Taking on the state's irresponsible mental health proposal

See Pages 3, 4
Contract benefit for state employees:

NYS can pay camp, child care costs

CSEA-represented state employees who are planning to enroll their children in summer camp or day care so they can work may be eligible for up to $400 from the state.

The Dependent Care Advantage Account (DCAA), a contract benefit for state employees, provides $200 to $400 for summer camp or child care expenses to eligible members.

CSEA members may sign up for only the amount the state will contribute, so nothing is deducted from their paychecks. If both parents are eligible state employees, they may both be eligible for the state’s contribution.

Although the 2001 open enrollment period for DCAA has expired, members who have a change in family status — such as enrolling a child in summer camp or day care — may still be able to join the program this year. For more information, call the DCAA program at 1-800-358-7202 (press 2).

CSEA President Donohue praises Angello appointment

CSEA President Danny Donohue issued the following statement on the appointment of Linda Angello as state labor commissioner.

“CSEA has a long and solid working relationship with Linda Angello. "She has won our respect as director of the Governor’s Office of Employee Relations despite protracted contract talks. She always tried to be responsive to the needs of the CSEA work force.

"Her appointment means working men and women will have a fair-minded professional in the department of Labor."

MAY 15 is deadline for submitting proposed resolutions, changes to CSEA’s Constitution and Bylaws

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the CSEA Constitution & By-Laws for consideration by CSEA delegates to the union’s 2001 Annual Delegates Meeting must be submitted by May 15, 2001.

Proposed resolutions may be submitted only by a delegate and must be submitted on the proper forms. Forms for submitting resolutions are available from CSEA headquarters and region offices.

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws must be submitted no later than May 15 to Statewide Secretary Barbara Reeves, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Ave., Albany, N.Y. 12210-2303.

The 2001 CSEA Annual Delegates Meeting will be held Oct. 29 to Nov. 2 in Buffalo.

Employee Benefit Fund hours

CSEA’s Employee Benefit Fund (EBF) has expanded its office hours. The office is now open from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The phone number is 1-800-323-2732.

Page 2 THE WORK FORCE March 2001
CSEA battles to save psych centers in Middletown, Syracuse

The battle to save two large state-run psychiatric centers from the budget ax is in high gear, as thousands of CSEA members lobby lawmakers, make phone calls and rally to save vital mental health services.

Members working at Hutchings Psychiatric Center in Syracuse and Middletown Psychiatric Center are fighting to save in-patient services.

Gov. George Pataki plans to close the facilities and merge services with other centers.

“We’re going to fight like hell!” said Sharon Connor, president of the CSEA Local at Hutchings Psychiatric Center.

Members fight back

CSEA has bombarded the public and state lawmakers with information about the ill-conceived plan, union leaders said.

Middletown workers staged a “day of rage” on Valentine’s Day and sent Pataki a huge red valentine signed by members of the staff. The message: “Have a heart. Keep Middletown Psychiatric Center open.”

Members phoned the governor’s office in Albany and their state lawmakers, lobbying to keep both facilities open.

“Radio and television ads highlighting the short-sighted closure plan and the important services CSEA members provide the mentally ill also ran across the state.”

“Governor Pataki wants to reinvest the money that it takes to run this place into community-based care,” said Diane Hewitt, CSEA Local President at Middletown Psychiatric Center.

“I think these patients will regress because they’ll be lost.”

— Ruth Ann Hasbrouck, mental hygiene therapy aide, Middletown Psychiatric Center

This type of money was promised in previous budgets, but that money has never come down. Governor Pataki obviously doesn’t care about the mentally ill. Actions are much stronger than words,” Hewitt added.

Families, staff affected

Anger and resentment tinged the comments of workers and family members in Syracuse and Middletown.

“We’re family here.” Ruth Ann Hasbrouck, a mental hygiene therapy aide and 28-year CSEA member at Middletown, said.

“We’ve all worked here for a long time and we really care about each other and the patients,” she said.

CSEA members are not the only ones concerned about the proposal.

Many patients and their families have also said they’re concerned about the center’s fate.

Every two weeks, Nerlene and Nestor Matthis travel an hour each way to visit their son, a patient at Middletown the last three years.

“We wouldn’t be able to visit our son as often if he’s moved to Rockland,” Nerlene Matthis said.

“He would be absolutely devastated. Visits are important to his recovery,” she said.

Greater social costs

For those who work daily with the mentally ill, these proposed cuts would create deeper problems.

“I think you’re going to have a lot more people end up homeless and not get the treatment that they desperately need,” said Joan Wilding, a 13-year mental hygiene therapy aide at Hutchings.

“They’re (state officials) trying to focus on saving money — they’re not focused on helping the patients. It’s a money issue, it’s not a ‘help the clients’ issue.”

— Lynn Williams, calculations clerk, Hutchings Psychiatric Center

They’re not the crumbling, outdated facilities state claims they are

The two state-run psychiatric centers the state wants to close have received rave reviews for their client programs and building maintenance.

Despite Gov. George Pataki’s claims, the Hutchings Psychiatric Center in Syracuse is not falling apart.

Instead, the facility has a preventative maintenance program that is touted as a model for other facilities. It has also won several state awards for energy efficiency.

• From 1992 to 1999, Hutchings has won energy savings awards for beating its energy savings goals;

• In 1992, Hutchings won an award from the U.S. Army Power Reliability Enhancement Program for superior maintenance practices;

• Last year, Hutchings won an award for environmental enhancement, given at a conference for physical plant superintendents.

The Middletown Psychiatric Center, which Pataki also wants to close, has been recognized for its innovative mental health programming.

Clinical Psychiatry News, a trade journal for psychiatrists, recently highlighted a unique treatment started seven years ago at the Middletown facility.

CSEA members at Middletown helped created the “shopping mall” style of delivering programs.

Vacant space was used to create a shopping center format to deliver art, business and life skills training. Clients moved from one “store” to another to receive the different skills.

CSEA members at Middletown Psychiatric Center sign a valentine to Gov. George Pataki urging him to “have a heart” and keep the center open.

“This is the only place that many (clients) know as home. It seems like we’re having medical decisions made by politicians. I think it’s terrible.”

— Mike Daley, maintenance assistant, Hutchings Psychiatric Center

“We’re (state officials) trying to focus on saving money — they’re not focused on helping the patients. It’s a money issue, it’s not a ‘help the clients’ issue.”

— Lynn Williams, calculations clerk, Hutchings Psychiatric Center

— Mark Kotzin and Janice Marra
It’s budget season and once again CSEA is in the midst of a major battle over Gov. George E. Pataki’s proposed mental health budget.

What we’re fighting about is the governor’s outrageous proposal to eliminate 725 more inpatient psychiatric beds, in part by closing Middletown and Hutchings Psychiatric Centers.

But we’re not just fighting about saving buildings or jobs. We’re fighting for sane mental health policy in New York state and for everyone who cares about that.

The original 1993 Community Reinvestment Act that both CSEA and then state Sen. Pataki supported required the state to use savings from closing state facilities to enhance services in the community. But the latest proposal bears little resemblance to the original community reinvestment concept. The state does not even pretend anymore that it will use the money from the dismantling of the state system to provide new or enhanced community services.

Instead, the state proposes using savings from closing the two facilities to pay for a cost-of-living allowance for not-for-profit mental health providers, and is attempting to split the mental health community over this issue.

Using funding as a tool to divide groups that provide services for the mentally ill is cowardly at best. While we don’t always agree, the mental health community has been united in recent years about the total inadequacy of funding for mental health services. We will not take the bait and fight with each other.

For the record, CSEA strongly supports the COLA and we will use whatever resources are necessary to get those workers a COLA. This COLA should not be dependent on the decline in other services and workers should not have to beg for it each year.

CSEA’s objective is a better mental health system. It’s a shame the administration insists on resorting to divide-and-conquer strategies when the only way to achieve sane mental health policy in New York is to work together.
Meeting their goals earns praise from peers, managers

Broome DDSO workers lauded for excellence

BINGHAMTON — CSEA members are the backbone of state and local facilities, and those working at the Broome Developmental Disabilities Services Office (DDSO) received a hearty pat on the back recently.

Workers were lauded for meeting three major goals: coming in under budget, meeting their targets for client care, and getting an excellent evaluation in their annual survey.

Their unique celebration included an informative training workshop which melded the talents of the Local and CSEA’s Education and Training Department, said Local President Debbie Davenport.

Working with management

Davenport said it was good to work cooperatively with management on the program, which drew more than 300 workers.

“I’m extremely grateful. It’s in recognition for the efforts that we make, and we’re lucky enough to have management that recognizes that. Broome’s excellence is directly attributable to the CSEA work force and our efforts,” Davenport said.

“It’s a partnership and our goals are more often the same than different,” she added.

Broome DDSO Director Richard Thamasett stressed the event was in appreciation of staff excellence, saying, “this expresses our appreciation for the work you do each and every day. Your caring and your commitment to enhance and ensure the quality of care we provide. It’s a record that is really something to be proud of, but it does not happen automatically. It happens because of yourselves.”

Pride all around

CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore told the Broome DDSO workers that despite decentralization and other changes in the state developmental disabilities system over the years, one thing hasn’t changed.

“What hasn’t changed over the years is the kind of treatment, care and love that you give. In CSEA we’re very, very proud of what you do on a day-to-day basis,” Moore said.

CSEA Payroll Clerk Kathy Roma said she was impressed with the workshop and the appreciation by others.

“You don’t realize that people take notice most of the time,” she said.

Roma said that the excellence at Broome comes from the high expectations that are set by management.

“The director is really supportive of the staff and he expects us to be number one, and we live up to that expectation,” Roma said.

Developmental Aide Steven Brown echoed Roma’s thoughts on the recognition.

“It makes me feel really good, because we work really hard on the units.

“Sometimes we feel like we’re not appreciated, and things like this show us that we are,” Brown said.

The event also highlighted a new labor-management grant that is providing two computers and locations for employees to take advantage of distance learning opportunities for career enhancement.

— Mark M. Kotzin

Turning negatives into positives at work

UNIONDALE — A client’s death, subsequent media coverage and a rap from the state have raised union members and management to improve working conditions and reaffirm pride in their jobs.

When a resident at the A. Holly Patterson Extended Care Facility choked to death on a hot dog a few months ago, the state cited the center for substandard care.

More staff was hired and members retrained, and the state recently said the center complies with state and federal rules.

“We are very pleased to be in compliance,” said CSEA A. Holly Patterson Extended Care Facility Unit President Les Eason.

“We’ve retrained a good portion of our work force and has hired additional staff and this is good for the members, the residents and the community,” Eason added.

After the accident, CSEA members who work at the nursing home said they felt demoralized and depressed because they had lost a loved member of their “family.”

To help express their feelings, CSEA member Cecilia Cheng wrote a letter — signed by staff members — to the local newspaper.

“I felt like I needed to put into writing what everyone was feeling and saying,” said Cheng, a 10-year employee.

The facility “has residents who are both young and old and we frequently accept residents who have been rejected by other facilities as being too difficult to manage or take care of. We work very hard to give our residents good care thereby enhancing their dignity and quality of life.

“There are many instances of nurses and other staff who go above and beyond their call of duty to help our residents and to bring them some measure of joy and happiness,” Cheng wrote in the letter.

Union members said they felt energized and restored by the letter.

CSEA member Jennifer Brown, a 16-year employee, said, “I think that letter was very well put. It really describes how the employees feel about the work and the residents.”

— Sheryl C. Jenks
Big win for union members
Florida firm booted, union members now give medical care at county jail

VALHALLA — Business prospects became cloudier for a Sunshine State firm that provided medical care to county jail inmates once CSEA activists got fired up.

In a major victory against contracting out, union members at Westchester Medical Center hospital will again provide medical, dental and mental health services to inmates at the adjacent Westchester County Jail.

A Florida firm had done the work. About 80 workers, mostly CSEA members, will be assigned to health care jobs at the jail.

The one-year contract began in January and it is a major victory for the hospital and the union, union leaders said.

The Westchester win is among many examples of CSEA members across the state proving they can do the jobs better and less expensive than private contractors.

Good for union, county

“If this contract can be renewed and stay in effect for a while, it’s a very good thing for the union,” CSEA Westchester Medical Center Unit President Jack Tatarsky said. “This will mean more jobs for our members,” he said.

Westchester Medical Center had provided health care services to inmates before 1996, when the hospital became a public benefit corporation.

Under the public benefit corporation status, the hospital and its employees remain in the public sector.

In recent years, inmates had been receiving medical services from privately-operated firms, the most recent one from Florida.

At the end of last year, Westchester County gave the jail’s medical services back to Westchester Medical Center, a decision applauded by many CSEA officials.

“CSEA members who will be working at the jail have been in health care for a long time,” CSEA Westchester Local President Gary Conley said.

“There will be a high quality of care delivered to the inmates there,” he added.

Keeping up the pressure

Echoing the high quality and efficiency of public employees was CSEA Southern Region President Carmine DiBattista.

“This brings to a close another sad privatization initiative erroneously undertaken by an administration that cared nothing about its employees or the public,” DiBattista said.

“Clearly, the return of services to a public agency shows the present administration of the county and hospital recognizes health care services can be better performed by public employees,” the region president said.

“We edge closer to the end of a shameful period of Westchester County government run by the administration of former County Executive Andrew O’Rourke,” DiBattista added.

— Janice Marra

Volunteers needed to help host meetings to study NY’s justice system

The League of Women Voters of New York State is continuing its Balancing Justice in New York State project and needs volunteers to organize meetings.

A free organizer training program will be offered to volunteers, and grants will be available to underwrite some of the costs of organizing.

Last year, CSEA members were among more than 2,200 New Yorkers in 70 communities across the state who took part in the project, designed to stimulate community-based participation in developing criminal justice policy and other justice-related activities.

The second phase of the project will, once again, use study circles across the state to continue to increase knowledge and participation in the decision-making process surrounding criminal justice policy.

Members interested in participating in the project should contact Rob Marchiony, project coordinator, League of Women Voters of New York State, 35 Maiden Lane, Albany, NY 12207, (518) 465-4162. E-mail: justice@lwvny.org.
By the pound, inch or second, it had better be accurate

Joe Marcello has a real feel for his job.
Like a surgeon who may operate by feel, Marcello’s work as an inspector with the Schenectady County Department of Weights and Measures relies on his knack for knowing when a pound of sugar really isn’t a pound of sugar.

“If I catch a product that’s short weighting Schenectady County residents, the whole lot — whether it’s 100 or 1,000 units — is removed from all of the stores in that chain,” Marcello said, hefting a bag of sugar that he thinks is “light.”

For Marcello and his other CSEA colleagues in the bureau, it’s a day of protecting consumers from too-short automatic car washes, rigged gasoline pumps, short-weighted bags of flour and guys who deliver less than the cord of wood they promised was on the truck.

“I’m looking out for the welfare of everybody who buys a product anywhere in the state. That feels good. That makes the effort worthwhile,” said Marcello, an 11-year veteran of the scales.

How much a pound?
Marcello and co-workers Angelo Melillo and William Meyer are almost worth their honest weight in gold.

The trio generated more than $250,000 in fines and fees for the county last year.

“It doesn’t matter if it’s a grocery, drug store, a gas station, a jewelry shop or a car wash,” Marcello said.

“If the merchant sells anything by weight, by measure, by the foot or by the second, it falls under our jurisdiction,” he added proudly.

“When you pay 50 cents for one minute of air to inflate your car tire or two bucks for a five-minute car wash, we make sure you are really getting 60 seconds of air or 300 seconds of hot water and soap,” Marcello said, pointing to a bright yellow department inspection sticker on the side of a vacuum at a car wash.

Hold the sugar
Pushing a shopping cart holding pounds of his rule books, Marcello checks in with the manager of a busy supermarket chain store.

Hot dogs here, cold cuts there, Marcello spot checks the weight.

The state Agriculture and Market laws that cover Marcello’s work allow for a certain margin of error.

There’s a problem in Aisle 4.

Twelve of 13 bags of confectionery sugar on the shelf are each short by roughly one half ounce.

Marcello takes the bags to a table in the store bakery and checks the weight of each package again.

Using a complex calculus formula, Marcello’s numbers confirm each bag in the lot is short.

“I’ve never been brought into court about my findings,” he said.

Pull the product
Marcello tells the store manager and gives him copies of the notice to remove all of the items in this lot from this store and all other stores in the chain.

“That short weight could cost the chain up to $600 a bag as per New York State Agriculture and Markets law,” Marcello said about the fines.

“But the stores want to know when a provider isn’t sending them what they’re paying for,” Marcello said.

“And the stores don’t want to shortchange the customers,” he added. “So my job helps the stores do a better job, the producers do a better job and that means the consumer gets a better product.”

— Daniel X. Campbell

Marcello checks the weights of packages of hot dogs and cold cuts to make sure consumers are getting the proper amounts advertised on the package.

With several 2-pound bags of sugar short-weighted by almost half an ounce each, Marcello takes detailed calculations and notes his findings on a report. The short weight can cost a grocery store up to $600 per package in fines.

— John Rocco, code enforcement officer, Town of Hempstead
Winter in the northeast puts snowplow crews on the road again

KNOX — Twenty inches of “partly cloudy” speaks underfoot. The mercury barely kisses zero. The wind chill is stuck in the thermometer’s basement.

This escarpment overlooking Albany and the Hudson Valley tunnels weather — sometimes a daily, malevolent brew of sleet, snow and hail — onto the roads and it makes a tired Dick Zink even wearier.

For Zink, the CSEA Albany County Highway Unit president and hundreds of other union members across New York who drive snowplows, winter is a worthy adversary. Their toughest battles are on the small roads that are so windy they appear as only squiggles on a map or on the wide highways that need four plows abreast to clear.

Danger on the road
Whatever the road, whatever the hour, CSEA members dodge the dangers, wind chill and exhaustion to keep the roads open.

“It’s always windy on the hill,” Zink said, trying to catch his breath in the howling morning wind which whipped snow into a white 40 mph veil.

“In the summer the wind is cool, but in the winter it’s brutal, just brutal,” he yelled over the noise.

While Albany County residents thank the highway crews daily for passable roads, even the boss extols Zink and his CSEA members’ talents.

“They are a tremendous crew of workers,” Albany County Highway Commissioner George Nealon said.

Hair-raising downstate drivers
The highways that insect Westchester County — the bedroom of New York City — become nightmares to snowplow drivers and motorists when it snows.

“People have four-wheel drive and think they can get through anything,” said CSEA state Transportation Department Local President Michael Kearney.

Westchester County sees the most traffic in the Hudson Valley, and some of the fastest.

“We have drivers try to pass us in any way they can, and they need to stay back” of the plows, Kearney added.

While most parkways in Westchester County were designed for today’s volume and speed, the rural Taconic Parkway wasn’t. In the winter, it may become as treacherous as a hobbled run.

“The Putnam County portion is hard to clear because we have a lot of sharp curves and the road is at its highest elevation there,” Kearney said about the Taconic.

Big county, big snow
In Chautauqua County snow is measured by the yard.

Snow, lake effect snow, and more snow bury this western county in six yards of snow each winter.

Tackling this Herculean task of keeping county roads clear and safe are 75 plow drivers, 23 mechanics, and 10 support workers, backed up by 75 administrative, supervisory and civil engineer employees who comprise the county’s Department of Public Works.

CSEA members Steve Torrey and Gary Taylor, motor equipment operators and plow drivers, recently finished 42 consecutive days of plowing and enjoyed their first weekend off since Thanksgiving.

“Besides our location at the upwind side of Lake Erie, which accounts for the lake effect snowfall, our county has elevations ranging from 300 feet to 1,800 feet above sea level,” said Torrey.

“Of course, the higher levels get the brunt of ice and snow cover. We have many hills and curves, so we have to be always alert and on the lookout for cars and other potential hazards while plowing during snowfall,” he added.

How can motorists help snowplow drivers do their jobs?
“Stay home,” Kearney of Westchester County said. “You’re only causing us more of a problem when we’re trying to clear the roads.”

— Daniel X. Campbell, Janice Marra, Mark M. Kotzin and Ron Wofford

Top photo, in Albany County a highway crew clears blowing snow in the rural hilltowns. Bottom photo, a stretch of road in Chautauqua County tests the driving and mechanical skills of CSEA members. Above left, John Sheroka, Albany County snowplow driver, talks with Highway Unit president Dick Zink before heading out to clear the roads.

...
CSEA gets “A” for effort in defeat of charter school plan

MOUNT VERNON — CSEA scored another victory in its battle with charter schools by helping derail a plan that would have drained $4 million a year from public schools.

After hearing from CSEA and other concerned groups, the State University of New York’s Board of Trustees shot down a proposal to open a charter school that would have housed up to 425 secondary students.

“I am relieved the SUNY Board of Trustees has made the right choice,” CSEA Westchester Local President Gary Conley said.

The charter school proposal drew strong objections from CSEA and other groups because of the financial and educational implications the schools have had across the state.

Charter schools are privately operated schools that use public money to operate.

Would siphon $4 million

Under the charter school plan, Mount Vernon taxpayers would have paid the charter school $8,720 per student — or about $4 million of the public school district’s $108 million annual budget.

The financial losses would hurt the Mount Vernon district, which recently operated on an austerity budget, union leaders said.

CSEA vehemently opposed the plan because it could hurt Mount Vernon’s ability to provide quality education and could lead to job losses for CSEA members and other district employees.

CSEA also strongly opposes charter schools in the state because some existing schools, including one in Albany, have major problems with school management, low educational test scores, student discipline and poor facility conditions.

“The district would have put its money into an experimental school that is being run by private citizens,” CSEA Southern Region President Carmine DiBattista said.

“They are opening schools that will siphon off money to the public schools, which could lead to a loss of jobs for our members. This proposal would certainly have hurt the children of Mount Vernon,” he added.

— Janice Marra

“LEAP”ing into learning at Niagara Falls schools

NIAGARA FALLS — CSEA’s Labor Education Action Program (LEAP) is helping union members in the Niagara Falls school system improve their personal skills and career outlook.

One of the first LEAP placements at a school district work site, the Niagara Falls program will sponsor several workshops this month for CSEA members.

“LEAP will make for more skilled workers for the district, while helping each enrolled member help themselves, their families and their careers,” said Bob Anderson, president of the Niagara Education Local.

“We’ll provide workshops on coping with stress, dealing with workplace changes, and possibly a diversity session,” said Dave Street of LEAP.

“This will be the first district-wide conference day for non-instructional staff, mainly our members, to have their own programs for self-improvement,” said Dave Spacone, Unit president.

Help on the career ladder

Improving members’ skills and career opportunities brought the LEAP program to Niagara Falls schools, union leaders said.

“Because of our excellent labor-management relations in the Niagara Falls school district, we knew a presentation by LEAP staff would result in a plan that would bring the program here for our members to take part in LEAP’s excellent resources,” Anderson said.

CSEA/LEAP staffers Street and Greg Reilly have told members about the many career and education advisement services, like financial aid, academic advising, and skills for success options LEAP provides.

“We offer workshops in building effective relationships in a diverse workplace, effective communication, handling conflict, coping with job stress, and others listed in our program brochures,” Reilly said.

Good labor-management relations

Reilly and Street emphasized the need for good labor-management relations to help the LEAP program succeed.

“The union-management partnership will quickly show its worth, union leaders said.

“CSEA/LEAP will provide assistance identifying members’ interests, guidance in program administration and implementation, expert instructors on the topics at a fair cost, and a program evaluation,” Street said.

After employer release time is provided so members can attend, the CSEA Locals and Units, with the school district, provide training room space and equipment.

The groups also handle registrations, site support to the instructor on training days, and pay the instructor.

Brochures and other CSEA/LEAP information are available by calling 1-800-253-4332.

— Ron Wofford

If the Renaissance Academy proposal had been successful, it would have been the first charter school in Westchester County.

“Workforce Facts

If you need more help where we do a great job and we are committed to the children.”

— Hope Menna, a 40-year employee of the Bethpage School District cafeteria

Marking the expansion of LEAP into Niagara Falls schools are, from left, Dave Street; Bob Anderson, Local president; Dave Spacone, Unit president and Greg Reilly, from LEAP.

For more information on LEAP

www.csealocal1000.net MembersBenefits2.html

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Women leaders put indelible mark on CSEA’s past, future

Women leaders put indelible mark on CSEA’s past, future

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives are not the only places where women are breaking through barriers to leadership. Even other labor unions have fallen short of the mark. CSEA reached a threshold last year that many other organizations have long been trying to break — 50 percent of the union’s highest-ranking elected officials are women.

For Women’s History Month, the top five women elected officials discussed the implications of their presence in powerful leadership positions. For Women’s History Month, the top five women elected officials discussed the implications of their presence in powerful leadership positions.

Women in leadership positions help to break down gender barriers, which is more than half female. It helps turn women’s issues into union issues and helps change the nature of our institutions.

Once you say women’s issues, you are eliminating a certain part of the membership,” said Kathy Garrison, CSEA’s Capital Region president.

“These are people issues, family issues, worker issues. I could be a single mother, but the guy working next to me might be a single father. We are so intertwined,” Garrison said.

"Women bring different ideas and perspectives to the table that complement men’s,” noted Sullivan.

Overcoming Hurdle

Since 1974, women have been on the offensive, not the defensive, Malone said. While there has been tremendous improvement eliminating hurdles to success, a few still exist.

“There are still things that are more difficult just because I am a woman,” said Garrison.

“Sometimes it is very overt and sometimes covert. A lot of it, even subtly, is part of the way we were all raised; we’re not even aware of it,” she said.

Even today, a woman has to build the credibility that a man is automatically given, Garrison said.

“An organization alone can’t tear down the really ingrained beliefs. We each have to make a commitment to want to try to change things to make it more inclusive. That takes time and commitment and the support of the people out there,” Garrison said.

Without that, she said, the union will not succeed no matter how hard it tries.

Acceptance increasing

“I have seen much more acceptance of women in leadership roles than 15-20 years ago,” Reeves said.

CSEA’s assertiveness training for women, consciousness training for men, and leadership education programs have taught people what is appropriate, Reeves noted.

“We have moved away from traditional gender roles. Women have become heads of households. Once they do that, they empower themselves to do things they would not have gotten involved in. We are stepping forward and saying ‘why shouldn’t I?’” Tripi said.

Traditionally, when organizations have been male dominated, there has been the implication that women who reached positions of prominence have used their sexuality to get there.

“That has really changed,” said Reeves.

“[I don’t] hear that now. There is the recognition that women achieve based on talent. That reflects societal change and changes in the organization like the formation of the Women’s Committee to promote issues and give women that voice,” Reeves said.

Malone concurred. “Statewide, we have come a long way, as evidenced by the attendance at and response to the women’s conference,” Malone said.

Challenges in the Future

Each of CSEA’s top elected leaders initially became involved as vocal advocates at the Local level. “Once I got a taste of it, I was hooked,” Sullivan said.

“This union is absolutely responsible for the person I have become,” added Tripi. “I am very proud of that.”

Like many leaders, their skills and talents were recognized and encouraged by other activists and leaders. All agreed leadership development is vital for a dynamic union.

“We must encourage all leaders,” Garrison said.

“Even when we disagree, we must work together for the good of the union. There is a time to run against a leader if you disagree with them. There is not a time to tear people down,” she said.

“We as an organization, and everyone who holds a position of leadership, have to reach out to others and bring them in,” said Sullivan.

“Our new structure promotes this, because by reaching out and encouraging participation, this will happen,” Sullivan said.

— Ann Carroll

THE WORK FORCE

March 2001

Women leaders put indelible mark on CSEA’s past, future

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives are not there yet. Neither are most companies listed on the Fortune 500. Even other labor unions have fallen short of the mark. CSEA reached a threshold last year that many other organizations have long been trying to break — 50 percent of the union’s highest-ranking elected officials are women.

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Women in leadership positions help to break down gender barriers, which is more than half female. It helps turn women’s issues into union issues and helps change the nature of our institutions.

Once you say women’s issues, you are eliminating a certain part of the membership,” said Kathy Garrison, CSEA’s Capital Region president.

“These are people issues, family issues, worker issues. I could be a single mother, but the guy working next to me might be a single father. We are so intertwined,” Garrison said.

"Women bring different ideas and perspectives to the table that complement men’s,” noted Sullivan.

Overcoming Hurdle

Since 1974, women have been on the offensive, not the defensive, Malone said. While there has been tremendous improvement eliminating hurdles to success, a few still exist.

“There are still things that are more difficult just because I am a woman,” said Garrison.

“Sometimes it is very overt and sometimes covert. A lot of it, even subtly, is part of the way we were all raised; we’re not even aware of it,” she said.

Even today, a woman has to build the credibility that a man is automatically given, Garrison said.

“An organization alone can’t tear down the really ingrained beliefs. We each have to make a commitment to want to try to change things to make it more inclusive. That takes time and commitment and the support of the people out there,” Garrison said.

Without that, she said, the union will not succeed no matter how hard it tries.

Acceptance increasing

“I have seen much more acceptance of women in leadership roles than 15-20 years ago,” Reeves said.

CSEA’s assertiveness training for women, consciousness training for men, and leadership education programs have taught people what is appropriate, Reeves noted.

“We have moved away from traditional gender roles. Women have become heads of households. Once they do that, they empower themselves to do things they would not have gotten involved in. We are stepping forward and saying ‘why shouldn’t I?’” Tripi said.

Traditionally, when organizations have been male dominated, there has been the implication that women who reached positions of prominence have used their sexuality to get there.

“That has really changed,” said Reeves.

“[I don’t] hear that now. There is the recognition that women achieve based on talent. That reflects societal change and changes in the organization like the formation of the Women’s Committee to promote issues and give women that voice,” Reeves said.

Malone concurred. “Statewide, we have come a long way, as evidenced by the attendance at and response to the women’s conference,” Malone said.

Challenges in the Future

Each of CSEA’s top elected leaders initially became involved as vocal advocates at the Local level. “Once I got a taste of it, I was hooked,” Sullivan said.

“This union is absolutely responsible for the person I have become,” added Tripi. “I am very proud of that.”

Like many leaders, their skills and talents were recognized and encouraged by other activists and leaders. All agreed leadership development is vital for a dynamic union.

“We must encourage all leaders,” Garrison said.

“Even when we disagree, we must work together for the good of the union. There is a time to run against a leader if you disagree with them. There is not a time to tear people down,” she said.

“We as an organization, and everyone who holds a position of leadership, have to reach out to others and bring them in,” said Sullivan.

“Our new structure promotes this, because by reaching out and encouraging participation, this will happen,” Sullivan said.

— Ann Carroll

THE WORK FORCE

March 2001
SUNY Oswego’s action had a snowball’s chance in ...

**Battle lines drawn in the snow over newspaper box relocation**

OSWEGO — State university officials broke state labor law when they disciplined a CSEA activist who moved a newspaper delivery box to keep his members out of traffic.

The state Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) ruled State University of New York at Oswego officials broke the Taylor Law when they reprimanded activist Dan Hoefer.

Hoefer called a newspaper to move its circulation box so CSEA members wouldn’t be forced to walk dangerous winter roads.

Even with snow drifts reaching as high as a basketball hoop and visibility at times nil with winds gusting off Lake Ontario, library workers visit the newspaper box daily to retrieve papers for the library.

“Either they had to climb over snow banks or go out into the road” during the winter to reach the newspaper box, shop steward Connie Fowler said.

“They were afraid of falling and cars coming at them. Visibility can be really bad,” she added about the brutal winters there.

Fowler and other union activists told managers about the potential danger. One year and several snowstorms later, nothing was done.

**One call over the line**

Fed up, local Safety and Health Committee Chair Hoefer called the newspaper, asking the box be moved to a safer location.

The newspaper quickly complied, but several months later Hoefer said he was counseled by the college’s personnel director for “overstepping his boundaries.”

Hoefer said he couldn’t believe what he was hearing.

“This is a joke. I can’t believe I’m being counseled for doing something for the safety of the folks here,” Hoefer said he told the personnel director.

“Basically, I got written up for doing something right,” he said.

**Won’t stand for it**

CSEA filed an Improper Practice charge against the college.

“They chose to drag their feet and bury it in red tape, when all Dan had to do was make a phone call and it was taken care of,” Local President Joe Miceli said.

“They showed a total lack of concern for the employees here. It was a simple problem, with a simple answer, and they chose to complicate it,” Miceli said.

“The administration isn’t going to bully us into ignoring an issue on campus for fear of reprisal. We’re going to do our jobs and they’re not going to intimidate us. Our main concern is the safety of our members,” Miceli said after he read the PERB ruling.

“This decision says very clearly we have the right to fight for safe workplaces for our members and that management can’t stand in our way from exercising that right,” said CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore.

— Mark M. Kotzin

**Unions asked to fight back:**

**Washington’s assault on new ergonomic standard**

Unions including CSEA are gearing up for an assault on the new federal ergonomic standards which protect workers from injuries.

Sen. Mike Enzi (R-WY) has vowed to have the rule rescinded because he claims it will paralyze business and increase the prices of goods and services.

Enzi chairs the Senate subcommittee that oversees the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

If successful, OSHA would be barred from issuing safeguards to protect workers from the nation’s biggest job safety problem.

Hundreds of thousands of workers would be needlessly injured and crippled each year, union activists said.

**What members can do**

Union members must tell elected officials how important these new protections are to them and give them the facts about the ergonomics standard, CSEA health and safety leaders said.

Write your congressional representatives and senators and urge them to oppose any legislation to overturn the new OSHA ergonomics standard.

Members can also write letters to the editor of their local paper to let the public know big business groups are trying to kill these important worker protections.

Meanwhile, the Bush Administration has not yet taken an official position on the ergonomics standard.

Responding to questions at her confirmation hearing, Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao said the issue was very complicated and she would study it carefully.

Additional materials and information are available on the AFL-CIO Web site at www.aflcio.org/safety or from the AFL-CIO Safety and Health Department, 815 16th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: (202) 637-5366 or fax: (202) 508-6978.

**This time, everyone got out quickly, safely**

A 25-minute evacuation of an old high-rise state office building in downtown Albany went smoothly recently, unlike previous evacuations of state workers in nearby office towers the last year, union officials reported.

CSEA leaders said local police agencies and state agency officials are learning from past mistakes associated with the faulty evacuations of workers during similar emergencies.

A motor on a ventilation unit seized on an upper floor of the Alfred E. Smith State Office Building in January, sending smoke into several floors.

Thousands of state workers were evacuated without incident.

The next day, union leaders met with firemen, police, building managers and representatives of state agencies housed in the 70-year-old building to review the evacuation plan and iron out small glitches.

“The evacuation had a few minor problems,” said CSEA occupational health and safety specialist Gary China.

“But in general the evacuation went well and in a timely manner. The building was reopened shortly after,” he said.

The Smith building evacuation contrasted the botched evacuation of a newer office tower at the Empire State Plaza last year, where several handicapped workers were stranded on floors for almost an hour.
Member shared kidney with co-worker

Heart-to-heart talk about sharing organs, giving life

GENEVA — Some friends have heart-to-heart talks at work.

Friends and school bus drivers Judy Ralston and Dmytro “Jim” Malyj have kidney-to-kidney talks.

These CSEA members were joined for life when they shared an out-of-body experience — Ralston’s kidney was put into Malyj’s body two years ago.

Now they are encouraging co-workers to donate their organs so others may live.

An unbreakable bond

The two bus drivers were already friends, but Ralston’s heroic donation of a kidney to Malyj, who was suffering from hereditary kidney failure, has brought them and their families closer.

“I sometimes kid him that he’s actually my father, and that’s why my kidney was such a good match for him. I always tell him he got the best kidney he could get,” Ralston said.

Not only was her kidney a good match, but incredibly, doctors said, it was a better match than any of Malyj’s children or relatives who volunteered.

“At work, we all had known about Jim’s kidney problems well before we knew of his transplant need,” said Ralston, a mother of four.

“In fact, I had been helping him by giving him his shots three times a week. I had a handicapped daughter, who passed away in ’91, and I had learned a lot of medical procedures from taking care of her. So giving him his shots was no problem for me.

“So when Jim traveled to Florida, where he has family, over the Christmas holiday to see his doctors, I went with him primarily to continue with giving him his shots,” Ralston said.

The gift of life

When Dmytro’s doctors told him he needed a kidney transplant and asked if he had any donors, Ralston immediately volunteered.

“My family thought I was nuts,” Ralston quipped.

Ralston’s generous offer couldn’t be accepted until a long series of tests showed it would be a good match.

“I don’t have any regrets and no side effects. If I didn’t touch the surgery scar on my back, I wouldn’t even remember that I had done it. I keep the same pace I always did, with the same diet. I love my job, and love the kids,” Ralston said.

Malyj, 70, began working for Geneva Schools in 1968, and had retired in 1992, before returning to work in 1994.

He takes daily anti-rejection medication since the transplant, which he is “ever so thankful” for, and he has slowly seen his color return with his old energy.

Donation ambassadors

Malyj and Ralston have become ambassadors for transplant donation.

“What she did for me …,” he stammered.

Tears welled in his eyes.

“He was surprised when I volunteered,” said Ralston quietly.

“We both just wish more people would look into organ donation, even if it means after they have passed on, by making your wishes known to your loved ones, and a notation on your driver’s license,” Ralston explained.

— Ron Wofford

One humorous aspect of Ralston and Malyj’s kidney transplant experience was revealed during a recent coffee break.

“He used to drink his coffee black, while I always take mine with cream and sugar,” said Ralston.

“Now, he likes his the same way I do,” Ralston said.

“I guess the transplant really worked.”

Dmytro Malyj is thankful for the kidney transplant given by friend and co-worker Judy Ralston. Both are bus drivers for the Geneva School District.

**Workforce Facts**

- Judy Ralston’s kidney donation to co-worker Dmytro “Jim” Malyj spared Malyj the usually long wait for a potential donor and the ordeal of weekly dialysis, a stop-gap measure that mechanically flushes the kidneys;

- Information on organ donation and transplants can be found online at www.unos.org, the Web site of UNOS, the United Network for Organ Sharing, a national transplantation resource;

- As of Sept. 30, 2000, more than 46,000 people in the U.S. were waiting for kidney transplants. In 1999, more than 6,000 patients died while waiting for an organ transplant, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing;

- A free transplant information kit may be obtained by calling toll-free 1-888-656-3327.

- If you’d like to be an organ donor, sign the back of your driver’s license in the presence of a witness.
Women have achieved prominent and important roles in CSEA the last 90 years.

Beulah Bailey Thull, the first woman president of CSEA, served as the 11th president of the union from 1934 to 1935. She is the only woman to have led the union to date.

A civil service worker in the state Department of Taxation and Finance, Thull served as CSEA's vice president from 1929 to 1934.

During her presidency, the first chapter of the union was formed in New York City. She was also a major force in the development of the Group Accident and Sickness Insurance Plan.

Also in 1934:
- Auto maker Henry Ford restores the $5-a-day wage;
- Bank robber John Dillinger is caught, escapes;
- TWA begins commercial airline service;
- The U.S. steel industry raises wages 10 percent;
- 50 people are shot as police open fire on striking truckers;
- The U.S. becomes a member of the International Labor Organization;
- Hitler assumes the German presidency.
From apathy to union activist:

After hearing “you’re fired,” another worker makes the leap

BALWDINSVILLE — A few years ago, CSEA member Guy Lyons wasn’t very involved in her union.

She said she didn’t know how the union worked, and didn’t think she needed it until her working world turned upside down.

Lyons, a bus driver for the Baldwinsville School District outside Syracuse, probably would have remained uninvolved if she hadn’t been fired by the district and later hired her job saved by CSEA.

“Prior to everything I went through, I wasn’t active,” Lyons said about her union apathy.

Getting the ax

Her turnaround started when Lyons hurt her knee on the job. After a year off work, the district fired her.

Within that time, Lyons’ doctor said she could return to work, but the district wouldn’t rehire her, claiming there were job “requirements” that she wouldn’t be able to perform — “requirements” she never had to perform when she drove the bus.

CSEA entered the fray, asking the district to accommodate Lyons’ physical problems.

The district wouldn’t budge.

With CSEA’s help, Lyons fought for her job through the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and filed a claim with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

After a nine-month investigation, the EEOC ruled the district violated the ADA and must rehire Lyons with full back pay and benefits.

“I was very happy to know CSEA was there from the beginning to the end, and I know that they’ll be there down the road if I need them again,” Lyons said.

Giving back to the union

Lyons has since become the secretary of her CSEA Unit and has served on its contract negotiating team for the latest contract talks.

She said she wants to give back to the union and its members who stood up for her.

“I will be there by their side as the union was there by mine,” Lyons said.

— Mark M. Kotzin

Labor-religion fast to focus on abuses faced by workers

CSEA is participating in the New York State Labor-Religion Coalition’s sixth annual “40 Hour Fast” this month on behalf of New York’s working poor who suffer in times of abundance.

This year’s “Invisible Workers, Hidden Abuses” fast focuses on the abuses faced by health aides, farm workers and day laborers.

The fast, which begins Tuesday, March 27 at 8 p.m. and concludes Thursday, March 29 at noon, provides an opportunity to hunger for, reflect on and act for fairness and justice.

For more information, contact Susan Zucker at 518-459-5400 ext. 6294, or visit CSEA’s Web site at: www.csealocal1000.net/activist2.html

Push to create state holiday honoring women

CSEA activists have gathered more than 10,000 signatures on petitions asking lawmakers to put a holiday honoring a woman on the calendar.

Without state or national holiday honoring a woman, the CSEA Women’s Committee and other groups have collected the signatures to designate March 10 as an official state holiday honoring Underground Railroad conductor Harriet Tubman.

A bill establishing that holiday was introduced to the state Legislature this year.

Lawmakers are also expected to consider another bill that would name the four state agency buildings in downtown Albany in honor of Susan B. Anthony, Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini, Harriet Tubman, and Eleanor Roosevelt.

“CSEA supports giving these female pioneers their rightful place in New York State’s glorious history,” said CSEA’s Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan. “This union has always supported legislation designed to benefit working women,” she added.

CSEA Secretary Barbara Reeves recently told state lawmakers Tubman should be honored for her bravery and courage. (See photo on pages 10-11.)

Tubman (1820-1913) is the best known conductor of the Underground Railroad, a network of abolitionists who worked to undermine slavery by helping slaves find safe passage to the North and Canada.

A fugitive, Tubman risked some 19 return trips to rescue about 300 slaves and never lost a passenger.

Her courage and shrewdness during the time she served in the Union army are well known. During the Civil War, Tubman served as a cook, a nurse, a scout for raiding parties, and a spy behind Confederate lines.

She is described as the first woman to serve in active duty in the armed services and the only woman in American history to lead an armed attack during a state of war.

Tubman spent the rest of her life near Auburn, where she used the military pension awarded her by Congress to establish a home for indigent aged blacks. She is buried in Auburn.

— Ann Carroll

This union has always supported legislation designed to benefit working women.
Benefits provided by The Empire Plan

The Empire Plan is a comprehensive health insurance program for employees of New York State and their families. The plan has four main parts:

**Benefits Management Programs: 1-800-552-2123**

- **Inpatient Hospital**
  - United-
    - Benefits-2012
  - United benefit
    - Care
  - United-
    - Benefits-2012
  - United benefit
    - Care
  - United-
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- **Outpatient Hospital**
  - United-
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- **Physician Services**
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    - Benefits-2012
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- **Pharmacy**
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- **Dental**
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- **Vision**
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- **Dietary Services**
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- **Behavioral Health**
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Important Note: The Empire Plan provides comprehensive coverage for medical services, including hospitalization, physician services, and prescription drugs. However, specific details regarding copays, deductibles, and other financial aspects are outlined in the plan's official documents. It is recommended to consult the Empire Plan's coverage guide or contact customer service for more detailed information.
### 2001 CSEA ELECTIONS Info

**Elections will be conducted for all Local officers, for delegates and for all Unit officers**

The term of office for all current Local officers, delegates and Unit officers expires June 30, 2001. Public sector officers and delegates will be elected to four-year terms. Private sector officers and delegates will be elected to three-year terms. Each Local and Unit executive board must select its own Election Committee and committee chairperson. The Local and/or Unit Election Committee is primarily responsible for conducting the election.

Slate petitioning and slate voting will be an option for candidates for Local and Unit office (see adjacent information). Members may run as individual candidates if they wish.

**Attention: Local, Unit presidents**

**Did you send Election Committee Data Form to CSEA headquarters?**

During early February, members of registered Election Committees received an election package to help them carry out their election duties. As long as Election Committee forms continue to be received, packages will be mailed. CSEA headquarters cannot send material and information to any appointed Election Committee without receiving the completed committee form from the Local or Unit president.

Inquiries concerning election materials may be directed to the CSEA Records Maintenance Department at 1-800-342-4146, ext. 1214.

**Nominating procedure for small CSEA Locals and Units: special election rules apply**

The union’s election rules require a minimum of 10 signatures on nominating petitions for office in all Locals and Units. However, this requirement causes problems for potential candidates for office in Locals and Units with 10 or fewer members. Special election rules apply for CSEA Locals and Units of 10 or fewer members.

In these smaller Locals and Units, completion of the Application for Election to Office replaces the requirement to obtain signatures on a nominating petition.

In Locals or Units with 10 or fewer members, any member who submits the application and meets election requirements under the appropriate Local or Unit Constitution will be placed on the ballot.

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### Important Information about slate petitioning and slate voting

**Local Elections**

In Local elections, a slate must contain a candidate running for the offices of president, one or more vice presidents as set forth in the Local’s By-Laws, secretary and treasurer.

The slate may also include candidates for other offices which have been created according to the Local Constitution and By-Laws. In Locals which have created the combined position of secretary-treasurer in their By-Laws, the slate must include a candidate for that office.

**Unit Elections**

In Unit elections, a slate must contain a candidate running for the offices of president, one or more vice presidents as set forth in the Unit’s By-Laws, secretary and treasurer.

The slate may also include candidates for other offices which have been created according to the Unit Constitution and By-Laws. In Units which have created the combined position of secretary-treasurer in their By-Laws, the slate must include a candidate for that office.

**Candidates should know the following:**

- A member cannot be a candidate for office and for delegate on the same slate. An officer candidate must circulate a separate nominating petition in order to appear on the ballot as a candidate for delegate.
- The member will appear on the ballot as a candidate for office as part of the slate and as an individual for the position of delegate.
- Candidates who run as a slate must complete a Slate Consent Form and a Slate Petition Request Form. By petitioning as a slate, candidates who appear as part of a slate need to submit only one set of the required number of signatures to qualify as a candidate. Individual petitions are not necessary for slate candidates.
- Candidates who withdraw from a slate must complete a Slate Withdrawal Form.

More detailed information about election slates will be available from Local and Unit election committees.

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### 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.

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**M a r c h 2 0 0 1**

**T H E W O R K F O R C E**

Page 17
Leadership that empowers is the theme and goal of an ambitious leadership development program CSEA is launching this spring.

The program will give CSEA leaders the next generation of skills they need to confront the critical challenges as CSEA evolves as a union, said CSEA President Danny Donohue. “We have an education agenda in this organization in keeping with our priority areas of organizing, representation and political action,” Donohue said.

“And we’re going to ensure that we can pursue those priority areas by having the best trained group of union activists you can find,” the president added.

Take ownership
Perhaps the most critical challenge the union faces is getting rank-and-file members to take ownership in their union, union leaders said.

A key component of the program will give leaders strategies to overcome some of the barriers that prevent them from empowering members in their Local or Unit to become active in the union.

“If we want to change how our members view, feel, think and care about the union then first we as leaders have to change,” Donohue said. “We no longer can lead the way we did for the past 15 or 20 years.”

Entering a new millennium in union building
“CSEA needs to develop leaders for this new millennium — people who are thinking differently than they did in 1920 about what the union means to the working person they represent,” added CSEA Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan.

To Sullivan, who serves as officer advisor to CSEA’s Education Committee, the program is about union building.

“We have to get into a person’s life and make ourselves relevant to their life,” Sullivan explained.

Get to know the members better
“And the only way to do that is to get to know them better, to communicate better with them,” she said.

“You have to hook into something, and part of this leadership training will help leaders identify various strategies they can use,” Sullivan added.

One of those strategies, program organizers said, is getting rank-and-file members to see the union as more than just some outside entity that files grievances and negotiates contracts.

To do this, leaders will learn how to identify workplace and community issues members are concerned about and empower them to get involved, develop solutions and take control of their situation.

Give the membership power
“If we can teach our leadership to listen and to take advantage of the suggestions that the membership gives them, to teach them how to involve and delegate, it will make us a better union,” Sullivan said.

“It will give the membership some power, which is what we want,” she added.

To CSEA Education Committee Chair Joe Aravena, empowering members is a matter of survival.

“We have to get the rank-and-file involved because the current leaders are moving on. We’re not going to last forever,” Aravena said.

“So the new membership — we have to educate them and train them because somebody’s got to stay and take over.

“When you explain to the members: ‘look, you’re not going to get something unless you go out there and fight for it,’ that will get them to think. And you have to send that message to them,” Aravena said.

A more exciting union
The real benefit of the program will be a more exciting union for our members, said CSEA Director of Education and Training Maureen Rizzi.

“Getting our leaders excited about involving others creates an excitement for the rest of the members,” Rizzi said.

“The members will see that “this is something that is relevant to me, that means something to me, that I’m invested in.” And then, in turn, they’re going to take a step forward and say ‘I want to be a part of this.’ That’s the point,” Rizzi said.

— Ed Molitor

Members fight for workplace and community issues, such as working the phone banks during an election, demonstrating against union-busting tactics in Long Beach, protesting layoffs in Nassau County and rallying for a fair contract at the “We’ve Got The Power” rally in Albany last year.
**CSEA offering $23,000 in scholarships**

Graduating high school seniors who are sons or daughters of CSEA-represented employees are eligible to apply for a total of $23,000 in scholarships offered by or through CSEA. A single application covers three scholarship programs.

- **Application deadline is April 15**
- Applications for the scholarships are available from CSEA Local and Unit presidents and the CSEA headquarters, region and satellite offices. Applications must be filed by April 15. Wards of deceased members who filed a notice under The Work Force are eligible.
- **JLT Award**
  - One $2,500 JLT Award scholarship will be awarded to a graduating high school senior entering higher education in the SUNY system.
  - The top 2 percent of scholastic achievers, based on high school average, will complete the application process.
- **MeTLife Award**
  - One $2,500 MeTLife Award will be presented to a graduating high school senior and is not restricted to a student entering the SUNY system.
  - The top 2 percent of scholastic achievers, based on high school average, will complete the application process.

The new system improvement will make obtaining your benefit simple and quick by eliminating the need to obtain a vision plan PVC or receive benefits through their expiration date.

**Procedure protects rights**

AFSCME's Constitution includes a rebate procedure to protect the rights of members who dispute whether the union spends money for partisan political or ideological purposes.

- **Article IX, Section 11 of the International Constitution** establishes the procedure for dues rebates for members who object to AFSCME's partisan political or ideological expenditures, as amended at AFSCME's 33rd International Convention.

The amended language requires those persons who object to the expenditure of dues for political or ideological purposes submit their objections in writing to both the International Union and CSEA Local 1000 by certified mail between April 1 and April 16 (dates inclusive) each year for the prior year ending Dec. 31.

The timing of the steps in the procedure is tied to the International's fiscal year. The procedure, including the requirements for submitting a proper rebate request, were modified by a constitutional amendment adopted by the 1998 International Convention. As modified, those procedures and requirements are spelled out in Article IX, Section 11 of the International Constitution.

- **REQUIREMENTS WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED.**

Here's how it works. Members who object to the expenditure of a portion of their dues for partisan political or ideological purposes and want to request a rebate must do so individually in writing between April 1 and April 16, 2001. That request must be timely filed by registered or certified mail with the International Secretary-Treasurer and the CSEA Statewide Treasurer. The requests must include the following information: name, Social Security number, home address and the AFSCME local to which dues were paid during the preceding year. This information must be typed or legibly printed. The individual request must be signed by the member and sent by the individual member.

- **International Secretary-Treasurer at AFSCME Headquarters, 1625 L St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-5837; and CSEA Statewide Treasurer, Empire State Plaza Station, P.O. Box 2611, Albany, N.Y. 12201.** Requests for more than one person may not be sent in the same envelope. Each request must be sent individually.

- **Requests must be renewed in writing every year the member wishes a rebate.**

Upon receipt by the International of a valid rebate request, an application for partisan political or ideological rebate will be sent to the objecting member. The objecting member will be required to complete and return the application in a timely manner. In accordance with the constitutional amendment adopted at the 1998 International Convention, the application will require the objecting member to identify those partisan or political or ideological activities to which objection is being made, and no rebate will be made to any member who fails to complete that portion of the application. In determining the amount of the rebate to be paid to any member, the International Union and each subordinate body shall have the option of limiting the rebate to the member's pro rata share of the expenses for those activities specifically identified in the application.

Upon receipt by CSEA of the valid, certified request, the constitutional maximum of 3 percent rebate will be processed. No phone calls or email correspondence will be accepted.

Any member who is dissatisfied with the amount of the rebate paid by the International Union may object by filing a written appeal with the AFSCME Judicial Panel within 15 days after the rebate check has been received. Appeals should be sent to the Judicial Panel Chairperson at AFSCME.

**AN EVER BETTER FUTURE!!**

**Scheduled AFSCME dues adjustment**

The scheduled adjustment in membership dues and agency shop fees was effective Jan. 1, 2001, to reflect AFSCME’s minimum dues structure approved by delegates at the 1998 AFSCME convention and reported to the membership in 1999.

The change applies to annualized salaries, not including overtime or location pay, based on salary at Jan. 1, 2001. No adjustments will be made during the year for raises or increments.

New hourly and per diem employees have dues deducted at the “Under $5,000” category of $3.98 bi-weekly.

| CSEA’s membership dues and agency shop fee structure: effective Jan. 1, 2001 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| **Annual earnings** | **Bi-weekly rate** | **Bi-weekly rate** |
| Under $5,000 | $3.98 | $28,000-25,000 | $13.30 |
| 5,000-49,999 | 5.38 | 30,000-31,000 | 14.18 |
| 10,000-12,999 | 8.22 | 33,000-33,999 | 14.96 |
| 13,000-15,999 | 10.25 | 34,000-35,999 | 15.25 |
| 16,000-21,999 | 11.61 | 36,000-37,999 | 16.08 |
| 22,000-27,999 | 13.03 | 38,000-39,999 | 16.92 |
| 40,000+ | 17.35 |

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Just the start of exciting changes online for CSEA members!

CSEA state contracts (ASU, ISU, OSU and DMNA) are now available on CSEA’s Web site.