

Don't miss holiday specials inside.

THE Work Force

December 2011

Vol. 14 No. 12

CSEA wins on Election Day



Photo by Lynn Miller

Voters elect Mark Poloncarz, center, in Erie County. Full coverage, Page 3

Photo of the Month



Photo by Pat Arnow

CSEA activists and officers, including Veterans Committee Chair Maryann Phelps, Statewide Secretary Denise Berkley, Treasurer Joe McMullen, Metropolitan Region President Lester Crockett, and recently retired Shenendehowa School District Unit activist Gary Lanahan, a disabled war veteran, take part in the New York City Veteran's Day Parade. It was the first time CSEA had a contingent in the parade.

Online option coming for leadership mailing!

Attention CSEA activists and leaders: You will soon be receiving information in the mail on how to access the CSEA leadership mailing online. No more paper, if you choose this option!

YOU NEED YOUR CSEA ID NUMBER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE YEAR 2012 ELECTIONS (Statewide, Region, Board of Directors and AFSCME Delegates)

Your 10-digit CSEA ID Number was assigned to you in 2010 and is printed on your CSEA/AFSCME membership card. It is the only number you need when conducting CSEA business. This includes Union election-related business – running as a candidate, signing candidates' nominating petitions, etc.

If you are unsure of your ID Number, you may contact your region office to request your CSEA ID Number. The numbers to CSEA's region offices are:

Long Island Region:	(631) 462-0030
Metropolitan Region:	(212) 406-2156
Southern Region:	(845) 831-1000
Capital Region:	(518) 785-4400
Central Region:	(315) 433-0050
Western Region:	(716) 691-6555

If you have lost your card, you may request a replacement card by calling CSEA toll free at 1-800-342-4146 and asking for the Membership Department.

More layoffs hit counties

Making good on his campaign promise to cut the size of the county work force, Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino introduced a proposed 2012 budget that calls for 210 layoffs in a number of county departments.

Astorino said layoffs are in the budget because unions have refused to meet to negotiate new contracts, a claim Westchester County Unit President Karen Pecora slammed.

"He's had commissioners and department heads going around and telling workers they are losing their job because the union is refusing to negotiate, which is completely untrue," Pecora said. "He is using scare tactics to create panic within the work force. We have been ready to come to the table, but Mr. Astorino doesn't seem to understand that negotiations don't just mean us sitting down to accept his long list of concession demands."

Pecora said members are mobilized to pack several scheduled public hearings on the proposed budget.

Dutchess County

Outgoing Dutchess County Executive William Steinhaus' final budget includes one parting blow to the county work force with which he's had a strained relationship over his tenure: the elimination of 22 mental health care providers in the Department of Mental Hygiene.

Dutchess County Local President Liz Piraino said CSEA has filed a grievance in response to the layoffs and is investigating other possible legal action due to the fact that the layoffs violate a provision in the

union contract.

"In addition to violating the contract, these proposed layoffs eliminate county mental health services at a time when we're dealing with the closure of the Hudson River Psychiatric Center campus and the recent elimination of mental health services at another local hospital," Piraino said.

"With the need for public health services at a historic high, it shows a serious lack of compassion on the county executive's part to eliminate these services at this time."

Ulster County

Ulster County Executive Mike Hein's proposed budget for 2012 includes sweeping cuts of mental health services, the closure of the Consumer Fraud bureau, cuts in the Department of Public Works, and the transfer of the county-owned Golden Hill Health Care Center to a to-be-formed local development corporation that would eventually privatize the facility.

Ulster County Local President Terry Gilbert said Hein's proposed budget puts rank-and-file workers on the unemployment rolls while creating new management positions.

"The county executive is proposing eliminating vital services and putting middle class workers out of a job, but he's apparently found places to stash his most loyal managers," said Gilbert. "This budget hurts the elderly, residents struggling with addiction and mental illness, and the average taxpayers who depend on services in DPW and Consumer Fraud."

— Jessica Ladlee

Two CSEA members killed on the job

CSEA is mourning the deaths of two members killed in the past month on the job in separate incidents.

State Department of Transportation Region 1 Local (Albany) member John Lattimore was killed Oct. 20 during a bridge inspection.

The incident happened on state Route 28. Lattimore was in a bucket device used to inspect bridges when he was pinned between the bucket and a beam on the Glen Bridge.

Lattimore and another employee were working at about 10 a.m. inside a boom-truck basket when his head struck a steel support underneath the bridge, authorities said. Another DOT employee working alongside Lattimore was not injured in the incident.

According to published reports, both workers were using standard safety equipment including harnesses and hardhats, authorities said.

In the second incident, town of Mamaroneck highway worker Robert DelVecchio Jr., 35, was killed Nov. 11 after being struck by a recycling truck at the town's sanitation and recycling center. Further details were unavailable as this edition went to press.

CSEA's Occupational Safety and Health Department and the Public Employee Safety and Health (PESH) Bureau are investigating both incidents.

CSEA helps secure key Erie County victory

BUFFALO — Thousands of phone calls and knocks on doors by union activists paid off recently in Erie County, where voters elected CSEA-endorsed Mark Poloncarz as the new county executive.

“Mark Poloncarz’s victory is great news for the people Erie County,” said CSEA Western Region President Flo Tripi. “He is in touch with the middle class and working people.”

CSEA members staffed phone banks and participated in labor walks on an almost daily basis in the weeks leading up to Election Day.

“I am so appreciative for the CSEA members who made time in their busy lives to come out and help. It really made a difference,” said CSEA Erie County Local and Unit President Joan Bender. “Our brothers and sisters in other locals and units also worked hard, and the 4,000 of us in the Erie County Unit really appreciate it. CSEA activists came from all over the county to

help.”

Poloncarz, currently the Erie County comptroller, handily defeated incumbent County Executive Chris Collins by at least 9,000 votes. The victory marks the end of the reign of an out-of-touch politician who became known as “King Collins” for his my-way-or-the-highway style.

The Collins campaign accused labor of buying the election and suggested Poloncarz would now be beholden to CSEA, an idea Bender

firmly rejects.

“We are looking forward to opening the lines of communication and to having an actual dialogue with the county executive. That’s something we haven’t had with the current administration,” Bender said. “Negotiations are always give and take. We will work with the new county executive to negotiate a deal that is good for the workers and the county.”

The Erie County Unit has been without

“We are looking forward to opening the lines of communication and to having an actual dialogue with the county executive. That’s something we haven’t had with the current administration.”



CSEA member Chris Chimera stands in support of libraries and county services during a We Are Erie County rally in downtown Buffalo earlier this year. County Comptroller Mark Poloncarz defeated Collins on Election Day. CSEA members worked hard to get out the vote for Poloncarz.

a contract since the end of 2006 and negotiations have not gone well.

“The election shows that if we work together we can accomplish great things,” Bender said. “We had many union members involved who had never been involved before. They made the difference and I hope in the future they will remain involved.”

— Lynn Miller

CSEA-endorsed candidates win across state on Election Day

CSEA-endorsed candidates across the state won many key races in Tuesday’s local government elections.

In Erie County, CSEA efforts helped pull Mark Poloncarz to an upset victory for Erie County Executive, beating incumbent Chris Collins by more than 9,000 votes. (See related story on this page.)

In Nassau County, CSEA efforts helped lead to the defeat of Republican county Legislator John Ciotti, a major supporter of County Executive Ed Mangano. Two pending races may cut the Republicans’ legislative majority even more.

CSEA members across the **Long Island Region** participated in an intensive get-out-the-vote campaign to help in Nassau County.

CSEA activists also played a vital role in a massive rally outside the Executive and Legislative Building in Mineola that persuaded Mangano to pull his anti-American legislation to open union contracts and delay plans to lay off nearly 1,000 county workers and mandate current employees and retirees to pay 25 percent of their health insurance costs.

In Westchester County, CSEA worked hard to maintain

a Democratic super-majority in the county legislature to prevent the county executive from decimating the county work force, though one race is still too close to call. Also, CSEA endorsed candidate Mike Spano won the Yonkers mayor race.

In Orange County, CSEA played a key role in helping elect Matt Turnbull, who opposes the privatization of the county nursing home, to the Orange County Legislature.

In Ulster County, eight county legislators who support the county nursing home were re-elected with strong CSEA support.

In Schenectady, CSEA-endorsed mayoral candidate Gary McCarthy has a slim lead over pro-privatization candidate Roger Hull. The race was still too close to call as this edition went to press. Overall in the Capital Region, 87 candidates were endorsed in seven counties, with 66 candidates winning.

Outside of New York state, union members successfully got out the vote, including in **Ohio**, where voters resoundingly repealed (60-40) a law backed by Republican Gov. John Kasich limiting public employees’ collective bargaining rights.

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1220M



Work Force

IN TOUCH WITH THE
CSEA President Danny Donohue

Indefensible “Cuomo-nomics” hit home

Local government layoffs, facility closures, hospital cuts, service reductions, chronic understaffing. It's all part of the autumn season across New York, thanks to Gov. Andrew Cuomo's state budget and ill-conceived tax cap scheme that are clearly making a bad economic situation a lot harder to manage, if not actually worse.

It's hard to imagine why the governor has taken to an advertising campaign to pat himself on the back for his “accomplishments” that make it harder for localities to manage their budgets and diminish the quality of life in our communities.

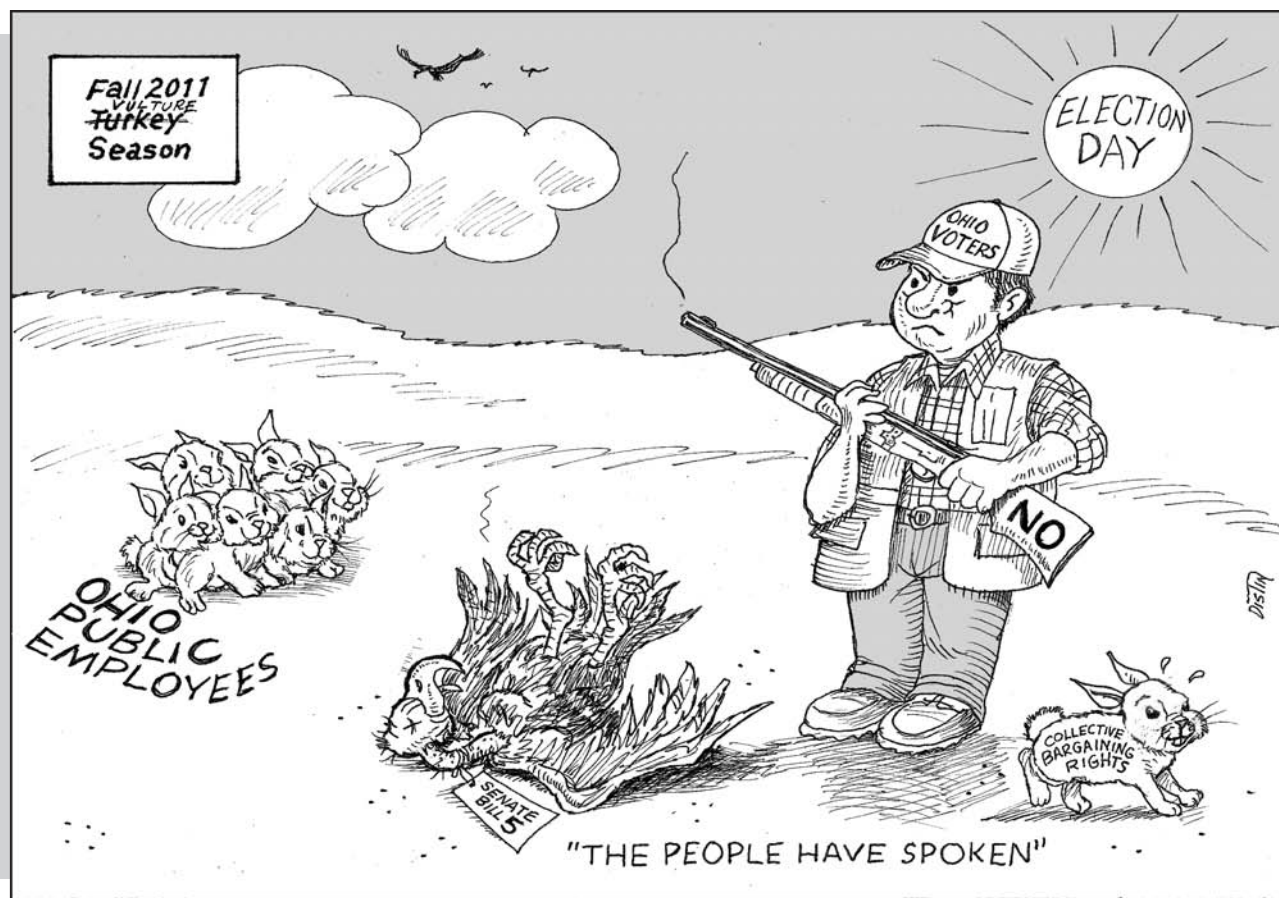
The reality of the tax cap initiative is very different from the perception that was sold to the public last spring. It does not reduce taxes; it simply limits the ability of local governments to address their budget challenges by imposing an artificial cap on their budget growth. The result is now being felt by counties, cities, towns and villages that face the hard reality of service cuts, closures and other pain.

The continuing sluggish economy isn't helping matters, but budget pressures are made worse by Governor Cuomo's cuts in state aid and his stubborn resistance to extending the existing personal income tax surcharge on the wealthiest 1 percent of New Yorkers. Think about it: localities are hurting, state operations have been cut to the bone, public workers have already sacrificed, retirees have been charged more for their health coverage and state revenue projects are alarmingly lower than expected. But Governor Cuomo is still hell-bent on giving a \$5 billion TAX CUT to the super rich!

Indefensible is the only polite way I can describe it.

P.S. — While there are few easy solutions to the challenges in front of us, CSEA brothers and sisters took a bold step forward this past Election Day. All across the state, you made an outstanding impact in campaigns and at the polls, helping to elect candidates who made it clear they stand with working people. Now it is our responsibility to stay involved and hold them accountable for fair and responsible action.





AFSCME Wisconsin leader tells of workers' fight

MANHATTAN — Earlier this year, the eyes of the world were fixed on Wisconsin when that state's governor, Scott Walker, sought to undermine our nation's middle class with an assault on collective bargaining rights and basic fairness towards working people.

But our brothers and sisters in the AFSCME Wisconsin councils fought back, mobilizing their members, leading rallies and sit-ins at the state Capitol and working hard in the recall elections to restore sanity to the political process in the state. They were joined by their brothers and sisters from across the country, including several from CSEA, including Executive Vice President Mary E. Sullivan and Statewide Treasurer Joe McMullen.

Helping to lead the fight was Jim Garity, president of AFSCME Council 40. Garity, who is a member of the council's Local 655, is a truck driver for the Jefferson County Highway Department.

Garity addressed CSEA delegates at the union's recent Annual Delegates Meeting



AFSCME Wisconsin Council 40 President Jim Garity speaks at CSEA's Annual Delegates Meeting about leading the fight for collective bargaining rights in his state.

in New York City at the invitation of CSEA President Danny Donohue.

"What's happening in Wisconsin is happening all over," Garity said. "This is a

concerted effort by the rich and powerful, not only in this country but in the world, to keep the working people down and under their thumb."

He said those behind the assault on working people are attempting to beat workers into submission and make the public believe that unions have outlived their usefulness.

But he said their tactics had backfired on them, causing workers and their supporters to rise up and fight back. He cited the Occupy Wall Street movement as an encouraging example of how people are beginning to organize against the corporate elite.

During CSEA's Annual Delegates Meeting, Garity and hundreds of CSEA delegates joined protesters in Lower Manhattan in a show of solidarity and support. Garity was impressed.

"What I saw there was wonderful. It's great!" he said. "When I hear the news media say: 'well, what's their message?' I say, 'Excuse me? Something's wrong! What the hell do you think it is?'"

— Ed Molitor



“Projects like this often take a year or more to complete. Our members pulled together and worked hard to finish the job in half that time.”

CSEA members save state money through in-house renovations

STONY BROOK — CSEA members employed at SUNY Stony Brook recently renovated the hospital’s Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Center, which added 7,500 square feet of space to the facility — and saved the state a significant amount of money.

SUNY Stony Brook Local members Ray Santiago, John Garofalo, Roy Clarkson, Bob Healey, Matthew Shoen, Victor Perez, Dave Hendrickson, Christopher Knowd Stephen Stoebe, Brian Purick and two separate individuals



Healey



Santiago

named Kenneth Taylor applied their professional skills and expertise in plumbing, electricity, flooring, sheet rocking, painting and cabinetry to finish the project in just six months.

“The center was too small in its former state and required detailed restoration to enhance quality of care,” said

Healey, the project supervisor. “The added capacity includes a modern nursing station and contemporary adult and children sections.”

Santiago did much of the electrical work, which including installing motion activated lighting in every office and patient room, and installing emergency outlets powered by a backup generator to enable computers and other critical equipment to function even if power is interrupted by a powerful snowstorm or hurricane.

Workers also put in energy efficient light bulbs to save money on electric bills.

“Projects like this often take a year or more to complete,” Healey said. “Our members pulled together and worked hard to finish the job in half that time. They deserve a great deal of credit for providing a first-rate facility for medical professionals to practice their craft and serve the needs of the general public.”

— Rich Impagliazzo

Bright idea saves school money

CHEEKTOWAGA — Creative thinking and a bit of legwork by CSEA members has saved at least \$14,000 taxpayer dollars in a Western Region school district.

Maryvale Central Schools, in the shadow of the Buffalo Niagara International Airport, recently received new dimmable light ballasts as part of a Federal Aviation Administration noise reduction project. Those ballasts, however, appeared to burn out at a quicker-than-normal rate resulting in the need for thousands of dollars in replacements — money the district had not budgeted to spend.

That’s when Paul Hybicki stepped in. The CSEA Maryvale Schools Unit



Hybicki

President set out to find affordable replacements. In his search, he discovered the cost savings.

“I contacted suppliers and talked to construction guys, and I found ballasts with a five-year guarantee,” Hybicki said. To make it even better, the distributor accepted the burned-out ballasts in exchange for the new ones, which CSEA members installed at the schools.

“All this came at no cost to the district,” Hybicki said. “It’s a total savings.”

The Maryvale Central School District Board of Education recently recognized Hybicki for his cost-saving efforts during a board meeting.

— Lynn Miller

CSEA vigil helps save facility



Orange County Unit activists and supporters, including 19th District congressional candidate Dr. Richard Becker, far left; Orange County Unit member Margie Schloemer, second from left; Orange County Unit 2nd Vice President Vanessa Bisone, third from left; Pearl Oliphant, wife of Orange County Unit President Bill Oliphant and Oliphant, far right, participate in an impromptu Nov. 12 vigil outside the home of Orange County Legislator Michael Amo, who suggested the legislature conduct a “do-over” vote to cut off aid to the county-run Valley View Center for Nursing Care and Rehabilitation because Amo said he had voted the wrong way on funding the home during the county budget vote. Nearly 100 CSEA members and supporters participated in the vigil. The county legislature voted overwhelmingly on Nov. 14 to fund Valley View through 2012. Amo’s was one of two dissenting legislative votes.

Program cuts, outsourcing threaten vital hospital services

VALHALLA — A disturbing pattern of program cuts and outsourcing over the past two years may destroy Westchester Medical Center's core mission as the region's only advanced medical care and referral hospital.

That's the message coming from Westchester Medical Center Unit activists, who have undertaken a campaign to inform the public that vital services at the hospital are being gutted while the facility's management team costs have grown more expensive.

The latest blow to the work force comes via CEO Michael Israel, who has threatened several hundred additional CSEA job cuts if the union does not agree to a lengthy list of concessions. CSEA officials have slammed Israel's claims of the CSEA work force being overcompensated as ironic given Israel's reported \$1.24 million salary, the highest public authority salary in the state.

"There are more vice presidents in the executive suite than you can shake a stick at, but somehow vital programs like our mobile mental health crisis team have



Westchester County Local President John Staino, right, speaks with a News 12 Westchester reporter about the program cuts that threaten quality care at Westchester Medical Center.

gotten the ax," said Westchester Medical Center Unit President Peter Piazza. "Now, at the same time Mr. Israel is running radio ads touting the hospital's 'world class medicine,' he wants to eliminate nearly a quarter of the current CSEA work force."

Misplaced priorities

While Israel has been credited for bringing the hospital's finances into the black after years of deficits, he's balanced the hospital budget by hacking away at safety net programs.

Israel kicked off his pattern of cuts in early 2009 by abruptly shuttering the Taylor Care Center, a public nursing home affiliated

with the hospital and located on its campus, that allowed residents with complex medical needs easy access to the hospital's many specialists.

Since then, Israel has stealthily outsourced a number of smaller departments, replacing longtime skilled CSEA workers with contractors. This summer, Israel fired workers from the Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program, a team that deployed into the community to triage residents experiencing mental health crises.

Opportunity to rebuild

CSEA officials say Israel must rebuild trust with workers if he wants

the hospital to continue its mission of excellence.

"We've always been willing to sit down with Mr. Israel and discuss where we think he cut waste, but we want a commitment from him that he is going to put a stop to the job cuts, the outsourcing and the poor morale that his management team has created within the hospital," said Westchester County Local President John Staino, a longtime Westchester Medical Center worker. "He has been so obsessed with squeezing every little bit of profit he can out of this hospital that he has lost sight of the hospital's mission as a public hospital that serves the community."

At press time, CSEA Westchester Medical Center Unit members were planning a demonstration to protest Israel's continued threat of layoffs and program cuts.

"Michael Israel needs to remember that this hospital exists to serve the needs of the community, not the needs of management," said Southern Region President Billy Riccaldo.

— Jessica Ladlee



"There are more vice presidents in the executive suite than you can shake a stick at, but somehow vital programs like our mobile mental health crisis team have gotten the ax."



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AFSCME members face same attacks as Ohio, Wisconsin

Challenging times for Puerto Rican workers

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO — Puerto Rican public employees were the target for unprecedented attacks long before public sector union workers in Wisconsin.

And months before Ohio workers defeated an anti-union measure, union members in Puerto Rico fought for and passed a law that reinstated collective bargaining.

Indeed, the conservative administration of this United States colony enacted a fiscal emergency law, known as Law 7, in March 2009 that froze contractual salary increases and suspended collective bargaining agreements for tens of thousands of workers.

Little-known situation

Some 30,000 workers, including 16,000 AFSCME (Council 95) members, were also laid off. That most people in the U.S. were unaware of these draconian measures some say is mostly due to the mainstream media's ignorance or inability to view these 4 million residents of this Caribbean island as U.S. citizens.

The nightmare, however, was all too real for Sandra Pacheco, the president of the local representing workers at the Department of Transportation.

"The work-load was huge," said Pacheco whose agency lost 500 members. "We immediately started a campaign to let the legislature know that all the workers were suffering and under intense pressure."

The battle was taken to the legislature since the only remedy was to pass another law to reinstate the rights that were eliminated by Law 7.

Pacheco, speaking at a labor breakfast during a gathering in San Juan of elected officials, union activists and community leaders from New York known as the SOMOS Winter Conference, expressed sentiments that were nearly identical to those expressed by workers in New York,



AFSCME Council 95 members show their union pride. AFSCME workers in Puerto Rico had collective bargaining rights ripped away by a reactionary governor similar to what workers in Wisconsin and Ohio faced. Like workers in those states, the Council 95 members were able to get the laws overturned.

Ohio and Wisconsin.

"In Puerto Rico there are so few jobs that whoever has a job wants to protect it at all costs which is why the union struggle is more difficult," said Pacheco.

A few days earlier Pacheco joined her brothers and sisters at a lunch time picket organized at work sites throughout the island. Workers were demanding economic justice in light of the millions of dollars they say the government is wasting on private contractors.

Workers are scared, but they are now recognizing that it is important to fight," said Pacheco. "If they don't they will lose what they have and also what took years and the lives of many to attain."

While the new law that passed in May extends the non-economic clauses of the contracts until 2013, workers must now negotiate salaries, benefits, bonuses and other economic aspects.

"Workers here need a cash injection now

just to make ends meet," said Pacheco. The cost of everything is rising and workers are getting poorer. We need to make workers feel like they are working toward something."

As an international vice president of AFSCME and leader of its largest affiliate, CSEA President Danny Donohue, expressed his solidarity with his brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico and pledged his support and cooperation in present and future struggles.

"We will do everything and anything our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico ask as they fight to protect their rights as union workers and their needs as working families," said Donohue. "It begins with recognizing the war on public employees in Puerto Rico is the same as the battle everywhere else."

— David Galarza

This holiday season, think outside the gift box!

Give the gift of genuine concern for our local communities. There is no longer an excuse that, at gift giving time, nothing can be found that is produced or provided locally.

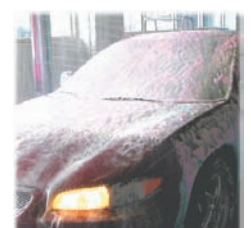
Instead of giving a shirt made in an foreign sweatshop, wrapped in gift wrap made somewhere around the world, give a gift certificate to a local barber shop or salon. Everyone needs some grooming now and then ...



Have a favorite locally owned restaurant? Share it with your friends and family through a gift certificate.



Give coupons to local car washes and detailing shops. Get someone's oil changed.



Get a loved one's driveway sealed or arrange to have their lawn mowed or snow removed.

Local Auto Care Center



Hire a cleaning person for a day. How about repair work or renovation?



You get the idea. Use your imagination and make some impact.

Home Improvement



House Cleaning Services



Happy Holidays

This holiday season, think globally, but act and buy locally.

Help your local economy.

Dealing with Alzheimer's disease during the holidays

The excitement of the holidays can trigger sudden irritability or upset a person suffering with Alzheimer's and can take a toll on family members and caregivers at an already stressful time of the year.

CSEA member Karslee Alcott, a data consolidation specialist and Seneca County Unit member, knows firsthand the challenges in caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's. She helps look after her mother-in-law and has had experience with her husband's grandmother, her mother and father all suffering from the disease.

"We try to get my mother-in-law in an up attitude before Thanksgiving and Christmas because there are 40 people that come for dinner including some little ones," she said.

Alcott said if they can manage her mood well enough to get her to the house and see the great-grandchildren, she is less likely to become agitated. It's about the little things to keep them comfortable and happy, but at times the holidays can become too overwhelming and they have to be flexible, sometimes taking her home right away.

Patience

"One word to remember is patience," Alcott said. "You just have to be patient and it's hard because you have your own things going on at the holidays but you have to step back and remember, these are the people who took care of you when you needed it and it's your turn to take care of them."

The majority of people who suffer from Alzheimer's disease live at home and receive in-home care or care from a relative or spouse. Thirty percent of patients are cared for in nursing homes and hospitals and tend to be in the later stages of the disease.

CSEA Orange County Local President Rosemarie Kukys is a clinical instructor at the county's Valley View Nursing Home. Valley View is among several county nursing homes in the state fighting to remain county-run amidst local plans for privatization (*See related story, Page 6*). Alzheimer's is among the many topics Kukys teaches new nurses.

"You have to really get to know the person with Alzheimer's and deal with them as they are today," Kukys said.

Kukys said the staff that works on the Alzheimer's Unit at Valley View involves the residents in everything they can during the holidays but stressed that keeping the Alzheimer's patients' routine is paramount to holiday celebrations. She advises that holiday visits in a facility should be low-key.

"Pictures are good; if the family can bring them in to let them reminisce a little," she said. "Keeping things quiet, no large crowds and

another thing, when people come into a facility it's very important that we educate the family on the Alzheimer's disease process because unfortunately, it doesn't get better. It's very difficult for a spouse who has been married for 60 years and their loved one doesn't remember them anymore."

Alzheimer's is progressive, fatal and the seventh leading cause of death in the United States.

"Families should learn all they can about the disease and attend support groups," Kukys said.

Kukys recommends the Alzheimer's Association support groups. Valley View partners with the association running support groups at the home and care managers attend adding additional support for families.



Helpful tips for coping during the holidays

Knowing which stage of the disease the loved one is in, understanding the disease and remaining flexible are key to a successful holiday season when dealing with Alzheimer's.

The Alzheimer's Association offers the following tips:

- Prepare your loved one for visitors.
- If possible, show pictures and discuss who is coming to visit.
- If your loved one has difficulty recalling names, consider using name tags.
- Plan celebrations early in the day.
- Have a quiet area for the person with memory loss to retreat when things get hectic.
- Reminisce about past holidays.
- Listen to or sing familiar music.
- Minimize travel – ask others to visit you and your loved one.
- Prepare the family and friends for spending time with the person with dementia.
- Offer visitors communication techniques to use with the person with memory loss.
- Minimize decorations that may confuse loved ones.

"We also participate in the Alzheimer's walks," she said. "We raise money by having casual days on Fridays the month before the walk and a lot of our staff walks."

— Jill Asencio

To find out more about the disease, support groups in your area or how you can participate in the walks visit.
www.alz.org

This Thanksgiving, remember the workers who make the meal possible

For many Americans, Thanksgiving is a day on which we give thanks for what we have.

While enjoying the traditional dishes such as turkey, sweet potatoes, stuffing and apple pie, please remember the people who helped bring the bounty to the table — farmworkers.

Since the 1930s, state labor law has excluded state farmworkers from the basic rights and protection that other workers take for granted.

Farmworkers are often denied days off, overtime pay, disability insurance and other benefits.

In recent years, the Justice

for Farmworkers Campaign has succeed in getting some rights for farmworkers such as clean drinking water in the fields, sanitary facilities and some other basic rights. However, there are still so much more that needs to be done.

When farmworkers work seven days a week, their family, social life, nutrition, hygiene and physical well-being suffer. Each day, they have to face unequal treatment, but they still do their jobs.

Farmworkers have struggled for workers' compensation, but always encountered difficulties.



Many workers express reluctance to file claims, fearing employer retaliation. Without workers' compensation, many injured farm workers often forgo medical treatment or go into debt to obtain it.

CSEA has long supported the Justice for Farmworkers

Campaign, participating in rallies to support farmworkers in their fight for the same rights and protection that other labor workers have.

It is only right and fair.

— Tracy Wang

To learn more about the plight of farm workers and how you can help, visit the Rural & Migrant Ministry's website: <http://ruralmigrantministry.org/jfw.html>.

Troubling changes in 'fair trade' labeling can mislead consumers

Dark days have come to the fair trade movement.

For years, the movement that has worked to change international trade for the benefit of small-scale farmers has recently taken a blow, threatened by large corporations.

At issue is Fair Trade USA (formerly Transfair), and other producer groups that are changing the meaning of "Fair Trade Certified," which was meant to raise consumer consciousness about imported goods and help small farmers.

For several years, CSEA has urged its members to buy fair trade products, such as Dean's Beans coffee. CSEA members should be aware that there are still "fair" fair trade products, but that they may have to research the product's origin more than just relying on a label.

"Many dedicated fair traders, like Dean's Beans, have always fought to maintain the principles of the movement by cultivating a deep and meaningful version of fair trade," said Dean's Beans founder Dean Cycon.

Others like Fair Trade USA (who licenses

the "Fair Trade Certified" seal in the U.S.), valued growth over depth (the logic being increased sales help more farmers). To do this, large corporations like Kraft, Nestle, Starbucks and Green Mountain entered the fray, and together with Fair Trade USA and their certification, began to dilute and co-opt the fair trade movement.

Fair Trade USA, for example, will now certify some products that contained as little as 2 percent fair trade ingredients. "In a marketplace where certifications already confuse consumers, we feel that Fair Trade USA's actions are misleading and unethical," Cycon said.

The most recent – and most troubling – move from Fair Trade USA was their decision to split from Fairtrade International, the global umbrella organization that sets the standards for fair trade. As a result, plantation-grown products will soon be able to be "Fair Trade Certified," an idea that farmers and serious fair traders have unanimously objected to for years.

"Perhaps the most troubling aspect of

this coup by Fair Trade USA is that many Americans who recognize the "Fair Trade Certified" seal will continue to trust its validity after these changes. After gaining widespread name recognition and consumer trust working with 100 percent fair traders and fair trade non-governmental organizations, Fair Trade USA has decided to take the money and run, disregarding the concerns and objections of the entire fair trade community," Cycon said.

"Our prediction? Soon, Starbucks, Green Mountain and several other companies with meager participation in fair trade will become "100 percent Fair Trade Certified" overnight — not because they changed their business practices, but because Fair Trade USA has lowered the standards on their behalf," he said.

Visit Dean's Beans at www.deansbeans.com for more information and to purchase fair trade goods that meets the spirit of the fair trade movement.

State employees: Take advantage of EBF's enhanced prescription co-payment reimbursement benefit

As of Jan. 1, 2011, the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund increased the prescription drug co-payment reimbursement benefit for our New York state employees who are CSEA EBF members.

The enhancement increased the maximum reimbursement from \$100 to \$150 annually. **To qualify for the maximum reimbursement, co-payment expenses must reach \$450 in a calendar year.**

If co-payment expenses



haven't reached \$450, but are more than \$300, EBF will reimburse the amount spent over \$300. For example, if a member reached \$350 in prescription drug co-payment costs, EBF will reimburse \$50.

If co-payment costs are \$450 for the year, EBF will reimburse \$150.

To submit a claim, members need to fill out the Employee Benefit Fund's NYS prescription drug co-payment claim form and send it with a printout of your prescription drug co-payment expenses for

the year from your pharmacy.

Claims from 2011 must be submitted **no later than March 31, 2012**. The claim form can be found on our website at www.cseabf.com under the "download forms" button, or members can call EBF at **1-800-323-2732** and request a form by mail.

You can stop by your local pharmacy and request a

printout of your prescriptions, or visit your pharmacy's website, as many will now supply this information for you online. If you use mail order for your prescriptions, they will also provide you with a printout upon request or make one available to you online. Please note that original receipts and cash register receipts are not accepted.

If you have any questions about this benefit, visit EBF's website at www.cseabf.com and click on "Live Help" to chat with a customer service representative, or you can always call us at 1-800-323-2732, press 5, and then press 4 for further assistance.

Health Benefits



Richmond University Medical Center, insurer continue negotiations

Negotiations for a new multi-year agreement between Empire BlueCross BlueShield and Richmond University Medical Center on Staten Island continue as the parties try to reach a long-term agreement.

Empire Blue Cross/Blue Shield has a fully executed extension agreement with Richmond University Medical Center, which runs through Dec. 15, 2011. Services provided by the hospital

during the extension period are considered in-network.

If you are currently receiving services from Richmond University Medical Center or are scheduled for treatment at the hospital after Dec. 15, 2011, please call Empire Blue Cross/Blue Shield toll-free at (800) 495-9323 for specific information on how your claims will be processed if the hospital becomes non-participating.

Empire Plan instant rebates available for omeprazole and doxycycline

In accordance with the contract for CSEA Executive Branch state employees, The Empire Plan Prescription Drug Program will offer, for a limited time only, an instant rebate for prescriptions switched to omeprazole or doxycycline. Nexium, lansoprazole and doxycycline hyclate are excluded under the Flexible Formulary.

The instant rebates will apply to those enrollees who switch an existing prescription of lansoprazole or Nexium to omeprazole or an existing prescription of doxycycline hyclate to doxycycline.

The instant rebate will be good between Oct. 1, 2011 and Jan. 31, 2012. After Jan. 31,

2012, the applicable generic co-payment (\$5 or \$10) will be required for subsequent refills. If you have questions about this rebate or your drug benefit, call 1-877-7-NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) and choose "The Empire Plan Prescription Drug Program."

If you have questions about this rebate or your drug benefit, call 1-877-7-NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) and choose "The Empire Plan Prescription Drug Program."

Important 2012 health program dates

Now is the time for New York state employees (including the Unified Court System) to think about health insurance options for 2012.

Watch your mailbox for important information, including the 2012 health insurance premium rates, option transfer information and deadlines.

Other important benefits and dates to remember are:

Pre-Tax Contribution Program (PTCP): Open Enrollment Ends Nov. 30, 2011

Your share of health insurance premium is deducted from wages before taxes are withheld, which may lower your taxes.

You were automatically enrolled in PTCP when you became eligible for health insurance, unless you declined. Under Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules, if you are enrolled in PTCP, you may change your health insurance deduction during the tax year ONLY after a qualifying event.

If you wish to change your pre-tax selection for 2012, see your agency health benefits administrator and complete a health insurance transaction form (PS-404) by Nov. 30, 2011.

Productivity Enhancement Program: Oct. 31 - Dec. 5, 2011

Exchange three days or six days vacation credit and/or personal leave in return for a \$500 or \$1,000 credit to be applied toward the employee share of your New York State Health Insurance Program (NYSHIP) premium. Please see your agency health benefits administrator for additional information

and an application. If you are currently enrolled in PEP, you must re-enroll to continue your benefits in 2012.

NYSHIP Annual Option Transfer Period: Dates to be determined

The annual Option Transfer Period will begin once the 2012 health insurance premium rates are approved. Please watch your mailbox and The Work Force for more rate information. See more details on this page.

NYSHIP Health Insurance Buyout: Dates to be determined

Employees who choose to cancel their health insurance coverage and opt out of NYSHIP's Empire Plan or a health maintenance organization may be eligible to receive an annual payment (distributed among 26 payroll periods).

At press time, program details were not available. We anticipate that the open enrollment dates for the opt out will coincide with the annual Option Transfer Period.

Please review NYSHIP's Annual Option Transfer Period documentation (when available) for more information.



If you are currently enrolled in the Productivity Enhancement Program, you must re-enroll to continue your benefits in 2012.

Watch for health insurance option transfer period, rate changes

The annual NYSHIP option transfer period for active state employees (including Unified Court System employees) will be held once the 2012 health insurance premium rates are approved. At press time, the rates were not approved.

Once the 2012 premium rates are approved and sent to agencies, enrollees will have 30 days from the date the agency receives the rates in which to change options.

Enrollees will have the ability to change their health insurance plan during the option transfer period. Enrollees should visit their agency health benefits administrator (typically located in the personnel office) and pick up a copy of "Choices for 2012," your guide to NYSHIP health insurance options.

If you are thinking about changing your option, read the descriptions of plans in your area and compare coverage and out-of-pocket cost sharing for benefits that are important to you and your family.

Please watch your mail, The Work Force and our website for more information, including the option transfer dates and the 2012 health insurance premium rates.

CSEA's notice of election

CSEA Election Schedule for
Statewide Officers, Region
Officers, Statewide Board of
Directors

Dec. 1, 2011: Deadline for candidates who qualify for Statewide, Region or Board of Directors to submit for publication in The Work Force their picture, the entity they work for, and the CSEA office they are seeking.

Dec. 19, 2011: Voter lists inspection available.

Jan. 18, 2012: Ballots mailed.

Jan. 25, 2012: Replacement ballots available.

Feb. 14, 2012: Deadline for receipt of ballots (8:00 a.m.).

Ballot count commences (9:00 a.m.)

Election results will be announced after the ballot count is complete and certified. Protest period ends 10 days following Statewide Election Committee's certification of results. Candidates will be notified by mail of the results. Election results will be published in the March 2012 edition of The Work Force.

Voting Eligibility Date

Only CSEA members in good standing as of Dec. 1, 2011 will be eligible to vote in the election.

Election Oversight

The union's Statewide Election Committee will oversee the election process. The American Arbitration Association, an independent election agency approved by the union's Statewide Board of Directors, will conduct the balloting.

NOTICE OF ELECTION 2012 AFSCME Convention Delegates

AFSCME DELEGATES ELECTION YEAR 2012

The approved schedule for the election is as follows:

Dec. 19, 2011: Voter lists inspection available

Jan. 18, 2012: Ballots mailed

Jan. 25, 2012: Replacement ballots available

Feb. 14, 2012: Ballots due 8 a.m.; Tally commences 9 a.m.

Ten (10) days following Statewide Election Committee Certification of Results: End of protest period

March 2012: Results published in The Work Force

Balloting for the AFSCME Delegates election will take place at the same time and as part of the CSEA elections for Statewide officers, Region officers and Board of Directors. Members are urged to carefully read the election information contained in The Work Force throughout the Year 2012 election cycle as well as the instructions, which will accompany each mail ballot.

Rockland budget: 600 layoffs over two years

NEW CITY — Rockland County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef recently presented legislators with a draconian budget proposal that calls for the closure of the Summit Park Hospital & Nursing Care Center, elimination of mental health and public health programs, and the privatization of security and housekeeping jobs.

At press time, CSEA members were preparing to pack a public hearing on the proposed budget, which calls for the elimination of nearly 600 CSEA jobs.

"This budget guts the services we offer Rockland residents at a time when the need for those services has skyrocketed," said Southern Region President Billy Riccaldo, a longtime county employee. "Passing this budget as proposed would mean undoing a century-long moral commitment we've made to our most vulnerable residents."

If the budget passes as proposed, the first wave of 91 cuts would come in January and April with the elimination of a county-run assisted living facility and guidance center, loss of funding for a prenatal clinic and cancer

prevention program, and the contracting out of security and housekeeping titles.

Later in the year, the proposed budget eliminates funding for all Summit Park services, which include nursing home care and mental health treatment. That closure will affect 453 workers if passed as proposed.

Rockland County Unit President P.T. Thomas said that years of county finance officials overestimating revenue has led the county to its current financial situation.

"The workers are not the cause of the problem," said Thomas. "All county workers have given 100 percent to achieve the mission of serving our residents. Rather than paying out unemployment costs for hundreds of workers, the county's money would be better spent continuing to fund the CSEA work force that has been aiding other residents in this difficult economy."

— Jessica Ladlee

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.

CSEA members help each other with flood relief

CSEA Statewide Treasurer Joe McMullen, Central Region President Colleen Wheaton and region activists and staff recently reached out to CSEA members and others in the region who were affected by flooding caused by Tropical Storms Irene and Lee. McMullen presented donations to two area United Ways on behalf of the union, while Wheaton, region activists and staff helped CSEA members with flood cleanup.



CSEA Statewide Treasurer Joe McMullen, right, presents a \$1,000 donation on the union's behalf to Ken Wiggins, president, and Tim McGraw, 1st vice president, of the United Way of Delaware & Otsego Counties from CSEA's disaster relief fund to help with flood relief efforts. McMullen also recently presented a \$1,000 donation on CSEA's behalf to the Tioga United Way for flood relief.

Left, Central Region President Colleen Wheaton, front, and Central Region Judiciary Local activist Stephanie Beck haul away debris from the home of CSEA member Carol Pflughardt. Also helping in the flood cleanup were Tammy Witteman, Tom Witteman, Andy Witteman, Phil Graham, Amy Graham, Sarah Graham, George Lawson, Sandi Badger, Janice Danaher and Mark Kotzin.

Retiring after 60 years of service



Left, Morrea Foote celebrates her retirement from the New York State Teachers' Retirement System in Albany, where she has given 60 years of service. For the past 40 years, Foote has been a switchboard operator and receptionist at the teachers' retirement system. Throughout her tenure, Foote has seen many technology advances but one thing remained the same: her laid-back style and strong commitment to serving the public. Foote, who is retiring to spend more time with her family, was honored by her co-workers with a day dedicated to her, a poster (shown in the photo) and a tribute by the retirement system board.

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