Giving VOICE to daycare needs
More than 50 workers from the Tompkins County Highway, Airport, Facilities and Solid Waste divisions demonstrate before a recent meeting of the Tompkins County Legislature to express their frustration over being offered a contract that asks for larger health insurance contributions that eat up most of the wage increases being offered.

**Canal Corp. members OK contract**

ALBANY — CSEA members have decisively ratified (328-58) a new five-year agreement for more than 500 state Canal Corporation employees.

The agreement, which covers workers who maintain and operate the New York’s canal system, includes wage increases and maintains dental, vision and health insurance benefits for employees.

The agreement also adds a new sixth step to the salary chart for employees who have completed one or more years of satisfactory service at the current job rate.

There is no change in the percentage of employee premium contributions for health insurance for current employees, as well as an enhanced health insurance opt-out bonus.

“This agreement was a long time coming and I commend all of the CSEA team members for their hard work and perseverance,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said.

As The Work Force went to press, it was learned that Thruway Authority members also ratified their contract.

**Erie County OKs sales tax hike**

BUFFALO — After a year of massive layoffs and cuts to services, lawmakers in Erie County have taken steps to add much-needed revenue to the county’s coffers for 2006.

County legislators voted Nov. 16 to increase property taxes and raise the sales tax a half-penny. The combination sales and property tax increase is a move CSEA has been recommending ever since County Executive Joel Giambra released his scorched earth “red budget” late in 2004.

For now, the revenue helps the county avoid another round of deep cuts, but it does not provide sufficient funding in some areas. The adopted budget contains only $6 million of a $20 million subsidy for the Erie County Medical Center. CSEA is working with county legislators to restore the remaining funds for the hospital, which features the area’s top trauma center and burn units, along with a helipad for Western New York’s air ambulance, “Mercy Flight.”

The sales tax issue now goes before state lawmakers for approval. If approved, county legislators will have to vote again to implement the sales tax hike. In addition to the tax increases, the 2006 budget raises needed revenue through increases in a variety of fees, and a monthly cell phone surcharge.

**SUNY food workers win**

COBLESKILL — By a vote of 42-6, SUNY Cobleskill dining service workers voted to seek the protection and benefits that come with union membership.

Denise Hennessy, a dining service employee, said of the vote to join CSEA, “we are very pleased with the outcome and happy to have a voice in matters that impact our jobs.”

CSEA will represent approximately 60 food service workers who are employees of Cobleskill Auxiliary Services (CAS). Because CAS is a corporation contracted by SUNY Cobleskill, members will form a new private sector local. CSEA also represents non-teaching employees at SUNY.

“We’re proud to welcome these new members to CSEA,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue. “We’ve earned our reputation as New York’s leading union and that means a continued commitment to strengthening our ranks with new workers.”

“We applaud these employees for their unity and for their efforts to improve working conditions through union membership,” said Kathy Garrison, CSEA Capital Region president.

**Workforce Champions in OMRDD**

An innovative labor-management expedited resolution process at Finger Lakes DDSO was recognized as one of Gov. George Pataki’s 2005 Workforce Champions. The process was begun in 2001 with an eye toward streamlining the settlement of disciplinary cases. Since the inception, CSEA has estimated its savings at more than $150,000. The facility has also saved a similar amount. From left are Finger Lakes Local 1st Vice President Ed Figueroa, CSEA President Danny Donohue, Finger Lakes Local Executive Vice President Steve Hurley, Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Commissioner Thomas Maul, Finger Lakes Local 5th Vice President Doug Drake, Finger Lakes Local President Kathy Button, and Finger Lakes Local Treasurer Dan Stone.
CSEA files lawsuit over Pataki administration’s Empire scam

ALBANY — CSEA has filed a lawsuit in State Supreme Court in Albany challenging the Pataki administration’s plan to raid a special reserve used to stabilize premium rate increases for the Empire Plan health insurance program.

State employees and other participants in the Empire Plan will face severe health insurance premium increases if the Pataki administration gets away with a scheme to siphon a dedicated fund in blatant violation of state employee contract agreements and state law.

“This action amounts to defrauding people on their premium payments and threatens to undermine the stability of the Empire Plan’s rates forever more,” said an angry CSEA President Danny Donohue. “Once again the Pataki administration is making the wrong choice.”

CSEA has filed a contract grievance with the Governor’s Office of Employee Relations and is preparing a lawsuit over the administration’s deceitful action.

The complicated scheme involves the Pataki administration unilaterally diverting $135 million from the Empire Plan’s Rate Stabilization Fund to pay Medicare Part B premiums for retired public employees. The Rate Stabilization Fund was established by negotiated agreement in the late 1980s.

Because the Empire Plan is an experience rated plan, any surplus funds from premiums paid by the participating employees and employers go into the fund at the end of the year to be used to hold down premium increases for the next year.

Medicare Part B premiums have never been part of Empire Plan or any other health insurance payments for active employees going back to the inception of the Taylor Law in 1967.

CSEA only learned of the administration’s illegal plan when a union representative questioned an obscure footnote note during a labor-management briefing on projected 2006 Empire Plan rates.

“Not only is the administration defrauding the plan participants and the taxpayers of New York, but they were being dishonest by trying to pull a fast one,” Donohue said. “The money that they’re taking is not theirs to take — it belongs to those who have paid the premiums.”

Suffern workers oust stubborn mayor

SUFFERN — Political patience paid off for village workers looking to organize under CSEA when they worked to oust Mayor James Giannettino from office after the mayor repeatedly rebuffed their union-forming efforts.

Across the state, CSEA members turned out on Election Day to help union-backed candidates win office.

Giannettino’s bull-headed approach — ignoring the organizing effort, changing work rules, then ignoring the Public Employees Relations Board (PERB) when it ordered him to restore the work rules, ultimately led to his loss.

The workers, with help from CSEA and the Rockland County Central Labor Council, leafleted, worked phone banks and put up campaign signs. Giannettino was defeated by a nearly 2-1 ratio (1,923-1,021).

The new mayor, Democrat John Keegan, has agreed to recognize and work with the union to improve the workers’ conditions, said Scott Brown, who drives a refuse truck in Suffern and has worked there almost 25 years. He credits Bill Riccaldo, president of CSEA’s Rockland County local, for turning the workers into a cohesive political force.

As for getting rid of Giannettino, Brown said, “Are you kidding me? It’s great! It’s like a thousand pounds were taken off our backs.”

Political action across state

CSEA activists across the state pushed ahead to elect pro-CSEA candidates.

Thousands of phone calls, literature drops, labor-to-labor and other campaign activities played a major role in getting elected officials who are friendly to working families elected to office.
For an organization that’s 95 years old, CSEA had a very dynamic year

There was no chance to rest on our laurels because we had more than our share of issues and fights from one end of the state to the other in 2005. We had to prove why we have earned our reputation as New York’s leading union, and we did!

The range of challenges we confronted over the past year is too great to detail with any justice here. I’ll leave that to a special state of our union message in next month’s edition. It is worth mentioning that over the past 12 months we stopped a reckless plan to undermine Social Security; made progress on ensuring the future of public health care (an effort that must continue into the new year); held our own against a government in meltdown in Erie County; and secured scores of agreements after protracted fights. These are no small accomplishments.

It is also important to note that around all of these and other challenges, CSEA members demonstrated extraordinary kindness and generosity in responding to the natural disasters that bracketed the year. The response of CSEA members to the South Asia tsunami of last December and the ongoing recovery from Hurricane Katrina has been inspiring. The desire to help others is a true reflection of the best in all of us and what CSEA is all about.

I thank you for all that you do and challenge you to get involved and help make our union even better in the new year.

I hope the joy of the holiday season will be with all of you and your loved ones.

P.S. My sincere congratulations and thanks to our first LEAD graduating class (see story, Page 15). These 32 activists have dedicated themselves for the past 18 months to an intensive program that will help them to better serve the CSEA membership. They deserve our appreciation.
Challenges remain, even after contract fight

UNIONDALE — Protracted and sometimes bitter contract campaigns can seem unending.

It took a highly visible campaign, numerous pickets, intense lobbying, political action, and skilled negotiating before workers for the Nassau Health Care Corporation achieved a contract earlier this year.

While such campaigns garner a lot of visibility, what often goes unseen is the day-to-day work union members are doing on the job while they commit energy, sacrifice time and expend unlimited patience working toward the goal of a better contract.

A contract is also no guarantee that management won’t attempt to cut corners, force overtime and keep the bottom line in mind. Along with Nassau University Medical Center and outlying clinics, the 880-bed A. Holly Patterson Extended Care Facility is one of the highest rated nursing homes in the nation, but the employees still face numerous challenges.

“These people are getting little or no recognition from management for all the hard work they do. Working out of title is a real problem,” said Nassau County Local President Jerry Laricchiuta. “CSEA is a strong union, and we’re going to continue to demand that our workers get treated with respect.”

“The lack of staff is probably our biggest challenge,” said A. Holly Unit President Les Eason. “They’re doing some hiring but for most of our people, it’s still a very tough situation,” he said.

“The staff is very caring and diligent here. We’re like a strong chain, we all pull together,” said Registered Nurse Terry Davenport. “But on my floor we have many psych patients, and people with substance abuse issues, so you also have to have ‘eyes in the back of your head,’” she said.

“CSEA is a strong union, and we’re going to continue to demand that our workers get treated with respect.”

“...I came here after 16 years of providing day care and seeing the problems of day-care providers going nowhere. When I heard about VOICE and looked into it a little bit more, it was like an angel appeared and we finally are going to get someplace.”

— Deb Dickson, Montgomery County, group Family day-care provider speaking at the recent CSEA VOICE summit.
Pataki hoses down state firefighter disability benefits

NEWBURGH — Firefighters at Stewart Air National Guard Base respond each day to calls on the base and the adjoining commercial airport, and regularly back up the busy paid and volunteer fire companies in neighboring municipalities.

Should Stewart firefighters ever develop heart or lung disease or cancer stemming from their firefighting days, Gov. George Pataki doesn’t seem to think they deserve compensation.

In October, Pataki vetoed, for the second year in a row, a bill that would allot disability benefits for firefighters employed by the state Division of Military and Naval Affairs who suffer from job-related heart and lung disease or cancer.

“The DMNA firefighters put their lives on the line just like any other firefighter, so they should not be treated as second-class citizens,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said.

State Division of Military and Naval Affairs firefighters do not receive state compensation for on-the-job injuries.

“For Governor Pataki, whose own father was a firefighter in their hometown of Peekskill, to deny us this benefit is outrageous,” said David Boswell, president of the Hudson Valley Division of Military and Naval Affairs Employees Local. “You’d think he’d be more sympathetic.”

Boswell said state military and naval affairs firefighters actually undergo more frequent training than most firefighters due to the nature of their job. The firefighters at Stewart are stationed in two firehouses, one near the commercial airport and one at the guard base. Most are trained as emergency medical technicians, as they are the first responders for all types of emergencies at Stewart.

“We’re also unique because, unlike regular fire departments that have separate ladder, hose and rescue companies, we handle all three areas,” said Boswell.

Whatever Pataki’s objection to the bill was, Boswell said it should have nothing to do with the level of activity for the base firefighters. The state division has other fire companies in Syracuse, Schenectady and Long Island. For the workers at Stewart, the responsibility is at least doubled due to the responsibility to respond to calls at the airport, in addition to frequent mutual aid calls.

“Just the other day, we had a major emergency when a FedEx plane made an emergency landing due to an on-board fire,” Boswell said. “The seriousness of that requires most of the fire companies in the county to respond, not just us. Later that day, we handled an emergency on one of the military’s C-5 jets, and in the evening, we responded to calls one town away where volunteer firefighters had two house fires.”

Aside from the veto being an insult, Boswell said several former firefighters could have used the benefits.

“We’ve had workers who have left because of heart problems,” he said. “So, we will keep trying and hoping for next year.”

— Jessica Stone

Stay informed about what state government is doing through

INSIDE ALBANY

CSEA is a longtime, major underwriter of this award-winning public television program. See the times below for the 2005 broadcast schedule in your area.

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"The DMNA firefighters put their lives on the line just like any other firefighter, so they should not be treated as second-class citizens."
Union leads fight for safe workplace

MANHATTAN—Concerned the air is still not safe to breathe at the 90 Church St. building, CSEA Metropolitan Region members recently joined scores of workers from the 90 Church St. Labor Coalition, environmental activists and elected officials at a rally for workplace health and safety on the steps of City Hall.

"Too many people have already become seriously ill because of government failures following Sept. 11," said Deb Hanna, president of the CSEA state Health Research Institute Local. She was joined by state Department of Health representative Marie Rogers Granger and CSEA Public Service Commission Local President Rene Jackson.

"We call on the United States Postal Service and the New York City Housing Authority to do the right thing, like the New York state departments of Health and Public Service and install double windows on all floors at 90 Church St.,” Hanna said.

Workers presented petitions, signed by more than 1,300 city, state and federal workers employed in the building, to elected officials. They are demanding that all floors at 90 Church St. be equipped with double windows. Only four of the 15 floors have double windows to shield workers from contaminated air and noise.

90 Church St. was heavily contaminated with lead, asbestos, mercury, dioxin, mold and other dangerous poisons during the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center. It took nearly three years for the building to be decontaminated and opened.

The workers’ health and safety are still in jeopardy given the numerous environmental hazards they will have to face over the next decade or more from the demolition of contaminated buildings nearby and the massive construction projects around the World Trade Center site.

"As an occupational safety and health professional, I believe that it is vital for all employees at 90 Church St. to have the protection that double windows offer," CSEA Occupational Safety and Health Specialist Komilla John said. "New York City cannot afford to continue exposing hard-working public servants to harmful contaminants."

Some of the most heavily contaminated buildings in New York City lie within a few blocks of 90 Church St., including the Deutsche Bank Building at 130 Liberty St. and Fiterman Hall at West Broadway and Barclay St. The demolition of the Deutsche Bank Building has already begun and Fiterman Hall will follow shortly.

— David Galarza

Mount Vernon library employees back to work

MOUNT VERNON — CSEA members at Mount Vernon Public Library are back to work after weeks of fighting to resolve health concerns and get the laid-off workers back on the job.

Dozens of CSEA members were affected by layoffs the library made stemming from the shutdown of the library building due to construction problems. The actual reason for the layoffs is still unclear, however, CSEA was very clear in demanding an end to the layoffs.

Mount Vernon officials closed the library in late August to accommodate a much-needed roofing project, but when employees learned of possible asbestos contamination within the building, they objected to returning because of the potential health risk.

The breaking point came when employees reported to work wearing masks and gloves to protest the possible health hazard. The next day, they received their pink slips.

Additional asbestos testing later showed the library interior was within legal asbestos limits. Still, the employees remained out of work and told to stand by, as they could be called to return at any point.

“It certainly wasn’t what you would call a vacation,” said Emma Maraia, who heads the library’s circulation department. “I tried to keep busy, doing a lot around the house and catching up on doctor appointments, but it wasn’t a vacation.”

The library finally reopened on Oct. 31. During their six-week layoff, employees were eligible for unemployment payments, but many struggled to make ends meet, as the payments barely equaled half of their regular paycheck.

“It was hard,” said Val Barden, a library clerk who has worked full time at the library for five years. “My bills collected and I’m still trying to get back on track. I had unemployment, but I’m a single mother with three kids, so it wasn’t easy.”

The priority for CSEA members now, said Unit President Gary Newman, is just to get back to normal. The unit’s contract negotiations, ongoing for two years, had been on the back burner recently, but Newman hopes the unit will settle soon.

Another concern for workers is the control of the library. The facility, the largest in Westchester and the county’s central library, is run by a board of trustees, but because it receives money from the City of Mount Vernon, the mayor and city council members have some influence. The mayor was recently quoted in a local newspaper stating he wants the city to take control of the library.

Whatever happens, the library’s employees are just happy to be back to work.

“You really just have to do one day at a time,” said Marcella Jenkins, a librarian. “If you think too much about the issues such as control of the library or contract negotiations, it’ll make you crazy. I’m just happy to be back.”

— Jessica Stone

Library clerk Val Barden works at the library’s busy circulation desk.

“T here are a lot of people doing child care in their homes illegally and our state just looks the other way because they’re too busy. They can’t be bothered. Those are the people you hear about on television the most. You know ‘the child died in family child care home’ and then it turns out it was an unlicensed child care facility. The licensed providers care and we want to do the right thing.”

— Kim Bannister, Erie County, licensed group family child care provider, speaking at the recent VOICE organizing summit.

CSEA NEW YORK’S LEADING UNION
Represents 50,000 Workers in SOCIAL SERVICES and ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

“W hat I really wanted was to get back to work.”

CSEA Voices

December 2005 THE WORK FORCE Page 7
PESH to toughen enforcement of sanitation worker safety standards

ALBANY — CSEA’s demand for tougher state enforcement of sanitation worker safety standards has prompted state Department of Labor Commissioner Linda Angello to direct the department’s Public Employee Safety and Health Bureau to more strictly enforce such standards.

CSEA President Danny Donohue wrote a letter to Angello demanding the state tighten its enforcement of sanitation worker safety standards after Ossining village sanitation worker and union member John Rodrigues died July 20 from falling off the back of a sanitation truck. PESH cited the village for several unsafe operating practices that violate waste industry standards set by the American National Standards Institute.

Rodrigues was the fifth CSEA member in 18 years who died while working on sanitation trucks. Several other local government agencies were also recently cited by PESH for sanitation worker safety violations.

“What makes (Rodrigues’) loss even more tragic is the fact that it could have so easily been prevented,” Donohue wrote. “Let’s not let Mr. Rodrigues’ death have been in vain.”

Angello, in her response to Donohue’s letter, wrote that PESH will work with local government agencies in complying with sanitation worker safety standards, including identifying and correcting potential hazards before accidents occur. PESH will also examine the current sanitation safety worker standards.

— Janice Marra

Waterfront commission workers ratify contract

NEW YORK — CSEA members working for the Waterfront Commission of New York Harbor recently scored a victory when they ratified a contract that will provide them with significant salary increases over the next three years.

“I am so happy that the commission is going to recognize something which is long overdue,” said CSEA representative Linda Smith. “Those with longevity (20 years) will be getting a lump sum on the first week in December.”

The new contract will also include new benefits for retirees. “It’s definitely going to help our retirees,” Smith said. “This benefit was approved by everyone involved in the negotiations.”

Additional benefits include two additional days of sick leave, an annual vision benefit and an increase in the premium paid by the commission for dental care from 50 percent to 100 percent.

CSEA members employed with the Waterfront Commission celebrate their new contract.

Seated from left are Theresa Landella, Linda Smith, Nancy Lombardi, Wilson Diejuste, Al Sugarman, Ronald Arthur and Catherine Teaman. Standing, from left, are Cheryl Mangin, Carmen Pickell and AnnaMarie Gattullo.

The Waterfront Commission is a quasi-public, private agency that licenses water-bound cargo in New York and New Jersey.

Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio, applauded the efforts of the negotiating committee. “Our members at the Waterfront Commission serve an invaluable public service,” he said. “This contract is an affirmation of that role and on behalf of CSEA, I want to commend these members for helping to protect our ports and waterfront.”

— David Galarza

“Let’s not let Mr. Rodrigues’ death have been in vain.”

I’m here this weekend at this VOICE summit because a friend of mine invited me who is an organizer for VOICE in Buffalo. He told us all these interesting and wonderful things that VOICE was doing for the family child care community and it sounded so good I wanted to be a part of it.”

— Antoinette Davis, Buffalo, family child care provider, speaking at the recent VOICE organizing summit.
Yonkers school workers demonstrate for fair contract

YONKERS — More than 700 members of the CSEA Yonkers Public Schools Non-Teaching Unit sent a strong message to the district’s Board of Trustees recently through a massive demonstration before a board meeting dominated by speakers from CSEA.

Nearly three years without a contract, the unit’s 1,500 members have united in their fight for a contract. Members overwhelmingly voted down a previous agreement earlier this year, which included zero percent raises for two of the three contract years.

“You will see us again and again until we have a resolution,” said Unit President Bobbie DiBattista, addressing board members at the board meeting. “It is time for resolution. It is time for a contract.”

The demonstration occurred outside of Saunders Technical and Trades High School. CSEA members, including dozens who were bused in from other locations because of limited parking, lined the street, chanting a reference to the last contract offer: “Zero, zero, two, just won’t do.”

Minutes before the meeting’s start, members filed into the auditorium, filling the large room. DiBattista and three other CSEA members addressed the board. After DiBattista finished speaking, the members exited the auditorium en masse.

“The majority of our members are parents here, homeowners and taxpayers,” said Ken O’Rourke, a 35-year custodian for the district.

“The contract offer of zero, zero, two (percent raises) is an insult.”

The protracted contract fight is largely tied to the financial difficulties the district experiences due to the state funding formula that has consistently left the city school district short of money each year.

While state lawmakers have often come through with short-term cash in previous years, the district lacks the continuous stream of money it needs to operate without a deficit.

“Let’s hope the awesome turnout of CSEA members showed the Board of Trustees we mean business and showed Albany that city school districts continue to encounter problems because of the twisted formula that allots their state funding,” Southern Region President Diane Hewitt said.

“I have to commend Bobbie and the officers on their organized effort for this demonstration, which was one of the largest in the Westchester local’s history,” Westchester Local President Jack McPhillips said. “The Yonkers CSEA members have been reinvigorated in their fight.”

— Jessica Stone

Rulings back retirees in benefit changes

WATERTOWN — CSEA is fighting to protect retiree health benefits. The union sued and recently won two cases involving local government and school district employers who are trying to save money on the backs of retirees by changing benefits.

In Lewis County, CSEA is fighting the county’s imposition of a new health plan called the National Employee Benefit Companies, or NEBCO plan, for everyone under the county’s current plan who is over age 65.

Under the current contract, the county is required to provide a health plan to all retirees that is the same as that for county employees. The contract expires in June 2006. Based on that, CSEA filed for breach of contract, which a judge has upheld.

Under the NEBCO plan, retirees over 65 years old had to pay 50 percent of their prescription drug cost. For some, that meant monthly bills of $500 to $1,000, with one individual paying nearly $4,000 a month for cancer treatments.

Lewis County is appealing the judge’s ruling, while CSEA is now filing claims to reimburse retirees who had to pay additional expenses under the NEBCO plan. CSEA is also filing an age discrimination claim with the Employee Equal Opportunity Commission.

In Watertown, CSEA and the New York State United Teachers won a ruling allowing the two unions to proceed with a class-action lawsuit against the city school district, charging the district illegally raised health insurance premiums for retirees.

Under the 1994 state Health Insurance Moratorium Law, a school district is prohibited from raising health insurance premiums for retired employees unless it equally raises them for active employees.

CSEA filed jointly with NYSUT because teachers and other school employees are equally affected. The school district is appealing the case but has withdrawn the premium increase until the appeal is decided.

My biggest challenge is the infant provider ratio for group family providers. You can only have two children under the age of 2 per provider and I don’t agree that a child is an infant until the age of 2. I feel the spot should be opened up earlier so we could provide access to day care to more New York state families.”

— Cheryl Oare, Fulton County, group family day-care provider, speaking at the recent VOICE organizing summit.
Child care providers make their voices heard

ALBANY — More than 100 independent day-care providers from across the state recently attended a two-day child care advocacy summit hosted by CSEA and the Voice of Independent Childcare Educators.

VOICE, a professional association of more than 700 family child care providers, has been working with CSEA to improve their profession and the quality of care for the children they serve.

The providers, who run small day-care operations in their homes, have joined forces to take on the difficult issues they face, including funding cuts, lack of input on regulations that govern their work, lack of access to affordable health insurance and lack of respect for their profession.

“You deserve to be recognized and valued as educators,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said. “You play a critical role for our children and our economy. No other business could open its doors unless you open yours.”

Donohue introduced Sen. Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, who told the providers he understands the critical role child care plays in New York state and appreciates the special role family child care providers play in the state’s child care system.

Bruno, who has a long-standing relationship with CSEA, received a standing ovation from the providers when he told them he looks forward to working with VOICE and CSEA to help fix the problems providers face.

Providers at the summit gave eloquent testimony about the challenges they face in their efforts to deliver high quality day care to children. A Workers’ Rights Board charged with developing recommendations to resolve the providers’ concerns heard their testimony.

The board is a project of the local Labor-Religion Coalition/Johns with Justice chapter, one of 60 workers’ rights boards across the country that support, strengthen and publicize the rights of working people. Board members include State Assemblymen Paul Tonko (D-Amsterdam) and James Tedisco (R-Schenectady), Albany County District Attorney David Soares, Early Childhood Educator Lynn S. Morris, and the Rev. Joseph Lusak, pastor, First United Presbyterian Church in Troy.

“This summit provided these workers a unique opportunity to testify before a panel of distinguished elected officials as well as prominent community and religious leaders,” Donohue said. “It was truly a chance to have their voice heard.”

“We needed CSEA to come in and have that power behind them to help us get our voice heard,” said Kim Bannister, a 13-year licensed group family child care provider from Erie County. “Coming here today has made a huge difference. We’ve never been able to get legislators to come and listen to our problems. Never.”

Deb Dickson, a 14-year group family day care provider from Montgomery County, said she was extremely optimistic about teaming up with VOICE and CSEA. “I said to the girl sitting next to me, ‘Who, I feel like Norma Rae. It’s going to happen. It’s going to happen.”

The VOICE campaign began three years ago when providers in Schenectady County contacted CSEA for help dealing with a cumbersome, unclear county reimbursement system. Since then, the union and the providers have worked together on many issues, including medication administration regulations, funding issues and county payment systems.

Last February, VOICE representatives delivered more than 1,200 signed petitions to state Office of Children and Family Services officials in Albany, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo resulting in changes to the agency’s web site, which the providers said had endangered children in their care and misled parents seeking day care for their children.

“Thishsummithprovidedhtheseshworkersha

Family day-care providers from across the state arrive in Albany for the child care advocacy summit hosted by CSEA and VOICE.

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Last February, VOICE representatives delivered more than 1,200 signed petitions to state Office of Children and Family Services officials in Albany, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo resulting in changes to the agency’s web site, which the providers said had endangered children in their care and misled parents seeking day care for their children.

“As her children Katrina and Ryan look on, parent Barbara Stevens testifies about the security she feels when leaving her children in the care of VOICE activist Joyce Burch.”

Child care provider Denise McFadden, top, pleads with members of the Workers’ Rights Board, top right, to address problems she and other providers are experiencing getting timely reimbursement payments.

Child care provider Edith Gaines-Rivera discusses issues concerning providers at the recent VOICE summit.

Ed Mollor

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Albany County District Attorney David Soares, left and Assemblyman Paul Tonko listen to testimony. Both political leaders expressed concern about issues with the Office of Children and Family Services web site that providers say could put children at risk.

Sen. Majority Leader Joseph Bruno and CSEA President Danny Donohue meet with child care providers attending the summit. Bruno expressed his commitment to working with CSEA and VOICE on the challenges providers face.

The providers face, including housing cuts, lack of input on regulations that govern their work, lack of access to affordable health insurance and lack of respect for their profession.

“You deserve to be recognized and valued as educators,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said. “You play a critical role for our children and our economy. No other business could open its doors unless you open yours.”

Donohue introduced Sen. Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, who told the providers he understands the critical role child care plays in New York state and appreciates the special role family child care providers play in the state’s child care system.

Bruno, who has a long-standing relationship with CSEA, received a standing ovation from the providers when he told them he looks forward to working with VOICE and CSEA to help fix the problems providers face.

Providers at the summit gave eloquent testimony about the challenges they face in their efforts to deliver high quality day care to children. A Workers’ Rights Board charged with developing recommendations to resolve the providers’ concerns heard their testimony.

The board is a project of the local Labor-Religion Coalition/Johns with Justice chapter, one of 60 workers’ rights boards across the country that support, strengthen and publicize the rights of working people. Board members include State Assemblymen Paul Tonko (D-Amsterdam) and James Tedisco (R-Schenectady), Albany County District Attorney David Soares, Early Childhood Educator Lynn S. Morris, and the Rev. Joseph Lusak, pastor, First United Presbyterian Church in Troy.

“We needed CSEA to come in and have that power behind them to help us get our voice heard,” said Kim Bannister, a 13-year licensed group family child care provider from Erie County. “Coming here today has made a huge difference. We’ve never been able to get legislators to come and listen to our problems. Never.”

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Sex offenders dumped at MPC

MANHATTAN – A surprising and controversial move by Gove. George Pataki to dump convicted sex offenders into a ward at Manhattan Psychiatric Center has been met with fear and demands by CSEA members to increase safety, provide additional training and staff.

“The decision to transfer these hardened criminals to this facility was a complete surprise,” said MPC Local President Sam Koroma. “It was irresponsible for OMH to not provide our work force with advance notice, training and additional staff before transferring these clients.”

Described by local newspapers as the “Dirty Dozen,” these sex offenders were to be released from prisons across the state the day they finished their sentences.

However, by invoking New York’s involuntary commitment law, Pataki was able to quietly transfer them to MPC starting in late September. This law allows authorities to confine people whom they deem mentally ill and potentially dangerous in order to keep them off the streets.

At press time, a Manhattan State Supreme Court judge ruled against Pataki, determining that the governor had improperly confined the men in the state psychiatric center. The state is expected to appeal the decision. In the meantime, these clients will remain at MPC.

“When they [the sex offenders] first arrived management at MPC was just as surprised as the staff,” said Koroma who demanded a meeting to discuss the situation with management after several of these clients threatened to take over the ward.

“After finishing their prison terms, we didn’t know how they would react to being placed in a psychiatric facility,” said Tommy Blakes, a mental health therapy aide who reported the threat to management.

That threat resulted in the removal of six sex offenders to a more secure unit at Kirby, next door.

“They are trying to make sure that the members are safeguarded and working in conditions that do not compromise their safety,” said Koroma.

With a commitment to train workers and a pledge to increase the minimum levels of staffing in the ward during the day and night shifts, members say they are a little more relieved about dealing with this population whose sordid crimes have become tabloid fodder in recent weeks.

Management has also received additional secure care treatment aid items and are currently interviewing employees for upgrades.

Aside from being sexual predators, “they are coming in here with a prison mentality,” said Koroma. “While we are very good at what we do, we are not used to dealing with this population.”

Koroma added that his members will “embrace the challenge because it’s new. But we are also cautious in terms of risking human lives.”

— David Galarza

Back on the job in Mt. Vernon

Employee Assistance Programs can help during the holidays

For some, the holidays can be two months of increased stress brought on by financial difficulties, family issues, the melancholy of shorter fall and winter days or many other factors that can make life seem more difficult.

Whatever the issue, Employee Assistance Program coordinators want union members to know most is their doors are always open but nothing of any discussion ever leaves their offices.

Confidential help
EAP is a labor-management agreement to provide services for employees aimed at making workers more productive by helping them cope — confidentially — with problems they may face in and out of the workplace.

CSEA pioneered the program with New York state in the late 1970s and has been a strong supporter since.

While substance abuse is often the root of many problems, CSEA EAP programs offers help in a myriad of areas.

Health care proxies, wills, cultural differences for foreign workers, parenting help — for parents and the children of elderly parents, stress, career issues, problems with a boss, financial problems are some of the areas an EAP program can offer help.

No problem is too big or too small, EAP coordinators say.

EAP does not directly provide counseling therapy, financial, legal or medical assistance.

Assessment, referral
Full-time or part-time EAP coordinators — some of them CSEA members — interview their “clients,” make an assessment and prepare a referral.

EAP’s help is also available to the spouses, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and children of CSEA members.

Today most state agencies have EAP in place. The program also has dozens of coordinators overseeing programs helping up to 35,000 CSEA local government members.

EAP is also a valuable tool for management, giving employers an option other than discipline to help their workers get help.

The Employee Assistance Program also coordinates food drives, blood drives and other charitable events, allowing workers to help others in need, building morale.

EAP coordinators and volunteers emphasize any request made by an employee is kept confidential. In fact, volunteers don’t keep records so nothing may be learned from a worker’s visit.

If you think you need help, contact an EAP coordinator in your workplace today!


Union members honored in lifesaving try

Two CSEA members employed as cooks at Mount McGregor Correctional Facility are being recognized for their efforts to save a co-worker in September.

Tim Trombley and Jeffrey Harvey were at work in the kitchen when a corrections officer was stricken with a massive heart attack. Trombley and Harvey attempted to resuscitate their co-worker and called for emergency assistance.

Despite their efforts, the heart attack was too severe and the officer died. This close-knit group of workers say they are still shaken by the death of one of their own.

Trombley and Harvey were recognized for their efforts to save the officer’s life. They received a framed certificate in a brief ceremony held in the facility’s superintendent’s office.

Trombley and Harvey say they were just doing what anyone else would have done and certainly didn’t expect any awards.

Mount McGregor Local President Clifford Seguin said the recognition is important.

“Too often, we only hear negative things,” he said. “We need to point out the positive efforts of our members.”

— Therese Assalian

Union members honored in lifesaving try

From Rensselaer to New Orleans, via CSEA Street

State Office of Children and Family Services Local members collect donations in the lobby of a department building in Rensselaer for “CSEA Street,” a row of houses Habitat for Humanity will build in storm-ravaged Louisiana with money donated by CSEA members. Local members bought a doghouse to donate to one of the Habitat homes. Members will raise money by having donors pay to sign a shingle. Signers can include messages of hope to the family who will eventually live in the home that will include the doghouse. From left to right are Treasurer Irena Glogowski, Executive Vice President Mary Hamilton, Local President Richard Chaffin, Kristina Stuto and Sam Hjardemaal. For more information, visit www.csealocal1000.org.
38 years ago ...

1967 changed the face of CSEA. That year, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller signed the Public Employees Fair Employment Act, or the Taylor Law. The new law, which took effect Sept. 1, 1967, mandates collective bargaining for public sector employees who wish to have union representation. With the Taylor Law, CSEA gained the right to negotiate and enforce contracts under the law. While the new law launched a new era for CSEA, it wasn’t the union’s only victory that year.

In November 1967, Rockefeller granted CSEA the exclusive right to represent nearly all New York state employees in collective bargaining with state officials. The union soon began making plans for contract negotiations with state officials.

The Taylor Law and Rockefeller’s recognition of CSEA as the state workers’ exclusive bargaining agent helped transform the association’s way of doing business into a true collective bargaining model.
CSEA activists demonstrate what it means to LEAD

Thirty-two CSEA activists from across the state recently completed the first-ever CSEA LEAD program. LEAD — the Leadership Education and Development Program — is an intensive program to help emerging activists gain the skills and knowledge necessary to better address the challenges facing the union at every level. The program extended over 18 months.

“The LEAD program was begun to ensure that we prepare CSEA activists for what they can expect to face now and in the future,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue. “This is only the beginning of our effort — we must build on the experience of each class and continue to involve more activists in this program.”

Donohue recognized the current class at a graduation program and commended them for their commitment to the program and the union. CSEA Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan, who played a central role in the development and presentation of the program, hosted the presentation.

LEAD was developed by the CSEA Education and Training Department with help from AFSCME, AFL-CIO and the Cornell Leadership Education and Training Development Program (C-LEx). LEAD is CSEA’s Leadership and Development Program, and is being viewed as a model for leadership development. The next session of LEAD is expected to begin in the spring.

Lifespire workers fight for quality care

MANHATTAN — Workers from Lifespire, a social service agency currently under investigation by the New York state attorney general, the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the National Labor Relations Board, recently provided elected officials with a scathing report on quality of care during a briefing at City Hall.

The briefing was part of comprehensive organizing campaign to help workers struggling to form a union with CSEA at Lifespire where about 1,300 workers provide services to the developmentally disabled and employs approximately 1,300 people in all five boroughs in New York City. About 16,000 CSEA members statewide do the same work as these employees.

“These workers provide important services to people with developmental disabilities despite understaffing, inadequate resources and supplies, substandard facilities, poor pay and declining benefits,” CSEA Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio said. “This complaint highlights many of these problems. How can these workers continue to maintain and improve quality of care if their rights are not respected?”

As with previous campaign events, Lifespire workers were joined at a City Hall news conference following the briefing by other workers, union activists and elected officials, including state Assemblyman Peter Rivera, state Sens. Diane Savino and Velmanette Montgomery and City Council member Robert Jackson.

“We are forming a union to benefit everyone at Lifespire,” said Etienne Julius, a Lifespire maintenance and direct care worker. “It’s the only way that management will pay attention to what is wrong and change the problems that are ongoing for the consumers and workers.”

With help from many elected officials, CSEA and Lifespire management have been engaged in talks for a card check/neutrality agreement, which would allow employees to choose if they want a union free of employer harassment and intimidation.

The union’s talks with Lifespire resumed in October after they were suspended in July. The talks were halted after Lifespire rejected the neutrality agreement. Agency management began pressuring employees to withdraw their support for a union through issuing memos, holding mandatory meetings and intimidating employees while talks were ongoing.

“We have been meeting with management, but even as they stall negotiations for a fair process for union recognition, they are harassing union leaders at the workplace,” said Natasha James, a Lifespire direct care worker.

“Management representatives look down on us workers and pretend there are no quality of care problems at Lifespire. But, what about the 750 citations by (the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities) in the last three years at Lifespire, or the death of a consumer that went uninvestigated?”

Lifespire receives 95 percent of its funding from the state. Lifespire workers are demanding that tax dollars and generous contributions from private sources go to improving quality of care, not to support anti-worker, union busting activity.

— David Galarza
Co-payment reimbursement program may help some CSEA members

Did you know the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund offers a prescription co-payment reimbursement benefit? Read on to learn more about this money saving benefit.

What is the prescription co-payment reimbursement benefit? EBF seeks to help members and their dependents defray some of the costs associated with excessive co-payments for prescription drugs. If you qualify for this benefit, you may be reimbursed up to $100.

Who is eligible for this benefit? CSEA state employees who are currently enrolled in a New York State Health Insurance Program (either the Empire Plan or a health maintenance organization) are entitled to reimbursement once annually for NYSHIP prescription drug co-payments only.

Some local government units such as towns, villages and school districts may have also negotiated this benefit in their collective bargaining agreements. Make sure to check your contract to see if your unit has negotiated this benefit.

I am eligible, so how do I qualify to receive the $100?

Once your co-payments for prescription drugs for the year (January - December) reach $300, the next $100 in prescription drug co-payment is reimbursable.

To get the maximum benefit of $100, wait until your co-payment expenses reach $400 before filing your claim.

If you do not accumulate $400 in co-payment costs before the end of the year, submit your claim after Dec. 31 for what you did pay over $300.

See the examples on the chart on this page for clarification.

What do I need to do to properly file a claim? Four easy steps:

• Get a prescription drug co-payment reimbursement claim form from a CSEA EBF representative, your union or personnel office, calling EBF at 1-800-CSEA-EBF, or by visiting EBF online at cseaefbf.com. Once you get the form, fill it out completely.

• Make a photocopy of YOUR (the member’s) Empire Plan or HMO insurance card.

• Get your original receipts OR a pharmacy print-out clearly indicating the co-payment amount.

• Place the completed claim form, the card photocopy and the receipts or print-out in an envelope and mail to:

CSEA Employee Benefit Fund
P.O. Box 516
Latham, N.Y. 12110-0516

What’s in it for you? An ever better future, and a little of YOUR money back in YOUR pockets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Co-payment Totals</th>
<th>Minimum Amount</th>
<th>Benefit Reimbursement</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andersons</td>
<td>$278</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>Do not meet requirements for reimbursement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smiths</td>
<td>$385</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>$85</td>
<td>Not maximum benefit, but some money is reimbursed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams</td>
<td>$478</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>Maximum benefit is reimbursed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Break in membership affects eligibility for union office, voting privileges

A break in union membership status can have long-term future implications. Your membership status affects your eligibility with respect to:

• seeking or holding union office;
• signing nominating petitions for potential candidates;
• voting in union elections, and;
• voting on collective bargaining contracts.

Only members “in good standing” can participate in these activities. To be in “good standing,” your dues cannot be delinquent.

If you go on unpaid leave or for any other reason have a break in your employment status, your dues will not continue to be paid through payroll deductions. You must make arrangements to pay your dues directly to CSEA to continue your membership status. If you are either laid off or placed on leave without pay status due to becoming disabled by accident, illness, maternity or paternity, you may be eligible for dues-free membership status for a period not to exceed one year. If you are called up for active military duty you may also apply for dues-free status.

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

Please notify the CSEA Membership Records Department at 1-800-342-4146, Ext. 1327, of any change in your status and what arrangements you are making to continue your membership in CSEA.

CSEA membership dues/agency shop fees effective Jan. 1, 2006

The scheduled adjustment in membership dues and agency shop fees is effective Jan. 1, 2006, to reflect AFSCME's minimum dues structure approved by delegates at the AFSCME convention.

The change applies to annualized salaries, not including overtime or location pay, based on salary at Jan. 1, 2006. No adjustments will be made during the year for raises or increments.

CSEA's membership dues and agency shop fee structure effective Jan. 1, 2006. The schedule is shown in the column at the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annualized Salary as of Jan. 1, 2006</th>
<th>Bi-Weekly Dues/Agency Shop Fee Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $5,000</td>
<td>$4.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000 - $9,999</td>
<td>7.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 - $12,999</td>
<td>10.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$13,000 - $15,999</td>
<td>12.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>$16,000 - $21,999</td>
<td>14.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>$22,000 - $27,999</td>
<td>15.72</td>
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<td>$28,000 - $29,999</td>
<td>16.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>$30,000 - $31,999</td>
<td>17.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>$32,000 - $33,999</td>
<td>17.98</td>
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<td>$34,000 - $35,999</td>
<td>18.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$36,000 - $37,999</td>
<td>19.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$38,000 - $39,999</td>
<td>20.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 and higher</td>
<td>20.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Members who are considering changing health insurance options for 2006 should weigh many factors before making a decision.

A good source of specific health insurance information is the free Choices guide available from the agency benefits administrator. Choices contains information on the Empire Plan and the health maintenance organizations which participate in the New York State Health Insurance Plan (NYSHIP).

Check the Rates

At the time this article went to press, the health insurance rates and deadlines publication for 2006 were being printed and mailed to enrollees’ homes. Members who want to change health insurance options must submit a signed Health Insurance Transaction Form PS-404, to their agency’s health benefit administrator by Dec. 16, 2005.

The 2006 biweekly health insurance premium deductions for CSEA active state employees are noted on the chart on this page. Although the Empire Plan has experienced a modest premium increase this year, the health maintenance organization premium rates vary. Many of the HMOs have made significant changes to their copayments and benefit structure, which may have resulted in a decrease in premium and extensive increases to out-of-pocket expenses.

Please remember to review all benefits changes and premium rates during this option transfer period. This is necessary because requests to change health insurance options outside the option transfer period are limited. See your General Information Book/Empire Plan Certificate for more information.

### NYSHIP 2006 Premium Rates for CSEA Executive Branch Active Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health plan name</th>
<th>NYSHIP option code</th>
<th>2006 individual premiums</th>
<th>2006 family premiums</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Empire Plan</td>
<td>001</td>
<td>21.07</td>
<td>85.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aetna</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>57.53</td>
<td>191.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Choice</td>
<td>066</td>
<td>14.17</td>
<td>69.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDPHP (Capital)</td>
<td>063</td>
<td>17.55</td>
<td>84.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDPHP (Central)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>18.63</td>
<td>110.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDPHP (W. Hudson Valley)</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>18.84</td>
<td>111.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Blue</td>
<td>067</td>
<td>16.41</td>
<td>99.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire BC/BS (Upstate)</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>21.17</td>
<td>123.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empire BC/BS (Downstate)</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>36.37</td>
<td>163.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire BC/BS (Mid-Hudson)</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>55.13</td>
<td>212.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHI HMO Albany Region</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>16.69</td>
<td>94.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHI HMO Hudson Valley &amp; Ulster Region</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>20.62</td>
<td>129.62</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIP</td>
<td>050</td>
<td>17.19</td>
<td>77.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMO Blue (Central NY Region)</td>
<td>072</td>
<td>55.25</td>
<td>181.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMO Blue (Utica Watertown Region)</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>96.96</td>
<td>282.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent Health</td>
<td>059</td>
<td>14.62</td>
<td>75.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>MVP Health Care (East)</td>
<td>060</td>
<td>16.56</td>
<td>103.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>MVP Health Care (Central)</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>25.15</td>
<td>127.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>MVP Health Care (Mid-Hudson)</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>32.76</td>
<td>147.64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preferred Care</td>
<td>058</td>
<td>13.58</td>
<td>62.68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Univera Healthcare</td>
<td>057</td>
<td>16.63</td>
<td>115.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vytra Health Plans</td>
<td>070</td>
<td>25.93</td>
<td>143.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Payroll dates for health plan changes for 2006

New health insurance options for administrative lag-exempt employees will begin Dec. 29, 2005. If you change options, the earliest paycheck in which an adjustment will be made is the paycheck of Dec. 14, 2005.

New health insurance options for employees under the institutional payroll will begin Jan. 5, 2006. The earliest paycheck in which you will see a health insurance deduction change will be the paycheck check of Jan. 4, 2006.

Because of processing time, most paycheck changes will be made retroactively in mid to late January and will include retroactive deductions to the effective date of coverage.

More information about the option transfer period is available at the agency personnel office.

### Promoting Good Health
As part of the CSEA 100 history project, CSEA has been interviewing individuals who have played a role in our history over the decades. The interviews will be used as part of a book and video documentary project being prepared for CSEA’s 100th anniversary. The interviews are also being archived at the CSEA archives at the Grenander Special Collections at the University at Albany. As we celebrate CSEA’s 95th anniversary, we are devoting the Leading Edge to some brief excerpts from a few individuals who have offered their perspectives for this project.

Tony Bailous, 1999 Mission Achievement Award Winner

“It’s extremely important for us to have a written history that our members can have access to. They need to know where we started and how we got to this point. It wasn’t something that was given to us. It was through hard work and sweat that we got to this point; the officers and the membership donating their time to move us forward. We had to fight every inch of the way. We document this so our members will know that they’re the ones who can make a difference.”

Norman Adler, Lobbyist, former AFSCME District Council 37 Legislative Director

“I think the union has understood the inextricable relationship between politics and government on the one hand, the collective bargaining fate on the other hand, and it’s used its politics rather well in order to advance the interest of its work force. The other thing is that the servicing arm of the union has gotten better and better.”

Larry Scanlon, former CSEA Executive Director, currently Director of Political Action, AFSCME

“I wanted to leave my footprint in concrete, not sand; to make a difference in the world and the union movement has allowed me to do that ... A lot of people have made a difference in people’s lives and that’s what it’s all about.”

Sue Crawford, 1997 Mission Achievement Winner

“It is critical that CSEA preserve its rich history to show future leaders of this great union CSEA’s evolution from a small social organization to a labor union and then to a member of the house of labor through the affiliation with AFSCME. People need to know how hard former leaders and activists fought, sometimes with each other, to make this union what it is today. The freedom, rights and privileges we now have are the result of much blood, sweat and tears. It didn’t happen through magic.”

Bill Curtin, 1998 Mission Achievement Award Winner

“Since CSEA does have such a great history, if we don’t remember our history and learn from it we’re very foolish. Depend on all of your resources, but depend on yourself the most and trust what you believe is right.”

Judy Remington Richards, longtime activist, Capital Region Retiree Local President

“My dad said you have to belong to a union to be protected ... The union will be there for you and I guess it was my dad who pushed me (to get involved). He always taught me if you’re right, you open your mouth and if you’re not right, you sit back and listen and then you open your mouth.”

Joel Schwartz, 1995 Mission Achievement Award Winner

“In the 1980s one of the issues that was a burning issue of our times was the issue of apartheid in South Africa ... We realized that the New York State Retirement System had billions of dollars invested in companies that did business directly in South Africa ... We tried to put pressure on the comptroller to divest the state retirement system of all those stocks. We did workshops at union conventions, we set up tables where we gave out literature and we really educated the membership of CSEA. Though we were ultimately not successful in getting the retirement system to divest itself of stock in companies that did business in South Africa, we were successful in getting them to not buy new stock with those companies ... It was one of the things that absolutely contributed to the downfall of apartheid.”

For more on CSEA’s history, including historic photos, visit www.csealocal1000.org
BUFFALO — CSEA delegates to the union’s 95th Annual Delegates Meeting approved the following first reading of an amendment to CSEA’s Constitution.

- Allowing one additional Board of Directors representative for any region with more than 10,000 education members. This is the same formula that is used for determining local government county seats on the Board of Directors.

Delegates approved the following changes to the bylaws, which go into effect immediately:

- Each region will receive an additional 25 cents per employee, making the annual payment 75 cents of the membership dues and shop fees collected from each employee of the region.
- Any Judicial Board member involved in Judicial Board matter will be granted a leave of absence from their Judicial Board seat until their Judicial Board matter is finally determined.
- Judicial Board mailings to the statewide officers with offices in headquarters will no longer be sent certified mail, return receipt requested but instead will be hand-delivered directly to statewide officer(s).
- The Judicial Board procedures for complaints initiated by the statewide President or statewide Treasurer will bypass the complaint phase and go directly to the charge phase where (1) the complaint is supported by a duly authorized audit by the CSEA Finance Department; or (2) the complaint is supported by a signed statement by the statewide President alleging that the underlying conduct is detrimental to the best interest of CSEA, or (3) the complaint is preceded by a suspension order by the statewide President and has been filed with the Judicial Board within seven days of the suspension.

AFSCME Family Scholarship deadline

The deadline to apply for the AFSCME Family Scholarship program is Dec. 31. All applications must be postmarked by that date. AFSCME will award 13 scholarships of $2,000 each to eligible high school seniors, which are renewable annually for a maximum of four years.

A generous donation from the American Education Services/Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency has allowed AFSCME to increase the number of scholarships from 10 to 13 awards.

Graduating high school seniors who are the children of AFSCME members or whose legal guardians are AFSCME members are eligible.
Union members save for the holidays!

The CSEA-endorsed Buyer’s Edge is a buy-by-phone consumer buying service designed to save you money on most major purchases including cars/trucks, large appliances, TVs, furniture and much more. Through the convenience of the toll-free numbers, you can call our vendors direct and talk to a “live” specialist who has product and service expertise, knows inventory availability, and, in many cases, can arrange delivery direct to your door as soon as possible.

For appropriate toll-free numbers, simply check out their web site* at www.buyersedgeinc.com.

*Important info: CSEA Username: 1811, and your Password: member1 available for access to the web site.

Here are some sample SPECIALS for CSEA members valid through Dec. 31, 2005. Call 1-800-377-3700, give your CSEA group# 1811, for the following great deals!

AUDIOVOX 15” FLAT SCREEN LCD TV: MODEL #1505
15 inch 4:3 LCD TV with built in speakers, table stand and NTSC Tuner
SUGG. RETAIL $ 439.00 ................... B.E. PRICE $279.00*

EMERSON 3 CD SHELF STEREO: MODEL #MS3105
3 CD changer system can be wall-mounted, set CDs for programmed or random order, and color-changing digital tuner display
SUGG. RETAIL $129.00 ................... B.E. PRICE $78.00*

HOOVER UPRIGHT BAGLESS VACUUM: MODEL #U5260
Bagless, 12.0 Amp Upright Vacuum, Hepa air filtration, on-board tools, adjustable height, power boost button
SUGG. RETAIL $129.00 ................... B.E. PRICE $75.00*

* Tax and Delivery not included

Buy union. Buy American.