See story, Page 3
Niagara Unit turns up heat to save Mt. View

LOCKPORT — The fight to save Mt. View Health Facility, the Niagara County nursing home, continues as the CSEA Niagara County Employee Unit works to reverse county Legislature actions that could lead to selling or subcontracting the home.

The Niagara County Legislature voted to seek a request for proposals (RFP) for the sale of the 152-bed nursing home. The resolution also said procedures to close the facility will be undertaken if the nursing home is not sold within one year.

A recent rally at a previous legislature meeting brought out nearly 200 members and supporters, who marched for an hour before the session with signs and chants to “Save Mt. View.” Unit members brought their children, as did Mt. View residents’ families, and other CSEA members, and concerned residents, showing the community is strongly behind maintaining Mt. View as a county operation.

A CSEA telephone poll showed an overwhelming number of county residents think highly of Mt. View, and would consider placing loved ones there.

“Our telephone poll showed the citizens are behind us, but we have to keep showing the politicians,” said Fran Faery, unit president.

“And we won’t stop as long as the county manager keeps pushing this as an option. They seem to be blind to the opinion of their constituents.”

The unit is keeping the issue before the public and county lawmakers through various media.

CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Candy Saxon recently appeared on a local call-in cable access program with Jim Galuzzo of the Area Labor Federation. They promoted Mt. View and the need for the public to let their representatives know they don’t want it sold or contracted out. Most callers expressed strong Mt. View support.

The unit also purchased a series of radio ads, with two relatives of Mt. View residents, who expressed their extreme satisfaction with the care their loved ones receive. The ads will run daily during drive time, until lawmakers meet to make a decision.

— Ron Wofford

Payroll dates for state bonus, increase set

Eligible Executive Branch State employees will receive the negotiated $800 bonus in their June 24, 2004 (Institutional Payroll) or June 30, 2004 (Administrative Payroll) paycheck.

The 2.5 percent (retroactive to April 1, 2004) negotiated salary increase will be reflected in the July 22, 2004 (Institutional Payroll) or July 28, 2004 (Administrative Payroll) paycheck.

CSEA President Danny Donohue to meet Central Region members Aug. 18

CSEA President Danny Donohue will visit the CSEA Central Region office on Wednesday, Aug. 18 to meet with members.

The meetings will be held in the region office at 6595 Kirkville Road, East Syracuse.

Donohue will meet with union members from 1 to 7 p.m. Please call the Central Region office at (315) 433-0050 or (800) 559-7975 for an appointment and directions.
Westchester members say ‘yes’

WHITE PLAINS — Westchester County CSEA members gave a resounding “yes” to a contract proposal that resolves a 29-month fight.

County Unit members approved the measure by a 3.1 ratio and now await the county Legislature’s vote.

“The terms are fair and equitable,” Westchester County Unit President Jack McPhillips said. “This is a good contract that is fair to everyone.”

CSEA President Danny Donohue, who joined union members for a November contract fight demonstration, praised the CSEA negotiating team for a “job well done.”

“The solidarity shown by our members made the difference,” he said. “They persevered and that perseverance was rewarded by a contract that meets their needs.”

Southern Region President Diane Hewitt expressed pride for the members’ efforts through the lengthy and at times bitter bargaining period.

“It’s been a long and difficult fight,” she said. “But our members stood together for a fair and equitable agreement.”

Westchester Local 860 President Gary Conley also praised the agreement.

Contract talks had begun in August 2001 and were moving in a positive direction until the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

“Any positive track that we had been on came to a screeching halt after that tragic event,” CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Donald Partrick, who served as the union’s lead negotiator, said. “Then, for months, we heard constantly of an economic tailspin.”

That tailspin led to an expired agreement and two years of stalemate at the negotiating table between CSEA and Westchester County. The union was offered contract packages filled with givebacks as the county — and its employees — grappled with budget difficulties that led to threats of contracting out and layoffs.

When the tentative pact was reached, the union and the county had been in fact-finding after attempts at mediation were exhausted. But McPhillips and the negotiating team were determined to fight back.

“When we began negotiations,” he said, “we wanted three things in our agreement — no bonuses, no zeroes (percent raises) and no employee health insurance contribution. Every package that we were offered the year contained at least one of those items that we didn’t want. Rather than back down and accept a package that we didn’t want, we chose to stick it out.”

The members’ desire to fight back led to numerous events that included demonstrations in front of county facilities and in county officials’ neighborhoods and a strong political action effort aimed at county lawmakers.

The four-year agreement is fully retroactive to Jan. 1, 2002. Terms within the agreement include raises in every year, significant increases to employee longevity payments and improvements to the optical and dental health care plans.

— Story and Page 1 photo by Janice Marra

CSEA pushes change at Nassau Health

COMMACK — Givebacks may soon have a different meaning to Richard Turan.

The former CEO of the Nassau Health Care Corp. demanded outrageous givebacks from CSEA as the price of a new contract. The unit is at impasse, and has been without a new contract since December 2002.

But now Turan may have to give back his hefty raise.

He’s already given up his job.

CSEA assailed Turan after he secretly gave himself a $125,000 raise, while at the same time laying off clerks, custodians and physicians at Nassau University Medical Center, A. Holly Patterson Extended Care Facility and the community health clinics, all CSEA-represented facilities that serve the needs of Nassau County residents.

Within days of Turan’s resignation, the ripples CSEA set in motion continued. State Comptroller Alan Hevesi launched a probe into the legality of Turan’s raise, which the NHCRC Board of Directors claims it never authorized. Shortly after that, a Nassau County Legislative publicly called for Turan to give the money back. Turan said the cutbacks were necessary due to financial troubles at the health care corporation.

CSEA had already been marching in the streets and working through political channels for months trying to rally support to save jobs and the health care centers. But Turan’s pay raise was unacceptable.

“This was an amazing one-two punch from CSEA to bring about long overdue change,” said CSEA Statewide President Danny Donohue. On the heels of the pay raise revelation, Long Island Region President LaMorte went to the media, calling for Turan’s resignation. Waving a pink slip that said Turan Must Go, LaMorte stood before the TV cameras and expressed his outrage, garnering coverage in Newsday, the New York Times and Long Island News.

That was followed by the delivery of a symbolic pink slip by CSEA’s Nassau County Local leaders.

“Every day Turan stays on the job, he brings this medical facility closer to flat lining!” said LaMorte. “It’s time for him to go!”

Turan also boosted the salaries of other hospital big wigs by as much as $280,000 each, and spent $12 million on consultants to help him in his job.

“We weren’t keen on Turan when he was first hired, because he had no prior health care experience.

But we thought he should get a chance to do the job. It turned out he was doing a job on every taxpayer and every worker in those facilities,” said Nassau County Local President Jane D’Amico.

— Rachel Langert

CSEA Nassau County Local President Jane D’Amico and NUMC Local President George Walsh leave NHCC CEO Richard Turan’s office after leaving a mock pink slip.

But we thought he should get a chance to do the job. It turned out he was doing a job on every taxpayer and every worker in those facilities,” said Nassau County Local President Jane D’Amico.

— Rachel Langert

July 2004 THE WORK FORCE Page 3
Let's celebrate our freedom in July and protect it in November

As we celebrate our nation’s Independence Day, it’s a good time to consider our liberties and the responsibility of being Americans.

Union members know we have to fight every day to preserve the rights, benefits and hard-won gains that we have in our contracts. More than ever before we cannot take those for granted because the very right to belong to a union is under increasing attack in this great country of ours. We also have to fight for our American freedoms because democracy is a precious thing that should never be taken for granted.

More than 200 years ago, Americans rose up against tyranny and established a new nation unlike anything before. It was founded on the principles of freedom and equality with a bill of rights to protect all citizens.

Today, we face the ugly reality of individuals and groups who seek to deny those rights and freedoms in the name of some misguided patriotism and corporate dominance.

CSEA members clearly know what is at stake in this election year. That was evidenced in programs at our recent state, local government and private sector workshops that used the exercise of creating television ads about the important issues affecting working Americans. It was an impressive display of smarts and creativity and all of the participants are to be congratulated for their efforts (See story Page 11).

The homemade ads hammered away at the challenges we face in provocative, entertaining and thoughtful ways. But the central truth in all the ads came through loud and clear: As Americans we all have the power to make a difference at election time. It’s up to each of us to use that power by registering and voting.
Workers, residents fight to keep Oswego County nursing home open

FULTON — CSEA members at Oswego County’s Andrew Michaud Nursing Home are fighting to retain the standard of care they provide, as the county considers selling the nursing home to the highest bidder.

An activist team is meeting regularly with union staff and elected officers to develop a strategic campaign to raise community awareness and let elected officials know people oppose the sale.

The county Legislature’s Health Committee voted recently in favor of selling the home. CSEA is planning a rally for July 14 outside the County Office Building in Oswego opposing the sale before the legislature votes on the measure on July 15.

Helping activists lead their fight are the facility’s residents, who actively oppose the proposed sale.

“None of us like it. These girls are like family to me. They really are. We don’t want it sold … we don’t know what will happen to us,” said resident Barb Lyon, who serves as Resident Council president.

Certified Nursing Assistant Samantha Francis said the quality of care they provide is the best. “No one else will take as good care of the residents as we do,” she said emphatically.

Physical Therapy Aide Mary Trude is fighting on two fronts. She’s fighting as an employee with 29 years of service, and on behalf of her father, a resident at the home. “The legislators want to sell this place, but the people don’t. A lot of our residents are very upset. The majority of the people want this place to remain with the county because they’re happy with the care we provide. We’re all family here.”

Trude has already been active fighting for the home, gathering more than five pages of signatures on petitions. “It’s very personal. My mother had been at a private home, and that place was awful. These people deserve a place like Michaud that gives such good care.”

Resident Roxanne Stuart, who’s lived at the home for 11 years, wrote a passionate letter to county legislators begging them to keep the home public. She fears a private sale would lead to her losing her private room and possibly her independence.

“I wish they wouldn’t sell it. It’s my home … my whole life. They’ve given me a whole new life here,” she said tearfully. “I’m afraid of losing the girls because they may have to drop to minimum wage or lose their health insurance or their retirement. If (privatizing meant) they cut back on physical therapy or activities, I wouldn’t be able to do anything. I wouldn’t be happy.”

The union is working on an advertising campaign and other means of taking message public. Recently, it’s workers handed out flowers to all the residents on Mother’s Day to remind them that they cared for them like family.

“We’re going to fight like hell to keep the great quality of care we currently have in Oswego,” said CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore.

“Our members really do provide loving care for these people,” said CSEA Unit President Bill Reed. “We’re going to put up a strong fight to maintain that.”

— Mark M. Kotzin

CSEA Voices

“We’re gonna fight like hell to keep the great quality of care we currently have here in Oswego.”

Only through unity can we fight Medicaid and health care cuts, and fight all the union-bashing efforts being mounted against working people.

— Joe Jones, 30-year CSEA member, painter, Roswell Park Cancer Institute
DOCS conference lays out issues

LAKE PLACID — CSEA members working in corrections from across the state recently held a statewide workshop to discuss issues affecting them on the job and attend sessions to help them advance their careers.

“The DOCS Conference was a huge success,” said Christine Mumma, Statewide Labor Management Committee for Corrections chair. “The conference continues to meet our members’ needs.”

The conference is a testament to the effectiveness of labor and management working together to resolve issues. Prison management from the statewide commissioner of corrections, assistant commissioners and key management staff attend the conference and participate in a question and answer forum.

“Every person who attends the conference has the opportunity to get in front of the microphone and ask a question or make a point,” said Mumma. “It gives us the opportunity to let them know of issues that they may or may not be aware of. Management listens and responds.”

In addition to the Q&A panel, the conference also focused on workshops that are affecting CSEA members. One such topic is dealing with term service contracts.

“Correctional facilities are seeing an increase in term service contracts,” said Mumma. “The facility will contract with a private company for a specific job such as installing a boiler or putting in fans when that same job could be completed by a CSEA maintenance member,” said Mumma.

“I encouraged Chris to put together a subcommittee and workshop on term service contracts,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue, who attended the DOCS conference.

“The trend is of growing concern. The conference is a perfect way to find out what other facilities are encountering and start addressing the issue.”

— Amy Scharf

Court system contract timetable set

ALBANY — CSEA members in the United Court System will be receiving ballots soon to vote on a tentative contract agreement with the state.

Ballots were to be mailed June 18. Each ballot parcel includes a ballot, fact sheet, contract language, a secret ballot envelope and postage-paid return envelope. Replacement ballots are available by calling (800) 342-4146, ext. 1279 or (518) 257-1279 on June 28.

The deadline to return ballots is 5 p.m. on July 12. Ballots will be counted and results announced on July 13. Results will be posted on www.csea-local1000.org.

Legislation needed to implement the new four-year contract has been introduced in the Senate and Assembly.

The new agreement provides salary increases 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, similar to the Productivity Enhancement Program in the Executive Branch, in which employees at or below Grade 16 can trade in three vacation days a year for a $409 deduction in health insurance premiums.

Besides the increases in other benefits mentioned last month, the tentative contract provides more money for a child care/elder care benefit; an increase from 165 to 200 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 and health; additional protections from overly hot or cold workplace temperatures; increased UCS contributions to the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund although ...

Nassau County Supreme Court CSEA member Arnold Cohen, a 54-year court reporter, has recorded up to 280 words per minute in his career. Cohen and his colleagues will soon be voting on a new United Court System contract.

there will be a reduction in current EBF benefits in order to stay within these contribution amounts.
Liquidation workers demand fairness

MANHATTAN — Management may be playing the name game, but CSEA members working at the New York State Insurance Department Liquidation Bureau know who they are and are proud of it: public employees.

As such, they are demanding a new contract, after working more than a year without one and an end to costly outsourcing and the proliferation of high paying, unnecessary management jobs.

The Insurance Department’s Liquidation Bureau Local negotiates its own contract with the state and does not fall under the Executive Branch contract, which recently was ratified.

“A lot of us are disturbed about our salaries,” said Denton Perkins, a senior claims examiner and CSEA member for 18 years.

“We are doing a lot more with fewer staff and yet, while they are telling us there is a job freeze and there is no money for raises, they are bringing in higher level people and paying them top salaries,” Perkins said.

Comptroller’s employees kicked out

The NYS Insurance Department Liquidation Bureau, which takes over and administers a failed insurance company’s assets and pays claims, made headlines in March when four auditors from the State Comptroller’s Office were kicked out of its New York City office. Officials at the Bureau claimed it was a private entity not subject to state scrutiny.

Management at the bureau went as far as instructing employees that the agency’s name had changed from “New York State Insurance Department Liquidation Bureau” to “New York Liquidation Bureau.” Stationery with the new name was also ordered.

During that time, State Comptroller Alan Hevesi stated: “The Liquidation Bureau claims it is not a state agency and not subject to our audit authority. That’s absurd. The bureau is part of the State Insurance Department. The head of the Insurance Department is automatically the head of the Liquidation Bureau.”

Public employees tell it like it is

Local CSEA activists at the Liquidation Bureau recently created and circulated a flier explaining that while management has attempted to change the name of the agency on paper, its employees remain New York state public workers.

The flier went on to cite three rulings by the New York State Public Employment Relations Board (PERB), the NYS Supreme Court and the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court to back this fact.

The last time the Liquidation Bureau was examined in 1998, it was faulted by former State Comptroller H. Carl McCall for operating without internal controls and for contracting legal and consulting services without a competitive bid process.

At press time the bureau was being audited.

Outsourcing and job security

“Outsourcing will be the demise of us,” warned Peggy Moynihan, a senior claims examiner and an 18-year CSEA member. “I think everybody should be focusing on job security. What good is it to finally get a raise but then have no job?”

Moylnihan said public workers often train temporary workers who then go on to do the same work for private employers that have contracts with the bureau.

“The public employees that are now doing the work are extremely competent individuals who have come to work here from private industry with years of experience,” said Moynihan.

After several delays there are now four negotiating contract sessions scheduled for July.

“I’m looking forward to a productive dialogue that will result in a fair and dignified contract that will secure our jobs, increase wages and improve benefits,” said Local President Phil Cannon.

— David Galarza

Phil Cannon, left, CSEA local president at the New York State Insurance Department Liquidation Bureau, speaks with Local Vice President Scott Lowman during a recent Liquidation Bureau membership meeting.

“The public employees that are now doing the work are extremely competent individuals who have come to work here from private industry with years of experience.”

— Sally Bromson, real property clerk, Cayuga County Treasurer’s Office

July 2004 THE WORK FORCE Page 7
JAMESVILLE — For CSEA members at the Onondaga County Department of Transportation, it’s like someone put their work area on fast-forward, jumping from an old, outdated and unsafe highway maintenance garage, to a new, high-tech, state-of-the-art workplace that puts worker safety, comfort and productivity first. It’s a win-win situation for all involved, and it came about as a result of classic labor-management cooperation.

“They moved into the modern age and they did it very well,” said CSEA Onondaga DOT Unit President Miles Neugent. “They went from about 1960 to 2005.” Neugent and crew all agree the garage is leaps and bounds ahead of where they were. Workers praise the bright lighting and well-heated buildings, in sharp contrast to the older buildings that were at best described as gloomy and cold. Now the floors are heated in the mechanics’ bay, which melts snow and slush so maintenance workers are no longer standing ankle-deep as they work on snowplows.

The facility’s redesign began in 1998 after several buildings at the nine-building complex were damaged in a storm the year before. The buildings, built in the 1940s, were in desperate need of updating and repair, and the county decided it would be better to build a new facility. The county spent more than a year planning the changes and gathered groups of workers together to get their input on what features would be most beneficial. CSEA DOT member and maintenance worker Jim Hale worked with the project manager to coordinate timing of construction and helped destroy some of the old buildings. “I took them out with a track hoe,” he said. “That was the fun part.”

The redesigned garage, which took several years to complete, is much more efficient from the lighting and heating systems to the placement of needed tools and supplies. “Everything’s right there where they need it. There’s no more running to get anything,” Hale said.

As the garage’s main carpenter, he is also pleased with his shop’s new dust-collection system. Previously, he had to wear a mask to eliminate any health hazard from sawdust. Now the dust is vacuumed up and he is mask free. For CSEA member and storekeeper Leo Kogut, who controls the garage’s parts and supplies inventory, his new workplace is full of efficiencies from the new computerized cataloging system to a well-organized shelving system, fax machine and second-floor stock room with its own freight elevator. “We’ve come 100 percent forward from where we were,” Kogut said. “It’s light years ahead.”

Paul Victory, a heavy equipment operator with 23 years of service was part of the brainstorming team that first put together ideas for the garage. “It was definitely a team effort. We just threw out ideas on the table from our experience,” he said.

Victory said that many of the changes enhance safety as well as productivity. “With the equipment we’re dealing with, it doesn’t take a big mistake for someone to get hurt.”

Victory and others credit the collaboration with management for leading to a workplace that is more like a showroom.

“Through the process, the cooperation was the big thing,” Victory said. “Everyone realized that we need to work smarter, not harder, and now we can.”

— Mark M. Kotzin

CSEA member and heavy equipment mechanic Paul Victory stands under a truck on a new hydraulic lift. The truck previously could have only been put on a ramp to repair.

CSEA Tire service mechanic Tim Bloodgood mounts a tire on a rim, which previously had to be done at a facility miles away.

“Everyone realized that we need to work smarter, not harder, and now we can.”

“I think my union brothers and sisters should do everything in their powers to get George W. Bush out of office.”

— Jon Ryan, bus driver, Southern Cayuga School District
Fighting for fair contract

AVON — The 45-member Avon Schools Unit, seeking their first contract as part of CSEA, formed a huge picket line at the recent school board budget meeting to show their displeasure with slow, and contentious negotiations.

The unit carried signs calling for fairness in a new contract and support for the support staff. Picketers blasted the district’s negotiating stance which denies workers the same disciplinary procedure in a new contract that its teachers enjoy and other basic employee rights.

The unit joined CSEA three years ago, but has been under the contract of their former independent association. The district was ordered into negotiations by PERB in November 2003. The unit declared impasse, and is awaiting PERB appointment of a mediator.

“These members deserve a fair, decent wage so they can make a decent living,” said Western Region President Flo Tripi. “Many of them couldn’t be here today, because they are working a second job. These are the people that keep this school district working.”

“We are here for a fair contract, and we want to be listened to,” said Unit President Kim Giambra.

The administration has not listened and has put up a stone wall.”

— Ron Woford

CSEA members tighten belts

CORTLAND — Like workers at many SUNY campuses throughout the state, some CSEA members at SUNY Cortland have had to “tighten their belts.” Unlike other campuses where it’s done figuratively to save money, at Cortland they’re literally tightening their belts because of the weight they’ve lost, thanks to a new benefit sponsored by their Employee Assistance Program (EAP), the college and the CSEA Local.

Earlier this year, EAP representatives approached campus unions and asked if they would offer a new wellness benefit for members by paying a portion of the fees for those who successfully completed a new on-campus Weight Watchers program. CSEA was the only union that took them up on the offer.

Now, the first group of 15 CSEA members has finished their 16-week weight loss program with great results. Along with 15 other campus workers, the whole group shed more than 400 pounds combined.

“We’re big losers,” beamed CSEA member Deborah Williams, a secretary in the college’s Communications Studies Department, who lost 22 pounds in the 16 weeks. Under the EAP program, Williams and her co-workers joined the weight loss program and attended one-hour weekly meetings on campus to learn about better and healthier eating habits and to monitor their progress.

The union-local reimbursed half of the program’s $159 cost to the workers who completed the program and didn’t have more than one unexcused absence.

CSEA members Marie Blanden, left, and Deborah Williams, right, show off the inches they’ve lost.

CSEA member Priscilla Davis, one-year CSEA member, housekeeper, Roswell Park Cancer Institute

“We are here for a fair contract and we want to be listened to.”

“Your union can help you in any discrepancies with your boss. Your union will back you up.”

— Mark M. Kotzin
Workshops motivate activists

He echoed the paint two weeks later at the Irving Flamenbaum Local Government Workshop in Albany.

November election critical
Touching on the critical November election, Donovan said at the Irving Flamenbaum Memorial Local Government and Private Sector Workshop, “Our biggest battle will be in the months ahead up to November and the most important presidential election we have ever faced.”

Mock TV ads score high ratings
One of the most widely received sessions at the workshops was “CSEA Votes 2004,” which gave members the opportunity to record mock television ads on the importance of voting this fall. (See accompanying article.)

Mission Achievement Winners
CSEA also awarded the State, Local and Private Sector Mission Achievement Awards, which were won by Colleen Wheaton of SUNY Purchase, William Bischoff of Rockland County and Maria Mach, Brian Francesca and Michele Kusmok, president, vice president and treasurer of Food Service at SUNY New Paltz, which joined CSEA last year. (See story, Page 15)

Other sessions at both workshops included pre-retirement advice, information on member benefits, dangers found in common cleaning chemicals, public relations in contract campaigns, organizing through card-check neutrality, and a Central Labor Council delegates’ forum.

CSEA members gained valuable information on member benefits at the workshops.

CSEA’s annual State Division Workshop is named in memory of Thomas H. McDonough, a longtime statewide leader of the union who passed away in 1983. McDonough, an employee of the State Department of Motor Vehicles in Albany, held numerous CSEA positions throughout his decades of service. He was the union’s executive vice president at the time of his death.

The Thomas H. McDonough Memorial Workshop
CSEA’s annual Local Government and Private Sector Division Workshop is named in memory of Irving Flamenbaum, a longtime statewide leader of the union who passed away in 1980. Flamenbaum, an employee of Nassau County, held numerous CSEA positions throughout more than 30 years of activism, including AFSCME international vice president. He was Long Island Region president at the time of his death.

For Sale

CSEA members at the State, Local Government and Private Sector Workshops let the camera roll in an interactive session focusing on issues facing working families in the upcoming presidential election.

The results were astounding.

The session was aimed at letting union members figure out the issues in the upcoming election, rather than be told what the issues are. That appeared to be the easy part.

Broken into small groups, participants were told to write scripts for a one-minute political advertisement. Props were made available, portable cameras were handed out, and everyone was told to have their tapes back by 6 p.m. — the workshop began at 1:30 p.m.

Some groups wandered no further than their hotel lobbies. In one case, a flushing toilet was used to not-so-subtly illustrate the direction in which the country is headed. Other groups hopped in cars and took advantage of their surroundings in Lake Placid and Albany, filming at gas stations, cemeteries, school buildings and elsewhere.

“All the commercials were incredibly creative,” said CSEA Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan. “It was impressive to see how our members took hold of the task and presented the issues in a very relevant and often moving way. This workshop is definitely one they’ll remember.”

Download an order form to order videos at: http://www.cseaalocal1001.org.

CSEA members at the “Rich Fat Cats” ironically portrayed Haliburton, pharmaceutical companies and big business exchanging cash contributions in return for political favors. Shown here, Wendy Simmons and Robert Poirier laugh during filming.

In the “No Carbs” commercial, rich oil company executives received big bucks while American workers barely got pennies. In this clip, Mark Patterson is shown holding over some money.

“Rich Fat Cats” comically portrayed Haliburton, pharmaceutical companies and big business exchanging cash contributions in return for political favors. Shown here, Wendy Simmons and Robert Poirier laugh during filming.

For Sale

From losing their homes to losing their loved ones, “Changning Times” gave a dark portrayal of the economic and emotional impact of the misguided policies surrounding working Americans. In the above scene, Irene Marry sadly puts up a “For sale” sign.
Learning confined spaces’ in and out

LOLLY — More than 20 CSEA town members recently learned it takes teamwork and knowledge to successfully work in confined spaces, during a two-day training session.

Trainers from AFSCME presented the program to teach how to safely work in confined space situations. The training was free to the workers through a federal grant administered through the Environmental Protection Agency’s National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences.

Confined spaces such as manholes, storage tanks and pumping stations can present unique rescue challenges. Some manholes are 20 feet deep and narrow in diameter.

**Potential dangers**

Work assignments in such areas are potentially dangerous because there can be a lack of oxygen, physical hazards, and toxic chemicals such as carbon monoxide, methane and hydrogen sulfide. CSEA members who work in confined-space settings include those who work on street and highway crews, utility crews, wastewater treatment plants, water departments and public works departments.

AFSCME Occupational Safety and Health Specialist Diane Brown, one of the program’s two presenters, said the program emphasizes hands-on training.

“We teach workers to do all kinds of exercises both inside the classroom and in practice,” she said. “To pass the course, you have to be able to perform the tasks because we use a performance-based standard. All the training that we do not only emphasizes safety, but union building. These workers learn to look out for each other.”

Employees who work in confined spaces are often unaware of the risks they will face within each space, Brown said.

“This training helps them have the knowledge that they need,” she said.

**Teamwork**

Teamwork in completing confined space tasks is another training benefit. One worker completes an entry permit before the task if the space contains any potential hazards, while other employees set up equipment for the worker who will enter the space.

The crew takes readings for oxygen and other compound levels before the worker enters the space. While enclosed, the worker is closely monitored by an entry supervisor and an attendant in case there is a need for assistance. When the task is completed, the worker is lifted out of the confined space by the entry supervisor and the attendant.

Robert Werner, an 18-year CSEA member and machine equipment operator for the town’s highway department, is glad to have received the training.

“I’ve learned how to take someone out of manholes,” he said. “I will now be able to help out in case something happens.”

Tom Marion, a four-year CSEA member and working supervisor at the Highway Department, entered a manhole during a training exercise.

“There’s more to the training than you would think,” he said.

**Job situations**

Wes Monica, a 17-year CSEA member and a senior operator at the town’s wastewater treatment plant, often enters confined spaces to complete his job.

“Having this training is important for safety,” he said. “There are toxic gases in some of these areas that could kill you quickly, so it’s good to know how to protect ourselves from the hazards.”

Brown said while many public employers from across the country have been slower to adapt confined space safety measures than their private-sector counterparts, New York state is well ahead of the curve because of the state’s PESH Act, which governs public employees’ health and safety on the job.

But Brown noted there is a long way to go to keep workers safe on the job.

“Some employers simply want the workers to do the job,” she said. “But, safety doesn’t take more time — it saves time.”

— Janice Marra

**Safety and Health Information**

Access a wealth of occupational safety and health information at http://www.csea-local1000.org/osh/osh_pubs.php, where you can download CSEA’s popular safety and health booklets.
Back from Iraq, with job waiting

LATHAM — CSEA Capital Region labor relations specialist Jeff Yeaw recently returned to work after 15 months of active duty in Iraq. Yeaw is relieved to be home and has settled back into the routine of work and family life.

Unfortunately, some reservists return to their jobs with a different kind of battle on their hands. Although federal laws mandate that active-duty personnel get special consideration when it comes to their jobs and financial obligations, some employers and creditors don’t always follow the rules.

“We are extremely proud of Jeff and the service he completed in Iraq,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue. “CSEA made sure Jeff knew he would be welcomed back,” Donohue said.

Service to his country
Yeaw, a colonel in the Army Reserve’s 308th Civil Affairs Brigade, was assigned to run the Humanitarian Activities Coordination Center (HACC). The HACC was responsible for bridge replacement, repair of hundreds of schools as well as water sanitation and purification. Based 50 miles north of Baghdad in a former Iraqi air base turned into an air and ground support center, Yeaw said accommodations were Spartan — a sea of tents and buildings. Desert heat of 120 degrees competed with occasional rocket assaults in an inhospitable contest.

Almost weekly, Yeaw would travel to Baghdad to meet with non-governmental organizations, primarily relief agencies, which assisted in the construction efforts. On route to Baghdad there was the constant threat of encountering booby traps and bombs.

Family and friends back home
Maintaining relationships with family and friends back home was also a focus of Yeaw’s time in Iraq. When he wasn’t traveling, Yeaw would wake up at 4 a.m. and log on to a computer for a real-time chat with his wife Elizabeth. While in Iraq, Yeaw missed his first wedding anniversary, birthdays, and holidays.

Several CSEA staff members also kept in contact with Yeaw via e-mail. “It was great to hear from my colleagues at CSEA,” said Yeaw. “They were also kind enough to send two boxes of needed supplies that were a pleasant reminder of home.”

Both Yeaw and CSEA are happy he is back on the job. “It was a relief to not have to worry about my job while I was away,” said Yeaw. Although an LRS’s work can be difficult at times, Yeaw joked: “It’s a lot less stressful reporting to work and not being shot at every day.”

— Therese Assalian and Amy Scharf

Union members build community spirit

POUGHKEEPSIE — CSEA members employed by Dutchess County recently gave an old home some new life through a community renovation project.

About 25 members of the CSEA’s Dutchess County Unit, along with some family members and union staff, “adopted” a Town of Poughkeepsie house to make repairs and renovations through the organization “Rebuilding Together” program.

“Rebuilding Together” is a national program in which volunteers from all types of professional and personal backgrounds rehabilitate low-income homes and communities. The program has local affiliates throughout the United States, including 13 in New York.

Many of the homeowners who benefit from the program are senior citizens, persons with disabilities or families with children who meet income eligibility requirements set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In the Dutchess County affiliate, more than 700 volunteers complete repairs on about 20 homes each year. Most of the repairs and renovations are completed during the program’s National Rebuilding Day, held on the last Saturday in April, in which volunteers complete renovations to the houses’ fixtures and essential repairs.

CSEA volunteers gave their adopted house fresh coats of paint and made structural, electrical and plumbing repairs, among other duties.

Dutchess County Unit and Local President Elizabeth Piraino, who served as one of the volunteers, said CSEA members were happy to give their time to helping a neighbor.

“The union believes in giving back to our community,” she said. “Our members wanted to give back as a group, so we decided to work together as a way to improve our community.”

— Janice Marra
60 years ago ...

In 1944, Clifford C. Shoro became the 14th president of CSEA following the sudden death of president Harold J. Fisher. According to the Civil Service Leader, "He (Fisher) was often chained to his desk long after others had departed for the day. Then he would join some association group until late in the night in an effort to work out the problems of the employees."

President Fisher's administration was designed to maximize the effectiveness of the CSEA organization. His eight-point program was designed to benefit all members of CSEA. During his term, arrangements were completed to supply "The Civil Service Leader" weekly newspaper to all CSEA members.

Clifford C. Shoro was president for one year. He announced on Aug. 28, 1945, that he would not run for re-election, because of the burden of work in the reorganization of the state Health Department, of which he was the chief finance officer.

Also in 1944 ...

- June 6th-D-Day; allied invasion of Normandy begins.
- Gas chambers at Auschwitz and Stutthof are destroyed.
- The American Broadcasting Co. (ABC) is formed.
- The Academy Award for best picture went to Gaslight.
- Franklin D. Roosevelt wins re-election over Republican challenger Thomas E. Dewey to become the only U.S. president to be elected to a forth term.
- Byron Nelson wins a record 11 consecutive open titles on the PGA golf tour.
- IBM invented the first program-controlled calculator, the Automatic Sequence Controlled Calculator.
- G.I. Bill of Rights is passed, giving thousands of veterans an opportunity to go to college.
CSEA Mission Achievement Award winners reflect CSEA unity, spirit

Mission Achievement Award winner — Local Government Division

Billy Riccaldo is one busy guy who really enjoys his role as union-builder extraordinaire.

For that role and for best exemplifying CSEA’s mission, he was awarded the 2004 Mission Achievement Award for the Local Government Division.

As president of the Rockland County Local and it’s 3,337 members, Riccaldo has earned the universal respect of his members. Riccaldo has succeeded in mobilizing rank and file members of his local to participate more fully. He’s also succeeded in encouraging other leaders to take on a bigger role in their union.

Why does he do it?

“I really enjoy helping the members,” he said after accepting his award at the Irving Flamenbaum Memorial Local Government Workshop in Albany.

Riccaldo has been active in organizing campaigns and is committed to getting training for members so they can sharpen their skills and advance their careers.

“Receiving the most prestigious award that CSEA has to give is truly an honor,” said Riccaldo upon receiving the award from CSEA President Danny Donohue.

“This is the pinnacle of my career in the union. I will always cherish it for what it is and what it stands for.”

Mission Achievement Award winners — Private Sector Division

Maria Mach, Brian Franciola and Michele Kusmuk, president, vice president and treasurer of Food Service at the SUNY New Paltz Local were awarded the 2004 Mission Achievement Award for the Private Sector Division at the Irving Flamenbaum Memorial Workshop.

This brave trio of union activists led the way in the fight to organize food service employees at SUNY New Paltz. Because of their fortitude and dedication, they along with their co-workers are now reveling in the completion of their first contract.

The vote for ratification was 60 — 0. Besides better benefits, higher pay and a grievance procedure, members of the new local feel strongly that they have changed things for the better in their workplace. Franciola points out that they now have 12 new employees, who are drawn to better benefits and working conditions. Kusmuk points out that she and her co-workers are just plain happier. “My mom noticed how much happier I have been. She hasn’t heard me complain since we got the contract,” said Kusmuk.
What’s In It For You?

EBF Retiree Dental Plan celebrates second anniversary

On July 1, 2002, the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund announced a new Retiree Dental Plan. Today there are more than 280 retirees participating in this plan. The plan is offered as an alternative to programs offered through CSEA and AFSCME and is designed to help state and local government retirees enjoy dental benefits.

The following are some of the features offered:
- $1,200 annual maximum with a $25 annual deductible/$100 family maximum per year billed after first claim submission of the year;
- Three tier monthly rate schedule: $30 Retiree, $60 Retiree and Spouse, $90 Retiree and Family.
- One year mandatory contract is required. A 20 percent discount is taken on the second year when signing up for a minimum of two years;
- Statewide listing of participating plan providers that accept the program as payment-in-full for covered plan services;
- Orthodontics are not included.

Please remember that enrollment is not automatic and certain requirements must be met to be eligible. Members must have been covered by either the EBF State Dental Program, one of the four local government dental plans (Sunrise, Horizon, Equinox, Dutchess), or covered by any other dental plan such as GHI within 90 days prior to enrolling in the EBF Retiree Dental Plan. For local government retirees, (counties, towns, cities, school districts, etc.) there is an EBF/Employer M.O.A. (memorandum of agreement) that must be signed in order for these retirees to be eligible. If your employer has not signed the MOA, that municipality cannot participate in the Retiree Dental Plan.

If a retiree elects to purchase the dental coverage and then drops the plan at a later date, they will be ineligible to re-enroll. Please remember that to enroll you must contact the Employee Benefit Fund directly. For further information on this program, interested retirees may contact EBF at 1(800)323-2732 extension #803.

Important note to CSEA members regarding address changes

Did you know that when you have a change of address, you must contact the Employee Benefit Fund (EBF) and the Membership Records Department at CSEA Headquarters? Some employers contact EBF with address changes. However, it’s not the employer’s responsibility to do so.

If a member has not notified Headquarters Membership Records Department of their change of address, the “old” address of the member from headquarters appears in our records. The Fund will only find out about the problem when the member calls looking for information such as an indemnity check for dental or vision benefits.

We appreciate everyone taking the time necessary to notify both departments so that accurate information is available and all mailings are sent to the correct address. Telephone numbers for both departments are listed below:
- CSEA Employee Benefit Fund: 1-800-323-2732, press 3
- CSEA Membership Records Department: 1-800-342-4146

Thanks for your assistance!

Protecting Your Benefits

Health Benefits Department
New York State Health Insurance Program (NYSHP) Domestic Partner Coverage

CSEA represented state employees covered under NYSHP continue to have the ability to add a domestic partner to their health insurance program. Effective Jan. 1, 2005, the waiting period required prior to enrolling a domestic partner will be reduced and the definition of domestic partnership will be as follows:
- A relationship in which the parties are both 18 years of age or older, unmarried, and not related in a way that would bar marriage, living together and financially interdependent for at least six months (was 12 months).

All enrollees interested in covering a domestic partner are required to submit proof: one of residency and two of financial interdependence, all of which have to show that the partnership has been in existence for at least six (6) months (was 12 months). In addition, enrollees who terminate a domestic partnership have to satisfy a 12-month waiting period (was 24 months) before again covering a new (or previously deleted) domestic partner.

Important financial information regarding domestic partners coverage:

Internal Revenue Service rules govern the way premiums are collected for domestic partners.

There are different tax implications depending on whether or not the domestic partner qualifies under Section 152 of the IRS code (federally qualified or non-federally qualified).
- Most domestic partners are considered non-federally qualified and cannot be listed as a dependent on your taxes.
- Premium for non-federally qualified domestic partners must be deducted after taxes.

Imputed income is applied to non-federally qualified partners.
- Imputed income is an amount the federal government considers to be taxable to the employee, even though it is not delivered in the form of cash compensation.
- Imputed income is the dollar value of the health insurance coverage provided for the domestic partner (determined based on the full-share cost of premium, minus applicable employee contribution toward coverage).
- Employees with family coverage will not have an increased health insurance deduction when adding a domestic partner; however, the dependent portion will be considered imputed income, even if there are other current dependents (no prorating done).
- At the end of the year, the imputed income for the domestic partner benefits will be reported on the enrollee’s W-2, “Wage and Tax Statement.” Enrollment should use this information when preparing their taxes.

The above is a brief summary of the financial impact of adding a non-federally qualified domestic partner to your health insurance. For more detailed information regarding domestic partner coverage and the requirements of the same, please contact your agency health benefits administrator (usually within your agency’s personnel/payroll office).

An Ever Better Future

Page 16 THE WORK FORCE    July 2004

Promoting Good Health
CSEA announces scholarship winners

The children of CSEA members from across the state will benefit this fall from scholarship awards presented by CSEA. CSEA wishes all the students good luck in their academic endeavors this fall.

\textbf{JLT Award:} Jeffrey L. Rook, II whose mother, Pamela Washington, is an employee of the Finger Lakes DBSO.

\textbf{MetLife Insurance Company Award:} Sarah Burke, whose mother, Ann Burke, is an employee of the West Seneca Developmental Center.

\textbf{Irvill Flaumenbaum Scholarship Awards (by region):}
- **Long Island:** Brian Edward Hack, whose mother, Donna Hack, is an employee of the Nassau County Police Department.
- **Metropolitan:** Nicole Remenyi, whose mother, Rachael Remenyi, is an employee at SUNY Maritime College.
- **Poughkeepsie:** Ulric Edwards, whose father, Ulric Edwards, is an employee of the NYS Insurance Fund.
- **Southern:** Michele Clare Jackson, whose mother, Denise Jackson, is an employee at the Shawangunk Correctional Facility.
- **Capital:** Amber Buol, whose mother, Lela Buol, is an employee at the Greene County Highway Department.
- **Central:** Jason G. Merten, whose mother, Marylu Merten, is an employee at Broome County Social Services.
- **Western:** Alicia Brekey, whose father, James Brekey, is an employee at Sherman Central School.
- **Northern:** Nicole Rushford, whose mother, Lesleigh Rushford, is an employee of the Cohoes City School District.

\textbf{Local Awards:}
- **Bishop Bradshaw:**npm
- **Ruthe:** Kevin, whom whose mother, Lynn Wedges, is an employee at the Bedford Central School District.
- **Cayuga County Local Awards:** Nathan Benson, whose mother Linda Benson, is an employee with the City of Auburn.

\textbf{CSEA now offers an Elder Law Plan to provide you and your family access to attorneys at low, affordable rates.}

**Available services include:**
- Low cost wills,
- Non-crisis related powers of attorney, consultations and planning,
- Reduced fee trust agreements, deeds, medicare eligibility services,
- Ongoing annual trust services,
- Information and publications and
c- Educational seminars.

**How Do I Find An Attorney?**
Call the CSEA toll-free number: 1-800-542-4146 and follow the prompts for the Legal Services Program.
"If I make up my mind to do something, I will do it," said Maryann Phelps. Whether it’s surviving boot camp or organizing a child car seat safety check at the CSEA Women’s Health Fair, Phelps knows how to get things done.

Phelps, a former guardswoman for the Army National Guard and current secretary at SUNY Stony Brook, is a busy wife, mom, grandmother, student and union activist who manages to balance it all.

WF: What was your involvement in the military? MP: I served for 13 years in the New York Army National Guard, from 1976 until 1989. It was a great experience for me.

WF: What made you join? MP: I worked hard to complete my high school requirements early. As a young, single parent at 17 and a half, I had a good job in a factory but it just wasn’t enough to support my daughter. My dad suggested talking to a recruiter and I did. I’ve always been adventurous and very independent. I thought I could serve my country and make some extra money too.

WF: What training was required? MP: I had to attend boot camp and then a MOS (Military Occupational School) in Fort Jackson, South Carolina for three months. I trained as a 75 Echo Personnel Action Specialist.

WF: What was boot camp like? MP: It was my first time away from home, my first flight ever. I didn’t know what to expect. I was told to pack everything in a foot locker. I was about 100 pounds back then, kagging around a 50 pound foot locker. We were bussed to the base and ten large male drill sergeants entered our bus, yelling and barking orders. I made the mistake of getting off the bus and lighting a cigarette. That’s when I was introduced to push-ups! I then had to run with my foot locker to my barracks. Mine was up three flights of stairs. When I made it, I was shaking and out of breath. It was scary but I said to myself ‘I’m gonna do this’ and I did.

WF: Was it more challenging being a woman? MP: I saw a lot of women sent home. You have to be a strong person physically and mentally. They test to see if they can break you. I made a vow that I would not break. I was so proud of myself at the end of training after making it through such a tough time.

WF: Where did you report for your weekend service? MP: My parent unit was in Patchogue, New York, the First Battalion, 242 Infantry Division. During my time in the Guard, I was promoted to staff Sergeant, E6, Personnel Management Specialist.

WF: Has any of the training been applicable to your current position? MP: All of the skills I was taught have helped me through today. I have a sense for organization, a need to complete tasks, and I definitely gained confidence.

WF: What’s your position like now at SUNY Stony Brook? MP: I am a secretary for 12 faculty members and the Assistant Dean. I supervise two keyboard specialists. It is always busy and never dull. In my last position that was not unionized, I worked loyally for seven years. Without notice, they halved my hours. When I asked for more hours, they sent me to a tech park that I had to travel on my lunch to get to. I figured I would take a Civil Service test and see if I could get something else. I scored well on the test, had several interviews and finally took this position. I have worked both and there is a big difference between union and non-union. Having a union behind me, helps protect my rights every day. I love being a CSEA member.

WF: Are you active in the union? MP: I am on the Veterans, Women’s, Human Rights Committees and am a Political Action Liaison. I’m also a delegate to the Long Island Federation of Labor committee. I really am committed to getting into the workings of the union and help make it stronger. My committee work really lets me help people.

WF: Sounds like you don’t have much free time — but what do you do with your time off? MP: I am going to school one night a week at the Dowling Labor Management School. Last semester I got an A in a mediation course. This semester I am taking a course in mental health in the workplace. Education is a sure bet. I love to learn. However, I do reserve weekends for my family. I spend quite a bit of time on the soccer field cheering on my grandchildren.

― Amy Scharf

Maryanne Phelps proudly wears her CSEA Long Island Region Veteran’s Committee hat and other CSEA items.

Page 18 THE WORK FORCE July 2004
PEOPLE PERSON — The PEOPLE Recruiter of the Month for May is Marie Prince of the Western Region. She recruited 16 new members to the PEOPLE program. PEOPLE is CSEA and AFSCME’s political action program. It is responsible for raising money and collecting volunteer contributions from the membership so that CSEA can effectively promote our interests at the state and federal level, HUNTINGTON IMPLEMENTS PEOPLE DEDUCTION — Huntington recently negotiated a PEOPLE payroll deduction, making it the first town in Suffolk County to do so. Now, the 250 members of the unit will be able to conveniently join PEOPLE through payroll deduction. DOT HONORS CSEA MEMBERS — Congratulations to Department of Transportation (DOT) workers and CSEA members who were recently honored with the Commissioner’s Award of Excellence. At a ceremony held at the Governor’s Mansion, DOT Commissioner Joseph Boardman presented more than 50 DOT workers with awards for Acts of Valor, Career Excellence, Program or Process Advancement and Project or Individual Accomplishment. CSEA members from the Capital Region, Claudia Coffey and Peter Landry, along with Central Region members Gerald Freeman and Timothy Talbot were presented the Act of Valor awards for their life-saving efforts that were previously reported in The Work Force. Also winning an award from the Central Region was CSEA member Lynne Schilling, who works in the Hornell area. Schilling won as part of a team that helped develop the Winter Traveler Advisory System.

STILLWATER HIGHWAY UNIT JOINS CSEA — The Stillwater Highway Unit are the newest members of CSEA. Newly elected president of the 15 member unit, John Curtis, said the main reasons for joining CSEA were to solidify the work force and to protect pay and benefits. “Without the backing of CSEA we felt there was no guarantee we’d be treated fairly,” said Curtis. “We have 100 percent participation and everyone certainly feels a sense of security,” he added...

MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN WORKSHOPS — Several workers from Quality Services for the Autism Community (QSAC) took part in an organizing workshop at the CSEA State Workshop in Albany. Danny Donohue welcomed them and encouraged future participation in CSEA conferences...

SCHENECTADY COUNTY LEGISLATORS APPROVE CONTRACT — In a 14-0 vote, Schenectady County legislators approved a contract between the county and CSEA. The contract is the first in the state to include a Canadian drug benefit that will cover nearly 900 members and more than 100 retirees.

Break in membership affects eligibility for union office, voting privileges

A break in union membership status can have long-term futures implications. Your membership status affects your eligibility with respect to:
- seeking or holding union offices;
- 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 deduction. 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. If you are called up for active military duty you may also apply for dues-free status.

Note: however, you must continue to pay dues to run for office. Dues-free or gratuitions membership allows members to continue their insurance coverage while out of work. It does not protect your right to run for an office. This does not apply to members who are on leave due to being called up for military duty. Members on active military duty, upon return, are considered to have had continuous membership status for all CSEA election purposes.

Please notify the CSEA Membership Records Department at 1-800-342-4146 and follow Prompts for CSEA Legal Services.
When workers try to organize unions for better pay, benefits, working conditions and a voice on the job, employers routinely harass, intimidate — even fire them.

Our freedom to bargain is also under attack by employers who seek to erode basic needs such as health insurance and pensions.

Freedom is worth fighting for. Join the fight to restore workers’ freedom to form unions and bargain collectively.