Great Canadian exports …

… and now coming to Schenectady County.

Lower cost Prescription drugs!

[See story, Page 3]
**Photo of the Month**

[Image of a tractor]

Park Recreation Aide 5 Ed Morse drives a tractor with a sickle bar attachment to trim trees along the canal path that runs alongside the old Erie Canal at Erie Canal Park in Fayetteville. CSEA has teamed with the New York State Parks and Conservation Association to serve as a sponsor of “Cycling the Erie Canal 2004,” a 400-mile bike tour from Buffalo to Albany along the Erie Canal. The ride takes place from July 11 to 18. For more information, visit the NYPCA website at www.nypca.org/canaltour.

**CSEA-backed school slates win**

CSEA members across the state helped get the vote out in critical school district races and budget votes.

Some key victories were:
- CSEA-backed school board candidates winning in Central Islip, Patchogue-Medford and Connetquot school districts;
- Twice as many voters than last year turned out for the Port Jervis schools vote; three of four CSEA endorsed candidates won board seats;
- All North County endorsed-candidates won, with several CSEA locals making their first endorsements;
- Key candidate wins in Mechanicville and Colonie races;
- All CSEA Central Region endorsed candidates won;
- The West Seneca schools budget and bus propositions passed.

**If you want to LEAD, CSEA wants you!**

There’s still time to apply to CSEA’s LEAD (Leadership Education and Development Program), an intensive 18-month session throughout the state to help equip CSEA members and activists with the knowledge and skills to develop into the next generation of leaders and ensure CSEA remains New York’s Leading Union.

Visit http://www.csealocal1000.org/LEAD_info.php or call 1-800-342-4146, ext. 1255.

**CSEA beats contracting out in Madison County**

WAMPsville — Within hours of a CSEA public forum, and following demonstrations, the Madison County Mental Health Task Force met and determined that contracting out the county’s mental health care program would not be the county’s best option.

“We were thrilled with the decision. Our members knew they could do it better and cheaper than anyone else and this just proves it,” said CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore.

Mooore congratulated the county workers for putting together a strong campaign along with region staff.

The workers recently held another picket to coincide with a county Board of Supervisor’s meeting, and did something a bit novel: organized their own public forum after the county did not plan for public comment on its contracting out plan.

Held at a local high school cafeteria, the forum was a success, with several clients and for refusing to meet with the workers on the issue.

“You should be ashamed for your failure to allow the public’s voice to be heard on this issue,” Moore said. “The people who previously ran this care, as well as those who are concerned about quality service in this community have a right to be heard,” he said.

The union’s Mental Health Advisory Committee has been meeting for months with CSEA staff and leaders to develop a strategic campaign to oppose contracting out. With the region and local’s assistance, the workers were able to run newspaper and radio ads to promote the public forum and raise awareness over the issue.

**Updates on other contracting out battles**

Montgomery County officials are giving the county nursing home staff a chance to comment on county plans to contract out services for Montgomery Meadows, the county’s nursing home.

Meadows Administrator Don Dalger is to meet with CSEA members to come up with ways to cut costs and convince the county not to sell the home.

Montgomery Meadows costs the county $2.1 million a year to operate, but the county has also lost $500,000 in additional funding this year, bringing the cost to $2.6 million. The county has heard four presentations from companies proposing to operate the home, and the CSEA proposals would be considered a fifth option.

CSEA members have held a series of demonstrations in the past months and have also attended county meetings to speak against contracting out the home’s services.

**Niagara County update**

CSEA members lobbying to keep the county’s Mt. View Nursing Home public have formed the Coalition to Save Mt. View and were staging a demonstration against contracting out as this edition of The Work Force went to press.

A group from CSEA was to address the county Legislature following the demonstration. CSEA represents about 70 workers at the county-run home, and is joining with citizens and community groups pushing to keep the center county-run.

— Mark M. Kotzin, Therese Assalian and Ron Woford
Canadian prescription drug benefit a first in New York

Schenectady — CSEA members in Schenectady County won’t be waiting for Congress or U.S. drug companies to address excessive prescription drug costs. Instead, they are looking north for relief as the county stands to be the first local government in the state with a lower cost prescription drug benefit from Canada. CSEA and Schenectady County reached a tentative agreement in early May on a four-year contract for nearly 1,000 county employees. The agreement is subject to ratification by CSEA membership. Approval by the county Legislature is expected in June.

CSEA has been at the front of the fight for cheaper prescription drugs, with purchases from Canada as one option proposed by union leadership. The tentative contract comes on the heels of a months-long statewide advertising blitz featuring CSEA President Danny Donohue urging solutions to spiraling prescription drug prices, as a way to save state and local governments money.

“With each agreement like this that is negotiated, the American prescription drug companies’ grip on the throats of the American consumers gets a little weaker,” Donohue said.

The drug benefit applies to active members and retirees enrolled in the Empire Blue Cross Matrix plan. The contract includes the formation of a Joint Labor/Management Committee to oversee all aspects of future employee health benefits.

CSEA’s county negotiating team began investigating the benefit during contract negotiations after the county expressed interest.

The county had originally proposed doing away with the Matrix plan. After a year of negotiations with talks at a standstill, the CSEA Health Benefits Department was brought into negotiations. Health Benefits Department staff convinced the county that the Matrix plan was the most stable option.

Cost savings were still needed, and that’s when a Canadian purchase plan was suggested, similar to one in place in Springfield, Mass.

A trip to Springfield helped convince the negotiating team and the county that the plan could work.

“I thought it was way too good to be true,” said CSEA Schenectady County Local President Joanne DeSarbo.

Take off, to the Great White North

A trip to the CanaRx headquarters in Windsor, Ontario followed in February, along with a tour of a CanaRx network retail pharmacy. The trip assured the team of the program’s safety and operational efficiency, said Labor Relations Specialist Mike Campion, who negotiated the contract and attended both trips.

“It was the combination of seeing the joint cooperation between labor and management in Springfield and then going to Canada that just cemented it,” Campion said.

DeSarbo agreed. “We couldn’t find anything wrong with it. We wondered why everyone wasn’t doing this.”

The benefit’s Canadian mail order portion is for specific and approved maintenance drugs and has no co-pay or shipping costs. Enrollees using mail order for drugs still have the option of using a U.S. pharmacy or U.S. mail order program for maintenance drugs, but will have a co-pay.

“That’s the incentive,” said County Manager Kevin DeFefbo. “The county saves money on the drugs and the member saves on the co-pay,” DeFefbo said.

The drug purchase plan is technically a voluntary employee option, not a county program.

The agreement covers CSEA-represented employees in Schenectady County.

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Information provided by CanaRx

Members of the CSEA Schenectady County Negotiating Team and Health Benefits Department tour a CanaRx center in Ontario, researching a Canadian drug purchase agreement for county members.

Glen Dale Nursing Home, Schenectady County Community College, the county nurses unit, county office building unit, county highway unit, public library unit, Social Services and the Schenectady Job Training Agency. CSEA is already fielding calls from other CSEA units interested in adding a Canadian drug benefit to their contracts.

Legality and Lobbyists

The purchasing arrangement establishes an account between the individual consumer and the Canadian pharmacy. The county is not a direct contractor. Similar arrangements are currently in place between various municipalities across the country, including Springfield, Mass.

The Canadian pharmacies offer prescription drugs at lower prices than in America because Canada regulates the profits of the giant pharmaceutical companies. The Bush administration has refused to consider such an approach and even supported language in the recent Medicare prescription drug legislation that would prohibit the federal government from negotiating better prices from the pharmaceutical industry which spent $91.4 million on federal lobbying in 2002.

The federal Food and Drug Administration has tried to discourage the practice of purchasing prescription drugs from Canada, suggesting it is a dangerous practice and that the drugs don’t meet U.S. safety standards.

Additionally, millions of prescription drugs are manufactured overseas anyway and are the same products shipped to both Canada and America.

For example, the blockbuster cholesterol lowering drug Lipitor developed by Pfizer is made exclusively in Ireland. And, U.S. companies have been steadily increasing the importation of drugs. In 2002 the U.S. imported more than $40 billion worth of drugs, a five-fold increase since 1995.

Canadian pharmacies are also coming under pressure from drug giants such as Pfizer, who have threatened to cut off their supplies of all drugs if they don’t refrain from selling to the U.S.

“The more we do this, the more the government will get the message something has to be done about this country’s legalized drug cartel,” said DeSarbo.

Therese Assalian

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June 2004 THE WORK FORCE Page 3
An unhealthy and unnecessary crisis for public hospitals and nursing homes

The crisis over public hospitals and nursing homes is getting more critical by the day. In county after county CSEA has been forced to mobilize whole communities to protect essential services and prevent subcontracting to private operators. They’re fights we wouldn’t have to wage if Gov. George Pataki would help to address the problem.

All health care facilities are facing serious problems but it’s even worse for New York’s public hospitals and nursing homes due to long outdated funding formulas that unfairly favor private health care facilities.

Far from addressing the situation, Governor Pataki seems to want to make a bad situation worse by imposing a “sick tax” that would break the back of public hospitals and nursing homes.

Under the Pataki plan, you and other local taxpayers get a double shot of bad medicine — you’ll pay more and still might see health care services cut in your community.

Can Governor Pataki really think that’s a healthy choice?

Public health care facilities are essential to our well-being, providing care that private facilities and others will not. State and local government need to work together to protect public health care but we also need to see real leadership in Albany for overdue reforms.
CSEA wins victory for diversity

POMONA — CSEA members employed by the Rockland County Department of Hospitals are celebrating their success in fighting against a discriminatory language policy.

In 2002, the county had enacted an “English-only” policy at the nursing units at the Dr. Robert L. Yeager Health Center after several long-term nursing residents had complained that employees spoke loudly to each other in front of the residents — and spoke in languages the residents couldn’t understand. The workers were forced to sign a petition affirming they would not speak a “foreign” language or in a “loud voice” out of “respect to the rights” of the nursing residents.

Problem is, some of the CSEA members employed at the center don’t speak English as their primary language or lack proficiency in English. A significant number of these workers identify themselves with Haitian or Latin American cultures — an identity that includes speaking Creole or Spanish as a first language. Many of the employees said the new policy was discriminatory and could negatively affect their job performances, so they turned to CSEA for help.

**Representing foreign-born workers**

“Our union represents a lot of foreign-born workers, and that number is increasing,” CSEA Rockland County Local President William Riccaldo said. “They should feel free to speak their own languages on the job.”

The “English-only” policy is also a violation of the prohibitions on national origin discrimination as outlined in Title VII in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has consistently struck down workplace “English-only” policies, citing that such a policy is a “burdensome term and condition of employment.”

**Complaint filed with EEOC**

CSEA filed a discrimination complaint with the EEOC after the county failed to end the “English-only” policy in the wake of the employees’ concerns.

The issue eventually went to mediation at the EEOC, and after two sessions, the union and Rockland County had reached a settlement. The county agreed to rescind the “English-only” policy and instead create guidelines for language use on the job.

CSEA and the county also worked together to educate the members on the new guidelines, which allow employees more opportunities to speak their primary languages while at work.

**No discrimination toward employees**

“I’m really happy that the union went the extra mile on this, so there’s no discrimination toward the employees,” CSEA member Edwin Rivera, a maintenance worker, said. “Our rights are respected just like the residents’ rights are. This shows the support that we get from our union, and I’m glad that my local president got involved and helped get a resolution on this matter once and for all.”

“This is really a respect for the resident policy,” Riccaldo said. “It’s important for the workers to respect others, yet be able to express themselves in their own way.”

Riccaldo commended the county for reaching the settlement.

“It was the right thing to do,” he said.

— Janice Marra

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_Fighting for public health care_ [Image]

CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore speaks at a community forum against contracting out public mental health care in Madison County. Hours after CSEA urged the county facilities remain public, the county abandoned its contracting out plan. See story, Page 2

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“I want a candidate in the November election who cares about education and jobs. Anyone with children or grandchildren has to worry about what the future will bring. Education is the ticket to success.”

— Jeff Zabieliski, motor equipment operator, Glendale Nursing Home
CSEA workers at Dewitt PD help keep kids safe

DEWITT — Keeping children safe is always a priority for the CSEA support staff in the DeWitt Police Department, but after a recent abduction of a 5-year-old girl in nearby Syracuse, the workers have increased their efforts to help make their community safer.

Prior to the girl’s abduction, and her eventual safe discovery, the department’s office workers had been trained to use the Digital Child Fingerprint Program, a relatively new system, and the first of its kind in the county, to assist parents of a missing child.

It works like this: workers digitally scan children’s fingerprints using a laser scanner, take their photo with a web-camera attached to a laptop and enter detailed information about the child. The data is put onto a disk for the parent to take home, along with a poster containing all the identifying information.

The poster can be given to law enforcement officials if the child goes missing. The information can be updated using a home computer, and there is no cost for the service, which the department offers to anyone, no matter where they live.

CSEA member Stacey Bellucci is a clerk for the department, and serves as the primary assistant to Police Investigator James Hildmann, the town’s youth investigator who runs the program. Fellow clerical workers and CSEA members Marilyn Mooney and Laura Pulaski also help with the program.

“If a child is missing, all we want the parents to do is take out the information and give it to the agency handling their missing child.”

— Mark M. Kotzin

As reported in the May Work Force, CSEA has reached a tentative agreement on a new four-year contract with the Unified Court System.

As the paper went to press, CSEA and UCS are completing the written Memorandum of Agreement. CSEA will then present the details of the new agreement to the membership, and ask them to ratify it in a mail ballot. In the meantime, legislation needed to implement the new contract has been introduced in the Senate and Assembly.

The new agreement provides salary and bonuses similar to the ratified state contract.

Court employees represented by CSEA will enjoy the same health insurance benefits as their brothers and sisters in CSEA’s Executive Branch units as well. They will also have a new form of Health Option Program in which employees at or below Grade 16 can trade in three vacation days a year for a $400 deduction in health insurance premiums.

The tentative contract also provides more money for a child care/elder care benefit; an increase in the number of accrued sick leave days which can be used to increase retirement service credit; improvements in the use of sick leave for family illness; separate articles on seniority and safety; health; additional protections from overly hot or cold workplace temperatures; increased UCS contributions to the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund; and UCS’s agreement to fund the entire cost of the Work/Life Assistance Program (formerly Employee Assistance Program).
Delivering hot meals and more

QUEENSBUY — Some days there just doesn’t seem to be enough time or energy to get dinner on the table. That’s when pizza delivery comes in handy. CSEA members working for Warren County’s Office for the Aging don’t have that option. They’ve got 300 seniors relying on them for a hot meal.

CSEA members prepare meals for the county’s nutrition program. Similar to the Meals on Wheels concept but much more expansive, the program covers two counties, has nine meal preparation locations and 12 satellite locations where meals are served, in addition to home-delivered meals.

One of the commercial kitchens is housed in a long-term care facility. Mornings in this spacious, spotless kitchen are like a well-choreographed dance. “My duty is to get the count done so the cooks know how much to cook” said Joan Lavigne, site manager, who has been donning an apron and hair net for 30 years.

From pantry to pan

With the menu set and the ingredients pulled from the pantry, the prep work begins. To an outsider, the task of determining how much food to prepare to match the number of meals needed seems overwhelming. Not for these workers. They have it down to a science. “If we’re having chicken we use about 12 big baking sheets. For meatloaf, we’ll use 12 big pans and get 30 to 32 servings per pan,” said cook Brenda Hilton.

Once the meals are complete, the journey from stove to dinner table begins. With deft handiwork and assembly line precision, the food is distributed into compartments of foil trays. The trays are sealed, the meals are stacked, then placed in coolers. Each delivery van or truck is stocked with the appropriate amount of meals for a given route. Once the food is loaded into the vans the drivers set out to homes and satellite meal locations.

All the comforts of home

The program allows homebound seniors to have a nutritious, dietitian-approved meal in the comfort of their own home. It also offers an element of human interaction that is meaningful and beneficial to the seniors as well as the volunteers who deliver the meals.

An opportunity to stay independent

For many, it is the primary reason they are able to stay independent and avoid a nursing home. Other seniors participate in the program by going to satellite locations throughout the community such as churches and senior centers to get a meal and spend time socializing with their neighbors, a much-needed opportunity in this very rural setting.

30 years of providing hot meals

The program has provided hot meals to seniors throughout Warren and Hamilton counties since 1974 when the Older Americans Act formed their mission.

“We put our hearts in it,” said Hilton. “I think that for almost every one of us it’s a special job. We are doing something special for these people.”

— Therese Assalian

Clockwise from left: CSEA members Joan Lavigne, Brenda Hilton, Sandy Lashway and Ruth Colchester prepare meals for the Warren County Office for the Aging nutrition program.

Warren County Nutrition Program Statistics

- 12 meals sites available where seniors can get meals
- 350 lunches and dinners prepared and served per day
- 209 seniors receive home-delivered meals
- 30 staff members prepare the meals in 9 kitchens

“T” Lobby Day shows that labor can take our power way beyond our village and really affect the fortunes of the whole state."

— Peter Reinke, 12-year CSEA member, power plant mechanic, Village of Freeport, who recently traveled to Albany to press state lawmakers on CSEA’s legislative agenda.

CSEA Voices
Niagara bridge workers press four-year fight

NIAGARA FALLS — After nearly four years without a contract, the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission Unit is still fighting for fairness against a management bent on breaking the union. "Even while they are foot-dragging on negotiations, and laying off full-time workers, they are also violating the contract, so much so, that grievances are filed almost daily, and they are still mounting," said Western Region President Flo Tripi. "Their motives are very clear — they are not interested in working with the union in a positive labor-management fashion. If they say they are, I'm still waiting for them to show it."

Proof of that statement is evident in a record that could be entered in an "Employers Hall of Shame": a unit that a few years ago had more than 50 members, now has fewer than 30; more than 200 grievances filed; five employees still out on layoff; another eight redeployed to maintenance; one of three commission bridges (Whirlpool) converted to an automated toll collection device, reducing toll collector slots; and false commission claims that bridge traffic is down as a reason for layoffs.

The commission continues to shuffle employees around and demote them in an ongoing effort to harass and intimidate. "But even though morale is low, we won't stop fighting for fairness because we know we have CSEA support from throughout the union," said Mark Pasler, unit president. "That's what has sustained us throughout this ordeal."

That support has been shown with rally appearances by CSEA President Danny Donohue and Tripi, other activists, and a series of newspaper ads exposing the commission's actions. The ads were launched with the aid of the Niagara County Local.


CSEA political action has been active, with PAC representatives meeting formally and informally with elected officials, and seeking support and leverage from elected officials on the commission, which is comprised of political appointees of Pataki.

A petition drive is under way calling on the governor to dismiss the current commissioners and reappoint a board that can work toward settling the outstanding labor issues. "The arrogance of this commission goes beyond disrespect for the union, to disrespect for the public," said Tripi. "They obviously think, because they are not the normal governmental entity, that they can do whatever they want. But they are wrong."

Keith Bovanian, a 30-year employee of the bridge commission, three of those years part time. After years as a toll collector, he is now a toll captain, and also serves the union as secretary and chief grievance steward. "There was already a sense of stress on the job since 9/11, because we are at an international border, with the obvious federal security measures ongoing all around us," said Bovanian. "But more than three years without a fair contract, the obvious disrespect for our contract, making one of the three bridges automated, layoffs, incorrect recalls, and grievances piling up — it's not a pretty picture. But we're not giving up."

The unit's last round of newspaper ads asked the public, "Who do they think they're kidding?"

— Ron Wofford

HOPING FOR CHANGE: Toll collector Julia Belle hopes CSEA efforts will bring about much needed change in labor-management relations at the Bridge Commission.
Fight for union heats up

PURCHASE — While private food service workers at SUNY Purchase continue their struggle to form a union with CSEA, union members, college students and faculty members have been cooking up support for the workers’ efforts.

About 80 food service workers at the college, who are currently employed by Chartwells, a private sector company, are facing harassment and intimidation on the job while trying to organize a union. Many of the dining hall employees are immigrants who speak Spanish as a first language.

The immigrant workers contend with low wages and second jobs because, although they hold green cards, they fear deportation if they should speak up for their rights and dignity. “I would like a union that would benefit the workers,” Iris Semidey, a longtime Chartwells employee, said. “We want a union, need a union, but people are afraid,” said Semidey.

She added that Chartwells managers often treat the employees disrespectfully. “They talk to us any way they want,” Semidey said. “They can fire us for any reason. One employee got fired because she didn’t slice tomatoes.”

While many of the food service employees fear reprisals for participating in union activities, CSEA members, other labor activists and the campus community have taken action.

In March, the Purchase College Association (PCA) passed a resolution requesting that Chartwells sign a card check-neutrality agreement which would allow the food service workers to form a union without harassment from the employer. Chartwells refused to sign the agreement and instead launched an anti-union campaign, which spurred CSEA, other labor activists and students to action.

About 14 students were arrested by numerous police in riot gear during a peaceful March 31 demonstration on campus. They now face criminal and college disciplinary charges.

CSEA, along with campus and labor supporters, has urged SUNY Purchase officials to drop the charges and for Chartwells to sign the card check-neutrality agreement. Along with campus demonstrations and a one-day boycott of the college’s dining facilities, several students have also launched a hunger strike in solidarity with the workers. They plan to continue the fast until Chartwells signs the agreement and the college withdraws the disciplinary charges.

“The food service workers at SUNY Purchase have a right to organize a union,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said. “These employees deserve respect and dignity at work yet Chartwells is denying them any sort of humane treatment. This is just wrong,” said Donohue.

While the fight to organize a union continues, Semidey and other campus food service workers worry about their futures as the college’s spring semester comes to an end and many of Chartwells’ dining operations close for the summer.

“It would be good if card check would come into place,” Semidey said. “Who knows if we’re going to have a job when we come back in the fall? With a union, we will have jobs in September.”

— Janice Marra

CSEA Westchester Local President and Southern Region Executive Vice President Gary Conley, left, addresses the crowd at a May 3 rally at SUNY Purchase on behalf of food service workers organizing a union with CSEA as SUNY Purchase junior Erica Bushel, second from right, and an unidentified student look on.

CSEA Organizing Supervisor Cindy Polinsky, left, and SUNY Purchase food service employee Iris Semidey, right, discuss the dining employees fight to organize a union with CSEA during a recent campus forum.

““These employees deserve respect and dignity at work yet Chartwells is denying them any sort of humane treatment. This is just wrong.”

“— Carol Mackey, 20-year CSEA member, keyboard specialist, SUNY Cobleskill

May 2004 THE WORK FORCE Page 9
Long Island conference shows a yearning for learning

MELVILLE — Nearly a thousand school support staff from all over Long Island — from teachers’ assistants to clerks and custodians — turned out in force for the annual CSEA Schools Conference to learn more about their positions, themselves and their union.

The ninth annual conference was sponsored by the Nassau and Suffolk Educational Locals.

“Your locals together on Long Island represent over 13,000 members. You do a great job, an important job, one that you should be proud of,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue.

Relative workshops

“I think the workshops we offer are about subjects that the rank and file need to know about. They’re all about getting through their daily life and activities, as well as some training to help them do their jobs better,” said Suffolk Educational Local President Diane Klement.

In addition to workshops like “Being Happy” and “Setting and Achieving Goals,” participants also learned about the laws relating to automatic external defibrillators, and how to plan for retirement.

Conference growth

The conference has been growing tremendously every year. This is the highest attendance we’ve ever had. It’s great, but it’s also a lot of work. It’s like planning a huge wedding every year,” said Klement.

“I’m here every year,” said Roosevelt School District teaching assistant Vesta Mackey. “I love the handouts for my students and the positive workshops for me. It’s a very rewarding day.”

CSEA school district employees — getting the job done!

While the popular CSEA Schools Conference helps union members stay up-to-date on the latest information to help on the job, one of the greatest teachers is experience. Below are CSEA members from the Central Islip and Levittown school districts on the job, providing safe transportation, nutritious meals and a clean, well-run learning environment for tomorrow’s leaders.

Bus driver Jim Puccia hops aboard to begin his route.

Cook Ruth Gonzalez runs some “tater tots” to warm up in the oven.

Teaching Assistant Eleanor Chinchkale prepares for a lesson.

Maintenance worker Bruce Gladis carries a ladder to his next project.

Left to right: CSEA President Danny Donohue, Suffolk Educational Local President Diane Klement and Nassau Educational Local President Denis Millett address the attendees at the conference.

Appropriate respect

“The educational employees are professionals just like the teaching professionals are, and they should be recognized as such and treated with the appropriate amount of respect,” said Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte, who was a custodian in the Farmingdale School District.

A team effort

But Barbara Schulz, who has more than 20 years as an accountant with the Levittown Schools said what should be, and what really happens, can be two different things. “I understand that any school district’s main purpose is to educate children. But without the rest of us that could not occur. And it would be nice if they could acknowledge that once in a while,” said Schulz. Her co-worker Angela Smith had a different view. “I think that the work that you do and who you are command respect automatically,” said Smith.

— Rachel Langert

Left to right: Lindenhurst teaching assistants (TAs) Maria Roj-Smith, Dorit Koziniski and Seaford High School Referral Center TA Josephine Snipe practice for the NYS Assessment of Teaching Assistant Skills exam at the schools conference.

Left to right: Lindenhurst teaching assistants (TAs) Maria Roj-Smith, Dorit Koziniski and Seaford High School Referral Center TA Josephine Snipe practice for the NYS Assessment of Teaching Assistant Skills exam at the schools conference.

PEOPLE Power

Many conference attendees took the opportunity to sign up for the PEOPLE program for the first time, or to increase contributions they are already making.

PEOPLE is CSEA and AFSCME’s political action program. It is responsible for raising money and collecting voluntary contributions from the membership so that CSEA can effectively promote the union’s interests at the state and federal level.

“We need people who are pro-labor to be able to advocate for us on every level of government, from the schools up,” said Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte.

“After all, we have the unique ability to hire and fire the people we work for, and every public employee needs to remember that fact. The vote is one of the biggest, most influential weapons we have — and we need to use it wisely, now more than ever before,” said LaMorte.
HAZWOPER training prepares CSEA members to train others

GLENCOE – A matter of life or death brought CSEA activists and staff together recently as AFSCME representatives conducted a weekend train-the-trainer workshop on occupational health and safety issues.

“We have so many members who could be affected,” said CSEA OSH Director Janet Foley. “We have DOT, DPW, water/sewage treatment plant operators, parks and highway employees. If there’s an accident or a truck tips over, we’re usually the first ones on the scene. That’s why this HAZWOPER training is so important,” she said.

HAZWOPER (Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response) is a train-the-trainer program that gives CSEA the ability to train units and locals how to respond to hazardous materials situations.

In turn, the labor-management-based program brings employers into compliance with state and federal regulations on hazardous materials handling.

During the workshop, participants learned to identify hazardous materials labels, how to handle hazardous situations, what NOT to do, and how to pass that information along to fellow union members.

“There are some 800,000 trucks a day on the road carrying hazardous chemical substances — a high concentration of them are on the East Coast — and it’s our members who are continually traveling those roads,” said Foley.

“It’s important for the union to require the employers to do this training for our members. Especially in light of today’s risks of bioterrorism, we have to have information to protect ourselves,” she said.

Cuts weaken job safety

“The huge cuts in state and federal funding to OSHA and PESH weaken on-the-job safety inspection and enforcement,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue. “We can’t let that happen. It’s critical that CSEA members become educated and remain vigilant at all times. We need to take responsibility for our own safety, and the safety of our fellow members. Because the sad truth is, if we don’t do it, nobody else will.”

Participants had high praise for the course.

“They’re doing a great job breaking down the information. I think my fellow members will receive this information better coming from union members rather than some outside agency,” said Steve Cianchetta, a hospital safety officer at Nassau University Medical Center. “I hope to get the knowledge to be comfortable teaching this stuff to my fellow members,” he said.

“I think the most valuable parts of the training involve the in-depth class discussions and the exercises which pull everything together,” said Rich Breusch, security officer for the Nassau County Police Department.

Valuable training

The current economic and political climate makes the training all the more valuable, Breusch said.

“We’re all up against weakened workers’ health and safety rules, and management which traditionally resists workers’ health and safety rights until they are motivated by some tragedy or external force,” said Breusch.

“And I’m learning that despite the distance in the country between us, the health and safety problems we encounter are very similar, no matter where you go,” he said.

Participant Eric Frase, who has 17 years of service as a maintenance assistant with the University of Buffalo, was glad to have great reference materials to take back with him.

“There are chemicals all over the place on any campus, radioactive materials in some of the labs, and that kind of stuff,” he said. “We’ve had spills and accidents already, so this kind of material will be very helpful.”

– Rachel Langert

HAZMAT Training Opportunities

For information about hazardous materials training for your local or unit, contact CSEA OSH Trainer David Guiliano at 1-800-342-4146, ext. 1287.
CSEA helps tourism in Niagara County

NIAGARA FALLS — As the summer tourism season begins, the 184 CSEA members of the Niagara Frontier Parks and Recreation Local are hard at work preparing for visitors to one of New York’s most scenic treasures.

Niagara Falls, with more than 8 million visitors a year, has a host of vital CSEA workers who keep the park maintained. From sign painters, store clerks, mechanics, park workers, electricians and more, the CSEA work force is a valuable asset to the tourism industry and the state.

Left to right: At the Bridal Veil section of Niagara Falls, CSEA parks workers Ray Blake, Amy Ortman and Todd Guetta stop on the walkway that is rebuilt every year by CSEA members.

Dave White of the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission Local takes a toll at the Rainbow Bridge in Niagara Falls. (See related story Page 8.)

Left to right: Niagara Parks and Recreation Local members Bob Giordano and Mike Wilczek work on a fence in Niagara Reservation State Park, the oldest park in the United States.

CSEA Hometown Heroes

ALBANY — CSEA members Karilee Chandler and Lee French, were honored by the American Red Cross as Hometown Heroes. (See accompanying story, Page 17.) CSEA congratulates them for their prestigious awards and thanks them for the work they do throughout their communities. Shown here following the awards ceremony are from left to right: Master of Ceremonies and Capital Region WRGB news anchor Jack Aernecke, CSEA Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan, Chandler and French.

Operation Adopt a Soldier

WILTON — The CSEA staff at Mt. McGregor Correctional Facility are hosting a project to help bring mail and kind words to service men and women currently serving across the globe, including in the United States. The staff asks that you write letters, send a card or a note to those serving their country.

To download a list of service people who would like to receive mail, complete with addresses, visit the CSEA website at www.csea/local1000.org/region4.php

You can also contact Mt. McGregor Local President Cliff Seguin Jr. at (518) 587-3960, ext. 3801.
40 years ago ...

In this pre-Taylor Law period (meaning that public employees did not yet have the right to collective bargaining in New York), CSEA persuaded numerous local governments to adopt the State Health Insurance Plan; reduce employee retirement contributions, and establish grievance procedures similar to gains CSEA had previously made for state employees by law. CSEA also celebrated the 25th anniversary of its Group Life Insurance Program in this year — a program that is still going stronger than ever.

In photo at right, CSEA members work in the Department of Tax and Finance in 1964.

Also in 1964 ...

- The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution leads to greater U.S. involvement in Vietnam.
- The U.S. Surgeon General warns against cigarette smoking.
- China explodes its first atomic bomb.
- The federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 is approved giving the federal government strong powers to fight discrimination.
- The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. receives the Nobel Peace Prize.
- The Beatles perform on “The Ed Sullivan Show.”
- The World’s Fair opens in New York’s Flushing Meadows.
- The Yankees lose to the St. Louis Cardinals, four games to three, in the World Series.
Union workers, working poor face continued challenges

ALBANY — The message that permeated virtually every workshop and speech given during the recent New York State Labor and Religion Coalition conference was clear: Under the current administration, labor and working families are under unprecedented attack.

More than 100 New York state labor and religious leaders gathered for the conference titled “Inspired Voices in Troubled Times” to discuss strategies and tactics related to fund-raising, immigration issues, election 2004, and the AFL-CIO’s @Work Campaign.

One workshop on mobilizing coalition partners for the 2004 election featured many creative ways to educate, motivate and get people to the polls on Election Day.

“There a lot of issues that are being used to divide people,” said Charest Jordan of the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice. “When you talk about things like poverty, prescription drugs, and education, this is an administration that has a political agenda to take away all our rights.”

Jordan also presented information on how to engage congregations in voter registration campaigns and a summer internship for students interested in helping low-wage workers register to vote. “We see this as a way for the labor and religious communities to build relationships with the community,” Jordan said.

During the conference, CSEA President Danny Donohue participated in an interfaith service in recognition of Worker’s Memorial Day where he read the names of workers who have died while at work in the previous year. (Page 12, May 2004 Work Force)

“As we honor these workers, let us also reflect on the critical work that remains to be done by the living to secure a safe and healthy working environment for all,” said Shulman, the author of “The Betrayal of Work: How Low Wage Jobs Fail Million Americans,” told participants that one in four workers in the United States earns less than $8 an hour.

“This is a mainstream problem with mainstream jobs,” said Shulman referring to low wage jobs in nursing homes, child care, janitors, ambulance drivers, and data-entry keyers. “We are the richest country in the world, low wage work is the antithesis of what we are supposed to be.”

Many youth activists from the Rural and Migrant Ministry and United Students Against Sweatshops also participated in the conference. A few spoke about their recent experiences with a delegation that visited the border towns of Mexico where they personally witnessed and spoke to workers who toil often for pennies a day at sweatshops known as maquiladoras.

“Maybe not in my generation but maybe in the next one something can be done to improve working conditions and human rights (at these factories),” said Camila Leiva, a student at Guelderland High School who is active with an organization called Kids Can Free the Children.

The Youth Arts Group from Rural and Migrant Ministry took part in a lively cultural presentation dramatizing the exploitation and oppression associated with globalization and multinational corporations like Wal-Mart that reap billions of dollars as a result.


— David Galarza

Farm workers rally for equal worker rights

ALBANY — New York state farm workers stopped for a rally at CSEA Headquarters on their way to the state Capitol, winding up a 10-day, 200-mile journey to highlight their struggle for equal rights.

United Farm Workers President Arturo Rodriguez thanked CSEA staff who came out to support the farm workers and pass out bottles of water at the end of their march.

The goal of the March for Justice was to foster a groundswell of grassroots support for the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act (A2859/S3351), a bill that would grant farm workers the same rights enjoyed by other workers in New York state, such as overtime pay, disability insurance, collective bargaining and a guaranteed day of rest.

“The 265,000 members of CSEA are proud to support the farm workers in the fight for fairness and respect,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue. “They deserve the same basic rights and dignity that other working people have.

CSEA members have stood and marched with the farm workers across New York and we welcome them to Albany as they speak for what’s right at the Capitol.”

Farmworkers in front of CSEA headquarters on their way to the Capitol to lobby for the Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act.
What’s In It For You?

So you think you heard it all about the CSEA-Employee Benefit Fund (EBF)? Did you know that:

• EBF has marketing representatives for each of the six CSEA regions. EBF’s marketing representatives provide biannual service calls with the personnel manager and/or unit president to each unit enrolled in the EBF to update current provider listings, booklets, enrollment cards and to answer questions on anything from enrollment to billing procedures.

• Our dental provider listing is updated every three to four months and vision every six months. Updates on providers are made daily on our website.

• EBF’s service is second to NONE. Members can call the CSEA EBF toll free number, (800) EBF-CSEA/(800) 323-2732 from anywhere in the United States, seven days a week 24 hours a day to inquire about your benefits. EBF also has a TDD for the hearing impaired at 1-800-532-3833.

• CSEA EBF no longer requires a vision voucher when using a panel provider. In addition to our standard four fee schedule dental plans and our three vision plans, we have vision riders that can be added to your existing vision plan for little cost.

• EBF administers miscellaneous benefits such as legal, hearing aid, maternity, and annual physical reimbursement plans, available to local government units during negotiations. A senior benefits specialist assigned to your region can assist you with information for dental, vision and miscellaneous EBF benefits during local government negotiations. CSEA EBF is available to do comparisons of dental and or vision plans for all public sector CSEA units.

• EBF can enroll a local government group with less than 100 percent participation, and a minimum of 50 percent.

• EBF has its own website: CSEAEBF.com for up-to-date information.

• Enrolling in a CSEA EBF plan supports and promotes the advantages of union activism. EBF is tax exempt, pays no sales commissions or dividends and the surplus monies must be rolled back into the benefits we offer, either by increasing the programs or helping to keep the rates low.

If you are not already enrolled in any of our plans, what are you waiting for? Call your local benefits specialist and get started on an ever better future!

Protecting Your Benefits

Try Home Delivery for Your Prescriptions — Help Maintain Empire Plan Premiums

Save time and money when ordering your prescriptions by using home delivery for maintenance medication from the Express Scripts Mail Service Pharmacy. It’s a convenient service available at no additional cost to you.

Benefits of Home Delivery:

• Enrollees can skip the trip to the local pharmacy for maintenance prescriptions — the prescriptions are delivered directly to your home.

• Enrollees don’t have to pay for home delivery service — standard shipping of your prescriptions is free.

• Enrollees only need to order refills once every three months — you get up to a 90-day supply of your medication with each order.

• Enrollees can save the plan money by eliminating the dispensing fees that are normally incurred by the plan when prescriptions are filled at participating or non-participating pharmacies when you use the mail service option.

• Enrollees can speak to a pharmacist anytime, day or night. The Express Scripts Mail Service Pharmacy never closes.

Promoting Good Health

2004 Special Election Schedule: Statewide Board of Directors Vacancy

Rensselaer County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 17</td>
<td>Start of Petitioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 28</td>
<td>Deadline for Receipt of Nominating Petitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 11</td>
<td>Ballots Mailed</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 17</td>
<td>Replacement Ballots Available</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>Ballots Due: 8:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Tally commenced 9:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>Ten (10) days after SEC Certification of Results</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Close of Protest Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August/The Work Force</td>
<td>Results Printed</td>
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Summary of April 2004 CSEA
Board of Directors Meeting

Editor’s note: The Work Force publishes a summary of actions taken by CSEA’s board of directors. The summary is prepared by CSEA Statewide Secretary Barbara Reeves for union members.

Reeves

ALBANY — CSEAs statewide board of directors met on April 15.In official business, the board:
• Added John Shepherd, Gary Conley, Chris Covell and Bob Timpano to the Political Action Fund;
• Elected Mary E. Sullivan, Barbara Reeves and James J. Moore as Employee Benefit Fund trustees;
• Appointed Mike Febraio, Tom Moreau, Jack Bohr, Bruce Damalt, Joe McMullen, Abe Benjamin, Sandy Reynolds and John Shepherd to the Directors Committee;
• Authorized a 48-month lease for a copier for Westchester County Local 860;
• Approved a lease for space at the Suffolk State Office Building for Long Island State Employees Local 016;
• Authorized negotiations to acquire property/finances acquisition at 595 West Hartdale Ave., White Plains for Westchester County Local 860;
• Designated Jean Ablert, Sandra Reynolds, George Lawson, David Mayo, Joe McMullen, Phil Cannon, Bob Simon and Dawn Smith to the Budget Committee;
• Appointed John Shepherd, Irene Kobbe, Betty Thomas, Mark Dotterswech, Carol Thornton, Lester Crockett, Bob Calboue, Lori Nilson, Kathy Button and Tom Moylan to the Personnel Committee;
• Named Tom Piruzolo, Chris Covell, Ron Gillespie, Cyndy Herman, Jimmy Blake, Rose DeSorbo, Carol Guardiano, Angela Fiore, Verne French and Paul McDonald to the Charter Committee;
• Elected Sabina Shapiro, Sandie Eas, Meg Shukta, Mike D’Alessandro, Joel Schwartz and Rose MacBaine to the Appeals Committee;
• Selected Jane D’Amico, Bruce Damalt, Mary Jo Tubbs, Abraham Benjamin, Bob Lorencc and Helen Fischklick for the Publications Committee;
• Picked Liz Piraino, Brenda Facin, Joan Grose, Lynn Wool, Michael Flavin, Mary D’Antonio, Mary Capano, Frank Strack, Jackie Goldsmith and Joe Melita for the Committee to Study Group Life Insurance;
• Retained the services of PricewaterhouseCoopers as accountants for 2004 fiscal year audit;
• Made “housekeeping” or technical changes to Article VI, Section 2 of the Region Constitution (reference to local president made plural), Article IV, Section 7 of Local Constitution (update delegates’ term of office to be consistent with change made previously), Article XIII, Section 3 of the Private Sector Local Constitution and Article XII, Section 3 of the Region Constitution (specify system to verify membership as part of nominating and election procedures for consistency with change made previously), and Article IV, Section 2 of Retiree Local Constitution (update term of office to be consistent with change made previously);
• Amended Article XII, Section 1 of the Region Constitution, Article IV, Section 1a and 1b of the Local Constitution, Article XIII, Section 1a and 1b of the Private Sector Local Constitution and Article XIII, Section 1a and 1b of the Unit Constitution to codify legal requirement that union officers must be bonded;
• Amended Article IV, Section 1 and Section 4 of the Local Constitution, Article IV, Section 1 and Section 4 of the Private Sector Local Constitution, Article IV, Section 1 and Section 4 of the Unit Constitution, and Article IV, Section 1a and Section 3 of the Retiree Local Constitution to clarify there is one Vice President position in a local or unit and that any additional vice president positions must be created in by-laws;
• Amended Article IV, Section 2 of the Local Constitution, Article IV, Section 2 of the Private Sector Local Constitution and Article IV, Section 2 of the Unit Constitution to be consistent with any legal changes (that is, membership notice and opportunity to comment) be followed in locals or units seeking to consolidate the secretary and treasurer positions;
• Amended Article XIII, Section 4 of the Local Constitution, Article XI, Section 4 of the Private Sector Local Constitution and Article XI, Section 4 of the Unit Constitution to establish a review and approval process that must be followed when locals or units directly apply for grant or other money;
• Amended Article III, Section 1 of the Private Sector Local Constitution to allow, when appropriate, consolidation of smaller bargaining units under the jurisdiction of a single private sector local;
• Amended Article VIII, Sections 1 and 2 of the Private Sector Local Constitution reducing the number of private sector mandatory committees from five to three;
• Amended Article XI, Section 2a and 2b of the Private Sector Local Constitution so in a first contact ratification only the 30-day membership requirement be waived;
• Amended Article IV, Section 7 of the Local Constitution to give the local executive board a choice regarding whether or not to fill a vacant delegate position;
• Amended Article XIII, Section 2 of the Retiree Local Constitution that membership be given notice of any proposed by-laws changes and an opportunity to comment before any action taken by local’s retiree executive board;
• Appointed to the Long Island Region Political Action Committee John Shepherd (chairperson), Catherine Custance, Rutha Bush, Al Lupp, Donna Smith, Bobby Holland, Mary D’Antonio, Bill Walsh, Jane D’Amico, Ron Gurrieri, Stanley Bergman, Paul D’Aleo, Harry Ader, Bill Flanagan (vice-chairperson), Robert Rauff, John Anderson, Mary Ellen DeLouise (vice-chairperson), Daniel LeMonte, Gary Kornova, Nick Pollicino, Barbara Reynolds, Tom Byrne and George Kalamaras;
• Appointed to the Southern Region Political Action Committee Tom Murray (chairperson), Pam Alexander, Steve Bardin, Kathryan Bayer, Len Beaulieu, James Blake, Richard Colson, Norma Condon, Gary Cowley, Sandra Cotron, Debbie Dowley, Kevin DuMond, Brenda Gamble, Ron Greene, Diana Harris, Rose Impallomeni, Naomi Kaplan, Irene Kobbe, William Mackey, Jack McPhillips, Dwayne Falen, Liz Piraino, Lee Pound, Sandra Reynolds, William Riccaldo, James Schultz, Dale Severo, Sabina Shapiro, April Shuback, Terry Sinaahaug, Emory Smith, Barbara Swanson, P. T. Thomas, Micki Thoms and Brian Wolfman; and
• Appointed to the Capital Region Political Action Committee Scott Allison (chairperson), Ronald Revers (vice-chairperson), Joseph Rounds, Jeffrey Zabinski, Vianna Boyko, Michael Burns, David Kircher, Adrian Otero, Jason DeSantis, Gordon Duprey, Robert Pierre, George McCroty, Bill Lauer, Roberta Porter, Linda Schwall and Ron Briggs (officer liaison).

Questions concerning the summary should be directed to CSEA Statewide Secretary Barbara Reeves, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Ave., Albany, N.Y. 12210, 1-800-342-4146 or (518)257-1253.

Elder Law

CSEA has added an Elder Law Plan to provide you and your family access to attorneys at low affordable rates who specialize in this complex area of law.

Illness or disability requiring long-term care can happen to you, your spouse, your child or your parent at any time.

The Elder Law Plan entitles CSEA members to legal consultations, guidance, document preparation and, where needed, representation pertaining to estate planning and Medicaid eligibility.

Available services include:
• Low cost wills, powers of attorney, health care proxies tailored to protect family assets and households;
• Reduced fee trust agreements, deeds, Medicaid eligibility services;
• Non-crisis related consultations and pre-crisis planning;
• Ongoing annual trust services;
• Information and publications; and
• Educational seminars.

How Do I Find An Attorney? Call the CSEA toll-free number: 1-800-342-4146 and follow the prompts for the Legal Services Program. Listen to the directions for accessing the Elder Law Plan to locate a plan attorney near you.

Information is also available on CSEA’s website at www.cseaatlocal100.org.

June 2004 THE WORK FORCE Page 17
Lee French, with one of the rescue vehicles he rides in when he responds to an emergency call.

What Lee French considers a hobby, most others would consider life saving heroics. His “hobby” is serving as an active member of the Ravena Rescue Squad for 38 years, an EMT for 35 years and an Advanced EMT Instructor for 30 years.

French was recently honored by the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York with the prestigious Hannay Reels Rescue Squad Workers Award.

His service to the Red Cross and his community is of great value. Not only does he serve as an EMT, but trains others as well. French presents one full EMT course and one refresher course every year and has done so for 30 years. He also teaches an Advanced EMT-Instructor course.

French is a hero who both saves lives and multiples the effect by creating classes of heroes. In his work role, French serves as a traffic management vehicle safety specialist for the New York State Thruway Authority. French started as a Teamster there for nine years and has been a CSEA member for the last 16 years.

WF: How did you get involved with the Ravena Rescue Squad?
LF: When I first got out of high school, I was working nights from 3 a.m. till 11 a.m. and was completely bored during the day. One day, I went to get the mail and got talking to the mailman. He asked me if I ever thought of joining the rescue squad. They really needed people especially during the day and he also said it was a great way to meet people. That was 38 years ago and I have been involved ever since.

WF: In today’s busy world, why do you volunteer?
LF: I volunteer because it’s the only hobby where you can save a life. Flag football or soccer is fun, but as an EMT, I can really make a difference by saving someone’s life. But it’s also really enjoyable. Some of my best friends I have made, were made “on call.”

WF: Any rescues that particularly stick out in your mind as significant?
LF: The fist call I ever went on as an EMT-I (Instructor, the second level of four levels one can be trained in as an EMT) was two or three miles from my home. A car had flipped 180 degrees, went up an embankment and was stuck in a tree. I had to climb up the tree on a ladder with a flashlight in my mouth since it was dark and put in an IV. We eventually got him down, but that was one to remember.

WF: You’ve trained many, many individuals, is it rewarding?
LF: It’s great since many of my trainees have gone on to be Albany firefighters. And, in my last class, I taught a third generation student. I had previously trained her mother and grandmother.

WF: What are some of your biggest challenges as a trainer?
LF: One of the biggest issues we deal with is burn out. An EMT’s role in the community is important but so are family and friends. When your daughter wants to go for an ice cream or your spouse wants to go to dinner, GO. I try to teach my students to pace themselves and LIVE.

WF: Has your training ever come in handy on the job for the Thruway Authority?
LF: I have a busy workload. I handle the tandem trailer program, all impounds on the Thruway and will be involved with a new federal LCV (Long Combination Vehicle) program. My expertise has especially come in handy to assist with the defibrillator program since we are trying to get a policy in place. They use me as a resource since I am so familiar with the equipment.

WF: Do you consider yourself a hero?
LF: Honestly, I consider myself a person that has a hobby. However, I do deal well with “gory” stuff and I do work well under pressure. Some of the scenes you see on television, I have lived.

WF: What does it mean to you to be recognized as a Hometown Hero by the American Red Cross?
LF: I was completely caught off guard by the recognition. It’s a very prestigious award and I am truly honored.

— Amy Scharf
PEOPLE PERSON — The PEOPLE Recruiter of the Month for April is Rutha Bush of the Long Island Region, her fifth out of six months in a row. She recruited 18 new members to the PEOPLE program. PEOPLE is CSEA and AFSCME's political action program. It is responsible for raising money and collecting voluntary contributions from the membership so that CSEA can effectively promote our interests at the state and federal level. BEST OVERALL PERFORMANCE FOR SARATOGA DSS — The Saratoga County Department of Social Services' child support enforcement unit was recognized for its performance by the Office of Temporary Disability Assistance for best overall performance in medium-sized districts. It was the fourth consecutive year the county department received the award. The CSEA unit assists in locating absent parents, establishing support obligations, collecting current and delinquent support payments and disbursing support payments. WATERTOWN CSEA MEMBERS PITCH IN FOR PBS — CSEA members in the Watertown area pitched in to help their public television station, WPBS. Workers from Black River Valley State Employees Local, Watertown Correctional Facility Local and Cape Vincent Correctional Facility Local donated CSEA shirts and volunteered their time to help answer phone calls to raise money during the station's telethon auction. CSEA sponsored one of the auction tables that same evening. AFSCME SCHOLARSHIP WINNER — Brendan O'Malley, a student from The Park School in Buffalo and the son of Ellen D. Hammond-O'Malley, a CSEA teacher's aide in the Clarence School District, is one of 10 national winners of the AFSCME Family Scholarship. O'Malley will receive $2,000 in scholarship money each year of his four years of college. DONOHUE HONORED — CSEA President Danny Donohue was honored with the 2004 Labor Service Board of the Western New York Area Labor Federation (WNYALF) Buffalo AFL-CIO Council. It family to know she is back home and on the mend. "The amazing number of cards and messages you sent me helped speed my recovery," Carr said. She added she was "deeply touched and very grateful for the many acts of kindness."
There’s an unhealthy situation in New York that’s getting more critical by the day.

New York’s public hospitals and nursing homes are facing serious problems due to long outdated funding formulas that unfairly favor private health care facilities.

There’s no easy answer, but Gov. George Pataki’s plan to impose a “sick tax” will break the back of public hospitals and nursing homes. Under the Pataki plan, every local taxpayer will suffer a double shot of bad medicine – increased health care costs and decreased health care services in the community.

Can Governor Pataki really think that’s a healthy choice?

Public health care facilities are essential to our well-being, providing care that private facilities and others will not. State and local officials need to work together to protect public health care and the Governor needs to provide real leadership for overdue reforms.

Otherwise the results could be tragic.

This message brought to you by the 265,000 taxpaying members of CSEA –
New York’s leading union –
United on and off the job to protect vital public health care services.