In Memory of
Florence A. Pike
Phyllis K. Caslin
Denise Miller Van Amburg
Nancy J. Wheeler

See Page 3
Royal Bragin scholarships awarded

MINEOLA - The CSEA Nassau County Probation Department Unit recently awarded scholarships to two family members of unit members.

The second annual presentation of the Royal Bragin Memorial Scholarships for continuing education took place at the Probation Department offices recently. The scholarships were created by the union to commemorate the memory of Supervisor Royal Bragin, a Probation Department employee for 20 years.

Unit President Jane D'Amico said Bragin had a distinguished career in the department and was also a dedicated member of the CSEA board.

The two $500 scholarships were presented to Elizabeth Buckley Colgan, daughter of Probation Officer Helen Buckley, and to David Scott Thomas, the grandson of Transcribing Machine Operator Mildred Guarini.

Colgan attends SUNY at Farmingdale where she expects to receive her degree in science in 1993.

Thomas attends Yale University, studying English. He expects to receive his bachelor’s degree in 1994.

In Orange County, member issues

MT. HOPE - What to was to have been the beginning of a new life for two families has turned into a nightmare for two young children. Now CSEA members are being asked to help.

The niece of CSEA member Margaret Trentacosta was one of two children badly burned in a propane gas explosion.

Bridgett, 7, and Kelli, 6, were each burned over 70 percent of their bodies. When the explosion occurred, the two girls were playing in the house that Bridgett’s mother and Kelli’s father had rented for the newly blended family that includes 11-month-old Keelin, Bridgett’s mother, Jessica Everett, and the baby escaped serious injury.

At the Westchester County Medical Center Burn Unit, the two have undergone numerous painful procedures to keep them alive. Kelli also suffered a broken arm and pneumonia. Although doctors say that Bridgett is stable, the prognosis for both children is cautious. The beginning of skin graft procedures has started for both girls, but each operation puts the children at risk for serious infection.

For now, the future holds hope, but the family has been devastated by expenses that are not covered by insurance, including the cost of a motel for the parents in Westchester County and transportation to and from the hospital.

Trentacosta, Ms. Everett’s sister, is hoping CSEA members will open their hearts and help the family. Fund-raising efforts in the Orange County area have raised some money over the last month.

Trentacosta, a six year employee and account clerk for the Ramapo Catskill Library, is a member of Local 730.

Anyone wishing to make a donation can send their contribution to the Bridgett and Kelli Burn Relief Foundation, c/o Middletown Mazda, 200 Dolson Ave., Middletown, NY 10940.

A plea for burn victims

Niagara County CSEA member wins thousands over out-of-title work

LOCCPORT — A CSEA Niagara County Unit member won nearly $6,000 in back pay after the union pursued an out-of-title complaint.

Kari Chorazy, a physical therapist at Mount View Nursing Home in Niagara County, was hired in June 1991. She did the work of the the senior physical therapist because the job was vacant.

Although she had all the qualifications for the job, Chorazy was not appointed. After CSEA filed an arbitration, the county settled and agreed to pay the physical therapist more than $6,000 in out-of-title back pay.
A tragedy in Watkins Glen

By Mark M. Kotzin
CSEA Communications Associate

WATKINS GLEN - Grief, pain, horror, shock, disbelief and fear were the most common emotions expressed throughout CSEA and Schuyler County over the recent tragic deaths of four Schuyler County CSEA Local 849 members, killed simply because they were doing their jobs. Killed were Phyllis K. Caslin, Florence A. Pike, Denise Miller Van Amburg and Nancy J. Wheeler.

The four women, three of whom were CSEA officers, were killed on Oct. 15 when a man carrying a semiautomatic handgun walked into the second floor offices of the county Department of Social Services (DSS) Support Collection Unit where they worked, shooting each of them.

The gunman, identified by police as John Miller of Ohio, then turned the gun on himself and committed suicide in front of police. Miller was reportedly angry at the support collection unit for tracking him down and garnishing his wages for missed child support payments. He had been arrested more than six times in the past 20 years for failing to pay child support for his daughter, now 26.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, a small community was left grieving. Families, co-workers, bosses, friends and union leaders were all shocked over the senseless killings. CSEA President Joe McDermott expressed his sorrow, noting that unfortunately it was not uncommon for violence to be directed at social services workers.

"Everyone at CSEA mourns the deaths of the Schuyler County Social Services workers," McDermott said. "Unfortunately, this senseless tragedy makes clear the constant danger that social services workers, and many other public employees, face on the job every day.

"CSEA will honor their memory by continuing to make every job site in New York safer."

CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore echoed those thoughts, saying that CSEA had "lost some of our best and brightest in an instant." He met almost immediately with the County Legislature, CSEA Occupational Safety and Health Specialist John Bieger, CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Merwin Stevens and Local 849 President Sue Brill to address the union's concerns. They discussed measures to limit building access, additional building security and counseling for employees.

The legislature was "extremely receptive" to the union's input and brought employees in to hear their concerns and make them aware of available counseling. Several area clergy were also present to help the employees deal with their feelings.

According to Local President Brill, a DSS employment coordinator, those feelings ranged from pain to fear. "We're feeling grief for the people we lost, the fear for the people that are left, and the anxiety over how we can prevent this from ever happening again," Brill said. "There isn't a person in our department who hasn't been threatened at one time or another."

A few days after the tragedy a host of CSEA staff and officers helped pay tribute to the victims and their families in a community-wide memorial service in Watkins Glen.

"We must use this opportunity to not only reach out to one another in our time of sorrow, but must also reach out to the other counties and states around us, to prevent things like this from occurring again," Moore told the gathering of families and friends in a packed auditorium. "We must not let ourselves remain victims of this tragedy. It won't be easy, but we must support each other and move on. As long as we remember the good things about our union sisters, they will always be with us. They will always live on in our memories," he said.

During the memorial service, Moore presented Legislature Chair Angeline Franzese with a plaque from CSEA, accepting the memories of the workers. Franzese said she was thankful for the union's support. "We appreciate the support that CSEA has been to both our employees and our county government in our time of need. Together, we will hopefully have a better place for everybody in the future," she said.

Local President Brill said that the tragedy was especially hard on the union, because Caslin, Pike and Wheeler were so active. "They didn't just do their jobs - they reached out to their fellow employees through their union activism," she said.

"We remember them fondly. Florence Pike, she said, was someone who loved to travel and read. As a former local president, Brill said Florence lead the union through "some of our toughest fights. The union was something she felt very strongly about."

Phyllis Caslin, Brill said, put everyone at ease. "In a job that you naturally make people angry, she was just the kindest person. If anyone could do the job without making people angry, it was her. She was a quiet woman, but had tremendous strength."

Denise Van Amburg, Brill said, was well liked throughout the building. "It's hard when you're relatively new, but she would always reach out to people," she said. "Even if it was just to say hello, she was always smiling."

Brill said sadly that she probably missed Nancy Wheeler most of all in the aftermath of the tragedy, because "she would've been our loudest voice in a situation like this to fight to protect the rights of those of us who are left." She characterized Wheeler as someone who wasn't afraid of anybody, and who would "stand up" for her co-workers no matter what the consequences.
Nassau County still CSEA country

Members of Nassau County Local 830 have overwhelmingly reaffirmed CSEA as their labor union of choice.

Members voted to retain CSEA as their union by a margin of nearly 2-to-1 in a secret ballot union representation election overseen by the American Arbitration Association (AAA).

CSEA has represented Local 830, the largest jurisdiction in the union’s local government division, for a quarter of a century.

"Now we can get back to the bargaining table and work at hammering out a new contract for our county members," Local 830 President Rita Wallace noted.

In Onondaga County,

CSEA fights layoffs to bitter end

SYRACUSE - Despite urgent pleas and a strong political action effort from CSEA members in Onondaga County, the union was unable to persuade the county legislature to reduce layoffs called for in the county budget.

Instead, more than 350 county employees will get their pink slips less than three weeks before Christmas.

The bad news came after several marathon legislative sessions, designed to hammer out a budget agreement different than the one proposed by County Executive Nick Pirro. CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore spoke in a public hearing before the legislature to reduce the layoffs by utilizing the county’s more than $21 million surplus.

Moore based his testimony on a review of the county’s proposed budget by CSEA Budget Analyst Kathy Albowicz. Moore said there are better ways to cut the budget, that layoffs didn’t work, and that the county had a responsibility to taxpayers not to cut services unless absolutely necessary. With such a large surplus, the cuts were "irresponsible and unnecessary," he said.

Before the public hearing, Moore joined nearly 400 county workers and supporters in a informational picket to spread the word about the county’s large surplus. The workers marched around the county Civic Center and gave out fact sheets to passers by.

Moore and local officers spearheaded an intense political action effort having CSEA members call legislators to urge passage of the CSEA plan. Despite this, the legislators could not agree on a budget plan by the deadline, so the county executive’s budget was automatically adopted.

CSEA Onondaga County Local 834 Acting President Joe Alcare said the union will continue to fight the cuts. CSEA is also planning to file an improper practice charge claiming that some employees to be laid off have been targeted because of their union activism, noting that an investigation would.

NEARLY 300 CSEA members protested layoffs at an Onondaga County budget hearing be conducted regarding charges that workers were improperly targeted for layoffs due to union activities.

Services to be cut include the county’s dental bureau and bookmobile program, along with significant reductions in the county’s social services highway and correction departments.
In dangerous conditions, Rockland workers are Forced to face rabies

By Anita Manley
CSEA Communications Associate

NEW CITY - Some workers in Rockland County are being forced to face the deadly rabies virus as they hack off the heads of animals in primitive conditions with improper tools and little or no protective equipment.

Determined to end the potentially risky practice, CSEA is fighting with every resource available. The union has gone to court to force the county to stop ordering the environmental health aides (EHAs) to do the decapitations. The state Department of Labor has already inspected the worksite based on CSEA's complaint; its report is pending.

And CSEA has filed a grievance because the practice violates the safety and health clause in the contract.

The EHAs decapitate the animals suspected of having rabies so the skulls can be sent to the state Department of Health labs in Albany for analysis. CSEA is fighting the assignments because they are not in the EHAs' job description; worse, rabies is easily contracted through contact with infected animals, and the conditions under which the employees perform the work are unsanitary and dangerous, CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Annette Raetz said.

CSEA Unit President Caroline Osinga and Raetz met with the county health commissioner in August, but made little progress.

"We said that to have EHAs perform the work is an inappropriate and unacceptable work practice, that this was not part of the job description and that problems had not been properly addressed by the immediate supervisors," Raetz said. "We cited lack of training and personal protective gear."

Most New York state counties use veterinarians to perform the decapitations. Rockland County officials said they don't hire one because of budget constraints, Raetz said.

The EHAs decapitate animals in a 15-by-18 foot fenced-in area behind an animal shelter. They are expected to use tools such as pruning shears, hacksaws and hunting knives. They previously used an ax. The county recently issued the EHAs new knives, a sharpening stone and a cutting block.

Rather than a sterile stainless steel table, the EHAs bend over a cement slab that doubles as a door stoop to decapitate the animals. Next to the slab is a bucket filled with animal carcasses. Nearby is a crematorium to incinerate the animal remains. The bloody tools are stored in a rusted locker.

After CSEA complained about the unsafe conditions, county officials gave the workers a plastic welder's helmet to protect them from being splashed with fluids from the animals. However, they should also wear protective clothing, according to state health standards. Employees have a bottle of bleach to use as a disinfectant, but there is no running water in the immediate area and they must wash up in a kitchen sink inside the shelter.

Prior to August 1991, a public health technician performed the decapitations. When he retired, the county assigned the job to the EHAs. Because of the present rabies outbreak, the EHAs have sent more than 230 skulls for testing this year.

Veterinarians should do decapitations, public health veterinarian Dr. John Debbie told Raetz. Training and safety precautions are necessary, he said. A sharp, knife-like instrument should be used in decapitation, he said. If a veterinarian is not doing the work, those who are doing it should at least get instruction from a veterinarian.

Heads should not be severed by chopping or sawing. Debbie emphasized.

Only after CSEA made the dangerous conditions public did the county finally agreed to have a veterinarian train the EHAs.

"The county health commissioner is justifiably concerned with the public health issue of rabies, but his concern does not appear to extend to the health and safety of his employees," Raetz said. "We intend to issue personal invitations to the members of the County Legislature to tour the facility."

They are expected to use tools such as pruning shears, hacksaws and hunting knives.
After 24 years on the job, Wheelchair doesn't hold him back

By Anita Manley
CSEA Communications Associate

Architects of the Americans with Disabilities Act need only look to the Town of Newburgh and police dispatcher Ray Tweed for guidance in enforcing laws protecting disabled workers.

A victim of polio, Tweed has been confined to a wheelchair since he was 19. When he first came to work as a dispatcher for the police department in 1969, the police station did not even have a ramp.

"I was running a nurses registry with the wife of the police chief," Tweed said. "When the Chief needed a dispatcher, she recommended me."

He started with a one day trial. "He told me to see if I liked it, and I stayed for eight hours. I've been here ever since."

 Makeshift ramps were constructed so Tweed could maneuver his wheelchair into work. A new police building fully accessible and equipped for the disabled. But more important is the caring attitude of his co-workers.

"We have a beautiful relationship here," Tweed said. "My co-workers are my friends. I don't feel handicapped here. They're like my family."

Recently town police officers obtained a generator for Tweed's respirator in case of a power failure.

Town officials recognized Tweed's dedication to his job in 1990, presenting him with the Republican Man of the Year Award at a banquet in his honor. He also received awards from the Police Benevolent Association and Police Chief John "Teny" Kulisek.

The 24-year employee says he doesn't plan to retire any time soon. "I don't know what I would do," he said.

AFTER MORE THAN TWO DECADES as a police dispatcher, Ray Tweed doesn't plan to retire in the near future. "I don't know what I would do" in retirement, he says.

Monroe County Unit cautious, optimistic on 1993 county budget

ROCHESTER — CSEA Monroe County Unit of CSEA Local 828 was prepared for the worst when the 1993 proposed Monroe County budget came out.

But so far, their early preparations appear to have warded off serious threats of layoffs and privatization.

"I'm cautiously optimistic," Unit President Flo Tripi said. "It looks like all our services are funded, but contracting out can happen at any time. We have to be on our toes."

The Monroe County Executive ran for office last year on a platform that called for contracting out of county services, CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Karen Spies said. But after CSEA launched a major campaign to reduce hundreds of proposed layoffs earlier this year, he apparently learned his lesson.

"The county administration is starting to realize from its initial efforts that contracting out is just not feasible," she said. "They're starting to realize they have to work with their employees."

The unit is still studying the budget, but so far it looks as if 19 CSEA-represented jobs may be added, Spies said. The county had originally talked of contracting out its new landfill, but the low bid for the project came from the county itself, she said.

But both Spies and Tripi said the preliminary picture could change and they plan to keep a close eye on the budgetary process.

"On the surface everything looks good," Tripi said. "But I don't think we can let down our guard just yet."
Public pride, not private profits

The drive to privatize public services is a growing threat to CSEA members and all public employees in New York.

Privatization or contracting out is literally a sell-out of government's responsibility to the taxpayers. It is a political quick fix that can lead to a loss of service, loss of accountability and increased costs.

The only real beneficiary of privatization is the private contractor who profits at the public's expense. At the same time the likelihood of corruption and other abuses increases.

Giving government work over to private companies is not a new thing. Long ago governments hired private mercenary navies. These ships were known as privateers, but we remember them as pirates.

CSEA is going to make sure the public understands the similarity between the pirates of yesteryear and the corporations that want to plunder the public till today.

This will not be an easy fight. Some of the country's wealthiest and most powerful corporations are out to take over public services. They see it as an easy way to make money.

These companies will try to sell the idea to politicians as an easy way to eliminate "headaches" in difficult areas of responsibility.

The truth is however, that the difficult problems of government don't go away. Elected officials are responsible for solving those problems.

CSEA will work through the labor-management process to help elected officials improve the delivery of public services.

This approach is best for our members and the general public. Public employees are on the front line delivering services under the most difficult conditions. We know how to make government work.

If government officials are serious about improving services they will tap into the know-how of CSEA's members.

The choice is a clear one. Dedicated public employees who are on the job 24 hours a day, seven days a week doing some of the toughest jobs imaginable. Or privateers looking to make a quick buck and improve a corporation's quarterly financial statement.

CSEA will speak out on behalf of the public employees and in opposition to the privateers.

Public pride, not private profits! That is our message and we will make sure it is heard.
Kelly Fund aids students

CSEA has announced the winners of the J.J. Kelly Scholarships for 1992. The 1992 winners of the $1,000 scholarships are:

- Renee Ann Hadley of Boston, N.Y., the daughter of the late David J. Hadley, who was a CSEA member employed at the Eden Junior-Senior High School at the time of his death. Renee plans to attend Herkimer Community College.
- Kristen A. Schoen of Derby, the daughter of Joseph E. Schoen who was disabled through his work with the state Department of Transportation. Kristen plans to attend St. Francis College in Brooklyn.

In addition to these scholarships, the Kelly Scholarship Fund will be used to increase awards to the 1991 McDonough Scholarship winners by $300; increase awards to the 1992 Flaumenbaum Scholarship winners by $250; and increase the 1992 McDonough Scholarship awards by $500. The Kelly scholarships are given in memory of an attorney who represented CSEA. Since the fund completed its original mission of helping Mr. Kelly’s children complete their education, the fund is used for scholarships awarded to the children of CSEA members who have died or were permanently disabled on the job. At times, the fund also supplements other CSEA scholarships.

Central Region helps fire victim

UTICA — CSEA Central Region activists recently came together to work on a relief effort for a fellow activist.

At the region’s recent fall conference in Utica, regional activists brought furniture, clothing and money to help CSEA Oswego County Local 838 activist Jeannette Engle, who lost her house and all her belongings in a devastating fire. Fortunately, Engle and her three children escaped harm. While activists worked to fill a truck with furniture and other household goods, the regional Executive Board collected more than $1,000 for Engle’s family.

Region President Jim Moore passed the donation along to Local 838 President Charlotte Adkins, who offered thanks on Engle’s behalf. More than $500 was also collected at a recent board of directors meeting in Albany, Moore said.

CSEA members wishing to help out can send donations to: Jeannette Engle, c/o CSEA Central Region Office, 6596 Kirkville Road, East Syracuse, NY 13057.

EAP hiring program representatives

The state Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is looking for EAP program representatives to serve in various areas of the state.

Requirements include three years of EAP experience and experience in making group presentations.

For more information, contact EAP Director Jim Sipes at 518-457-9381. Resumes can be sent to: Sandra DeMoe, program administrator, Office of Employee Relations, 2nd Floor, Core 1, Swan Street Building, Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223.

Summary of September CSEA Board meeting

In official actions at the September meeting, the Board:

- Adopted a budget for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1;
- Approved a tentative agreement with the New York State Association of Health Plans; and
- Authorized full health insurance benefit to new employees with at least 20 years of service and provided contingent coverage when such employees find alternate employment prior to full retirement.

The Public Sector is an award winner again, taking two awards in the International Labor Communications Association competition.

INDEX

Page 9
- The Public Sector is an award winner again, taking two awards in the International Labor Communications Association competition.

Pages 10 and 11
- Pride, not private profits, is CSEA’s cry as it fights privatization across the state.

Page 12
- New York state’s tax structure favors the wealthy, and the gap between rich and poor is growing. And state tuberculosis tests may have given false results.

Page 13
- November is Native American Heritage Month. And if you have a legislative suggestion for CSEA’s Legislative and Political Action Department, here’s how to let us know.

Page 14
- An important CSEA benefit: The Buyer’s Edge.
The Public Sector has again been named a multiple-award winning publication in an international journalism contest. The latest awards earned by CSEA's official publication were won in the International Labor Communications Association annual journalistic awards contest for publications issued during 1991. The Public Sector was recognized for "best use of graphics" for a display page in the September 1991 edition and for "best front page" for the cover of the February 18, 1991 edition. The award-winning page featured a photograph of the "Hot Day in February" union rally that attracted 20,000 public workers to Albany to protest proposed state budget cuts.

CSEA's official publication has been a multiple-award winner every year the publication has been entered in the International Labor Communications Association's annual journalistic awards contest.

Portrait of the Great American Investor

You can tell by looking at him that he believes in working hard. And he expects his investments to do the same. That's why he puts his money in U.S. Savings Bonds.

From Main Street to Wall Street, people all over America are discovering that Bonds have changed. And they're now the Great American Investment. It's easy to see why. When held for five years or more, Bonds pay competitive rates, like money market accounts. So you make the most of your money, without having to work at it.

Plus, Bonds are free from state and local income tax. What's more, they're easy to buy. You can purchase Bonds at most banks or through payroll savings at work.

Whether you're investing $25 or $5,000, buying U.S. Savings Bonds today is one of the smartest moves you can make. Now that Bonds pay a competitive return, it's easy to become a Great American Investor. Find out more, call anytime 1-800 US BONDS.
CSEA instrumental in Brookhaven saving millions by not privatizing public projects

BROOKHAVEN — CSEA has been instrumental in saving the Long Island Town of Brookhaven millions of dollars by convincing officials that contracting out is not the answer.

When CSEA Suffolk County Local 852 President Bill Walsh heard the town was putting out bids for private contractors to handle the capping of filled sections of the Brookhaven landfill, he immediately approached the director of landfill operations and made a case for keeping the work in-house.

"The lowest bid that came in was for $7.1 million," Walsh said. "Three-and-a-half million dollars was plus there was a benefit to the private contractor for transportation employees. They got an average of a 10 percent raise (over their bus company salary)."

CSEA Unit President Keith Champlin said. "Plus there was a benefit to the CSEA members they employ."

"So many towns and counties look for quick-fix solutions when they should look no further than the CSEA members they employ," Walsh said.

Walsh and his unit members also saved the town money and aggravation in another situation by pointing out that employees with Class B licenses could be moved up to Class A licenses. That enabled those employees to operate a truck and trailer combination.

Before the license upgrade of 12 employees, the town had men pulled from other work sites to drive the trailer, which carried a bulldozer to the worksite. The employees who had Class B licenses could drive the bulldozers but not the truck and trailer to get the bulldozer to the site.

Also, Walsh, said his unit has a improper practice case pending regarding trucking trash for ash, a deal the Town of Brookhaven has with the Town of Hempstead. According to Walsh, the town could save approximately $2.5 million if they buy their own equipment and do the transporting in-house.

Walsh said the town will spend over $10 million on private contracting.

"Our new town supervisor, John LaMura, recently made a public statement that if anyone points out cost-saving measures, he will work to implement them. This transport deal is a perfect example of a huge cost-saving suggestion," Walsh said.

Penn Yan School District says 'enough's enough;' contracts-in

PENN YAN — After more than 10 years of paying a private contractor for transportation services, the Penn Yan Central School District decided enough was enough.

"They were paying out a whole lot of money to pay dispatch, maintenance and driving," CSEA Unit President Keith Champlin said.

School District Business Manager Gary Texido agreed, saying changes in the state aid formula that allow the district to pay employee benefits with state aid make contracting-in more cost efficient. "We felt there was a cost savings," Texido said. "Plus there was a benefit to the transportation employees. They got an average of a 10 percent raise (over their bus company salary)."

The transportation staff of about 35 drivers, mechanics and dispatchers are now represented by CSEA.

The transition worked well. Champlin said, since the district hired many employees who had worked for the private vendor, some of whom had worked for the school district before the private vendor was hired.

The transition was smooth in part because despite hiring a private vendor, the district maintained ownership of the buses, the garage and other equipment.

The process of returning to an in-district transportation system included consulting with employees and the union, Texido said, because the district wanted to ensure it went smoothly.

Privatization is a gimmick that has repeatedly failed at every level

Newburgh dumps private contractor for water treatment

TOWN OF NEWBURGH — Town officials have dropped a private water treatment contractor in favor of a town operation after five years of privatization. Town Supervisor Robert A. Kunkel said the decision to regain town control will definitely save taxpayers money.

The move is another reversal of recent local government trends to contract out such services.

Privatization of public services is a gimmick that has repeatedly failed at the federal, state and local levels. Kunkel's predecessor hired the firm of Metcalf and Eddy in 1987 after residents complained of poor water quality. CSEA protested the decision in 1987, suggesting that the town instead hire a manager who was knowledgeable in water treatment operation.

"We lacked the expertise in-house then to deal with the problems," Kunkel said. "But now we have a full-time engineer who is a water specialist and we have a full-time plant manager."

Kunkel said the town will definitely save money with its own operation but said it's too early to tell just how much.

"We won't know until a year into the operation, but I feel we'll save money," the supervisor said.

Seven employees have been added to the CSEA bargaining unit as a result of the change.
Politicians once hired private companies to provide mercenary ships, called privateers, to do government work. We know them as pirates.

Today many politicians are trying to hoist the same old idea. This time around they call it privatization, the hiring of private companies to provide public services. Privateers are driven by profit and greed. Public employees, motivated only by the public good, provide the most efficient public services. That’s why CSEA is doing everything possible to prevent politicians from turning privateers loose again.
Politicians once hired private companies to provide mercenary ships, called privateers, to do government work. We know them as pirates. Today many politicians are trying to hoist the same old idea. This time around they call it privatization, the hiring of private companies to provide public services. Privateers are driven by profit and greed. Public employees, motivated only by the public good, provide the most efficient public services. That’s why CSEA is doing everything possible to prevent politicians from turning privateers loose again.
Long union effort pays dividends in Glens Falls

GLEN'S FALLS - A long, two-year effort by CSEA paid off for Glens Falls city council and the city's wastewater treatment plant employees as the city council finally voted down a proposal to privatize the potentially profitable facility by a vote of 5 to 1.

“Our message finally got through - the public should reap any profits the waste water incinerator facility generates, not the for-profit contractor,” CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Bob Morris said.

For two years the Glens Falls Waste Water Treatment plant employees, part of the overall city of Glens Falls CSEA unit, have been campaigning against a move to privatize the facility in a variety of ways. These included public statements at various city meetings, informational pickets and paid advertising informing the public of the actions of the contractor in other areas.

The processing plant can and should make money for the taxpayers and residents so that city taxes could go down. If a contractor takes the plant with a built-in CPI increase the city would eventually find itself paying higher and higher rates, so that the contractor could make higher and higher profits,” Morris said.

The union’s effort during the campaign supplied so much free exposure for the Sludge processing plant and incinerator of the plant that an out-of-state company offered city $600,000 worth of business. Other private corporation in the city wanted the city $850,000 worth of business, and city tax dollars to the public employees doing the same work.

The city administration to force it to serve the taxpayers at a profit, Morris said. “Our message finally got through - the public should reap any profits the waste water incinerator facility generates, not the for-profit contractor,” CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Bob Morris said.

Now we must find out if the deficit was just a sham and if the city was using that to make the privatization of the plant look good to taxpayers.

“Now we must work together with the CSEA Ontario County Unit President Elaine Domaratz said.

GANNANDAIGUA — CSEA convinced Finger Lakes Community College (FLCC) officials to sign an agreement regarding an earlier contracting-out flap (see adjacent story). Ontario County was a contract out the FLCC Unit President David Bloom said.

The college agreed to use two temporary cleaners for the new building in a six-month trial.

“We gave them the pros and cons,” he said. “Our people are much more flexible than union contractors, and that's good for the college and a whole.”

During a recent flood in the new building, for instance, the college was able to marshall its entire cleaning staff to handle the emergency. FLCC would lose that flexibility with contracted workers, Bloom said.

...and union fighting to regain the college garage

GANNANDAIGUA — CSEA is fighting to have vehicle maintenance services for Finger Lakes Community College restored to the county garage.

The college contracted out the work to a private, for-profit vendor earlier this year. They based the move on an audit that said county garage labor rates were much higher than that of the for-profit contractor.

CSEA immediately protested the deal, and as a result, the county agreed to negotiate with the union before contracting out any other services.

“We’re not through fighting for the garage,” CSEA Ontario County Unit President Elaine Boncoraglio said.}

November 1992
New York taxes favor the rich

ALBANY — The rich got richer while the poor lost ground in New York and the state's tax policies have contributed to the growing gap.

That's according to the Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI). New York had the fifth widest income gap between rich and poor of the 50 states in the late 1980s, according to a study by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities which FPI released.

During the 1980s, while the pre-tax income disparity between the rich and poor was growing faster in New York than in all but four other states, the state changed its tax policies to benefit the rich even more.

Earlier this year, FPI reported that the richest 5 percent of New Yorkers paid $1 billion less in state income taxes in 1991 than they would have owed under 1985 tax laws.

“We've been saying all along, we all have to pay our fair share, and fair is the operative word,” CSEA President Joe McDermott said. “This study is proof the richest New Yorkers have not done so, and that's because tax laws allow them to escape paying their fair share. The burden has fallen on working people and the poor.”

According to the report, the average income of New York's poorest 20 percent dropped 10 percent or $1,068 from 1979 to the late 1980s, after adjusting for inflation. Meanwhile the incomes of the richest 20 percent rose 20 percent or $18,051 per family.

New York’s tax laws have increased the disparity between rich and poor. The top income tax rate, once 13.5 percent, has dropped to only 7.9 percent, has dropped to only 7.9 percent and could drop to 7 percent if remaining steps of the 1987 tax cut are implemented.

“The state is creating a monster with the tax cuts that lead to bigger and bigger deficits,” McDermott said. “We have to have a system that is fair to everyone so the state can solve its perennial budget problems.”

Like CSEA, FPI advocates a tax increase on those making $150,000 or more to restore the $1 billion a year lost because of tax policies that favor the rich. FPI also calls for the closing of corporate tax loopholes and the expansion of sales tax to cover business services.

The rich don't pay their fair share of NY taxes

State and local taxes as percentage of income in 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>Percentage of Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$14,200</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$44,200</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$61,400</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$98,500</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$240,500</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1.4 million</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE RICH PAY LESS of their overall income in state and local taxes in New York, as the graph above illustrates. Those making more than $1.4 million pay only 8.6 percent of their income in taxes, while those making only $14,200 pay 15 percent of their income in taxes.

Results may have been wrong in tuberculosis testing program

Individuals who tested positive for tuberculosis (TB) infection in the past year may not actually be infected.

The state Health Department has investigated unexpectedly high rates of individuals testing positive and has determined that there may be a problem with the testing product.

Following concerns about a TB epidemic in the state Department of Correctional Services, nearly 100,000 prisoners and public employees received TB tests last year. Thousands of additional public employees have been tested under landmark public employee occupational safety and health guidelines for TB exposure adopted by the state earlier this year.

The health department investigation identified 25 individuals in different parts of the state with no prior history of testing positive for TB who tested positive using a product called SCLAVO Purified Protein Derivative. Follow-up testing using a different testing product was negative for TB.

Samples from the product lots that produced these false positive results have been forwarded to the federal Food and Drug Administration for further testing.

In the meantime, the Health Department advises the following:

* No further testing be done using the SCLAVO product until there is additional information. Other products should be substituted;

* Individuals who had positive test results using the SCLAVO product lots #192, #219, or #221, should be retested using a different product. Those who don't know the lot number and can't find out should also be retested.

* Individuals who are currently receiving TB preventive therapy due to the positive test results using the SCLAVO product should receive priority for retesting.

* Individuals who have questions about their condition should contact their physician or health care facility, particularly about the possible need for retesting.
November is Native American Heritage Month

CSEA member studies his own Native American Heritage

EDITOR'S NOTE: November is Native American Heritage Month, which provides the opportunity to learn about the contributions of Native Americans. New York is home to about 40,000 Native Americans living in every county and on 10 reservations. Many work for local governments, school districts and the state and are represented by CSEA. This story is about one CSEA member who is exploring his own heritage.

ALBANY — For CSEA member Anthony Bonomo, living in two cultures is a way of life.

A clerk in the state Department of Social Services and member of CSEA Local 688, Bonomo is part Chippewa and part Italian. He has spent time and effort trying to learn more about both aspects of his heritage.

He has worked on his family genealogy and, as part of his work in DSS, he's studied "cultural pluralism," which describes how different cultures survive and work together in American society.

"I think cultural pluralism is a big issue for Native Americans," Bonomo said. "The old idea was the melting pot where A plus B is supposed to equal AB. What it really means is it equals A."

That's because one culture becomes dominant and the other can disappear. For example, Native Americans for many years were not allowed to speak their own languages or practice their traditional religions. Many Native Americans have tried to conform to white culture because they believe the only way to succeed is to abandon their own.

Then there is the problem of marginality, he said. "That's trying to live in two worlds but never really being accepted in either," he said. "That's a big problem."

Although he was born in the New York City area, lives in Albany and spends time with relatives on a reservation in northern Minnesota, Bonomo said marginality isn't a big problem for him: His Native American relatives accept him completely.

Bonomo himself carries a small identification card that says he is a Chippewa.

"We are the only race of people the federal government keeps track of," he said.

The practice started when the government was fulfilling treaties that called for giving blankets, guns and other items to Native Americans. Often, Bonomo said, the blankets were flea-infested and guns would blow up in people's faces.

"The treaties were never held in good faith," he said.

His great-grandfather was one of many Native Americans who because of poverty sold off his plot of land on the reservation. By the time federal law prohibited the practice, more than 40 percent of the reservation belonged to non-Natives.

Native American Heritage Month is a good idea because it gives people the opportunity to learn more about Native culture. Education is a key to understanding and acceptance.

"I think people should be informed," he said. "I think people should be tolerant and not so hostile."

CSEA Legislatve and Political Action Department is preparing for the 1993 session of the state Legislature. If you have any suggestions for legislation, let the department know. Fill out this coupon and mail it to:

CSEA Legislative and Political Action Department
143 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12210

Name:________________________ CSEA Local No.:____________________
Address:___________________________________________________________

There ought to be a law:______________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________
This CSEA member benefit can save you money this holiday season

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 this holiday season and all year round.

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 simply call the appropriate toll-free number listed below and ask the participating Buyer’s Edge vendor for their guaranteed lowest price. Then, using a credit card or check, and from the comfort of your home, buy by phone from the participating vendor.

Be prepared to give the CSEA group number whenever you contact a participating vendor.

The CSEA Buyer’s Edge Group Number is 1811.

Lowest Price Guarantee

If you buy a product for $150 or more through a Buyer’s Edge vendor, and within 30 days (and within 50 miles if you buy in person at the vendor’s store) you find the same item for less at a factory-authorized dealer, The Buyer’s Edge requires that the participating vendor mail you the difference, plus 20 percent of that difference. This guarantee even covers advertised sales, discount houses and other buying plans. (Silver and gold items, services, merchandise offered with limits on availability or quantity, dealer-installed options and prices after manufacturers’ cut-off dates for model years on new cars are not covered by this guarantee.)

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, NJ 07092

Important Reminder: When 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.

CALL THE APPROPRIATE BUYER’S EDGE TELEPHONE NUMBER BELOW FOR ALL YOUR GIFT-GIVING NEEDS

| MAJOR APPLIANCES: | Rochester area* | 716-427-8360 |
| Conditioners, refrigerators, dehumidifiers, freezers, washing, dryers, ranges, dishwashers, disposal units, microwaves and vacuum cleaners. | Buffalo NY area* | 716-838-3345 |
| *Shop in person plans also available. | All other areas | 1-800-377-3700 |
| TV & VIDEO EQUIPMENT: | Downstate | 718-720-3792 |
| All types of color televisions including big screen, video recorders and video cameras. | | |
| CARPETING & RUGS: | Select most any style or color, wall-to-wall broadloom or any size area rugs. | |
| Complete local installation available for home or commercial use. 25 sq. yd. minimum. | | |
| CHINA, CRYSTAL, SILVER, PORCELAIN FIGURINES: | Bridal Registry available. | |
| DIAMONDS, FINE JEWELRY, WATCHES | 1-800-543-9136 |
| EXERCISE EQUIPMENT: | Rowers, universal stationary exercise bikes, | |
| Treadmills, ski machines, free weights and Physicians Scales. | 1-800-541-9905 |
| FURNITURE: Authorized dealer for over 300 furniture manufacturers. In business since 1940. | 1-800-631-0286 |
| LIGHTING: Lamps, chandeliers, and sconces, most major quality brands. | 1-800-631-0286 |
| LUGGAGE: Travel, briefcases, portfolios, attache cases, travel accessories. | 1-800-543-8237 |
| PERSONAL COMPUTERS: Computers, terminals, monitors, add-on boards, printers, modems, disc drives. Some computer products may be refurbished. Ask for details. | 1-800-345-6265 |
| SEWING MACHINES: Singer and other brands. | 1-800-526-6825 |
| TYPEWRITERS | 1-800-635-0755 |
| TRAVEL: Discount on any advertised trip, package, tour charter or cruise - plus FREE trip life insurance on air travel. | 1-800-543-7406 |
| CAR PLAN: | 1. SHOP - decide make, model, and options | |
| 2. CALL - for referral to local cooperating dealer | | |
| 3. DEALERSHIP SAVINGS - ask for The Buyer’s Edge price documentation book. Compute your price. | | |
| If book not available, call Car Plan. Computer printout - Price information mailed to you for nominal charge. | | |
| Used Cars - Late models only (5 years or less) 12 month/12,000 mile warranty. | 1-800-543-8381 |
| VACUUM CLEANERS | 1-800-377-3700 |
| FURS: Buy quality furs directly from manufacturers. Call for appointment. | 212-947-9140 |
| KITCHEN CABINETS/COUNTER TOPS: Call for referral | 1-800-327-3599 |
| MOVING PLAN: Professional services, household goods/autos (distances over 40 miles or interstate). Free in-home estimate. Call 4 weeks prior to moving date. | 1-800-356-7771 |
| REAL ESTATE PLAN: Call referral service before contacting broker. Ask about specific savings on purchase or sale of a home. | 1-800-232-6766 |

YOUR UNION, WORKING FOR YOU!

Keep up with Current Issues:
Call 1-800-342-4146 and hit 5 on your touch-tone phone for the latest information

14 November 1992
CSEA wins age discrimination case

STATEN ISLAND — It took nine years, but CSEA member Jim Ward persevered in a legal battle against age discrimination at Arthur Kill Correctional Facility. As a result of his victory over the state Department of Correctional Services (DOCS), Ward will receive $35,000 including back pay and compensatory damages of $25,000 for mental anguish and humiliation.

The CSEA New York City State Employees Local 010 member is grateful to Arthur Kill Correctional Facility Shop Steward Bob Richards and CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Charles Bell for their tireless support in his long battle. The administrative law judge ordered DOCS, Arthur Kill Correctional and the state departments of Civil Service Department and Audit and Control to "cease and desist discrimination against Ward or any person on the basis of age."

He also ordered that written directions prohibiting age discrimination be provided to all DOCS supervisors and hiring personnel.

Ward filed his case after his employers promoted a younger, less qualified employee to senior stationary engineer grade 14 in 1983. "My wife thought I'd be under the ground with a tombstone on me before this was over," Ward said, "but if something had happened to me, I knew we'd have the Human Rights Commission and CSEA to see that these things were taken care of."

As a 55-year-old ex-Merchant Marine and licensed engineer, Ward applied for the power plant promotion with 12 years of outstanding state job evaluations behind him. But the promotion went to a 28-year-old unlicensed engineer whom he had coached to pass examinations.

When Ward was told point-blank "we are going to get rid of the old guys," he decided it was a fight to the finish. Even while management kept asking him when he was retiring and being bumped back a grade, Ward hung on with CSEA's support.

Even after he was appointed to the job when it became vacant again, Ward stuck with his case. Problem followed problem as state cutbacks in the Human Rights Division and delays with new attorneys slowed the case. Ward made many long trips to the human rights office, and was even mugged once. His chief witness believed so strongly in the case that he traveled 500 miles twice to testify.

Still Ward stuck with it until the last hearing was held. "I was really sick over it," Ward said. "At night I couldn't sleep, hearing voices saying 'you're too old for the job.' I had to take medication, and my wife was very upset."

Now that he's won his case, Ward has some specific plans that don't include retirement. "I'm 65 now and have no plans to retire. I have 21 years' service in now," he said. "I'm going to my church and make a donation and thank God for my health."

November is Health Insurance Option transfer period

November is Option Transfer Month, when state employees may change their health insurance option. Pre-tax Contribution status, and/or Dependent Care Advantage Account participation. Employees who wish to change Empire Plan or Health Organization (HMO) options must do so during the Option Transfer Period by contacting their health benefits administrator, located in their agency personnel office.

The 1993 Benefits Choices Guide (including NYSHIP Profiles) publication was scheduled to be mailed to homes during the last week in October. The Guide describes both the Empire Plan and the NYSHIP-approved HMO's in your geographic region. The guide also includes information about the Pre-tax Contribution Program and the Dependent Care Advantage Account Program. Read the Benefits Choices Guide carefully in order to make informed decisions.

Two changes may affect your health care choice. As a result of meetings between Capital District Physicians' Health Plan (CDPHP) and the HMO Workgroup, which is comprised of representatives from the Joint Labor Management Committee on Health Benefits, CDPHP will be accepting new enrollees in 1993. In addition, Blue Choice and Group Health have merged and will be known as "Blue Choice." Effective Jan. 1, 1993, enrollees can choose to receive their medical care in either a Blue Choice private physician's office or one of the Group Health Medical Centers. Both settings receive the same benefits. However, members who receive their care at a Group Health Medical Center will incur no co-payment for in-center office visits. For more information regarding Blue Choice, refer to the 1993 Benefits Choices Guide.

Use Benefits Choices Guide and rate information together. After you receive Benefits Choices Guide in the mail, look for the 1993 rates to be distributed at your agency in November. Should you wish to change your health insurance option, you will be given 30 days from the date rate information is distributed to your agency to make your change.

If you decide NOT to change your health insurance option, you do not have to take any action. Premium payments Remember in reviewing the Guide and the rate schedule that whether you are enrolled in the Empire Plan or an HMO, the state pays 90 percent of the cost of your premiums for individual coverage and you pay the remaining 10 percent. For family coverage, the state pays 90 percent of the cost of your premium as the enrollee, plus 75 percent of the additional cost for family coverage regardless of the number of dependents.

Two additional choices to consider

The Pre-tax Contribution Program allows you to have your health insurance premiums deducted from your pay before taxes are taken out. This may lower your taxable income and give you more spendable income. This benefit is explained in the NYSHIP General Information Book. If you want to change your tax status for 1993 health insurance premiums, you should see your health benefits administrator by Nov. 30, which is the IRS imposed deadline. No action is required if you wish to keep your current pre-tax option.

The Dependent Care Advantage Account Program helps you reduce your taxes and increase your spendable income by paying your dependent care expenses with pre-tax dollars. This program is available if you have dependent children under the age of 13, disabled children of any age, or adult relatives needing care in order for you to continue working. A brochure explaining how this program works is available from your agency Health Benefits Administrator. The enrollment deadline is Nov. 15. However, employees who experience a family status change may still enroll during the program year. For further information, see your agency Health Benefits Administrator or call 1-800-358-7202.
CSEA members fight for health

They’re suing computer makers over unsafe equipment

By Lilly Gioia
CSEA Communications Associate

NEW YORK — CSEA members are filing lawsuits against computer manufacturers whose shoddy keyboard designs have caused them painful injuries.

Carpal tunnel syndrome, which causes pain in fingers, hands and wrists, is caused by repetitive motions. One cause is typing at an awkward angle on a computer keyboard.

The product liability lawsuits of CSEA members and others are a ground-breaking legal approach. Generally, victims of these types of injuries have filed for workers compensation. But workers compensation laws don’t allow them to sue their employers or collect for pain and suffering. If successful, suing the manufacturers will give injured workers another avenue for recompense for what are often long-term injuries.

CSEA is helping workers across the state identify symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome. Repetitive strain injuries cause more than half the country’s work-related ailments, according to the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

CSEA Metropolitan Public Service Local 450 President Steve Pezenik wears a wrist brace at work and while sleeping to alleviate pain from a compressed nerve. “I tried to rest my hands between calls, but I still had numbness in my hands,” he said. “At night I’d wake up with pain in my fingers, thumb, wrist and shoulder.”

Pezenik, a NYS Public Service Commission employee, realized he had the syndrome after a CSEA program on carpal tunnel. He was diagnosed, filed a workers compensation claim and a product liability lawsuit.

Jane Teabutt, a NYS Parole Division keyboard specialist, also followed up after a CSEA program. Until then, her doctor thought she had arthritis. Teabutt, who is blind, has problems at home because of her injuries. “I can’t even open a can of soup,” she said, “and I have trouble walking with my seeing-eye dog on the leash because it hurts so much.”

CSEA Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio urged members who think they may have carpal tunnel trauma to get a diagnosis and file workers compensation claims promptly. “There’s a statute of limitations,” he said. “If you delay, you can lose your legal rights.”

CSEA Labor Department Local 350 member Roiy Penna took cortisone shots in the palm of her left hand to relieve carpal tunnel pain, then had surgery. “My hands have caused me excruciating pain in the middle of the night and I still sleep with a splint,” Penna said. She now has the condition in her right hand and is fighting back in the courts.

When Steve Pezenik realized he had carpal tunnel problems, his supervisor said, “You know it doesn’t hurt! You’re just making it up. Be a man.” Since then, that supervisor moved to another unit and PSC management has brought in ergonomic chairs. “They’re planning to bring in more ergonomic furniture in the future,” Pezenik said. “They’re now making an attempt.”

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome causing more injuries

Repetitive strain injuries today cause more than half the country’s work-related ailments, according to a new report by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Reported cases of repetitive strain injuries have more than tripled since 1984, when they cost $27 billion in lost wages and medical expenses, federal statistics show. Now OSHA is considering setting new standards covering a range of cumulative trauma disorders. The agency also plans to reopen its investigation into skyrocketing carpal tunnel problems.

Those problems are “the invisible and silent health problem that is screaming for attention in millions of workplaces,” CSEA Safety and Health Director Jim Corcoran said.

A recent ABC-TV News Special Report focused on research and development efforts to construct new keyboard configurations, calling carpal tunnel syndrome a silent epidemic that is finally being recognized.

CSEA has long recognized the problem, however, and has offered programs and information on this difficult and painful occupational injury.
STATE GOVERNMENT NEWS

Protest over safety

"WHO HAS TO BE SHOT before someone pays attention to the lack of security?" CSEA Local 401 members protested recently at the Bronx Psychiatric Center over security threats. Therapy aides there continue to be menaced on the job by a gun-toting former patient.

Fraud conviction shows dark side of privatization

In a clear example of a "not-for-profit" mental health care provider bilking taxpayers, the state's Appellate Court has upheld the Medicaid fraud conviction of the Brooklyn Psychosocial Rehabilitation Institute (BPRI) and its operator.

The fraudulent scheme included having BPRI staff list such mundane encounters as asking patients "how are you?" as "therapeutic encounters" and billing the state.

The scheme defrauded the state of more than $2.5 million. The court awarded the state $7.5 million in damages. But the case required years of painstaking effort by a variety of state agencies, the Commission on Quality Care for the Mentally Disabled, and the Attorney General's office at a huge cost. 'That time and money could have been spent more productively.

"CSEA cringes at the thought that BPRI is the 'alternative care' that the Office of Mental Health refers to as an argument for dumping patients and running down state facilities," CSEA President Joe McDermott said.

New group home a celebration of cooperation

NEW YORK - East Harlem's 119th Street resounded with spirited gospel music and hope-filled speeches to salute a new community group home staffed by CSEA Local 443 Manhattan Developmental Center members.

Undaunted by chilly winds, 26 developmentally disabled residents joined the outdoor celebration of their new building, the result of management, labor and community efforts.

CSEA Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio and CSEA Local 443 President Wally Nash joined NYS Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) Commissioner Elin Howe, Associate Commissioner Jim Walsh and other officials at opening ceremonies.

"God had answered many prayers" for the group home's success, Nash said. CSEA put in countless hours to resolve conflicts over work rules. CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Floyd Payne said. "Our efforts have been an important factor in making 119th Street a model for how labor/management cooperation can turn things around to benefit the residents, their families, and the workers."

Calling the center "a beacon of hope," Boncoraglio praised OMRDD's commitment to those in need of care in New York City.

Gowanda tragedy offers a lesson for Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center fight

The state Office Mental Health has put a new twist on its relentless drive to dump patients and run down facilities. Not content with callously downsizing the system without regard for the patients, the staff or communities, OMH is now undermining the state Legislature's demand for accountability.

The controversy revolves around the status of the Gowanda Psychiatric Center. OMH contends that OMH emptied out the facility last year over the objections of CSEA and the entire western New York legislative delegation.

By law the Legislature must approve the official closing of the facility. Lawmakers have balked at that action because OMH has failed to provide a responsible plan for alternative care.

As a result, OMH had to maintain a small admissions unit at an exorbitant cost. But OMH has twisted the situation by portraying the lawmakers as irresponsible and wasteful at Gowanda.

OMH's suggestion that the Gowanda money could be better spent in community-based care rings hollow. Gov. Cuomo vetoed a bill earlier this year that would have required the "savings" generated by institutional shutdowns be transferred to community care.

"OMH has really hit a new low in their disgraceful irresponsibility," CSEA President Joe McDermott said.

"OMH has walked away from its obligations and set up the Legislature for the blame."

For CSEA, the lesson of the Gowanda Psychiatric Center tragedy is that OMH will close facilities without regard for the consequences. It's a lesson that the union is keeping in mind as it addresses other impending facility closures.

Under OMH plans, the Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center is at most immediate risk, with closure expected by April 1994.

CSEA's Mental Hygiene Task Force, comprised of key CSEA elected officials and staff and chaired by CSEA Executive Vice President Danny Donohue, is trying to protect the jobs and interests of CSEA mental health workers and find appropriate alternative uses for the facilities.

The task force emphasized that mission to Harlem Valley employees during a recent meeting at the facility.

"Our concerns about patient care and mental health policy are unchanged but our immediate objective at Harlem Valley is to preserve the jobs of our members," Donohue said. "CSEA will do everything we can to make the best of a bad situation for our members."

New study shows mentally ill dumped in jails

It's no surprise to CSEA, but a new national study has reported that nearly 30 percent of American jails surveyed hold seriously mentally ill people without any charges simply because no appropriate treatment is available.

The report by the well-respected Public Citizen Health Research Group and National Alliance for the Mentally Ill reinforces CSEA's contention that too many mentally ill people are ending up in jails because of psychiatric center dumping and the absence of alternative services.

Ironically, the asylum movement of the 1800s which led to the creation of psychiatric hospitals stemmed from mentally ill people being inappropriately thrown into jails. New York's mental health policy has come full circle.

November 1992 17
Leave program helps state members

By Daniel X. Campbell
CSEA Communications Associate

ALBANY - For years, CSEA has successfully helped local government members who face a terminal illness. Whether it's their own or the illness of a spouse or child, CSEA tries to provide what may be needed most — time.

"When Lyle Evans, Local 505 president, approached Joe McDermott about Ken Lyon, CSEA knew it was time to move the issue," Joan Tobin, CSEA DOT Board representative, said. "All the pieces of the puzzle were finally ready to go together."

Lyon, who used his leave time because of liver transplants, was run out of accruals on July 24 (see story at left below).

Ross Hanna, CSEA director of contract administration, and Mark Lawrence, a deputy director, worked behind the scenes; Tobin worked with DOT management. Forms and guidelines were developed and approved. Everything finally fell together.

"By July 20 DOT employees in Local 505 were donating annual leave time," Tobin said.

"Within hours 125 state employees in that local donated enough time to put Ken back into full leave status and saved his family from more economic uncertainty," she said. "Labor and management finally did it, and we did it together."

Donated leave time made last days easier

WILLARD - Before he died in late October, CSEA member Frank Perdicho thanked his co-workers in a local paper.

"God bless all of you, whoever you are, at Willard Psych. Center CSEA who donated your time to me during my troubled times."

Perdicho's death was a heartwarming thing." Perdicho said he was astounded by the support from his fellow workers.

In an interview shortly before his death, Perdicho said he was astonished by the support from his fellow workers. "I was elated. It made me feel stronger and want to fight my illness," he said. "I saw a different light about life - the people here don't only care for the clients, they care about each other. It's just a heartwarming thing."

Lichak said the local is mourning Perdicho's death. "But at least we were able to help him out when he needed us most," he said.

Ken Lyon

chronic illness that attacks the liver, he was hospitalized several times. He quickly used up his leave accruals and was on sick leave at half-pay.

In April, he had a liver transplant. But after 20 minutes, the liver failed, and doctors immediately replaced it. Lyon was in surgery more than 23 hours and used 118 units of blood.

Luckily, the second transplant succeeded. After a long hospital recovery, Lyon is still recuperating at home; he may be able to return to work in a year or less. As he used his leave accruals and hospital bills depleted his savings, the future looked bleak for Lyon, his wife, Sharon, and their three children.

Knowing Lyon was running out of sick leave, CSEA Local 505 President Lyle Evans asked CSEA President Joe McDermott if the union could help. The wheels started turning and the program was established, allowing more than 125 local members donated enough leave time to keep Lyons on the payroll until February 1993.

Lyon said he was astounded by the outpouring of support.

"I didn’t realize I had so many people who care about me," he said. "We just can’t thank people enough," added his wife, Sharon. "If it wasn’t for all the support from family and friends and people we both work with, I don’t know what we would’ve done."

Evans was also pleased.

"It is another example of what hard work and cooperation between the union and management can accomplish when the need is there," he said.

CSEA WILLARD
Psychiatric Center
Local member Frank Perdicho, right, shortly before his death, thanking Local 428 President Steve Lichak for leading a campaign to give Perdicho more leave time during his fatal illness.

WILLARD - Before he died in late October, CSEA member Frank Perdicho thanked his co-workers in a local paper.

"God bless all of you, whoever you are, at Willard Psych. Center CSEA who donated your time to me during my troubled times."

Perdicho, a therapist aide with 30 years of service, was among the first state employees to benefit from a new sick leave donation program for state employees. In fact, the pilot program was started partly because of him (see story above).

Suffering from Hepatitis-C, a chronic illness that attacks the liver, he was hospitalized several times. He quickly used up his leave accruals and was on sick leave at half-pay.

In April, he had a liver transplant. But after 20 minutes, the liver failed, and doctors immediately replaced it. Lyon was in surgery more than 23 hours and used 118 units of blood.

Luckily, the second transplant succeeded. After a long hospital recovery, Lyon is still recuperating at home; he may be able to return to work in a year or less. As he used his leave accruals and hospital bills depleted his savings, the future looked bleak for Lyon, his wife, Sharon, and their three children.

Knowing Lyon was running out of sick leave, CSEA Local 505 President Lyle Evans asked CSEA President Joe McDermott if the union could help. The wheels started turning and the program was established, allowing more than 125 local members donated enough leave time to keep Lyons on the payroll until February 1993.

Lyon said he was astounded by the outpouring of support.

"I didn’t realize I had so many people who care about me," he said. "We just can’t thank people enough," added his wife, Sharon. "If it wasn’t for all the support from family and friends and people we both work with, I don’t know what we would’ve done."

Evans was also pleased.

"It is another example of what hard work and cooperation between the union and management can accomplish when the need is there," he said.
Hanson Place
day care center opens

BROOKLYN - CSEA leaders navigated around toys, cribs and playdough to celebrate the opening of a state-of-the-art child care facility in the heart of Brooklyn.

In the state's 80 Hanson Place office complex, it is convenient for workers at Tax and Finance and Education departments and other state offices in the area.

CSEA Executive Vice President Danny Donohue, CSEA Secretary Irene Carr and CSEA Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio went on the tour.

Carr applauded labor/management efforts to increase day care slots in New York City.

Mary Rodnell, vice president of CSEA Local 259 New York Parole District, was among area union leaders who pledged to publicize the new facility.

"Hanson Place is so bright and cheerful," Rodnell said. "I brought registration information to all our parole parents on because there is such a great need for our young mothers to have a place like this."

Discounts for 'The Patch' available through EBF plan

The CSEA EBF Prescription Drug Program does not cover smoking cessation aids such as "The Patch," (Nicotine Transdermal System), but may help you save money on them.

If you are a CSEA member enrolled in the EBF Prescription Drug Program and want to try "The Patch," get a prescription from your doctor. Check the price at your local pharmacy; then call the Mall Service Pharmacy, NRx Services Inc., at 1-800-445-9707 to compare prices. If the NRx price is less, you can use the standard CSEA EBF Maintenance Drug Mail Order Envelope to fill your prescription. For an NRx mail order envelope, call 1-800-EBF-CSEA (1-800-332-2732) on a touch tone phone; when the Automated Attendant answers, immediately dial 1321. Leave your name, Social Security number and mailing address; your envelope will be mailed.

All orders must include the prescription and payment. Check or major credit card is acceptable.

CSEA activist Elliot Bernstein dies

NEW YORK - CSEA is mourning the loss of activist Elliot Bernstein, 41, who died after a lengthy illness.

As an activist who served twice on NYS Administrative Services Unit (ASU) negotiation team, he fought hard for clerical workers' upward mobility through establishing career ladders and the NYS Clerical, Secretarial Employees Advancement Program (CSEAP). A strong advocate of equal opportunity, Bernstein led the struggle to put the first non-discrimination clause in the CSEA/NYS contract.

CSEA Metropolitan Region’s Executive Board paused at a recent meeting for a moment of silence in Bernstein's memory. "We will miss Elliot's dry wit, innovative ideas and dedication to union ideals," CSEA Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio said, "and we will not forget his courage." The March 1993 Regional Workshop will be named the "Elliot Bernstein Memorial Workshop."
Generous co-workers show They care!

See Page 18

CSEA LOCAL 505 members Ken Lyon, seated, his wife Sharon and Local 505 President Lyle Evans.