Imagine a Governor Who Cares More About Tax Breaks For The Rich....

Than About Seniors In Need of Health Care.

It could cost You and Your community.

The Pataki budget: Wrong again

See Page 3
CBTU to hold annual convention

ALBANY — The Coalition of Black Trade unionists will hold its 35th international convention May 24-29 in Orlando, Fl.

The convention theme will be “CBTU at 35: Continuing the Fight for a New Economic Order.”

The event will include general sessions and workshops as well as the national women’s, retirees’ and youth conferences.

For additional information, contact Portia Given at (518) 257-1210, (800) 342-4146 or given@csea.unc.org.

Photo of the Month

State AFL-CIO President Denis Hughes announces the labor body’s endorsement of state Comptroller Alan Hevesi for re-election. Hevesi is fourth from left, CSEA joined in the endorsement.

Scholarship deadlines nearing

April 15 is the deadline for graduating high school seniors who are sons or daughters of CSEA-represented employees to apply for scholarships offered through CSEA. A single application covers three scholarships. Applications are available from local and unit presidents, CSEA Headquarters, region or satellite offices, or may be downloaded from the Member Benefits section at CSEA’s web site at www.csealocal1000.org.

New Thruway contract signed

From left, CSEA President Danny Donohue joins CSEA Thruway Authority Local President Nick Chiessa and CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Mike Sheldon in signing the local’s new contract. Behind Sheldon is Thruway Executive Director Mike Fleischer.

Comptroller backs CSEA’s NYSHIP suit

ALBANY — State Comptroller Alan Hevesi recently issued an opinion supporting CSEA’s position that the Pataki administration was illegally forcing employees and retirees covered under the state health insurance program to contribute toward the cost of Medicare Part B premiums for retired public employees.

The comptroller also said the state Civil Service Department attempted to clear the way for the illegal action.

“As we see it, the Pataki administration is taking money that is not theirs to take and it will harm our members and many others,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said. “We are pleased the comptroller agrees with our assessment and expect the courts will as well.”

CSEA filed a lawsuit in state Supreme Court in Albany last November when the Pataki administration proposed diverting $135 million from the Empire Plan’s Rate Stabilization Fund to pay Medicare Part B premiums.

The union charged the action would wipe out the reserve fund resulting in higher premiums for plan participants. In response to the union’s lawsuit, the administration scrapped that proposal, but on Jan. 1, began charging employees and retirees directly for Medicare Part B premiums for the first time in 40 years.

CSEA amended its lawsuit claiming the new action violated state civil service law rules and regulations, which require employers to pay 100 percent of the cost of Medicare Part B premiums. Nothing in the law, rules or regulations allowed the state or other public employers to pass on the costs to employees or retirees.

On Jan. 4, the state Civil Service Department, realizing its own rules prohibited the administration’s action, tried to amend the rules to pave the way for the employee contributions.

Similar lawsuits filed by other public employee unions in New York have been consolidated with the CSEA suit. The opinion from the Comptroller’s Office supports the unions’ position.

CSEA has also filed contract grievances with the Governor’s Office of Employee Relations.

— Ed Molitor

Dutchess County members fight for contract fairness

POUGHKEEPSIE — Members of the Dutchess County Unit are kicking their contract fight up a notch, with CSEA leaders firing back after the county declared impasse and said the union wasn’t doing its part.

In reality, the CSEA negotiating team agreed in negotiations to several contract points that would save the county significant money, Dutchess County Unit President Lizabeth Piraino said.

“Fair contract negotiations contain a certain amount of give and take, but the county seems to have trouble with the giving part,” she said.

Piraino noted that a meeting with a mediator was set for March.

The county unit has been without a contract since Dec. 31, 2004. Contract proposals from the county included health insurance concessions, some of which CSEA agreed to accept. The county’s demands came despite extensive media coverage of a county surplus.

The major sticking point now is the county’s demand that new hires pay an increased percentage of health insurance costs. CSEA members currently pay 15 percent; the county wants new hires to pay 20 percent.

Meanwhile, management employees contribute nothing toward premiums for their health insurance. The county’s position is that if CSEA does not accept all of the health insurance concessions, then there would be no deal.

“Our members are outraged that, given the county’s healthy financial surplus, we are being asked to dig even deeper to pay for our health insurance while those making the top salaries pay nothing,” Piraino said.

The county unit is expected to begin a contract campaign to draw public attention to the protracted negotiations.

— Jessica Stone
ALBANY — “The governor will be gone after next year. But the deficit he will leave us, as well as the unfinished business of a deteriorating health care system and public education system, will be with all of us for years.”

That was CSEA President Danny Donohue’s assessment of Gov. George E. Pataki’s 2006-07 executive budget proposal.

Testifying before state lawmakers on behalf of CSEA’s 265,000 members, Donohue pointed out they are doing more with less help following years of state budget deficits. He said New York must learn from the mistakes of the past when budget surpluses were squandered away in the form of tax cuts that led to those deficits.

Donohue said Pataki’s proposed tax cuts for the wealthy will require devastating cuts to health care, education, infrastructure and many other critical services.

“At a time when nursing homes and long-term-care facilities are already facing closure and severe service cuts, when it takes a court order to realize we are not adequately funding our schools, when business lines up and tells us our colleges are not producing at a high enough standard compared to other nations, when our roads and bridges are deteriorating, how can we justify implementing tax cuts that will only further all of these problems?” Donohue said.

Donohue said Pataki’s proposal to cut more than $1.3 billion in health care funding will not only directly affect the 65,000 CSEA members who work in health care facilities, it will hurt every New Yorker and their families who depend on quality health care being available where they live.

(See President’s column — Page 4)

Donohue also blasted the governor’s education plan, which he said does not do enough for public schools and shortchanges the majority of children in the state.

Pataki is calling for an additional 150 charter schools in upstate New York and an unlimited number in New York City. Donohue said the state must not continue to deprive public schools of state revenue to fund charter schools when so many of the charter schools have failed to improve public education.

“The governor and his supporters say we can’t fix the public schools by throwing more money at them, so apparently they think taking money away will somehow help,” he said.

Donohue also criticized Pataki’s interest in revamping public employee pensions, likening the governor to private corporations that no longer want to pay their employees for their years of service. He also told lawmakers the union opposes the governor’s early retirement incentive which he said will be costly, with little benefit to CSEA members who keep the state running.

— Ed Molitor

CSEA President Danny Donohue prepares to testify before state lawmakers about the damaging effects Gov. George Pataki’s proposed budget would have on New York’s future.

Statewide public health care relief sought

Reforming the funding formula and securing the future of public health care across New York is CSEA’s top legislative priority this year. Public nursing homes and large public hospitals are at serious risk.

At Erie County Medical Center, Executive Michael Young reached an agreement with Erie County Executive Joel Giambra to settle a lawsuit against the County. For the last two years, Giambra has ignored state law, and refused to pay ECMC its much-needed county subsidy. Despite a ruling by Supreme Court Justice Joseph Makowski in support of full subsidy to the health care network, Young opted to avoid trial and settle the suit with Giambra. But CSEA believes the settlement shortchanges the facility.

Despite a grassroots lobbying effort by CSEA against the settlement, county lawmakers approved the measure.

CSEA is considering legal action to have the settlement overturned in court.

Nassau University Medical Center

CSEA has been fighting tirelessly to protect the jobs of Nassau University Medical Center doctors.

Nassau Health Care Corp. recently laid off eight doctors as part of the corporation’s $32 million budget-slaicing plan.

Over the past four years, 941 Nassau University Medical Center employees have lost their jobs, forcing the remaining workers to face challenges in providing quality health care. Overall staffing has gone from 5,000 workers to 3,000 workers since 2001.

Nassau Local President Jerry Laricchiuta said he blames Daniel E. Kane, CEO of Nassau Health Care Corp, for causing the problems.

CSEA is holding a statewide Lobby Day for public nursing homes and health care facilities on Tuesday, March 14 and needs your participation! Contact your political action coordinator at your region office to sign up.

See region office phone numbers, Page 4.

CSEA members from the Van Duyk Nursing Home have been active for months fighting proposals to close the Onondaga County facility, which faces funding pressures similar to those of other public health care centers across the state.

The union has tried to open more dialogue with Kane, but with the latest rash of layoffs, things have hit a standstill.

Westchester Medical Center

Westchester Medical Center’s finances have improved significantly from last year. CSEA fought for and helped win $57 million in additional funding for the medical center last fall.
Pataki, Bush health care cuts will hit you like a Mack truck

CSEA members, like all New Yorkers, have been hit by a double whammy over the past month. The first hit came when Gov. George Pataki proposed his state budget. The second came when President George W. Bush proposed his federal budget. Both budgets have the same impact on health care funding: it’s like being hit by a Mack truck.

CSEA members working in health care have known for some time what it means to work under stress. Inadequate funding, understaffing, lots of make shift measures to keep helping people in need. The problem is real for all health care facilities but public facilities take the brunt of it. That’s why CSEA has been campaigning for more than a year to enact real reform that will begin to address the crisis.

The governor’s budget proposal is crafty when it comes to health care funding. He proposes many changes that sound good at first but when you get to the bottom line, they really hammer health care facilities.

The president’s proposals are far more heavy-handed. The Bush budget is simply a radical cutback on health care funding, including Medicare for the elderly. The impact on New York in the first year alone is estimated at $1.2 billion and it could get worse. That’s without considering the effect on access to care, overcrowding of facilities and higher health insurance premiums.

It must also be pointed out that both Pataki and Bush are proposing these devastating cuts in health care at the same time they are both pursuing more tax breaks for the wealthiest of the wealthy. It’s just wrong!

You and every other CSEA member will feel the pain if these proposals are enacted. CSEA will be fighting every step of the way for a more responsible approach — you need to get involved now and let your state legislators and congressional representatives know that these proposals are unacceptable. Otherwise, get ready to pay through the nose for health care that’s not as good as you have now.
Onondaga County members rally for contract, health care

SYRACUSE — CSEA members working for Onondaga County recently took to the streets and turned up the heat in their struggle for a fair contract, and to save the county’s nursing home.

They’ve been working under an expired contract since December 2004. Prior to their first mediation session, more than 700 county workers rallied outside their workplaces across the county to support the services they provide and the value they provide to taxpayers.

CSEA Onondaga County Local President Phil Graham said the union members are asking for a fair wage increase.

“We’ve got members working to help our area seniors get assistance to pay their heating bills, when many of our own members can’t afford to pay their own gas bills, thanks to the county’s unfair wage offer,” Graham said. “We’re just looking for a fair cost of living increase that allows our members to meet their basic needs and shows them some respect.”

CSEA is continuing efforts to pressure the county to offer a fair contract, and has put into place a strategic campaign to gain visibility and public support. Updates are being posted on the local’s website. The local reported progress in negotiations following the large rally.

CSEA has been running a strong campaign to save Onondaga County’s nursing home, the Van Duyn Home & Hospital. Under the slogan “Don’t cut our safety net,” workers have distributed lawn signs, posters, fliers and window stickers. They have been lobbying elected officials to try to reform the outdated and unfair Medicaid reimbursement methodology before the nursing home falls victim to the current funding crisis that’s already seen several public nursing homes sold to private operators. (See related story Page 3.)

— Mark M. Kotzin

CSEA has been running a strong campaign to save Onondaga County’s nursing home, the Van Duyn Home & Hospital under the slogan “Don’t cut our safety net.”

Almost time to retire?

Your local may pay the first year of CSEA retiree dues, which is only $12!

CSEA retiree members enjoy many of the benefits and discounts of belonging to a union. In return, you get access to a wide variety of money saving benefits such as:

• Travel discounts.
• A discounted consumer items buying service.
• Discounted dental and vision care programs.
• A personal legal services referral network.
• Receive The Work Force for $5 a year.

Being a CSEA retiree member also makes you part of a growing statewide body that can effectively advocate on your behalf:

• Legislative and political action programs designed to enhance and protect retiree pension and health benefits.
• Participation in a Retiree Local of CSEA.
• Effective lobbying against Social Security reform.
• Three informative publications.

For more information, visit www.csealocal1000.org and select “retirees” from the “Member Benefits” menu item.

“Cuts will only hurt the families and residents. If more homes close the people that can’t get into privates will have to be cared for by family at home and they may not be able to provide the care needed.”

— Mark Kingsley, registered nurse, Maplewood Manor in Saratoga County, on the state of public health care.
Nassau County jail workers shine despite challenges

MINEOLA — Many people who are unfamiliar with jails may think of them as places where inmates are simply shackled or locked behind iron gates.

One visit to the Nassau County Correctional Center can blow that image to pieces.

The 116 CSEA members who work in this maximum-security facility that houses about 1,500 inmates look danger in the face every day.

Unlike many outsiders’ images of inmates locked up in their cells, many of the inmates here walk freely within the jail. The inmates may be locked up, away from the outside world, but jail employees are locked up with them.

“They (inmates) watch you at all times, and you’re always walking a tightrope,” said CSEA Nassau County Local President Jerry Laricchiuta, who is also the president of the Sheriff’s Support Unit. “When you’re trying to work in this jail it’s a lot more than you just can’t leave keys around. It’s in everything you do; it’s your attitude, your actions; how you dress and how you speak.”

Table for 1,800, anyone?

CSEA members work alongside low-risk inmates, supervising their work in departments including buildings and grounds, automotive repair, and the kitchen, where jail employees and inmates prepare and serve 6,100 meals per day.

“Fifty percent of the time you spend worrying about the food, and the rest of the time you worry about security,” Kitchen Supervisor Dave Rodenburg said.

“Knives have to be in their proper places, or chained to counters. All utensils are also accounted for.”

He said jail officials frequently change employee work hours. Because the jail operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the hours can make family life tough.

Cook Lou DiNucci, who was stirring a 4-foot tall stew pot, said he loves the job. “I don’t mind the work or the inmates. If you’re straight with them, they’re straight with you,” he said.

Difficult conditions

“Violence could break out at any time. Disease is rampant, including HIV, hepatitis B, tuberculosis,” Laricchiuta said. “We’ve had our members come down with these diseases. It’s a very dangerous place to work.”

CSEA members who work as maintenance mechanics cut grass, repair potholes, weld iron gates, and ‘inmate proof’ the auto fleet. Tom Pugliese and Anthony Abrami maintain and secure fleet vehicles for departments that include corrections, probation, family court, and the sheriff’s department.

“We have to make sure every nut, bolt and screw is picked up and put away when we’re done, because they could be used to pick handcuffs,” Abrami said.

As in any large facility, nothing works without the clerks. Every inmate generates a stack of paperwork for issues including court activity, medical records, special dietary restrictions and workers’ time and attendance.

Skilled workers

The jail has its own plumbers, carpenters and air conditioning, heating and ventilation repair workers. Maintenance Mechanic Ed Melin fabricates and welds anything metal. “My work keeps people from getting out who aren’t supposed to be out and helps protect officers from inmate abuse.”

Kathy Spreckles keeps track of all the repairs and maintenance in the sprawling facility. “I deal with a lot of unhappy people. Lights go out, floors are slippery. There were four people working here with me; now it’s just me.”

Her lament is part of a county-wide epidemic: out-of-title work.

“It’s a systemic problem that we’re working on,” Laricchiuta said. “The members are doing two and sometimes three jobs. This administration has let so many people leave through attrition that we’ve lost around 40 members that way in this unit over the last four years, and they’re just not being replaced. We’re working to get the administration to promote and fill the positions accordingly.”

“The members at the jail exemplify the best spirit of public service,” said Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte. “Every day they endure trying conditions and a heavy work load to provide essential services. They are truly unsung heroes.”

Despite the stressful conditions, tense atmosphere, increasing demands and the crazy hours, Laricchiuta said CSEA members employed at the Nassau County Correctional Center make up “the finest group of professionals, and I’m proud to be one of them.”

“We are the heart and soul of the sheriff’s department and we don’t get the glory, but without us this jail would cease to function.”

— Rachel Langert

Kathy Spreckles, a clerk typist and the unit’s recording secretary, takes complaints and maintenance requests.

Another view: Terri Debiaw, 22-year CSEA member and Senior Account Clerk Typist, Cayuga County Nursing Home, on the state of public health care.

“They cut back on nursing positions, on that kind of care. We treat our residents as family. Any cuts in funding would be detrimental to their care. Up until the last few years, we’ve been self supporting, but with any additional cuts to finances, the issue of privatizing could possibly come up again. We ask our legislators to think of our residents first, and vote ‘no’ on budget cuts to health care.”

— Terri Debiaw, 22-year CSEA member and Senior Account Clerk Typist, Cayuga County Nursing Home, on the state of public health care.
Lotto rep a game ambassador

BROOKLYN — Sarah Ying feels like she's the jackpot with her job.
Darling around Brooklyn one afternoon, this proud member of the state Department of Taxation and Finance Local said she enjoyed being a New York State Lottery marketing representative.

"Sometimes, I feel like I gained 200 friends," said Ying. That's because Ying has been the main link between scores of small business owners, known as agents, who sell lottery products and the lottery agency for the past 10 years. "We make sure that everything runs smoothly," said Ying. By "everything" she means such things as making sure the phone lines attached to every lottery machine are working properly, the advertising and displays for the games are correct and current and stocking other materials. She also takes great pains to explain how each game works.
"Today is Mega (millions) day, so we have to make sure that all the agents have the jackpot posted correctly," said Ying. The jackpot on this particular Friday was $102 million.
"We are extremely fortunate to have such dedicated workers and union members like Ying at the Department of Taxation and Finance," said Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio.

A day in the life

Hopping around her territory in her state-issued minivan, Ying has become adept at finding parking even in the most congested business districts.

At Rainbow World in Brooklyn's Chinatown, store owner Joann Cheuck oversees an impressive and extremely busy lottery location with two lottery machines and a wall filled with colorful scratch off games.
"She's a very good helper," Cheuck said about Ying in between customers. "Whenever we have a problem we know that we can call her."
While lottery agents earn 6 percent of their lottery income, more importantly "the lottery brings in the traffic to help their core business," said Ying.
Wearing the black lottery jacket she was recently awarded for her stellar performance as a representative, Ying ruffled through several files and boxes in the rear of the van grabbing tape, scissors, signs, forms and other items she'll need for her next agent.
"This is my office," said Ying. She spends the bulk of her time in the field, usually visiting an agent twice a month. Lottery representatives generally serve about 200 agents throughout a particular region.
"This is the biggest region," said Ying. "It’s very busy and has the largest number of representatives."
Ying and our members in the lottery division make important contributions to our union and the New York State Lottery every day," said Taxation and Finance local president Pat Metzger.

Lottery Marketing Representative Sarah Ying, left, visits with Lottery agents in Brooklyn as part of her busy rounds checking Lottery outlets.

"It's very rewarding to know that the revenue goes to education," said Ying. While universities are always looking for ways to raise money, said Ying, "It is gratifying to meet the students, the recipients of our work and their proud parents.
"Among her more memorable moments, however, was getting dressed like King Kong and walking with 50 other representatives all over midtown Manhattan to promote the "King Kong" scratch off game.
"Even tourists were taking pictures of us," said Ying.

— David Galarza

CSEA Voices

Among her more memorable moments, however, was getting dressed like King Kong and walking with 50 other representatives all over midtown Manhattan to promote the "King Kong" scratch off game.

"We're already hurting for staffing as it is, and Patuelli's budget proposal could hurt even worse, cutting staffing and impacting the quality of care we deliver. Mandating is bad right now and this could make it worse."

— Teddy Watkins, maintenance worker, Golden Hill Health Care Center, Ulster County, on the state of public health care.

March 2006 THE WORK FORCE Page 7
Turning trash into electricity sparks CSEA members, town

COLONIE — CSEA members working at the Colonie town landfill are helping turn trash into cash. CSEA members in Colonie’s Unit B, which includes laborers, mechanics and equipment operators, and Unit C, which covers foremen, highway workers, water and sewer workers and fleet service workers, played a key role in preparations for a new gas-to-energy plant going online soon.

Methane is a natural by-product of organic decomposition and certain levels of methane, like those found in smaller landfills, pose few problems. Larger landfills must find a way to curtail emissions from landfill gas.

Gas to electricity
The CSEA first studied the concept of converting methane to electricity in the 1980s. After some starts and stops, town officials chose a private firm to build the plant to produce electricity.

That gas-to-energy plant is now a reality and was expected to start producing electricity in February. CSEA members have laid miles of pipe under the landfill which carry the gas to the plant. The work involves fusing 12-inch pipe to lengths between 400 feet and 500 feet. This intricate network of pipes now deliver the gas to the header facility. Once at the facility giant blowers suck in the gas which is purified. From there, the gas heads to motors that fire the shafts that spin the generator to create electricity. The landfill gas acts as fuel.

Union members also maintain the pipe network, conduct repairs as needed and do essential monitoring work. CSEA Colonie Unit B President Bert Plew said CSEA members at the landfill work under very tough conditions every day. “It’s not easy,” he said.

“The work of the crew here allows for this type of project to move forward,” said Joseph Stockbridge, director of the town’s environmental services department who has been overseeing the initiative. “The work they do has an impact.”

New revenue source
“Town officials estimate the plant will produce more than 4 1/2 megawatts, enough electricity to power 3,000 homes. Colonie also estimates revenues from the plant to come in around $250,000 per year and possibly grow to $400,000 annually. The town makes money by selling the electricity, selling reduction emission credits on the open market and through other tax credits.”

“We’re proud of the role our members play in the creation of this new revenue source for the town,” said CSEA Colonie Unit C President Larry Washburn.

— Therese Assalian

A day at the zoo!

CSEA members at the Buffalo Zoo are playing a role in a series of capital projects at the facility. The renovations will include an upgraded barn for three elephants, including the one in the photo at left pictured with zoo Local President Kelly Amrhein. Amrhein is a zoo animal handler specializing in the care of elephants and rhinoceroses.

Read more about the Buffalo Zoo in The Work Force soon!
Yonkers schools workers united in fighting for fair contract

YONKERS — CSEA members in the Yonkers Public Schools Unit are standing firm to win a fair contract after district officials recently declared impasse.

In fact, the district’s unwillingness to negotiate a fair agreement with CSEA is motivating more than 1,800 unit members to fight even harder for the contract they have worked without for three years. The major negotiations sticking points include health insurance and fair wages to give long needed financial parity to unit members.

District workers have faced layoffs in recent years because of the schools’ fiscal crisis which had resulted in multimillion dollar deficits. CSEA members employed at the district have particularly suffered from cuts, forcing many unit members to live paycheck to paycheck. CSEA’s intervention with local and state officials has helped lessen the impact on workers with last-minute, short-term fiscal bailouts, but the union is fighting for a long-term solution to the ongoing fiscal crisis.

Because Yonkers is one of the state’s “Big Five” school districts, the city of Yonkers funnels state funding into the district.

CSEA recently demonstrated its pull when members stormed a meeting of the Yonkers Public Schools’ Board of Trustees, filling the seldom-filled auditorium at Saunders Technical and Trade High School. With nearly 1,000 members participating, the demonstration was one of the largest in CSEA Westchester Local 860’s history. Unit President Robbie DiBattista said the demonstration won’t be the last time Yonkers officials will hear from CSEA.

“It is unfortunate that the school district does not recognize the need to resolve this contract stalemate in a fair and equitable manner,” DiBattista said. “The employees of this district deserve better. The administration and the mayor, it appears, are not looking to resolve, but looking instead to delay. We will stay strong, we will be united and we will receive a fair settlement that benefits the members and residents of the city.”

— Jessica Stone

‘Guardian angel’ bus driver saves woman’s life

PORT LEYDON — After 60-year-old Michal Pedersen’s car skidded off a snowy road and launched upside down into an icy pond, she thought she would die.

After about 15 minutes partially submerged in the icy water, with her foot caught in the steering wheel, Pedersen mentally said her goodbyes and waited for death.

Instead, she was greeted by CSEA member Shawn Marie Chesbro.

A call for help

Chesbro, a bus driver for the Webb Union Free School District and a CSEA Herkimer County Local member, was driving on a remote stretch of road in Lyonsdale when she noticed tire tracks on the road that weren’t there a half hour earlier.

When she looked over the side of a five-foot embankment, Chesbro saw two passenger-side tires sticking out of an ice-covered pond.

“It was very obvious that there must have been somebody in the car,” she said. She had also noticed there were no signs of anyone having left the vehicle.

She tried getting a signal on her bus radio and cell phone, but neither worked. She pulled her bus into a nearby driveway, blew the horn consistently and hanged on the front door of the house, but no one answered.

“That’s when I knew it was just up

CSEA member Shawn Marie Chesbro, left, with Michal Pedersen, whose life she helped save.

to me,” Chesbro said.

She jumped into the icy, chest-deep water. She tried to use ice to break the car’s rear window.

When someone left the nearby house, Chesbro yelled to call 911.

A passing motorist brought over a tire iron, which Chesbro used to smash the rear window and found a nearly submerged hand reaching for her.

She grabbed the hand, and suddenly half of Pedersen’s face appeared, mouthing the words “thank you.” Chesbro realized Pedersen couldn’t get out the rear window, and Chesbro used the tire iron to break a side window.

The unidentified motorist then helped Chesbro pull Pedersen out of the car. They dragged Pedersen to the side of the road, and covered her with their bodies to help provide warmth until the ambulance arrived.

Pedersen was treated and released for hypothermia and was later readmitted with internal injuries, but is now home and doing well.

Her ‘guardian angel’

Pedersen calls Chesbro her ‘guardian angel’ and the two have become friends.

“I was 20 minutes earlier than usual, which isn’t like me. Apparently, I was supposed to be there,” Chesbro said. “For me, it’s no big deal, I was just very glad to find somebody alive in there. I would like to think that anybody who comes on a situation like this would just help, like I did.”

For her lifesaving efforts, Chesbro was given a certificate of recognition from the New York State Police.

Chesbro is also an advanced certified diver. Before the incident, she had signed up to receive training in ambulance driving from her local fire department. She said it’s her way of giving back to her community.

“I remind everybody not to take for granted what their volunteer fire departments do and your school bus drivers aren’t just school bus drivers,” she said.

— Mark M. Kotzin

“I was just very glad to find somebody alive in there. I would like to think that anybody who comes on a situation like this would just help.”

— Carol Low, supervising licensed practical nurse, Long Island State Veterans Home, on the state of public health care.
ALBANY — CSEA is gaining statewide momentum in its campaign for improvements in quality care throughout the developmental disabilities system. Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno was among the numerous state and local elected officials from both political parties who have rallied to the cause in recent weeks during public events on Long Island, in New York City, White Plains, Syracuse, Rochester and Albany.

The Quality Care campaign is necessary because of an epidemic in turnover rates — up to 40 percent annually — among front line employees of many not-for-profit agencies that threaten the long-term quality standards of services and care. “The big issue is maintaining the quality of care throughout the entire system because the individuals with developmental disabilities deserve it,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue. “But quality care begins with making sure the people who care for the individuals are treated with fairness and respect.

New York’s system of care for individuals with developmental disabilities is generally viewed as a model for the nation and CSEA’s relationship with the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities is highly regarded as a model for cooperative labor relations. The seriousness of the employee turnover problem in the not-for-profit agencies, which generally do not have union representation, has raised multiple concerns for the future. Not-for-profit agencies provide an increasingly higher percentage of the overall services to individuals with developmental disabilities in New York. Most of the agencies also receive up to 95 percent of their operating budgets from public funds. Millions of taxpayer dollars are at stake because of high turnover.

CSEA is advocating for the passage of the Quality Care Act in the New York state legislature which would require not-for-profit agencies receiving at least 50 percent of their operating funding in public money to better account for their spending priorities and provide baseline standards for employee pay and benefits. “Fair pay, decent benefits, adequate training, reasonable working conditions and a voice in the work site cannot be disregarded as important factors in recruiting and retaining a qualified, capable and engaged workforce,” Donohue said. “These factors are at the heart of maintaining quality care standards.”

CSEA welcomes 1,200 Lifespire members

MANHATTAN — Workers at Lifespire, a human service agency in New York City, that provides services to developmentally disabled individuals, are the newest members of CSEA. Their victory marks the largest ever private sector organizing win for CSEA.

“CSEA is committed to advocating for the needs of workers throughout the developmental disabilities system,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue. “The quality of care depends on workers being treated with fairness and respect. Lifespire’s management recognized the wisdom of remaining neutral while their employees chose to join CSEA. Now we can all work toward making things better for everyone.”

“I want to welcome and congratulate our new brothers and sisters from Lifespire for waging a dignified and victorious battle on behalf of their consumers and their fellow workers,” said CSEA Metropolitan Region President George Bonocrodi. “With CSEA there is strength and power that comes from a statewide organization with a proven record,” said Norma de Guzman, a senior developmental aide and a leader in bringing the union to Lifespire. “It’s not just for us, it’s also for the consumers we are servicing.” (Read profile of de Guzman on Page 15)

De Guzman and some 1,200 Lifespire co-workers join a union that has a long history advocating for workers who provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities and as an advocate for the system.

“I hope to work with and bring together all Lifespire employees so that we can begin to make the changes that are needed at our facilities,” said Helen Hain, a Developmental Aide.

The campaign to bring a union to Lifespire was preceded by several months of innovative and comprehensive organizing throughout New York City, building support from community groups and elected officials.

“Now we have a union that will make them see us, hear us and understand us. Now they have to deal with us as people,” said Marion Frampton, a Lifespire residential habilitation specialist.

The Lifespire activists are now turning their attention to negotiating their first contract.

— David Galarza

CSEA President Danny Donohue talks about the campaign at a news conference in Syracuse with Assemblywoman Joan Christensen and Assemblyman Bill Magnarelli.

For more on the campaign visit www.csealocal1000.org


Supporters in White Plains included Westchester County Legislator Clinton Young, state Sen. Thomas Montano, Assemblymen Ken Zebrowski, Assemblyman Adam Bradley, Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, county Legislator Jose Alvarado, and Assemblyman George Latimer. CSEA Southern Region President Diane Hewitt is also pictured with Donohue.

Lawmakers, including Assemblymen Charles Lavine and Tom DiNapoli; state Sen. John Flanagan and Assemblymen Harvey Weisenberg and Marc Alosi, showed their support in Mineola.

State Sen. Frank Padavan speaks at a Campaign for Quality Care news conference in New York City. Numerous other legislators, city council members and activists also participated.
**Asbestos-related illness came from washing clothes**

**Innocent chore proves dangerous**

OSWEGO — Deborah Haws never thought the simple act of washing her husband’s work clothes could end up making her seriously ill. Yet that’s what she said she believes caused her to develop a rare form of asbestos-related cancer that has put her out of work and made daily living a painful struggle. Her experience is a cautionary tale to others who may be in similar situations.

Deborah’s husband is CSEA member Charlie Haws, a grounds supervisor at SUNY Oswego. In the 1980s, Charlie was exposed to airborne asbestos fibers as a campus laborer and equipment operator, along with other power plant workers, when taking down ceilings and dismantling boilers. Less was known then about the dangers of asbestos, and he never thought twice about bringing his work clothes home to be washed.

Covered in dust

“He would come home wearing the same clothes that he worked in,” Deborah said. “He’d be covered in a black soot. I also remember him running his hands through his hair real quick and the dust would all fly out. When he’d take his clothes off, I’d pick them up and shake them to make sure there was nothing in the pockets before I put them in the washing machine, and the whitish gray dust would fly. Two or three different times I remember itching real bad from it. I thought it was fiberglass.”

“Back then, we never had a chance to shower or wash our clothes at work,” Charlie said.

“At the time, it wasn’t a concern at all. I honestly never knew (it was asbestos). It never occurred to me that I was exposed by doing laundry,” she said.

When the college later realized the workers had been exposed, it set up an annual program testing the 12 exposed power plant workers, including Charlie Haws, as required by law. Every year since then, he’s gone for lung function tests and x-rays of his lungs, which to date have remained clear. No one thought to look beyond the lungs of those who were directly exposed.

Last year, Deborah ended up in the emergency room. A CAT scan revealed a mass in her abdomen, which was surgically removed, tested and found to be mesothelioma, a somewhat rare form of abdominal cancer found to have a direct causal link to exposure to airborne asbestos fibers. Because Deborah never worked in an environment where she was exposed to asbestos, her surgeon narrowed the cause to her husband’s work clothes.

“There’s no doubt in my mind that her exposure came from me bringing it home from the college,” Charlie said.

Following her diagnosis, Charlie and Deborah came to CSEA seeking guidance. SUNY Oswego Local President Joe Miceli referred them to Occupational Safety and Health Specialist Lynnet Witherell who has since worked with them along with Miceli, Local Safety and Health Committee Chair Dan Hooper and Labor Relations Specialist Chris Jamison.

More testing sought

“This was a revelation to us, having asbestos affect family members like this,” said Miceli.

“We want to expand the follow-up testing for our workers most likely affected and we’re asking for the testing for other household members.”

On their behalf, the union has written the college’s Environmental Safety and Health Director, requesting that SUNY Oswego expand its asbestos screening program. The union wants the workers previously identified as exposed to get additional abdominal scans to catch any possibility of this type of cancer. CSEA also asked to increase the pool of workers tested, to include other workers believed to have been exposed, and that family members be offered the same testing to avoid any more cases like Deborah’s from slipping through the cracks.

“Even my surgeon has highly recommended that my children get tested,” Deborah said. “Their insurance won’t pick up the cost. I think the college should pay for it, and I really think my husband should have a CAT scan every year.”

She’s glad that the union is going to bat for the increased testing.

“I hope they do get it. I think it’s important and I really think spouses should be tested too, not wait for something else to happen.”

In the meantime, she’s taken her case to a New York City law firm specializing in asbestos litigation, and is currently pursuing a lawsuit against the asbestos manufacturers. Since her diagnosis, she’s had numerous CAT scans and her abdominal pain continues. She also suffers almost constant nausea, anemia, a swelling of the left side of her body, and is being treated for high blood pressure. She said it’s not only hurting physically, but financially. The co-payments on her medication alone are more than $100 a month, not to mention co-payments for each doctor visit, and the many diagnostic procedures she has had to undergo.

“I can’t work anymore. Meanwhile, my disability has run out and I’m waiting for Social Security disability. We’re back to a one-income family, and it’s not easy. I’m in debt and we’re getting further and further behind. Why

See Asbestos, Page 13
**Asbestos work hazard brought home in clothes**

**Continued from Page 12**

should I have to pay for it? It just doesn’t seem fair, you know?”

Charlie said they’re not pursuing their legal actions to become “lawsuit millionaires.”

“The only thing I’m asking from the state is to help my wife, help us out with the medical expenses. I just want to make her as comfortable as possible. I just want her taken care of,” he said. “I feel guilty that I brought this home to her.”

Basically homebound, Deborah said she is unable to enjoy her life the ways she did before. She’d give almost anything to have her old life back.

“You know, at this point, I feel cheated. I just have a feeling that I’m not going to be around as long as I should be. I don’t enjoy doing things I used to. I don’t get out like I used to and if I do I get so tired, it’s just not worth it. It’s getting me down. I just want to feel better. I’m so sick of feeling awful. I want to go back to how I used to feel.”

As for her prognosis, the future remains uncertain.

“I’m on a lot of medication, I see at least one doctor a week, at minimum. At some point, if the pain gets too bad, they’ll go back in and see what they can do for me. Right now it seems to be under control, so it’s like a wait and see kind of thing.”

One thing does seem clear to Deborah. Others shouldn’t have to go through what she is going through.

“And any other employees (who have to go through this), God help them. That’s all I can say. I think the state should do more.”

It’s a sentiment CSEA strongly shares, and the union remains hopeful that the college will agree to their increased testing requests, at minimum.

“Years ago, asbestos was thought to be a great product, but medical findings showed differently and the asbestos standard was born. Now, more than 20 years later, new medical findings indicate even more health issues related to exposure than we previously knew of,” Witherell said. “The original standard hasn’t caught up with current knowledge. We’re making an effort to influence changes for the workers and their families who may have been exposed. We hope the college will comply for their sakes, so that more people won’t have to suffer what the Haws’ are facing.”

CSEA Central Region President Jim Moore agreed, saying he hopes the state would empathize with workers and their family members who are suffering due to occupational exposures.

“Perhaps through their empathy, they’ll institute the changes in testing we’ve asked for, so that early detection from now on may prevent any severe illness or drastic consequences for other workers and their family members.”

— Mark M. Kotzin

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**ELECTION NOTICE**

**2006 AFSCME Delegates Election**

The Board of Directors approved election schedule is as follows:

- **Feb. 11/Saturday**: Region Nomination Meetings/11 a.m.
- **Feb. 12/Sunday**: Receipt of Original Nomination Forms
- **Feb. 21/Friday**: Voter Eligibility List Date
- **March 6/Monday**: Declaration Deadline
- **March 8/Wednesday**: Local/Unit President Labels Available
- **March 12/Monday**: Inspection of Voter List Period Begins (30 days before election)
- **April 11/Tuesday**: Ballots Mailed
- **April 18/Tuesday**: Replacement Ballots Available
- **May 1/Tuesday**: Ballots Due/9 a.m.
- **May 1/Monday**: Tally Commences/9:30 a.m.
- **June/July Edition(s)**: Results Printed in The Work Force
- **August 7-11**: AFSCME Convention, Chicago, Ill.

Ten (10) days after SEC certifies result, protest period closes.

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**ELECTION NOTICE**

**2006 Special Mid-Term Election for Statewide Board of Directors**

Ten (10) seats are unfilled on the CSEA Statewide Board of Directors. Those seats are: STATE: Civil Service; COUNTIES: Champaign, Essex, Franklin, Orono, Ontario, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Tompkins, and LOCAL: GOVERNMENT EDUCATIONAL: Central. The Board of Directors approved election schedule to fill these seats is as follows:

- **Feb. 21/Tuesday**: Start of Petitioning Period
- **Feb. 28/Tuesday**: Local/Unit President Labels Available
- **March 10/Friday**: Deadline for Receipt of Petitions/5 p.m. at CSEA Headquarters
- **March 10/Friday**: Deadline for Review of Invalid Signatures
- **March 17/Friday**: Deadline for Declaration/Name Confirmation
- **March 21/Tuesday**: Drawing for Position on ballot
- **April 11/Tuesday**: Ballots Mailed
- **April 18/Tuesday**: Replacement Ballots Available
- **May 1/Monday**: Ballots Due/9 a.m.
- **May 1/Monday**: Tally Commences/9:30 a.m.
- **June/July Edition(s)**: Results Printed in The Work Force
- **July 1/Saturday**: Term begins (through June 30, 2008)

Ten (10) days after SEC certifies results, protest period closes.

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**Spring Skills for Success courses offered**

This spring, CSEA-represented New York state employees have opportunities to take Skills for Success training courses offered by the New York State & CSEA Partnership for Education and Training (Partnership). Skills for Success courses are designed to help employees prepare for the challenges and demands of current and future jobs.

The Skills for Success courses are scheduled statewide from early March through late May. The training is available free to employees or their agencies. Reimbursement for employee travel, lodging, meals, and parking expenses is at the discretion of agencies. All courses are held during the day at conveniently located training sites.

CSEA-represented state employees are eligible to participate in courses if they are a member of the Administrative Services Unit (ASI), Institutional Services Unit (ISU), Operational Services Unit (OSU), or the Division of Military and Naval Affairs (DMNA) bargaining units. Choose from 16 job-related and personal development courses under the following topic headings:

- Adult Education Basics
- Clerical and Secretarial
- Educational Advisement
- Operations and Maintenance
- Work and Life

Employees may take any of the courses offered, not just courses that typically reflect the work they do. Supervisory approval is needed for employees to directly apply for these courses. Applications should be sent as soon as possible and not later than four weeks before the start of a class.

The Skills for Success course catalog contains eligibility information, course descriptions, course schedules, training locations, and an application form. Catalogs and application forms are available from CSEA local presidents and agency personnel/training offices, or can be downloaded from [www.nysecapartnership.org](http://www.nysecapartnership.org). A catalog can be requested by calling 518-486-7814 or for areas outside the Capital Region call 800-253-4332, or e-mailing learning@nysecapartnership.org.

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**March 2006 THE WORK FORCE Page 13**
41 years ago...

In 1965, CSEA won a major health care staffing battle. CSEA President Joseph Feily questioned the ratio of ward service employees to patients in the mental hygiene field. CSEA believed the ratio between staff and patients was insufficient for proper patient care in some state facilities, including Brooklyn and Buffalo state hospitals. After writing a letter to the acting state mental hygiene commissioner to address the union’s concerns, Feily and other CSEA leaders met with representatives from the state Department of Mental Hygiene and Division of the Budget to resolve the issue. Within a week of the meeting, the state agreed to adopt CSEA’s recommendations to increase staffing.

Later that year, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller announced that a new staffing program had been launched at the Brooklyn and Buffalo facilities. The following year, he proposed a new system of post-staffing at state hospitals and facilities for people with developmental disabilities that eventually replaced the ratio system and allowed workers to ensure that patients received at least basic services at all times. The post staffing formula for the state mental hygiene system was the first such program of its kind in the United States.

This headline about Gov. Nelson Rockefeller’s proposals appeared in the Sept. 28, 1965, issue of the Civil Service Leader, once CSEA’s official publication. CSEA President Joseph Feily led the union’s fight to have the state significantly increase staffing at state health care facilities to allow workers to provide high quality care.

Also in 1965...

• The first U.S. combat troops arrive in Vietnam.
• Martin Luther King Jr. and more than 2,600 others arrested in Selma, Ala., during demonstrations against voter-registration rules.
• Black nationalist leader Malcolm X shot to death at Harlem rally.
• A power failure in an Ontario, Canada plant blacks out parts of eight northeastern U.S. states and two Canadian provinces.
• ‘The Sound of Music’ is released, becoming one of the top-grossing movie musicals in history.
• My Fair Lady wins Academy Award for Best Picture.
• British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill dies at age 90.
**Union gives Suffern workers morale boost**

SUFFERN — What a difference a month has made for Suffern employees in Rockland County, who late last year were still fighting for recognition as a bargaining unit with CSEA.

A few weeks into a new year, the new CSEA unit has newly elected interim officers, plans for contract negotiations and increasing morale after two long years with anti-union village leadership.

"Everything is back to normal," said CSEA Rockland Local President Billy Riccaldo, who was an active part of the organizing effort. "The new mayor and the Village Board have put all previous terms and conditions of employment back in, so the workers are happy."

The previous elected village administration made significant changes to longstanding working conditions. Most notably, Public Works employees were forced to rotate working weekends without the benefit of overtime pay.

The former mayor had also eliminated the use of personal days, complaining that employees were using them for leisure activities such as hunting and fishing. Those changes led a group of workers to spearhead an organizing campaign with CSEA. Political action on the part of those workers and other CSEA members led to the former mayor’s ouster in November.

"Now, the morale is great," said Riccaldo. "The new mayor has an open door policy and has met with the employees."

Contract negotiations are expected to begin shortly. Among the priorities to discuss in negotiations, Riccaldo said, would be the implementation of a labor-management committee to ensure village workers are treated with the fairness and respect they were denied during the past few years.

— Jessica Stone

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**CSEA remembers Thull, other women in labor history**

ALBANY — At a time when many women struggled for equal rights in American society, the labor movement included many women leaders. March is Women’s History Month, and CSEA is remembering a few of the many women whose leadership and solidarity affected the workplace for both genders. Many of their contributions are still relevant today.

Some of the women highlighted below are less well known than women labor leaders such as Kate Mullany, who founded the Collar Laundry Union and was the first woman to hold a national union office; Mary Harris “Mother” Jones, who organized mine workers and fought against child labor. However, all of these women helped shape and advance the labor movement.

**CSEA’s first trailblazer**

Long before many women were even in the workplace, Bealah Bailey Thull blazed trails at CSEA by becoming the association’s first woman president in 1934.

Thull, who was born Feb. 27, 1891, and lived in Troy, was a speechwriter for Gov. Franklin D. Roosevelt before being elected president of what was then known as the Association of State Civil Service Employees. During Thull’s one-year term, the first state employee credit union was established and the association adopted the motto “We Serve.”

Thull also oversaw the association winning for state workers 12 days per year of sick leave, cumulative to 150 days.

After leaving office in 1935, Thull became the first president of the Rensselaer County chapter of the New York League of Women Voters in 1939. She also established the Women’s Legislative Forum and wrote several books on local history.

Her achievements helped pave the way for later women members of CSEA, including former statewide Secretary Irene Carr, to become trailblazers in their own right. Thull died in October 1975 in Troy.

**Other labor union women**

In 1844, Lowell Mill factory workers in Massachusetts formed the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association to press for better pay and working conditions. Sarah Bagley was their first president.

Mary Kenney O’Sullivan organized bookbinders in Chicago and in 1892 she became the first salaried organizer of the American Federation of Labor.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn began making speeches for the International Workers of the World around 1905 when she was 15, and soon became a full-time organizer for the Wobblies.

Rose Schneiderman, an organizer for the Ladies’ Waist and Dress Makers’ Union, helped mobilize the public for workplace protections following the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire on March 25, 1911, in Manhattan that killed 148 people.

In 1960, Dolores Huerta, co-founded with Cesar Chavez, the National Farm Workers Association, the predecessor to the United Farm Workers of America. She organized migrant workers while raising her own 11 children.

— Janice Marn and Rachel Langert

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**Work for justice — join the 11th annual 40-Hour Fast**

- Begins Wednesday, March 15 at 8 p.m.
- Ends Friday, March 17 at noon

Sponsored by the New York State Labor-Religion Coalition

Instead of spending Americans the necessities of life, the Bush administration has made policies that are making the rich even more wealthy, and the poor even poorer. While cutting wages for the rich, the last federal budget made massine care in programs that help the poor, such as Medicaid and food stamps. About 37 million U.S. citizens live in poverty.

As working families, we have the power to take action and make some real changes in the way America does business. While standing in solidarity with the millions of Americans who struggle each day, we can — and should — demand that our federal, state and local governments make a change.

To sign up for the fast or for information on fast events in your area, call the state Labor-Religion Coalition at (518) 213-6000, ext. 6294 or visit the coalition’s website at www.laborreligion.org.

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**CSEA NEW YORK STATE INDUS. UNION**

285,000 MEMBERS STRONG

LABOR LINK

MAR 06
Fight age discrimination in the workplace

Editor’s Note: This is the sixth article in a series of discrimination articles that have appeared in The Work Force, to provide valuable information regarding important areas of protection available through the CSEA Legal Assistance Program (LAP). The Legal Assistance Program covers employment and labor issues involving grievances, contract grievances and arbitrations, court litigation and agency proceedings. Get more information about legal services in the LAP by calling CSEA headquarters at (800) 342-4146, ext. 1443, or by visiting www.csea.local100.org, and clicking on the legal programs and services menu item.

This article provides an overview of age discrimination in the workplace.

Under the federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), it is illegal to discriminate against an employee because that employee is 40 years of age or older. The ADEA prohibits discrimination with respect to compensation, retirement, or other employer actions, which materially impacts an employee’s employment (i.e. forced early retirement, age-based harassment). In addition, it prohibits employers from applying age-based classifications on employees in any manner that would deprive them of employment opportunities or otherwise negatively affect their employee status.

Under the ADEA, in certain narrow circumstances, an employer may act based on an employee’s age where the employer can demonstrate that age is a bona fide occupational qualification.

Moreover, the ADEA permits employers to use a seniority system as long as it is not a mask for discrimination. The seniority system must be based on the length of service as the primary criterion.

New York state law contains similar but more detailed protections against age discrimination. Unlike the ADEA, New York protects individuals 18 years of age or older from age discrimination. As a labor union, CSEA remains committed to fighting unlawful discrimination.

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 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.

Procedure protects rights

AFSCME’s constitution includes a rebate procedure to protect the rights of members who disagree with how the union spends money for partisan political or ideological purposes.

Article IX, Section 14 of the International Constitution, which establishes the procedure for dues rebates for members who object to AFSCME’s partisan political or ideological expenditures, was amended at AFSCME’s 33rd International Convention.

The amended language requires those persons who object to the expenditure of dues for political or ideological purposes submit their objection in writing to both the International Union and CSEA Local 1000 by certified mail between April 1 and April 17 (dates inclusive) each year for the prior year ending Dec. 31.

The timing of the steps in the procedure is tied to the International’s fiscal year. The procedure, including the requirements for submitting a proper rebate request, were modified by a constitutional amendment adopted by the 1998 International Convention. As modified, those procedures and requirements are spelled out in Article IX, Section 14 of the International Constitution. THESE REQUIREMENTS WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED. Here’s how it works. Members who object to the expenditure of a portion of their dues for partisan political or ideological purposes and want to request a rebate must do so individually in writing between April 1 and April 17, 2006. That request must be timely filed by registered or certified mail with the International Secretary-Treasurer and the CSEA Statewide Treasurer. The requests must contain the following information: name, Social Security number, home address and the AFSCME local to which dues were paid during the preceding year. This information must be typed or legibly printed. The individual request must be signed by the member and sent by the individual member to: William Lacy, International Secretary-Treasurer at AFSCME Headquarters, 1625 I St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036-5087, and CSEA Statewide Treasurer, Empire State Plaza Station, P. O. Box 2611, Albany, N.Y. 12220-0611. Requests for more than one person may not be sent in the same envelope. Each request must be sent in writing every year the member wishes to request a rebate.

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

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

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

The Judicial Panel will conduct a hearing and issue a written decision on such appeals, subject to an appeal to the full Judicial Panel. If dissatisfied with the Judicial Panel’s ruling, a member can appeal to the next International Convention.
Deadline for 2005 Empire Plan claims is March 31

Empire Plan enrollees have until March 31, 90 days after the end of 2005, to submit medical expenses to the following providers:

- United Health Care Service Corp.
- Empire BlueCross/Blue Shield
- ValueOptions
- Express Scripts

As a reminder

On Jan. 1, Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield began insuring and jointly administering the Empire Plan prescription drug program with Caremark, its pharmacy benefits manager. Enrollees can call the Empire Plan at 1-877-7NYSHP (1-877-769-7447) with questions or to get claim forms. When using the Empire Plan’s toll-free telephone number, please pay extra attention to the choices offered by the automated system.

Network providers and pharmacies will submit claims directly to the appropriate insurance carrier on your behalf. If you have a non-network claim submission, make sure you complete the requested subscriber information on the claim forms, include the original billing or receipt, if requested, and sign the claim form.

Important prescription drug information for Empire Plan enrollees

Below is information that may be helpful the first time you use a Caremark/Empire Plan participating retail pharmacy to fill your prescription.

Bring the information in this box with you on your first visit to a participating retail pharmacy after Jan. 1, 2006.

- Rx Group: NYSSTATE
- Processor Control Number: NYSSTATE
- Bank Identification Number: 004336

For more information, call The Empire Plan at (877) NYSHP (1-877-769-7447).
Norma de Guzman knows a thing or two about being the boss.

After all, in her native Philippines she once managed more than a dozen employees in the wholesale apparel business her family started from scratch.

As a private citizen, she also knew her rights and those of her countrymen were under attack by the dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

To fight back, de Guzman became adept at organizing, first her family and then her friends to attend rallies and demonstrations aimed at toppling his regime.

The lessons and skills honed from both experiences would serve her well years later when she came to the United States and played a leading role in helping organize her co-workers at Lifespire, Inc. into a union with CSEA. (See story — page 10).

The Work Force’s David Galarza recently spoke with de Guzman, a senior developmental aide who is now working with her colleagues on their first contract. Next month will mark her 14th year at Lifespire.

WF: Congratulations on your victory! Why was it so important to bring a union to Lifespire?

ND: We wanted to be respected and improve quality care for our consumers. Lifespire has a mission statement. In order for us to achieve those goals, to provide the necessary services, it was necessary for us to organize a union. With a union, there is power and there is strength.

WF: Now that you have a union at Lifespire, what do you hope to achieve?

ND: We want fairness and want to have a voice at work. Of course, we want better salaries and benefits, but we also want to make sure everyone is treated equally. It’s not just for us — it’s also for the consumers we are servicing.

WF: You once managed a small work force in the Philippines. How would you describe yourself then?

ND: I was a fair employer. I usually paid more than the minimum wage and even if I couldn’t afford it, I would pay my employees bonuses. It’s a form of exploitation if you don’t pay them right. I was living comfortably until (the economy soured) and we went bankrupt.

WF: After making your way to Oregon you finally settled in New York and landed a job at Lifespire. How do you feel about the work you are doing?

ND: I never imagined myself in this kind of job, but there is fulfillment. When (a client) says they like you or love you, it’s so innocently said but you know that they are telling the truth. They’re not pretentious. You get very attached to them. We have to change the perception that many people have about our clients. When we take them outside, some people are so judgmental. They don’t have to be seen or treated that way. They need to be treated like human beings.

WF: Many politicians played a key role in negotiating the card check and neutrality agreement. Knowing that politicians weren’t among your favorite people back in the Philippines, how do you feel about those who helped you and your fellow workers?

ND: The politicians helped us a lot. I remind my co-workers about this all the time. In order for them to get involved and stay involved, we have to show them that we aren’t going to lay back and let them do all the work.

WF: You’ve spent many days, nights and weekends organizing this union and are now getting ready for the contract campaign. What keeps you going?

ND: You learn so many things. It enriches your knowledge about the history of labor, the legal process and guidelines that must be followed. I will continue to spread the goodness about having a union. It will make for a better workplace. Nothing is perfect, but I really feel a union will make things better, not worse. Some things have already started to change because we have a union. They’ll get even better once we have a contract.

Learn more about CSEA’s Campaign for Quality Care at www.csealocal1000.org.
The Governor’s pitching pension changes that could hit us hard

Strike Back!

Save Your Pension

Join PEOPLE Today

Public employee pensions and benefits have been increasingly under attack lately, first from big business groups and now from our own governor.

Gov. George Pataki wants to create a new retirement plan with a new Tier 5. He also wants to switch your pension from a defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan. That means you pay more in with no guarantee of getting more out.

PEOPLE (Public Employees Organized to Promote Legislative Equality) is CSEA’s voice in Washington, Albany and in your community. Join PEOPLE and help defeat this and other proposals that hurt working people.

- PAYROLL DEDUCTION APPLICATION -

Name ___________________________ Last ___________ First ___________ Apt. # ___________ Mobile ___________

Address ___________________________ City ___________ State ___________ ZIP ___________

Social Security No. ___________________________ Work Phone ( ) ___________ Home Phone ( ) ___________

Job Title ___________________________ Region ___________ Local ___________

Employer ___________________________

Total amount deducted per year in equal installments:

$100 (MVP)  $250 (Local 100)  $500 (VIP)**  $1500 (TOTAL)** Other ___________

1040 ___________ 1040-ES ___________ Other ___________

ACCOUNT NUMBER ___________

SIGNATURE ___________

circle size: X Small / S  / M / L / XL / XXL / XXXL / 4XL

This agreement is void if you are not a member of PEOPLE.

* You receive the VIP Lapel Pin, Local 100 Key Chain, plus a special gift – a custom-designed light-weight cotton MVP jacket with a gold embroidered logo for your rear view mirror.

** You receive a practical white windbreaker or a VIP Lapel Pin. These gifts only the symbol of PEOPLEDDing your action to protect your retirement security.

Please mail completed application to: PEOPLE OF PEOPLE, 143 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12210

PEOPLE PERSON — The PEOPLE recruiter of the month of January is Patricia Metzger of the State Taxation & Finance Local in the Metropolitan Region. She recruited 15 new PEOPLE members.

CSEA’s PEOPLE program protects and improves our jobs, benefits and pensions in Washington, Albany and in your community. Your support and participation in PEOPLE strengthens CSEA’s clout in the workplace, in the legislature, in your community and in the labor movement ...

ORLEANS COUNTY CONTRACT — Members of the Orleans County Unit recently ratified a new three-year contract. There are no changes to health insurance premiums. The contract also includes raises each year ...

CSEA RETIREES FIGHT BACK — CSEA Dutchess-Putnam Retiree Local members, joined by members of the union’s Putnam County Local, have won the first part of a battle to keep their retiree health benefits intact. A blue-ribbon panel created by the county spent months researching future retiree health insurance costs, with some members of the panel urging a huge hike in retiree out-of-pocket payments. Outcry from retirees and county workers has resulted in the panel concluding that no changes should be made to the current plan, a far cry from initial recommendations. The panel’s decision will now have to go before the Putnam County Legislature ...

STATE AID SAVES SERVICES — CSEA members in Olean recently faced layoffs resulting from a cash flow problem in the city. State Sen. Cathy Young was able to stop the layoff notices and help the cash-strapped city by negotiating the early release of the municipality’s state aid. CSEA unit leadership and activists have formed a committee that will work with the city to find ways to streamline operations without affecting jobs ...

MAKING A DIFFERENCE — State Sen. Michael F. Nozzollo recently recognized the CSEA Seneca County Local for its “Making a Difference in Our Community” program. Recent projects include collecting children’s winter clothing from CSEA members to donate to a local agency and collecting canned goods for a local food pantry. “The union’s community service efforts showcase how CSEA members not only provide vital public services, but that we are also involved and active in our communities,” Seneca County Local President Carmina Russo recently told a local newspaper.

May 15 is deadline for submitting proposed resolutions, changes to CSEA’s Constitution & Bylaws

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the CSEA Constitution & Bylaws for consideration by CSEA delegates to the union’s 2006 Annual Delegates Meeting must be submitted by May 15, 2006.

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

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws must be submitted no later than May 15 to Statewide Secretary Barbara Reeves, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Ave., Albany, N.Y., 12210-2023.

The 2006 CSEA Annual Delegates Meeting will be held Sept. 25-29 in New York City.
Greetings to all! As I write this message the Pittsburgh Steelers have just won their fifth Super Bowl. They did it with the youngest and least experienced quarterback in NFL history. It is a lesson in teamwork, determination and grit. Congratulations to the Steelers for coming out on top despite the odds.

Now, onto union business. Recently you may have read more bad news regarding the financial status of the Nassau Health Care Corporation (NHCC), which runs the Nassau University Medical Center, A. Holly Patterson Extended Care Facility and our eight health clinics. Once again, more than 3,000 hardworking members employed by the NHCC find themselves on shaky ground and worried about their future.

I have reached out several times to Nassau Health Care Corp. CEO Dan Kane and his labor relations team. Although Mr. Kane is certainly an intelligent person, I have come to the conclusion that a major change is needed and this change must come from the top. It is time for Dan Kane to step down and take several of the board members with him, including the pound-for-pound featherweight champion of all board members, Larry Gottlieb. It is time for someone to take over. We must have someone who is willing to work with their employees as well as the patients of this institution. It appears that most of the board members from the NHCC are not exercising their powers of checks and balances, but are instead being pulled by the nose by Dan Kane and Dr. Wallerstein.

I’ve said it before and will say it again: In my opinion these people appear hell-bent on farming out the services of the NHCC to other health care systems, specifically the North Shore-LIJ system. I remain determined to serve and protect the hospital, and our members’ jobs. I am concerned about the future of this great Nassau County institution and I believe we must act now. Kane, Gottlieb, Wallerstein and other board members need to step down immediately!

I recently read a small editorial regarding the proposal for the county to take in additional waste sludge from Suffolk County at the Cedar Creek Water treatment plant. As of this writing, I am still waiting for the results of the recent PESH complaint/investigation at Cedar Creek.

We should not entertain taking on more sewage until the county fixes the current problems that plague this facility and which our members must face daily. The facility is understaffed, and our members are under-trained and still disrespected by some managers. We need a full-time rescue team in place as well as confined space training. We are also looking to have refresher training for all the staff at this facility.

Labor relations at this facility have improved, thanks to County Executive Tom Suozzi and Deputy County Executive Peter Gerbasi although we are still far from a solid working relationship at this facility. It still looks as though we will need to revisit the Cedar Creek plant. We must make sure our initial attempts to clean up and make this facility safer are implemented.

I want to congratulate one of our members, Crossing Guard Colleen Kiesow, for her act of bravery. Each day our crossing guards protect the most important part of our lives, our children. To read and hear about Colleen’s act of heroism, performed without regard for her own health and safety, makes us all proud.

I hope this mid-winter newsletter finds all of you in good health and safe. I am looking forward to getting around meeting you all as the year progresses.

In solidarity,
Jerry Laricchiuta

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**What’s Inside**

March 2006 Express

- Page 3
  - D.A. Rice Visits CSEA Local 830
  - CSEA Fights for NUMC Doctors
- Pages 4 and 5
  - CSEA Meets With Crossing Guard Leaders
  - Another Crossing Guard Becomes a Hero
- Pages 6 and 7
  - Nassau Health Care Corporation Pay Tables
Taking Care of Business:
You, Your Family, and Your Life

Editor's note: This is part of a series of articles by CSEA's expert attorneys appearing regularly to provide valuable information to you and your family members regarding the important areas of protection available to you through the CSEA Legal Services Program [LSP]. The LSP covers many areas of law that affect us every day. Get more information about legal plans in the LSP by calling CSEA Headquarters at 1-800-342-4146, extension 1454, or by visiting www.csealocal1000.org, and clicking on the legal services menu item.

Providing for Disabled Family Members

How do you provide for a quality life for qualified disabled family members without losing their government benefits?

Medicaid treats funding for chronically and severely disabled individuals differently, depending on the source and ownership of the funding.

An important legal planning tool called a Supplemental Needs Trust (SNT) allows a disabled individual to improve their quality of life while maintaining public benefits. The SNT provides for needs not covered by government aid, such as private caregivers, vacations, entertainment, education and vocational programs. The public benefits cover basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and health care.

There are different kinds of SNTs. An SNT funded by a parent or grandparent is a Third Party SNT and can be made effective while the parent/grandparent is alive or created as part of a will. There is no “pay back” to the state or Medicaid lien upon the child’s death. At the creation of the SNT, the parent/grandparent directs who will inherit any remaining funding after the child has died. A disabled individual under age 65 may fund his or her own SNT from money obtained from insurance settlements or judgments. This trust must be created by someone other than the intended beneficiary; it may also be created by a court. In this instance, though, there are “pay back” requirements to the state and Medicaid for the public benefits received by the trust beneficiary.

There are many ways to ensure a disabled family member continues to have a quality life while you are there to care for them, as well as after you die. Good advice and guidance from a knowledgeable elder law attorney and advance planning are the keys to ensuring this happens. Failure to plan or to consult with experts in this area could have serious consequences that could well make your loved one’s life even more difficult.

To learn more details about providing for a disabled loved one, visit the Elder Law page at CSEA’s website at www.csealocal1000.org/legal/elder_law.php.

President Laricchiuta Shows Support for Public Works Department

CSEA Local 830 President Jerry Laricchiuta recently visited the Nassau County Department of Public Works to show his appreciation for its more than 800 full-time employees. DPW serves the public by ensuring safety on county roadways, as well as preserving quality in the environment. They will certainly be prominent in keeping roads safe this winter during snow emergencies.

CSEA will continue to fight hard to allow these workers to continue to serve our community as effectively and efficiently as possible.

They Said It:
Quote of the Month

“This bill will raise incomes, it will raise spirits, and it will raise interest in doing business with this county. It is a win-win situation for everyone involved.”

— Nassau County Executive Thomas Suozzi

Jan. 16, of the Living Wage Law that the CSEA Local 830 fought so hard to help approve
New District Attorney Kathleen Rice Visits CSEA Nassau Local Office

New Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice and her staff visited the Nassau Local Office Jan. 12 for a meeting with Local President Jerry Laricchiuta.

The gathering was basically a lunch “meet and greet” to introduce themselves and help build a rapport between the union and Rice.

Rice said she is very excited about the opportunity to build a relationship with CSEA and work with members employed in her own office.

Rice has big plans for her first term. “We are looking forward to combating gang violence, illegal housing and public corruption,” Eric Phillips, Rice’s spokesman, said. “The most important thing is to reinstall an aggressive approach to enforcing the law.”

The adjustment to taking over the reins of a position that former District Attorney Denis Dillon held for 30 years will undoubtedly be difficult, but Rice is promoting a very proficient, professional atmosphere to make things easier. “She has been welcomed with open arms and warm words,” Phillips said.

Laricchiuta said he looks forward to working with Rice and he wished her luck in her new post.

CSEA Nassau Local President Jerry Laricchiuta greets Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice.

CSEA Nassau Local Continues to Fight for Nassau University Medical Center

MINEOLA — CSEA Nassau Local President Jerry Laricchiuta has been fighting feverishly to protect the jobs of Nassau University Medical Center doctors.

Nassau Health Care Corp. recently laid off eight doctors as part of the corporation’s $32 million budget-slaying plan.

Over the past four years, 941 Nassau University Medical Center employees have lost their jobs, forcing the remaining workers to face challenges in providing quality health care. Overall staffing has gone from 5,000 workers to 3,000 workers since 2001.

Laricchiuta, during a recent television news interview in front of Nassau University Medical Center, said the union is fighting to resolve the difficult situation.

“I have doctors crying on the phone to me, saying they have three kids and they don’t know what they’re going to do,” he said. “It’s just not right.”

Laricchiuta blames Daniel E. Kane, CEO of Nassau Health Care Corp., for causing the problems. The union has tried to open more dialogue with Kane, but with the latest rash of layoffs, things have hit a standstill.

“I would call for (Kane) to step down,” Laricchiuta said. “If we don’t do something, we’re going to lose this place in two years.”

CSEA will continue to fight to save these jobs for our members and keep the level of health care from diminishing.

Water Main Break Affects Many CSEA Nassau Local Members

UNIONDALE — A Jan. 10 water main break on Chester Street affected residents and CSEA members employed in the area, who were advised to not use the water until Hempstead town officials deemed it safe.

The break affected Nassau Local members employed at Nassau Community College and the Department of Social Services.

When he learned of the water main break, CSEA Nassau Local Vice President Scott Mulholland called Peter Clement at the Department of Social Services to help members cope with the situation.

Mulholland suggested the department supply bottled water and antibacterial wipes while tap water was unavailable. Local President Jerry Laricchiuta and his staff also visited Social Services to ensure things were going accordingly.

By noon on Jan. 11, town officially declared the water safe to use.
CSEA Nassau Local Working to Protect Nassau County Crossing Guards

MINEOLA — CSEA Nassau Local President Jerry Laricchiuta recently met with Nassau County Crossing Guard Unit President Mary DeMare and Vice President Joan Kay to discuss the welfare of crossing guards in all eight precincts.

Laricchiuta, DeMare and Gray addressed several concerns among the guards, including understaffing and a lack of uniformity between the eight precincts on various topics.

Laricchiuta agreed with the guards’ position that there needs to be uniformity within the guidelines of the precincts on issues including time clock procedures and seniority. He emphasized that safety is the No. 1 concern here. “We can’t underestimate the importance of having experienced crossing guards to protect the children,” he said.

“We need crossing guards desperately,” DeMare said. “If we had enough, we wouldn’t have police officers doing crossings.”

The local will continue to work hard to preserve the crossing guard jobs, as well as defend the safety of all Nassau County children with sufficient staff and highly skilled workers.

Crossing Guard Recognized for Heroic Feat

NORTH MERRICK — Colleen Kiesow woke up on the morning of Jan. 25 as a 1st Precinct Nassau County crossing guard and aide at Park Avenue Elementary School in North Merrick.

She would go to bed that night also known as a hero.

Kiesow, a Bellmore native, works for the crossing guard at the corner of Uniondale Avenue and Braxton Street in Uniondale. She also works three hours a day at the school.

The Nassau County Local member protects the public, but her quick actions saved four lives.

At about 11:20 a.m., Kiesow was working outside during recess at school when fourth-grade student Bradley Kelly told her a nearby house had smoke coming out of a second-story window.

Coincidentally, the house was young Bradley’s own home.

Kiesow promptly ordered all the children to go inside the school and ran for the burning house. She saved the four people who were inside at the time from the blaze.

The house’s occupants, Fran Kelly, her brother, daughter and 65-year-old Patricia Fritz, were not even aware of the blaze until Kiesow rushed into the house.

Fritz was taken to South Nassau Communities Hospital for smoke inhalation treatment, but the other three members of the Kelly family were unharmed.

Local authorities said without Kiesow’s alertness and calm demeanor during the fire, the consequences of the fire might have been much worse.

CSEA Nassau Local officials commended Kiesow’s heroic actions, saying she is a great asset to the children there.

Her quick thinking shows how CSEA members work for you.

Colleen Kiesow directs traffic at her crossing guard post on the intersection of Uniondale Avenue and Braxton Street in Uniondale.

Three CSEA Members Retire from Nassau County Civil Service Commission

Three CSEA members employed by the Nassau County Civil Service Commission retired last month after a combined 58 years of service. Lorraine Murphy, a 22-year employee, Rose Oscchio, a 20-year worker, and Virginia Schneider, a 17-year employee, were presented with CSEA citations in appreciation for their job well done. “We are losing many valuable years of experience, but I wish them a happy retirement,” said Karl Kampe, executive director of the Nassau County Civil Service Commission.

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Pictured with from left, Nassau County Civil Service Commissioner James Demos, Rose Oscchio, Lorraine Murphy, Executive Director Karl Kampe, Virginia Schneider and Nassau County Civil Service Commissioner Scott M. Davis.

Oath Given to New Police Communications Bureau Unit Officers

CSEA Nassau Local President Jerry Laricchiuta administered the oath of office Jan. 11 to the new officers of the Nassau County Police Communications Unit. Pictured here, from left to right, is Inspector James J. Callahan of the Communications Department, Treasurer Ellen O’Malley, Vice President Ann Yoda, President Ginger Dunlap and Laricchiuta.

2/2/06 Class action Grievance # 80-05

ATTENTION!!

All part time employees who served on jury duty between March 25, 2005 and Feb. 2, 2006 and would normally have been scheduled to work on these days, should have received their wages. Nassau County is responsible to pay up to $40 a day for the 1st three days of Jury Duty. If you did not receive the proper payment please send the attached cut off to CSEA immediately. CSEA must receive this form by March 7, 2006.

If you have any questions please call CSEA at 516-571-2919 ext. 14 (Tim Corr)

Name: ____________________________
Title: ____________________________
Department: ______________________
Phone #(H): ______________________ Phone #(w): ______________________
Normal work days: __________ Normal work hours: __________
Dates served on Jury Duty: __________
Did you receive any jury duty payments: yes __ no __
If yes what days were you paid for: __________
Who paid you (Court or Nassau Cty): __________

Mail this form and proof of Jury Duty to:
CSEA Local 830,
400 County Seat Drive, Mineola, NY 11501
Att: D. O’Connell.

Jerry Laricchiuta, President
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**Nassau Health Care Corporation Pay Tables**

**Nassau Local 830 Information Fair**

- Ask Questions
- Get Member Benefits Information
- Meet President Jerry Larchiutti

**Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2006:**
11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Nassau Community College CCB Room 252 & 253
1 Education Drive
Garden City, NY 11530

**Thursday, Feb. 23, 2006:**
11 a.m.-2 p.m. Nassau University Medical Center Auditorium
201 Hempstead Tpke.
East Meadow, NY, 11554

**REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED!**

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**EXPRESS**

CSEA Nassau County Local 830 Union Member News

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**EXPRESS**

CSEA Nassau County Local 830 Union Member News
**A Message From Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte**

**Heroines of Labor History Should not be Forgotten**

Brothers and Sisters,

Because March is Women’s History Month, I thought it would be a good time to pay tribute to some of the unsung heroes (or heroines) of the American labor movement.

In 1844, Lowell Mill factory workers in Massachusetts formed the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association to press for better pay and working conditions. Sarah Bagley was their first president.

In 1886, Kate Mullany of Troy, N.Y. founded the Collar Laundry Union, then led a strike of 200 women, protesting pitifully low wages and unsafe working conditions. They won a wage increase of 25 cents. In 1888, she was appointed assistant secretary of the National Labor Union, the first female to hold a national labor union position.

Lucy Parsons organized and led thousands of workers in large street protests all over America. After the Haymarket affair in 1886, when eight anarchists including her husband were jailed or hung for their beliefs, Parsons emerged as a powerful orator and activist.

Mary Kenney O’Sullivan organized bookbinders in Chicago, and in 1892 she became the first salaried organizer of the American Federation of Labor.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn began making speeches for the International Workers of the World (IWW) around 1905 when she was 15, and shortly after became a full-time union organizer for the Wobblies.

Rose Schneiderman was an organizer for the Ladies’ Waist and Dress Makers’ Union and served as president of the Women’s Trade Union League. She helped mobilize the public for on-the-job protections following the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire on March 25, 1911, in Manhattan. Because they were locked into a sweatshop on the 10th and 11th floors when the fire broke out, 148 women and children died in that disaster.

One woman who watched that building burn was Frances Perkins. It led her to a life of advocating for workers, and under President Franklin D. Roosevelt she became Secretary of Labor in the 1930s.

Long before many women were even in the workplace, Beulah Bailey Thull blazed trails at CSEA by becoming the association’s first woman president in 1934.

Thull, who lived in Troy, was a speechwriter for then Gov. Franklin D. Roosevelt before being elected president of what was then known as the Association of State Civil Service Employees.

During Thull’s term, the first state employee credit union was established and the association adopted the motto “We Serve.”

Thull also oversaw another important worker achievement — the association won for state workers 12 days per year of sick leave, cumulative to 150 days.

After leaving the association presidency in 1935, Thull continued to fight for women’s and workers’ rights. She became the first president of the Rensselaer County chapter of the New York League of Women Voters in 1939. She also established the Women’s Legislative Forum and wrote several books on Rensselaer County local history.

Her achievements in the association helped pave the way for CSEA women members, including Irene Carr, to become trailblazers in their own right in their union.

Thull died in October 1975, in Troy. To date, she remains the only woman ever elected CSEA president.

Margaret Haley became an organizer with the American Federation of Teachers in 1916, after leading a successful campaign to create pensions for teachers in Illinois.

In 1960, Dolores Huerta, co-founded with Cesar Chavez, the National Farm Workers Association, the predecessor to the United Farm Workers of America. She organized migrant workers while raising her own 11 children.

Mary Harris, or “Mother,” Jones was over 50 when she began her labor career. Mother Jones was best known for her work organizing mine workers, which earned her the nickname “the Miner’s Angel.” She even led a parade of children to protest the evils of child labor. Mother Jones mobilized people with fiery speeches and by the time she died in 1930 at the age of 100, she had became known as “the Most Dangerous Woman in America.” She once said, “I’m not a lady, I’m a hellraiser.”

So I say, here’s to the labor agitators — or hellraisers.

We’re all better off because of them.

In solidarity,

Nick LaMorte, president

Long Island Region

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**Monday, July 24, 2006**

**Eisenhower Park Red Course**

**CSEA Local 830 Annual Scholarship Classic**