

THE
PUBLIC

Sector

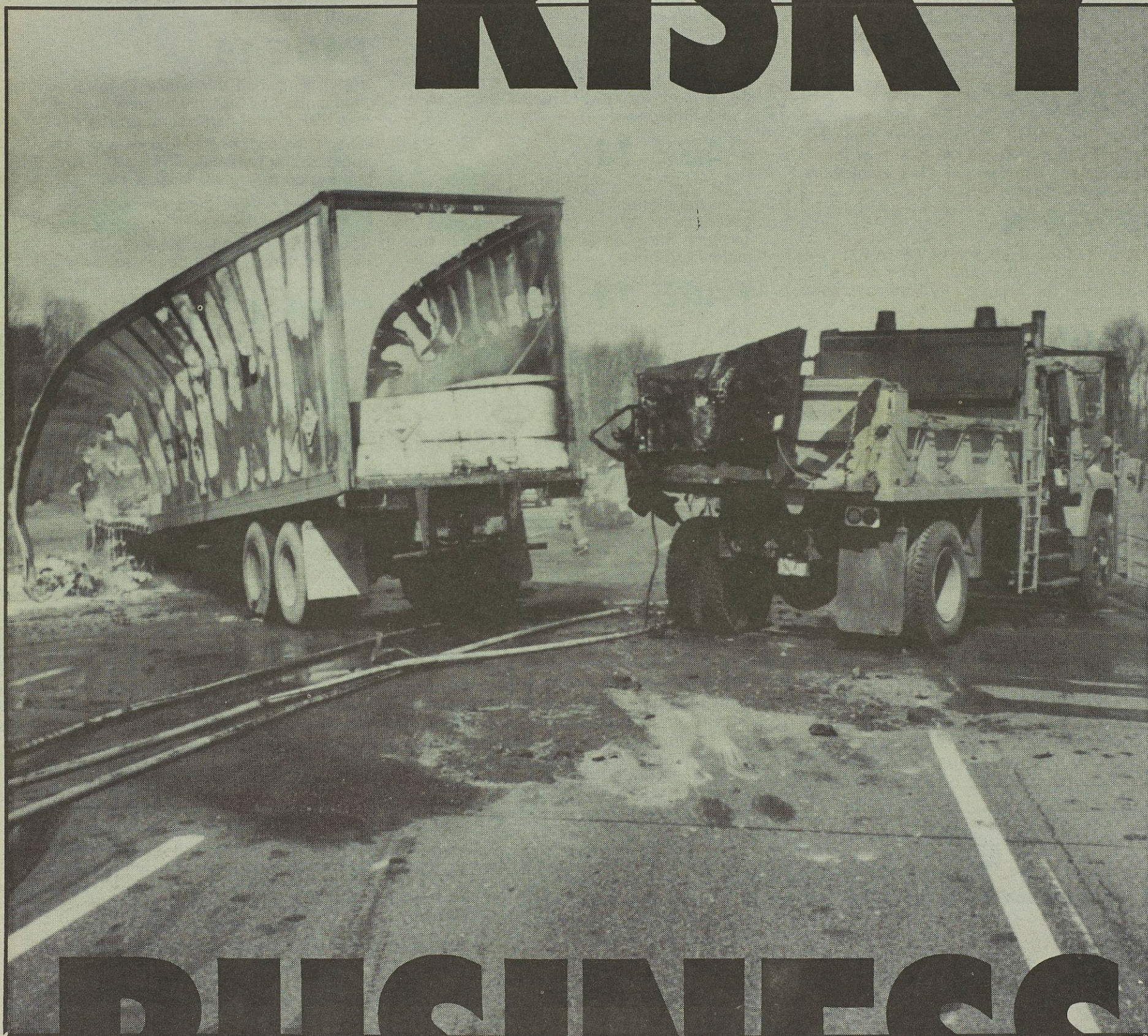
Monday, April 16, 1990

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PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT IS

RISKY



BUSINESS

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INSIDE NEWS YOU CAN USE

PAGE 3

Highway maintenance crews potentially face death every day on the state's roadways. Safety procedures saved one state DOT crew in a fiery crash on a major interstate highway north of Albany recently. The driver of a tractor-trailer was not so lucky; he died in the mishap.

PAGES 4-5

The state's budget situation was at crisis level as this issue of *The Public Sector* went to press. CSEA President Joe McDermott talks about the problems that creates.

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A state OMH pilot project that's supposed to be a cooperative effort to ensure adequate staffing doesn't always work that way.

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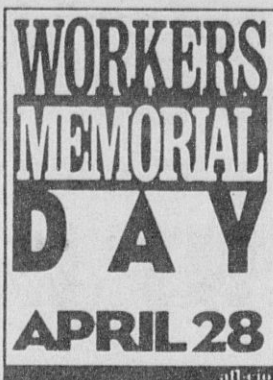
Rest areas along the interstate highways may be hazardous to the health of the public who use them and the employees who clean them.

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A far-sighted approach by CSEA has helped reduce the number of workers laid off at the Erie County Medical Center during a budget crunch.

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At this rodeo the cowboys (and cowgirls) all wore orange hard hats and the horses were under the hood.



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Three CSEA members nearly lost their lives after management sent them on a foolish and dangerous mission on the Oswego River in the dead of winter.

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CSEA plans legal action in an effort to halt controversial examinations scheduled by the state Civil Service Department for newly created Secretary 1 and 2 titles.

PAGE 13

What happens in Washington impacts upon the state and trickles down to local governments. Which is why CSEA pays so much attention to what goes on in the nation's Capital.

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When things went from bad to worse for workers and clients in a facility for the multiply disabled, CSEA turned up the heat on management. Things are starting to look better now.

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A class-action grievance filed by CSEA proves once again that management must respect seniority rights of workers. Will they never learn?

Some important deadlines are approaching in CSEA elections.

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Modifying and extending the life expectancy of equipment for clients with special needs is rewarding work, saves money, and is "worth all the effort."

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Tony DelBorgo doesn't let disability stand in his way.

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Watch your mail this week: Tens of thousands of CSEA members will receive new EBF dental cards through the mail.

When the Town of Ramapo delayed an upgrading agreement, CSEA put it to 'em bluntly: do it or else. They did it.

PAGE 19

Your handy reference guide to CSEA member services and benefits.

PAGE 20

The workplace is a dangerous place. On April 28, pause to remember the more than 100,000 workers who die each year from the effects of job-related injuries or diseases.

DOL Local 670 collecting for AIDS newborns, babies

Department of Labor (Albany) CSEA Local 670 will sponsor a collection of clothing and other items suitable for newborn and young babies on April 26 and 27.

The items will be donated to Farano House, a privately-funded facility which cares for newborns and babies with AIDS-related problems.

Collections will be taken during working hours outside the cafeteria area in the lobby of Department of Labor Building 12 at the State Office Building Campus complex in Albany.

CSEA member loses two sons in arson fire; Local 419 launches fund drive to help family

NEW YORK — On Sunday, March 25, two sons of CSEA member Maria Elena Mancina went out dancing. The two, ages 19 and 21, never returned from the Bronx Happyland Social Club.

Calixto and Jose perished in an arson blaze that killed 87 people and horrified the nation. They were victims of New York City's worst mass murder.

Shocked co-workers of Maria Mancina, a housekeeper at New York Psychiatric Institute, immediately launched a drive to raise funds to aid the stricken family.

"Our goal is to raise at least \$3,000 to help sister Mancina with burial expenses

involved in returning Calixto and Jose to Honduras for burial," CSEA Local 419 President Tony Bailous said.

Checks should be made payable to "Maria Elena Mancina Fund/Local 419 CSEA."

Contributions, cards and other expressions of sympathy can be sent to Maria Elena Mancina at:

**CSEA Local 419
NYS Psychiatric Institute
c/o Eva Jacobs, Local 419 Treasurer
722 West 168th Street Box 26
New York, New York 10032**

THE PUBLIC Sector

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"I feel lucky to be alive"

CLIFTON PARK — When it comes to worksite safety, an ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure — it can save your life.

The CSEA-represented members of a DOT road crew from the Clifton Park residency discovered that recently when they narrowly escaped with their lives after a tractor-trailer crashed into their work zone.

The fiery crash occurred just as the crew, members of CSEA DOT Local 676, had set safety barriers and warning equipment in place.

While shaken up, none of the four crew members were seriously injured. One of the crewmen was sitting in a DOT truck that was hit by the tractor-trailer. He was wearing a seat-belt and received only minor burns.

The driver of the tractor-trailer was not so lucky. He was killed in the crash.

The truck was believed to be carrying flammable material. "All I could see was a ball of flame," said crew member Emma Folmsbee.

Crew member Scott Putnam escaped the flames by jumping a guard rail and rolling down an embankment.

"Everything just crumbled and then there was intense heat — it was unreal," he said. "I feel lucky to be alive."

Jay Reidel, the crew member stationed in the truck, escaped from the cab through the passenger side window. A state police investigator said having his driver's side window closed probably saved his life since the fireball charred that side of the truck.

Crew supervisor Jim Lee said they all had their backs to the crash when it occurred but immediately called for Reidel to get out.

"With the flames all around us, I thought we'd had it," he said.

CSEA remembers

During the past year four CSEA members gave their lives in the line of duty as public employees.

CSEA honors their sacrifice as the union continues its efforts for safer working conditions.

Frank Peragine

Excavating Machine Operator
Westchester County Parks Department
CSEA Local 860

Peragine was killed when struck by a garbage dumpster that was being unloaded into a garbage truck in September. A chair in the dumpster apparently impeded the lift and caused the dumpster to swing out of control.

Robert Howard

Seasonal Maintenance Assistant
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
CSEA Local 117

Howard died Dec. 22 after the truck he was riding in collided with a propane truck in an ice fog on a stretch of road along the Black River near Watertown.

Robert Smithers

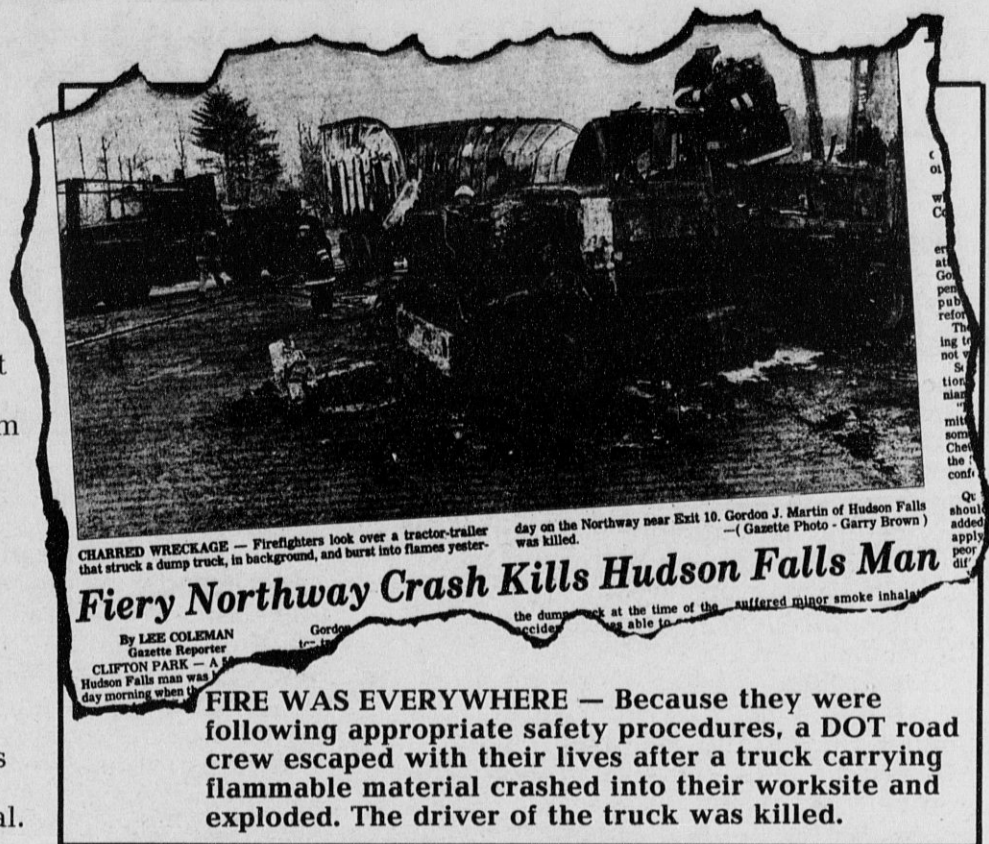
Highway Maintenance Supervisor I
NYS Department of Transportation
CSEA Syracuse State Employees Local 013

Smithers died early Christmas Eve morning when the truck he was driving struck a utility pole in Lysander, Onondaga County. The incident occurred while the 24-year veteran was on a routine road check. He had been working for at least 14 days straight in shifts ranging from eight to 11 and a half hours.

James Woodworth

NYS Department of Transportation Barge Canal
CSEA Local 500

Woodworth collapsed while at work Jan. 2 at the state DOT Barge Canal Maintenance Shop at Waterford and was pronounced dead of an apparent heart attack. Woodworth was in waterway maintenance and was supervising the removal of a propeller from a tugboat in drydock when he collapsed.

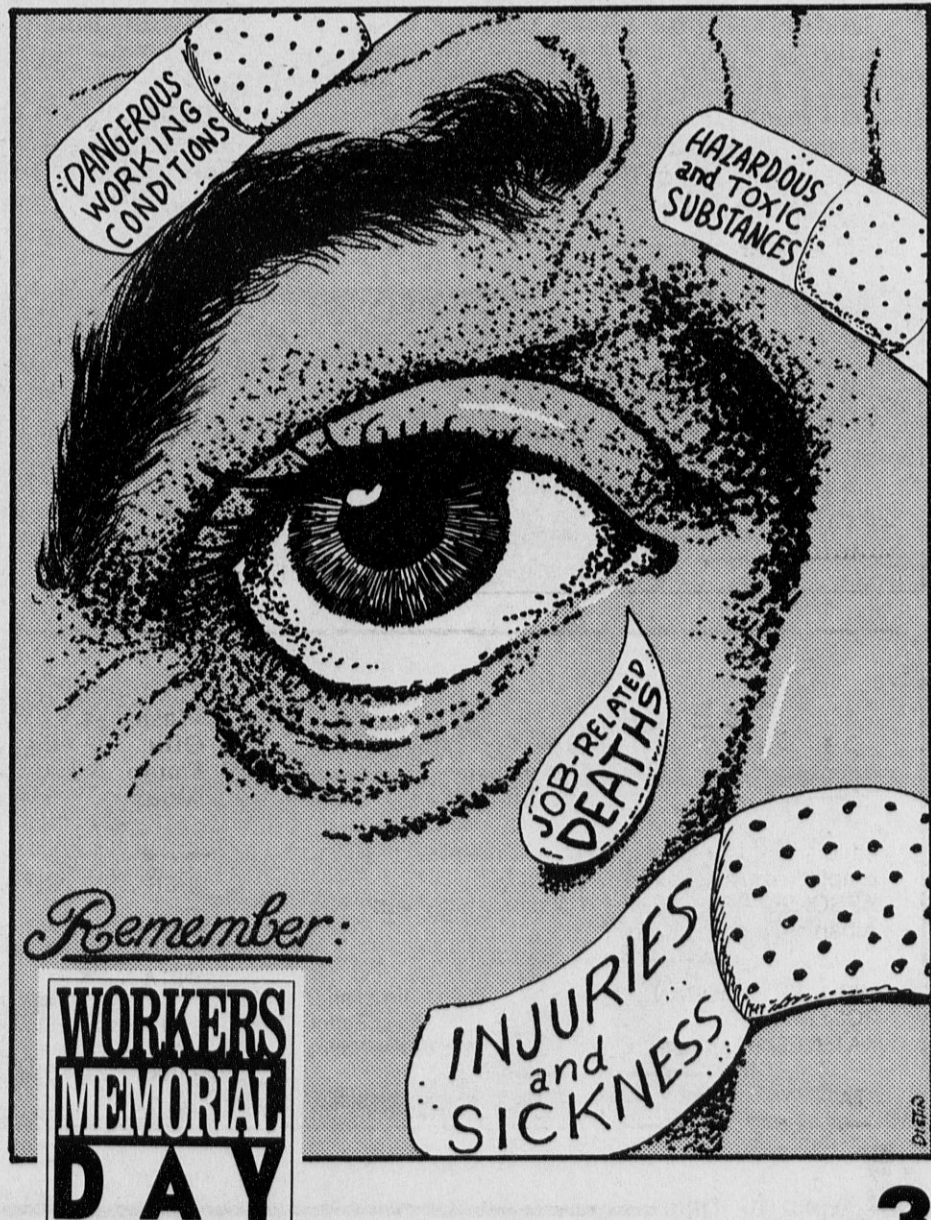


All of the crew members were treated for stress in addition to receiving emergency room treatment at Saratoga Hospital.

It's always dangerous out on the road. Over the past 10 years, more than half of the CSEA members killed on the job were involved in state or local government road work or motor vehicle accidents.

"Department of Transportation employees are involved in dangerous work," CSEA Director of Occupational Safety and Health James Corcoran said. "You can never remove the risk altogether, but if you stress safety as part of your standard operating procedures you significantly reduce the risk to people."

"Generally speaking, DOT has done a good job of making their employees aware of what they have to do to protect themselves," he said. "This incident shows why that's so important."



CSEA budget battle goes into high gear

ALBANY — More than 230 CSEA Local presidents, filling a meeting room to overflowing recently, were briefed on the union's plan to battle planned service and aid cuts in the state budget.

CSEA President Joe McDermott outlined the seriousness of the state's financial problems (see page 4) and their impact on CSEA.

"Regardless of what your legislators may tell you, they haven't worked the budget out and they have hurt you," McDermott said. "They're going to hurt you very seriously."

Gov. Mario Cuomo, Assembly Speaker Mel Miller and Senate Majority Leader Ralph Marino have apparently agreed on \$500 million in cuts from the governor's proposed budget. That could translate into thousands of layoffs. And the Senate has talked about even more cuts.

As this issue of *The Public Sector* went to press, the leaders had not come

to a full agreement on budget cuts and new taxes for the budget. This is the sixth year in a row the state has not had a budget in place by the April 1 deadline.

The plan

McDermott encouraged the local presidents to ask their local members to call their legislators to let them know that CSEA opposes cuts in aid, layoffs, targeted early retirement and raids on the public employee retirement fund.

Demonstrations were organized in each of CSEA's six regions outside legislators' district offices to make the point even more strongly to legislators who were home for a holiday break.

"It's your job to let them know this budget is killing us," McDermott said. "Regardless of what they say, it's going to kill you in staffing, in our contracts, in local government, in the pension system. And the problem isn't going to go away."



"They're going to hurt you very seriously."

**CSEA President
Joe McDermott**

How the state budget proposals will hurt you

- **Layoffs** — Budget cuts apparently agreed on and others being discussed mean CSEA members could lose their jobs while the state loses its ability to provide services.
- **Understaffing** — Even without layoffs, proposed job losses through attrition in mental hygiene facilities will make dangerous work even more so, while the people who really suffer are the clients who don't get the care they need because of understaffing.
- **Pension raids** — Two proposals will cut the costs of pensions for employers without giving the employees any benefit. One would merely adjust formulas for contributions for this year. The second would change it permanently and, while it saves money at first, would cost employers more in several years. If that happens, benefits could suffer in the long run.
- **Local government aid** — Cuts in local government aid mean that local

governments will suffer. They may have to cut programs, raise property taxes and lay off employees to make up for lost state aid. That hits all of us where we live with higher property taxes or higher rent.

- **School Districts** — Cuts in aid to education will put school districts in the same boat — struggling to provide vital services without the money they need. Again, that could mean higher property taxes, cuts in programs and layoffs.
- **Corporate tax loopholes** — Corporations' profits have been rising, but the taxes they pay have been dropping, part of the reason the state has a budget deficit. While the Governor and legislative leaders have agreed on a temporary 15 percent surcharge on business taxes, that won't solve the problem. It will only stall it. What they need to do is reform corporate tax structure so that everyone, particularly huge multi-national corporations, pay their fair share.
- **Personal income tax rates** — The leaders have apparently agreed to temporarily freeze personal income tax rates, but that's not enough. What's left of the tax cut plan benefits the rich at the expense of middle-income workers. Besides the unfairness of the cut, it shifts costs to local governments, where it shows up in higher property taxes. And it doesn't solve the problem, it only delays it. The state needs to raise money in a budget crisis, not give it away to the rich.



A message from CSEA President Joe McDermott

CSEA THE CIVIL SERVICE
EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION, INC.
Local 1000, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO
143 WASHINGTON AVE., BOX 7125, CAPITOL STATION, ALBANY, NEW YORK 12224 (518) 434-0191

JOSEPH E. McDERMOTT, PRESIDENT

By the time you read this, the state may have a budget. But let me tell you now the battle is far from over. And the battle affects you.

Why should you worry about the political gymnastics that go on in Albany over the state budget? It's all politics as usual and won't mean anything in the end, right? They threaten layoffs but you've never been laid off, right? The state budget won't affect you in your local government job, right?

WRONG!! The problems in the state budget mean more than politics, more even than the jobs of a few people, as unfair as that is. They mean the future — your future, your community's future and the state's future.

The state's repeated budget deficits mean that the state simply isn't raising the money it needs to live up to its responsibilities — to the needy, the middle class, and yes, to public employees. The problem isn't going to go away.

State leaders refused to listen to us and others last year when we said the state couldn't afford tax breaks for the rich when it wasn't bringing in enough money. Now the state is in even more trouble.

You're paying the price

And you're paying for it. If you're a state employee you may be laid off. You could be bumped back to a lower position or bumped right out of a job. Or you may stay on the job, vulnerable to injury because your co-workers are gone.

If you work for a school, where do you think your district will make up for cuts in aid? Not just by raising property taxes or cutting programs. They'll lay some people off, yes, maybe you.

If you work for local government, aid is getting cut there. Transportation aid will get hit, so if you repair and maintain roads, you could lose your job. Even if you keep your job, state aid cuts will make your local budget tighter. Then, of course, there's the issue of your needing a raise or some benefit improvements.

And even if you don't worry about those things, do you want your children to suffer because of cuts in school staff and programs? Do you want your property taxes to go up while your roads and parks deteriorate? Do you want more homeless mentally ill on your streets because the state doesn't provide care for them?

CSEA keeps fighting

The state budget does matter to you. That's why CSEA is out there fighting cuts in the state budget, raids on the pension fund, tax breaks for the rich. That's why CSEA is fighting for the closing of corporate tax loopholes, the freezing of tax rates and proper staffing in state institutions.

That's why we asked your local presidents to urge you to call your legislators and hold demonstrations to let them know CSEA is serious. As public employees, we know what it takes to care for the ill and disabled, to keep roads safe and schools functioning. We know the truth — and we've got to fight for it.

No matter what happens with this budget, CSEA's fight — your fight — is not over.

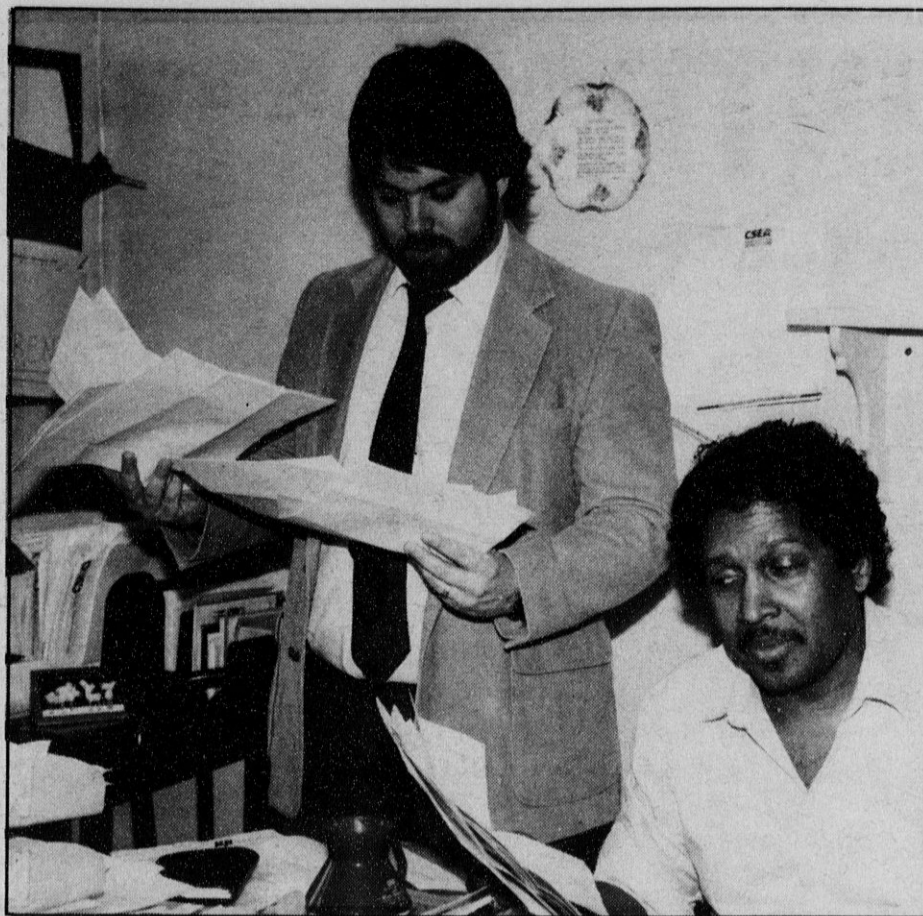
Joe McDermott

OMH actions add Insult to injury

By Stephen Madarasz
CSEA Communications Associate

EDITOR'S NOTE — CSEA's recent compilation of on-the-job injury figures for the state psychiatric centers and mental retardation facilities presents a devastating picture of pain and suffering. But the numbers, which show the loss of nearly 270,000 workdays due to occupational injury, also are an indictment of deficient management.

As the following story demonstrates, the Office of Mental Health (OMH) is not working with CSEA to find solutions. And CSEA believes the unilateral actions taken by OMH make the problems worse.



OMH OVERKILL — CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Glenn Blackman and CSEA Rockland Psychiatric Center Local 421 President Vernon Cason review some of the hundreds of NODs filed in OMH's time and attendance crackdown. CSEA believes OMH is clogging the disciplinary process for no good reason and hurting employee morale.

If getting hurt on the job in the state's dangerous psychiatric centers isn't bad enough, the Office of Mental Health is now setting up a system to harass employees, too.

Under the guise of a pilot project at six facilities — Rockland, Kings Park, Kingsboro, Manhattan, Creedmoor and Bronx — OMH has created Overtime and Absenteeism Control Units (OACUs). According to OMH, they're supposed to be cooperative efforts to help labor and management ensure adequate staffing.

But in some of the locations overzealous OACUs are running amuck. They are going after employees who are off the job with injuries, disciplining long-term employees with clean records and seeking maximum penalties for minor infractions.

"CSEA objected to parts of the plan when it was outlined at the state level," said CSEA Deputy Director for Contract Administration Mark Lawrence. "But OMH imposed it anyway and the problems are clear — all they're doing is clogging the disciplinary system for no good reason."

CSEA believes the time and money could be better invested in addressing the real problems — understaffing and lack of a comprehensive safety and health program to reduce on-the-job injuries which are the main cause of absenteeism.

At Rockland Psychiatric Center, management has refused to share any details of the program with CSEA. But CSEA is well aware it's there because scores of members have been hit with Notices of Discipline (NODs) for alleged time and attendance abuse. Injured employees have received threatening telephone calls demanding that they come back to work.

"We've had employees with as much as 26 years of service being brought up on charges," said Rockland Psychiatric Center CSEA Local 421 President Vernon Cason. He noted another employee was brought up on charges even though he had medical documentation that he couldn't work.

At Creedmoor Psychiatric Center more than 160 NODs have been issued since the OACU was established late last year. Employees are threatened with fines ranging from \$150 to \$24,000.

"There's been no communication with the union whatsoever," said CSEA Local 406 acting President Frank Grillo. "The NOD backlog is so outrageous that a

Time and Attendance Umpire is stationed at the facility two days a week just to keep up."

CSEA Kingsboro Psychiatric Center Local 402 President Robert Nurse said an OACU began operating in late February and since then NODs have increased 50 percent. As a rule,

management immediately seeks the maximum penalty even for minor infractions.

At the other locations it's difficult to judge what the OACU is all about.

"So far the absenteeism unit's been more like a baby-sitting service here," said Kings Park Psychiatric Center CSEA Local 411 First Vice President Barry Malone. "The absenteeism people go around and watch employees come in and leave work to make sure no one's taking advantage of their time."

"We haven't had any real problems yet but management is planning to talk to us about the unit later this month and we certainly hope they don't intend to go the direction of the other psychiatric centers."

It's a similar situation at Manhattan Psychiatric Center where local 413 President Mohammed Hussain said CSEA has been promised detailed information and involvement when the OACU gets down to business. In the meantime, NODs are on the rise at Manhattan anyway.

CSEA has higher expectations for the program at Bronx Psychiatric Center. Labor and management have worked together at the facility and statewide level to develop a detailed program to address time and attendance issues.

The program includes efforts to strengthen employee involvement in workplace decisions, comprehensive safety and health training and initiatives to improve employee morale.

"The program appears to hold promise and there's clearly management commitment to making this approach work," said CSEA Local 401 President Ernest Punter. "CSEA's greatest concern is that budget cuts and continued on-the-job injury problems could undermine the follow-through."

**"All they're doing is clogging
the disciplinary system for no
good reason."**

—CSEA Deputy Director For Contract Administration Mark Lawrence

INTERSTATE REST AREAS NOT ALWAYS RESTFUL PLACE

By Anita Manley
CSEA Communications Associate

Stopping at those roadside rest areas along interstate highways when you're weary may be a good idea, but it could also be hazardous to your health. Serious understaffing and underfunding by the state leave rest areas virtually unattended around the clock.

Hypodermic needles, drug paraphernalia and condoms are being found mixed in with trash and garbage left at rest areas. The dangerous items are found in trash containers, in toilet areas and among the garbage scattered throughout the rest areas by careless and inconsiderate motorists. State police say the rest areas are also used for illegal drug and prostitution transactions.

The situation poses a health and safety threat not only to other motorists and their families using the rest areas, but to state Department of Transportation (DOT) workers who clean up the rest areas along the interstates.

The problems are the same along every major interstate highway dissecting New York state. I-84, which slices across lower New York from Pennsylvania to Connecticut, is a perfect example.

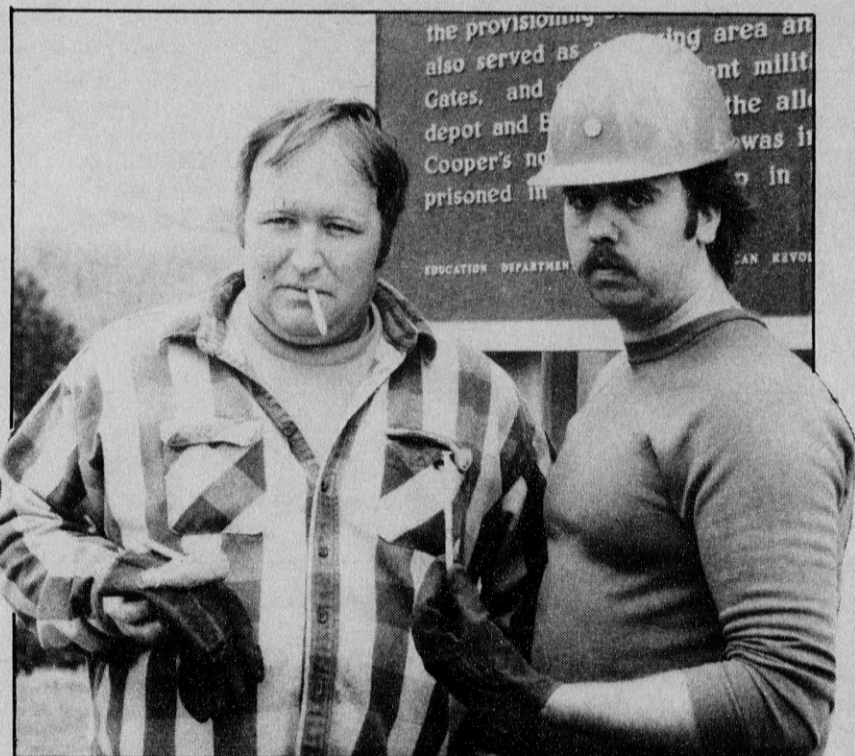
"The rest areas have gotten out of hand," said state DOT Highway Maintenance Supervisor Tom Lee, whose crews cover the I-84 rest areas. "We need two people in here 24 hours a day to staff these places," said Lee, a member of CSEA Local 507.

Once a day not enough

Instead, DOT highway maintenance workers stop by each rest area once a day to pick up the grounds, empty trash



THIS STORMVILLE REST AREA along I-84 appears clean and inviting after state DOT employees cleaned it up. But over the next 24 hours it will be trashed up again. Workers often find health hazards inside the building, in trash containers and scattered around the parking areas.



DOT CSEA MEMBERS Tom Lee and Kevin Cassidy show drug paraphenalia found at a rest stop on I-84 in Dutchess County.

containers, clean floors, toilets and sinks and replace toilet paper and paper towels. Because of budget problems and understaffing, the rest areas are not staffed the rest of the day or night.

"We're highway maintenance workers," Lee said. "We shouldn't have to deal with these kind of problems."

Wrecked in three months

"We got no extra help when the rest

stops were opened" in 1972, Lee said. "In three months the areas were completely wrecked." Rest areas along I-84 were renovated in 1987 but vandalism problems have only gotten worse.

"People come in here at night and drill holes in the partitions and write all over the walls," Lee said. "One man discovered blood splattered all over a bathroom. He became ill and couldn't work. Why should he have to clean something like that? Who knows what was in that blood?"

In another incident, a DOT employee was assaulted when he asked a man to leave the premises, Lee said.

State Police drive through the rest areas at night but can't patrol the areas constantly.

Gloves, a claw and a warning

The only real protection workers have been given against dangerous items mixed in with ordinary trash are gloves and a special "claw" device to pick up trash on the ground. And, oh yes, a warning not to put their hands into trash containers.

"If these rest areas were properly staffed, they wouldn't be a problem," Lee concluded.



Planning pays off in Erie County

CSEA saves 90 jobs in budget crunch

"We're not happy that any CSEA members lose their jobs."

CSEA Unit President Steve Caruana

BUFFALO — CSEA action and a far-sighted agreement made in 1985 has helped reduce a massive budget-cut/layoff plan at Erie County Medical Center.

"We're not happy that any CSEA members lose their jobs," said Stephen Caruana, "and we're going to do all we can to see that those actually laid off from the medical center are given preference for any similar jobs elsewhere in the county."

Caruana, president of the Erie County Employees CSEA Unit of Local 815, said 37 members were laid off April 1. But

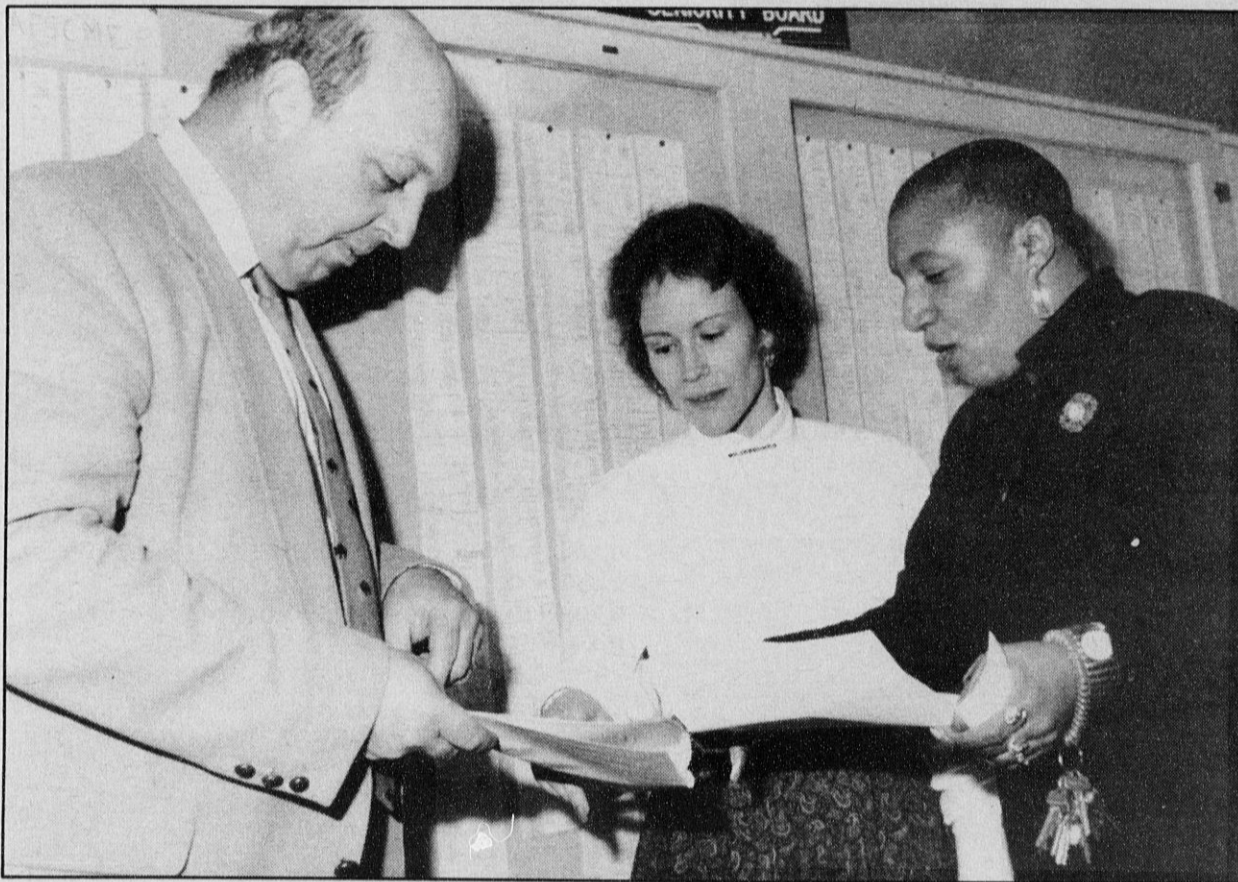
that's only about a quarter of the layoffs planned originally.

The layoffs stem from the projected \$12.3 million deficit for the medical center. Deficit-reduction measures included cutting 130 non-medical jobs to save \$2.2 million.

But under an agreement CSEA fought for in 1985, the county laid off per diem workers before full-time employees. Per diem workers or part-timers who work fewer than 19 hours a week are laid off before full-time employees in the same job title.

"Of course, we'll be watching to make sure our members' rights are protected," Caruana said.

"We also have an agreement with Deputy Personnel Commissioner Kevin Loos so that any same-title job vacancies that opened before the layoffs would be held open for those who got layoff notices," he said. The plan saved at least two jobs as of April 1, he added.



CHECKING THE FIGURES — Erie County Medical Center CSEA Unit officers look over layoff numbers. Only 37 CSEA members were laid off, with promise of first shot at jobs in other county departments, because of a far-sighted plan set in 1985. The officers are, from left, Unit President Steve Caruana, Secretary Debbie Saia and Executive Vice President Charlene Norman.

Get your Survivor's Guide

CSEA members can get a copy of "A Survivor's Guide for CSEA Members and Their Families" through CSEA headquarters.

The 32-page guide contains information to help members and their families in dealing with the legal and financial implications of a death in the family. It is provided by the CSEA/State Labor/Management Committees.

The publication is free and is provided through the CSEA contract with the state.

If you would like a copy, mail in the adjacent coupon to:

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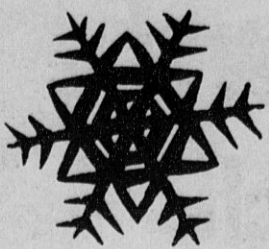
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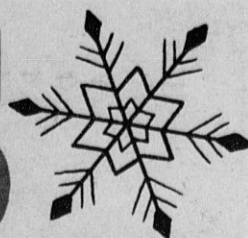
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SNOW JOBS



They came to the fairgrounds, from all over the state, for the rodeo. They brought with them the excitement of great skills, quick-thinking and daring maneuvers. Each sought the thrill of victory while avoiding the agony of defeat.

But this rodeo, at the state fairgrounds in Syracuse, had no cowboys, steer-roping or ten-gallon hats. The horses were all under the hood and the cowboys, wearing bright orange hardhats, were all CSEA members guiding huge, powerful snowfighting rigs through tight obstacle courses.

State Department of Transportation (DOT) employees are acknowledged to be among the finest snowfighters in the country. This month 10 teams of the very best came together in Syracuse for the second annual DOT Statewide Snowplow Competition, a joint project sponsored by CSEA and DOT. The competition was funded this year by a grant from the joint CSEA/NYS Committee on Work Environment and Productivity (CWEP).

Two-person teams from each of 10 DOT regions competed in the statewide contest. Each team previously won regional competition to move on to the statewide event. Judging was in five different events, including a snowplow obstacle course, a plow wing assembly competition, a tire-chain competition, a pre-operational vehicle check and verbal testing.

After all the pylons were navigated, after all the wings were attached and all the tires chained, the team of driver Don Jerrett and wing operator Joanne Mannara emerged victorious. The winning team represented the Mexico DOT residency in Oswego County.

Jerrett and Mannara earned their experience handling the area's snowiest season ever, often tackling brutal lake-effect snowstorms that sweep the Oswego County area.

Mannara became the first woman to share the state title, and said she was proud of her accomplishment, especially since she only recently became involved with snowplowing. Several other women competed in this year's event as well.

"Anytime you're a woman in a non-traditional job, something like this feels good," Mannara said. "But, really, as long as you have the ability to think smart and think safe, you can do this work."

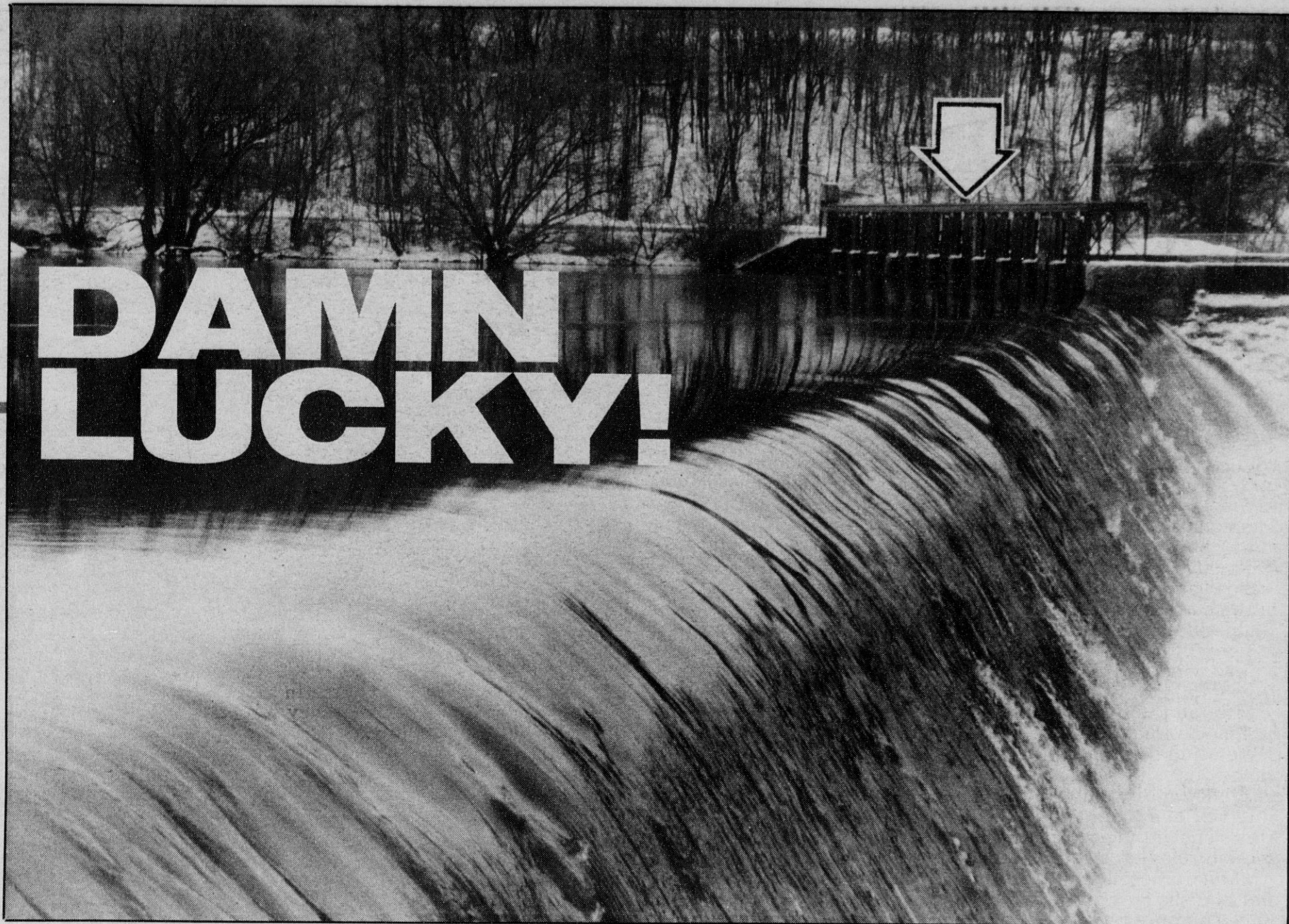
Winning is only part of the big picture for an event of this nature, DOT Equipment and Operational Specialist Terry Vennard pointed out.

"Even more important was the training," Vennard said. "It was harder for us to pick a winner this year, but that means the training we do is paying off. We're very pleased."

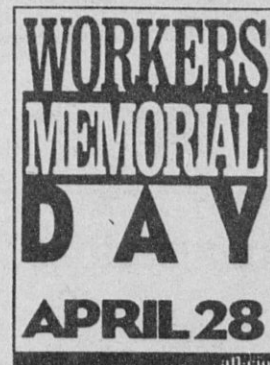


They're all champions

- Regional DOT champions competing in the 1990 Statewide Snowplow Competition were:
- DOT Region 1: (Essex) John Napper and David Call
 - DOT Region 2: (Montgomery) Ed Goodspeed and Elizabeth Guadagno
 - DOT Region 3: (Oswego) Donald Jerrett and Joanne Mannara
 - DOT Region 4: (Livingston) Harold Hill and Rick Spencer
 - DOT Region 5: (Chautauqua) Ken Stanbro and Peter Musso
 - DOT Region 6: (Schuyler/Yates) Claude Andrews and Lynn Ossant
 - DOT Region 7: (Clinton) Ross Poupori and Holly Coupal
 - DOT Region 8: (West. No.) Prize Funk and Donna Hamilton
 - DOT Region 9: (Otsego) Todd Moore and Dale White
 - DOT Region 10: (Parkway) Charles Meinhold and William Youngs



DAMN LUCKY!



April 28 is Workers Memorial Day, a day set aside in memory of the more than 100,000 workers who die each year from job-related injuries and diseases. Except for luck and courage, three CSEA members who were sent by management on a dangerous and foolish mission would be among those being mourned this year.

Story and photos by Mark M. Kotzin
CSEA Communications Associate

OSWEGO — Three CSEA-represented state Department of Transportation (DOT) Barge Canal workers nearly drowned recently in an accident that CSEA claims was "one hundred percent preventable."

A foolish mission

CSEA Local 505 President Homer Porter blames management for sending the workers on a "foolish mission" and needlessly risking their lives.

The accident occurred when dredge Captain Donald Carney, tender tug

Captain Richard "Red" Lewis and Maintenance Assistant Desmond Dixie were sent out to remove buoys from the icy-cold waters of the canal.

The three launched their 14-foot aluminum boat into the 28 degrees water of the Oswego River and were attempting to retrieve two buoys anchored in front of nearby Lock No. 6. The buoys were no more than 25 feet from the 20-foot drop of the Oswego High Dam.

While the men were trying to lift one buoy into the boat, the small craft's motor suddenly quit.

Dixie frantically tried to restart the engine, but to no avail. With a strong current pulling the boat quickly toward

the edge of the dam, Dixie did the only thing he could do.

"I told the boys to jump," he said.

Into the river

And that's exactly what they did; first Dixie and Lewis, and then Carney, as the boat went over the dam.

Dixie and Lewis jumped early enough to swim away from the dam; Carney did not. He went over the falls, plunging into the icy water below.

Pushed to the bottom by the force of the water spilling over the dam, Carney said he was trapped underneath for several moments — moments he said felt like days. Realizing he wouldn't survive unless he could reach the surface, Carney gave a final push off the bottom

with his legs, and with the help of his life preserver, rose to the top.

"I thought I was a goner. The cold water took the breath right out of me," he said. When he reached the surface, he tried to swim towards the boat floating nearby, but could not. He decided to lie still to conserve his dwindling energy.

Lewis and Dixie, meanwhile, managed to swim to a group of steel gates at one end of the dam that stopped debris from entering the hydroelectric plant across from Lock 6. They were both pushed against the grates by the force of the water and held on to the steel beams for life.

"I thought it was lights out . . . history," Lewis said, "but I hung on." And when Dixie grew tired and couldn't hang on any longer, Lewis grabbed hold of Dixie and kept him above water.

Dixie credits Lewis with saving his life. "I did what anybody else would have done," Lewis modestly insisted. "It was just good teamwork."

Help from ashore

When the accident occurred, four other CSEA members were working at the DOT station; three repairing a tugboat and one manning the office phone. Luckily for Dixie, Carney and Lewis, they were being watched from shore.

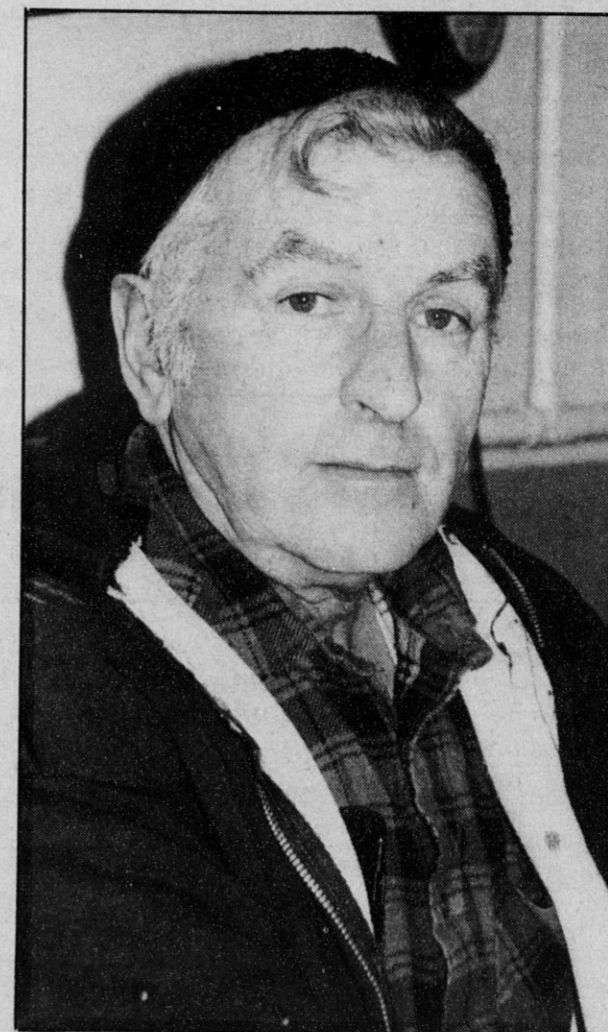
"We felt it was ridiculous for them to be out there," said Dave Gower, one of the employees. Concerned, Gower kept an eye on the men on the river. "Then we saw them go in!"

Gower immediately ran to the phone for help. Oswego fire and rescue crews were called to the scene, and arrived soon afterward.

Dixie and Lewis, nearest to shore, were pulled out first. Carney was pulled



A LIFEJACKET similar to the ones they credit with helping save their lives is displayed by, from left, Donald Carney, Richard "Red" Lewis and Desmond Dixie. In photo at left, arrow points to the steel gates where water enters the Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation hydroelectric facility, and where Lewis and Dixie hung on in 28 degree water for more than 30 minutes before being rescued. Co-worker Carney went over the edge of the dam and was rescued in the churning water below.



"I though I was a goner!"

— DONALD CARNEY

into an inflatable lifeboat after having been afloat in the icy river for about 30 minutes. All three were taken to a nearby hospital, treated for hypothermia and released.

Porter said they were lucky to be alive.

"Five minutes more and those guys might have been dead," he said.

"Our lifejackets saved our lives," Carney said. All three credited their life preservers with keeping them alive.

Management to blame

Local 505 President Porter called the mission unnecessary and said he blames management for the accident.

Porter said management endangered their lives by sending the men into the frigid water with a motor not designed for cold water operation. Porter said the motor contained a label advising the motor should not be operated in water colder than 50 degrees. Logbook records show the water was 28 degrees at the time of the accident.

CSEA has filed a contract safety violation grievance as a result of the accident.

One week after the Oswego incident a barge canal employee fell off a barge. Sometime later, another worker fell partially through some thin ice while doing yet another job Porter called "unsafe and unnecessary."

"We almost lost three men, and nobody from DOT is doing anything to improve safety," Porter said. "These other accidents prove it. It's a real serious situation."

Luckily, the three lived to tell their story. All say they are thankful to be alive.

Shortly after the incident, Dixie became a father to Desmond Gary Dixie Jr.

Carney survived the mishap to retire from state service in April.

Lewis can joke about it now. "We always said we were 'die-hard canalers' . . . now we've proven it."

**April 25 is
Secretary's Day**

Give credit where it's due

EDITOR'S NOTE — April 25 is Secretary's Day — a day to give recognition to people who really make an office work. Thousands of CSEA members fall into that category.

The point is particularly appropriate this year since CSEA is involved in a long-running battle with New York state over its secretarial reclassification process.

This is the story of just one CSEA member who does so much more than her job specifications say.



ASK HER WHY? Helen Hayes Hospital CSEA Local 302 member Joyce Mills, center, helps co-worker Debbie Smith with a pin protesting the state's scheduling of civil service exams for the secretarial reclassification. CSEA has filed a lawsuit to block the open competitive exam that could hurt CSEA members' opportunities.

WEST HAVERSTRAW — If it sounds like a cliché to say that secretaries are the "unsung heroes" of the workplace, then so be it.

Joyce Mills owes no apologies.

"I'm on the front line," she said.

There's no question about it. When you balance schedules for half a dozen professionals and doctors, screen patients' calls, see to it that parents complete lengthy paperwork and lend a caring ear to the people you serve, you are indeed on the front line.

"You need a good memory for this job," she said.

Mills' title is Keyboard Specialist, but the 10½ year employee of Helen Hayes Hospital, (whose only keyboard is on a typewriter) does much more than type.

Ironically, Mills' application for upgrading to one of the newly created secretary titles was recently rejected.

A typical day can begin with a call from a frantic parent who has just heard from a school teacher that her child may be learning disabled. Mills' office assesses and treats children with learning disabilities.

"Most parents are very upset," she said. "I listen, I try to calm them down and reassure them that we'll do all we can to help."

"My own child had a seizure disorder for nine years so I know how a parent feels," she said.

Once Mills helps the patient complete the necessary paperwork, a professional team evaluates the child and maps out a

plan of individual help if necessary.

Mills tracks the child's progress and sends reports to the school. "It's gratifying to see a child progress," she said.

She's often approached by parents in local stores and shopping malls.

"They'll tell me how wonderful their child is doing and how grateful they are that the hospital has the learning disabilities clinic. They really appreciate how we help their kids."

Although Mills loves her job, she would like to work in an administrative capacity some day. To that end, she is studying Public Health Administration through the CSEA Labor Education Action Program.

CSEA to see state in court on reclass

As *The Public Sector* went to press, CSEA was working fast and furious on the final details of its legal case against the state Civil Service Department exams for the newly created Secretary 1 and 2 titles.

CSEA considers the scheduling of the exams a slap in the face of its members who are bogged down in the state's complicated reclassification process.

The controversial set of exams are scheduled to begin April 21.

Thousands of CSEA members already qualify for the reclassification without the requirement of the exam. Others have been waiting months without any word on the status of their applications.

CSEA believes the reclassification should be completed before any exams are given.

CSEA's action is just the latest salvo in the ongoing battle between CSEA and the state over the costly and confusing secretarial reclassification process.

CSEA knows the score

Applications received by Civil Service	6,094
Applications pending at Civil Service	2,008
Applications rejected by Civil Service	985
Applications approved by Civil Service and sent to Division of Budget	3,101
Approved by Division of Budget	650

"The whole process is an example of grossly deficient management at the Civil Service Department," said CSEA President Joe McDermott. "Their process is destroying morale and wasting taxpayers' money, too."

"The state's talking about layoffs but Civil Service is going forward with tests for a titles that already have thousands of qualified employees waiting," he said. "It makes no sense."

If CSEA successfully blocks this set of exams, it should not affect any member's reclassification.

Holding the open competitive exams at this time, however, could hurt some CSEA members' chances of securing a secretarial title later if their reclassification request is rejected.

CSEA PALS in Washington



AFSCME President Jerry McEntee makes a point to CSEA President Joe McDermott, right, and Congressman Michael R. McNulty (D-Troy). CSEA and AFSCME hosted a legislative breakfast during training for CSEA's federal political action liaisons (PALS).



CSEA REGION VI Federal PAL Florence Tripi talks with Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-Rochester) during the legislative breakfast in Washington, D.C.

CSEA EXECUTIVE VICE President Danny Donohue, right, and Cheryl Sheller, director of CSEA's PEOPLE program, talk with Congressman George J. Hochbrueckner (D-Centereach). PEOPLE is AFSCME's federal political action program, in which CSEA is an active participant.



AFSCME PRESIDENT Jerry McEntee poses for a photo with Congressman Major R. Owens (D-Brooklyn) during the CSEA/AFSCME legislative breakfast.



WASHINGTON, D.C. — CSEA's newly appointed federal political action liaisons (PALS) got a chance to test their skills during a training program in the nation's Capital.

AFSCME offered an extensive training program to the CSEA PALS, each of whom is assigned a federal legislator. They learned about federal issues that concern CSEA and how to contact and lobby their legislators.

Then they used their new knowledge during a legislative breakfast. They had the opportunity to discuss federal child care legislation, cuts in New York state and other important issues.

"The training and the breakfast were great successes," said CSEA Federal Issues Coordinator Joe Conway. "We've already had an impact, with the House of Representatives approving restorations in the Department of Labor budget and child care legislation."

Jerry Klepner, AFSCME director of legislation, wrote a letter praising the role CSEA played in convincing legislators to approve the child care legislation.

Both the child care and Department of Labor legislation must also pass the Senate.

SERVING NOTICE TO SUNY



PAPER WORK — PLENTY OF IT! SUNY Chancellor Bruce Johnstone, seated in photo at left, reaches to receive a stack of petitions signed by CSEA members in opposition to a proposed plan to institute parking fees at SUNY campuses. The petitions were presented to the chancellor during a recent statewide SUNY labor/management meeting. Members of the CSEA SUNY Labor/Management Committee, above photo, also used the meeting to discuss concerns about the impact of budget cuts on SUNY. Other issues discussed included improving career opportunities and problems with U-grades.

Union complaints shed some light on a dark situation at SIDC

By Lilly Gioia
CSEA Communications Associate

STATEN ISLAND — Things went from bad to worse before they finally started getting better at the Multiply Disabled Unit (MDU) at Staten Island Developmental Center (SIDC).

In the process, management left staff and clients literally groping in the dark, CSEA Local 429 President John "Bunny" Jackson said.

Such as when electricity failed and lights went out in the MDU. Supervisors simply handed out flashlights to employees and pretended it was business as usual, Jackson said.

"It was real dangerous, but they never declared a state of emergency and failed to notify the union," he complained.

"CSEA had been calling the electrical problems to management's attention for several days, but supervisors paid no heed. It's just another example of the inexcusably sloppy supervision that was allowed on the MDU."

Jackson said complaints by the union to the facility director's office fell on deaf ears, leading to anger and frustration after months of criticizing the inept staffing direction.

"They didn't even have basic things like soap or enough pajamas for the clients," Jackson said.

CSEA persisted in demanding an audit

of patient-staff ratios at the MDU, citing what the union called the "deplorable conditions" of the unit.

Jackson laid the blame for intolerable conditions rights on management's doorstep, charging facility Director Bob Witkowsky with using poor judgment in selecting management appointees.

When the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) conducted the MDU audit demanded by CSEA, both the team leader and deputy director, who were appointed by Witkowsky, were removed and replaced with staff from other facilities.

Under the new supervision, staffing levels were immediately increased and CSEA says there is a concerted effort under way to restore the unit to adequate functioning levels. Jackson said he's relieved that OMRDD finally stepped in to replace those responsible for many of the problems at the unit.

"It was just totally aggravating to watch SIDC management allow the unit to deteriorate, neglecting the safety of both patients and staff," said CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Bart Brier. Brier said CSEA worked hard to get the MDU program operational over five years ago.

CSEA wins class-action arbitration ruling

OMH must respect seniority in community residences

By Ron Wofford
CSEA Communications Associate

GOWANDA — State Office of Mental Health (OMH) management must respect seniority rights when staffing state-operated community residence (SOCR) facilities.

That fundamental, very important fact has been upheld in a class-action grievance filed by CSEA on behalf of employees at the Gowanda Psychiatric Center.

An arbitrator agreed with CSEA's contention that OMH is obligated to fill residential program aide and assistant I (RPAs) positions at SOCRs according to the contract when applicants attempt to transfer from a different title, such as mental hygiene therapy aide (MHTA).

CSEA Local 408 President Wayne Jones filed the class-action grievance in 1987 in behalf of his CSEA members when Gowanda management ignored seniority when staffing an on-campus SOCR.

"I filed under class action to ensure that this important issue was carried forward," Jones said. "Many others had filed, but often individual members get harassed and drop their grievances. They can harass me all they want; I don't give a damn. When we're right, we are right!"

The arbitrator agreed, and Jones said that ruling should be helpful to CSEA members and their locals at other OMH facilities.

"We had several well-qualified members with substantial seniority who were denied appointment because the Governor's Office of Employee Relations advised the facility they didn't have to regard seniority rights (in appointing RPAs at SOCRs)," Jones said.

Among those denied appointments were MHTAs Peggy Long and Alfreda Ruolo, both with 15 years of seniority, and Cynthia Eaton, with 23 years of seniority. The three complained they were passed over in favor of males with less seniority in part because



management preferred male staff at SOCRs.

Male vs. female issue

"This male-female issues really boils my buns," Long said. "We three already worked on all-male wards, and we have had the necessary training. Besides, there's more than just the physical part; you have to help the clients deal with delusional thoughts, talk to them and help them work it out."

"The majority of cases are from alcohol and drug abuse," Ruolo said, "and we're qualified to assist in their treatment, too."

"There would be no need for filing all these grievances if they (state administration) were doing what they should be doing," Jones added.

The grievants were uncertain whether to pursue SOCR slots already filled, and were leaning toward awaiting new openings.

"I would still be interested in an RPA position," said Eaton, "but what would happen if we bumped people who have been in the job for two years? There would have to be resentment from those who would be displaced."

The on-campus SOCR at Gowanda Psychiatric Center houses 20 patients, with nine direct-care staff for all three shifts.



GOWANDA PSYCHIATRIC CENTER CSEA LOCAL 408 President Wayne Jones discusses an important class-action arbitration ruling upholding job transfer and seniority rights with MHTAs Peggy Long, Cynthia Eaton and Alfreda Ruolo.

Deadlines near in CSEA delegates, board, region elections

Important deadlines are fast approaching in several CSEA elections.

Wednesday, April 25, is the deadline for ballots to be returned in elections to select 218 CSEA delegates to AFSCME's Convention June 25-29 in Miami, Fla. Ballots must be received by 8 a.m. April 25 at the Independent Election Corporation of America in Lake Success.

Friday, April 27 is the deadline for nominating petitions to be received at CSEA Headquarters in elections to fill three vacant seats on the union's statewide Board of Directors. Nominating petitions must be received not later than 5 p.m. April 27 for vacant Executive, Motor Vehicles and Mental Hygiene/Region 5 board seats.

Elections of officers of CSEA's six

regions continue on schedule. Friday, April 20 is the deadline for region officer candidates to provide election statements and/or photographs for printing in the April 30 edition of *The Public Sector*. Candidates should refer to the letter advising them of their qualification as a candidate for the guidelines. Drawings for ballot positions will be held on Monday, April 23.

ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT PROGRAM

"Worth all the effort"

The client lay contorted on a black stretcher pad. His deformed body never seemed to be at rest; spasms jerked his short arms and tremors raced down his stubby legs. Feeding him is a difficult, messy and often dangerous process.

By Daniel X. Campbell
CSEA Communications Associate

WILTON — "If this fits right, he'll be able to be in an almost upright, sitting position," said John Plantier, working on a special feeding chair he designed for the client. "He might feel safer and that might help the other workers in feeding and caring for him."

Plantier, a maintenance assistant, is doing what he does best: modifying equipment to fit specific requirements of a client at Wilton Developmental Center and saving taxpayers money.

Plantier, a member of CSEA Local 416, created a unique feeding chair for this client's special needs. The feeding chair is a combination of padding, pillows and props positioned to lift and support the client, freeing him from the flat stretcher where he has spent much of his 30 years of life.

The moment of truth

With great care, staffers slowly ease the client into the contraption. Support belts criss-cross the client's body; a seat belt is firmly secured and a specially-designed feeding tray is snapped into position. For the first time in years the client is secure and sitting upright, a look of anticipation spreading across his face. The spasms and tremors seem to lessen.

It's another success story for Plantier and the Adaptive Equipment Program at Wilton.

Wilton Developmental Center became a part of the pilot project of the state's Adaptive Equipment Program in the early 1980s and has been one of a number of participating state developmental centers ever since. Under the program, clients' wheelchairs and other equipment are upgraded, reinforced and maintained to reduce maintenance and replacement costs. Equipment is modified whenever possible to further save money.

It pays for itself

"We have an equipment budget of \$13,000, but we save that and more

each and every year," said Plantier's supervisor, Mario Massa. "I think we probably save the cost of the program, including our two salaries, plus that of a half-time staffer."

Tax dollars are saved each time the life of a wheelchair is extended or a piece of equipment modified because Medicaid funding, which provides the wheelchairs and special equipment, is not being spent.

"John's work and the work of the department and program provides special services directly to the center at a much lower cost and in a shorter time frame than contracting the work out. We can easily prove that," Massa said.

Serving many clients each year

At Wilton the Adaptive Equipment Program provides service to about 180 of the center's 377 clients each year, mostly in the form of preventive maintenance of wheelchairs. When a client first arrives at Wilton, the wheelchair is overhauled and reinforced with durable plastic solid seats and backs. Chairs are maintained on a regular basis thereafter, extending the life of the equipment.

"It saves a lot of money," Plantier said. "A regular chair costs \$350, and



CSEA MEMBER JOHN PLANTIER makes life easier for clients at Wilton Developmental Center and saves taxpayers money at the same time. The maintenance assistant maintains and modifies equipment, such as a regular wheelchair, left, and feeding chair, right.

then they have to be modified with stronger seats and backs. Motorized chairs can cost up to \$8,000."

Modification of equipment to meet individual client needs also saves both time and money.

Contracting out would be costly

"If we had to wait for a private contractor to bid on making a feeding chair, it would cost \$4,000 and take six months or more just to get the chair in here, not counting fitting the chair to the client," Massa said. "So this program pays for itself and saves the taxpayers money all year long."

Plantier also modifies beds to accommodate hidden crib sides so the beds look normal during the day but provides the side rails the clients need at night to prevent accidents.

"This is the client's home and we want the bedroom to look like a normal bedroom at home," Plantier explained.

"How much would this cost on the outside?" Massa asked. "Who knows? Here, it's just part of the job."

"It's worth all the effort when you see a client come in here flat on a stretcher and, in a matter of months, because of staff concern, see that same client using a chair to get around, independently, for the first time in his life," Plantier said.

Tony DelBorgo and his seeing eye dog, Injun



Tony DelBorgo:

Disability doesn't stop him

Department of Social Services. He's had several jobs with the county and now works in the Child Support Services Unit.

DelBorgo traces complaints from people who have not received a support check. He uses a computer with a magnification screen that allows him to read forms and memos.

While he has progressed in his career, he would like the county to provide more promotional opportunities for the handicapped.

"You have to stay motivated," DelBorgo said. "Just because you reach one level, you have to keep reaching."

His constant companion is Injun, a black Labrador retriever and a seeing eye dog. His wife's dog is Injun's brother.

While he resisted getting a seeing eye dog, DelBorgo felt his lack of peripheral vision made it inevitable — he had to constantly bend over to see the ground.

After a mugging more than seven years ago, DelBorgo decided he and Loretta would never be endangered again. He contacted "Guiding Eyes for the Blind" to get the dogs.

"Injun is my security," said DelBorgo, who walks to work from his downtown White Plains apartment. "He gives me more security and allows me to stand up straighter."

DelBorgo's personal philosophy stems from his life experiences battling attitudes and proving himself to doubters.

"The world won't give you a darn thing. You have to work for what you want," he said. "If it was God's decision to give me half a loaf, then it is up to me to make up for the rest."

By Anita Manley
CSEA Communications Associate

WHITE PLAINS — Tony DelBorgo holds down a full-time job, marches in rallies, supports himself and his wife and has been a foster parent.

Unusual? Not really. But for DelBorgo, it was a little tougher than for most people.

DelBorgo is legally blind.

"It's not easy to convince people you're useful," he said recently. "You have to fight obstacles so-called normal people put in your way. You have to be willing to persevere at all costs. You can't let the hurts get to you."

A Westchester County employee and member of CSEA Local 860, DelBorgo said it was fight, anger and desire that drove him to achieve a normal life. Growing up wasn't easy. Schools weren't equipped to handle a sight-impaired student and his self esteem took a beating during his teen years when other youngsters were dating and active in sports.

Born a month too soon, DelBorgo was an "incubator" baby whose optical nerve never developed. As a result, he has a neurological deficiency that, while allowing him some vision, prevents him from seeing, for example, distinguishing features of a person's face. He has no peripheral vision.

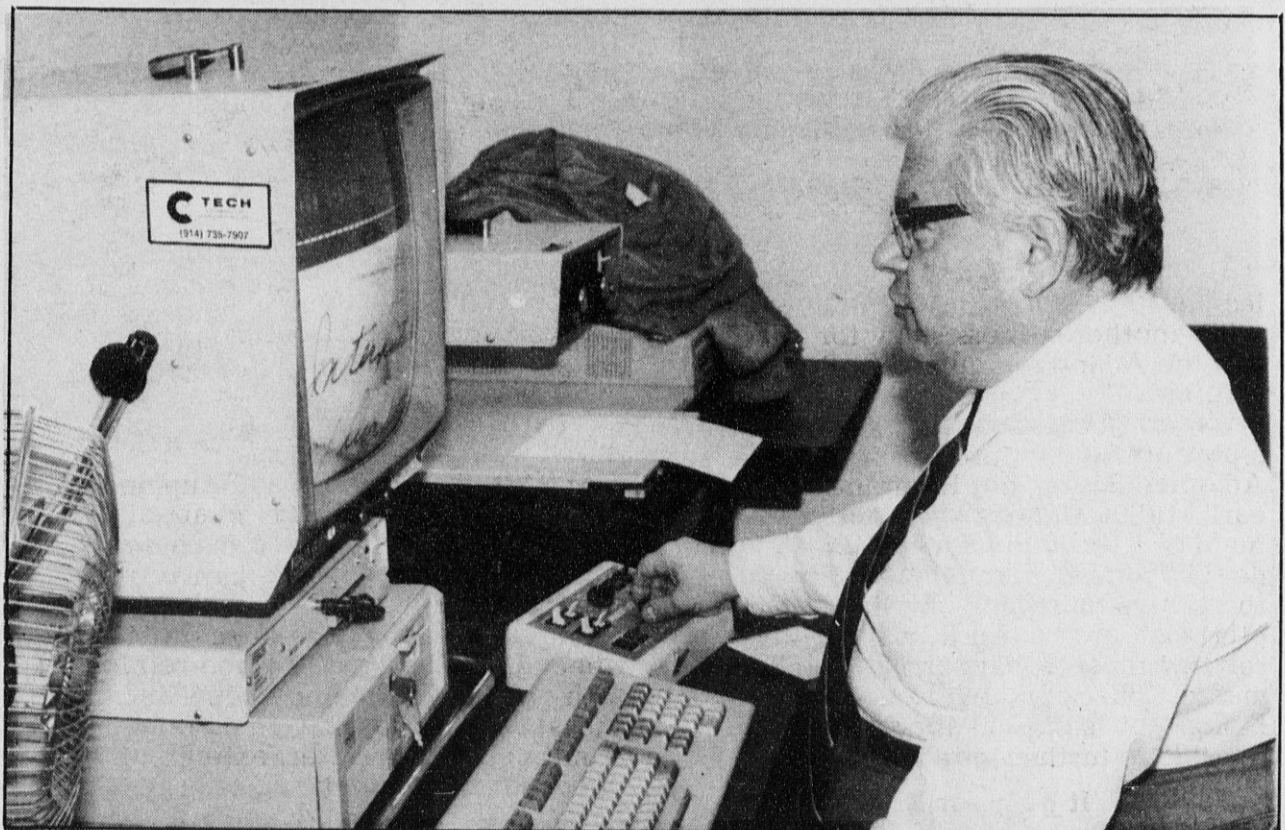
Determined to learn marketable skills, DelBorgo attended the New York Institute for the Blind, where he majored in business. He followed that up with a year's training in transcription, secretarial and clerical work at the Lighthouse in New York.

That's where he met his wife, Loretta, who is also visually impaired.

Determined to be self-supporting, DelBorgo went to work for two different insurance companies before getting a job with the Westchester County

"It's not easy to convince people you're useful."

**Tony DelBorgo,
CSEA member**



TONY DELBORGIO DEPENDS on a machine to magnify memos and letters so that he can read for his job in Westchester County's Child Protective Services Unit.

Half of Ramapo employees are upgraded after CSEA threatened to file charges

RAMAPO — More than 80 Town of Ramapo employees have been upgraded after CSEA threatened to file an improper practice (IP) charge against the town.

"The upgradings are a foot in the door . . . and put the employees on an equitable level for upcoming contract negotiations," CSEA Unit President Pauline Goldin said.

About half the town's 165 workers were recommended for upgrading based on the results of a pay equity study CSEA negotiated into a contract with the town four years ago.

Unit President Goldin said she was promised the upgradings would take effect this past January, but town officials voted to change the effective date to July. CSEA threatened to file the IP charge after the town later decided to upgrade police dispatchers in March, four months earlier than everyone else.

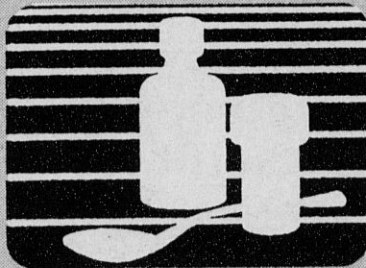
"After we threatened to file the IP, the town agreed to upgrade all 83 employees recommended in the study effective March 17," Goldin said.

"We intend to address other positions in negotiations," Goldin said. "We're not finished. We intend to look into other inequities."

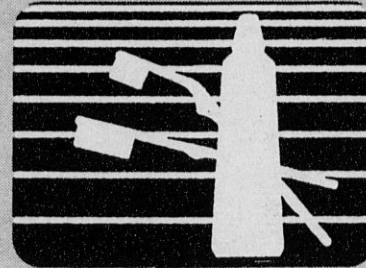


CHECKING THE TOWN OF RAMAPO CONTRACT in preparation for negotiations are CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Glenn Blackman, left, CSEA Unit President Pauline Goldin and CSEA Collective Bargaining Specialist Larry Sparber.

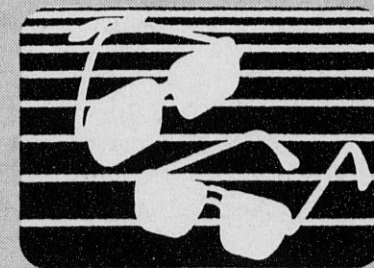
CSEA
EMPLOYEE
BENEFIT FUND



PRESCRIPTION
DRUG



DENTAL
CARE



VISION
CARE

The CSEA Employee Benefit Fund (CSEA EBF) is a negotiated program providing drug prescription, dental and vision care benefits for more than 125,000 CSEA-represented employees in six statewide and more than 260 local government bargaining units. For the benefit of the membership, *The Public Sector* will periodically publish information concerning the CSEA EBF.

CSEA Employee Benefit Fund

(518) 463-4555 or 1-800-342-4274

Watch your mail for an important envelope; it contains your new CSEA Employee Benefit Fund (EBF) prescription drug card. EBF prescription drug cards will be mailed out to eligible CSEA members starting April 19.

The new cards will be effective from May 1 through Oct. 31, 1990.

Eligible CSEA members who do not receive their new EBF Prescription Drug Card by April 26, or if the card they receive is incorrect, should call the CSEA EBF at 1-800-342-4274 (toll free) or (518) 463-4555. Cards should include the names of all eligible dependents.

The EBF Prescription Drug Plan

covers CSEA members in state agencies and those political subdivisions which negotiated for the drug plan.

The EBF Prescription Drug Plan provides brand name prescription drugs for a co-pay of \$3 and generic equivalent drugs for a \$1 co-pay.

The CSEA EBF co-pays are among the lowest in the nation. Last year, while members were paying either \$1 or \$3 co-pays for each prescription filled, EBF paid out more than \$26 million to cover medicine for CSEA members.

The EBF encourages members to ask their doctor for generics wherever possible. Generic medication has the

same active ingredients and strength as brand name drugs; the only difference between a brand name drug and its generic equivalent is the price. Generic drugs, like all medicine, are tested and approved by the FDA only when they meet stringent standards for safety, purity, effectiveness and strength.

The use of generics not only saves the member the difference in co-pay — \$1 compared to \$3 — but provides a substantial savings to the EBF as well. Generic drugs cost much less than brand name drugs, and EBF passes the savings on to employees through the maintenance of the low co-pays.



AT YOUR SERVICE

YOUR UNION BENEFITS

A REFERENCE GUIDE TO CSEA MEMBER SERVICES AND BENEFITS

CSEA Toll-Free

The union's toll-free telephone number — **1-800-342-4146** — is your direct link to CSEA Headquarters.

When you call the toll-free number, a recorded message describes the choices to put you through to the right place for the help you need.

You need a touch-tone telephone to complete your call without operator assistance. If you aren't calling from a touch-tone telephone, an operator will pick up and complete your call at the end of the message.

If you know the extension number of the individual that you're trying to reach, you can press "O" plus the extension number on your touch-tone telephone at any point during the recorded message and be connected.

If you don't know the extension, the message will give you the following choices:

* For Field Operations or the Empire Plan/Health Benefits Committee, press number 1

* For disciplinarys, grievances and other legal matters, press number 2.

* For Communications, the Executive Offices or Political Action, press number 3.

* If you have a question concerning dues, membership or agency shop, CSEA group insurance other than health or need to talk to the Finance Department, press number 4.

Employee Benefit Fund

The CSEA Employee Benefit Fund is a CSEA-administered trust fund which provides certain supplemental negotiated benefits for state employees and participating local government employees. It currently administers Dental Care, Vision Care, Prescription Drug, and Package 7 Benefits Plans.

For questions regarding any of the benefits or for assistance with negotiations, call:

**1-800-342-4274 or (518) 463-4555 or write:
CSEA Employee Benefit Fund
14 Corporate Woods Boulevard
Albany, NY 12211**

Education and Training

CSEA can help you prepare for civil service exams with low-cost study booklets and free-to-borrow video tapes. A small selection of audio tapes are available to the visually impaired.

CSEA also provides educational workshops for union activists eager to learn more about their union responsibilities.

To request booklet order forms or to obtain information on union workshops, call CSEA headquarters at **1-800-342-4146**. For information on videotapes, contact your CSEA regional office.

Safety

To report unsafe or unhealthy working conditions or serious accidents, call your CSEA labor relations specialist. For occupational safety and health information, call CSEA headquarters at **1-800-342-4146**.

AFSCME Advantage Credit Card

THE AFSCME MasterCard has one of the lowest interest rates around — 5 percent above the prime lending rate. There is no annual fee.

To obtain an application form, call your CSEA regional office.

The card is issued by the Bank of New York. If you apply for a card and there is no response within four weeks, call the bank toll-free at **1-800-942-1977**.

AFSCME Advantage Legal Services Program

The AFSCME Advantage Union Privilege Legal Service Program makes it possible for you to easily obtain high quality, affordable legal services for many personal legal matters. For more details and a list of the participating lawyers in your area, call the CSEA office in your region.

Insurance

CSEA offers several insurance programs at low group rates and provides the convenience of automatic payroll deduction.

These voluntary group plans include: Basic Group Life, Supplemental Life, Income Protection Program, Hospital Indemnity Plan, Family Protection Plan, Auto Insurance and Homeowners Insurance. **For more details, call 1-800-366-5273 or (518) 381-1600.**

Health Insurance

For health insurance questions concerning Empire Plan coverage, call the appropriate following telephone number:

EMPIRE PLAN	
Blue Cross Claims	1-800-342-9815 or (518) 465-0171
Metropolitan Claims	1-800-942-4640
Participating Providers	1-800-537-0010
Empire Plan Health Call (Hospital admission approval/surgical review)	1-800-992-1213

Retirement

If you are retiring soon, it's important that you select the proper option from the Employees' Retirement system.

By using the services of a CSEA-provided retirement counselor, you'll be able to plan for a lifestyle in your retirement years that takes into account your anticipated expenses.

For more information, call 1-800-366-5273. General retirement information and retiree membership information are available by contacting **CSEA's Retiree Department at CSEA Headquarters 1-800-342-4146 or (518) 434-0191.**

Technical retirement benefit questions (i.e., eligibility for service buy-back, transfer of membership), requests for retirement allowance applications, and requests for retirement estimate applications should be directed to the New York State and Local Retirement Systems at **(518) 474-7736**.

United Buying Service

Get big savings on consumer products through the union's official discount buying service. UBS combines the power of millions of members to negotiate discounts on a whole range of major name discount products. Everything from automobiles to major appliances, video to home furnishings and more. The program is free to CSEA members and carries no service charges. **To place an order or for pricing information, call 1-800-336-4UBS or 1-800-877-4UBS.** UBS has also set up a hotline for information on limited special monthly offers available only to CSEA members. **For a listing of specials, call the hotline at 1-203-967-2980.**

Grievances, Disciplines

If you believe you have a grievance, immediately contact your local grievance representative or shop steward. If they are unavailable, contact your CSEA Unit or Local President, or your CSEA Labor Relations Specialist at the appropriate regional office. Do not delay if you believe you have a problem; grievances must be filed on a timely basis.

CSEA REGIONAL OFFICES

LONG ISLAND REGION 1 OFFICE
Hauppauge Atrium Building
300 Vanderbilt Motor Pkwy.
Hauppauge, NY 11788
(516) 273-2280
(516) 435-0962

SOUTHERN REGION 3 OFFICE
Rural Route 1
Box 34, Old Route 9
Fishkill, NY 12524
(914) 896-8180

CENTRAL REGION 5 OFFICE
6595 Kirkville Road
East Syracuse, NY 13057
(315) 433-0050

METROPOLITAN REGION 2 OFFICE
Suite 1500
11 Broadway
New York, NY 10004
(212) 514-9200

CAPITAL REGION 4 OFFICE
Suite 402
1215 Western Avenue
Albany, NY 12203
(518) 489-5424

WESTERN REGION 6 OFFICE
482 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14202
(716) 886-0391

CSEA STATEWIDE HEADQUARTERS
143 Washington Avenue, Albany, N.Y. 12210
1-800-342-4146 (toll-free) (518) 434-0191

APRIL

28

FIGHT FOR THE LIVING

MOURN FOR THE DEAD

The workplace is America's forgotten endangered environment. Each day more than 20,000 of our fellow workers are injured or killed on the job due to toxic substances, explosions and unsafe working conditions.

More than 100,000 workers die each year from job-related injuries and disease.

April 28 is Workers Memorial Day. AFL-CIO unions observe April 28 as a time to remember those who have suffered and died in the workplace.

CSEA locals are encouraged to mark the

occasion by wearing black armbands, observing a moment of silence, conducting a memorial service or organizing other local activities.

But mourning isn't enough. CSEA remembers those who have paid the supreme price, and we renew our commitment to make the workplace safer and healthier.



**REMEMBERS AMERICA'S
WORKERS KILLED ON THE JOB**

