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Taking the campaign to the people, CSEA strives to improve the state's mental hygiene policies.

Important information for Empire Plan subscribers.

The battle over one-person snowplow safety continues.

Reese elected to Board

ALBANY — Barbara Reese has been elected to the CSEA statewide Board of Directors as its newest member. She will represent the state Health Department. Reese was elected in a special election to fill the vacant seat.

Boncoraglio on council board

NEW YORK — CSEA Region II President George Boncoraglio was recently elected to a three-year term on the New York City Central Labor Council's 28 member Executive Board. Region II's Executive Board voted to join the Central Labor Council to raise CSEA's visibility and participation in New York City labor actions. The Council represents 1.5 million unionized workers in 500 unions.

"While this holiday season looked bleak for so many unemployed and union families alike, it's more important than ever for CSEA to stand united with other workers in fighting back against government policies that favor the wealthy and abandon the working class," Boncoraglio said.

"Involvement in the Central Labor Council strengthens the labor movement where we live and work."

Tax Hotline worker helps caller

ALBANY - A state Tax and Finance Department employee who works on the agency's information hot line was instrumental recently in saving a taxpayer's life by telephone.

During an average year the department's 50 employees answer three million hot line telephone inquiries. After awhile the calls blur and very few stand out.

Kay Keefe, a member of CSEA Tax and Finance Local 690, will always remember one inquiry that began as a normal call for tax information. But the caller said she was going to have a seizure. Keefe heard the phone drop and seconds passed before the voice, disoriented, returned to the line.

"She had told me she was alone. I wondered if she had hurt herself in the fall," Keefe said. "I kept the caller on the line and got her name, phone number and, finally, her address. The caller was a Rochester resident and suffers from epilepsy.

"The Tax and Finance switchboard made a call to Rochester and an ambulance reached the caller, who was treated but did not required hospitalization. She did appreciate the long distance help and later called Keefe to thank her.

"Most people don't like having to call Tax and Finance," Keefe said. "But we really are here to help people."

"Most people don't understand seizures," Keefe said, relating what the caller said. "Most people would ignore a person having a seizure, walk right past them thinking they're on drugs or something. People have to understand more about epileptic seizures."

Helping the woman was not an individual effort, Keefe said.

"Maria Childs contacted the telephone operator in Rochester, and my supervisor, Lois Collins, was involved, as was Jeanne Brady," Keefe said. "We all worked together on this one. I think anyone in the phone bank would handle in the same way. Everyone would have done it."

CSEA Local 690 President Carm Bagnoli praised the efforts of Kay Keefe and her coworkers. "We do have good workers at Tax and Finance, real heroic ones."
Gov. Cuomo’s budget proposal:

It offends everyone

ALBANY — If Gov. Cuomo’s proposed budget stands, New York might as well hang a “going out of business” sign, CSEA President Joe McDermott said. “The Governor’s proposed budget offends everyone.” McDermott said. “If New York were a business, the proposed budget is the equivalent of putting up a sign that says, ‘Going out of business.’”

The $56.4 billion proposal would eliminate 6,200 state jobs, including 3,900 layoffs. It freezes wages for the second year for remaining employees. (See page 22 for cuts affecting local government and school district employees).

“The state workforce has endured more than enough destructive layoffs,” McDermott said. “We cannot be expected to perform properly when we are working forced overtime and understaffed shifts which are leading to increased injuries and devastated morale.

“Buildings are deteriorating, the mentally ill and the mentally disabled are suffering from less care, and no care for those dumped on the streets,” he continued. (See page 5 for cuts affecting Mental Hygiene).

“Local governments and school districts face more cuts and more responsibilities, which will mean they have to raise regressive property taxes,” he noted.

“This is worse than a no-win budget.” McDermott said. “It’s a budget of complete despair. It shows not leadership but cowardice as the state faces problems with an axe rather than with long-term solutions.”

In all his cutting, the Governor did not include $125 million in lagged pay CSEA believes the state will have to repay. A series of court decisions have decided in CSEA’s favor, agreeing that the lag payroll imposed on employees last year was illegal. The state is still appealing, but CSEA is confident it will win the employees’ money for them.

The proposed 1992-93 budget for the fiscal year beginning April 1 comes on the heels of a $838 million deficit in the current fiscal year and predictions of a $4.8 billion hole for 1992-93.

“We are already hard at work fighting this unrealistic proposal,” McDermott said. “It is going to be very difficult, but CSEA is working harder than ever to protect our members.”

Court throws out OCA lag

ALBANY — The state Court of Appeals awarded CSEA a significant victory that offers important protections to the contracts of public employees.

The court ruled that a lag payroll imposed on the state’s court employees in 1991 is unconstitutional because it violates the workers’ contract with the state — even though the contract has expired and a new contract has not been signed.

“This ruling offers us vitally important contract protection,” CSEA President Joe McDermott said. “It reinforces the law which says the terms and conditions of employment cannot be diminished even after a contract expires and before a new contract is in place.

“The state virtually stonewalled contract negotiations, and then had the Legislature pass a law that diminished salary through a lag payroll,” he explained. “This court decision means the state can’t get around the rules for contracts and negotiations by playing word games. Our rights must be taken seriously.”

The employees’ pay was never actually lagged, thanks to an earlier ruling which prevented the state from taking five days' pay until the suit was concluded.

CSEA argued that the law which lagged employees’ pay violated the state’s contract with its employees. Although that contract had expired, state civil service law protects employees’ contractual terms and conditions of employment even when a contract has expired.

CSEA therefore argued that the law violated the federal Constitution, which prevents legislatures from passing laws which violate contracts.

In the decision, Court of Appeals Judge Richard Simons said the civil service law provides that the “terms and conditions of the ‘expired agreement’ shall continue.

“We conclude that the provision extended the contract, thereby affording the plaintiffs protection under the contract clause of the Federal Constitution. To hold otherwise would mean that the State would be bound by the terms of an expired collective bargaining agreement only so long as it wished to be bound.”

The court’s decision bolsters the union’s case now in court over the lag payroll imposed on executive branch employees.

“We’re very, very pleased with this decision,” McDermott said. “It does far more than stop a lag payroll; it strengthens our legal and contractual rights and gives us solid legal ground for the future.”

Court agreement saves jobs

ALBANY — CSEA members laid off from the state court system last year will be going back to work sometime after April 1. Gov. Cuomo and Chief Judge Sol Wachtler, with legislative help, settled a long feud over court funding last month.

The two leaders agreed the system’s budget would remain at $874 million for this fiscal year and next; another $19 million would be added to cover unique costs beyond the court’s control.

Wachtler said the agreement would allow the courts to rehire 471 employees laid off in September.
SUNY New Paltz handles PCB crisis on campus

NEW PALTZ - CSEA members at SUNY New Paltz responded to a PCB emergency during winter break. An automobile accident triggered a transformer fire on campus, and part of the campus had to be closed because of PCB contamination.

The incident occurred during the December holiday break when the campus was practically empty, which was a blessing, College President Alice Chandler said.

About 25 college employees, many of them members of CSEA Local 610, responded to the emergency. All had to be decontaminated by local fire departments before being transported to hospitals to be examined. Workers showed no evidence of exposure to PCBs when tested.

Local 610 President Diane Lucchesi praised college officials for the quick action taken the day of the fire.

"They did all the right things," she said. "I'm very satisfied with the college's response to this emergency."

Following the fire, the state's Office of General Services immediately contacted appropriate agencies to aid in the clean-up. The affected buildings are being tested. Many buildings have already re-opened, although class scheduling for the semester was pushed back two weeks.

Of 50 transformers on the SUNY New Paltz campus, 20 have PCBs, Chandler said. Five are being removed and others are being reviewed, she said. All transformers with PCBs are examined quarterly, she said.

The university system has about 600 PCB transformers statewide.

The SUNY incident cannot be compared with the Binghamton state office building. Chandler said. That has been closed for more than 10 years because of PCB contamination. Smoke contaminated the entire Binghamton building because vents were open. At SUNY, vents were closed for the winter break.

Contamination, considered minimal by experts, was confined. Employees involved in the PCB incident have been advised by college officials to file workers' compensation papers in case of any health problems later in their lives.

He was just 'doing his job'

NEW PALTZ - Joe Braun saved the power house! That's the consensus after the transformer explosion at SUNY New Paltz.

Braun, a stationary engineer and member of CSEA Local 610, said the power went out in the plant when a car hit a power pole in New Paltz. He immediately switched off the power to prevent a damaging power surge when power was restored.

"It's like second nature," Braun said, insisting he was just doing his job.

Explosions rocked the campus as transformers blew because of a power surge, spewing dangerous PCBs. Braun then shut down power in the affected buildings.

"The stationary engineer has to make the decision to shut down the plant," Braun explained. "You have to keep a cool head. You just do your job."

Local 610 President Diane Lucchesi said Braun does not ordinarily work in the plant, but was covering for a sick co-worker. Braun had worked in the plant when he was hired at the college more than eight years ago.

"If it wasn't for Joe, it could have been a lot worse," Lucchesi said. "It could have cost the college a lot more and done much more damage."

At Brooklyn Developmental Center:

Working together to save certification

BROOKLYN - Struggling against long odds, Brooklyn Developmental Center (BDC) CSEA Local 447 members are helping new management retain $25 million in federal funding.

Two recent audits found BDC management so deficient the facility could lose vital federal funds if problems are not immediately corrected.

The audits credited direct care CSEA workers with very good job performance, often under the most stressful conditions. But they cited BDC management with ineptitude and negligence, CSEA Local 447 President Denise Berkley said. The state replaced BDC management with a new team headed by Jan Wheeler, acting director.

Berkley stressed CSEA's commitment to working closely with the new management to save BDC's accreditation.

"Prior to this new team coming in and showing real dedication to our clients, we had six different directors in the last 10 years. This caused a lack of consistent direction and poor communications with the union," Berkley said. "It's no wonder our accreditation was jeopardized and the clients were underserved."

The local hopes the high visibility of the new management combined with regular, substantive meetings with CSEA will improve client services greatly, and save BDC's federal funding.
CSEA's fight for a better mental hygiene system

CSEA is mounting an all-out campaign to improve the state's mental health and mental retardation systems. It's a fight that affects people in every community in the state. CSEA's campaign calls the state's mental hygiene policies "The Shame of All New York" and details what the state's irresponsibility costs in dollars and human terms.

The CSEA offensive is aimed at mobilizing CSEA's mental hygiene workers and the general public to work for improvements.

It opened as OMH and OMRDD got more bad news in Gov. Cuomo's new state budget proposal (see accompanying story). The centerpiece of CSEA's campaign is a brochure that details the state's deficient policies and urges support for a more responsible approach. It is being mailed to all CSEA mental hygiene members and key public policy decision-makers.

CSEA is urging its locals to publicize the deplorable situation in facilities and the inadequacy of community services. The union is providing materials and assistance in this effort. But locals are encouraged to involve their members and communities in activities to draw attention to the problems.

CSEA's campaign also includes a series of radio advertisements airing statewide. "Everyone should be furious about what is happening in the mental hygiene system in this state," said CSEA President Joe McDermott. "What we're seeing is government without a heart or a head, and the situation is getting worse."

McDermott emphasized that CSEA is doing all that it can on the statewide level to protect jobs and maintain services but it will not be easy.

"We cannot succeed without the grassroots efforts of all our locals and members," McDermott said. "New York is abandoning the mentally ill and the state mental health workforce. That puts every one of our OMH members at risk."

CSEA also has serious concerns about commitments to the workforce in OMRDD, he said.

While OMRDD has to date closed developmental centers while successfully transitioning clients and staff into community-based facilities, McDermott said, this approach may become a victim of budget politics.

Don't work alone without getting it in writing

CSEA is reminding mental health direct care workers to take steps to protect yourself when working alone. CSEA developed a form and procedure for members to use when given an assignment without back-up help.

The working alone form is available from your CSEA local office. If you are assigned to work alone, complete the form and have your supervisor sign it. It puts management on notice that you cannot be held accountable for the lack of security. If your supervisor refuses to sign it, note that and sign it yourself.

The procedure also recommends that you call your facility security office and ask them to log in that you are working alone.

After completing your shift, be sure to return a copy of your working alone form to your CSEA local office.

CSEA locals should send the forms to the office of Contract Administration at CSEA Headquarters.

OMH budget plan bashed

In what has become an all-too-familiar routine, OMH and OMRDD take the brunt of state cutbacks once again in Gov. Cuomo's proposed budget.

Unlike the numbers are very sketchy, OMH apparently faces 1,600 layoffs. OMRDD may face up to 360 more layoffs.

And in recent years, the Legislature had made even deeper cuts than the Governor had proposed.

Direct care service to patients, already strained by earlier cuts, cannot stand any further slashing. Services will deteriorate more rapidly and undermine the future of the entire system.

The budget does not call for closing any psychiatric centers this year, but the prospects don't look good for the future.

There are clear signs that several facilities may be closed before long, with Willard, Harlem Valley and Middletown apparently most at risk. Some state lawmakers have proposed converting Willard into a prison, but plans for the alternative use of the other facilities are unclear and CSEA is not taking anything for granted in OMH.

CSEA is also concerned about proposed cuts in funding for new state-operated community-based facilities for the mentally retarded. Delays in their development will limit the availability of needed services and could increase the state's temptation to privatize services.
Empire Plan's new Mental Health, Substance Abuse Program

Introducing APM & the Empire Plan's new Mental Health & Substance Abuse Program 1-800-446-3995

BETTER BENEFITS BEGIN FEBRUARY 1, 1992

Beginning February 1, 1992, your benefits for mental health and substance abuse services are changing to provide more benefits, better care and reduced costs. This redesigned program, called American PsychManagement (APM), will make it easier for you to choose and receive mental health and substance abuse care. APM is providing its services to you, your enrolled spouse and other enrolled dependents. You and your family need to follow the requirements for mental health or substance abuse care whenever you will be seeking Empire Plan coverage for these services.

Program requirements apply nationwide, regardless of where you or your family seek mental health and substance abuse services.

You Must Make the Call

Before seeking care for mental health and substance abuse problems, call APM. If you don't call APM, you may receive a significantly lower level of benefits.

When you call APM, you decide on the best steps to take for treatment.

APM gives you & your family:

- Reduced out-of-pocket expenses - you can get the recommended care without worrying about the bill. Except for any copayments, the bill is paid when you use the network, and there are no claim forms.
- Confident help - no one needs to know you're making the call.
- 24-hour help, 365 days a year.
- Better mental health and substance abuse benefits when you call APM and obtain care from a recommended provider.
- Up to three outpatient visits without a copayment for intervention following a suicide or severe mental illness crisis, when you use APM.
- Access to an extensive network of quality practitioners in your area carefully chosen for their training and experience. Many providers who have been helping Empire Plan enrollees and their families for years are in APM's network.
- Help in choosing the right provider. You don't have to guess which professional can help you.

Better Benefits When You Use APM

Your new Empire Plan mental health and substance abuse program has two levels of benefits. Network Coverage gives you the highest level of benefits.

Under Network Coverage, you do not have to meet an annual deductible. You have modest copayments for outpatient treatment. And, there is no limit on the number of covered visits for medically necessary treatments.

You qualify for Network Coverage when:

- You call APM before your treatment begins, and
- You are treated by a provider APM recommends.

Usually, you will be referred to a network provider or facility. However, you will still qualify for Network Coverage if APM refers you to a non-network provider or facility.

Network Providers

APM's network gives you access to a wide range of specialists and facilities when you need mental health or substance abuse care.

Whenever possible, you will be referred to a provider who is no more than 30 minutes from your home. These providers are in your community and many of them have been caring for Empire Plan enrollees and their families for years.

Providers in the network were selected for their training and experience to meet the needs of Empire Plan enrollees and their families. These providers have been carefully screened and their performance will be continually monitored by APM.

APM's providers are available nationwide. At this time, there are over 14,000 providers in the network. APM is growing daily to meet the needs of Empire Plan enrollees and family members.

The network is made up of health care providers who, as independent contractors, sign agreements with APM and agree to provide their services at preferred rates, called the network allowance. These providers are not employees or agents of MetLife or American PsychManagement.

Who's in the network? Psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, psychiatric nurses/clinical specialists and certified social workers. All of these providers are licensed to practice independently.

What type of facilities? Hospitals, rehabilitation centers and alternative inpatient facilities such as day/night centers, halfway houses and treatment centers for dually diagnosed individuals. APM developed and continues to develop its network based on a comprehensive analysis of practitioners and facilities that currently provide care to Empire Plan enrollees.

If you or a member of your family currently receives mental health or substance abuse care, during the February 1, 1992-April 30, 1992, transition period you may continue to receive benefits either from APM or your current (non-APM) provider, as long as you call APM and follow the recommendations, you will receive the network level of benefits.

If a covered provider wants to join the network? APM invites you and your provider to request information about how to join the network by writing to: American PsychManagement, Inc. Provider Relations Suite 200, 433 River Street Troy, NY 12180

APM will send your provider the materials needed to join the network and follow-up once these materials are returned.

Inpatient Benefits When You Don't Call APM. You Don't Use a Recommended Provider

There are limited benefits available for medically necessary care when you don't call APM or use a recommended provider. If you need care that you have received outside the APM network is medically necessary, you will receive non-network coverage. You will PAY FOR A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE COST. This description of your benefits is an example of the largest deductible, and you will pay a major part of the provider's or facility's charges. Before you choose a non-network provider, consider the high cost of treatment. For inpatient care or crises, unless medically necessary, you will not receive any Empire Plan benefits, and you will be responsible for the full cost of care.

To be certain that your care is medically necessary, when you choose to use a non-network provider, you must call APM as follows:

For Inpatient Admission to Non-Network Facilities: You must precertify your inpatient treatment by calling APM.

For Outpatient Treatment by Non-Network Providers: For all outpatient care beyond 10 visits, you must call APM before the sixth visit for authorization.

Throughout treatment, APM professionals review and approve care to make sure it is consistent with your medical needs. At all times, APM holds information in strictest confidence.

Copayments, Claims and Appeals

When you or a family member goes to a network provider, you will pay for your share of the cost when you receive the service. You do not have to complete any claim forms. Your provider will complete and submit the claims directly to MetLife.

If your visit to a network provider qualifies as a crisis intervention visit, there is no copayment. The provider will be paid in full by MetLife for up to three visits. If you see a non-network provider, you will pay charges in full and seek reimbursement from MetLife for those services that are covered and determined to be medically necessary.

For non-network outpatient services incurred on or after February 1, 1992, you should continue to use MetLife non-participating provider claim forms. Call MetLife customer service at 1-800-542-4604 (Outside New York State call 1-800-431-4313) and ask for an Empire Plan's new mental health/substance abuse claims form. To MetLife, P.O. Box 1007, Kingston, New York 12404.

Either you or your provider can appeal denial of treatment. To request an appeal, call APM at 1-800-446-3995 and ask for levels of appeal. If your first appeal in denied, you may request a second appeal.

If you or a member of your family currently receives mental health or substance abuse care, during the February 1, 1992-April 30, 1992, transition period you may continue to receive benefits either from APM or your current (non-APM) provider, as long as you call APM and follow the recommendations, you will receive the network level of benefits.

Inpatient treatment: If you or a covered family member is hospitalized for mental health or substance abuse care on January 31, 1992, and continue to be hospitalized on February 1, 1992, you will continue to receive benefits under the previous Empire Plan provisions (in effect prior to February 1, 1992) until discharged from the hospital or until Benefits After Termination are exhausted as explained in your Empire Plan certificate. All treatment rendered after discharge from the hospital or after Benefits After Termination are exhausted, will be provided through the APM program described in this report.

Outpatient treatment: If you or a covered family member has received outpatient mental health or substance abuse treatment from a non-network provider at any time between November 1, 1991 and January 31, 1992, you may continue to receive treatment and receive benefits from APM at the previous Empire Plan level (in effect prior to February 1, 1992) until April 30, 1992. If you need more than 10 visits between February 1 and April 30, 1992, you must call APM for prior authorization after your fifth visit, or as soon thereafter as possible. No benefits will be paid for more than 10 visits without prior authorization.

If you or a member of your family choose to use a non-network provider during the February 1, 1992-April 30, 1992 transition period you will receive the network level of benefits. If you continue to use a non-network provider, you will receive non-network benefits. From May 1, 1992, the more comprehensive network benefits will replace the prior plan benefits at that time.

File your outpatient claims quickly - this will tell APM you're eligible for transition benefits: If you receive mental health or substance abuse care between November 1, 1991 and January 31, 1992, file your claim for benefits before February 1, 1992. If you cannot file, call APM on or after February 1, 1992.

When you Must Make the Call

1. Call APM at 1-800-446-3995 at any time you or covered family members need help for a mental health or substance abuse problem, 24 hours a day. Your call will be answered by a mental health professional who will ask you some questions in order to direct you to an appropriate provider. Be sure to call APM before treatment begins.

2. For non-emergency inpatient or outpatient treatment, call APM. APM will give you the name, address and phone number of a provider near you who is a member of APM's network of providers. If you live in an area where APM does not have a network provider, you can still receive full benefits if you call APM. APM will also recommend a provider, as long as within 48 hours.

3. In an emergency. APM will either arrange for a network psychiatrist to call back within 30 minutes or direct you to an appropriate facility for immediate care.

In a life threatening situation proceed to the nearest emergency room. Then, you must call APM within 48 hours.

If you or a member of your family call a non-network provider for mental health or substance abuse care, 24 hours a day. Your call will be answered by a mental health professional who will ask you some questions in order to direct you to a network provider. Be sure to call APM before treatment begins.

To be certain that your care is medically necessary, when you choose to use a non-network provider, you must call APM as follows:

For Inpatient admission to non-network facilities: You must precertify your inpatient treatment by calling APM.

For outpatient treatment by non-network providers: For all outpatient care beyond 10 visits, you must call APM before the sixth visit for authorization.
CSEA has formally charged the state Department of Transportation (DOT) with violating a series of safety standards in implementing its dangerous one-person snow plowing program.

CSEA filed a Public Employee Safety and Health (PESH) complaint that DOT's one-person plow plan violates safety standards for safe operation of equipment.

While there are no specific safety and health standards for snow plowing, CSEA's PESH complaint cites standards for the safe operation of equipment which the union believes should apply to the plows.

The DOT program has sparked controversy and criticism across the state. CSEA first detailed its objections in a brochure, *A Real Snow Job*, which has received widespread media coverage.

CSEA points out that DOT does not conform to the manufacturer of either the vehicle or plow equipment:

* The diminished visibility and increased operating requirements that single drivers have in operating the two-person plow equipment violates federal motor carrier safety regulations. Under those regulations, vehicles are not to be operated when the driver's view is obscured or if the operator cannot handle the vehicle safely, including easy access to accessories required for emergencies; and

* DOT's change from an operating policy that had prohibited operators from backing up without warning devices or a spotter to this plan violates safety standards.

CSEA has also charged that DOT's training procedures for one-person plowing are inadequate and fail to meet appropriate safety and health requirements.

CSEA charges in its PESH complaint that:

* DOT's modification of the plow equipment does not conform to regulations that modification of vehicles and related equipment should be designed or approved by the manufacturer of either the vehicle or plow equipment;

The DOT originally claimed it would save about $2.5 million from the change, but the union questions whether it will save any money at all. DOT originally projected using one-person plows on 90 percent of the roads they cover, but have since scaled back to 50 percent. DOT is also offering premium pay to buy the silence of drivers assigned to solo on the trucks.

When the cost of modifying the trucks and employee training is added, DOT's claim of savings is ludicrous, especially with an increased likelihood of damage to property, equipment and people.

"Common sense should be enough to apply in a situation like this," said Jim Corcoran, CSEA director of occupational safety and health. "It's simply nonsense to make the kinds of changes DOT has made in the way that DOT has made them and then turn around and say they have no adverse effect on safety."

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* DOT's change from an operating policy that had prohibited operators from backing up without warning devices or a spotter to this plan violates safety standards.

CSEA has also charged that DOT's training procedures for one-person plowing are inadequate and fail to meet appropriate safety and health requirements.

CSEA, which filed its charges in the state Department of Labor's Syracuse PESH office, has asked that inspections be carried out in actual working conditions during a snowstorm.

"I think it stinks!"
-- Gary Price, CSEA Local 521 member

"They asked people who haven't driven in 15 years to drive. Training was held in ideal weather but it's a different story when it's dark, slippery and snowing heavily."
-- George Kelley, president, CSEA State DOT Local 521

"It's hairy out there. The problem is with the public. When the weather gets bad, their brains get soggy and they try to crowd you."
-- DOT driver, anonymous
Another despicable attack on civil service

The state's civil service system is being assaulted once again by a familiar group — high-level management executives of the state's private sector business and industry.

"It's an appalling, thinly disguised plot to strip away the rights and dignity of workers and give management dictatorial powers," CSEA President Joe McDermott said. "They would bring back the same evils that the civil service system was created to protect workers against in the first place."

The business executives claim the civil service system makes it too difficult for management to run governments the way they want to and that there is no longer any need for public employees to be protected by a civil service system anyway.

The proposal to radically change or abolish the state's civil service system is contained in a report prepared by the Business Council of New York State, the lobbying organization for executives.

"It all boils down to this," McDermott said. "Private sector management wants to remove civil service protection from public sector workers, thereby creating a huge patronage cesspool. Public sector management could then do anything it wants to the workers, including firing them without cause and with impunity. That would create a huge pool of highly-skilled workers that private industry could exploit with low pay and poor benefits. That would help boost profits, at the expense of the workers. And that's how the Business Council proposes to end the recession. Ridiculous!"

A message from CSEA President Joe McDermott

I don't know who the hell the Business Council of New York State thinks it is, but I'll tell you what I think it is. It's one of the most anti-union groups around and one of the best reasons I've ever seen why workers should be unionized.

The Business Council is mostly concerned about corporations and profit margins as reflected by the business moguls and management executives it represents. It's no coincidence that many Business Council members operate non-union businesses and exploit their employees by paying low wages and inadequate benefits.

The Business Council's proposal to radically change or even abolish the state's civil service system is absurd and dangerous.

The purpose for CSEA's existence is clearly spelled out in the union's Constitution:

"This Association is organized and exists to promote the organization of workers in general and public employees in particular, to represent its members with respect to all terms and conditions of employment, to uphold and extend the principles of merit and fitness in public employment, to maintain and promote efficiency in public service..."

I intend to do whatever is necessary to meet our constitutional objectives. When then-New York City Mayor Ed Koch, one of the most powerful politicians in America, tried to eliminate the civil service system to suit his political agenda, we met the challenge and defeated his proposal. I promise you we will do the same to the Business Council's latest assault on civil service.

The Business Council fat cats have this terribly misguided concept that private industry driven by profit motives can solve all the fiscal ills of the world. If they had their way, they would turn everything over to the likes of Frank Lorenzo, Carl Icahn and all the other discredited captains of industry. We must never let anything like that happen.

The Business Council is clearly driven by its greed to create a huge patronage pool of unprotected, highly-skilled workers that they could exploit with low wages and little or no benefits.

But labor unions and civil service law stand in the way. The Business Council's latest plan is nothing more than an brazen attempt to weaken or eliminate both. It will not succeed.
Donohue named chair of AFSCME committee to study Northern Ireland

CSEA Executive Vice President Danny Donohue has been appointed chair of an AFSCME committee to study the political, economic, religious and labor situation in Northern Ireland. Donohue was named committee chair by AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee. The AFSCME International Executive Board approved formation of the committee so union members can be better informed and educated about the situation in Northern Ireland. The committee will also recommend ways in which organized labor can contribute to resolving the Northern Ireland crisis. Donohue is one of three CSEA officers on AFSCME’s International Executive Board. Others are CSEA President Joe McDermott and CSEA Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio.

Local 615 sets up fund to help member’s family

SYRACUSE — CSEA Local 615 members working at the SUNY Health Science in Syracuse have reached out to help one of their own, and could use help from other CSEA members.

The local recently established a fund to help member Larry Smith, a painter at the center for 27 years, and his wife, Beverly, a former center employee, who recently had her second liver transplant.

While Beverly Smith is doing well since her surgery in November, her husband said her recovery is taking longer than before and he doesn’t know when she will be able to come home.

The local established the fund to help support the Smiths, who have drained most of their savings to pay for Beverly Smith’s medical care and transportation back and forth to the hospital in Boston.

Local 615 President Bob Vincent said, although insurance is paying for most of Beverly Smith’s care, Larry Smith said, they have had to pay many extra expenses. They are very grateful to the local for its efforts to help, he said.

“IT’s tough. We’ve used all our savings and everything,” Smith said. “It costs at least $850 for gas and tolls for each trip to Boston. I’ve made more than 20 trips so far and put more than 40,000 miles on the car since last March.”

The local has raised more than $300 for the fund. CSEA members who want to help can send contributions made payable to the fund to:

Larry Smith Liver Fund
c/o Ed Owens
4674 Beef Street
Syracuse, NY 13215

February 1992
Organized labor lining up behind
Clinton for President

The bandwagon that many labor leaders hope will carry Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton to the Democratic nomination for President and ultimately to the White House in the November general election gained a huge burst of momentum recently.

AFSCME, CSEA's 1.2 million-member international union, announced that Clinton will get the bulk of the union's support in his quest for the Democratic presidential nomination. "The same day, according to the Associated Press, the 660,000-member American Federation of Teachers also announced it is backing Clinton's candidacy."

Impressive
AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee said Clinton emerged as the leading Democratic candidate following a meeting of the AFSCME Executive Board in January. Although AFSCME did not make a formal endorsement, McEntee said the Executive Board members were "impressed" by Clinton's qualifications and that he has the support of the majority of them.

"Electability really did come through loud and clear," McEntee said.

"Bill Clinton has that quality and the AFSCME Executive Board members recognized it," said CSEA President Joe McDermott, one of three CSEA officials on AFSCME's Executive Board.

"There is widespread support for Bill Clinton on the Executive Board and I am sure that when the time comes for AFSCME to formally endorse a candidate, Bill Clinton will be our official candidate," McDermott said.

"All working Americans have suffered in George Bush's recession. We need to elect a President in November who truly cares about working people. I believe Bill Clinton is that person," McDermott added. The backing by AFSCME and AFT provides a big surge for Clinton in his quest to win the support of the AFL-CIO, which has a complex endorsement procedure which prevents it from considering an endorsement until a majority of member unions unite behind a candidate.

Many seeking to become Clinton delegates

Petitions are being circulated for at least 18 CSEA members seeking to become delegates (or alternates) to the Democratic National Convention pledged to support presidential candidate Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton.

"Once their petitions have the required number of signatures, the delegates will be on Clinton slates on ballots in the April 7 New York primary. CSEA/AFSCME hopes to have about 35 members as Clinton delegates at the convention in New York City, which would be about one-quarter the state's delegates. In fact, the union has more delegates on Clinton slates on ballots in the April 7 New York primary."

In order to vote for CSEA/AFSCME delegates in the primary, voters must first select Clinton, then vote for the number of delegates allowed. A formula that allows for distribution of delegates among the highest vote-getting male and female delegates will determine who attends the convention.

The full list of CSEA/AFSCME Clinton delegates will appear in March's The Public Sector. Below is a list of CSEA members now circulating petitions to be Clinton delegates to the Democratic National Convention as they have been announced so far.

1st Congressional District:
Kenneth F. Cavanaugh of Bethpage

2nd Congressional District:
Robert Leibowitz of Monsey

3rd Congressional District:
Leslie V. Eason of Uniondale (alternate)

4th Congressional District:
Daniel F. Donohue of Clifton Park

5th Congressional District:
Mary K. Saxon of North Tonawanda

6th Congressional District:
Betty Jo Johnson of Oneida

7th Congressional District:
John Anthony Paeno of Oswego

8th Congressional District:
Robert L. Leonard of Springwater

9th Congressional District:
Francine A. Turner of Skaneateles (alternate)

10th Congressional District:
Leslie V. Eason of Uniondale (alternate)

11th Congressional District:
Karen A. Barlow of Cortland

12th Congressional District:
Marietta Small of Brooklyn

13th Congressional District:
Ricky D. Noreault of Syracuse

14th Congressional District:
Thomas D. McNabb of Auburn

15th Congressional District:
Robert L. Leonard of Springwater

16th Congressional District:
Gary A. Zuckerman of Saratoga

17th Congressional District:
Betty Jo Johnson of Oneida

18th Congressional District:
Mary K. Saxon of North Tonawanda

19th Congressional District:
John Anthony Paeno of Oswego

20th Congressional District:
Ann M. Gorman of Albany

21st Congressional District:
Mary K. Saxon of North Tonawanda

22nd Congressional District:
Kenneth Leibowitz of Manorville

23rd Congressional District:
Rebecca A. Lawson of Albany

24th Congressional District:
Daniel F. Donohue of Clifton Park

25th Congressional District:
Betty Jo Johnson of Oneida

26th Congressional District:
Francine A. Turner of Skaneateles (alternate)

27th Congressional District:
Ricky D. Noreault of Syracuse

28th Congressional District:
Theron Joseph VanDyke of Port Ewen (alternate)

29th Congressional District:
Thomas D. McNabb of Auburn

30th Congressional District:
John Anthony Paeno of Oswego

31st Congressional District:
Robert L. Leonard of Springwater

32nd Congressional District:
Mary K. Saxon of North Tonawanda

"Here in New York we need to rally behind Bill Clinton and help him win the New York Democratic primary on April 7," McDermott said. "A big win in New York would follow what I think will be a series of Clinton victories in earlier primaries and caucuses and propel Bill Clinton to the nomination."
1992 CSEA Legislative Package

Fighting for budget fairness, against contracting out and for the members

CSEA's biggest priority of the 1992 legislative session will be fighting for adequate spending and revenue in the 1992-93 budget.

"We're in our third year of disastrous state budget cuts that have seriously damaged state services and placed unfair burdens on local governments and school districts," CSEA President Joe McDermott said. "CSEA is already fighting for a fair tax system that will raise the revenues New York needs to provide vital services and funding."

CSEA, along with the Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI) will continue to press the state Legislature to raise taxes on the wealthiest New Yorkers and close loopholes that allow large corporations to escape paying taxes. The union will also work to see a wide-range of laws passed that will affect CSEA members.

With new lobbyist Tom Hartnett leading the effort, McDermott said, CSEA will work to put important restrictions on privatization and contracting out, secure important protections for retirees and school employees and succeed in other areas important to CSEA members.

Privatization and Contracting Out: CSEA wrote this bill to ensure that all levels of government in the state follow strict standards before they can contract out or privatize service. The law would require governments to prove the privatization/contracting out would save money; the state would also establish a Privatization Advisory Board, including public employee representation, to ensure compliance with the law.

Retiree Issues
Pension Supplementation and Permanent Cost of Living Adjustments: To help retired public employees who are struggling with inflation on fixed incomes, this bill would extend pension supplementation benefits to former employees who retired before 1985, increase the percentages and increase the base pension amount and provide an annual cost-of-living adjustment to pensions of retired public employees.

Board of Trustees: This bill would allow public employees to have some say in how their Employee Retirement System Fund is invested and administered by creating a Board of Trustees that includes public employee representation.

Health Insurance for Retirees: This bill would prohibit the state and municipalities from reducing retiree health benefits.

Workplace Issues
Agency Shop: The state Legislature must periodically renew agency shop for state employees, and in localities and school districts, agency shop is optional. This law would make agency shop permanent for state and local governments and school districts.

VDT Safety: This bill would required public employers to provide minimum safeguards and protections for all video display terminal (VDT) operators.

Family and Medical Leave: This bill would offer unpaid, job-guaranteed time off for births and adoptions and to deal with serious medical problems of family members.

School District Issues
Unemployment Insurance for School Employees: CSEA/AFSCME worked hard in Congress for a law which allows states the option of offering non-teaching school employees to receive unemployment insurance between academic years. Now CSEA is working to get New York to allow those employees to receive unemployment insurance.

Contingency Budgets: This bill would allow districts to adopt contingency budgets without voter approval and clarifies the responsibilities of the school boards and district voters.

CSEA's Political Action Department is hard at work pushing for legislation that will help CSEA members.

But CSEA members themselves, on the job every day plowing roads, caring for the mentally ill, serving school lunches, working in county office buildings can have a more direct idea of what laws are needed to make their jobs and communities safer, happier and more productive.

That's why CSEA wants to listen to what laws you think need to be written to make your job safer, your service better and your life a little easier.

So if you have an idea for a law that might help you, fill out this coupon and send it to:

CSEA Political Action Department
143 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12210

'There ought to be a law ...'

Name: ________________________
Address: ________________________
CSEA Local: ________________________

"There ought to be a law

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February 1992

11
SYRACUSE - When CSEA Onondaga County Local 834 member Emma Johnston came to Syracuse in 1959, she was immediately thrust into the local civil rights movement when she looked for a home in the city she calls “one of the most prejudiced areas” she had ever seen.

When she and her family tried to move from their roaming house, several landlords said they didn’t rent to “colored” people. Instead of moving into strictly “black neighborhoods,” Johnston fought back. She went to the state Housing Discrimination Board and got an apartment in the area she wanted.

Since then, Johnston, a home economist assistant with the county Adult and Family Services Department for 12 years, has been actively involved in Syracuse’s black community, and through her volunteer work has helped to reduce prejudices she first encountered years ago.

“I enjoy working with people,” she said. “I think if I had to do something else, I wouldn’t be happy. I like to face problems and do things for people, but I’m also doing it for myself.”

Many of the problems she has faced for others through her volunteer work have their roots in discrimination. She has long fought against housing and job discrimination and worked on other minority issues such as police brutality and educational and social opportunities for minority youths and adults.

She is proud of being involved in the Crusade for Opportunity, a local organization setup with money from the federal Office of Economic Opportunity in the 1960s. One project she worked on helped establish the first Head Start program in Syracuse, providing school breakfasts for area students.

Her proudest accomplishment, however, came in 1988, when she single-handedly organized a protest march to convince Onondaga County management to officially recognize the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a paid holiday.

She is a former vice-president and treasurer of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and is now chair of Community development. She is a former president and current board member of the People’s Equal Action Community Effort (PEACE) Inc. and is chair and Onondaga County’s liaison with the Southeast Community PEACE Center.

Johnston is also secretary for the executive board of the Syracuse Community Health Center, president of the Modern Neighborhood Facilities (SNF) Community Center, a member of the National Council of Negro Women, the American Businesswomen’s Association, the Onondaga County Urban League and the City of Syracuse’s Task Force on Community and Police Relations. She is active in local politics, having run for the county legislature twice.

In 1982, she received a community service award from PEACE Inc.; in 1985 she was named “Woman of the Year” by the local American Businesswomen’s Association; and in 1986, she received a community service award from the Syracuse Community Health Center and the NAACP’s Freedom Award.
Did you work during 1991—and did your family earn less than $21,250? Did a child live with you for at least half the year? If so, you may be eligible for up to $2,000 from the Earned Income Credit. It’s a federal benefit for both married and single parents. Getting your Earned Income Credit takes just two simple steps:

1. File a federal income tax return (Form 1040 or 1040A). You can get the Earned Income Credit even if you don’t owe income tax.

2. Fill out “Schedule EIC” and attach it to your tax return. If you’re eligible, you’ll either owe less in taxes—or the government will mail you a check!

There’s another way to get your Earned Income Credit: your employer can add it to your paycheck during the year.

For more information, call the IRS toll-free at 1-800-829-1040.

Deadline near for submitting Empire Plan major medical claims

All 1991 Empire Plan Major Medical claims must be submitted before April 1, 1992, to:

Metropolitan Life Insurance Company
CPO Box 1600
Kingston, N.Y. 12402-0600.

Major Medical claim forms may be obtained from your agency’s personnel/business office or from Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Please be certain to have your doctor or other provider fill in all the information asked for on the claim form and sign it. If the claim form is not filled out by the provider, all bills submitted must include all the information asked for on the claim form. Missing information will delay the processing of your claim.

Should you have any questions concerning your claim, you may call the following toll-free number at Metropolitan:

(Within New York state) - 1-800-942-4640
(Outside New York state) - 1-800-431-4312

Don’t put your finances on thin ice...

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds. They are safe, backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government. Bonds earn a guaranteed minimum rate or better in any economic climate and can be replaced if lost, stolen or destroyed. Ask about them where you bank or work.
CSEA over the airwaves

Hundreds of CSEA local and unit election committee members across the state took advantage of CSEA's teleconference training last month.

To help locals and units prepare for elections this spring, CSEA set up training sites across the state, connected via huge television screens and toll-free numbers with a central panel of trainers in Albany.

"Everyone got their training at the same time and had the chance to get questions answered," statewide Secretary Irene Carr said. "Now they're ready for the very important job of elections."

CSEA STATEWIDE SECRETARY IRENE CARR talks with Beverly Hamecher of Local 811 during the teleconference training.

ON THE BIG SCREEN, CSEA Education and Training Specialist Connie Wunderlich conducts part of the teleconference training.

THE PANEL which conducted the teleconference training included, from left, Standing Election Committee chair Delores Iacobelli, CSEA Education and Training Specialist Connie Wunderlich, CSEA Attorney Robert DeCataldo, CSEA Communications Associate Ron Wofiford and Elections Committee Coordinator Marcel Gardner.

How to request political, ideological refund on dues

CSEA members who object to the appropriation of a portion of their dues for political or ideological purposes unrelated to collective bargaining can obtain a rebate.

How to request refund from CSEA

The CSEA political refund amounts to 3 percent of the dues collected in 1991.

Under the union's rebate procedure, individual refund requests must be submitted in writing by certified or registered mail addressed to:

CSEA Treasurer
Civil Service Employees Association
143 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12210

CSEA refund requests will only be accepted during the month of March.

Individual requests only must be submitted; lists of members are not acceptable.

Each request for reimbursement must be typed or legibly printed and include the individual's name, home address, Social Security number and CSEA local number. The request must be signed by the member.

How to request refund from AFSCME

Members who object to AFSCME, CSEA's international union, expending a portion of their dues for partisan political or ideological purposes may also request a refund from AFSCME.

Under AFSCME's rebate procedure, reimbursement requests must be made individually in writing between April 1 and April 16. Requests must be typed or legibly printed and include the member's name, Social Security number, home address, AFSCME local and council number.

The individual request must be signed by the member and sent by registered or certified mail by the member to:

International Secretary-Treasurer
AFSCME International Headquarters
1625 L Street NW
Washington, DC 20036

The International secretary-treasurer calculates the per capita payment equivalent that was used for partisan political or ideological purposes during the fiscal year and refunds that amount.

Requests to CSEA and /or AFSCME must be renewed in writing every year.
It's February and that means it's time for working people to find out just how safe their workplace is.

By law, all employers are required to post the DOSH-900 form in a conspicuous place throughout the month.

The DOSH-900 form is the annual log of all occupational injury and illness sustained in the workplace during the previous year. It is an invaluable source of information about safety and health.

Check your safety records:

It's DOSH-900 time again

Nominating sites listed for AFSCME Delegates

Region meetings to nominate CSEA delegates to the 1992 AFSCME Convention will take place Feb. 29.

CSEA members will meet beginning at 11 a.m. at the sites listed below. The AFSCME Convention will be June 15 to 19 in Las Vegas, Nev.

Delegates will be elected on a regional basis. Each CSEA region will elect the number of delegates to which it is entitled based on the basis of membership strength in accordance with AFSCME and CSEA Constitutions.

Nominating procedures

Any member in good standing as of Feb. 1, 1992, is entitled to be nominated as a delegate to the AFSCME Convention. Any member in good standing as of Feb. 29, 1992, is eligible to nominate delegates to the convention.

Nominations will be made at the region meetings beginning at 11 a.m. The meetings will continue until all those present who want to make nominations have been given the opportunity to do so.

Those nominated to serve as delegates from a region must be members of that region and be nominated by region members.

Nominees do not have to be at the nominating meetings.

Any qualified CSEA member may nominate as many candidates for delegates as he or she wishes to represent. Not more than 450 signatures are required.

In the Local Government Division, a candidate needs petitions signed by at least 10 percent of eligible voters in the department or agency by which he or she wishes to represent. Not more than 450 signatures are required.

Any candidate who is a member of a competing labor organization cannot be serving a penalty imposed by the CSEA Judicial Board.

In the State Division, a candidate needs petitions signed by at least 10 percent of eligible voters in the department or agency he or she wishes to represent. Not more than 450 signatures are required.

In the Federal Division, a candidate needs signatures signed by at least 10 percent of eligible voters in the department or agency by which he or she wishes to represent. Not more than 450 signatures are required.

In the Local Government Division, a candidate needs petitions signed by at least 10 percent of eligible voters in the department or agency by which he or she wishes to represent. Not more than 450 signatures are required.

Educational locals which share a particular designation. Candidates nominated by slate will appear on the ballot in the order in which they are nominated.

Those who make multiple nominations must state whether the nominations are made individually or by slate.

The ballot will allow candidates who are on a slate to be elected individually, separate from the slate.

Expenses for delegates for transportation, room and board at the AFSCME Convention will be paid by CSEA.

AFSCME delegates election schedule

Feb. 29 — Nominating Meeting in all regions (see above).

April 1 — Ballots mailed.

April 9 — Replacement ballots may be requested if original is not received.

April 22 — Deadline for receipt of ballots (8 a.m.)

May — Publication of election results in The Public Sector.

May 2 — End of protest period.

Schedule set for CSEA's Board of Directors' election

ALBANY — Nominations open Feb. 10 for all seats on CSEA's statewide Board of Directors.

Under the union's open election procedures, any member in good standing can have his or her name placed on a ballot by obtaining the required number of CSEA member signatures on an official petition form.

In order to be eligible, a candidate must have been a member in good standing of CSEA since June 1, 1991, and have continuously paid membership dues since then. In addition, he or she cannot be a member of a competing labor organization and cannot be serving a penalty imposed by the CSEA Judicial Board.

In the State Division, a candidate needs petitions signed by at least 10 percent of eligible voters in the department or agency by which he or she wishes to represent. Not more than 450 signatures are required.

CSEA's Board of Directors has adopted the following election schedule:

Feb. 10 — Start of Petitioning Period: nominating petitions available from CSEA region offices and CSEA headquarters.

March 13 — Deadline for nominating petitions to be received at CSEA headquarters (5 p.m.).

April 7 — Deadline for declinations (8 a.m.); deadline for confirmation of name as it will appear on the ballot (8 a.m.); drawing for positions on the ballot (noon).

May 11 — Deadline for receipt of campaign articles for The Public Sector; deadline for campaign literature to be submitted to CSEA headquarters for distribution (5 p.m.).

June 8 — Deadline for return of ballots (8 a.m.)

Election results will be announced after the count. Candidates will be notified by mail.

July — Publication of election results in The Public Sector.
CSEA Women's Conference discusses

Issues facing working women

BOLTON LANDING — Determined to grapple with working women's toughest issues, more than 500 union activists met in Bolton Landing to take part in CSEA's 1991 annual Women's Conference, the largest yet held.

Before a packed hall, recently-retired Region III activist Lee Pound accepted the Irene Carr Leadership Award from CSEA President Joseph McDermott. Saluting her outstanding efforts in working for national health care, McDermott described Pound as "a lady who gets the best out of everyone and is someone you just can't say no to when it comes to fighting for causes she believes in."

"Lee has been an inspiration to so many others because of the dedication she has shown to our great union," said CSEA Secretary Irene Carr. Pound is also a former member of the CSEA Women's Committee.

Conference workshops focused on a variety of topics, including how women can become more sophisticated health care consumers.

Television reporter Benita Zahn discussed what patients should look for when choosing or changing physicians, stressing the importance of feeling comfortable with one's physician.

CSEA Regional Attorney Elliott C. Olin and CSEA safety and health expert Janet Foley discussed occupational injuries, highlighting changes in New York's workers compensation law and new benefits now available.

A FAMILY AFFAIR — CSEA Local 010 President Vincent Martusciello, left, attends the conference with his wife, Jody, and son, Paolo Vincenzo.

CSEA MEMBERS participate in a workshop on sexual harassment.

SHE'S A WINNER — CSEA Retiree member Lee Pound, second from right, receives the Irene Carr Leadership Award from CSEA President Joe McDermott, right. With them are her husband, Howard Pound, left, and CSEA Women's Committee Chair Helen Zocco. Pound, long active in CSEA, formerly served on the Women's Committee and lobbies for national health care. She continues her activism as a CSEA retiree member.
CSEA Toll-Free
The union’s toll-free telephone number—1-800-342-4146—is your direct link to CSEA Headquarters.

If you don’t know the extension number, an operator will pick up and complete your call at the end of the message. If you know the extension number of the individual you’re trying to reach, you can press “O” plus the extension number on your touch-tone telephone at any point during the recorded message and be connected.

If you don’t know the extension, the message will give you the following choices:
* For Field Operations or the Empire Plan/Health Benefits Committee, press number 1.
* For disciplinaries, grievances and other legal matters, press number 2.
* For Communications, the Executive Offices or Political Action, press number 3.
* For a listing of the participating lawyers in your area, call the CSEA office in your region.

Employee Benefit Fund
The CSEA Employee Benefit Fund is a CSEA-administered trust fund which provides certain supplemental negotiated benefits for state employees and participating local government employees. It currently administers Dental Care, Vision Care, Prescription Drug, and Package 7 Benefits Plans.

For questions regarding any of the benefits or for assistance with negotiations, call:
1-800-342-4146.

Education and Training
CSEA can help you prepare for civil service exams with low-cost study books and free-to-borrow video tapes.

CSEA also provides educational workshops for union activists eager to learn more about their union responsibilities.

To request booklet order forms, call CSEA at 1-800-342-4146.

If on information on videotapes, contact your CSEA regional office.

Safety
To report unsafe or unhealthy working conditions or serious accidents, call your CSEA labor relations specialist. For occupational safety and health information, call CSEA headquarters at 1-800-342-4146.

AFSCME Advantage Credit Card
The AFSCME MasterCard has one of the lowest interest rates around—5 percent about the prime lending rate. There is no annual fee. To obtain an application form, call your CSEA regional office.

The card is issued by the Bank of New York. If you apply for a card and there is no response within four weeks, call the bank toll-free at 1-800-942-1977.

AFSCME Advantage Legal Services Program
The AFSCME Advantage Union Privilege Legal Service Program makes it possible for you to easily obtain high quality, affordable legal services for many personal legal matters. For details, see 1-800-366-5273. Also offers Auto Insurance and Homeowners/Renters Insurance.

For details, call 1-800-366-7315.

Health Insurance
For health insurance questions concerning Empire Plan coverage, call the appropriate following telephone number:

EMPIRE PLAN
Blue Cross Claims-1-800-342-9815 or (518) 465-0171
Metropolitan Claims-1-800-942-4640
Participating Providers-1-800-537-0010
Empire Plan Health Call-1-800-992-1213
(Hospital admission approval/surgical review)

Retirement
If you are retiring soon, it’s important that you select the proper option from the Employees’ Retirement system. By using the services of a CSEA-provided retirement counselor, you’ll be able to plan for a lifestyle in your retirement years that takes into account your anticipated expenses.

For more information, call 1-800-366-5273.

General retirement information and retiree membership information are available by contacting CSEA’s Retiree Department at CSEA Headquarters 1-800-342-4146 or (518) 434-0191.

Technical retirement benefit questions (i.e., eligibility for service buy-back, transfer of membership), requests for retirement allowance applications, and requests for retirement estimate applications should be directed to the New York State and Local Retirement Systems at (518) 474-7736.

State employees over the age of 50 and their spouses can attend DIRECTIONS, a two and one-half day pre-retirement planning seminar sponsored by CSEA. For Information call (518) 498-1918.

United Buying Service
Get big savings on consumer products through the union’s official discount buying service. UBS combines the power of millions of members to negotiate discounts on a whole range of major name discount products.

Everything from automobiles to major appliances, video to home furnishing and more. The program is free to CSEA members and carries no service charges. To place an order or for pricing information, call 1-800-336-4UBS or 1-800-877-4UBS. UBS has also set up a hotline for information on limited special monthly offers available only to CSEA members. For a listing of specials, call the hotline at 1-203-967-2980.

Grievances, Disciplines
If you believe you have a grievance, immediately contact your local grievance representative or shop steward. If they are unavailable, contact your CSEA Unit or Local President, or your CSEA Labor Relations Specialist at the appropriate regional office.

Do not delay if you believe you have a problem:

CSEA REGIONAL OFFICES
LONG ISLAND REGION I OFFICE
Hauppauge Atrium Building 300 Vanderbilt Motor Pkwy.
Hauppauge, NY 11786
(516)273-2280
(516)435-0882

CENTRAL REGION V OFFICE
134 Washington Avenue, Albany, N.Y. 12210
1-800-342-4146 (toll-free) (518) 434-0191
Press 5 for Current Issues Update

CSEA STATEWIDE HEADQUARTERS
143 Washington Avenue, Albany, N.Y. 12210
1-800-342-4146

SOUTHERN REGION III OFFICE
Regional Route 1
Box 34, Old Route 9
Fishkill, NY 12524
(914)896-8180

WESTERN REGION VI OFFICE
482 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14202
(716) 886-0391

WASHINGTON REGION II OFFICE
Capital Region IV Office
Suite 402
1215 Western Avenue
Albany, NY 12203
(518) 489-5424

Metropolitain Region 11
11 Broadway
New York, NY 10004
(212) 514-9200

AFSCME Advantage Credit Card: sponsored by CSEA.
Grievance win restores wage equity

TOWN OF NEWBURGH - When Town of Newburgh officials hired a typist at a salary higher than usual for an entry level employee, CSEA made sure it also meant comparable raises for three long-time employees, thanks to a clause in their contract and a class action grievance filed on their behalf.

Rose Marie Moffa, a seven-year employee, said it wasn't the first time a new worker was hired at a higher rate.

"I was earning $5 an hour at the time and they hired this person to do the same job as I did," Moffa said. "When we went into negotiations three years ago, I asked what we could do to keep this from happening again."

Region Director Jim Farina, who was then a collective bargaining specialist, suggested the clause that would grant anyone in the same position as a new hire the same salary if it is higher.

CSEA filed a class action grievance on behalf of three typists after a typist was hired in November 1990 at a higher salary.

The arbitrator ruled that they should be paid the higher salary retroactive to November 1990.

"The unit was pleased that we were able to secure a victory for them," CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Carl Rasmussen said. "This type of violation was a sore spot for many years."

Worker gets promotion, pay

'Without the union, this never would have worked'

GLEN COVE - Thanks to the persistence of CSEA Glen Cove Unit President Bob Blumhagen, Thomas Jiles received the promotion he deserved.

When another employee, Joe Cunningham (see adjacent story) was injured on the job, the mayor appointed someone to fill Cunningham’s traffic monitor position, Blumhagen said.

When Cunningham retired because his injuries made it impossible for him to return to work, the mayor neglected to properly post the job opening.

"I work with CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Pat Curtin to grieve the fact the position was not properly posted and that the senior man was not given the opportunity to apply. That man was senior laborer Thomas Jiles," said Blumhagen.

The grievance led to an agreement between CSEA and the city. That made Jiles a permanent grade 10 and awarded him $1,200 back pay.

Jiles is extremely pleased to have CSEA on his side.

"CSEA's been great. They really helped me. I'm going to use the money to travel to North Carolina to visit my father who's 83 years old," Jiles said.

"Without the union this never would have worked out," Jiles emphasized.

'CSEA went all the way for me and I appreciate it'

GLEN COVE - CSEA City of Glen Cove Unit member Joe Cunningham suffered serious injuries when he was hit by a car while on official city business painting green lines in the road for the 1990 St. Patrick's Day parade.

Cunningham's injuries forced him to retire, and he was shocked to learn the city planned to pay him for only 250 of the 800 vacation and sick days he had accrued during his 36 years of service.

CSEA took the case to arbitration and recently won a settlement that gave Cunningham $20,000 and 148 compensation days.

"Joe was an exemplary employee," said CSEA City of Glen Cove Unit President Bob Blumhagen. "It was a damn shame we had to fight to get what was absolutely and rightfully his."

"CSEA went all the way for me and I really appreciate it," Cunningham said. "The union did a terrific job for me."
CSEA filed charges after member was injured

Hicksville must provide proper training

HICKSVILLE — CSEA won a round for worker safety recently when the state Department of Labor ruled that Hicksville School District must provide its employees with proper training before they can use sandblasting equipment.

CSEA filed an occupational safety and health charge after member William Hiskey was hospitalized in the intensive care unit for carbon monoxide poisoning. He had collapsed after using sandblasting equipment without training.

Other district employees were also ordered to use the equipment without training, said co-worker Earl Hurley.

When the workers initially complained to district officials that they were experiencing serious headaches, the workers were allowed to borrow self-contained air hoods from another district.

Hiskey was wearing one of the hoods and operating the sandblaster when he started to waver and then collapsed, Hurley said. Hurley removed Hiskey’s hood and found him unconscious. Hiskey was sent to the hospital for treatment.

The substance used with the sandblasting equipment was clearly marked with warnings that prolonged exposure could cause cancer, said CSEA Hicksville School District Unit President Rich Bachteler.

“Hiskey was one of our members using the equipment without training, and I don’t want my members using equipment without training, and I don’t want my children or anyone else breathing in these deadly fumes.”

If you believe unsafe or unhealthy conditions exist in your workplace, immediately contact your CSEA shop steward or local president or call your CSEA labor relations specialist at your CSEA region office. For occupational safety and health information, call CSEA headquarters at 1-800-342-4146 and ask for the CSEA Safety and Health Department.

Peru District recovering from a serious asbestos problem

THESE DOORS SEAL off an area at one of the Peru schools where asbestos removal was taking place. Serious problems with one contractor caused the district’s three schools to be closed for several weeks.

PERU - Things are returning to “almost normal” at the Peru Central School District after one of the worst asbestos contamination problems in the history of public schools.

The largest district in Clinton County had to shift operations for several weeks to Plattsburgh City School District buildings and run an evening program for high school students, while elementary and secondary pupils attended class at the nearby military base. The schools have since reopened.

Teachers, bus drivers and other Peru School District staff, assisted by their Plattsburgh counterparts, put in a tremendous effort to continue the school year under these difficult circumstances.

The problems began when the state Department of Labor, responding to complaints CSEA filed, ordered the district’s three schools closed because of a contractor’s improper asbestos abatement procedures and actions of the district administration which put the students, staff and in danger of asbestos exposure.

The abatement project cost ballooned from $300,000 to nearly $5 million as the district hired new contractors and other qualified help to get the schools reopened.

“We have been informed by the state Department of Labor that all of our charges against the district have been upheld,” CSEA Peru School Unit President Wanda Mason said. “Our chief concern now is to get base line medical reports done for our building and maintenance and custodial staff members who had the most potential exposure.”

“This whole multi-million dollar mess could have been easily avoided if the district had simply paid attention to the legitimate complaints of the non-instructional and instructional staff members,” CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Ken Lushia said.

“CSEA originally presented the district its concerns about asbestos five years ago,” he said. “The administration never replied to our members’ legitimate health concerns.”
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECTION

Mass layoff threat demoralized Westchester County employees

O'Rourke's tactics challenged

WHITE PLAINS - CSEA officials are blaming Westchester County officials for causing employees unnecessary stress by threatening hundreds of layoffs.

CSEA Westchester County Unit President Cheryl Melton questioned why County Executive Andrew O'Rourke told county employees they would have to forego their contractual raises or face 500 layoffs.

"After all was said and done, 65 employees received their pink slips," Melton said. While any layoffs are too many, she said, salaries for 65 positions hardly equals pay increases for 6,500 county employees and did not warrant the demoralizing layoff warning notices.

"It served only to further deteriorate morale," Melton said, "and cause many.

county employees to wonder about job security here in Westchester County."

Sending out layoff warning notices distracted workers during the holidays and considerably lowered productivity and morale during December, Melton said.

Most of the threatened layoffs were avoided because many employees took advantage of early retirement incentives. County officials could have waited to see how many would retire before threatening workers with layoffs, Melton said.

The union is also questioning county administrators because of the disproportionate number of Probation Department employees being laid off.

Considering the increase in crime here in Westchester County, I wonder how the county can expect those remaining in the Probation Department to share the increased caseload," Melton said. "At some point in the near future it will become physically impossible to serve this many clients."

Melton has expressed her outrage in a letter sent to Josephine Gambino, president of the state Civil Service Commission, objecting to "the insensitive and callous method in which Westchester County has chosen to administer the initial phase of their reduction in workforce procedures."

She specifically objected to phone calls made to 20 employees to notify them Dec. 30 that they would be laid off the next day.

I ask you to intervene in order to assist in securing at least three weeks notice, to allow these employees who are targeted for layoff time to make employment or other plans in adjusting to this situation."

FOUR HUNDRED WESTCHESTER COUNTY CSEA MEMBERS picketed last month to protest county leaders' threats of hundreds of layoffs if union members didn't give up their raises. So far, 65 members face losing their jobs.

CSEA wins raise for worker at Jefferson Community College

Thanks to CSEA efforts, Jefferson Community College employee Donna Loadwick will finally get the raise she deserves - one she expected more than six months ago.

Last June, when college employees received their scheduled salary increases, Loadwick, a typist in the college's science department, noticed that her salary step did not increase as expected. Although she was a part-time worker, her salary and her hours qualified her for some full-time benefits under the contract, including annual step increments.

When she realized the error, she went to her supervisor to correct the problem. After meeting with administration officials, her supervisor said he could do nothing.

"I felt like I deserved it," she said. "But I wasn't getting anywhere on my own, and my boss wasn't getting anywhere either."

Loadwick then turned to CSEA for help. She contacted Jefferson County Unit President Dan Brady, who told her it was worth pursuing.

Fortunately, Loadwick had documentation to back up her claims, including pay stubs from the past year to prove that she worked enough.

Brady used the documentation in an informal labor-management session. Because he proved that Loadwick worked more than half of a full-time employee's schedule, the county agreed Loadwick should get the increase.

Now waiting for her raise to take effect, Loadwick says she is thrilled with the result of the union's effort on her behalf. Because of the decision, Loadwick will not only get last year's step increase retroactive to January 1990, but will also go up another salary step this year.

"I'm absolutely delighted with the union and what they did for me," she said. "I had my doubts at first, but then I got the call that it went through. I was thrilled."

Brady said that he was pleased he could work out the problem without having to file a grievance, and that he hoped that this case would encourage employees to turn to the union if they needed help. After her victory, Loadwick says that she would urge her co-workers to follow her lead.

February 1992
CSEA battles budget axe

MINEOLA — Paranoia and fear abound in Nassau County where the budget axe is expected to cut 4,000 to 6,000 county employees out of a job. Projected layoffs have continued to rise since the county Board of Supervisors announced their budget plans in December.

While CSEA, county department heads and residents plead with the county to carefully evaluate the effects of downsizing, the county’s only concern is to keep taxes down.

“I truly don’t believe that residents and tax groups really had these drastic service cuts in mind when they cried for tax relief,” CSEA Nassau County Local 830 President Rita Wallace said. “And I’m speaking as a local president and a taxpayer here in Nassau County."

CSEA has gotten the county’s cooperation in applying for a state Department of Labor retraining grant which would help sharpen laid off workers' interview skills, resumes and overall marketable abilities.

The union hopes the grant will be approved within three months. So far 350 CSEA members have been laid off, with another 75 workers possibly bumping CSEA members out of their current jobs, said Ed Fritz, Local 830 administrative assistant.

“It is vital that our members realize it is the county who is laying them off,” Wallace said. “CSEA is doing everything possible to help ease the burden, but ultimately the county has a legal right to lay off employees.”

“It’s a heartbreaking situation.” CSEA Region I President Gloria Moran said. “I hope all our members, their families and their neighbors call (County Executive) Thomas Gulotta and the entire Board of Supervisors to make them aware of the terrible effects of these layoffs.”

MINEOLA - There was seating for 2,000, but still the crowd flooded into the aisles in the auditorium where CSEA held a seminar on how to survive layoffs.

The seminar, one of many the union has sponsored around the county, was put together quickly to answer questions on bumping rights, unemployment, social service benefits and deferred compensation.

The crowd listened intently and asked questions of the panel, which included CSEA Region I President Gloria Moran, CSEA Nassau County Local 830 President Rita Wallace, CSEA Research Specialist Ed Molitor, CSEA Region I Director Ron King and representatives from the departments of unemployment, social services and deferred compensation.

When asked for a show of hands for those who received their pink slips, most of the crowd answered “not yet,” conveying the sense of doom spreading through the county workforce at an alarming rate.

Those who raised their hands were dealing with what the others were dreading - having no job when unemployment on Long Island is at an all-time high.

According to planned budget cuts, the axe is poised over 4,000 to 6,000 Nassau county employees, predominantly CSEA members.

Thomas Halligan, a 30-year employee in the county's public health department, recently got his walking papers.

“It’s devastating. I only have enough money in the bank to last us three months.” he said. “I’m the sole supporter.”

Halligan said he thanks God he is 55 years old and can apply for his pension.

Looking over at his wife, Rebecca, Halligan’s voice was full of pride when he said his four children, all in college, are also contributing to the bills.

Another health department employee, Dr. Samuel Cytryn, a clinical physician, was also cut loose.

“This is all new to me,” Cytryn said, as he leafed through the CSEA booklet. What to do When the Paycheck Stops. "Now I’m looking for another job."

Edgar Thompson has been working in parks and recreation for 18 years. He is bumped down from his groundskeeper II position and says it is a matter of time before he bumps out completely.

Many members agree the fear of the axe is almost as bad as feeling it cut.

"Each day these people report to work, unsure that they will make it through the day without getting the axe," Wallace said. "It is absolutely reprehensible."

The cuts in probation

Drastic cuts in the 1992 Nassau County budget mean a lot more felons will walk the streets unsupervised.

The Probation Department saves the county money because a person in jail costs the county $34,000 a year, compared to $1,000 for probation.

If not properly supervised, probationers often land back in an expensive cell.

The department will be severely crippled by 22 percent cuts and 90 layoffs. It supervises 11,000 probationers.

“Public safety will be threatened,” said Probation Unit President Jane D’Amico. "These are people convicted of serious crimes like rape. Many drug-addicted and violent people will be on the streets."

“The planned cuts in our department will affect all Nassau County residents in a real and direct way,” she said.

The department has not hired a new officer in three years while staff has been reduced 20 percent. D’Amico said.

If the planned $3.7 million cut is implemented, the probation officer’s law-enforcement mission will cease, D’Amico said.

The Pre-Trial Services Bureau won’t be able to properly analyze release requests, which means a growing Correctional Center population. Incomplete investigations will cause expensive sentence appeals. The family division which deals with juveniles and families in trouble, child abuse and neglect and custody will suffer.

Probation will also have a hard time disbursing $1.35 million a year in restitution payments to crime victims.
Private sector just a quick fix that will cost plenty in the long run, CSEA warns; Creative solutions are what's needed

Still a mess

ALBANY - The chair of CSEA's Solid Waste Task Force, stressing that localities should use their existing workforce more effectively before considering privatizing solid waste and recycling services, recently urged state lawmakers to stop passing the buck and address the state's growing landfill crisis.

"New York state is dumping the cost and responsibility for dealing with its garbage problems onto localities and now the localities are trying to dump the responsibilities onto the private sector," said William Walsh, president of CSEA Town of Brookhaven Blue Collar Unit.

"The private sector is a quick fix that in the long run will cost taxpayers plenty." Walsh made his comments before the state Legislative Commission on Solid Waste Management, which is considering legislation that would make it easier for localities to privatize solid waste and recycling services.

"We propose state and local governments to work together to find creative solutions that address the garbage problem instead of shifting responsibility. Among CSEA's ideas: reworking the state bottle bill to encourage recycling; limiting the volume of garbage; and providing better economic incentives for local governments.

CSEA released a report, Throwing Away Our Future, more than a year ago and a half year urging responsible action. "Little positive action has happened since then," Walsh testified. "The time for action has come."

CSEA represents nearly 2,000 landfill/sanitation employees at about 60 different locations across New York state. The CSEA Solid Waste Task Force was appointed by CSEA President Joe McDermott in 1989 in response to the state's solid waste crisis. Since then the Task Force has assessed the impact of the crisis and continues to recommend constructive actions to resolve the issue.

State budget calls for more cuts

ALBANY — Gov. Cuomo's proposed 1992-93 budget spares no one, warned CSEA President Joe McDermott.

"The Governor's proposal offends everyone," McDermott said. "It offends local governments and school districts because it spells higher property taxes."

"Gov. Cuomo proposes slashing $168 million in school aid during the state fiscal year, which costs schools about $248 million during the school year.

Local governments, still reeling from previous cuts in highway aid, revenue sharing and social services, get no relief this year as they take on more responsibilities and get less money from the state to provide services. (See page 3 for more state budget information.)"

"If New York were a business, the Governor's proposed budget is the equivalent of putting up a sign that says 'Going out of business,'" McDermott said. "Local governments and school districts are facing once again the dismal prospect of raising regressive property taxes to provide services to their citizens.

The budget hits local governments in a variety of ways. While the budget proposes Medicaid savings for local governments, CSEA is skeptical those savings will materialize.

Worse, in counties which provide hospital and nursing home services, those Medicaid savings will come from the counties' own facilities. That means finding more money to operate them from somewhere else. (See adjacent story.)"

"The Governor also proposes cutting probation aid, which could wind up costing local governments money (see page 21)."

"The budget proposal also includes cuts in mental health community services aid. So as the state puts its mental health patients out on the streets, it is cutting aid to the communities which must cope with the mentally ill on their streets with few resources to help them."

"The proposal also retains the cap on administrative reimbursement for social services. While the need for social services is growing in the recession, counties are being forced to keep costs for administering those services at last year's levels. "This budget sets CSEA up for a fierce battle," McDermott said. "We're already in the trenches to protect CSEA members in school districts and local governments."

Massena hospital faces layoffs

MASSENA — State budget cuts have CSEA members at the Town of Massena Memorial Hospital worrying about job security and the quality of care they provide.

Officials recently said they will cut 26 positions from the 40-bed facility's budget. CSEA Unit President Hazel Hayes said.

Hayes was told the cuts are being made because of a $1 million decrease in the hospital's Medicaid reimbursement budget from the state for 1992.

The layoffs will not affect direct-care workers, only support staff, she said. But Hayes is worried any layoffs will affect patient care and staff morale, she said. CSEA represents both medical and clerical support staff.

The cuts follow a long fight to keep the hospital open since the state tried to close it five years ago. It's unfortunate, Hayes said, that after the hospital has worked to improve services, this kind of cut had to happen.

"It's not going to be good for us," she said. "We battled back against closing and improved our services. Now we just want to maintain what we fought for."
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LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS

In Seneca County’s Office Building,

He caught the vandals

WATERLOO - Vandals beware! Seneca County has a new law enforcer in town. They call him “Deputy Dale.”

That’s the new nickname of CSEA Seneca County Local 850 Vice President Dale Wagner, a counselor in the county’s Employment and Training Department. He earned it recently for catching two teenagers vandalizing the county office building.

It all started with a routine trip down the hall. As Wagner walked through a corridor, he noticed a teenager loitering outside a restroom.

The boy saw Wagner, quickly ducked into the restroom, came out seconds later with a friend and headed quickly to a stairway.

Suspicious, Wagner looked into the men’s room, immediately smelled fresh paint, and saw spraypaint on the wall. Without thinking, Wagner went after the teenagers.

He caught up with the two suspects downstairs at the end of a hall, very close to an exit. Afraid he wouldn’t catch them if they got out, Wagner yelled to them to stop where they were and freeze.

“I thought to myself, ‘Oh my God, they froze,’” he said rather sheepishly. “I must have taken them by surprise. That’s what gave me the upper hand.”

Wagner took them to a nearby office, where the county administrator was called. Later, the police arrived. Both teenagers confessed to the crime, and to a similar incident a month earlier, in which another bathroom sustained several thousand dollars’ worth of damage. The two were charged with criminal mischief.

The police complimented Wagner on his bravery. County Administrator Ray Demming thanked him, saying Wagner’s action went above and beyond the call of duty. The local’s monthly newsletter also noted his good work. Although he appreciates the recognition, Wagner said, he didn’t do it for the praise.

“I didn’t do it for glory or anything,” he said. “I just felt it was something I needed to do. I was running on instinct.”

The two teenagers, ages 16 and 17, said they vandalized the county building because they were bored. Wagner found that a very sad excuse.

“They could have come up to my office and gotten a job if they were bored,” he said. “There’s no need for youths to be doing this type of behavior. They could be getting jobs or an education.”

Newburgh CSEA members save child’s life

NEWBURGH - Two city employees are credited with saving the life of an 18-month old child.

“We were in the right place at the right time,” public works employee Jim Rose said.

While driving, Rose saw a young woman frantically flagging him down. As he slowed, he saw another woman sitting in a van, holding a young child upside down, smacking her on the back.

While Rose called for an ambulance, co-worker Dave Baxter jumped out of the truck. An eight-year volunteer fireman, he could see the child was not breathing.

“I did a finger sweep of the child’s mouth,” he said, “and her tongue was swollen, blocking her airway. She had been running a high fever and had been having convulsions.”

Baxter kept her breathing until the ambulance arrived. The child, who was hospitalized, is okay now. Her rescuers later learned the child’s father is also a city employee.

“They saved my kid’s life,” Reynoldo Santiago said. “I’ll be forever grateful.”

“We’re proud of them,” said Public Works Superintendent Bill Mott. “Some people are afraid to get involved, but it came naturally to these guys.”