New York state's long-delayed budget was in place — sort of — as this edition of the Public Sector went to press. But as things stand, the spending plan is disastrous for public employees at all levels of government.

The legislature's budget eliminated more than $150 million for state agencies, which could result in the additional layoffs of another 4,000 state workers. Governor Cuomo, on the other hand, vetoed more than $900 million worth of funds from the legislature's budget that was primarily targeted to aid schools and local governments. Public employees lose in both instances.

The Governor and legislative leaders indicate they want to restore funds to the budget, but at press time it was unclear if that could or would be done before the legislature breaks for the summer season.

Whatever they do, if anything, will probably represent a bandaid approach to the fiscal problems; unless we can convince them to do the right thing.

One key approach to long-term fiscal stability is tax fairness. Restructuring the state's tax system to require the wealthy and big corporations to pay their fair share of taxes would provide enough money to sustain vital state services and aid to local governments and school districts now and for the long haul.

CSEA is keeping the pressure on the governor and legislative leaders to negotiate a more responsible plan than the current budget represents. It's a tough, uphill effort, and you can help.

Sign, clip and send the messages on this page to Gov. Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader Ralph Marino and Assembly Speaker Mel Miller. Tell them to find a better way to deal with the state's fiscal crisis that they helped create and which is now robbing citizens of vital public services they need and want.

CSEA Statewide officers re-elected to new terms

Joe McDermott
PRESIDENT
Danny Donohue
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
Mary E. Sullivan
TREASURER
Irene Carr
SECRETARY

SOLIDARITY DAY '91
AUGUST 31st WASHINGTON, D.C.* See page 13

Court of Appeals decision enhances lag payroll lawsuit — PAGE 3
State News

News stories, articles and items of information of particular interest to CSEA State members

State News

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PEOPLE

IN THE NEWS

He sings for clients
When he worked at Broome Developmental Center, CSEA member Tony Villecco never worked with the clients. But in a recent visit, he had plenty of patient contact as he sang for the clients in the geriatric unit.

Now a member of CSEA SUNY Binghamton Local 648, Villecco is a clerk at the library. When he’s not working, he pursues his singing. When geriatric ward leaders at the developmental center were looking for a program for their clients, they remembered Villecco, who once sang in an employee talent show.

With his accompanist, Madeline Iannone, Villecco sang favorites from Italian opera to Broadway show tunes. Metzger and Carolyn Backstrom, membership drive chair, with strong support from Local 401 President Danny Plumey.

Also on the membership drive committee were: Allyson Thomas, Andrew Francis, Catherine Collins, Ludovino Acevedo, Patrick Slack, Ida Whitehurst and Joyce Deloatch. The top three recruiters were Backstrom, Thomas and Francis.

People join PEOPLE in the Bronx

A five-month membership drive for PEOPLE (Public Employees Organized to Promote Legislative Equality) by members of CSEA Bronx Psychiatric Center Local 401 added more than 300 members to the rolls of the political action arm of AFSCME, CSEA’s international union.

CSEA PEOPLE members donated hours of time to the recruitment effort, led by Region II PEOPLE Chair Patricia Metzger and Carolyn Backstrom, membership drive chair, with strong support from Local 401 President Danny Plumey.

Also on the membership drive committee were: Allyson Thomas, Andrew Francis, Catherine Collins, Ludovino Acevedo, Patrick Slack, Ida Whitehurst and Joyce Deloatch. The top three recruiters were Backstrom, Thomas and Francis.

CSEA LOCAL 401 President Danny Plumey, left, receives the PEOPLE Award from CSEA President Joe McDermott and Pat Metzger, right, CSEA Region II PEOPLE chair.

THE PUBLIC Sector


COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATES

SHERYL C. JENKS……………. Region I (516) 273-2280
LILLY GIOIA………………….. Region II (212) 514-9200
ANITA MANLEY……………… Region III (914) 896-8180
DAN CAMPBELL……………… Region IV (518) 489-5424
MARK M. KOTZIN…………….. Region V (315) 433-0050
RON WOFFORD……………… Region VI (716) 886-0391
STEPHEN MADARASZ Headquarters (518) 434-0191

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CSEA targets disastrous budget

ALBANY — The disastrous 1991-92 state budget talks have yet to be completely settled as this edition of The Public Sector went to press.

Although the Legislature passed a budget, the Governor vetoed nearly $1 billion in spending and both sides are now talking about talking again.

CSEA, already forcefully opposed to the Governor's proposed budget, had even more objections to the Legislature's budget. While it restored some aid to local governments and school districts and some state spending, it hacked away at vital state programs and services.

Whatever spending the Legislature restored, the Governor vetoed. That means CSEA members at both the state and local levels may suffer from deep budget cuts.

However, as this issue of The Public Sector went to press, the Governor and legislative leaders were discussing the possibility of new negotiations to restore more than $300 million in spending.

"CSEA is working every day to convince the Legislature and Gov. Cuomo that we have got to restore spending and restore revenue by making the tax structure more fair," said CSEA President Joe McDermott.

"We've got to be sure the wealthy and the corporations pay their fair share so that all New Yorkers can benefit from the services they need from the state, local governments and school districts.

"Our lawmakers have got to understand that New York needs to build, not tear down, its base of services and aid to local governments and school districts," McDermott said.

As it stood at press time, the 1991-92 state budget:

— drastically cuts revenue sharing aid to local governments;
— cuts $900 million in school district aid;
— cuts state services so severely that another 6,000 or more layoffs may be necessary; and
— cuts the Office of Mental Health so drastically that both Elmira and Gowanda psychiatric centers are to be closed. (See page 6.)

"We are out there fighting for more talks, more spending and more revenues," McDermott said. "We are fighting for more than our members; we're fighting for the whole state."

Multi-year pacts legally binding, court decides

ALBANY — Public employee unions' right to negotiate multi-year binding contracts has been upheld by the Court of Appeals, the state's highest court.

This fundamental right was threatened by a federal court decision in a case involving the pay lag of court employees. In that decision U.S. District Court Judge Robert Paterson ruled that any portion of a contract that cost money was subject to annual legislative appropriations.

The Court of Appeals agreed with CSEA's argument and said no to that logic. The high court ruled that a multi-year contract is binding once approved by the Legislature.

"The Court of Appeals decision is a tremendous victory for CSEA," said President Joe McDermott. "If the federal decision had been allowed to stand, public sector contracts would have bound the employees but not the employer. That would have created chaos in every unit CSEA represents."

The high court's decision is also an important intermediate step in the union's legal battle to overturn the lag pay imposed on state employees.

"Our legal battle to overturn the lag payroll is based on the fact that the lag improperly impaired a contract," said CSEA General Counsel Nancy Hoffman.

"The Court of Appeals ruling affirms that a binding contract existed."

CSEA has already received a favorable state court ruling in its fight against the court employees' lag pay (see related story page 4). The union's lawsuit against the pay lag of executive branch employees is in federal court. This decision will help the union's arguments in that case.

State's spending priorities off

ATTICA — While the state Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) is laying off employees, George Phelps thinks it's very strange that the administration at Attica Correctional Facility is spending close to $2 million on projects rather than jobs.

"Here we are, laying people off, causing bumping and other disruptions to the lives of hard-working people," said Phelps, president of Attica Correctional Local 152, "while they're spending more than a million and a half bucks on items that surely could wait until the economic atmosphere improves."

Phelps pointed to $1,006,640 being laid out for paving the facility parking lot and drainage and lighting and $600,000 for inmate showers as spending that should be put on hold before layoffs are implemented.

"These jobs are being done by private contractors," said Phelps, "which is bad enough. But you know half of that cost is for labor, and we have plenty of that in the system."

July 1991
A state Supreme Court justice has ordered the Unified Court system to return 10 days’ lag pay to 3,700 court employees represented by CSEA. The state immediately announced it would appeal the decision.

Justice Daniel H. Prior Jr., ruling in an Article 78 proceeding brought by CSEA, said the court system must return the salary withheld because the method used to implement the lag payroll was an “impairment of (the employees) contract rights” and resulted in a “deprivation of property without due process of law.”

“The lag payroll for non-judicial court employees was instituted Nov. 7 and affected workers hired after April 1, 1983, by withholding one day’s pay for each of 10 consecutive pay periods. ‘The decision is a giant step forward in CSEA’s fight against lag payrolls,’” CSEA President Joe McDermott said. “It gives us hope for another victory down the road against the lag payroll imposed on other state employees.

“State officials should respect the rights of public employees and stop raiding our paychecks to patch up the fiscal mess,” McDermott added.

CSEA has several actions pending against New York state for imposing a lag payroll on executive branch employees. CSEA instituted a federal lawsuit, an improper practice charge and a contract grievance against the state.

A decision is awaited on the union’s federal lawsuit, the state Public Employment Relations Board is expected to hear the union’s improper practice charge next month and a hearing on the contract grievance is scheduled in October.

By Mark M. Kotzin

ELMIRA — CSEA officials are blaming state budget cuts for a recent prison uprising that could have endangered the lives of CSEA members working at Southport Correctional Facility.

Several guards were overpowered and taken hostage by about 50 inmates armed with homemade knives and other weapons. A day and a half later, the guards were released with some injuries. While no CSEA members were taken hostage, local CSEA leaders say that this time they were “just lucky.”

According to CSEA Southport Correctional Facility Local 193 President Rich Lincoln, the prison’s conversion to a “maxi-maxi” prison to cut costs. The “ maxi-maxi” prison houses almost exclusively violent, hard-to-control inmates who are locked up 23 hours a day. About 700 of the prison’s 800 inmates are “ maxi-maxi” prisoners. The conversion has made the prison harder to control, Lincoln said.

“I feel the control of the jail has gotten out of hand,” he said. When the prison was converted, the state eliminated 47 prison guards and 31 civilian jobs.

“Unless something is done, it’s going to happen again,” Lincoln said. “There will be more uprisings. It will be just a matter of time before one of our members is hurt.”

Among those most vulnerable to inmate attacks are those working in the maintenance shop and storehouse. In the maintenance shop, one or two civilian employees are left alone with nine or 10 inmates. Worse, class-A tools, classified as weapons, are available to inmates. In the storehouse, a guard sits outside two secured doors, leaving one or two CSEA members alone with two inmates.

On a positive note, Lincoln said that he wanted to commend all the CSEA members who helped out during the crisis. Such help included: clerical support staff who assisted management with communications and helping the families of hostages, cooks who stayed overtime to make sandwiches for the extra guards and officials who were called in and the maintenance workers who worked 16-hour days to repair the damage to the facility done during the uprising.

Contract updates

ALBANY — CSEA is continuing mediation with the state for a contract agreement for CSEA-represented state employees.

The mediator is working with both CSEA and state negotiators in an attempt to come to an agreement.

Negotiations began last year on a new contract, but before the previous contract expired, the state declared impasse. The state Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) appointed a mediator, who was accepted by both sides.

If mediation fails to result in a contract, the next step in the process is fact-finding. In that situation, a fact finder or panel of fact finders collects information from both parties and recommends a non-binding solution.

OCA talks continue

CSEA also is negotiating a new contract for Office of Court Administration (OCA) employees.

Those negotiations are continuing: CSEA and the OCA negotiating teams continue to work toward a new contract for the approximately 3,700 OCA employees represented by CSEA.

maxed out!

Southport:
Making the public responsible for its trash

Editor's Note: Collecting and disposing of trash and garbage is a time-consuming and costly task in today's throw-away society. But thanks to an unusual program that grew out of an idea suggested by employees themselves, there's a lot less trash these days at state parks and historic sites throughout New York. And that translates into more time available to better maintain the parks and sites and money saved that preserves jobs that otherwise might be lost in these tough fiscal times.

By Daniel X. Campbell
CSEA Communications Associate

SARATOGA — "The bottom line is that the carry-in/carry-out efforts save money and that saves jobs," CSEA Saratoga Spa Local 106 President Herb Adamson said.

The "carry-in/carry-out" program requires visitors to state parks and historic sites to carry out all trash and garbage they brought in or created during their visit.

The program was tested last year as a pilot project at three state parks in the Saratoga region and this year is in operation at all historic sites and state parks.

Cheryl Gold, regional historic preservation supervisor in the Saratoga area, praised the project.

"The idea came from the workers themselves through a labor-management committee. We worked together to develop the idea and it was so successful in the region that this year it is being tried out throughout the state," she said.

"When visitors arrive to picnic or camp they are given a carry-in/carry-out bag, some information about the program and asked to remove all trash they generate during their visit," Adamson said.

"We no longer have trash barrels in the park. The response from the public has been amazing."

This year one of our small parks will save $7,000 with carry-in/carry-out. As costs soar, savings should double and possibly triple," he said.

Gold believes most people are concerned enough about the environment that they understand and appreciate the conservation efforts.

"The people want to help," she said.

"If this project was not so well received and supported by the public, we would be seeing budget cutbacks slashing hours of operation or the assignment of workers who should be doing maintenance projects to sanitation collection instead," Adamson said.

"Gold courses are public entertainment facilities are also targeted to become part of the program," Gold noted.

"We're also willing to share our efforts with local governments, cities, towns, etc., that have park operations and facing the same type of problem," Adamson said.

By Ron Wofford
CSEA Communications Associate

HORNELL — An innovative employee-involvement program that enables worker suggestions to be used for improving working conditions and job efficiency has sailed through a pilot period with flying colors in the state Department of Transportation (DOT) Region here.

CSEA Hornell State Employees Local 007 President John Wallenbeck joined DOT Regional Director Duane Heineman in praising the "Quality Circles" program.

"This is a very worthwhile program that lets employees propose solutions to problems they find on the job," Wallenbeck said during a recent employee recognition day program. "It's good for morale because it logically lets those closest to the situation have a say in improving things."

Objectives of the Quality Circle program, established by a joint labor-management steering committee, include improving human relations among DOT personnel, improving communications at all levels, improving personal involvement and development and improving leadership and problem-solving skills.

One Quality Circle project included establishing a training module for employees on heavy equipment. That enabled all heavy equipment operators and candidates to have practical experience and resulted in a 30 percent gain in the number of qualified equipment operators in the region.

Another Quality Circle project dealt with the universal problem of motorists speeding through road construction zones. The Quality Circle crew devised a series of measures, including more detailed warning signs and traffic flow devices, to guide vehicles through work zones at a safer and slower rate of speed.

"At a time when New York seemingly doesn't know where the next dollar is coming from, these programs are lifting morale to an all-time high," Wallenbeck said.

Wallenbeck, a member of the steering committee, said he expects the Quality Circle pilot program to become a permanent part of the region's operational philosophy.

Innovative DOT program pays off

CSEA LOCAL 007 PRESIDENT John Wallenbeck, left, and Local 007 member Jim Caparulo discuss a Quality Circle project. Caparulo, a highway maintenance supervisor, is a team leader of a Quality Circle crew that worked on devising a more efficient trailer to carry equipment.

July 1991
Outrage across the state

Mental hygiene cuts are beyond reason; CSEA fighting back

For CSEA mental hygiene workers the state budget fiasco has turned a serious situation into a crisis. Legislative cuts for the Office of Mental Health (OMH) and the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) are even deeper than Gov. Cuomo proposed.

As it now stands, OMH plans to close Gowanda and Elmira Psychiatric Centers by Oct. 1. Because of the lack of funding, that action would be the most drastic, but the severity of the cuts will hit every facility and employee in the system.

"These cuts are irresponsible and unacceptable," said CSEA President Joe McDermott. "They not only affect the lives of clients and staff, they undermine the OMH and OMRDD system and make it even harder to develop long-term alternative care."

When Gov. Cuomo unveiled his devastating state budget last winter, CSEA said the fight for mental hygiene funding would be a fight for the very survival of the system. For months CSEA has been pounding away at the wrong-headed OMH policy evident in the original plan to close Gowanda Psychiatric Center by 1993 without developing necessary alternative care.

The state Legislature responded to CSEA’s message by approving budget language requiring a detailed plan before allowing any closing. But the Governor vetoed that provision. (See page 3)

At the same time the Legislature was demanding OMH accountability, their OMH funding cuts may have actually expedited the Gowanda closing.

The Legislature’s spending plan also took a greater toll on OMRDD. OMRDD cuts could result in the loss of 1,300 jobs, the consolidation of facilities and possibly even the shifting of specific state facilities to the voluntary sector.

While the Governor and legislative leaders have indicated they would like to correct some deficiencies in the budget, there was little indication at press time that mental hygiene was high on their agenda.

But CSEA is not giving up the fight.

As an immediate response, CSEA has sent all mental hygiene members a mailing urging action to help demonstrate dissatisfaction to the Governor and legislative leaders. The union is also demonstrating its outrage publicly (see accompanying stories) and more plans are in the works.

"We have to keep pounding away with our message because lives are at risk," McDermott said.

Hutchings hits cuts

SYRACUSE — In protest of impending layoffs at Hutchings Psychiatric Center, more than 100 CSEA and other union members joined together for a recent lunchtime demonstration.

Despite rainy weather, the workers marched in front of the psychiatric center, wearing black armbands to symbolize the start of a two-week “mourning period” at the facility. Exactly two weeks from the date of the demonstration, 24 employees were scheduled to be laid-off.

"We’re not only losing people here, we’re losing programs that have helped our clients become more independent and self-sufficient," said CSEA HPC Local 435 Pres. Sharon Connor.

Manhattan PC vents anger at Surles

MANHATTAN — When NYS Mental Health Commissioner Richard Surles arrived at Manhattan Psychiatric Center to present a speech, he found the entrance blocked by an angry CSEA informational picket line.

Disgusted with Office of Mental Health (OMH) layoffs, facility closings and disregard to patient and employee safety CSEA members vented their frustration at Surles and his irresponsible policies. CSEA Region II President George Boncoraglio said, "Surles ignores reality while he runs the mental health system into the ground!"

Led by Boncoraglio and CSEA Local 413 President Mohamed Hussain, picketers followed Surles to the auditorium, making certain the union’s presence was highly visible during his speech.

CSEA believes OMH plans to release mental patients into minimally supervised housing in New York City is a cruel hoax. Community-based group homes are almost non-existent in the metropolitan area, and what housing there is, in too many cases, has been exposed in the press as filthy and disgraceful. A recent report by the NYS Commission on Quality of Care for the Mentally Disabled, described housing conditions for New York City’s mentally ill as "wretched."

According to Hussain, Local 413 members are incensed not only by layoffs, but by increasingly dangerous working conditions including the lack of a long-promised security fence. Alarmed by the continually escalating crime rate on Ward’s Island since New York City placed a homeless men’s shelter in close proximity to the Manhattan Psychiatric Center, CSEA told Surles that the fence is vital to halt the all too frequent robberies and muggings of patients and staff.
By Lilly Giola
CSEA Communications Associate

STATEN ISLAND — State Institute for Basic Research (IBR) scientists, like sleuths in white lab coats, search for clues to the mysteries of mental retardation, Alzheimer’s Disease, AIDS, hepatitis and other thus far incurable conditions.

CSEA Local 438 support staff members are justifiably proud of IBR’s excellent scientific reputation and achievements, but are increasingly troubled by what some believe to be laxness toward employee safety at the facility.

“This place houses so many dangerous chemicals and infectious viral and bacterial elements,” said CSEA Local 438 President Mary Greenman, “and many workers have approached the union concerned over a number of serious laboratory accidents over the years.”

According to Greenman, governmental safety standards specifically for laboratories have only recently been issued. CSEA Safety and Health Director James Corcoran III indicated that the IBR is “long overdue to be checked out by an outside agency to monitor whether established safety standards are being maintained.”

Responding to mounting concerns about inadequate employee safety training programs at IBR, Greenman requested that a complete safety assessment be conducted at the 22-year-old facility, which is also presently undergoing a massive asbestos removal program. At the request of CSEA, Dept. of Labor (DOL) experts are now conducting unannounced examinations of all laboratories and hazardous waste disposal procedures to assure compliance with Public Employment Safety and Health (PESH) standards.

“I believe this is the first substantial outside safety analysis that has ever been conducted since the Institute opened,” Greenman said. She is working jointly with other unions at IBR, with CSEA’s Safety and Health Department and with the statewide Joint Safety and Health Labor-Management Committee to address safety issues.

“Some labs don’t have posted what chemicals are being used and some do. All the material safety data sheets (MSDS) are not kept current either,” a lab chemist said.

Greenman accompanied a DOL senior industrial hygienist on a recent random walk-through inspection of the tissue culture, genetics, immunology and virology departments, as well as a review of procedures for the disposal of infectious waste.

“CSEA is anxious to receive the Labor Department’s report, because we hope it will expedite precautionary training programs for all employees,” Greenman said.

“We don’t have any way of knowing and perhaps we never will, if several recent cancer deaths among IBR employees are coincidental here or had anything to do with exposure to carcinogens being handled over the years. But everyone will breathe easier if we have more stringent procedures in place and adhered to throughout the facility.”

At CSEA’s request, the Labor Department is conducting unannounced examinations of all laboratories and waste disposal procedures to assure compliance with PESH standards.
CSEA calls foul over supervisor's harassment of DOT worker

PLEASANTVILLE — Why should a perfectly dependable 12-year employee who received glowing evaluations suddenly become a problem employee? Why would an employee who once looked forward to coming to work suddenly dread waking up in the morning?

Ask DOT employee Verna Ellis who daily faces the greatest challenge of her life. Ask Verna Ellis who works for a supervisor who rules with sarcasm and intimidation. Ask Verna Ellis who feels that she is being singled out to be the object of a vindictive supervisor’s wrath.

“I had excellent evaluations when I worked at Sing Sing Prison,” said Ellis, who took a cut in pay to work closer to home. “I was employee of the year.”

Ellis pointed out that an interim supervisor at DOT rated her as a highly competent employee. “When I told this woman about my last evaluation, she said it was ‘bogus,’ ” she said.

Over the last few months, Ellis has been called into the supervisor’s office where she has been subject to physical shoving and tongue lashings and has had duties taken away.

Ellis recalled that a former co-worker had filed a grievance against the same supervisor and while waiting for the results, died of a heart attack.

Labor Relations Specialist Max Neuberger has advised Ellis that he will do all he can to rectify the situation and has referred her to the Human Rights Commission. He is also awaiting the results of a second stage grievance hearing.

“It’s a shame that certain supervisory personnel feel that they have to intimidate people to keep them in line,” he said. "Here is a perfectly capable woman who could be a very productive worker if her supervisor treated her with respect. You would think management would notice who really has the problem.”

Grub pay boosted on canal

CSEA-represented Department of Transportation waterways personnel will benefit from a newly negotiated meal and travel reimbursement policy. The agreement stems from a CSEA grievance filed in 1989.

Previously, waterways personnel working on projects that required them to be away from their home port or headquarters received $3.75 per day “grub” money but were not entitled to receive the per diem allowance that other state employees received in similar situations. CSEA’s grievance challenged that policy.

Under the new policy, the employees have the option of receiving the appropriate per diem allowance to cover lodging, meals and transportation according to the state comptroller’s guidelines when they are away from their home port. The workers may, however, choose instead to receive quarters and $5 grub money.

Additionally, the agreement provides for retroactive grub money payments of an additional 75¢ per day for the 1989 navigational season and another 50¢ per day for the 1990 season to the present.

The grievance was originally filed by CSEA DOT Barge Canal Local 500 President Tom Dohin and CSEA DOT Barge Canal Local 503 President Homer Porter. The agreement was negotiated by CSEA Deputy Director for Contract Administration Tony Campione and Assistant Administrator Chuck Eynon with the involvement of CSEA DOT statewide Labor-Management Committee Chairperson Milo Barlow.

Tool agreement reached

BUFFALO — A CSEA-GOER agreement at SUNY Buffalo has revised a policy that required maintenance workers to maintain their own tool inventory in performance of their duties.

The tool-ownership requirement will be phased out over a five-year period, with current employees who have been providing their own tools, given a lump-sum payment of $300 or before June 30.

“The guys are quite happy with this settlement,” said Barry Kobrin, third vice president and grievance chair for SUNY Local 602. “Especially since this is the second time we had filed a grievance over the issue.”

During the five-year phase-out period, maintenance personnel will continue to use their own tools until they are replaced as needed by SUNY Buffalo.

Newly-hired employees will be provided with any tools necessary for assigned tasks, and a labor-management committee will monitor the tool matter for any needed improvements.

High-handed in high peaks

LAKE PLACID — A series of small ads making statements about the actions of the Olympic Regional Development Authority have begun appearing in major North Country publications. The CSEA campaign’s objective is to develop citizen concern about the high-handed actions of ORDA in dealing with the North Country community and ORDA’s anti-union record.

“ORDA breaks the law and doesn’t pay a $40,000 fine for illegally dumping waste in our backyard. You deserve better,” one ad reads, pointing out that the authority has dragged its feet in a health and safety issue that could have an impact on local residents.

Curiously, ORDA began cleaning up the waste dump after the CSEA ads appeared.

“The ORDA administration tells the public one thing and does another,” CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Ken Lushia said. “CSEA’s going to educate the public about ORDA’s true record — everything from its refusal to obey the law to the secrecy surrounding ORDA management salaries.”

State News Section

Register now for on-site child care

Summer is the ideal time for state employees to enroll their children in the day care programs at one of the 47 child care centers operating at New York state worksites. CSEA Statewide Secretary Irene Carr advises.

Carr is CSEA’s representative to the New York State Labor/Management Child Care Advisory Committee, which oversees the operation of the 47 worksite child care centers.

The centers provide child care services to more than 3,200 children between the ages of eight weeks and 10 years. Priority for enrollment is given to state employees.

Carr pointed out that openings for enrollment are most likely to occur during the summer as some participating children will enter kindergarten in the fall. She advised interested parents to immediately contact the child care center at work concerning enrollment. Funding for the worksite child care centers is provided through a joint labor-management effort between CSEA, PEF, AFSCME COUNCIL 82, District Council 37, UUP and the Governor’s Office of Employee Relations.

Arbitrations, Grievances, IPS, Lawsuits

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Ballots go out next month in special elections to fill statewide board vacancies

Ballots will be mailed next month in special elections to fill four vacancies on CSEA's statewide Board of Directors. Ballots will go out to members eligible to vote in the special elections on Aug. 20 and will be counted Sept. 10. Board of Directors vacancies to be filled are one seat each representing state employees in the Department of Transportation, Universities and Department of Health and Ontario County employees.

Nominating petitions had to be at CSEA headquarters by July 1, and a drawing for positions on the ballots will be conducted July 9.

The deadline for candidates to submit campaign articles for publication in the August edition of The Public Sector is July 15.

Ballots will be delivered to the post office for mailing on Aug. 20 and replacement ballots will be available on and after Aug. 27. Ballots must be returned by 8 a.m. Sept. 10 and will be counted that same day. The results will be published in the October edition of The Public Sector.

CSEA Calendar of Events

July 9
Deadline for submission of recommendations for changes in CSEA Constitution and By-Laws to be considered at Annual Delegates Meeting

July 11
Region II general membership meeting, Region office, 5:30 p.m. "Solidarity Day." Contact Jerry Fidler at 212-514-9200.

July 17
Local 010 Department of Transportation, Long Island City, Lunch and Learn program. Contact Lilly Gioia, 212-514-9200.

August 8
Deadline for submission of recommendations for resolutions to be considered at Annual Delegates Meeting

August 11
Region II PEOPLE Committee picnic, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Kruckers Restaurant and Grove, by bus. Contact the following people for reservations. Bronx: Carol Backstrom, 212-931-0600 ext. 2584. Manhattan and Staten Island: Robin Walker, 212-960-2200 ext. 370. Brooklyn and Queens: Ana Diaz, 718-217-4242.

August 14
Local 010 Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Brooklyn, Lunch and Learn program. Contact Lilly Gioia, 212-514-9200.

August 19-22
CSEA Retiree Convention, the Catskills

August 31
Solidarity Day, Washington DC. Contact your local president for bus information.

October 7-11
CSEA Annual Delegates Meeting, Niagara Falls

Colleen Boncoraglio dies; wife of region president

CSEA was saddened by the death of Colleen Boncoraglio, wife of CSEA Region II President George Boncoraglio. She died June 25 following a long fight with cancer.

Donations may be made to Pax Christi Hospice of St. Vincent's Hospital, 355 Bard Avenue, Staten Island, N.Y. 10310.
Eighteen win CSEA Flaumenbaum scholarships

Eighteen sons and daughters of CSEA members have been named winners of $500 CSEA Irving Flaumenbaum Scholarships. The scholarships are given annually to graduating high school seniors who will be enrolling in colleges and universities in the fall. Three $500 scholarships are awarded in each of CSEA's six regions.

The 18 winners, selected from more than 1,000 applicants, were announced jointly by CSEA President Joe McDermott and Diane Lucchesi, chairperson of CSEA's Special Memorial Scholarship Committee.

**Long Island Region 1**
DEBORAH UPTON of Seaford, a graduate of Gen. Douglas McArthur High School, whose mother, Diane Upton, is a teacher's aide in the Levittown Union Free School District and a member of CSEA Local 865.
KEITH JOHN SAMSON of Kings Park, a graduate of Kings Park High School, whose mother, Margaret Samson, is a library aide in the Kings Park School District and a member of CSEA Local 870.
JERRY CAPORASO of Mineola, a graduate of Mineola High School, whose father, Jerry Caporaso, is a custodian at the Mineola Memorial Library and a member of CSEA Local 830.

**Metropolitan Region 2**
PAULETTE DENISE AURELIEN of the Bronx, a graduate of St. Catherine Academy, whose mother, Margarita Aurelien, is a senior clerk with the State Insurance Fund and a member of CSEA Local 351.
PRITI DIXIT of Staten Island, a graduate of New Dorp High School, whose father, Anil Dixit, is a clerk with the State Insurance Fund and a member of CSEA Local 351.
NICOLE D. SCOTT of Jamaica, a graduate of Franklin Lane High School, whose mother, Ella Scott, is a keyboard specialist with the state Department of Labor and a member of CSEA Local 350.

**Southern Region 3**
LEIGH ANNE KIRSCHEN of Watermill, a graduate of Watermill High School, whose mother, Joan Carol Kirschen, is a teaching assistant in the Wallkill Central School District and a member of CSEA Local 856.
JOANN DIPIERRO of Chester, a graduate of Chester High School, whose mother, Jean DiPierro, is a teacher's assistant in the Chester Union Free School District and a member of CSEA Local 835.
SANJAY S. MOHINDRA of Hopewell Junction, a graduate of John Jay High School, whose mother, Nina Mohindra, is a diet technician at the Hudson Valley Psychiatric Center and a member of CSEA Local 410.

**Capital Region 4**
APRIL ANN BEMIS of Gansevoort, a graduate of South Glens Falls High School, whose mother, Helen Ann Bemis, is a secretary in the South Glens Falls School District and a member of CSEA Local 864.
RENEE CARTIER of Fort Ann, a graduate of Fort Ann Central School, whose mother, Margaret Kendra Bartier, is a mail and supply clerk at the Washington Correctional Facility and a member of CSEA Local 183.
DEBORAH L. DECOTA of Stillwater, a graduate of Stillwater Central School. Her mother, Joanne Decota, is a school monitor at the Stillwater Elementary School and a member of CSEA Local 864. Her father, Matthew Decota, is a bridge repair mechanic with the state Department of Transportation and a member of CSEA Local 676.

In addition to Lucchesi, members of the CSEA Special Memorial Scholarship Committee are Willie Allen, Region I; Nevada Solano, Region II; E. "Sam" Rockfeller, Region III; William Fetterling, Region IV; Sandra Delia, Region V and Arthur Howell, Region VI.

The scholarships are named in memory of the late Irving Flaumenbaum, a former CSEA activist, regional president and AFSCME International vice president.

Winners of the CSEA Flaumenbaum Scholarships for 1991 are:

**Central Region 5**
DAWN MARIE GRANDE of Little Falls, a graduate of Little Falls High School, whose mother, Kathleen Grande, is a teacher's aide in the Little Falls City School District and a member of CSEA Local 822.
ERICA M. WIEDRICK of Turin, a graduate of South Lewis High School, whose mother, Cynthia C. Wiedrick, is a senior account clerk with Lewis County and a member of CSEA Local 825.
SCOTT OWEN FRYECK of Horseheads, a graduate of Horseheads High School, whose mother, Alice June Fryeck, is a secretary in the Horseheads Central School District and a member of CSEA Local 808.

**Western Region 6**
TANYA NICOLE WEIMER of Warsaw, a graduate of Warsaw Central School, whose mother, Peggy Weimer, is a nurse's assistant at Wyoming County Community Hospital and a member of CSEA Local 861.
JOHN ANTHONY RIZZO of Niagara Falls, a graduate of Niagara Falls High School, whose mother, Maria Asuenta Rizzo, is a home school partner for the Niagara Falls Board of Education and a member of CSEA Local 872.
CHARLES A. SAGONA of Fredonia, a graduate of Fredonia High School. His mother, Carmela Sagona, is an assistant service worker for the Fredonia Faculty Student Association and a member of CSEA Local 627. His father, Santo Sagona, is a janitor at SUNY Fredonia and a member of CSEA Local 607.

**McDonough Scholarships**
Applications for CSEA Thomas H. McDonough Memorial Scholarships for continuing college studies will be mailed in mid-July to all CSEA Irving Flaumenbaum Memorial Scholarship winners of the past three years.
McDonough Memorial Scholarships are a one-time $500 award for continuing college studies given annually to six different recipients, one from each CSEA region, who have previously won a Flaumenbaum Memorial Scholarship.

Applications will be accepted until Sept. 15 and winners will be selected in October.
McDermott, Donohue, Sullivan, Carr
re-elected CSEA statewide officers

CSEA members returned their incumbent president, who campaigned on his record and the theme “A tough leader for tough times,” to lead the union through a difficult future clouded by a national recession and horrific fiscal problems at every level of government in New York state. Three other incumbent statewide officers were returned to office in a mail ballot election decided in June.

CSEA President Joe McDermott, Executive Vice President Danny Donohue, Treasurer Mary E. Sullivan and Secretary Irene Carr began new three-year terms on July 1.

Joe McDermott
McDermott received 21,544 votes in the mail ballot election to win re-election over CSEA Southern Region President Pat Mascioli, who polled 20,286 votes.

McDermott served as executive vice president for six years until first winning the union’s top spot in 1988. Prior to that he served five terms as president of CSEA Capital Region IV and five years as a CSEA Department of Transportation Local president.

McDermott continues as an international vice president of AFSCME, CSEA’s international labor affiliate, a position he has held for 11 years.

Danny Donohue
Executive Vice President Danny Donohue was re-elected to a second three-year term in the union’s second highest office.

Donohue received 22,291 votes to defeat challenger Pat Hahn, a union activist from Long Island, who got 18,479 votes.

Donohue served as president of CSEA Long Island Region I for eight years until winning his first term as executive vice president in 1988. He served in a number of Local and region offices prior to that. He has been an international vice president of AFSCME for the past seven years.

Mary E. Sullivan
Statewide Treasurer Mary E. Sullivan won re-election overwhelmingly, polling 30,918 votes to 10,103 for challenger Ron Daniels, a CSEA activist in the Albany area.

Sullivan was appointed CSEA treasurer in 1986 and elected to her first three-year term in 1988. Before becoming statewide treasurer she served as CSEA Region V first vice president and treasurer, president of Herkimer County Local 822, a member of the union’s statewide Board of Directors and chair of the statewide local government executive committee.

Irene Carr
Statewide Secretary Irene Carr was returned to another three-year term without opposition.

Carr has been statewide secretary for 15 years, first winning the post in 1976. Before that she was president of her Local at SUNY Oneonta for seven years and recording secretary of Region V for eight years.

Election results available
Complete results of the recent CSEA statewide elections are available to CSEA members. Results for your local are available from your local and/or region office. The results by local for your region are available from your region office. The results for all regions by local may be obtained by contacting Marcel Gardner at CSEA headquarters, 1-800-342-4146 (toll free) or (518) 434-0191.

McDermott wins prestigious award for leadership of fair tax drive

CSEA PRESIDENT JOE McDERMOTT won the prestigious “Progressive Leadership Award for Labor/Community Coalition” for 1991 from the Citizen Action of New York, an affiliate of the 3 million-member national grassroots citizens lobby. At an awards ceremony in Albany are, from left, award winner Judy Krebs, president of the Student Association of the State University; Ellen Kennedy, president of Citizen Action of New York; McDermott, and award winner Frank Barbaro, chair of the state Assembly Labor Committee. McDermott was honored for leading CSEA’s fight to restore fiscal health to the state through a program of fair taxes.
Unemployment hits New York state hard

Unemployment workers swamped

Employees in the State Department of Labor (DOL) unemployment offices across the state have been overwhelmed by heavier workloads as more and more New Yorkers lose their jobs.

That translates to longer hours, heavier caseloads and long, depressing lines of unhappy people. Matters haven’t been helped by cuts within DOL itself.

Vicious cycle

“It’s a vicious cycle of frustration,” said Nancy LaCocque, a member of CSEA DOL Local 670, about conditions at the Rensselaer County unemployment office. “We’re here to help, but remember, this department suffered through a series of cutbacks prior to the current fiscal crisis. We lose staff — job counselors and veterans counselors — to retirement and only a few vacancies have been filled,” she said.

That means while people are looking for services to get a job interview, benefits, etc., there are fewer employees to help them.

In one week in February the office handled 4,386 mail-in claims, meaning a weekly rate is 3,350. “But the figures do not reflect the true situation,” LaCocque said. “We have people losing jobs after 26 weeks. Those people go off our rolls and move on to social safety nets.”

The unemployment load is so high that every office has been trying to find job openings for the unemployed by busy processing applications, LaCocque said.

Doing everything

Betsy Mitchley, a senior employment service clerk at the Middletown Unemployment office of CSEA Mid Hudson State Employees Local 009, said the office has an increase of 1,200 claims last year, and the recent consolidation of services has given employees more responsibility.

“We do everything now, including certifying them for unemployment insurance,” she said.

One bright note is that the Newburgh mid-Middletown area has been an hourly employees to help the full-time clerks.

“I don’t know what we’d do without them,” Mitchell said. “We were working Saturdays and weeknights before they came.”

Stress takes a toll

Sue Lendino, a senior employment security clerk and member of CSEA Binghamton State Employees Local 002, has been working for DOL for five years. Understaffing claims rise, she sees her coworkers suffer.

“There’s been a great deal of stress recently. First of all, the people that come to us aren’t very happy,” Lendino said. “That makes it even more difficult for us. We’re building our own caseload.”

The work is continuous,” Allicott said. “It’s overwhelming, even after two months of hectic work and upward trend has continued in 1991.

“People are getting out of hand,” said Lynn Hartnett, in his efforts to convince the government has been holding back money it has for DOL.

Although Department of Labor (DOL) unemployment offices are deluged these days, the federal government has been holding back millions of dollars that could be used to help relieve the pressure. CSEA is supporting New York’s Commissioner of Labor, Thomas Hartnett, in his efforts to convince the federal government to allocate the money it has for DOL.

The CSEA federal Political Action Lines (PALs) held in Washington recently for a bill which would require the federal government to allocate money for unemployment insurance based on need.

Mail-in process helps

The stories on unemployment offices were written by communications associate Annette O’Reilly, Pistols, Laocque, Asita Manley, Dan X. Campbell, Mark, M. Kozim, Ron Wolford and edited by Kathleen Daly.

Mail-in process helps

ROCHESTER — In an effort to ease the heavier workloads at the 54 unemployment offices, the state Department of Labor is using a bi-weekly cycle and mail-in coupon books. CSEA members say that it is working.

After a newly-unemployed person signs up initially, they come back in two weeks for orientation on how to seek unemployment benefits, the state’s first unemployment period, said Doris Mortensen, a security clerk at State Employees Local 012. “If there are no complications involved in their application, they can then go to the mail-in process.”

The unemployment insurance (UI) recipients receive with their check and attached coupon along with a dated, pre-addressed envelope. They mail it back to the UI office every two weeks, Cota said.

The two-week cycle helps all of us in handling volume of paperwork, verification and so forth that needs to be handled to meet federal regulations,” said Cota, who has worked for DOL for 13 years.

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Dealing with the stress of retirement

Retirement is one of the top 10 most stressful events you'll experience in your lifetime. It changes everything about your life, from where you spend your time to your finances. Like any major life event, retirement requires some time for adjustment.

For many people, part of the adjustment includes a down period, during which they feel tired, depressed and without energy. The day of retirement or any time after, the question comes up: "Now what?"

For those taking early retirement, the adjustment may be more difficult. Early retirement requires a quick decision, and you may wonder whether you did the right thing. That doesn't mean you made the wrong decision; you're just going through a normal adjustment phase.

You can ease that adjustment in a number of ways. Before you retire, take some time to imagine what it will be like six months into retirement. How will you fill your time? What will give you a sense of achievement or boost your self-esteem? Think back to other major changes in your life. What helped you survive? Talking to family and friends? Reading self-help books? Stress reducers such as exercise or meditation? What worked for you before will help again.

For perhaps the first time, you have 50 hours a week to fill. It is not enough to fill your time; your new activities must meet your needs to be a lively, forward-thinking person. For most of us, our jobs have met at least some of our psychological needs to be creative and connected. In retirement, that becomes our responsibility.

If your job was unpredictable and full of change, you are used to creating your own structure and may be more comfortable with that freedom in retirement. If your job has been structured and predictable, you may find the open-minded nature of retirement uncomfortable. You'll need to find a way to create some sense of structure or schedule in retirement. You are your own expert: You need to anticipate what your needs are and how you will meet them. 

Retirement is a major transition. It requires a new outlook, even a new identity — not a small undertaking. It takes two to three years to re-invent your life in retirement. Be patient with yourself as you go through the process.
Helping others overcome problems with speech, hearing, language is rewarding work for these members

By Ron Wofford
CSEA Communications Associate

NIAGARA FALLS — Nancy Gambino and her co-workers at the Niagara County Speech, Hearing and Language Center realize a sense of personal fulfillment every time they help someone cope with their impairments.

All the center’s professional staff members hold a minimum of a master’s degree in speech pathology, audiology or psychology and traveled an arduous educational road in order to help others.

“Because we provide such a wide variety of services and see such a spectrum of diagnostic cases, this is a great place to work for a therapist,” said Gambino, a senior speech/language pathologist and member of CSEA Niagara County Local 832. “We see and treat stroke patients, stutterers, deaf infants, laryngectomy clients and much more.”

In addition to nine pathologists, the center’s staff includes a medical director, a specialist in ear, nose and throat disorders, an audiologist, an occupational therapist, a clinical psychologist, a social workers, clinical aides and special education teachers.

Gambino also assists center director John Reardon, based primarily in Lockport, as administrator of the Niagara Falls satellite clinic. Gambino also serves as CSEA unit representative for the eight members in Niagara Falls.

“In addition to the two clinics,” Gambino said, “we do an increasing amount of visitation to provide treatment and speech services in and through the schools, for Head Start kids, senior citizens in nursing homes, day care centers, home visits for adults unable to travel and in-service treatments for patients while they are hospitalized. All of us do.”

A recent afternoon visit to the Niagara Falls clinic revealed a flurry of organized treatment activities for pre-school children.

ABOVE: Speech and Language Pathologist Elizabeth Cardwell works with pre-school children.

RIGHT: Speech and Language Pathologist Virginia Thompson with Calvin at the computer.

Tier 3,4 members can borrow against retirement contributions

Effective July 1 Tier III and Tier IV members of the state Employee Retirement System (ERS) can borrow against their contributions to the ERS. CSEA pushed the program through the state Legislature last year in response to member concerns.

Members can borrow once a year and must borrow at least $1,000. The loan cannot account for more than 75 percent of the individual’s contributions. Interest rates will be one percent less than the rate of interest used by ERS. For 1991-92 that interest rate will be 7.75 percent. A service charge will also be deducted. Loans must be repaid within five years.

To apply, contact your personnel office or the New York State Employee Retirement System.
AT YOUR SERVICE

A REFERENCE GUIDE TO CSEA MEMBER SERVICES AND BENEFITS

CSEA Toll-Free

The union's toll-free telephone number — 1-800-342-4146 — is your direct link to CSEA Headquarters.

When you call the toll-free number, a recorded message describes the choices to put you through to the right place for the help you need.

You need a touch-tone telephone to complete your call without operator assistance. If you aren't calling from a touch-tone telephone, an operator will pick up and answer your call at the end of the message.

If you know the extension number of the individual that you're trying to reach, you can press “0” plus the extension number on your touch-tone telephone at any point during the recorded message and be connected.

If you don't know the extension, the message will give you the following choices:

- For Field Operations or the Empire Plan/Health Benefits Committee, press number 1

- For Disciplinary, grievances and other legal matters, press number 2

- For Communications, the Executive Offices or Political Action, press number 3

- For questions concerning dues, membership or agency shop, CSEA group insurance other than health or need to talk to the Finance Department, press number 4

- To hear CSEA's Current Issues Update for news of interest to CSEA members, press 5

Employee Benefit Fund

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

For questions regarding any of the benefits or for assistance with negotiations, call: 1-800-323-2732 or (518) 483-4555 or write: CSEA Employee Benefit Fund 14 Corporate Woods Boulevard Albany, NY 12211

Education and Training

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

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

To request booklet order forms or to obtain information on union workshops, call CSEA headquarters at 1-800-342-4146. For information on videotapes, contact your CSEA regional office.

Safety

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

AFSCME Advantage Credit Card

THE AFSCME MasterCard has one of the lowest interest rates around — 5 percent above the prime lending rate. There is no annual fee.

To obtain an application form, call your CSEA regional office.

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

AFSCME Advantage Legal Services Program

The AFSCME Advantage Union Privilege Legal Service Program makes it possible for you to easily obtain high quality, affordable legal services for many personal legal matters. For more details and a list of the participating lawyers in your area, call the CSEA office in your region.

Insurance

CSEA offers several insurance programs at low group rates and provides the convenience of automatic payroll deduction.

These voluntary group plans include: Basic Group Life, Supplemental Life, Income Protection Program, Hospital Indemnity Plan, Family Protection Plan, Auto Insurance and Homeowners Insurance. For more details, call 1-800-366-5273 or (518) 381-1600.

Health Insurance

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

EMPIRE PLAN

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

Retirement

If you are retiring soon, it's important that you select the proper option from the Employees' Retirement System.

By using the services of a CSEA-provided retirement counselor, you'll be able to plan for a lifestyle in your retirement years that takes into account your anticipated expenses.

For more information, call 1-800-336-5273.

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

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

State employees over the age of 50 and their spouses can attend DIRECTIONS, a two and one-half day pre-retirement planning seminar sponsored by CSEA. For information call (518) 488-1918.

United Buying Service

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

Everything from automobiles to major appliances, video to home furnishings and more. The program is free to CSEA members and carries no service charges. To place an order or for pricing information, call 1-800-336-4UBS or 1-800-877-4UBS.

UBS has also set up a hotline for information on limited special monthly offers available only to CSEA members. For a listing of specials, call the hotline at 1-203-967-2980.

Grievances, Disciplines

If you believe you have a grievance, immediately contact your local grievance representative or shop steward. If they are unavailable, contact your CSEA Unit or Local President, or your CSEA Labor Relations Specialist at the appropriate regional office. Do not delay if you believe you have a problem; grievances must be filed on a timely basis.

CSEA REGIONAL OFFICES

LONG ISLAND REGION 1 OFFICE
Hauppauge Court Building
300 Vanderbilt Motor Pkwy.
Hauppauge, NY 11788
(516) 272-2390
(516) 435-0962

SOUTHERN REGION 3 OFFICE
South Port 1
Box 43, Old Route 9
Fitchburg, NY 12524
(716) 598-8180

MARTIN REGION 2 OFFICE
Suite 1000
11 Broadway
New York, NY 10004
(212) 514-9200

CAPITAL REGION 4 OFFICE
Suite 402
1215 Western Avenue
Albany, NY 12203
(518) 489-5424

CENTRAL REGION 5 OFFICE
6595 Kirkville Road
East Syracuse, NY 13057
(315) 433-0050

METROPOLITAN REGION 2 OFFICE
Suite 202
815 Western Avenue
Albany, NY 12203
(518) 489-5424

WESTERN REGION 6 OFFICE
492 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14202
(716) 686-3391

CSEA STATEWIDE HEADQUARTERS
143 Washington Avenue, Albany, N.Y. 12210
1-800-342-4146 (toll-free)
(518) 434-0191
Press 5 for current issues update.
Member tracks down hit-and-run driver

By Sheryl C. Jenks
CSEA Communications Associate

SMITHTOWN — CSEA member Artie De Murias has been lauded for tracking down the driver of a hit-and-run vehicle which struck and killed a 77-year-old man.

De Murias is a dog control officer at the Smithtown Animal Shelter and CSEA shop steward for the Smithtown Unit of CSEA Suffolk County Local 852.

A number of employees were in the office of the animal shelter when they heard the sounds of "a skid, a bang, glass breaking and another skid," De Murias said. He ran outside, saw the body and told co-worker Joe Dietrich to call an ambulance and the police.

He then ran to his animal shelter van, intending to use it to block the body from being struck again.

"I had the flashing lights on so I could block the man from being hit again and also keep him out of view of the school kids when Kennel Aide JoAnn Umbach ran to me and said it was a red Jeep and it went down that block," De Murias said. Umbach stayed with the victim and tried to comfort his wife while De Murias took off to locate the red Jeep.

"After driving around the neighborhood I saw a red Jeep parked in a driveway. I parked across the driveway so no one could leave and waited for the police to come," De Murias said.

Although he located the hit-and-run driver, De Murias said he doesn't feel he is a hero.

"Hey, I don't feel like I'm a hero. One man died and another one screwed up his life. If the old man had lived I'd feel great, but I just did what anyone should have done," he said.

And De Murias said he did not act alone in his good deed.

"It was a matter of a lot of people pulling together," he said, crediting Shelter Supervisor George Beatty and fellow

DOG CONTROL OFFICER ARTIE DEMURIAS is interviewed by a local television news reporter after receiving a proclamation from the Town of Smithtown. With him are his son Arty Jr., daughter Danielle and wife Denise.

New contract, longevity pay win in Lindenhurst

LINDENHURST — The combination of a new contract and a longevity pay grievance arbitration victory has put members of the Village of Lindenhurst Unit of Suffolk County Local 852 in a happy mood.

The new three-year contract provides increases each year and improves dental and life insurance coverage.

The longevity pay arbitration victory will provide some members between $450 to $1,500, according to Unit President Mike Cronin.

City of Rye

CSEA CITY OF RYE Unit President Gail Klepps signs a three-year contract for clerical and public works employees.

With her are unit members Pam Fazzino, Mildred Nendel, CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Glenn Blackman, Vito Calo and Jordan Stavrodes. The contract provides for increases retroactive to Jan. 1, 1989. Many benefits were also increased.

July 1991
Encouraging youths to follow their dreams

Editor's Note: Every school day CSEA members Betty Pavlica and Lee Reynolds put their own time to good use — helping 11th grade high school students follow their dreams while steering them on a course to finish high school and toward college.

Pavlica and Reynolds are volunteers in Project LINK, a federally-funded pilot program which encourages 11th grade students who are at risk of dropping out of school to stay in school. The program is run out of the Farmingdale, Copiague and Amityville school districts on Long Island.

Pavlica and Reynolds are employees in the Farmingdale School District and are members of CSEA Nassau Educational Local 865. Pavlica is secretary to the school principal and Reynolds is an account clerk in payroll.

Most Project LINK participants are at risk of dropping out of school either because of low grades, poor attendance, discipline problems, limited use of English, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy or dysfunctional families.

The purpose of the program, according to Director Ellen Kramer, is to keep ‘at risk’ 11th grade students in school and directing them toward college.

The program, held every Thursday night, begins with dinner and guest speakers who talk about various careers. Later, 40-minute classes, or labs, are taught by certified teachers and college professionals. Labs include aerospace, business, computers, criminal justice, graphic arts, chemistry, nursing, automechanics and SAT preparation courses in math and English.

Students choose any three labs and are encouraged to select at least one SAT course.

Pavlica and Reynolds volunteer to participate in the Rainbow Program portion of Project LINK. Every Thursday night they met with selected students, listen to their concerns and encourage them to follow their dreams.

“We work one-on-one with students who need help,” Pavlica said. “We help them do their research papers and we volunteer their time to make a difference in these kids’ lives,” said CSEA Nassau Educational Local 865 President Nick LaMorte.
Local parks suffer budget cuts

Editor's note: Next time you visit your local park, be prepared — it may not be the neat, clean recreation area to which you're accustomed. State and local budget cuts are hitting the heart of local parks across the state.

Who's taking out the trash?
With seven parks, four baseball stadiums, two swimming facilities and an ice hockey facility, Glens Falls city residents have plenty of public park space to enjoy.

But this year, those parks might not be so enjoyable. A citywide freeze means the city isn't hiring summer workers.

"The DPW (Department of Public Works) used to pick up the garbage in the parks once a week on Sunday. Now there are no pickups," said Richard Elmer, CSEA Glens Falls Unit president.

"Trash is supposed to be placed in dumpsters or trash cans. Since the people are not used to this, trash is not being dumped properly and it's not being picked up."

The city also used to provide a lot of extras that park users now must pay for such as lighting for night ball games.

"Right now the city council is talking about cutting back on hours, not using one swimming facility, looking for ways of saving money," Elmer said. "Probably the DPW employees will end up covering part if not all of the parks."

Freezes chilling park services
Onondaga County will open a new $2.5 million museum, Ste. Marie Among the Iroquois, in August that will be staffed by CSEA members.

However, the county has a hiring and equipment freeze on and isn't filling vacant positions. According to CSEA Unit President Andy Rogers, a park ranger, the county doesn't have enough employees to staff the new museum.

The county has already reduced the Burnett Park Zoo's schedule by three hours a day. The zoo is hiring more part-time help and fewer permanent workers, said Pat Guffy, crew leader and CSEA steward.

"There's work that doesn't get done," Guffy said. "Our motto seems to be longer grass and dirtier bathrooms."

Ben Larrow, a zoo attendant, said the animals come first and aren't suffering from budget cuts. But workers don't have much time to talk to visitors. Rogers said he hears more and more about contracting out, especially jobs like lawn maintenance.

"I see a very serious threat of contracting out services," he said. "I also think we'll see higher user fees and a curtailment of services."

Park users will pay
In Monroe County, budget shortfalls mean higher fees for skiing, park shelters, the Seneca Park Zoo and three public golf courses, according to a 17-year parks employee.

"This is all due to the state budget problems," said Frank Moscowitz, section president for public works in the Monroe County Employee Unit of CSEA Local 828. "We're glad they're not targeting the workers as they did in 1989, but it's sad that the everyday citizen is going to have to pay more for the use of public parks facilities."

The parks department is usually the first hit with staff cuts, he said, but he credits the public's resistance to reductions and layoffs in 1989 as helping avoid the same scenario this year.

Fewer workers mean program cuts
Town of Brookhaven parks employee Ronny O'Rourke said the parks are suffering from budget cuts.

The town is hiring fewer part-time parks employees, leaving full-timers to pick up the slack. But the town isn't replacing workers who leave. At the same time, the town is limiting overtime, which many employees depend on to pay their bills.

The town is contracting out some work in the park system, which has 168 locations and 87 full-time employees.

Workers also face cutbacks in vehicle maintenance. Orders for parts and repairs are being delayed, and workers often have to ride three to a vehicle, which can be dangerous.

So far, so good in some parks
In Westchester County, parks employees admit to having to do more with less, but the parks have few budget restraints — for now.

At Rye Playland, the crowds keep coming as families vacation closer to home. The park will hire 300 summer workers as usual.

At Mountain Lakes Park in northeastern Westchester County, the camps for children and campgrounds for families will be open, though the park will feel some budget effects.

Bruno Rawl, a 15-year employee, said the park will hire less summer help than usual to help operate and maintain the 1,000 acres.

County parks, however, may end up suffering at the end of the summer. A parks spokesperson said state budget action could hurt parks beginning in September. Many may get minimum maintenance and little or no programming.

Making money counts
In Yorktown, CSEA Unit President John Schroeder is proud of the many revenue-producing programs that have kept the parks busy. In fact, said Schroeder, a 17-year employee, last year's programs brought in $50,000 more revenue than projected.

"We get to all groups," he said, "the kids, senior citizens, the handicapped. Everything is well attended."

The secret? The parks are well maintained, the equipment is the best and program supervisors recruit excellent instructors.

"Yes, the crunch will hit us," Schroeder said. "We'll get very little summer help this year except for lifeguards and programs that bring in money. Our help has been cut in the highway, parks and sewer department and it's going to be a scramble this year."
LAKE PLACID — More than 500 CSEA Local Government and school district members participated in programs covering the broad spectrum of CSEA workplace issues and services during the union’s annual Irving Flaumenbaum Memorial Local Government Workshop.

The well-attended workshops provided valuable information and an opportunity to exchange ideas on a variety of topics, including the impact of the state budget crisis on localities and school districts, how to fight the contracting-out of public services, conducting a workplace safety and health walk-through inspection and recruiting new members.

The workshop also provided a forum for discussion on specialized topics including meetings for probation, social service, law enforcement, school district and minority members.

Ida Torres, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 3 of the United Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, and Mike Martin of the union-sponsored Fiscal Policy Institute addressed the Workshop participants.

Torres emphasized that the current economic climate is being used as an excuse for union-busting but that labor unions in both the public and private sectors must work together more closely to fight the trend.

Martin detailed the economic reality that forms the basis for CSEA’s call for an overhaul of the state tax structure to assure fairness and the ability to pay for essential services.

LAKE PLACID — CSEA Westchester County Local 860 member Irene Amaral was selected as the recipient of the second annual CSEA Mission Achievement Award.

“As an activist, Irene excels in all that she does,” said CSEA President Joe McDermott in presenting the award. “A long-time local secretary, she recently added the position of Unit 9200 secretary to her list of credits. She also finds the time to be an energetic member of numerous committees as she strives to be a unionist who makes a difference in the lives of the members she helps.

“Irene is the essence of those who personify the true grassroots of CSEA.”

The CSEA Mission Achievement award is given to honor one CSEA state division member and one local government division member each year who each exemplify the CSEA Mission Statement spirit: “to represent our members as best we can in any way we can; and to continue our role as a leader among labor unions.”
EARLY RETIREMENT!
CSEA now pushing for open enrollment program

ALBANY — After winning early retirement incentives for local government and school district employees, CSEA has a new fight across the state: to convince employers to offer an incentive program open to all employees eligible under the law.

Gov. Cuomo signed a law, pushed through the Legislature largely through CSEA’s efforts, that allows local governments and school districts the option of offering early retirements. However, the law also gives them the option of offering open or targeted early retirement.

“The early retirement option is vital for local governments and school districts staggering under the burden of drastically reduced state aid,” said CSEA President Joe McDermott. “But now we’ve got to make sure every eligible employee can take the incentive if they want. Targeting isn’t fair, and it isn’t effective.”

Because local governments have to decide whether to offer early retirement incentives by Aug. 19, it’s important for CSEA members to contact their local lawmakers and school boards as soon as possible to support open early retirement.

Sanitation commissioner stinks up labor relations

By Sheryl C. Jenks
CSEA Communications Associate

HEMPSTEAD — The tenure of William McGrane as sanitation commissioner in the Town of Hempstead has been marked by a steady erosion of labor-management relations and a growing litany of problems in the Sanitation Department, CSEA Town of Hempstead Local 880 President Pete Ellison charges.

Since McGrane took over as sanitation commissioner in the Long Island town about a year ago, conditions have deteriorated to the point where:
* McGrane unilaterally changed decades-old work rules by transferring collections and recycling assignments without negotiating changes with the union;
* about 150 CSEA members in the sanitation department have conducted a series of demonstrations, on their own time before starting their work shifts, to protest McGrane’s behavior;
* Local President Ellison calls McGrane’s latest move, the arbitrary removal of 20-year-employee Richard Brown from his route to another job assignment, anti-labor and racially motivated;
* Ellison and Brown addressed a recent meeting of the town board to lash out at McGrane and demand an explanation and apology for the incident involving Brown’s reassignment;
* McGrane brought disciplinary charges against 120 sanitation department employees, charging they engaged in a work slowdown. CSEA denies there was any work slowdown;
* CSEA has filed disciplinary grievances on behalf of 120 employees in the sanitation department; three contract grievances charging violations of the disciplinary procedure and changing of work rules; and two improper practice charges regarding contracting out and changing of working conditions without negotiating with the union;
* McGrane further angered sanitation employees by buying a $6,000 ad in a local newspaper to charge “An unwarranted job undertaken by a small number of TOH employees MAY result in limited garbage collection in isolated areas over the next several days...” CSEA President Ellison maintains there was no job action and that McGrane was simply upset by the CSEA demonstrators;
* McGrane recently refused to allow CSEA Shop Steward Larry Vicario to attend a meeting about changes in the collection rules; Ellison said McGrane failed to negotiate with the union when he unilaterally changed work rules by

Under the law, local government and school district employees who are at least 55 years old and have at least 10 years of service or have 30 years of service are eligible for the incentive. Those who participate will receive one month of service credit for each year of service up to five years and two months’ credit for each year after five, up to 36 months’ credit.

“We won a major victory getting the early retirement law,” McDermott said. “But we can’t stop. Now we’ve got to press for open early retirement for all our local government and school district employees.”

CSEA LOCAL 880 PRESIDENT Pete Ellison gestures as he talks with CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Jim DellaRocca, right, before they attended a recent town board meeting. Looking on from left are CSEA Shop Steward Santo Saia and union members Sal Catalina and Richard Brown.

transferring collection assignments and did not follow proper procedures when he improperly removed Brown from a route he had worked for two decades,

Ellison said McGrane’s action was anti-labor and racially motivated when he reassigned Brown based on allegations he paused to look at photos that had fallen out of a resident’s garbage. Brown, who is black, told the town board that no action was taken against his white partner even though they picked up the photos together after they had spilled out of the garbage and into the street. Brown was later reinstated to his route after an investigation proved the allegations were unfounded.

CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Jim DellaRocca said McGrane created a hardship for recycling crew members when he transferred responsibility for picking up items such as refrigerators and stoves to that crew.

“Making a change like this without negotiating its impact shows McGrane’s contempt for the union and the negotiating process,” DellaRocca said.

“Never in the union’s history with the town has there ever been a problem with getting a shop steward released,” Ellison said of the commissioner’s refusal to allow Vicario to attend a meeting on rules changes.

“On top of everything else,” Ellison said, “the commissioner has arbitrarily contracted out the maintenance of the vehicles that have always been serviced by our auto mechanics shop. This department is flooded with problems and we’re not going to stop fighting until they’re resolved.”
The tragic death of Sabina Kulakowski:

Death threats were made against DSS workers

CSEA family deeply saddened

The entire CSEA family is deeply saddened by the untimely death of Sabina Kulakowski," CSEA President Joe McDermott said. "It appears she may have become a victim solely because of where she worked. Her death underscores that social service workers face threats and physical violence on a regular basis.

"Apparently and unfortunately, Sabina Kulakowski fell victim to a deranged individual...We mourn her tragic and untimely death," CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore said.

"This was senseless and deeply tragic," said CSEA Cayuga County Employees Unit President Kathy Johnson, a DSS employee herself. "There was no link between the suspect's case and Sabina. This tragedy has hurt us all."

Memorial scholarships

CSEA Cayuga County Local 806 has named its annual scholarships program the "Sabina Kulakowski Memorial Scholarships" in memory of the slain local member. The local has awarded scholastic scholarships for several years.

Winners of $500 Sabina Kulakowski Memorial Scholarships for 1991 are Carene Kulis, Kristin Meaker and Veronica Wilson.

Coarene is the daughter of Salvatore Giangreco, senior custodian at Seward Elementary School; Kristin is the daughter of Sandy Meaker, who works in the Cayuga County Laboratory; and Veronica is the daughter of Kay LaRock, an employee of the Cayuga County Assessment Department.

Helping co-workers cope

A recently-formed county Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is helping Cayuga County employees cope with effects of the murder of co-worker Sabina Kulakowski.

Through a cooperative effort by the county Department of Social Services (DSS), the state DSS and the local EAP committee, a series of counseling sessions were scheduled to assist employees in dealing with their emotions.

Five-hour sessions were scheduled to be held on-site for DSS employees and throughout the county for others, according to Michael Mancini, an EAP committee member and one of two CSEA members who serve as EAP coordinators in Cayuga County.

"The EAP committee, the county DSS and the state DSS all recognized that this was a terrible tragedy and that it would need to be dealt with to assist the employees through this tough time," Mancini said.
Local Government News

News stories, articles and items of information of interest to CSEA Local Government members

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Operation BEST works for the troops

CSEA member John Bivona knew he wanted to help the troops stationed in the Persian Gulf, so with the support of Brookhaven Highway Superintendent Harold Malkmes and Council Member John Powell, he created Operation BEST — Brookhaven Employees Support the Troops. Then he got down to work collecting donations to send to the US troops.

“We all worked together as a department,” said Bivona, a highway department employee and member of CSEA Brookhaven Town Unit. “We did it on our own time with the help of a local businessman who asked to remain anonymous.”

Through Operation BEST, the highway department collected more than $1,500 in donations and $2,000 in merchandise which they sent to the troops in the form of 27 boxes of food, batteries and other items. Bivona has received letters from those who received the packages. Some told of personal experiences, while others talked about camels or the sound of Scud missiles; they all talked about how much it meant to receive care packages and support from people back home.

“A few guys said they are going to come to the highway department to thank us in person,” Bivona said.

So much money was collected that Operation BEST was able to donate almost $400 to a woman who lost her husband in the Gulf and to buy 16 cases of large canned soups for pantries established for the families of those serving in Operation Desert Storm.

Nassau County program a finalist

The Nassau County Department of Social Services (DSS) School Liaison program is one of 22 national finalists in the American Public Welfare Association's 1991 Successful Projects Initiative Awards.

CSEA Nassau County DSS Unit member Celine Beazley coordinates the program which ensures abused and neglected children get the services they need by providing school districts with a direct contact person for suspected child abuse cases.

The program handles hundreds of calls each year, said Beazley, a DSS employee since 1976 and a former teacher. The callers are often school teachers, supervisors and nurses who suspect a child may be the victim of abuse.

“Often people don’t know who to call and what to do,” she explained. “Part of my job is to help clarify issues, policies and procedures and facilitate them going through the system.”

Newsletter for the future

When they open the time capsule in Clarkstown in 2091, CSEA will be there — on paper at least.

The CSEA Town of Clarkstown Unit newsletter is one of nearly 150 items in the time capsule buried in a Rockland County park. Other items include political campaign buttons, a real estate brochure, supermarket coupons, a disposable razor, a Desert storm T-shirt, a can of coffee and vitamins from a Rockland County pharmaceutical firm.

Remembering the veterans

CSEA Tioga County Local 854 members are helping to make sure that our veterans are never forgotten. Local members working for the Village of Owego Department of Public Works are helping to restor the village’s Veteran’s Memorial Park, which honors local veterans.

Proving unity is strength

Proving that unity is strength, three CSEA units worked together to help move the dream of a new Farmingdale Community Library closer to reality.

The CSEA Farmingdale Library Unit, Farmingdale Village Unity and Farmingdale School Unit worked with CSEA Region I President Gloria Moran and the region’s Political Action Committee to be sure voters approved a bond act need to build the library.

The library is now in two buildings, which results in a lot of duplication, said CSEA Nassau County Educational Local 865 President Nick LaMorte. The CSEA units got involved at the suggestion of member MaryLou Arangio, said CSEA Farmingdale Library Unit President Carol Probyehahn.

CSEA members got the word out about the vote and Moran wrote a letter to all CSEA members urging them to vote for the bond act, which passed.

“This is a perfect example of how a unified effort can make things happen to benefit our work lives and our community,” she said.
Case Worker Slain; House Set Afire

Cops seek killer of county worker

By Katherine Scoby

ARALIUS — Investigators were hoping an autopsy today would shed clues on the murder of a Cayuga County social services worker whose naked, battered body was found outside her burning house Thursday morning.

"The autopsy will tell us a lot," said Peter Pinckney, an investigator for the district attorney's office. "The cause of death is the key thing." An autopsy on the body was ordered.

No injuries were reported. An Auburn man was detained in connection with the May 17th slaying of a Cayuga County social services worker, whose naked body was found on fire after the house was engulfed in flames.

The 30-year-old Brown was released from prison May 17 after getting time off for good behavior on a two-year sentence for making death threats to two social service workers in November. Brown had threatened to use a screwdriver to ‘kill’ the worker’s daughter.

"He could get out again. He has friends," the worker said. Brown, however, has no family or friends here. The county has no record of him even seeing a Cayuga firefighter recently. The timing was just coincidence. But the county has no record of him even seeing a Cayuga firefighter recently.

"He was in this jail has not changed," said Joe McDermott, a Cayuga County social services worker whose naked, battered body was found outside her burning house Thursday morning. "In this jail has not changed." The worker said he was in this jail has not changed.

"Social workers are dealing with very volatile situations such as child protection, spouse abuse and parenting judgment on benefits that affect a person's quality of living," Sanchez said. "They also deal with sometimes unstable people, drug addicts, alcoholics and people under tremendous financial and social pressure, said Joan Zlotnik, staff director of family services for NASW.

"The concern for safety is widespread. Every day these workers face dangerous situations," she said. Officials in Cayuga County headed up security there prior to Brown's release. They took steps including installation of crush bars and new locks and asking an armed sheriff's deputy to stand guard in the social services department.

Commissioner Stefan Bandas said the timing was just coincidence. But photographs of Brown were distributed to county workers prior to May 17th.

Workers said they were told in call-in sessions before Brown was released from jail that Cayuga County Social Services employees were in danger. But few workers were told about the plans for Brown's release. Workers were told to keep an eye on him. But few workers were told about the plans for Brown's release.

"We are concerned for the safety of our employees," said Undersheriff Noga. "We are concerned for the safety of our employees." The worker said he was concerned for the safety of our employees.

CSEA/AFSCME

Statewide officers re-elected to new terms

Joe McDermott

PRESIDENT

Danny Vonohue

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Mary E. Sullivan

TREASURER

Irene Carr

SECRETARY

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