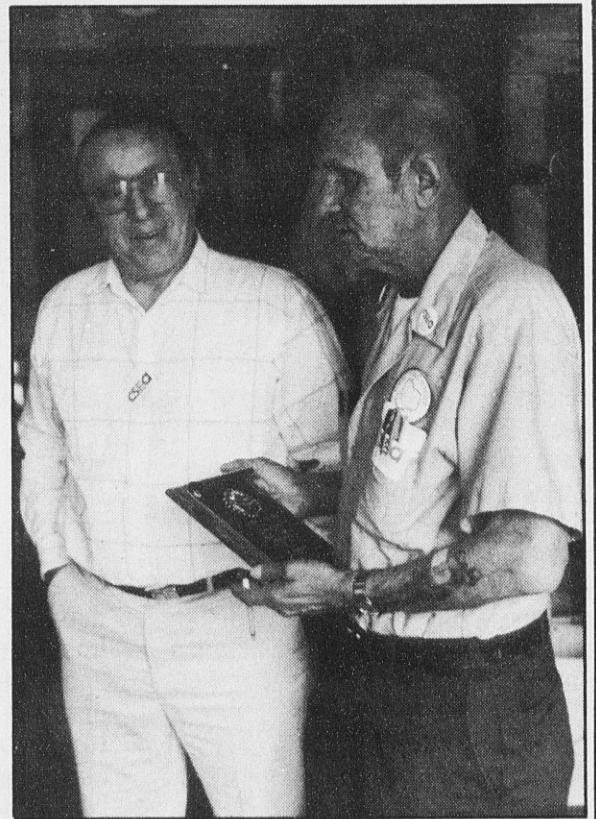
Members of CSEA SUNY Cortland Local 605 recently received awards for 20-25 years of state service. SUNY Cortland Personnel Director Don McHugh, standing left, presented the awards on behalf of President James M. Clark at a campus luncheon for 54 employees. CSEA honorees included, seated left to right, Doris Tyler, Donna Mastronardi, Betty Thomas and Local 605 Secretary Sharon Baker. Standing, left to right, Don McHugh, Nancy Cove, Alice Gorman, David Colantonio, Leon Cranson, Robert Hutchings and Local 605 President Bill Powers.

He gets their vote

Custodians in the Syosset School District Unit of CSEA Nassau Educational Local 865 recently voted to declare a music teacher their choice for a "Teacher of the Year Award."

According to Ben Gummin, a member of the unit's executive board, "Joe Hassid has displayed his down-to-earth attitude by choosing to take his coffee breaks and lunch periods with custodians and maintenance personnel."

Hassid was presented a plaque by Gummin.



This, that

AND THE OTHER THING

If you have an item of interest for *This, That & the other thing*, bring it to the attention of your CSEA regional communications associate. Their phone numbers are listed on page 2.

*Is you is or
is you ain't
my backhoe?*



When the exhaust smoke cleared and the controversy was finally settled at an agency level hearing, SUNY Binghamton grounds workers, members of Local 648, not only won their out-of-title grievance, but now have a new title for the backhoe operator (SG-8 Equipment Operator.)

Local 648 President Bob Goeckel reports it all started when former steward and president Chuck Eynon filed a grievance in March 1987 to clarify what was a light tractor and what was heavy equipment. And where do you draw the line on occasional use?

When CSEA officials finished their "hoework," the distinctions were clear. The backhoe is, in fact, a piece of heavy equipment, and 80 percent time use by the grounds crew was certainly more than occasional.

Not only did CSEA involvement gain a new job title, it also gained back pay for the operator.

CSEA Leadership assignments

LOCAL 1000
AFSCME
AFL-CIO

Between its three AFSCME International Vice Presidents — CSEA President Joe McDermott, Executive Vice President Danny Donohue and Region II President George Boncoraglio — CSEA's interests will be well represented on key AFSCME Executive Board Committees.

McDermott will serve on the Finance and International Affairs committees. Donohue will serve on the Organization and International Affairs committees, while Boncoraglio will serve on the Organization and Convention Site committees.

Wyoming County 'drops ball' on employee security items

BROKEN PROMISES

By Ron Wofford
CSEA Communications Associate

WARSAW — While some promised safety measures are in place, Department of Social Services workers in Wyoming County are still awaiting completion of others that will make them feel more secure in their workplace, many months after those assurances were made.

"We may have to reconsider our earlier decision not to picket and demonstrate over the lack of progress," declared Sandy Dominissey, president of the Wyoming County Employees CSEA Unit. "After all, it's been about a year since we had the incident that exposed the utter lack of security for our members in the Social Services Building."

She was referring to an incident last July when a disgruntled client walked directly into the building, splashed gasoline down 100 feet of corridors during working hours and threatened to torch the facility.

While the gasoline was not set afire, the employees were terrified, and in the rush to exit the building several reported injuring themselves as they slipped on the gasoline-slicked tile floor. The incident also pointed out the fact that there was no emergency exit at the south end of the building, the windows do not open and there is no

security presence in the building.

Several other incidents, such as a client threatening DSS workers with a gun, have further heightened fears and lowered morale, according to the Local 861 members.

"We had to lock the doors until help arrived that time, but clients and workers alike were very upset. It's frightening and dangerous. Two workers have quit because they couldn't handle not feeling safe at work."

Following the gasoline incident, employees and union activists including Dominissey, Social Services steward Sandy Boyd and Local 861 President Roy "Corky" Upright petitioned the Social Services Commissioner and the county Board of Supervisors to enact a series of security and safety measures.

"They were quite receptive to our safety concerns," recalled Dominissey. "And an agreement was made to implement our list of desired security measures. Some of them are in place, but our members' safety should be top priority and there's been a breakdown somewhere."

The completed safety measures include crash bars on a rear door, installation of an

emergency exit at the building's south end, carpeting to eliminate skidding, and in the support services building next door, a payment window has been installed where, previously, anyone could walk directly into the office.

A major problem still to be resolved is the basic issue of a security presence — a deputy sheriff, police officer or security guard on duty during working hours.

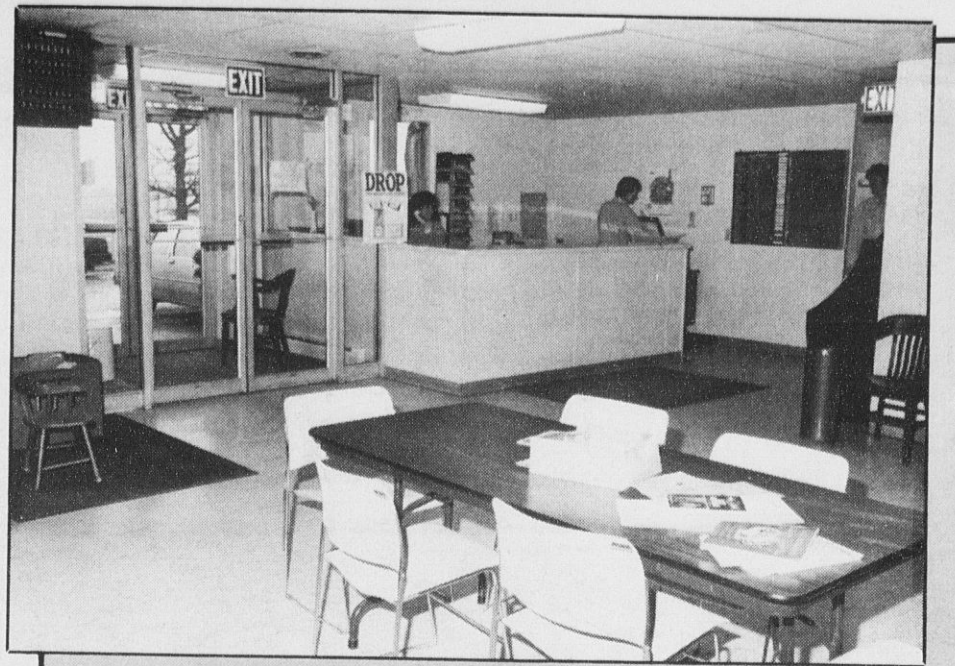
"They've got to realize this is the 1980s," said social welfare examiners Mary Ann Rase and Michelle Neville, who both fell during the gasoline incident. "Most counties routinely have a security contingent present in their social services department, but all we hear is that the sheriff is resistant to the idea because 'there wouldn't be enough to keep him busy' The sheriff has been lax in protecting social service department workers."

The local officers said they had worked out an arrangement with the village assistant police chief to have one of the police patrol cars periodically cruise past the offices. But that arrangement was halted by the police chief because the office falls under the sheriff's legal jurisdiction.

A direct call-in line to the sheriff's office for emergencies has proved unworkable.

"We do a lot for this community," said the social workers. "And we could do a much better job if we felt safer."

'Our members' safety should be a top priority, but there's been a breakdown somewhere'



NO SECURITY IN SIGHT in the lobby of the Wyoming County Social Services office. Despite county promises to improve security after several incidents that threatened the safety of workers, little has been done.



MICHELLE NEWVILLE



MARY ANN RASE



SECURITY IS THEIR PRIORITY — Wyoming County Employees CSEA Unit President Sandy Dominissey, left, Social Services shop steward Sandy Boyd and Local 861 President Roy "Corky" Upright discuss the county's failure to follow-through on needed security measures.