Seeking ideas at every level – Page 3
Erie OKs sales tax hike

BUFFALO — Erie County lawmakers approved raising the county’s sales tax by 1/4 cent to help close a $118 million deficit in this year’s budget, bringing an infusion of badly needed money to help maintain county jobs and services.

Already ravaged by layoffs and service cuts, the county faced dire financial straits without raising the sales tax — an amount that totals one penny on every $4.

“The county legislature came to its senses. There was nothing left to cut without essentially shutting down the government. Let’s hope this move will fix Erie County back on the road to recovery,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said.

CSEA continues to fight to keep the Erie County Home and Infirmary a public facility after the county threatened to sell the home (see story, Page 5).

The county has already laid off 1,500 workers, 800 of whom are CSEA members, to close an unprecedented budget gap.

Along with the sales tax hike, legislators also voted to borrow $310 million to get through the year. The measures come a week after state Comptroller Alan Hevesi recommended the state install a control board in upstate’s most populated county to solve a financial crisis he blamed on “colossal mismanagement.”

A budget review by Hevesi’s office projected a $118.4 million deficit for the current fiscal year, despite the massive layoffs and job cuts.

Westchester Medical Center workers mobilize for jobs

VALHALLA — Union activists at Westchester Medical Center recently mobilized again as they distributed and returned thousands of postcards telling Gov. George Pataki time is running out in the fight to save the hospital.

CSEA members reached out to friends, family and even strangers to return as many signed postcards as possible. Some members hit several local parades to ask the public to sign postcards.

The union is mobilizing to convince Pataki to cooperate with state Senate and Assembly efforts to find continuous funding for the hospital before the legislative session ends June 23. While a $20 million cash infusion from Westchester County has temporarily tided over the hospital’s shaky finances, a steady stream of cash is the only answer to permanently saving the debt-ridden hospital.

“Governor Pataki has been the missing link throughout our fight to save Westchester Medical Center,” President Danny Donohue said. “With the majority of Senate and Assembly members on board, it is critical we remind the governor of his responsibility to the residents of the Hudson Valley.”

— Jessica Stone

Thruway talks reach impasse

ALBANY — CSEA declared impasse in contract negotiations with the New York Thruway Authority on behalf of 620 technical, professional and supervisory employees in Unit II.

The main sticking point in the negotiations is an arbitrary management demand that would force about 110 bridge and highway maintenance supervisors to switch to night shifts and possibly different work locations on short notice during the summer months.

The parties have been meeting since March 2003. The CSEA contract expired on June 30, 2003.

Syracuse football discounts

Discount tickets again will be available for CSEA members to all Syracuse University football games this season including CSEA Day for the SU-West Virginia football game Labor Day weekend. Look for more details next edition.
AFSCME initiative targets future strategy
Union moving forward

The world is not standing still and neither is CSEA or its international union, AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees). With strong ideas from CSEA, AFSCME is proceeding with an intensive self-examination to help strengthen the union for the future.

The “AFSCME in the 21st Century” initiative was established at last year’s AFSCME Convention. The project has a mandate to examine every aspect of AFSCME’s constitution, as well as review all committees called for under the constitution to best focus their purpose and activities; analyze the dues structure; evaluate programs, priorities, representational structure, and methods of operation. The purpose is to recommend changes to make the union more effective, stronger, and ensure that AFSCME is on the offensive and serves as the leader of the labor movement.

Comment from the union

The 21st Century Committee is conducting hearings, surveys and other research to challenge the whole union to engage in this vital exploration and will report to the 37th International Convention in 2006 on its findings and recommendations.

CSEA President Danny Donohue, along with CSEAs other AFSCME vice presidents, Mary Sullivan and George Boncoraglio, all have a role with the initiative. Just as important to the project is the interest and involvement of CSEA members.

AFSCME recently devoted a significant portion of its legislative conference to hands-on workshops seeking ideas and discussion among leaders, staff and activists. The program also included a town hall style meeting providing a forum for questions, comments and observations.

“This is an exciting opportunity to take a thorough review of what we do, and why and how we do it,” Donohue said. “We can make our union even better and more able to prepare for what’s ahead. But it will only work if you offer up ideas about what needs to be done.”

Workshop ideas

CSEA brought the project to the next level during the union’s recent spring workshop, with two “roll up your sleeves” working sessions to focus on the challenges CSEA and AFSCME confront daily. An overview of the discussions was presented to nearly 900 CSEA activists at the event. The results will also be shared with the 21st Century Committee.

“There were some excellent discussions and some difficult issues to debate during our workshop sessions,” Sullivan said. “We need to hear lots of different points of view to make the right decisions.”

Left, CSEA Westchester County activist Karen Percora reports on group discussions from the AFSCME in the 21st Century workshop during the recent CSEA combined Workshop in Lake Placid. At right, Broome County Educational Employees Local activist Deb Denney reports on her group discussions.

CSEA Executive Vice President and AFSCME International Vice President Mary Sullivan listens during a town hall meeting in Washington, D.C., during a recent AFSCME conference. Sullivan chairs the 21st Century Committee’s politics subcommittee.

“CSEA has always helped lead the way in AFSCME and that means we need to tap into the full knowledge, talent and energy of our members to come up with new approaches,” Boncoraglio said.

For more information about the AFSCME in the 21st Century Committee and its outreach visit www.afscme.org.

Yvette De La Cruz, assistant director of AFSCME’s Women’s Rights Department, presents an overview on the AFSCME in the 21st Century initiative during CSEA’s recent spring workshop.
Court ruling OKs use of your tax dollars to undermine you

CSEA's efforts to strengthen our own bargaining position while helping other working families gain fairness and respect recently took a blow. A U.S. District Court judge has overturned a law that CSEA worked long and hard to put into effect, which was intended to prohibit not-for-profit employers from using public funds to stop union organizing efforts.

This event set me thinking about the misguided business interests that continue their relentless drive to undermine your rights. As you should be aware, big business in New York, perhaps emboldened by the obvious anti-worker animus of the Bush administration, has been waging a campaign to roll back your wages, pension benefits and other rights because they're "too generous" compared to non-union, private sector workers.

The union neutrality law was an attempt to stop a misuse of the public’s money — your tax dollars — while setting some limit on employers’ ability to intimidate and coerce during organizing campaigns. The law was necessary because in reality, many not-for-profit operations do indeed use public funding to hire law firms whose sole purpose is to prevent union organizing. They do it by training managers how to identify and crush activism at the first sign of a union. Tactics include misrepresenting the truth about what a union is all about, captive audience meetings with personnel to control and indoctrinate, intimidating one-on-one counseling and outright firings intended to send a chilling message to other workers.

These were the abuses CSEA was attempting to end through the law. And to be sure, they continued in spite of the law being on the books. Several recent CSEA organizing drives have seen heartbreaking split votes where employer threats apparently poisoned enough minds against the union to tip the balance against us. It is very clear that the results would have been different if workers had been able to exercise their right to choose in a more neutral environment.

CSEA does not agree with the court’s decision and we will fight back. In the meantime, it’s just more evidence of the attempt to further erode the power that working people have left.
BUFFALO — Western Region activists are mobilizing to fight the sale or closure of nursing homes throughout the 14-county area.

Area lawmakers are putting fiscal exigencies against public homes at risk for sale or closure by seeking a quick, one-time infusion of cash.

Western Region members aren’t alone in facing public health care woes. CSEA members across the state are fighting for the future of public health care.

“Selling or closing county nursing homes is not the right move,” Western Region President Flo Tripi said. “It has a long-term negative impact on the frail elderly. Those most in need are left with nowhere to turn for care. CSEA will do everything possible to make sure that does not happen.”

Erie County Home and Infirmary

The Erie County Home and Infirmary, home to about 600 residents and 650 workers, may become a victim of the ongoing Erie County budget crisis.

Administrators at Erie County Medical Center, which operates the facility, threatened to close the home if the county legislature chopped any more funding from the hospital’s subsidy. Following a successful CSEA rally, lawmakers agreed the home is vital and withdrew a proposal to slash more from the budget.

Medical center leaders are now considering selling. The county legislature is also faced with closing a projected $118.4 million deficit for 2005.

“The Erie County Home faces all of the same challenges as other homes across the state,” said CSEA Erie Unit President Joan Bender. “But Erie County is in dire financial straits. The Erie County home has the added obstacle of a county with no money that’s on the verge of a control board. The likelihood of an effort to sell is probable. CSEA will be there ready to fight.”

Mount View Health Care Facility

CSEA activists continue an 18-month fight to stop the Mount View facility in Niagara County from being closed or sold.

Activists packed a recent public hearing held by a community taxpayer association, which hosted the forum after the county’s legislative majority refused.

“Mount View is home to frail elderly of Niagara County who have paid their taxes all their lives,” said Melanie Carr, a CSEA activist. “Aren’t they entitled to a nice place to stay in their final days? Niagara County took their money, now it is the county’s turn to take care of them.”

The county received only one private bid, a total well below the estimated value of the property. Lawmakers continue to consider the sale.

Wayne County Nursing Home

About 60 CSEA activists mobilized last month following a newspaper report of an unsolicited bid by a private company to buy the brand new Wayne County Nursing Home.

“Wayne County is a major battle,” said CSEA Western Region Director Roger Sherrie. “We would expect more unsolicited bids to come in.”

CSEA has formed committees and issued news releases. The CSEA Wayne County Unit has also begun a newspaper and radio advertising campaign to block the sale.

“County nursing homes are a safety net for people who cannot afford or who would not be accepted into private care,” said Mark Braccio, president of the Wayne County Unit.

“Our members provide skilled, loving care to these residents. It is important that we continue to have this resource in the community.”

The fight in Wayne County is especially critical, Sherrie said. CSEA activists across the state will need to closely monitor this situation.

“If the Wayne County Nursing Home is sold, it will give other counties the green light to dump their new facilities,” he said.

Steuben County Health Care Facility

CSEA played an instrumental role last fall in stopping the sale of the Steuben County Health Care Facility.

In response to CSEAs efforts, county legislators voted unanimously to reject the sale of the county-run facility. Legislators are now faced with the next logical step, Sherrie said, the construction of a brand-new state-of-the-art facility. Legislators received a proposal in late May for the construction of a facility with a local share of $3.7 million and $13.7 million in state aid. The existing facility is in need of repairs estimated at $16 million.

Localities building new facilities or undertaking significant reconstruction can qualify for higher funding reimbursement rates.

“To let the public know the new facility is the right choice, CSEA activists launched an educational campaign including a fact sheet for members, brochures for the community, a postcard mailing, window posters and newspaper and radio ads.

A vote on the new facility was expected in late June.

Other counties

CSEA is also monitoring the nursing home situation in other Western Region counties as well as statewide.

Sherrie said a request for proposals for the sale of at least one other Western Region facility is possible by the end of the summer.

“To be ready, activists are mobilizing and Sherrie recently held a special training session for staff.”

“We have experience in preventing sales and closures,” Sherrie said. “We commit all of the union’s resources to campaigns such as this.”

— Lynn Miller

CSEA activist Jill Kwoka speaks at a public hearing on the sale of Mount View Health Facility. The forum was held by the Concerned Niagara County Taxpayers Association after county legislators refused to call a public hearing of their own.

“Dpen's 60,000 Workers In
HEALTH CARE SERVICE

Our members provide skilled, loving care to these residents. It is important that we continue to have this resource in the community.”

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Court training center
a gateway to careers

TROY — A new court officer training academy in Cohoes has opened the doors to a new career for many upstate residents.

In late February, the state Unified Court System opened its first officer training academy outside Manhattan. Court officers maintain order and help with security in court facilities throughout the state.

For 30 years, officer recruits traveled to Manhattan for the intensive 10-week training. The distance and time away from family once deterred many qualified applicants, but not anymore.

The first round of graduates, dubbed the “Upstate Eight,” completed their training in April and now work in courts around the Capital Region.

For Jennifer De Seve, one of the “Upstate Eight,” the ability to train locally was key to her starting her new career.

The former stay-at-home mom with twin daughters had long been interested in a law enforcement career, but De Seve was unwilling to spend 10 weeks in Manhattan for the training. She took the exam two years ago after hearing the state was considering opening an upstate academy.

“I wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for the academy in Cohoes,” De Seve said. “I would have been disappointed (if the upstate academy had not opened), but I would not have been able to leave my family.”

Citing an increased demand for court officers statewide, the Unified Court System created the upstate academy to attract more upstate recruits. The court system previously filled upstate job openings by transferring downstate staff.

“They can take the exam, access the academy and then go right out into the field,” said upstate courts Chief Sean McCartney.

The next round of statewide court officers exams is scheduled for October and December. Applications are available at any courthouse.

Melita’s dedication earns him honors

LAKEx PLACEx — Joseph Melita is not known for compromising, especially when it comes to fighting for his members.

A straightforward, genuine style matched by an unwavering commitment to the employees of the state Office of Children and Family Services’ Tryon School has earned Melita, president of the CSEA local at the facility, this year’s State Mission Achievement Award.

President Danny Donohue presented the award, CSEA’s highest honor for activists, to Melita in front of nearly 900 CSEA leaders and activists at the union’s State, Local Government and Private Sector Workshop in Lake Placid.

A Johnstown resident, Melita is a longtime activist who has worked at Tryon since 1977. In addition to serving as local president, he chairs the Office of Children and Family Services’ Labor-Management Committee. Melita also serves on the Human Services Committee and the CSEA board of directors as the Department of Family Assistance representative.

“I’m deeply touched by this honor,” Melita said. “It means so much to me and I’m proud to be a member of this great organization.”

— Therese Asalian

“T”

The workshop is a great way to be able to compare and contrast what’s going on between facilities. It’s helpful to find out that other people are going through similar situations and we talk about ways to handle them.

— Mike Raponi, Otisville Correctional Facility Local, interviewed at the recent CSEA workshop in Lake Placid.

“I wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for the academy in Cohoes.”

Jennifer De Seve, one of the “Upstate Eight,” had the ability to train closer to home at the Unified Court System’s new training center.

De Seve said she and other upstate graduates are pleased with their placements at courts close to home.

“It’s the perfect job,” said De Seve, who now works during daytime weekday hours, with weekends and holidays off, a rarity in law enforcement. “I am moving from being a stay-at-home mom to now having independence and a career I’ve always wanted.”

— Therese Asalian

Joseph Melita accepts the state mission Achievement Award at the recent State Local Government and Private Sector workshop in Lake Placid.
United front fights for safe workplace

MANHATTAN — After working tirelessly to force the state to make numerous health and safety improvements at the lower Manhattan building they were forced to move into, CSEA members are now working with other unions to demand the same improvements.

"In the labor movement, we often say an injury to one is an injury to all," Metropolitan Region President George Boncore said. "We will always fight to protect the safety and well being of all workers. It's something we're entitled to and we will not rest until these improvements are made."

CSEA members recently demonstrated to support members employed at 90 Church St., adjacent to the World Trade Center site. The building was heavily contaminated with lead, asbestos, mercury, dioxin, mold and other dangerous poisons during the Sept. 11, 2001 attack on the towers. It took nearly three years for 90 Church St. to be decontaminated and opened.

Building tenants include the New York City Housing Authority, the U.S. Postal Service, the New York State Department of Health and the New York State Public Service Commission. They fear dangers posed by the numerous environmental hazards they face over the next decade or more by working next to the nation's largest construction site and the demolition of several extremely contaminated buildings.

Some of the most heavily contaminated buildings in the city lie within a few blocks from 90 Church St., including the Deutsche Bank Building at 130 Liberty St. and Fiterman Hall at West Broadway and Barclay Street.

Workers will be exposed to toxic diesel fumes from trucks and construction equipment, harmful particulates from the demolition of contaminated buildings and extremely high noise levels due to the building's old, leaky windows. Only four of 90 Church St.'s 15 floors have double windows to shield workers.

Workers are currently circulating a petition demanding double windows. "It's great that we all came together from different unions to form this coalition," said Marie Rogers Granger, a CSEA grievance representative at the state Department of Health and a leader in demanding a safer work environment for CSEA workers. "We can get so much accomplished by working together."

— David Galarza

Faery’s leadership ‘the right thing’

LAKE, PLACID — Fran Faery, president of CSEA’s Niagara County Unit, describes her work every day on behalf of unit members as the ‘right thing to do.’

Faery works tirelessly to ensure the best for her members and every day. Faery leads her unit through challenges they overcome together.

Although Faery considers her activism simply the right thing to do, her efforts have not gone unnoticed. CSEA awarded Faery with this year’s Local Government Mission Achievement Award.

"I was in shock when I found out I had been selected," Faery said. "I never did any of this for an award. I am just a CSEA member, no different than anyone else."

Faery has been instrumental in the ongoing fight for a fair contract for her members. She also has

30 years. "Fran Faery is such a fierce union advocate that management actually laid her off a while back because of her union activity," President Danny Donohue said. "CSEA had to fight hard to get her back to work and thank goodness we were successful."

At the time of the layoff, Faery was a Niagara County Sheriff’s Department employee. She currently works in the county’s Department of Social Services. "Despite her ordeal, or maybe because of it, Fran went straight back to work helping others and she hasn’t stopped since," Donohue said.

Faery credits her parents for her drive and determination. Her mother taught her the importance of having a calm demeanor and her father taught her to remain non-judgmental in every situation.

"I am just a regular person," she said.

— Lynn Miller

Metropolitan Region Occupational Safety and Health Committee Chair Frank Cosentino leads CSEA members during a demonstration outside 90 Church St., whose tenants fear health risks from Sept. 11 related contamination. CSEA got the state to address concerns for its members, and joined the solidarity march in support of other unions seeking similar remedies.

“We will always fight to protect the safety and well being of all workers. It’s something we’re entitled to and we will not rest until these improvements are made.”

“...I learned that we have to get copies of statements or any evidence that management could be bringing up in a disciplinary procedure. We are entitled to that information under our rights from the Taylor Law. I think that everything I learned at the workshop will help me be an even better representative for my members.”

— Meg Shutka, Brookhaven White Collar Unit President, interviewed at the recent CSEA workshop in Lake Placid.

Niagara County Unit President Fran Faery addresses the CSEA combined Workshop after receiving the Local Government Mission Achievement Award.
DOT workers’ clever ideas earn merit

CORTLAND—Necessity being the mother of invention, state Department of Transportation workers at the Polkville residency have spawned numerous innovations using spare parts, elbow grease and know-how, making their workplaces more efficient and safer.

State officials recognized several of the workers’ clever ideas with merit certificates and small cash awards.

Local President Kathy Lewis praised the workers’ creativity.

“Those guys are true,” she said. “It’s nice to know that they take the initiative and are encouraged enough to come up with innovative ideas and solutions to assist them and their co-workers in getting their jobs done.”

Working safer

Bridge Repair Mechanic Jim Barrows’ safety prompted him to invent a new type of ladder for flathed “stake rack” trucks. His truck’s four-foot high bed can be tricky to scale.

“The ladders that were built in were either flimsy or hard to see under the bumper,” he said. “People have fallen and I wanted something stable and safe to get on and off with, especially when carrying equipment. I had a picture in my mind of what might work.”

His invention is an angled ladder hinged to the truck’s rear that workers can fold for storage. Barrows built the ladder out of angle iron and steel rods. He has since added the device to two other trucks.

“I think all the trucks should have them,” he said. “It’s just easier and safer to get on and off the trucks.”

Cleaner trucks, time & money saved

Highway Maintenance Supervisor Ray Delaney invented a cleaning device that makes workers’ jobs easier and saves time and money.

His underbody pressure washer quickly cleans a large truck’s undercarriage, using a steel frame with about 20 nozzles aimed at different angles. The washer rides on wheels and can slide under trucks. Bridge Repair Supervisor Gregory Lee built Delaney’s design.

“The mechanics would complain that there was a lot of dirt under the trucks and we wanted to find a better way to get it out of there. Lee said. “The workers like the new washer a lot because it’s quick and easy.”

Before Delaney’s invention, workers washed the trucks by hand. The task took about 20 minutes and workers often failed to reach many undercarriage parts. The new device allows workers to cut the task down to five minutes or less, with cleaner results. Clean trucks also mean less corrosion.

Another invention, designed and built by Bridge Repair Assistants

Bridge Repair Assistants James Marshall, left, and Richard Reddick, right, stand next to the storage bracket they invented which sits inside a portable compressor, allowing several pneumatic tools to stand upright inside.

Richard Reddick and James Marshall, prolong the life of pneumatic tools used with a portable air compressor. The storage bracket they built has three large rods to hold jackhammers and three small rods to hold chippers, storing them upright.

“It’s better for the equipment and should prolong its life,” Marshall said, noting that the equipment no longer rattles together in transit.

“The tools are easier to get to, more organized, and there’s less strain on your back trying to get to equipment,” Reddick said.

Mark M. Kotzin

Freckleton a private sector achiever

LAKE PLACID — Tireless efforts to organize Sodexo food service workers at Westchester Medical Center earned Robert Freckleton this year’s Private Sector Mission Achievement Award.

President Danny Donohue gave Freckleton the award at the recent State, Local Government and Private Sector Workshop in Lake Placid.

Freckleton, president of the private sector laundry and housekeeping worker local at the Valhalla hospital, was the driving force behind the organizing drive for 125 food service workers.

Freckleton, a longtime Yonkers resident who hails from Jamaica, has long been active in CSEA. He served as a shop steward before being elected to union office. He has served as president of the Housekeeping and Laundry Employees Local for seven years. Freckleton is also active in AFL-CIO events in the Hudson Valley.

After learning of the workers’ difficult working conditions and low wages, Freckleton launched a campaign to help them organize a union with CSEA.

The resulting organizing drive was a quick success, with the Sodexo workers winning in December recognition from management through card-calculation neutrality.

“I decided to organize these workers so they could have a voice and be heard,” Freckleton said. “I wanted them to be in the union so they would have some job security.”

— Jessica Stone

Robert Freckleton accepts the Private Sector Mission Achievement Award at the State, Local Government and Private Sector Workshop.

Things have improved for them since they were first recognized in December.”

— Jessica Stone
Bayport school workers fight for respect

BAYPORT — Teacher’s assistants and teacher’a aides in the Bayport-Blue Point School District took to the streets recently to demand a fair contract. Bayport-Blue Point School District officials have refused to negotiate on any other contractual issues until the unit, which consists exclusively of women, takes the issue of health care off the table completely.

Carrying signs that read ‘Be fair. We need health care,” CSEA members sent a clear message to the Board of Education that its stance was unacceptable. “It is unconscionable that in this day and age, working women who are often the sole support of their families, cannot get health insurance through their full-time jobs,” Bayport-Blue Point School District Unit President Karen Gugliotta said.

Teaching Assistant unit president Karen Gugliotta at the recent protest at a school board meeting, demanding a fair contract for teacher’s assistants and teacher’s aides.

Nine unit members who work full time are uninsured, largely because of single parenthood, divorce or an uninsured spouse.

“The district seems to think this is 1950 and we are just working to get out of the house,” Gugliotta said. “On the contrary, teacher assistants and aides are educated, and have higher academic standards to meet today than ever before. If our job of working directly with the district’s children does not merit respect from our employer, what does that say about the district’s priorities?”

The unit is waging a spirited fight in the local press as well. They took out a hard-hitting informational ad, filled board meetings with supporters and delivered thousands of area residents’ signatures on petitions.

The board, however, is refusing to budge.

“These women do a fine job and an important job every day. They deserve the same respect for a job well done that any man gets. The district claims the assistants and aides knew when they took the jobs that they didn’t have health insurance.”

LaMorte said that people’s lives change and often need coverage.

“They need change,” he said. “This district is not being reasonable.”

Gugliotta also blasted the school board for laying off 10 greeters in the school district. She said in this post Sept. 11 climate, the greeters help maintain order and security in the schools and the cuts are extremely short-sighted.

— Rachel Langert

Fund-raises honors memory of late custodian

LARCHMONT — Bill Dorsey may be gone, but in the hearts and memories of the students, faculty and staff in the Mamaroneck School District, the CSEA member is definitely not forgotten.

Dorsey worked several years as a custodian at Central School, an elementary school in the Westchester County district. His death last December, in a fire at his home in nearby Harrison, shocked and saddened the school community.

The death also spurred concern for Dorsey’s daughter Rachel, 13.

A desire to raise funds for Rachel’s education and to remember Dorsey led members of the CSEA Mamaroneck School District Unit and faculty to organize a fund-raising kickball game June 8 to benefit the Rachel Dorsey Fund.

“The fifth graders loved him so much, they wanted to do something to remember him before the end of the school year,” said George Reed, unit president. “The younger kids didn’t know him as long as the fifth graders did, so the older kids were especially hit hard by his death.”

For a donation, students and their parents watched as faculty and staff played, the 90-degree heat not deterring the students from loud cheering.

Attendees entered for a donation, and organizers raised additional money selling lemonade and snacks.

Central School staff and faculty presented Rachel Dorsey with a plaque honoring her father that will be hung in the school.

“Billy was just a wonderful person in our Central School community,” said Jean James, the fifth grade teacher who organized the kickball game. “We had already wanted to do something involving faculty and students toward the end of the school year, so we thought we could honor Billy in a way that would help his daughter.”

Reed and James said Dorsey had a special way with the students, particularly a talent for making them laugh.

Dorsey also made the students feel good about themselves, they said.

And for that, at Central School, he won’t be forgotten.

— Jessica Stone

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First combined CSEA workshop builds strength

LAKE PLACID — More than 900 CSEA members employed by the state, local government and the private sector came together for a weekend of unity and learning during the union’s first combined spring workshop.

CSEA members attended workshops on topics varying from Social Security to health care along with members employed in all divisions. The union previously held separate workshops each year, with one geared to state employees and the other aimed at local government, school district and private sector workers.

Despite the change, the goal of this year’s State, Local Government and Private Sector Workshop remained the same as it had in past years — preparing members to fight for working families’ rights, benefits and futures.

“Whether we work for the state, a local government, a school district or in the private sector, we share the same problems, experiences, goals and agenda as we face the challenges ahead,” President Danny Donohue said. “We have a tough agenda ahead of us.”

Fights ahead

Donohue urged members to continue to stand together and fight to save public hospitals and nursing homes across the state, many of which are facing contracting out or closure threats because of fiscal woes.

The union’s efforts to secure health care funding led to state lawmakers allocating in the state budget $40 million for public nursing homes.

“CSEA has led the fight to make sure our public hospitals and nursing homes got the urgent care they needed to survive,” Donohue said. “CSEA members will be able to continue delivering quality public health care at places like Nassau University Medical Center and SUNY teaching hospitals.”

The union is continuing its fight to save other public hospitals and nursing homes in peril, including Westchester Medical Center, Erie County Nursing Home and Mount View Nursing Home. (See stories on Pages 2, 5.)

Donohue also stressed that CSEA members need to fight attacks on workers by President George W. Bush’s administration and business groups (See story, Page 15). “We need to stand together and fight to survive four more years of the anti-worker Bush administration and its attack on our workplace safety protections, overtime and retirement,” he said. “Groups like the Citizens Budget Commission are using false, misleading information to call our wages and benefits too generous. Bush wants to take the security out of Social Security. We can’t sit still for this attempt by the business community to undermine what we’ve fought nearly 100 years to gain.”

Mission Achievement Award winners

CSEA also awarded the State, Local Government and Private Sector Mission Achievement Awards to Tyeon School Local President Joseph Melita, Niagara County Unit President Fran Faery and Westchester Medical Center Housekeeping and Laundry Workers Local President Robert Freckleton. (See stories, Pages 6, 7 and 8.)

Preparing for the 21st century

One of the weekend’s highlights centered on CSEA’s work with ANMC’s 21st Century Committee, of which Donohue is a member. CSEA Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan also chairs the committee’s politics subcommittee and was active in the weekend’s two workshops, when union members broke into small groups and brainstormed ideas on how to best move the union forward. (See story, Page 3.)

CSEA members also competed in “CSEA Family Feud.” The union’s political action department presented the program based on the long-running TV game show, in which union members answered questions about CSEA and other current affairs such as politics, sports and even favorite foods.

The union generated the questions in classic Family Feud style, by surveying 100 union members and asking workshop attendees to provide the most popular answers to questions.

For instance, one question posed to 100 member asked “Where do CSEA members currently get information about candidates and laws?”

Survey says: 100 CSEA Members were surveyed and asked: Where do CSEA Members currently get information about candidates and laws?


Other workshops included information on Canadian prescription plans, civil service law, retirement advice, school district career goals, mobilization during contract campaigns, organizing through card check neutrality, the Family Medical Leave Act and communicating messages to members and the public and a dose of CSEA Family Feud.

— Janice Marra

CSEA members brainstorm ideas to resolve safety and health problems at work.

CSEA Town of Oyster Bay local members John Anderson, left, and Salvador Cerece look over the workshop program.

CSEA President Danny Donohue welcomes the crowd at the State, Local Government and Private Sector Workshop.

CSEA members learn more details about the Bush administration’s proposed Social Security privatization.
CSEA, PESH build stronger bridges

EAST SYRACUSE — CSEA is hopeful a new collaboration between union leaders and activists, and the staff of the state Department of Labor’s Public Employee Safety and Health (PESH) Bureau will give each side a clearer understanding of how the other functions and lead to more productive interactions and safer workplaces across New York.

Throughout many dealings between PESH officials and the union over the years, it became clear that underlying communication problems and a better understanding of both sides’ roles and responsibilities needed to be addressed.

“We are all in it to ensure worker safety,” CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore said.

CSEA proposed a closer working relationship between the organizations to PESH. Reviewing common issues and misconceptions, a joint training program developed to benefit CSEA activists and PESH Bureau staff.

The training has moved across the state, with CSEA Region Safety and Health Committees having the opportunity to meet with PESH staff and get a first-hand account of what PESH does and how the bureau and union can better interact.

Recently, the CSEA Central Region Safety and Health Committee met with PESH Senior Safety and Health Consultant Franklin Watson, Safety and Health Inspector Donna Haley and Senior Industrial Hygienist Peter Moles. Watson presented training titled “What is PESH?” and “PESH as a Resource.” Watson said the training should prove valuable to the union activists.

“We definitely got to meet people we hadn’t known. As far as the enforcement side, they’ll probably be able to file better complaints in the future,” Watson said. Central Region Safety and Health Committee Chair Anthony DeCaro said the training was well received.

“I think that PESH really put the framework of the rules into perspective for us, to allow us to think about how our work can be conducted with safety in mind, reminding us that it’s everyone’s responsibility, especially employers, to ensure our work environments are safe,” he said. “All of us who were at the training welcomed the opportunity to hear from the PESH representatives in a format that allowed us to ask questions and begin a dialogue that can continue in the future.”

The enhanced knowledge of CSEA’s safety activists will lead to better communication to ensure safer workplaces, said CSEA Occupational Safety and Health Director Janet Foley.

“It is important for CSEA members to be familiar with the only law that protects them from occupational hazards,” she said. “It is important for PESH to know the issues of CSEA members. CSEA is a leader on occupational safety and health because of our activists. Keeping the lines of communication open between the two is key,” Foley said she hopes CSEA and PESH will collaborate more closely in the future on joint safety initiatives.

— Mark M. Kotzin

Tips for working in hot weather

Union members working in hot weather should remember their employers need to make sure safe practices are followed, and provide you the protections to prevent illness or accidents. Here are some tips workers and employers should follow:

**Heat**
- Drink plenty of water before you get thirsty.
- Wear light, loose-fitting, breathable clothing — cotton is good.
- Take frequent short breaks in cool shade.
- Eat smaller meals before work activity.
- Avoid caffeine or large amounts of sugar.
- Find out from your health - care provider if your medications and heat don’t mix.
- Know that equipment such as respirators or work suits can increase heat stress.

**Lyme Disease**
- Wear light-colored clothes to see ticks more easily.
- Wear long sleeves; tuck pant legs into socks or boots.
- Wear high boots or closed shoes that cover your feet completely.
- Wear a hat.
- Use tick repellents, but not on your face.

**West Nile Virus**
- Apply insect repellent with DEET to exposed skin.
- Spray clothing with repellents containing DEET or permethrin.
- Be extra vigilant at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.

**Sun**
- Use sunscreen. A sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 blocks 93 percent of ultraviolet rays. Be sure to follow application directions on the bottle or tube.
- Wear a hat. A wide brim hat, not a baseball cap, works best because it protects the neck, ears, eyes, forehead, nose, and scalp.
- Wear UV-absorbent shades. Sunglasses don’t have to be expensive, but they should block 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB radiation. Before you buy, read the product tag or label.
- Limit exposure, if possible. UV rays are most intense between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
Child’s death creates mission for toll collector

NEWBURGH — Violet Lyster has always considered herself an advocate for children, but it was the death of a little boy named Xavier Lunan that led her to a crusade.

Lunan, who died at the age of 3 in 1999 after weeks of beatings at the hands of his mother and her boyfriend, was buried in a grave with a plastic marker. He could easily have been another crime statistic that faded in the public’s memory, but Lyster wouldn’t allow it.

“The night after I read an article about Xavier’s grave in the paper, I couldn’t sleep,” she said. “I called the reporter who’d written about him and asked what I could do.”

Lyster, a mother and grandmother who works as a toll collector at the New York State Bridge Authority’s Newburgh-Beacon Bridge, began on a mission to ensure Xavier Lunan received something in death he got little of during his short life: respect.

She worked day and night to raise the money to buy Lunan a gravestone. Co-workers from the five bridges making up the authority were among the contributors, with one maintenance worker at the Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge even coming up with donations he’d collected from his bowling league.

“You couldn’t have asked for more,” Lyster said of her co-workers. “They knew I was under enormous stress with this. Their little acts took so much off my shoulders.”

She quickly met her fund-raising goal for the gravestone and little Xavier Lunan, and an uncle buried alongside him, now have a recognizable grave in St. Mary’s Cemetery in Kingston.

Honoring Xavier

Her initial goal accomplished, Lyster pressed on. With the cooperation of the Newburgh City Council, the street where Lunan lived and died was renamed Xavier Lunan Way.

Lyster soon worked toward a park for children in the inner-city neighborhood where Lyster had lived, which was without a safe place for children to play. Again working with city council members, Lyster organized the building of a playground next door to the Washington Heights Community Center. It, too, was named for Lunan.

Bridge Authority workers joined in the park’s dedication last year, with some of Lyster’s co-workers donating and cooking food for the occasion.

Neighborhood children enjoyed months of play before a fire in a nearby abandoned building damaged the playground equipment. Lyster is hoping city officials will come through with replacements for the damaged equipment, as it was one of Newburgh’s few outdoor play spots.

Lyster also is also hoping for another accomplishment, to commemorate Child Abuse Prevention Month.

“I would love to see the city have Xavier as their poster child for that month,” she said.

— Jessica Stone

DDSO workers hailed as heroes

ALBANY — Three CSEA members employed at the Capital District Developmental Disabilities Services Office were recently honored by the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities for helping 12 consumers escape a February fire unharmed.

Bus Driver John Parker and Developmental Aides Ricardo Brown and Noe Boillard had just left an Albany day treatment center with the consumers on board a 15-passenger van when they began to smell smoke.

Shortly after the van’s battery gauge began to discharge, all of the dashboard gauges lit up. The van soon lost power and coasted to the side of the road.

Within seconds, flames began to shoot up the doors, soon engulfing the van.

Parker, Brown and Boillard quickly moved the consumers to safety in a nearby building. A passing police officer notified the fire department and helped with traffic control.

“We did what we had to do,” Parker said. “The adrenaline definitely kicked in.”

— Therese Assalian

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61 years ago ...

It might seem quaint today, but in 1944, the Civil Service Leader, then CSEA's official publication, gave tips to the “civil service gal” on what to wear during the summer. Women working in civil service at the time had quite a dilemma when trying to decide whether to dress for comfort or for appropriateness. “It is an acknowledged fact,” claimed the Leader, “that a worker should be dressed appropriately — comfortably, to attain maximum efficiency.” The publication noted that, shockingly, some women had begun to wear halters to work instead of their white-collar blouses to alleviate the heat.

The paper’s editor promptly assured readers they were “not advocating halters — just reporting.” It should also be noted halters of that era bear little resemblance to halters of today.

Although the article gave no solid conclusions on the decision between bobby socks and liquid hose, don’t worry, they would “try to give you, in future issues, some good ideas about what the well-dressed civil service girl should wear this summer.”

We’ve come a long way ...

The women in this July 1944 photo were the finalists for the Civil Service Leader’s “Miss Civil Service” contest. Women in civil service competed in the newspaper’s beauty contest for a fur coat. Mary Nelson, center, won the title. She is described as an “attractive, brown-haired girl.” The paper unabashedly also gave her height, weight and measurements, a reminder of that era’s chauvinism.

Also in 1944 ...

• On June 6, Allied troops invade Normandy, France, in what would become known as D-Day. Later in the year, they were bogged down in the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium.

• U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt is re-elected to an unprecedented fourth term.

• Oswald Avery isolates DNA at the Rockefeller Institute.

• Disney’s “The Three Caballeros” becomes the first film to combine live action and animation.

• Anne Frank and her family are located by the Gestapo on a tip and sent to concentration camps.

• Hungarian journalist Laszlo Biro invents ballpoint pens.

• The Germans develop the V-2, the first long range ballistic missile.
ALBANY — Public employee wages and benefits are under attack by big business groups trying to cast all of New York’s workers in a race to the bottom for substandard pay and working conditions.

A recent report by the Citizens Budget Commission, a New York City think tank that’s a front for the business community, uses false and misleading information to claim public employee pay, benefits and pensions are too generous. Among other things, the commission wants to increase public employee pension contributions, raise the retirement age and convert the pension system from a defined benefit to a defined contribution plan.

“Worker pay is at its lowest level in nearly 40 years and corporate CEOs are making 450 times what their average employee makes,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue. “It’s outrageous that working people should be under assault from misnamed “citizens” associations that have the nerve to call our wages and benefits excessive.”

Respected economists and public policy experts from the CMEF and the Public Policy Institute have pointed out serious flaws with the commission’s report.

They say the report uses flawed methodology and inappropriate wage data to compare public employee wages with private sector wages. For example, the commission includes in its wage comparison low-paying private sector jobs such as waiters and waitresses that have no public sector counterparts. The report also fails to take into account factors such as qualifications and scope of responsibility in its wage comparisons.

As for retirement, the report uses increased public employer pension contributions to justify slashing public employee pensions without fully addressing the role stock market declines and corporate scandals have had in those increases. The report also ignores the fact that during the 1990s the stock market performed so well public employers contributed nothing to their employees’ pension funds.

The Citizens Budget Commission is not alone in its assault. The Business Council and the Manhattan Institute, another business-backed think tank, have also been relentlessly advocating rolling back rights, wages, and benefits. Donohue said CSEA won’t sit still for this attempt by the business community to undermine what unions have fought nearly 100 years to gain.

“Calling for lower wages and benefits in the public sector because wages and benefits in the private sector are under attack is like slashing your front tire because your back tire has a leak,” Donohue said. “We should all be working together to fix the leaking tire instead of slashing the good one.”

— Ed Molitor

How the commission’s report attacks CSEA members like you

10. Business groups like the Citizens Budget Commission are trying to cast workers in a race to the bottom for substandard wages and benefits.

9. Despite its name, the commission is a front to advance the big business agenda. It does not represent typical New York citizens.

8. The commission’s report bases its conclusions on flawed methodology and inappropriate wage data.

7. At the same time President George W. Bush wants to take the security out of Social Security, the commission wants us to pay more into retirement with no guarantee of getting more out.

6. The report ignores the fact that during much of the last decade, public employers contributed nothing to employee pensions.

5. Corporate CEOs now make 450 times what their average employee makes.

4. Worker pay is at its lowest level in 40 years while corporate profits are at the highest level ever recorded.

3. More and more employers are sending jobs overseas and workers to the unemployment line.

2. Big business outsprints labor 24:1 on lobbying.

1. Be aware — with the stroke of a pen, the governors of Kentucky, Indiana and Missouri recently wiped out public employee collective bargaining rights and are refusing to honor existing worker contracts.

Save on summer fun with CSEA

You deserve a break from work and high entertainment costs!

Through Working Advantage, union members can use Union Plus Entertainment Discounts for their summer fun, including theme park and movie ticket discounts.

You can save on tickets at theme parks across the country, including these great theme parks: Adventure Island, Busch Gardens, Medieval Times, Paramount’s Kings Dominion, SeaWorld, Six Flags and Universal Orlando Resort.

You can also save on seeing newly released summer movies through discounted movie tickets! Participating theater chains include Loews, Regal and Clearview Cinemas.

Order your tickets today by logging into the Member Benefits entertainment discounts page on CSEA’s web site at http://www.csea-local1000.org/mem_bens/entertainment_discounts. You can also visit Working Advantage’s web site at http://www.workingadvantage.com for more information about the discount. You can also order tickets by calling Union Plus Entertainment Discounts at (800) 565-3712, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

IMPORTANT: To receive the Union Plus discount, union members must reference the Union Privilege Member ID number of 74438770 when calling or ordering theme park or movie tickets.
Summary of April 2005 CSEA board of directors meeting

CSEA announced winners of statewide, local scholarships

CSEA presented college scholarship awards to children of CSEA members from across the state. CSEA wishes the students good luck in their academic endeavors.

Pearl Carroll & Associates Award: Amanda K. Stephens, whose father, Patrick Feldman is an employee at the state Department of Environmental Conversation in the Buffalo area.

MetLife Insurance Award: Sarah Birnbaum, whose mother, Nancy Birnbaum, is an employee of Westchester County.

Irving Haunenbaum Scholarship Awards (by region)

Long Island: Hayley Elizabeth Curtis, whose father, Gregg Curtis, is an employee of the Town of Southampton.

Southern: Megan Burnham, whose father, Michael Stevens, is an employee of the Washingtonville School District.

Heather Lynn Foss, whose mother, Denise Foss, is an employee of the Hudson Valley Developmental Disabilities Services Office.

Jolynne Sannicandro, whose mother, Linda Sannicandro, is an employee of the Yonkers Public Schools.

Carrie Douglas, whose mother, Caroline Douglas, is an employee of the Aculable Valley Central School.

Tara M. Nolan, whose mother, Monica J.B. Nolan, is an employee of the Cambridge School District.

Matthew Walsh II, whose mother, Dawn Walsh, is an employee of the state Taxation and Finance Department.

Central: Katie Birchenough, whose mother, Kathy Birchenough, is an employee of the Lewis County General Hospital.

Randall Ellis Church, whose father, Wayne Ellis Church, is an employee of the Town of Webb School.

Brittney Vrooman, whose mother, Christine Vrooman, is an employee of the State University of New York at Potsdam.

Western: Nathan S. Haseley, whose mother, Deborah Haseley, is an employee of the Starpoint Central School.

Hilary Osborn, whose mother, Kathleen Osborn, is an employee of Erie County.

Elizabeth Panill, whose mother, Maryanne Panill, is an employee of the Dunkirk City School District and whose father, Carl Panill, is an employee of Chautauqua County.

Albany County Local Awards

Joseph Handen, whose father, David, is an employee of the Albany County Department of Social Services.

Jason Flately, whose mother, Theresa, is an employee of the Cohoes Department of Public Works.

Westchester County Local Awards

Daniel Adams, whose father, Leonard Adams, is an employee of the Pocantico Hills School District.

Douglas Bicknese, whose mother, Jeanine Bicknese, is an employee of the Mount Vernon School District.

Rachel Cracy, whose father, William Cracy, is an employee of Westchester Medical Center.

Douglas Elman, whose mother, Diane Elman, is an employee of the Yonkers Public Schools.

Sarah Greenbaum, whose mother, Beatrice Greenbaum, is an employee of Westchester County.

Lindsay Maci, whose mother, Christine Maci, is an employee of the Port Chester School District.

Luciano Ranallo, whose father, Ennio Ranallo, is an employee of the Edgemont School District.

Jolynne Sannicandro, whose mother, Linda Sannicandro, is an employee of the Yonkers Public Schools.

Francesca Santa, whose mother, Gina Pelliccio, is an employee of Westchester County.

Cayuga County Local Scholarship

Sarah Rundfeisch, whose mother, Mary Rundfeisch, is an employee of the Cayuga County Department of Motor Vehicles.

Natalie Holak, whose mother, Alexandra Holak, is an employee of the Cayuga County Human Services Department.

Carrie Shaw, whose mother, Susette O’Connor, is an employee of the Cayuga County Sheriff’s Department.

Stephanie Dann, whose mother, Maria Dann, is an employee of the Moravia Central School.

Alexander Baker, whose mother, Martha Baker, is an employee of the Weedsport Central School.

Alexis Parsons, whose father, Allan Parsons, is an employee of the Cayuga County Sheriff’s Department.
**What’s In It For You?**

You asked for it... dental plan enhancements are here

The CSEA Employee Benefit Fund is pleased to announce that effective July 1, 2005, your dental plan will be better than ever! EBF staff enhanced the plans based on suggestions made by members, dentists and dental consultants. The recommendations led to upgrades for state employees, including ORDA and the New York State Liquidation Bureau, as well as local government employees covered under the Sunrise, Horizon, Equinox, and Dutchess plans.

- Higher fee schedule allowances with specific focus on cleanings, examinations, fillings, root canal therapy, dentures, crowns and extractions
- Partial banding can be covered under each of the plans except for the Retiree Dental Plan, which does not include an orthodontic benefit.

The EBF will mail new plan booklets the week of June 20. Should you have any questions or concerns about your EBF dental plan, please contact your marketing representative. Unless otherwise noted, you can reach representatives at (800) 323-2732.

**State employee representatives are:**
- Long Island, Metropolitan, Southern and Capital regions — Charles Guild
- Capital, Central and Western regions — David Reed

**Local government employee representatives are:**
- Long Island Region — Linda Sclafani (631) 462-5224
- Southern Region — Geoff Swift
- Capital Region — Carisa Haberl
- Central Region — Meghan Pastiglione
- Western Region — Mike Wagner (716) 691-6555, ext. 5131.

**NYSHIP enrollees to receive benefit statement in mail**

In June, all NYSHIP enrollees who are in the Empire Plan or a health maintenance organization (HMO) will receive a 2005 Benefit Statement in the mail from the New York State Department of Civil Service.

**What is a 2005 Benefit Statement and what kind of information will be on it?**

The statement will show you and your dependent(s) medical information as it appears on the New York Benefits Eligibility and Accounting System. It will include medical benefit information such as your name, dependent name(s), eligibility dates, birth dates and Social Security numbers.

**What do I need to do with this statement?**

It is important that you confirm if the information is either correct or incorrect. If the information is correct, you don’t need to take any action.

If the statement is incorrect, you need to make changes on page three, sign it and return it to your health benefits administrator.

**When do I need to return the statement?**

You must turn in your corrected statement to your health benefits administrator by July 15.

**Who can I call if I have questions?**

You can call your agency’s health benefits administrator for assistance.

**Empire Plan offers new meningitis vaccine coverage**

The Empire Plan covers vaccinations and immunizations in accordance with recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The CDC and the Academy of Pediatrics recently released a statement endorsing the meningitis vaccine for pre-teens ages 11 and 12 and high school and college students in dormitories.

Effective July 1, the meningitis vaccine will become a covered pediatric immunization under the Empire Plan for the following categories of children and young adults in the targeted population:
- Dependent children up to 19 years old will be eligible to receive the meningitis vaccine through a participating provider or from a non-participating provider (basic medical coverage — subject to deductible and co-insurance) of the Empire Plan.
- Full-time dependent students age 19 and over will be eligible to receive the meningitis vaccine under the adult immunization benefit, which is through a participating provider ONLY.
ALBANY — Few people even come close to matching the experience and knowledge John O’Keefe earned during his 53-year career.

O’Keefe started working at Wadsworth Center for Laboratories and Research in 1952. Shortly after that, CSEA gave a charter to the Wadsworth Center Local, making the local one of the longest existing chartered locals in the union.

In 1989, after serving as vice president, O’Keefe became local president, an office he’s held since. For more than 50 years, O’Keefe has played an active role in a changing labor movement. He remains steadfastly committed to members of his local and has earned the respect of fellow union activists.

O’Keefe did not seek re-election as local president and said his retirement will likely happen this year. The Work Force’s Therese Assalian caught up with O’Keefe to learn more about his tenure at Wadsworth Labs and his union involvement.

John O’Keefe points to a family tree of three generations of the Byrne’s and O’Keefe’s who have worked at the Wadsworth Lab.

WF: What was your first job and how did you get it?

JO: Right here at the lab. After graduating from the Vincentian Institute in Albany, my father, Daniel, who worked here spoke for me and I started as a lab helper, a grade 1 in 1952. He was a good Irishman from the old country. He loved the lab and he was a great union guy.

WF: What’s this about a family connection to the lab?

JO: My mother, Hannah, worked as a maid for Dr. Wadsworth, the founder of the lab. When my father was laid off from the West Albury Shops, she went to Dr. Wadsworth. He gave my father a job doing gardening and grounds work. He was able to provide for his family of four kids. That Blue Cross card and the benefits that card represented were very important. Both sides of my family, the Bymes and the O’Keefes, have worked at the lab for three generations. A few years ago, our co-workers presented us with a plaque citing 350 combined years of service including aunts, uncles and cousins. My brother Dan and I met our wives working here. My wife, Linda, still works here and my cousin Michael runs the mailroom. So, yes, you could say there is a family connection. We were all very happy with state service.

WF: Did you think you’d be working in public employment this long?

JO: No, I didn’t. I did leave for two years in 1957 for the U.S. Army. When I returned, I took an exam and passed it and returned to the state as a Grade 9 Lab Technician. I’ve been here ever since.

WF: What changes in the labor movement or in CSEA are most noticeable since you began your career?

JO: Our union has grown much larger. When I

John O’Keefe at work in the CSEA office at Wadsworth Labs. O’Keefe’s pending retirement will bring a 53-year career at the Wadsworth Labs to a close.

was first involved in the union, CSEA was only state workers. Now, we have local government and private sector members. I also remember when we joined AFSCME.

WF: Any advice for younger activists?

JO: Get involved and remember your first responsibility is to your members. Learn as much as you can about your contract — that’s the (union) bible. If you don’t know that, you know nothing. Also, learn the labor laws.

WF: What do you plan to do when you retire?

JO: Well, I have a big family. We have a lot of fun when we get together. So, I plan to enjoy my family. I also plan to play bad golf and to join the retirees local.
PEOPLE PERSON — The PEOPLE recruiter for the month of May is Maureen Ford of the Ulster County Local in the Southern Region. She recruited 12 new PEOPLE members. PEOPLE is CSEA and AFSCME’s political action program. It is responsible for raising money and collecting voluntary contributions from the membership so CSEA can effectively promote our interests at the state and federal level. FROM ‘A to Z’ — CSEA and the New York State Senate are among the sponsors of The Encyclopedia of New York State, published by the Syracuse University Press, now available. From A&P to zebra mussels, the new encyclopedia contains thousands of facts on the culture and history of New York state. Copies can be ordered at the encyclopedia’s web site at www.syracuseuniversitypress.syr.edu/encyclopedia. CSEA is also featured in the publication with a substantial entry in the public employee section.

CSEA remembers soldier and activist

COMMACK — Long Island Region members recently held a ceremony to honor the late Tom Byrne, a CSEA activist who proudly served his country and his union. 

Union members dedicated the flagpole outside of the Long Island Region office in Commack to Byrne after he died last year. Recently, CSEA members raised the POW/MIA flag to honor Byrne’s memory. Byrne, the former president of the Long Island State Employees Local, was also active in the region Veteran’s Committee and took great pride in his military service.

“Tom was a champion for his members,” LAMorte said. “He would meet with them at all hours and any day of the week if they needed his assistance. Tom loved this union and all the people in it, and we are grateful for his many years of service.”

“I’m very proud and honored that this was done for Tommy,” Jeannie Byrne, Byrne’s wife, said. “I really appreciate this, and I know that if Tommy’s around he’s up there and his Irish eyes are smiling in approval.”

Long Island Region President Nick LAMorte, far right, with, from left, Jeannie Byrne and Long Island Region Veteran’s Committee Chair Steve Abramson, raise the POW/MIA flag in honor of Byrne’s late husband, Tom Byrne.

• Want the latest on safety & health laws?
• Concerned about asbestos at work?
• Want information on CSEA safety and health training programs such as ergonomics?

Visit the Occupational Safety and Health page on the CSEA web site at www.csealocal1000.org/osh.php for the answers to these and many other safety and health questions.

Also, watch soon for a new Canary flying into CSEA!

(The Canary is CSEA’s safety & health newsletter!)

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You know what works best for all of us?

CSEA has a long history of providing union members with the tools necessary to advance their careers in civil service and the private sector.

Visit the Career Resources pages today, and start improving your tomorrow.

learn more at www.csealocal1000.org/career_resources
ILGO BEACH — It was a beautiful day for the beach. The rain earlier that morning had ended. The sun was warm, the sky blue. Hundreds of cars roared by, carrying beach-goers to Long Island’s fine South Shore beaches.

Two men in wet suits carrying their surfboards crossed Ocean Parkway when the flow of cars and motorcyclists eased.

Although the state Department of Transportation Local members were quite close to the ocean, it was not a beach day for them. They were on the median of the parkway readying guard rails for heavy summer beach traffic. The temperature was in the mid-70s and the gnats were biting.

Please see DOT workers, continued on Page 3
For all outdoor workers, the fall and the spring are the best seasons,” said Bill Stodolski, a highway maintenance supervisor who is president of the local. “Summer and winter you have extreme temperatures, either freezing or sweltering.”

The 800 members of the local maintain thousands of lane-miles of state roads, ramps and interchanges from the Queens line to the end of the Island — the Long Island Expressway, Montauk Highway, Sunrise Highway, Jericho Turnpike, Route 25A and all the named parkways.

They clear snow in the winter, patch holes in the surface, maintain the landscaping around the roads, paint the lines, make the signs and keep the lights burning. And keep the guide rails, which save many lives from being lost in head-on crashes, in good order.

Operational members work from DOT residencies at Garden City, Syosset, North Merrick, Riverhead, Melville and Central Islip. There are also specialized units such as the Equipment Management crew in Central Islip, the major repair facility for the department’s hundreds of vehicles and machines. A crew headquarteried in Babylon maintains the bridges. There is a paint crew, a crew that trims trees, mechanics who maintain the traffic lights and a parkway lighting crew that replaces burned-out bulbs.

The main clerical unit, located at the State Office Building in Hauppauge, handles the payroll and employee records, purchases and training.

On Page 1 and on this page are photos of the DOT crew at work.
Region Committee honors veterans …

On Memorial Day weekend, the Long Island Region Veteran’s Committee honored deceased CSEA members and their family members who are buried at Calverton National Cemetery. The committee visited about 50 graves, decorating them with U.S. flags.

… and a champion for the union

The Veterans Committee was also instrumental in the dedication of the Long Island Region’s new POW/MIA flag in honor of Tom Byrne, the former president of the Long Island State Employees Local, who was also active in the region’s Veteran’s Committee and took great pride in his military service.

“Tom was a champion for his members,” Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte said. “He would meet with them at all hours, and any day of the week if they needed his assistance. Tom loved this union and all the people in it, and we are grateful for his many years of service.”

CSEA members, officers and staff joined members of the Byrne family, including his widow Jeannie, to honor Byrne for his years of service to members. CSEA members in the region dedicated the flagpole outside of the CSEA Long Island Region office to Tom Byrne after his death last year.
CSEA MEMBERS from the Long Island Region were well represented at the State, Local Government and Private Sector Workshop recently. It was the first time the State and Local Government Workshops were held together. Attendees came away armed with the knowledge and tools they’ll need to “Fight the Good Fight” for worker’s rights, political clout, and benefits, making CSEA even more of a force to be reckoned with.

They worked hard at meetings dedicated to hot issues like: Discipline in the Workplace; Negotiating a Canadian Prescription Plan; Identifying Injuries, Hazards and Health and Safety Problems; and Building Union Power.

“I learned all about FMLA (The Family and Medical Leave Act), but all the workshops were very informative and they were extremely well done,” said Carol Low of SUNY Stony Brook Local.

“One thing I learned was that we have to get copies of statements or any evidence that management could be brought up in a disciplinary procedure. We are entitled to that information under our rights from the Taylor Law,” said Meg Shukla from Local 332.

“I think that everything I learned at the workshop will help me be an even better representative for my people,” she said.

The Town of Oyster Bay Local made sure its officers and shop stewards attended. “We want to make sure they learn everything they can so they can provide the very best service,” said Oyster Bay Executive Vice President John Anderson. “We need new people who are dedicated because (local President) Angie (Local 1st VP) Bobby and I won’t be here forever. We have to make sure that we all work together to keep our local and our union strong,” said Anderson. — Rachel Langert

CSEA members from around the state work together to identify workplace safety hazards (clockwise) Don Lees (standing) from Suffolk Municipal Local; Bob Barile, Kerry Mitchell, Debbie Nappi, Gonzalo from SUNY Stony Brook, Kevin Smith and Mark Paterson.

Clockwise from top right, Don Kelly, Director of the CSEA Research Division conducted the highly acclaimed workshop on NYS Civil Service Law. Chair Joanne McGrath discusses the workshop materials with committee member Bobby Raff; some region education and training committee members attended for the very first time, like (left to right), Garden City Schools Executive Vice President Judy Weis and new unit President Pat Drius; (left to right) Tom Osmanski. Shop Steward for Brookhaven Blue Colar unit. Maureen Wall, Brookhaven Highway 2nd vice President and Stacey Pagan, secretary from the DOT completed role of the workshops; the Nassau Municipal Local was well-represented by Kathleen Dufall, Eleanor Arnot, Madeline Home and Steve Abranson from the City of Long Beach; State Employees Local President George Naranjo and Andie Sigman worked hard in the civil service law class. Statewide CSEA President Danny Donohue shares a lighthearted moment with Long Island Region President Nick Laforte at the region workshop.

Long Island Region holds annual workshop

This year’s Long Island Region Workshop drew members and officers from state and local government as well as private sector locals and units throughout Nassau and Suffolk.

In his opening address, statewide President Danny Donohue said, “The Long Island Region’s strength has always been its diversity. You may not realize it, but we all need each other. The strength of this union will always be its people. That’s why we need you to stay involved, and work through and for your union.”

Participants stayed busy honing their skills, sharing information and preparing to better represent their members.

“I want to better understand how the whole system works,” said DOT Local Secretary Stacey Pagan. “We work just as hard as the private contractors and I can’t understand why the governor and his people can’t see that. It’s at gatherings like this, that I get to talk about things like this with other officers,” she said.

With 32 years on the job, Brookhaven Blue Colar unit shop steward Tom Osmanski had some advice for the newer activists. “They should make sure they do whatever they can to protect their health insurance,” he said. “We have a 10 year contract, but even with our management is already making noise about the cost of our benefits, so people really have to stay alert.”

At those workshops we get to learn a great deal about a number of different things, and bring this information back to our stewards and activists,” said Education and Training Committee member Bobby Raff. The Civil Service Law workshops, conducted by CSEA Research Director Don Kelly, was especially well attended, and the Ed and Training Committee chair found that gratifying.

“We work hard to bring the members and officers the information and tools they will need to be more effective advocates,” said committee Chair Joanne McGrath. “We conduct surveys all the time, and civil service is the most requested class, so we’re glad to be able to present an in-depth session,” she said.

Long Island Region President Nick Laforte was glad to see so many people who are willing to learn, grow and participate.

“Those workshops bring a wealth of valuable information to everyone, repeat participants and newcomers alike,” he said. “If we all get together that people come to understand that the problems and challenges we face are very similar. If not the same, no matter where we work. By sharing our experiences and knowledge, by remaining curious and committed, we make CSEA a stronger, more cohesive union,” said Laforte.

— Rachel Langert
36 honored at SUNY Old Westbury

OLD WESTBURY — Thirty-six CSEA members were among the 85 employees honored for long service to the SUNY College at Old Westbury during May 17 ceremonies on the campus.

Two CSEA Local officers, President Mary D’Antonio, and Secretary Karen Carlen-Murray, were among those honored.

CSEA members who received the awards are:

30 Years: George Dudek, Heat Plant, and Ruth Pessin, Student Activities.

25 Years: Nancy Bonilla, Math/CIS; Idrian (ike) Bryant, Facilities; Helen Patricia Cheshire, First Year Experience Program; Leila Crayton, Facilities; Mary D’Antonio, Academic Affairs; and Regina Rudowski, Sociology.

20 Years: Carol Brennan, Copy Center; Deborah Butler-Hughes, Custodial Services; and Anne Silverman, Registrar’s Office.

15 Years: Donald Forsythe, Facilities; Arthur Foure, Grounds; Carmela Marsicano, Library; Viola Smith, Custodial Service, and Victor Watson, Facilities.

10 Years: Diane Carbocci, Student Affairs; Karen Ike Bryant

Carlen-Murray, Student Affairs; Scott Fisher, Custodial Services; Alan Florestal, Facilities; Meryl Hiller, Teacher Education; Penny Kurlan, Accounts Payable; Gregory Lee, Grounds; Mary McPherson, Custodial Services; Marianne Orobello, School of Business; Mamie Piersch, Library; Alien Rice, Custodial Services; and Joseph Ruckel, Business Affairs.

5 Years: Teresa Branch, Custodial Services; Traci Cruz, OSSD; Travis Green, Grounds; Alfonso Haynes, Custodial Services; Malini Kumar, Visual Arts; Ella Pearlall, Custodial Services; Owen Scott, Custodial Services, and Jayashree Thruverhadu; Chemistry/Physics.

Commack — Certified results of local union elections were not available at press time and will appear as they become available.

Fire destroys marina

Joe Kozikowski III, a member of the Town of Oyster Bay Local, clears debris of a fire that destroyed the marina building at Theodore Roosevelt Park on Oyster Bay Harbor on May 18. The fire, one of three recent suspicious fires, is under investigation by Nassau County’s arson squad and fire marshal. The building housed offices for the marina, bay constables and Parks Department employees and a workout room for the parks workers. John Venditto, Oyster Bay supervisor, estimated it would cost the town $1 million to replace the structure and the equipment destroyed by the blaze. No suspects have been identified by the police.

Congratulations

Holding awards for longtime service at SUNY Old Westbury are, left to right, Penny Kurlan, Tom Noble, first vice president of the local; Mike Marsicano, Scott Fisher, Local President Mary D’Antonio, Ruth Pessin and Diane Carbocci.

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Summer fun with CSEA

You deserve a break from work and high entertainment costs! Through Working Advantage, union members can use Union Plus Entertainment Discounts for their summer fun, including theme park and movie ticket discounts.

You can save on tickets at theme parks across the country, including these great theme parks: Adventure Island, Busch Gardens, Medieval Times, Paramount’s Kings Dominion, SeaWorld, Six Flags and Universal Orlando Resort.

You can also save on seeing newly released summer movies through discounted movie tickets!

Participating theater chains include Loews, Regal and Clearview Cinemas.

Order your tickets today by visiting the Member Benefits entertainment discounts page on CSEA’s web site at http://www.cselocal1000.org/mem_bens/entertainment_discounts. You can also visit Working Advantage’s web site at http://www.workingadvantage.com for more information about the discount. You can also order tickets by calling Union Plus Entertainment Discounts at (800) 565-3712, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

IMPORTANT: To receive the Union Plus discount, union members must reference the Union Privilege Member ID number of 744387769 when calling or ordering theme park or movie tickets.
SEFA honors LIDDSO member

COMMACK — Willie Gwynn of the Long Island Developmental Disabilities Services Office has been honored with a Beacon Award for his outstanding work on behalf of the State Employees Federated Appeal.

This year, Long Island state employees contributed more than $460,000 to the 400 local and national charities that participate in the SEFA drive. Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte serves as campaign co-chair on Long Island.

A SEFA volunteer for the past eight years, Gwynn’s efforts this year raised more than $9,000.

“The Long Island Developmental Disabilities Services Office is very proud of Willie and thankful for his outstanding work,” said Ben Calderone, a member of SEFA’s Long Island Committee.

Beacon Award winner Willie Gwynn, center, is congratulated by Ben Calderone, left, of Long Island Developmental Disabilities Services Office and Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte, Long Island SEFA co-chairperson.

May 25 executive board meeting

COMMACK — President Nick LaMorte announced the selection of Christine Urbanowicz of the Suffolk County Educational Employees Local as the Long Island Region treasurer at the May 25 Executive Board meeting at the region office.

Urbanowicz, a former president of the Longwood School District Unit, has an extensive accounting background and is a member of the region’s Education and Membership committees.

She replaces Barbara Allen-Lemp, who retired in April after 18 years as the Long Island Region treasurer.

LaMorte also named the members of the region’s Special Memorial Plaque Committee, which will honor deceased Long Island Region members who have given outstanding service to the union by helping to advance its goals.

LaMorte appointed four other region officers to the committee — Carol Guardiano, executive vice president, Les Eason, 1st vice president, Bobby Holland, 3rd vice president, and Lee Reynolds, secretary. LaMorte also named Suffolk Retirees Local President Barbara Reynolds to the committee as a retiree representative.

In other board business, Dr. Ray S. Naghavi, medical director of the Sleep Improvement Center in Rockville Center, addressed board members about treating sleep apnea, an ailment that prevents many people from getting a good night’s sleep.

Region President Nick LaMorte, right, thanks Dr. Ray S. Naghavi, center, after Naghavi’s presentation on sleep apnea at the May 25 executive board meeting. At left is Lee Reynolds.

Long Island Reporter 7
Mark your calendar!

**INTERNATIONAL DAY FESTIVAL**

at the CSEA Long Island Region 1 Office
3 Garet Place, Commack, NY

INTERNATIONAL FOODS!
ETHNIC ENTERTAINMENT!
RAFFLES & PRIZES!

Family & Friends Are Welcome!
Come Share Ethnic Traditions with Us!

PLEASE RSVP by July 8, 2005
(631) 462-0030

Long Island Region
International Day Festival
and
Women’s Health Fair

Saturday, July 23
at the Long Region office
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
CSEA has taken a very aggressive stance in protecting the health and safety of the Department of Social Services members who the county will move in September to a remodeled building at 60 Charles Lindbergh Blvd. in Uniondale. The issue remains, as it has since the move was first announced 18 months ago, the county’s refusal to recognize CSEA’s demand that protective barriers and partitions be placed between the workers and Social Services clients. We have filed a grievance, received legal approval and will expedite an arbitration date. We also consulted with our CSEA attorneys in Albany. We have filed an improper practice charge which is currently deferred to the arbitration process. Our attorneys are prepared to seek immediate injunctive relief in court in the event the partitions are not in place at the time our members are transferred.

CSEA has documented numerous incidents in which Social Services workers have been verbally abused and physically attacked by irate clients, including several cases involving serious injuries to our members. Administrative Assistant Rich Breusch has compiled extensive data and incident reports to be presented at future legal proceedings. We encourage members to continue to contact Breusch at (516) 571-0755. We will not allow the county to compromise our members health and safety.

I am expecting that by the time you read this column you will have received the money owed to you as a result of a settlement with the county regarding the lag payroll. Money resulting from the impact on delays in cost of living and step increases was to be paid to each employee, retroactively to Jan. 1, 2001. According to the county, this money was to be paid on or about June 17. Other details relating to the completed settlement were to be addressed at a court date scheduled for June 24, after this issue of The Express went to press. You will be provided with an update in our next issue. Meanwhile, an additional case involving the lag payroll, which would eliminate it in its entirety, may impact us upon settlement.

The request for proposals has gone out for a company to conduct the first audit of all civil service job titles in 45 years. The company selected will specialize in salary compensation analysis. I will be part of the committee to select the appropriate company and to review the process and results.

As a result of continued negotiations with the county, I am pleased to announce the approval of 58 promotions in the Department of Social Services. Eligible employees were to be canvassed in accordance with existing procedures. The promotions, which will be processed as soon as possible, include the following titles: Social Welfare Examiner II (15); Caseworker II (14); Multi Keyboard Operator II (11); Child Support Investigator II (9); Clerk II (8) and Clerk/Typist II (1). We will continue to press for hiring in all county departments.

The checks have started coming on Nassau Local 830’s largest ever grievance victory. This issue stems from the incorrect manner in which the county calculated raises for CSEA members who were promoted since 2001. I have been pressing for the completion of salary awards and I’m advised that a few departments have already been issued checks. The rest are in the budget office prior to being sent to the comptroller’s office for checks to be issued. The process should be completed shortly. Thanks for your continued patience.

An improper practice charge CSEA filed has resulted in the withdrawal by the county of its demand that Parks Department workers be held “solely responsible” for Nassau County-owned and issued cell phones. In a July 19, 2004, letter to employees, a Parks Department deputy commissioner told workers that they would be liable for the $90 purchase price if the phones were lost or damaged. On June 1, as a result of our charge, the county agreed to withdraw the memorandum.

At the Nassau Health Care Corporation, a memorandum of understanding regarding domestic partner coverage has been negotiated and signed. If any of our health care corporation members would like to take advantage of this provision, they should see their department’s human resources representative.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a safe and healthy and enjoyable summer season.

Yours in unionism,

Jane M. D’Amico, President
CSEA Nassau Local 830
LEGAL UPDATE

At Last, One for the Good Guys!

Nancy Hoffman, Esq.
CSEA General Counsel

FINALLY, A PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS BOARD DECISION WE CAN CHEER! A PERB ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE ("ALJ") HAS HELD THAT WITNESS STATEMENTS IN DISCIPLINARY CASES MUST BE TurnED OVER TO UNIONS, EVEN WHEN PATIENT ABUSE IS ALLEGED.

This recent decision from a PERB ALJ greatly enhanced union rights to obtain information from employers. PERB has held in recent years that unions are entitled to receive witness statements from employers in regard to disciplinary charges against unionized employees. CSEA recently demanded the employer’s investigative files, including witness statements, in a contractual disciplinary arbitration. The employee had been charged with patient abuse. The employer attempted to withhold the information from CSEA, claiming that both the Mental Hygiene Law and the Education Law protect reports and witness statements gathered in the course of investigations involving allegations of patient abuse.

The employer claimed that these files and statements need to remain confidential to promote “the quality of care through self review without the fear of legal reprisal.” The employer argued that maintaining confidentiality, “encourages frank and open discussion concerning the conditions that lead to [patient care] incidents and the means to correct them, by shielding the facility from adverse inferences that can be drawn if such statements were made available in action against it.”

CSEA argued, to the contrary, that the Mental Hygiene Law and the Education Law could not be used to prevent employees, faced with discipline for patient abuse, from seeing the evidence against them. CSEA relied upon the law governing collective bargaining, specifically arguing that the Taylor Law entitlelement to information needed to administer the contract should override any Mental Hygiene/Education Law protections. The ALJ agreed and ordered release of the requested information.

The ALJ specifically held that the Education Law and the Mental Hygiene Law prohibit only the disclosure of information in cases where the public employer is being sued or the request is being made under the Freedom of Information Law. The Education Law and the Mental Hygiene Law do not prohibit disclosure of the information requested by CSEA to assist representing an employee in a disciplinary matter. The decision by the ALJ, however, is not final. As we have come to expect in these difficult political times, the employer has appealed the ALJ decision to the full PERB board which will have the opportunity to review these issues and either affirm or reverse the ALJ decision. The board decision can also be reviewed by the courts.

The ALJ cautioned unions to be careful about the way we phrase demands for information. Generally, a union request for “documentation of interviews of witnesses, and witness statements” will be granted. However, requests that are too vague, such as for any other relevant information obtained during the investigation, will be denied. “Any other relevant information,” while standard language in litigation discovery demands, is not specific enough for PERB and PERB will not require an employer to provide information in response to such a vague request. Based on this PERB ALJ thinking, then, requests for “employer’s investigative files” relating to the individual grievant, in addition to “all employee interviews and witness statements,” presumably will be enforceable.

At least until the appeal is decided, we have won an important point here. Let’s just hope that the full PERB board sustains the decision to allow unions to obtain this important information from employers regarding the employer’s investigations of employee conduct resulting in disciplinary action by the employer. We will keep you posted!!
Former AMT Jeff Wiener
Killed in Action in Iraq

Jeffrey L. Wiener, former Nassau Police Department Ambulance Medical Technician, gave his life in the service of his country in Iraq on May 7, 2005.

Wiener was a member of the CSEA Police Civilian Unit when he served as an AMT. He resigned in 2002 to join the Navy, and served as a Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class assigned to the Marines.

Wiener, a former resident of both Lynbrook and Valley Stream, and an 11-year veteran and ex-captain of Lynbrook’s Tally-Ho Volunteer Fire Company, was killed in what Pentagon officials described as a “combat-related incident.” Subsequent reports indicate that Wiener was killed during a four-hour firefight that erupted after insurgents used a suicide bomb to level a civilian hospital. According to Michael Ciaramella, a close friend of Wiener’s, reports from the scene indicate that Wiener was killed rendering aid to several Marines.

Wiener leaves his wife and high-school sweetheart, Maria, and their two daughters, Mikayla Lynn, 5, and Theodora Rose, 2.

Wiener was born on May 26, 1973, and grew up on Hutcheson Place in Lynbrook. He displayed a passion for volunteer work at age 14, when he joined the Lynbrook Junior Fire Department. In 1991, shortly after turning 18 and graduating from Lynbrook High School, Wiener joined Tally-Ho.

His dedication took him up through the ranks quickly, and he was elected 2nd lieutenant of Tally-Ho in April of 1997 and captain in 2000.

Wiener was so affected by the events of Sept. 11, 2001, that he joined the Navy and became a corpsman. In the Navy, Wiener showed the same dedication he displayed as a firefighter.

“He was the closest thing to a brother I ever had,” said Ciaramella, who serves as a Paramedic for the Nassau County Police Department Ambulance Service and whose mother, Valerie, worked for the Police Building Maintenance Unit. “He made a huge impact on everyone who met him, even for five minutes. People were incredibly moved just by his presence,” Ciaramella said. “A huge part of my heart has been torn out,” he said.

Ciaramella said that Wiener’s motto essentially was to always strive to be the best you could be and that he felt our soldiers deserved the best of support from the people back home.

“I never knew Jeff personally, but I have learned much about him since his death,” said Local 830 President Jane D’Amico. “Jeff was a true American hero. He will be remembered as a man who was motivated by his love for his country and his fellow human beings. We extend our deepest sympathy to his grieving family and friends,” D’Amico said.

In Loving Memory

Carolyn Jones;
CSEA Activist

CSEA Nassau Local 830 is mourning the passing of Carolyn Jones, an outstanding union activist and a warm, caring person.

Before retiring from her nursing position in 2002, Jones served as executive vice president of the Nassau University Medical Center Unit. She was also active on several CSEA committees, including the unity and women’s committees and helped each year in organizing the Martin Luther King luncheon. She also served as a shop steward and a grievance representative at the medical center.

Jones was a founding member of the Long Island chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), serving as a trustee since the chapter’s inception.

Jones began her career at the medical center in 1989, where she worked as a recovery room nurse for many years before being assigned to the medical center’s home care unit at the Department of Social Services.

“Carolyn’s concern for her fellow workers was always the motivation for her outstanding service to CSEA, which she continued even after retiring. She was a wonderful asset to our union and will be sorely missed,” Local 830 President Jane D’Amico said.

Jones was stricken with a heart attack on a plane en route to a CBTU convention in Arizona, where she was to serve as a delegate representing Long Island.

“Even to the end, Carolyn was busy helping to improve the lives of working people,” Long Island CBTU Chapter President Rudy Bruce said. “She was a shining example of what it means to be a union activist as well as a simply wonderful human being. Our deepest sympathy and our prayers go out to her family and to her many friends.”
Fighting Breast Cancer

The Nassau University Medical Center participated last month in the "Long Island Two-Day Walk to Fight Breast Cancer," a 35-mile walk beginning and ending at Smith Point Park in Shirley. For the second consecutive year, a portion of the funding raised will be donated to the renovation of the hospital's new breast health center. Pictured near the end of the route are, from left to right, Michael Ade, vice president for development; Howard Schwartz, an event volunteer from Ultimate Cruise Planning; Ywonna Landau, a walker from the hospital; Gimy Salemo, walk founder and director; and Christine Mascuso, director of the hospital's breast screening program.

MAMMOGRAPHY SCREENING PROGRAM
Fact Sheet

The "Mammography Screening Program" is a benefit negotiated by CSEA for all Nassau County government employees, regardless of insurance carrier or coverage. This benefit allows you to go to the Nassau University Medical Center BREAST IMAGING CENTER on your work time and with no out-of-pocket cost to you. You will stay as long as it takes to get a proper diagnosis and you will meet personally with the doctor to discuss the results.

1. Call the NUMC Breast Imaging Center at (516) 572-5700 any weekday afternoon to schedule an appointment. Identify yourself as a county employee. Appointments for county employees will be held on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

2. When you call, you will reach the CSEA Mammography Program "Hotline" Voice Mail System. Please leave your name, daytime phone number and best time to be reached. A scheduler from the Breast Imaging Center will promptly return your phone call and schedule your examination.

3. Fill out a departmental time and leave slip; check "other," and write "mammography screening." Submit it to your supervisor.

4. Mammography screening will be given with no out of pocket expense to you. Your insurance company will be billed. If you have insurance, bring your insurance card with you, and an employee ID card if you have one. Also bring your prior mammographic films with you, if you have any.

5. A parking map is available upon request. Designated parking spaces on the map will be free of charge or you may park at your own expense in the paid parking lot. Inside NUMC, follow the rose-colored "Breast Imaging Center" signs.

6. Upon returning to work, you will be required to submit documentation to your department. The documentation will be supplied by NUMC at the time of the examination.

7. You will be excused with authorization and will be granted leave without loss of time or pay for travel and examination.

Matt Brosnan prepares a ball field at Mitchel Park Athletic Complex.

Groundskeeper Mitchel Brumberg gets the field in shape for evening softball league games at Eisenhower Park.

Keeping Eisenhower Park's 14 ball fields in fine playing condition is the job of workers such as Jerry Williams, shown here preparing the infield of a heavily used softball field.
Quick action by CSEA members Vinny Monteforte and Sal Natale, lead carpenters of the Police Department Building Maintenance Unit, saved two women’s lives May 25.

Monteforte and Natale were en route to the 5th Precinct when they noticed smoke coming from an apartment complex at 651 Front St. They immediately approached the building, where they saw a woman screaming for help from a second floor window.

Monteforte and Natale got out of their truck and instructed a pedestrian to call 911 to report the fire. Realizing there was no way for the trapped woman to escape, they instructed other pedestrians at the scene to look for an extension ladder.

The two men found a couch by the curb and carried it to the window as a safety net in case the woman fell. They also comforted her, telling her they were going to bring her to safety.

Meanwhile, a truck was flagged down, a ladder was removed from the vehicle and brought to the scene. With the help of a landscaper working nearby, Monteforte and Natale raised the ladder to the window and brought the woman down to safety.

The woman then told them her roommate was still inside a bedroom in the apartment. The rescuers immediately moved the ladder to the bedroom window and Monteforte broke the glass to try to get into the room.

He faced intense smoke and heat. He shouted through the broken window to the woman, but there was no response. They moved the ladder to a balcony and climbed onto it. Kicking in the door, they again yelled into the smoke filled room.

When the Hempstead Fire Department arrived a short time later, Monteforte and Natale told firefighters about the woman trapped inside.

As firefighters extinguished the blaze, Monteforte and Natale moved the ladder to the roommate’s window. Natale climbed the ladder to the window and told firefighters the woman was inside the room.

Firefighters found the woman unconscious and unresponsive. Both women were transported by ambulance to Nassau University Medical Center. One was listed in satisfactory condition, while the other was revived and listed in critical condition.

Hempstead fire officials praised Monteforte and Natale’s efforts, noting that if not for their quick thinking and putting their own lives in danger, the result would have been much more tragic.

Following the daring, courageous rescue, Monteforte and Natale reported to work.

“Sal and Vinny are true heroes in every sense of the word,” Nassau Local President Jane D’Amico said. “Because of their clear thinking, quick action, and their disregard for their own safety, two women were spared a horrible death. I am extremely proud of them. They deserve the highest of praise for their valiant deed.”

Vinny Monteforte, left, and Sal Natale of the Police Department Building Maintenance Unit congratulate each other on a job well done following their daring rescue of two women from a burning building. Behind them is the police van they were driving when they discovered the fire.

**Nurse of Excellence**

Donna Duffy, a registered nurse, and perinatal nurse specialist in the maternity unit of Nassau University Medical Center, is the hospital’s nominee for the Nassau Suffolk Hospital Council ‘Nurse of Excellence’ award. As a seasoned nursing professional, Donna has a varied background spanning several clinical areas, with perinatal nursing specialty. From left to right are Maxine Wolf, chief nursing officer at Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical Center and chair of the Nassau Hospital Council Nurse Administrators Committee, Duffy and Vice President for Patient Care Services Bill Tinto.

**Earning Recognition**

Ann German, a CSEA member and nurses’ aide at A. Holly Patterson Extended Care Facility, was honored in May as the facility’s ‘Employee of the Month.’ Nassau Health Care Corporation officials said German, who resides in West Hempstead, is an exceptional employee who works well with other employees and residents and is a fine example of the work ethic that nursing home and hospital officials value.
Greetings Brothers and Sisters,
Because CSEA is the most democratic union around, every four years we give each member the opportunity to elect the people who will represent his or her best interests.

So, the newly elected unit officers, welcome to the fold! To the veterans who have been re-elected, welcome back! To everyone who has served his or her fellow members, a sincere thank you for what is often a challenging and seemingly thankless job.

Now, we have an opportunity for new beginnings.
With that in mind, I will be meeting with your local in what I hope will be a positive exchange that will result in better ways of serving you. This is an awesome responsibility.

With responsibility comes accountability, and that involves holding regular membership meetings; returning phone calls; visiting work sites; getting involved in the political process and making it work for the members, and communicating effectively with the members.

In Nassau County, one essential tool we use to communicate with the membership is this paper, the Nassau County Express. The paper deals exclusively with events and issues that affect Nassau County Local 830.

Through this paper, we highlight the work our members do, showcase our victories and keep the members informed about the challenges we face.

It is through resources like the Express that we tackle our challenges together. We all know you can’t have a union without solidarity, but we also can’t have an effective union without frequent, open communication with our members.

After all, no matter how much good work we do for our members, it won’t amount to very much if the members don’t know about it.

Speaking of things the members should know about — it’s time once again for the CSEA event of the summer! On July 23, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., all members and their families are invited to the International Day Festival and Women’s Health Fair at the Long Island Region office in Commack.

This free event is an opportunity for us to share our diversity — through international foods and entertainment — and get health information for our families at the same time. We will also have free blood pressure screenings, massages — even face painting for the kids.

We hope to see you there!

In solidarity,

Nick LaMorte, president
Long Island Region 830

Nassau Credit Union Changes Its Name
Nassau County Federal Credit Union (NCFCU) has changed its name to Nassau Financial Federal Credit Union, effective immediately.

Originally chartered in 1936, the 69-year-old credit union’s name change follows the credit union’s recent adoption of a community-based charter opening Nassau Financial’s membership to people who live, work, worship, volunteer or attend school in Nassau County, as well as members of their immediate family or household.

The credit union will roll out its new name to members July 1. The credit union will implement the new brand throughout its operations in the next several months.