CSEA President Danny Donohue at a recent news conference surrounded by CSEA’s statewide officers; from left, Executive Vice President Mary Sullivan, Capital Region President Kathy Garrison, Central Region President Colleen Wheaton, statewide Treasurer Joe McMullen, Southern Region President Billy Riccaldo, Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte, statewide Secretary Denise Berkley, President Danny Donohue, Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio, and Western Region President Flo Tripi.
Officer Aaron Dean of the Newark Police Department in Wayne County, CSEA Western Region, approaches a vehicle during a traffic stop on the village’s main street.

Correction

An Erie County Medical Center worker was misidentified in a photo caption in a June Work Force article about CSEA members’ response to the swine flu outbreak. The woman in the picture is Edie Sumner.

A follow-up to the swine flu article appears in this edition on Page 5.

CSEA considering buyout offer for court workers

CSEA President Danny Donohue will visit the CSEA Central Region on Aug. 19 to meet with members.

The meetings will be held at the Canton Satellite Office, 20 Park Street, Canton. Donohue will meet with union members from 1 to 7 p.m. Please call the Canton Office at (315) 386-8131 for an appointment and directions.

Donohue will visit all six CSEA regions this year.

CSEA President Danny Donohue to meet Central Region members on Aug. 19

CSEA considering buyout offer for court workers

ALBANY — CSEA is reviewing a proposal from the state Unified Court System to offer a separation from service payout similar to what has been offered to executive branch workers.

The court system is attempting to shed payroll and would target the positions to be voluntarily vacated. Workers would need to take the offer before close of business on Sept. 2, 2009.

The court system would have complete discretion to identify the titles and the number of positions in each title and jurisdiction that will be targeted for the cash payment.

In areas where there are more employees in the same bargaining unit, title and jurisdiction than the number of positions that have been identified to receive the payment, the offers would be made to eligible employees in seniority order beginning with the most senior workers. For purposes of the cash payout, seniority is defined as the first date of hire in the court system.

Where an employee’s total separation cost (cash payment and the payout of accruals) does not yield a savings in fiscal year 2009-2010, the employee will not be eligible for the cash payment and the court system will move to the next eligible employee in seniority order.

This is not an early retirement incentive and CSEA has not yet chosen to participate in the payout offer. As this edition went to press, CSEA was still reviewing the proposal.

If CSEA were to adopt the payout offer, offers to employees from the Personnel Office would be generated beginning on July 8. The offers sent from UCS to payout candidates would include instructions on how to accept the offer.

Court overrules NLRB in CSEA case

A federal court has reversed a National Labor Relations Board decision in a case involving CSEA picketing by private sector health care workers several years ago. The NLRB had ruled that private sector health care workers at the Albany County Jail could be disciplined for informational picketing without giving formal 10-day notice as required for strikes at health care facilities.

The U.S. 2nd Circuit Court overruled the board’s decision pointing out that the sanctions for employees should only apply in actual strikes, not picketing.

The decision will provide greater future protection to workers and also reinforces CSEA and other unions' longstanding concerns that the NLRB has been overly zealous in eroding worker rights.
CSEA stands strong in agreement

ALBANY — CSEA reached agreement in early June with Gov. David Paterson to achieve long-term savings, avoid massive state layoffs and maintain essential services without reopening union contracts.

The agreement ended the governor’s threat to eliminate 8,700 state jobs unless the unions agreed to concession bargaining. CSEA stood strong and turned back the threat.

CSEA worked in solidarity with the Public Employees Federation throughout the crisis.

Under the terms of the agreement hammered out with the governor’s office, the state will shed payroll by encouraging employees in targeted positions to take a cash buyout to leave state service. The buyout will only be available to employees in the targeted positions — it is not tied to whether they are retirement eligible or not. It is not yet clear what positions will be targeted, but it is expected that they will likely be non-essential positions.

The Paterson administration is pledging that it will not pursue layoffs over the next two years as it seeks to gain savings and maintain services.

Contrary to some media reports, no positions will be abolished although some non-essential jobs may go unfulfilled until the economy improves.

**Labor/management effort**

There will also be a labor/management effort to better employ the negotiated voluntary reduction in work schedule program included in both unions’ contracts to help achieve state payroll savings. This is an option that CSEA sought in contract negotiations, but many state agencies have not been cooperative in offering it until now.

CSEA and PEF will accept Paterson’s proposed legislation seeking to establish a Tier V in the state Retirement System for new hires after a specified date in the future. The union’s movement on Tier V reflects the reality of current economic conditions and the fact that it will only apply to future hires. There will be no negative impact on the retirement rights and provisions of current employees. At press time, there had been no action on the legislation in the state legislature.

“From the start, CSEA has remained focused on not just protecting our members but also the essential services we provide to New Yorkers every day,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue. “CSEA recognizes these are extraordinary times with unprecedented challenges and we have tried to find ways to help without reopening contracts. We believe the agreement worked out with the governor’s office achieves all of these aims.”

“I am enormously proud of our members for standing up for what was right and keeping up the pressure for a fair resolution,” Donohue said. “We only succeeded because CSEA members and other union brothers and sisters stood strong.”

CSEA members dogged the governor across the state and the union didn’t pull any punches in statewide advertising and other outreach to let people know what was at risk throughout the ordeal.

**Contracts protected**

Standing strong to resist demands to reopen the state contract was an enormous victory for all CSEA members. Reopening the contract would have undermined decades of hard-fought battles to secure fairness in salaries, benefits and working conditions.

CSEA negotiates more than 1,100 contracts across the state and none of them are identical. Reopening one contract would give every other employer an opportunity to demand we open their contract, too. It would undermine the validity of any agreement that we have now or would negotiate in the future.

Kingsboro Psychiatric Center Local Vice President Crispin Booker, top, holding CSEA sign, and Division of Housing Local President Janet Ventrano-Torres, right of sign, and other CSEA members demonstrate in front of the Gov. David Paterson’s midtown Manhattan office in May as CSEA fought the governor’s proposal to lay off 8,700 workers.
Solidarity helps CSEA stand tall

The challenges of the past few months have been intense.

From the start of the financial meltdown last summer, CSEA recognized that these were extraordinary circumstances and we offered ways to help address the situation. But we would not be scapegoats, we would not take the brunt of the pain and we would not reopen contracts no matter how much we were pressured.

In the end we reached a fair agreement with New York state that will avoid layoffs, protect jobs and services and maintain the integrity of our contract. It's a responsible conclusion that benefits everyone.

It is especially important for those of you who work for local governments, school districts and private sector employers. By finding solutions without reopening the state contract, we have sent a message loud and clear across this state that CSEA will not knuckle under.

Let me say again what I have been saying for months: CSEA will always bargain in good faith and we will always work cooperatively to find better ways to get the job done and achieve savings, but we will not allow our contracts and our credibility to be undermined. We proved it once again last month.

It could not have happened without solidarity. You, the members of CSEA, demonstrated why we are New York's Leading Union. There is no limit to our strength when we all stand together. No one should underestimate that.
SUNY workers cautious with flu

BROOKLYN — The swine flu outbreak may have caused a panic throughout the country but at SUNY Downstate Medical Center, workers calmly and professionally continue exercising the same precautions and protocols they’ve used for handling other illnesses and pathogens.

“This whole neighborhood could get infected if we don’t do our job properly,” said health care worker Maurice Dunaway. “If I come in contact with some pathogens here, I could easily spread it to my co-workers, in the subway on the way home and then at home, which is why we have to make sure that we handle and dispose of medical waste properly.”

Nurse aides and cleaners who regularly clean and prepare rooms throughout the hospital agreed that preventing the spread of swine flu is not unlike preventing the spread of any number of contagious diseases or pathogens.

“When we go into a room we take all the necessary precautions” said Peggy Bellamy, a nurse aide. Often, workers may not even know if a patient has swine flu or another illness due to patient privacy laws. Yet, Bellamy knows that “we’re supposed to use protection even when we’re not sure.”

There have been reports of several pregnant women and some children, at high risk, being treated for swine flu at the hospital. Without hesitation, workers like Bellamy continue to offer patients the same professional services and protection.

“I feel like I am doing something very important,” she said. “I know that I am helping sick people.”
— David Galarza

CSEA blasts White Plains layoff proposal

WHITE PLAINS — A plan to lay off close to a dozen city workers has drawn the ire of members of the City of White Plains Unit.

Unit President Joe Roche held a news conference in early June, flanked by more than 65 members of the city work force, where he slammed the Democratic majority of the White Plains Common Council for its decision to override the mayor’s proposed budget, which included no layoffs.

“The Common Council has apparently decided that the CSEA work force in White Plains should bear the brunt of the financial deficit that the city has found itself in, rather than instituting any one of the reasonable suggestions CSEA has supported that would enhance revenues,” said Roche. “I am not sure why members of the Common Council have decided to pick on some of the lowest paid workers in this city, but it sure feels as if CSEA is being singled out.”

CSEA supports saving jobs through implementing a tiny city sales tax increase, which would bring White Plains in line with the other major shopping hubs in Westchester County. Roche argued the small increase is needed in White Plains, which has seen a huge increased demand for municipal services in recent years due to expansions in retail and office space.

Southern Region President Billy Riccaldo joined Roche at the press conference. Riccaldo criticized Assemblyman Adam Bradley for going back on his previous commitment to lobby in Albany for the sales tax increase.

“It’s wrong that Assemblyman Bradley and the majority on the Common Council have blocked a measure that could help preserve jobs and services in White Plains,” said Riccaldo.

Layoffs are expected to put additional stress on an already lean work force. White Plains draws hundreds of thousands of visitors each week, due in large part to the large number of corporations headquartered there.
— Jessica Ladlee
**Monroe County workers fight management ploy**

ROCHESTER — CSEA is fighting back against multiple attacks on Monroe County workers by management.

County leaders, including County Executive Maggie Brooks, are attempting to undermine the union. Calls to meet with Brooks have not been answered.

“We are very concerned about the precedent of labor-management relations that Monroe County is setting,” said CSEA Western Region President Flo Tripi. “We are facing many issues within our units.”

**Attacks on part-time workers**

 Possibly most troubling is Monroe County’s attack on part-time workers. A New York state Supreme Court Justice recently backed CSEA by ordering Monroe County to stop interfering with and attempting to undercut CSEA union business.

About 200 part-time CSEA members working for the county recently received a so-called “survey” from the county that obstructed the union’s ability to conduct its business. Union officials said the county’s survey contained blatant anti-union propaganda and clearly attempted to weaken the ranks.

“The county is obviously attempting to bust the union with this illegal survey,” said Tripi. “This illegal and ill-advised survey has wasted taxpayer dollars at a time when there are none to be spared.”

The court ordered the county to cease distribution of the survey. It also instructs the county not to tabulate the results of survey forms that have been collected and it prohibits the results of the survey from being disseminated in any way.

The court granted the temporary restraining order as requested by the state Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) after CSEA asked for the injunction. A New York State Supreme Court judge is reviewing the temporary restraining order to determine whether it will be made permanent. CSEA has also filed an improper practice charge against the county with PERB, scheduled to be heard in July.

**Tough negotiations**

CSEA is involved in contract negotiations with the county for the part-time workers, as well as full-time county employees. The county has taken a hard line in the contract talks, refusing to grant even modest benefits for the part-timers who are among the lowest paid workers in the county, and who currently have few or no benefits.

The union said workers see the survey as an inherent threat that if they do not vote the union out, working conditions will get worse for them. The full-time unit is at impasse. In addition, CSEA members in the Probation Department are working with dangerously low staffing levels. The county’s refusal to hire additional probation officers puts the public at risk.

CSEA held a news conference before the recent Spring Workshop in Rochester to bring to light the county’s union-busting tactics. With CSEA President Danny Donohue and other statewide officers at her side, Tripi called on the county to work with CSEA or possibly lose CSEA convention business in Monroe County. The workshop, attended by 800 CSEA members, made a significant impact on the Monroe County economy.

— Lynn Miller
Warren County layoffs jeopardize public services

LAKE GEORGE — Warren County employees recently demonstrated in front of the county municipal center to speak out against county layoffs and warn the public about cuts in services.

Workers chanted and carried signs with slogans such as “cut the waste, not the workers” and “less workers, longer lines,” sending the message that work force cuts will lead to reduced services for county residents.

CSEA represents 480 county employees in departments that include public works, social services, motor vehicles, Westmount and Countryside Adult Home.

While the demonstration was taking place, the Warren County Board of Supervisors were meeting to decide on budget and job cuts.

The county plans to conduct layoffs in rounds by first abolishing 25 jobs and possibly up to 100 more. So far, five people have received layoff notices. CSEA is attempting to minimize the number of positions to be cut and enter into negotiations with the county over the impact that layoffs will have on the work force.

“Laying off workers will harm families and prevent them from contributing to the community,” said CSEA Capital Region President Kathy Garrison.

CSEA Warren County Unit President Mark Murray said he worries how cuts will affect workers and county residents. “So many department resources are already stretched to capacity. People don’t want to wait all day to renew their driver’s license or process social services claims,” he said.

— Therese Assalian

Menegaux honored with Local Government Mission Achievement Award

ORANGEBURG — If you haven’t heard of Mike Menegaux, it isn’t because he’s new to the CSEA leadership ranks.

In fact, Menegaux has a 30-year history as a CSEA leader and activist in Orangetown, in Rockland County, a role he took on just a few years after joining the town highway department in 1973. This quiet, behind-the-scenes guy doesn’t draw a lot of fanfare as he carries out the union’s work, but other CSEA leaders say he’s known for getting the job done and doing it with his members’ best interests always in mind.

That’s what made Menegaux, president of the Orangetown Unit, the perfect candidate for the CSEA Local Government Mission Achievement Award. “Mike has always been a strong fighter for his members,” said Southern Region President Billy Riccaldo. “His unit has had some really tough contract fights, but Mike has always unified the membership and kept them focused on holding out for the fairest contract possible. He personifies everything the Mission Achievement Award stands for.”

Menegaux, who said he was “quite surprised and somewhat humbled” by the statewide CSEA honor, came into his union role by accident. After taking the reins as unit president upon a co-worker’s promotion, having previously turned down the chance to run for president, Menegaux began learning everything he could about contract negotiations and other union matters.

In the years since, Menegaux, whose grandfather was a union activist in New York City, has taken the opportunity to remind co-workers on the importance of the union in the workplace. “I try to keep it simple,” he said. “I say, look at your paycheck. When I started in 1973, full time laborers were starting at $4.14 an hour. We’ve come a long way and that’s thanks to the union.”

— Jessica Ladlee
CSEA fights town layoff plan

SOUTHOLD — CSEA members demonstrated outside Southold Town Hall before a recent town board meeting against a misguided proposal by the town supervisor to lay off 10 percent of the town work force and severely curtail the quality of resident services in the process.

Southold employs approximately 230 people, of which about 150 are CSEA members. The layoff plan comes just months after CSEA fought off the town supervisor’s proposal to hire private contractors to transport materials away from the town’s waste management site, a job now performed by town workers.

A few months earlier, town officials tried to force CSEA to agree to a plan that would cut town hall business hours and decrease workers’ salaries.

Once again, the union refused to buckle under.

“We have a clear pattern of anti-union behavior on the part of elected officials in Southold,” Long Island Region President Nick LaMorte said. “They should understand that threats of layoffs and contracting out will not weaken our resolve.”

— Richard Impagliazzo

Member honored for helping save man

BROOKHAVEN — Town Housing Inspector and CSEA member Jim Carlson was recently honored by Brookhaven Supervisor Mark Lesko during a town board meeting after Carlson helped save a young man’s life.

A few weeks earlier, Carlson arrived at a town residence moments after the man had suffered a gunshot wound. As he waited for emergency help to arrive, Carlson checked the man for other injuries.

Local police came moments later and gave Carlson a trauma kit to allow him to continue providing first aid until paramedics arrived and took over.

Carlson kept helping the emergency medical technicians until the man’s condition stabilized and he was taken to an area hospital.

“Jim Carlson is a hero in every sense of the word,” Brookhaven White Collar Unit President Meg Shutka said. “Jim’s actions helped to save the life of a young man and we are very proud of him.”

— Richard Impagliazzo
LIBERTY — Opposition to a possible merger of Sullivan County BOCES with Orange-Ulster BOCES was so strong, outgoing state Education Commissioner Richard Mills nixed the proposition in early June.

Outcry against a merger came in large part from CSEA members in the Sullivan County area. The union represents about 150 workers at Sullivan County BOCES. Teamwork with Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther and the Sullivan County BOCES teachers’ union sent a strong message to state education officials.

“Working with others in the community, we were able to demonstrate to the state Board of Regents that a merger just was a bad idea for Sullivan County,” said Southern Region President Billy Riccaldo. “Our members should be proud of how quickly and strongly they mobilized to fight this.”

Mills, in a letter explaining his decision, affirmed points previously made by CSEA and community members, including the difficulty of many Sullivan students in accessing Orange-Ulster site. He also noted the legal costs associated with a merger, which could easily exceed the costs of keeping the two separate sites.

“When you’re talking about losing local control over your county’s BOCES and its programs and the layoff of employees there, it just isn’t worth it,” said Sullivan County Local President Jimmy Blake. “A small bit of cost savings doesn’t make up for what would be lost. Consolidation isn’t always the answer.”

“No one knew what the merger was going to present,” said Sullivan County BOCES Unit President Joanne Kraack. “Community-wise, the concern with a merger was that so many of the big decisions that would impact us might be happening outside of our county.”

— Jessica Ladlee

Port Jervis school aide saves boy

Donna Mead, a CSEA-represented school aide at the Port Jervis School District in Orange County, is being honored by her co-workers for recently saving a kindergarten student’s life. When Mead noticed the boy, Matthew Fitterer, choking on cereal, she jumped into action and within seconds she successfully performed the Heimlich Maneuver on the child. Matthew was so grateful that he brought Mead flowers the next day. In the photo above are Mead and Matthew Fitterer. (Photo by Christie Smith)

Sprague honored with Private Sector Mission Achievement Award

CANTON — CSEA Private Sector Mission Achievement Award winner Rick Sprague humbly protests being chosen to receive that award

“I don’t deserve it. I don’t feel I’ve done anything special,” he said.

Sprague, a senior circulation technician at St. Lawrence University’s Owen D. Young Library, serves as president of CSEA’s St. Lawrence University Local, a position he’s held since the mid-1990s after stepping up to serve on the union’s contract negotiations committee, and as an union administrator after the previous officers resigned.

When he took office, he was able to rebuild the union, bringing in several co-workers to become union activists and officers. They’ve run unopposed for union leadership since.

Sprague said that under his administration, he’s always tried to impress that the contract belongs to both parties. “It’s not the CSEA contract; it’s the union and the university’s contract.”

The way to best manage that contract, he said, is through cooperation. “My best feeling of accomplishment comes from being willing to work with management. I’m very pleased and happy to work with people in Human Resources who are willing to work with me, and for me to be able to call the president of the university, that reinforces the mutual respect that the university has for the union and we have for the university.”

“I’m very humbled,” he said about receiving the CSEA award.

— Mark M. Kotzin
**CSEA holds Spring Workshop in Rochester**

**Hearing Every Voice**

ROCHESTER — Hundreds of CSEA activists from across the state attended the union's annual Spring Workshop on June 12 to 14.

The workshop, with the theme "Hearing Every Voice," focused on building union leadership and other skills. The event included programs on CSEA's history, union building, the endorsement process and navigating the Family Medical Leave and Americans With Disabilities acts. Forums to help members develop conflict resolution and leadership expertise, and sessions on the state contract, partnership equality and labor-management collaboration also took place.

CSEA President Danny Donohue delivered the "State of the Union" address and presented the CSEA State Mission Achievement Award Friday evening to Mike Kaiser, president of the State Police Troop D Local.

The Local Government Mission Award recipient was Mike Monegaun, president of the Orangefield Union in Rockland County in the Southern Region, a Richard Spragge, St. Lawrence University Local President in the Central Region, received the Private Sector Mission Achievement Award. (See stories, pages 7 and 9)

The union also debuted its new DVD on addressing workplace violence. Union leaders will receive a copy of the DVD in the coming months and they are encouraged to share it with their members. A forum for members age 35 and younger, a plenary session on the Employee Free Choice Act rounded out the weekend.

— Lynn Miller

**Workplace violence video debuted**

A group of CSEA members who have experienced workplace violence first-hand told their stories on camera recently in the hope that they might help prevent others from going through the same thing.

The workers are part of a Workplace Violence Prevention DVD. CSEA is producing to help CSEA leaders and activists learn more about the various types of workplace violence that can occur, and learn how they can work with their employers to reduce the risk of violence at their work sites.

The DVD made its debut at the Spring Workshop and will be available to locals and units in July. Extra copies will also be available at CSEA region offices.

Above right, Mental Health Therapy Aide Sandra Martine tells CSEA OSH Project Developer Matt Bazak about her assault by a patient at Bronx Psychiatric Center as part of a DVD CSEA is producing to help CSEA leaders and activists reduce the risk of violence at their work sites. Below right, Sally McDonough, right, of Steuben County, and other CSEA members, listen to the presenters during a workshop on preventing workplace violence. CSEA debuted its DVD on the subject during this workshop.

CSEA members took a first aid and CPR course while at the workshop. CSEA is looking for union members who are certified to train first aid and CPR to help train others to save lives.

*Are you a Red Cross certified instructor for First Aid/CPR/AED training? Would you be interested in becoming one and helping CSEA train other members in these lifesaving skills?*

If so, CSEA would like to hear from you. Call CSEA at 1-800-342-4146 ext. 1271 or e-mail it to: Lifesavers@cseainc.org.

**Want to help save a life?**

CSEA members took a first aid and CPR course while at the workshop. CSEA is looking for union members who are certified to train first aid and CPR to help train others to save lives.

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**One of the workshop sessions gave an overview of CSEA’s history as the union approaches its 100th anniversary in 2010. Here is what some CSEA members who attended the history presentation had to say about CSEA’s history:**

*I didn’t realize CSEA went all the way back to the Theodore Roosevelt era. The union has accomplished a lot in the last 100 years.*

— Perry Edinger

**Buffalo State College**

*I didn’t realize CSEA had a female president. I found the workshop very interesting. I started with the state and CSEA in 1977 but I didn’t know much about the union’s history. It is very interesting where we’ve been and where we plan to go.*

— Pat Vaillancourt

**St. Lawrence County Local Secretary**

*I learned a lot about CSEA by attending this workshop. I’ve been here a member for nine years and involved for four. I haven’t had a chance to go too deep into the history. I found the workshop to be very interesting especially the section about the first women president. It was an excellent presentation.*

— Amy Simmons

**St. Lawrence County Local Secretary**

*“I didn’t realize CSEA went all the way back to the Theodore Roosevelt era. The union has accomplished a lot in the last 100 years.”*
Probation officers save woman

CANANDAIGUA — An Ontario County woman is alive today because of the efforts of two CSEA members in the county’s Probation Department.

“This is just another example of the importance of the services CSEA members provide every hour of every day,” said CSEA Western Region President Flo Tripi.

Instinct

A tip call late one night sent Probation Officer Sue Cirencione to the home of one of her probationers. There, she and her co-worker, Kevin Case, found a note on the door stating the woman had gone to a support group meeting.

Cirencione’s instinct sensed something different. “I was pretty sure I saw movement in the house,” she said.

While Case went to the back of the house to watch the balcony and the exits, Cirencione stayed on the front porch and tried to get the woman’s attention.

“She told me to leave,” Cirencione said. “She told me she was going to drink poison and antifreeze.

“It was then that I kicked in the door,” she said. “I have had a long-standing relationship with this woman. I could tell she was serious and I knew her history. I was getting into that house no matter what.”

Once inside the home, Cirencione saw the woman drinking bottles of carpet cleaner. Police and emergency medical crews who responded to the scene put the woman under mental health arrest.

“Sue’s rapport with the woman helped the situation greatly,” Case said. “It was a very unpredictable situation. Things could have been a lot worse.”

Cirencione and Case recently received a chief’s citation award from the county in honor of their diligence and hard work.

High caseloads

Case has worked in the department since 2001, while Cirencione has been a probation officer for 12 years. “The more challenging the person, the more I like to work with them,” she said.

Like in many other counties, probation cases are up as the county grows.

“We are starting to see an increase in probation cases in Ontario County,” Cirencione said. “The population is still going up, and with that comes crime.”

— Lynn Miller

Kaiser honored with State Mission Achievement Award

ONEIDA — CSEA State Police Troop D Local activist Mike Kaiser recently got a special presentation from his union to celebrate his upcoming retirement — he received CSEA’s State Government Mission Achievement Award.

Kaiser, a 27-year police communications specialist with the New York State Police in Oneida, has served as a local officer for more than 20 years, including as president for the last 11 years. He’s also served on numerous committees on every level of the union.

Kaiser said his union service has been all about helping improve the lives of his members and their families.

“(I have helped improve members’ lives) by bringing home good contracts, by improving working conditions for State Police employees through labor-management and though political action, by helping to elect politicians who are supportive of the union at all levels,” he said.

“For all his service to us, Mike’s never expected any fanfare or recognition, but Mike, we’re not about to let you go without giving you the recognition and the thanks you deserve,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue when presenting the award.

“I was very grateful and surprised. I didn’t expect to get this award, and I can think of other people who probably deserve it more than I do, but it was very nice and I appreciate it very much,” Kaiser said.

Kaiser plans on retiring in September and looks forward to becoming an active CSEA Retiree Division member.

— Mark M. Kotzin
Peritore caps 63 years with CSEA

Retiree Division Chair
Charles “Charlie” Peritore will step down from that post in July after 63 years of union activism, 21 in his current position.

Peritore, a CSEA member since 1946, served in numerous leadership positions on every level of CSEA both as an active and retiree member.

Peritore served as local president at Craig Developmental Center (now Finger Lakes Developmental Disabilities Services Office) in the Western Region, as a mental hygiene representative on the state contract negotiating committee and many other committees.

Peritore retired in 1980 and helped found the CSEA Retiree Division in the late 1980s and served as the division’s vice chair before he was elected chair in 1988. He played a leading role in developing the retiree division, which now has more than 60,000 members.

Along with chairing the retiree division, he served as president of the Livingston-Wyoming Counties Retirees Local.

Serving with pride
Soon after Peritore was hired at Craig Developmental Center as an attendant for people with developmental disabilities, the United States entered World War II. Like many Americans, Peritore enlisted in the military.

Peritore served nearly four years in the war’s Pacific theater. CSEA, then known as the Association of State Civil Service Employees, strongly supported members serving in the war. The association worked hard on a labor-management agreement to ensure that Peritore and other workers serving in the war could easily return to their jobs.

“They had my job waiting for me,” Peritore said. “I started in again as an attendant for the developmentally disabled at the same division and I stayed there until I retired.”

After the war, Peritore continued to serve his country through 24 years in the National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve.

CSEA President Danny Donohue said Peritore has meant much to many people over the years. “We thank Charlie for his hard work and his commitment to CSEA for 63 years,” Donohue said. “This is a man who understands at the deepest level, the meaning of solidarity and service.”

— Jill Asencio and Janice Marra

Collecting clothing for women’s shelters

From left, Central Region Women’s Committee Chair Cathy Barretta and committee members Carmina Russo, Linda Stiefel and Ann Marie Ellis collect hundreds of undergarments for women and children to be donated to women’s shelters across the region as part of “Underneath it all, we’ve got you covered” clothing drive held at the region’s recent spring conference. Central Region members donated the clothing.
As New York state employees faced the Great Depression, they and other New Yorkers were led by a progressive governor who was committed to supporting and advancing workers — Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Roosevelt, who became governor in 1929 and elected U.S. president in November 1932, worked closely with the Association of State Civil Service Employees, as CSEA was then known. Roosevelt, who sought allies to help enact his policies, developed a relationship with association leaders and there are records of his correspondence with various association leaders. The correspondence between Roosevelt and association leaders suggest a relationship based on mutual respect and Roosevelt gave tacit recognition to the association as a legitimate employee representative. He also attended the association’s annual dinner. This helped the association become even more powerful as it quickly grew.

While the association enjoyed a mostly positive relationship with Roosevelt, relations were not without bumps, particularly when the governor vetoed civil service reform legislation that the association sought.

Also in 1932, the Association of State Civil Service Employees’ founding president, William Thomas, passed away. He had served the association in a consulting role after his presidency ended in 1918 (see story, Page 18).

Also in 1932...

- Nazis lead in German elections with 230 Reichstag seats.
- Congress sets up Reconstruction Finance Corp. to stimulate economy.
- Aviator Charles A. Lindbergh’s baby son is kidnapped and killed.
- Amelia Earhart becomes the first woman to fly across the Atlantic solo.
- Lake Placid, N.Y., hosts the Winter Olympics.
- Jazz composer Duke Ellington writes "It Don’t Mean a Thing, If It Ain't Got That Swing," a song that presaged the swing era of the 1930s and 1940s.
- Radio City Music Hall opens in Manhattan.
- Babe Ruth hits his called shot as the New York Yankees defeat the Chicago Cubs in the World Series in a 4-0 sweep.
Activist Willie Terry honored with Nadra Floyd award

ALBANY — CSEA activist Willie Terry received the Coalition of Black Trade Unionist’s Capital District Chapter’s Nadra Floyd Membership Award at the chapter’s recent 10th anniversary banquet.

Terry has been a CSEA member for 28 years, and was a past president of the state Department of Taxation and Finance Local in New York City before moving to Albany in 1997.

He has been active in the CBTU for more than 20 years and was a founding member of the Capital Region chapter. He has also been active in the Troy Labor Council and has led CSEA’s Black and Puerto Rican Caucus for the past 18 years.

The award is named for former CSEA Director of Organizing Nadra Floyd, and is given to labor activists who demonstrate a commitment to challenging and fighting discrimination and promoting human rights issues.

Retiring CSEA local presidents recognized by OMRDD commissioner

ALBANY — Capital District DDSO Local President Joseph Howard, Western New York DDSO Local President Dawn Smith and Broome Developmental Center Local President Deborah Davenport were all presented certificates of appreciation from Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Commissioner Denise Jones Ritter and John Monteiro, Deputy Commissioner for Workforce and Talent Development.

The three are retiring from state service. The certificates read: “For your years of advocacy on behalf of our work force and your commitment to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities, OMRDD is stronger because of your activism.”

Howard has more than 24 years of service as an employee of OMRDD and has been CSEA Capital District DDSO president since 1992. Smith has been in state service since 1972. She has been involved with CSEA for almost as long. She has been president of CSEA Western New York DDSO Local since 1998.

Davenport has more than 34 years of service to New York state. She has also been a CSEA officer for more than 30 years, and CSEA Broome Developmental Center Local president for more than 10 years.

CSEA Appreciation Days at Six Flags Aug. 16 to Sept. 7

For CSEA members and their families!

Come to the Great Escape for thrills, chills, family fun and fond memories at the area’s best family theme park and water park — The Great Escape and Splashwater Kingdom.

Tickets are on sale NOW online at sixflags.com. Once entering the site, ordering is as easy as 1-2-3:

1. Pick a park and choose Six Flags Great Escape and Splash-water Kingdom
2. Enter promo code CSEA1000 in the upper right hand corner and click “Go”
3. Choose your quantity of tickets and follow the prompts

You must enter the Promotional Code of CSEA1000 to qualify for this special rate.

• Tickets are priced at $19.99 plus tax — that’s more than half off the regular admission price of $40.99 plus tax per person. Tickets will be good any day of the CSEA Appreciation Days listed above!

For more information please contact:
Raymond Canavan, 518-792-3500 ext 3347, rcanavan@sftp.com

ALBANY — Capital District DDSO Local President Joseph Howard and Western New York DDSO Local President Dawn Smith with certificates they received from Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Commissioner Diana Jones Ritter

At left, CSEA state Department of Taxation and Finance activist Willie Terry speaks at a Capital District labor group meeting.
The CSEA Employee Benefit Fund has enhanced the EBF dental plans for covered local government and active Unified Court System members. These important enhancements, effective July 1, 2009, affect members covered by the Sunrise, Horizon, Equinox and Dutchess plans, as well as the plan offered to full-time, active Unified Court System members. Some of the specific procedures targeted are exams and cleanings, x-rays, fillings, crowns, root canals, some periodontal services, full and partial dentures, extractions and orthodontia.

Information detailing the enhancements were mailed to all covered members June 26. Please remember that participating dental providers accept EBF’s fee schedules as payment in full for all covered services. Members using non-participating dentists will experience fewer out-of-pocket costs at the dentist’s office. The increases will assist covered members in paying for dental treatments and should help EBF retain and attract new dental providers to our panel.

For more information on the enhancements and other valuable benefits available through EBF, please visit the fund’s website at www.cseaebf.com.

Empire Plan enhances hearing aid benefit

On April 1, 2009, the Empire Plan enhanced the hearing aid benefit for enrollees and eligible dependents by offering the addition of the Hearing Service Plan (HSP), provided by EPIC Hearing Healthcare. The addition of EPIC HSP offers you and your eligible dependents an option (voluntary program) that allows for direct billing to the Empire Plan so enrollees do not have to pay upfront costs for hearing aids, as long as that cost is within the benefit allowance.

The Empire Plan negotiated dollar allowance for hearing aids remains unchanged and the plan will continue to cover hearing aids received from providers other than EPIC HSP providers. This benefit enhancement was put in place to assist those who could not afford the upfront out-of-pocket expense required when purchasing a hearing aid.

Look for additional detailed information regarding this benefit enhancement in future articles of The Work Force. Empire Plan enrollees and/or dependents can contact 1-866-956-5400 for additional information and assistance in locating an EPIC HSP provider.
Dependent eligibility verification: Empire Plan and NYSHIP HMO enrollees with family coverage

The Special Amnesty Period, which allowed NYSHIP enrollees a specified period of time to remove ineligible dependents (without penalty) has ended.

Verification of Dependents will be conducted in two phases:

The first phase will be for dependents of New York state and participating employer enrollees.

Phase 1 Verification Period:
- New York state employees and employees of participating employers must provide proof (verification) of ALL dependents.
- Ineligible dependents (or those who did not submit proof of eligibility) will be removed from coverage, retroactive to Feb. 1, 2009.
- Enrollees will be responsible for claims payments made on behalf of ineligible dependents during period of ineligibility.

The second phase will be for dependents of participating agency enrollees.

Phase 2 Verification Period:
- Local Government (participating agency) employees must provide proof (verification) of ALL dependents.
- Submission of proof beginning Aug. 28, 2009 to Nov. 25, 2009.
- Ineligible dependents (or those who did not submit proof of eligibility) will be removed from coverage, retroactive to Feb. 1, 2009.
- Enrollees will be responsible for claims payments made on behalf of ineligible dependents during period of ineligibility.

ACTION BY YOU IS REQUIRED.
Submit copies of documents as outlined in the verification packet.
NO ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED.

Flex Spending Account participants: new online claims submission

The Flex Spending Account (FSA) is a valuable negotiated employee benefit that uses pre-tax money to help you save on health care costs and the dependent care expenses.

If you are enrolled in the Flex Spending Account for either the Health Care Spending Account (to pay for health-related expenses) or the Dependent Care Advantage Account (to pay for child/adult day care expenses), please be advised that the FSA administrator, Fringe Benefits Management Company, has recently implemented a new online claims submission process.

There is now a simple, two-step process to allow enrollees to submit reimbursement requests for the Health Care Spending Account and the Dependent Care Advantage Account directly through FBMC’s secure website. Submitting reimbursement requests online is faster than traditional mail, therefore expediting the payment of FSA money to enrollees.

If you have any questions, please contact FBMC’s Customer Care Center at www.myFBMC.com or call 1-800-358-7202.
Thomas’ presidency sets standard for service, achievement

Editor’s Note: CSEA will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2010. Throughout this year, The Work Force is devoting the Leading Edge to a look back at some of the key individuals who have helped shape our extraordinary history. This month we consider the founding of the association and the legacy of our first president, William Thomas.

On Oct. 24, 1910, a small group of New York state employees came together at the state Capitol to form the Association of State Civil Service Employees. Their purpose was simple: Advance the concept of merit and fitness in the state civil service system to improve the working lives of New York state employees.

It was a good time to take up the challenge but at the same time, a nearly overwhelming task.

The association was founded at the height of the Progressive era, when optimism about transforming the corrupt political patronage mills into a rational social-science based system had vigorous momentum. In 1910, New York’s trust-busting governor, Charles Evans Hughes, had recently stepped down to become a member of the U.S. Supreme Court, while New York’s Theodore Roosevelt dominated the political scene as he contemplated another run for president.

New York’s civil service system had actually been drafted by then Assemblyman Theodore Roosevelt and signed into law by Gov. Grover Cleveland in the early 1880s. It was hailed as a benchmark accomplishment for advancing good government and helped Cleveland reach the White House. It was intended to create a rational approach to filling government jobs in an orderly and economical way through competitive examinations with qualified employees rather than party favorites filling jobs through the political spoils system.

Need for change

In spite of vigorous momentum for reform of many institutions, by 1910 New York’s civil service system was once again rife with pockets of corruption and favoritism. There was good reason for well-intentioned state employees to band together for change.

There had been civil service reform organizations and other good government around for decades by the time the association was founded. There had also been labor unions and other benevolent associations of every stripe, including organizations that represented municipal workers such as fire and police. But the Association of State Civil Service Employees appears to have been the first organization of its kind representing the interests of state employees.

Our founding leader

The association’s first president, William Thomas, was a hearing stenographer for the state attorney general. He had first taken a civil service exam on Jan. 1, 1882, and began work for the state attorney general in 1901. State records show that his annual salary in 1917 was $3,000.

Thomas set the standard for dedicated service and driven focus as president of the association until 1918 when he was appointed a member of the New York State Pension Commission. In that role, Thomas was instrumental in the establishment of the state retirement system in 1920, giving the association a significant early achievement that endures to this day.

Thomas retired from state service in 1922 but continued to serve as a commissioner of the pension system, regularly working out of the Association’s cramped office on the first floor of the state Capitol in Albany. Thomas passed away on June 14, 1932.
Kudos to
CSEA Cortland County
State Department of
Transportation Local member Jamie
Arnold, a highway maintenance
supervisor I. After more than a dozen
people were left without a warm
place to stay after their hotel caught
fire in March, Arnold took
the initiative to bring them to the DOT
barn in Polkville. He and his
co-workers provided food, shelter and
blankets to the victims until the Red
Cross arrived on the scene ...

NEW CONTACT — CSEA members in the
Oyster Bay/East Norwich School
District Custodial Unit
overwhelmingly ratified a new three-
year contract that provides for
annual salary percentage increases,
no additional health care insurance
contribution, an enhanced health
insurance buyback option and
improved longevity payments ...

MADISON SETTLEMENT — The
Madison County Legislature recently
voted to ratify a two-year contract
rollover for the Madison County Blue
Collar Unit. CSEA praised the
legislature for its passage and hopes

HELPING FIRE
VICTIMS — Kudos to
CSEA’s clout in the workplace, in the legislature, in your
community and in the labor movement.

CSEA members lend hand at All-Star Auction

CSEA was once again a proud major sponsor of the WPBS-TV “All Star
Auction” in Watertown this year. Dozens of CSEA volunteers from around
the North Country helped the TV station answer phones, sell auction items
and work behind the scenes to make the magic happen and raise money
for the last night of the annual television auction. Thanks to the CSEA
volunteers who helped make the event a success.
CSEA members save $4.00 off admission on Sept. 5 and 6, 2009, during CSEA Weekend.

The New York State Fair is at the Empire Expo Center located off Exit 7 of I-690, 3 miles west of Syracuse. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily.

Saturday, Sept. 5 and Sunday, Sept. 6, 2009, is CSEA WEEKEND at the New York State Fair in Syracuse. CSEA members and their family members will receive $4.00 off admission that weekend, compliments of CSEA and the New York State Fair.

NEW! Find CSEA and view our 100-year history display during the entire fair at our new booth location along the front wall to the left of the center doors in the Americraft Center of Progress Building. Stop by and visit the CSEA booth any day, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. The coupons for $4.00 off admission, however, are only good during CSEA weekend, Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 5 and 6, 2009.

Clip one coupon at right for each CSEA member and family member and bring coupon(s) to any fair gate to get $4 off the price of admission on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 5 and 6, 2009, only.

Reproduced coupons will not be accepted. Additional coupons will be available at your CSEA region office.