OVERCROWDED, UNDERSTAFFED!

SEE PAGE 3
This course could change your life

If you're looking for some help in answering the question everyone asks themselves, "What do I want to do with the rest of my life?" then CSEA's Labor Education Action Program (LEAP) is the place to turn to.

But you'd better hurry, because the deadline to apply for the one LEAP course that can help you answer that question ends soon.

CSEA/LEAP is offering a special course, "Empowered Learning: Unleashing Your Career and College Potential," that will teach you to make the necessary choices that will enable you to take control of your own life.

CSEA/LEAP has established a second registration period for this course only. This second and final registration period ends Jan. 11, 1988. Members of the ASU, ISU, OSU, DMNA, HRI or SUNY Construction Fund bargaining units who have not already been accepted into a Spring 1988 LEAP course are eligible to enroll in this dynamic course.

Classes for the "Empowered Learning" course will be held in eight locations across the state for eight Tuesdays from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. beginning Feb. 23, 1988 and ending April 12, 1988.

Classes will be offered in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Binghamton, Albany, Ashkill, New York City and Melville.

"Empowered Learning: is a career development workshop designed to help you clarify your interests, values and job expectations. Participants costs for the eight-week, non-credit workshop series will be approximately $50 for books and materials.

To apply for this exciting CSEA/LEAP course, contact your CSEA local president or your agency training/personnel office and request a LEAP 110 application form. Complete the form as directed and mail, to arrive before Jan. 11, 1988, to LEAP. For additional information, call CSEA/LEAP at (518) 434-0191, Ext. 226 or 228.

But hurry. The registration deadline is fast approaching.

Visions of sugarplums all blurry for Amber

By Daniel X. Campbell
CSEA Communications Associate

ALBANY — No one stands taller than when he or she stoops to help a child.

The holiday season transforms public employees in the Capital Region into busy elves helping out on numerous holiday projects. Some may be involved with Toys for Tots, others may collect food to restock fast-emptying food pantries, others work with holiday meal programs.

This year, there is one special child who needs a lot of love from everyone. Her name is Amber and she is the two-and-a-half-year-old niece of a CSEA member.

While others will wake on Christmas morning wide-eyed to see what Santa has left under the tree, Amber will only be able to see out of one eye. Retinoblastoma, a rare form of cancer affecting only one in every 20,000 children, claimed her right eye in October. Her Christmas morning will be bleak indeed.

It would be nice to say that all of the bills were paid by Medicaid or some other type of insurance. But before Amber's illness was discovered, her father had been unemployed because of a serious knee injury. The firm he worked for was later sold, leaving him without a job or health insurance coverage.

Amber's father forgot about his own troubles when Amber's cancer was discovered and became almost life-threatening.

The blindness in her right eye was only discovered during a simple eye exam; an emergency eye check detected the cancer. Amber's doctor acted quickly, sending her to the Willis Eye Hospital in Philadelphia where the cancerous eye was removed.

Going to Pennsylvania for treatment complicated the crisis further. Medicaid refused to pay the bills initially because she'd had the necessary operation in another state.

It has taken time, but numerous letters and informational filings have cleared up most of this problem. What little funds the family had put aside for Christmas, including anything to fulfill the Christmas wishes of another child, are long gone, used to pay various bills. Now Amber's father faces a bleak Christmas.

The family has not become self-absorbed in their troubles. In fact, they hope their story will help others realize the importance of eye exams for children between birth and two and a half years, the period in which they are most susceptible to retinoblastoma.

If Amber had been checked earlier, even in a clinic, her eye might have been saved.

Hindsight is 20-20; Amber's eye cannot be restored. But what can you do to help the ladder and her family?

First, tell your friends and relatives and anyone you know with young children about the importance of eye checkups to detect the rare cancer.

Second, sacrifice a pack of cigarettes, a coffee or a snack and donate that money to: AMBER Care of Netha DeGrff President, CSEA Local 669 Division of Parole 97 Central Avenue Albany, New York 12206 Please help make this Christmas full for Amber.
NASSAU JAIL BURSTING AT THE SEAMS

By Sheryl Carlin
CSEA Communications Associate

EAST MEADOW — The Nassau County Correctional Facility, bursting at the seams with inmates on the one hand and severely understaffed with corrections officers (COs) on the other, is a powder keg with the match already lit.

“We're trying to keep a lid on this place and we're barely keeping it from exploding,” says Corrections Officer Bill Stanley, president of the Nassau County Sheriff's Department CSEA Unit. CSEA represents COs at the facility.

The county jail is under fire from the state Corrections Commission and community groups concerned about overcrowding and understaffing. Following the recent escape of an inmate, the state cited the facility for inadequate security staffing and ordered 100 inmates moved to ease overcrowding.

County officials responded to that order by suggesting the possibility of adding more guards instead of limiting the number of inmates.

It's not the first time Nassau County has negotiated with the state. Earlier this year the Corrections Commission allowed the county to increase the inmate population in the annex in an effort to reduce overcrowding in the main facility in East Meadow. In return, the county agreed to increase the number of corrections officers.

Nassau County CSEA Local 830 President Jerome P. Donahue called on Gov. Cuomo to reopen the correctional facility at Brentwood the state closed some time ago.

“The state lets Brentwood just sit there while local jails become more crowded daily. It's absurd,” Donahue says. “Brentwood is a perfectly good, 1,000-bed prison. The state should use it to house state inmates now held 155.1 under staffing, Stanley said conditions at the facility are "extremely volatile and dangerous" because so many lock-ups are dormitory or module style.

"The life expectancy of a CO is age 59 but retirement is not until age 62. People use this job as a stepping stone," he adds.

Stanley says there are 26 vacancies the county has been unable to fill, while Undersheriff Joseph Jablonsky claims there is no more money in the 1987 budget to hire more officers.

"We need 219 more; then we won't be working overtime to the point of exhaustion," says Stanley, who worked 1,000 hours of overtime in 1986.

Stanley says problems at the facility have been building for a long time.

"We've had these problems since I've been here. Ten years. This is just the worst its ever been.

"It's not simply a question of hiring more officers; we can't keep them on board," Stanley claims. He says a pay scale not competitive with other law enforcement positions in the county, a relatively late retirement age of 62, pressures of the job and placing rookie officers in service before completion of training courses all contribute to turnover.

"The dorms and modulars lead to more confrontations." Visitors pulling up to the correctional facility with its stern, gray buildings and coiled barbed wire fences are screened by CO Edward Wilner, who's worked at the jail nearly 18 years.

Wilner finds the overcrowded, understaffed conditions "disgusting." Some inmates have been sentenced to state prisons but are being housed in the county facility, and Wilner says "the state should take responsibility for getting its own prisoners out of here."

Stanley says the situation is taking a toll on the staff.

"These problems are having a really damaging effect on the officers. Morale is lower than I've ever seen it."

"I just called Gulotta (Nassau County Executive Thomas Gulotta) for an emergency meeting. We need help."

Pay equity: one step closer

ALBANY — The state has finally granted authorization to release pay equity adjustments to employees paid on an hourly or per diem basis. But payments are still not expected to be made until at least next month.

Several weeks ago, The Public Sector reported that the state had finally given in to CSEA pressure and agreed that employees are eligible for upward adjustments if they:

* have job titles recently assigned a higher grade through the new classification and compensation plan;
* hold "NS" or non-statutory positions but have salaries equated to a grade.

Before employees can hope to receive their pay equity adjustments, the state agencies must provide the Division of Budget with a list of eligible employees. Several weeks ago CSEA was advised by the state that this step had already been taken, but in fact it has not yet been accomplished. The process is expected to be time consuming. It now appears that payments will not be made before the end of the year.

When payments are made, they will be retroactive to April of 1987.

EDWARD WILNER calls conditions at the Nassau County Correctional Facility "disgusting."

CSEA Unit President Bill Stanley

The facility is bursting with 1,510 inmates. The annex, built to house 88 inmates, now holds 105.

In addition to overcrowding and understaffing, Stanley said conditions at the jail are "extremely volatile and dangerous" because so many lock-ups are dormitory or module style.

"The county is trying to find a cheap way out by not building cells," Stanley claims. "The dorms and modulars lead to more confrontations."

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"I just called Gulotta (Nassau County Executive Thomas Gulotta) for an emergency meeting. We need help."
Transplant further bonds love between mother and daughter

By Ron Wofford
CSEA Communications Associate

WEST SENECA — When Carol Lindner learned that her 23-year-old daughter Joanne, a diabetic since the age of three, would have to face an uncertain future attached to a dialysis machine if she didn’t get a kidney transplant, she didn’t hesitate. She volunteered one of her own kidneys.

Lindner, a 10-year employee of the Erie County Department of Social Services and a member of CSEA Local 815, is presently a confidential investigator for pre-trial services.

“I knew a transplant from a relative would be better than from someone else,” said the widowed mother of four as she recuperated at home from transplant surgery. “And I didn’t want any of the other children to suffer, although someone younger probably would have fared better.”

Daughter Joanne is slowly recovering, although several rejection scares have caused mother and daughter to be hastily flown back to the University of Minnesota Hospital where the operation was performed.

Lindner brushes aside praise of being “brave” for her sacrifice, preferring to give the credit to Joanne, who is legally blind and has endured laser surgery on her eyes nine different times.

“I only did what any mother would do under similar circumstances,” she said. “Joanne would be totally blind without the eye surgery, even though she must still sit extremely close to watch television.”

As she recovers from the surgery, Joanne must adhere to instructions in a guide book for transplant patients as thick as a telephone directory and take a large array of immunosuppressant drugs. The medications fill a container as large as a breadbox and will cost from $3,700 to $5,700 per year, according to Lindner, who has yet to get a handle on all the hidden costs of the medical procedures.

“I’m not sure which medications are covered by our insurance,” Lindner said, “but things happen for the best. You just have to have faith, and know God is guiding things.”

Lindner’s faith is a genuine and recurring theme in her conversation and an obvious source of strength both for her and her family.

Her eyes brighten when she speaks of her religious beliefs, and she is proud to show off a photo of a meeting with noted TV minister Dr. Robert Schuller. She said he counseled her and Joanne and autographed a book he wrote.

Another bright light through the pain she and Joanne still experience is the concern and help extended by her friends and fellow workers.

“It was wonderful what they did,” she said, recalling the well-attended benefit for her at a local tavern and the CSEA Region VI Benefit Fund.

“It was really a thrill, and it relieved my mind so much. You just don’t know how you can continue to spend so much money on matters you’d never foresee, on things like long-distance phone calls to the doctors and such.

“I don’t know how I can ever repay them, but they’ll always be in my prayers.” she said. “With all these people doing all this for us, we just have to recover.”

Carol Lindner Fund established

BUFFALO — CSEA Region VI members are digging down deep in their pockets to help a fellow public employee cope with the tremendous expense of donating a kidney to her diabetic daughter.

Erie County CSEA Local 815 members helped organize a benefit for Carol Lindner at a local tavern.

Region VI President Robert Lattimer has kicked off a regional Carol Lindner Fund Drive with a $50 donation. In a letter to regional locals and units, he lauded Lindner’s bravery in undergoing the crucial operation to save the life of her 23-year-old daughter Joanne.

He explained that diabetes can be life-threatening because of the deterioration the disease causes the kidneys, eyes, pancreas and other organs.

He noted such damage to Joanne was the cause for the transplant surgery she and her mother underwent at the University of Minnesota Hospital.

“As you look ahead to the holiday season,” wrote Lattimer, “I hope you and your fellow members will substitute a portion of what you would normally spend on cards or gifts, and consider a donation to help Carol and Joanne Lindner.”

Any donations to the Lindner family would be greatly appreciated. Please send them to the Region VI office in care of:

Civil Service Employees Association
Carol Lindner Fund
482 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14202
As we begin this holiday season I had hoped that the wounds that divided us this past year would be healed. Unfortunately, they remain. Rather than heal, there are those who are hindering the process, stirring the ashes of discontent to satisfy their own political ambitions at the expense of the membership.

A case in point — the recent budget meeting of the Board of Directors. Faced with a $5.4 million deficit, I put forward a number of cost-saving proposals to provide what I felt was a more equitable balance between revenue and expenditures without directly affecting services to the membership. I proposed that we cut — by half — the number of delegates that we send to the AFSCME convention in Los Angeles next summer. The anticipated savings: $150,000. But the majority of the board rejected that recommendation. The cost: $300,000!

(I should point out that many board members have been AFSCME delegates in the past. And one regional president, who had sought to withhold a portion of our mandated per capita payment to AFSCME, and who backed off when having the opportunity to discuss that matter with AFSCME President Gerald McEntee, voted in favor of sending the full contingent to Los Angeles.)

Despite my opposition, the board voted to “defer,” as they put it, payment of $190,000 to the union’s contingency fund. This is members’ money put aside to be available to assist our brothers and sisters in the event of a strike. Isn’t this borrowing from Peter to pay Paul? My question: Who pays Peter?

Another cost-saving measure that I proposed was to reduce the number of board meetings. The savings would have amounted to $50,000. That, too, was defeated.

The financial antics of the board were perhaps best described by one board member who said, “You people are doing everything for yourself, but nothing for the membership.” I anticipate, and indeed fully expect, there will be those who will try to discredit what I have said. But no matter what the political disguise — the facts and figures speak for themselves.

The simple truth is that we must be responsible to the membership. Anything less is unacceptable.

Despite the adversities facing us, it is my hope that this holiday season brings both our families — CSEA’s and yours — the health, joy, prosperity and peace that we all seek.

Fraternally,

William L. McGowan

President

CSEA, other unions file lawsuit to stop rate hikes

All major public employees unions, including CSEA, have joined with the New York State AFL-CIO in filing a lawsuit in an attempt to prevent the arbitrary increase of premiums on state and local government workers enrolled in the state’s Empire Insurance Plan.

The lawsuit was filed in State Supreme Court in Albany on Dec. 10 as this issue of The Public Sector went to press.

The Empire Plan has announced biweekly insurance costs to subscribers will jump 56 percent in January. The increase would affect more than 250,000 state workers and about 190,000 local government employees. Participants in the lawsuit include CSEA, the State AFL-CIO, Public Employees Federation, AFSCME Council 82, United Universities Professionals, New York State United Teachers, Supreme Court Officers Union, AFSCME Council 66, New York Service Employees Council, Communications Workers of America, AFSCME District Council 37, New York State Firefighters, State Federation of School Administrators and Teamsters Local 445.

“I still believe that the Empire Plan is — in concept and delivery of services — the best that’s available,” CSEA President William L. McGowan said. “But I also believe that there’s a way to cut these increasing costs so that our members can participate without a heavy financial burden. We seek, by this court action, to assure that our membership will have access and the benefits offered, at a price they can afford to pay.”
CSEA, community rally to assist activist suspended for union work

By Charles McGeary
CSEA Communications Associate

JORDAN — Betty Hewitt, a bus driver for the Jordan-Elbridge Central School District, got a first-hand lesson in union solidarity recently, and the school board that suspended her with pay for "unexplained conduct" probably wishes it never heard the word solidarity.

The school board decided Dec. 8 to reinstate Hewitt, who was relieved of her duties Nov. 20. She returned to her regular bus route Dec. 9.

Her suspension had sparked an outpouring of support from CSEA and from the public she has served for 14 years.

According to Terry Moxley, CSEA field representative for the newly-formed Jordan-Elbridge School District CSEA Unit, an Unfair Labor Practice charge filed against the district will not be withdrawn. The charge, filed with the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB), accuses the district of punishing Hewitt for her union activities. She is president of the new CSEA unit, a part of Onondaga County CSEA Local 834.

"She has a spotless record," Moxley said. "Now, all of a sudden, she helps bring in CSEA representation and, overnight, she becomes a bad driver."

School officials deny the district is penalizing Hewitt for her union activities. CSEA members in the unit and in surrounding county and state units and locals, as well as Region V President James Moore and Local 834 President Dale King, disagree.

Hewitt will lose no pay for her two-and-a-half-week suspension, but school officials plan to place in her personnel file a letter about discipline aboard her bus.

School board members came to their decision in a closed executive session at the end of their regular meeting and declined to explain it.

While pleased to be returning to work, Hewitt said she doesn't understand the board's letter.

"I thought I was doing fine with my kids on my route," she said.

The community seemed to agree. Parents, students and others called district officials, circulated petitions supporting her and attended en masse an earlier board meeting.

Hewitt, a veteran bus driver with a clean driving record and an excellent reputation for taking special care with her passengers, was suspended in late November for so-called "insubordination and unsafe driving."

At the previous board meeting, a crowd of angry Jordan villagers, students and CSEA supporters from surrounding areas forced the meeting to move from district office to library to school cafeteria to accommodate the visitors.

They praised Hewitt as a skilled driver and dedicated employee who took special interest in her work.

Moxley was permitted to speak at that meeting only after a board vote was taken.

"You are investigating the wrong person in this case. Douglas Milton (district transportation director) called her a liar at an October 27 executive session and not one board member said that was inappropriate, and you condoned it, which is unforgivable," Moxley said, earning applause.

Hewitt said she had moved the location of a bus stop one house on her Morgan Road run for winter safety and was accused of accelerating the bus and slamming on the brakes. To her knowledge, she added, there were no witnesses and her passengers were illegally questioned by Milton and other school officials.

Besides showing tremendous support at the meeting, irate parents have telephoned and visited school officials to demand an explanation. Billboards and homemade signs have suddenly appeared along roads and in the windows of village businesses; 400 people signed support petitions.

"I'm totally overwhelmed by the support from everywhere. My fellow CSEA members, friends, neighbors, students, even total strangers have called," Hewitt said. "I knew I had many friends here in Jordan, but I'm amazed by the amount of support. I'm sincerely grateful."

Betty Hewitt is back to work, proof that you can fight city hall or, in this case, the school board.

"Isn't it wonderful to see her go back to work?" Moxley said.

"And wouldn't it be even better if the Jordan-Elbridge School Board ... decided their school employees have a right to be represented by CSEA and agree to a fair and equitable contract? I can't think of a better Christmas package for our good members."

A Public Appeal to Jordan-Elbridge Central School District Residents

We, the residents and concerned citizens of Jordan-Elbridge Central School District, do hereby protest the unjustified suspension and unwarranted harassment of school bus driver Betty Hewitt.

For more than 14 years, Betty Hewitt has served the school district faithfully and diligently, while maintaining the highest professional standards for the district students entrusted to her care. As residents and concerned citizens of the J-E School District, we demand that the suspension of Betty Hewitt be lifted and that she resume her duties as full-time bus driver.

This petition was one of many signed by 400 people supporting suspended bus driver Betty Hewitt. She has since been reinstated.

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SCHOOL UNIT PRESIDENT BETTY HEWITT attends a Jordan-Elbridge School Board meeting about her suspension. She is surrounded by her many supporters.
swego nailed!

Compiled by Charles McGeary
CSEA Communications Associate

OSWEGO — In a landmark action, the State University of New York (SUNY) at Oswego has been fined $20,000 for violating federal Clean Air Act regulations for asbestos removal projects.

The EPA began its investigation following a complaint filed in December 1985 by a joint AFL-CIO Health and Safety Committee comprised of representatives from CSEA, United University Professionals (UUP) and AFSCME Council 62 at the college.

CSEA’s involvement resulted from a shocking discovery that the SUNY Oswego administration concealed information about severe asbestos contamination on the campus for three years and then knowingly put staff and students at significant risk in an irresponsible clean-up project.

Asbestos, once widely used as insulation, has been shown to cause cancer.

Dale Dusharm.

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CSEA SUNY Oswego Local 611 President

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SUNY Oswego has been fined $20,000 for violating federal Clean Air Act regulations for asbestos removal projects.

While there is some satisfaction that SUNY Oswego has been found in violation, CSEA and the AFL-CIO committee are critical of the $20,000 fine as inadequate.

They point out that the state of Idaho was fined $25,000 per day for asbestos violations.

Who did the federal government really fine but the taxpayers of New York?” asks CSEA SUNY Oswego Local 611 President Dale Dusharm.

“The fine is a drop in the bucket that doesn’t get at the root of the problem,” adds CSEA Region V President James Moore.

“CSEA would like to know why there was no strong measure of punishments for management officials who consciously violated the law.”

The situation first surfaced in September 1985 when campus work crews, made up of state employees and student part-timers, were ordered to tear down asbestos insulation covering heating boilers.

Working without protective clothing or equipment, the crews proceeded as ordered, ripping out the deteriorated flaky material by hand, stuffing it into ordinary trash cans for later removal to a local landfill.

Unsuspecting custodial workers then swept up the dusty, cancer-causing residue after each area job was completed.

“They did what they were told to do with absolutely no training or warning about the dangerous material they were handling,” explained Dusharm.

The workers were told the material was “mineral wool” but a CSEA investigation proved otherwise. CSEA and the AFL-CIO committee then uncovered evidence that a 1982 state Health Department report prepared for SUNY Oswego documented severe asbestos contamination in more than 30 campus buildings!

Dr. Leland Marsh, a professor of environmental sciences at the college and chairman of the joint AFL-CIO committee terms the administration’s actions “outrageous.”

“To deliberately ignore all the information and permit workers and students to be exposed to a deadly material not only violated health and safety regulations, it borders on a criminal act!” he stated.

“By using staff and students, SUNY Oswego management got an asbestos clean-up at a bargain price, even adding in the $20,000 fine. But what about the future health of those workers?” asked Dusharm angrily.

That’s a question that CSEA still intends to have answered.

CSEA: EPA action serves notice

“This EPA action should put SUNY and everyone else on notice that they can’t disregard the law when it comes to asbestos,” states CSEA Director of Occupational Safety and Health James Corcoran.

Corcoran points out, however, that “it’s really a disgrace that the first official action on this came from an agency whose main responsibility is protection of the environment. The state Labor Department, charged with protecting people on the job, found no violations at SUNY Oswego. They ought to be ashamed of that, given all the evidence.”

CSEA is currently appealing the Labor Department’s findings to the Industrial Board of Appeals, which is expected to issue its ruling within a few months. The EPA action against SUNY Oswego adds further weight to CSEA’s case.

Among other things, CSEA is seeking a comprehensive health screening program for workers who were exposed to asbestos at the campus.

“The fact is that we’re seeing a much more vigorous enforcement of environmental law than of labor and public health laws — so if that’s the route we have to go for action to protect our people, then so be it. But at the same time we’re going to embarrass the appropriate agencies into responsible action if necessary,” promises Corcoran.

“The value of the EPA action against SUNY Oswego is that it sends a message to state, local government and school districts that the federal government is looking over their shoulder to make sure they’re in compliance. We won’t hesitate to go back to the EPA if we continue to find violations,” he concludes.
AIDS:

It's not an occupational disease

By Kathleen Daly
Associate Editor

James Corcoran has heard the questions before. As CSEA director of Occupational Safety and Health, he has spent a lot of time talking about Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

This time, it's an anonymous letter from a health care worker who is concerned that direct care givers are not told if a patient has AIDS because of confidentiality rules.

Unless they know, how can they be expected "to give appropriate care, both physical and psychological, and at the same time protect ourselves with this information?" the letter writer asked.

Corcoran's answers have remained consistent with the guidelines of the national Centers for Disease Control.

"AIDS is not an occupational disease," he said. "If you want to be safe and you want to protect yourself, then you don't spend time trying to decide if a person has the disease.

"You treat everyone as if they have some kind of blood-borne disease. If everyone did this, fewer health care workers would contract Hepatitis B."

Hepatitis B is a particularly dangerous disease and can be fatal. It can be contracted through contact with an infected person's bodily fluids.

The Centers for Disease Control advises health care workers to put a barrier between themselves and any patient's bodily fluids. AIDS is known to be transmitted through blood or semen, Corcoran said, so that if health care workers wear gloves or other protective clothing whenever they may come in contact with any bodily fluids, they should be protected from AIDS and other diseases.

"The point is, you don't handle people's bodily fluids," he said. "If people start following this procedure, they're going to be healthier not because they're not getting AIDS, but because they're not getting other diseases like Hepatitis B."

In fact, a patient admitted with a problem that is not AIDS-related, such as a broken leg or a heart attack, could also carry the AIDS virus. Again, health care workers should follow the same precautions with all patients, Corcoran emphasized: put a barrier between themselves and the patient's bodily fluids.

There is concern for laundry workers in hospitals and other facilities that may house patients carrying the AIDS virus or other contagious diseases, Corcoran said. If sheets are wet and soiled with bodily fluids, laundry workers should not handle them without gloves and protective clothing. In fact, such laundry should be well marked so that laundry workers don't inadvertently pick them up without protection, he added.

"I think it's important for people in the unit who take sheets off the beds to categorize them," Corcoran explained. "It does happen, but not as often as it should."

Corcoran emphasized that under nearly all circumstances, AIDS is not a disease a person will contract while on the job. Only a very few cases of occupational exposure have been recorded and they occurred under highly unusual circumstances. Instead, he urged people to consider the most common methods of transmission — use of dirty hypodermic needles and sexual contact with an infected person.

You can get more detailed information on occupational procedures to avoid exposure to AIDS and other contagious illnesses. CSEA has produced an educational poster that outlines the Centers for Disease Control precautions for health care and laboratory workers.

To order the posters, write:
CSEA Safety and Health Department
143 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12210

Eight CSEA members have been elected to fill vacant seats on the union's statewide Board of Directors.

All eight were elected to serve the remaining portion of terms which expire in June 1989. Results of special elections to fill the vacancies were announced by Linda M. Cote, chairperson of the union's Statewide Election Committee, as follows:

State Division results:
Georgianna M. Natale was elected to represent the Department of Audit and Control on CSEA's Board of Directors. Natale won over Polly Kimmel by a 238-222 total.
Douglas Mayette and Steven Pellicciotti were elected unopposed to fill two vacant seats representing Mental Hygiene-Region III.
Sharon Connor was unopposed in winning the vacant seat representing Mental Hygiene-Region V.
Robert Calhoun, also unopposed, won the seat representing Public Service.

Local Government Division results:
Gary China won the race to fill the seat representing Montgomery County. China won over Michael Cantieri by a vote of 177-99.
Edward Williams is the new board representative from Wayne County, winning the seat by a vote of 84-79 over Carolyn DeVelder.
Susan M. Bieniek is the new board member representing Albany County, winning the seat uncontested.

BALLOTS WERE COUNTED under the supervision of the Statewide Election Committee on Nov. 30 at CSEA statewide headquarters in Albany. Eight members were declared winners of vacant seats on the union's statewide Board of Directors.
Brush with death brings —

A living testimonial

"I look like a roadmap of cuts and stitches, but it's great to be alive"
—Jerry Toomey

Giving the gift of life

Getting a transplant of any major organ in New York state can mean a long wait — and potential transplant recipients can literally die in the process.

A number of factors have to do with the shortage of organs available for transplants, including lack of legislation defining brain death and the number of transplant programs in the state.

If you would like to be a potential organ donor, you can do so by filling out the back of your New York state driver's license (see illustration at right). You also need two witnesses to sign the card.

That gives permission for your organs to be used, if possible, for transplants at your death.

By Daniel X. Campbell
CSEA Communications Associate

Life is what you make of it and former CSEA SUNY Central Local 693 president Jerry Toomey is determined to make the most of his opportunity.

With a failing liver, Toomey was within three days of death last spring. Then an organ donor was finally found and he underwent a successful transplant. The road to recovery has not been easy, but he credits the support, generosity and negotiated benefits of CSEA with helping him make progress.

Well enough to attend last month's CSEA Region IV business meeting, Toomey was enthusiastically welcomed by friends, who received an inspiring message of thanks.

“I had to go out of state for the operation. I was on the operating table for 18 hours and really wasn't lucid from May 14th to June 14th. I look like a road map of cuts and stitches, but it's great to be alive,” he told his fellow members.

“T’m still recovering but I want to thank you for your letters and cards and generous financial support — it made a big difference for me. I also want to thank CSEA for negotiating the Empire Plan and the Employee Benefit Fund (EBF) Prescription Drug Program. Don't lose those benefits; I know that they're both lifesavers,” he added.

During Toomey's illness, CSEA members Norma Paige and Jane Perry, who served with him on the Region IV Social Committee, coordinated a raffle that raised $1,300 for his benefit.

"Your gift came in very handy. I haven't worked in 10 months, I'm on leave with half-pay and your money helped pay my living expenses," he said.

Toomey also noted that the cost of his operation and medication is staggering but he has been well-protected by his CSEA benefits.

“I'm on five different pills a day. Just one of those medicines costs $190 for what used to be a four-day supply. Now that I’m recovering, that supply covers a 10-day period. I’ll never be off this medication — ever! But I haven’t seen one bill, not even a $3 co-pay.”

As for the bottom-line on the operation — it came to more than $300,000 and was all paid for by insurance.

"If not for this health insurance, I wouldn’t be here today telling you about my recovery,” he explained.

There is of course a more important benefit for Jerry Toomey though: “No matter what each day brings, tears, joy, problems or laughter, I plan to enjoy every second of it because it’s a wonderful life.”

November 30, 1987

THE PUBLIC SECTOR

December 14, 1987

9
Happy Fridays

from the officers and staff of The Civil Service Employees Association
State being much too charitable with Catholic Charities program

By Charles McGeary
CSEA Communications Associate

UTICA — A proposal by the state to contract out a program for a group of mentally ill people in the Utica area to Catholic Charities in 1988 has drawn heated opposition from CSEA.

"We have no axe to grind with Catholic Charities, but do wish to make it perfectly clear we are strongly opposed to any erosion of state control," says CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore.

"Programs that affect the care and treatment of the mentally ill should be created and administered by the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene," Moore says. "There should be only one 'captain' on the bridge of a ship. Fragmenting control and leadership, in our opinion, only weakens service and damages the morale of CSEA members and other employee unions!"

A just-released report written by Pulitzer Prize-winning author and Princeton University Professor Paul Starr asks some sobering questions about the real costs of contracting out and what taxpayers might not get for their money.

Starr's report, *The Limits of Privatization*, is published by the Economic Policy Institute, a non-profit and nonpartisan Washington research organization. In his report, Starr warns that "privatizing" government services may result in serious financial and civic costs.

Starr reports that selling off public assets and contracting out government functions — policies now being promoted by a Reagan commission — could increase costs to taxpayers, erode popular participation in government and reduce government response to the rights and needs of citizens.

He also questions one of the key arguments of privatization advocates: the claim that contracting out results in savings to the public. He points out that most privatization proposals do not call for outright elimination of public goods or services, but rather that they be contracted out to private corporations while the public continues to foot the bill.

"Given the American experience with defense production, construction projects, and health care — all mostly produced privately with public dollars — it is remarkable that anyone could see a path toward budgetary salvation simply by shifting the focus of service production from the public sector to the private sector," Starr writes.

Other potential problems with current privatization proposals, according to Starr, are that:

- it is dangerous for the state to put power over citizens (in law enforcement, for example) in the hands of employees of a private firm
- current proposals to convert Social Security to a program solely for the needy risk losing middle-class political support for a successful social program
- privatization is often a device to cut public employee wages and to destroy unions; this imposes income losses on workers and reduces the quality of jobs in a community
- removing essential services like education, fire protection or health care from the public arena will reduce citizens' ability to influence the quality of services and remove motivation to participate in civic life
- private firms are seldom equipped to meet adequately the needs of poor or elderly people; schemes that contract out public services (health care, for example) often shortchange those who need them most

"The public expects government to play an active role in spurring the economy and safeguarding its stability. Starr argues that, when government is being called on to provide more leadership to the private sector in this era of economic difficulty, the country needs public servants and public institutions loyal to its highest interests — not private contractors interested only in maximizing their own fortunes.

"The privatization movement, advanced primarily by antigovernment political theorists and private contractors, has recently received a boost from President Reagan in the form of a presidential commission. The commission will submit a report to the White House by March 1, identifying areas of the federal government that should be privatized."

The Economic Policy Institute will counteract this movement by making Starr's report on contracting out available to members of the commission and Congress or any Administration official.

PICKETS PROTEST — Union officials and employees of the Mohawk Valley Psychiatric Center in Utica march to show opposition to a state plan to contract out services. Leading the demonstration, from left, are Local 434 President Bud Mulchy, CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore and Therapy Aide Jim Schaub.

Contracting out gets a critical review

Paul Starr

Paul Starr is a Professor of Sociology at Princeton University. He is the author of a number of books, including The Discarded Army: Veterans After Vietnam (1974) and The Social Transformation of American Medicine (1982), for which he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and the Bancroft Prize in American History. He is currently working on issues concerning the appropriate balance between public and private sectors and problems with contracting out.
Playing it Safe
CSEA member teaches fire safety

Compiled by Anita Manley
CSEA Communications Associate
WASHINGTONVILLE — When Steve Bolash starts talking to school children about fire prevention and safety, the veteran volunteer fire fighter knows his audience almost as well as he knows his subject.

Bolash, treasurer of Orange County CSEA Local 836, works as a custodian in the Washingtonville School District, so he knows the children. And for the last 14 years, he's fought fires with the Monell Fire Company in Washingtonville. The fire company also funds the community education project that brings Bolash to the elementary schools.
The children enjoy the red fire truck Bolash brings and are receptive to the lessons he offers.

"What do you do if your clothes catch on fire?" he asked the children on one recent visit.

"Stop, drop and roll," the children shouted back in unison.

As part of his instruction, Bolash told the children what to do if there is a fire outside their rooms.

"Feel the door," he explains. "If it's hot, find another way out, through another door or window."

He also encourages them to take the safety messages home.

"Hold fire drills in your home," Bolash said. "Plan a meeting place for your family outside the house. Don't go back inside for your toys."

The final part of the lesson is a crowd pleaser, Bolash said — a tour of the fire truck and a demonstration of the hoses. But entertainment is only a by-product of the safety program.

"If we get our message across to one child," he said, "it's worth it."
TARRYTOWN — More than 300 CSEA activists took a look at changes in the labor movement that affect women and that women have brought about during the union's annual Women's Conference held here recently.

"Women Affecting Change" included workshops on sex discrimination, public Speaking, stress, career decisions and women in American labor history.

For Boni Pellino, a therapy aide at Wassac Developmental Center, the conference is an opportunity to keep up with women's issues. As secretary of CSEA Local 426, she is the only woman to hold office, but that doesn't mean the local doesn't benefit.

"The other officers all attended and all listened," she said. "It's a great way to bring the issues to them. It keeps us updated."

Pellino, who works nights and has a family, said she appreciates the workshops that address stress and time management. She also appreciates her husband's support — he attended the women's conference, too.

In his presentation, CSEA statewide Vice President Joseph McDermott urged CSEA women to take the lead in pressing for change in legislation for issues such as parental leave and mandatory overtime.

CSEA General Counsel Marjorie E. Karowe pointed out that women have turned the tides of labor legislation throughout labor history.

"Changes came because women gave their lives to achieve them," Karowe said, referring to the early years of the labor movement.

"What changes will we make?" Karowe asked. "You will help make changes. You will follow that path into history."
You will help make changes. You will follow that path into history.

JUDGING FROM THE PAPERS scattered in front of them, this trio kept busy during the conference.

THE STATEWIDE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE took time out during the three-day workshop to pose for a portrait. The members are, from left: Ruby Everett, Region VI; Irene Nash, Region I; Harriet Hart, Region II; Chairperson Helen Zocco; Kathy Roma, Region V; Ellen Dianne, Region IV; and Lee Pound, Region III. At right, Zocco addressed the conference.

REVIEWING WORKSHOP information, three attendees kept working even on a coffee break.

GENERAL COUNSEL Marjorie E. Karow discussed the power of change women have shown throughout the labor movement.

January 11, 1988
DO YOU BELIEVE IN Santa Claus?

LARRY CASERTANO
Syracuse Developmental Center Local 424 Region V
“Of course I believe in Santa Claus. He happens to be a member of my CSEA local. December is his busiest month, but he hopes to deliver a good state ‘contract package’ in April, too.”

TERRY DOMBROWSKI
Mid-Hudson State Employees Local 009 Region III
“Sure I do! You have to believe in something. It gives you hope. It’s always good to look forward to something.”

NANCY SEARS
Livingston County Local 825 Region VI
“Yes, I do. I received all sorts of good things in my lifetime, so I know there’s goodness in the world.”

STEPHANIE COX
Long Island State Employees Local 016 Region I
“Yes, why not? Christmas is the spirit of giving. That’s why I believe in Santa.”

SALLY DISPIGNA
New York City State Employees Local 010 Region II
“Yes! Because Santa Claus is a beautiful fantasy. He can be anything you want him to be.”

JANICE RADLEY
Division of Parole Local 669 Region IV
“Yes, I believe, because when you go to bed there are no presents. But in the morning, there are. Santa is a jolly old man who is nice.”
A tale of two contracts

Retirement demands stall talks

CENTEREACH — Braving cold weather to voice their frustrations, about 250 CSEA members from area locals recently demonstrated to support fellow members in the Middle Country School District who have declared impasse in contract negotiations.

The members picketed prior to a November Board of Education meeting and then attended the meeting, complete with their signs.

The four CSEA units, representing about 225 members, are demanding an improved retirement system that would increase retirement checks by about $25.

“The district has no empathy, especially for the older, loyal employees who would be affected by the change in the retirement plan,” said CSEA Field Representative Jim Walters.

The change from the current retirement plan to the better plan would cost the district less than 1 percent, Walters said.

For Mike DeTuro, a custodian at Centereach High School, the improved retirement benefits could mean the difference between moving or staying on Long Island.

“I am looking to get a better pension because I’m ready to retire and it will mean more money,” he said. “The extra money would help me and my family and maybe I won’t have to move off the island.”

The contract expired June 30 and impasse was declared the last week of August, he said.

Job security is an issue for the bus drivers who currently are guaranteed seven hours pay each day. While CSEA is asking for eight, the district wants to reduce the guarantee to six hours.

The four CSEA units in the school district are: Heads and Chiefs, Edward McIntyre, president; Buildings and Grounds, Dennis Watson, president; Maintenance, Dennis O’Leary, president; and Transportation, Peg Sabella, president. The units are part of CSEA Suffolk Educational Local 870.

As part of the impasse procedure, the negotiating teams have begun meeting with a mediator from the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB).

CSEA negotiates winning contract

WASHINGTONVILLE — A four-year contract for 165 Washingtonville School District employees will result in substantial salary increases and an agency shop rule.

The pact provides:

* 8.5 percent annual increases for the first three years and 8 percent in the final year
* increases in night differential
* call-in pay
* increases in sick leave accumulation for 10- and 12-month employees
* tuition reimbursement
* a sick leave bank

Unit President Doug Jeffries and negotiating team Chairperson Steve Bardin praised the efforts of Collective Bargaining Specialist Larry Sparber.

“It’s the best contract we’ve had in the district for 17 years,” Jeffries said. “Larry did an excellent job. He’s one of the better negotiators. We’re very pleased with him. We finally got agency shop and call-in pay which we never had before.”

“I thought Larry was super,” Bardin said. “The members were impressed with things he had to say even before we got started. It’s the best money contract we’ve ever seen.”

CSEA MEMBERS from the Washingtonville School District are all smiles following the signing of a four-year contract. Shown here seated are Unit President Doug Jeffries and negotiating team Chairperson Steve Bardin, Standing are Region III Field Representative Jim Farina, team member Lorreto Kennedy, Region III Collective Bargaining Specialist Larry Sparber and team member Warren Sanders. Also on the negotiating team were Susan Morgan, Patrick Dreadowski and Bruce Gillespie.
Arson threat spurs safety drive

By Ron Wofford
CSEA Communications Associate

WARSAW — Security and safety measures will be tightened in the Wyoming County Social Services Department following an incident that could have resulted in a blazing inferno and serious injury or death.

An irate client, upset because he lost custody of his children, entered the unguarded building and began pouring gasoline throughout the halls, threatening to ignite it.

Co-workers credit receptionist Colleen Wittmeyer for her quick action which likely saved lives.

When Wittmeyer saw the man splashing gasoline on the floors near her desk in the lobby, she began alerting the approximately 60 people in the building to evacuate immediately. She said she wasn't exactly sure what was happening, but she knew she had to do something.

“If he had really set the fire, the girls in the back would have been in trouble,” Wittmeyer said.

After notifying the people in the building, she ran about 1,000 yards to a state police office, and, finding no one there, continued to a nearby bank office and called the police.

When Wittmeyer returned to the front of the building, where a group of employees and clients had gathered, the gasoline-splashing client was sitting on the hood of her car.

The police arrived soon after and the splasher was arrested.

The man never lit the fire, but several workers slipped and fell on gasoline-slicked floors and suffered minor injuries.

The episode fueled a petition drive by the social service workers to the county Board of Supervisors urging improvement of building security and safety.

Measures called for in the petition include:
* a buzzer or signal device connected directly to the county sheriff's department
* windows that open and may be used as emergency exits
* a door at the south end of the building
* a full-time security guard
* buzzers at interview desks that can be used to alert security when problems arise
* security doors at the entrance to each hallway
* enclosed reception area with a separate exit
* fire extinguishers
* crash bars on exit doors

PRAISE FOR HEROIC ACTION — Wyoming County CSEA Unit President Sandy Domnissey, standing, thanks Colleen Wittmeyer for her work in evacuating the county Social Services building and calling the police when a man threatened to set it on fire.

County CSEA Unit President Sandy Domnissey and Steward Sandy Boyd said the legislature has responded favorably to the employees' concerns. Some of the requested items are already in place, such as a two-digit number to reach the sheriff's department in an emergency.

In a meeting with CSEA Field Representative Bob Young, the activists said they will continue to press for all the petition's measures to be put into place.

Meanwhile, Colleen Wittmeyer has been awarded for her quick action by being named Employee of the Year by Social Services Commissioner Lois Bowling.

CSEA readies uniform allowance grievance

ALBANY — CSEA is preparing a contract grievance to win back $92,000 in uniform allowances for state Institutional Services Unit (ISU).

The Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER) is refusing to add the money — left over from the second contract year — into the current fiscal year's uniform allowance.
Members of the Dutchess County Unit of CSEA Local 814 are trying to share the joy this holiday season by collecting food, clothing and toys for distribution to needy families. According to President Carl Mathison, pictured below with members Mary Ellen Still and Donna Rhoads, collection boxes have been set up in worksites all over the county.

L.I. says thanks

A scholarship fund has been established in memory of Mary Irizarry, a CSEA member and 17-year cafeteria worker at Central Islip High School, who died of a brain aneurism recently.

CSEA co-workers remember her as a "wonderful woman" and a "hard worker" who is greatly missed.

Since her death, Irizarry's husband, Noel, has worked hard to raise money for the scholarship which will be given to a worthy minority student.

"Mary was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother and will always be in our hearts and prayers," he said.

Anyone interested in contributing to the fund should call Central Islip High School at (516)348-5079.

Watch for "Kudos & Uh-ohs" — a stimulating and sometimes irreverent look at the memorable people and events of 1987 — Next edition!

45 big ones for Wyoming County member

Lorna King, an original member in the County Unit of CSEA Wyoming County Local 861, was surprised with a party recently in honor of her 45 years as a county employee!

Co-worker and unit steward Sandy Boyd put the event together at Wyoming County Fire Hall.

"Everyone, including the commissioners, have been wonderful to work with through the years. I have no complaints," said King.

And apparently the feeling's mutual. "She's highly thought of by everyone," said Boyd of King, who is still going strong with no mention of retirement.

It's nice to be appreciated — even nicer when it's official recognition from the state Assembly. That's just the distinction that former CSEA Syracuse State Employees Local 013 President Claire McGrath received after 20 years of service with the state Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Pictured with her, from left, Assemblyman Michael Bragman; McGrath's husband Edward; and the Education Department's Marvin Reed.

"Outstanding Labor Leader"

CSEA Region II President George Boncoraglio is certainly making his mark on New York City politics. He was recently presented with a New York City Council proclamation citing him as one of "New York's Outstanding Labor Leaders."

The presentation, made by Bronx Councilwoman June Eisland, made special mention of his successful efforts to save Downstate Medical Center Hospital after it was targeted for closing by the Health Systems Agency.
Getting an earful

CSEA seeks hearing safety for members in powerhouse

By Sheryl Carlin
CSEA Communications Associate

KINGS PARK — Imagine stepping inside 120-decibel concert speakers turned on to full volume. That’s what it’s like to walk through the powerhouse at the Kings Park Psychiatric Center.

Members of CSEA Local 411 who work in the powerhouse are to have their hearing tested since it was discovered that the noise level far exceeds the norm, said Local 411 President Tony Bentivegna.

“I know of two or three guys who have suffered some hearing loss. We’re now in the process of scheduling examinations for the 30 people working in the area,” Bentivegna explained — once he closed the door to a soundproof office within the powerhouse.

Recently a Department of Labor investigator who was researching an asbestos problem cited noise level as well.

Although protective headphones are supplied, many workers are uncomfortable with them because of their bulk.

“We are definitely encouraging our members to wear the headphones,” Bentivegna said. “We want to protect their hearing.”

“I feel I have experienced a hearing loss,” said Stan Hinnant, an employee who has worked 19 years at the facility. “I find it hard to work with the headphones on, but I do when we put the diesel (machinery) on.”

Evidently, the diesel machinery makes even more noise than the other machinery which runs constantly.

Senior engineer Joe Coffey agreed that the headphones are uncomfortable.

“When they switch to gas, the noise will be equivalent to standing next to a jet engine,” he said.

In addition to asking for hearing tests, CSEA will discuss with management other methods to prevent hearing loss among powerhouse workers.

“We are definitely encouraging our members to wear the headphones. We want to protect their hearing.”

CSEA MEMBERS Stan Hinnant and Joe Coffey look at bulky, protective headphones which are supplied to workers in the Kings Park Psychiatric Center powerhouse because of high noise levels.