New Year, New Day

CSEA members help make inauguration happen, Page 8
Co-pay hike brings IP charge in Ulster County

KINGSTON — CSEA has filed an improper practice charge against Ulster County following county officials’ decision to double other employees’ co-payments on health care services.

The improper practice charge, filed in December with the state Public Employment Relations Board, states that management’s failure to negotiate the change is a violation of the terms and conditions of employment.

The decision doubles the cost of co-payments for doctor visits and prescription coverage, including generic drugs and a mail-order pharmacy program. The county also introduced a deductible for hospital stays. Workers already contribute toward their health insurance premiums.

“I already have many county employees who do not take the health insurance because they can’t afford to and by increasing the co-payments and deductibles, this will force additional employees to have to make that tough decision,” said Ulster County Local President Kevin DuMond.

DuMond said he made several unsuccessful attempts early last year to sit down with management and discuss ways to cut health care costs without hurting CSEA members. That meeting never occurred.

Before the county’s mid-September decision to implement the co-payment change, CSEA and other unions representing county employees met with management to discuss alternate cost savings measures.

CSEA’s suggestions included increasing the amount of the health insurance buyout (as an incentive for more county workers to use a spouse’s insurance plan), the introduction of a two-person insurance plan for couples as a cheaper alternative to a family plan and the introduction of a Canadian drug plan. A representative from CSEA’s Health Benefits Department participated in the meetings.

Since introducing the co-payment change, county officials have committed to reimbursing employees for out-of-pocket costs related to the hospital deductible.

There has also been discussion of creating a committee handling financial hardships occurring because of the co-payment changes, but DuMond said the two overtures don’t compensate for the unfair change.

— Jessica Ladlee

Union activist killed in work crash

CSEA member Ryan Thomas Brady, 31, died Dec. 16 when the truck he was driving while on a work assignment at Allegany State Park struck a tree.

Brady, a water treatment operator at the park, was traveling the park’s roads on his way to get water samples when his state-issued truck apparently left the road and struck the tree. There were no witnesses to the accident.

The Erie County medical examiner’s office, which does autopsies throughout Western New York, determined Brady died of injuries suffered in the crash. CSEA’s Occupational Safety and Health Department investigated the accident scene along with New York State Parks Police and the New York State Police. State police planned to inspect the truck in January. At press time, a report of the inspection was not yet available.

Brady was vice president of the CSEA Allegany State Park Local and a 10-year parks employee. He started his career at the park as a cleaner, then moved to the grounds and maintenance department, and then to the water treatment facility. He is survived by his wife, Kristin; a 1-year-old daughter, Calin; and his unborn child.

Brady was also vice chair of the Salamanca City Republican Committee and a member of the executive committee of the Cattaraugus County Republican Committee.

— Lynn Miller

Niagara County members OK pact

LOCKPORT — After more than four years working under an expired contract, members of the CSEA Niagara County Unit have ratified a new six-year agreement.

Members voted overwhelmingly last month to approve the deal, crafted with the help of a PERB mediator. The county had declared impasse last fall.

“This has been a long and difficult fight,” said CSEA Western Region President Flo Tripi. “We are pleased the PERB mediator was able to help the county realize our members do need raises and appropriate health coverage.”

The new contract, which expires in 2009, is retroactive to 2003. It includes lump sum payments to the 850 employees in the unit for the first three years, and a percentage raise in each of the final three years of the agreement.

“Our members have not received a raise in four years,” said Tom Lalorina, Niagara County Unit president. “With increased costs for gasoline, utilities and groceries, many county workers have been struggling to make ends meet. The majority of our members believe this is a fair and reasonable contract, one that will help them continue to raise their families here in Niagara County.”

The new agreement also addresses health care. Employees will have three options from a single insurance carrier. Coverage for elective cosmetic surgery will no longer be an option.

“We had been trying unsuccessfully for years to negotiate the removal of the elective cosmetic surgery rider,” Lalorina said. “Health coverage had been an issue in negotiations since day one.”

At press time, the Niagara County Legislature had not yet approved the contract.

— Lynn Miller
ALBANY — CSEA continues to press its fight against hospital closing and consolidation recommendations made by the Pataki-appointed Berger Commission in early December.

Several lawsuits have been filed which have the potential to delay implementation of the overall report for years. One lawsuit has resulted in a temporary injunction against implementing the entire plan.

CSEA will continue to lobby Spitzer administration health officials, who will have a tremendous amount of influence over how this report gets implemented.

Thanks to CSEA lobbying the state legislature has already indicated that many of the proposals, including a plan to privatize SUNY Upstate Medical Center and Erie County Medical Center, need to be changed legislatively to protect the vital health care services in those areas. (See related story, Page 5)

While Gov. Eliot Spitzer has agreed to endorse the commission findings, a separate proposal from the SUNY Board of Trustees recommends expanding the three SUNY teaching hospitals. The report did not address creation of transitional or other new services to replace the closure and downsizing of public safety net services and the report mentioned nothing of how to address work force issues, such as how to help displaced health care workers find new jobs or how the state should address the current shortage of qualified nurses.

Meanwhile, the SUNY Board of Trustees proposed in November a $142.7 million hospital expansion project before the Berger Commission released its report.

The trustees recommend expansion at SUNY Upstate Medical, SUNY Stony Brook University Medical Center in Suffolk County and SUNY Downstate Medical Center. CSEA represents workers at all three hospitals and supports the expansion proposal.

CSEA President Danny Donohue testified at a public hearing on the Berger Commission, slamming it as a politically motivated document that only makes recommendations former Gov. George Pataki could not achieve in his budgets over 12 years in office. CSEA members from around the state rallied and lobbied their legislators in districts, asking them to defeat the report.

Budget concerns lay ahead

ALBANY — CSEA is anticipating Gov. Eliot Spitzer’s first budget and has concerns about how the plan will address health care, schools and its effect on local governments.

Public health care

One of CSEA’s priorities will be to protect public health care funding, and the safety net public health facilities and centers provide in many communities. Gov. Eliot Spitzer has said he will endorse the findings in the Berger Commission, which could have drastic effects on public hospitals, nursing homes and medical centers. (See related stories on this page and Page 5).

Charter schools

CSEA is prepared to fight for a fair charter school funding method. Spitzer has suggested raising the cap on charter schools from the current 100 statewide. Communities that have been forced to accommodate the quasi-public schools have faced devastating blows to their property tax bases. Albany in particular has several charter schools in a city of less than 100,000 that also has a large share of tax-exempt government property. The charter schools, meant to provide an alternative to public education, drain resources and revenue from the public school districts in which they are located.

Several studies also have shown the schools do no better in educating their pupils than do traditional public schools.

Preserving local government

Some of the governor’s proposals to more fairly provide property tax relief to middle class homeowners could create difficult decisions for local governments and municipalities in their budgets.

The federal imposition of Medicaid cuts over the past decade, coupled with increasing health care costs have strained many communities’ financial situations. Further cuts in necessary revenue would harm the ability to deliver services in many areas.

Spitzer was to release his budget by Jan. 31, after this edition of the Work Force went to press. The March Work Force will have full coverage of the budget and its potential impact on CSEA members.
The power of member involvement is awesome!

New year, new day!

Gov. Eliot Spitzer has taken office and is setting a fresh tone at the state Capitol. There is a lot of change to get used to, including a whole new set of commissioners and other administration officials.

None of this is entirely new to CSEA. For nearly 100 years, CSEA has literally moved administrations in and out at the state Capitol. From Governors Al Smith to Nelson Rockefeller, and Hugh Carey through George Pataki, the CSEA work force has been a constant in Albany and across the state. Still, it is important that we take nothing for granted in the new year.

CSEA did not earn its reputation as New York’s leading union by standing still, and we must continue to move forward and advocate for a better New York. The challenges facing our state are enormous, and we must be prepared to mobilize around fair and meaningful change.

We do not yet know the details of what Gov. Spitzer will propose in his new state budget. We do know, however, that we continue to have a lot of concern about the future of Medicaid and other public health care issues and facilities. These are matters that affect many CSEA members directly. They also affect all CSEA members indirectly, no matter where you live and what you do. There will certainly be a lot of work ahead on these issues.

The power of CSEA members getting involved is awesome, and it makes all the difference in the world in how challenging situations come out. I ask you to commit to CSEA involvement around issues that affect you in the year ahead. There is no denying the positive impact of committed individuals and their union.

P.S. My sincere appreciation and respect to all CSEA members who had a role in the planning, staging and cleanup of the Spitzer inauguration. All New Yorkers should be proud of your work!
CSEA fights Berger Commission public health care recommendations

CSEA members are keeping the pressure on state lawmakers to reject state Berger Commission recommendations that would harm public hospitals and nursing homes.

While the state commission’s binding recommendations would affect all CSEA members, the Central and Western regions were especially hard hit by the commission’s recommendations for significant privatization, mergers and cuts to public hospitals and nursing homes where CSEA represents employees.

Activism in Syracuse
In the Central Region, CSEA members are mobilizing to fight commission recommendations, especially the proposed privatization and mergers of SUNY Upstate Medical University and Onondaga County’s Van Dyrn Home & Hospital with nearby private hospitals.

CSEA members recently participated in marathon phone banks, district meetings with state legislators and a Syracuse demonstration before a state Assembly committee hearing on the report. Despite support for the united front from local state lawmakers, they were unable to bring the report to a vote. CSEA also recently participated in a demonstration with another union.

The workers’ focus has shifted to getting lawmakers to minimize the report’s harmful recommendations by eliminating the privatization components. The workers are also waiting to see the results of lawsuits filed against the commission.

Saving the safety net
Efforts to stop the merger of the public Erie County Medical Center with a private hospital continue in the Western Region.

The commission recommended Erie County Medical Center be merged with a private sector hospital and become a new entity. That move could threaten the safety net provided by public health care and could jeopardize the hospital’s top-notch regional Level One Trauma Center, exceptional burn unit and other highly specialized services.

SUNY expansion
Amid the commission’s recommended possible privatization for the three SUNY hospitals, the SUNY board wants to spend $142.7 million on expansions and new buildings at the three facilities.

SUNY’s Board of Trustees endorsed the construction plan Nov. 28.

That day, the Berger Commission recommended SUNY Upstate Medical Center merge with Crouse Hospital in Syracuse, SUNY Stony Brook University Medical Center in Suffolk County develop more partnerships with neighboring hospitals and the state consider privatizing all three SUNY hospitals. CSEA supports the expansion proposal.

— Mark M. Kotzin
and Lynn Miller

Timothy’s Law to take effect; provides safety net

ALBANY — Timothy’s Law, which will require insurance companies to cover 30 inpatient days of treatment and 20 outpatient days of treatment for all mental illnesses, will take effect in March.

CSEA supported the legislation that will provide a critical safety net for families struggling to pay for care for their mentally ill children. “Families with mentally ill children should not have to go begging because insurance companies dictate which of them will receive care,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue.

The law establishes minimal coverage for all individuals covered by an insurance plan, and then expands that coverage to children under age 18 for various other disorders.

Insurance companies are required to fully cover biologically based mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia/psychotic disorders, depression, and bipolar disorder. In addition, insurers must cover care for children under age 18 with attention deficit disorder, disruptive behavior disorders or pervasive development disorders where there are serious suicidal symptoms or other life-threatening self-destructive behavior including significant psychotic symptoms that place the child at risk of causing personal injury or significant property damage.

“CSEA gives us our voice. Through the union, we are united and strong. I’ve worked here since August 2005 and I joined the union at my first opportunity.”

— Kathy Risew, Mental Health Social Worker, Wyoming County Community Hospital
Rensselaer County emergency workers fight for fair contract

TROY — Members of CSEA's Rensselaer County 911 Unit recently demonstrated outside the county's office building to protest stalled contract talks with the county. The dispatchers were joined by community activists and supporters from area labor unions. CSEA declared impasse in negotiations in December. The previous contract expired on Dec. 31, 2003, and negotiations began more than two years ago. CSEA Capital Region President Kathy Garrison led the group in chants of "911, get it done" and "No contract, no peace," as they circled the entrance used by legislators filing in for the county meeting. At the meeting, Garrison and Unit President Todd Smith asked legislators for their help in settling the contract. "Every member has seen their pay slowly decrease as the cost of living rises with higher energy costs, higher health insurance premiums and higher costs to raise their children in our communities," Smith told the legislators. "All the members in the center have been working day in and day out knowing this because they care about their jobs and they care about the citizens they protect and serve in Rensselaer County."

“Solidarity and job security are the biggest benefits of being in a union. It’s the sense of being part of something.”

— MaryAnn Brownell, clerk/cashier, Greenwich Central School District

CEA Rensselaer County 911 Unit President Todd Smith, far right, and Capital Region 2nd Vice President Mike Gifford, second from right, lead the Rensselaer County 911 Unit’s demonstration outside the county’s office building to urge county officials to settle a fair, equitable contract.

Smith said the biggest hurdle with negotiations is getting the county negotiator to show up — and stay — at the table. He said more than 20 meeting sessions that took place to date were needlessly limited to one to two hours, and there were sessions when the county negotiator showed up late or had to leave early.

— Therese Assalian

CSEA Rensselaer County 911 dispatchers and their supporters demonstrate for a fair contract outside county offices. Unit members have worked without a contract for more than two years.

The workers are the front-line call center employees for county residents, and they coordinate all aspects of emergency calls.
Historic Alfred E. Smith State Office Building reopens

ALBANY — A historic downtown skyscraper housing state offices is seeing new life after four years of extensive renovations.

CSEA members employed at several state agencies recently moved into the Alfred E. Smith State Office Building after the building reopened. The state had not upgraded the Smith building in 35 years before renovations began in 2002. The 34-story skyscraper, built in 1928, is one of Albany’s tallest buildings and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. When it was first built, the Smith building was considered to be the tallest building between New York and Chicago.

The building is named for former governor and 1928 Democratic presidential candidate Alfred E. Smith.

The state Department of Civil Service, Department of State, Banking Department, Liquor Authority, Division of the Budget and some legislative offices are now based in the Smith building. Before the renovation, the building housed the state Comptroller’s Office, which moved into a newly constructed building in downtown Albany.

The Department of Civil Service had been based on the W. Averill Harriman State Office Campus for more than 40 years, but it recently returned to its original location in the Smith building.

“This move has been a transition for us, but I like it,” Department of

CSEA members employed at the state Department of Civil Service stand in front of their new work site, the Alfred E. Smith State Office Building. From left are Beth Stamas, Zofia Drans, Joann Delsignore, Zelda White, Sharon Connors and Christine Pivoda.

Civil Service Local President Sharon Connors said, “We’ve got the newest equipment to work with and now there have been a lot of improvements in the office space. It’s also great to have a cafeteria right in the building.”

The Alfred E. Smith Building now has the features of a modern office building. New features include additional office and conference space, a new mechanical system providing fresh air, enhanced sprinkler, heat and smoke detection systems, modern fiber-optic telecommunications and a comprehensive security system.

The renovations also make the building more efficient, in attempts to address workers’ previous concerns about the Smith building’s inefficiency.

In contrast with its modernization, the Alfred E. Smith Building retains its original Art Deco design, a popular 1920s art and architectural trend. The state’s 62 counties are etched in the facade around the building’s exterior limestone and granite edges. Surrounding the building’s main tower are a group of smaller towers, or setbacks.

Bronze light fixtures light the lobby, and the elevator doors are sculpted. On the lobby’s high ceiling is a mural of famous New Yorkers, including President Theodore Roosevelt.

Joann Delsignore, a clerk at the Civil Service Department and a 21-year CSEA member, said the renovations give the Smith building a “cleaner, newer look.”

“It’s a gorgeous building,” she said. “The ambiance is beautiful and the security is great here.”

— Janice Marra

Social services workers honored for food stamp programs

CSEA members employed at six county Departments of Social Services across the state are being honored for their efforts to help provide food stamps to families in need.

The United States Department of Agriculture’s Food Stamp Outreach Coalition recently honored Erie, Greene, Onondaga, Schenectady, Schuyler and St. Lawrence counties with the 2006 Food Stamp Hunger Champions award. The counties were among 58 counties across the United States to be recognized.

In October 2004, the coalition introduced an annual recognition program to honor offices that provide exemplary service in assisting eligible families in getting food stamps.

Nominations come from local, state and federal food stamp office staffs, and from non-profit and advocacy communities.

The workers’ efforts have led to thousands of families across the state receiving food stamps every month.

— Therese Assalian and Janice Marra

The names of the state’s 62 counties are etched on the facade around the building’s outdoor limestone and granite edges.

CSEA helps us negotiate the best contract possible. The union makes sure we have good health care coverage and helps us protect our jobs.”

— Colleen Holmes, Wyoming County Department of Social Services
“We worked around the clock. We started at 6 o’clock Sunday morning and the last guy left at 11 o’clock Monday night.”

OGS workers help make inauguration a success

ALBANY — Even before he took office, New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer found out just how hardworking and dedicated many of his workers are.

In the days and weeks leading up to the governor’s Jan. 1 inauguration, CSEA members working in the state Office of General Services (OGS) played a big role in making sure the historic event went off without a hitch.

Spitzer’s “people’s inaugural,” the first outdoor inauguration in state history, drew 8,000 people to the west lawn of the state Capitol Building. Many inaugural festivities followed the ceremony, including a reception at the Governor’s Mansion and a celebration of New York in the underground concourse of the Empire State Plaza featuring performers, exhibitors and food vendors serving regional specialties from popular New York restaurants.

Rain challenges workers
CSEA-represented grounds, maintenance and construction service workers put in 12-hour shifts for three days, often in drenching rain, to get the job done on time. They helped set up a large, circular stage above the fountain that normally adorns the Capitol’s west lawn and 2,000 chairs for those witnessing the ceremony.

Inclement weather in the days leading up to the event threatened the outdoor plans for the inauguration. Plumber and CSEA member Paul Spadaro said the biggest challenge was trying to keep everything dry.

“Sunday was a group effort because it was calling for bad weather and you had like 60 OGS people out there for eight or 10 hours, covering every chair,” he said. “We worked around the clock. We started at 6 o’clock Sunday morning and the last guy left at 11 o’clock Monday night.”

Supervisor of Grounds and CSEA member Jeremy Jasper, who also worked with State Police setting up more than 300 security barricades at the Capitol and the Governor’s Mansion, said job titles didn’t matter when the rain came.

“To see the teamwork between everybody working was the most impressive thing to me. That’ll stick in my mind,” Jasper said. “It didn’t matter what you were or who you were, you were out there the same as everybody else, doing whatever needed to get done. The unity was great.”

Working together
CSEA members working in the OGS print shop churned out 20,000 inaugural programs commemorating the event. They also printed thousands of credentials, fliers, booklets and brochures.

OGS parking services employees assisted motorists at the Empire State Plaza parking lots and nearby peripheral parking lots.

Special events and convention center staff worked diligently to coordinate events inside the concourse and on the plaza. They were responsible for setting up, decorating and lighting the concourse, coordinating children’s activities and a jazz concert in the convention center, as well as managing the lighting and sound for the events.

For CSEA-represented electrician Frank Salvagio, work began two weeks before the event, by upgrading the electrical systems in West Capitol Park to be able to withstand the needs of the inauguration.

Electricians provided power for workers erecting the stage and large video screens as well as for the news media. They also hooked up magnetometers (metal detectors) for the State Police at the Capitol and at the Governor’s Mansion.

“It was special to me because of the event being outside for the first time in so many years,” Salvagio said. “With the time constraint we were under; to pull it all together and make it happen made you feel good that it went off without a hitch.”

As inauguration day drew to a close, the day was just beginning for CSEA members assigned to cleanup duty. Despite the large crowd and the magnitude of the event CSEA OGS Local Executive Vice President Mike Essenter said everything was back to normal for those returning to work the next day.

“When we came in on Tuesday, it was clean; clean as a whistle,” he said. “You wouldn’t even have known it happened.”

“Our members are always up to the challenges expected of them,” said CSEA OGS Local President Tracy Carnavale.

— Ed Molitor

Christine Barling of the Office of General Services’ Public Affairs Office provided information for this article.
**Long Island school workers fight for contract, respect**

MATTITUCK — CSEA members from all over Long Island turned out at a recent demonstration to support members in the Mattituck-Cutchogue School District Unit fighting for a fair contract.

Union members, including those from as far west on Long Island as Port Washington and Long Beach and a CSEA retiree visiting Long Island from his home in the Midwest, shouted chants such as 'What do we want? Contract! When do we want it? Now,' and 'CSEA won't be gagged.'

**Demanding respect**

"We are here to send a clear message: the CSEA members in the Mattituck-Cutchogue School District deserve more respect than the disregard this school district has shown them and their president, Sam Strickland," CSEA Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte said at a recent school board meeting. "The members in Mattituck-Cutchogue deserve a fair contract and we will not rest until they have one."

That's because at the school board meeting in November, Strickland was interrupted and prevented by the board from continuing his statement as soon as he mentioned that unit members were working without a contract.

Their contract expired June 30, 2006, and they have had two unsuccessful mediation sessions since the union and district officials reached impasse in the fall.

"This disrespect and outright censorship exhibited by this school board is unacceptable," said LaMorte. "While the board may have been within its legal rights, I think it's hypocritical that this district teaches children about tolerance and constitutional rights, but denies an employee their freedom of speech in a public meeting."

At the December school board meeting, the board issued a public apology claiming it did not mean to slight Strickland, but that it would not tolerate discussion about contract negotiations at the school board meeting.

**Health plan issue**

A key sticking point in the contract negotiations is the health insurance plan. District officials are proposing to change from a self-insured plan to the Empire plan. "The district is refusing to compensate our members for the switch, even though we will be saving the district some money," Strickland said. "The district needs to switch because of their own poor management practices, but they want CSEA members to pay higher premiums and more than double our out-of-pocket costs without some consideration. It's not our fault they don't know how to properly administer the program and we shouldn't be made to suffer."

"We want CSEA members, the board and the community to know we are behind the members in Mattituck-Cutchogue all the way. They work hard; they have families. They deserve a fair and equitable collective bargaining agreement," said LaMorte. "That's all there is to it."

— Rachel Langert

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"This disrespect and outright censorship exhibited by this school board is unacceptable."

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CSEA stands by the workers no matter what. That is very important."

— Heidi Walton, Wyoming County Community Hospital

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If you need more information, the CSEA Membership Benefits Department provides information and assistance to help members take full value advantage of the many services and benefits that CSEA has to offer. (See the list of important phone numbers.) You can also log into the members — only benefit section on the CSEA website: www.cseaocal1000.org and choose from a score of CSEA’s popular member benefits publications.

Important Phone Numbers
CSEA Headquarters
143 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12210
518-277-1000
1-800-342-7146
Fax 518-483-3689
www.cseaocal1000.org

CSEA MEMBER BENEFITS DEPARTMENT
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State safety board to cite Canal Corporation in worker’s death

ALBANY — The New York State Canal System faces two citations following an investigation into the drowning death of a canal worker and CSEA member in December.

Michael Len, 45, of Cohoes plunged into the icy Mohawk River on Dec. 7 while cleaning debris from Lock 9 of the Erie Canal in Rotterdam Junction. He was in the water for nearly 30 minutes before he was located and recovered about a half mile downstream.

A state Public Safety and Health (PESH) investigation revealed that providing a handrail on the side of the catwalk on which Len was working would have helped in preventing the incident. CSEA's Occupational Safety and Health Department also investigated the fatality. PESH investigators also determined that the Canal Corp. did not provide a proper hazard assessment for the working conditions. The employer is required to do a proper hazard assessment for those conditions.

The state Department of Labor, under which PESH falls, had granted a variance allowing the Canal Corp. to have only one handrail on the catwalk if certain criteria were met. But PESH ruled those criteria were not met, and the variance is to be rescinded.

The variance required management to properly size and select life vests for workers, but the vest Len was wearing was meant for calm water, not the heavy current of the Mohawk in winter.

The variance also required management to properly train workers each time they went out on the catwalks, which PESH determined was not done.

Almost time to retire?

Your local may pay the first year of CSEA retiree dues, which is only $24!

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- Discounted dental and vision care programs.
- A personal legal services referral network.
- The Retiree News quarterly

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.

Worksite Security Act to begin in March

ALBANY — The Worksite Security Act, for which CSEA fought for more than a decade, will take effect in March.

The legislation is a comprehensive measure requiring the assessment of risks and appropriate measures to reduce them.

It will improve security and protect people.

The act was signed by former Gov. George Pataki in May 2006.

“Assessing and reducing risks in public work sites will not only benefit the people who work in those locations, it will benefit all the people of New York in many ways,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue.

The Worksite Security Act will require public employers with more than 20 employees to assess risk and develop a plan of action to prevent potential workplace violence.

The law will also establish a complaint procedure for workers to call attention to the potential for violence.
CSEA activist and mom called by Army to serve in Iraq

GOWANDA — CSEA activist Susan Sharp normally spends her days working as a keyboard specialist in the medical records department at Gowanda Correctional Facility. Soon, she’ll be spending her days defending the United States in the war in Iraq.

Sharp, 53, a Sgt. 1st Class in the Army, has been called to active duty on a civil affairs assignment. At press time, she did not yet know what her assignment in Iraq might be.

Sharp has been a member of the Army Reserves for almost 22 years. For the past decade, she has been teaching various finance classes for other reservists. As an instructor, she said she thought she would stay on U.S. soil.

“I never thought they would grab me up for this,” she said. “I am not scared, but I don’t want to leave my family. My family is already thinking about how mom’s not going to be here to take care of things.”

Sharp, the mother of a high school senior, left Dec. 9 for a physical assessment period at Fort Bragg in North Carolina. She returned home briefly over the holidays before leaving for Fort Dix in New Jersey. There, she will train for a month before an expected deployment in February to Iraq.

“I am very proud of Susan Sharp and of all CSEA members serving in the armed forces,” said CSEA Western Region President Flo Tripi. “These men and women, and their families, sacrifice so much so that we may continue to enjoy the freedoms we have as United States citizens.”

Sharp joined the Army Reserves as a young woman to make extra money.

“I was working two jobs; Monday through Friday at my regular job and Monday through Saturday at my part-time job,” she said. "I was looking for something that gave me more than just one day off. Here was a part-time job that was one weekend a month and two weeks a year.”

During her military career, she served in Panama during Operation Just Cause.

“I was involved with a special group retraining the civilian police force,” Sharp said. “I was on active duty for 100 days. That was my only call-up.”

Sharp was ineligible for activation in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm in the early 1990s because she was pregnant with her son when her unit was called. She instead helped mobilize members of other units locally. “I helped them get their records and their finances in order before they had to go,” she said.

Sharp’s current orders are for an 18-month minimum. She plans to retire from the Army Reserves at the end of her current contract.

Sharp has worked for Gowanda for about 10 years. Before that, she worked for the state Liquor Authority. She is also a member of the Western Region Women’s Committee.

— Lynn Miller

Susan Sharp, shown in the back row at far left, with some of the members of the Western Region Women’s Committee during a recent region event.

CSEA members in giving spirit during the holiday season

CSEA members in the Western Region marked the recent holiday season by giving to others.

Members of the state Department of Transportation Local in Rochester spent “Black Friday,” the day after Thanksgiving, volunteering as bell ringers for the Salvation Army. Local members volunteer as bell ringers every year. Also on Thanksgiving, Erie County Medical Center Licensed Practical Nurses Brenda Pawl and Lisa Hernandez cooked a Thanksgiving feast for their spinal injury and acute rehabilitation patients who otherwise would not have had a celebration.

Pawl and Hernandez cooked the meal at home and brought it to the hospital on their day off and delivered the meals to the patients.

— Lynn Miller

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In 1937, CSEA, then known as the Association of State Civil Service Employees, achieved one of the union’s most important victories with the state’s passage of the Feld-Hamilton Act, which gave association members a state salary plan that provided workers with minimum salaries and a defined salary schedule. The law also included provisions for appeals. The association had fought for the Feld-Hamilton Act for seven years and led the way in securing the law in the wake of other significant strides during the 1930s, including the abolition of the 72-hour workweek for state institutional employees in 1936. The Feld-Hamilton Act remains one of CSEA’s most significant accomplishments.

CSEA was also years ahead of its time in 1937 by introducing a program that gave members access to discount insurance plans through Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

Above, a state Health Department worker helps a boy walk on crutches circa 1930s. The association fought for seven years for the state to establish a salary structure that would ensure all employees would receive fair and consistent pay, culminating in the Feld-Hamilton Act of 1937.
CSEA honors “Inside Albany” for years of reporting on state government issues

ALBANY — Beyond the change from the Pataki to the Spitzer administration, the New Year also brought the end of another era at the Capitol.

The award-winning weekly TV newsmagazine “Inside Albany” ended its production after 32 years on the air. The show ran on PBS stations across the state.

For more than a generation, television viewers across New York state could tune into “Inside Albany” for a unique perspective on state government news.

The program’s hosts, Lise Bang-Jensen and Dave Hepp, among director Gary Glinski, offered strong, objective reporting and provided a tremendous service to New Yorkers by helping them to better understand about what goes on at the Capitol and how it affects people in their communities.

For the past 11 years, CSEA has been a major supporter of “Inside Albany.”

“We have been proud to help ensure that “Inside Albany” had been able to report on state government and bring its insight to the people of the state,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue.

“We are very grateful to CSEA for its moral and financial support over many years,” Hepp and Bang-Jensen said. CSEA recognized Hepp and Bang-Jensen at its recent statewide Board of Directors meeting and thanked them for their extraordinary years of service and achievement.

For more on “Inside Albany,” see Page 2

Union Plus tax service makes filing taxes easier, cheaper

April 15 just got a little less taxing. With the Union Plus Online Tax Preparation Service, union members and their families can use an online tax tool to prepare and file their taxes.

Ready to get your tax refund? Using this service along with the built-in e-filing means you could get your refund within a couple weeks and, unlike many other tax preparers, there are no high-cost “rapid refund” service fees.

With this simple, easy-to-use service, the online tax preparation tool automatically calculates your taxes and helps minimize errors.

You can save information and start again later, so you don’t have to complete your tax returns all at one time.

Year-to-year information is also saved so you can import information from a prior year’s return.

• You can file your federal and state returns for $14.95 each, for a total cost of $29.90.
• If your adjusted gross income is below $29,000, you can file both your federal and state returns for $14.95.
• You are not charged until you either file or print your return.
• The Union Plus Online Tax Service is half the cost of similar services provided by tax preparers H&R Block and Quicken.

Reliable provider: The Union Plus Online Tax Service is provided through CCH Incorporated and TaxEdge.com, the leading provider of tax and business law information and software for tax preparation professionals. The company was founded in 1913 and has been providing Web-based tax services directly to consumers for five years. Many tax preparation professionals use CCH software to file taxes for their clients.

Rapid refunds. Once ready to file, you can print the return and mail it directly to the IRS and your state authority, or file the return electronically. Refunds can be direct deposited to a checking or savings account or sent via a check.

To use the Union Plus Online Tax Service, visit its website at www.unionplus.org/taxes.

Compare and save money

• H&R Block’s TaxCut Standard — $54.90
• Quicken’s TurboTax Basic — $44.90
• Union Plus Online Tax Preparation Tool — $29.90
• Includes fees for one state tax return, one federal return and filing fees.
Happy New Year from the Employee Benefit Fund

Now that the winter months are upon us, hot dog days, picnics and outdoor information days are behind us. As you begin 2007, you may wonder how you can receive updated information from the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund. The EBF is constantly working to provide the most up-to-date information possible, whether it’s a change in our dental and vision provider network or an enhancement in the benefit programs we offer.

For plan booklets and provider information, visit our website at www.cseaebf.com. Members can navigate the EBF website with full access and no passwords. Not only will you find current listings in real time for dental and vision providers, but also summary plan booklets, dental claim forms and other EBF forms, such as the vision care direct reimbursement claim form which is used if you have EBF vision benefits and use a non-plan doctor.

Our website also provides members with the opportunity to send an e-mail to their region’s CSEA EBF representative listed below if they have questions or issues that need resolving, or require a service call for supply of materials.

If you’re a local or unit president or a shop steward and would like a supply of updated information for distribution to your members, contact the EBF mailroom at 1-800-323-2732 and follow the phone prompts.

Don’t miss the opportunity to stay informed and keep up-to-date on current events with the EBF.

Colleen Foley, Director, Marketing & Communications: C.Foley@cseaebf.org

Jane Balander, Marketing Coordinator/Administrative Assistant: jbalander@cseaebf.org

Linda Sclafani, Long Island Region: LindaSclafani@aol.com

Geoff Switts, Southern Region: GSwitts@cseaebf.org

Carisa Habert, Capital Region: CHabert@cseaebf.org

Meghan Pastiglione, Central Region: MPastiglione@cseaebf.org

Michael H. Wagner, Western Region: MWagner@cseaebf.org

Charles Guild, State Representative, Long Island, Metropolitan, Southern and Capital regions: CGuild@cseaebf.org

Dave Reed, State Representative, Capital, Central and Western regions: DReed@cseaebf.org

Deadline for 2006 Empire Plan claims is March 31

Empire Plan enrollees have until March 31 (90 days after the end of 2006) to submit medical expenses incurred during 2006 to the addresses listed below:

United Health Care Service Corp.
P.O. Box 1600
Kingston, N.Y. 12402-1600

For the Empire Plan Basic Medical Program, the Home Care Advocacy Program (HCAP) and non-network physical therapy or chiropractic services.

Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield

For help with the claim filing process of inpatient or outpatient hospital services, contact Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield at 1-877-TNYSHIP (1-877-769-7447).

ValueOptions
P.O. Box 778
Troy, N.Y. 12181-0778

For non-network mental health and substance abuse services received in 2006.

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 2007 Annual Delegates Meeting must be submitted by May 15, 2007.

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the CSEA Constitution & Bylaws 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. 12210-2203.

The 2007 CSEA Annual Delegates Meeting will be held Sept. 17 - 21 in Lake Placid.
When disability results in the loss of your job...
You must wonder whether you are doing everything you can to maintain your income

Civil servants, state and local, must come to grips with sections 71 and 72 of the Civil Service Law when they are unable to work due to disability.

Section 71 provides for a one-year leave of absence for employees with an occupational injury or disease (two years if the injury was the result of a work-related assault) and Section 72 provides for a one-year leave of absence for employees with a disability that is not work-related.

Some members have purchased disability insurance, and that, of course, helps. Those who were injured on the job should apply for Workers' Compensation benefits available to them, so they start to feel the financial pinch early on in their period of disability.

Optimism about the outcome of injuries and disease tends to delay thinking about the "what if" one cannot return to work. Optimism should not be discouraged, but realism must temper optimism. The fact is that no workday goes by without someone somewhere being removed from the payroll after one year of absence due to disability.

Whether the disability is or is not job-related is of no consequence where Social Security Disability Benefits (SSDB) are concerned. A disabled worker with the requisite "quarters" (40 if over 30 years of age) who has worked five out of the preceding 10 years at the time of application is eligible to receive as much in SSD as if they had already reached normal retirement age and were receiving Social Security (Old Age and Survivor Benefits). For those eligible for a service or disability pension, receiving Social Security Disability Benefits on top of the pension allows the disabled worker creature comforts as well as dignity.

In addition, Medicare is available to SSDB recipients commencing two years following the date of disability set by the Social Security Administration. It is important not to wait until one is "off the payroll" to be looking for income replacement when disabled. For Workers' Compensation, file a C-3 at the Workers' Compensation Board promptly after being injured, even if not disabled from working at that time. For SSDB, apply once you are out of work for six months, even if you believe that you will return to work before the year is up.

Processing applications by these agencies takes time, something that is precious to the disabled member.

It is actually possible to receive a pension, Workers' Compensation and Social Security Disability Benefits at the same time, under certain circumstances.

A free telephone consultation is available to CSEA members through the Legal Services Program by calling 1-800-342-4146, and following the prompts for the injury-related plans under the CSEA Legal Services Program. The consultation is provided by the law firm of Fine, Olin & Anderman, LLP, the CSEA approved provider for Workers Compensation and Social Security Disability Benefits Legal Assistance.

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Break in membership affects eligibility for union office, voting privileges

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

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

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

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

Note: however, you must continue to pay dues to run for office. Dues loss or gratuities 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. 1347, of any change in your status and what arrangements you are making to continue your membership in CSEA.

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REMININDER TO PRIVATE SECTOR LOCAL PRESIDENTS

The term of office for current Private Sector Local officers will expire on June 30, 2007. Elections for office must be conducted and completed before the new term begins on July 1, 2007.

A letter was sent by the Statewide Election Committee (SEC) on August 15, 2006, to each Private Sector Local President requiring each Local Executive Board to select an election committee and chairperson prior to October 15, 2006.

If you have not selected an election committee, please do so immediately. Please refer to the SEC’s Aug. 15 letter for procedural requirements.

If you did not receive a copy of the Aug. 15 letter, or have questions pertaining to it, please contact the SEC at 800-342-4146, ext. 1447.
WHITE PLAINS — When you make a trip to Jim Rose’s law office, you also receive a lesson in labor history.

Rose, longtime CSEA regional attorney for Westchester County, is an avid collector of union memorabilia, with a collection of more than 1,000 buttons from CSEA and other unions. His office doubles as a small labor museum of sorts, showcasing the many years of progress.

The Work Force’s Jessica Ladlee spoke with Rose about his collection and how these small buttons and other items tell the story of union history.

WF: How did the tradition of union buttons start?
JR: Most of the pins I have are from the ‘30s and ‘40s. They predate dues check-off. They would issue a different pin, with a different color or date, for the particular union. If you showed up for work without the pin on your collar, then your fellow union members would say, “where’s your pin this month, did you pay your dues?” Another category I have is election buttons. Some are for collective bargaining purposes; some for officers. Some of the dues buttons are back from the turn of the 20th century.

WF: Which pin is most interesting to you?
JR: I can’t pick just one. I’m very interested in the history of one piece from what might have possibly been a CSEA organizing convention. We’re not sure. It says Sept. 10, 1910, but records show the CSEA organizing convention was in October 1910. The pin says, “State Convention, New York State Civil Service Association.” I think this organization may have been the civil service administrators rather than the actual organizing convention of CSEA.

WF: What do the buttons say about CSEA history that members today might not know?
JR: I have the CSEA buttons that go back to when CSEA was an association of state employees, before it represented local municipalities, which a lot of people don’t know about. It changed in the ‘30s, well before the Taylor Law went into effect. We had at one point a local in Yonkers that had the CSEA name before the state organization did. That eventually became part of CSEA, Inc.

WF: Where do you find the pins?
JR: Mostly flea markets, but now eBay. When eBay first started, I checked the site. I couldn’t find anything. If you go to eBay today, there are between 500-600 entries in the union category on any particular day. It’s almost taken the fun out of finding obscure stuff. Also, a lot of people come to me, CSEA members or other people, and bring me buttons that belonged to a grandfather who was a union member. Members also bring me back pins from various conventions.

WF: What other union memorabilia is in your collection?
JR: I have a lot of ribbons. (Union members) would wear them on Labor Day when they’d march in parades. They have metal hangers down in front, usually with the logo of the union. On the back, the name is in black; they’d reverse them and wear them for funerals of union members when they turned out for the funeral. I have eight AFL-CIO convention ribbons, including one from the AFL and one from the CIO before they merged, and one from the convention year in which they merged. I have a collection of union charters that dates back to the 1880s. One charter is from 1900. Another, for a group called the Knights of Labor, goes back to the 1880s. Probably the nicest thing in the collection is the charter issued by the AFL to a central labor union body in Rome. It is signed by 12 union presidents of various unions, including William Green, who was the president of the AFL and George Meany, who was secretary. I also have a collection of shop cards. When I was a kid, every barber had behind him his shop card saying it was a union barber shop.

Jim Rose, a CSEA regional attorney in the Southern Region, shows off his collection of union buttons and pins.
CSEA scholarship applications to be available in February

April 16 is the deadline for graduating high school seniors who are the children of CSEA-represented employees to apply for scholarships offered through CSEA. A single application covers three scholarships. Applications will be available in early February 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.

PEOPLE PERSON — The PEOPLE recruiter for the month of December is Carol Low of the State University of New York at Stony Brook Local in the Long Island Region. She recruited 11 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. ... LEAVE ACCRUAL SHEETS — The 2007 Leave Accrual Sheets are available csealocal1000.org, where the they can be downloaded in several different formats: State Administrative Payroll, State Institutional Payroll, Court Payroll and Local Government and Private Sector. ... TRIPI ELECTED — Western Region President Flo Tripi has been elected 2nd vice president of the Rochester Labor Council. ... WORK FORCE CHAMPIONS — State University of New York at Cortland Local members were recently honored by state officials for their work leading to the Governor’s Office of Employee Relations selecting the college as one of three “Workforce Champions.” SUNY Cortland was honored for its campus energy savings program titled “Watt Can We Do to Save Energy?” Campus physical facilities workers, including those represented by CSEA, did work to help reduce the college’s natural gas consumption rate by 11 percent, a savings of nearly $300,000 on heating costs alone. The state also honored workers in the Office of Mental Health and Office of Children and Family Services. ... SEP. 11 RESPONDERS: REGISTER FOR WORKERS’ COMP — Many Sept. 11 responders are now eligible to receive Compensation benefits under recent changes to state law. The state recently changed its Workers’ Compensation Law to allow people who worked at Sept. 11 recovery efforts between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 11, 2002, but who are not ill, to be eligible to file a workers’ compensation claim should they become ill from a Sept. 11-related illness in the future. Many health experts predict thousands of exposed workers will become ill in the future. Hundreds of CSEA members across the state worked as paid and volunteer Sept. 11 responders. You must register with the state Workers’ Compensation Board by Aug. 14, 2007, to be eligible for Sept. 11 Workers’ Compensation benefits at any time in the future. For more information or to download a registration form, visit CSEA’s website at www.csealocal1000.org and follow the links for the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health and the state Workers’ Compensation Board.

Region calendar of events

February 2007

Long Island Region:
• Feb. 7-8: Defensive Driving, 5:30 p.m. - 8 p.m., Long Island Region Office, Commack
• Feb. 12-13: Local Government/Private Sector Grievance workshop, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn, Ronkonkoma
• Feb. 24: Defensive Driving, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Long Island Region Office, Commack

Metropolitan Region:
• Feb 26-27: State Government Grievance workshop, 5:30 p.m. - 9 p.m., Kingsboro Psychiatric Center, Brooklyn

Southern Region:
• Feb. 14-15: CSEA Partnership class: Electricity Basics, Downstate Correctional Facility, Fishkill
• Feb. 19: CSEA Partnership class: The Organized Secretary, SUNY New Paltz, New Paltz

Western Region:
• Feb. 6-7: Advanced Grievance workshop, 5:30 p.m. - 8 p.m., Saratoga Springs

Central Region:
• Feb. 6-7: Advanced Grievance: Power in Numbers workshop, 5:30 p.m. - 8 p.m. Sergi’s Restaurant, Potsdam

Workshop:
8 a.m. – 3 p.m., Best Western Albany Airport Inn, Albany
February 6-7: State Government Grievance workshop, 5:30 p.m. - 9 p.m., Best Western Albany Airport Inn, Albany
February 14-15: Advanced Grievance: Power in Numbers workshop, 5:30 p.m. - 8 p.m. Holiday Inn, Saratoga Springs

For more information on the listed events or to participate, contact your region office (phone numbers are listed on Page 4) or visit your region page at CSEA’s website at www.csealocal1000.org. Please note that additional events may be scheduled in your region, so check your region calendar page on the website.
Our Reputation:
New York’s Leading Union.
We’ve Earned It!

We’re CSEA — a positive force throughout New York State for nearly a century.

We’re 265,000 members strong. Dedicated. Keeping our skills sharp and our knowledge current. Doing the vital work that all New Yorkers depend on. And doing it right.

We fight for fair pay, decent benefits, fairness and respect. It’s not just the right thing to do – it’s a great investment.

Quality. Effectiveness.
And a better community for all.
CSEA members keep benefits

Brookhaven workers beat town council

ARMINGVILLE — Several hundred CSEA members employed by Brookhaven attended the Dec. 19 town board meeting to fight any proposed cuts in their supplemental benefits, a fight the members won.

"If the benefits weren’t that important, we wouldn’t be fighting that hard for them," said Suffolk Local 852 President Bill Walsh, also the

Please see Brookhaven continued on Page 3
Brookhaven Blue Collar Unit president. “That’s why the rank-and-file came out en masse. This was a very important issue.”

The big turnout was spurred by a flier from the union warning that “the supervisor, with the town board, is looking to diminish the Package 7 benefits for hardworking CSEA employees.” The benefits are negotiated separately from the three units’ contracts with the town.

The Package 7 benefits include vision, dental, prescription co-payment reimbursement, maternity, hearing aid and legal assistance and are provided through the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund. The town switched from another plan to the EBF 10 years ago.

The CSEA package is superior to the benefits the town offered and cheaper. “The town has saved thousands of dollars having this package compared to the one we had prior to 1996,” said Walsh.

Members of the three CSEA Brookhaven units, Blue Collar, White Collar and Highway, began filtering into the Town Hall auditorium well before the scheduled 4 p.m. meeting time. The turnout was large enough to require setting up extra tables for everyone to sign in. By the time the meeting began about 4:30 p.m., hundreds of CSEA members were present.

At about 6 p.m., the town board went into executive session to consider the benefits package. When the board returned an hour and a half later, Town Supervisor Brian X. Foley announced the benefit package would be maintained until 2009.

As Walsh and Meg Shutka, president of the White Collar Unit, prepared to thank the council for its action, Foley changed the tenor of the meeting. He never intended to cut benefits, the supervisor said, and blamed the union for circulating rumors that he did.

“He was trying to paint a picture that I was lying and that opened him up to a rebuttal,” said Walsh. “I told him I put out the fliers and the information was not in error but what their labor counsel had told me. Our members applauded and we all walked out. We didn’t get out of there until almost 9 p.m.”

Walsh also thanked members for their support. “I commend all those who were there that evening,” Walsh said. “It was the rank-and-file who made the difference by sticking.”

Shutka said although members were busy during the holiday season, they recognized the importance of showing up. “It not only showed support for the officers on this important issue but it impacted on the board meeting as a whole in a positive way,” she said.

“All we can do is deal with problems,” said Walsh.

At left, because of the large turnout, extra tables had to be set up for people to sign attendance sheets.

Above, Rich Leute, standing at right, Local 852’s Brookhaven Highway Unit President, talks with a member who is waiting in line to sign in before the town council meeting begins.
CSEA members win new contract; community gets new library

SAYVILLE — CSEA members and the community will benefit from a new contract and a new library.

The CSEA Sayville Library Unit of Suffolk Local 852 won a new three-year contract and in 2009 the community will have a brand new library. After union members won a 13 percent salary increase in the agreement, CSEA helped the library board win the village’s approval for construction of the new library.

The contract, retroactive to last July 1, provides a 4 percent boost the first year, 4 percent the second year and 5 percent in the final year. Eyeglass coverage was boosted and there were no givebacks in the agreement.

The negotiations were informal. “We had off-the-cuff negotiations with the board, so we never had to go to the table and sit down with the library attorney,” said Bob Konoski, unit president. “The board was very amiable, listened to what we wanted, and everything was settled without one hour of formal negotiations. The library saved on lawyer’s fees and we saved a lot of headache.”

The union’s executive board served as the negotiations committee. “The person most responsible is the treasurer, Donna DiBerardino,” said Konoski, who serves on the executive board along with Bill Olson, vice president, and Sandy O’Rourke, secretary. “The group is the same one that bargained the unit’s previous contract three years ago.”

Alice Lepore, the library director, played an instrumental role in the talks. “The board had proposed a new library several years ago but the community turned it down. This time, when the board re-introduced the proposal, library employees unanimously voted to back the project. The union put ads in local newspapers and Gretchen Penn, CSEA’s Long Island Region political action coordinator, provided posters that went up all over town. The union’s efforts were a key element in the vote, which passed by a narrow 1676 to 1628 vote in November.”

The new building, projected for completion in the spring of 2009 on Green Avenue, will have triple the space of the current building. There will be three community meeting rooms, which will provide space for many more adult library programs, as well as handicapped access and staff offices, which it doesn’t have now. It will also end physical problems with the current building. “Now, every time it rains, the basement floods,” said Konoski. “The new building will be state of the art. We’re looking forward to the new building.”

The 38-member Sayville Library unit includes librarians, including the heads of children’s, adult and reference services, and custodial, clerical, bookkeeping and accounting employees.

Message from Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

When a new member asks me what he or she gets for being a member of CSEA, I am reminded that not everyone is aware of all the extras that are available to members only. It certainly is information that bears repeating.

First and foremost CSEA negotiates contracts aimed at securing your rights at work, and improving the quality of life for you and your family. CSEA represents members when they have a grievance with management, or when management fails to abide by the contract. And, as public employees we are also earning pensions and securing our future with every day we work union.

Other basic benefits include things like access to CSEA’s labor toolbox, which holds the expertise of our Labor Relations staff and the Legal, Occupational Safety and Health, Political Action, and Communications departments.

There are numerous other discounts and programs such as:
• Discounts at Avis and Budget Rent-A-Car
• Discounts on legal services, theme park admission, cruises, travel, movie tickets and moving expenses
• Buyers Edge (Discounts on everything from autos to household appliances)
• Insurance programs through Pearl Carroll
• Scholarships for union members and their children
• And there are educational benefits such as:
• Civil Service Test Preparation Services
• The WORK Institute
• Partnership for Education and Training

And then, depending on your contract, even more benefits may be available to you! In fact, there are so many money saving programs and services that we can’t list them all here. Check pages 10 and 11 of this month’s Work Force for more information. And if you have access to the Internet you can explore all these programs by logging onto www.csealocal1000.org and www.unionpriv.org.

You may not use these programs or services all the time, but they are here when you need them. And remember, these great benefits and discounted services would not be available to you if you were not a member of New York’s Leading Union, CSEA.

In solidarity,

Nick LaMorte, president Long Island Region

PHOTO OF THE MONTH

Brookhaven Department of Waste Management and the Highway Department employees played a flag football game at the town’s Avatlon Park Dec. 31. Highway team is at left in dark jerseys, and the waste management team, the winner, is at right in light jerseys. The teams hope to make the game an annual event, said Suffolk Local President Bill Walsh, kneeling at right.

Members of the Sayville Library’s executive committee and negotiators are, from left, Sandy O’Rourke, Bill Olson, Bob Konoski and Donna DiBerardino.
COMMMACK — On this page are photos showing Long Island Region members enjoying holiday parties given by locals and units.

Judiciary Local 330 combined its half dozen parties, held across Nassau and Suffolk counties, with an information fair to recruit members of the CSEA unions available to them.

At the State University of New York at Old Westbury, members enjoyed live entertainment from Copper Rose, while talented members at the Farmingdale State College Local provided live entertainment with their karaoke singing.

“Everywhere there was food and festivities to close out the old year and bring in 2007 with renewed hope,” nobody minded the “Bah Humbug” cap Donna Nicastro of Brookhaven’s Research Department wore during the holiday season. “Everyone who sees the hat loves it,” she said.

Above, more than 250 members of the Long Beach Unit of Nassau Municipal Local 882 had a good time at their holiday party, held at Paddy McGees restaurant in Island Park on Dec. 20. Officers of the unit, left to right, are 1st Vice President Paul Attanasio, 2nd Vice President Vincent DeLele, President Colleen Silva, Secretary Amanda Hall and Executive Vice President John Mooney.

Above, SUNY Old Westbury Local member Mahi Kumar took a break from the union party to sit on the knee of Santa, portrayed here by Julia Sweeney. For $2, Old Westbury employees could sit on Santa’s lap. All proceeds went to charity.

Left, this was the buffet for members of Judiciary Local 330 who attended the local’s holiday party in Mineola Dec. 15.

Left, Judiciary Local 330 combined information fair, foreground, with holiday festivities at its parties, including this one in Mineola.

Top to bottom: Farmingdale State College Local President Tom Dowdene, left, is shown with members at Local 606’s holiday party; at the Farmingdale State College party, Local Executive Vice President Glen Huyler offers candy mini-bars for those with a sweet tooth; these Long Beach Unit members were among the 250 CSEA members who enjoyed themselves when the union took over Paddy McGees in Island Park for its holiday party on Dec. 20.

Above, enjoying one of Judiciary Local 330’s holiday parties are Long Beach City Court members, from left, Pat Amendola, local 1st vice president and unit shop steward; Gregg White, Nancy Auli, Lynn Laminuit and Susan Levine.

Above, wearing antlers, SUNY Old Westbury Local President Mary O’Antonio sells a raffle ticket to a member at the union’s party.

Above, Farmingdale State College Local President Tom Dowdene presents a raffle prize, a gingerbread house, to Phyllis Jacobs at the union’s party, held Dec. 15 at Knapp Hall.

Right, taking a lead from Ebenezer Scrooge, Donna Nicastro’s cap flaunted “Bah Humbug” to Brookhaven residents visiting the town’s Research Department.
CSEA backs O'Connell for State Senate

CSEA has endorsed Nassau County Clerk Maureen O'Connell in the state Senate's special election for the 7th District.

The Long Island Region Political Action Committee recently interviewed O'Connell on important issues such as her position on the right to organize, contracting out, public education funding and maintaining public sector pensions. O'Connell is a lifelong district resident.

"We are supporting Ms. O'Connell because we believe she is an outstanding candidate and will fight for our members and for working families in general, especially on a statewide level," Long Island Region Political Action Committee Chair John C. Shepherd said. "She is understanding and sympathetic regarding the issues of our members."

"There are so many ways that having the right person in office can be helpful to us, especially as public employees," Statewide Political Action Committee Chair Bill Walsh said. "The wrong person holding office can be a nightmare, too. On a state level, lawmakers can be instrumental in acquiring proper funding for our school districts, libraries, and all of our municipalities. The knee-jerk response of many administrators and office holders is to try and cut benefits and/or cut jobs the minute there's any reduction in funding."

"It's vitally important we go out and support the people who will be supportive of the concerns and struggles that we and our families face every day," Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte said. "That's why we will be campaigning for Ms. O'Connell and getting out the vote in this special election. She has proven herself to be a friend of labor."

The state Senate 7th District seat was vacated by Michael Balboni when he became the Deputy Secretary for Public Safety in Gov. Eliot Spitzer's administration. The special election will be held Feb. 6.

— Rachel Langert

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— Rachel Langert
Long Beach member retires

LONG BEACH — Arthur Findlay, a photo technician for the Long Beach Police Department, retired Jan. 12 after 23 years of service.

"Arthur was a great asset to the department," said Colleen Silvia, Local 882’s Long Beach Unit president. "He photographed crime scenes, did fingerprinting, entered data and so much more. The Police Department will never be the same without Arlie Findlay."

Silvia also commended Findlay for his CSEA activism.

"Arthur also was a great shop steward and participated in many union activities," she said. "He took part in the march to the governor’s mansion back in the ’90s. Arthur is one of the nicest people I have had the pleasure of working with in Long Beach, and he will be missed by us all."

Labor relations specialist retires

COMMACK — After serving CSEA members for 23 years, Labor Relations Specialist Ken Brotherton has retired.

"My first gig was with occupational safety and health," Brotherton said. "I did that for about three years and then I was promoted to (labor relations specialist) in 1987."

Brotherton said he always tried to return phone calls promptly and generally help the membership as much as possible. "Kenny had a light touch, but he was quietly effective and persuasive," said Long Island Region Director Ron King. "He was always a gentleman. He could effectively relate to the rank and file, but he could also present clear and professional insights into labor relations issues that may not have been readily apparent."

Perhaps that’s because before joining the union’s staff, Brotherton worked for the Town of Hempstead as a CSEA-represented employee for 14 years and served as administrative assistant to the Hempstead town unit president for three years.

As a CSEA member, he served as unit secretary, when the town was part of the Nassau County Local, and as a shop steward in the town’s Parks Department.

"It was a great ride," Brotherton said of his years at CSEA. "Everyone has been good to me and I tried to be good to them."

Ken and his wife Rose have a son, daughter and a granddaughter, Joanna Rose. Brotherton said he is looking forward to fishing in the spring. He and Rose also hope to drive to visit family in California.

— Rachel Langert

Correction

This photo, which appeared on Page 5 of the January issue, had an incorrect caption. The photo, taken at the region holiday party in December, shows, from left, Joel Tarantowicz, treasurer of Farmingdale State College Local 606; Tom Dowdrey, local president, and Carlos Speight, president of SUNY Stony Brook Local 614. We regret the error.
Local officers sending a message to town officials

Shelter Island Gets Support from CSEA

SHELTER ISLAND — CSEA members in Shelter Island are increasingly making their presence known at town board meetings and keeping up the pressure for a contract. The unit is at impasse and has had a few mediation sessions with an independent third party, but as of press time no breakthrough has been made.

Officers from the Suffolk Municipal Local, including President Bill Walsh and 3rd Vice President Matt Hattoff, recently began attending town board meetings to send a message to town officials.

“We want the board to know that we’re watching the situation very carefully,” said Walsh, also the chair of CSEA’s statewide Political Action Committee. “We’re not going anywhere until these members get a fair and equitable contract. After that, we’ll make sure that the town lives up to every word of it.”

Walsh also requested a meeting with the town supervisor in an effort to break through the logjam.

The primary stumbling block to an agreement is health insurance. The town wants new employees to contribute 15 percent of the premium.

The membership has held firm against the provision, because it basically did not want to be seen as willing to

Mattituck-Cutchogue school district

workers fight for contract, respect

CSEA members care about their community

CSEA members working at Saxton Middle School helped make the holidays brighter for many families in need. Carl DeMasi, 1st vice president of the CSEA Operations Unit in the Patchogue-Medford School District, said the custodial workers did a fantastic job, raising about $1,500 through raffles. They also solicited donations of toys, including bicycles, electronics and video games. DeMasi said workers just wanted to show CSEA members care about their community.

Pictured are CSEA members Nick Logiacco, Mike Zarcone, Joe Nava, Armando Goncalves, Gary Gadson, Edna Dolengewicz, Maria Raycroft and secretary Joann Mulderich. Rich Pappas is not shown.

See full story, more photos on Page 9 of The Work Force.
I hope everybody had a safe and healthy New Year. The holiday season is a time of year I always look forward to, but I’d be lying if I didn’t say that I am happy we have survived yet another one. As I look ahead to another productive year, I want to take a few moments to review some events from the past year.

Let me start with the financial standing of your local. I am proud to announce that for the first time in CSEA Local 830 history, we have produced a balanced budget for 2007. That simply means that I have forwarded a budget to our local’s Executive Board where our projected spending equals our projected income for the fiscal year of 2007. I refused to put forth a deficit budget and our entire team worked diligently to make sure we didn’t.

Sounds easy, right? Believe me, it was not, and many tough decisions were made to accomplish this feat.

Since we have taken office in Local 830, we have reduced our yearly spending by almost $200,000! I felt that as your local’s president, it was imperative all of my members have a financially sound union. By making the cuts we did we were able to balance the budget. Before taking office, I spent a great deal of time speaking with some of our experienced financial board members who told me that if something was not changed soon, our local was headed for financial problems. One member who comes to mind is Mr. Timothy Carter, an administrative assistant under the past local president. As an accountant, Tim was able to clearly define many areas where spending had exceeded our ability to pay. In most instances this was not anyone’s fault, since our membership has declined over the years and as we all know, everything costs more today than it did 10 years ago. A decrease in revenue, combined with an increase in expenditures, equals BIG problems. That being said, we just could not continue on this road to disaster.

Last fiscal year (2006) was another first, as we actually came in under budget. We spent $5,000 less during the year than was budgeted. That shows fiscal constraint and sends a clear message to everybody. CSEA Local 830 intends to become stronger in all areas of unionism. Being a financially sound organization is just as important as being a strategically strong one.

CSEA Local 830 intends to become stronger in all areas of unionism. Being a financially sound organization is just as important as being a strategically strong one. Simply put, your local today is in much better financial shape than it has been for a very long time. For you, our members, this should make you extremely happy.

It has taken almost two years, but our contract is finally being printed for the Nassau Health Care Corp. As previously stated, we had to hold up the printing because there were many post-signing problems and issues that needed to be resolved. A copy of the contract has now been sent to every NHCC employee by way of global e-mail from the hospital administrators. CEO Art Gianelli and I were determined to get this contract out to print. With the help of our CSEA team, led by Unit President Earl Stoughton, and the hospital administration, the contract is now collated and on the hospital’s intranet for our members to use.

I’d like to thank and congratulate our Unity and Social committees for their hard work and great results during the past two months. Stephen Cohen, Kelvin Lewis, Carol Croston, Tim Corr and others worked very hard to make our events a real success. First of all, our annual holiday party in December was a great success with more than 650 people in attendance. Most impressive was the generous donation of toys for our local children in need. The distribution of toys to those children, who really needed help this holiday season, ranks among the highlights of my term. We also initiated a new ‘Adopt-A-Family’ program for this holiday season and once again, you all came through. Eighteen CSEA members’

Continued on Page 5
Denial of Overtime in Department of Social Services Overturned at Arbitration

As a follow-up to my last article concerning equal distribution of overtime under the terms of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between CSEA and Nassau County, we have a decision of interest out of the Department of Social Services ("DSS").

As we know, the county is required to, insofar as practicable, equally distribute overtime among employees in a department who have the same job titles (Section 28-4.2). In the DSS case, an employee was denied the opportunity to work overtime because of his “work performance.” The department claimed it had conducted a “work study” of the grievant’s performance during a one-week period that he had worked overtime. However, the people the grievant was compared to were his supervisors who had many more years of experience than the type of work he had been performing on overtime. Also, while the study only looked at 4.5 hours of grievant’s overtime, the two employees he was compared to had six-hour periods analyzed plus an additional three hours each for the supervisors. This created a skewed result and invalidated the study in the arbitrator’s view. “This single, relatively small sample of the Grievant’s work cannot fairly be considered to represent his average rate of work.”

The arbitrator went on to state: “Even if this sample sufficed, this study does not demonstrate that the Grievant was comparatively underperforming his colleagues to a substantial degree.”

The crux of this arbitration centered on the term “insofar as practicable” in the equal distribution of overtime clause of the agreement. The arbitrator held: “Section 28-4.2 of the Agreement requires the equal distribution of overtime among employees in a department who have the same job titles. The language at issue, however, contains a caveat. It states that overtime will be equally distributed only ‘insofar as practicable.’ A definition of these words is important to an understanding of the clause as a whole. The dictionary definition of ‘practicable’ is something ‘possible,’ ‘workable’ or ‘realistic’. Thus, when one reads Section 28-4.2 as a whole, it requires the equal distribution of overtime among employees in a department who have the same job titles to the extent equalization of overtime is both realistic and workable.”

This definition should be taken to heart by all CSEA members when deciding whether they have been deprived of equal distribution of overtime. In this case, the county tried to argue that the grievant’s “poor work performance” was valid criteria for denying equal distribution of overtime. The arbitrator rejected that argument on several grounds, the most important being that the county did not prove the employee had poor work performance. Secondly, that the “work study” used to demonstrate poor work performance was flawed and finally, no proof was offered to demonstrate the minimum amount of work the department expected of each employee.

Given these flaws, the arbitrator concluded the county violated the agreement when it denied overtime to the grievant and has ordered the parties to meet to determine an appropriate remedy. If the parties cannot agree, the arbitrator will retain jurisdiction to determine the remedy.

So, if you are faced with a situation in which your work performance is being used to deny you overtime, contact CSEA to file a grievance on your behalf.

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**They Said It:**

"I thank Commissioner Ribeiro for cooperating with us, and getting this done. I also would like to wish the best to our DPW workers as they get through the winter season."

— CSEA Local 830 President Jerry Larichuta, on CSEA's initiative of getting costs for Department of Public Works employees to rest during their busy snowplowing season.
Hundreds of CSEA members have done it so far . . .
YOU can be next!

THERE ARE GREAT BENEFITS OF
SIGNING UP FOR
www.CSEA830.ORG!!

New Website Includes:
• Brand new, functioning “Members” section with contracts, unit constitution and member benefits information;
• Links to local CSEA staff and unit presidents by telephone and e-mail;
• Archives of all radio shows, video links to the Local 830 commercial and footage from CSEA meetings, pictures and current Express newsletters;
• Updated information on all the latest in CSEA news;

AND MUCH MORE!

Sign up Today!

Above, Social Committee Co-Chairs Kelvin Lewis, left, and Steve Cohen, right, work together on organizing the recent holiday party.

Left, Local 830 President Jerry Laricchiuta with Administrative Assistant Ana O’Gorman.

Around the Local Office

Picture This

Above, Local 830 Vice President John Aloisio helps a member on the phone in the grievance area.

CONTRACT NEGOTIATION TIME IS COMING UP!

CSEA Local 830 has already formed its 2007 contract negotiation team, which is meeting to ensure we get the best contract for our members that will start Jan. 1, 2008.

CSEA Local 830 is looking for proposals from its members on the issues that are most important to you and should be addressed in our next contract.

CONTACT your unit president for proposal forms! Deadline is Feb. 1.
CSEA Local 830 Holiday Party a Great Success!

WOODBURY — CSEA Local 830's annual holiday party took place Dec. 20, 2016, at the Croix Hollow Country Club in Woodbury. More than 860 CSEA members, friends and family attended the event.

Cocktail hour was from 7 to 8 p.m., followed by a speech by Local President Jerry Laricchiuta, a special eight-minute video montage of CSEA events in 2016, and refreshes of many prizes including George Foreman grills, televisions and DVD players. The night was punctuated with a breathtaking musical performance by "American Idol" star Kevin Covais who performed "Marry Little Christmas," Jon Leornard's "Imagine," and "O Holy Night." Additionally, the dance floor was flooded with people having a great time.

The Economic Opportunity Commission (EOC) was also on hand to collect all the toys that CSEA members donated for local children distributed on Dec. 22 at the Christmas on Jackson Street celebration.

"I was very pleased with the outcome of this year's holiday party," Laricchiuta said. "I am glad we all got to spend the holiday together at this wonderful event and I look forward to doing the same in the future."

Clockwise from top left: Local Vice President Scott Multford, President Jerry Laricchiuta, Deputy Sheriff's Unit President Bob Arciello and Local Vice President Ron Guerini; Kevin Covais performs.

CSEA Takes Part in Christmas on Jackson Street

HEMPSTEAD — CSEA Local 830 members collected hundreds of toys this holiday season that were handed out to local children Dec. 22 at the Economic Opportunity Commission's Christmas on Jackson Street event. There was not a dry eye in the house on this day as most who looked on were amazed to see the look on the children's faces when they were inundated with gifts donated by CSEA and other organizations.

CSEA Local 830 Unity Committee and Social Committee Co-Chair Kelvin Lewis was on hand for the event and said, "It was really incredible. Seeing the look on those kids faces was just priceless."

Local President Jerry Laricchiuta echoed that thought and said, "It's just so special to be part of such a great program during the holiday season. We thank the EOC for partnering with us this year, and we look forward to doing it again in the future."

Message From CSEA Local 830 President

Jerry Laricchiuta

Continued From Page 1
families gave a wish list of presents, and all donations came from CSEA members. I cannot thank you all enough for your generosity and kindness. I only wish there was a way for everyone to have been able to see the families as they were given their gifts. It was just a great feeling, and you did it! We had "American Idol" star Kevin Covais sing three songs for us at the party, and we watched a 10-minute video of CSEA Local 830's year in review. The event was just great. Next year, we will make it a five-hour party because I heard that some of you wanted more time to dance.

On Jan. 6, our Unity Committee held its annual Martin Luther King Jr. luncheon. Each year seems to get better, and this year we were entertained for the entire four hours. The Rev. King would have been proud of all of those in attendance, and his life was celebrated with class and pride. I never realized how many talented people we have in CSEA, including families of our members. It was a memorable event and Local 830 members should also be proud. Once again, thanks to our hardworking committee members.

Well, with all that action in the past, I guess the rest of this year should be a walk in the park! That's wishful thinking of course, as we are just beginning the contract negotiations process. So, until next time, stay safe and stay strong.

Yours in solidarity,

Jerry Laricchiuta

Cots for DPW Workers Delivered

Thanks to CSEA, Nassau County Department of Public Works snowplow operators will get some rest during the busy winter season. With the help of CSEA Local 830 and Department of Public Works Commissioner Ray Ribeiro, 250 cots were delivered to the department's Hicksville garage the week of Dec. 19, which were distributed to the county's seven garages and two sewage treatment plants Jan. 8, just in time for the busy snowplowing season.

New York state law prohibits drivers from operating a vehicle for more than 16 hours without resting for a period of time.

In the past, drivers were found sleeping in their trucks and even cars and the union has been very instrumental in making sure that never happens again. CSEA Local 830 President Jerry Laricchiuta has been in contact with Ribeiro on numerous occasions about this situation, including a lengthy November DPW meeting that was open to all members at Nassau Community College.

Ribeiro said he is very happy about the cots becoming a fixture in DPW garages this winter. "I think the snow plowing guys do a great job," he said. "Whatever makes them do their job more efficiently, I am all for." Larichiuata echoed that thought and said, "I thank Commissioner Ribeiro for cooperating with us, and getting this done. I also would like to wish the best to our DPW workers as they get through the winter season."

If you would like to see a one-minute excerpt from a recent DPW meeting at Nassau Community College, where Jerry Laricchiuta speaks about this situation, log onto www.csea830.org and click on the Special Features icon.
Great Entertainment at CSEA’s Martin Luther King Jr. Luncheon

BALDWIN — The CSEA Local 830 Unity Committee held its 13th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Luncheon Jan. 6 at the Coral House in Baldwin. The CSEA Executive Board, staff and many members were on hand for the wonderful event that included entertainment, raffles, food and scholarships awarded to recently graduated or graduating high school seniors.

Four $500 scholarships were given to very deserving winners Christopher Joseph Smith, Lydia Gibson, Sean Jones, and Dwayne Lassiter Bowser. Nassau County Parks, Recreation and Museums Commissioner Jose Lopez was the guest speaker, with achievement awards going to Principal of Centennial School in Roosevelt, Patricia Chartherm and Village of Hempstead Trustee Don Ryan. Entertainment was provided by vocalists Carolyn Harding, James and Brianna Seabrooks, and the performance of the Unspoken Word by the Praise Dancers. All this was made possible by the hard work of the Unity Committee. The committee co-chairs are Kelvin Lewis and Carol Croston. Other committee members are Kathleen Zoeller, Tim Corr, Debbie O’Connell, Barbara Jones, Bahiyud-Deen Ahmad, Stanley Bergman, Juanita McKivries, Cynthia Stoudmire and Concetta M. Walker.

It was a great time for all those involved. “It’s always a pleasure to honor the legacy of the great Martin Luther King Jr.,” CSEA Local 830 President Jerry Larkin said. “I am proud of CSEA and of our Unity Committee for putting together such a wonderful event once again. I also would like to congratulate all the awardees and scholarship winners.”

Photos, from top to bottom: Parks, Recreation & Museums Commissioner Jose Lopez; James Seabrooks performed two selections; the CSEA Local 830 Unity Committee; Nassau County Legislator Kevan Abrahams presents Patricia Chartherm and Don Ryan with achievement awards.

About our Scholarship Winners

Christopher Joseph Smith of Floral Park is 17 years old and is very active with the Boy Scouts of America and has been accepted into The Cooper Union for Advancement of Science and Art as a chemical engineering major.

Lydia Gibson is an active member of her high school’s Key Club and participates in events such as breast cancer and lupus walks and tutors science to elementary school students.

Sean Jones has been a huge help, volunteering at Winthrop University Medical Center in pediatrics and the intensive care unit, and at Nassau University Medical Center promoting breast cancer awareness.

Veteran’s Corner
By Debbie O’Connell

We would like to wish a happy and healthy New Year to everyone as we look forward to another strong year of helping to serve our nation’s veterans. Here’s the latest in veterans news:

• About 130 veterans’ organizations in Nassau County are eligible for free American flags to mark veterans’ graves Memorial Day weekend. Veterans’ organizations that would like to flag the graves of veterans at private or national cemeteries should send a letter to Edward G. Aulman, c/o Nassau County Veterans Service Agency, 1425 Old Country Road, Building H, Plainview, N.Y. 11803. Letters with the number of flags requested must be received by April 1.

• Last week the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate passed legislation that permits veterans to use the Veterans Affairs Home Loan to purchase a co-op. Under the old law, the VA Home Loan could only be used to buy a house, townhouse, condominium, or mobile home, but not a co-op.

• The House and Senate also passed legislation that will permit lawyers, for a fee, to help veterans appealing unfavorable decisions by the VA regional offices. The law should go into effect in about six months, but the Secretary of Veterans Affairs must prescribe in regulations what level of experience or training is necessary before a lawyer represents veterans.

• Veterans not rated 100 percent for their disabilities can still receive the financial benefit of a 100 percent rating ($2,471 per month) if they can establish that their service connected disability makes them unemployable. Under current rules a veteran must be at least 70 percent service connected for multiple conditions and have at least one condition at 40 percent, or be 60 percent service connected for a single condition.

• CSEA is still collecting DVD movies for soldiers deployed abroad, and is still looking to support member families of anyone deployed overseas. If you have any suggestions on these programs or additional veterans service programs that CSEA can do in 2007, please contact Veterans Committee Chair Debbie O’Connell at 571-2919 ext. 22.

Some information provided by Edward G. Aulman, director, Nassau County Veterans Service Agency

This month from
Talkin’ Labor With Local 830

“Talkin’ Labor with Local 830” has been flying high into 2007, and the show recently welcomed some very prominent guests.

Dec. 27 marked the first appearance of Nassau County Executive Tom Suozzi in the Local 830 studios in Mineola. Local 830 President Jerry Laricchiuta discussed many labor issues with Suozzi in an intriguing interview that all CSEA members should hear (Log onto www.csea830.org to listen to the interview in its entirety).

Other guests included Nassau County PBA President Gary Delaraba. Delaraba’s union represents Nassau County police officers and he has many similar and also some different points of view from CSEA’s, which were all discussed during the interview.

Town of Hempstead Receiver of Taxes Donald X. Clavin Jr. was also on the show in an interview that should be heard by all taxpayers. Also, Jan. 24 marked Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice’s second appearance on “Talkin’ Labor.”

Please tune in each Wednesday night at 6:30 p.m. on WGBB AM 1240, or log onto www.csea830.org to listen to all archives.

Above, Jerry Laricchiuta speaks with PBA President Gary Delaraba.

Left, Jerry Laricchiuta with Receiver of Taxes Donald X. Clavin Jr.

Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. on WGBB AM 1240
A Message From Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte

Union Membership has its Privileges

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

When a new member asks me what they get for being a member of CSEA, I am reminded that not everyone is aware of all the extras that are available to members only. It certainly is information that bears repeating.

And foremost CSEA negotiates contracts aimed at securing your rights at work, and improving the quality of life for you and your family. CSEA represents members when they have a grievance with management, or when management fails to abide by the contract. And, as public employees we are also earning pensions and securing our future with every day we work union.

Other basic benefits include things like access to CSEA's labor toolbox, which holds the expertise of our Labor Relations staff and the Legal, Occupational Safety and Health, Political Action, and Communications departments.

There are numerous other discounts and programs such as:

- Discounts at Avis and Budget Rent-A-Car
- Discounts on legal services, theme park admission, cruises, travel, movie tickets and moving expenses
- Buyers Edge (Discounts on everything from auto to household appliances)
- Insurance programs through Pearl Carroll
- Scholarships for union members and their children

And there are educational benefits such as:

- Civil Service Test Preparation Services
- The WORK Institute
- Partnership for Education and Training

And then, depending on your contract, even more benefits may be available to you! In fact, there are so many money saving programs and services that we can’t list them all here. Check pages 10 and 11 of this month’s Work Force for more information. And if you have access to the Internet you can explore all these programs by logging onto www.csealocal1000.org, and www.unionpriv.org.

And remember, these great benefits and discounted services would not be available to you if you were not a member of New York’s Leading Union, CSEA.

In solidarity,

Nick LaMorte,
President
Long Island Region

If you have access to the Internet you can explore all these programs by logging onto www.csealocal1000.org, and www.unionpriv.org.

CSEA Unit of Nassau Community College
is pleased to announce an open competition for the
PEGGY FITZPATRICK MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

In the amount of: $400

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLYING:

✔ A single parent who is a CSEA/AFCSCME member, the sole support of his/her children, and is attending Nassau Community College (full-time or a part-time student carrying a minimum of three credits).

✔ A student of a single parent who is a member of CSEA/AFCSCME and is attending Nassau Community College (full-time or a part-time student carrying a minimum of six credits).

✔ A graduating CSEA member who is transferring to an institution of higher learning with a 2.5 GPA.

✔ A graduating liberal arts student pursuing a career in the field of labor relations with a 2.5 GPA.

Filing Deadline: March 30, 2007

Applications available at:
Department offices; Academic Advisement; Financial Aid Office-3rd Floor Tower; Transfer Office; Nassau Hall; Student Activities Center-CCB-Room 150; Library Reference Desk; the Children’s Greenhouse; Adult Advisement; Information Center and CSEA Local 830 office

Return applications to:
Nassau Community College
Barbara Vollmer
CSEA Scholarship Committee Chair
351 Harmon Ave.
Garden City, N.Y. 11530
(516) 572-7883