Under attack: good jobs, benefits and services

See pages 3, 6, 10 and 11.
CSEA settlement huge victory for retirees

CSEA has won a settlement on behalf of 1,600 retired Westchester County employees that freezes their prescription drug costs for life for themselves and their dependents.

“This is a huge victory for our retirees,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue. “They live on fixed incomes and never expected they would be forced to pay more for their health care.”

Under the terms of the class action settlement, prescription co-payments are forever frozen for class members and their dependents. Various other co-payments and deductibles are also frozen forever.

The county will also pay each class member or surviving dependent $700, and the county will also pay CSEA attorney fees and litigation expenses in the amount of $65,000. The costs of the immediate payouts are approximately $1.1 million.

The settlement stems from a suit CSEA filed in 2004 claiming the county improperly diminished the health insurance benefits of workers who retired between January 1993 and May 2004.

CSEA argued that the 1993 through 2004 contracts, unlike other CSEA contracts with the county, prohibited the county from changing those retirees’ benefits.

As a side agreement, the county agreed that other CSEA unit retirees, who previously had no clear contractual or legal protection, were entitled to at least the insurance level of active employees.

— Ed Molitor

National health care signed into law

Union members across the United States helped make the difference in getting the historic health care reform measure signed into law.

“This legislation is a giant step in the right direction toward affordable, quality health care for all working families,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue. “The legislation isn’t perfect and there still is work to do, but this is an important step for America.”

Union members across the country made more than 4 million phone calls to lawmakers to urge the legislation’s passage, according to the AFL-CIO.

Read more about the plan’s immediate and future details on page 6.

New CSEA/AFSCME membership cards will protect your identity

CSEA members have spoken!

Because you asked, Social Security numbers are being replaced by CSEA ID numbers for CSEA business. In January, you should have received your 2010 CSEA/AFSCME membership card with a new CSEA ID NUMBER. You will no longer have to use your Social Security number to identify yourself as a CSEA member.

KEEP THE CARD IN A SAFE PLACE SO YOUR CSEA ID NUMBER IS AVAILABLE WHEN YOU NEED IT.

From the Office of President Danny Donohue

CSEA President Danny Donohue to meet Western Region members May 12

CSEA President Danny Donohue will visit the CSEA Western Region on Tuesday, May 12 to meet with members.

The meetings will be held at the Western Region office, 120 Pineview Drive, Amherst. Donohue will meet with union members from 1 to 7 p.m. Please call the Western Region office at (716) 691-6555 or 1-866-568-7734 for an appointment and directions.
ALBANY — CSEA continued its fight for public services in New York as the April 1 budget deadline neared.

As The Work Force went to press, the budget situation and other factors that would have a direct impact on CSEA members across the state remained up in the air. There was little expectation of an on-time budget.

Here is a breakdown of some of the issues that in some cases, CSEA members are fighting against, and in others, union members should be prepared to fight:

**Senate Democrats irresponsible**

The state Senate majority has proposed additional massive cuts to state operations that have already seen $2 billion in cuts in the past 18 months. The cuts could add up to 8,000 layoffs, and would severely undermine most agencies.

The state work force is already doing more with less and cuts already made to state agencies have created staff shortages, mandatory overtime problems, an over-reliance on temporary workers and safety issues.

Senate Democrats are refusing to consider several revenue raisers while putting forth projections that don’t add up.

Paterson continued to call for state employees to help fill a $250 million gap in the budget.(See President’s column, page 4.)

**Education**

Gov. David Paterson is proposing an overall school aid cut of $1.6 billion, which would be progressively based on a local school district’s wealth and student need. The governor has also proposed a $2.3 million cut in library aid. Combined with the anticipated reductions in state aid to localities, these proposals would have a devastating effect on counties, cities and towns.

The Senate proposal would go along with the governor’s deep cuts to education and localities.

**Proposed state park closures**

The governor’s proposal to close dozens of state parks and historic sites across the state is simply a bad idea and is meeting with resistance from the public. Funding for parks would be cut by $28 million — a 40 percent budget cut over the past two years.

New York’s state parks attract out-of-state tourists and generate up to $2 billion in economic activity for private businesses and supports 20,000 jobs. The state enjoys $5 in benefits for every $1 it invests in its parks.

What’s worse is that New York’s parks provide an invaluable resource for working families who might otherwise not have the means to take a vacation or a daylong trip. Closing parks during the worst economic recession since the Great Depression is irresponsible.

**Temporary workers**

CSEA is pushing to end the Paterson administration’s exploitation of temporary workers and undermining of state workers. The union is urging state agencies to provide realistic assessments regarding their real work force needs. If temporary workers are needed, the state should create worker pools to draw from, rather than using private contractors to supply the bodies. Workers from the pool work force would then be deployed to agencies as needed.

Aside from the temporary workers not having the on-the-job protections and benefits of CSEA members, more than $62 million in tax dollars are being used to hire temporary workers through employment agencies. Nearly every state agency is hiring such workers despite a state hiring freeze that is potential workers from gainful employment in a bad economy.

See Pages 4, 6, 8, 9, 10-11 for related stories.

Visit www.csealocal1000.org for updates on the budget situation.
Senate Democrats take aim at you!

As bad as Gov. David Paterson’s proposed state budget is, the New York state Senate Democrats have a plan that’s even worse. The Senate Democrats’ proposal really sticks it to state employees and throws schools and localities under a bus, too!

Contrary to popular belief, state agencies account for less than a 10th of the New York state’s budget. Over the past 18 months, nearly $2 billion has been cut from state operations including a hiring freeze and an erosion in resources to do the job properly. But the Senate Democrats’ proposal could lead to 8,000 state employee layoffs!

Meanwhile, shortchanging school districts and local governments, as the Senate Democrats and governor want to do, will force drastic measures all across the state. What’s worse, the Senate Democrats’ are being recklessly irresponsible by putting forward revenue figures that don’t even add up! It all suggests that they not only can’t count but don’t have any real understanding of the public services they are putting at risk.

CSEA has no tolerance for politicians who take cheap shots at dedicated public employees. It’s not right and New Yorkers deserve better.

CSEA members know better than anyone that these are tough times. We’re already doing more with less and it’s harder to get essential work done, whether it’s maintaining our roads and bridges; operating our parks; ensuring care for individuals with developmental disabilities; upholding public safety or providing a quality of life in hundreds of different ways.

We won’t apologize for the work we do, and let me remind all elected officials that we pay taxes and spend our hard-earned money in our home communities. Massive layoffs of public workers will only further weaken our economy.

Let’s be clear: The Senate Democrats’ approach won’t solve New York’s fiscal problems and will cost you a lot more in the long run.
April 28 is Workers’ Memorial Day

Mourn for the dead, fight for the living!

April 28 is Workers’ Memorial Day, an international day of remembrance for workers who passed away or sustained severe injuries while doing their jobs.

In 1989, CSEA and other AFL-CIO unions observed the first Workers Memorial Day.

The unions chose April 28 to observe Workers’ Memorial Day, the date that also marks the anniversary of the passage of the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act.

For the first Workers’ Memorial Day, CSEA encouraged members to mark the day by organizing or participating in events that included memorial ceremonies, moments of silence, planting trees or flowers in memory of workers and wearing black armbands. (See page 14)

This year, CSEA will again honor members who have passed away while doing their jobs, including the following four members:

- **Kevin Forsyth**, a highway maintenance supervisor at the state Department of Transportation’s Niagara residency, passed away July 23, 2008, while setting up a work zone;

- **Sharon M. LaDuke**, a senior clerk for the village of Potsdam, passed away on May 29, 2009, after a battle with mesothelioma;

- **Gary L. Farrell**, a highway maintenance worker at the state Department of Transportation’s Alder Creek sub-residency, passed away Nov. 2, 2009, while flagging in a work zone; and

- **Nancy Lou Dell-Olio**, a monitor at the Amityville School District, passed away on Nov. 5, 2009, from injuries sustained after falling down a flight of stairs on the job.

Nothing is more important to CSEA than to keep all of our members safe and healthy on the job, and that is why CSEA and other unions also use Workers’ Memorial Day as an opportunity to continue our ongoing fight for safe and healthy workplaces.

CSEA has led the way nationally in ensuring safer workplaces, including leading the fight to enact the state Public Employees Safety and Health Act, passing a groundbreaking state workplace violence law and training a strong network of safety and health activists and peer trainers.

Despite these strides, going to work is still too dangerous for too many people and the fight still must continue.

CSEA members are urged to participate in Workers’ Memorial Day commemoration events throughout the state, including one at the union’s upcoming Statewide Conference on Occupational Safety and Health (see page 12 for more). Contact your region office or visit your region web page on CSEA’s website at [www.csealocal1000.org](http://www.csealocal1000.org) for more information.
OGDENSBURG workers fight to save prison

OGDENSBURG — Since the first days after Gov. David Paterson announced his plans to close Ogdensburg Correctional Facility, CSEA-represented workers have banded together to keep the governor’s plan from becoming reality.

They’ve worked with literally everyone who holds a stake in their community, including other workers and their unions, local businesses, community and civic leaders and elected officials at all levels.

CSEA members also posted signs in their cars, their homes and local businesses, placed ads and editorials in the local newspaper and held a demonstration outside Ogdensburg City Hall that shut down the block. Prison workers have held weekly lobbying visits with their state legislators, and traveled by the busload to the state Capitol in Albany to make sure their voices were heard.

Their message was simple: it’s about jobs, and an entire rural economy supported by them. At the recent demonstration, CSEA Central Region President Colleen Wheaton made the case that in such a high-unemployment area, New York’s North Country cannot afford to lose the prison as an economic engine.

“We need to continue to make the case to our elected leaders that we cannot have economic recovery in New York state without people working and paying their taxes,” she said.

“Closing this facility makes no sense.”

An enthusiastic rally outside the state Capitol in late March also helped keep hope alive. Scores of state legislators participated, as did CSEA Statewide Treasurer Joe McMullen.

CSEA Ogdensburg Correctional Facility Local President Mark Lashua said everyone in the community has joined together in the fight.

“We’ve all been working together to fight this closure, because it affects everyone in our community,” he said. “There’s not one family in Ogdensburg and our surrounding area that wouldn’t be negatively impacted by this facility closing.”

— Mark M. Kotzin

Facts on the new national health care law

President Barack Obama has signed legislation that is the most sweeping health care policy enacted since the 1960s. Below is an explanation of the legislation’s major provisions. CSEA fought long and hard to make access to health care a right. If you have any questions, contact the CSEA Legislative and Political Action Department at (800) 342-4146, or visit www.csealocal1000.org.

Effective dates are in parentheses

Coverage

More than 32 million Americans would gain health insurance under this law.

The uninsured and self-employed would be able to purchase insurance through state-based exchanges with subsidies available to individuals and families with income between the 133 percent and 400 percent of poverty level. (Health exchanges go into effect in 2014)

Individual Responsibility

Almost everyone is required to be insured or else pay a fine. There is an exemption for low-income individuals. (Begins in 2014)

Employer Responsibility

Technically, there is no employer mandate. Employers with more than 50 employees must provide health insurance or pay a fine of $2,000 per worker each year if any worker receives federal subsidies to purchase health insurance.

Fines applied to entire number of employees minus some allowances. (Begins in 2014)

Benefits Tax

There will be a 40 percent excise tax on health plans that cost in excess of $10,200 (individual) or $27,500 (family). This total does not include dental or vision coverage. (Begins in 2018)

How it is paid for

Increase Medicare payroll tax rate by 0.9 percent for individuals earning more than $200,000 and families earning more than $250,000 plus a 2.9 percent assessment on unearned investment income for individuals earning more than $200,000 and families earning more than $250,000. (Begins in 2013)

Part D Donut Hole

Fills donut hole gradually and in 2020 the hole will be completely filled. Seniors who hit the donut hole by 2010 will receive a $250 rebate.

Medicaid

Expand coverage up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level.

For states such as New York that already cover this population, the federal government will phase in payments to the state starting in 2014 and will pay 90 percent of the cost of insuring them in 2019 and after.

Affordability

Exchange subsidies limit premium contribution from 2 percent to 9.8 percent of income based on FPL percentage.

Employees offered coverage at work will be eligible for the insurance exchange if premium contribution exceeds 9.8 percent of income.

Rate Review

A new Federal Insurance Rate Authority is created to oversee and assist states in examining proposed insurance rate increases by insurance companies.

Insurance companies would be required to lower premiums or pay rebates to policy holders if rate increases are unreasonable and unjustified.

Insurance Market Reforms

• Insurers are prohibited from denying coverage to people with pre-existing conditions (six months after enactment for newborns, 2014 for everyone else)

• Higher premiums for women would be banned. (six months after enactment)

• Insurers would be forbidden from placing lifetime dollar limits on policies. (six months after enactment)

• Parents would be able to keep children on their policies up to age 26. (six months after enactment)

• Require large insurers to spend 85 percent of premium payments on care. Failure to do this would require a rebate to policyholders. (six months from enactment)
CSEA leading the way in child care funding fight

CSEA is leading the way nationally to improve access to quality child care for thousands of families by getting involved in mobilizing federal funding for families in need.

CSEA’s many meetings and tireless efforts with U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand and U.S. Rep. Paul Tonko have influenced important connections in Washington, D.C., that will help place child care in mind as a national priority in budget decisions.

Timing is critical due to dramatic funding cuts in some localities across the state. More federal funding would relieve the state budget and hopefully eliminate the temptation to leverage “lack of federal funding” as an excuse for fiscally conservative counties to not handle subsidy programs responsibly.

Statewide, VOICE/CSEA has been a driving force in an advocacy campaign called, “Families Earning, Children Learning,” connecting directly with members of Congress through phone calls, letters and e-mails.

In a letter to Congress, CSEA President Danny Donohue wrote, “Currently, only one in seven eligible children receives child care assistance through this program. Federal investment in these programs will ensure that New York’s youngest children get the strong start they need and that parents can access affordable child care in order to work and support their families.”

If the increases are approved, the effect would be far-reaching and powerful in New York state.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant funds subsidy programs for millions of people across the country and would bring about $48.3 million to New York alone, directly helping working families.

BUFFALO — Erie County Executive Chris Collins is at it again.

CSEA members employed by Erie County haven’t had a contract since Dec. 31, 2006, and once again, the union is going head to head with Collins, who has been undermining CSEA members and working families since taking office.

While speaking about child care subsidies that he considered unsustainable, Collins and the county’s Social Services Department opted to drop some 40 percent of eligible children while aware of the risk that some working-poor parents will quit their jobs and turn to public assistance because they will be better off; publicly stating that welfare is cheaper for the state and county rather than helping families work.

More than 900 families with 1,500 children are affected by these subsidy cuts.

In early March, Collins boasted in The Buffalo News about Erie County’s $44 million surplus. The newspaper reported, “it was clear that Erie County officials never had their backs to the wall financially in 2009.”

VOICE/CSEA joined with Voice-Buffalo, a coalition of faith-based organizations and the YWCAs of Erie County recently to a rally to protest drastic cuts in child care. More than 150 providers, parents and community members attended the rally.

News about Erie County’s $44 million surplus. The newspaper reported, “it was clear that Erie County officials never had their backs to the wall financially in 2009.”

Niagara County VOICE/CSEA child educator Cathey Sandman stands with U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand after Sandman testified in Washington, D.C., on the need for increased child care funding.

Danny Donohue wrote, “Currently, only one in seven eligible children receives child care assistance through this program. Federal investment in these programs will ensure that New York’s youngest children get the strong start they need and that parents can access affordable child care in order to work and support their families.”

If the increases are approved, the effect would be far-reaching and powerful in New York state.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant funds subsidy programs for millions of people across the country and would bring about $48.3 million to New York alone, directly helping working families.

— Jill Asencio

Helping children

CSEA is fighting for congress to make child care a priority with the following proposals:

• $1 billion increase for Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG);
• Improvements in funding for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and
• $989 million increase for the Head Start/Early Head Start.
ROCHESTER — During a recession, families are often forced to make changes, tighten their belts and make cuts.

But as people scale back, the public library becomes even more important. Libraries become the place to go for everything from job search assistance to borrowing a movie for Friday night.

“What if your neighborhood library suddenly closed its doors?” asked Ove Overmyer, president of CSEA’s Monroe County Library Unit. “It could happen sooner than you think.”

Although library use has increased greatly during the economic downturn, libraries are in trouble if yet another funding cut takes place, Overmyer said. A proposal in the state budget would whack funding by 18 percent, a significant amount.

“The Polar Plunge is one of the largest statewide fundraising efforts to benefit the Special Olympics and we’re glad to be a part of it,” said Oyster Bay Local President Bob Rauff, who participated in the plunge. “We want to aid their mission while demonstrating the CSEA commitment to quality care for people with developmental disabilities and dedication to community involvement.”

In addition to raising money for the Special Olympics, CSEA members had another incentive to be “Freezin’ for a Reason:” the Polar Cap Award.

President Danny Donohue will present the award to the region that achieves the best participation and fundraising results for this

by people engaged in job searches, applying for jobs online and acquiring job search skills such as resume writing and effective interviewing,” Overmyer said. “Seventy five percent of all job listings are now online and at least 60 percent of prospective employers only accept online job applications. If it weren’t for New York’s libraries, more than 330,000 unemployed people throughout the state would not be able to apply for jobs online.”

Overmyer urges members to help save libraries. “Contact your state legislator today,” he said. “The future of our libraries and our economy is dependent on whether you decide to take direct action. Make your move today.”

— Lynn Miller
CSEA members respond to devastating storms

Snow springs Greene County members into action

CAIRO — CSEA members in Greene County helped county residents cope when a late February snowstorm found them measuring snowfall totals in feet, not inches.

In most parts of the county, 4- to 5-foot totals were the norm, with some higher elevations topping out over 7 feet.

With the snow came widespread power outages, an avalanche that forced road closures, car accidents, collapsed houses, lost animals and medical emergencies that kept the county’s 911 dispatchers busy with three times the call volume.

When a state of emergency was declared, CSEA members employed by Greene County sprang into action helping to turn the county’s emergency services building into a command center. There, state and county efforts worked with utility companies and the American Red Cross to respond to the storm. The building housed a shelter where some people stayed for up to three days.

CSEA members employed at the county’s Department of Aging and Social Services also helped staff the operations center.

“County staff handled all these events professionally, thoroughly and with compassion,” said Greene County Local President and 911 Senior Dispatcher George Greiner.

— Therese Assalian

Long Island workers face severe wind damage

CSEA members from the Town of Oyster Bay Local rose to the challenge in the aftermath of a powerful storm that battered Long Island with gale force winds and torrential rains.

South Shore communities such as Massapequa and Farmingdale were affected severely, with many large trees uprooted, power lines downed and streets littered with debris.

“We had to differentiate electrical wires from cable and phone lines before removing the tree limbs that dislodged them,” said Highway Crew Foreman and Local 1st Vice President Gene Fallica. “The power authority was unable to respond in every instance, so we relied on the expertise of our town electricians.”

Veteran highway crew workers likened the damage to that produced by hurricanes Gloria (1985) and Bob (1991), noting that the severity was not as widespread and similar only in specific areas. Still, CSEA members had the situation under control within 72 hours.

South Shore highway department supervisor Steve Kelly reported that crews worked in varying shifts from 14 to 24 hours for three days following the storm and union workers from other departments also contributed to the considerable effort. “It was all hands on deck,” he said.

Similarly impressive efforts were undertaken by CSEA members in municipalities all over Long Island.

— Richard Impagliazzo

CSEA members across the Hudson Valley worked round-the-clock during the late February blizzard, keeping roads clear despite heavy snow, massive power outages, downed utility lines and fallen tree limbs. Eastern Orange County was one of the hardest hit areas in the Southern Region. Through their efficient work, CSEA members showed the importance of the public services they provide. Pictured here, Village of Cornwall-on-Hudson Unit member Larry Lawless uses a backhoe to clear snow from village fire hydrants. While village residents suffered widespread power outages and downed trees, the CSEA work force did an excellent job keeping the roads clear, enabling utility crews to restore power.
Under attack: good jobs, good benefits and good services

I f you think your rights, benefits and work as a CSEA member are increasingly under attack these days, you’re right. Some of it is the economic crisis and the intense pressure of public sector budgets. But there is also a focused campaign supported by some of the world’s largest corporations, wealthiest, and most politically conservative individuals, intended to scale back what unions and workers have spent decades trying to achieve on behalf of working people.

For decades, unions representing workers in manufacturing and other private-sector industry have faced relentless attacks. Now, public sector unions are the single-minded focus of these corporate-backed policy think tanks like the Manhattan Institute and its minded focus of these corporate-backed policy think tanks like the Manhattan Institute and its mindset of these corporate-backed policy groups. But there is also a focused campaign supported by an intense pressure of public sector budgets. But there is also a focused campaign supported by some of the world’s largest corporations, wealthiest, and most politically conservative individuals, intended to scale back what unions and workers have spent decades trying to achieve on behalf of working people.

Race to the bottom

What’s really happening is that corporate America wants to force public sector workers into the “race to the bottom.” For years, public sector workers were compensated for lower-than-average wages by negotiating for good benefits. Public sector workers like you didn’t get rich, but could count on a decent living and retiring with security. Over the last decade, private sector workers have seen most of their defined-benefit pensions – where the benefits are guaranteed – replaced with defined-contribution plans, such as the 401(k)’, where the only guarantee is the amount of money that is invested in the plan and the benefit is subject to how well the investment does. Under the defined contribution approach, many private sector workers saw their retirement benefits consumed in the recent financial collapse.

At left, Newark Schools bus mechanic Nate Amos works on one of the school district’s buses, helping ensure the safety of schoolchildren.

At left, Newark Schools bus mechanic Nate Amos works on one of the school district’s buses, helping ensure the safety of schoolchildren.

The Empire Center for New York State Policy

The Empire Center is the same organization that has posted the salary of every public sector worker in New York state on the Internet for all to see. It is the same organization that has spent years running down public sector workers and has been relentless in their media bombardment. The center’s central premise is that wages and benefits in the public sector are far too generous and should be better aligned with the private sector. Their solution? Diminish pensions, break contracts, and blame the unions.

Race to the bottom

What’s really happening is that corporate America wants to force public sector workers into the “race to the bottom.” For years, public sector workers were compensated for lower-than-average wages by negotiating for good benefits. Public sector workers like you didn’t get rich, but could count on a decent living and retiring with security. Over the last decade, private sector workers have seen most of their defined-benefit pensions – where the benefits are guaranteed – replaced with defined-contribution plans, such as the 401(k)’, where the only guarantee is the amount of money that is invested in the plan and the benefit is subject to how well the investment does. Under the defined contribution approach, many private sector workers saw their retirement benefits consumed in the recent financial collapse.

As private-sector workers, particularly those without a union, have lost ground in earnings and benefits over the past decade, many private sector workers now not only have better benefits, in some cases, they make more money. That’s bad news to corporate-backed interests like the Empire Center, because it won’t be long before private sector workers go back to joining unions to get what public sector workers have. At the same time, municipalities are looking to sell off and contract out more public services, with the idea of raising cash to cover deficits. The danger here is that as Americans lose control of public services, they also lose control of the democracy that governs such public institutions. It’s a challenge CSEA has weathered before but today’s danger is very real and made worse by a number of related factors.

The big lie

The Empire Center has spent years on the attack against public worker benefits and has built some momentum particularly as the economic meltdown has undermined millions of working people. Ironically, many of those financially supporting the Empire Center’s PR blitz are the same people whose unbridled greed helped cause the meltdown.

What often makes the Empire Center’s message so misleading is a tendency for the media to present their point of view as if the center was a “good government watchdog” rather than the ultimate special interest that it is.

Unfortunately, there is too much of a receptive audience for scapegoating and quick fixes in these difficult times. Most recently, Governing Magazine, which is read by government and elected officials across the country, ran an article that attacked public sector unions and employee benefits based largely on information from the Manhattan Institute. The article’s conclusions were predictable: government budget shortfalls are being caused by greedy public sector unions who want too much for their members. It’s a simplistic and dangerously misguided argument, but it’s chilling to consider that this is the perspective that many elected officials are buying into without really understanding the facts.

Across New York, CSEA has come up against numerous politicians in recent time who are driving agendas and trying to build political careers based on attacking their own employees. They flaunt their contempt and wear their disregard for public workers as a badge of honor. These politicians are either knowingly or unwittingly driving a wedge between working people by promoting anger and resentment between workers who have rights and benefits and those who have lost them. CSEA does not apologize for standing strong for our members and the services we deliver, but we also believe that all working people need to stand together for fairness and respect and should not fall into the trap of being played off against each other.

Above, City of Newburgh Unit members Alfred Bevier, left, and Jim Humphrey remove fallen tree branches from a city neighborhood. The Newburgh area was among the hardest hit by a blizzard that hit lower New York in late February. Recent budget cuts in Newburgh resulted in more than a dozen job cuts in the city’s Department of Public Works.

At right, Yan Kushelman, a surgical technologist at SUNY Downstate Medical Center, provides medical surgeons with the proper instruments needed during an operation. CSEA members earn their pay and benefits performing essential work.

CSEA has never been better or stronger at any point in our history than we are today, but so are our opponents. No matter how strong we stand in any light, the only way we can succeed in the long run is by having members who understand what’s going on and get involved. The job you save just may be your own.
Statewide Conference on Occupational Safety and Health

The 2010 CSEA Statewide Conference on Occupational Safety and Health will be held April 30 - May 2 in Lake Placid.

This year’s conference theme is “CSEA at 100: Better. Stronger. Safer.” as a nod to the many workplace safety and health advances CSEA has led the way in achieving in the union’s history. The conference logo is below.

While much progress has been made, there is still much more to do. One sad sign of that will be the conference’s Workers’ Memorial Day observation for our brothers and sisters who have passed away or been injured at work.

Visit the conference page at CSEA’s website at www.csealocal1000.org/osh_conference_2010.php to see a conference agenda, download conference forms and other materials and much more!

CSEA Monroe County Part-Time Unit members Jaime Kennedy-Peer, front and Linda Holzapple demonstrate for a fair contract.

Activist’s son hailed as hero

ROCHESTER — Members of the CSEA Monroe County Local and Federation of Social Workers members recently demonstrated in front of the county office building to protest the county’s apparent lack of interest in negotiating fair contracts with its workers.

“It’s time for the county to bring honesty and credibility back to the bargaining process.”

CSEA and the Federation of Social Workers are tired of being treated like second-class citizens by this county administration,” CSEA Western Region President Flo Tripi said.

Members of CSEA’s Monroe County General Employee Unit and Part-Time Unit, as well as members of the Federation of Social Workers, have been working without contracts for more than a year.

“It’s time for the county to get off the dime and negotiate our contract so that we can support our families and continue our good services to the community,” Tripi said. “It’s time for the county to bring honesty and credibility back to the bargaining process and it is time for the county to give recognition to those who deserve it, the dedicated, hardworking employees who only ask to be treated with dignity at work.”

— Lynn Miller

State Department of Taxation and Finance Local activist Douglas Murphy, left, with his son, Douglas Murphy Jr. with courtside tickets to a Los Angeles Lakers basketball game and a trip to the Bahamas.

BRONX — What was supposed to be a normal transfer between trains turned into a life-saving experience for the son of a CSEA activist.

Douglas Murphy Jr., son of state Department of Taxation and Finance Local activist Douglas Murphy, was going home by train after work. He was on a Bronx train platform when he noticed two teenagers playing roughly.

“They were playing around so much that they bumped a lady onto the train tracks,” said Murphy Jr.

Murphy Jr. jumped into the tracks. “The lady was unconscious, so I tried to wake her up,” he said.

He lifted her up to the platform when he noticed the lights of a rapidly approaching train. Six seconds after hoisting himself off the tracks, the train raced by.

As emergency workers arrived, Murphy Jr. wrapped his jacket around the 88-year-old woman. “I stayed with her until the ambulance arrived,” he said.

Two days later, Murphy Jr. visited the woman in the hospital. “She told me, ‘I can’t ever forget you. You’re my angel,’” he said.

The woman was expected to make a full recovery. Her son told him he was part of the family now. “I told him that he would’ve done the same for me, too,” said Murphy Jr. “That could’ve been my mother.”

It wasn’t until he placed the woman on the platform that Murphy Jr. thought about his actions. “I started thinking that I could’ve died,” he said.

Word of his heroic deed spread quickly. He was featured on several local newscasts. Then came the call from Ellen DeGeneres, who flew Murphy Jr. and his fiancée to Beverly Hills, interviewed him on her show and surprised him with courtside tickets to a Los Angeles Lakers basketball game and a trip to the Bahamas.

“I always watch TV, but never thought that this was how I would get my 15 minutes of fame,” said Murphy Jr.

His father, Douglas Murphy, gushed as his son retold the story. “I am very proud of my son,” said Murphy. “We are all very appreciative of his good instincts.”

— David Galarza
ELECTION NOTICE
2010 AFSCME DELEGATES ELECTION

The AFSCME Convention is scheduled for June 28 – July 2, 2010, in Boston, MA. As a result of the Nomination meetings held on February 6, 2010, for each CSEA Region, the following candidates have been “Elected/Unopposed” as AFSCME Delegates, and as such, no balloting is required:

LONG ISLAND REGION:
(41 delegates)
Solidarity Slate:
Nick LaMorte
Carol Guardiano
John C. Shepherd
Jerry Larcichuta
Carlos Speight
Robert Rauff, Jr.
Lee Reynolds
Christine Urbanowicz
Andre Signone
Kevin Ray, Sr.
Manny Mungal
Rutha Bush
Mary D’Antonio
Bill Walsh
Monica Berkowitz
María Navarro
Robert Murphy
Debra Nappi-Gonzalez
Maryann Phelps
Ronald Gurrieri
Kenneth Nicholson
Debra Imperatore
Marla Rowe
Robert Arciello
Nancy Ianson
Stephen Cohen
Kelvin Lewis
Meg Shukta
Matt Hattorff
Pete Collins
Tom Skabry
Roger DeGroff
Richard Acevedo
Eileen Alcus
Stephen Nocella
A.J. Smith
Alex Bard
Jarvis Brown
Daniel LoMonte
Steve Abramson
Michael Taylor

Leaders By Example Slate:
Colleen Wheaton
Betty Thomas
Jeff Colburn
Casey Walpole
Shane Barber
Chantalise DeMarco
Lori Nilsson
Linda Stiefel
Sheila Sears
Beverly Centers
Tammy Witteman
David Lee
Betty Jo Johnson
Jeannette Engle
Joe Miceli
Deb Denney
Theresa Palmer
Karen Bright
Ron Witt
Cathy Barretta
George Lawson
Mary Linnertz
Fred Gerloff
Ellen Lennon
Don Linsky
Patricia Kolota
Pete Niznik
Brenda Harwood
Ken Greenleaf
Barbara Carnrike
King Davis
Terry Stiefel
Gordon Miller
Bob Timpano
Phil Graham
Patricia Casler
Joan Hand
Carmen Church
Elizabeth Daugherty
David Burdick
Joseph Palmisano

Abraham Benjamin
Renee Jackson
Janet Ventrono-Torres
Fitzroy Wilson
Adriane Hudson
Evans Quamina
Alva Watson
Samuel Koroma

CENTRAL REGION:
(41 delegates)
Leaders By Example Slate:
Colleen Wheaton
Betty Thomas
Jeff Colburn
Casey Walpole
Shane Barber
Chantalise DeMarco
Lori Nilsson
Linda Stiefel
Sheila Sears
Beverly Centers
Tammy Witteman
David Lee
Betty Jo Johnson
Jeannette Engle
Joe Miceli
Deb Denney
Theresa Palmer
Karen Bright
Ron Witt
Cathy Barretta
George Lawson
Mary Linnertz
Fred Gerloff
Ellen Lennon
Don Linsky
Patricia Kolota
Pete Niznik
Brenda Harwood
Ken Greenleaf
Barbara Carnrike
King Davis
Terry Stiefel
Gordon Miller
Bob Timpano
Phil Graham
Patricia Casler
Joan Hand
Carmen Church
Elizabeth Daugherty
David Burdick
Joseph Palmisano

WESTERN REGION:
(40 delegates)
Ruby C. Mims,
Independent Candidate

The Leadership Slate:
Florence “Flo” Tripi
Hank Hoisington
Joan Bender
Bob Pyjas
Yvonne Sirkin
Mark Dotterweich
Sheri Ambuske
J. Seamus Barnes
Delia Bertrand
Paul Blujus
Ron Castle, Jr.
Rose Conti
Dominic I. Cosimano
Wayne Dorler
Robert “Robbie” Ellis
Terri Ferrara
Timothy Finnigan

Ronald A. Gillespie
Sharon Ivey
Bruce Jamison
Larry Kuebler
Sean Ledwith
Charles Parsons
Robert Pazik
Paul Peters
Tom Rogalski
Jerald H. Schlagenhaufen
Debi Sherk
John V. Stading
Denise Szymura
Rose Teachman
Mel Thomas
Christina Tomasine
Mary Jo Tubbs
Bess Watts
Don Williams, Jr.
Cristal “Cris” Zaffuto
Kathy Button

There will be elections for AFSCME Delegates in the Southern and Capital Regions pursuant to the Board of Directors approved election schedule, which is as follows:

AFSCME DELEGATES ELECTION YEAR 2010

The approved schedule for the election is as follows:

April 6 (Tues.)
April 13 (Tues.)
April 29 (Thurs.)

Ballots mailed
Replacement ballots available *
Ballots due 9:00 a.m.;
Tally commences 9:30 a.m.
End of Protest Period

Ten (10) days following SEC Certification of Results
June/July
June 28 - July 2

Results published in The Work Force.
AFSCME Convention (Boston, MA)

* Call the SEC at 800-342-4146, x1447, to request a replacement ballot
Throughout 2010, The Work Force will be marking CSEA’s 100th anniversary taking a look back at CSEA’s history by reprinting pages of past and present publications.

Featured here is a reprint of a page from the April 17, 1989, edition of The Public Sector, then CSEA’s official newspaper. This page was the first of a four-page insert that urged union members to participate in the first-ever Workers’ Memorial Day. More about the history of Workers’ Memorial Day, this year’s observations, and most recent fallen brothers and sisters are detailed on page 5.

Workers Memorial Day
April 28, 1989

Make April 28 a day of honor

More than 100,000 workers die each year from job-related injuries and diseases, almost twice the number of Americans killed during the Vietnam War.

Thousands of these were public employees and many were CSEA members, working in health care, highway maintenance, sewers, corrections and other fields—workers who do some of the most dangerous and unpleasant jobs that our society demands.

Now these individuals who have given so much will receive the honor and recognition they deserve, and you can help.

April 28 has been chosen by CSEA and other unions of the AFL-CIO as Workers Memorial Day—a day to remember those who have suffered and died in the workplace.

The date is the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

From Long Island to Buffalo, CSEA locals are encouraged to observe the day by organizing or participating in events or actions such as wearing black armbands, conducting memorial services, observing moments of silence, planting trees or flowers in honor of departed brothers and sisters, dedicating memorials or other activities.

CSEA is a leader on safety and health issues and Workers Memorial Day is a chance to renew our commitment to protecting people.

CSEA has a supply of black armbands, lapel stickers and other materials available. If your local is planning an activity and needs these materials, please contact Janet Faley in the CSEA Health and Safety Department at (516) 434-0191 Ext. 466.

Your safety is CSEA’s priority

April 17, 1989

By Stephen Madarasz
CSEA Communications Associate

When a ditch collapse at SUNY Morrisville nearly claimed the life of a CSEA member last month, CSEA’s safety and health specialist was quickly on the scene. The school was cited for 10 different violations of law.

When potentially infectious waste washed up on Long Island beaches last summer, CSEA made sure workers had the necessary protective equipment before they went out to pick it up.

When the school bus garage in Mamaroneck was failing apart around the workers, CSEA kept after the state Labor Department about the unsafe conditions until management finally fixed the place up.

When the AIDS crisis was causing public hysteria in the early 1980s, CSEA got its members the most accurate information available. That effort led to joint statewide AIDS training for public employees.

“Every time the telephone rings I never know what to expect,” said CSEA Director of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Jim Corcoran. “It could be anything from a routine inquiry about job stress to someone’s life on the line. We always have to be ready to respond.”

Over the years CSEA’s safety and health department has handled all kinds of situations from rabid dogs’ heads in the interagency mail to toxic chemicals forcing building evacuations to infectious disease outbreaks.

It’s a daily struggle, but persistence does pay off. CSEA has made great strides on safety and health issues in a very short period of time.

(Continued on Page 10)
Animal shelter offers safe haven

“...We think of (the shelter) as a safe haven that offers security, nutrition and medical attention to abused or abandoned dogs and cats.”

ITHACA — Younger union members working at the Hempstead Animal Shelter in Wantagh are dedicated to giving innovative, compassionate care to homeless animals.

The shelter is capable of housing 90 dogs and 150 cats, and averages about 1,600 dog and cat adoptions each year.

“This is not a dog pound,” said Charles Milone, deputy commissioner of the Hempstead Department of General Services, who directs operations at the shelter. “We think of (the shelter) as a safe haven that offers security, nutrition and medical attention to abused or abandoned dogs and cats.”

Two adoption programs are offered every year exclusively to town residents. Rabies vaccinations, spaying or neutering and microchipping are provided at no cost during both of these eight-week periods. Regular adoption fees are waived as well. The shelter also offers other adoption programs throughout the year.

“These programs are responsible for tripling the normal adoption rate,” said Hempstead Local President Charlie Sellitto. “The programs offer great savings for town residents and provide new homes for a lot of great animals.”

Another shelter program is the Humane Education and Pet Therapy Program, in which several dogs and cats visit adults in nursing homes, assisted living facilities and other programs, as well as children in schools and child care centers.

“The children love to interact with our animals,” said Joanne Mirendo, a CSEA member who works on the program. “We show them how to safely approach a dog and give them a sense of what is required of a pet owner. We let them pet the dogs and try to make them understand that these animals are living creatures that need to eat, drink and go to the bathroom.”

At an assisted living center, the focus was on pet therapy.

“The mood in the room immediately brightened when the dogs interacted with people at the assisted living facility,” said Michelle Guiliano, a CSEA member who also works with the program. “Seniors in such a setting look forward to our visits and can’t wait for the dogs to sit by their side or on their lap.”

— Richard Impagliazzo

Humane Education Instructor Gelsy Freese with Pomeranians Brandi, left, and Chanel, two of the dogs used in the Pet Therapy Program.

Youth and unions: tapping a new source of activism

ITHACA — Younger union members across the United States need to take larger roles in their unions, and the unions need to recognize the power that a new generation of union members hold and tap into the possibilities they can bring to the union movement, according to a recent Cornell University study.

“Youth and Unions,” written by Marlena Fontes at Cornell’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations, studies the issues facing younger union members and how different unions are seeking to “organize and involve young workers and members.”

CSEA and AFSCME have the Next Wave program to get younger members involved in the union.

The Cornell report outlines the cultural and behavioral differences between Generation X and Generation Y, and some of the challenges unions can face in trying to organize and mobilize generations that were raised in the Internet and in a working world where few people stay at the same job for more than five years.

More importantly, the report recognizes the challenges all workers are facing right now and the sometimes-delicate balance unions need to strike between longer-term rank-and-file members and young members. “Many unions are struggling to balance the challenges of an outsourced economy, an economic crisis, and lack of significant pro-union legislation in decades,” the report states. “Workers and unions are struggling to protect the rights and wages that they already have.”

Read the full report at: http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/workingpapers/104

April 23 is the deadline for graduating high school seniors who are the children of CSEA-represented employees to apply for scholarships offered through CSEA.

A single application covers the Irving Flaumenbaum Memorial Scholarship, the Pearl Carroll & Associates Scholarship and the MetLife Insurance Company Scholarship.

Applications will be available in early February from local and unit presidents, CSEA Headquarters, region or satellite offices, or may be downloaded from the Member Benefits section at CSEA’s website at www.csealocal1000.org.
Dental and vision plan comparisons: a free EBF service

Did you know the CSEA Employee Benefit Fund (EBF) offers a service that compares dental and vision benefits for CSEA local government and school district units?

This service may be used by unit officers and negotiating teams at any time during negotiations or mid-contract to make informed decisions about their programs and benefits.

This free service can help your unit evaluate various benefit programs before settling on a benefits provider. EBF senior benefits specialists can compare and highlight all of your dental and vision proposals, including EBF benefits and dental and vision benefits offered by other companies.

Our non-biased comparisons show the specific strengths and weaknesses of each plan reviewed in a simplified, easy to understand format. We take a look at the services each plan offers, review eligibility criteria, calculate premiums and assess employee contribution including deductibles and other types of cost sharing.

Because of our unique relationship with CSEA and our non-profit trust fund status, EBF may be able to offer comparable benefits at a lower price. Our competitive dental and vision programs offer many options to suit the varying needs of local government and school district units across the state.

While we may include information about our benefits in the comparison, there is no obligation to choose one of our plans. Units do not have to contract with EBF or have an existing EBF benefit to use this service. Our goal is to provide you with as much information as possible so your members can enjoy the best benefits possible.

Contact your region’s EBF senior benefits specialist

Please contact the senior benefits specialist assigned to your area to find out more about what EBF can do for you.

Long Island Region:
Linda Sclafani:
(631) 462-5224
lsclafani@cseaebf.org

Southern Region:
Carisa Haberl:
1-800-323-2732, ext. 813
chaberl@cseaebf.org

Capital Region:
Brian Pezze:
1-800-323-2732, ext. 860
bpezze@cseaebf.org

Central Region:
Chuck Guild:
1-800-323-2732, ext. 818
cguild@cseaebf.org

Western Region:
Mike Wagner:
1-800-323-2732, ext. 808
mwagner@cseaebf.org

Westchester County Local offering scholarships

The Westchester County Local will award 12 $1,000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors who are the children of active Westchester County Local members or agency fee payers.

The local will also award the Grace Ann Aloisi Scholarship, a $1,000, four-year renewable scholarship, to a graduating high school senior pursuing a degree in either labor relations, a labor-related field of study or public service. The scholarship is open to local members or agency fee payers. Scholarships will be renewed for a maximum of four years provided the student remains enrolled in the specific degree program (12 credits minimum) and maintains a 3.0 or higher grade point average.

For applications, call the local office at (914) 428-6452. The application deadline is April 15. Successful candidates will be notified by May 21.

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

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the CSEA Constitution & By-Laws for consideration by CSEA delegates to the union’s 2010 Annual Delegates Meeting must be submitted by May 15, 2010.

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

Proposed resolutions and proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws must be submitted no later than May 15 to Statewide Secretary Denise Berkley, CSEA Headquarters, 143 Washington Ave., Albany, N.Y. 12210-2303.

The 2010 CSEA Annual Delegates Meeting will be held Oct. 18-22 in Albany.
The Empire Plan will be implementing a Specialty Pharmacy Program on April 1, 2010. The program will affect Empire Plan active and retired local government employees (county, city, town, school district, etc.), as well as CSEA retired state enrollees. **It is important to note that this program will not affect the prescription coverage of CSEA active state enrollees.**

Specialty medications are typically defined as high-cost prescription drugs that treat complex conditions and require special handling and administration.

Examples of specialty medications include those that treat cancer, rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis.

Under the new Specialty Pharmacy Program, most specialty drugs will ONLY be covered when dispensed by The Empire Plan’s designated specialty pharmacy, Accredo, a subsidiary of Medco (not from a retail pharmacy).

A list of the medications included under the Specialty Pharmacy Program is posted online at [www.cs.state.ny.us](http://www.cs.state.ny.us). On the Department of Civil Service website’s home page, select “Benefit Programs” from the left side menu. Select “NYSHIP Online” and, if prompted, choose your group, “The Empire Plan,” then “Health Benefits.”

Enrollees affected by this new program should have received a letter from Medco describing how your prescription will be covered under The Empire Plan moving forward.

If an enrollee is currently using a retail pharmacy to receive their specialty medications, Accredo will work with the enrollee’s physician in an effort to ensure that the enrollee’s prescription is transferred to Accredo.

For more information about this program, call The Empire Plan toll free at 1-877-7-NYSHIP (1-877-769-7447). When prompted, choose option 4 — The Empire Plan Prescription Drug Program.

**Editor’s Note:** As noted above, this program will **NOT** affect the prescription coverage of CSEA active state enrollees. The Specialty Pharmacy Program will affect active and retired local government and retired state enrollees.
Strong community ties build strong union

Editor’s note: During CSEA’s centennial year, the Work Force’s Leading Edge will profile union members who are helping to make the union stronger through their actions in the union, in their communities, or in other ways that reflect the spirit of solidarity in CSEA.

This month features a profile of Southern Region activist Reuben Simmons, who is working to raise CSEA’s profile in his community.

BEACON – Whether he’s working out in the gym, talking with friends, or coaching young Pop Warner football players, City of Beacon Unit President Reuben Simmons is getting the word out about the city’s CSEA work force.

It’s just one component of a more detailed plan Simmons has to build a stronger union.

After graduating from Catholic University in Washington, D.C., Simmons accepted a full-time laborer position with Beacon’s Department of Public Works in 2008, having worked part time with the department during previous summers. With a knack for leadership acquired through years as a running back in high school and college football, Simmons soon had co-workers urging him to run for CSEA office.

“You had to have a year in good standing [as a CSEA member] to run for office and I just made it,” said Simmons. “I was still pretty new on the job, but I felt like I could do it.”

**Getting everyone on board**

After taking the reins, Simmons was determined to make his bargaining unit a more influential force in Beacon. With support from his local officers and CSEA staff, Simmons set that plan into motion, calling for more frequent membership meetings, arranging visits from CSEA’s member benefits vendors and establishing committees focusing on safety and health, political action, and other issues. The key to success, he said, is getting all members on board.

“The only way you win is if you play as a team,” said Simmons, who also serves as president of Beacon’s Pop Warner football league, a program he played in as a child. “As a running back, I couldn’t do anything if I didn’t have my line there to block. At our meetings, I’ve told everyone we’re not just city workers. We’re union workers and we have to use our power.”

Now Simmons and his co-workers are kicking CSEA’s public profile up a notch in the community. He and his unit members have recognized the importance of frequent attendance at City Council meetings and regular communication with city elected officials. They’ve signed on as a CSEA unit to support local charity events. Simmons even hopes his group can have a presence this year at the city’s popular Spirit of Beacon Day.

**Part of the community**

“With Beacon being a small city, a lot of our members live, own homes and pay taxes here, so we need the public to see that we are a part of this community,” said Simmons. “We need CSEA to have a public face in Beacon because the residents don’t always see you as they go about their business. I want them to see that I’m not only the one coaching your son in Pop Warner, I’m also working for the city and plowing the roads so you can get to work.”

With the unit headed into contract negotiations,
April CSEA calendar of events

Statewide:
• April 28: Workers Memorial Day. Visit your region web page for information on events in your area.
• April 30-May 2: CSEA Statewide Conference on Occupational Safety and Health, Lake Placid. Visit the conference page on CSEA’s website at www.caselocal1000.org.

Long Island Region:
• April 10: CSEA WORK Institute: NYS Beginning Clerical Worker Test Prep Workshop, 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., CSEA Long Island Region office, Commack. Visit www.caselocal1000.org or call 1-866-478-5548 to register.
• April 26-27: Skills for Success: Writing Clinic, Belmont Lake State Park*
• April 27-28: Local Government Discipline: Representing Members in Intergovernmental Workshop, Sign-in: 5:30 - 6 p.m.; Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Glen Cove Fire Department, Glen Cove

Metropolitan Region:
• April 6-7: CSEA WORK Institute: NYS Beginning Clerical Worker Test Prep Workshop, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m., Room 88, Adam Clayton Powell Jr. State Office Building, Manhattan. Visit www.caselocal1000.org or call 1-866-478-5548 to register.
• April 19 & 26, May 3 & 10: Skills for Success: Introduction to Spanish: Level 1, CSEA Metropolitan Region office*
• April 26-27: Skills for Success: Plumbing Advanced, Roberto Clemente State Park*
• April 28-29: Skills for Success: Writing Clinic, CSEA Metropolitan Region office*

Southern Region:
• April 13-14: Local Government Discipline: Representing Members in Intergovernmental Workshop, Sign-in: 5:30 - 6 p.m.; Workshop: 6 - 9 p.m., Westchester County Local Office, White Plains

Capital Region:
• April 14: Skills for Success: Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Basics, Office of General Services*
• April 17: Local Government/Private Sector Grievance Representation Workshop, Sign-in: 8:30 - 9 a.m.; Workshop: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Best Western Airport Inn, Albany
• April 21-22: CSEA WORK Institute: NYS Beginning Clerical Worker Test Prep Workshop, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m., Room 125, Empire State Plaza concourse, Albany. Visit www.caselocal1000.org or call 1-866-478-5548 to register.
• April 23, 30; May 7 & 14: Skills for Success: Introduction to Spanish: Level 2, Department of Correctional Services Training Academy*

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

April 2010

NEW CONTRACT — Members of the Buffalo Sewer Authority unit approved a three-year agreement that contains wage increases annually, no givebacks and no change in cost of health insurance ...

LIQUIDATION PACT — The state Liquidation Bureau, based in the Metropolitan Region, overwhelmingly ratified a three-year contract. The agreement, effective April 1, 2010, includes wage increases in each year of the contract, a new merit pay benefit based on performance evaluations and an additional $1,300 for tuition assistance, among other benefits ....

CONTRACT IMPOSED — The Genesee County Legislature voted last week to impose a contract on the CSEA General Employees Unit for the year 2009. The imposition follows failed mediation and a fact-finding report that was unacceptable to CSEA. The major sticking point is the creation of a second wage tier for new hires ... GETTING EDUCATED — More than 700 CSEA members working for Suffolk County school districts and municipalities recently attended the first-ever 2010 Joint Membership Conference, which was jointly sponsored by the Suffolk Educational Local and Suffolk Municipal Employees Local. The one-day conference featured educational workshops that addressed union leadership skills and other issues the workers face on the job.
IT’S TIME TO GET REAL ABOUT NEW YORK’S JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

There’s no sugarcoating the seriousness of the situation in New York’s juvenile justice facilities.

For years, the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) ignored the warnings and disregarded the need for reform.

Now there’s an administration that thinks it can just wave a magic wand and make everything better. What’s more, they’ve tried to create a fairy tale about youth in state care, the staff who work with them every day and the ability of current community programs to adequately meet needs and protect everyone involved including the public.

In reality, there are rarely any fairy tale endings.

People have already been injured and killed because of OCFS irresponsibility.

OCFS needs to slow their reckless drive to empty juvenile justice facilities and get real about ill-prepared community programs.

What’s more, employees at Annsville, Tryon Boys and Lansing non-secure deserve better than what the OCFS administration is doing. OCFS needs to work with CSEA and others to create a better system of juvenile justice for all the people of New York. It takes serious, clear thinking and a lot of hard work, not some juvenile hocus-pocus.