ROBERT THOMPSON, a member of the Institutional Unit negotiating team, from Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center Local 409.

GROUND RULES OUTLINED — CSEA President William L. McGowan, upper right, and Meyer S. Frucher, lower left, director of the Governor's Office of Employee Relations, discuss ground rules yesterday on how negotiations will be conducted. Today both sides met again and exchanged their contract demands.

Negotiations

CSEA and the State formally exchanged contract demands today in Albany to begin the task of negotiating new contracts covering 107,000 CSEA-represented state workers in three major bargaining units. The expectedly difficult contract talks will most certainly continue over the next several months, with settlements hopefully reached prior to the March 1, 1982 expiration of the present agreements.

The intense contract talks begun today have impact far beyond the members of the three state bargaining units. Traditionally the CSEA-State contracts have formed the basis for other contract settlements involving public employees at all levels throughout New York State.

Insofar as possible, The Public Sector will keep CSEA members advised of progress in the bargaining process over whatever length of time it takes to reach a satisfactory settlement.

INTENSITY is reflected in faces of Richard Riley, (center photo), left, an Operational team member, and John E. Lowery, of the union's Institutional bargaining team. Riley is president of Helen Hayes Hospital Local 309, and Lowery is president of Goshen Center for Boys Local 554.

ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT team members Doris Josephson of Rockland Psychiatric Center Local 421, left, and Elsie Yudin of New York City Local 418 discuss bargaining issues.
Citizens join ranks of protest

Thousands of angry taxpayers demand to keep road patrol

By Daniel X. Campbell
CSEA Communications Associate

Ballston Spa — "First get your house in financial order, then cut waste and managerial luxury, before you cut services or people."

This was the main message that irate citizens of Saratoga County delivered to their Board of Supervisors at a recent public hearing on the Board's proposed $51 million budget, which includes a proposed 23.45 percent tax increase and the elimination of 100 public employee jobs.

The message was brought home with the delivery of 24,000 signatures of support for the Saratoga County deputy sheriffs, who man the road patrol, which the budget would abolish, and by a spectacular show of support from 19 volunteer fire departments which each sent one piece of firefighting equipment to ring the Saratoga County Office Complex the night of the meeting.

The 'public hearing' itself was another example of county mismanagement as the board tried to limit the number of taxpayers allowed into the building to 280 while more than 500 showed up. The angry crowd was not calmed by the county's efforts to broadcast the proceedings over a public address system into the cold night. The volunteer fire departments provided free coffee and doughnuts to the milling citizens outside.

Inside the facilities building, the board did not do any better in its attempt to sell the 'your money or your life' budget package. After a brief attempt by the board to explain the document, 42 Saratoga County residents spoke on the subject. They criticized the board for failure to plan adequately for the public hearing; criticized the board for its plan to eliminate the Saratoga County Deputy Sheriff's road patrol. Speaker after speaker spoke in support of the deputy sheriffs, for the general county workforce and against the board's lack of professionalism in their management of the county.

Three boxes of petitions containing 24,000 signatures of residents against the Saratoga County budget cuts were delivered to the board by Robert Prendergast, a deputy sheriff and a county taxpayer.

"We only have 98 men in the highway department," Larry O'Bryan, first vice president of the Saratoga County CSEA local, told the audience, "not the 115 the board thinks we have. If this budget cut goes through we will lose more personnel and we will not be able to handle the county's snow removal operation, let alone all the special snow clearing requests the board members make."

Russ Bowers, president of the CSEA local and a deputy sheriff, pointed out a few questionable increases in the supposed tight document. "They cut the budget to the bone and increased the dog shelter budget by 53 percent!" Bowers shouted. "They cut the sheriff's budget by 37 percent, but increased the promotion department budget by 27 percent, but that department doesn't have any employees!" The crowd applauded loudly.

Capital Region Second Vice President Joan Tobin told the board of the layoff experiences of the state.

"Layoffs don't work, they cost the employer more in the long run than they save. Proper management of the situation can lead to other solutions."

CSEA Field Representative William Lochner summed up the union's presentation saying, "We have offered you a complete budget analysis to help you find possible additional funds. We can not write the budget for you, but we may be able to help you find alternatives to your present plan."

RUSS BOWERS, president of the Saratoga Co. local, informs taxpayers of increases in the bare bones budget.

WITH CAMERAS ROLLING, Capital Region Second Vice President Joan Tobin tells the board that layoffs cost more than they aim to save in their budget proposal.

A CROWD OF SEVERAL HUNDRED irate taxpayers fills the public hearing room while a few hundred more wait outside and listen to the meeting over a public address system.
Sewanhaka drops contracting-out plan; jobs of 140 cafeteria workers saved

MINEOLA — CSEA action last month saved the jobs of 140 cafeteria workers in the Sewanhaka Central High School District.

The victory came as the school board — following intervention by CSEA — dropped consideration of bids from outside contractors to operate the cafeterias in four district high schools.

A committee of CSEA unit members and Field Representative Harold Krangley had met with school officials and persuaded them that the contracting-out plan would cripple the district's control over its program and introduce less reliable employees into the school.

More importantly, a food-service consultant introduced by CSEA advised the school officials that the cafeterias were losing money because of mismanagement — and probably would turn a profit if reorganized.

Unit members picketed in rain before a board meeting set to consider bids that had been secured from outside contractors, and the board rejected all bids.

Instead, a joint labor-management committee was formed to pursue the consultant’s recommendations.

The initial negotiations and the study were being handled by Nettie Romano, Tina Kareich, Jean Merenda, Mary Lotito and others of the CSEA cafeteria units in the four schools operated by the district, with the advice of Krangley. The unit is part of Nassau Local 830.

"The only objection we had was that they sought bids before they notified the union," Krangley asserted.

"The board was frightened by a $30,000 loss figure for last year, and rightly so," he continued. "But, upon examination of all the facts, the district decided to stay with its CSEA employees.

"We are sure the consultant can show them how to make a profit."

Katz chairs new CSEA judicial board

ALBANY — Eva Katz of Region III has been named chairperson and Joseph Johnson of Region II has been named co-chairperson of the newly-created statewide Judicial Board.

Also appointed to the board were Ed Garcia, Region I; Dennis Tobin, Region II; Jack Whalen, Region III; Brian P. Ruff, Region IV; Sarah Soule, Region V; and Florence Tripi, Region V.

The panel was established by a change in the CSEA by-laws approved in October at the annual delegates convention.

"The new statewide Judicial Board was designed to correct two major defects in our former system," explained statewide president William L. McGowan.

Designated an annual event

Health fair successful

WEST BRENTWOOD — Because of its success last month, the employee assistant program organizer of the Health Fair at Pilgrim Psychiatric Center has decided to make the fair an annual event and extend its duration to a full day.

The first fair was held in October from 2 to 7 p.m. and was attended by up to 200 employees who received a variety of free health tests and information from health organizations.

"We gave everyone who attended an evaluation form. Most of them asked that we run the fair again on an annual basis and to extend it up to two days. I don’t know if we will run it for two days, but I am sure we will hold it for a full day at least," said Margaret Fields, the EAP chairperson at Pilgrim.

Visitors to the fair, held in Pilgrim Building 29, were able to take preliminary physicals, Fields said, including glaucoma screening, anemia, blood pressure, and dental checks. The results of the tests were put on a form employees could take to their doctors for follow-up physicals.

In addition, various health organizations, including Alcoholics Anonymous, the American Cancer Society, American Heart Society to Overeaters Anonymous had tables where employees could receive information on health.

"The purpose of the fair was to help people get a reasonable assessment of their health," Fields said.

Monroe County stewards complete training program

ROCHESTER — More than 40 union stewards will be better equipped to process and follow up on fellow members' grievances as a result of a steward training program initiated recently for members of Monroe County Local 828.

"The steward's duties represent the basic foundation of why any union exists, to protect its members from abuses by management," said field representative Tom Pomidoro.

Pomidoro was assisted in conveying the duties of the steward and interpretation of the contract by Local 828 President George Crownley, Monroe County employee unit President Florence Tripi and field representative Ray Duchay.

"Knowledge of the contract and the steps of grievance appeal are absolutely essential to protecting our fellow members' rights," said Ms. Tripi. "Because many times the technicality of filing late or some other legal point is used to deny a grievance rather than address the issue underlying the filing."

The newly trained stewards were given copies of the contract, a steward's handbook and other materials that will enable them to carry out the duties of a union steward.

EVA KATZ — Chairperson of newly-created CSEA Judicial Board.
Regional negotiators keep members informed on talks

ROCHESTER — The long and probably arduous task of negotiating a new contract between CSEA and the State of New York on behalf of some 110,000 state employees began in Albany this week. But before the union negotiators who traveled the farthest to participate left the Western region, they conducted informational meetings at three different locations throughout the region.

The negotiating process was explained, and an outline of what topics will be subject to negotiation was given. CSEA Region VI President Robert L. Lattimer told interested members that "your representatives deserve your support as they undertake the very serious task of trying to implement your desires into a fair contract."

"They will be under a lot of pressure and will be called on to sacrifice a great deal of their personal time and energy in behalf of you and the matters given the greatest priority on the contract demand solicitations that every state worker received," Lattimer continued.

The Region VI negotiating team members are Liz Watts, Howell Park Memorial Institute Local 303, and Debbie Lee, West Seneca Developmental Center Local 427, Institutional bargaining unit; Tom Warzel, SUNY Buffalo Local 602, and John Wallenbeck, Hornell Local 607, Operational unit; and Elaine Todd, DOL, Buffalo District Local 352 and Mary Ann Bentham, SUNY Fredonia Local 607, Administrative unit.

Questions and concerns voiced at the sessions ranged from how much impact the political climate will have on the negotiations to "nitty-gritty" issues such as clothing and uniform allowances, with wage increases in the highest priority.

After pointing out that some legitimate concerns of members were not necessarily proper contract negotiating items, team members took note of members' concerns regarding pass days, sick time, licensed practical nurse problems, abuse of management rights, job descriptions, length of the contract, upgrading of job titles, holidays, increments and clerical career ladders, among others.

Noting the intense interest of those in attendance, veteran negotiator Mary Ann Bentham assured the membership "We want what you want. We know it's going to be difficult but we're going to fight like hell to bring back a fair contract that we all can live with."

Nurses confer on common causes

SYRACUSE — Licensed practical nurses in Region V are not letting geography keep them from sharing a common cause with their brothers and sisters across the state.

Recently at an LPN committee meeting, representatives from Willard, Utica, St. Lawrence, Elmira, and Binghamton psychiatric centers and from Oxford Veterans' Home met with James Moore, regional president, to discuss common issues.

Foremost is the continuing struggle to reclassify the LPN title to conform with more modern duty requirements.

In addition to hearing a statewide committee report, the group heard a recent grievance decision at Willard P.C., and reviewed the proposed demands currently being negotiated for LPNs.

The meeting agenda also included further definition of LPN work site duties and a suggested list of duties submitted for a questionnaire.

Commenting on the progress of the committee, Moore said, "I am extremely pleased with the amount of informational input we have received at these LPN committee meetings. The ideas that we exchange are invaluable in helping to improve the positions of LPNs across the state. That is our goal and there is no doubt we can reach it if we remain united and work hard."

Correction

Typographical errors, although usually harmless, are none-the-less embarrassing when they are discovered in print. In the previous edition, however, a one letter typo completely changed the meaning of a sentence and the result was anything but harmless. In a sentence dealing with budget difficulties in Saratoga County, Saratoga County CSEA Local President Russ Bowers was quoted as saying, "The idea to put the road patrol in a highly residential county with a high senior citizen population and growing young families is stupid." The serious typo involved the fourth word of that sentence when "g" became a "p" and changed the entire intent of the statement. The sentence should have read, "The idea to GUT the road patrol in a highly residential county with a high senior citizen population and growing young families is stupid."

Donahue opposes S.S. revisions

MINESOLA — The president of Local 830 has called for Congressional resistance to proposed changes in the Social Security system that could adversely affect the retirement pensions of CSEA members.

After attending a Social Security forum conducted by Congressman Norman F. Lent, Local 830 President Jerry Donahue wrote to Lent to express his concern over proposed changes in the system that would reduce payments to those receiving payments from other pension systems.

Donahue told Lent that the proposed changes could affect all presently employed and retired public employees in the Tier I, II and III categories as well as workers in the private sector on company and union pensions.

"As my members are your constituents, I am requesting that you take immediate action to reverse the trend that is impacting negatively on public employees. You represent us and we cannot accept these proposed changes," Donahue wrote.
HANNIBAL — CSEA members in the Hannibal Central School District unit recently received a favorable PERB decision regarding their improper practice charge against the district.

The charge was filed last December after the district had transferred bus-washing duties, previously performed by a driver, to non-unit mechanics in November 1980.

CSEA learned of the contemplated change in August 1980 and notified the school district of its objection and willingness to discuss the matter, but the district never responded.

In the charge CSEA contended that for 10 years the washing duties were done by a driver who was duly compensated according to an hourly rate provision in the contract. According to past practice, the washing duties were done by a driver who was duly compensated according to an hourly rate provision in the contract.

The union further charged the school district violated the terms of the written agreement when it unilaterally turned bus-washing chores over to non-unit mechanics.

The school district argued that considerable money could be saved by assigning the washing duties to non-unit employees.

The district was directed to reimburse Joyce Cummings for the hours worked by the mechanics who washed buses, and to negotiate with CSEA any further decisions to contract out.

Hannibal bus driver wins IP decision

NEW YORK CITY — For the second time in six months, an arbitrator has ordered the state to reinstate an employee brought up on charges and suspended for asserting his rights during an interrogation.

Arbitrator James Cooper has issued an interim decision ordering South Beach Psychiatric Center (SBPC) to reinstate Local 446 member David Carp, a mental hygiene therapy aide at the center. Cooper found that SBPC “lacked probable cause to suspend David Carp prior to a determination” of the merits of the charges brought against him. One of those charges was Carp’s alleged refusal to cooperate in an interrogation.

Incredibly, even though the arbitrator ordered Carp reinstated, SBPC refused to grant him his wages lost during his suspension. CSEA had to go back to the arbitrator to get his supplementary award granting Carp the back pay to which he was entitled.

Although Cooper has yet to issue a decision regarding the charges of misconduct brought against Carp, Metropolitan Region II Field Representative Bart Brier called the interim decision a significant victory for CSEA in the continuing battle with the Office of Mental Health’s departments of Employee Relations and Manpower Management over employees’ rights during interrogations.

“The bureaucrats simply don’t understand collective bargaining agreements between CSEA and the state,” Brier charged. “If they did, they wouldn’t suspend employees for exercising their contractual right to have union representatives with them during interrogations.”

Carp was scheduled for an interrogation on Sept. 15 concerning his alleged misconduct. The interrogation began as scheduled with Carp’s being represented by SBPC President George Boncoraglio and Brier. SBPC Personnel Officer Howard Roelofs adjourned the interrogation after a half hour, and although Boncoraglio and Brier told him that they could not be available to continue the interrogation the next day, Roelofs directed Carp to report on Sept. 16 for the continuation of the interrogation.

Carp reported as directed, but, as his union representatives were not present, he declined to answer any questions, citing his right to union representation during an interrogation. Roelofs then suspended Carp.

“The misconduct charges were so phony that Roelofs suspended Carp for insisting on union representation,” Boncoraglio said. “The whole thing was ridiculous, especially since Brier and I represented Carp at the start of the interrogation. The interrogation should not have been continued without us.”

The arbitrator’s interim decision focused on whether or not SBPC had probable cause to believe that Carp’s “continued presence on the job represents a potential danger to persons or property or would severely interfere with operations.”

The arbitrator found the incidents which resulted in Carp’s being served a notice of discipline and his refusal to be interrogated without union representation did not merit his suspension.

In a similar decision in June, an arbitrator ruled that New York Psychiatric Center (NYPI) had violated the rights of NYPI member Edith Rawlings by suspending her for refusing to answer questions during an interrogation without union representation.
Reagan's corporate tax plan
a big gift to big business

By Gary G. Fryer
CSEA Director of Communications

WASHINGTON — For those who think the Reagan Administration is incapable of celebrating the Christmas spirit, take heart. The Administration is bestowing what could be the biggest gift of all time on big business — the end of the corporate income tax.

While millions of American workers are watching their earnings disappear each week in income tax deductions, the Reagan Administration has announced tax guidelines that allow ailing corporations eligible for tax incentives to sell those incentives to wealthy corporations which should not be eligible for any tax break.

The result of this intentional loophole, according to the Wall Street Journal, is a $3 billion corporate income tax break for business this year, and tax breaks over the next six years that could easily exceed $27 billion. Some experts say that left unchanged, the new tax rules could virtually abolish the corporate income tax in America, leaving the entire burden of supporting federal services on individual taxpayers.

Ford Motor Company, and International Business Machines Corporation, for example, have been reported to be on the verge of concluding a typical deal under the new rules that would beat the federal treasury out of nearly $179 million in corporate income tax from the profit-rich IBM.

The prestigious national news magazine, Newsweek, reported this outline of the transaction, said to be typical of how the wheeling and dealing will occur under the Administration's plan.

New tax incentives, combined with tax credits already provided in tax laws, allow corporations to "write off" up to 40 percent of new capital investments, like machinery, in the first tax year after purchase. But nearly half of U.S. companies including Ford, already pay little or no corporate income tax for various reasons. They, therefore, can't benefit from the incentives. Enter the new rules.

To beat the system, Ford will sell $300 million worth of machinery it now owns to IBM. In exchange, IBM will give Ford $78 million as a down payment and a promissory note from IBM for an additional $222 million. Ford then signs a lease to use the same equipment it just sold and the lease payment will cover precisely the amount IBM owes on the promissory note.

As a result, no money changes hands except for the original $78 million that acts as a "shot in the arm" for Ford, which is experiencing serious cash problems. IBM now technically owns the machinery and writes off up to 40 percent of the purchase price to receive $168 million in tax credits over a five year period on an initial cash investment of $78 million, the down payment.

Ford gets a $78 million cash benefit and retains control and use of its machinery. IBM gets a $168 million corporate income tax credit it would not otherwise be entitled to and, presumably, the federal government must tax other sources — such as low and middle income taxpayers — to make up the loss from the corporate tax break.

If you get the impression that this is a boondoggle for big business, you're not alone. Many financial experts and some legislators in Washington share your concerns. Even a conservative economist, Alan Greenspan, has called the new tax plan "food stamps for business.

Why hasn't more been said about this plan? An answer could lie in the ironic timing of disclosure of the new rules that make this plan possible. It was coming out just at the time that David Stockman, chief architect of the Administration's economic program, was coming under fire for disclosing in an interview that Reaganomics was actually a "Trojan horse" for giving back tax money to the wealthy in hopes it would somehow "trickle down" to the poor.

The Stockman admissions, coming at the same time as the new tax rules, clearly outline a conscious attempt by the Administration to strip social programs funded by the government and to give the savings to high income taxpayers and wealthy corporations in the hope that by making the rich richer, the rest of the nation will benefit.

Between Stockman's admissions and a simultaneous flap over National Security Advisor Richard Allen's acceptance of a $1,000 cash "gift" from a Japanese journalist for setting up an interview with Nancy Reagan, the new tax rules were all but ignored by the national news media.

Whatever other problems the Reagan Administration may be experiencing, there can be little doubt that it has been very effective in displaying its generosity to business.
Another win for Local 615

Out-of-title grievance upheld at Upstate Med.

SYRACUSE — CSEA officials have been notified that an out-of-title grievance which it filed on behalf of an account clerk at Upstate Medical Center has been sustained.

The Governor's Office of Employee Relations recently notified CSEA that its grievance filed on behalf of Mary Lou Bristol has been upheld. She is a member of CSEA Local 615 at the Upstate Medical Center facility.

According to Bob Vincent, local president, and Bill LaPoint, chief steward, CSEA presented a third step grievance in September. Ms. Bristol alleged that she was asked to assume the duties of the out-patient billing supervisor, a senior accountant clerk, grade 9, from April 27, to August 27, 1981, while the position was vacant.

Bristol also claimed that during the four month period she instructed and supervised two temporary employees and supervised four regular state-employees; taught billing procedures at five in-service workshops for clerical employees; attended a seminar in the capacity of the outpatient billing supervisor and attended meetings; handled correspondence to be sent to a billing agency and billed and flagged accounts.

A spokesperson for the Medical Center conceded that the Bristol statement of duties was generally correct but questioned her claim of supervisory responsibilities.

After examining the facts, the OER representative found in favor of Ms. Bristol and directed Upstate Medical Center to discontinue the out-of-title work practice.

Unfortunately, due to the fact that the grievance was filed more than ten days following the end of the out-of-title assignment, Bristol was not eligible for compensation for the four month period.

The Bristol decision marks another in the series of recent CSEA victories regarding out-of-title and upgrading grievances filed for employees at the huge upstate medical facility.

CSEA PRESIDENT WILLIAM L. McGOWAN, above right, listens intently as Joe LaValle, left, president of Suffolk Developmental Center Local 430 discusses complaints the local has against the center's administration. McGowan recently went to the facility to participate in a high-level meeting with state officials in an effort to resolve the problems. In photo below, McGowan and LaValle, left foreground, are among several union representatives facing state officials on the other side of the table. The important meeting lasted more than four hours in an effort to end difficulties at the facility.

Union charges Ulster Co. with restraint and coercion; IP filed to protect grievance rights

KINGSTON — Union leaders are reacting strongly to attempts by Ulster County to transfer highway department employees from the Hurley Avenue garage in Kingston to substations as far as 50 miles away. CSEA is also charging the county with “restraining and coercing” its employees to deprive them of grievance rights.

Sean Egan, president of the county unit, announced the filing of two grievances and an improper practice charge “to remedy the situation.”

The IP relates to a grievance filed July 27 by various highway workers regarding overtime pay. Six of the eight employees being transferred were parties to the grievance which is scheduled for arbitration Dec. 1. CSEA is charging the reassignments are a “retaliatory measure on the part of the public employer for the employees’ exercise of their grievance rights.”

Egan expressed particular concern because in at least one case the reassignment will require an employee to travel more than 100 miles a day. He said many of those affected "won't be able to afford to go to work."

The grievances charge the county with failing to follow job posting procedures to fill vacancies at the substations, and with making reassignments using a system that does not exist in the CSEA contract.

In a related matter, Field Representative Ross Hanna is requesting County Personnel Officer Thomas Costello to take the grievances directly to arbitration. He has also asked Public Works Commissioner Thomas Hart to delay the December 14 effective date of the reassignments until all charges are resolved.

Hanna explained such actions "would be in the public interest, because another question is raised, and that's the impact the reassignments will have on road safety in the greater Kingston area."
Westchester County union leaders give a few messages to legislature

‘No layoffs,’ demands Unit President Jerry Barbour

MT. PLEASANT — CSEA leaders who represent more than 5,000 Westchester County employees are sending out a message that is loud and clear: ‘No layoffs.’

Acting County Unit President Jerry Barbour told a meeting of the county legislature’s Finance Committee on Nov. 23 that when they eliminate jobs, they destroy morale, “and that’s an even higher price to pay.” Said the leader: ‘Don’t balance the budget on the backs of your blue collar workers.’

The county executive’s 1982 budget would eliminate 204 positions, of which 88 are filled. It’s estimated that $6 are held by people in the bargaining unit.

Approximately 300 people in the unit are CSEA members, attended the hearing.

School workers win double-digit raises

MT. VERNON — The 325 employees who belong to the non-teaching unit of the city school district have received wage hikes of 10.5 to 17 percent as the result of a recently approved one-year contract.

The pact, according to Collective Bargaining Specialist Ron Mazzola, includes a 6.5 percent general wage increase, plus creation of a new step on the salary schedule which means all employees will receive an increment.

Other highlights include granting cafeteria workers $100 clothing allowance; retaining existing sick leave and holidays; paying 75 percent hospitalization insurance premium for retirees, and 60 percent of premium for their families; and, improving dental coverage.

Unit President Marie Lewis, who noted the contract is retroactive to July 1, praised the cooperation shown by members of the board of education, saying, “They were sensitive to our needs.” Board President Anthony Veteri, meanwhile, said he was pleased both sides were able to reach an amicable settlement.

Approximately 300 people in the unit are CSEA members.
Margaret wins a grievance to end harassment at work

NEW YORK CITY — A harassment grievance filed by Margaret Robinson against South Beach Psychiatric Center (SBPC) has been settled with Ms. Robinson receiving a letter of apology from Chief of Service Dr. Darla Bjork.

The grievance was filed in response to actions repeatedly taken against Ms. Robinson by SBPC management in what SBPC Local 446 President George Boncoraglio charges was an attempt "to get rid of Margaret for exercising her right as the senior person on her unit to first choice of pass days."

The grievance charged that after Ms. Robinson refused to give up Saturday and Sunday as her pass days, management began harassing her.

Among the instances of harassment cited in the grievance were:

- the reprimanding of Ms. Robinson in front of patients and fellow employees for actions which were clearly not violations of work rules;
- in a counselling memorandum, charging Ms. Robinson with failing to respond to a potential incident on three occasions. (The grievance pointed out that Ms. Robinson was not even at work on one of those occasions);
- serving Ms. Robinson with a counselling memorandum in the guise of a report of a supervisory conference which was actually a counselling session in violation of Ms. Robinson's contractual rights;
- the team leader's calling a staff meeting to begin rallying the staff of Ms. Robinson's unit in an attempt to force her to resign.

"Harassment is particularly difficult to prove," Boncoraglio says. "In Margaret's case the harassment was so malicious and so blatant that top management had to acknowledge she was being harassed."

MARGARET stops to chat with South Beach Psychiatric Center Local 446 President George Boncoraglio between sets during a recent performance at Staten Island nightclub. Boncoraglio recently helped represent Ms. Robinson in a successful harassment grievance against South Beach Psychiatric Center.
SUNY workers protest ‘lock-out’

ALBANY — On the Friday after Thanksgiving, the State of New York was open, but the State University of New York at Albany was closed.

So while thousands of state employees reported to work and thousands of others — including Meyer S. Frischer, director of the governor’s Office of Employee Relations — used earned leave accruals or contract-negotiated benefits to enjoy a long weekend, university workers had no choice but to take the day off at their own expense.

The employees were told unilaterally to charge the day off to personal or vacation time, or to forfeit the day without pay, if they had no accruals. Those who wanted to work were technically violating personal or vacation time, or to forfeit the day without pay, if they had no accruals. Those who wanted to work were technically "locked out."

"It’s ironic. The State criticizes us for abusing our own earned benefits, and when we want to work, they lock us out."
— William Fetterling

McGowan optometrist tour reveals overwhelming support for vision plan

ALBANY — An impromptu visit to the Empire Vision Center proved to CSEA President William McGowan that on this day after Thanksgiving, some members still had much to be thankful for.

The new Vision Care plan had been in effect barely a month and already, the Albany optometrist office (one of 10 authorized by CSEA statewide) was filled to capacity.

Of the members of McGowan talked to, there were no complaints, only words of praise.

"Keep up the good work," exclaimed Peggy Wagner, as she studied a display of more than 100 frame styles selected for members.

Wagner, a clerk at the Department of Education, said she already made appointments for her family. After enrolling, she said she received the vouchers within four days.

Other members were as equally complimentary of the vision plan. "I’ve been waiting a long time for a program like this," noted Patricia Haley, a secretary at the Department of Taxation and Finance.

Despite all the acclaim, McGowan repeatedly asked members if there were any problems with the new program. "Do you like the selection?" "Are you sure?" "Have you been waiting very long?"

While most members didn’t mind the half-hour wait, Empire Vision Center manager Blaine Kosty said it was advisable to make appointments in advance.

Kosty said the response was so overwhelming, the center may expand its hours and increase personnel to accommodate the influx of CSEA program participants.

Vision care plan requires enrollment, voucher

CSEA members who are eligible participants in the new Vision Care Benefit program are reminded to submit a voucher before scheduling an exam under the plan.

The plan, which became effective November 1, is administered to CSEA Employees Benefit Fund (EBF). It is available to all workers in the Administrative, Institutional and Operational bargaining units to provide free professional eye examinations and eyeglasses to eligible employees and their dependents.

Enrollment cards may be obtained by calling EBF toll-free at 1-800-343-4747. Vouchers, good up to $40, may be obtained by completing a request form below and mailing it to CSEA Employee Benefit Fund, P.O. Box 1354, Albany, N.Y. 12211.

Vision plan application requires enrollment, voucher

CSEA President William L. McGowan, right, congratulates EBF Director Thomas P. Collins upon the institution of the new Vision Care Benefit program.
Apprenticeship Training

Unique union-state program for stationary engineers now in place in Capital Region

ALBANY — CSEA and the state Office of General Services have launched an apprenticeship training program which leads to employment as a stationary engineer.

The Apprentice Training Pilot Program — the first joint state-union apprenticeship program on a statewide level in New York — kicked off Nov. 19. Twenty-five Capital Region residents were chosen to participate in the three-year program, which combines comprehensive on-the-job training with approximately 200 hours of classroom instruction per year.

The program is aimed at providing a pool of trained workers to run and maintain the state's stationary machinery, such as its power plants in downtown Albany and the state Office Campus Building and its boilers and turbines.

The project has been in the planning stages for more than a year and is certified by and registered with the state Department of Labor.

Funding is through the CSEA-state Office of Employee Relations Committee on the Work Environment and Productivity (CWEP), which has authorized $74,000 for the first year of the program. Of that, $44,500 will go to Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, which is providing the classroom sessions.

The 25 apprentices include five alternates, and were chosen from more than 350 applicants. The group includes the first three women to be hired in the Capital Region for the state's stationary engineer job series.

CSEA President William L. McGowan has called the program "a welcome opportunity for career growth and advancement for public employees."

According to William Blom, CSEA's director of research and a member of the joint apprenticeship committee set up to oversee the project, apprenticeship training is "an efficient and effective way of providing practical experience and formal instruction in order to keep employees abreast of technological and other changes which may affect their jobs."

Also representing CSEA on the joint committee are Collective Bargaining Specialist Nels Carlson and Senior Stationary Engineer Arthur Kosiba. Representing OGS are Allen Wilbur, director of the Division of Employment Services; Robert Mathes, supervisor of Plant Utilities; and Paul J. Kelly, director of the Division of Technical Services.

At an opening ceremony launching the program, CSEA Executive Director Joseph J. Dolan called the program a "forerunner" for future apprenticeship programs.

Apprentices start at Grade 6 with a salary of $8,931 and advance two pay grades each year. Upon finishing the program, they receive a New York State certificate of completion from DOL, advance to a Grade 12 with a salary of $12,515, and are assigned to state facilities managed by OGS.

The apprenticeship program was conceived by CSEA and APSCME Career Development, Inc., an advisory and consultory group for apprenticeship programs for state, county and municipal governments.
ALBANY — CSEA Tax Local's education committee recently conducted a very successful shop steward training workshop for its new stewards, teaching them the basics of performing their shop steward role in the Tax and Finance Department.

The session was held in conjunction with the monthly executive council meeting which was presided over by Local President Carmen Bagnoli.

The workshop featured five presentations ranging from "Communications" presented by Ed Wysomski to "Tools of a Shop Steward" by Kathy Saragalis, education committee chairperson, and Helen Butryn, Local secretary.

This last presentation featured the distribution of a locally prepared Membership Committee Report to each shop steward. The report consisted of samples of forms most frequently used and instructions on how to complete them properly. Also the report highlighted the most often asked questions and their answers.

Also the education committee compiled a timely and factual "Shop Steward Training Guide" which should provide useful information on a daily basis to all shop stewards. The most important sections of the guide are the duties, responsibilities and tools of a shop steward and an excellent section in member recruitment.

CSEA appeal against the deduction of a share of premiums for HIP/HMO subscribers that the county could make the deductions — but that the county failed to provide adequate notice to employees that the charge would be deducted or what the amount would be. In the interests of justice, Sobol ordered the county to refund the deductions taken during 1980.

The county appealed the court on a technical ground, saying that the arbitrator was barred from ordering refunds because he had found that making the deduction was legal.

The county deducted the excess cost of HIP/HMO coverage above the amount for Statewide or Group Health Insurance after the state dropped HIP/HMO as an option. HIP/HMO had increased its rates for total health care to an amount substantially higher than the other plans.

However, Sobol found that the county did not notify employees until Oct. 1 that the excess amount would be deducted, and many employees did not receive the notice until Oct. 11. However, Sobol found that the county did not notify employees until Oct. 1 that the excess amount would be deducted, and many employees did not receive the notice until Oct. 11. October is the annual period in which employees may change their health insurance option.

Also, Sobol found the county estimated the deduction would be $1 per pay period for individuals and $6 per family. The county, however, increased its rates for HIP/HMO to $4.00 and $10.60 respectively. That was after the option period had closed.

The judge ruled that the arbitrator's decision was certainly an equitable result.
Florida retirees luncheon set

CSEA Florida State Retirees Local 950 will hold a Christmas luncheon program on Monday, December 14, at the American-Italian Civic Club, Madison Avenue and State Road, in Elfers, Florida, according to Local President Louis P. Colby. He also announced a business meeting of Local 950 for January 11, 1982, at 11 a.m. on the second floor of the First Federal Building, Darlington Road and US 19, in Holiday, Florida. Len Klafter of the International Insurance Group Underwriters of Hollywood, Florida, will speak on nursing home insurance coverage.

Tragic accident claims life of William Kise, 29

GENEVA — A tragic accident aboard a New York State DOT derrick boat has claimed the life of William Kise, 29, a nine-year veteran of the Barge Canal System and a member of CSEA Local 503 Barge Canal District 3.

According to an unofficial report, Kise, a marine engineer assigned to the tug Seneca, was working with a crew approximately one quarter mile offshore from the harbor entrance to the canal and Seneca Lake.

The accident reportedly happened at approximately 2:30 p.m., December 2, while the men were driving pilings for navigation entrance locks. During the work a cable went slack, releasing pressure on the pile driver and causing it to fall and strike Kise.

In gathering initial information from Ed Canavan, president of Local 503, CSEA learned that the 50-year-old derrick boat on which the accident occurred has no communication equipment. Efforts on the part of CSEA officers and representatives of OSHA have brought no results.

Canavan said he plans to call for a complete investigation of the accident by a CSEA safety team and representatives of OSHA. He will also question state authorities as to whether Kise, a marine engineer assigned to the tug Seneca, was working out of title with the pile driving crew.

Funeral arrangements for Kise, a resident of Seneca Falls, New York, were unknown at Public Sector press time.

Kise leaves a wife and two children.

Who you know' no more in Spring Valley

New contract provides salary schedule, increment system and longevity payments

SPRING VALLEY — Employees in this Rockland County village no longer will be hired and paid on the basis of "who you know" thanks to a contract which sets up, for the first time, a salary schedule and system of increments and longevity payments.

CSEA Collective Bargaining Specialist Manny Vitale, who directed negotiations for the union-represented workers, called the old system "unfair, inequitable and shameful." Hereafter, under the new contract, all new employees must be hired on step one, and pay scales for any newly established positions must be the subject of negotiations with CSEA.

All current workers here have been placed on the appropriate salary schedule, and for them it means average annual wage increases of 15.87 percent, with the range over three years going from 24.5 percent to 81.2 percent, depending on existing salaries.

Other contract highlights, according to Unit President Joanne Cangelosi, are:

• implementing Agency Shop;
• granting extra holidays on Yom Kippur and Good Friday, and two half-days on Dec. 24 and Dec. 31;
• allowing unused personal time to be converted to sick leave bank;
• specifying insurance carrier as the Statewide Health Insurance Plan;
• allowing reimbursement of job-related education and tuition expenses, upon approval by Board of Trustees;
• granting additional bereavement leave;
• providing, "no employees shall be required to perform any job without appropriate safety equipment;"
• allowing reimbursement of glasses, dentures, hearing aids, etc. damaged or destroyed during discharge of duties;
• clarifying work schedules for various departments; and,

UNIT PRESIDENT Joanne Cangelosi and Collective Bargaining Specialist Manny Vitale appear pleased as members of the Spring Valley Unit ratify new contract.

• providing that upon death the employee’s estate will be compensated for unused compensatory time.

The negotiating team included, besides Vitale and Ms. Cangelosi, Jay Garbus, Blanche Moore, Lou Grausso and Dan Campbell.

Carroll elected VP

W. Michael Carroll, a former CSEA staff member, has been elected a vice president of Bache Ter Bush & Powell, Inc., which serves as CSEA’s insurance agency in administering the union’s insurance plans.

In his new capacity, Carroll assumes responsibilities for the firm’s employee benefits services, retirement counseling and CSEA divisions and serves as the liaison with CSEA relative to insurance matters.

Carroll joined CSEA in January, 1973, as an organizer/field representative. In January, 1975, he was named research associate for the union’s Capital Region, and was director of CSEA group insurance programs from February, 1977, until November, 1979.
UTICA — Oneida County employees at the county waste water treatment plant should not be blinded if they get into the holiday spirit a little early this year.

For more than 40 employees, members of Local 833, Christmas arrived December 2 in the form of a personal message from Oneida County Executive Sherwood Boehlert saying he will recommend to county legislators they not accept the proposal from Envirotech to turn over maintenance and operation of the water pollution control plant.

In breaking the news to the employees, the county executive also took the opportunity to tell them he had appointed Richard O. Edwards to the post of deputy public works commissioner for water pollution control.

In addition to being strongly opposed to the takeover by Envirotech, CSEA officials have long argued the need for a qualified top administrator at the plant. The new appointment fills that void.

James J. Moore, CSEA Region V president, was present when the county executive made his announcement and issued a comment. "We are very pleased with the decision of Oneida County Executive Boehlert to back the efforts of CSEA members at the Part-County Sewage Treatment Plant. Although the final decision remains with the legislators, we are hopeful and confident they will make the right decision and accept Mr. Boehlert's recommendation to reject the Envirotech proposal," Moore said.

“We also want to recognize the union leadership at the plant,” Moore continued. “John Mikalauskas, first vice president of Local 833 and Dorothy Peterson, second vice president, worked long and hard to prevent the loss of jobs. Their leadership and support, along with the combined efforts of CSEA and AFSCME, successfully demonstrated to the county that contracting out was not the least expensive way of providing the needed services to Oneida County taxpayers.”

CSEA believes the decision by the county executive could be attributed, in part, to a report prepared by Richard O. Edwards that sewer tax rates would increase 79 percent next year if the county hired Envirotech, but would increase only 14 percent if the county continued to operate the plant.

If Boehlert had not made his announcement, CSEA officials planned to approach the legislators individually and to make a combined CSEA and AFSCME research presentation to the full legislative body in the near future. At that time, CSEA also planned to highlight the results of the "Poughkeepsie Experiment," an Envirotech program in Dutchess County.

CSEA considers the Boehlert announcement a wise decision. If the legislature accepts the recommendation, it will assure the continued control of the treatment plant by the county and maintain job security for 45 county employees.

At Christmas time that is particularly good news.

**Self awareness, career development featured discussions at statewide women's conference**

NIAGARA FALLS — Self awareness, career development and better understanding of the problems facing women workers were all addressed at a recent statewide conference here offered by the CSEA Special Women's Committee.

A keynote address by CSEA Attorney Marge Karowe spoke of the history of women in the early days of the American labor movement. More than 250 CSEA members took part in workshops and strategy sessions designed to “encourage all concerned that the struggle for equality for women in the workplace has the highest priority in this union,” according to committee chairwoman June Scott.

The weekend program included films and workshops in self awareness, career development strategies, teamwork theory and other pertinent subjects delivered through the combined efforts of the Center for Women in Government and the Women's Activities department of AFSCME.

Fredda Merzon, training director for CWG, said her workshops were designed to show each worker "how much she has to offer and develop the skills we all possess in negotiating contracts and other labor matters as well as dealing with sexism in public employment.”

Overcoming "dead-end career ladders” and improving leadership skills are also continuing goals of CSEA and the special women's committee, according to staff coordinator Cindy Chovanec.

In listing the social gains women have made, banquet speaker Karen Burstein said the struggle for women's equality "is far from over.

"Just because we now have laws against sexual discrimination in credit and insurance matters, doesn't change the fact that most women are still stuck in low-paying, dead-end jobs,” said the attorney, who is a former state senator and presently executive director of the state's department of consumer affairs.

"We must come to terms with our reality," Ms. Burstein continued. "For the next 50 years, we will find the same lack of progress. Equal pay for work of comparable value must become our watchword until it is achieved. The importance of your great union in accomplishing this cannot be overstated," she observed, noting unionized government workers earn more than nonunionized employees.

Ms. Burstein compared the struggle for women's equality to the civil rights struggle of the ‘60s as she called for some idealism and dedication to see us through to victory."

Before closing to a standing ovation, Ms. Burstein observed that "to be born a woman in America is a difficulty, but the opportunities to humanize this society and improve it for those who come after us offers the greatest possibility of rewards one could imagine.”

**Novo slams Suffolk County for serving 200 layoff notices**

HOLTSVILLE — Charles Novo, president of Local 852, has attacked the approximately 200 layoff notices handed to Suffolk County employees with their paychecks the day before Thanksgiving as "illegal, unnecessary and tactless."

The layoff notices, dated Nov. 25, were signed by Jack Farneti, director of personnel and labor relations, and given to employees the county has scheduled to be terminated because of cuts in the 1982 budget. The union expects that the number of actual layoffs will be far fewer than the number of notices handed out.

CSEA claims that the layoff procedures being used by the county are illegal because layoffs are being made on the basis of department rather than county-wide seniority. "If the county wishes to lay off a stenographer in the social services department, that stenographer's seniority must be checked against stenographers in all other county departments," Novo said.

He said he has instructed union attorneys to bring suit against the county for violations of the seniority provisions of the CSEA contract.

Novo said the layoff notices were tactless because of the county's high monthly attrition rate of 80 to 100 employees.

"The county could easily fill jobs vacated by retirements and people quitting with employees scheduled to be laid off," he said. Meanwhile the county is continuing to hire new employees. "There were 60 new employees hired last month alone," he said, "in the departments of Social Services and Health in the very titles scheduled for layoff."

Novo said that the CSEA contract and civil service laws stipulate a minimum 60-day notice period of job termination. While the county wanted to make the layoffs by Jan. 24, "they could have at least given out the notices at an earlier date than the day before Thanksgiving," he said.

The layoff notices did not inform employees of their rights to initiate bump and retreat procedures. "This oversight may have occurred because the notice was written by Mr. Farneti instead of the director of civil service, who obviously understands civil service laws better than Mr. Farneti."

**CSEA retains representation rights to Norwich school district workers**

NORWICH — Chenango County CSEA Local 806 officials have been formally notified by the state Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) that a petition filed by the New York Education Assn. (NYEA) to represent 110 non-instructional employees of the Norwich Central School District has been dismissed.

CSEA represents those employees, but NYEA filed a challenge to CSEA's representational rights early in 1981, according to CSEA Field Representative R. R. Ventura Jr. PERB conducted a hearing on that petition in July in Syracuse, and decided to dismiss the petition in November.

"The PERB decision means that CSEA will continue to be recognized as the official bargaining representative for non-instructional school employees in Norwich, and the current contract remains valid through June 30, 1984," Ventura noted.
UTICA — Oneida County employees at the county waste water treatment plant should not be blamed if they get into the holiday spirit a little early this year.

For more than 40 employees, members of Local 833, Christmas arrived December 2 in the form of a personal message from Oneida County Executive Sherwood Boehlert saying he will recommend to county legislators they not accept the proposal from Envirotech to turn over maintenance and operation of the water pollution control plant.

In breaking the news to the employees, the county executive also took the opportunity to tell them he had appointed Richard O. Edwards to the post of deputy public works commissioner for water pollution control.

In addition to being strongly opposed to the takeover by Envirotech, CSEA officials have long advocated the need for a qualified top administrator at the plant. The new appointment fills that void.

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CSEA considers the Boehlert announcement a wise decision. If the legislature accepts the recommendation, it will assure the continued control of the treatment plant by the county and maintain job security for 45 county employees.

At Christmas time that is particularly good news.
GREENBURGH — After protracted negotiations, which went to mediation twice before ending up in factfinding and eventual resolution, a contract has been worked out for members of the Town of Greenburgh Unit of Westchester County Local 860.

During the two-year term of the pact, employees at either the minimum or maximum steps of the salary schedule will receive a gross wage hike of 14.75 percent. Workers on in-between steps will receive 16-19 percent plus increments, according to Unit President Eleanor McDonald who explained, "in increments were equalized to gain more dollars now instead of waiting until reaching the final step." She also noted that a four-step salary structure for blue collar workers was eliminated, and an additional increase negotiated instead.

Provisions of the 1979-1980 contract will otherwise remain in effect, except for improved bereavement leave, upgrading parks groundsmen, and paying medical insurance premiums for surviving spouses of retirees.

The negotiating team included Sylvia Failes, Frank Amodeo, Angelo Nanna, Gregg Prant, John Gristello, Mark Matero, Pat Lofaro and Collective Bargaining Specialist Ron Mazzola.

The pact is retroactive to Jan. 1.

COORS BREWERY—BEER

FABERGE, INC.—COSMETICS
Personal care products—OIL, CHEMICAL & ATOMIC WORKERS INTERNATIONAL UNION. On list since February 1979.

NON-UNION BRIGUETTES
Charkets, Grill Time, Star Grill; Sparky Lighter Fluid and Hickory Chips—INTERNATIONAL WOODWORKERS OF AMERICA (Pachuta, Miss., plant). On list since August 1960.

ICEBERG LETTUCE—PRODUCE
Non-union iceberg lettuce—UNITED FARM WORKERS OF AMERICA. On list since May 1979.

MARINE OPTICAL, INC.—OPTICAL PRODUCTS
Eyeglass frames sold through optical retailers—INTERNATIONAL UNION OF ELECTRICAL, RADIO AND MACHINE WORKERS. On list since May 1980.

MISS GOLDY’S CHICKENS—POULTRY
Brand name chickens — INTERNATIONAL CHEMICAL WORKERS UNION. On list since May 1979.

PERDUE FARMS—PERDUE FOODS—POULTRY
Perdue chickens, roasters, broilers and cornish game hens—INTERNATIONAL WOODWORKERS OF AMERICA. On list since February 19, 1981.

R.J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO.
CIGARETTES & TOBACCO
Brand names: Winston, Salem, Camel, Doral, Vantage, More, Now, and Real Cigarettes; Winchester Little Cigars; Prince Albert Snuffing Tobacco—BAKERY, CONFECTIONERY AND TOBACCO WORKERS INTERNATIONAL UNION. On list since 1955.

SEATTLE-FIRST NATIONAL BANK—FINANCIAL INSTITUTION
Withdraw funds—UNITED FOOD AND COMMERICAL WORKERS INTERNATIONAL UNION. On list since July 1979.

DO NOT BUY!

National Boycotts Officially Sanctioned by the AFL-CIO Executive Council

All trade unionists and their families are asked not to patronize the products and services of the boycotted firms listed below. List current as of first day of month of publication. Subject to change.

SMITHTOWN ACTION IS ARROGANCE

SMITHTOWN — Long Island, long accustomed to power politics, witnessed an unusually naked display of power recently when the Republican and Conservative-controlled Smithtown Town Board abolished the independent planning department including 34 positions and transferred the powers and all but four of the positions to the politically-appointed planning board.

The town board said the reason for the move was to cut taxes contained in the budget of Democratic Supervisor Pat Vecchio. But observers, including the Smithtown News, said the real target of the "reorganization" was Fred Meyer, a highly respected professional planner, who had served the department for 19 years and had opposed effort of the board and town attorney to grant variances to developers. Meyer, an environmental planner, and two senior engineers, one of whom was a managerial union representative, were not rehired.

The move came at a board meeting held without public notice or debate because, as one councilman put it, "people would not have showed up at the meeting to debate the issues."

"The layoffs are nothing more than a cold-blooded maneuver in a political fight. It is despicable that politicians can toy with peoples' livelihoods and essential governmental services simply because they want more power," said James Carty, Smithtown CSEA president.

Of the nine CSEA members involved in the reorganization, six were transferred into the planning board, and two were transferred to other departments. The union is trying to save the jobs of four other employees whose positions were cut out of the budget.

After news of the move was announced in local newspapers it was denounced by the League of Women Voters and a former Smithtown supervisor who called it "incredible."
### STATE JOB CALENDAR

#### TITLE: FILING ENDS DECEMBER 7, 1981

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<td>Training Technician, Senior (Police)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director of Neighborhood Services</td>
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#### APPLICATION FORMS

- To obtain an application form, specify the examination number and title. Mail to the N.Y.S. Employment Service (no mail requests handled).
- You may obtain application forms by mail or in person at the following offices of the State Department of Civil Service:
- Albany — State Office Building Campus 12239
- Buffalo — Suite 750, 1 W. Genesee Street 14222
- New York — 55th Floor, 2 World Trade Center 10007
- Local Offices of the N.Y.S. Employment Service (no mail requests handled)

When you complete an application form, specify the examination number and title. Mail completed applications to: NYS Department of Civil Service, State Office Building Campus, Albany, N.Y. 12239. In the Buffalo area, mail applications to Buffalo address shown above.
Here's three ways not to get mugged.

I hate to repeat myself—but you're not listening!
So I'll say it again:
1. Walk on well-lit streets.
2. Don't walk alone late at night.
3. Have your keys ready, so you don't fumble around at your door.

Find out what else you can do to protect yourself. Write to: Crime Prevention Coalition, Box 6600, Rockville, Maryland 20850.

And help me...
AFSCME International vice presidents, were among the more than 900 delegates attending the convention.

Although much of the convention business centered around economic matters, the delegates took action on a wide range of subjects of importance to working men and women. A wrap-up of some of them are contained on this page for your general information.
Tarrytown Pump Station

Inspection reveals intolerable noise, dangerous equipment

Westchester Co. refuses to recognize need for hearing tests while workers have to hang over edges of sewage plant to hoist barrels

TARRYTOWN — "When I got out of Vietnam," is how Pete Hilliard describes going home from work everyday. And the chief operator at the Tarrytown Pump Station says the worst part is returning to the "front lines" every morning. Hazardous noise levels, faulty equipment and poor access roads leading to the Tarrytown sewage plant all contribute to Hilliard's demand for safer working conditions.

Initially, the plant was designed to be automatic, but because of technical problems (the contractor blames the manufacturer, the manufacturer blames the county, Hilliard explains) it has to be staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Susan Wein of the Westchester County CSEA unit's Health and Safety Committee entered the picture a year ago after Hilliard had exhausted all channels in attempting to improve the work environment. "Our inspection confirmed serious hazards present," she noted.

For example:

- Noise levels were measured at 85 decibels, which is considered a "hazard" according to OSHA standards. Constant exposure to high noise levels causes impaired hearing and even deafness.

Two solutions were proposed; (1) construct a soundproof room, or (2) install a trailer to use as an office. To date, neither solution has been implemented. The county also refuses to give employees annual hearing tests.

Hilliard complained that workers must go outside to eat lunches, take a break or to just escape the noise. A telephone with a long cord is carried outside to talk. During cold weather, they sit in their cars with motors running to keep warm. Temperatures often become frigid since the plant is located on the east bank of the Hudson River near the picturesque Tappan Zee Bridge.

- Procedures and equipment were deemed unsafe because barrels filled with matter (rags, etc.) collected when the influent enters the plant. In fact, part of the process involved the men having to lean over an edge and hoist the barrels from 50 feet below. To date, various solutions have been attempted, including setting up a protective railing and providing a harness to be worn by the worker when hoisting. The chief plant operator believes additional measures are required, most of all installation of a "tram" to make the job safer.

- The access road to the plant looks like craters on the moon. So employees have all kinds of car troubles, especially with brakes and exhaust systems. Originally, access was via another road which went through a privately-owned compound, but apparently the owners had some troubles with the county and decided to get even by putting up barricades to block access. Hilliard complained that road conditions hurt morale and says a solution could easily be achieved by either regaining access through the compound, or having the county simply fix up its own road. To date, nothing has been done.

If operations don't go smoothly at the pump station, there's always the spectre of disaster. Major problems mean that raw sewage is dumped, after being chlorinated, directly into the Hudson River. So it's important that the ten employees regularly assigned there have the best working conditions possible, and that's the message which CSEA's Health and Safety Committee has been trying to send to Westchester County.

Barrels must be lifted out and emptied. Employees are demanding better procedures and equipment to make the job easier.