Next paycheck brings 5% raise for state workers

ALBANY — State workers belonging to the administrative, institutional and operational bargaining units will be getting something extra in their next paychecks — a 5 percent raise.

The increases, negotiated by CSEA, will be in paychecks Thursday, April 28, for those on the institutional payroll and in the Wednesday, May 4, salaries of those on the administrative payroll.

The raises went into effect the payroll period nearest April 1, but employees are reminded that the state now lags, or defers, payrolls by two weeks. CSEA members, nevertheless, are better off than 1,200 top-level state government officials who recently had their raises scrapped by Gov. Mario Cuomo.

Union members can expect another 5 percent hike next September.

Latest layoff listing called 'ill-timed . . . stupid . . . dumb'

ALBANY — After weeks of lengthy delays the State of New York is about to send “reprieves” to some 4,000 state employees targeted for layoffs. But for other state employees, a new layoff date will be the unpleasant message.

The state’s 1983-84 fiscal budget has been law now for three weeks, but it wasn’t until April 19 that the state finally announced its revised layoff estimate of 3,385 filled positions, a major decrease from the 9,400 layoffs originally threatened, but still considerably higher than CSEA is willing to accept.

Yet to be considered in the layoff number is the final impact of the state’s early retirement incentive program, a proposal by the Cuomo Administration to temporarily enrich state employee pension benefits for some 23,000 eligible workers in an effort to encourage them to voluntarily retire early and reduce the need for layoffs.

While the program was originally expected to generate 4,200 retirements, as of April 20 more than 5,000 state employees had filed for retirement and two weeks still remained before the May 2 deadline to participate in the program.

The difference between the original 4,200 retirement target and the final retirement number will be subtracted from the 3,385 layoffs announced April 19, but no one at this point can say with any certainty what the reduction will be.

CSEA Chief Lobbyist James Featherstonhaugh told capitol reporters this week that the Cuomo Administration’s release of revised layoff notices now was, “ill-timed, ill-thought-out, and generally stupid. It’s going to re-terrify people who have been terrified before, and it is just plain dumb.”

But while sparks may be flying between union and state officials over the details of the continuing work force controversy, for most state workers — particularly those originally targeted for layoff — the continuing uncertainty was only worsening already ravaged morale.

It has now been nearly six weeks since the original layoff notices were sent out over the objections of CSEA and many state legislators who argued that the notices were meaningless without a state budget in place.

After lawmakers and the governor reached agreement on the details of the new state budget, it became clear that there would be far fewer layoffs than threatened. But that is about the only thing that has been clear over the past several weeks.

While budget officials and policy makers sorted out the implications of the budget agreements, state employees were left in the dark with layoff notices that may or may not still be valid and the very real fear of joining the ranks of the millions of Americans who have been thrown onto the streets, the results of a continuing national recession.

State officials said April 20 that employees originally targeted for layoffs would be receiving updated information within the very near future.

IMPORTANT REMINDER FOR ANYONE CONSIDERING THE EARLY RETIREMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM

• To participate, you MUST file a notarized “application for service retirement,” form RS-6037, which MUST be received by the retirement system no later than May 2, 1983.

• Your retirement must take effect prior to May 31, 1983.

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Union members can expect another 5 percent hike next September.

Next paycheck brings 5% raise for state workers
Popularity of Info Day keeps growing

WILTON — The CSEA Information Day concept in the Capital Region originated at the Wilton Developmental Center, and the latest one again proved to be a big success. And, in a major addition to this year's program, nearly 160 Wilton employees participated in a mini-physical examination provided by the state Employee Health Service (EHS).

Virginia Horan, R.N., director of nurses for the EHS, praised the inclusion of the mini-physical in the CSEA Information Day concept. "We discovered significant facts about the employees' health situation, and we have forwarded this information on to the workers and their doctors so that steps to address their physical health needs can be taken on a timely basis," Horan said. "The combination of the two programs certainly addresses all the concerns of the worker from a to z."

"We want to help our members in every way possible," Francis Wilusz, local president, said. "This new addition to the 20 information tables generated additional interest and support for the program."

Blood Pressure and Pulse are checked for a Wilton employee during recent Information Day.

CSEA FIELD REPRESENTATIVE Mike While, above left, Employee Benefit Fund Assistant Director Tom Linden, center, and Wilton CSEA Local President Francis Wilusz discuss success of recent CSEA Information Day program at Wilton.

Blood Pressure and Pulse are checked for a Wilton employee during recent Information Day.
TRUSTEES of the new Westchester County Unit Legal Service Plan review the points of the program, which went into effect April 1. They are, seated from left, James Marino, Jack Whalen and Mary Naylor-Boyd. Standing from left, Mary Williams, Jerry Barbom*, Carmine DiBattista, and Ernest K. Hempel.

New legal plan for Westchester Co. Unit

WHITE PLAINS — Do you have a legal problem? If you are a member of CSEA’s Westchester County Unit, you can now take advantage of a new program designed to insure your legal protection — the Legal Service Plan, which is part of the union’s Employee Benefit Fund.

“We are all aware of the importance of medical, dental and vision care protection, but few of us have taken full advantage of our legal rights,” said Unit President Jack Whalen. “Now, by virtue of this Legal Service Plan, our members can protect themselves and their families in today’s increasingly complex society, and we can all stick up for our rights.”

The new legal program went into effect April 1. Among its benefits are:

• unlimited advice and consultation;
• legal letters and phone calls from staff attorneys on behalf of members;
• simple document review by staff;
• referrals to experienced, nearby attorneys with guaranteed reduced legal fees (when members are faced with more complex legal problems);
• a dollar ceiling on total fees charged for specific legal matters;
• probate fee discounts; and
• personal injury fee discounts.

Counsel Administrator William M. Kirschner says “the plan speaks for itself. It’s one of the best plans for the money in the country.” Kirschner noted the plan also has an added benefit whereby the Employee Benefit Fund will pay directly to the participating attorneys designated by the Fund the first $100 of benefits per year for most legal services incurred by members and their covered family members.

The Legal Service Plan is being administered by seven trustees. More information is available from the Legal Service Plan office at (914) 725-3510.

Legislature approves ‘aidable’ school bus funds

ALBANY — There has been another giant step forward in gaining parity for school districts which provide their own bus transportation. The State Legislature has approved a new aid formula which includes insurance premiums and uniforms as new items which are “aidable,” that is reimbursable with state funds.

CSEA has been lobbying for changes in the law and each year has taken another step forward in ending the system which, in effect, encourages subcontracting.

Larry Scanlon, CSEA’s director of school district affairs, says the changes will, “help us fight efforts to contract-out transportation services, particularly in current battles with the Vestal and Corning school districts,” and he advises CSEA members who hear of any rumors that their employers are contemplating contracting-out to contract the union leadership, “immediately.”

Region IV endorses school board candidates

TROY — The Political Action Committee of the Capital Region has endorsed seven candidates in school board elections in the cities of Troy and Schenectady.

In the Troy City School Board races the union is endorsing Guy Enfante, Robert Delaney, Gary Sorensen and William Martin.

In the Schenectady elections John Hamilton, Henry Borzi and Susan Fifield have won CSEA backing.

Both elections will be held Tuesday, May 3, from noon to 9 p.m.
CSEA STATEWIDE TREASURER Barbara Fauser, below, conducted a seminar for Region I local and unit treasurers recently.

CATHY BRUNO, above, supervisor of general accounts in CSEA’s Finance Office, helped conduct the recent seminars in Region I.

REMEMBER — the state retirement process is separate and distinct from any potential benefits an individual may be entitled to from the Social Security Administration. Therefore, individuals seeking information on the early retirement incentive program should also obtain information separately on options for Social Security benefits. There are dozens of district Social Security offices throughout New York State. Check your telephone directory for the office nearest to you — to obtain necessary information.

The following New York State Employees’ Retirement System units are best equipped to handle telephone inquiries regarding the Early Retirement Incentive Program:

INFORMATION SERVICES: (518) 474-7738.

SERVICE RETIREMENTS: (518) 474-4449; (518) 474-4932; (518) 474-3621.

GENERAL ESTIMATES: (518) 474-7699; (518) 474-4467.

Address changes should be sent to Civil Service Employees Association, The Public Sector, 33 Elk Street, Albany, New York 12224.

Due primarily to the recently announced early retirement incentive program for state employees, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of employees seeking information on their potential benefits under the New York State Employees’ Retirement System. System information representatives are available to discuss the retirement incentive program and individual retirement specifics on the following schedule.

The schedule shows the locations and visiting days for Retirement System Information representatives.

Note that this is an expanded schedule compared to the one listed in the previous edition of The Public Sector. The expanded schedule affects the Albany area, in that the Albany office of the State Employees Retirement System in the Gov. Smith State Office Building will be open on Saturdays during April. Additionally, information representatives will be available each Friday during April in the Roosevelt-Cleveland Room of Building 1 at the State Campus.

While services at each location are offered on a “first come, first served” basis, appointments are urged for the Saturday sessions by calling (518) 474-7736. Basic information by telephone may be obtained by calling the same number from any location.

For info by telephone: (518) 474-7736
BEDFORD — Margaret Scanlon was appointed a stenographer on a permanent basis by the Bedford Central School District in June 1971. Then why wasn't she treated like one on pay day?

Scanlon was being paid on an hourly basis, as are teacher aides, although her duties bear no relationship to that title. Now an arbitrator has ruled, “the Board (of Education) has historically mistreated Ms. Scanlon as regards her level of compensation.”

Arbitrator Stanley L. Aiges has ordered the school district to recompute Scanlon's pay on the basis of an annual salary, and give the Bedford CSEA unit member the difference between that amount and the amount she had been paid, retroactive to July 1982.

“This decision will positively affect all our employees who have taken Civil Service tests, been appointed to those Civil Service positions by the Board of Education, but have been denied their yearly salary instead of an hourly rate. Looking on are, from left, Westchester Local 860 President Pat Mascioli, Regional Attorney Arthur Grae, and Field Rep. Joe O'Connor.

BEDFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT Unit President Dolores Solazzo reviews the favorable decision of Arbitrator Stanley L. Aiges which awards stenographer Margaret Scanlon pay based on a titles when they receive their pay,” says Unit President Dolores Solazzo.

As past practice, the school board had grouped a number of job titles into the category of “teacher aides,” and paid those employees on an hourly basis. Aiges ruled in his 11-page decision, “Once Ms. Scanlon was granted permanent status as a stenographer in the district, it seems to me she should have been treated as such. The plain fact is that she was not... as regards her compensation. There is no contractual justification whatsoever for treating a stenographer as a teacher aide for any purposes.”

Solazzo says, “I'm very pleased with this decision. We've been working on this since last June, and it tells the school board that our workers should receive the rights and privileges they are entitled to under state law and regulations, not just what the board members think is right.”

Arbitrator Aiges educated the school board on the math involved in figuring out Scanlon's pay. He wrote, “Ms. Scanlon's salary could have been prorated to reflect the fact that she does not work a full seven-hour day or a 12-month year. The arithmetic is simple enough to compute.” Aiges provided the formula for the district to use in recomputing Scanlon's pay.

Scanlon has worked in the Bedford Central School District since 1965. The unit is part of Westchester Local 860.

My present label reads exactly as shown here (or affix mailing label).

Name______________________Local Number__________
Street______________________
City______________________State____Zip__________

My New Address Is:

Street______________________
City______________________State____Zip__________
Agency where employed__________Agency No.:__________

My social security no.______________________

Please allow 3-4 weeks for change to take effect.
COPING with LAYOFFS

Some facts you should know if you are facing job uncertainty

The question of how many layoffs, if any, and who will actually be affected under the next state budget is still unresolved at press time.

What is known is that thousands of state workers recently received layoff notices, but the final number of layoffs, if any, will not be determined until the number of notices actually sent out.

Too, due to the bumping process involved in a layoff situation, the person receiving a notice may not in fact be the person eventually laid off.

For anyone facing the prospect of going off the payroll, there are great many things to consider. Insurance and benefits are certainly among those concerns.

The following information should be beneficial to everyone facing job uncertainty during the budget crisis.

Answers to some common questions about health insurance

ALBANY — What happens to my health insurance if I go off the payroll? Although the number of state layoffs is expected to be less than once feared, many employees are still asking that question. To set the record straight, the Employee Insurance Section of the Civil Service Department has provided answers to the following questions:

1. Am I eligible to continue coverage in the New York State Health Insurance Program if my job is abolished?

If you have been separated from service with the state and your name has been placed on a Civil Service Preferred List, you are eligible to continue your enrollment in the Health Insurance Program. If you are a state employee not eligible for preferred list status, but you were employed on a permanent full-time basis and are separated from service as a result of the abolition of your position, you are also eligible to continue your health insurance coverage.

2. If I don't meet the requirements described in Answer No. 1, can I continue my coverage?

If your most recent date of employment in state service is prior to April 1, 1975, you may retire and continue coverage as a retiree, or may defer any retirement allowance due and continue coverage on a direct-pay basis until such time as your retirement is effective. At that time, you may then continue as a retiree on a deduction basis. In either case, you are only required to contribute the employee's share of health insurance premium.

3. Prior to my position being abolished, I had 10 years of state service credited with the Retirement System, but I am under retirement age. Am I eligible to continue health insurance as a vested employee?

You would be eligible to continue coverage for a maximum of one year or until re-employed by a public or private employer by contributing only the employee's share of premium. If you reach retirement age on or before that date, you may continue coverage as a retiree. If you do not qualify for retirement by that date, you may continue in vested status until attainment of retirement age and then continue coverage as a retiree. Vested enrollees must pay both the employee's and employer's share of premium until they are eligible to retire.

Other questions concerning continuation of health insurance coverage should be directed to your Personnel Office or the Employee Insurance Section, Department of Civil Service, State Office Building Campus, Albany, N.Y. 12239.

How to make direct payments

ALBANY — If you are a CSEA member who is separated from employment, then you can still continue to participate in CSEA-sponsored insurance by arranging to pay premiums directly to the insurance carrier.

CSEA, through Jardine Ter Bush & Powell, provides Basic Group Life Insurance (Code 305), Supplemental Life Insurance (Code 360) and an Accident and Sickness Plan (Code 361).

The first step for any laid-off employee who wishes to continue the supplemental insurance is to apply to the union for dues-free membership. (See accompanying article.)

Once the dues-free membership is approved by CSEA, Jardine Ter Bush & Powell will be notified. Insurance premiums will be billed directly and once payment is made, you will be put on a direct billing system and receive quarterly statements for up to one year.

Meanwhile, anyone who is laid off and who participates in the CSEA Master Plan (Homeowners and Automobile Insurance) should contact Jardine Ter Bush & Powell at this special toll-free number — 1-800-462-2636 — and arrange to make direct payments to the Travelers Insurance Co. The direct number is 1-518-381-1550. Participants in the Family Protection Plan, as well as supplemental life insurance and accident and health/disability programs, may contact Jardine Ter Bush & Powell toll-free at 1-800-342-6272. The direct number is 1-518-381-1557.

Questions regarding the Basic Group Life Insurance Plan should be directed to CSEA's Insurance Department in Albany.

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Questions regarding the Basic Group Life Insurance Plan should be directed to CSEA's Insurance Department in Albany.
CSEA retiree membership
tremendous bargain;
protect your future
through retiree power

ALBANY — Retired public employees can protect their futures for just $4.50 — the cost for a limited time 6-month membership in a CSEA retiree’s local.

The union's legislative accomplishments for retirees have included pension increases for those who retired after April 1, 1970 and before Dec. 31, 1979, drug prescription cards for those with health insurances in the state program, and survivor’s death benefits for state employees.

But these benefits could not have been accomplished without the political clout of the 40,000 people who already belong to retiree locals. And, it is in the special interest of retirees who have not yet joined their ranks to do so.

Membership gives them a voice in the state’s capitol to lobby for their needs. In addition, there is an official retiree's newsletter issued periodically, special mailings go out on selected issues, locals meet regularly to share ideas and exchange information, social gatherings are held, and there is access to a retiree’s department, staffed by professionals, in CSEA Headquarters.

For additional information, contact the retiree’s department by calling (518) 434-0191. To sign up, fill out the following form and with a $4.50 check send it to: CSEA, 33 Elk St., Albany, N.Y. 12207.

ALBANY — Only two simple steps will have to be taken for early retirees to continue their participation in CSEA-sponsored insurance programs.

First, you must Join a CSEA retirees local. See accompanying article above, for more information and an application form.

Then, you must arrange to pay insurance premiums directly because once you retire payroll deductions stop.

If you have any questions, call one of the following telephone numbers:

CSEA
Basic Group Life Insurance...  (518) 434-0191
JARDINE TER BUSH & POWELL
Supplemental Life Insurance...  1-800-342-6272 Ext. 537
Family Protection Plan. . . . . . . .  1-800-342-6272 Ext. 447
Accident and Sickness Plan...  1-800-342-6272
MasterPlan (Home and Auto). . . . .  1-800-462-2636
Jardine Ter Bush & Powell can also be reached by calling (518) 381-1600.

To obtain more information, fill out the following coupon and mail it to: CSEA, 33 Elk St., Albany, N.Y. 12207.

Info Center on preferred lists
opened to help
layoff victims

ALBANY — The Department of Civil Service has set up a Preferred List Information Center for state employees facing layoffs.

Counselors will be available 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. to answer telephone questions. The phone number is (518) 457-2973.

The Center, in Room 119 in Building 1 of the State Office Building Campus in Albany, will also provide information on a walk-in basis from 8:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. daily.
NEW YORK CITY — Speaking as the statewide CSEA secretary, as a former secretary at SUNY Oneonta, and on behalf of thousands of clerical employees represented by the union, Irene Carr has asked that legislation be passed governing the operation of video display terminals, better known as VDTs.

VDTs are increasingly common in offices, with nearly 10 million now in use and the number growing all the time.

Carr, testifying at a public hearing sponsored by the State Assembly Labor Committee and the Legislative Commission on Science and Technology, said: "Are there problems involved with the sustained use of VDTs? Unquestionably yes. Are those problems serious? Certainly to those who operate VDTs."

Citing possible health hazards to pregnant women operating the terminals as well as reports from union members of such side effects as neck and back pains, eye strain, headaches, dizziness and nausea, Carr said they raised "troublesome questions."

She declared: "Concern about the safety of continuous use of VDTs is not expressed only by whining women who want to avoid work or by boisterous unions looking for a cause between contract negotiations. Professional and technical employees, and even executives, are concerned about the problem. The difference, of course, is that professionals and executives usually have more control over their own work habits and work environment than clericals."

Carr cited an "executive policy bulletin" issued by Chautauqua County as an example of what can be done. The policy, developed cooperatively with the CSEA Chautauqua County unit, did the following:

- Provided for operators to take a break of at least 15 minutes after two hours of operation.
- Required reasonable accommodation to minimize the possibility of physical fatigue, eye strain, and other ailments.
- Provided accommodation for pregnant operators based upon the advice of personal physicians.

Carr concluded: "Chautauqua County's approach is a fine example. Should legislation be passed governing the operation of VDTs? In my opinion, yes."

CETA workers may 'buy back' retirement time, thanks to successful union class action suit

HOLTSVILLE — Because of a successful legal action by CSEA, CETA workers in Suffolk County, and perhaps throughout the state, now have the right to "buy back" retirement time for the years they were employed under the federal program.

The case was brought by Suffolk Local 852 after Suffolk County refused to pay its share of the "buy-back" sought by a former CETA worker. The case, argued by CSEA Albany Attorney Marjorie Karowe because of its statewide implications, was handled as a class action to cover any other employees that may be affected.

"The union's business is to represent members, to see that all their rights are protected. We are proud that we were able to help former CETA members," said Charles Novo, president of Local 852.

Civil Service law specifies that CETA workers may "buy back" the time they spent as CETA employees and apply it to their retirement accumulations. However, CETA workers can only apply for the "buy-back" after they have been regular civil servants for five years. Another stipulation requires that CETA workers apply for the benefit within one year after their fifth year of service.

Kevin Mastridge, county grievance representative for Local 852, said the union would assist other employees affected if they contact him at the local's Holtsville offices.
INSURANCE UPDATE — Delegates at the State Delegates Workshop held at Grossinger's Hotel in Liberty last week attended more than a dozen workshops. Pictured at one on the New York State Health Insurance Program are, above from left, Dave Egggersdorf and Charles Cooley of Finger Lakes State Parks Commission Local 112; and Ed Avery and Roger Townsend of Finger Lakes State Transportation Local 519. At left, Pat Fraco of Buffalo Psychiatric Center Local 403 discusses problems with time and attendance at another workshop.

LIBERTY — Some 600 state delegates and officers from CSEA’s six regions gathered in this Catskills town last week to exchange information on everything from job classifications and union finances to the quality of working life.

The three-day State Delegates Workshop, held at Grossinger’s Hotel, featured a potpourri of workshops, caucuses and other meetings led by a number of union staffers, members and management representatives.

The first day’s agenda included workshops on affirmative action, job classifications and the use of regional labor-management programs.

In discussing affirmative action, Joseph Tortelli, director of the Westchester County Office of Affirmative Action, said, “Everybody has to have the same shot at a job.” He said affirmative action “doesn’t push people aside to guarantee you a job, it just makes sure you aren’t penalized for being a woman, black or a member of other minority groups.

“Affirmative action applies to every single aspect of employment — hiring, firing, promotions, transfers, dress codes, pay differentials and anything related to job performance,” Tortelli said.

He recommended public employees keep an eye on where vacancies exist and how agencies fill them. “Very often,” he said, “you’ll find recruitment took a very casual turn. Someone from the department brings in a friend. That’s not recruitment — that’s cronyism. And that’s what keeps the system going, keeps the status quo.”

Barry Lorch, New York State director of Classification and Compensation, led the workshop on how job classifications are established, shedding light on the 15,000 individual judgments made each year by his division — judgments which affect some 45,000-50,000 employees across the state.

In the workshop entitled “Utilizing Regional Labor-Management Facilitators,” delegates were presented with a broad overview of two joint programs, the Committee on the Work Environment and Productivity (CWEP) and the Quality of Work Life (QWL).

(Continued on Pages 10 & 11)

LEADERS CONFER — CSEA Chief Lobbyist James Featherstonhaugh, left, talks with Capital Region President C. Allen Mead, center, and Southern Region President Raymond O’Connor.

LISTENING INTENTLY — Laurel Nelson of O.D. Heck Developmental Center Local 445 listens and takes notes during the workshop on health insurance.
I asked the employee why he or she is late. Instead of just listening and deal with it in a real sense. "We know that a lot of these cases are often settled by the people involved in the case, and we're not dealing with the employee's real problems," he said. "Instead of just listening and dealing with it, we're able to resolve many problems on the spot."

The fee is $12 for CSEA members and $22 for others. Would you like to feel more at ease when you're driving? Are you in danger of losing your driver's license? Could you use a 10 percent reduction in the liability portion of your car insurance? Because you're not dealing with the employee's real problems, he said. "Instead of just listening and dealing with it, we're able to resolve many problems on the spot."
Judge notes alleged misspellings ‘trivial’ in firing of steno; job, back pay awarded

MEDFORD — CSEA has vindicated a stenographer who was fired for alleged bad spelling but was, instead, according to a ruling of the Appellate Division of Supreme Court, the victim of retaliation by her boss because she had complained of abusive treatment.

The court ordered the employee reinstated with full back pay.

The alleged bad spelling, furthermore, involved errors that the appeals court judges found to be “essentially trivial.”

Not only that, but the judges observed that there were two misspellings in the report of a hearing officer who had originally upheld the employer’s effort to fire the stenographer, and two more misspellings in the brief submitted by the employer’s lawyer.

Charitably, the court assumed these errors to be merely “typographical” errors.

According to CSEA, the employee had been subjected to abuse ever since the second one had been assigned according to seniority rules to serve as secretary to an official of the Suffolk County Board of Cooperative Educational Services District III. From the start, the court ruling recited, the supervisor’s “attitude toward her was so difficult and abusive that she complained about it to higher officials.” Immediately thereafter, the court said, the supervisor started writing memos to the employee complaining about every spelling error that she made.

The court ordered the employee reinstated with full back pay.

The CSEA legal defense program battled the firing all the way to the Appellate Division. The case was handled by Stuart Lipkind of the law firm of CSEA Regional Attorney Lester B. Lipkind.

The appeals judges said the employee’s demerits for spelling were “essentially trivial.” Many, the judges said, were only typographical or shorthand transcription mistakes and fell far short of justifying the charge of incompetence.

The judges were not fooled. “What emerges from the record as a whole,” they ruled, “is a retaliatory effort by (the supervisor) to have petitioner dismissed after she complained about him.”

The firing, they ruled, was invalid, and the employee must be reinstated with full back pay.

Altieri elected to 3rd vp post

LATHAM — Lou Altieri, a 26-year Schenectady County employee and a long time union activist, has been elected to the position of third vice president of the Capital Region of the Civil Service Employees Assn.

Altieri fills a vacancy created when C. Allen Mead moved from first vice president of Region IV to the region presidency upon the election of Joseph E. McDermott as state-wide CSEA Executive Vice President. Joan Tobin and Barbara Skelly, both state employees, moved up from second and third region vice presidents to first and second, respectively.

Altieri is a member of the Local negotiating team, a member of the CSEA state-wide board of directors, and serves as a member of the region Political Action Committee.

He is president of the Department of Engineering and Public Works Unit of the Schenectady County CSEA Local; chairman of the Local’s Occupational Safety and Health Act Committee and chairman of the local’s membership committee.

His term will expire in 1984.

Vision program now available to court employees

ALBANY — A new benefit — vision care — went into effect April 1 for Unified Court System employees represented by CSEA. A brochure describing how the optical plan operates is available by contacting the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund at the toll free No. 1-800-342-4274.

Layoffs battled on several fronts

CSEA HAS BEEN FIGHTING LAYOFFS under the new state budget in several ways, among them large-scale public protest demonstrations and concentrated lobbying efforts with state legislators. In photo, CSEA Region VI President Robert L. Latimer addresses a large group of agry public workers who demonstrated recently in Buffalo against state layoffs.

In photo, Doris Mikus, a member of the statewide CSEA Political Action Committee, meets with Sen. Joseph Pisani (R-Westchester) recently in Albany. “Senator Pisani was most responsive to our lobbying efforts to avert proposed layoffs,” she noted.

ALBANY — CSEA is seeking applicants to fill the position of Director of Communications. The Director is responsible for operation of the Communications Department and supervision of its 14-member staff; facilitates communication between the union and its members; promotes the policies of the union through the media; and has overall responsibility for The Public Sector.

Qualifications include 10 years experience in public relations or with a newspaper, involved in the above areas of responsibility. A bachelor’s degree in communications may be substituted for some experience.

Resumes and salary histories should be submitted no later than May 9 to the CSEA Personnel Director, 33 Elk Street, Albany, NY 12224.
CSEA VOLUNTEERS

- Members of Syracuse City School District Clerical Unit 9 and Custodial Unit 6 of Onondaga County Local 834 volunteered a Sunday afternoon for a recent public television station fund-raising campaign. Shown taking WCNY-TV pledge are: Millie Behling, team captain; Mary Troche, Joe Morgan, Dave Kennedy, Joe Krzykowski, Dave Russell. Bottom row: Georgiana Finkard, Peg Young, Doris Crotin, Robie Maser.

Union motto ‘We Serve’ takes on new meaning as Region V members join public TV fund drive

SYRACUSE — When WCNY-TV, the Public Broadcasting Station in Central New York, sent out a call for volunteers to help with its annual fund drive, CSEA Region V was quick to respond.

The CSEA Communications Department saw it as an excellent opportunity to become involved in a worthwhile community activity, and to reciprocate for a valuable broadcast service the station offered CSEA members and other public employees interested in improving civil service exam skills.

Through the efforts of CSEA communications in Albany and Syracuse, WCNY-TV agreed to participate in the state television network broadcast of the four-part civil service exam series developed by CSEA in cooperation with the Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations and the State of New York. The station carried the initial series April 5-8.

To arrange help for the stations recent fund-drive, Region V Communications Associate Chuck McGeary contacted two Syracuse City School units of CSEA Local 834 Onondaga County. In less than one hour he had the 10 volunteers requested by the station, with additional standbys eager to work.

McGeary reported that the Sunday afternoon pledge session went like clockwork. The CSEA team arrived early, received instructions, then began taking telephone calls from area viewers.

Apparently, most of the volunteers enjoyed the work because they offered to return. There was also talk of perhaps taking on a bigger challenge such as a county-wide blood drive.

All in all, it was a good day for CSEA, the union that prides itself on the “WE SERVE” motto.

Meeting highlights

Processing Department and creation of three positions was approved and referred to the Budget Committee, as was upgrading of the Meeting Coordinator position to Grade 15. The Board defeated a proposal to combine the departments of Safety and Education and directed the Personnel Committee to report back at the next meeting with appropriate job specifications for the Safety Department.

In other action, the Board:

- Approved the recommendation of the Charter Committee that employees of the Long Island Correction Facility be granted their own local.
- Approved a three-year lease extension for the Plattsburgh Satellite Office and authorized Erie County Local 815 to purchase a building to be used as their headquarters.
- Approved the Election Procedures Committee's recommendation to allow nominating committee members to resign from their positions in order to run for Delegate.
- Approved Lake Placid as the site for the Oct. 21-26, 1984 Annual Convention.
- Approved a motion calling on CSEA to conduct an analysis, including cost savings and ramifications to members, of combining the Commissions of OMRDD and OMH and Alcohol and Substance Abuse back under one Commission for the purpose of saving money to keep members working.
- Approved a motion supporting Gov. Mario Cuomo's proposal to allow a portion of funds accrued in the NYS Pension System to be utilized in investment capital for establishing new businesses in New York State.

Employee wins longevity grievance

LOCKPORT — Niagara County needed an arbitrator to define Mary Gephart's length of service. And, Mary Gephart had to file a grievance and get help from CSEA’s legal assistance program to get the arbitrator.

It all started when the county decided it incorrectly gave Gephart credit for past service, and reduced her pay from the eighth longevity step to the fifth step. The excuse was that she incorrectly included the time she was employed as a houseparent by the county in her service. And, Mary Gephart had to file a grievance and get help from CSEA's legal assistance program to get the arbitrator.

At the regular Board meeting March 17, discussions covered a broad range of topics. Here are the highlights of official business transacted:

- The Board approved allowances for the State Executive Committee attending the State Workshop April 13-15 and the County Executive Committee attending the County Workshop June 6-10.
- The Board dealt with three Personnel Committee recommendations. Expansion of the Data
CSEA charges commission report on Tier III ‘ludicrous;’ based on faulty assumptions

EDITOR’S NOTE: On April 12, 1983, CSEA presented testimony before a public hearing of the New York State Permanent Commission on Public Employee Pension and Retirement Systems. The Commission had previously released a report favoring the permanent enactment of the controversial Tier III retirement system, which is due to expire June 30, 1983. Following is the testimony of CSEA Legislative and Political Action Director Bernard Ryan.

Members of the Commission, guests and other witnesses. My name is Bernard J. Ryan and I am the Director of CSEA’s Legislative and Political Action Department. I am here on behalf of William McGowan, President of CSEA. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present testimony about your recent report on Tier III Reform.

I would like to be able to continue the amenities by complimenting the Commission on this well conceived and carefully developed report on Tier III reform. Unfortunately, I cannot do so. The Commission report draws conclusions which are based on faulty and contradictory assumptions. The comparisons that are made are totally inconsistent, and its conclusions and proposals are, therefore, of great disappointment to CSEA and to the 240,000 state and county employees whom we represent.

Let me deal with the two most dominant subjects of the report, namely the employee contribution and the integration of social security. In your report of April 19, 1982, you state on page 7 that the original Co-ESC plan, as originally developed by the Permanent Commission, did not include the employee contribution provision.” The 1982 report then states that the employee contribution provision of 3% was included in order to have a cost somewhat lower than Tier II, which was then and still is approximately 14%. Your recommendation in that 1982 report stated that, “Experience has shown that the cost of Tier III is somewhat lower than originally estimated. It, therefore, seems appropriate and desirable to go back to the Commission’s original concept and not require any employee contributions.” In other words your 1982 report reiterated the original 1976 recommendation not to have employee contributions.

Conflicting reports
Now in this year’s 1983 report you stated on page 15 that the elimination of the 3% contribution, would bring about conformity with most employers in private industry. You then cite the Banker’s Trust study which showed that 81% of conventional plans in private industry had no mandatory or voluntary employee contribution and that 96% of all plans in the study had no mandatory contributions. Then on the following page, you state, “However, the elimination of the employee contribution was criticized by certain business groups because eliminating the contributory feature of Co-ESC would put New York State out of step with the majority of other states in the nation which have contributory features for their public employees. They apparently thought a valid comparison was with other public employee plans rather than with the private industry plans.”

Gentlemen, you then imply you are drawing a comparison based on 50 states rather than the private industry plans which have been far more beneficial to our case. You then state that the same business groups thought that “… a more valid comparison was with other public employee plans rather than private industry plans.” And that it was advisable to make a comparison on both employee contributions and social security integration with similar provisions, but under public employee plans in nearby states, namely Conn., New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts.

Abandoning the private sector comparison
It is worth noting at this point, that you have abandoned the comparison with private sector plans and have chosen instead, to try to maintain some consistency in your comparisons by using, not the comparison of New York with all other states in the nation, as you did previously, but rather with just some of the contiguous states. It may be because the only other state to have an integration with social security is the state of Connecticut. The other 48 states simply do not have an integration formula.

It seems as if you have reached your conclusions and then attempted to find arguments that would justify the conclusions. By using the same type of logic, we can say that 4% of the plans studied by the 1980 Banker’s Trust study have mandatory contributions and that there is only one other state out of the 50 that has social security integration, therefore, neither contributions nor a social security integration policy would be advisable to the New York Retirement Systems.

Regardless, let us continue with the examination of the Report. You then go on to discuss the comparison of benefit plans with the 4 contiguous states and your chart on page 19 clearly shows that New York retirement benefits returned a lesser replacement ratio than any of the other 4 states. When you then include social security, it is 4th out of the 5 states with Massachusetts only being 2 points lower and that being because Massachusetts does not participate in the social security program. In discussing the alternate approach to the social security integration, you then delve into the area of offering alternative proposals, namely proposal A and B.

Proposals ‘offensive’ to CSEA members
Proposal A, deals with what you refer to as social security bend points. What this basically does is require you to reduce the percentage that a person uses when multiplying his final average salary times his years of service in order to determine his pension. Instead of using 2% a year for each year of service, your alternative says that he would use 1.45% up to what you refer to as the second social security bend point. Your report clearly states that there is only 1% as if you have replaced your conclusions and then attempted to find arguments that would justify the conclusions. By using the same type of logic, we can say that 4% of the plans studied by the 1980 Banker’s Trust study have mandatory contributions and that there is only one other state out of the 50 that has social security integration, therefore, neither contributions nor a social security integration policy would be advisable to the New York Retirement Systems.

The other portions of your plan are equally as offensive to our members. Your proposal which you label Proposal B, is nothing more than a simple reduction from 2% for each year of service to 1.5% for each year of service up to a maximum of 35 years. The comparison that you then do on page 23 with contiguous states shows that this would produce by far the lowest pension benefit of any of the 5 states when looked at alone and when you then add in the social security integration it then again manages to be the 4th out of the 5 only because Massachusetts does not participate in the social security program.

The other portions of your plan are equal reoffensive to our members. You state that if an individual retired before age 62, not only would he be forced to take a reduction in his benefit because of age, but he would never receive an increase in his retirement benefit regardless of the increase in the cost of living. Your supplementation proposal mandates a maximum increase of 3% per year for those who retired at age 65 or later and a lower percentage increase for those retiring before age 62. This is inadequate. In addition, you mentioned on page 23 of your Report under the general subject of Disability Benefits, that your objective would be “the elimination of the distinction...
between ordinary and accidental disability." What you are doing is simply lowering the benefit provisions to the lesser of the two.

Worst public employee benefits in Eastern U.S.

This report amounts to nothing more than an administrative reform. It is not a true study in analysis. It does not present a range of options and associated costs from which the Legislative and Executive Branches, the policy making bodies in this state, can make reasonable and intelligent choices.

Your report shows that employees in New York State will have the worst benefits of all public employees in the Eastern United States. Those are your recommendations and we think they are ludicrous. You manage to confuse the Legislature and the public as well. You have clearly stated in your report for this year, that you were sensitive to the criticism of "certain business groups" and have managed to make the current recommendation one, which if enacted into law, would produce the worst retirement plan for public employees in the Eastern United States.

Let's just step back a bit from your most recent recommendation and look at the basis for Tier III. When this plan was first suggested it had a basic premise that social security integration was a necessary part of any overall retirement plan and it was stated, in 1976, by your Commission, that the social security benefits would be the foundation of the Tier III Retirement Plan. Gentlemen, I submit to you that in the past seven years it has been found that the social security program does not have the strength necessary to support this retirement program. In addition, the most recent changes made by Congress will not stabilize the social security trust fund nor, more importantly, ensure that there will be funds available for the payment of benefits in the far distant future. Given these recent developments, will there be any realistic benefit level when our present employees retire under Tier III?

Social Security System: a weak foundation

If your foundation is weak, everything that is built upon it is equally as weak. The program that was originally proposed to be built upon the strong social security foundation was one which was guaranteed to produce a retirement benefit that would be equal to what the employee earned during his active working life. By your own admission in the most recent report, the integration formula which was proposed by your Commission and eventually passed by the Legislature has not worked and is impossible to administer. We find it extremely difficult to look at the assumptions that you made in 1976 and which have since been proved to be ill-conceived and faulty and now look upon your present recommendations with any degree of trust. I am sure that your Consultants are competent and that your goals are consistent with the legislative mandate that you have received. However, you are tackling an immense problem and your viewpoint has been subjectively singular; that is you have looked at it only from the employer's point of view. That viewpoint has overshadowed the one aspect that is necessary in developing a Retirement Plan. And that is EQUITY. The employees have been shortchanged.

Let me remind you of a few facts. All of the members that we represent are members of the New York State Employees Retirement System. This System has assets of over $16 billion. It is extremely well funded. The return on investments is very good. The average salary of the members we represent is approximately $12,000. If that employee is a member of Tier 1 and works 35 years in public employment, he can retire on the grandiose sum of $700 per month. That is if he chooses option 0 and decides not to provide benefits for a spouse or survivors. If so, then his retirement benefit is much less. This is the best that our members can hope for. Under Tier II, that same employee would take a reduction if he retired before age 65 and he would be receiving a lower benefit under this formula. Under your proposals, this same employee working under Tier III would receive approximately $300 per month. In addition, he would have been paying 3% of his gross salary into the Retirement Plan.

We are talking about the future when people will be living at an older age based on modern advances in medicine and technology.

'A matter of conscience'

Statistics show you will have an increased older population and what you are proposing is that most of this older population will be living at or below the poverty level. This now becomes a matter of conscience; not just fiscal responsibility. Gentlemen, as you have clearly stated in your Report, you listened very well to the recommendations of business groups. They have talked in terms of millions of dollars of increased costs on retirement plans. Back in 1976 when we argued this same subject, we were told that the cost for Tier III had to stay at about 13%. This was an arbitrary number that was chosen or, possibly agreed upon, by the same groups that you are still dealing with and which caused a ceiling on benefits as well as costs. At present, Tier III is costing about 9.5% of payroll. This is based on the Report issued by the New York State Comptroller Edward Regan, the sole trustee of the New York State Employee Retirement System. We have since been told that the substitution of Tier II for Tier III would increase the employer contribution rate to 13.5% of payroll. This is a mere one-half-of-one-percent above what the goal you set seven years ago was. We believe that this is what your recommendation should be. Eliminate Tier III and revert back to Tier II at an increased cost of one-half-of-one-percent, and end the inequitable program that has been hoisted on the employees for the last seven years.

Revert back to Tier II

We are advocating Tier II as an alternative to the extremely inequitable Tier III plan that does exist, or the proposals that are being considered for this year.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak before your group.
WASHINGTON — The million-member American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and its affiliate, the 23,000-member Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE), have revealed that a U.S. District Court has fixed August 29 as the trial date for a landmark multi-million-dollar comparable worth wage discrimination suit brought against Washington state.

Tacoma District Court Judge Jack Tanner also dismissed a wide range of state-filed motions designed to dismiss AFSCME's lawsuit and limit the size and scope of the union's suit, which was originally filed by AFSCME and nine plaintiffs in July of last year.

The judge also ordered the state to provide extensive data to support AFSCME's claim that the state intentionally segregated and paid its employees on the basis of sex. The union is seeking full implementation of comparable worth pay increases for an estimated 15,000 female employees in Washington state, plus an award of back pay for four years.

"The eyes of the country and of working women everywhere will be on the State of Washington," declared AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee. "This is the first case of its kind, where a state is being charged for practicing sex-based wage discrimination, and for violating both federal and state anti-discrimination laws. The case is expected to set the precedent for implementation of earlier Supreme Court decisions."

In the case of County of Washington v. Gunther, the U.S. Supreme Court opened the door for legal actions by unions and working women by holding that discrimination in pay on the basis of sex is illegal even if male and female employees are performing different jobs. The court confirmed that it is illegal to pay "female" jobs less than "male" jobs because they are female, if the difference in pay is not justified by the difference in the required composite of skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions.

Since the Supreme Court ruling, AFSCME has filed legal actions charging the states of Connecticut, Washington, Hawaii and Wisconsin and the cities of Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Chicago with wage discrimination against their women workers. The Washington state action is the first trial date to be set as a result of AFSCME's legal attacks on unequal pay for working women.

"Naturally, we're very pleased with the rulings of Judge Tanner in throwing out all motions filed by the state and in granting all motions filed by AFSCME," stated WFSE Executive Director George Masten. "All of the defense motions were aimed at reducing the scope of this suit and narrowing the ability of our union to prevail in this case."

Among state-filed motions denied by Judge Tanner was a motion which claimed that the union's suit improperly included allegations of state law violations in a case before a federal court. These allegations contend that the State of Washington violated its own Civil Service laws and the state's Equal Rights Amendment.

Tanner also ruled in favor of the union on their motion for "class certification." This ruling allows the nine individual state employees named as plaintiffs to act on behalf of all affected civil service state employees.

**Landmark pay equity case unfolds**

**Weeks of picketing spur 3-year pact in White Plains**

WHITE PLAINS — Members of this city's school district's non-instructional unit can take their walking shoes off. After seven weeks of daily demonstrations in front of the School Board's offices at Education House, both the Board and CSEA members approved a three year contract.

Members had been working without a contract since July 1, and held daily informational pickets calling for serious negotiations by the Board.

"It's a victory for us," says Unit President Barbara Peters, "because the Administration wanted to sub-contract the cafeteria services, but we held firm and said no!" Forty-four positions were saved.

The 334 members of the unit will enjoy their largest pay raises in several years. For 1982-83, there will be a 7 percent increase, on top of increments, which were already paid. There will be an additional 7 percent hike July 1, plus increments, while there is a wage reopener provision for 1984-85.

Cooks will receive an adjustment of 75 cents an hour retroactive to July 1. Clerk-typists and stenographers will move up one level on the salary schedule July 1, 1984.

All present school district unit employees will continue their non-contributory health insurance program, while any new employee with at least 20 hours per week will pick up 5 percent of the cost of dependent health insurance coverage. CSEA dental and vision plans will be made available July 1.

Teacher aides and assistants will get two extra paid holidays per year. All unit members will be covered by an improved disciplinary procedure.

Members approved the contract 223-29 March 14. Later that night, Board members unanimously adopted the agreement.

Peters says, "Our negotiating team stuck together throughout this whole ordeal. Field Rep. Joe O'Connordid wonders as our negotiator. I'd like to thank committee members Frances Komita, Marie Broady, John Catoe, Carol Finiani, Ray Orr, Irene Izzo and Ursula Wright."

The unit had some salaries frozen and others increased only slightly in the 1979-80 school year as the district was facing financial difficulties. Peters reminded the Board, "We helped you go through this. "We helped you go from the red to the black, that's enough!"

The 7 percent pay raise will first be seen in the bi-weekly paychecks distributed April 28. The retroactive pay will be made in one lump sum on May 27.
Charles Sandler Scholarship applications being accepted

BUFFALO — Applications for the Charles R. Sandler Scholarship are being accepted from Region VI members for cash assistance towards labor related studies.

In making the announcement, Region President Robert L. Lattimer said applicants must be CSEA members in a Region VI Local or Unit to be eligible.

The award was established by former Region VI Attorney and Mrs. Charles R. Sandler, upon her retirement after 33 years as Region Attorney.

The Scholarship Recipient will be selected by the fund trustees, including Region President Lattimer, Region Director Lee Frank and Regional Attorney Ronald L. Jaros.

Applications are due by May 24.

Marilynne Whittam heads Capital District of CLUW

ALBANY — The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) has elected Marilynne Whittam, who chairs the Region IV Women’s Committee, Virginia Kirby, was elected secretary.

Women’s participation in unions — past, present and future — will be discussed at CLUW’s next business meeting scheduled 6:30 p.m. on Monday, May 16, at the NYSUT/PEF Headquarters, 159 Wolf Rd., Albany.

Ruth Jandreau, a former factory worker, union organizer and officer of the United Electric, Radio and Machine Workers Union, will be guest speaker.

For more information, contact Ms. Whittam by calling (518) 674-5874.

Arbitration win over jury duty a triumph for past practice

BUFFALO — Past practice is a treasured unit right, and once again it has worked to the advantage of a CSEA member.

A 25-year employee of the Erie County Medical Center, Noah filed the grievance because her supervisor refused to alter her work schedule so she would have the weekend off during the week she reported to jury duty.

The refusal, however, ignored a past practice established at two other county facilities (the Home and Infirmary, and the Jail) which grants employees in similar situations weekend leave.

Moreover, the CSEA contract stipulates that second or third shift employees who report to jury duty during the same work week are excused (with pay) from work during the evening.

Based on these factors, Arbitrator Fred Denison ruled that, “The County violated the contract in refusing to give the weekend off to the grievant after she had been on jury duty for the five days previous” and awarded Noah two days off.

open competitive

STATE JOB CALENDAR

FILING ENDS MAY 2, 1983

Title
Bridge Painter II, Supervising
Facilities Management Assistant
Food Inspector (Surplus Foods)
Heating and Ventilating Engineer, Assistant
Mechanical Construction Engineer, Assistant
Plumbing Engineer, Assistant
Program Research Specialist II (Medical Assistance)
Program Research Specialist III (Medical Assistance)
Program Research Specialist III (Operations)
Program Research Specialist II (Social Services)
Program Research Specialist III (Social Services)
Teachers’ Retirement System Information Representative
Environmental Specialist (Cultural Resources), Senior
Director for Cancer Institute Nursing Services, Assistant
Salary
$16,870
17,094
16,711
24,569
24,569
24,569
24,569
22,132
22,132
22,132
22,132
22,131
22,772
22,772
28,772
13,131
Exam. No.
25-844
25-241
25-943
25-937
25-938
25-939
25-939
25-812
25-812
25-812
25-812
25-813
25-814
25-815
25-813
25-899
28-455
28-808
28-490
Detailed announcements and applications may be obtained from the following locations:
ALBANY: Examinations Information, Department of Civil Service, Stat* Office Building, Albany, NY 12239.
BUFFALO: State Department of Civil Service, Room 303, 65 Court Street, Buffalo, NY 14202.
NEW YORK: State Department of Civil Service, 55th Floor, 2 World Trade Center, New York, NY 10047 or Harlem State Office Building, 163 West 12th Street, New York, NY 10012.
LOCAL OFFICES: New York State Employment Service (no mail handed or applications accepted).

Special Test Arrangements Will Be Made For Saturday Religious Observers And Handicapped Persons When A Written Test Is Held.

COMPETITIVE PROMOTIONAL EXAMS

(State employees only)

FILING ENDS MAY 9, 1983

Title
Administrative Assistant G-18
Senior Laboratory Technician G-12
Senior Laboratory Technician (Biochemistry) G-12
Senior Laboratory Technician (Chemistry) G-12
Senior Laboratory Technician (Microbiology) G-12
Senior Business Management Assistant G-18
Corrections Officer G-7
Correction Officer II G-7
Correctional Officer G-7
Correctional Officer II G-7
Correctional Officer IV G-12
Associate Forester G-21
Senior Forester G-18
Senior Forester M-1
Assistant Building Structural Engineer G-20
Senior Boiler Inspector G-17
Senior Public Work Wage Investigator G-17
Supervising Public Work Wage Investigator G-21
Senior Public Work Wage Investigator G-17
Senior Public Work Wage Investigator G-21
Disability Determinations Review Clerk I G-9
Disability Determinations Review Clerk II G-9
Disability Determinations Review Clerk III G-9
Senior Public Work Wage Investigator G-21
Associate Pari-Mutuel Tax Examiner G-23
Senior Pari-Mutuel Tax Examiner G-19
Salary
Exam. No.
13,131
37-945
37-944
37-946
37-919
37-861
37-962
37-963
37-771
37-790
37-910
37-933
37-934
37-935
37-929
37-930
37-927
37-928
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37-920
37-777
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37-777
"For want of a nail
the shoe is lost,
For want of a shoe
the horse is lost,
For want of a horse
the rider is lost."

—George Herbert
(1593-1633)

Renovation,
maintenance
Achilles' heel
of the barge canal

When CSEA revealed that planned layoffs of a large number of full-time employees of the New York State Barge Canal system would lead to serious deterioration of canal equipment and could ultimately lead to shutting down the canal system itself, the news media was quick to investigate. In the greater Albany area, all three network affiliate tv stations covered the growing controversy over the layoffs. At upper left, Canal Structure Operator Frank Jones right, talks with Channel 6 newsman Dick Beach as Canal Structure Operator Dave Couture looks on. At lower left, Channel 10 newscaster Marci Elliott reports on the situation at Lock 2 of the system's Champlain Canal at Waterford. At upper right, Jones shows a tv cameraman some of the intricate, but old, equipment that must be maintained at all times. At lower right, Couture talks about problems on the canal system with a reporter from Channel 13.

"...THE WORK NEEDED TO KEEP THIS SYSTEM OPERATING IS AROUND-THE-CLOCK, TWELVE MONTHS A YEAR. A LOT OF THE EQUIPMENT OUR PEOPLE KEEP WORKING DATES BACK TO 1912 WHEN THE CANAL WAS LAST RENOVATED..."
LAYOFFS COULD SINK THE SYSTEM

ALBANY — Probably everyone knows that any layoffs that cost more than they save make little or no sense, but despite appearances that in the long run they may actually be losing money, the State of New York seems intent on laying off 164 full-time employees of the New York State Barge Canal.

The employees, who work for the Waterways Maintenance Division of the Department of Transportation, were targeted for layoff under Gov. Mario M. Cuomo’s proposed Executive Budget. The “logic” behind this plan was that if the barge canal is only open seasonally, then why employ year-round workers?

While that sounds like it makes sense, it makes no sense at all to the men and women who keep the 158-year-old canal moving every day. What’s more, they point out that while the administration seems ready, willing and able to dump 164 workers, it has no intention of abolishing any top level jobs despite the fact that such jobs have been growing over the years while the numbers of employees have been reduced.

“It seems pretty dumb to be getting rid of the people who are the ‘nuts and bolts’ of this efficient transportation system while the office people just keep right on sailing along,” commented GSEA Collective Bargaining Specialist Nels E. Carlson.

Yet the inequity of the layoff plan isn’t CSEA’s biggest gripe, Carlson says. The number one mistake the state is making is in cutting back drastically on a relatively modest maintenance cost when the ultimate effect may be the destruction of an invaluable public asset.

“The barge canal locks and dams may be closed during part of the year,” Carlson says, “but the work needed to keep this system operating is around-the-clock, twelve months a year. A lot of the equipment our people keep working dates back to 1912 when the canal was last renovated. With major mechanical equipment lasting over 70 years, these people have obviously been doing their job. Cutting back now will cause this equipment to deteriorate and the ultimate effect may be an end to the canal.”

In a position paper opposing the cutbacks prepared by Carlson and CSEA’s Research Department, several critical questions are posed; questions raised by the budget cutbacks and questions that appear to have no answers.

For example, if the barge cutbacks do cause increasing delays in transit and breakdown and replacement of very expensive equipment, will the loss of efficiency push present freight onto already deteriorating state bridges and highways? Will the deterioration jeopardize the important function of the canal’s dam system as a flood control mechanism for the Mohawk Valley? Will the state have the resources to finance expensive renovations caused by reduced maintenance or is part of the plan the eventual shut down of the entire canal system?

The Waterways Division of DOT presently employs 666 full-time and 179 seasonal employees to keep the system’s 57 locks and 17 lift bridges operating. Laying off nearly 27% of the entire full-time workforce — all on operational jobs — is expected to save only $1.7 million. CSEA says it could destroy the canal.

And as Carlson points out, it’s not as if the state feels it’s overstaffed. He notes that before a canal system employee can take even one week off in the summer months, the employee must have 15 years of service on the canal.

Even DOT itself appears to agree with CSEA’s position. As a department factsheet puts it, “If maintenance and rehabilitation funding is not increased, deterioration will continue to the point where the canals may become inoperative within ten years.”

The union also urges that by switching to a purely seasonal operation, the system will drive out its best employees who will seek alternate, stable employment.

“When you take out what the state will pay in unemployment insurance, health insurance and other costs, that effectively reduce layoff savings,” Carlson said, “it really looks like we’re about to throw away a priceless state resource for an insignificant savings in a $32 billion state budget. That’s not management, that’s just stupid.”

Despite the bleak outlook for barge canal employees, the union is continuing its efforts to convince state officials of the false economies in their plans in an effort to turn the layoff threat around.
Unions suing Nassau to end decades of discrimination in hiring, wages

Nassau County CSEA Local 830 President Jerry Donohue, Local 830 Executive Vice President Rita Wallace, and CSEA Region I President Danny Donohue.

"Nassau County had better wake up. Women have moved from the kitchen table to the bargaining table"—Rita Wallace

By Hugh O'Haire

MINEOLA — CSEA and AFSCME announced last week that they would take Nassau County to court to end "several decades" of discrimination by the county in hiring and wages.

The action was the culmination of several months of preparation by CSEA and AFSCME of a study of the pay levels of 14,000 county employees represented by CSEA Local 830 which showed a pattern of "sex-segregated jobs" at the lower and upper ends of the grade scale and cited examples of "wage discrimination" where women and men in the same pay grades were paid at different scales.

"Pay equity is not a woman's issue; it's a worker's issue," said Danny Donohue, president of CSEA Region I. "We've already passed the Civil Rights and Equal Pay Acts and there is no reason discrimination should still exist anywhere in New York State in this day and age."

The findings of the study were made public at an April 14 press conference in the Nassau County press room attended by Danny Donohue, Jerry Donahue, president of Nassau Local 830; Rita Wallace, executive vice president of Local 830; and Marilyn DePuy, AFSCME assistant coordinator of woman's activities.

Jerry Donahue told reporters that he had given Nassau County Executive Francis Purcell the report several weeks earlier and had requested that the county join CSEA to conduct its own survey "to determine the degree of sex segregation in the County's workforce and to correct the disparate treatment of women." Donahue said he had received an unofficial response from the county that the union could go to court to try and prove its charges.

"That's exactly what we plan to do," Donahue told reporters from Newsday, Daily News, the wire services and radio stations.

"Nassau County had better wake up. Women have moved from the kitchen table to the bargaining table," warned Rita Wallace.

After the press conference a spokesman for Nassau County said the unions' charges were "totally false."

CSEA and AFSCME leaders disagreed with the county. The study showed, they said, a clear pattern of wage discrimination and sex segregated jobs — those in which one sex dominates — in the 14,000 employees surveyed.

The study, based on county documents, found:

- Women make up about 36 percent of total employees in salary grades one through 14, but they are almost 90 percent of employees in the three lowest salary grades.
- More than 90 percent of the county employees in grades one through 14 work in sex-segregated jobs where at least 70 percent of the job holders are of the same sex. More than two-thirds of the county's 681 job classifications are all-male or all-female jobs.

A sex-segregated workforce generally means low pay for women workers in Nassau County, "Women's jobs" pay less than "men's jobs," even when the jobs require equivalent levels of skill, effort and responsibility.

The report compared three entry level female-dominated jobs-clerical assistant, nurse aide 1 and clerk stenographer 1 in pay grades 1, 2 and 4 — with an entry level male-dominated job, labor 1 in pay grade 5. The clerical assistant, nurse aide and laborer all have minimal skill and educational requirements and generally perform routine duties under close supervision.

Yet, according to the report, last year a starting laborer earned from $565 to $1,926 more a year than a than a worker starting in these jobs; $565 a year more than a clerk stenographer 1 who passes a qualifying examination in typing and dictation.

Local 830 has a history of fighting against sex discrimination. In 1980, Local 830 brought a successful class action suit against Nassau County for paying domestic workers at the Nassau County Medical Center, a woman-dominated job, less than the employees of the male-dominated custodial workers even though both jobs are technically on the same level and pay scale. Now the local is looking into similar practices at the A. Holly Paterson Home, according to Wallace.

The study grew out of the refusal of Nassau County to conduct its own job classification study which the CSEA requested as part of its last contract negotiations, according to Jerry Donahue. Donahue and Rita Wallace, along with Region I President Danny Donohue, contacted CSEA statewide President William McGewan and Executive Vice President Joseph McDermott, both also AFSCME vice presidents, who arranged for AFSCME's help in the study. Marilyn DePuy and the AFSCME Research Department worked closely with Rita Wallace gathering data and interviewing scores of employees before finally submitting their report to the county.

According to Jerry Donahue, both CSEA and AFSCME are contacting the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and will ask that it direct the Justice Department to join with them in suing Nassau County. The EEOC has 180 days to respond to the request. Donahue said that even if the federal government doesn't sue Nassau, the unions will.

CSEA OFFICIALS involved in the major law suit against Nassau County included, from left, Nassau County CSEA Local 830 President Jerry Donahue, Local 830 Executive Vice President Rita Wallace, and CSEA Region I President Danny Donohue.