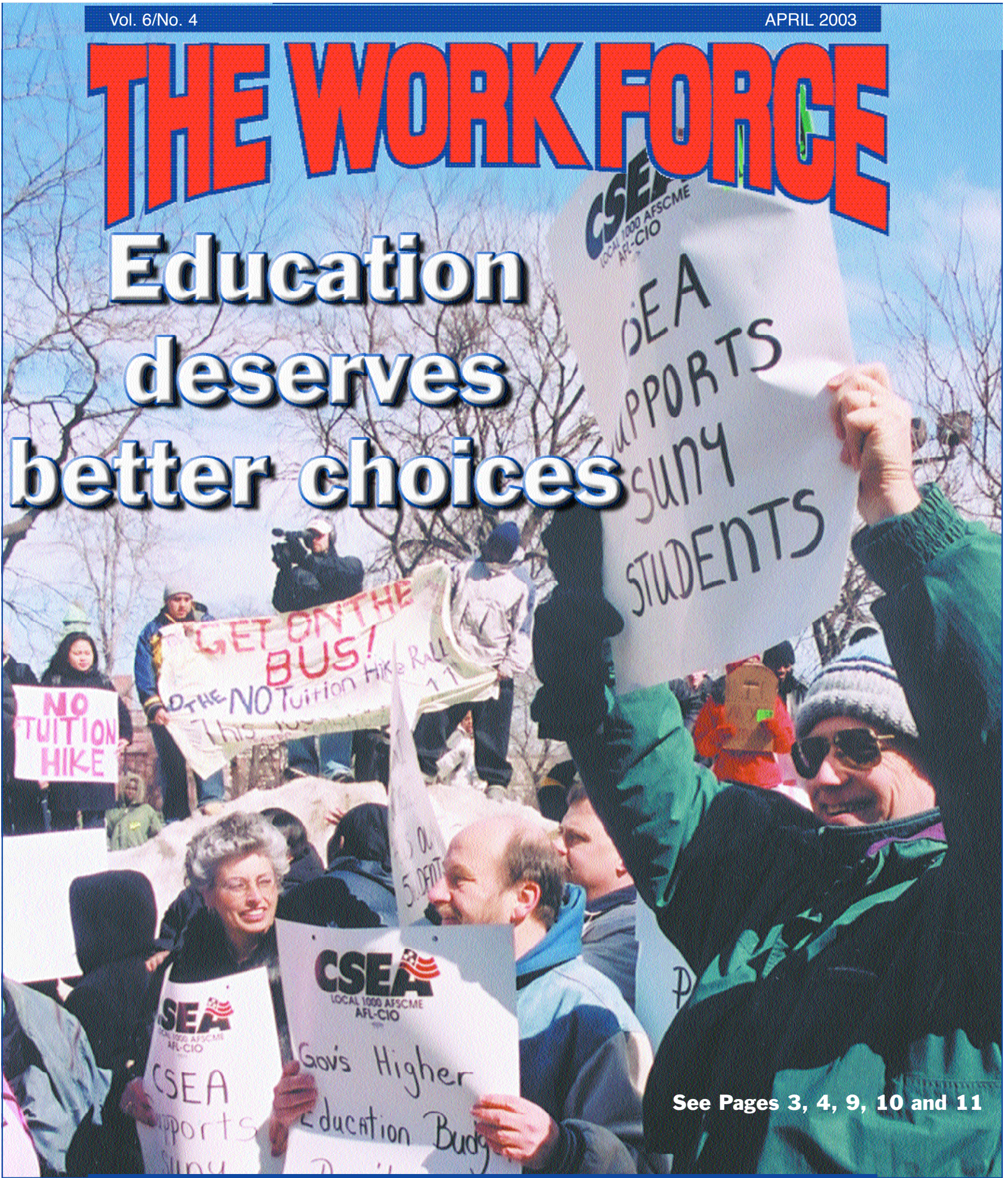


THE WORK FORCE

Education deserves better choices



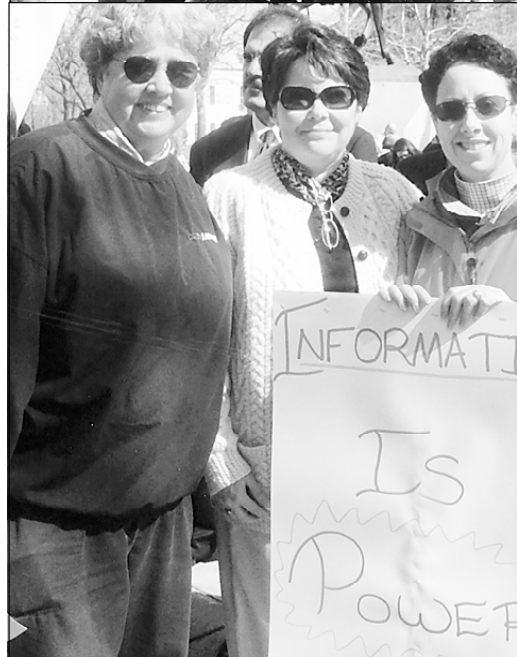
See Pages 3, 4, 9, 10 and 11

Photo of the Month



Photo by Ed Molitor

CSEA attorneys from left, Daren Rylewicz, Tim Connick and William Herbert stand victorious outside state Supreme Court in Albany after receiving a temporary restraining order against the Pataki administration, halting for now the administration's plans to close five psychiatric centers across the state. See complete story on Page 5.



At left, CSEA Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan, left, joins Margaret Garret, center, and Eileen Williams, librarians at the Guilderland Public Library. The three were part of a State Capitol rally recently in support of funding for libraries.

Statewide court negotiations begin

CSEA began contract negotiations March 20 for 5,200 workers working in the New York State Unified Court System (UCS).

The employees work in the trial courts, the appellate division and administrative offices throughout the state. Their jobs range from court clerk to court reporter to attorney, with some maintenance and clerical workers as well.

CSEA President Danny Donohue said the court employees are not insulated from the fiscal challenges facing other CSEA members. He said the union would fight to protect salaries and benefits while addressing a number of issues the workers are concerned about.

"We anticipate a very difficult negotiations, a very lengthy negotiations, just as with our executive branch brothers and sisters," Donohue said. "Our priority

is not to get a quick contract. Our priority is to get a good contract. We'll take as long as it takes to get a good contract."

CSEA's negotiating team is comprised of six UCS members from across the state representing a cross section of the union's state membership. They are supported at the negotiating table by the full range of CSEA professional staff and resources, including professional negotiators.

CSEA contract proposals were developed by the team based on input from rank-and-file members who responded to a contract survey CSEA sent to all UCS members as well as recommendations from team members about needed changes.

The current contract expires March 31.

— Ed Molitor

CSEA President Danny Donohue to visit Western Region

CSEA President Danny Donohue will visit the CSEA Western Region on Thursday, April 17 to meet with members.

The meetings will be held at the Holiday Inn Batavia, 8250 Park Road, Batavia.

Donohue will meet with union members from 1 to 7 p.m. Please call the Western Region office at (716) 886-0391 or (866) 568-7734 for an appointment and directions.

Note: Each month, The Work Force will feature an excerpt of the union's agenda for the future. To read the entire agenda, visit www.csealocal1000.net.

April 2003

Safe and Healthy Workplaces

CSEA believes every worker has the right to a safe and healthy workplace. The union is committed to:

- Educate workers on safety issues
- Advocate for laws to protect workers
- Coalition building to make workplaces safer
- Active and educated worksite safety and health committees in every CSEA workplace.

CSEA mobilizes for better choices

Events and actions are starting to come fast and furious as CSEA builds broad support in its campaign for better choices in the state budget.

Gov. George Pataki has put forth a spending plan that will kill jobs, hit working families the hardest, shift burdens onto localities and school districts and result in huge property tax increases.

"CSEA called on the governor last year to be fair and balanced in dealing with the state's unprecedented deficit," said CSEA President Danny Donohue. "Instead he put out a proposal that already has New Yorkers pulling apart in a struggle for limited resources."

CSEA has also criticized the governor's proposal for its devastating impact and cost for working New Yorkers. The governor's cuts to education will result in double digit school tax hikes just to maintain current budget levels. Similar cuts in aid to localities will force significant



Part of CSEA's mobilization involves Political Action Liaison (PAL) training, which recently took place in Albany. Here, a CSEA member Brenda Weiner talks with Assemblyman Paul Tonko.

cuts in staff and programs along with large property tax increases.

Hikes in tuition for the State University of New York amount to a tax on working New Yorkers who are struggling to help their children earn a college education. Reinstating a sales tax on clothing will also hurt working people more than anyone else.

At the same time the governor has refused to consider closing corporate tax loopholes or asking big business to do anything to share the burden.

Mobilizing for better choices

CSEA is working hard to deliver its message about the governor's wrong choices to its members, the public and state lawmakers. The union has conducted briefings for its leaders and activists, training sessions for scores of political action liaisons, and taken its message public.

CSEA has delivered a strong set of ideas through radio, television and print advertising statewide. CSEA members have begun meeting with state lawmakers in Albany and in their district offices to reinforce the need for a fairer approach.

Activists from CSEA and other AFSCME affiliates in New York will move forward with the union's agenda during lobbying day activities on April 1. CSEA is also supporting a major march regarding education funding in Albany on Saturday, May 3 (see Page 20). Regardless of the status of the state budget situation, the May 3 event will be an important rally to build momentum for school district budget votes scheduled statewide on May 20.

Working with the AFL-CIO, New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness — a broad coalition of labor, community and other advocacy groups — CSEA is pressing the case for changes in what the



CSEA members rally at the State Capitol recently to protest Gov. George Pataki's proposed education budget cuts.

governor has proposed and presenting ways to deal with the revenue shortfall.

Raising revenue, affecting the fewest New Yorkers

For example CSEA and its coalition partners are recommending an income tax surcharge on the wealthiest New Yorkers as one of the best ways to raise needed revenue while having the least negative effect on the vast majority of New Yorkers.

"No one wants to see a tax increase," said Donohue. "But the governor's proposals for hidden taxes and fees and dumping costs onto schools and localities will hit people a lot harder than an

income tax adjustment.

"It's been clear for some time that New York can only deal with its budget problem through a balanced combination of reform, revenue and federal help, but so far the governor has dug in on his proposal which has made it even harder to find common ground," Donohue said.

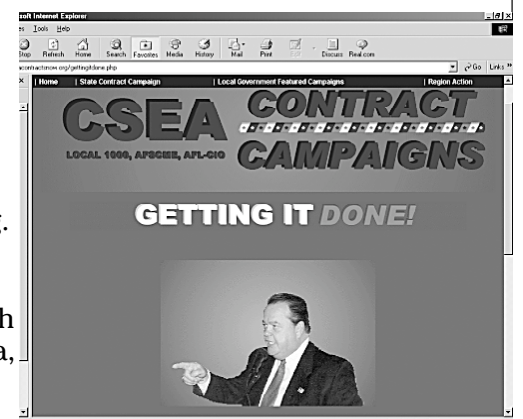
CSEA members are urged to **call the governor and lawmakers toll-free at 1-877-255-9417.**

"CSEA knows there are better choices than what the governor has proposed and we must keep the pressure up," Donohue said. "This fight is just beginning."

Up-to-date contract information a click away

CSEA is now offering online information regarding the state and local government contract negotiations. Visit www.CSEAContractsNow.org. CSEAContractsNow.org is a member-only area — if you already have an account with the CSEA members only area, you may use the same username and password.

Otherwise, you will be given a username and password, which will work in both the CSEAContractsNow area and the members only area of www.csealocal1000.net.



What will my school taxes be?

Visit www.csealocal1000.net for a complete listing, by county, of proposed school property tax increases should Gov. George Pataki's budget take effect. You may be surprised ...

CSEA secures restraining order against Pataki's continuing mental health disgrace

ALBANY — As far as CSEA's concerned, the Pataki administration can answer to the judge for its disgraceful mental health budget plans in clear disregard for the legislative process and state mental hygiene law.

CSEA has secured a temporary restraining order in state Supreme Court in Albany prohibiting the Pataki administration from proceeding with steps towards closure of the Hutchings, Elmira and Middletown Psychiatric Centers by July 1 and consolidating Nathan Kline Institute and the New York Psychiatric Institute.

For now, the administration cannot take any actions to transfer functions or provide employees with transfer options.

The issue will return to court April 2 for a hearing on the union's motion for a formal

injunction. CSEA argued that the administration was disregarding state law requiring the affected communities to receive one year's notice before significant service reductions.

The union has also pointed out that the administration's actions disregard the role of the state legislature.

"Last we checked, the legislature was a co-equal branch of government with the governor but he is thumbing his nose at legislators," CSEA President Danny Donohue said. "We will now seek relief from the third branch of government, the courts."

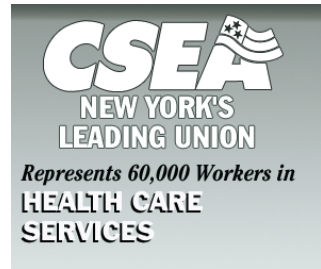
The action came as hundreds of CSEA members and other employees who work at the facilities were put on notice by the administration that the governor is proceeding with his plans even though there is

significant opposition in the state Legislature.

"It's clear that the Pataki administration doesn't give a damn about people with mental illness receiving the care they need in the communities where they live," said Donohue.

CSEA has objected to the governor making moves to shut down facilities without a coordinated plan for addressing the needs of the patients, the communities and the workers who provide care.

"We need more community-based programs and residences," Donohue said. "It's clear that the state must use its existing resources, including the experienced and dedicated state mental health work force," Donohue said.



It's clear the Pataki administration doesn't give a damn about people with mental illness receiving the care they need in the communities where they live.

Mental health employees lobby legislators

ALBANY — CSEA members from around the state converged in Albany to lobby the legislature concerning the threatened closings of the Elmira, Middletown, Hutchings, Bronx Adult Psychiatric and Bronx Children's Psychiatric Centers without a comprehensive plan for future services.

The governor's current budget proposal drastically reduces state services, but does little to existing services in the community.

"We want to make sure that we protect jobs and give service to our clients in the community where they need it the most," said Abraham Benjamin from Bronx Psychiatric Center, which Pataki has proposed closing in 2005.

Years of failed policies have already dumped thousands of

CSEA members lobbied State Sen. Thomas Libous (left) and Assemblyman Peter Rivera (right), chairs of the Senate and Assembly Mental Health Committees, concerning the proposed psychiatric center closings.



people with mental illness into homeless shelters and the criminal justice system. Further reductions will just amplify this effect.

"Mental health services should be a part of the full health benefits that New Yorkers rightly deserve," said Sharon Connor, president of the CSEA Hutchings Psychiatric Center Local.

CSEA members also expressed concerns about families having to travel even farther distances to visit relatives if facilities closed.

"Hutchings has patients from a five county region," said Connor. "If Hutchings closed, people would be forced to drive quite a distance to see patients who are relocated in Utica," she said.

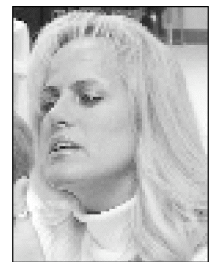
"I think everyone here has read the same budget that I have and the budget basically creates more questions than answers," said Assemblyman Peter Rivera, chair of the Assembly Mental Health Committee during a meeting with a large group of CSEA members.

"We've made our voices heard said Connor. "Let's hope that our legislators listened."



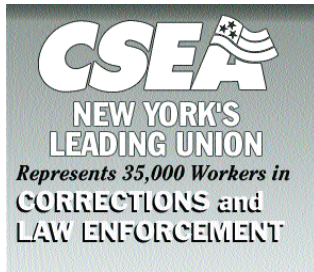
Libous

CSEA Voices



"I feel the budget cut impact on our district. If we have to cut positions — the persons that fill those positions are what has made this district one of the top schools in New York state. In order for us to maintain that status, we can't afford to lose the faculty and staff that we have. If New York state is willing to compromise our education, I think that's a shame."

— Millie Ritter, school nurse, West Canada Valley School District



[I want to make sure that everyone who comes through here not only becomes a member, but is registered to vote.]

CSEA Voices



“I’m concerned about the school district cuts and what it’s going to mean for our taxes in our home districts.”

— Loralee Whitlock, court assistant, Fulton County Combined Court, 20-year CSEA member

Cooking up mobilization

RED HOOK — Mattie Campbell doesn’t take a lot of credit for mobilizing CSEA members to become involved in their union.

But the head cook at Parker Training Academy in Red Hook makes it a practice to ensure that all new employees entering the five-week program are signed up as CSEA members.

The academy trains new State Office of Children and Family Services employees for positions at the agency’s youth detention centers statewide through a rigorous, five-week program.

Parker Training Academy, which has been the central base for the agency’s staff training since early 1999, recently held its 100th training class graduation.

At the event, CSEA Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan honored Campbell with a plaque of appreciation for her activism.

“Mattie is a great activist,” Sullivan said. “She’s a true supporter of CSEA and she just wants to make sure that CSEA members get information and are represented well.”

Campbell, a 24-year CSEA member who serves as a shop



CSEA Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan honored Mattie Campbell with a plaque of appreciation for her activism.

steward — and once served as a vice president — for the union’s Mid Hudson State Employees Local, not only oversees the academy’s food service but cooks up mobilization of union members who train at the facility.

“I want to make sure that everyone who comes through here not only becomes a member, but is registered to vote,” she said. “It’s so important.”

Campbell credits her success to CSEA and the Employee Benefit Fund staff and activists who regularly attend meetings at the facility

to discuss union benefits and other programs available to members.

“I’ve always been so fortunate to have a great team from CSEA, PEOPLE, and EBF,” she said. “They are so conscientious about educating new members about benefits and programs.”

But Sullivan and staff members give all the credit to Campbell.

“Mattie has never wanted to be in the spotlight,” Sullivan said. “But, she’s one great leader.”

— Janice Marra

CSEA supports hearing examiners legislation

CSEA strongly advocates the passage of a bill pending in the New York State Legislature that extends the reappointment terms of hearing examiners in family court from three to five years.

Hearing examiners are currently appointed for three-year terms initially and reappointed for additional three-year terms. The proposed bill would provide that hearing

examiners be appointed on a full-time basis for a term of three years and reappointed for subsequent five-year terms.

The current three-year term for hearing examiners is the shortest term for any judicial officer. The proposed bill brings hearing examiner’s terms in line with other judicial appointees.

Considering that hearing examiners directly handle 40 to 50 percent of the court’s

caseload statewide, it is important to ensure that we keep experienced examiners in the Family Court. The change will also add stability to the court and ensure a more efficient process.

By providing for longer terms, the work and expense associated with the appointment procedure is also significantly reduced.

Keeping it up to code

OYSTER BAY — Mark Knight's truck is his rolling office. A picture of his two young sons is on the dashboard.

As a sanitation inspector for the town, Knight makes sure residents adhere to local ordinances.

"A lot of our job deals with making sure the crew is safe out there doing their job," Knight said.

CSEA members working as code inspectors in local governments across the state provide a vital link between laws aimed at protecting the public and making sure those laws are followed.

While many people might associate code enforcement strictly with electrical or building issues, it can also cover a wide range of areas including sanitation, commercial signs and fire safety measures.

Providing protection could prove to be more difficult if the ramifications of Gov. George Pataki's proposed budget begin to hit localities. The city of Amsterdam recently proposed laying off two code enforcement officers, but city officials changed their minds.

The job isn't glamorous but is essential to public safety.

"You get calls for stuff like liquid waste or even worse, medical or human waste, which shouldn't be put out with the household trash," said Knight.

"We're like the mediator between



CSEA Town of Oyster Bay sanitation inspector Mark Knight writes out a notice of violation for a resident on his route while in his mobile office.

the crew and the homeowner."

During his two years as inspector, Knight has just about seen it all — from the most common violation, overweight pails, to liquid waste pollutants.

Knight said he tries to get residents to do the right thing. Even though most homeowners clean up their act when they do get a notice of violation, sometimes things can get hairy.

"Some of the residents yell and scream, because they think they're right," Knight said.

At a residential stop in Hicksville, Knight issued a violation notice for bags that were too heavy, not securely fastened, and had loose floor tiles that could cut a sanitation worker.

"A lot of these residents treat our people like second class

citizens," said Knight. "They have homes and families too. If a guy blows out his rotator cuff and he's out for two months, who's going to feed his family?"

Once put like that, one can see the recognition in the homeowner's face, Knight said.

In extreme circumstances, when notices of violation and warnings don't get through, then a resident can be fined or hauled to court.

"Last week a worker picked up a bag, and it had broken glass in it. He wound up with 18 stitches," said John Andersen, executive vice president of the CSEA Oyster Bay Local.

"Our policy is taxpayers first. But our men are taxpayers, too," said Andersen.

— Rachel Langert

Code violation a close call for CSEA activist

CSEA officer and activist Rudy Bruce recently discovered in an alarming way the necessity of building codes and their enforcement.

"I was at my desk, and somebody said, 'Hey Rudy, there are a bunch of fire trucks going down your street!'" said the Nassau County Local 9th vice president.

A fire had broken out in the

walls of Bruce's kitchen after an electrician turned on a circuit to check some work he had just finished.

An inspection revealed the electric cable was not what the building code called for.

"I'm just grateful that my family is safe. The inconvenience I can live with. I couldn't live without my wife and daughter," said Bruce.



Rudy Bruce points out the damage sustained to his kitchen by an electrical fire.



'A lot of our job deals with making sure the crew is safe out there doing their job.'

CSEA Voices



"I do believe we are in a crisis but I would like to see upper level spending cuts."

— Sherri Hood, calculations clerk, SUNY Alfred, 10-year CSEA member

Pataki turns college dreams into nightmares

ALBANY — SUNY students and their parents are trying to make sense of the governor's proposed budget that includes a triple-whammy of cuts and increases that threaten to turn the dream of a college education into a nightmare.

The first blow came when Gov. George Pataki released his budget and announced a \$1,200 tuition hike for SUNY schools. That amount represents a 35 percent increase over the current full-time tuition of \$3,400.

CSEA member Ellen Krzykowski wonders how she's going to be able to pay tuition and fees for herself and her daughter, both full-time students. In addition to her job at SUNY Albany, Krzykowski, treasurer of her local, also holds a part-time job to help pay the two tuition bills.

She attends weekend and night classes at SUNY Cobleskill. Her daughter, currently enrolled at Utica College of Syracuse University, will transfer to SUNY Albany in the fall.

Krzykowski uses any and all resources available to her and her daughter, including maximum

student loan amounts, just to get through each semester.

"My books this semester cost \$385 and my daughter's were \$450," said Krzykowski as she does the mental math to figure out how she can possibly stretch things any further.

She does get a break on tuition from the CSEA LEAP program. She also gets partial tuition reimbursement from her employer but she's already seeing that amount reduced. "It used to be 50 percent, now it's 46," she said.

Krzykowski estimates that the costs for her daughter transferring from a private school to the SUNY system will actually be *the same* given the generous financial aid package currently offered at the private school. She fears that SUNY schools will have trouble competing with private schools as costs continue to escalate, financial aid cuts go deeper and programs and services are scaled back.

Student fees increased

Although SUNY tuition has not increased since 1995, student fees have increased an



Ellen Krzykowski, secretary at the State University at Albany, worries that tuition hikes may prohibit herself and her daughter from attending SUNY schools.

average of 47 percent per year from 1997 to 2001. The last time SUNY tuition was increased — by \$750 per academic year eight years ago — enrollment dropped by nearly 8,000 students over the following three years.

The second blow came in the form of a \$184 million cut in "taxpayer support" to SUNY and an \$83 million cut at CUNY's four-year senior colleges. This means that any revenues generated from the tuition hike will be used to offset the amount the state no longer contributes, thus eliminating the chance for any improvements in programs or services. Once again, taxpayers will be paying more and getting less.

Cuts in TAP aid

If that isn't bad enough, students from families with household income less than \$80,000 who are eligible for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) would have to wait until students earn a degree to receive a third of their grant. A similar plan presented to the state Legislature last year was rejected.

Pataki also proposed a 50 percent reduction in E.O.P

(Educational Opportunity Programs) for disadvantaged students, the elimination of math and science training programs for minority students under the Collegiate Science Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) and the Science and Technology Program (STEP) and a cut of \$18.7 million in Bundy Aid for private college students, including a discontinuation of the aid for students pursuing master's and doctoral degrees.

"Those struggling to pay tuition may be on the border of not being able to attend," said CSEA Capital Region President Kathy Garrison.

Many are concerned about the obvious impact of rising costs on working families trying to pay for a college education.

Sue Pozniak, a CSEA member working at SUNY Albany, has a son enrolled at SUNY Morrisville. She worries about the equity of the governor's cuts. "I'm not happy about it because it won't impact all people equally," she said.

— Therese Assalian

Governor Pataki's cuts to education:

- \$1.24 billion direct cut in state education aid to school districts.
- Authorizes tuition increases at SUNY and authorizes each campus to raise tuition on their own in the future.
- Slashes state aid to community colleges by 15 percent.
- Defers one third of TAP awards for low income students until graduation.
- Eliminates BOCES administrative aid and consolidates BOCES aid into operating aid for an overall cut to BOCES of \$109 million.

What this could mean for you:

- Layoffs and staff reductions at school districts, BOCES community colleges, SUNY and SUNY teaching hospitals.
- Elimination of BOCES and special education programs
- Increased privatization of positions at SUNY, community colleges and local school districts.
- Double digit property tax increases and program cuts in virtually all school districts in the coming year.
- Elimination or lack of access to many course and programs

Education cuts equal wrong choices

Call the governor and your state legislators today and tell them that the budget is the wrong choice for New York.

Call toll free: 1-877-255-9417

What CSEA members are saying about the governor's proposed budget



"We've been giving and giving and giving and giving. It's not fair. I can see the negative impact on taxes and public services. And prices for everything keep going up and up and up and up."

Jane Goodridge, cleaner, SUNY Alfred

"It hurts the children first and foremost. It also hurts the families because many children need special programs, which may not be available to them because of this budget. To cut teachers and enlarge class sizes will definitely hinder the children's ability to learn and will reduce the attention paid to them. These are the adults of the future — they need a good foundation."



Barbara Marshall, pre-auditor, Syracuse City School District



"We've already been losing too many members, and these cuts will make it worse. We've been hit extremely hard, and important services are being lost."

Claudia Mount, janitor, SUNY Alfred

"The governor mandates programs for students and then we have no money for them and are forced to raise local taxes to make up for what he's taking away. Most budgets are going to have to increase between 10 and 20 percent in order to maintain the working capital to fund mandated programs for students."



Connie St. Denny, bus driver, Baldwinsville School District



CSEA members joined forces with over a thousand students at the New York State Capitol to protest cuts to higher education and tuition assistance programs.

CSEA slams asbestos cleanup

MANHATTAN — Nearly a month after being told by CSEA Safety and Health specialists that dangerous levels of asbestos were present in and around air conditioners at a DMV office near Ground Zero, state officials have still not responded adequately.

"I feel like they are punishing us because we let CSEA come into the office and they found that things were not correct," said Barbara Shoates, a motor vehicle representative and CSEA shop steward. "I think that is wrong."

After conducting their own air quality and other samples, officials at the DMV originally said they would replace the 11 air conditioners at the DMV service center, according to CSEA Safety and Health Specialist Komilla John. They later recanted and said that they would only remove the units but not replace them.

With summer approaching, workers are sure the building's inadequate air

conditioning system will not be enough to keep their work areas comfortable.

"They are saying that they will be removing these units as a sign of good faith because it's not their responsibility," said John. "But it is the employer's legal responsibility to provide our workers with a safe and healthy workplace."

PESH violations

State Public Employee Safety and Health (PESH) inspectors who surveyed the site hit the agency with more than 40 health and safety violations concerning asbestos exposure. CSEA made repeated requests to DMV officials to shut down one air conditioner after DMV was notified by CSEA that the unit contained high levels of asbestos.

"The DMV is continuing to place workers and the public at risk despite being told about the severity of the situation," said Metropolitan Region Health and Safety Chair



CSEA Industrial Hygienist Mark Stipano and OSH Specialist Komilla John take samples from the Department of Motor Vehicles office near Ground Zero.

Frank Cosentino. "It seems to me like a classic case of money over workers."

A month after the attacks, DMV workers were instructed to clean dirt and debris that contained unknown substances from their desks and in their work areas but were not given cleansers or gloves, which they bought themselves.

CSEA workers are being urged to obtain medical check-ups and to file Workers Compensation

claims. "It's a disgrace that the DMV has not remedied this situation," said CSEA Metro Region President George Boncoraglio. "We have had to prod and push them to clean up this mess properly and they are still not doing it right. We celebrated our public sector employees as heroes of 9/11. Why aren't they helping them now?"

— David Galarza

CSEA
NEW YORK'S
LEADING UNION
265,000 Members Strong
SAFETY and
HEALTH

Workers' Memorial Day coming

CSEA will join with unions across the country in marking Workers' Memorial Day on April 28. Several events are being planned by CSEA in different regions.

More information will be included in the next edition of the Work Force. Also, check the CSEA web site at: www.csealocal1000.net for regular updates.

Smallpox compensation proposal falls short

CSEA finds encouragement in the Bush administration's move toward a compensation plan for workers who choose to receive the smallpox vaccination, but the plan remains inadequate.

CSEA and its affiliate union, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), are urging a more comprehensive plan with adequate education and screening requirements to reduce the risk of injury to recipients.

"This plan still fails in several areas, including the costs it would impose on our local and county governments that try to administer it," CSEA President Danny Donohue said.

"The risks to our workers remain until adequate screening procedures are put in place, and I don't see how adequate screening procedures can be put in place if the localities

can't afford them," Donohue said.

The compensation proposal offers individuals who die or suffer a permanent disability \$262,100 in benefits. Lost wages as a result of temporary or minor injuries would be capped at \$50,000 and would be paid only after an individual had missed five days of work. The same benefits would be available to a hospital patient or family member who suffers an injury after contact with an inoculated health care worker.

The proposal does not protect employees from being coerced by employers to "volunteer" for vaccination, and the compensation schedule assumes that workers will also be receiving benefits under state workers' compensation programs, a premise that is uncertain in most states.

The lifetime maximum benefit payable to families of deceased workers or to those who

are disabled will not protect against financial ruin. For most workers, the maximum benefit payable represents only a few years of income.

The call for health care workers to volunteer for smallpox vaccinations went out Jan. 24.

The first stage targeted an estimated 450,000 public health and medical workers on smallpox response teams, and the second will include up to 10 million additional health workers and first responders. About 12,700 nationally people have volunteered to be vaccinated since the program began, with hundreds of hospitals opting out of the program until better screening and compensation for workers is offered.

For more information visit www.csealocal1000.net.



Important News about Dependent Care Advantage Account

Since 2001, state employees who enrolled in the Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAAccount) have enjoyed extra help from New York State toward their eligible child, elder or disabled care expenses.

With the expiration of the collective bargaining agreements on April 1, 2003, the employer contribution will no longer be available for employees who enroll in the DCAAccount with a Change in Status (CIS) form.

If you return from a leave of absence, register your school-age child for summer day camp, or experience any other eligible change in status before April 1, 2003, submit your CIS form to enroll in the DCAAccount and take advantage of the employer contribution. CIS forms received after April 1, 2003, will not receive the employer contribution.

The DCAAccount program will continue through 2003. If you pay for child, elder or disabled care in order to go to work, you can save up to 40 percent by enrolling in the DCAAccount. Visit www.flexspend.state.ny.us to learn more or call 1-800-358-7202 and press #2.

Activist's CD is catching on

MANHATTAN — Peggy Eason is living her dream.

The CSEA local president at the Division of Parole in the Metropolitan Region recently recorded her first CD, "Discover Me." As her dreams of being discovered evolve, Eason finds her co-workers and friends discovering her musical talents.

"I was always talking about wanting to be discovered," said Eason, explaining the CD's title. "But when Sept. 11 occurred my producer said it was time to make my dream come true. He said tomorrow is never promised so I hopped on a plane by myself and went to Los Angeles to record the CD," she said.

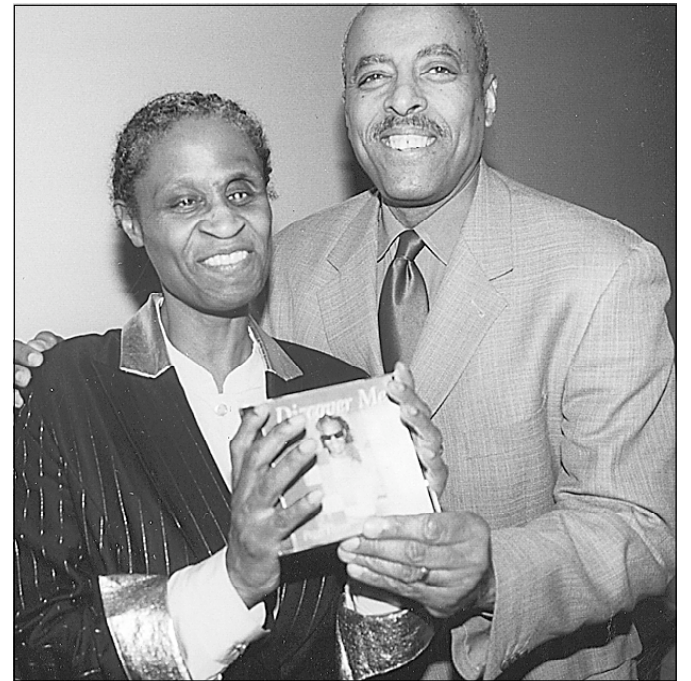
A classically trained musician who has sung since she was 9, Eason is also blind. Her disability hasn't stopped her from earning two master's degrees, advocating for persons with disabilities or running for and winning the CSEA local's presidency.

Add to those accomplishments her newfound recording career. The 14 song-CD encompasses cabaret, easy listening and Broadway tunes. In fact, it was on Broadway that Eason met the talented musician who would become her producer, Howlett Smith.

"He wrote most of the songs on the album," said Eason. She met Smith, who is also blind, in 1976 when he was producing music for jazz singer Bessie Smith.

"He (Smith) needed a female voice to try out some of his music," said Eason. "He heard about me and I auditioned. He loved my voice from the first minute he heard it," she said.

"Peggy has a lot of hidden talents," said CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Charles Bell, who recently purchased a copy of her CD. "She has a lot of heart, a lot of stamina and she fights like hell for her members," said Bell.



CSEA member Peggy Eason and Labor Relations Specialist Charles Bell proudly display a copy of Eason's new CD.

Eason said a portion of the purchase price will be contributed to the Guide Dog Foundation, from which she's obtained her guide dogs.

Eason couldn't be happier with the CD. "I'm even more proud because I paid for all of this myself," said Eason.

If you're interested in purchasing Peggy Eason's CD "Discover Me" go to www.cdbaby.com or call 1-800-BUY-MYCD.

— David Galarza



Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte and Nassau Education Local President Denis Midnet present an award for service above and beyond the call of duty to CSEA member Arthur Sandstrom.

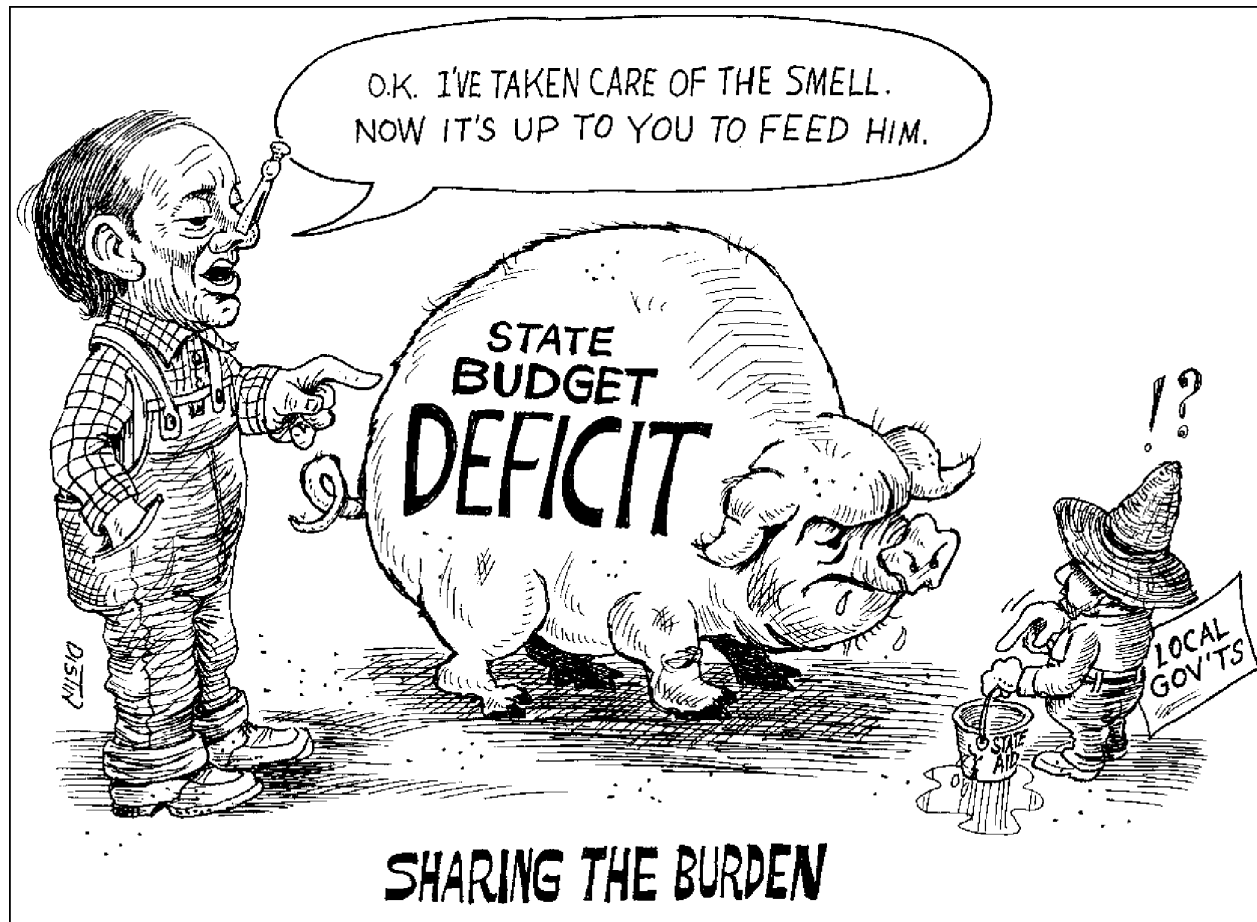
CSEA member performs a humanitarian act

LOCUST VALLEY — Arthur Sandstrom, a CSEA groundskeeper at the MacArthur School in Locust Valley, was recently commended for exceptional service to the public after saving a man's life.

Sandstrom was on security duty during a football playoff game at Hofstra University when a man walked by him, turned blue and passed out. Sandstrom reacted quickly and performed CPR on the spectator until help arrived.

"I think it sends a very positive message to our members," said Denis Midnet, President of Nassau Educational Local.

"We commend David for his compassion and willingness to help a complete stranger," said CSEA Long Island Region President Nick Lamorte.



15 years ago...

In the spring of 1988, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) got more than they bargained for from CSEA. The IRS had tried to launch an ill-conceived proposal to tax public employees' unused benefits (such as vacation leave, sick leave, compensatory time, severance pay, disability pay and death benefits). CSEA mounted a fierce counter-attack.

Thousands of people petitioned their federal legislators against the tax which would have cost every public employee several hundred dollars annually. CSEA collected nearly 100,000 signatures in opposition to the plan and delivered them to members of Congress. IRS backed down. Unused benefits were not taxed. CSEA members won. IRS lost.

Photo at right shows front page of CSEA's newspaper with then-CSEA President William McGowan and former U.S. Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan receiving CSEA's response to the ill-fated IRS plan.



Also in 1988:

- * CDs outsell vinyl for the first time ever.
- * The Iran-Iraqi war ends.
- * Televangelist Jimmy Swaggart admits to being with prostitutes.
- * Pan Am Flight 103 explodes over Lockerbie, Scotland; Libyan terrorists are suspected of planting the bomb.
- * Prozac is introduced as an anti-depressant.
- * Long Island beaches close due to medical waste washing ashore.
- * Bobby McFerrin tells everyone "Don't worry, be happy."

QSAC workers fired up, speaking out

QUEENS — After two years of often working 17-hour days, having his positions constantly changed, getting harassed by his supervisor and getting his pay reduced, Chris Ayala says he is more than ready to help create a union at Quality Services for the Autism Community (QSAC) in Queens.

“I can’t wait for the union to come in,” said Ayala, who was recently suspended for union activity and later reinstated.

“My co-workers are not treated like human beings, we are being treated as slaves.”

CSEA has been working with Ayala and other workers at QSAC who are fed up with short staffing, high turn over, arbitrary firings and disciplinary actions, and problems with food and medical supplies.

They have formed a committee called QCARE (Quality Care Advocates for the Rights of Employees), have started publishing a newsletter and are working with CSEA to stand and fight for fair representation on the job.

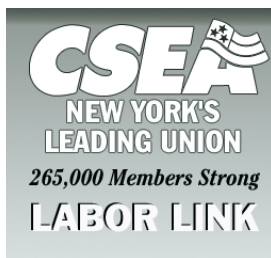
QCARE workers are also working with many local politicians such as New York City Councilman Hiram Monserrate, who has attempted to bring management and



QSAC’s Andrew Linden, CSEA’s Denise Berkley, the Rev. N.J.L. Hervreaux Jr., executive director of the Queens Federation of Churches, and the Rev. Earl Kooperkamp of St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, gather at a QSAC facility to show support for workers trying to organize a union.

workers together. Management has repeatedly refused to meet. City Councilwoman Margarita Lopez, who chairs the City Council’s Mental Health Committee, will be holding a “Community Speak Out on Autism Care” as this edition of the *Work Force* goes to press.

CSEA recently helped Ayala and other workers go to the state attorney general about wage



violations. The attorney general is also investigating alleged violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

“The QCARE Newsletter and news of the attorney general’s investigation have created excitement and the momentum is building,” said organizer Paul Frank.

The newsletter featured a story about a delegation from the Greater New York Labor and

Religion Coalition who attempted to meet with QSAC management on behalf of employees who have been harassed. The religious leaders were repeatedly asked to leave the premises.

Such harassment of employees has resulted in the filing of several Unfair Labor Practice charges. Employees who want a union say they’ve experienced coercion, intimidation, suspensions, terminations, and surveillance by the employer.

“QSAC is setting the tone here and they’re obviously taking the low road,” said George Boncoraglio, president of CSEA’s Metropolitan Region.

“All QSAC workers want is the ability to sit down with management and talk about a fair and amicable process for unionization.”

QSAC, a non-profit agency serving autistic children and adults, receives more than 90 percent of its operating budget from the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. It employs approximately 650 people at 15 sites with 14 in Queens and one on Long Island.

— David Galaraza

Buffalo CBTU conference takes aim at Pataki’s proposed state budget

BUFFALO — An activist agenda at the Buffalo chapter’s Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) conference included a call to action against the proposed state budget of Gov. George Pataki.

“The governor’s plan continues to pull the rug out from under those who care for the mentally ill, who are already working short-handed,” said Robert Mootry, chapter president, and Buffalo Psychiatric Center president. “We’re informing all our union brothers and sisters that we must fight this budget plan on all fronts.”

The chapter’s 10th annual conference included CSEA members from across the state, and unionists from throughout the Northeast, which forms CBTU Region I.

Concerned union members should speak up and speak out against the budget’s unfairness, several guest speakers urged those in attendance.

CBTU activities seek to bring diverse union activists together to aid in bringing working families’ agenda to fruition.

— Ron Wofford

AFSCME New York Lobby Day April 1

CSEA and other American Federation of Municipal, Federal, State and County Employees (AFSCME) affiliates in New York will gather in Albany April 1 to lobby lawmakers that there are better choices than Gov. George Pataki’s proposed state budget.

The governor’s plan calls for:

- \$1.7 billion in education cuts
- \$2 billion in health care cuts
- \$1 billion cut in state agency spending
- Shifting the burden to local governments

Lend your help: Call 1-877-255-9417 today and let the governor know his budget will pull New York apart!

Lawsuit challenges out-of-network services by United HealthCare

CSEA is one of several union plaintiffs in a pending action against United HealthCare which provides medical/surgical benefits to our members under the Empire Plan. The suit challenges the reimbursement rates paid for out-of-network healthcare services covered under the Basic Medical portion of the plan.

If you have had a problem obtaining adequate reimbursements under the Empire Plan for out-of-network services, you might be covered by this suit. To find out if this matter addresses your concern, please contact the attorney handling this litigation for all the unions involved. Contact D. Brian Hufford, Esq. of Pomerantz, Haudek, Block, Grossman & Gross LLP toll-free at 1-888-476-6529.

NYS AFL-CIO Scholarship deadline is April 15

The New York State AFL-CIO will award a four-year scholarship to a 2003 graduating high school senior who intends to pursue a career in labor relations or a related field. The scholarship will be for \$2,000 a year for four consecutive years for a total of \$8,000.

To be eligible, the applicant must be a 2003 high school graduate whose parent or guardian is a member of a union affiliated with the New York State AFL-CIO and be accepted in a course of study in labor relations or related interest such as history, economics, law, political science, sociology or journalism at an accredited institution of higher education in New York State.

The application must be completed by April 15, 2003, and be accompanied by an official transcript and SAT scores, letter of recommendation by a teacher/counselor from the applicant's school and an essay of 400 to 500 words on "Learning About the American Labor Movement."

For more information, visit the NYS AFL-CIO web site: www.nysaflcio.org. The winner will be selected and all finalists notified of the decision in June.

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

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the CSEA Constitution and Bylaws for consideration by delegates to the union's 2003 Annual Delegates Meeting must be submitted by May 15, 2003.

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

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

The 2003 CSEA Annual Delegates Meeting will be held Oct. 20-24 in Lake Placid.

PEOPLE PERSON — The PEOPLE person for the month of February is Michael Flaherty. He is a member of the Finger Lakes DDSO

local. He recruited 24 members. PEOPLE is CSEA and AFSCME's political action program aimed at electing individuals friendly to working families to Congress (See article, page 18) ...



CONTRACT RATIFIED — (Above) CSEA President Danny Donohue congratulated Delaware County Local President George Lawson on the recent passage of the Delaware County contract. The contract included across the board raises retroactive to Dec. 31, 2001, when the former contract expired ... **FOOD DRIVE LAUNCHED** — CSEA Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte in conjunction with the Long Island Women's Committee has launched a food drive for the workers at Plum Island off Long Island's north fork. The members of the International

CSEA
NEW YORK'S
LEADING UNION
265,000 Members Strong
CSEA
TODAY

Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) have been on strike for many months with no end in sight. CSEA members can help by donating

non-perishable, canned foods. In Nassau County, the collection is being taken at the county local's office and in Suffolk county at the region office in Commack ...

CSEA VETERANS SOUGHT — Long Island Region Veteran's Committee President Steve Abramson will decorate the graves of deceased CSEA veteran members at Long Island's Calverton National Cemetery just before Memorial Day weekend but needs to know which of our departed members completed military service. If you know of a deceased CSEA member who was laid to rest at Calverton, contact Steve Abramson at (516) 432-8268 ...

PENSION INFO A CALL AWAY — Active CSEA members and retirees can now call a toll-free number for information about the state pension systems. The number is 1-866-805-0990 and several prompts follow. Press 1 for active member services or loan information; 2 for retirees and beneficiaries information; 3 to report a death; 4 for tax-related services; 5 for the 2002 retirement incentive; and 6 for other services.

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.

March
ON May 3rd
in Albany

For Public Education

Pre-K through Post-Grad



If you're concerned about the future of public education, then mark your calendar now for Saturday, May 3. Join CSEA and a broad coalition of people who care about public education, pre-K through post-grad. Get on board!



Public education this year faces unprecedented challenges to its funding to sustain current academic programs and standards.

If you care, you'll be there!

What: A March on Albany for Public Education

When: Saturday, May 3 at noon

**Where: Meet at CSEA Headquarters and
March to the State Capitol**



Call your Political Action Coordinator to Sign Up!

*Long Island Region:
Gretchen Penn: 631 462-0030*

*Metropolitan Region:
Matthew D'Amico: 212 406-2156*

*Southern Region:
Jason Haenel: 845 831-1000*

*Capital Region:
Adam Acquario: 518 785-4400*

*Central Region:
Mike Ottaviano: 315 433-0050*

*Western Region:
Bill Benfanti: 716 886-0391*