HAUPPAUGE — A Suffolk County official last week estimated the number of employees scheduled to be laid off because of job cuts in the 1982 budget at between 120 and 167 but added that the county’s high attrition rate could eliminate most of the actual layoffs.

“Entry level positions, especially among the clerical series, have annual turnover rates as high as 110 percent,” said George Meyer, personnel officer, civil service department. “Because of the turnover rate, I am very optimistic that people who are laid off will be re-employed in a short time, if indeed they are ever actually laid off.”

The latest estimate represents a narrowing of the original estimate — which ranged from a low of 50 to a high of 180 — made by county officials Nov. 5, the day the budget was adopted by the Legislature.

CSEA Local 852 is monitoring the layoffs closely with the civil service department and is considering legal action if strict seniority is not observed when the layoffs begin.

“As soon as employees receive notices, I want them to contact a Local 852 officer at our Holtsville offices,” said Charles Novo, Local 852 president. “If the layoffs violate any civil service laws, we’re going to court. But we can’t act until the county actually delivers the layoff notices.”

Novo said he was concerned also about reports that jobs funded by state and federal grants had been eliminated in the budget fight between the county executive and the Legislature.

Originally, Suffolk County Executive Peter Cohalan proposed the elimination of 1,200 jobs, 736 of them filled, as part of the 1982 budget. The legislature restored all of the filled positions and overrode most of Cohalan’s vetoes of their budget except those eliminating the 120 to 167 jobs now scheduled to be laid off.

The confusion over how many jobs were scheduled to be eliminated resulted from both the budget fight, in which more than 300 resolutions were voted on, and by intricate layoff procedures which must identify the eventual employees who will be terminated after the bump and retreat process takes place.

Once the list of jobs to be eliminated was compiled from the budget resolutions by the county budget department, it was sent to the civil service department which began the lengthy search — for both competitive and non-competitive job categories — to see if the jobs are filled or vacant and how the bump and retreat procedures will affect parallel and lower positions.

“It’s tremendously time consuming, like trying to count the grains of sand on a beach,” Meyer said. “The problem starts if an employee can bump down to a lower position. In each case, we have to research to see if there is a lower position and then check to see if it is filled or vacant.”

Meyer said that he expects to have a list of names of employees scheduled to be laid off by the first week in December.

While employees are bracing for layoff announcements, the county is continuing to hire. Lynn Martins, Local 852 second vice president, reported she attended an orientation for more than 60 new employees last week at the Hauppauge County Center. Some of the new employees hired, Martins said, were in titles scheduled for layoffs.

Meyer said the county has to continue to hire because of its high attrition rate.

“It is questionable whether the job openings are the same one as the jobs being laid off but they could well be. For example, the civil service department could hire a stenographer while social service is laying one off. Because the layoffs have not yet taken place, there is no preferred list.”

While Battle of Saratoga heats up
...see page 2
RUSS BOWERS, right, addresses recent union meeting to discuss layoffs.

The Battle of Saratoga

By Daniel X. Campbell
CSEA Communications Associate

BALLSTON SPA — A proposed Saratoga County budget which targets 100 public employees for layoff has been labeled a "your money or your life" proposal by CSEA. Union officials say 42 road patrol deputy sheriffs will be eliminated under the budget, and that top union officials are among those targeted for axing.

"This is an attack on the union, the employees, and even the taxpayers of Saratoga County," bristled an angry Russell Bowers, president of the Saratoga County CSEA local.

Bowers charged "the supervisors want to use public employees as pawns in a game to get support for a county sales tax. They don't have the intestinal for-titude to go directly to the taxpayers and make their case. They want to scare the county residents into supporting the proposal."

The layoff proposal has touched off a heated political battle between Saratoga County Sheriff James Bowen and Frederick McNeary, chairman of the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors and acting county administrator.

At a recent union meeting, Fred Dake, president of the deputies CSEA unit, noted the employees support Sheriff Bowen's conten-tions that reducing the deputy sheriff force will create a serious gap in police patrols and protection for county residents. Dake also told the audience the deputies sup-port the other county workers in previous contract battles with the county administration "and we are well aware of your support for us now. Together we can fight for all the union members."

Capital Region Director John D. Corcoran Jr. said the McNeary budget would "gut the highway engineering department and that could kill the Saratoga County real estate market and its developing industrial areas."

CSEA statewide Board of Directors member Bill McTygue from Saratoga County, one of those threatened with a layoff, says, "We're demanding that the county cut waste and luxury before it cuts people." A union media campaign is being planned with that theme as the main point.

UNION FIELD REP Bill Lochner, left, reports on current dispute, while, below, among interested attendees at union meeting are Cheryl Sheller of Saratoga County Local, Statewide CSEA Secretary Irene Carr, CSEA Region IV Vice President Joan Tobin, and Fran Wilusz of Wilton Developmental Center Local 418.

Just how coincidental is layoff of union leaders?

BALLSTON SPA — Russ Bowers is the newly elected president of the Saratoga County CSEA Local. Bill McTygue is the Local's representative on CSEA's statewide Board of Directors.

Bowers is chairman of the deputy sheriffs negotiations committee currently at impasse with the Board of Supervisors. McTygue helped lead the general county employees unit to a recent contract settlement after months of bitter conflict.

Bowers is a road patrol deputy. McTygue is a highway engineer. Both are scheduled to be laid off January 1.

"The board doesn't want to admit it, but they don't like dealing with a real union. So just by coincidence both the current union president and the union's board of directors rep are scheduled for job abolishment," says McTygue.

"And look where the cuts are scheduled to hit," adds Bowers. "Right where the public needs public service the most. Our deputy sheriffs handled 15,700 complaints in 1980 and investigated 6,618 crimes. The idea to put the road patrols in a highly residential county with a high senior citizen population and growing young families is stupid."

BILL McTVGUE, CSEA board of directors rep and one of those scheduled to be laid off, speaks at recent union meeting. McTygue says the county is eliminating union leaders under the guise of budget constraints.
Economic policies assaulted during AFL-CIO meeting

NEW YORK — Keynoting the 14th biennial AFL-CIO convention earlier this week, federation President Lane Kirkland delivered a blistering attack on the Reagan administration’s economic policies.

Kirkland referred to federal Budget Director David Stockman as “the original interior decorator of this economic house of ill repute. Now that the sirens are sounding and the bust is due, he has his story ready. He was only the piano player in the parlor. He never knew what was going on upstairs.”

McGowan, McDermott among delegates

Kirkland’s address opened the convention, which marks the centennial of the U.S. labor movement. Among the more than 900 delegates attending were CSEA statewide President William L. McGowan and Region IV President Joseph McDermott.

Delegates heard Kirkland’s sharp criticisms of the nation’s economic course echoed throughout the week by a roster of speakers including Senator Edward Kennedy, House Speaker Thomas P. O’Neill Jr. and former Vice President Walter Mondale.

Warmly received by the delegates, Mondale accused President Reagan of jeopardizing Social Security benefits; said the way to bolster theailing housing industry was to end “crippling” interest rates; urged repeal of tax loopholes and deferment of some tax cuts; and said the Federal Reserve Board must be “more forthcoming in the supply of money and credit for our country.”

The AFL-CIO offered its own economic platform to the nation when convention delegates recommended an economic package designed to deal with runaway inflation. The policies call for restoration of several job-producing programs, including public service employment; temporary restrictions on imports harmful to U.S. business and jobs; and use of credit control authority to offset tight money policy and high interest rates.

The federation recommending that the programs be financed by limiting the income tax cuts next year to $700 per taxpayer, cutting the investment tax credit from 10 percent to 7 percent, and withdrawing oil windfall profits tax exemptions.

In other business, a monthly dues increase from 18 to 24 cents a member was approved for 1982. Much of the proceeds would be used to fund two new programs: a labor institute for public affairs designed to bolster the sagging image of unions, and a major organizing campaign in the Houston area, involving some 40 unions. The organizing effort, which began last month, is an important element in labor’s effort to attract members in the rapidly growing job market of the Sun Belt.

Delegates also approved the AFL-CIO’s reaffiliation with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. Although American unions were among the early supporters of the confederation following its founding in 1949 as a rival to a Communist-backed labor federation, the AFL-CIO withdrew from the organization in 1969. The reaffiliation, effective Jan. 1, will bolster the strength and influence of the world’s free labor movement and will “help workers all over the world in their opposition to dictatorial and Communist governments,” high-ranking AFL-CIO leaders commented.

Also approved by convention delegates was an AFSCME-sponsored resolution upholding the right of public employees to strike. Although the Reagan administration’s harsh reaction to the PATCO strike served to unite union leaders, some delegates expressed concern about strikes by public employees in jobs critical to the public safety.

Capital Region members on TV: Trio faces state workers’ problems

ALBANY — Representatives of CSEA’s Capital Region appeared recently on “Face to Face,” a local television public affairs program on WTEN, in an effort to communicate to taxpayers the economic, job and morale problems facing New York State employees, who will soon be entering into contract negotiations.

The 30-minute interview was hosted by TV 10 co-anchor Marci Elliot, who questioned members Joan Tobin, C. Allen Mead, and Delores Farrell about anti-public employee attitudes.

“People have the perception that the state employee is always overpaid, underworked and always has a job,” said Tobin, the region’s second vice president and a transportation planning aide at the Department of Transportation. “This is a fallacy from start to finish. They’re always underpaid.”

On the subject of allegations made by Meyer Frucher, director of the governor’s Office of Employee Relations (OER), concerning the supposed abuse of sick leave by state employees, Tobin said, “Let’s look behind those statistics at the safety issue. Last year we had 12 people die; during the same year 31,266 people had reportable injuries. That time was included in this sick leave ‘abuse.’”

Mead, the region’s first vice president and a state Health Department employee, maintained that many state employees are actually losing time owed them. “When you reach 300 hours of vacation leave, you fail to accrue it,” he said.

Asked whether the abuse charge was anything more than a negotiations ploy, Mead, who will be part of the union’s Administrative bargaining team, responded, “Public employee negotiations depend on public sentiment. The government wants public sentiment on its side. They want to make it palatable for the public to hold costs down in government.”

SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY

The “Face to Face” interview also touched upon the failure of the employee performance evaluation system, with the union representatives maintaining there were numerous managerial failures which doomed the controversial procedure. “We have supervisors who never talk to their employees in 52 weeks,” said Tobin.

Farrell, president of the Department of Civil Service, a principal clerk and also a member of the Administrative unit bargaining team, said, “To be outstanding, you almost had to walk on water.”

And according to Mead, “If employees were given a good rating, no one told them what they had to do to improve it to achieve the outstanding rating.”

On the issue of on-the-job safety, Tobin mentioned the recent murder of a Kingsboro Psychiatric Center nurse. “These people are under constant adverse conditions,” she said. “You have a mental hygiene therapy aide on a ward, and there might be 20 violent patients on that ward. If the MHTA does anything to protect himself, he’s brought up on disciplinary charges, and they want to fire him. They don’t say anything about the patients.”

Tobin called on her experience at DOT to illustrate what she also sees as public worker dedication and lack of managerial concern.

“Roads have to be plowed at all hours so school buses, trucks and workers can go to work,” she said. “You’re talking about grades 6, 8 and 9. These people work 16 hours straight and then go on voluntary time. You’re depending on a small group of people to put in as many as 42 hours behind the wheel of a plow. And when they can’t go any longer, they ask for time off to go home and sleep.”

“They (state management) won’t give them annual leave or personal leave, so they take sick leave,” continued Tobin. “Now, who is abusing whom?”

AFL-CIO PRESIDENT LANE KIRKLAND
Valenti gets ok as civil service chief; names new top aides

ALBANY — A number of top-level changes in the State Department of Civil Service became effective recently, headed by the State Senate confirmation of Joseph A. F. Valenti as commissioner and president of the State Civil Service Commission, succeeding Victor S. Balano.

Commissioner Valenti most recently served as the executive deputy commissioner of the State Department of Taxation and Finance prior to being named commissioner of the Department of Civil Service.

Valenti in turn has appointed Ralph J. Vecchio as deputy commissioner and general counsel for the Civil Service Department, and Patrick J. Bulgaro as executive deputy commissioner.

Vecchio most recently was deputy commissioner and counsel at the Department of Taxation and Finance, while Bulgaro was a deputy chief budget examiner with the Division of the Budget.

Troy schools accept pact

TROY — A two-year agreement retroactive to July 1 has been accepted in the City of Troy School District. The CSEA non-instructional unit will receive a 14 percent salary increase, plus increment if due, in the first year of the pact, followed by a 13 percent increase, plus increment, in the second year.

The district increased its family coverage from 50 percent to 95 percent. Shop stewards have gained one-half hour per week for union business, and the gain has also started an appeal for an additional upgrading of five employees to senior nursing station clerk, grade 7.贞

Union still skeptical about state plan for Central Islip Center

HAUPPAUGE — Gov. Hugh Carey is expected to decide within two weeks if the state will sell Central Islip Psychiatric Center to the Town of Islip for the purpose of turning it into a college and industrial park.

That timetable was revealed by Deputy Commissioner of Mental Hygiene Chet Barrel at last week's pre-budget forum at the Hauppauge State Office Building. CSEA Local 404 President George Donavan questioned Barrel, Gov. Carey and other officials about plans for the Central Islip facility.

Gov. Carey said, "This proposal (turning the facility into a college) was initiated to us by the New York Institute of Technology. We didn't initiate it. With regard to what will happen to it, I'll have the last say. I'm not going to see workers of the CSEA in mental hygiene displaced."

Barrel said the governor will be looking at "guiding principles" in reaching a determination, including no layoffs, minimum patient movement, and no reduction in the quality of care.

But despite Carey's remarks, both Donavan and CSEA Region 1 President Danny Donohue said they were skeptical of official promises. "We've heard this kind of stuff before from the state and we are very dubious about what it really means," Donohue said. "Based on what I heard today, I am not optimistic that Central Islip will be kept intact."

Donovan said that while a lot of work has been going on at the local level to keep Central Islip open, CSEA statewide President William L. McGowan and his staff have been holding discussions with the Department of Mental Hygiene and the Governor's Office of Employee Relations on the state level, where the final decision will be made.

Meanwhile, Local 404 continues to make preparations for a counter demonstration to a November 21 welcoming parade scheduled by the Town of Islip for the New York Institute of Technology. Donavan said he has been meeting with shop stewards and directing the preparation of flyers and placards for use in the CSEA demonstration.

CSEA charges that the proposed sale of Central Islip will result in a large loss of jobs and the dumping of mental patients. Additionally, the union charges, property taxes will rise if the state facility is sold and replaced by a non-profit and tax-exempt school and industry lured to Islip on tax-free incentives. Central Islip Psychiatric Center currently pays more than $100,000 in taxes annually to the Central Islip school board.

Union obtains 58 upgrades at Upstate

SYRACUSE — Persistent effort by CSEA local officials and staff members has finally paid big dividends in the form of upgrades for 58 employees at Upstate Medical Center.

For more than a year, officers of CSEA Local 615 have been in contact with union officials in Albany to attempt the change of 58 job titles from clerks-typist, grade 3, to nursing station clerk, grade 4, at the state facility.

The hard work paid off this September when CSEA was notified by the state Civil Service Department that the reclassification and transfer of five employees to the Institutional Services Unit had been approved and was retroactive to October 8, 1981.

According to Bob Vincent, local president, and Bill LaPoint, chief steward, the union has also started an appeal for an additional upgrading of five employees to senior nursing station clerk, grade 7. Vincent said the local took the initial action when it learned that the same job items had already been upgraded at another state medical center downstate.

"We started to investigate and ask questions. It took a lot of work on the part of CSEA research and our collective bargaining specialist for administration to the Institutional Services Unit had been approved and was retroactive to October 8, 1981."

According to Bob Vincent, local president, and Bill LaPoint, chief steward, the union has also started an appeal for an additional upgrading of five employees to senior nursing station clerk, grade 7.
THEY CARE ABOUT DAY CARE — CSEA members from Marcy, Utica and Central New York psychiatric centers turned out in force recently to ask Gov. Carey to release seed money for day care centers already budgeted for all three facilities. The demonstration took place at the ground-breaking ceremony for the new SUNY College of Technology at Marcy.

Day care demonstrators press governor to free promised funds

MARCY — When Gov. Hugh L. Carey and his entourage recently came to town to break ground for the new SUNY College of Technology, they were promptly greeted by a determined group of CSEA members from Utica, Marcy and Central New York psychiatric centers who wanted the governor to know they were unhappy with the delay in the release of seed money for two proposed day care centers.

According to Barbara Reeves, Utica Psychiatric Center employee and chairwoman of the Utica-Marcy child care committee, the Oct. 30 demonstration was organized to impress upon the governor that state employees want the day care centers they have been promised.

"Our members find it totally frustrating to know that $150,000 has been budgeted for statewide day care centers while state officials continue to drag their feet before allocating the necessary money to get programs started," Reeves said.

"Gov. Carey came here to do some spade work for the new SUNY Tech buildings, but we want him to know we have also completed the necessary spade work for the new day care centers," Reeves continued. He said the proposed locations at both facilities have been inspected and approved by management and the state Department of Social Services, and they have complied with all regulations at Utica's Dunham Hall and "A" building on the Marcy Psychiatric Center campus.

Reeves stressed the seed money is vitally needed to hire directors to plan programs, purchase necessary equipment and complete the rehabilitation of both sites.

"Cooperation between labor and management toward common goals has been excellent," she noted. "The effort of all committee members has been smooth and productive, but the delay of funds is very frustrating.

"The CSEA contract with the state calls for day care centers. The money has been budgeted. The preliminary details have been carefully completed. Now all we need is someone to pick up a telephone and order the release of $10,000 for each center," said Reeves.

"We are ready to take the next step toward opening, but we cannot do it without the starting funds."

Inequity adjustments in new Cornwall pact

CORNWALL — A new two-year contract, retroactive to last January 1, was recently ratified by members of the Town of Cornwall CSEA Unit.

Included in the agreement are such provisions as annual eight per cent wage hikes, plus an extra inequity adjustment of one per cent yearly for the senior operator, "A" operator and maintenance man in the sewer department, and for mechanics in the highway department.

Employees are also now guaranteed two-hour call in pay at the overtime rate for work on Sundays and paid holidays. Provisions to purchase safety shoes, converting unused personal days to the sick leave bank, and increasing sick time accumulation during the second year of the pact are all included in the new agreement also.

Unit President Elton Babcock, Chet Gardner and Collective Bargaining Specialist Manny Vitale comprised the union negotiating team.

Nassau County worker wins longevity pay denied him

MINEOLA — Nassau Local 830 has won a court ruling giving a longevity increment to an employee who had been denied the benefit because his title had been changed.

The employee's title had been reclassified from Superintendent of Materials and Supplies to Management Analyst III. Nassau County denied him a longevity increment in 1977 on the grounds that he had not held the same job without promotion for the previous five years.

However, CSEA Regional Attorney Richard M. Gaba proved that the change was a change in name only, and that the employee's duties continued as before.

The employee, who retired while the case was pending, will receive payment for the wages wrongfully denied him.

The ruling was won from Justice Richard C. Delin in Supreme Court in Mineola.
HRPATCO
get off the ground

ALBANY — Feel like doing something to help the striking brothers and sisters of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO), but you don’t know what to do? As PATCO Eastern Region Vice President Mike Parman told CSEA Delegates to the recent 1981 Convention at Kiamesha Lake, “I can’t overstress how important funding is for our organization at this time.” Anyone wishing to contribute to PATCO’s struggle can send a donation to: PATCO Family Fund 810 16th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005

Factfinder approved in Westchester Co.

PEEKSILL — Cafeteria workers in this northern Westchester County school district have accepted a factfinding report to end a 17-week contract talks. Bertha Cox, president of the CSEA unit which represents 30 people, announced the decision, which she described as “a fair and equitable solution recommended by an impartial third party appointed by the Public Employment Relations Board.”

Factfinder Edward D. Depew, after hearing arguments from both sides, recommended increasing cafeteria workers’ salaries. Depew pointed by the Public Employment Relations Board.

The school district had recommended freezing employees’ salaries, while granting increases to other bargaining units whose salaries and costs to the school district are much higher than this lowest paid group in the district.”

Union leaders, according to Field Representative Don Partrick, were hopeful that an accord could now be reached.

Goodman Fund Short Story Contest sponsored by the City University of New York. “In the Forest of Wysoka” is about the lengths to which a Jewish woman goes to survive in Nazi-occupied Poland. The story is about what she does to survive, Strauss says, “but it’s just as much about the universal wish for survival sometimes at all costs.”

“In the Forest of Wysoka” is Strauss’ first short story. It was highly praised by CUNY Professor of English Edward Quinn, who wrote in his preface that the story “captures the ruthless energy of the protagonist and carefully manipulates, even suppresses, the easy moral judgment that less talented writers fall back on.” Quinn wrote further that in the story, author Strauss “maintains a compassion and objectivity that lend the story a status of genuine literary merit.”

Local honors

UTICA — Twenty-four former employees of the State Department of Transportation were honored at a recent retirement dinner at Hart’s Hill Inn here.

The retirees, members of CSEA Local 505 and representing 500 years of state service, included: Everett Leonard, 21 years; Francis Wahl, 19 years; Ronald Smith 21 years; John Nagle, 25 years; Clarence Ferguson, 25 years; Elinor Malozi, 14 years; Robert Carney, 17 years; John Gaspa, 22 years; Edward Ryan, 22 years; Clement Smith, 11 years; Leo Cruikshank, 14 years; Walter Oare, 35 years; Nial Williams, 9 years; Stanley Myers, 30 years; Fredrick McGovern, 32 years; John Cusack, 25 years; Joseph Morocco, 15 years; Donald Mosher, 34 years; Clifford Waring, 16 years; Peter Zajaczkowski, 19 years; Orville Lawrence, 13 years; Gertrude McCarthy, 22 years; Joseph Morocco, 15 years; Donald Mosher, 34 years; Clifford Waring, 16 years; Peter Zajaczkowski, 19 years; Orville Lawrence, 13 years; Gertrude McCarthy, 22 years.
GLOVERSVILLE — "We were tired of taking too much on the chin," Ted Salvione, president of the newest unit in the CSEA Capital Region said.

He explained why the former independent City of Gloversville Public Works Association had recently joined New York State's largest public employee union.

"When we were an independent association, we were represented by a private attorney. He was good in some areas, but lacked expertise in public sector bargaining. So management was getting away with ignoring seniority, hiring new employees to do jobs that could be done by DPW employees. And when we would try to get to our attorney he was busy with another case."

Salvione explained that the independent association finally decided to look for a real union when the city refused to sit down and negotiate a new contract with the group. "That's when we decided to call on CSEA."

-- Capital Region Field Representative Greg Davis, who was the organizer contacted by the Gloversville group, explained his involvement. "The employees were ready to join CSEA. They did most of the internal organizing and I handled the matter before the state's Public Employment Relations Board. We went to an election, won the count 32-2 and moved for formal recognition."

Currently, the new CSEA members are busy wrapping up the left-over problems of the former independent association while preparing to negotiate their first contract under the CSEA.

"We're ready this time," Salvione said, confidently.

NASSAU COUNTY — Civil service employees of Nassau County may be credited with previous county service as CETA workers for purposes of computing salaries under the CSEA contract, according to a recent New York Court of Appeals ruling.

CSEA brought the legal action on behalf of former CETA workers who were placed in the county's non-incremental salary plan when they were given civil service appointments.

"The CSEA contract with the county provides that new employees entering service after Jan. 1, 1977 go into the non-incremental salary plan instead of the older graded salary plan," explained CSEA's attorney in the proceedings, Marjorie E. Karowe.

"We argued that county employment for these workers began when they were initially placed in CETA-funded positions, and thus they were entitled to placement in the incremental salary plan," she said.

The appeals court agreed with the union's position, pointing out in its ruling, "Although the federal government provided funding for the CETA positions, salaries were paid through county accounts, the county had the power to hire and fire the CETA workers, and the county exercised direct control and supervision over their work."

It was also pointed out that the CETA workers were in the bargaining unit and derived their employment benefits from the collective bargaining agreement between CSEA and the county.

The State Court of Appeals remanded the case to the Appellate Division for a review of the facts, which Ms. Karowe says should not affect the Court of Appeals decision that the workers should be credited with their county service as CSEA employees.

The case arose when six employees of the code enforcement department were relocated to office space in a fire department building. The Fire Fighters then sought to recruit them. CSEA argued that the people involved were doing identical tasks they have always performed, and accordingly upheld the right to keep them in the bargaining unit.

A hearing was held Oct. 5 in the nation's capital.

Nassau local shocked at imposed settlement

MINEOLA — One of the most blatant abuses of the dictatorial powers of employers under the Taylor Law occurred in the Westbury Fire & Water District as the board of commissioners imposed a 3 percent settlement.

"I couldn't believe it," a shocked and angry Nassau Local 830 President Terry Donahue declared.

It was noted that the chairman of the board of commissioners, Donald Crouchley, will be up for re-election next month.

Donahue said the Nassau local would be "immensely involved" in negotiations scheduled to begin shortly for a new contract for 1983.

CSEA had been unable to reach a settlement with the commissioners although efforts continued after the contract covering 18 employees expired last January 1. Finally, the board conducted a legislative hearing under the Taylor Law and voted to impose its own terms. It voted a three percent wage increase.

Fortunately, a new contract will be due in less than two months, and the power of a united CSEA membership will be behind our brothers in the district," Donahue asserted.

Calendar of EVENTS

December

5—St. Lawrence County Local 845 annual Christmas party, 6:30 p.m., Fiacco's Restaurant, Potsdam.

3—OGS Local 660 executive committee meeting, 10 a.m.; general membership meeting, 2:30 p.m., Ford's Tavern, 1118 Central Avenue, Albany.

7—Nassau County mini-workshop for small units, 5:30 p.m., Salisbury Inn, Eisenhower Park.

11—Update Medical Center Local 615 annual Christmas Dinner Dance, 6:30 p.m., Holiday Inn, Farrell Road, Syracuse.

12—Syracuse Developmental Center Local 422 annual Christmas Dinner Dance, 6:30 p.m., American Legion Hall, East Manlius Street, E. Syracuse.

16—Willard Psychiatric Center Local 428 General Information Day, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Hadley Hall, Willard campus.
Union investigating why Nassau unit deposited retirement funds in banks

Discover that a local government unit placed monies in non-interest account instead of employee retirement system

By Hugh O'Haire
CSEA Communication Associate

MINEOLA — Local 830 has launched an investigation to determine if government units in Nassau County are depositing monies deducted from employee paychecks in non-interest-bearing accounts in local banks instead of the New York State Employees' Retirement System in Albany.

The investigation was sparked by the discovery that the Nassau Board of Cooperative Educational Services had deposited retirement monies from 17 employees in non-interest-bearing accounts in local banks instead of in the retirement system.

Nassau County politicians have been investigated and criticized in the past for placing government funds in non-interest-bearing accounts in banks that make low-interest loans to their campaigns.

The problem was discovered when a Nassau County CSEA member in the Tier 3 category quit and requested the return of his contributions to the retirement system. When that return was not forthcoming, the CSEA checked and found that BOCES had instead deposited the employee's deductions, along with those of 16 additional BOCES employees, in non-interest-bearing accounts in Long Island banks.

Under the Tier 3 retirement system, deductions of three percent are made by government units from bi-weekly paychecks. The deductions are supposed to be placed in the government units in the retirement system in Albany. The money is refundable at five percent if an employee leaves the system before retirement. Annual accountings of the sums in each employee's account are made and mailed to employees.

Since the discovery, Local 830 officials are worried that the practice might be widespread. Moreover, they say it is difficult to detect. If a new employee's money is being deducted and not deposited in the retirement system, the employee would never receive an annual accounting report. If employees never receive the reports, they would be unable to detect that the monies were not being deposited.

"Because there is no way for the union to audit every account, we are urging all employees who have any cause for doubt to write to the retirement system and demand an accounting. If they discover they have a problem, we urge them to come to us for help," said Jerry Donahue, president of Local 830. "Mistakes do get made, but no employee wants to find, when he is about to retire, that his account is empty. It could take years to straighten out.

The local confronted BOCES officials with its findings. BOCES officials said that the problems stemmed from the new accounting procedures created for the Tier 3 employees which are a minority of BOCES employees.

Payments for older employees is apparently continuing without problems.

While Donahue said the BOCES officials have agreed to make up the payments for all employees with interest to the retirement system but there was no way for the union to know if the problems were limited to 17 employees so far identified by the CSEA. BOCES officials refused to identify the bank in which they deposited the employees' retirement monies.

"It could happen in a lot of school districts. Many members tell me they have never received a statement. That could be a tipoff that something is wrong with their account."

He urged all CSEA members who have any doubt to write to the Employees' Retirement System, Gov. Smith State Office Building, Albany, NY 12246.

Union counsel named to OSHA enforcement board

James Roemer appointed by governor

ALBANY — CSEA's successful pressure to enact an occupational safety and health law for public employees in New York State has received added recognition with the announcement by Gov. Hugh L. Carey that CSEA will have its voice heard in the enforcement of the life saving OSHA laws.

The governor has appointed CSEA Chief Counsel James W. Roemer, Jr., of East Berne, N.Y., to the seven-member Health Hazard Abatement Board. Simultaneously, the governor announced the appointment of Richard WINsten, of Brooklyn, N.Y., counsel to AFSCME District Council 37's legislative office, as another board member. The two unions had lobbied aggressively together for passage of the state's first public employee safety legislation.

Roemer is managing partner of Roemer and Featherstonhaugh, an Albany law firm representing CSEA. He is a graduate of Albany Law School of Union University and the University of Buffalo.

The Health Hazard Abatement Board was created as part of the legislation granting public employees the protections of the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA). The board has the responsibility to appropriate $15 million in funds to finance the capital costs of abating safety hazards in local government facilities.

Under the law, any political subdivision of the state (but not the state itself or any of its departments or agencies) may apply for assistance in eliminating safety hazards cited under the law. The board reviews the applications and awards funds based upon many factors. Any employer applying for the funds must eliminate the hazard cited whether they receive funding or not.

The OSHA law, however, prevents any public employee or any public employer from being a member of the board. It also precludes officers of public employee unions from being members of the board.

Roemer has been associated with CSEA's legal matters since 1969.

NEW SLATE OF OFFICERS of District 8, Department of Transportation CSEA Local 567 were installed recently in Poughkeepsie by CSEA Region III First Vice President Pat Mascioli, left. Taking oath of office are President Pete Dean, First Vice President Jack Shaw, Second Vice President George Ballard, Treasurer Barbara Ritchie, and Secretary Allyn Constable.
ALBANY — “This union just got in my bloodstream. I got hooked, just like being an alcoholic. So now the union is my whole life, and here I am,” explained Judy Burgess.

“There’s a you-name-it-we-do-it kind of job,” Ms. Burgess said. “Keeping track of correspondence, helping solve members’ problems, trying to work out McGowan’s schedule, following up on directives from the board and delegates, smoothing ruffled feathers and putting up with the president’s cigars. In short, it’s a madhouse.”

The office receives, by actual count, an average of 350 pieces of mail a day — mail that has to be answered, referred elsewhere in the union, followed up or tracked down.

“The discouraging part is that a great deal of that mail shouldn’t be here at all; it should be in the regional offices,” Burgess said. “If members have a problem with a grievance, or a problem with their local, or a problem on their job, they decide to go straight to the top and the letter winds up here.”

What many of them don’t realize is that there are regional offices, with elected officers and professional staff, set up to solve their problems. And often, because of their physical location and their knowledge of the locals within their area, the regional offices are in a much better position to deal with some of these problems than we are. Sure, the buck should stop here, but it shouldn’t necessarily start here.

Scheduling is a major responsibility — from setting up statewide officers’ meetings and agendas to making sure that the president can make his commitments from Chautauqua to Clinton to Suffolk. “Sometimes I wonder if Wojo has nightmares about appointment calendars and transportation schedules,” Burgess said, laughing.

And that’s just the beginning of the staff’s job. “We have to keep up with whatever President McGowan gets involved in, from making political action contacts, to dealing with AFSCME International or other unions, from making committee appointments and making sure that statewide committees are fulfilling their duties, to his roles as chairman of the Political Action Fund and the Employee Benefit Fund,” Burgess recounted. “And, of course, right now we’re starting up state contract negotiations, and it’s been a big task working out the details of appointing negotiating teams, setting up meetings and so forth.”

The job requires an intimate, in-depth knowledge of CSEA, which Ms. Burgess began acquiring, as she proudly points out, when she organized her CSEA unit at Geneva City School District. After serving as unit president, she held offices as local president, board member, member of numerous committees and six-term Region VI secretary.

“This is a 24-hour-a-day job,” she added. “I can’t think of the last weekend or holiday when I didn’t get phone calls wanting some help or some information. But it has to be that way. After all, there are a lot of members out there who work from midnight to 7 a.m., and they’re just as important and just as deserving of our help and attention as those members who work days.”

“... we work for the elected statewide president. His responsibility is directly to the members, so our job is to see that the members get served.”

**STAFF PROFILE**

The Civil Service Employees Assn. is an extremely diverse organization. Its membership of upwards of a quarter of a million workers perform thousands of different jobs at hundreds of work locations throughout New York State. The needs of those members can vary as much as the members themselves, and it takes a sophisticated staff organization to meet those needs. CSEA employs a professional staff of more than 200 people to provide services to the membership. Slightly more than one-half of that total are assigned to statewide headquarters at 33 Elk Street, Albany, with the remainder assigned to the six regional headquarters maintained by CSEA throughout the state. “Staff Profiles” is an informational series designed to acquaint members with staff departments and personnel.
'I was very embarrassed,' said budding balloonist.

Local secretary lands in the news

By Tina Lincer First
Associate Editor

When Kathy DiMaggio went for a balloon ride recently, she didn’t reach any new heights but she did make headlines.

Kathy, secretary of CSEA Local 414, Marcy Psychiatric Center, took flight with a friend late one afternoon last month. When they discovered the wind wasn’t strong enough and it started getting dark, they landed in a parking lot in Ilion, attracting some 50 villagers — and a few reporters.

The next day, pictures and an account of their unscheduled landing appeared on the front page of the Utica Daily Press, as well as in the Frankfort Evening Telegram.

"I was very embarrassed," said Kathy in a recent telephone interview, though the spirit in her voice spoke more of fun and adventure. "There were crowds of people watching us. The next day everyone was calling me up and now everyone wants a ride."

When not off on flights and other fancy escapades, the 22-year-old union member has her feet firmly planted on the grounds of Marcy Psychiatric, where she is a secretary. She lives in Frankfurt, about 10 miles outside of Utica, and while she enjoys skiing, swimming and "all the things people my age do," she says ballooning is now her "main hobby."

She was steered into the sport by her friend, Glen Golden, who has been doing it for about five years. "We usually go up about 4:30 p.m., when I get home from work," said Kathy, explaining they use Golden’s own six-story high red balloon, called "Skyrider."

On the day of their newsmaking journey, said Kathy, they took off from in front of her house, checking first with Flight Service for weather and wind conditions. "They said the winds were 0-5 miles, but when we got in place there were no winds and we were at a standstill. We figured we’d better land."

The two touched down in the first place they could find, which turned out to be the parking lot of Remington Arms, internationally known manufacturer of firearms and ammunition, located in Ilion.

"I don’t know if they thought we were spies or not," said Kathy, who, along with her friend, escaped the episode uninjured. (The balloon was undamaged.) They also escaped charges. According to the Utica newspaper, an Ilion patrolman said the two might have been arrested for disorderly conduct, but weren’t because they claimed it was an emergency landing.

"You really can’t steer a balloon," said Kathy. "I was learning to keep it up. You just have to go with the wind. That’s why you never know where you’re going to end up."

Kathy’s experience in unplanned landings comes after only three months of lessons, but it hasn’t dampened her ballooning spirit.

"It’s such a nice feeling," she says about the airborne activity. "When you’re up there you feel really free."

Local 010 member receives overtime pay

NEW YORK CITY — It took more than a year and a half, but New York City Local 010 member Betty Mallory finally received nearly $700 in previously denied overtime pay.

Mrs. Mallory, a data entry clerk in Queens Criminal Court, was offered compensatory time in lieu of overtime pay to which she was entitled. A grievance representative for Local 010 members in Queens Criminal Court, Mrs. Mallory was well aware of her rights under the CSEA Administrative Services Unit contract of her money with no problems, but, after what she considered an inappropriate amount of time passed, she contacted Region II Field representative Charles Bell.

Bell investigated the status of Mrs. Mallory’s grievance and learned that “higher-ups in the Office of Court Administration (OCA) had, by ignoring the first step decision, in effect, rescinded it” without informing Mrs. Mallory.

After meeting with OCA management, writing letters, and, in Bell’s words, “making a lot of noise,” Mrs. Mallory received the overtime pay to which she was entitled.

They ‘positively’ enjoy workshop

Members find help in dealing with careers, personal lives

ORANGEBURG — "Very special" is the term that best describes the Career and Personal Skills Workshop held the first weekend in November in the Southern Region.

Union members who took part in the nine-hour program were unanimous in their thinking, which was fitting enough, since its objective was to stimulate more positive mental attitudes.

"Its purpose is to help you develop skills you can use to improve your careers and personal lives," said Chester Galle, who led the program, held at the Orangeburg Holiday Inn.

"I found part of me," is how one member summed up the experience. Comments from others who participated included: "If people will listen with an open mind, they will learn to understand"; and "It was a great opportunity to re-affirm positive thinking habits."

One participant simply called the program "mind-opening."

Included during the two days were a variety of exercises and teaching techniques, including a debate on whether "negative people" exist and an exercise that entailed identifying different things in the environment. Galle, who has held similar sessions in the Western Region, sees his methods as an especially good way to train union members to work together at problem-solving.

He says he seeks to "help retrain your mind in a new direction, gain greater self-confidence, bring out your creativity and uniqueness, and choose thoughts that will advance your career."
MIDDLETOWN — A chorus of protests is rising in this city of 22,000 people to have working conditions improved for City Court employees. Judge Elaine Slobod, Judiciary Local 332 President Pat Nealon, and now Field Representative Flip Amodio have demanded better facilities for employees who occupy three small rooms in the City Hall complex.

Amodio scored what he called "unwholesome working conditions...a chicken coop atmosphere unworthy of both city residents and court employees." Each year, the court processes approximately 7,000 parking tickets, 1,600 traffic summonses, 1,500 criminal cases, 500 small claims, 400 civil cases, and responds to numerous requests for information.

A recent inspection of the facilities with Court Marshall Frank Dendanto revealed such trouble spots as:

- Inadequate space which makes for cramped, unsafe quarters;
- Insufficient soundproofing which compromises the confidentiality of business;
- Not enough storage facilities which require keeping records in a bathroom and in a damp, cluttered basement which can only be reached via the police locker room;
- Lack of appropriate security facilities;
- Inadequate ventilation;
- Lack of space to accommodate people summoned to court, to jury duty or to witness proceedings;
- Inadequate bathroom facilities for employees, and no facilities for public;
- Locating of two employees in judge's chambers which also serve as a "multi-purpose room"; they must vacate when it's used for other purposes such as jury deliberations, attorney/client conferences, holding room for youthful offenders, etc.;
- Inadequate fire prevention measures and exit procedures;
- Lack of private work space for chief clerk;
- Dangerous system of transporting prisoners which requires them to be taken into chambers through a door which opens right next to sitting judge; and,
- Understaffing.

Amodio met Oct. 21 with city officials to remind them of Article 39 of the Judiciary Law, which puts responsibility directly on the city to provide facilities "suitable and sufficient for the transaction of business." He expressed concern that they "discharge their responsibility under the law and act before, not after, tragedy strikes," to which City Marshall (and Shop Steward) Frank Dendanto adds: "Do we have to wait until the horse is out of the barn?"
CSEA moves to block contracting out at Oneida County sewage treatment plant

UTICA — Officers of Oneida County Local 833 have called for the full support of CSEA and AFSCME research departments in an all-out effort to prevent contracting out of the operation and maintenance at the county sewage treatment plant.

According to Dorothy Penner, local president, the action was taken to protect the jobs and security of more than 40 employees at the treatment plant.

In an initial, hard-hitting letter to Oneida County legislators, Penner and John Mikalauskas, first vice president of the local, stated the union was unequivocally opposed to any takeover by Envirotech, a California firm. CSEA Region V President Jim Moore also pledged the full cooperation of both the Albany and Washington, D.C. research teams in analyzing background data and the proposal figures offered by the private firm.

In a supportive comment, Moore said, "We firmly believe the county can solve its own problems at the treatment plant and operate for less money than the Envirotech proposal. As the official representative of the employees at the treatment plant, CSEA is vehemently opposed to any plan that might jeopardize the job security of any employee."

To add further support to the union position that a private firm takeover is not the best answer, John Mikalauskas called attention to a recently-issued consent order from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to the county. It stated, in part, that "the primary operational concern is the deteriorated condition of the sewage collection system pipelines owned by municipalities which are members of the system."

"It is the consensus of most professionals at the plant that if the collection system pipelines are corrected, and the county hires a qualified deputy commissioner for water pollution control, we are confident we can meet and surpass the standards required by state law," Mikalauskas said.

Since the union's letter to Oneida County legislators, the county has called an advisory board meeting to hear both sides of the issue from the county deputy public works commissioner and representatives of Envirotech.

According to figures submitted by Richard Edwards, deputy commissioner, sewer tax rates would increase 79 percent next year if the county hired Envirotech to run its treatment plant, but would increase only 14 percent if county operation were to continue.

Envirotech officials said they would not want to comment on Edward's report before discussing it privately with county officials.

CSEA is expected to submit an evaluation of the Envirotech proposal in the near future.

Kings Park employee cleared of insubordination charges

KINGS PARK — "A mental hospital is not a totalitarian state," an arbitrator has ruled in a CSEA case that cleared an employee of Kings Park Psychiatric Center Local 411 of charges of insubordination.

The ruling came as a "new atmosphere" in labor-management relations was forecast by Local 411 President Carl Fennell. Fennell noted that a new cooperative spirit had been demonstrated by Acting Director Stephen Goldstein and John Mikalauskas called attention to a recently-issued consent order from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to the county. It stated, in part, that "the primary operational concern is the deteriorated condition of the sewage collection system pipelines owned by municipalities which are members of the system."

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The strongly-worded ruling was issued by arbitrator Israel Kugler as he set aside a charge of insubordination and a proposed $150 fine and directed the hospital to remove any mention of the incident from the employee's personnel file.

The employee had been asked to report to a supervisor after his night shift with only a few hours notice. The interview was to deal with a tire-slashing incident on the grounds of the institution.

The employee declined because he had already made an appointment to carry out personal business after his shift. However, the arbitrator noted, the employee offered to telephone the supervisor at home but was denied access to the supervisor's telephone number. The employee did report for interrogation several days later.

The employee, the arbitrator noted, had no knowledge of the tire-slashing. He further noted that no charge of insubordination was made until weeks later.

Moreover, the employee had been employed at the Kings Park institution for 25 years "without a single blemish on his record," the arbitrator pointed out. He concluded that "no case of insubordination existed," and added, "While a mental hospital, particularly in terms of the care of patients, requires dedication, loyalty and obedience, it is not a totalitarian state. The collective bargaining relationship between the State of New York and the CSEA clearly implies a consideration of the individual humanity of both employees and supervisors."

The defense of the employee was handled by CSEA Regional Attorney Lester B. Lipkind.

Statewide and regional officials of the Employee Assistance Program met recently in Rome to discuss progress of the program in Region V. Pictured during a break in the day-long activities were, seated left to right, Mary Ellen Mangino, EAP coordinator for PEF, and James Moore, CSEA Region V president. Standing, left to right, are Robert Hill, Rome Developmental Center coordinator; Stan Watson, Region V EAP representative; Jon Premo, president of Local 422, Rome DC; and James Murphy, statewide EAP director.

EAP PROGRESS
Deadline is approaching for employee training courses

Employees in CSEA’s three state bargaining units — Administrative, Institutional, and Operational — are reminded that November 27 is the deadline for applying for Employee Benefits Training courses scheduled for spring 1982.

Hundreds of courses covering all fields are being offered at dozens of colleges, schools and mental hygiene and other facilities throughout the state. There is no tuition charge for any of the courses, which are supported by funds negotiated between CSEA and the state, and administered by the Training Section of the Department of Civil Service.

A complete list of courses is available through the Civil Service Department and through agency training or personnel offices. Those who wish to apply should obtain a training application card from their supervisor, fill it out completely, and obtain their supervisor’s signature.

Completed cards should be forwarded to training or personnel offices before November 27. Employees should not apply for more than two courses.

Nominees will be ranked in priority order. First preference is based on how applicable the course is to the employee’s current job duties. Second preference is based on the value of the course to the employee in any future positions.

Homework and attendance are important parts of the classes and attendance records will be forwarded to the participant’s agency. Some courses will start as early as January 4. Employees will be required to purchase any books or related course materials.
Child car seat required by law after April 1, 1982

This special car seat offer could help you save your child's life

ALBANY — CSEA wants to help its members keep their children from becoming one of the 50 kids under four years of age who will be killed on highways in this country this year or one of the estimated 60,000 children that will be injured, many of them permanently disabled, in automobile accidents.

CSEA has joined with the state Department of Motor Vehicles in urging motorists to buy federally-approved child car seats and the union is working with the Cosco/Peterson Co., to make those car seats available at an affordable cost.

Union President William L. McGowan made every major manufacturer of federally-approved child car seats an offer: if they would give CSEA's members a low price on their products, CSEA would tell its members about their product. The union isn't endorsing the manufacturer, it's just trying to help its members protect their children and comply with a new state law that makes it illegal to operate any motor vehicle in this state after April 1, 1982, unless any passengers under five years of age ride in an approved child car seat.

Cosco was the only firm that accepted the union's offer and, according to the Union Label and Service Trades Department of the AFL-CIO, it's the only baby products manufacturer that is union-represented.

"Nobody needs something else to buy these days," commented President McGowan, "but the facts clearly justify the new state law. Thousands of children are being killed or injured in accidents every year and, according to the experts, many of these tragedies could have been avoided if only the child had been protected by car seat restraints."

To help, CSEA is publishing this special price list from Cosco on its child seat products. Most of the prices listed are well below list price and generally below even discount prices. The prices listed also include the cost of handling and shipping.

Any CSEA-represented public employee can purchase a car seat directly from Cosco by following the instructions on the price list below. Of course, they can also buy a Cosco product, or any other federally-approved child car seat in most major department stores or baby product stores.

"We're not saying that these products are better than any other," the union leader said, "but what we are saying is that these products meet the rigid standards of the federal government and the manufacturer, approved by the union label department of the AFL-CIO, has agreed to offer this special price directly to CSEA members. What is important is that your child be properly protected. This is one way to do it."

All orders and any questions concerning these particular products should be addressed to the manufacturer at the address printed below.

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CSEA Members

Price Bulletin

November 1, 1981

(Supersedes all previous price bulletins)

COSCO/PETERTSON

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NOTE:
Prices include shipping and handling charges to one destination.
Prices subject to change without notice.
Returns will not be accepted without prior written authorization.

TERMS:
Prepayment (certified check or U.S. Government money order) must be sent with purchase order.

SHIPMENT:
Allow 30 days from receipt of order.

Send purchase order with prepayment to:
Cosco/Peterson
2625 State Street
Columbus, Indiana 47201
Attn: Special Markets
After eight months of talks, city resorts to Taylor Law

WATERTOWN — More than 250 Watertown employees, represented by CSEA Local 828 Jefferson County, will receive a 5 percent salary increase effective January 1, 1982, as part of a recent settlement imposed by the city council.

According to Tom Dupee, CSEA field representative and chief negotiator for the bargaining unit, the settlement actually represents an increase of only 2.5 percent because it takes effect midway in the fiscal year.

“We are not at all happy with the settlement,” Dupee said. “It is unfortunate that after eight months of solid negotiations, complete with an accepted fact finder’s report, we still do not have a contract.”

Along with the imposed salary settlement, the city also acted on an ordinance ending the 4p.m. closing of city hall during summer, a practice the city claims costs $100,000 annually.

The settlement decision was not unexpected by rank and file members of the unit. Earlier this month, council members and the city manager were greeted by nearly 100 employees who demonstrated they were unhappy without a contract by setting up an informational picket line at a council meeting and public hearing.

At that meeting, both Dupee and city manager Forbes expressed their positions to the council.

The decision to impose the settlement came two weeks later. When questioned concerning the future, Dupee indicated he plans to request negotiations be renewed with the city after the first of the year.

“The imposed settlement was tough to take, but under the law (Taylor) we had no choice. In a few months we will be back at the bargaining table. Hopefully, we can hammer out a good contract for the employees,” Dupee said.

After-hours picket in protest of city’s position

WATERTOWN — Members of the Watertown Unit of Jefferson County Local 823 conducted informational picketing in front of the Watertown Municipal Building Nov. 2, prior to a public hearing held by the City Council which resulted in an imposed settlement on the 250-member CSEA unit.

CSEA Field Representative Tom Dupee, chief negotiator for the union, said during the hearing that CSEA members would accept the recommendations of a state-appointed factfinder, calling those recommendations “fair to both sides.”

Watertown City Manager Ronald G. Forbes, however, rejected those recommendations, and returned to his original bargaining position of no pay hikes or improvements in contract provisions over the 1980-81 fiscal year agreement.

The CSEA members have been working without a contract since July 1.

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Labor press importance emphasized at meeting

NEW YORK CITY — The labor movement is facing extraordinary challenges, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Thomas R. Donahue reminded delegates attending the 1981 International Labor Press Association (ILPA) constitutional convention here last week. And that puts increasing pressure on the labor press to continue providing the kind of information working men and women require to speak in a united voice against those that would dismantle organized labor, information often missing from the commercial press, he said.

Donahue was among several prominent individuals to address the representatives or to conduct panel discussions, workshops and presentations held to help members of the labor press hone their unique brand of journalism.

Among the more than 150 delegates from throughout the United States and eastern Canada were CSEA Director of Communications Gary G. Fryer, who serves as publisher of The Public Sector, and Public Sector Editor Roger A. Cole.

The ILPA is comprised of representatives of more than 700 labor newspapers, magazines and newsletters published by AFL-CIO organizations and by Canadian Labour Congress organizations. ILPA member publications have a combined per issue circulation of more than 24 million copies.

McGowan, Frucher at Suffolk Local 430

Two leaders confront unresolved MHTA, floating schedule problems at Suffolk Dev.

MELVILLE — A high level meeting between CSEA and members of state government is expected to result in an eventual solution of continuing problems at Suffolk Developmental Center.

President William McGowan and members of his Albany staff met with Meyer Frucher, Director of the Governor’s Office of Employee Relations, and Acting Commissioner Zygmund Slezak of the Department of Mental Retardation to hear complaints by Local 430 about problems that have remained unresolved at the local level for more than a year.

Among the problems discussed at the Nov. 12 meeting were the deployment of MHTA employees being forced to work alone on night shifts, minimum of “floating” schedules by management, and allowing MHTA trainees to work alone on wards.

The session lasted for more than four hours and moved from Suffolk Developmental Center in Melville to Region 1 headquarters in Hauppauge. The exchange between labor and management was heated at times, but both sides kept tempers from flying.

“We’re here to solve problems. If it is within the realm of the possible, we’ll solve them,” said Frucher.

Joe LaValle, president of Local 430, said he was skeptical of management promises in general but added, “It helps to bring things out.”

“I never feel I have accomplished anything until I see the results after I meet with management,” McGowan said at the end of the meeting. “We will review what happened today in two months when I will send someone down here to check. But as a rule, these high level meetings are successful.”

Also attending the meeting were: CSEA Counsel James Roemer; Jim Conboy and Jason McGraw, collective bargaining specialists; and officers of Local 430.
JUNE FERNER: long road to safer school bus laws leads to state senate hearing

Driving a school bus is a job June Ferner takes seriously. Very seriously. When the state of New York raised the height of bus seats to an obstructive 28 inches, Ferner stepped down from the driver's seat to protest the law, which went into effect in 1974.

Finally, seven years later, Ferner's hard work was recognized. The New York State Senate Transportation Committee invited her to testify about the bus seat requirement. She gladly accepted. CSEA backed Ferner from the beginning. Together, they are campaigning to have the state law repealed. Legislation is now pending in the state assembly and senate.

Following is Ferner's testimony presented verbatim before the New York State Senate Transportation Committee.

"Members of Senator Caenngemer's Staff, Members of the Committee, my name is June Ferner. I have been a member of CSEA Erie Educational Local 868 and a school bus driver for 16 years. The topic I will be addressing here today deals with the issue of the height of bus seats."

"In 1974, New York State legislation was enacted into law (Chapter 971). This legislation requires a bus seat height of 28 inches for all school buses manufactured after 1975 with a capacity of over 11 passengers. This requirement in New York State is 3 1/2 inches higher than the standards imposed by federal regulations. In fact, New York State is the only state in the United States that has a bus seat height requirement that is higher than that of federal regulations."

"CSEA opposes the NYS bus seat height requirement of 28 inches. CSEA not only opposes this regulation but has also proposed legislation dealing with the repeal of the law. Senate 4846 and Assembly 3515 would delete the statutory requirement that passenger seats on school buses used in NYS be equipped with padded seat backs at least 28 inches in height. This piece of legislation was in Senate Transportation committee and Assembly ways and means committee."

"Although the seat height difference is only 3 1/2 inches from that of the federal standards, these higher seats make it much more difficult for the bus driver to view what is going on in the bus. Before the effects of the passage of this legislation could be seen, drivers used to fight over who would be entitled to receive a new bus. Today, transportation supervisors must force the drivers to accept and drive these buses. No driver wants to live with a tragedy, especially one that could have been prevented. This state statutory requirement makes it impossible to observe student behavior and contributes to the loss of driver discipline. It also results in an additional cost to the taxpayers."

"The risk of accident is increased. This is not fair to the students being transported, the driver, or the motorizing public at large, who may also be involved. If an accident does occur, the cause will undoubtedly be determined as "driver error," yet, every school board member, every administrator, every transportation supervisor and of course, every driver, will know that the accident was the result of extraordinary high seat backs. Originally, high seats were created to eliminate whiplash in case of emergency stops or accidents. This may be true, but whiplash is not the only injury a student can sustain. Whiplash could almost be considered minor compared to other injuries that may be caused if a bus with high back seats is in an accident, for example, facial cuts and fractures."

"The drivers' view is another problem concerning the 28-inch seat backs. His or her view is obstructed by the higher seats, therefore distracting the drivers' attention from the road longer, in order for them to locate the problem or trouble on the bus. With the higher seats it also takes longer to even know that a problem exists. The driver's attention is diverted, making it more difficult to drive because they must keep looking in the mirror, thus their eyes are off the road."

"In buses with high back seats only a few hands and tops of heads of the taller students are visible. In this case those three inches makes a distinct difference. In the buses with the seat back standards of federal regulation, the heads of even the smaller children can be seen, even if they attempt to slump down. If a student is smoking or otherwise misbehaving on the bus, it cannot be detected. High seats also magnify the driver's blind spot to the left, making road visibility extremely difficult and lane changing additionally hazardous."

"In summary, the 28-inch high back seats cause disciplinary and safety problems."

However, this legislation does not apply to the cost of pensions, health insurance, or other programs presently provided on behalf of the public employee. Scanlon said the ultimate goal of his office is complete parity, where public employees and private contractors are treated on an equal basis.

"COMPUTERIZED BUS ROUTING. A corollary of partial parity, this legislation makes computerized busing an approved transportation expense. Previously, only private contractors' systems were aided by the state. This chapter of the Education Law allowed public employed systems to be funded as well."

"BOCES SALARIES. The law was amended to provide up to $14,500 for BOCES salaries. Scanlon said this bill will ease tight salary restrictions on this state-funded program, thereby creating more state aid for school districts."

"AID TO SMALL CITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS. The HURD decision, handed down in the early 1970's, cursed certain city school districts with constitutional tax limit deficits. This year, over $28 million was allotted to correct the imbalance."

"WORKER'S COMPENSATION DISABILITY BENEFITS FOR PREGNANCIES. Women were previously granted eight weeks of disability payments for uncomplicated pregnancies. This new legislation allows up to 36 weeks."

"Although the above legislation brought an additional $66 million in state aid for local school districts. Scanlon emphasized the need for complete parity. "It is imperative that we push for the full parity bill to balance the scales," he said."

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