Governor,
You've Got Mail!

State contract battle heats up
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Youth lockup melee spurs safety concern

RUSH — A melee at a state youth detention facility where kids yanked legs off tables to beat staff members with has left at least one CSEA member injured and the union concerned about management’s response to the threat of more trouble.

One union member was struck twice in the face by two teens and is out of work, union leaders said.

“We were about to transfer a resident who had been a source of trouble to another cottage on the grounds,” said Harold Milton, a youth development aide at the facility near Rochester. “He resisted, a tussle started, and several of his friends jumped in and attacked a staff member.

“It started in the cafeteria, as the residents were lined up to leave. As the scuffle escalated, two residents broke away, and tore the legs off a table to use as weapons. It took about 10 staff members to subdue the five residents,” Milton said.

This is the latest rash of violence which has injured CSEA members who work in these state-run facilities for kids who are doing time for felonies ranging from arson to murder.

The incident renewed CSEA members’ call for hazard duty pay for those who work with the troubled, and often violent, teens.

CSEA members, however, said they are concerned management hasn’t addressed the underlying problems of short staffing, worker safety and the dangerous teens with multiple problems who they oversee.

“We’re very concerned about our members’ safety in such incidents,” said Wilma Hasser, local president.

— Ron Wofford

New faces in the family: CSEA organizes 445 at Long Beach Hospital

Workers in the service and maintenance unit of the Long Beach Hospital and nursing home in Nassau County exploded into a roar of excitement when they realized workers voted to make CSEA their union.

CSEA welcomed 445 new members to the union family after the National Labor Relations Board recently confirmed the election results.

The on-site election was the product of a determined, year-long effort by the workers at the private hospital and nursing home to become unionized.

“We are very excited and proud to be members of CSEA,” said Angel Alvarez, a 20-year employee.

“We needed representation and now we’ve got it!” Alvarez said.

“CSEA will be proud to represent the Long Beach Hospital workers who showed so much courage,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said.

Lead CSEA Organizer Mary Bryant and Supervisor Phoebe Mackey praised the workers for their strength and perseverance even in the face of management’s intimidating tactics.

“I am inspired by the workers and the CSEA staff and activists throughout this campaign,” said CSEA Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte.

“We are proud these employees have chosen CSEA to represent them. Our first order of business is to begin negotiating a contract for these deserving workers,” said CSEA Director of Organizing Diane Campion.

CSEA’s effort to represent three other units in the hospital and nursing home — skilled, technical and business office employees — will continue.

CSEA, which represents employees in hospitals and nursing homes throughout the state, will continue to support workers’ efforts to organize the hospital and nursing home’s remaining three units.

“We are going to continue to work with the employees in the other units and hopefully, next year, they will choose CSEA as well,” said Bryant.

— Sheryl C. Jenks

Still no budget as session comes to close

As this edition of the Work Force went to press, the state budget was nearly three months late. With the legislative session coming to a close, there was still no deal in sight.

CSEA President Danny Donohue said Gov. George Pataki and state lawmakers should be embarrassed and ashamed of themselves.

“What gall it takes to hand yourselves a 38 percent pay raise and then not even do the job you were elected to do,” Donohue said. “Especially when the people who really do the work in this state are still without a contract,” he added.

The following are some CSEA-supported bills pending at press time:

• S.3383/A.5558. Allows members of a retirement system who had a break in service to re-enter their original tier of service.

• S.5081/A.7984. Authorizes the Department of Transportation (DOT) to pay a hazardous duty differential to DOT employees who work close to traffic and are in unavoidable risk of injury.

• S.3136/A.5861. Authorizes counties an option of providing a 3/4 final average salary, performance of duty disability retirement to sheriffs, deputy sheriffs, undersheriffs and correction officers who are injured by the act of an inmate.
Zeroing in on justice
CSEA protesters circle state Capitol

ALBANY — Marching to singer Aretha Franklin's soul hit "Respect," hundreds of angry state workers zeroed in on the Capitol in Albany last month demanding respect in contract talks.

Led by CSEA President Danny Donohue, more than 600 CSEA activists from across the state delivered Gov. George Pataki the biggest zero he's ever seen.

Union members circled the Capitol with a garland made from thousands of postcards signed by CSEA members angered by Pataki's latest four-zero wage offer.

"We're not starting at zero and these guys should know it!" Donohue yelled to the boisterous crowd as he gestured toward the Capitol.

The protest was one of many CSEA contract-related events held across the state the last few weeks to crank up the heat on the state for a solid contract. The public pressure prompted the governor to continue vital dental and optical benefits for CSEA state workers through Sept. 30.

Thunderous chants of "Zero is not a number" and "You got yours. We want ours," (referring to the 38 percent pay raise state lawmakers gave themselves) ricocheted across the noontime throng as Donohue led a charge up the Capitol steps toward Pataki's office.

"This is the beginning of the fight. This is not the end," Donohue said.

Joined by CSEA Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan, Treasurer Maureen Malone, Secretary Barbara Reeves and CSEA's region presidents, Donohue delivered nearly 40,000 postcards signed by CSEA members onto Pataki's doorstep.

"We're going to hang out there one day longer than they are willing to jerk us around to make sure that we have a contract that every CSEA member can be proud of!" Donohue shouted.

— Ed Molitor
When hundreds of CSEA leaders and members delivered nearly 40,000 postcards demanding respect to the Governor’s doorstep recently, it was a victory for all CSEA members.

This fight is not just about a state contract. It’s a fight for fairness and respect and that affects CSEA members no matter where you work.

There is no contract for state members but there is no state budget for all New Yorkers. And the Governor’s proposals shortchange us in both areas.

That’s why CSEA will continue to go wherever the Governor goes to deliver our message:

CSEA members are tired of doing more with less; We’ve shouldered more than our share when times were tough.

CSEA members are tired of being shortstaffed and not having the help they need to do the jobs they have to do.

CSEA members are tired of not being appreciated for the hard work and dedication they bring to the job everyday.

CSEA members are tired of not being able to take vacation because their worksites are so short-staffed that they can’t get any time off.

CSEA members are sick and tired of getting hurt on the job because of understaffing and lack of safety protections.

What’s more, CSEA members are tired of high priced political appointees getting the reward and the credit for the sacrifice and productivity of CSEA members.

The Governor should know that talk is cheap. In budgets and in bargaining it’s time to start showing the CSEA Work Force that he means it when he says CSEA members are the best workers anywhere.
Fight spills into court, media on OMH worker safety issue

CSEA is intensifying its battle in the courts and the statehouse to protect the health and safety of members who work in state psychiatric centers.

In court, a judge forced the state Office of Mental Health (OMH) to give CSEA important documents about the agency’s plans for Manhattan Psychiatric Center.

The union sued because state officials refused to turn over the public papers that highlight the state’s plans for the huge psychiatric center downstate.

The documents CSEA sued for are “important to state employees as well as the vulnerable patient population that may be impacted,” by layoffs or firings, a state Supreme Court justice wrote in the favorable decision.

On the statehouse floor, CSEA supported a bill that would set up staff-to-patient ratios based on the types of clients the facility serves.

Danger Zone
“Staffing is dangerously low and our members are working in facilities that are tinder boxes of violence. They’re being forced to work double shifts and they’re getting hurt working with the most difficult clients,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue.

“CSEA members are tired of not being able to take vacations because their worksites are so short-staffed. And they’re angry because they’re getting hurt because of this,” Donohue added.

These “deplorable working conditions” were thrust into the public spotlight recently with an exhaustive 12-page New York Times Magazine expose.

The piece highlighted the state Labor Department’s ruling that the Hudson River Psychiatric Center is a hazardous workplace. In the article, an OMH spokesman said CSEA’s health and safety complaint was a union ploy.

“It’s disgraceful that OMH would dismiss our members getting attacked and injured as a ploy,” Donohue said.

“They’re obviously out of touch with reality,” the president added.

Joel Schwartz, a CSEA member at South Beach Psychiatric Center, knows the wear and tear bad working conditions take on employees.

“Our members are now working more hours. We now have significantly fewer employees serving the most difficult clients who may have drug and alcohol problems compounding their mental illness,” said Schwartz, co-chair of CSEA’s Mental Hygiene Advisory Committee.

Workplace violence is common, said union leaders, and the mandatory staffing bill would help the agency provide quality care and service.

Pick up the phone!
CSEA members are encouraged to call their state lawmakers and demand some of the proposed beds for the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) be state-operated.

The New York Cares program is slated to create more than 900 new beds this year.

When announced earlier this year, the new beds were to be operated by private sector employees.

CSEA members began lobbying state legislators to make a portion of these 900 new beds state-operated.

“The lobbying and letter-writing efforts have helped greatly because both the state Senate and Assembly have voiced their support making some of the new beds state-operated,” said CSEA Treasurer Maureen Malone.

“Although we have made progress, the battle is far from over,” she added. “CSEA members need to continue calling their legislators on this issue.”
Prison chef is fed up

MARCY — Work is a hot, noisy kitchen surrounded by dangerous convicts. Routinely overworked and understaffed, you serve 5,000 meals a day.

If the food isn’t hot or it’s served late, hungry inmates start angrily yelling your name because you’re the only guy wearing a name badge.

Imagine working 53 days without a day off.

Unfortunately, this hellish scene has confronted Civilian Cook Carl Murphy at Marcy Correctional Facility, where up until recently, it seemed like he was the one doing hard time.

Short staffing in state prisons such as Marcy are complicating family vacation plans and forcing CSEA members like Murphy to work long stretches without a break.

Murphy said he took the overtime because, as the least senior employee, he would be forced to work the shifts.

To help his co-workers avoid even more days on the job without rest, Murphy said, “I just went with it” as other kitchen employees pitched in during the staffing crisis.

“It makes you frustrated, but you try not to think about it too much,” Murphy said about his 53-day kitchen sentence.

“I got burned out close to the end. Don’t watch the clock, don’t look what day it is — that helps,” he added.

Ingredients for short staffing

The kitchen staffing problem began last year when one employee died and several transferred to other positions.

Prison management isn’t to blame, said CSEA Local President Jocasa Relf.

A state hiring freeze has chilled all but emergency staff requests and state budget bureaucrats in Albany aren’t budging on pleas for more help.

“They know it takes seven people minimum to run the process,” said Relf.

“With four people, what happens if someone gets sick, hurt, or has a family emergency?”

Recipe for disaster

Head Cook Sam Scampone says understaffing the kitchen is also unsafe. Inmates get very angry if their food is late or cold.

“If they start getting rowdy, its 360 inmates against about 20 guards,” he said.

The work is consuming.

“It’s hectic and hot, and with the Toasters running, the fans running, the ovens running, people talking, and the constant noise from utensils hitting plates, it gets rather loud. After an eight-hour shift, your ears are ringing,” Murphy said.

Spelling ‘relief

Since a recent statewide corrections conference where Relf highlighted the problem to agency officials, the kitchen is slowly returning to normal.

Six of the seven positions have been filled, and the agency wants to hire a relief person to cover food services.

And finally, Murphy and Scampone have taken some well-deserved time off.

— Mark M. Kotzin

Voices of the Work Force

“Our office is responsible for all incoming and outgoing paperwork for inmate transfers, court appearances, immigration hearings, and legal issues.

In January 1998, we got 200 more maximum security disciplinary inmates, with no extra staff. It’s affected us tremendously because of the paperwork involved.

It’s mind boggling, because we didn’t get any extra help.”

Crystal Donahue, clerk — Marcy Correctional Facility
Monroe County members give kids shot at healthy future

ROCHESTER — CSEA members are making sure kids have a healthy future. The “Healthy Shot For Kids,” a pilot electronic registry operated by Monroe County CSEA members, makes sure children in an 11-county area are immunized.

“We’re part of a very important aspect of children growing up healthy, and that’s a good feeling,” said Donna Miller, an immunization clerk and Local secretary.

Healthy Shot enables local health care providers to manage immunization records for their young patients by storing the records in a regional computer data bank.

Parents must give permission before the records can be archived.

The program — the first of its kind in the state — may be expanded to other areas, organizers said.

The computer registry benefits parents and doctors, Miller said.

“It helps parents keep complete records, even when children change from one medical provider to another. It also makes sure their children get vaccinated at the recommended times, or age of the child, from hepatitis B to varicella (chicken pox).”

“Right now there are about 15 or 16 shots recommended for the early months and years,” Miller said.

The registry helps doctors maintain complete and accurate shot records and provides a reliable source doctors can check to see if the children have all the needed vaccinations.

The program is supported with funding from the New York State Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

— Ron Wofford

CSEA members Nancy Hackett, left, a public health nurse, and Donna Miller, an immunization clerk, discuss immunizations given to travelers visiting foreign countries. The two also work on the computerized immunization registry.

Voices of the Work Force

“I’m upset with our members not mobilizing to fight for a fair contract! It’s their contract.

Our local is doing different things to get the message out. It would be nice if other members in other locals would get involved.”

Steve Ableman, clerk — state Office of Children and Family Services
Summer brings surprises for CSEA roadway mowers

ROTTERDAM — The sight of CSEA highway workers mowing the grass along county highways on a clear summer morning cuts a bucolic image as their tractors lumber along, unhurried.

Lurking in the grass, however, are any number of surprises waiting for the highway workers, who need to keep track of traffic, their tractors and anything along the roadside that shouldn’t be meeting the whirring blades.

“Fences, cables, tires, stumps, you name it and it’s there,” said Schenectady County Local member Ken Stevens.

“I was surprised the other morning when I caught a snake on the end of the thing,” Stevens said.

“It’s like anything else, you gotta be careful,” added local member Lou DeSorbo. “Safety first.”

Doing two things at once
As DeSorbo and Stevens prepared their machines for another day of mowing, they

Above, Schenectady County Local member Ken Stevens, right, gets a hand oiling his tractor before a day of mowing. At left, it’s a tight squeeze along a county highway.

...told of some of the challenges their jobs bring. Keeping an eye on traffic is one. Sometimes the tractors can take up most of a travel lane while cutting, and operators have to share the road with motorists.

At the same time, they watch the cutting bars or flail mowers, which could flatten a mailbox or street sign.

The tractors resemble huge fiddler crabs as they crawl along the highway, intermittently lifting their large right claw that is the mower to avoid an obstacle.

Tires heaved along the road are a particular threat, Stevens said. Getting one jammed in the mower can involve using the second tractor to pull it out.

“Yesterday, I got a pair of pants and somebody’s knit shirt in the mower,” Stevens said.

Old carpets dumped by motorists and telephone wire left behind by utility crews also can stall their methodical progress down the road.

In all, Stevens, DeSorbo and four other workers keep 220 miles of roadside clear from May to mid-November, Unit President Andy Brown noted.

The work is essential to maintain safe sight lines for motorists and keeps the roadways looking neat, Brown said.

— Lou Hmieleski

Voices of the Work Force

“W what is interesting about my job is the element of never knowing what’s going to happen. It might be a broken main, a clogged line, checking stations — we have 43 stations that have to be checked on a regular basis — or a repair job. I might have to wash and wax a truck. You never know. It’s a different thing every day. It breaks it up.”

Bill Plass — Town of Poughkeepsie
Water Pollution Control Department Maintenance Mechanic
Long Island pickets prod municipalities

LONG ISLAND — School employees from three districts on Long Island held rallies recently to protest their protracted contract talks.

In Comsewogue, CSEA demonstrators were mostly concerned with a pervasive administration attitude that part-timer employees were working for "pocket change" or "just to get out of the house for a few hours."

The unit reached an agreement shortly after the demonstration.

"I credit Unit President Eileen Romaszka for her strength and fortitude during the difficult negotiations," said CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Stephanie Bonfante.

"We have a contract in place now, and while we did not get everything we wanted, we certainly let the district know how they have chipped away at the morale of their part-time employees," he added.

In the West Babylon School District, the paraprofessional unit also protested.

Bonfante, who led their negotiations, said the committee was bringing an agreement to the members for ratification.

"The committee can only do the best it can do and in the end it is up to the majority of the members to have their voices heard at the ratification vote," Bonfante said.

As the Work Force went to press, CSEA members in the West Islip School District clerical unit were holding a protest.

That group has been without a contract for a year.

"We have had two mediation sessions that met with no success. Unit President Colette Ribaudo and I hope the protest will make the public who attend the board meeting aware of the unfair treatment these employees are getting," CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Toni Soucie said.

— Sheryl C. Jenks

Perseverance pays off at ICC

Members working in the Ichabod Crane School District near Albany are realizing the power of CSEA as they put a bitter 30-month contract battle behind them and ease into summer.

Salary increases and improved health insurance coverage are among several benefits in the new pact for 135 union members.

What can't be quickly measured, however, is the invaluable help and support local members showed their colleagues.

"What was amazing was not once did I hear 'when is this going to stop' from one member," said unit President Sherrill Phillips.

"Rather they would say 'What can I do next to help the union?' That really amazed me," she added.

The arduous fight with the district galvanized members, including those who had not been active in union issues.

"I just had to fight back," said secretary Georgia Leonard.

"They just wanted to take things away from us and they wanted it all. So we all just fought back," she said.

"It was as if everybody had something to lose so we all had to work together to win," President Phillips said.

— Daniel X. Campbell

Voices of the Work Force

"What burns me up is the inequity of our situation. The legislators give themselves a raise, Pataki gives himself a raise. We're the front-line workers and he offers us zero. We all have families, mortgages to pay and we pay taxes. We're ready to FIGHT BACK!"

Frank Berghela — state Department of Education, Albany
CSEA members help bring high-tech 9-1-1 system to rural county

SCHOHARIE — Schoharie County is one of the last counties in the state to get 9-1-1 service, but CSEA members are working to make sure the new system is one of the most advanced. When the county Real Property Tax Office workers’ work is done, not only will residents be able to call 9-1-1 in emergencies, but 9-1-1 will call them if they’re in danger of being flooded by the fickle Schoharie Creek.

Meanwhile, county staff will be able to call up tax maps on their computer screens, putting all the county’s real property information a computer-mouse click away for residents.

Beam me up

“I got to see the GPS (global positioning satellite) points on the map for the first time and they all fell on the rooftops and I said, ‘This is going to work!’” said union member Mark Wood. Wood has spent the last two years traveling every road in this rural county west of Albany to canvas nearly every building, an important task in creating the data base dispatchers will rely on to send help when an emergency call comes in.

“When we merge the information that Mark has with the real property information, we will have nearly everything — literally everything — linked on the property records to these points,” said CSEA’s Marjorie Troidl, a Real Property Tax Office title searcher.

“We’d like to make it all available to the public,” she added.

A decade or two ago, the demand for such specific and ready information was not as great in the largely rural county.

But in the last 10 years, many new residents have moved in.

Some may not know their neighbors’ names, while others may be serving as volunteer firefighters and be unfamiliar with the geography.

Likewise, the county’s aerial tax maps were compiled in 1973. “Getting something 25 years newer is a real plus,” Troidl said.

High tech comes to town

A map of Schoharie on a computer screen using the new system shows dozens of small red dots, like fire ants marching along county roads.

Click on a red dot and you get the resident’s name, address, phone number, the property owner and the latitude and longitude.
While much of the team’s work has been done in the county office building, Wood has been visible along the country lanes crisscrossing the county as he canvasses addresses for 9-1-1.

When Wood comes to a residence to be plotted, he hoists a backpack equipped with a satellite receiver onto his shoulders. He’s instantly linked to up to six satellites which locate the property.

If the homeowner isn’t home, Wood can use information from a house’s electric meter to access utility databases to get the resident’s name and telephone number.

Software written by CSEA member Tom Buschynski, a system and network program analyst, helps collect all the data to create a master street index guide.

We’re from the government …

Wood has canvassed about 12,000 properties but has had only a few problems.

“I had a gentleman tell me to drag my butt down the road — he didn’t have 9-1-1, he didn’t need 9-1-1 and he didn’t want 9-1-1,” Wood chuckled.

The man’s daughter, who lived down the road, gave Wood the information he needed.

During another jaunt, Wood came to a house where a water pipe had burst. The homeowner was complaining of chest pains brought on by the ruckus.

Wood helped fix the pipe and got the man his heart medication.

“Dogs make it interesting,” chimed in part-time assistant Terrie Gaida.

Once complete, Troidl said many will benefit from the combined system.

The county health department can track water wells, planning and zoning boards will use the information to help set development policy, and agricultural planners will be able to plot changes in the Schoharie Creek which affect neighboring farm fields.

— Lou Hmieleksi

At left, Wood and his assistant, Terrie Gaida, collect data in the field for the new 9-1-1 system. Above, Wood receives a signal from a satellite, locating the property he is cataloging.
Shock facility sawmill bears a lethal legacy

A state lumber treatment plant which was later converted into a sawmill is leaving a potentially lethal legacy of chemical contamination among CSEA members who worked there.

Although the dip plant and sawmill at the Summit Shock Incarceration Facility in rural Schoharie County is padlocked, CSEA wants to know why state managers allowed workers to be exposed without adequate protection to concentrations of dangerous chemicals thousands of times higher than safe levels.

“It’s clear EnCon (the state Department of Environmental Conservation) has treated its own employees very badly,” said Ward Stone, the well-respected EnCon wildlife pathologist who is investigating the shuttered dip plant and sawmill.

A history of ignoring health and safety

From 1964 to 1975, CSEA members supervised the hand dipping of logs used in conservation projects and outdoor buildings into vats of noxious, dangerous preservatives, including suspected cancer-causing agent pentachlorophenol (PCP). The employees were not given appropriate protective gear or information about the chemicals.

In July 1975, after a decade of treating millions of board feet of lumber and logs, the facility was suddenly closed, and not because managers were worried about the workers’ exposure to the witch’s brew of toxic chemicals.

A spill of the log-treating solution flowed into a nearby creek and killed hundreds of fish.

In 1997, CSEA members began converting the dip plant into a sawmill.

Workers were again exposed to massive amounts of the potent chemicals which had dripped into the surrounding soil, wood and equipment over the decades.

Massive contamination

At issue is why EnCon and the state Department of Correctional Services, which operates Camp Summit, would knowingly expose their workers to PCP, dioxins and other chemicals for several decades without proper protective clothing.

And the state Department of Health is doing little, if anything, to protect the health of active and retired workers who were exposed at the camp, CSEA activists said.

To find answers, CSEA recently convened a meeting with representatives from EnCon, the state Health Department and local and state governments.

“What I found were percentage ratios indicating a massive exposure” to PCP and other chemicals, Stone told the group about his tests on work boots and slivers of wood from the dip plant.

CSEA demands action

CSEA demanded immediate action.

“CSEA wants EnCon, the health department and all of the involved agencies to act responsibly in this matter,” CSEA Industrial Hygienist Matt Kozak said.

“CSEA wants the building thoroughly examined, studied and then properly disposed of so it can’t accidentally expose our members to known carcinogenic-causing chemicals in the future. The area should be put on the toxic site super cleanup fund list.

“And, most importantly, all of the exposed workers from the

(See SHOCK FACILITY’S on Page 13)
Shock facility’s potent contamination affects members

Two days that may forever change a life

Carlton Dibble wants to live a long life. What happened to him on two days in August 1997 has forced Dibble and others working at the Camp Summit Shock Incarceration Facility to question their health.

Dibble was jackhammering through the floor in the former lumber dipping facility as part of its conversion into a sawmill.

His jackhammer struck a pocket of liquid under the concrete. The liquid doused him.

He wiped it off as best he could and continued working. Stricken, Dibble was hospitalized but doctors couldn’t determine the cause of his sudden illness.

He returned to work at the sawmill a few days later but again became sick from the fumes.

Another hospitalization didn’t find the cause of his ailment.

CSEA health and safety experts believe Dibble and others who worked at the contaminated sawmill have been exposed to massive concentrations of dangerous wood-preserving chemicals.

Retired Corrections Officer Conrad Radloff, who ran the dip plant before it became a sawmill, said: “They closed the dip operation down real quick. We have a lot of cancers around here, a lot of cancers.”

— Daniel X. Campbell

A contaminated history

The state Division of Lands and Forests, the forerunner of the state Department of Environmental Conservation, opened the Summit facility in the early 1960s.

The pole and lumber dip treatment plant was built between 1962 and 1964.

Logs were soaked in copper napthenate as a preservative. The excess chemical often dripped onto the ground.

In late 1965, the facility started using pentachlorophenol (PCP) and fuel oil as a dipping preservative. PCP is deadly after prolonged exposure.

Dioxin, a known carcinogen, is created when PCP breaks down.

In July 1975, after a decade of treating millions of board feet of lumber and logs, the facility suddenly was closed. Some toxic PCP accidentally drained into a nearby pond, killing hundreds of fish.

At right, DEC wildlife pathologist Ward Stone discusses contamination at the Summit Shock Facility with CSEA officials.

Break in membership affects eligibility for union office, voting privileges

A break in union membership status can have long-term future implications. Your membership status affects your eligibility with respect to:

* seeking or holding union office;
* signing nominating petitions for potential candidates;
* voting in union elections, and;
* voting on collective bargaining contracts.

Only members “in good standing” can participate in these activities. To be in “good standing,” your dues cannot be delinquent.

If you go on unpaid leave or for any other reason have a break in your employment status, your dues will not continue to be paid through payroll deductions. You must make arrangements to pay your dues directly to CSEA to continue your membership status. If you are either laid off or placed on leave without pay status due to becoming disabled by accident, illness, maternity or paternity, you may be eligible for dues-free membership status for a period not to exceed one year.

Note, however, you must continue to pay dues to run for office. Dues-free or gratuitous membership allows members to continue their insurance coverage while out of work. It does not protect your right to run for or hold office.

You must notify the CSEA Membership Records Department at 1-800-342-4146, Ext. 1327, of any change in your status and what arrangements you are making to continue your membership in CSEA.
CSEA's Peanut Man comes out of his shell

Some people might think he's "nuts," but CSEA activist Ken Koopman is really just coming out of his shell.

Koopman, also known as "Peanut Man," has spent the spring and summer dressed in a giant Peanut Man costume, dogging Gov. George Pataki around the state.

A popular symbol of Pataki's four-zero salary offer to state employees, Peanut Man hands out tiny brown paper bags containing just four "Peanuts from Pataki," as he leads crowds of CSEA members chanting "We don't work for peanuts!"

Koopman, who also serves as CSEA Office of Temporary Disability Assistance Local Secretary in Albany and statewide chairperson of the OTDA's Employee Assistance Program, took time from his busy schedule to talk with Work Force reporter Ed Molitor.

Why he does it

"We were trying to revitalize our local and the contract fight provided the perfect opportunity.

"At a region mobilization meeting, someone brought up the idea of using peanuts and the possibility of having a Peanut Man.

"Mark Juliano, our Local vice president, leaned over to me and said 'Hey, I've got a Peanut Man costume.'

"Well, being a motivator and being nuts in general, I thought it was a perfect opportunity for me to volunteer and do my part."

The governor's reaction

"In the very beginning he was all smiles. He would look at us and say 'CSEA, I appreciate you being out here.' At one rally he actually shook all our hands and thanked us for doing a silent protest.

"But the next day he spoke at Albany City Hall and I was outside (they wouldn't let me inside) and he kind of gave me a little bit of a look.

"When he finished speaking at city hall, he had another appearance at the train station nearby just an hour later.

"And when Pataki got out of the car and saw Peanut Man was already there, he gave us a really irritated look and a sarcastic 'thanks' as he walked by. So we are getting to him."

His most memorable moment

"I was down in Port Chester, Westchester County, where we were protesting outside a hotel where the governor was speaking at a fund-raising dinner.

"We were walking back and forth in a crosswalk when one of these surrogate judges (we could tell from his license plate) decides he wasn't going to wait for us even though we had the right of way.

"He pulled in front of other cars and almost ran me and a couple of other people over.

"That was the night Peanut Man almost became peanut butter and jelly."

Getting others involved

"Peanut Man is a thorn in the governor's side.

"But Peanut Man is just a symbol, and the guy inside the costume is just a person. To really push that thorn in and make it hurt we need the other members standing with me, chanting and holding up their signs.

"The more members, the deeper the push.

"I'm doing this so we have something to rally around. My No. 1 project and my No. 1 commitment is the union and getting this contract.

"And if that means me walking around in this hot, smelly, stinky, silly looking suit to irritate the governor, that's my part in the fight.

"And I'm hoping other members also find things that can make them get involved in it too."
Kurtz lauded for community involvement

Jim Kurtz, center, a public health sanitarian who enforces swimming pool health codes, discusses pool maintenance with hotel staff Christine Huff and Adam Carnes.

A long-time CSEA activist who for decades has been the sparkplug for union issues has been honored with the prestigious Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Memorial Community Services Award from the state AFL-CIO.

CSEA stalwart James V. Kurtz, president of Chautauqua County Local 807 and Western Region treasurer, earned the mantle by selflessly giving his time, talent and energy to union causes the last two decades.

“It’s really humbling to have so many people supporting you for such an important award as this,” Kurtz said.

“I’m truly thankful to everyone. I hope I can live up to all this acclaim. I couldn’t do any of the things I do without the support and understanding of my wife, Arlene. I am truly blessed,” he added.

The award “is given annually to a union member who has worked to strengthen our communities in the areas of health, human services and recreation, and who has instilled a spirit of community service in the labor movement,” said Colleen Gardner, state AFL-CIO director of community services.

The award is named for Van Arsdale, a visionary union leader who led the New York City Central Labor Council from 1957 to 1986.

“Service” could be a middle name for Kurtz, who subscribes to the maxim, “leadership — not by conquer and control, but by submit and serve.”

Over the years, Kurtz has forged a reputation for consistency and friendliness that is only surpassed by his sincerity.

A Village of Mayville resident and father of two, Kurtz has been a public health sanitarian for Chautauqua County for 29 years.

His involvement with CSEA goes back 27 years, and his union resume fills an entire page with accolades, honors and local, regional and statewide leadership positions. Kurtz has been a unit and local steward, and a member of political action, negotiations, membership, charter and insurance committees.

He has served on the region political action committee, membership and Special Olympics committees and has been treasurer for 14 years. He also is a member of the CSEA statewide board of directors.

— Ron Wofford

On the road, on the run

Sullivan helps drive member mobilization

With the governor’s office behind her, the union in front of her, and nearly 40,000 post cards at her feet, Mary Sullivan is right at home stirring the pot of public opinion.

Sullivan, CSEA’s executive vice president and the leader of CSEA’s biggest membership mobilization campaign, was the lead organizer for the state Capitol demonstration last month that brought more than 600 unionists and almost 40,000 post cards to Albany.

“This is the new and better CSEA and we must make members a greater part of this union,” Sullivan said.

The heart and soul of this mobilization campaign is leadership and membership involvement, Sullivan added.

“The more members we have involved, the more power we have at the bargaining table and the better off we’ll all be,” she said.

Gov. George Pataki “must know that when he talks with the members of our contract negotiating team, he is talking with 77,000 state workers. He needs to know the union is strong and powerful!” Sullivan said.

CSEA’s mobilization plan was designed last year by CSEA President Danny Donohue and the union’s top officers as a way to better involve members in union business and communicate more directly with the rank and file.

It is now being tested under fire as tough talks with the state continue for a new contract.

The union’s power comes from communicating up and down the line and getting members involved, Sullivan said.

Sullivan leads the chants at a recent state Capitol rally.
BUFFALO — Michael Myers said he has always been blessed with a “silver tongue” because he can cajole most folks to pitch in at the Albany Housing Authority local he belongs to.

But even the glib and confident Myers was polishing his speaking skills during one of several well-attended workshops for CSEA’s local government leaders held in Buffalo recently.

“I’ve always been comfortable speaking in front of a group,” Myers said nonchalantly after the public speaking workshop, “but now I’m honing my skills to be on an even keel with management negotiators.”

Myers was among hundreds of CSEA members from school districts, towns, counties and the private sector who attended the conference which featured workshops ranging from public speaking to union building.

“This is my first workshop and I’m loving it,” said Val Juby, who works in the Lewis County treasurer’s office. “I can better myself and my union members” by sharing the workshop information with other colleagues on the job, she added.

Led by CSEA Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan, Treasurer Maureen Malone and Secretary Barbara Reeves, members also learned the importance of communicating frequently and effectively with members.

“We are putting together a stronger and more powerful union driven by the members and led by you!” Sullivan told the cheering crowd of local union leaders.

“We have to involve that percentage of members who don’t understand that being part of a great union is the greatest thing they could have,” Sullivan added.

Being good neighbors
Community involvement is a key to union building, the union leaders stressed.

“We need to be known in our communities as the union that cares about our neighbors and neighborhoods,” Malone said.

That theme struck home for Donna Borquist.

About a dozen years ago, Borquist and her mother, both Dutchess County employees, attended their first general membership meeting.

They were the only two who showed up.

“I’m now very passionate about union building.” Borquist said, adding she has helped build her local into a “hotbed of activism.”

Pressed for time, most union members are reluctant to volunteer to help with a union project or lead the local, members said.

However, all said they would be happy if members would offer 15 minutes or a half hour once a month to distribute information or make phone calls.

“Most members think it’s all or nothing when it comes to giving time to their union,” said Linda Campbell, president of the Syracuse Housing Authority local.

“But I’ll take 15 minutes if that’s all someone has to offer,” she added. “Everybody counts and everybody is important. We all need to help build this union,” Campbell said.

These budget cuts hurt everyone!

“The governor’s budget shortchanges New York’s counties, cities, towns and villages as well as schools and health care facilities.

“All this while the state is sitting on a multi-billion dollar budget surplus that CSEA members helped create through hard work and sacrifice.

“It’s time for the governor to get to work to reach agreement on a budget that treats CSEA families with fairness and respect.

“Judging from the spirit and strength CSEA members are showing, the governor ignores these issues at his own peril.”

— CSEA President Danny Donohue to hundreds of CSEA local government activists meeting in Buffalo

Sail away with CSEA

on Royal Caribbean’s Sovereign of the Seas

November 8-12, 1999

(Monday to Friday; November 11 is Veterans Day)

Explore the Bahamas and Key West with family, friends and fellow CSEA members on a deluxe 4 night cruise aboard the Sovereign of the Seas from Miami to Nassau, Cocco Cay, and Key West.

TRAVEL TO THESE DESTINATIONS REQUIRES PROOF OF CITIZENSHIP. PLEASE INQUIRE FOR DETAILS.

YOUR CRUISE PACKAGE INCLUDES:
* Round trip airfare to Miami
* Round trip transfers, airport to pier
* Your choice of outside or inside cabins
* All meals and entertainment on board
* Port charges and departure tax

RATES (per person) DOUBLE OCCUPANCY
Outside (category I): $859
Inside (category N): $799

CANCELLATIONS:
Please refer to the RCCL brochure for RCCL’s policy.
Plaza Travel has a cancellation fee of $50 per person separate from RCCL’s policy and is not protected by the RCCL insurance shown at right.

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Insurance is available at the rate of $49 per person which covers trip cancellation, medical protection, baggage protection and emergency assistance.

DEPOSIT AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE:
Please make your reservation by calling Plaza Travel at 800-666-3404 no later than July 15. For those who desire the insurance option below, an additional $49 per person must be paid. Payments are accepted by check only, and are made payable to Plaza Travel Center. Your balance is due in full by July 30, 1999.
Union business is all in the family

NEW PALTZ — Union business is all in the family at the Beaulieu house.

Both Len and Janice Beaulieu are union activists at SUNY New Paltz where Janice, who serves as first vice president of the local, is a secretary in the theater department. She’s worked for the state 11 years.

Len, a state worker for five years, is president of the local and works as a refrigeration maintenance assistant.

Janice’s sister, Linda Franzella, is also an activist who works in the college library and serves as a shop steward for the local.

Married nearly 15 years, Len and Janice were attending a union meeting when Southern Region President Carmine DiBattista announced the local needed members who were willing to run for office.

“The union had helped me out with a problem,” said Janice. “I had some spare time and I volunteered to be a vice president.”

Later, she learned her husband was going to run for local president.

“Carmine (DiBattista) told me my husband was planning to run for president and that was news to me — I didn’t know,” she said.

“I asked him that night and he said he was thinking about it,” Janice said.

Both new officers have “hit the ground running” attending conferences and training and becoming well acquainted with CSEA.

As expected, CSEA is a major topic of discussion in the home.

“We spend a lot of time discussing the union,” said Janice, who also serves as the local’s grievance chairperson.

“It’s not bad — we have something in common to talk about,” she said, “but then again, it’s not good to spend all our time talking about union problems.”

Family gatherings with Janice’s sister, also in the union movement, “are a real blast,” said Len.

“She’s a good soldier,” he said.

Len said he was at first concerned how Janice would react to him “doing things my way” at the local.

“I have to keep her under control,” he joked, “she’s the radical one.”

Len referred to an incident where a college official objected to a letter Janice had written him.

“He said he wasn’t used to the union being so confrontational. We knew that wasn’t true,” said Len. “He wanted us to withdraw the letter. I backed Janice and he backed down. You do what you have to do.”

— Anita Manley

JUST LIKE CHRISTMAS — Members of Highland Division for Youth Local contributed toys, games and school supplies to the Catherine Street Community Center in Poughkeepsie. About 75 inner city children attend the center’s after school program. These youngsters enjoy opening the gifts which will be used by all of the center’s young members. Shown with the children is Local President Ingrid Opsis.
Dear Member:

We are pleased to report CSEA’s financial state is improving.

For the second year in a row, net assets increased. And, for the first time in five years, the deficit in operating activities was reversed.

The improved financial situation is good news for the CSEA Family.

DANNY DONOHUE
PRESIDENT

MAUREEN S. MALONE
TREASURER

The Civil Service Employees Association, Inc.

The Civil Service Employees Association, Inc.

Statements of Financial Position
September 30, 1998

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS
Cash and cash equivalents $4,574,044
Membership dues and agency fees receivable 2,077,060
Miscellaneous receivables 1,187,137
Prepaid expenses 1,192,654
Total current assets 9,030,895

PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT
Land 2,173,742
Office buildings and improvements 11,825,937
Furniture and equipment 4,258,640
Less accumulated depreciation (6,559,009)
Total property, plant and equipment 7,680,300

OTHER ASSETS
Long-term investments 21,597,340
Prepaid pension cost 1,647,805
Total other assets 23,245,145

Total assets $43,975,350

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES
Accounts payable and accrued expense $4,477,205
Compensated absences 1,343,478
Due to locals 7,587,789
Current maturities of long-term debt 359,591
Current maturities of capital lease obligations 18,666
Deferred revenue 114,458
Total current liabilities 13,901,187

OTHER LIABILITIES
Long-term debt 3,514,604
Capital lease obligations 644,635
Deferred compensation liability 1,533,334
Accrued postretirement obligation, net of current portion 6,199,890
Total liabilities 13,901,187

NET ASSETS
Unrestricted 19,294,184
Temporarily restricted 477,966
Total net assets 19,772,150

Total liabilities and net assets $43,975,350

The Civil Service Employees Association, Inc.

Statement of Activities
Year ended September 30, 1998

Operating revenue:
Membership dues and agency shop fees:
State $26,563,184
Local government 34,215,962
Total operating revenue 41,125,983

Less:
Dues refundable to locals and regions 10,954,117
Political Action provisions 1,829,686
Affiliation dues 15,353,334
Total operating expenses 39,888,111

Change in net assets from operating activities 1,237,872

Nonoperating activities:
Net realized and unrealized gains 3,941,088
Gain on disposal of equipment 619,866
Total nonoperating expenses 39,888,111

Change in net assets from operating activities 1,237,872

Change in net assets 17,896 5,197,790

Net assets, beginning of year 14,114,290

Net assets, end of year $19,294,184 $477,966 $19,772,150

CSEA also has reporting requirements to fulfill with the US Department of Labor (LM-2) and the Internal Revenue Service (990). Because of the different reporting requirements the Audited Annual Financial Report as printed here may differ in presentation from these other reports.

A copy of the financial statements and report of independent accountants PricewaterhouseCoopers, L.L.P. for the year ended Sept. 30, 1998, is available upon written request by contacting the CSEA Treasurer’s Office at CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12210.

Page 18 THE WORK FORCE July 1999
Union scholarships key to success

Education is key to improving the lives of union members and their families. And since 1980, CSEA scholarships have helped improve the lives of hundreds of CSEA families.

CSEA's Special Memorial Scholarship Committee administers the programs and it's no small task.

For three days this spring, committee members reviewed more than 900 applications to select the 20 winners listed below.

Except for the Jardine Group Services and the MetLife Insurance Co. scholarships, which are awarded solely on academic merit, the committee judges each candidate on several criteria, such as parental income, work experience, extracurricular activities and academics.

If there's a tie, the applications are rescored by two different committee members who rarely arrive at the same numbers as the original scorers. Though the work is time-consuming, members said serving on the committee is rewarding.

"As a union activist, it's very rewarding to be able to help out your fellow members," said committee member Jeanette Newman. "It's even more rewarding when you're able to help out their kids."

The committee will resume its duties this fall, helping more members' children achieve their dreams.

WINNERS

CSEA has announced the 1999 winners of the Irving Flauumenbaum and Jardine/Met Life Scholarship Awards.

The Flauumenbaum Scholarship awards 18 $1,000 scholarships annually to high school seniors. Three awards are granted in each of CSEA's six regions.

The Jardine and Met Life scholarships are $2,500 each.

LONG ISLAND REGION: Matthew J. Giusto of Meford, whose mother, Susan Giusto, is a Clerical Aide with Patchogue Medford School. Steven Ling of Dix Hills, whose mother, Irene Ling, is a Motor Vehicle Representative with NYS Motor Vehicles. Jonathan Lissauer of Shoreham, whose mother, Elaine Lissauer, is a Secretary with SUNY Stony Brook MSRC.

METROPOLITAN REGION: Larissa Vanyashiyev of Staten Island, whose mother, Anne Vanyashiyev, is a MHTA with South Beach Psychiatric Center. Varghese of Elmont, whose mother, Aleyamme Varughese, is a Clerk Typist with Warwick Valley CSD. Jessica Shaw of Yonkers, whose mother, Roberta Shaw, is a Teacher's Aide with Yonkers Board of Education. Jennifer Zaveckas of Warick, whose mother, Grace Zaveckas, is a Food Service Aide with Warwick Valley SD.

CAPITAL REGION: Rebecca MacDowell of Clifton Park, whose mother, Deborah MacDowell, is a Teacher's Aide with Shenendehowa SD. Amanda Chase of Lyon Mountain, whose mother Robin A. Chase, is a Keyboard Specialist with NYSDOCS. Michelle Lea Johnson of Scotia, whose mother Cynthia A. Johnson, is a Teacher's Aide with B/A/B Central Schools.

CENTRAL REGION: Leslie A. Reed of Adams Center, whose mother Carol A. Reed, is a Secretary with South Jefferson CSD. Beth Ann Fitch of Bridgewater, whose mother Colleen Mary Fitch, is an Assistant Cook with Mt. Markham HS. Greg A. Tingley of Binghamton, whose mother, Melissa A. Tingley, is a Library Aide with Binghamton City Schools.

WESTERN REGION: Rose E. Marmon of Tonawanda, whose mother, Cecilia R. Driscoll, is a Developmental Aide with WNY DDSO. Joseph H. Dolan of West Seneca, whose mother, Margaret Dolan, is a part-time Clerical Worker in West Seneca CSD. Norman U. Boyer, II of Buffalo, whose mother, Rosemary Boyer, is a Teacher Aide with West Seneca CSD.

JARDINE GROUP SERVICES AWARD: The 1999 winner is Danny McNatty of Depew. His mother, Margaret McNatty, is a developmenta aide at the Western New York DDSO.

METLIFE INSURANCE COMPANY AWARD: The 1999 winner is Leslie Mackrell of East Greenbush. Her mother, Maria Barrington, is a principal court analyst with the Unified Court System.

Deadline for AFL-CIO scholarship Sept. 30

The Northeast Council AFL-CIO awards 10 $1,000 scholarships annually to children and grandchildren of affiliated members.

Applicants must be accepted by an accredited two or four-year college. Winners are drawn by lottery. The deadline to apply has been extended to Sept. 30.

For applications, write to: Mario Cilento, New York State AFL-CIO, 48 East 21st St., 12th floor, New York, NY 10010 or call (212) 777-6040.

LEAP extended to local government, private sector

Union members working in local government or the private sector can now get a career boost with a new CSEA program that offers financial aid information, career planning and academic advising.

This confidential toll-free service was recently expanded from the original program for state government workers to now include all union members.

Called the Labor Education Action Program (LEAP), advisers work with members on the telephone and provide them with financial aid information and advice and help with career planning, academics and adult basic education skills.

LEAP offers career and education guides, test preparation booklets and videos and financial aid and educational planning booklets. Hundreds of state government workers have used the LEAP program to boost their careers.

"I got a lot of support from the LEAP office," said Barb Denison, a union member at the Central New York Developmental Disabilities Service Office. "I would not have been able to get my degree without their help," she added.

A keyboard specialist at the facility for a decade, Denison said she was ready to go back to college and advance her career. LEAP advisers may be reached at 1-800-253-4332 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The office is open Thursdays until 8:30 p.m.

Members may call at other times and leave a message. A LEAP advisor will return the call at a convenient time.
Come join us at

THE FAIR
THE GREAT NEW YORK STATE FAIR

DISCOVER AMERICA IN THE HEART OF NEW YORK.
Aug. 26 - Sept. 6, Syracuse

The New York State Fair is at the Empire Expo Center located off Exit 7 of Interstate 690, 3 miles west of Syracuse. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily.

The New York State Fair in Syracuse. CSEA members and their families will receive two-for-one admission that weekend, compliments of CSEA and the New York State Fair.

CSEA will maintain a booth in the Center of Progress Building on the fairgrounds throughout the entire fair, so stop by and visit the CSEA booth at any time. The two-for-one coupons above, however, are only good during CSEA Weekend, Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 4 and 5.

Saturday, Sept. 4 and Sunday, Sept. 5, 1999, is CSEA WEEKEND at the New York State Fair in Syracuse. CSEA members and their families will receive two-for-one admission that weekend, compliments of CSEA and the New York State Fair.

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