Jerry Wurf

Jerry Wurf, 62, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), died Dec. 10 in George Washington University Hospital, Washington.

A tribute to Mr. Wurf as the man and the labor leader is located on page 7 of this edition.

Gerald McEntee of Pennsylvania is new president

Gerald McEntee, executive director of AFSCME Council 13 of state employees in Pennsylvania has been elected president of AFSCME, succeeding the late Jerry Wurf. McEntee was elected by AFSCME's executive board to fill Mr. Wurf's term, which expires in 1984, at a meeting yesterday in Washington. A detailed background article on the new AFSCME president will be published in the next edition of The Public Sector.

Day care centers funding created

An unprecedented CSEA-State agreement has been announced that will provide funds to create self-sustaining day care centers for public employees at several major state work locations.

In a lengthy article on pages 10 and 11 of this edition, CSEA President William L. McGowan describes the new agreement and how it will work to the benefit of the employees and the employer.

The important agreement creating the new day care centers grew out of the highly successful program, The Children's Place at the Plaza, which opened in 1979 in Albany. The child at right is one of more than 100 children of employees currently enrolled in The Children's Place Program.

HOLIDAY JOY TO ALL

On behalf of CSEA, its officers and staff, sincere wishes for a most happy holiday season and a peaceful New Year.
LYNN CANTON, a workshop leader at the Women's Conference, works for the Center for Women in Government.

KAREN BURSTEIN, Executive Director of the state Department of Consumer Affairs, makes a point during her banquet address.

Struggle for equality is ‘far from over’

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

More than 250 members were inspired by CSEA attorney Marge Karowe's keynote address on the history of women in the labor movement. Later, members took part in workshops and strategy sessions designed to 'encourage all concerned that the struggle for the equality for women in the workplace has the highest priority of this union," according to committee chairperson June Scott.

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

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

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

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

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

"We must come to terms with our reality," Ms. Burstein continued, "or the next 20 years will find the same lack of progress. Equal pay for work of comparable value must become our watchword until it is achieved."

The importance of your great union in accomplishing this cannot be overstated," she observed, noting unionized government workers earn more than non-unionized employees.

Ms. Burstein compared the struggle for women's equity to the civil rights struggle of the sixties as she called for "same idealism and dedication to see us through to victory."

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

MINEOLA — CSEA Local 830 and Nassau County have reached a tentative agreement on a three-year contract which gives the union's 14,000 county employee members raises ranging from 25.6 to more than 40 percent over the life of the contract.

The tentative agreement capped more than six months of bargaining between CSEA and the county's office of employee relations and was reached in the early morning hours on Dec. 9 following a marathon session.

The agreement provides raises of 8.5 percent in the first year, eight percent in the second year and 7.75 percent in the third year. During the first two years, the agreement provides for all employees to receive a minimum raise of $1,000 and in the third year, $1,100.

In addition, the contract includes a new, 15-step graded salary plan starting in the second year of the contract. Each step, or annual incremental raise, in the plan equals an additional raise of 2.2 percent. And, almost 8,000 employees, who are still on a previous county step system abolished for new employees in 1977, are eligible for step increases of five percent.

Some employees, who are eligible for three-step promotions under the old system, could receive compounded salary and step raises totaling more than 40 percent over the three-year period. Without any step promotions, the minimum three-year, compounded raise is 25.6 percent.

"This contract represents the largest labor settlement in Nassau County this year," said Jerry Donahue, Local 830 president. "It will help our members through this period of inflation. I feel we have extracted the maximum amount of dollars we could from the county in this contract."

The agreement must be approved by the CSEA rank and file, Donahue said. The local will hold a general membership meeting next week to discuss the tentative agreement prior to a mail ratification vote.

In the tentative agreement, the longevity clause of previous CSEA contracts has been modified to reflect true, or chronological longevity, based on length of service employment with the county rather than time in grade. Employees with 15 years service and more will receive lump sum payments of $1,000 annually.

The tentative agreement also includes increased night differential pay, a uniform allowance of $175 per year, and up to 80 percent payment for accumulated sick leave time on termination. The agreement also provides for a mutually agreed-on panel of 10 arbitrators chosen by the union and county to settle grievances.

Donahue said that this was the first tentative contract reached by the union and county before the expiration of a contract. The current three-year contract with the county expires on Dec. 31.

**Niagara County members continue holiday tradition**

NORTH TONAWANDA—A 20-year tradition of bringing together members of Niagara County CSEA Local 832 and county department heads and officials during the holiday season was continued here recently.

"The fellowship is important to the members because it's really necessary to recognize the human element behind the official job titles we all represent," said Local Program Chairwoman Diane Sino.

More than 325 people attended the recent dinner-dance, including Local President Dick McIntyre; Lockport Hospital Unit President Marion Clute; North Tonawanda Unit President Dave Maziarz; and Niagara County Unit President Joseph Sandel.

**Unit president calls proposed Poughkeepsie settlement ‘sham’**

POUGHKEEPSIE — "An irresponsible use of the law," is how the leader of 200 city workers has labeled a report the Common Council is planning to impose a one-year, no-pay increase settlement on them.

CSEA Unit President Don Murphy called the proposed action "a sham...now we know why they've stalled the talks for a year — to balance the budget on our backs." He noted that while city employees "may receive nothing this year," across-the-board raises of $196, six percent and eight percent, were granted, respectively, in the cities of Kingston, Newburgh and Beacon. He added, "Between January 1980 and July 1981, the Consumer Price Index went up 17.6 percent, and in that same time frame our salaries only went up 1.77 percent. Every day we work, we're making less and less.

"Employees have been without a contract since January 1.
PATCO 'alive and still fighting,' leader tells South Beach PC members

NEW YORK CITY — On the day that the federal courts upheld the decertification of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO), Mitch Cook, president of PATCO, told members of CSEA's South Beach Psychiatric Center (SBPC) Local 446 that PATCO is “alive and still fighting to win its strike; and we will win.”

“You can't decertify the human spirit,” he said.

In the keynote address at the installation dinner for the officers of Local 446, Cook gave an overview of the events which led to the strike by 11,500 air traffic controllers and their firing by President Ronald Reagan.

He admitted that PATCO made a serious mistake by endorsing Reagan for the presidency based on pledges Reagan made to PATCO.

“He made a lot of promises when he was running for office,” Cook said. “But when it came time to negotiate, Reagan told the Federal Aviation Agency negotiating team ‘to give nothing, say nothing’.”

Cook maintained that Reagan's attitude toward the negotiations left PATCO no alternative but to strike.

To a sympathetic audience of CSEA members who work under the severe restrictions of the Taylor Law, Cook affirmed that “without the right to withhold your work, there can be no collective bargaining only collective begging.”

Referring to upcoming negotiations between CSEA and the state, Cook urged CSEA members to be aware of the tone that the federal government has set and how that tone can reach all levels of government.

But, to enthusiastic applause, he promised that “the rights of public employees will not be destroyed by a senile leader in the White House who has no interest in treating you as human beings.”

After Cook's speech, Metropolitan Region II President George Caloumeno formally installed the officers of SBPC Local 446: President George Boncoraglio; First Vice President Joel Robinson; Third Vice President Lou Gilmore; Treasurer Pete Anicic; Secretary Rosemary Burris; Second Vice President Lorraine Conti; Thousand Island State Comptroller Edward V. Regan has announced that the location of the Retirement System's Information Service in Buffalo will be changed as of January 6, 1982.

Beginning on that date, the System's Information Office will be located in the State Office Building at 65 Court Street, Buffalo.

An Information Representative will be available in Hearing Room No. 4 on the first, second, third, and fourth Wednesdays and Fridays of each month between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. The representative will meet with callers on a — first come — first served basis and will offer counsel and advice about retirement matters.

Appointments are not necessary and telephone calls cannot be accepted since they would interfere with consultations.

The New York State Employees' Retirement System and the New York State Policemen's and Firemen's Retirement System sponsor a retirement information service at major cities and towns throughout the state. The two retirement systems serve nearly 600,000 active members and pay benefits to more than 170,000 pensioners and beneficiaries.
Calling on membership for support

"Your representatives deserve your support as they undertake the very serious task of trying to implement your desires into a fair contract.

Region VI President
Robert L. Lattimer

ROCHESTER — As CSEA begins the long, arduous task of negotiating a fair labor contract with the state of New York, Region VI negotiating team members met with members at three locations in the region to explain the negotiating process and outline which matters of concern to members will actually be subject to negotiation.

"Your representatives deserve your support as they undertake the very serious task of trying to implement your desires into a fair contract," said Region VI President Robert L. Lattimer.

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

The Region VI negotiating team members are Liz Watts, Roswell Park Memorial Institute, Local 303 and Debbie Lee, West Seneca Developmental Center, Local 427 of the Institutional bargaining unit; Tom Warzel, SUNY Buffal, Local 602 and John Wallenbeck, Hornell Local 007 of the Operational unit; and Elaine Todd, DOL (Buffalo District) Local 352 and Mary Ann Bentham, SUNY Fredonia, Local 607 for the Administrative unit.

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

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

Noting the intense interest of those in attendance, veteran negotiator Mary Ann Bentham assured the membership "We want what you want. We know it's going to be difficult but we're going to fight like hell to bring back a fair contract that we all can live with."
The dangers of the piece work concept: "It's a threat to the number of keypunch jobs," she said.

If the state can get the same amount of productivity from seven keypunch operators that it previously got from 12 operators, there go five keypunch jobs.

The other problems is, what happens when the productivity bonus money is gone? Will the state expect the productivity to remain at the bonus rate without additional compensation? And what if an individual's productivity fails? Can that person be disciplined?"

McTygues complimented Skelly on her research and involvement in this issue, and remarked that it is the type of issue which should be brought forward at regional meetings so all regional leaders will have a chance to exchange information and brainstorm possible solutions.

"We have to be aware of all new developments that management is coming up with in order to be prepared to defend our members' rights and jobs," he said.

Pact reached

VICTOR — The Victor Schools Unit of CSEA Ontario County Local 855 has reached agreement on a three-year collective bargaining contract, following protracted negotiations which were punctuated by informational picketing of the school board by a majority of the 100-plus member unit.

The agreement, effective through July 1984, calls for wage increases of 10, 11, and eight percent in the first, second and third years, respectively, of the contract.

The pact also provides double-time pay for Sunday holiday or non-school work, as well as for snow plowing.

Cafeteria workers and monitors will be paid time-and-one-half pay for non-school functions, such as banquets or dinners, and will gain additional holidays. Bus drivers will receive time-and-one-half pay for extra trips and kindergarten runs as well as schedule improvements.

All employees will receive an additional vacation week, and will benefit from a Section 41-J sick leave rider.

Committee members included Mary Miller, Unit President Alice Schoenthaler, Alice Crowther, Robin Brown, Judy Evans, Barbara Ahonen, Gail Hall and Donna Zink.

Dispute over law clerks continues

ALBANY — In the latest clash between CSEA and the Office of Court Administration over the classification of law clerks and law assistants in New York State, the state Supreme Court has reversed a decision by the Public Employment Relations Board confirming union membership of the employees.

In Evans v. PERB, et al., Herbert B. Evans, chief administrative judge of the courts of the state Unified Court System, has moved for an order vacating and annulling the PERB decision that law clerks and law assistants should not be classified as managerial or confidential under the Taylor Law.

The PERB decision was made on appeal by PERB members Ida Klaus and David C. Randles and confirmed an earlier decision by Harvey Milowe, PERB's director of Public Employment Practices and Representation. It made findings of fact that law assistants and law clerks "do legal research, analyze questions of law and prepare drafts of legal documents, including judicial opinions and decisions," and concluded that these employees do not formulate policy, but instead, provide technical professional help.

The Supreme Court has called the PERB ruling "arbitrary and capricious." Unless it is appealed, the matter will be returned to PERB for a determination of the issue of "formulation of policy" — an issue which, notes CSEA Attorney Stephen Wiley, "has already been decided in our favor by Harvey Milowe."

CSEA represents more than 750 law clerks and law assistants in the state. Only CSEA and one other union had filed briefs before PERB opposing OCA's appeal of the original Milowe decision. In addition, only CSEA and the other union intervened, answered petitions and filed briefs when OCA commenced an Article 78 proceeding.
Jerry Wurf, International president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), died Dec. 10 in George Washington University Hospital, Washington. Mr. Wurf, who was 62, had undergone surgery for a gastric ulcer six weeks ago. Cause of death was cardiac arrest. He is survived by his wife, Mildred, and three children, Linda Susan, Nicholas and Abigail.

Jerry Wurf: advocate for workers' dignity

In his 41 years in the labor movement, Jerry Wurf built his life's record on the forceful and effective advocacy of dignity for working people.

That dedication was probably the key ingredient of his most significant accomplishment: the building of AFSCME into the nation's largest public employee union. When he became its president in 1964, AFSCME had 240,000 members. Today, with one million members, it is the third largest union in the AFL-CIO.

Mr. Wurf was born in New York City in 1919. As a child, he contracted polio and he fought a resulting physical disability for the rest of his life. After graduating from New York University in 1940, he went to work in a cafeteria and promptly organized the staff as a local of the Food Checkers and Cashiers Union. He went on to become an effective organizer for that union.

In 1947, Mr. Wurf joined AFSCME, then a small and struggling organization, as an organizer in New York City. During the 1950s he won a series of representative and legal battles that earned him national labor recognition. From 1959 to 1964 he served as Executive Director of AFSCME's District Council 37 in New York City. Building local by local, Wurf won collective bargaining rights for city and state employees in New York. His efforts led directly to an executive order by President Kennedy curtailing parallel rights for federal employees.

Mr. Wurf was elected president of AFSCME in 1964 following a hotly contested election in which he led a reform slate. One of his first acts was to call a convention to draft a new union constitution, and this set the stage for AFSCME becoming, in the words of The Washington Post, "a model of virile labor unionism.

He also encouraged a tough stance in contract negotiations and as the union won bargaining victories, membership began its rapid growth. As the union began to expand, Mr. Wurf helped pioneer landmark public sector collective bargaining laws in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Hawaii, Michigan and a number of other areas.

He was also a leading advocate of effective dispute settlement machinery to settle public sector bargaining problems.

Recognizing the vital link between civil rights and union rights, he led the first of these efforts. In the civil rights movement began in the early 1940s when he was one of the founders of the Congress of Racial Equality. In the 1960s, he and A. Philip Randolph developed the strategy for the cities followed by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in his civil rights campaigns in the South.

In 1968, a small AFSCME local of black garbage collectors in Memphis, Tennessee, struck to protest racial discrimination. Mr. Wurf saw Memphis as a pivotal event in the civil rights movement and committed the entire union to the struggle. The strike ended in success but only after the assassination of one of its strongest supporters, Dr. King.

In Memphis as elsewhere, Mr. Wurf never hesitated to challenge laws and procedures which he considered to be unfair. Chief among these were state laws against strikes by public employee unions. Through open defiance, he made public employee strikes a fact of life in the nation's cities and states. In 1974 he went to jail in Baltimore while personally leading a strike of the city's garbage collectors for better wages and working conditions.

Mr. Wurf was elected to the AFL-CIO's Executive Council in 1969 and served in that post until his death. While AFSCME was often considered a maverick as he championed stands more progressive than the AFL-CIO was prepared to take at the time.

He was a member of the Democratic National Committee, and his union was constantly involved in political campaigns at every level of government in support of liberal causes and candidates.

Mr. Wurf also served on the Executive Board of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. He was a member of the boards of the American Arbitration Association, the Twentieth Century Fund, and the Academy for Contemporary Problems, and was a member of the Visiting Committee on Economic Studies of the Brookings Institution, and of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Earlier this year, he was recipient of a special award from the National Labor Relations Board. He was presented the Twentieth Century Fund's Social Action for his contributions to the labor movement. He was to have received the annual Labor-Human Rights Award of the Jewish Labor Committee at a dinner in his honor on January 7 in New York City.

Mr. Wurf was frequently described in the press as "cantalankerous," or "contentious," and he contended that these were not the right adjectives. But he was also a scholarly reader of poetry, of history, and the writings of Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas. It is perhaps from these that he derived his abiding conviction that personal dignity is an innate human need, an individual's primary defense against the haunting fear of worthlessness. He believed that the labor movement could and should provide dignity.

He once said, "The most important dynamic in our organization is the conferring of dignity on workers, whether they are engineers or trash collectors, whether they're conservative or radical. The be-all and end-all is dignity."

"I see the trade union movement as a vehicle for bringing a measure of equity into the lives of the poor. Our program is to get our fair share. The labor movement can be a force for not just the economic well-being of workers, but for peace, tranquility, and a better tomorrow for all mankind."

AFSCME's International Secretary-Treasurer William Lucy said, "Jerry Wurf was the driving force behind public-sector unionism in this country, first as a regional leader in New York, then as the president of a fledgling union in historic struggles over human and union rights, and finally, as a labor leader respected throughout the free world."

"Jerry fought for his members. He was a tough, pragmatic, and successful advocate for their interests. He brought strength and democracy to AFSCME, and he gave public employees everywhere a greater sense of personal value and influence."

"The members of AFSCME mourn the loss of one of the great leaders of the modern American labor movement."

...a tireless fighter for cause of unionism

ALBANY — The Civil Service Employees Association mourns the death of Jerry Wurf, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), AFL-CIO.

CSEA President William L. McGowan called the death of Jerry Wurf a great loss to the American labor movement, public employee unionism and all lower and middle income Americans.

"Jerry Wurf was a tireless fighter for the cause of public employee unionism," President McGowan said, "but he was also a vocal and determined advocate for all those Americans whose voices are all too often ignored by the leaders of this nation. And it was Jerry Wurf, more than any other individual in AFSCME, who was responsible for the affiliation that finally brought our two great labor unions together.

"Under the leadership of Jerry Wurf, AFSCME increased its membership five-fold at the very time that most unions in this country were trying desperately to stop a decline in membership," McGowan said. "He was a genius in organizing and, having built up AFSCME, he exerted his strength as a member of the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO to make public employees a more active force within that organization."

"But, despite his dedication to his union, he never forgot the poor, the elderly and the millions of other people in this country who have become innocent victims of government retrenchment. When everyone else was just complaining about Reagan's budget cuts, Jerry had the International on television from coast-to-coast blasting administration proposals and warning the American people of what was to come," McGowan said.

"All working men and women in this country should mourn the loss of Jerry Wurf," he said, "but, for those of us in CSEA, our sense of loss is particularly strong because of the role that this man played in making CSEA a part of AFSCME, the AFL-CIO, and the organized labor movement in America."
Training curriculum now available for state agencies

ALBANY — A standardized training curriculum designed to combat and prevent sexual harassment in the workplace has been developed and tested, and is now available for use in state agencies.

Top-level agency executives and union representatives last week attended a briefing by the Center for Women in Government, which designed the curriculum with $65,129 provided by three statewide labor-management committees, including the CSEA-Office of Employee Relations Labor-Management Committee on the Work Environment and Productivity (CWEP).

The training program is a step in carrying out the statewide policy against sexual harassment in the workplace issued last May. That directive called on all Executive Branch department and agency heads to issue a strong ban on sexual harassment, to widely distribute that ban, to conduct appropriate training and to thoroughly investigate charges of sexual harassment while preserving confidentiality of both parties.

"Sexual harassment is not a problem to be taken lightly or swept out of sight," said CSEA President William L. McGowan, who served on an advisory committee which assisted in developing the training program. "It is far too serious a fact of working life for many of our members. Its economic as well as emotional consequences can be devastating.

"That is why we have joined in this effort to combat harassment and have especially welcomed this approach to the problem," McGowan continued.

"We hope that through education, awareness and sensitivity, we will see an atmosphere in which far fewer employees fall victim to this type of harassment.

Meyer S. Frucher, director of OER, had this to say about the training program: "Effective training is essential to sensitize employees at all levels to the nature of sexual harassment discrimination and to eliminate it from the workplace. This training program is an excellent example of the real progress that can result when labor and management join forces to tackle workplace problems."

Nancy Perlman, executive director of the Center for Women in Government, said the center is "encouraged by agency interest in this project and confident most departments will offer the training."

The training material is broken into separate units aimed at four specific groups — managers, supervisors, employee support groups (such as shop stewards and affirmative action officers) and employees.

Each training unit contains basic information, such as a definition of sexual harassment, the legal aspects of the issue, typical harassing behavior, effects on the person being harassed and on the system, and informal and formal strategies that can be used to cope with harassers. Each unit also contains specific information relevant to each group.

Field testing of the training units was conducted at the Wassaic Developmental Center in Dutchess County in September and October.

In addition to CSEA-CWEP, funds for the training program were provided by the OER/Public Employees Federation Labor-Management Committee on Professional Development and Quality of Work Life, and the OER/Council 82 Labor Management Committee on Quality of Working Life.

The Center for Women in Government will offer training directly to agencies for all or part of the program or will train agency trainers. For more information about the program, call (518) 455-6211.

Demotion no answer to employee's alcoholism, arbitrator rules

Principal account clerk keeps job; urged to use Employee Assistance Program

ALBANY — An employee who has been suffering from a drinking problem will not be demoted, if he seeks help from the CSEA Employee Assistance Program, an arbitrator ruled recently.

The state had sought to demote the employee, a principal account clerk in the Department of Law, from his Grade 14 position to a Grade 5. The demotion would mean a cut in pay of about $6,000.

In serving its notice of discipline, the Law Department charged the employee had been late or sick 64 times in less than a year and had shown indiscretion.

CSEA Attorney Richard L. Burstein, who represented the employee in his grievance against the state, argued that the employee's poor attendance resulted from his alcoholism problem.

In her ruling, Arbitrator Susan T. Mackenzie noted the employee had been open about his alcoholism and had received a leave of absence from the department in 1977-78 for treatment.

"It is my conclusion that this disease contributed to and was the root cause of grievant's conduct, on which the department based its disciplinary action," Mackenzie wrote. "I further note that no written warning or other disciplinary action appears in the grievant's record prior to the notice of discipline.

"I am not sure that while the employee was negligent in some of his duties, his conduct did not constitute incompetence. And since his supervisors were aware of his drinking problem, they should have exercised more direct oversight of his work, she said.

Mackenzie also pointed out that the state failed to refer the employee to the Employee Assistance Program, a voluntary and confidential counseling program that grew out of contract negotiations between CSEA and the state.

EAP helps state workers deal with alcoholism as well as with other problems which may jeopardize their job performance, health or family life.

"His supervisors knew the program (EAP) was available, but they never orally or in writing counselled grievant to seek assistance there or elsewhere," the arbitrator wrote.

In learning of the decision in favor of the employee, James Murphy, statewide EAP project director, had this to say:

"I would hope the state management force would learn from this and would help in training state supervisors in the areas of employees' personal problems. Had this been done in the first place, this case never would have gone to arbitration, and everyone — the employee and department and union personnel — would have saved a lot of time, money and wear and tear.

"This is an important victory of us," Murphy continued. "In spite of the fact that management didn't recognize they had a program they could turn to, the arbitrator did recognize the availability and importance of EAP."

"I'm glad management will be forced to play by the rules. We've been fighting tooth and nail to get EAP programs in place all over the state. My message to management is, 'Use EAP — don't just give it lip service.'"

In her decision, Arbitrator Mackenzie cautioned that while alcoholism cannot be used to demote an employee if he is sincere in getting help to overcome the illness, the ruling does not mean an alcoholic employee can never be disciplined or fired.

She said the facts of each case would be reviewed individually, and offered the following criteria to guide arbitrators in future cases:

• Was the condition of alcoholism revealed to the employer before or only after the disciplinary action was taken?
• Had the grievant been subject to progressive discipline?
• Was the grievant on sufficient notice by the employer that his conduct or conduct would result in severe disciplinary action or discharge?
• Did the employer and the union in their contract or by other means provide for rehabilitation efforts by employees?

In the case of the Law Department employee, the arbitrator noted that his attendance record has improved dramatically since participating in EAP. She said the state has the right to review periodically the employee's participation in the program.
A FAULTY VENTILATION SYSTEM at the Onondaga County Civic Center may be responsible for spreading a hepatitis epidemic which has infected upwards of 30 people. The county has no plans for a mass immunization.

SYRACUSE — To a city resident or the casual observer, the impressive-looking Onondaga County Civic Center is a fine tribute to functional architecture. Built to serve the dual role of a modern, multi-theatre complex and headquarters for Onondaga County government, the building has become functional architecture.

A recent outbreak of hepatitis among building staff members and customers of the lower level cafeteria at the Civic Center has been traced to the faulty ventilation in the building. In the case of one employee — a non-smoker with persistent throat and lung problems — the ailments seemed to disappear after vacation periods away from work, but reoccur after returning to the job.

The outbreak of hepatitis followed closely on the heels of numerous complaints of respiratory ailments from county employees who work in the building.

For more than a year, CSEA officers and members of Local 834 have complained to Onondaga County administrators about malfunctions and an inadequate supply of fresh air through the ventilation system in the huge building complex. Several employees have undergone medical attention and were told by personal physicians that their respiratory problems can definitely be traced to the faulty ventilation in the building. In the case of one employee — a non-smoker with persistent throat and lung problems — the ailments seemed to disappear after vacation periods away from work, but reoccur after returning to the job.

According to figures released by the county, between 21 and 30 persons who work in or have recently visited the building, have contracted the disease or showed symptoms of being infected. An Onondaga County official has reported a food service worker in the Civic Center cafeteria might be responsible for the spread of the disease.

As late as December 4, more than three weeks after the initial outbreak of the disease, county officials had no plan for mass immunization of county employees or building visitors who may have been infected. To compound the problem, the New York State Compensation Board has taken the position that no compensation will be awarded to those who missed work — due to infection or suspected infection — because the board did not consider it work-related.

Skaneateles ratifies

SKANEATELES — After ten months of negotiations, members of the Skaneateles Central School Unit of CSEA Local 834 recently ratified a new two-year contract calling for salary increases and other benefits.

According to Roger Kane, CSEA collective bargaining specialist and chief negotiator for the unit which represents more than 100 bus drivers, mechanics, teacher aides, nurses, custodial and food service employees, the new agreement calls for a 9.5 percent salary increase the first year. A COLA clause in the second year guarantees a minimum six percent and maximum of 9.5 percent.

Clerical employees will receive an increase of 10 percent the first year and the COLA clause guarantee in the second year.

Other new contract language includes:
- Individual dental coverage the first year.
- An increase of four to five days required before an employee must present a sickness form from a physician.
- Extra bus driving assignments are to remain the same with seniority rights retained.

In announcing the December 2 ratification, Kane also complimented the bus drivers for their special effort in aiding negotiations.

The drivers wrote to the (Skaneateles) school board outlining problems in the bus garage. In my opinion, their effort was the turning point that enabled negotiations to move toward a successful conclusion," Kane said.

Kane also expressed his appreciation to Warren Snook, unit president, and the members of his negotiations committee for their patience and dedication during the lengthy period of contract talks.

Pact reached in Larchmont

LARCHMONT — Some new and significant benefits have been won for employees of this Westchester County village of 7,000 people.

Unit President Tom Guinon and Field Representative Larry Sparer have succeeded in negotiating a two-year contract which includes:
- First year: First aid program.
- Second year: 5.5 percent salary increase, and a shift differential pay increase to $500 per year.

In the meantime, thousands of employees and visitors continue to use the Civic Center daily with no promise of corrective action.
ALBANY — Day care centers for the children of CSEA members have finally been moved off the drawing board and into implementation as the result of an unprecedented CSEA-State agreement that will provide up to $500,000 in “seed money” to create self-sustaining day care centers for employees at major state work locations.

CSEA President William L. McGowan announced the agreement for the union at a December 7 press conference in Albany with Mayor Erastus Corning II of the governor’s Office of Employee Relations (OER), and the presidents of two other public employee unions representing state workers: John N. Burke of AFSCME District Council 82, and John Kraemer of the Public Employees Federation.

The money, provided by joint labor-management committees funded under collective bargaining agreements, will be used in grants of up to $10,000 each to help employee groups incorporate their day care centers, set up procedures related to operation, buy initial staff and purchase furniture and equipment.

In addition, the state will provide on-site space for the day care centers as well as funds for renovations. The centers will then repay the state for renovation costs over a five-year period.

Each center must meet regular state guidelines that ensure day care centers provide adequate and safe care for children. They will be self-governing and must be self-sustaining, supported by the schedule of fees charged to employees who use the center’s services.

“CSEA has been fighting for years to make quality day care centers available for our members and their families at major state employment centers,” commented President McGowan.

“Hundreds of our members have spent thousands of hours planning and preparing to operate these centers to ease the burdens for parents of young children. It took a great deal of pressure from CSEA and some demonstrations by its members, but we have finally cleared the hurdles and made this promise a reality.”

McGowan, who will appear in a segment of a documentary film on day care, to be aired next year, said employees will be allowed to bring their children to the center and will help eliminate unnecessary absences caused by last-minute problems with day care.

“Another major benefit,” he said, “is the enormous advantage it provides for single parents, who will be freed from much of the madness that currently confronts someone who has to be a single parent and a provider at the same time.”

Employee groups at 11 state work locations have already submitted proposals to create day care centers at their work sites for the children of employees. These are: Albany State Office Campus, Buffalo Psychiatric Center, Central Islip Psychiatric Center, Bronx Developmental Center, Rochester Psychiatric Center, Monroe Developmental Center, O.D. Heck Developmental Center, South Bronx Psychiatric Center, Binghamton Psychiatric Center, Pataki Developmental Center and Wassaic Psychiatric Center. The J.N. Adam Developmental Center plans to improve its program.

Interest in day care centers for state employees grew rapidly following the conclusion of a CSEA-State negotiations in 1979 when the newly-created Committee on Work Environment and Productivity (CWEP) funded a pilot project costing $5,000.

Sponsors at 12 other work locations are in various stages of developing proposals. These are: Albany State Office Campus, Buffalo Psychiatric Center, Central Islip Psychiatric Center, Bronx Developmental Center, Rochester Psychiatric Center, Monroe Developmental Center, O.D. Heck Developmental Center, South Bronx Psychiatric Center, Binghamton Psychiatric Center, Pataki Developmental Center and Wassaic Psychiatric Center. The J.N. Adam Developmental Center plans to improve its program.

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Proud, determined Barbara Butterfield’s become
Another statistic in the budget cut

By Daniel X. Campbell
CSEA Communications Associate

SCHENECTADY — On Solidarity Day she roll-
ed in her wheelchair down the wide streets of
Washington, D.C. at the head of the CSEA con-
tingent, and became a symbol of the public
employee. She is an individual determined to
overcome personal handicaps and to strive for
high goals.

Now, three months later, she is one of the first
victims of Reaganonomic cutbacks in Schenectady
County. Barbara Butterfield slowly climbs a
flight of stairs every Tuesday and limps with
brace-wrapped legs into the Schenectady County
Unemployment Office. She is just another
statistic in the David Stockman budget cut
process.

"I’m proud of my union, of its actions on
behalf of its members at Solidarity Day," the 29-
year-old mother of two says. "CSEA is
honoring me for my medical bills."

Butterfield was born with spina bifida, a con-
genital malformation due to failure of the spinal
canal to close during embryonic development.

"Now, my unemployment check is $75 per week
and most of that goes for my medical
problems," Butterfield explained that recently
she began going to the doctor’s office twice a
week to receive treatment for developing
problems in her left leg. "I have no feelings in
either leg. I develop pressure sores, blisters that
develop into ulcers very quickly. She said that
treatment of the ulcers could take years and
might even require having special braces, which
would not touch the ulcerated area, made. "The
ills are getting high," she sighs.

As far as the future goes, Butterfield is
realistic. "It’s going to get worse. When we were
told that the SETA office was being cut by 60
percent, some of the affected workers with more
seniority were able to find other positions in the
county. But another cut will really hit the people
hard. There are no more places left to go.

Commenting on Reagonomics, Butterfield
laments, "He hasn’t made our life better. He
hasn’t helped my children. His plan is hurting
more and more."

The smile which radiated from Butterfield’s
face on Solidarity Day has faded considerably.
But the determination to pull her own weight
still shines through.

BARBARA BUTTERFIELD was a symbol of
determination in the Solidarity Day march, up-
per right photo, but three short months later she
checks into the New York State Unemployment
Office, above, as another statistic in the federal
budget cut process.

SARATOGA SPRINGS — The need
for a unified negotiating team was
emphasized throughout a day-long
seminar on collective bargaining for
non-teaching school district members
here recently.

More than 50 present and future
negotiating team members assembl-
ed for a series of informative talks,
workshops, role-playing exercises and
films. CSEA Director of Education
Thomas Quimby lead the seminar
with speeches entitled "What goes on
in negotiations," "Why," and "What
works for the benefit of the
negotiating
committee."

After a film on negotiations, Region IV
unit officers participated in an ex-
perimental role-playing skit staged for
the benefit of the audience.

Members who volunteered were
Connie Colangelo of the Schenectady
City School, Norm Fayette of Glens
Falls, Janice Harrington of Stillwater
and Stanley Pelech of Averill Park.

Scuylerville Unit President Mazie
Fort, who was instrumental in
organizing the seminar, participated
along with Quimby. CSEA Coordi-
nator of School District Affairs
Larry Scanlon and Field Represen-
tatives Bill Lochner and Mike White.

"Participants were highly
motivated," Quimby said. "Enthusiastic
response to this program once again indicates
that education and training are very
necessary for building a strong
union."

Earlier, members were split into
groups assigned to list and carry out
what goes on before, during and after
negotiations. Scanlon noted these
sessions were highly productive
because they helped members antici-
pate the tactics of management.

"By all accounts," Scanlon said,
"participants are better equipped to
represent the membership at the
bargaining table."

Mazie Fort was awarded a cer-
ificate of appreciation for her out-
sanding efforts on behalf of school
employees.

Fort, who chaired the Region IV
Non-teaching School Employees Com-
mitee and belonged to the Region IV
PEOPLE Committee, is leaving the
Scuylerville School for a job with an
Albany accounting firm.

Her closing words: "My association
with CSEA has been very beneficial.
All I can say to school district
members is be active. You are the
union."

Unification emphasized for school
negotiators at seminar in Saratoga
A farewell salute to a regional attorney

By Ron Wofford
CSEA Communications Associate
BUFFALO — When Charles R. Sandler retired recently after 32 years as Region VI legal counsel, the "Colonel," as he is affectionately known, was given the equivalent of a 21-gun salute.

Sandler received accolade after accolade by the many who attended his surprise retirement dinner, indicating the esteem in which he is held by CSEA members, leadership, staff and fellow attorneys alike.

"He was the kind of person who would call a cloudy day cloudy. He wouldn't sugar-coat his opinions for anyone."
—Region VI President Robert L. Lattimer

His was a "special kind of relationship" with CSEA, said his wife, Gloria, who announced the establishment of a scholarship in his name. The Charles R. Sandler Scholarship to the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations at Cornell University will go annually to a CSEA member from the region who shows leadership qualities.

Those who praised Sandler's exemplary service to the union spoke not only with respect for his knowledge of the law, but also with appreciation of his humane handling of the legal concerns of union members.

CSEA President William L. McGowan said Sandler was "one of the greatest regional attorneys I've ever known."

Region VI President Robert L. Lattimer said he was "the kind of person who would call a cloudy day cloudy. He wouldn't sugar-coat his opinions for anyone. If all lawyers were as capable and forthright as Charley Sandler, all attorneys would be held in much higher esteem."

CSEA Executive Director Joseph J. Dolan told the attorney that "Western New York will be better off because of your service." and recalled "the many times when the chips were down that you came through for CSEA."

And Executive Vice President Thomas H. McDonough told Sandler "there will always be a job waiting for you if you're too bored with retirement."

CSEA Chief Counsel James Roemer said he "learned a lot from Charley—I learned how to be a labor lawyer." He called Sandler "a model the 20 regional attorneys around the state would do well to emulate, the kind of person who really cares."

Two members who echoed this theme were Amelia Clay of West Seneca Developmental Center Local 427 and Vic Marr, president of Erie County Local 515 health unit. They called Sandler "a real fighter...yet one of the nicest, most humane gentlemen you would ever want to meet."

Thanking Sandler for his "valued guidance," Regional Director Lee Frank presented him with a plaque of appreciation on behalf of his staff.

In expressing his thanks for the tribute accorded him, Sandler said it was "a rare occasion when a lawyer-client relationship concludes on such an upbeat note."

He praised the CSEA field staff, "who take a lot of abuse with little thanks for their effort," and expressed confidence in his successor.

"One of the reasons I feel I can depart now is because I know I am leaving this important task in the very capable hands of my partner, Ron Jaros," he said.
MemberSp busy as Santa’s elves, create Yuletide miracle at Bear

BEAR MOUNTAIN — One of the gifts of the season, as reliable as Santa Claus, is the annual “Christmas Festival” held at the famous old Bear Mountain Inn nestled on the west shore of the Hudson River in the scenic Palisades Mountains.

Come November, the sounds of electric saws and drills, the banging of hammers, the stringing of wires and the soft swoosh of the paint brush turn a miracle. Earnest state workers, who belong to CSEA Local 105, the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, convert a cafeteria into a fantasy world to be visited by more than 100,000 children of all ages. Painter George Vinelette describes them as “kids and grownups who are still kids at heart.”

The festival, whose 1981 theme is “The Fantasies of Christmas,” starts simply enough with a floor plan. “Give them what you want, and that’s it,” says Exhibit Director Connie Hill, referring to the employees who put together the show. She praises them as “very fast workers,” and adds, “They offer lots of suggestions.” Carpenter Joseph Blanchette calls the work a challenge.

Mr. Hill, who for the past five years has come up with both the theme and the design, knows opening day will be on schedule. It always has. Says

ARRANGING CITY FIGURES — Carpenter Tom Kelley, left, and General Mechanic Charles Dunitz put together the figures that appear in a section called “Christmas in the City.”

CASE IN POINT — Carpenter Joseph Blanchette uses the tools of his trade to make special exhibit cases.

A TASTY SIGHT — Field Representative Diane Campion takes a look at “Gingerbread House.”

PUTTING ON PAINT — Painter George Vincette at work.
Mountain
carpenter Tom Kelly with a laugh: "Everybody likes to play with toys." And so, all the pieces fall in place with the intensity of the night before Christmas.
This year, as every year, the festival is a veritable showcase. The Goebel Museum in nearby Tarrytown is putting on an exhibit of Hummel Christmas plates and bells. Camp Yule Log is pitched, and there's a display of soft sculptured children and geese.
A Gingerbread Village, assembled by 12 different families, entertains the idea of togetherness during the holiday season. And, the ever-popular train display is back, right on schedule, along with various animated wonders. Outdoors, a 40-foot evergreen is strung with lights.
All eyes, however, are turned to Santa's House, where he arrived on December 11, and brought with him the children of all ages who put the spark into the miracle of Christmas at Bear Mountain State Park.

Santa's House before...
Here's how the old Bear Mountain Inn looked before Local 105 members arrived on the scene.

...and after
Now it's a warm and enchanting place visitors will certainly delight in.
Our Very Best Holiday Wishes
to those we serve throughout the year...

from the CSEA Headquarters Staff

and

from the Public Sector staff

Page 16 THE PUBLIC SECTOR, Friday, December 18, 1981
Executive Sherwood Boehlert, a spokesman for Envirotech, the California-based firm that had proposed to take over the operation and maintenance of the Part-County Sewer District Wastewater Treatment Plant, has announced the company has withdrawn its proposal.

The private contracting firm has recently come under fire from regional and local officials of CSEA which represents more than 40 employees at the Oneida County facility in Utica.

UTICA — In an official letter to County Executive Sherwood Boehlert, a spokesman for Envirotech, the California-based firm that had proposed to take over the operation and maintenance of the Part-County Sewer District Wastewater Treatment Plant, has announced the company has withdrawn its proposal.

The private contracting firm has recently come under fire from regional and local officials of CSEA which represents more than 40 employees at the Oneida County facility in Utica.

James J. Moore, Regional V president, indicated to area news media that he was “pleased, but not surprised, the private firm pulled out.”

“CSEA was fully prepared to submit a report to the Oneida County Legislature that a take-over by Envirotech would have cost the taxpayers of Oneida County more money than it would to continue county operation of the system,” Moore said.

In a further comment, Moore added, “Naturally, the primary concern of the union was job protection for those CSEA members at the plant. But we were also prepared to show that a private firm take-over was not a sound fiscal move.

“We wish to publicly thank the Utica area news media for their objective coverage of the proposed private take-over from its inception,” Moore continued. “Once all the facts were presented openly to the legislature and the public, a course of action became more defined.”

Two MHTAs reinstated with back pay, benefits

NEW YORK CITY — In separate decisions, arbitrators have cleared two members of Manhattan Psychiatric (MPC) Local 413 of patient abuse charges and ordered them reinstated with full back pay and benefits.

Based on the statements of two MPC patients, Mental Hygiene Therapy Aides Kenneth Braithwaite and Doris Ledgister were charged with abusing a patient in their care. Even though the records of the patient who was allegedly abused show that in the past he has sustained self-inflicted injuries and has been held down while other patients beat him, MPC administration relied solely on the testimony of the two patients in charging Braithwaite and Ms. Ledgister and suspending them without pay.

The courts have ruled that confinement to a mental institution does not automatically render a patient's testimony incompetent. If the state produces a patient as a witness, however, the patient's testimony is to be treated in the same manner as any other witnesses' testimony.

In Ms. Ledgister's case, the arbitrator cited numerous inconsistencies in the testimony of the two patients in clearing Ms. Ledgister, a state employee for 19 years.

The state produced only one of the patient eyewitnesses to testify against Braithwaite. The arbitrator found no inconsistencies in the patient's testimony, but found Braithwaite, a 17-year state employee, “without any prior incident or suggestion of mishandling or neglecting patients,” to be “an honest, hardworking, concerned employee and not the type of individual” to abuse a patient.

MPC Local 413 President Floyd Payne praised the arbitrator's decisions, but expressed his anger over MPC management's zeal in bringing employees up on charges of patient abuse.

“Our members provide excellent care for patients,” he said. “With the chronic understaffing here at Manhattan State, there's no way our members can constantly observe all patients to make sure they don't abuse themselves or each other.”

PILGRIM PSYCHIATRIC CENTER LEADERS INSTALLED

LONG ISLAND REGION I PRESIDENT Danny Donohue, left, installs the leadership of Pilgrim Psychiatric Center Local 418. From left are Clifton Berry, executive committee; Joseph Noya, president; Gus Vasquez, executive committee; Crawford McPhatter, first vice president; Joseph Lind, executive committee; Sylvia Weinstock, second vice president; Oradel Fuchs, treasurer; Bessie LeBalbo, executive committee; Carol Guardiano, secretary; Charles Gubelman, delegate; and Vito Bertini and Joan Joiner, both executive committee.
ALBANY — A direct attack on the right of American workers to strike has been launched in the U.S. Senate, and union members throughout the country are being urged to stage a counter-attack through cards and letters to their members of Congress.

The anti-labor bill is S. 613, known as the Hobbs Act Amendments. The bill would amend the 1940s Hobbs Act so that lawful strikers who do or say anything while picketing that could be interpreted as “violence” or a “threat” would be subject to 20-year prison sentences of fines of up to $250,000 under federal charges.

In contrast, strikebreakers — employers or their agents who engage in the same action or statement or who provoke strikers — would be charged under state or local law with a misdemeanor carrying a maximum sentence of only 30 days.

"The injustice of this bill is clear. This bill is one more in a series of anti-labor moves being generated in Washington," commented CSEA statewide President William L. McGowan. "What else could we expect from an administration that has directed outrageous union-busting actions at our brothers and sisters in PATCO and which has been totally insensitive to the needs of American workers?"

While attending last month's AFL-CIO convention, McGowan and Region IV President Joseph E. McDermott — both International Vice Presidents of AFSCME — heard detailed warnings about the Hobbs Act Amendments from national labor and political leaders. Since then, President McDermott has distributed information on the legislative threat to Region IV officers and political action committee members.

"We have to watch everything that the President and the Congress are doing in relation to unions and worker rights," McDermott stressed. "If this law is passed, one of the strongest weapons in the limited arsenal available to organized labor will be effectively destroyed. We must stop this anti-union legislation in its tracks now."

The Hobbs Act Amendments, sponsored by Republican Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, would put the federal government in the business of policing strikes — but only on the side of employers.

Many national labor leaders point out that the bill would actually encourage violence as a strike-breaking tactic by employers, since strikebreakers who threaten or harm workers would be let off with only light penalties under the law. On the other hand, picketers who engage in "violence" — even though merely defending themselves in management-provoked situations — could face stiff fines and long sentences in federal prison.

"Anti-labor groups such as the National Right-to-Work Committee are hard at work lobbying for passage of this amendment," Regional President McDermott pointed out. "In order to counter their lobbying might, American workers have to speak out in opposition to the gross injustice of this proposed legislation.

"If we don't speak up now by sending our Representatives and Senators a post card or letter today, no one is going to be able to speak up for us down the road when they slap the handcuffs on American workers," McDermott concluded.

"The injustice of this bill is clear. This bill is one more in a series of anti-labor moves being generated in Washington" — CSEA President William L. McGowan

Employers or hired strikebreakers who start a picket line dispute are now liable to get only 30 days in a local jail under present law.

The same penalty now applies to strikers and picketers.

If anti-labor forces have their way, defending yourself from harassment on the picket line could get you 20 years in a federal penitentiary.

Employers or their scabs would still be subject only to less severe local penalties.

That's the plan under S.613, a blatantly anti-worker piece of legislation sponsored by Republican Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina.
MEMBERS IN FANTASYLAND — Local 104 members take a coffee break in Niagara Reservation Park, renamed Niagara’s Fantasyland for the Festival of Lights. Pictured are, from left to right, Ed Olszewski, Jack Finley, Valerie Buttery and Dale Matteson.

Members fancy making fantasy in park for Festival of Lights

NIAGARA FALLS — When the lights went on to begin this city’s first “Festival of Lights,” members of CSEA Local 104 felt especially bright.

The members, employees of the Niagara Frontier State Park and Recreation Commission, helped give a big boost to the festival, an ambitious, community-wide holiday project, by putting their touch on everything from lights to wiring.

Entertainer Pearl Bailey and Niagara Falls Mayor Michael C. O’Laughlin teamed up with Santa Claus to throw a switch, lighting more than 20,000 bulbs across the Niagara Falls Rainbow complex as well as a giant Christmas tree. The ceremony kicked off a lighting extravaganza that will continue every evening from 5:30 to 11:30 p.m. through January 3.

The opening festivities also included a 30-minute fireworks display, which momentarily rivaled the colored lights on every tree in the area of the Convention Center, Lackey Plaza, Rainbow Mall, the Wintergarden, the Prospect State Park entrance and the entire Niagara Reservation State Park.

Preparation work at the park — the oldest state park in the country — began by Local 104 members more than a month before the festival, with Local President Dale Matteson, an electrician, leading a crew that included carpenters, plumbers, masons, maintenance workers and other electricians.

“It was hard work, but a labor of love,” said Matteson as he talked about how his crew installed wiring, hung lights and erected stands for the large panels depicting Christmas and children’s fairy-tale themes, which were illuminated by floodlights.

“A hell of a challenge” is how Matteson described his monumental task of drawing up the electrical layout plans that extended from Niagara Reservation park through the city to the Rainbow Mall.

Don Sweatman, regional park maintenance supervisor, and Mario Pirastu, Niagara Parks regional manager, credited Matteson’s crew with doing “a tremendous job.”

“This will become an annual affair and the groundwork by our crew will allow for even greater growth of the festival in the future,” Sweatman said.

“The entertainment planned for every weekend should make our city an enjoyable place to visit during the holidays,” said Pirastu, noting that the total community undertaking also included efforts from firefighters, local electrician unions, schools, the nearby Air Force base and many others.

Dave Matteson has another way of looking at the project.

“It gives our local a chance,” he says, “to put a little elbow grease behind our wish to everyone, including our fellow CSEA members across the state, for a happy holiday season.”

MESSAGE TO MEMBERS — Wishing fellow CSEA members across the state happy holidays are, from left to right, Harold Stickl, Dale Matteson, and George Husanian.