

# *CSEA members make impact on state budget mess*

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Volume 11, No. 8

Sept. 2008

## **THE WORK FORCE**

# Short staffed and at risk



See Pages 10-11

*Photo by Mark M. Kotzin*



## Photo of the Month



Photo by Lynn Miller

**Erie County Local members Gail Sharp-Zawadzki and Jeff Brzyski participated in a llama dressing contest at "America's Fair, the Erie County Fair," held in August. Brzyski and his llama, dressed as Zorro, won second-place. Sharp-Zawadzki and her llama took a third-place ribbon.**

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# ALERT



### CSEA President Danny Donohue sets member visits in three regions

President Danny Donohue is continuing his series of "meet the members" visits with stops scheduled in New York City, Rochester and Beacon.

The meetings will be held between 1 and 7 p.m. Call the region office to make an appointment and get directions.

#### Metropolitan Region - Oct. 7

Region office located at 125 Maiden Lane, 5th floor, New York, N.Y.  
To make an appointment call (212) 406-2156.

#### Western Region - Oct. 15

Satellite office at 3495 Winton Place, Building E, Suite 3, Rochester.  
To make an appointment call (716) 691-6555 or (866) 568-7734.

#### Southern Region - Oct. 28

Region office located at 568 State Route 52, Beacon.  
To make an appointment call (845) 831-1000 or (800) 757-CSEA.

# Retirees win major health insurance case

WHITE PLAINS — CSEA has won a \$3.6 million class action lawsuit against Westchester County on behalf of 1,600 retired union members.

The win demonstrates the need for legislative protections of retiree health insurance. These protections are critical to assure active CSEA members have the benefits due them when they retire.

The union filed a suit in 2004 claiming the county unilaterally and illegally diminished the health insurance benefits of workers who retired between January 1993 and May 2004.

In May 2004, CSEA and the county concluded negotiations for a new contract, which included increased co-pays and deductibles for health insurance. CSEA and the union members who ratified the agreement understood that current employees and future retirees would have to pay the higher amounts.

However, the county, on its own,

decided to also apply the changes to workers who had already retired.

"This is a huge victory for our retirees," said CSEA Westchester County Unit President Jack McPhillips. "They are living on fixed incomes and never expected they would be forced to pay more for their health care."

CSEA President Danny Donohue said the case highlighted the need for the retiree health insurance legislation (S.6457a) the union is backing. The bill, which the Senate and Assembly passed in the last legislative session, and awaits Gov. David Paterson's signature, would prohibit public employers from shifting health care costs to retirees and prohibit them from diminishing health insurance benefits for one year while a study is completed to determine how to provide health insurance in the most cost-effective manner.

— Ed Molitor

## State DOT worker killed in work zone

BUFFALO — CSEA is mourning the death of Kevin Forsyth, a state Department of Transportation worker who died from injuries he received when he was struck by a sport utility vehicle at a work site.

Forsyth, 46, was setting up traffic cones on a Niagara County roadway about 8:40 a.m. July 23 when he was struck by the vehicle, which had crossed the centerline of the road and traveled about 10 feet before striking Forsyth in a nearby parking lot. The SUV's driver reportedly told police he dropped a lit cigarette in the vehicle and he was reaching for it when the accident occurred.

Forsyth was taken to the Erie County Medical Center, where he later died. He had worked for the state Department of Transportation for almost 20 years.

"Our hearts go out to the Forsyth family and to our CSEA brothers and sisters in the DOT," said CSEA Western Region President Flo Tripi. "This is an

accident that clearly did not have to happen. Drivers must remain alert in work zones. Our safety depends on that."

Known among his co-workers as "Sarge," Forsyth, a no-nonsense, easy-going "military guy," will be missed.

"He really knew his stuff," said CSEA Niagara Department of Transportation Local President Darrell Smith. "He got along with most everyone. He was a positive person who wanted to get the job done. What happened really opened a lot of eyes; it will be a shame if the public forgets and goes right back to being careless while in work zones."

A police investigation revealed the driver of the SUV was charged with failure to keep right and further charges may be pending. CSEA's Occupational Safety and Health Department also investigated the incident.

— Lynn Miller

# CSEA stands strong in budget fight

ALBANY – Strong response by CSEA made a huge difference in the outcome of a special State Legislative Session called by Gov. David Paterson to cut the state budget.

While lawmakers did agree on more than \$400 million in cuts, phone calls, post cards, e-mails from CSEA members coupled with an aggressive media campaign led to much better choices than what the governor had initially proposed.

The governor is still working on an additional reduction of more than \$600 million in state operations, which do not require legislative approval. At press time, the details of state agency cutbacks



**Donohue**

ordered by the governor were not complete. However, the governor had personally assured CSEA President Danny Donohue that there would be no layoffs at this time.

“CSEA members recognized what was at risk on the job and in their communities and made their voices heard,” Donohue said. “Without member activism, this situation would have been much worse but we need to mobilize even more members because there are more battles ahead of us.”

The situation was sparked in late July when Paterson made an unprecedented statewide television address calling for drastic cuts in the state budget that he and lawmakers had agreed on just four months earlier. The governor’s action was based on projections showing revenue down significantly due to the sluggish economy.

The governor ordered all state agencies to find more than 10 percent savings in their budgets. He also called the legislature back into session and presented them with proposals to cut additional millions from aid to local governments and health care funding.

CSEA did not question the governor’s concerns but raised strong objection to his approach of addressing it only by cutbacks rather than finding creative ways to generate revenue and share the burden more fairly.

CSEA used all available means to raise these issues publicly.

“Real jobs, real services and real communities were at risk,” said CSEA statewide Political Action Committee Chair Bill Walsh. “CSEA members sent thousands of postcards, generated e-mails and helped deliver the message.”



**Walsh**

The union also quickly produced a statewide advertising campaign and presented the situation in dozens of media interviews. CSEA’s message underscored the potential negative impact on local communities and the reality of state services already stretched thin by understaffing and neglect.

While CSEA would still like to see greater attention focused on generating revenue more fairly for the long run, lawmakers sought budget savings designed to minimize the impact on localities and essential services.

It is expected that next year’s budget process, which will begin in January, will be more difficult and painful. CSEA members will need to be prepared for a long fight ahead.



*“There are many other ways to save money besides laying off state workers.”*

**David Ruster**  
State Office of General Services  
Maintenance



*“We help people that often cannot help themselves. If they cut funding for jobs like mine, who’s going to help them? As a person who also has a disability, I would have thought he’d be more sensitive to these matters.”*

**Karen Mack**  
Day Habilitation Aide  
Lifespire



*“Job cuts won’t help. They will just hurt people and the economy more. People need their jobs. We need to cut our dependence on oil.”*

**Patrice McFarland**  
State Department of Education



*“We cannot afford to lose any jobs among the front-line workers. The quality of services to the public would suffer.”*

**Elaine Gerace**  
Keyboard specialist  
SUNY College at Buffalo



*“Instead of spending so much money to build things like stadiums, they should be using these funds on programs and people who need and provide them.”*

**Sofia Rodriguez**  
Developmental Aide  
Lifespire



# THE WORK FORCE

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## Budget cuts distort facts, ignore reality

**H**ere we go again.

New York — like the rest of the country — is hitting some bad economic times. So what do we get? Distorted facts and blaming public employees and other working people!

How about a reality check?

The New York State budget was agreed to last spring in good faith — not simply to spend money but to better deliver services at every level throughout the state. It was based on real needs of real people in your community.



Gov. David Paterson's concern about future deficits is based on a lot less revenue coming in now than was expected. That's understandable. What's disappointing — and disturbing — to CSEA is that his approach to the shortfall relies almost entirely on cutting jobs and services. That's just not right and it plays into the agenda of those who want to undermine and put down public services.

When the governor tells state employees to do more with less, he ignores dedicated service. Agencies are already stretched thin with workers in 24/7 facilities covering mandatory double shifts.

Initial proposals for cuts to local government and health care funding would have been devastating. We said so loud and clear. Many of CSEA's concerns were heard and the result will be budget savings designed to minimize the impact on localities and essential services.

It's easy to take pot shots at "government spending." It's a lot harder to balance needs with resources. There will be more battles ahead. Responsible long-term solutions for New York must include creative ways of increasing revenues and fairly sharing the burden — not just cutting jobs and gutting services.

# Erie County Medical Center to keep public jobs, services

BUFFALO — More than 1,000 CSEA members working at Erie County Medical Center will retain their public employee status and the hospital will continue to serve as a needed safety net for the community following an agreement approved by the state Department of Health.

The Berger Commission last year recommended ECMC merge with the private Kaleida hospital system. CSEA contended from the start the recommendation did not require a full merger of the hospitals' assets. The

spirit of the recommendation, CSEA said, was to end duplication of services, not shutter important public facilities.

"This is a significant victory for CSEA and for labor," said CSEA Western Region President Flo Tripi. "ECMC will remain strong in the community and our members will continue to be the driving force behind that strength."

Earlier this year, Erie County Local leaders held a series of membership meetings to keep members of all three

unions at the hospital informed. Activists collected more than 4,000 signed postcards demanding lawmakers protect the hospital and keep it public. The cards were mailed to state Senate and Assembly members.

ECMC and Kaleida Health will remain separate entities. A state-appointed board will govern the two hospitals.

— Lynn Miller



**"ECMC will remain strong in the community and our members will continue to be the driving force behind that strength."**

## Summary of July Board of Directors meetings

*Editor's Note: The Work Force publishes a summary of actions taken by CSEA's Board of Directors. The summary is prepared by CSEA Statewide Secretary Denise Berkley for union members.*



**Berkley**

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

- Approved a three-year lease agreement for rental space in the Decker Building, Rochester, for Local 828, Unit 7400-00;
- Reallocated \$300,000 in the Capital Additions Budget for the current fiscal year;
- Appointed Ron Walker to the Publications Committee and Ron Briggs to the Committee to Study the Cost of Operating Group Life Insurance;
- Changed the name of Local 754 from Ballston Spa Head Start to Saratoga County EOC;
- Created Private Sector Local 765 for Albany County Airport Maintenance Employees;
- Created Private Sector Local 766 for The Guild for Exceptional Children and granted them a temporary charter;
- Dissolved Private Sector Locals

722 (Brookhaven Recycling) and 740 (Waste Management Recycling-Hillburn/Weimenunche);

- Changed subdivision constitutions for locals, units, retiree locals and private sector locals with regards to verification requirements (last four (4) digits of the Social Security Number) on the ballot return envelope;
- Changed subdivision constitutions for locals, units and private sector locals with regards to grievance and disciplinary training requirements;
- Changed subdivision constitutions for locals and units with regards to membership status for retirees working part-time;
- Designated Buffalo as the site of the 2009 Annual Delegates Meeting (Sept. 14 - 18) and Albany as the site of the 2010 Annual Delegates Meeting (Oct. 18 - 22);
- Appointed Jay Ingoldsby to the Capital Region Political Action Committee;
- Appointed Tony Scalise, Suzanne Smith, Olga White, Debra Davenport, James Jackson, Darleen Snyder, Annette Testani and Mary Whitmore to the Central Region Political Action Committee;
- Appointed Tim Finnigan, Doris Cota, Theresa Ferrara, Kimberly Whitlock, Chuck Parsons, Ove Overmyer, Cristal Zaffuto, Judy DiPaola, Yvonne Sirkin, Ron Castle, Jr.,

Steven Panton, Tom Warzel, Bernie Giambra, Jake Waters, Jeff Mileham, Judith Trost, Ed Blodgett, Edward Hoover, Douglas Drake, Kathleen Button, Dan Stone, Robert Ellis, Paul Peters and Mike Jones to the Western Region (East) Political Action Committee;

- Appointed Tom Rogalski, Paul Blujus, Nancy Prevosto, Louis Rouse, Kevin Furlong, Richard Ortel, Donald Brisky, Bruce Jamison, Bob Bostwick, Ken Penski, Gordon Diffenderfer, Donald Williams, Jr., Stephen Skidmore, Isabella Mendol, Agnes Mabins, Jeanne Kreavy, Marcia Olszewski, Carolyn Lee, Sandra Smith, Debra Sherk, John Stading, James Kurtz, Gerald Prince, Jim Smith and Dee Bertrand to the Western Region (West) Political Action Committee; and
- Placed into administratorship City of Binghamton Unit 6151-00/Local 804; Jordan-Elbridge CSD – Bus Drivers Unit 7819-00/Local 834; Town of Cornwall Unit 7924-00/Local 836 and Larchmont Public Library Unit 8221-01/Local 860.

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

**CSEA** Voices



**"The governor is unfairly targeting the public work force. We've got families to support, too, and the public needs the services we provide. I think cuts are the wrong thing to do, because it's going to cripple our ability to provide the services the public needs and relies on – they already wait too many hours to get into our emergency room, and these cuts would just make that worse."**

**— David Quimby, patient services coordinator and SUNY Upstate Medical University Local treasurer, on how his work site is affected by state budget cuts.**





# CSEA members honored for outstanding probation work

**“I feel honored; it’s not only my award, it’s a county award. It’s for the caseworkers and the probation officers that carry out the work we do.”**

**CSEA Voices**



**“I am a new hire. I would be the first to go. The governor’s cuts should start at the top — right in his own office. Fringe benefits and state cars at the top all have to go first before hurting those of us at the bottom. This is my first job. I am trying hard to support my family. I don’t want to lose my job after only a year.”**

**— Mary Codick, keyboard specialist 1, SUNY College at Buffalo, on Gov. David Paterson’s proposed state budget cuts.**

ALBANY — Two CSEA members were honored for excellence on the job at the recent New York State Probation Officers Association conference.

## **Officer of the Year**

Richard Schenosky from the Onondaga County Probation Department was recognized as Probation Officer of the Year for outstanding service.

The award is presented annually by the state Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives in recognition of exceptional service, dedication and professionalism performed by a probation officer who has contributed significantly to the field of community corrections and strengthened its role within the criminal justice system.

Division State Director Robert Maccarone said Schenosky recognizes the important role probation officers play in influencing offender behavior, promoting accountability and working with other law enforcement agencies through field intelligence and investigatory work to deter recidivism and solve crimes.

Schenosky, a 20-year officer, is highly regarded as a “primary officer” working on Project Impact in Onondaga County. He was one of the original officers chosen to work on the department’s first police/probation detail:



**Onondaga County Probation Officer Richard Schenosky with his plaque recognizing him as Probation Officer of the Year.**

the START Team (Supervision, Treatment and Rehabilitation Together) and was the first probation officer selected for the department’s Community Reporting Office.

Schenosky said he was surprised to be nominated and “flattered” when he heard he won the award. “I like the diversity of teaching, training, working with the juvenile unit and working on special projects with other law enforcement agencies,” he said.

Schenosky has been instrumental in providing training on defensive tactics and firearms and offering suggestions for improving officer safety. He volunteers with members of an inner-city youth bicycling group and



**Director of the state Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives Robert Maccarone, left, congratulates Warren County Probation Supervisor John Adams and the county’s Supervisor of Preventative Services and CSEA member Maureen Schmidt on their award for outstanding collaboration between probation and social services.**

serves as a positive role model. “It’s fun and different; you’re not in an office and you get to learn a little about each agency’s work,” he said.

## **Outstanding collaboration**

Also at the conference, Warren County Supervisor of Preventive Services and CSEA member Maureen Schmidt was recognized along with colleague John Adams, the county’s probation supervisor, with a special award that recognizes outstanding collaboration between probation and social services in improving the lives of children.

“Maureen Schmidt and John Adams demonstrate a strong and effective partnership between probation and social

services in improving the lives of children and families in Warren County. Their advocacy for youth and promotion of evidence-based practices and programs support early identification and effective intervention,” Maccarone said while presenting the award.

“We have done a lot of work together to work with at-risk youth to reduce out of home placements such as foster care,” Schmidt said. “I feel honored; it’s not only my award, it’s a county award. It’s for the caseworkers and the probation officers that carry out the work we do.”

**— Therese Assalian**

# Pest control keeps public safe

**BUFFALO —** The warnings come every year: Stay away from wild and stray animals, apply insect



**Peter Tripi**

repellant when spending time outdoors and so on.

Warnings like these come from CSEA members in the Erie County Health Department's Vector Control Program, which deals with creatures that may put the public at risk.

"CSEA members working in Vector Control provide a service that is extremely important to the health and well being of residents," said CSEA Western Region President Flo Tripi. "Through their hard work and dedication, the potential for a public

health crisis is drastically reduced."

Through the program, CSEA members monitor, test and fight disease-carrying creatures such as rats, mosquitoes that carry West Nile virus, possibly rabid animals and Lyme disease-carrying deer ticks.

"We are improving the quality of life in Erie County every day," said Peter J. Tripi, a CSEA member and senior public health sanitarian in the Vector Control Program.

"People call us for help every day and we are there for them," said Tripi, who is not related to Flo Tripi. "We are proud of what we do. We are a small operation that stays within a small budget and does a lot with what we have. The benefits of vector control far

outweigh the costs."

CSEA members have worked feverishly to stop West Nile from transmitting to humans. Each year, more than 34,000 storm drains are treated with larvicide. Locations near 800 at-risk population centers, such as schools and nursing homes, are also monitored and treated as needed.

Maps on Peter Tripi's office wall show the locations of the treated mosquito pools, rat complaints and the location of animals with confirmed rabies, a virus that is almost 100 percent fatal.

"The reason people don't die in the United States every day from rabies is because of public health programs and how we handle complaints," he said.

Vector Control employees also work at rabies vaccination clinics throughout the county, where each year more than 5,000 cats, dogs and ferrets are vaccinated against rabies for free.

The county's vector lab has performed tests and provided training for Erie County municipalities, several other New York counties, the Seneca Nation and even municipalities in Southern Ontario, Canada.

"I take great pride in protecting the public and I am proud to work for the Erie County Health Department," Tripi said. "I believe we really make a difference."

— Lynn Miller



**"Through their hard work and dedication, the potential for a public health crisis is drastically reduced."**

## Local Government Contract News

### Orange County Unit fights for fairness



Hundreds of CSEA members from the Orange County Unit and their supporters, including Southern Region President Billy Riccaldo, front row, second from left, recently demonstrated outside the county's government center in Goshen shortly before a recent county legislature meeting to urge county officials to reach a fair contract with CSEA. The unit has been without a contract since Dec. 31, 2006. Issues stalling an agreement include the county's proposal for a 35-hour workweek and health insurance. Negotiations have moved to fact-finding. The unit is expected to hold another demonstration outside the government center Sept. 4.

### Otsego County reaches out to public



CSEA Otsego County members and their families recently protested their contract stalemate by marching in the Otsego County Fair Parade and distributing CSEA leaflets to the public. From front to back are Otsego County Manor workers Robert Griffith, Dottie Naughton and Lester Shaw, and Alexis Duda, daughter of unit Vice President Crystal Davidson. More than 600 CSEA-represented county employees have been working without a contract since Dec. 31, 2006, and negotiations are going into fact finding.

## CSEA Voices



**"L**ayoffs and hiring freezes will hurt us all and make more work for the rest of us. "

— Mary DeFazio, agency service representative, Department of Motor Vehicles and two-year CSEA member, on how her work site is affected by state budget cuts.





# CSEA fights for worker's return after assault by patient

**“I felt like this was owed to her and that helping her come back would improve morale.”**

**CSEA** *Voices*



**“Right now, we’re looking to hire temps for the snow and ice season and we haven’t been able to do that yet. We’re usually working short-handed as it is, so if there are cuts and we’re unable to hire temps, we’re going to be mandated overtime to keep the roads clear for the traveling public.”**

**— Fred Gerloff, secretary I, state Department of Transportation Construction Office in Watertown and Black River Valley State Employees Local President, on how his work site is affected by state budget cuts.**

*Editor’s Note — Last year, The Work Force highlighted a violence reduction plan in place at Capital District Psychiatric Center. The need for such a plan came about after a series of violent incidents. The story mentioned an employee who was attacked at work. That employee is now back to work at the psychiatric center thanks to a joint effort between labor and management.*

ALBANY — Kathy Filkins worked at Capital District Psychiatric Center as a mental health therapy aide for 20 years until an attack at the hands of a patient put her out of work for almost two years.

She had been in touch with co-workers while she was recuperating. Once cleared by her doctor to return to work, Filkins faced another challenge.

“I didn’t know what my options were or how I would come back,” she said. “I just knew I wouldn’t come back as a therapy aide.”

Capital District Psychiatric Center Local President Jim Reedy worked with Filkins every step of the way and pleaded her case to an initially reluctant administration. Other colleagues and union members also rallied behind Filkins in her fight to return to work.

“I felt like this was owed to her and that helping her come back would improve morale,” Reedy said.

Reedy lobbied a key administrator at the psychiatric center who, once on board, helped bring other administrators on board.

“He knew I wasn’t backing down,” said Reedy.

Acting as a liaison between Filkins and the administration, Reedy encouraged her to work with the state Civil Service Department and seek 55b status, which designates non-competitive class state positions to be filled with people with disabilities, to assist her in her efforts to return to work.

“Jim kept me updated and told me about different positions as they became available,” said Filkins.

After a few interviews Filkins was offered a housekeeping position. She returned to work in May.

“The first few days were very difficult,” Filkins said. “It’s still difficult at times, but I enjoy working here, I enjoy my co-workers and I love being back at work.”

**— Therese Assalian**



**Kathy Filkins on her new housekeeping job at Capital District Psychiatric Center.**



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Finding a CSEA Legal Services Program attorney is as simple as calling the CSEA toll-free number: 1-800-342-4146 and following the prompts for the Legal Services Program. Listen to the directions for accessing the Injury-Related Plans, or the Non-Injury Related Plans, which includes the Taking Care of Business Plan. Information is also available on the CSEA website at [www.csealocal1000.org](http://www.csealocal1000.org).

**CSEA**  
LOCAL 1000, AFSCME, AFL-CIO  
**1-800-342-4146**



# Mattituck-Cutchogue school workers win long fight for contract

MATTITUCK — After a long fight for fairness, CSEA members in the Mattituck-Cutchogue School District Unit have ratified a new contract.

The five-year agreement, reached late last month, calls for annual salary increases in progressive percentages. Unit members will also switch their health insurance carrier from Island Group to the Empire Plan in exchange for two years of retroactive wages, including overtime and retirement payments.

**Turning up the heat**  
The ratification concludes a difficult negotiating process that began when the previous contract expired on June 30, 2006. The new contract is the result of the revamped contract



Mattituck-Cutchogue School District Unit members file into the school gymnasium to cast their contract ratification vote.

## School District Contract News

campaign CSEA recently implemented to turn up the heat on the district's school board and restart stalled contract negotiations.

Unit officers and

activists, including Unit President Sam Strickland, worked closely with CSEA staff to devise strategies and craft a plan to raise public awareness of the situation and shed light on the actions of school board members that had exacerbated tensions between the union and district officials.

### Outreach

The revamped contract campaign featured a series of advertisements in the local newspaper, postcard mailings to registered voters in that town and a union member display of solidarity at the school board meeting that preceded the budget vote.

CSEA spent much time

during the long campaign fighting against attacks by district officials, including those in a letter by the school board president that ran in the local newspaper after CSEA questioned recommendations from a fact finder.

"We were compelled as union members to oppose the words and deeds of the school board as they made a mockery of the collective bargaining process," said Strickland. "We dealt with a difficult situation in a professional manner and CSEA stood with us the whole way."

— Richard Impagliazzo



**"We dealt with a difficult situation in a professional manner and CSEA stood with us the whole way."**

**CSEA** Voices



**"Any cuts are bad, but if they insist upon making cuts they need to be done straight across the board and that includes the governor's office, the legislators and their staffs."**

— Ron Sweeter, calculations clerk, SUNY College at Buffalo, on Gov. David Paterson's proposed state budget cuts.



Mattituck-Cutchogue School District Unit member Donna Kowalsick casts her vote.



# INSIDE THE WORK FORCE

## OCFS workers face abuse, short staffing

JOHNSTOWN — Spit at, cursed at, clubbed over the head with a wood board, hit with a broom; just another day at work for youth development aides at Tryon Residential Center and other facilities run by the state Office of Children and Family Services.

A broken wrist, fractured leg, torn bicep and head cuts are just a few of the injuries sustained by Tryon aides in the last few months as a result of assaults from youths housed at the center.

### Few consequences

Between the often-harsh institutional environment, the troubled youths housed at Tryon, mandatory overtime and the workers' belief that OCFS is not doing enough to protect staff, many aides wonder whether it's worth it to stay.

Youth aides complain there is little, if any, consequences for residents for assaultive behavior, except maybe in cases where it escalates. Eric Jensen, a youth division aide, was informally reprimanded for calling the police after being assaulted on the job by a youth, who was later arrested.

One week later, the same youth, scheming with a roommate who created a distraction by pretending to throw up, lured another Tryon youth division aide to the room. Upon entering, the aide was clubbed repeatedly over the head with a board ripped from the desk.

According to Tryon staffers working that night, the youth planned to club the aide "until he was dead" to escape. The aide was discouraged from pressing charges and the offending



**Tryon Residential Center Local members, from left, Courtney N. Lee, Isaac Brown, Guy Newborn, Jeff Miskinis (back row center), Local President Mike Geraghty and Eric Jensen. The workers say the agency is doing little to help them deal with staffing and assault issues on the job.**

youth was simply transferred to another facility.

Transferring violent youths to other facilities happens frequently. The youth who attacked a Lansing youth division aide (*See story, Page 11*), causing him to lose his fingertip, is now at Tryon.

"We don't mind doing the job but when the assaultive person has no consequences, we don't feel appreciated," Tryon worker Isaac Brown said.

### A new model

OCFS is trying to reform state juvenile facilities by reducing restraints and implementing a therapeutic or

a two-week period," said Mike Geraghty, Tryon Local president.

Tryon Girls and Tryon Residential Center have some of the highest rates of workers compensation cases of all state youth facilities.

At Tryon Girls, about 20 of 60 workers, or about a third of the staff, are out on assault-related workers' compensation. At Tryon's boys' center, a limited-secure facility, 25 percent of workers, or 27 out of 108 staff, are out on disability.

Of the facilities' 170 youths (more than 100 boys and 60 girls), more than 80 percent have been diagnosed with some form of mental illness. Many have drug dependency issue and are violent, therefore unpredictable. Many receive medication several times a day.

This pressure-cooker work environment is taking its toll on workers.

An Employee Assistance Program, in place to help workers deal with personal and work-related issues, is seeing contacts increasing.

Some have just decided that they would rather work somewhere else. In the last two months, four Tryon staffers have resigned, citing overtime mandates and working conditions.

Tryon staffers want to see conditions improve at the facility and want to see the youths do well.

"We care about the kids. We need to dispel the myth that we don't care," Brown said.

"You have to have an environment that is safe for the kids and safe for the staff," Geraghty said.

— Therese Assalian

### Workers receptive to 'sanctuary model'

OCFS has been focusing on a new "sanctuary model," which centers on a new mindset for staff; a more therapeutic environment focused on staff building relationships with the residents.

"The staff are willing to make the change," Lansing/McCormick Local Vice President Andy Mantella said. "We're ready to accept the sanctuary model, but we need the resources — additional staffing levels, a safe work environment, proper training, and for the people who brought us the sanctuary model to believe in it the way we do, in order to make it work."

### Resources needed

The problem with the sanctuary model is the message was sent to facilities and the workers from OCFS officials to eliminate and reduce restraints at all costs, without any resources to make that happen.

"We need more staff to do the activities and to occupy the kids' time so they don't get into trouble," Mantella said. "In order to do that, you have to have some type of structure and discipline in place. Right now, the structure and discipline is not in place. That's been taken away from us, through the kids having more control. It's an unsafe environment for staff and kids."

"The people who do this job genuinely like and want to work with kids," said Yonah Lempert, a youth division aide III at Lansing Residential Center. "We don't have the tools to do so in a safe way right now."

— Mark Kotzin

## Lansing worker's injury highlights dangers of short staffing

Lansing/McCormick Residential Center workers are demanding more staffing and resources from the Office of Children and Family Services after several workers there were forced to confront a violent situation at the facility without adequate means to do their jobs safely.

Youth Division Aide III Andy Mantella was working on the facility's "A" Unit with two other workers, supervising 15 female residents. Two of the girls had been put in restraint and one was on a personal safety watch.

Suddenly, the all too frequent "all available staff" call rang out over his radio, indicating staff on "S" Unit had an urgent situation.

Mantella left his unit to assist with the emergency call. Upon arriving, he found himself in the middle of what was turning into a full-scale riot. Two girls were in restraints, one was on a personal safety watch, two others were refusing to go into their rooms, one was repeatedly breaking out of her room and another resident was attempting to hang herself.

Mantella and a youth counselor who responded first prevented the suicide attempt.

Mantella then escorted one resident to her room, who fought him every step of the way. Upon reaching her room, he removed her restraints, only to have her kick her door closed so fast and so hard, Mantella did not have time to completely clear the door.

Its edge severed almost a half-inch off the tip of the middle finger on his left hand.

With no one available to take him to the hospital, Mantella drove himself, getting his fingertip re-attached. Back at the facility, the remaining staff called for backup, with at least four state troopers and two county sheriff's deputies responding.

"The troopers were stunned at the lack of resources we had," said Yonah Lempert, a youth division aide.

"This whole evening could have been avoided if administration was doing what they were supposed to do and following policy," Mantella said.

For example, he said, the facility was housing together girls prone to assault and keeping girlfriends together on the same unit. In the past, those situations would not have occurred and



**Lansing Residential Center Local Vice President Andy Mantella displays a cell phone image of his injured finger after an attack at the youth detention facility.**

contributed to the lack of control and authority of the staff.

"I can understand and accept getting hurt at work — it's going to happen, but when it could have been prevented through proper staffing and resources, it's hard to live with,"

— Mark Kotzin

### Eloquent Times letter captures workers' commitment

Lansing Residential Facility Local Secretary and youth division aide Yonah Lempert wrote a letter responding to a *New York Times* editorial pushing for more community-based resources for youthful offenders.

In the letter, Lempert wrote, "The label 'borderline' young offenders was distressing to many staff members, who are frequently kicked, spat upon, verbally abused and otherwise assaulted."

Her letter also said, "The majority of youth

in OCFS facilities have overwhelming special needs. Changing young lives in a setting that is safe for everyone benefits society, the youths and staff."

"Rather than demonizing the facilities, and the people who work in them, resources should be provided to effectively run the residential programs."

*Read the entire letter at [www.csealocal1000.org](http://www.csealocal1000.org). Click on the Work Force link.*



# AFSCME International Convention:

SAN FRANCISCO — More than 200 CSEA elected delegates led the way as part of AFSCME's 38<sup>th</sup> International convention. CSEA is AFSCME's largest affiliate.

Delegates debated and acted on scores of issues and resolutions and heard inspiring speeches from presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama, U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton and former Vice President Al Gore, among others.



McEntee

Delegates also attended numerous educational workshops, forums and other events to share perspectives and ideas with union members from across the

country.

"We all know we are strongest when we are united," AFSCME President Gerald McEntee told delegates. "And the things that unite us are bigger than the candidates we support or the campaigns we wage. What unites us are the values we share."

## A Better America

"We are the conscience and the core of the American labor movement,"



Lucy

AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer William Lucy said. "We have accepted this responsibility to take our movement into the future and we will march on to a better America."

Obama echoed those sentiments in his satellite address to the delegates. "If we can just unite this country



CSEA's first-time AFSCME Delegates pose for a picture at the San Francisco convention.

around a common purpose then there's no obstacle we cannot overcome," he said.

Clinton and Gore praised Obama in their remarks and urged AFSCME delegates to mobilize for change.

Much of the program emphasized the progress that has been made in the AFSCME Power to Win initiative approved by delegates at the union's last convention in 2006. Power to Win focuses efforts on organizing and



Obama



Clinton



Gore

strengthening the union's ability to better represent members both now and in the future.

CSEA was recognized for leading the way nationally in its organizing efforts that have brought nearly 30,000 new

workers to our union.

*Visit AFSCME's website at [www.afscme.org](http://www.afscme.org) for more details about the actions of the delegates, photos and video from the convention.*

## AFSCME leaders re-elected

AFSCME President Gerald McEntee and Secretary-Treasurer William Lucy were re-elected by acclamation to new four-year terms in the International leadership.

CSEA President Danny Donohue seconded the nomination of McEntee from the convention floor.

McEntee has served as the International's



Donohue



Sullivan

president since 1981. Lucy was first elected Secretary-Treasurer in 1972.

Additionally, Donohue, CSEA Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan and Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio were re-elected without opposition as CSEA's three International vice presidents. Donohue was first elected as an AFSCME International vice president in 1984. Boncoraglio was elected in 1988 and Sullivan was elected in 1996.



Boncoraglio

# We Make America Happen

## CSEA a leader in organizing



**CSEA President Danny Donohue, joined by 40 CSEA volunteer organizers, addresses the AFSCME Convention after CSEA was awarded the International's organizing award.**

SAN FRANCISCO — CSEA received AFSCME's highest organizing award during the AFSCME convention in recognition of CSEA's success at bringing into the union nearly 30,000 workers.

"CSEA organized the most workers of any AFSCME local union during the last two years," said AFSCME President Gerald McEntee as he gave the award at the union's convention in San Francisco.

Receiving the award, CSEA President Danny Donohue was joined on stage by 40 CSEA members who had volunteered to organize the new members.

"It is not about winning an award," said Donohue. "It's about building a strong union and making workers' jobs better and more secure."

Donohue also thanked the many New York elected officials, community and religious leaders who supported the workers in their struggles to join CSEA.

**Read more about the convention at  
[www.afscme.org](http://www.afscme.org).**



*"It's such a diverse group of people from so many backgrounds and walks of life."*

**Cris Zaffuto  
Monroe County Local  
First-time AFSCME Convention Delegate**



*"I was glad to see Al Gore and hear his message about the environment. I was also happy to see AFSCME go green at this convention."*

**Heather Spencer  
Lake Taghkanic State Park  
Taconic State Park Commission Local  
First-time AFSCME Convention Delegate**



*"Everyone's entitled to their opinion, but I think labor ought to consider more than just the pro-labor record of candidates when making endorsements."*

**Chris Espejo  
Department of Transportation Local —  
Poughkeepsie  
First-time AFSCME Convention Delegate**



*"There was a lot of information to absorb; a lot to share with other members."*

**Mary Hamilton  
State Office of Children and Family  
Services Local — Capital Region  
First-time AFSCME Convention Delegate**



*"The reputation of the union is a great force. The power of the membership in AFSCME provides a great voice. I feel power as a member."*

**Maria Navarro  
Suffolk County Educational  
Employees Local  
Miller Place School District  
First-time AFSCME Convention Delegate**



*"The enormity of this conference is surprising. The camaraderie, unity and solidarity of purpose is very comforting. I didn't realize until now that AFSCME is like a loyal and trusted extended family to CSEA's family."*

**Nick Chiesa  
Thruway Authority Local  
First-time AFSCME Convention Delegate**





## 25 years ago ...

In fall 1983, CSEA was hard at work spreading the alarm about severe understaffing in state mental hygiene facilities. It was a campaign with shocking parallels to the present day.

The state's new governor, Mario Cuomo, had come into office earlier that year to face a significant budget deficit and had proposed drastic cuts in state jobs and services. The impact was particularly devastating in 24/7 mental hygiene facilities. Direct care workers were regularly left without backup support while responsible for the care of dozens of patients and individuals.

Much progress has been made in the mental hygiene area since that time, but in recent years there has been an erosion of adequate staffing, leaving front-line workers without adequate help and forced to work mandatory overtime on an ongoing basis.

CSEA has been vigorously raising this issue in the current budget situation, in which Gov. David Paterson has called on workers to do more with less.



The above headline, from a 1983 issue of *The Public Sector*, then CSEA's official publication, reflects the state mental hygiene facility understaffing crisis that is again facing CSEA members today.

## Also in 1983 ...

- \* Philippines opposition leader Benigno Aquino is assassinated on his return to Manila from exile in the United States.
- \* A terrorist bombing kills 237 U.S. Marines in Beirut.
- \* A South Korean jetliner strays into Soviet airspace and is shot down by a Soviet fighter, killing all 269 aboard.
- \* U.S. troops invade Grenada.
- \* Astronaut Sally Ride becomes the first American woman in space.
- \* The New York Islanders defeat the Edmonton Oilers for their fourth straight Stanley Cup championship.
- \* More than 125 million viewers tune in for the last episode of M\*A\*S\*H.

# CSEA wins cases affirming right to leave for cancer screening

CSEA recently won two critical victories assuring workers in local government and school districts will be granted paid leave for breast cancer screening.

A Saratoga County Supreme Court judge ordered Saratoga Springs to restore two hours sick leave to a City Hall employee who was forced to use her leave accruals when she took time off during the workday to have a mammogram.

In Poughkeepsie, a Dutchess County Supreme Court judge ordered the Wappingers Central School District to restore sick leave accruals to three of its employees whom the district forced to use their leave accruals for breast cancer screening.

CSEA sued the city and the school district, claiming they violated state Civil Service Law Section 159-b by refusing to pay the workers for time spent getting mammograms. The law, which has applied to New York state employees since 2002, was amended in 2007 to include municipal and school district employees. It states that employees are entitled to up to four hours leave annually to have a mammogram or prostate cancer screening without charge to any other leave to which they are otherwise entitled.

Attorneys for the city and the school district argued that although the law required employers to allow the time off, it did not require them to pay the employees. The judges disagreed in both cases.

CSEA President Danny Donohue said the spirit of the law is clear.

"It encourages workers, who may not do so otherwise, to undergo these lifesaving tests for cancers that are highly treatable if caught in time," Donohue said. "It's really a bargain when you consider the long-term costs of managing these diseases if they are not caught early. The potential savings in lost workdays and health care costs for protracted hospital stays, surgery and other avoidable procedures is well worth the investment of a few hours of an employee's time."

Gov. David Paterson recently signed into law CSEA-backed legislation to clarify that school district, and other local government workers, including those employed by public benefit corporations, be granted time off with no charge to their accruals for mammograms and prostate cancer tests.

— Ed Molitor



## Ambassadors of labor



CSEA recently hosted two Korean researchers from the Korea Institute of Public Administration studying American public employee unions. South Korean federal workers recently won the right to collectively bargain. The two spoke with CSEA representatives about collective bargaining, dues collection, labor-management relations and other issues. From left are Hwang Sung-Won, research fellow; CSEA Statewide Secretary Denise Berkley; CSEA Director of Contract Administration Ross Hanna; CSEA Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan; Suh Won Seoh, Ph. D.; CSEA Treasurer Joe McMullen, and the Korean translator.

### 2008 CSEA Special Board of Directors Election

Contested Board of Directors election ballots have been counted for the Universities board seat and the Rockland County board seat. Winner of the Universities Board Seat was Debra Nappi-Gonzalez. Winner of the Rockland County Board seat was P.T. Thomas. The CSEA Statewide Election Committee oversaw the election process.

### 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.



# Make dental visits easier with EBF

The last thing you need is an unpleasant surprise when you go to the dentist, especially if you are in pain.

To avoid any unnecessary surprises on your next visit to the dentist, take the following steps, especially if you're using a new dentist.

## Use EBF dentists

First, **make sure you're going to a dentist who participates in the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund.** More than 1,600 dental providers across the state participate in EBF. To find out whether your dentist is participating, contact EBF by phone at 1-800-323-2732 or visit our website at [www.cseaebf.com](http://www.cseaebf.com).

Participating dentists have signed a contract with EBF stating they will accept the CSEA fee schedule as payment in full for covered services. That means there should be no out-of-pocket expenses for covered services for the member except in certain circumstances.

## Participating provider?

Next, if a dental office notes that it will accept the EBF plans, **ask the providers whether the office is a participating provider.**

When the dental office states that it accepts the insurance, it may mean that it may take our fee schedule, but the provider will bill you the difference between the actual charges and what EBF pays or submit the difference to a secondary insurance carrier, if applicable.

If you choose to use a participating dental provider, you may still have an out-of-pocket expense. When this occurs, it may be that the patient has met their yearly maximum or a frequency limitation for covered services or they could be having services done that are not covered by the EBF such as teeth whitening.

Dental specialists, including oral surgeons, endodontists and periodontists, who have provided documentation in these three fields and who are part of participating general practice have the right to bill members the differences between the specialist's customary charge for the specialty service and the allowance paid by the applicable CSEA EBF dental plan. These particular dental providers



are noted in our directory with a double asterisk.

**Submit prior authorization**  
Finally, **if the cost of a recommended dental service exceeds \$250, a prior authorization must be submitted**

**to EBF.** After review, EBF will notify the member and dentist of the benefits payable based on the treatment plan.

In determining the amount of benefits payable, consideration may be given to an alternate procedure that will accomplish a professionally acceptable result.

If the member and dentist agree to a more expensive method of treatment than the pre-authorization allows, the member will be responsible for the amount exceeding what the pre-authorization states, even if it would otherwise be a covered service.

**Have more questions? Visit the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund website at [www.cseaebf.com](http://www.cseaebf.com).**

## An Ever Better Future

### Important Empire Plan update

The Herpes Zoster (shingles) vaccine is a new Empire Plan network



benefit effective July 1, 2008.

As with other adult vaccines, it is covered subject to an office visit co-payment, when received from a participating provider in accordance with established guidelines for individuals age 55 and older. There is no non-network benefit.

We have been informed that some physicians have advised Empire Plan enrollees they do not have the vaccine in stock or that their office requires enrollees to obtain the vaccine

from the pharmacy and bring it to the doctor's office for injection. Please be

advised that the Empire Plan Prescription Drug Program does not cover vaccines. If enrollees choose to fill the prescription at the pharmacy, they will pay the entire cost of the vaccine.

United HealthCare has communicated with all network providers that enrollees should not be getting the vaccine at the pharmacy and that network providers should arrange to obtain the vaccine and administer it from their offices.

### Empire Plan enrollees: Make sure your student's shots are up-to-date

Is your child off to college this fall? If you've made a checklist of items to pack and things to take care of before he or she goes, you may want to add just one more item — make sure their shots are up to date.

Growing research has found that some groups of college students may be at a higher risk of contracting bacterial meningitis, and that risk can be minimized by means of a quick injection.

As Empire Plan enrollees and their eligible dependents gear up for another fall semester, the CSEA Health Benefits Department would like to remind those in charge of "planning" that the Empire Plan's vaccination and immunization

benefit was enhanced to include the meningitis vaccine for dependent children and full-time dependent students.

Enrollees who have questions about whether their child has received the meningitis vaccination should contact their doctor's office.

If you would like to learn more about the Empire Plan's vaccination and immunization benefit, including the meningitis vaccine, please contact United HealthCare, the Empire Plan's medical/surgical provider, at 1-877-7NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447).

See page 17 for more CSEA Health Benefits news.

## Protecting Your Benefits

# Empire Plan update: Quest Diagnostics not a participating lab since January 2007

Recently, the state attorney general directed Quest Diagnostics and United HealthCare to communicate with Empire Plan enrollees regarding Quest's non-participation status with the Empire Plan.

Enrollees are reminded that as of Jan. 1, 2007, Laboratory Corporation of America (LabCorp) became the sole *national* laboratory services provider participating under the Empire Plans' medical program, which is administered by United HealthCare. In addition to LabCorp, many other *regional* and *local* laboratory providers continue to participate, providing broad access to participating providers for laboratory services.

We have been advised that Empire Plan enrollees who continued to receive services from Quest after Jan. 1, 2007, were not billed, thus giving enrollees the impression that

Quest laboratories were still participating and that they would not have any additional out-of-pocket expenses if they continued to receive services at Quest facilities.

As previously stated, the state attorney general has become involved and requested that the following occur:

### Testing performed by Quest Diagnostics with dates-of-services between Jan. 1, 2007 and June 6, 2008:

- Both Quest and United HealthCare send a letter to Empire Plan providers and enrollees reminding them that Quest is not a participating laboratory and has not been one since Jan. 1, 2007.
- Quest and United HealthCare must work together to integrate their files so Quest knows who



received reimbursement directly from United HealthCare.

- Quest will begin mailing bills to Empire Plan enrollees who used Quest between Jan. 1, 2007 and June 6, 2008.
- Enrollees will owe any amount that was already paid to them directly from United HealthCare for lab testing services received from Quest as well as the participating provider co-payment.
- In cases where enrollees were not reimbursed directly from United HealthCare for lab testing, enrollees will be responsible for the participating provider co-payment.

### Any testing performed by Quest Diagnostics after June 6, 2008:

- Enrollees will be financially responsible for the full cost of

diagnostic testing performed by Quest Diagnostics. No discounts will apply and enrollees will experience higher out-of-pocket costs than if a participating laboratory was used.

- Enrollees will be billed directly from Quest Diagnostics.
- Enrollees who choose to continue using out of network laboratory services, such as Quest or another out-of-network provider, will be covered under the enrollee's Basic Medical Plan (subject to deductible and co-insurance), which can result in higher health care costs for The Empire Plan and for enrollees.

The CSEA Joint Committee on Health Benefits is following this issue closely and will report on any new or updated information in future editions of *The Work Force*.

## Empire Plan reminder: Full-time student requirements under NYSHIP

If your child is going to college, the end of summer is more than just a change of season. It is a time of transition and this process can be stressful on many levels.

This change will be easier if you make sure your soon-to-be student has what he or she needs. In addition to laptops and books, don't forget about keeping your health insurance up-to-date.

The following information is an attempt to help reduce the level of stress surrounding health insurance coverage

Did you know that unmarried, dependent children of CSEA state enrollees are eligible for NYSHIP coverage if they meet all of the following guidelines:

- age 19 or over but under age 25, and

- full-time students at an accredited secondary, preparatory or trade school, college or other educational institution, and
- otherwise not eligible for employer group coverage.

Proof of eligibility may be required at the time of claim submission. This documentation is separate from that required by the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund.

Effective July 1, 2008, covered dependent students shall be provided with a three-month extended period upon completion of each semester as a covered full-time student (or equivalent). The benefit extension will begin on the first day of the month following the month in which dependent student coverage would otherwise end and will last for three months or

until such time as eligibility would otherwise be lost under existing plan rules.

If your unmarried, dependent child loses his/her NYSHIP eligibility, you have 60 days from the date coverage ends to apply for continuation of coverage under COBRA. Enrollees must send a written request to the Employee Benefits Division within that 60-day period.

If you would like to know more about full-time student eligibility, please see your NYSHIP General Information Book or contact your agency health benefit administrator (HBA), usually located in the personnel department.

*See page 16 for more CSEA Health Benefits news.*

## Promoting Good Health



## **Meet your leaders**



### **Garrison enjoys a good fight**

**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 edition we feature Capital Region President Kathy Garrison. In 1989, Garrison began working for the Department of State and became more active in union issues. In 1998, she was elected executive vice president of the Department of State Local. She also served as chair of the local's Audit Committee. She held both positions until she was elected president of CSEA's Capital Region in 2000. In 2008, she was re-elected to her third term as the Capital Region president.*

#### **WF: How did you get involved in CSEA?**

**Garrison:** I got involved actually in times that were very similar to this, when the state was proposing to lay off workers. I think it was about 1990 and there was a big proposal to lay off a lot of workers and I thought for sure that I would be gone. My first union meeting I received a book – what to do when the



pink slip comes or something – and the message from the local leadership wasn't very encouraging. It was somewhat punitive, to be quite honest. It was, 'while you're laid off, we expect you to come to every rally that we have or otherwise we won't protect you,' which bothered me quite a bit.

I wasn't a victim of that series of layoffs, but after that I did get involved and I started serving on local committees and doing what I was asked to do and going to meetings and making sure that people were a little bit more responsive to the members.

#### **WF: What did you learn about the union from getting involved in that circumstance?**

**Garrison:** I was in unions previously, so I knew what I was hearing didn't make a lot of sense. But I did learn that there were a lot of resources in CSEA; there were a lot of people that could provide information on just about any topic that we needed to know about. There were educational benefits and the contracts were good. I learned a little bit of history about the contracts and where they started from and what we had gained to that point in time. It was pretty encouraging and exciting.

#### **WF: What message do you try to share with CSEA members about getting involved in the union?**

**Garrison:** That the union really is their future, it is their contract, it is how they provide for their families. If they want to have a say in that process, they need to get involved. They can protect what they have at work and they don't have to take everything that the employer dishes out to them – there are avenues for some relief at times when things get tough.

#### **WF: A lot has been made recently about outreach to younger members. Do you see a generational divide in CSEA?**

**Garrison:** Yeah, I'm kind of in the middle of those age groups, to be honest with you. I'm in my 40s and when I was younger I was engaged. I think in most unions, everything is kind of based on seniority, so yes, we want to engage them, we want to get

their opinions, but then do we have some place where we can plug them in where it's effective without stepping on some political toes. I'm really encouraged in this region because we do have a lot of younger people. They're really enthusiastic about the union and I think at times we're missing the boat because we're not really reaching out to them to learn more about what their peers want in the union. I think that would be somewhat logical.

#### **WF: What do you see as CSEA's strengths as a union?**

**Garrison:** Every challenge that we have, every board that we speak in front of, the first thing all of us say is we represent so many thousand members – whoever's speaking – and without those members we would not be as effective. The legislators listen to us at the county level, at the school board level, at the state level and they do it because they know that we have a large contingency that we can activate, that we can mobilize, that we do vote. Hands down, the No. 1 strength is our members.

#### **WF: Is there anything that actually surprised you during your time as a leader in CSEA?**

**Garrison:** The generosity of the members throughout the whole union. When people fall on really bad personal times, there really is a family of people throughout the state that send their well wishes and prayers – just a lot of good feeling out there among a lot of people.

#### **WF: What would you like the CSEA membership to know about you?**

**Garrison:** That I like a good fight. (laughter) I like a good fight – some fights are better than others. And also, I'd like them to know that I have a great family – they're a very supportive family. This job does put you out on the road and away from home quite a bit and without my family's support, I wouldn't be able to do that.

## September CSEA calendar of events

### Statewide:

• Sept. 22-26: **CSEA Annual Delegates Meeting**, Marriott Wardman Park, Washington, D.C.

### Long Island Region:

• Sept. 15-16: **Local Government/Private Sector Grievance Representation Workshop**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m., Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Suffolk County Educational Employees Local Office, Medford

• Sept. 17- 18: **Contract Negotiations I: Maximizing Our Leverage**

**Workshop**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m., Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Charles J. Fuschillo Park, Senior Citizen's Center, Carle Place

• Sept. 17-18: **Defensive Driving**, 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Long Island Region Office, Commack. Call (800) 942-6874 to register.

• Sept. 27: **Defensive Driving**, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Long Island Region Office, Commack. Call (800) 942-6874 to register.

### Metropolitan Region:

• Sept. 16: **Defensive Driving**, 3 - 9 p.m., Building 1, 1st floor Staff Development Office, Brooklyn Developmental Center, Brooklyn. Prior registration/payment are required to attend. PLEASE NOTE: No admission to the class after 3:15 p.m. Call (718) 642-6300 to register.

### Southern Region:

• Sept. 13: **Defensive Driving**, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., CSEA Westchester County Local Office, White Plains. To register, call 1-800-942-6874.

• Sept. 16-17: **Defensive Driving**, 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., CSEA Westchester

County Local Office, White Plains. To register, call 1-800-942-6874.

### Capital Region:

• Sept. 9-10: **Local Government/Private Sector Grievance Representation Workshop**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m., Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Schaffer Heights Building, Schenectady. **PLEASE NOTE:** *This workshop is open only to Schenectady County Local and Schenectady Family Health Services Local members.*

### Central Region:

• Check for upcoming events at the Central Region page at CSEA's website at [www.csealocal1000.org](http://www.csealocal1000.org).

### Western Region:

• Sept. 9-10: **New York State Unified Court System State Government Grievance Representation Workshop**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m., Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Holiday Inn, Lockport. **PLEASE NOTE:** *This workshop is open to New York State Unified Court System locals only.*

• Sept. 16-17: **State Government Grievance Representation Workshop**, Registration: 5:30 - 6 p.m., Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Gowanda Correctional Facility, Collins.

*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](http://www.csealocal1000.org). Please note that additional events may be scheduled in your region, so check your region calendar page on the website.*

## Show your union pride on Labor Day!

Labor Day is Sept. 1, and CSEA members are participating in events across the state. Visit the CSEA website at [www.csealocal1000.org](http://www.csealocal1000.org) for events in your region!

**Right, CSEA members from the Upstate Medical Center Local march in the 2007 Syracuse Labor Day parade.**



### IRENE CARR AWARD

— CSEA is accepting nominations for the 2008 Irene Carr Leadership Award, which will be presented at the union's Women's Conference in Hauppauge Nov. 7-9. The award honors a CSEA member, retiree or staff member who takes a leadership role in advancing one or more issues of concern to working women. The award is named for former statewide Secretary Irene Carr, who was a pioneer in advancing issues traditionally of concern to women and was a leading advocate for those issues during her career. Applications for the award can be downloaded from CSEA's website at [www.csealocal1000.org](http://www.csealocal1000.org). The deadline for submissions is Sept. 1, 2008 ... **FOUR-DAY WORKWEEK FIGHT** — Westchester County Unit officers recently delivered 3,000 petitions to the county executive and county legislative chairman urging them to institute a four-day workweek in county departments where applicable to help save on



commuting costs ... **FETED FOR EXCELLENCE** — Two CSEA-represented Greene County employees were honored recently for excellence on the job. Laura Churchill of the Family Planning Department was

presented with the Employee of the Year award for her positive effect on programs throughout her department and her highly effective job performance. Greene County Correctional Officer Brian McManus was honored with the Chairman's Award for his heroic action and service after thwarted a suicide attempt at the jail on Feb. 11 after he discovered an inmate with self-inflicted wounds ... **NEW CONTRACT** — CSEA members in the Bellmore-Merrick Clerical Unit ratified a four-year contract after months of negotiations with the school district by an overwhelming margin. Contract highlights include an upwardly restructured salary scale, additional money on steps, extra holidays and a deferred compensation plan.

## PEOPLE Recruiters of the Month

*"It was very easy to get people to sign up. I talk to them about what PEOPLE does and I'm very pleased how everybody's gotten on board. When I speak to my co-workers, there's a lot of concern about the issues we face in the future, especially about what retirement benefits they have and what might change by the time they retire. Through the PEOPLE Program, we'll be involved in any legislation that could affect that, and we'll fight to make sure our rights and benefits are protected."*



**Simmons**

— Amy Simmons, secretary, St. Lawrence County Local and the June PEOPLE Recruiter of the Month. She recruited 20 new MVP PEOPLE members.



**Teachman**

*"PEOPLE's not just about 'political endorsements.' Our county is negotiating a new contract. Now more than ever it's important that we support the PEOPLE program, which helps us secure our salaries and health care. There are so many issues out there right now facing all of us, from privatization to job seniority. Any cuts to these programs are going to hurt us. Through the PEOPLE program, we can be heard."*

— Rose Teachman, vice president, Cattaraugus County Local and July PEOPLE Recruiter of the Month. She recruited 22 new MVP PEOPLE members.

*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.*





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# CSEA

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Danny Donohue, President

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