Ed Burkhart, a CSEA member in the Great Meadow Correctional Facility Local, emerges from 46-degree Lake George water after taking the Polar Plunge to raise money for Special Olympics New York. Burkhart dedicated his plunge to his young friend Sammy Wollschleager, and raised more than $1,360 from area businesses, friends and family for Special Olympics. See Page 13 for details of upcoming Polar Plunges.

CSEA, ORDA reach contract

LAKE PLACID — After protracted negotiations, including a spirited solidarity demonstration by union delegates during the 97th Annual Delegate Meeting in Lake Placid, CSEA has reached a tentative contract with the Olympic Regional Development Authority.

CSEA members employed at the North Country Olympic venues overwhelmingly ratified the agreement. ORDA workers had been without a contract since March 31.

“We are very pleased with the outcome and that we were able to reach agreement just in time for the holidays,” Bill Shurter, CSEA ORDA Local president said in comments on SportsFeatures.com. “With negotiations behind us, we can now move forward and focus on what looks to be a very promising year.”

ORDA, which operates the Winter Olympic venues in Lake Placid as well as Gore Mountain in North Creek, and CSEA, whose members are employed at these sites, reached agreement on a two-year contract, retroactive to April 1, 2007, and expiring on March 31, 2009.

“We still have this discrepancy in pay compared to other state workers. We’ll be working through our legislators,” Shurter told the Plattsburgh Press Republican.

Union backs pension oversight reforms

ALBANY — Gov. Eliot Spitzer and state Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli have presented a package of reforms that will provide greater oversight and transparency over the management of the $154.5 billion state pension system. CSEA supports the changes.

“The public needs to be confident in the integrity of our pension investment policies and oversight,” CSEA President Danny Donohue said.

“That’s even more important for CSEA members who rely on the system for their future security. These reforms will help strengthen that confidence.”

The new regulations are aimed at improving efficiency and protecting the New York State Common Retirement Fund, which funds the pensions of 1 million government employees.

The new regulations were jointly developed by DiNapoli and state Insurance Superintendent Eric Dinallo. The reforms dovetail with DiNapoli’s ongoing efforts to develop, implement and publicly disclose management standards, practices and policies.

“Recent events have illustrated the importance of protecting the integrity of the state pension fund. The new regulations, developed by Comptroller DiNapoli and Superintendent Dinallo will maximize protection for taxpayers, local governments and beneficiaries,” said Spitzer.

CSEA 2008 leave record sheets available

CSEA members working in local government now have expanded leave time to get screening for breast and prostate cancer.

The new law, pushed for by CSEA, allows four hours of annual, excused leave for all municipal and school district employees to receive breast and prostate cancer screening. This includes employees of cities, towns and villages. The leave cannot be charged against an employee’s accrued sick, vacation or other leave to which they may be entitled.

This builds on similar laws that granted this same health care screening for state and county employees. CSEA members can visit http://www.fightcancer.org, using “CSEA” as a password, to learn more about fighting and preventing cancer.

Keep track of your leave accruals with these downloadable leave accrual sheets. Download the sheets at: http://www.csealocal1000.org/ca/leave_accruals.php
ALBANY — “This rule will have a profound impact on the working lives of thousands of public employees and it will save lives,” CSEA President Danny Donohue told state Department of Labor officials about a proposed DOL rule that would require public employers to put in place workplace violence prevention programs to protect their workers.

At a public hearing on the proposed rule before it takes effect, the union leader said the rule will build upon the Worksite Security Act of 2006, which CSEA spearheaded and which provides safer workplaces for New York's public employees.

“New York now leads the nation in protecting its public employees from potential workplace violence. CSEA believes this rule will further reduce the threat of violence against our members,” Donohue said.

Donohue said the fact that the proposed rule will save lives should outweigh employer complaints that it may be burdensome to enforce.

“In light of the lives that will be saved, the argument that this will be too burdensome holds very little water with us,” he said.

**Voice of the workers**

Donohue stressed that employers would benefit from worker input when developing their workplace violence prevention programs.

“Workers know what the problems are, they know where the problems are and, for the most part, they know how to fix them,” Donohue said. “Workers are the ones in the trenches when it comes to workplace violence. Who could be better suited or more motivated to help develop an effective and comprehensive workplace violence prevention program than the people whose necks are on the line?”

Always at the forefront in the fight for worker safety, CSEA played a leading role in enacting New York’s Public Employee Safety and Health Act in 1980. The union intensified its fight for safer work sites in 1992 after a disgruntled client murdered four CSEA members employed at the Schuyler County Department of Social Services at their workplace.

CSEA’s leadership and persistence led to New York’s historic Worksite Security Act, which became law in 2006. The law requires public employers to assess potential workplace violence risks and take appropriate measures to reduce those risks.

National statistics strongly support the need for protection against work site violence. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health reports the following:

- Violence is a substantial contributor to death and injury on the job. NIOSH data indicates that homicide has become the second leading cause of occupational injury death, exceeded only by motor vehicle-related deaths.
  - Homicide is the third leading cause of death on the job for men and the leading cause of death for women in the workplace.
  - Government workers make up 18 percent of the U.S. work force, but 31 percent of the victims of workplace violence.

— Ed Molitor

**Bloomberg challenges security law**

MANHATTAN — Despite the protections rules to combat workplace violence would bring, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg opposes the measures, claiming they would be onerous and costly to implement, and is hinting at suing over the measures.

“We believe that the proposed regulations, if adopted as currently written, would impair the effectiveness of public-employer workplace violence prevention programs by altering, adding to, and contradicting the language of the law, and by creating a regulatory environment which is inconsistent with the intent of the law,” Sylvia Pryce, director of the New York City Office of Occupational Safety and Health, which oversees the city’s occupational safety and health programs, told The Chief, a civil service oriented newspaper.

Pryce urged the state Department of Labor to heed the city’s suggestions and revise the drafted regulations “without the need for long and costly litigation.”

“It would be a shame to come this far, only to have one of the state’s largest public employers balk,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue. “Considering the risks public employees face every day on the job, especially those in New York City, I would think the mayor would be embracing the new law wholeheartedly.”
It’s the start of a new year and a time for new beginnings.

In less than three years CSEA will celebrate its 100th anniversary. We could not have succeeded for a century without an ability to change, grow and adapt.

Today we are New York’s leading union. That’s a very different identification and responsibility than the challenge taken up by those who started this organization. We might share some basic values and aspirations with our founders and those who followed them but we live in a very different world today. What we do right now and how we do it differs from what has come before. And it may have to be even more different tomorrow.

Each of us has a personal stake in the success of CSEA – we rely on our contracts, benefits and the strength of our union. But we also know that we are part of something bigger than all of us and our individual needs and wants – there is strength in our numbers and our unity. That unity is only meaningful when we all work together. When we do, it is awesome.

There is a world of possibility before us but we cannot take anything for granted in terms of our rights, benefits and authority. We must always prepare for what might lie ahead. This reality is especially true for the younger members in our ranks.

I hope that each of you will take this opportunity to consider what it means to be a CSEA member and how you as an individual can help strengthen our future.
CSEA to fight Erie County Medical Center merger

BUFFALO — CSEA is making sure Erie County Medical Center will be there for the public when they need it.

The union is battling misunderstanding about what’s expected for the future of hospital and health care services in western New York.

Contrary to popular belief, New York State’s Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 21st Century, also known as the Berger Commission, did not mandate a merger between Erie County Medical Center and Kaleida Health Care.

A joint operating board now in place to oversee operations and avoid costly duplication of services meets the state’s requirements.

“There’s a lot at stake here,” said Western Region President Flo Tripi. “Erie County Medical Center has a unique mission to serve the people of our region in ways that no other facility can. It’s a commitment to ensuring access to quality services 24/7. No private provider will ever have that same responsibility.”

CSEA has developed a media campaign for western New York to get the message out, and the union will be engaged in other actions as well.

“We need to tell our elected officials to protect the unique mission of ECMC,” said Erie County Local President Joan Bender.

— Lynn Miller

Seneca County Local supports area soldiers

WATERLOO — The Seneca County Local is using its annual community service event to reach out to hometown soldiers serving overseas through the local “Here4you” program.

The local recently began collecting donated goods and monetary contributions (to help defray shipping costs) from county and Romulus Central School District employees to benefit about 70 local soldiers.

Local Veterans Committee Chair Michael Lambert, who also serves as the Seneca County unit and local vice president, is heading up CSEA’s effort.

“So far, the employees have responded well,” Lambert said. “We’re expecting it to pick up in the community and we’ll carry it through as long as they’re deployed over there.”

CSEA has collected more than 1,000 pounds of food and supplies, as well as hundreds of greeting cards for the soldiers from area schoolchildren.

A list of requested items and drop-off locations is posted on Seneca County’s website at www.co.seneca.ny.us.

— Mark Kotzin

“I want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and with dignity and respect.”

— Pamela Gibbs, EKG technician, South Beach Psychiatric Center, asked about goals for 2008 as a CSEA activist.

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The Legal Assistance Program covers employment and labor issues involving disciplinaries, contract grievances and arbitrations, court litigation and agency proceedings.

“The work force, developing a better relationship between the city’s labor force and management, and no consolidation or privatization of services. As a former president of the Glen Cove Unit, I would like to continue to be involved locally and also with CSEA in 2008.”

— Kevin Monahan, labor foreman, city of Glen Cove, asked about goals for 2008 as a CSEA activist.

CIVIL SERVICE LAW: Introduction

Editor’s Note: This is the first in a series of Civil Service Law articles to provide valuable information regarding important areas of protection available through the CSEA Legal Assistance Program (LAP). Get more information about legal services in the LAP by calling CSEA Headquarters at 1-800-342-4146, extension 1443, or by visiting www.csealocal1000.org, and clicking on the legal programs and services menu item.

This article provides an overview of Section 61 of the Civil Service Law. Section 61 is one of many various sections of the Civil Service Law that provide employees protection in the workplace. Other Civil Service Law sections will be addressed in future articles.

Civil Service Law Section 61 governs (1) appointments and promotions, and (2) out-of-title work. The New York State Constitution and Civil Service Law mandate that appointments and promotions in the public service shall be made according to merit and fitness on the basis of tested qualifications. The statutory provisions regulating appointments under Civil Service may not be waived by contract.

Appointments and promotions

Under Civil Service Law Section 61(1), appointments and promotions in the competitive class of the Civil Service must be made from eligible lists. Appointments or promotions from an eligible list shall be made by the selection of one of the three persons certified by the appropriate Civil Service Commission as standing highest on such eligible lists who are willing to accept such appointment or promotion. There is no vested right to an appointment from an eligibility list, as the appointing authority may select any one of the three highest persons appearing on the list.

Out-of-title work

Under Civil Service Law Section 61(2) employers are prohibited from assigning civil service employees to perform the duties of any title unless the employee has been duly appointed, promoted, transferred or reinstated to such title. “Out-of-title” work is only allowed in two instances: (1) where a temporary emergency exists, and/or (2) where the out-of-title work occurs irregularly and infrequently.

Increase in workload or performance of an overlap of duties between titles does not constitute out-of-title work. The courts have held that where employees only occasionally perform duties beyond the scope of their own job specifications and those duties are substantially similar to their own duties, out-of-title work may be allowed. It is the continued and persistent assignment out-of-title that constitutes a violation.

Civil Service Law Section 61(2) defines “out-of-title” work as the performance of duties of a title other than the title that a Civil Service employee holds. As always, the relevant collective bargaining agreement should be examined first to identify any negotiated provisions relating to “out-of-title” work.

Where the contract between CSEA and the employer contains provisions relating to out-of-title work, the contract language must be followed, and violations are challenged through the grievance procedure. Where no contract language is available, and a possible violation of Civil Service Law Section 61 may exist, a lawsuit may be filed.

Out-of-title remedies

Contract language will also determine the available remedies. Of special note, Civil Service Law does not provide for back pay as a remedy for out-of-title work, only a cease and desist order is available. The remedy of back pay for out-of-title work must be negotiated in the contract to be available. Furthermore, reclassification and promotion are never appropriate remedies for out-of-title work. Should you believe you may have an “out-of-title” claim, you should check immediately with your CSEA Labor Relations Specialist. Whether you have a contractual or statutory remedy available, there are very short time limits within which your claim must be filed.
Rockland County workers step up contract fight

NEW CITY — Frustrated over a lack of progress in contract negotiations, more than 2,000 CSEA members working for Rockland County are taking their contract struggle public.

After jamming several Rockland County Legislature budget meetings to remind elected officials of their contract plight, the union is using the media spotlight to remind residents of the workers’ importance. A contract campaign is in place, with different outreach efforts including paid advertising planned.

“We make Rockland happen,” said Unit President P.T. Thomas. “Our members perform the jobs that often go unnoticed by the public, but our work keeps our children safe, our elderly cared for and our infrastructure running.”

**Health care workers employed at Rockland County’s Robert L. Yeager Health Center give quality care to patients.**

Fighting for fair raises

The 2008 budget passed without raises for CSEA members. Following CSEA protest, a proposed 10 percent raise for Rockland County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef, raising his current $137,765 salary, was shelved. Additionally, more than 100 vacant county jobs were eliminated.

“The county executive can’t ask the county employees to do any more,” said CSEA Rockland County Local President Billy Riccaldo, also a county employee. “We’re stretched to the point where we can’t do any more than we’re doing. The service you’re getting is second to none and [Vanderhoef] should look upon that to give us a fair wage.”

Contract talks stalled

Negotiations are at impasse. A previous contract expired Dec. 31, 2006. Workers have not received a raise since Jan. 1, 2006, a tough fact for many to accept in the midst of the county’s rising property taxes and increased gas and utility prices.

“The cost of living in the county has exceeded far beyond the national average and state average,” Thomas said. “We are only asking a fair and equitable pay increase to meet our ever increasing cost of living.”

Fairness for per diems

In addition to the sticking point of wages, health insurance and the current trend of using per diem relief workers to perform work formerly done by full-time employees also concern members.

Dave Schwall, a patient activities leader at the county-run Robert L. Yeager Health Center, is one of many members troubled by the use of per diem relief workers to staff jobs, mainly positions at the county health center, that were once staffed by full time workers.

“It’s a carrot-and-stick approach with the per diem workers,” said Schwall of the per diems, many of whom work nearly full time but do not enjoy the health insurance or other benefits full timers receive.

CSEA has been successful in having some per diem workers win full-time jobs, but leaders have to keep a constant watch to ensure per diem workers aren’t working full-time hours.

“We have to keep a good watch on the Department of Hospitals in particular and how they do their scheduling,” said Riccaldo. “It’s not an easy task, but what we do is use the state’s Freedom of Information Law to monitor the hours being worked. We don’t want people being taken advantage of.”

Contract mediation sessions are expected to begin this winter.

**“We’re stretched to the point where we can’t do any more than we’re doing.”**

— Jessica Ladlee

“**Our members perform the jobs that often go unnoticed by the public, but our work keeps our children safe, our elderly cared for and our infrastructure running.”**

— Vanessa Bisone, 3rd vice president, Orange County Unit, asked about goals for 2008 as a CSEA activist.
Workers hit unsafe plowing proposal

WAMPSVILLE — Madison County may be calling it “OPP” — short for “One Person Plowing” — but CSEA is calling it “UPP” — short for “Unsafe Plowing Plan.”

The union is fighting secrecy surrounding the county Highway Department’s plans to remove the second “wing” operator from Madison County snowplows. CSEA is strongly campaigning against the plan, saying the move could jeopardize safety for the public, and might not save the county much money.

The union can’t judge costs, because the county has refused to meet and share its plans. What the union does know is that it’s safer to have an extra set of eyes in the snowplows, especially on the side of the plow that pushes snow into snow banks where children may be playing.

“Our plow drivers are busy enough driving, maneuvering around obstacles, and dealing with lake effect snow, whiteouts and slippery roads,” said Unit President Ron Walker. “They are very concerned about the safety aspect of having to also work the radio and both plows by themselves.”

Walker said the county justifies their switch to OPP by pointing to the state’s success with the plowing method.

“We’re talking about a completely different situation than the state. They don’t plow rural, narrow, residential roads in the lake-effect conditions that our drivers do. Just because it works for the state doesn’t mean it will work here in Madison County.”

After the county ignored several requests from the union to meet and get written documentation about the switch to OPP, the union recently filed an Improper Practice charge with the state labor board over the county’s failure to negotiate. The county’s plan is still under development, but the union disagrees, maintaining that recent mandatory OPP training the county

“OPP drivers do. Just because it works for the state doesn’t mean it will work here in Madison County.”

Praise for Delaware County DPW work reopening road

CSEA is praising the work of the Delaware County Department of Public Works for their efforts to rebuild a county road that was destroyed by flooding this past summer.

The DPW road crews put forth a “monumental effort” this year, said Delaware County Local President George Lawson, himself a DPW worker, to rebuild County Road No. 7, one of the most heavily traveled county roads that connects Delaware and Sullivan counties. The entire seven-mile stretch of the road was destroyed by severe flooding in June, causing commuters a 40-minute detour, but by November, the road was open.

Four people were killed in the flooding, including the mother of two CSEA Town of Andes Highway Department Unit workers.

All road crews from the DPW were involved in the road’s rebuilding, often putting in 12-hour days to get the roadway repaired. This was the second summer that the workers had to rebuild county roadways due to flooding. Lawson said that CSEA has urged the County Board of Supervisors to officially recognize the DPW workers for their efforts.

— Mark Kotzin
Food fight! CSEA fighting contracting out school food services

PORT BYRON — Having school food services provided by district workers gives parents more direct control over the quality of food served to their children, as well as over the costs of the overall food service program.

Unfortunately, mismanagement by the recently retired food service manager in the Port Byron School District and rising health care costs have brought about a deficit for the district’s food service program.

Instead of looking for solutions, the school board is looking to contract out the entire operation, putting at risk the jobs of 15 food service workers and the services they provide.

CSEA has led the charge against contracting out, telling the board and district administrators there are better ways to achieve savings. The union has urged the board to listen to the suggestions of the food service workers, who know where money can be saved.

Recently, about 40 CSEA members and supporters demonstrated outside a school board meeting to get their message heard. The union also mailed out postcards to registered voters and ran a newspaper ad to stimulate public discussion over the issue.

“We're trying to show the district that we are united as one force.”

Solidarity fuels Minisink contract fight

SLATE HILL — Last-minute notice for a contract demonstration can often result in a weak turnout, but CSEA members working at the Minisink Valley School District are ready to go at a moment’s notice to get their demand for a fair contract heard.

That has been this case this winter, as members at the Orange County school district have made it a priority to attend regular school board meetings to plead their case. Turnout has been so strong that the regular meeting location had to be changed to accommodate the crowd.

“We’re trying to show the district that we are united as one force,” said Kitty Uhrig, a school clerk who has been helping rally her co-workers for meetings. “Our unit is made up of many different titles, but we’re one group.”

Unit members have worked without a contract for more than 18 months. A contract offer brought to the membership following mediation was rejected overwhelmingly.

“After a year and a half negotiating, the offer was an insult to us,” Unit President Linda Horan. The offer included an almost unprecedented measure: a requirement for CSEA members to pay retroactively on health insurance premiums back to the contract expiration date, coupled with a very low wage offer. School administrators had previously agreed to a similar retroactive payment plan, but Horan said administrators only had a handful of months to pay back and they are the highest paid employees in the district. CSEA members are the lowest paid workers.

“It is crazy that the district wants us to back up and pay for insurance premiums that they already paid for,” Horan said. “We're treated like second-class citizens.”

“We can’t afford the retro payments,” said Kelly Pascoe, a first-time negotiating team member. “Even if you’re in a two-income household, it’s still a struggle.”

Negotiations have progressed to fact finding. Horan hopes the district will come back with a truly fair offer that will allow both sides to forego the lengthy fact-finding process, but unit members are prepared to fight as long as necessary.

“We’re going to go to every meeting we can make,” Uhrig said. “We want to show the board we are not just members; we are actual people. We want them to see our faces.”

“My goal for 2008 as a union activist is to generate more interest in the union among all our employees, especially our four new employees. I hope to help them understand how union membership benefits them, and to help them become aware of the political arena. 2008 is going to be a big year.”

— Nancy Prevosto, principal clerk, New York State Police Troop A, asked about goals for 2008 as a CSEA activist.
Thanks to CSEA, Dora Pelaez is on her way to achieving the American dream. Pelaez, a CSEA member and hospital attendant at Stony Brook University Medical Center who speaks Spanish as her first language, is enrolled in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program at her work site. The classes are made possible by a New York State & CSEA Partnership for Education and Training grant that shows the best in labor-management collaboration.

“I want to learn and the ESOL course allows me to do this,” said Pelaez. “Once I’ve mastered the English language, I will be able to further my education and get promoted to a position with more responsibility and greater pay. That’s my idea of living the American dream.”

The Partnership, local BOCES and administrators worked together to establish English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program for CSEA-represented workers at Stony Brook and the University at Albany. Course participants come from countries that include Albania, Chile, China, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Kenya and Poland.

“This is something I am very passionate about and this program is so necessary,” said Gary Bartolina, Adult Education Basic Program manager at the Partnership. “A lot of our members are struggling with basic skills, such as English, and we really want to help.

Our course, which is voluntary and free to workers, has helped CSEA members who do not speak English as their first language communicate in English more effectively and confidently, on and off the job.

Maria Krawesyk, a custodial worker at the University of Albany who moved to the United States from Poland two years ago, said the class and a supportive supervisor are helping her learn more English, her third language.

“Every day, I learn more English,” she said. “If you live in America, it’s easier to speak English because it’s spoken everywhere.”

Stony Brook Carlos Speght, SUNY Stony Brook Local President, worked with Cindy Brooks, project manager, Corporate Education and Training at Stony Brook University Medical Center and Bartolina to make the ESOL course happen.

“As president of my local, one of my roles is to support the members, improve their quality of life and create opportunities for them to move ahead in their careers,” Speght said. “The ESOL course speaks to all three of these criterion and, at the same time, makes the union stronger and the institution we work for more efficient.”

During their evening shift. There is also a waiting list for the class.

“The university has good workers, but sometimes lack enough English language skills.”

Enkelejd Hoxha, a custodial worker who came to the United States from Albania more than 20 years ago, master the language she has struggled to learn for years.

“I would like to learn more English to talk better to other people,” she said. “I’ve been supported at work. My family is helping me learn, too. English is not easy; it’s very, very hard.”

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— Richard Impagliazzo and Janice Marra

Amalia Benavide, Francisca Ortiz and Dora Pelaez; three CSEA members at SUNY Stony Brook who see the ESOL course as an opportunity to expand their horizons and pursue the American dream.

Ottavio LoPiccolo, an instructor for Capital Region BOCES Career & Technical School who is teaching the evening ESOL course at Albany, said that it takes between five and seven years to become fully proficient in the language. He said he also uses pictures, body language or classroom items as learning props, especially if the students are less proficient.

Enkelejd Hoxha, a custodial worker who came to the United States from Albania more than three years ago, wants to develop his English skills to improve his job skills and eventually go to college to become a mechanic.

“I like to speak English and I’m living in America,” he said. “With more English, I’m better at work here and I’m thinking about college.”

The ESOL pilot program is helping Elsbieta Kramicki, a 15-year custodial worker at University at Albany who came to the United States from Poland more than 20 years ago, master the language she has struggled to learn for years.

“I would like to learn more English to talk better to other people,” she said. “I’ve been supported at work. My family is helping me learn, too. English is not easy; it’s very, very hard.”

― Richard Impagliazzo and Janice Marra

 distrustress
Canal workers remember fallen co-worker

On the anniversary of his death, co-workers of former New York State Canal Corp. worker Michael Len honored his memory by unveiling a plaque at Lock 9 in Rotterdam. Len drowned Dec. 7, 2006, after falling into the Mohawk River while helping shut down the lock for the winter.

CSEA and the state Public Employee Safety and Health Bureau investigated the incident, which resulted in several citations to the Canal Corp.

The Canal Corp. has been working with CSEA and the state Department of Labor to put protections in place for canal workers.

Right, several of Michael Len’s co-workers at the New York State Canal Corp., including Local President Walter Sprouse, third from right, honor his memory on the anniversary of his death.

New OSH booklet educates about mold

The CSEA Occupational Safety and Health Department has just released a new booklet titled “Mold.”

The booklet refers to several useful and reliable sources of information about mold.

The attention given to mold issues has increased and will continue to do so because of the aging buildings in which CSEA members work. The amount of information available through the Internet has exploded and as with any other high interest issue a great deal of that information is tilted toward the business interests of individuals and organizations.

CSEA has compiled what it considers to be the best, no-cost and unbiased resources available concerning mold. Information can be obtained online at http://www.csealocal1000.org/osh/mold_resources_and_photos.php or call 1-800-342-4146, ext. 1292.

View an entire list of CSEA Occupational Safety and Health publications available for free download at http://www.csealocal1000.org/osh/osh_pubs.php.

Subscribe to The Canary!

The Canary is a quarterly newsletter that informs members of the latest safety and health regulations and trends, and provides valuable information for labor/management safety and health committees. To subscribe to The Canary, fill out the form on this page and return it to the address below. Please clearly print the following information:

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Home: (     ) ______________________________________

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Attn: Membership Department
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Albany, N.Y. 12210

You can also fax this form to (518) 465-2382.
THIELLS — A group of CSEA members at North Rockland High School have received several commendations following their response to a dangerous incident that recently occurred at the school.

Workers successfully intervened after a 17-year-old girl stabbed a 16-year-old female student as the school’s 2,600 students were being dismissed. Security staff were able to disarm the alleged stabber, a student at the school’s alternative education program, and subdue her until police arrived.

In addition to receiving honors from district officials, many of the school’s security officers, clerical staff and school nurses also were presented with certificates of appreciation from Rockland County Local President Billy Riccaldo and Unit President Jeanne Hughes.

Defusing a dangerous situation

After hearing a call of a fight dispatched by security officer Cheryl Novak, security officer Andrew Delo was the first worker in contact with the assailant.

“We restrained her and kept her arms down, so she couldn’t get to any of the other kids,” Delo said.

Then security officer George Crowley, who arrived seconds later, grabbed the knife out of the girl’s hand. Fellow security officers Ernest Cebrian and Robert Roland were able to help Delo and Crowley subdue the girl.

Other CSEA members also pitched in, diverting the many students who had been exiting the school, dispatching police and ambulances, and providing immediate medical care. While the school is large, Joe Salgado, the school’s senior security aide, said the incident isn’t the norm.

“I’ve been here 11 years and this is the most serious incident by far,” he said. “I think we have a good track record here, other than this.”

Beefing up training

“We go each year to the Rockland County Fire Training Center to complete our state certification, but this year we will be focusing on hand-to-hand combat training,” said Salgado.

“This type of training is overdue,” said Cebrian. “It’ll teach us how to deal with disruptive people on the school grounds.”

North Rockland High School Principal Michael Gill praised the workers involved in responding to the stabbing.

“They were able to manage a situation that was dangerous and keep the other students safe,” Gill said. — Jessica Ladlee

Take the Polar Plunge for the Special Olympics

Have you ever done something wild and crazy? Something that you never thought you’d do in your wildest dreams, then realized afterward, you were so glad you did?

Support this Special Olympics New York unique, wacky event by participating with our CSEA action team or by forming a CSEA team of your own!

Through a very special, supportive relationship with Special Olympics New York and Quality Care New York, CSEA affirms our commitment to New York’s developmentally disabled individuals, advocating for the highest standard in quality of care.

Join us in this unique experience as we continue a CSEA tradition in community action. Raise money from friends and family to support your jump — or slow crawl — into the freezing waters at any of the sites listed!

Funding raised directly benefits Special Olympics athletes.

As CSEA members, we have a special responsibility to join in this fight. Our tradition of influence and action begins at the grassroots level with member involvement. We can be the sparks for others in our communities to get more involved and truly make a difference.

So, take an icy dip with our team! You’ll be glad you did.

Visit www.specialolympicsny.org for more information. Call 1-800-342-4146, ext. 1276 to join the CSEA team.

2007 — 2008 Plunge Season: Freezin’ for a reason!

• Feb. 10, 2008: Rochester Polar Plunge
  Charlotte Beach, Lake Ontario

• March 8, 2008: Fishkill Polar Plunge — 10th Anniversary!
  Sharp Reservation, Fishkill

• March 8, 2008: Long Island Polar Plunge
  Bar Beach, Port Washington
40 years ago …

1968 was a tumultuous year in America and a time of new beginnings for CSEA.

Early in the year, the New York State Court of Appeals recognized CSEA as the designated bargaining unit for the vast majority of state employees. The decision followed a challenge to the authority of the newly implemented Taylor Law, which recognized public employee rights to collective bargaining and unionization in New York. It opened a whole new world of opportunity to address working conditions at the bargaining table. CSEA previously had to lobby for raises and terms and conditions of employment at the state and local government levels.

Later in 1968, CSEA moved to a new statewide headquarters at 33 Elk St. in Albany, across the street from the state Capitol. The union outgrew that building and moved to its present location at 143 Washington Ave. in Albany in 1985.

CSEA’s former headquarters at 33 Elk St., Albany. The artist’s depiction was part of the announcement of the new building’s opening in 1968.

Also in 1968 ...

* North Vietnamese soldiers launch the Tet Offensive, a turning point in the Vietnam War.

* President Lyndon B. Johnson announces that he will not seek re-election to the presidency.

* Civil rights leader the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Robert Kennedy are assassinated in separate incidents.

* “60 Minutes” debuts on CBS.

* The motion picture rating system debuts with G, PG, R and X designations.

* The Beatles release the smash single “Hey, Jude.” Originally titled “Hey Jules,” the song was written by Paul McCartney to comfort John Lennon’s son Julian during his parents’ divorce.

* Astronauts aboard the space shuttle Apollo 8 become the first people to orbit the moon.

* The Green Bay Packers defeat the Oakland Raiders in the Super Bowl.
Member Action Team building a stronger union

COMMACK — CSEA Long Island Region has developed a MAT Committee (Member Action Team) to help provide hands-on assistance in contract campaigns or negotiations and broaden member involvement in union activities with an eye toward enhancing problem solving.

“The MAT Committee is open to everyone and its members broaden their depth of knowledge by dealing with problems on every level, whether it is state, county, town, city, village, school or library. If a MAT Committee member comes across a problem he or she is not familiar with, they are paired with someone who is and work with unit officers to achieve the desired goal, filtering in pertinent information from various places when necessary,” said Rich Acevedo, Port Washington School District Unit president.

Bringing awareness

“The primary goal is to make members aware of the educational opportunities available through the union and tell them how a knowledgeable member can be an asset to the union as a whole,” said Town of Oyster Bay Local President Bobby Rauff.

“We need to stress the fact that all the committees are interrelated and can support each other’s goals. For example, MAT Committee members can easily access the expertise of the Political Action Committee should they need some advice in that area. And that’s just one example,” Rauff said.

“The MAT Committee is different from other region committees in that it has the ability to directly impact a group of members almost instantly,” said SUNY Stony Brook Local activist Maryann Phelps.

“It’s all about building a stronger union,” noted Suffolk County Local President Bill Walsh, who also serves as CSEA’s Political Action Committee chair.

— Richard Impagliazzo

Cornell Labor Relations celebration

CSEA President Danny Donohue, right, speaks with Cornell University President David Skorton and School of Industrial and Labor Relations Dean Harry Katz at a recent celebration of the school's 60th Anniversary. CSEA helped sponsor the event. Also pictured is CSEA General Counsel Nancy Hoffman, an ILR alumna who served on the event's planning committee. Cornell ILR is the leading school of its kind and has long maintained a close working relationship with organized labor.

Support for CSEA’s child care educators

CSEA VOICE Local leaders and negotiating team members Beth White, Ulster County child care provider (foreground left) and Patrick Hogan, Westchester child care provider (foreground right) met with Sen. Hilary Clinton and other AFSCME child care providers to discuss home-based childcare industry issues. Clinton announced that day the Quality Childcare for America Act. The act would increase funding for worker development programs and block grant funding by $200 million.

PEOPLE Program Recruiter of the Month

LANSING — CSEA activist Andy Mantella, a Youth Division Aide III at the Office of Children and Family Services’ Lansing Residential Center, is CSEA’s PEOPLE recruiter of the month for November.

Mantella, who serves as vice president for the South Lansing Center For Youth Local, got involved on the local’s PEOPLE Committee in September. At the time, only about 15 percent of his 250 members were signed up for PEOPLE, CSEA’s and AFSCME’s political action program.

Since September, he’s personally recruited 77 new PEOPLE members at the MVP status level, and had about 20 previous members move up to the MVP status. In November alone, he recruited 23 new MVP members to earn the recruiter of the month status. Mantella said he signs up his co-workers to strengthen the union and help protect their future.

“I’ve come to the conclusion in these changing times that there’s power in numbers. Our agency specifically is changing so much that I figured the more people we have involved, and the more money that’s available to work with, in turn, everybody can have a stronger voice.”

“We have a lot of newer, younger employees, and there’s not too many people that I work with who knew about the PEOPLE program. Once I explained it to them and they saw where the money goes and how they can have a voice, they were very receptive to signing up.”

— Mark Kotzin
An Ever Better Future

State, Unified Court System workers: submit claims for your co-payment reimbursement plans

State prescription co-payment reimbursement plan:

For New York state employees represented by CSEA in the Administrative, Institutional and Operational Services units, Division of Military and Naval Affairs and the Roswell Park Cancer Institute Corp., it’s time to submit claims for your prescription co-payment reimbursement plan.

This benefit covers members from these bargaining units who are enrolled in the New York State Health Insurance Program (either the Empire Plan or a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO)). The benefit can be used once annually for reimbursement of NYSHIP prescription drug co-payment expenses for members and their dependents.

The benefit reimburses once annually up to a maximum of $100 per family, per calendar year. To get the maximum benefit of $100, members must wait until their co-payment expenses reach $400 before filing a claim. The claim can be submitted before Dec. 31 if your expenses have already exceeded $400.

If you do not accumulate $400 before the end of the year, submit your claim AFTER DEC. 31 for amounts you paid over $300. The deadline for submission is March 31 of the following year for the co-payments accumulated during the previous calendar year.

There are a few ways to obtain a prescription drug co-payment form:

- You can download one from our website at www.cseaebf.com
- You can call the fund at (800) EBF-CSEA and request a form
- You can write to the fund and we can mail one to you

Please mail your requests in writing to:
CSEA Employee Benefit Fund
P.O. Box 516
Latham, N.Y. 12110-0516

For more information, call EBF at (800) EBF-CSEA.

Prescriptions must be dispensed by a licensed pharmacist. The difference between brand and generic drugs is not covered. Charges for non-covered medications under your drug card are not eligible. Prescriptions that cost less than the required co-payment are the responsibility of the member. This benefit is for NYSHIP prescription drug card co-payments only and does not include co-insurance payments.

Submit your completed claim form with original receipts or an itemized pharmacy printout clearly indicating the co-pay amount. Prescriptions must be dispensed by a licensed pharmacist. Cash register receipts, canceled checks, and credit card receipts are not acceptable.

Unified Court System prescription co-payment reimbursement plan:

This benefit reimburses prescription drug card co-payments once annually, up to a maximum of $100 per family, per calendar year.

Members are entitled to reimbursement once annually for prescription drug card co-payment for themselves and their dependents. To obtain the maximum benefit, wait until your co-payment expenses reach $100 before filing your claim. If you do not accumulate $100 before the end of the year, submit your claim after Dec. 31 but before March 31 of the following year for what you did pay.

Submit your completed form with original receipts or an itemized pharmacy printout clearly indicating the co-pay amount. Prescriptions must be dispensed by a licensed pharmacist. Cash register receipts, canceled checks, and credit card receipts are not acceptable.

Unified Court System physician co-payment reimbursement plan:

This benefit reimburses co-payment expenses of physician office visits only. Reimbursement is processed once annually up to a maximum of $125 per family, per calendar year.

Members are entitled to reimbursement once annually for physician office visits for themselves and their dependents. To get the maximum benefit, wait until your co-payment expenses reach $125 before filing your claim. If you do not accumulate $125 before the end of the year, submit your claim after Dec. 31 but before March 31 of the following year for what you did pay.

Submit your completed form with original receipts clearly indicating the co-pay amount. Canceled checks and credit card receipts are not acceptable.

The benefit does not apply to costs covered by your regular health insurance plan. Non-physician provider, physical therapy, emergency room, hospital, lab, x-ray and dental co-payment are not eligible. Deductible/co-insurance payments are not eligible.

You can get your reimbursement claim forms from our website at www.cseaebf.com or you can call the fund at (800) EBF-CSEA and we will mail you a form.

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CSEA membership/agency shop fees effective Jan. 1, 2008

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Protecting Your Benefits

EMPIRE PLAN CLAIMS DEADLINES FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2007

Empire Plan enrollees have until March 31, 2008, (90 days after the end of the calendar year) in which to submit medical expenses that were incurred during the 2007 plan year to:

United HealthCare 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 for non-network physical therapy or chiropractic services.

Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield
For assistance with the claim filing process of inpatient or outpatient hospital services contact Empire Blue Cross and Blue Shield at 1-877-7NYSHIP (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 2007.

Caremark
P.O. Box 52071
Phoenix, AZ 85072-2071

For prescriptions filled at non-participating pharmacies or at participating pharmacies without using your New York Government Employee Benefit Card.

As a reminder: Beginning Jan. 1, 2008, United HealthCare will insure and jointly administer the Empire Plan Prescription Drug Program with Medco, its pharmacy benefits manager.

Enrollees can call the Empire Plan at 1-877-7NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447) with questions or to obtain claim forms. As a reminder, when using the Empire Plan’s toll-free telephone number, please pay extra attention to the choices offered by the automated system.

Network providers/pharmacies will submit claims directly to the appropriate insurance carrier on your behalf. If you have a non-network claim submission, make sure you complete the requested subscriber information on the claim forms, include the original billing or receipt (if requested), and don’t forget to sign the claim form.

CSEA’s notice of election

Jan. 22, 2008: Ballots mailed
Jan. 29, 2008: Replacement ballots available
Feb. 13, 2008: Deadline for receipt of ballots (8 a.m.). Ballot count commences (9 a.m.). Election results will be announced after the ballot count is complete and certified. Candidates will be notified by mail of the results.
End of Protest Period: 10 days following Statewide Election Committee certification of results.

Voting Eligibility Date
Only CSEA members in good standing as of Dec. 1, 2007, will be eligible to vote in the election.

Election Oversight
The CSEA Statewide Election Committee oversees the election process. The American Arbitration Association, an independent election agency approved by the union’s Statewide Board of Directors, will conduct the balloting.

Break in membership affects eligibility for union office, voting privileges
A break in union membership status can have long-term future implications. Your membership status affects your eligibility with respect to:

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

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

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

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

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

AFSCME DELEGATES ELECTION YEAR 2008

In addition to our CSEA elections, the year 2008 also has an AFSCME Delegates election. The approved schedule for that election is as follows:

Jan. 22, 2008: Ballots mailed
Jan. 29, 2008: Replacement ballots available
Feb. 13, 2008: Ballots due 8 a.m.; Tally commences 9 a.m.
End of Protest Period: 10 days following Statewide Election Committee certification of results.

Balloting for the AFSCME Delegates election will take place at the same time and as part of the CSEA elections for Region officers and Board of Directors. Members are urged to carefully read the election information contained in The Work Force throughout the 2008 election cycle as well as the instructions, which will accompany each ballot. Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters on January 22, 2008.

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 2008 Annual Delegates Meeting must be submitted by May 15, 2008.

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the 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 the Office of the Statewide Secretary, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Ave., Albany, N.Y., 12210-2303.

The 2008 CSEA Annual Delegates Meeting will be held Sept. 21-26 in Washington, D.C.
The State of Our Union 2008

The year gone by was a year of changes, surprises and challenges for CSEA. CSEA members stood tall throughout it all and although our union may be nearing our 100th anniversary, it is beyond doubt that we are New York’s leading union. Our strength and vitality cannot be taken for granted. We must continue to work hard every day to build a better union and a better future. That means we need your involvement and ideas.

Other working people in our country and around the world are not doing as well as CSEA members — it is essential that we continue to lead the way for meaningful change by standing up for fair treatment and human rights in every way we can.

2008 can be a year of impact with your help!

Building on the Achievements of the Past Year

Beyond what you see and hear in the media, CSEA has made strong progress with the new Spitzer administration on several fronts.

New relationships are being formed with state agencies to address a variety of long-ignored issues.

The 2007 state budget reached in cooperation with the state Legislature was the best in a generation, providing record aid to schools and localities while improving staffing levels in long-neglected state agencies.

The Spitzer administration worked hard with CSEA at the bargaining table to hammer out a strong but responsible tentative state contract covering about 75,000 state executive branch members, making improvements in nearly every area.

Gov. Eliot Spitzer’s signing of an executive order granting independent family child care providers the right to form a union was an historic moment of fairness and respect for working people. CSEA has been recognized as the representative of more than 7,000 of these providers under the VOICE/CSEA banner. By year’s end, we had also filed to represent another 15,000 child care providers under the CCPT/CSEA banner.

Protecting Public Health Care

Intensive campaigns and community mobilization helped secure the future of public health care in New York at facilities including SUNY Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, Onondaga County’s Van Duyn Nursing facility, Schenectady County’s Glendale Nursing Facility and Erie County Medical Center.

Historic Recognition for Child Care providers

Intensive campaigns and community mobilization helped secure the future of public health care in New York at facilities including SUNY Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, Onondaga County’s Van Duyn Nursing facility, Schenectady County’s Glendale Nursing Facility and Erie County Medical Center.
Good is Not Good Enough for Quality Care

CSEA continues to push the campaign for Quality Care to improve the care and lives of individuals with developmental disabilities. Good is not good enough when it comes to individuals with developmental disabilities. There is clearly a need for more resources, better and specialized training, improved oversight and transparency in OMRDD facilities and not-for-profit contractors. The alarming staff turnover rates in the not-for-profit sector continue to undermine quality and continuity of care and cannot be ignored.

CSEA Supports State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli

CSEA enthusiastically supported the selection of Thomas DiNapoli as New York State comptroller. As the sole trustee of the public employee retirement system, there is no position of responsibility in New York state government more important to CSEA members than state comptroller. CSEA has enormous confidence in Tom DiNapoli's integrity and abilities. DiNapoli addressed CSEA members at both the Spring Workshop and the Annual Delegates Meeting.

A President to make us Proud

CSEA was proud to join with Hillary Clinton in her in her historic campaign for President of the United States. CSEA endorsed her last summer as the nation's first major union to back her.

CSEA's Melvin Moves to Statewide Leadership at AFL-CIO

CSEA praised the selection of the longtime CSEA activist and staffer, Terry Melvin as secretary-treasurer of the 2.5 million member New York State AFL-CIO. He is the first person from the CSEA ranks to hold such an important position in the state Federation and also the first African-American to do so.

Buy Fair Trade products

CSEA continues to encourage support of working people and fair trade through the purchase of fair trade coffee and other products. Learn more on our website: www.csealocal1000.org

CSEA Continues to Organize and Grow

In addition to the 22,000 independent child care providers organizing with CSEA, our organizing efforts were strong and vigorous throughout the year helping hundreds of new workers to join our ranks and paving the way for even more growth ahead.

State Fair/Labor Parades

CSEA members across the state marked Labor Day with parades, picnics and other events. CSEA also concluded its annual booth at the New York State Fair in Syracuse with CSEA weekend celebrated Sept. 1 and 2. More than 1 million people visited the State Fair. More than 3,000 CSEA members signed in at the CSEA booth with about a thousand visiting on CSEA weekend.

CSEA Rallies for Olympic Regional Development Authority workers

Delegates to CSEA's 97th Annual Delegates Meeting demonstrated outside Lake Placid's Olympic Center in support of Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA) employees reaching a fair contract with the authority. The CSEA members, who maintain the Olympic Center and other Olympic and recreational venues in the Lake Placid region recently ratified a new agreement.
GET MORE SATISFACTION FROM YOUR COFFEE.

BUY 100% FAIR TRADE.


How you help.
Enjoy top quality products, while supporting 100% Fair Trade retailers and the Labor-Religion Coalition Fair Trade Project — helping farmers at home and around the world to receive a fair price for their produce, and combating child labor, forced labor and slave labor.

Do you know beans about Fair Trade?
Important facts to remember:
• Farmers and workers who grow coffee beans are slipping into dire poverty while U.S. coffee giants grow rich off their labor.
• The average American drinks 400 cups of coffee every year. Fill every cup with Fair Trade coffee and make a real difference.
• In one year, Fair Trade benefits a million workers and farmers in 58 developing countries.
• Shop Fair Trade and you support livable wages, community development, health care and education.

Visit www.deansbeans.com and www.equalexchange.com now. Enter “CSEA” as your promotion code. Help yourself to great flavor, while you help others live better.

The Labor-Religion Coalition
Fair Trade Project is supported by

Start your New Year Right!
Buy 100% Fair Trade

Danny Donohue, President
www.csealocal1000.org