Always a WILD RIDE

...See Pages 12 and 13

When the nightmare becomes reality

...See Page 13
INDEX
Page 3
CSEA members are heroes on the job at the World Trade Center bombing and on a lonely bridge during a snowstorm.

Pages 4 - 5
The real story behind Gov. Cuomo's proposed layoffs in the Office of Mental Health. CSEA members tell it like it is.

Page 6
CSEA takes on OMH on several fronts to preserve quality of care and jobs.

Page 7
Important Empire Plan information, and the story of two CSEA members who make one job work.

"Working With the Public" safety seminars scheduled

In the wake of increasing acts of violence against front-line public employees such as the Schuyler County DSS tragedy last October, CSEA and the state have designed a series of personal safety seminars for employees in public contact positions.

The "Working With the Public" seminar will be held in six locations across the state as part of this spring's NYS/CSEA Safety and Health Seminar Series.

Skills covered in the seminar include effectively gathering information from customers and clients, dealing with difficult and manipulative people and defusing potentially explosive behavior.

A limited number of seats are still available from your CSEA Local president and personnel and training and education offices. You can also contact: NYS/CSEA Labor-Management Committees, One Commerce Plaza, Suite 1117, Albany, N.Y. 12260, or by calling (518) 473-3428.

Seminars will be held April 20 in Albany, April 22 in Utica, May 4 in Buffalo, May 18 in New Paltz, June 17 in New York City and June 24 in Hauppauge.

State News

In paychecks this month

4% salary hikes!

More than 100,000 CSEA-represented state employees will receive salary increases this month under terms of the 1991-95 contracts CSEA negotiated with New York state.

CSEA-represented state workers in full-time employment status as of March 31 will receive a 4 percent salary increase effective April 1. In addition, increment payments will be effective the same date for employees eligible to receive them.

The increases cover employees in the Administrative Services, Operational Services, Institutional Services and DMNA bargaining units.

State workers on the Administrative payroll will receive their increases and increments, if eligible, in the April 21 paychecks.

Employees on the Institutional payroll will see their increases and increments, if eligible, in the April 29 paychecks.

Also effective April 1, the downstate adjustment for eligible state employees in New York City and Nassau, Rockland, Suffolk and Westchester counties will increase from the current $701 annually to $729 annually.

Know your contracts

While salary and increment increases are of great interest to everyone covered by the contracts CSEA negotiated with the state, it is important to keep in mind that the contracts themselves are extensive documents which protect and improve the standard of living of CSEA-represented workers in many different ways.

CSEA/NYS contracts, in fact, contain nearly 200 pages that document agreements on more than 50 major articles, dozens of sub-sections and more than half a dozen lengthy appendices.

In addition to salary hikes, annual increment increases and downstate adjustment payments, thousands of employees also receive longevity payments throughout the life of the contracts. Longevity payments are paid to eligible employees whose salary is equal to or higher than the job rate (maximum) of their pay grade and who have, on their anniversary date, completed either five or 10 years of continuous service at or above the job rate. The employee’s most recent performance rating must be at least “satisfactory” or its equivalent to be eligible for longevity payments paid on either the fifth or tenth anniversary of continuous service at or above the job rate.

CSEA also successfully negotiated many other funded programs to enhance promotional opportunities for members and improve working conditions in general.

For instance, the current contracts provide annual funding for many employee development and training programs in each of the four CSEA bargaining units.

In the all-important areas of health and safety, CSEA negotiated hundreds of thousands of dollars in funding annually to address unsafe and unhealthy working conditions, provide personal protective worksite clothing and equipment and monitor video display terminal operations, toxic substances and building air quality.

Other ways the CSEA/NYS contracts improve the standard of living of members include providing funding for child care programs and day care centers and funding employee assistance programs.

Personal copies of the CSEA/NYS contracts have been mailed to all CSEA state members. You should read it and save it for future reference. If you did not receive your personal copy, contact the appropriate CSEA region office.
Wassaic members, clients survive NYC bombing nightmare

By Anita Manley
CSEA Communications Associate
NEW YORK CITY - What began as a field trip for eight Wassaic Developmental Center clients became a test of survival during a terrorist bombing.

The field trip to the World Trade Center occurred the same day an explosion shook the towers and killed six people.

Four Wassaic employees, two of them members of CSEA Local 426, and eight patients were caught in the nightmare. CSEA member Susan Dunham said the group had just reached the 107th floor. DOT workers were checking the lunch menu in the cafeteria.

"Just then, we heard an explosion," Dunham said. "The cafeteria workers kept saying there was no problem, but they were closing everything down."

The building began filling with smoke.

"They told us to go up on the roof," Dunham said. "We knew we just had to do it and not think about it. I'm just glad it's over."

The wind chill registering a bone-jarring 20 degrees below on the span crossing the Hudson River between Albany and Rensselaer counties.

"There's a walker in the middle of the bridge... possibly looking for a place to jump" the voice crackles over the radio.

Suddenly, the routine chatter that had filled the airwaves since the bridge snow removal operation began at midnight stopped. The operation takes on a whole new mission - to save a life.

Kevin Farley, president of CSEA Rensselaer County State Department of Transportation (DOT) Residency Unit of CSEA DOT Local 676, and DOT Safety Officer Ray LaMarco, were among a group of DOT workers who prevented a suicide attempt.

By Daniel X. Campbell
CSEA Communications Associate
ALBANY — It's very dark in the wee hours of the morning in the middle of the Dunn Memorial Bridge, and very cold. The temperature hovers at 3 degrees below zero, and the wind chill registering a bone-jarring 20 degrees below on the span crossing the Hudson River between Albany and Rensselaer counties.

"There's a walker in the middle of the bridge... possibly looking for a place to jump" the voice crackles over the radio. Suddenly, the routine chatter that had filled the airwaves since the bridge snow removal operation began at midnight stopped. The operation takes on a whole new mission - to save a life.

Among those quickly responding are Kevin Farley, president of CSEA Rensselaer County State Department of Transportation (DOT) Residency Unit of CSEA DOT Local 676, and DOT Safety Officer Ray LaMarco.

They find CSEA members Brian LaFleur, who first spotted the woman and made the initial call, and Dan Quinion. LaFleur and Quinion cautiously circle their trucks and keep the woman in sight.

A car approaches the woman but she ignores the driver, and it speeds away. She keeps looking at the Hudson River far below, apparently searching for a snow bank she might be able to climb over.

Farley has already asked the Rensselaer city police for assistance. LaMarco and Farley offer her a seat in the warm truck.

"I have no reason to stay warm, no reason," she responds. She is crying and shaking, with a blank stare in her eyes.

The Rensselaer city police arrive, place the woman in a patrol car and leave. The DOT crew returns to clearing snow. The radio is alive again with routine calls.

LaFleur, Quinion, Farley and LaMarco know that working together, they may have saved a life.

"If she had found an opening in the river's ice and managed to get up on the snow bank, it would have only been a matter of seconds," Farley said. "Only a matter of seconds."

STATE GOVERNMENT NEWS

CSEA wins one in budget battle

QUEENS VILLAGE — CSEA can claim victory in one of the first skirmishes of this year's state budget fight.

Full funding has been restored for the Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse treatment center at Creedmoor Psychiatric Center.

Gov. Cuomo's original budget proposal called for the unit's elimination, including 25 jobs. CSEA was among the groups opposing the move.

Gov. Cuomo then decided to restore the unit in budget amendments.

"This is a very positive development," CSEA Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio said. "Drug and alcohol abuse are big problems, particularly in New York City. It wouldn't make any sense to eliminate a treatment program that actually helps people."

CSEA fights to save DMV offices

ALBANY -- CSEA is fighting the proposed closing of Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) offices in Newburgh, Utica, Binghamton and Buffalo.

CSEA is urging members to write and call their state legislators to oppose the closing, included in the Gov. Cuomo's budget proposal.

"Closing these offices would reduce state services and put hard-working state employees on unemployment lines," CSEA President Joe McDermott said. "CSEA is fighting hard to be sure these proposed closings do not occur."

Court deals blow on secretary upgrades

ALBANY — The Appellate Division of the state Supreme Court has ruled the state's patchwork implementation of secretary I and II upgradings is acceptable, despite CSEA's strong arguments that it was unfair.

"This decision is very disappointing," CSEA statewide Secretary Irene Carr said. "The state's recategorization procedure was a fiasco from the start. The state's legal costs are probably more than what it would have cost to pay the people what they deserved."

CSEA first filed the suit because different state agencies gave employees different retroactive dates for their upgrading based on agency budgets.

An earlier court ruling supported CSEA's position that employees shouldn't be treated differently based solely on where they worked.

The state appealed the decision, and the Appellate Court ruled that the inconsistent dates were not unfair because of the state's budget problems.

"There's really not a lot that can be said at this point," said CSEA Office of Mental Health Local 673 member Cathy Davis, a plaintiff in the lawsuit. "After all this time it's disappointing to be back to square one."

CSEA is now reviewing the decision to determine the best course of action.
Layoffs have a face

The Governor's proposed budget for the Office of Mental Health (OMH) will eliminate 2,700 jobs. As The Public Sector went to press, CSEA was lobbying hard to save jobs.

In an agency already ravaged in recent years, the numbers don't tell the whole story. They don't talk of the suffering of staff, of patients and even of the communities surrounding psychiatric centers. Here are a few of the real stories of the suffering that results from misdirected budget cuts.

By Stephen Madarasz
CSEA Communications Associate

She needs the benefits

"Everybody's scared. It's all that everyone is talking about. Where can we go, what can we do?" Jane Mutell said.

She should know. A clothing clerk at Kings Park Psychiatric Center, she will be laid off, and she can't bump into another position.

"I'm concerned about what will happen," she said. "I need the health insurance coverage, and older workers are at a disadvantage.

"It's also terrible what they're doing to the patients," Mutell said. "There was a little old man who had been here for years, and they just dumped him into a nursing home in Jamaica without any warning. The younger, dangerous patients they're putting out on the streets."

Forced to leave close-knit community

It's a mistake to think that only therapy aides and medical staff have direct contact with patients. Just ask Shelly Buczak.

A 15-year employee in Central Islip Psychiatric Center's business office, she handles patients' personal accounts and works directly with them every day.

"I love my work; we have a close-knit community here," she said. "Unfortunately, OMH is determined to close the Central Islip campus at any cost.

As part of the accelerated relocation of Central Islip, the state is laying off all operational and administrative employees. Depending on their seniority, they may be able to bump into other Long Island facilities.

"I have no idea where I'll end up or what I'll be doing," Buczak said.

But she is far more concerned about the patients than she is about herself right now.

"A lot of the patients are confused," she said. "They're concerned about their money. They're asking for information about what will happen, and we have no idea. There's no real information from the administration.

"It's sad," Buczak said. "OMH is treating the patients like they're packages, not feeling people."

After 29 years, a pink slip

A layoff notice is Bob Michalski's reward for 29 years service at Manhattan Psychiatric Center.

A plumbing supervisor, he feels unappreciated.

"After all the time and effort I've given to the state, all the knowledge I have, none of it matters," he said.

The layoff is an added insult to Michalski, who has been diagnosed with asbestosis. He believes it's a result of on-the-job exposure to asbestos.

With his seniority, Michalski will probably move to another facility in New York City.

But he believes he could still do a lot to help Manhattan Psychiatric Center run better.

"The work is still here," he said.

Quality of care will suffer with direct care layoffs

The continuing cuts of direct care workers just don't make sense to Catherine Custance, a therapy aide at Pilgrim Psychiatric Center.

"The priorities are all off. It seems like OMH is more concerned with protecting high-level pencil pushers than the staff who really do the work," Custance said.

"The quality of care depends on the direct care staff," she said. "I work on a ward where the patients are non-ambulatory and depend on us to do everything for them.

"These are long-term patients who can't be handled anywhere else.

"With the cuts they're planning, where are they going to get the staff? There's too much mandating of overtime as it is," she said.

"Physically you can't work 16-hour shifts four to five days in a row and do the job effectively. Care will suffer, and more staff will get hurt."

Custance is demoralized by the prospect of being laid off.

"The uncertainty is terrible," she said. "It's not fair."

She built self-esteem

When beauticians and barbers targeted for layoff leave their jobs, the state's psychiatric centers will lose an important aspect of care.

That's what Nancy Affelt thinks. A supervising beautician at Central Islip Psychiatric Center, Affelt has 13 years of experience helping patients with self-esteem.

"I really like working with the patients and helping them to feel better about themselves," Affelt said. "One patient told me they would take up a collection to have me come in to do their hair every week.

"There will be no beautician staff left," she said. "It's pretty clear that OMH doesn't care about the patients and the budget people don't look at the impact of what they're doing."
‘Gov. Cuomo should see for himself’

“I don’t think people really understand what’s happening in the mental health system,” said Marie Edsell, a food service supervisor at CSEA Kings Park Psychiatric Center. After 15 years, her position is being eliminated. Edsell wrote President Clinton, hoping for federal help to stop the deterioration of New York’s mental health center.

Edsell said, “It makes me angry that OMH is being so unfair to these people.”

“I have watched employees lose their jobs, their whole lives turned upside down and for what? A state that can’t manage its finances...”

“We work hard at Central Islip to keep a clean environment. It comes from everyone, not just the housekeeping staff, taking pride in the facility,” said Edsell. “But the state is destroying that.”

Patients will suffer

Uncertainty and the impact on patient care are the most immediate concerns for Marge Ludack, a therapy aide at Central Islip Psychiatric Center for 32 years.

“The attempt to rush us into ‘interim’ buildings at Pilgrim is the biggest change in all the time I’ve been here and it’s not a change for the better,” Ludack said.

“We’re told it’s a savings but they’re using people who don’t speak for themselves to accomplish it,” she said. “It’s a shame that they want to move us into ‘interim’ buildings that are inadequate for geriatric patients.”

The move and layoffs will hurt the patients, she said.

“Geriatric patients are ill more often, and it’s easier to help them get better when they know who’s taking care of them,” Ludack said.

“The patients are aware that something is happening and they’re upset. A move like this is extremely traumatic for them. I’ve seen patients from one part of the facility to another result in death,” she said.

“It makes me angry that OMH is being so unfair to these people.”

Infection control job eliminated

It’s very hard to find a silver lining in the cloud surrounding Bobbie-Jo Howard’s impending layoff from Kings Park Psychiatric Center.

Howard, a central medical supply technician, began working at the facility in 1966. But she lost nearly 14 years of seniority because her title was provisional until 1979. The extra seniority wouldn’t help anyway because Howard’s title is being eliminated.

“It hurts,” she said. “Especially since we do a lot of very important technical work and have taken on more and more responsibility.”

Medical supply technicians sterilize all medical instruments, keep high-tech medical equipment functioning and order and stock medical supplies. They have a primary role in the facility’s infection control program.

“There’s been no explanation about who will do this work after we’re laid off,” she said. “You can’t just walk in and know how to run an autoclave or know the disease control procedures that have to be followed; you need technical knowledge and training,” she said.

“I could understand if this was a consolidation, but they’re just eliminating the function. They’re going back to the way it was when I first started.”

No job security here

“When I took this job in 1978, I thought that working at a psychiatric center would be secure. I didn’t think it would be possible that the state would put mentally ill people and hard-working staff out in the street,” said Milton Smith, a housekeeper at Central Islip Psychiatric Center.

Like all operational employees at Central Islip, Smith is to be laid off. He hopes his seniority will help him move to another facility. But he says, “Who knows about next year?”

“We work hard at Central Islip to keep a clean environment. It comes from everyone, not just the housekeeping staff, taking pride in the facility,” he said. “But the state is destroying that.”

He has important work but no job

“Having sterile equipment and supplies is an extremely important part of the infection control efforts in a place like this,” Derek Wilmot said.

His job as a central medical supply technician at Manhattan Psychiatric Center is being eliminated.

“There are three of us now, and there’s more than enough work for us,” he said. “The two who’ll be left will have a lot more work to do.”

Despite OMH projections about fewer patients, MPC’s population is increasing.

“This is important work,” Wilmot said. “I’m disappointed to be losing my job.”
ALBANY — CSEA is challenging in court the Office of Mental Health’s (OMH) immediate shutdown of Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center. It is just one of many battles CSEA is fighting to win a more sane state mental health budget.

“We are doing everything possible to save the jobs of our members and preserve the quality of care for the mentally ill,” CSEA Executive Vice President Dan Donohue said. “We are fighting OMH in the courts, in the state legislature and in the media.”

Under the Governor’s proposed budget, Harlem Valley would close by April 28, rather than in 1994 as originally planned. OMH began transferring patients in early February. The Town of Dover went to court and won a restraining order based on a state law that requires OMH to give unions and localities 12 months notice of a facility closing. CSEA joined the lawsuit and union attorneys were preparing the case as The Public Sector went to press.

CSEA also made news with a report criticizing the slap-dash attempt to relocate Central Islip Psychiatric Center in interim housing at Pilgrim Psychiatric Center. The report, developed after site visits to the facilities with key state lawmakers, questioned the cost and the effect on patient care of the accelerated move.

Harlem Valley and Central Islip are only symptoms of misguided OMH policies and operations. CSEA believes the state Legislature must act to resolve them.

Dozens of CSEA officials and activists traveled to Albany for OMH Commissioner Richard Surles’ grilling by state lawmakers at budget hearings in late February.

“We heard all the right questions,” Donohue said. “But we need a lot more. We need a responsible OMH budget and we need to see policy changes to benefit the employees, patients and communities OMH is trying to abandon.”

BROOKLYN — A new multiply disabled unit (MDU) is opening at Brooklyn Developmental Center to treat patients who, although their primary diagnosis is retardation, also suffer from mental illness. These clients need special units with specially trained staff to care for their complex needs.

CSEA has encouraged the development of MDUs. The unit at Brooklyn DC is the latest in a growing network across the state. CSEA Brooklyn DC Local 447 member Maulda Taylor is looking forward to the challenge of the 80-bed MDU.

“We are getting training on the clients’ behavior which is really helping us,” Taylor said. “We have teamwork and will be able to do a really good job.”

CSEA’s success in siting the new MDU at Brooklyn DC could not have come at a better time. The unit will help retain about 180 jobs that the facility might otherwise have lost through layoffs.

CSEA would like to see more MDUs at facilities across the state. They provide intensive care for a difficult population that cannot be served in other settings.

As in other locations, CSEA worked closely with the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and facility management on an agreement for hazardous duty pay for all union members who will work on the MDU.

Local President Denise Berkley hailed the progress on the MDU which was to open in early April.

“This is an urgently needed treatment center for multiply-disabled patients and we’re glad it’s here,” Berkley said.
POUGHKEEPSIE - For Anne Marie McVicker and Sue Roth, two heads are definitely better than one.
The two administrative aides have been sharing one full-time job in the Department of Transportation (DOT) in Poughkeepsie for nearly a year.
Both women, members of CSEA DOT Local 507, will tell you sharing a job requires team work. And they have built their team over the course of several years.
Six years ago, Roth was working at Downstate Correctional Facility and finding it hard to coordinate a full-time job with caring for two small children. McVicker, a senior account clerk, also had children.
"I knew that Anne Marie was interested in cutting down her hours too, and she was on the (Civil Service) list for administrative aide," Roth said, "so I suggested the idea."
Roth's boss, at first reluctant, agreed, and Roth and McVicker teamed up.
The job worked out well for both women, but the state eliminated it in 1991.

CSEA members Anne Marie McVicker, left, and Sue Roth.

"We keep a log so that each of us knows exactly what's going on and what the other has done, " McVicker said.

One advantage of job sharing is that if one employee is ill, the other is always there. "When I come in on Wednesdays, I'm ready to work," Roth said. "I get more accomplished."
Regional Highway Maintenance Engineer Joe Gleeson said he's enthusiastic about the job-sharing team.
"Sue and Anne Marie work so well together," Gleeson said. "They truly share the job."

McVicker took a full-time job at the Department of Labor in Newburgh and Roth worked full time at DOT in Poughkeepsie.

But full-time hours once again proved difficult. Roth asked about job-sharing, and her new boss was willing to try it.
Back together, the two women are doing their job better than expected.
McVicker works Monday through Wednesday, Roth Wednesday through Friday.

Job sharing ideal for these CSEA members

Job sharing may not be ideal for everyone

While part-time shared job status may work well for some, a change from full-time status can have many effects on benefits and employment issues that must be thoroughly considered.

Among other considerations, your salary, increments and longevity will be prorated; your leave credits will be prorated; your retirement benefits will be reduced; you will not be eligible to receive location pay differentials or inconvenience pay differentials; you will not be eligible for overtime pay; and it may not always be possible to return to full-time status.
Always discuss the possible effects in detail with your CSEA local president, CSEA labor relations specialist and your agency personnel office before accepting any change in status.

April 1993
We must continue to fight for safety

Workers Memorial Day is an especially sad event for CSEA this year. In the past twelve months, we have mourned the loss of eight of our sisters and brothers in job-related deaths, including the senseless murder of four Schuyler County Social Services employees in Watkins Glen. Phyllis Caslin, Florence Pike, Nancy Wheeler and Denise VanAmburg were gunned down in their unprotected office by a "deadbeat dad" angered that his wages were garnisheed to pay court-ordered child support.

It is impossible to make any sense out of this tragedy. But it is also important to understand that CSEA is doing everything possible to be sure that these individuals did not die in vain.

The Watkins Glen murders attracted national attention. CSEA has focused that attention on the dangers that public employees face on the job every day in a campaign for safer working conditions. It is not a new effort for CSEA but the tragedy re-emphasized the urgency. CSEA officials have systematically contacted and met with public employers across the state to give priority to workplace security measures and labor-management involvement on this issue. If tragedy could strike in a small community like Watkins Glen, it could happen anywhere.

The deaths of four other CSEA members in the past year may not have received the same dramatic attention that the Watkins Glen tragedy generated, but they were surely no less painful for the families and co-workers of the deceased.

Victor Weeden, a Rensselaer County Highway worker, was found dead near his truck while on a work assignment.

Cayuga County Sheriff's Deputy Vincent Spinelli died following an altercation with a prisoner.

Shaun Casey, a code enforcement officer for the City of Syracuse, collapsed and died after he raced around a burning building searching for trapped occupants.

Scott Petteys, a power plant worker at Wilton Developmental Center, died of Mesothelioma, an asbestos-related disease.

It's difficult to draw definitive conclusions from these deaths except to recognize that public employees work in extremely stressful and often dangerous conditions. It is also important to note that working conditions are becoming more difficult as many public employers require workers to do more with less.

CSEA considers worker safety and health one of our most important responsibilities as a union. CSEA fought for the Public Employee Safety and Health Act which was enacted in 1980. We continue to fight to strengthen its provisions and enforcement. Our efforts have resulted in stronger protections on blood-borne disease, Tuberculosis exposure, asbestos regulation, and right-to-know provisions on exposure to hazardous chemicals. We have also negotiated some of the most comprehensive guidelines for video display terminal use and worker training programs to be found anywhere.

We continue to work on the complex problem of indoor air quality that affects so many people.

CSEA has accomplished all of this while there are still 27 other states that do not have comprehensive safety and health laws to protect public employees. It may be impossible to prevent all accidents and crimes. But there are steps that can be taken to reduce the risks. This year's Workers Memorial Day reminds us that we have made progress but our task is not complete.

IN 1979, CSEA was fighting for on-the-job protections for its members who were not covered by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA). CSEA Cartoonist Ralph Wietin drew this cartoon in April 1979 to emphasize CSEA's concerns. In 1980, the New York state Legislature passed the CSEA-backed Public Employee Safety and Health Act. CSEA has continued over the years to fight for improvements to PESHA.
New CSEA Term Life Plan offers expanded coverage, lower rate

A new CSEA Term Life Plan, underwritten by the Travelers Insurance Company, went into effect April 1. Information and enrollment material was mailed to all CSEA members by Jardine Group Services Corp. The new CSEA Term Life Plan is available only to CSEA members. The new plan combines the best features of the previous Max 25 Basic Life and Supplemental Life plans while reducing rates by as much as 18 percent in many cases; increasing the maximum coverage to $150,000; providing broader coverage for spouses and dependent children, and guaranteeing the issue of $50,000 of coverage without taking a physical or answering medical questions.

"CSEA is constantly reviewing our benefits package to be sure we offer our members the best possible benefits at the lowest possible cost. This new insurance plan, with increased coverage at lower rates, does that," CSEA President Joe McDermott said.

CSEA members currently insured in the Max 25 Insurance Plan will be automatically transitioned to the new plan.

Term Life

For some members the Boston meeting offers expanded coverage, same dates on Long Island. The next Government Workshop being held the story of a champion. AFSCME Women's Conference is scheduled June 11-13 in Boston. AFSCME Regional Women's Conference is June 11 to 13 at the Sheraton Boston. Members are reminded that the AFSCME CSEA plan may enroll in the new CSEA Term Life Plan by completing the simplified application form underwritten by New York Life. CSEA members not currently insured in either the new CSEA Term Life Plan must check the box for the new plan in the enrollment material they received in the mail and return it in the prepaid envelope. Members who elect to transfer to the new CSEA Term Life Plan will be able to continue payroll deduction for their coverage. If they elect to retain their Supplemental Term Life coverage, they will pay the higher rate by direct billing and payroll deduction will not be available.

CSEA members currently insured under the CSEA Supplemental Life Insurance Plan who wish to transfer to the new CSEA Term Life Plan must call Jardine Group Services Corporation at 1-800-697-CSEA. The CSEA members must file a request for transfer to the new plan. The request will be automatically processed by Jardine Group Services Corporation.

For members who elect to transfer their coverage, CSEA members must complete a new application form and return it to Jardine Group Services Corporation. Members who do not elect to transfer to the new CSEA Term Life Plan will retain their current coverage.

Reminder:

AFSCME Women's Conference scheduled June 11-13 in Boston

Members are reminded that the AFSCME Regional Women's Conference will be held June 11 to 13 at the Sheraton Boston Hotel and Towers, Boston, MA. Information concerning the conference is being mailed to CSEA local presidents. CSEA members interested in attending should contact their CSEA local presidents. For some members the Boston meeting may conflict with the annual CSEA Local Government Workshop being held the same dates on Long Island. The next AFSCME Regional Women's Conference is scheduled for Sept. 10 to 12 in Chicago.

Elections for CSEA region officers are approaching.

CSEA pays tribute to members who have died from job-related injury or illness to commemorate Workers Memorial Day, April 28.

CSEA members tell how it really is plowing the snow-covered, storm-battered roads of New York alone.

CSEA's political action efforts include fighting for cost-of-living adjustments for retirees and support for President Clinton.

CSEA celebrates Black History Year with the story of a champion.

An update on the United Buying Service.

CSEA wins improved hours for DMNA firefighters.

A tribute to fallen comrades

By Ron Wofford
CSEA Communications Associate

PENN YAN — An artistic tribute to four fallen CSEA members is emerging from the creative hands of a fellow union member as Workers Memorial Day 1993 approaches.

Carol Thornton, president of CSEA Yates County Local 862, is creating a ceramic memorial sculpture dedicated to four Schuyler County Social Services Department workers who were killed on the job Oct. 15 by an irate deadbeat father whose wages had been garnished for missed child support payments.

"We were all crushed when that happened because we knew them all and had worked with them at conferences over the years," Thornton said. Like the four slain Schuyler County employees, Thornton works in child support enforcement and collection. "Schuyler County borders Yates County, so we were neighbors as well as co-public employees and fellow union members. It was really devastating," Thornton said.

The idea for a memorial sculpture developed when Thornton, a studio art major in her college days, enrolled in art courses early this year at nearby Keuka College.

"It came to me that this was what I wanted to do in memory of my fellow CSEA members," she said.

Thornton, who also represents Yates County on CSEA's statewide Board of Directors, plans to donate the finished sculpture for permanent display in CSEA Headquarters in Albany.

Thornton envisions her finished work containing four life-sized symbolic heads or masks, mounted on a background board. She is studying photos of the Schuyler County victims to add some recognizable features, although the finished work may not be an exact likeness of them.

"This will be my first major work with clay," Thornton said. "Most of my sculptures have been in wood or plaster, going back to my days at William Smith College. But I feel good so far working with clay."

The artist said she hopes to have the work completed by the end of May or early June.

"I hope to have it done by that time," she said. "But it's more important that I take my time, so that when I finish, it will be a fitting tribute to our fellow members."

CAROL THORNTON working on her sculpture.

New CSEA Term Life Plan offers expanded coverage, lower rate

INDEX

Page 10 Elections for CSEA region officers are approaching.

Page 11 CSEA pays tribute to members who have died from job-related injury or illness to commemorate Workers Memorial Day, April 28.

Pages 12 - 13 CSEA members tell how it really is plowing the snow-covered, storm-battered roads of New York alone.

Page 14 CSEA's political action efforts include fighting for cost-of-living adjustments for retirees and support for President Clinton.

Page 15 CSEA celebrates Black History Year with the story of a champion.


Page 17 CSEA wins improved hours for DMNA firefighters.

A new CSEA Term Life Plan, underwritten by the Travelers Insurance Company, went into effect April 1. Information and enrollment material was mailed to all CSEA members by Jardine Group Services Corp. The new CSEA Term Life Plan is available only to CSEA members. The new plan combines the best features of the previous Max 25 Basic Life and Supplemental Life plans while reducing rates by as much as 18 percent in many cases; increasing the maximum coverage to $150,000; providing broader coverage for spouses and dependent children, and guaranteeing the issue of $50,000 of coverage without taking a physical or answering medical questions.

"CSEA is constantly reviewing our benefits package to be sure we offer our members the best possible benefits at the lowest possible cost. This new insurance plan, with increased coverage at lower rates, does that," CSEA President Joe McDermott said.

CSEA members currently insured in the Max 25 Insurance Plan will be automatically transitioned to the new plan.

Members currently insured under the CSEA Supplemental Life Insurance Plan who wish to transfer to the the new CSEA Term Life Plan must check the box for the new plan in the enrollment material they received in the mail and return it in the prepaid envelope. Members who elect to transfer to the new CSEA Term Life Plan will be able to continue payroll deduction for their coverage. If they elect to retain their Supplemental Term Life coverage, they will pay the higher rate by direct billing and payroll deduction will not be available.

CSEA members not currently insured in either CSEA plan may enroll in the new CSEA Term Life Plan by completing the simplified application form included in the mailing.

Members with questions about the Supplemental Life coverage should call Jardine Group Services Corporation at 1-800-697-CSEA. Questions concerning the new Basic Life coverage should be made in writing to the CSEA Insurance Department, 143 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12210.

April 1993 9
April 1 is the deadline for nominating petitions to be received at CSEA Headquarters in elections being conducted this year for officers of CSEA's six regions.

Under the union's open election procedures, any member in good standing can have his or her name placed on a ballot by obtaining signatures of a minimum of 500 CSEA members on official petition forms. All signatures must be from the region where the person is seeking office. Members who sign the petition must be eligible to vote in the election.

CSEA's statewide Election Committee is overseeing the election which is being conducted jointly by WM Applications, Inc. and Federal Business Forms, Inc.

The petitioning period began March 1 when nominations opened. The remainder of the election schedule for region officers as adopted by CSEA's Board of Directors is as follows:

**APRIL 1** — Deadline for nominating petitions to be received at CSEA Headquarters. Deadline is 5 p.m.

**APRIL 14** — Deadline for declination of nomination. Deadline is 8 a.m. Drawing for positions on the ballot. CSEA Headquarters conference room. Candidates or proxies may attend as observers. Deadline for receipt of campaign material by The Public Sector.

**MAY** — Names, photos and candidate statements printed in the May edition of The Public Sector.

**MAY 17** — Official ballots mailed to members eligible to vote.

**MAY 24** — Replacement ballots available.

**JUNE 7** — Deadline for return of ballots. Deadline is 8 a.m. Ballots tabulated and results announced.

**JUNE 17** — Protest period ends (10 days after official results announced).

**JULY** — Election results published in the July edition of The Public Sector.

**In order to be eligible to seek office...**

In order to be eligible to seek office, a candidate must be at least 18 years of age; a member in good standing of the region since June 1, 1992; shall not have been a member of a competing labor association or union since June 1992; and shall not currently be serving a disciplinary penalty imposed by the Judicial Board of CSEA. To be eligible to vote in the election a member must have been in good standing as of April 1, 1993.

The following offices, by region, are up for election:

**REGION 1 OFFICERS**
- President
- 1st Vice President
- 2nd Vice President
- 3rd Vice President
- 4th Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

**REGION 2 OFFICERS**
- President
- Executive Vice President
- 1st Vice President
- 2nd Vice President
- 3rd Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

**REGION 3 OFFICERS**
- President
- 1st Vice President
- 2nd Vice President
- 3rd Vice President
- Recording Secretary
- Treasurer

**REGION 4 OFFICERS**
- President
- 1st Vice President
- 2nd Vice President
- 3rd Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

**REGION 5 OFFICERS**
- President
- Executive Vice President
- 1st Vice President
- 2nd Vice President
- 3rd Vice President
- Recording Secretary
- Treasurer

**REGION 6 OFFICERS**
- President
- 1st Vice President
- 2nd Vice President
- 3rd Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
For The Living
Workers Memorial Day, April 28

CSEA honors its members who die in the line of duty each year.

Since last Workers Memorial Day, CSEA lost eight members including four in a brutal slaying in their offices.

Workers Memorial Day is observed by AFL-CIO unions on April 28, the anniversary of the passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

"CSEA is committed to making workplaces safe and healthy for all workers," CSEA President Joe McDermott said.

"While we honor our fallen brothers and sisters, we continue to fight for the day when such senseless deaths will be only a memory and we can work safely, securely and in good health."

Below is the list of CSEA members who have died on the job and work-related deaths reported since the establishment of CSEA’s Safety and Health Department in 1983.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roger McClary</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>January 2, 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon Bartle</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>June 10, 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Conrad</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>June 28, 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Sawers</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>January 7, 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amos Smith</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>January 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Talada</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>March 2, 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary Freeman</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>April 9, 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernest Stowel</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>June 21, 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Pickney</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>July 19, 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard A. Ortlieb</td>
<td>015</td>
<td>September 17, 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Denowski</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>September 22, 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis O’Neill</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>October 16, 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Wilcox</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>December 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Snyder</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>February 21, 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Doyle</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>February 26, 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quentin Schultz</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>May 28, 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John H. Krone</td>
<td>058</td>
<td>July 31, 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John C. Murphy</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>January 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Gieb</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>May 4, 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfreda Szynamski</td>
<td>868</td>
<td>June 4, 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clara Taylor</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>July 17, 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce Benware</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>July 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Dwyer</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>August 13, 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven Guzzo</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>December 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Graves</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>February 13, 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Risley</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>April 15, 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Thorngren</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>April 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Holmes</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>July 18, 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Bucktooth</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>August 24, 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Kramer</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>September 22, 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Inggrassia</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>October 19, 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Mayotte</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>November 16, 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Peragine</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>September 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Howard</td>
<td>015</td>
<td>December 22, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Smithers</td>
<td>013</td>
<td>December 23, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor Nuanez</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>August 8, 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Rezucha</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>February 12, 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabina Kulakowski</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>May 23, 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth Ruis</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>September 25, 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Wayne</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>May 1991</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In memoriam:
April 1992 to March 1993

Victor Weeden
Local 842
June 25, 1992
He was found dead near his truck while at work.

Vincent Spinelli
Local 806
August 6, 1992
He died after an altercation with a prisoner.

Florence Pike
Phyllis Caslin
Nancy Wheeler
Denise VanAmburg
Local 849
October 15, 1992
The four women were brutally murdered at their Department of Social Services offices by a “deadbeat dad.”

Scott Petteys
Local 416
December 23, 1992
He died of mesothelioma, an asbestos-related disease.

Shaun Casey
Local 834
February 2, 1993
He collapsed and died while trying to be sure a burning building was vacant.
Riding a 'wing and a prayer

By Mark M. Kotzin
CSEA Communications Associate

WOODVILLE — It's about 11 in the morning, there's two feet of snow on the ground already, and the lake-effect snow continues to fall on Route 3 in Woodville, a few miles east of Lake Ontario. The road in New York's snowbelt terrain. Visibility is near zero, there's inches of fresh snow on the road, and CSEA Local 015 member Connie Granderen is out plowing. Tagging along for the ride is a very nervous Public Sector reporter.

"It would be bad enough if it was just the snow," she says, "but the wind and the snow combined just make it really nasty." And mostly it is. The passenger side of the front window is almost covered with snow and ice, the windshield wipers powerless against the snowdrifts of Mother Nature. The side mirrors, including the only one giving her a view of the wing, are also frozen over. Connie reaches to the little fan in the middle of the dashboard toward the windshield, in hopes of defrosting it slightly.

This is what you call stress," she says, unhesitatingly

Opening car doors into the roadway. People shake their fists at you when it's windy. The snow is blowing, and you get hit by it. Sometimes you get lost (on the road) and that's where a second person comes in handy. They're closer to the side and could tell you where the snowbanks are. You can't see it from the driver's side. Without that person, Connie relies on instinct and her innate knowledge of the roads she frequently plows.

Connie's drive to work is normal stuff for her. She says matter of factly as I ride along in his truck. "It's a little more difficult and dangerous. He says other problems he must deal with are private plows that push snow on the sidewalk, taillights, poles, trees. If you got traffic, the plow doesn't push snow into them, people park in front of their driveways so the person who can pull the wing in would be in the way, so you have to pull out for them. Sometimes you get lost (on the road) and that's where a second person comes in handy. They're closer to the side and could tell you where the snowbanks are. You can't see it from the driver's side. Without that person, Connie relies on instinct and her innate knowledge of the roads she frequently plows.

"It would be bad enough if it was just the snow," she says, "but the wind and the snow combined just make it really nasty." And mostly it is. The passenger side of the front window is almost covered with snow and ice, the windshield wipers powerless against the snowdrifts of Mother Nature. The side mirrors, including the only one giving her a view of the wing, are also frozen over. Connie reaches to the little fan in the middle of the dashboard toward the windshield, in hopes of defrosting it slightly.

"This is what you call stress," she says, unhesitatingly, "but it's not being able to see — worrying about what's around them.'

Aside from road and weather conditions, Connie says her biggest problems involve misconceptions of the general driving public, which lead people to take dangerous chances. She says that just because she's in a big truck, someone can see she can handle it in poor weather, but she really can't. "Sometimes it's worse because you can't get the snow blowing on you," she says. "You get snowed in and you just can't see it."

OPP, sometimes, the visibility is poor and you're driving at night and you're not sure exactly where you are. Sometimes, you get lost (on the road) and that's where a second person comes in handy. They're closer to the side and could tell you where the snowbanks are. You can't see it from the driver's side. Without that person, Connie relies on instinct and her innate knowledge of the roads she frequently plows.

Connie's drive to work is normal stuff for her. She says matter of factly as I ride along in his truck. "It's a little more difficult and dangerous. He says other problems he must deal with are private plows that push snow on the sidewalk, taillights, poles, trees. If you got traffic, the plow doesn't push snow into them, people park in front of their driveways so the person who can pull the wing in would be in the way, so you have to pull out for them. Sometimes you get lost (on the road) and that's where a second person comes in handy. They're closer to the side and could tell you where the snowbanks are. You can't see it from the driver's side. Without that person, Connie relies on instinct and her innate knowledge of the roads she frequently plows.

Connie's drive to work is normal stuff for her. She says matter of factly as I ride along in his truck. "It's a little more difficult and dangerous. He says other problems he must deal with are private plows that push snow on the sidewalk, taillights, poles, trees. If you got traffic, the plow doesn't push snow into them, people park in front of their driveways so the person who can pull the wing in would be in the way, so you have to pull out for them. Sometimes you get lost (on the road) and that's where a second person comes in handy. They're closer to the side and could tell you where the snowbanks are. You can't see it from the driver's side. Without that person, Connie relies on instinct and her innate knowledge of the roads she frequently plows.

Connie's drive to work is normal stuff for her. She says matter of factly as I ride along in his truck. "It's a little more difficult and dangerous. He says other problems he must deal with are private plows that push snow on the sidewalk, taillights, poles, trees. If you got traffic, the plow doesn't push snow into them, people park in front of their driveways so the person who can pull the wing in would be in the way, so you have to pull out for them. Sometimes you get lost (on the road) and that's where a second person comes in handy. They're closer to the side and could tell you where the snowbanks are. You can't see it from the driver's side. Without that person, Connie relies on instinct and her innate knowledge of the roads she frequently plows.

Connie's drive to work is normal stuff for her. She says matter of factly as I ride along in his truck. "It's a little more difficult and dangerous. He says other problems he must deal with are private plows that push snow on the sidewalk, taillights, poles, trees. If you got traffic, the plow doesn't push snow into them, people park in front of their driveways so the person who can pull the wing in would be in the way, so you have to pull out for them. Sometimes you get lost (on the road) and that's where a second person comes in handy. They're closer to the side and could tell you where the snowbanks are. You can't see it from the driver's side. Without that person, Connie relies on instinct and her innate knowledge of the roads she frequently plows.

Connie's drive to work is normal stuff for her. She says matter of factly as I ride along in his truck. "It's a little more difficult and dangerous. He says other problems he must deal with are private plows that push snow on the sidewalk, taillights, poles, trees. If you got traffic, the plow doesn't push snow into them, people park in front of their driveways so the person who can pull the wing in would be in the way, so you have to pull out for them. Sometimes you get lost (on the road) and that's where a second person comes in handy. They're closer to the side and could tell you where the snowbanks are. You can't see it from the driver's side. Without that person, Connie relies on instinct and her innate knowledge of the roads she frequently plows.

Connie's drive to work is normal stuff for her. She says matter of factly as I ride along in his truck. "It's a little more difficult and dangerous. He says other problems he must deal with are private plows that push snow on the sidewalk, taillights, poles, trees. If you got traffic, the plow doesn't push snow into them, people park in front of their driveways so the person who can pull the wing in would be in the way, so you have to pull out for them. Sometimes you get lost (on the road) and that's where a second person comes in handy. They're closer to the side and could tell you where the snowbanks are. You can't see it from the driver's side. Without that person, Connie relies on instinct and her innate knowledge of the roads she frequently plows.

Connie's drive to work is normal stuff for her. She says matter of factly as I ride along in his truck. "It's a little more difficult and dangerous. He says other problems he must deal with are private plows that push snow on the sidewalk, taillights, poles, trees. If you got traffic, the plow doesn't push snow into them, people park in front of their driveways so the person who can pull the wing in would be in the way, so you have to pull out for them. Sometimes you get lost (on the road) and that's where a second person comes in handy. They're closer to the side and could tell you where the snowbanks are. You can't see it from the driver's side. Without that person, Connie relies on instinct and her innate knowledge of the roads she frequently plows.

Connie's drive to work is normal stuff for her. She says matter of factly as I ride along in his truck. "It's a little more difficult and dangerous. He says other problems he must deal with are private plows that push snow on the sidewalk, taillights, poles, trees. If you got traffic, the plow doesn't push snow into them, people park in front of their driveways so the person who can pull the wing in would be in the way, so you have to pull out for them. Sometimes you get lost (on the road) and that's where a second person comes in handy. They're closer to the side and could tell you where the snowbanks are. You can't see it from the driver's side. Without that person, Connie relies on instinct and her innate knowledge of the roads she frequently plows.

Connie's drive to work is normal stuff for her. She says matter of factly as I ride along in his truck. "It's a little more difficult and dangerous. He says other problems he must deal with are private plows that push snow on the sidewalk, taillights, poles, trees. If you got traffic, the plow doesn't push snow into them, people park in front of their driveways so the person who can pull the wing in would be in the way, so you have to pull out for them. Sometimes you get lost (on the road) and that's where a second person comes in handy. They're closer to the side and could tell you where the snowbanks are. You can't see it from the driver's side. Without that person, Connie relies on instinct and her innate knowledge of the roads she frequently plows.
AFSCME, CSEA back Clinton's budget plans

ALBANY -- CSEA and AFSCME are calling on members to support President Clinton's economic stimulus and budget plans.

"We've elected a president who is willing to make the tough choices, and now he needs our support," CSEA President Joe McDermott said. He urged CSEA members to write their Congressional representatives and U.S. senators to let them know the plan has broad-based support.

Clinton's plan calls for investment in people and needs that have been unmet for the last 12 years. It also offers a deficit reduction strategy with a balanced, responsible approach to spending cuts and tax increases.

His plan also makes the tax structure more progressive and more fair, with more than 70 percent of the new taxes being raised from those earning $100,000 or more, and 98.9 percent of all American families will have no increase in their income taxes.

The only tax to affect most middle class families will be the energy tax. That will average only $12 to $17 a month for families earning $40,000. The plan also includes expansion of the earned income tax credit and food stamp programs to offset the regressive effects of the energy tax on low-income families.

CSEA represented on AFSCME urban affairs advisory committee

AFSCME plans to recommend ideas on solving urban problems to the Clinton Administration and CSEA will be a part of the working group.

CSEA Board of Directors member Jimmy Gripper Jr. has been named to the new AFSCME Urban Affairs Advisory Committee. He will serve on the subcommittee on Urban Government and Finance.

Gripper, a longtime CSEA activist, is a member of CSEA Brooklyn Developmental Center Local 447. AFSCME President Gerald W. McEntee appointed Gripper at the recommendation of CSEA President Joe McDermott, who is also an AFSCME International vice president.

CSEA works to protect police, peace officers

ALBANY -- CSEA is fighting a bill that would strip police and peace officers of protection against discrimination for their off-duty activities.

The state Senate bill would deny police and peace officers the protections offered to other public employees.

"There is no reason any of our members should be denied these protections," CSEA President Joe McDermott said. "CSEA is determined to protect the rights of our members.

CSEA members who would be affected if this bill became law would include deputy sheriffs, probation officers and any other peace or law enforcement employees.

Costs rise, pensions don't

BUFFALO — For June Ferner, the issue of a permanent cost of living adjustment (COLA) for public employee retirees is a personal one.

The former school bus driver hasn't had a pension increase since retiring in 1982. Active in CSEA when she was working — she served on the statewide Political Action Committee — Ferner is a member of CSEA Buffalo - Niagara Frontier Retirees Local 903.

Most of New York's retired public employees haven't had a cost-of-living increase in their pensions since 1988, and many have had no increase at all.

Since September 1982, the cost of living has risen 45 percent.

Ferner is frustrated because her costs keep rising, but her pension doesn't.

"When I retired it took a little more than three months of my pension to pay my property taxes. Now it takes more than seven months," she said. "The cost of living has gone up so much."

Yet Ferner counts herself lucky: her husband also receives a pension, and their Social Security payments have increased over the years. What bothers her is the unfairness of the system.

No stranger to political action, she has written to Gov. Cuomo more than once urging him to support a permanent COLA for public employee retirees.

"For me it's a matter of principle," she said. "I think it's wrong for the state to be making money on the money we put in the system."
Angelo Hickman: An agent of change

By Mark Kotzin
CSEA Communications Associate
Slatersville - As an African American growing up in the Bronx, life for CSEA member Angelo Hickman always centered on overcoming odds.

His mother died when he was 11, but through perseverance and hard work, he managed to break free from the adversity of the streets. Now 37, Hickman is a world-class athlete and ready to face his latest challenge — being a CSEA leader.

Hickman, a youth division aide at the Austin MacCormick Center for Youth, has worked for the state Division for Youth (DFY) and been a CSEA member for 14 years. Former vice-president of CSEA Lansing/MacCormick FY Local 561, he recently became president when former President Joe Maratea left to become a CSEA labor relations specialist.

One of his biggest accomplishments is his world championship bench-press title for his age and weight class in the World Drug-Free Powerlifting Federation. He won the title last fall by bench-pressing 336 pounds.

In the Beginning

It all started when he was eight and his older brother started teaching him martial arts. Hickman learned about spirituality, self-discipline, respect for others and the joys of competition.

As he got older, Hickman became active in many sports, including gymnastics, running, skydiving, judo and, most recently, weight lifting. In high school and college, he was on gymnastics teams and was ranked seventh in three states on the rings in the North American League of Intercollegiate Gymnastics.

"I always dreamed of being a professional athlete," he said. "If I was a little bigger, a little taller, I would have gone on."

While attending SUNY Oneonta, he had two experiences that changed his life. The first was meeting the woman he later married, and the second was a year-long study program in Japan.

There he learned about unity between people, and studied Buddhism, Japanese martial arts, philosophy, religion, Zen, Chinese thought and taught conversational English.

"My outlook on the world was different when I came back," he said.

Putting His Talents to Work

As he completed his bachelor’s degree in psychology, he started working for DFY. "I always made a promise to myself that I would help youth," Hickman said.

"My friends came from the same neighborhoods as these kids."

As a YDA, Hickman works with youths ages 12 to 18 who have been sentenced to the facility for criminal acts. As a direct-care worker, he plays many roles for the troubled young adults, he said.

"We’re like jacks of all trades with these kids. We’re disciplinarians, counselors, teachers, role models and agents of change. We’re also like the family that a lot of them don’t have," he said.

"My philosophy is that we all have something to contribute to society. As an agent of change, that’s what I’m trying to teach them."

His Own Role Models

Hickman takes little credit for his achievements. Instead, he attributes his success to his main role models, his brother and his father. "Always looked up to” his brother, and admired his father for being able to raise the family on his own, he said.

"My respect for my father is that he held the family unit together. We went up against great odds coming out of the city like that," he said. "I look up to my father because he was always successful in a very advanced world, despite his lack of formal education."

A lot of his inspiration also comes from his wife, Linda, who “always believed I was a world-class quality athlete,” and who “has always been in my corner,” even when he doubted himself, he said.

Another inspiration comes from religion. He noted that the St. James A.M.E. Zion Church in Ithaca which he regularly attends was part of the underground railroad network created by Harriet Tubman to free slaves. Tubman is another African American who inspired him.

"I look up to people who have overcome great odds. My father was like that, and Harriet Tubman was like that."

Looking Toward the Future

Over the past several years, Hickman has become increasingly involved with CSEA. He became inspired by the “Hot Day in February” Rally in Albany two years ago, and said that he will use his “world-class” strength to fight hard for his union members.

"My will to rise up to the occasion should help me as a CSEA leader," he said. "I’m really glad I’m getting a chance to help my fellow union members."

Deadlines announced for submission of proposed changes to CSEA’s Constitution and By-Laws and proposed resolutions to be considered at CSEA’s Annual Delegates Meeting scheduled for Nov. 15 to 19, 1993, in Washington, D.C.

Proposed amendments to CSEA’s Constitution and By-Laws must be submitted at least 90 days prior to the meeting. The deadline for submission of proposed amendments is Aug. 16, 1993.

Proposed resolutions to be considered at the annual meeting must be submitted at least 60 days before the meeting. The deadline for submissions of proposed resolutions is Sept. 15, 1993.

Proposed amendments and proposed resolutions must be submitted on or before the deadline to:

CSEA statewide Secretary Irene Carr
CSEA Headquarters
143 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12210.
CSEA, in conjunction with The Buyer's Edge, a consumer buying service, offers CSEA members a great way to save money on the purchase of major consumer products. The Buyer's Edge is a consumer buying service that negotiates extra discounts and lowest price guarantees on many big ticket products that would not otherwise be available to individual buyers.

**How To Use The Buyer's Edge Program**
Shop around. Determine the exact make, model and style number of the item you want. Then, using a credit card or check, and from the comfort of your home, buy by phone from the participating vendor. Then simply call the appropriate toll-free number listed below and ask the participating Buyer's Edge vendor for their guaranteed lowest price. If book not available, call Car Plan.

**Be prepared to give the CSEA GROUP NUMBER whenever you contact a participating vendor.**

**THE CSEA BUYER'S EDGE GROUP NUMBER IS 1811.**

**Member Protection Service That Works For You**
If you ever receive less than superior treatment with regard to price, delivery or service, immediately speak to the management of the participating vendor. If you don't get satisfactory results, write to:

The Buyer's Edge
1429 Route 22 East
Mountainside, NY 07092

**Important Reminder: When comparison shopping, always be sure you are comparing exactly the same model number, accessories, service arrangements and warranties, and that the quoted price is the complete price, including delivery and taxes. And always be prepared to give the CSEA group number whenever you contact a participating vendor.**

**THE CSEA BUYER'S EDGE GROUP NUMBER IS 1811.**

| **MAJOR APPLIANCES:** | Air conditioners, refrigerators, dehumidifiers, freezers, washers, dryers, ranges, dishwashers, disposal units, microwaves and vacuum cleaners. |
| **TV & VIDEO EQUIPMENT:** | All types of color televisions including big screen, video recorders and video cameras. |
| **AUDIO EQUIPMENT:** | Receivers, turntables, tape decks, speakers, amplifiers, systems, consoles and compact disc players. |
| **EXERCISE EQUIPMENT:** | Rower, universal stationary exercise bike, treadmills, ski machines, free weights and Physicians Scales. |
| **FURNITURE:** | Authorized dealer for over 300 furniture manufacturers. In business since 1940. |
| **LIGHTING:** | Lamps, chandeliers, and sconces, most major quality brands. |
| **LUGGAGE:** | Travel, briefcases, portfolios, attache cases, travel accessories. |
| **PERSONAL COMPUTERS:** | Computers, terminals, monitors, add-on boards, printers, modems, disc drives. Some computer products may be refurbished. Ask for details. |
| **PLIANOS & ORGANS:** | Choose from almost all major brands for home, church or school. (Ask for Otto or Liz) |
| **SEWING MACHINES:** | Singer and other brands. |
| **TEXTYPEWRITERS:** | |
| **TRAVEL:** | Discount on any advertised trip, package, tour charter or cruise - plus FREE trip life insurance on air travel. |

**STOP PAYING RETAIL!!! CALL THE BUYER'S EDGE**

**NORTH NJ (201 & 908) -** 908-248-0055
**rochester area* -** 716-427-8360
**Buffalo NY area* -** 716-838-3345
**All other areas -** 1-800-377-3700

| **QUASAR MICROWAVE** |
| **RCA CAMCORDER** |
| **JVC CAMCORDER** |
| **QUASAR VCR** |
| **SANYO 13" REMOTE COLOR TV** |
| **SYLVANIA 13" REMOTE COLOR TV** |
| **PANASONIC MICROWAVE** |
| **HITACHI VCR** |

**SPECIALS**

| **MAJOR APPLIANCES** | **TV & VIDEO EQUIPMENT** |
| **NORTH NJ (201 & 908)** | **ALL OTHER AREAS** |
| **908/248-0056** | **1-800/377-3700** |

**sku13511**
**178 channels; sleep timer; OSD**
SUGG. RETAIL $229.99 BE PRICE $189.00

**skr1020**
2 head; remote; on-screen display; 178 channels
SUGG. RETAIL $224.00 BE PRICE $188.00

**vtf361**
4 head, hi-fi
SUGG. RETAIL $369.99 BE PRICE $295.00

| **COLORS: (WHITE) ($003)  (WALNUT) ($008)** |
| **COLORS: (WHITE) ($003)  (WALNUT) ($008)** |

**BUFFALO NY AREA* -** 716-635-0755
**DOWNSTATE -** 718-720-3792
**1-800-356-7771"**

| **RCA CAMCORDER** |
| **JVC CAMCORDER** |
| **QUASAR VCR** |
| **SANYO 13" REMOTE COLOR TV** |
| **SYLVANIA 13" REMOTE COLOR TV** |

**STOP PAYING RETAIL!!! CALL THE BUYER'S EDGE**

**North NJ (201 & 908) -** 908-248-0055
**rochester area* -** 716-427-8360
**Buffalo NY area* -** 716-838-3345
**All other areas -** 1-800-377-3700

**sku13511**
**25 button remote; 178 channels; sleep timer**
SUGG. RETAIL $199.00 BE PRICE $182.00

| **COLORS: (WHITE) ($003)  (WALNUT) ($008)** |
| **COLORS: (WHITE) ($003)  (WALNUT) ($008)** |

**BUFFALO NY AREA* -** 716-635-0755
**DOWNSTATE -** 718-720-3792
**1-800-356-7771"**

| **COLORS: (WHITE) ($003)  (WALNUT) ($008)** |
| **COLORS: (WHITE) ($003)  (WALNUT) ($008)** |

**BUFFALO NY AREA* -** 716-635-0755
**DOWNSTATE -** 718-720-3792
**1-800-356-7771"**

| **COLORS: (WHITE) ($003)  (WALNUT) ($008)** |
| **COLORS: (WHITE) ($003)  (WALNUT) ($008)** |

**BUFFALO NY AREA* -** 716-635-0755
**DOWNSTATE -** 718-720-3792
**1-800-356-7771"**

| **COLORS: (WHITE) ($003)  (WALNUT) ($008)** |
| **COLORS: (WHITE) ($003)  (WALNUT) ($008)** |

**BUFFALO NY AREA* -** 716-635-0755
**DOWNSTATE -** 718-720-3792
**1-800-356-7771"**
Fiscal gimmicks have cost members of the state’s retirement system more than $13 billion in recent years, including a loss of $3 billion since 1990 when the state Legislature voted to change the method used to fund the pension system.

That’s the findings of an aptly-named report, “It’s Still Our Money (What’s Left of It),” issued by the AFL-CIO Task Force on Public Employee Pensions. CSEA President Joe McDermott chairs the task force.

The report updates the task force’s 1990 findings on pension funding changes when the Legislature changed from a “pay-as-you-go” system to the current projected method, or pay-as-you-go with a 12-month transition to the schedules.

McDermott criticized the funding changes, saying they amounted to a raid on the pension funds.

“These deferred wages of employees are not a slush fund for elected officials,” McDermott said. “It’s our hard-earned dollars and cents, as much ours as regular paychecks.

CSEA and other public employee unions propose retirees be provided annual cost-of-living adjustments capped at 5 percent as one way to guarantee the funds be used exclusively for the benefit of retirees.

The Common Retirement Fund (CRF), comprised of the State and Local Government Retirement System and the State and Local Police and Fire Retirement System, currently have assets of $53.7 billion. The task force recommends a higher investment return on assets. The fund currently projects a 8.75 percent return, which is unrealistic in today’s marketplace.

AFL-CIO Task Force on Public Employee Pensions charges

Gimmicks cost retirement systems billions

Non-occupational lifetime maximum benefit now available as an option-only provision

Effective April 1 the non-occupational lifetime maximum benefit provision of the Accident and Health Plan (Disability Income Insurance) program available to CSEA members became an option that must be specifically selected and paid for by an additional premium.

A recent review revealed non-occupational accident claims with a lifetime payment maximum were creating a negative impact on the overall Accident and Health Plan. In order to avoid a general premium increase for every policy holder, that benefit provision is now available only as an option.

Members who wish to retain the non-occupational lifetime maximum benefit must select the optional coverage and pay an additional 20 percent premium.

Premiums will not increase for members who do not select this option and their benefits for a non-occupational accident will now have a 12-month maximum, the same as the current maximum for an illness related disability.

If you have questions concerning the Accident and Health Plan, call Jardine Group Services at 1-800-220-7059.

CSEA has negotiated a shorter workweek, safer upgraded uniforms and additional promotional opportunities for airport firefighters in the union’s Division of Military and Naval Affairs (DMNA) bargaining unit. The changes were effective March 25.

“These improvements will enable the firefighters to spend more quality and leisure time with their families without any reduction in their base pay levels,” CSEA President Joe McDermott said. “And they will also have more chances for promotions and safer equipment on the job as well.”

The changes, in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding reached between CSEA, DMNA and the Governor’s Office of Employee Relations, covers more than 100 firefighters assigned to CSEA-represented air bases in the state.

Under terms of the agreement, the workweek for airport firefighters has been reduced by 19 hours, from 72 hours to 53 hours, chopped the bi-weekly pay period from 144 hours to 106 hours. The firefighters workweek was last reduced in 1988.

The state has agreed to offer the first 20 or so promotional opportunities across the state created as a result of the schedule change to current firefighters in the bargaining unit who meet the job eligibility criteria. Promotional opportunities thereafter will be governed by Article 28 of the CSEA/DMNA contract.

Also, uniforms worn by firefighters will be upgraded in accordance with the National Fire Protection Act standards. As part of the agreement, the pre-shift briefing pay for firefighters was discontinued effective March 25.

Accruals for annual, personal and sick leave and holiday compensation are now pro-rated to reflect the new 53-hour workweek. Concerns arising as a result of the new work schedules will be addressed in the local labor/management forum.

Anthony A. Campione, CSEA deputy director of contract administration, met recently in Albany with DMNA fire chiefs to review the new arrangements and pave the way for a smooth transition to the schedules.
A member says thank you

After months of difficulty with management and finally victory, Walt Smith, new president of the CSEA Albany County Highway Unit, took time to thank the people who stood by him during his long ordeal.

Last summer, Smith disagreed with Albany County Highway Department management, something not out of the ordinary in labor-management relations in Albany’s hilltowns.

This time it was over the assignment of a simple lawn-mowing job to the wrong title. As shop steward, Smith protested. Management, not wanting to admit Smith was right, assigned Smith to the job as punishment.

Smith agreed, but told management he had a bad knee so they’d have to get a replacement soon. The discussion escalated, and the next thing Smith knew, he had been sent home on suspension. Later, he was told he was fired. That began his long battle back.

But Smith had more trouble — he suffered a heart attack while out of work. The battles began to take their toll. Money problems piled up, medical bills piled even higher, stress added to the burden. And then there was the long-awaited arbitration concerning his job.

But all along the way neighbors, friends, even strangers gave Smith and his family help. The hilltown groups and his own DPW Westerlo Division held fund raisers to fight back the creditors; family members made donations from their limited savings.

And CSEA led the fight to win back Smith’s job. Then after months of worry, after nearly losing everything the verdict was in: return to work and be made whole by the county.

Now is the time to say thanks.

CSEA ALBANY COUNTY HIGHWAY UNIT President Walt Smith, right, is welcomed back to work by former Unit President Jim Bashwinger.

Delaware County workers ratify new contract

DELHI - Nearly six months ago, a large group of CSEA Delaware County Unit members were pounding the pavement outside a county Board of Supervisors meeting, demanding a fair and decent wage increase in their next contract.

Now those workers got what they asked for after overwhelmingly voting to ratify a new two-year contract. The new contract guarantees raises and increments for each year.

The CSEA Delaware County Local 813 members had been working under their former contract that expired in December 1991, which was continued by legislative imposition without any raises for 1992.

The agreement also left their health insurance benefits intact, except for a slight increase in prescription drug co-payments. The union and the county also agreed to review issues related to health insurance cost containment. CSEA Delaware County Local 813 President Karin Eggleston said she was pleased with the agreement.

“It’s nice to know that our show of force paid off in getting a decent contract,” she said. “After a year of sacrifice, our members certainly deserved the raises they got in this contract.”

Whistleblower wins hearing over firing

ALBANY - CSEA Saratoga County Local 846 member Jack Dennis, fired after he blew the whistle on alleged safety violations in the county's Public Works Department, will get a “good faith” hearing.

Dennis, a maintenance worker for 17 years, was fired a year after he spoke out about alleged safety and health problems, including improper asbestos removal by untrained county workers without safety equipment.

CSEA took his case to state Supreme Court, arguing that he was fired for his whistle-blowing. Justice Jan H. Plumadore ruled in the union's favor, agreeing there were possible violations of whistleblower protections. The judge ordered a hearing on a variety of issues surrounding the manner in which Dennis was fired.

CSEA is preparing to represent Dennis in the good faith hearing.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS

Rensselaer County jail uprising

Enough computers, but not enough people, training

TROY - CSEA Rensselaer County Sheriffs Unit members hope the recent riot and the brief escape of two convicts from the new $20 million county jail, which opened in late 1992, have made it clear that computers cannot replace properly trained and equipped corrections officers and deputy sheriffs.

Apparently the message is getting through. Since the riot, which resulted in $50,000 in damages, Sheriff Daniel Keating asked for 20 additional officers, more equipment and training funding, and the county legislature and county executive seem receptive.

The CSEA unit had campaigned for years for a new, safe jail while operating in one of the oldest and most unsafe facilities in the state.

However, when funds for transitional training and necessary equipment were cut from the jail's budget, the members and CSEA leaders were concerned. They worried that county management outside the facility was placing too much trust in the facility's new computer technology. At the same time, they saw too little funding for the real security backbone of the jail: corrections officers inside the jail and deputy sheriffs outside the facility.

Then, on Valentine's Day, the facility experienced a sudden inmate uprising that turned into a riot and provided cover for two escaping convicts.

Thanks to the quick response of all corrections personnel and all available road patrol staff, the uprising was calmed without one hostage being taken or one life being lost. Both escapees were later apprehended.

In a three-hour labor-management meeting with Sheriff Keating, CSEA Unit President Mark Mann discussed specifics of the uprising and a laundry list of other issues including the safety of sheriff's sub-stations and a lack of training and equipment for the correctional staff.

Mann said he was optimistic that many of the union's concerns would be addressed shortly.

CSEA views the steps taken by Rensselaer County Executive John Buono and the Rensselaer County Legislature to be positive.

"We expect the co-employers - the county executive and sheriff plus the legislature - to now see the importance of providing the front line law enforcement personnel all of the materials they need to do the job in a professional and safe manner," CSEA Capital Region President C. Allen Mead said.

County executive threatens imposition

Rockland County members protest impasse

NEW CITY -- CSEA officials say Rockland County Executive John Grant apparently has money for political appointments but won't give county employees a decent contract.

Grant has threatened to impose terms and conditions of employment for one year on 2,100 CSEA-represented county workers. The imposition had not been placed on the county legislature's agenda as this edition of The Public Sector went to press.

The employees recently overwhelmingly rejected a fact finder's recommendation. The employees have been without a contract since Jan. 1, 1992.

"It's business as usual for Grant's political cronies and appointments," said Rockland County Unit President Caroline Osinga. "He has money for what he wants, but not for the workers on the front lines." She said she's not convinced the county has no money for pay increases.

Photo at right shows angry CSEA-represented county workers participating in a demonstration protesting the impasse.

April 1993 19
CSEA wins $29,000 for two in Erie County

BUFFALO - Thanks to CSEA, two Erie County CSEA members have won almost $30,000 in two arbitration cases.

CSEA went to arbitration in both cases after the county refused to acknowledge Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) advisory decisions in favor of Jim Tighe and David Stoltzman, CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Jim Gleason said.

Tighe, now a highway systems technician, received $18,000 for working out of title since May of 1988, when he was a senior engineering assistant in the Department of Public Works.

In 1986 Tighe started setting up a computer management system that became more complex as he helped county civil engineers with road construction plans.

"I initially trained myself, and continued to take computer courses to stay on top of advances," Tighe said. "After a while, I was performing work at a much higher level than my pay grade. My department supported me in seeking a higher pay grade, but the budget department continued to refuse. We finally got an advisory decision, but the county ignored it. I didn't think anything was going to happen until Mike Bogulski (unit president) and Jim Gleason got on the case and gave it the big push."

Tighe has moved up four pay grades.

Stoltzman, now retired from the Department of Social Services, received $11,800 in back pay after CSEA won an arbitration decision that found he was working out of title when he supervised workers.

Stoltzman filed for early retirement with county-offered incentives last year.

"But because he was on sick leave, the calculations to determine his exact compensation were complicated and caused the delay that is now over."

"I want to thank CSEA and especially (now-retired Shop Steward) Charlie Carpenter for seeing this through," he said.

CSEA, state agree to give laid-off Albany DPW workers job help

ALBANY - Through the efforts of CSEA and with the cooperation of the Governor's Office of Employee Relations, Albany County highway workers facing layoffs will have access to the CSEA State Employee Services Office (ESO).

The ESO system, located throughout the state, provides outplacement services to laid-off state workers, ranging from resume preparation to job search assistance in both the public and private sectors.

"With the county still refusing to extend the deadline for the layoffs of the remaining workers, CSEA is hopeful that this additional service in finding vacant positions will be as valuable a service to our local government members as it has been to our state members," CSEA Capital Region President C. Allen Mead said.

CSEA Albany County Local President Jack Röhl will be liaison between the Albany County Committee, which is also seeking to place the targeted workers, and the CSEA/NYS program.

"If this effort is successful and runs smoothly I hope the state would consider offering it to our CSEA Local government members throughout the state," Mead said.

East Rochester school employees choose CSEA

EAST ROCHESTER - Non-instructional employees of the East Rochester Union Free School District have enthusiastically chosen CSEA as their union.

The 34-member unit voted 20 to 8 for CSEA in a representation election, ousting the National Education Association (NEA).

"We were not pleased with NEA because we were always second fiddle to the teachers in negotiations, grievances, everything. We felt abandoned most of the time, and their representative paid all the attention to teacher issues," Unit President Rose Correa said.

"But Tom Mullen (CSEA organizer) showed us how CSEA represents a lot of workers just like us, and has a track record that we can admire and anticipate working for us."

The new CSEA unit is comprised of full- and part-time cleaners, maintenance mechanics, maintenance, cafeteria and secretarial/clerical workers.

"I'm sure CSEA will be a much better union for us," Correa said.
Privatization is the wrong medicine

POMONA - Rockland County lawmakers may regret their decision to privatize the county hospital's pharmacy.

Thanks to vigilant nurses who work for the county's hospital, patients were prevented from taking the wrong medications which were misfilled by Med-World, the company the county hired last year to run the pharmacy.

CSEA actively opposed the privatization of the pharmacy and warned county lawmakers to reject the move.

According to a recent report, the company has had 37 "serious dispensing errors" since last July.

One complaint has surfaced recently: Med-World has been late in providing medications, has made inappropriate renewals of medications and has problems with medications being unavailable.

The company president, who admitted publicly that "some mistakes were made," agreed to some changes, including the addition of a "kind of contract manager."

"CSEA's committee objected to the proposal for many reasons, including job security, employee morale and community safety. And those issues only begin to scratch the surface. The committee believes a private agency can't begin to provide the service and expertise of the current county employees."

"The variance is approved for the Ulster County Probation Department it will only be a matter of time before the contracting out of probation services spreads to other counties."

This means it will not be uncommon to find trained peace officers being used as "contract managers" while probationers will be supervised by workers who are not authorized to execute a warrant or even to take a probationer into custody.

The committee is urging all probation officers and those who work with these professional employees communicate their opposition to this variance to Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives Director Edmund Wutzer, DPCA, 60 So. Pearl St., Albany, New York 12207-1595.

Legislature Chairperson Bruce Levine, meanwhile, has called for a review of the county's contract with the company.

CSEA Unit President Caroline Osinga said private contractors do not belong in public service.

"This just proves that privatization is not a workable situation in government," Osinga said. "The job could be better performed by dedicated employees who are not there to make a profit."
LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS

A 'shot in the arm' for the health of 45,000 county residents

Jefferson County members winning war over Meningitis

WATERTOWN — Though few people around the state are aware of it, there’s a war going on in Jefferson County. A war, that is, against bacterial meningitis, and it’s being waged, and won, by CSEA members.

Meningococcal meningitis, the official name of the disease, is a severe bacterial infection of the bloodstream and the lining covering the brain and spinal cord. It can cause chronic damage to the nervous system and occasionally death. Since last fall, eight cases were reported in the county, two of which were fatal.

To stop its spread, county health officials sent in their best weapons to battle the disease — the CSEA Jefferson County Local 823 members in the county Public Health Service.

45,000 immunized

And battle they did. Within two weeks, the workers, with help from volunteers, rolled up the sleeves of more than 45,000 county residents between the ages of two and 29 and administered a vaccine to stop the further spread of the disease.

Registered Nurse Donna Grant said the fight was exhausting.

“It certainly was a lot of work, involving a lot of people and a lot of effort, but very worthwhile,” she said. “It was very demanding, not just the clinics themselves but setting up for them and tearing down afterwards. We worked 10 to 12 hour days.”

CSEA member Judy Proven, a typist for the county Public Health Service, was almost buried in paperwork at the clinics. Her function was to fill out immunization cards and help organize the flow of human traffic. She said the clinics were really busy at the local schools.

“They were really busy. They would bring in busloads of kids and as soon as one left, another would come in.”

Public Health Nurse Bernice Zehr credited all the volunteers, both from the community and from health departments of neighboring counties, for helping the clinics run smoothly.

“We had a lot of cooperative effort from everyone involved,” Zehr said.

A team effort

“Nurses by their very profession are used to working together. This outbreak definitely made that happen. It was a team effort,” Grant said.

CSEA member Patti May, also a public health nurse, said the team handled the clinics very professionally, despite the large volume of people getting immunized.

“We would normally do 200 kids at a regular school clinic, divided between a group of nurses. At these clinics I was doing hundreds a day personally. After a while, I just couldn’t keep track.”

In total, the workers held clinics at seven schools and six sites in the community.

For anyone who missed those clinics, the CSEA members continue to give the meningitis vaccinations at their regular weekly immunization clinic, but it appears they have stopped the disease before a serious outbreak occurred.

R.N. DONNA GRANT, a member of CSEA Local 823, has a vaccination ready for seven-year-old Tommy Hines of Adams.

Meningococcal meningitis

(spinal meningitis, cerebrospinal fever, meningococcemia)

What is meningococcal meningitis?

Meningococcal meningitis is a severe bacterial infection of the bloodstream and meninges, a thin lining covering the brain and spinal cord. It is a relatively rare disease and usually occurs as a single isolated event. Clusters of cases or outbreaks are rare in the United States.

Who gets meningococcal meningitis?

Anyone can get meningococcal meningitis, but it is more common in infants and children.

How is the germ that causes this type of meningitis spread?

The meningococcus germ is spread by direct close contact with nose or throat discharges of an infected person. Many people carry this particular germ in their nose and throat without any signs of illness, while others may develop serious symptoms.

What are the symptoms?

Although most people exposed to the meningococcus germ do not become seriously ill, some may develop fever, headache, vomiting, stiff neck and a rash. Up to 25 percent of patients who recover may have chronic damage to the nervous system. The disease is occasionally fatal.
Where water is concerned, Safe is always better

MAYVILLE - The supply of good, clean, safe drinking water in Chautauqua County is something the residents don’t have to give a lot of thought to, thanks to the work of Bill Göllnitz and fellow workers in the county’s Department of Environmental Health.

But Göllnitz, a water resource specialist since 1988, is looking to the future. He’s exploring the area for more safe water sites and keeping an eye out for any environmental or ecological dangers that could affect water source safety or quality.

Göllnitz has helped the county receive more than $250,000 in grants that have upgraded the department’s ability to survey, regulate and calculate the data needed in staying on top of water quality and safety.

"There are several sources of water in this county," Göllnitz said. "These include groundwater, wells and Lake Erie. The county doesn’t own these resources, but regulates them according to federal guidelines.

"Most people don’t fully understand the importance of hydrology or water resource studies, but state and federal agencies are focusing more and more on protection and preservation of water resources," he said. "In less than five years, the federal Safe Drinking Water Act will come up for reauthorization for renewal, and regulations will be tightened. We can expect mandates that will require an in-place protection program for every community."

-Göllnitz

To comply with those mandates, the Chautauqua department will use a state-of-the-art computer and digitizing table that makes it possible to calculate and record the complex data.

Göllnitz recently shared an award for the best paper presented to a nationwide water resources conference for smaller public water systems. The paper, co-written with researcher Barbara Kittle of SUNY Fredonia, described methods for public water treatment systems to improve plant efficiency to comply with more stringent national water quality standards.

Göllnitz said he and co-workers are awaiting several research grants, expected this spring, that will help continue the work they are doing to make the county’s water supply as safe as can be.
To your good health
...See Page 22

CSEA MEMBER
Bernice Zehr, a Jefferson County public health nurse, gives a vaccination to two-year-old Watertown resident Alisa Hamm as her mother watches.

FIGHT For The Living
Workers Memorial Day
April 28