As CSEA begins its second century, the challenges before our union are nearly overwhelming. Our history offers perspective to guide us. Crisis has always brought out the best in CSEA members and it has always strengthened our bonds as a union.

But some of the best lessons for us are not from decades past, but from the past year.

**A Year of Solidarity**

Our centennial year, 2010, was one of the proudest times in our history despite the difficulties. CSEA members stood together and stood up for what was right whether it was politically popular or not.

We stood strong against demands for concessions and givebacks. We stood together against withering attacks by an out-of-control governor and other misguided politicians. We remained true to the principles of fairness and respect for working people.

CSEA's solidarity and poise over the past year are an enormous strength and inspiration as we look forward. Make no mistake, there are difficult times and some impossible choices in front of us.

**A Year of Change**

Change is inevitable and we will embrace the opportunity to make New York a better place. We will be willing partners in efforts to make our government work better at every level. We will welcome new ideas that promote a better workplace and a more appreciated and productive work force.

We will accept our role as partners with our elected officials to find creative solutions to our society's most difficult problems.

But CSEA will not accept reform that undermines and denigrates public employees and other working people. We will not have terms and conditions dictated to us and we will not be pushed aside.

All of this requires you to be an informed and active member of this union. CSEA will communicate with you and we will need your feedback and your action. Read this newspaper. Check our website at www.csealocal1000.org regularly to stay up to date and look for new media options that we will offer. Together, we are stronger than any of us as individuals. We will need all of that strength, and then some, in the year ahead.

**Special Message from CSEA President Danny Donohue**

The state of our union in 2011 is strong!
What they’re not telling you ...

Situation at Tryon misrepresented in news

If you listen to some politicians and the media, you might believe that state Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) employees at the Tryon School in Johnstown are being paid to do nothing at taxpayer expense. It’s simply not true.

CSEA was instrumental in passing a law several years ago requiring communities to receive a year’s notice before significant downsizing or closure.

The purpose was to prevent serious decisions like closures from being subject to knee-jerk politics and to require adequate planning and preparation.

Under the misguided policies of OCFS Commissioner Gladys Carrion, which included running sex parties to “incentivize” the underage convicted felons in OCFS care, Tryon’s population has been diverted to other facilities and out of the system with some serious consequences. As the facility has downsized, much of the staff who remain on the Tryon budget lines have been assigned to the Tryon Girls facility, which continues to operate on the same grounds. The facility also continues to operate the agency’s statewide dental and transportation centers.

A skeleton crew is also responsible for maintaining the grounds and physical plant, which is a necessity under any circumstance.

A much more questionable use of tax dollars than Tryon remaining technically open is Carrion’s policies that seek to place dangerous youths in community settings without adequate staff, resources or safeguards.

CSEA membership dues/agency shop fees remain the same for 2011.

As a result of the AFSCME minimum dues structure remaining the same as 2010 there will be no increase to the CSEA membership dues/agency shop fee schedule for 2011.

NLRB finds employer violated the act, orders back pay for terminated union supporters

On Dec. 9, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) determined that Correctional Medical Services, Inc. (CMS) violated the National Labor Relations Act (Act) when it interrogated, threatened and then terminated five employees who were CSEA supporters during an organizing drive at the Albany County Jail.

CSEA was able to get CMS, a private sector employer who ran the jail’s medical clinic, to bring the employees back to work after five weeks pending the litigation.

During its organizing drive, CSEA engaged in picketing at the jail because CMS refused to recognize the union. However, because CMS was considered to be a medical facility, the union was required to give 10 days’ notice of its intent to picket. Here, the union failed to give the requisite notice. After the five at-issue employees participated in the union’s picket, CMS ultimately terminated them.

CSEA filed an unfair labor practice charge with the NLRB. Initially, the Board held that since the union failed to give the notice, the picketing was illegal and the employees who participated in the picketing engaged in unprotected activity and thus could be terminated.

That decision was appealed to court. The court found, in short, that simply because the union failed to give proper notice did not mean that the employees who participated in the picket engaged in unprotected activity. The court remanded the case back to the NLRB.

The NLRB has now determined that CMS violated the Act because it terminated the employees for engaging in protected activity. The Act only provides remedies against the union for failing to give notice of a picket. The Act does not permit an employer to take adverse action against employees who engage in a peaceful picket. CMS was ordered to pay back pay (for the five weeks) plus interest and expunge the employees’ files of any reference to the illegal terminations, among other remedies.

This is an important development in the law because previously private sector health care employers would routinely terminate employees who participated in peaceful pickets in support of a union where the union failed to give the requisite notice.
Open season on public employees

So public employees are now the new public enemy?

Welcome to the twisted world of 2011.

Since when did it become a crime to dedicate your life to public service, doing jobs that keep New York’s economy going or dealing with people and problems that most people would prefer to pretend don’t exist?

Why is it a bad thing that you and other public employees work hard to earn and then spend paychecks in local communities, supporting local businesses and making those communities better places to live along with helping charitable organizations?

Why should you be ashamed of who you are and what you do? Why should you have to apologize for trying to make a decent living, take care of your family, pay your bills and have some pension security?

Why is it suddenly wrong to follow the law and bargain in good faith for contracts that protect employers and employees? And why is it somehow unacceptable that CSEA believes both labor and management have to live up to the agreements they make? For that matter, why is it that misguided critics seem to think only labor contracts can be broken on demand?

The fact is, there are no good answers to these questions.

There’s too much wrong with the way things work in this state right now for self-serving politicians to run down the people who actually do the work. We’re prepared to be part of needed change. We’re not willing to be insulted and made scapegoats.

Hold your heads high — CSEA is not apologizing for anything.
New law strengthens child care provider rights

Action plan set for the future

Legislation passed recently by the state Legislature and signed by Gov. David Paterson sets existing collective bargaining rights for child care providers across the state into law.

This means child care providers who are members of VOICE/CSEA will be able to collectively bargain with the state Office of Children and Family Services, the agency that ultimately oversees their work and controls the conditions of their employment.

Previously, VOICE/CSEA members could collectively bargain, but their rights were under an executive order signed by Gov. Eliot Spitzer, which could have been reversed by a future governor.

More than 50 providers from across the state recently met in Albany to celebrate the numerous accomplishments of VOICE/CSEA since 2002 and talk about enormous challenges that families and providers face in these economic hard times.

Their recently ratified first agreement addressed several concerns, including quality program grants, expanded opportunities for professional development and affordable health insurance, but there is still much work to do.

Continuing to build membership and power is the key to solving many issues for parents and providers. Providers adopted an action plan for the next few months which includes home visits, local membership meetings and work to establish 25 chapters throughout the state (a structure approved by CSEA Board of Directors in January 2010) during the next few months.

In May, hundreds of providers, child care colleagues, dignitaries and other invited guests will convene to attend the first statewide meeting of VOICE/CSEA Local 100A to adopt an action plan for 2011 that continues this work and also lets legislators and public officials from Albany to Washington D.C. see and hear their “VOICE.”

— Jill Asencio

HISTORICAL NOTE:
In 1660, Charles II became King of England, many years after his father, King Charles I was ousted from the throne by a group of dissidents. The period that followed was known as the Restoration.
MANHATTAN — Anabel Rosa remembers the day a client stepped in her office full of despair, only to walk out a few minutes later with a smile and a new outlook.
The woman didn’t speak English, had recently lost her sons and now had lost her vision. As the only Spanish-speaking keyboard specialist in the state working for the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH), Rosa was not only able to help the client with information in her native language, but she also felt like she offered her some hope.
After 25 years of providing walk-in and call-in services to legally blind, Spanish-speaking consumers who live in the Bronx and Manhattan, Rosa now needs some of that hope herself.
She was one of hundreds of state workers targeted for layoffs by lame-duck Gov. David Paterson.
And while others in her office have been reassigned, as the only Spanish-speaking keyboard specialist in the state, she cannot bump anyone with less seniority.
“At this point, I feel that terminating my position is discriminatory against the Hispanic consumers who call and visit our office for overall information about CBVH services,” Rosa recently wrote to state Office of Children and Family Services officials, who oversee the agency.
An OCFS training in June had ironically discussed the lack of cultural diversity within the agency and the communities it serves.
“They said the agency was going to start to do more to address this salient fact,” said Rosa. “If this is the case, how can eliminating my position help what OCFS intends to do?”
The state Office of Children and Family Services website states “OCFS commits to identifying, addressing and reducing disproportionality and to eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in our systems of care and custody.”
As The Work Force went to press, Rosa had not received a response to her letter.
“I would like to keep my job,” she said. “I would like for the CBVH administration and state personnel to consider my overall diligence, dedication, and positive work ethics on the job for the past 25 years.”
— David Galarza

Visit CSEA’s website at www.csealocal1000.org for the latest information on your union’s effort to fight back against cuts!

FULTON — CSEA City of Fulton Unit President Brace Tallents is upset over the recent layoffs in his municipality because he knows that it’s not just about numbers — it’s about people.
Despite the union efforts to try to get the city to find alternatives to layoffs, city administrators decided to lay off four full-time workers, all laborers in the city Public Works and Sanitation departments.
Out of a CSEA-represented work force of 75 people, it may seem like a small number, but it’s one that Tallents said will have a big impact.
“These are the guys that do all the unseen work,” he said. “They walk behind the garbage trucks, do sidewalk repairs, shoveling and plowing and all the tough work, out there in the snow and rain. You’re not going to notice a drastic impact at first, but as time goes on, things are going to slow up. Surprisingly enough, four people make a difference, like on a day like today when we’ve got a lot of snow, and we’re shorthanded, it slows everyone up.”
Tallents said the city won’t save that much by firing the workers and it could have been avoided.
“The amount ultimately saved with the layoff doesn’t amount to much on a budgetary scale,” he said. “We could have found other ways to fund this budget gap without people being put out of work.”
“I feel awful,” Tallents said. “We lost people, people with families, people who will probably have a tough time paying their mortgages and taxes and keeping food on the table. There are far reaching effects of this. It affects the whole community in more ways than the small amount saved.”
— Mark M. Kotzin

“Layoff increases language barriers”

Anabel Rosa is one of hundreds of state workers facing the loss of their jobs.

Workers, city services hurt by layoffs
Budget cuts “practically annihilate” Newburgh’s Department of Public Works

NEWBURGH — When it snows this winter, City of Newburgh residents might as well stay home.

In an extreme example of local government cuts, massive budget cuts in Newburgh have left the city’s Department of Public Works practically annihilated. The department has no laborers, thanks to two consecutive years of these cuts, and city residents are now feeling the effects of these cuts as winter weather begins.

The remaining public works employees must now clear the city’s 56 miles of roadway.

Adding insult to injury, city council members approved a 71 percent tax hike for 2011.

“With a city like Newburgh, where there is serious poverty and serious crime, you cannot eliminate the workers who perform quality of life work such as street maintenance,” said Southern Region President Billy Riccaldo.

“Newburgh’s history of financial blunders, including most recently a $9 million overrun on the construction of a courthouse, means the budget ends up being unfairly balanced on the backs of the workers.”

CSEA members lobbied the community during the recent budget process, leafleting city neighborhoods and taking paid advertising to highlight the impact the loss of services would have on the already struggling city.

The final budget eliminated a half dozen laborer jobs in Public Works and the job of a clerk who processed incoming traffic fine payments, a move CSEA thinks is shortsighted for a municipality desperate to maximize incoming revenues.

“Residents in Newburgh are going to suffer because they are not going to receive the services they’re paying for,” Riccaldo said. “The rank and file workers are the ones who have kept this city running through many years of uncertainty. They shouldn’t be punished for a problem they didn’t create.”

— Jessica Ladlee

Welders save town money

HEMPSTEAD — Among the Town of Hempstead Local members are four welders whose high level of skills have provided town administrators with a means to save significant amounts of money by restoring town vehicles and equipment to optimum condition.

CSEA members Harold Pinder, Kenneth Hill, Charlie Rosselli and James Capuano make the necessary repairs to the heavily used town fleet of sanitation and tow trucks, snowplows, roll-on trash bins, recycling vehicles and various other types of steel or metal equipment.

The capacity of these workers to quickly and proficiently handle fabricating, fitting and welding tasks both large and small precludes the need for the town to rely on private companies to complete these tasks at what would certainly be a far greater cost.

Pinder estimates that five or six sanitation trucks with a total damage value of about $15,000 are repaired in-house every month.

If a vehicle is too old to make repairs feasible, usable parts are used to fix other vehicles in the fleet.

“The savings resulting from the work of these CSEA members is incalculable as is their worth to the town,” said Hempstead Local President Charlie Sellitto.

— Rich Impagliazzo

Town of Hempstead welders Harold Pinder, left, and Kenneth Hill help the town save money through welding to restore aging equipment.
Bah Humbug! Sale of public services, job losses grim mark of holiday season

Public services are being threatened in Fulton and Montgomery counties, where county officials have planned layoffs and the sale of public services for 2011.

**Public services for sale**

In late November, the Fulton County Board of Supervisors approved the sale of the county infirmary and county nursing services to private companies. Fulton County Local President Ron Briggs has been coordinating a public awareness campaign about the issue since last year, reaching out to the public via newspaper, radio and television. Rallies have been held and CSEA members crowded the chambers at a late November budget hearing, where nursing home staff and union leaders, including Briggs and CSEA Capital Region President Kathy Garrison, warned supervisors of the negative consequences of the sale.

**Job cuts in Montgomery**

In Montgomery County, Local President Ed Russo urged supervisors to reconsider job cuts proposed for the 2011 budget, which county supervisors approved Dec. 14.

“Some of you supervisors are making a joke of people’s lives,” Russo said. “If you’re going to offer layoffs, that you’re going to tell people a couple weeks before Christmas that they don’t have a job, I want you supervisors to go around and tell people. If you think you’ve got the guts to do that, then you should stand up and do that.”

CSEA Labor Relations Specialist Michael Campon reminded supervisors of the cost-saving concessions union members have already made. “We’ve agreed to cheaper health insurance, dental insurance and vision insurance with more out-of-pocket expenses for workers,” he said. “We agreed to a drug plan that’s projected to save the county about $120,000 a year.”

CSEA members in Montgomery County demonstrated Dec. 14 before the final budget hearing.

— Therese Assalian

**Fulton County Local President Ron Briggs speaks out about the county’s proposed sale of public health services, as CSEA members hold signs in support.**

CSEA fights layoffs in Riverhead, Brookhaven

CSEA is fighting two Long Island towns’ proposals to cut jobs in their municipalities.

In Riverhead, town Supervisor Scott Russell is expected to cut six full-time and seven part-time union jobs, while Brookhaven town board members plan to cut six jobs in the town’s Highway Department.

While the job cuts are slated to take effect Jan. 1, CSEA continues to negotiate for the reinstatement of affected members in both municipalities.

— Rich Impagliazzo

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SUNY Canton labor-management cooperation working for workers

Since the ratification of their first CSEA contract, newly organized food service and maintenance workers at the SUNY Canton College Association (CA) say management has come a long way and is their partner like never before.

Many issues that would have never received consideration before are now being addressed quickly. CSEA negotiations and the resulting labor-management committee moved Canton CA workers from a culture of dysfunction to productive, open lines of communication.

“There was a week following our discussions when we had 90-degree-plus weather and there are panels in our dish room that divide the air conditioned dining room from the kitchen,” said Toni Besio, newly elected president of the new SUNY Canton College Association Local.

Using their new communication channels, they talked with management about the issue. “The panels were taken down before I even could make it back to my building. It cooled the kitchen down 20 degrees,” Besio said. “Our executive director went one step further and also took the uniform requirement away for the following two weeks. He said, ‘wear what’s going to be comfortable for you.’ This was the biggest deal, I cannot even tell you … and it was all done with a snap of a finger; it was so simple,” said Besio.

Barriers blocking communication between the workers and the executive director’s office, which had the power to fix problems for the workers, were a serious issue for the workers before forming a union. If they tried to bypass supervisors, often they suffered repercussions and it was seen as going above a supervisor’s head to notify the executive director’s office of issues affecting conditions or quality.

“Our union has definitely served to open the communication lines,” said Bill Fletcher, facilities technician and an organizing committee member. “So far, Mike Perry, the director of the College Association workers, has done everything in his power for us. I’d say he’s doing an excellent job.”

Workers now have adequate supplies, uninterrupted lunches and breaks, fewer scheduling hassles and most importantly, adequate staffing. “We were just bare bones on staff and upper management was telling us, ‘if you’re sick, stay home,’ but supervisors would say, ‘go throw up in a garbage can and go back to work.’ It was that way, I’m not exaggerating,” said worker Jim Rogers.

The school is undergoing an expansion and also it’s very important to the College Association Board that students are happy.

“They want happy employees,” Besio said. “Sometimes, the people who are doing the job have good ideas and they might end up saving money if they listen to us.”

Attitudes of Canton CA management have been so positive seeing the process of negotiations and what it can do for everyone that they have asked the union to include shuttle bus drivers in the bargaining unit.

Workers said it has helped tremendously to have stellar support throughout the campaign, negotiations and now. Volunteer member organizers from the CSEA SUNY Canton Local and its local president, Joe Kelly, and the SUNY Canton College president have been their champions.

“We know now, all of this can be done by working together and it can make a better workplace environment and in our case, a happier, more productive and efficient workplace,” said Besio. “I would like others to gain confidence by our story. It was a tough road to get here, but we ended up with not only a great contract but a voice. It’s such a big deal.”

— Jill Asencio

Newly elected SUNY Canton College Association Local President Toni Besio, left, and Secretary-Treasurer Michelle Johnson help prepare a meal for students.

Metropolitan Region Volunteer Organizers recognized with Nadra Floyd Award

The CSEA volunteer member organizers from the Metropolitan Region were honored with the Nadra Floyd Award at CSEA’s 100th Annual Delegates Meeting. The award recognizes members who have made an extraordinary contribution to the growth of CSEA’s membership. In the picture, Metropolitan Region Organizing/Membership Committee Chair Ramon Lucas accepts the award from CSEA President Danny Donohue, left, and is joined by Metropolitan Region President George Boncoraglio, second from right, and Statewide Treasurer Joe McMullen, right. The Metropolitan Region Organizing/Membership Committee includes CSEA activists Abraham Benjamin, Bronx Psychiatric Center Local; Sheila Conroy, Staten Island Developmental Center Local; Lester Crocket and Linda R. Williams, region officer liaison, State Insurance Fund Local; Rosemary Hampton, Leila Hoskins, Jamagne King, and Carlota Williams, Creedmoor Psychiatric Center Local; Adrianne Hudson, Brooklyn Developmental Center Local and Evans Quamina, Metropolitan DDSO Local.
CSEA state, court contract teams set for toughest negotiations ever

ALBANY — CSEA is preparing for what could be the union’s toughest state contract negotiations ever, between a state that’s financially hurting and a governor who has vowed to cut state jobs.

The state negotiating team and the Unified Court System negotiating team are prepared to work hard to get the fairest contract possible for state members in terms of salary, health benefits and job protection.

“These will be our most difficult negotiations, ever. The incoming governor (Andrew Cuomo) has already stated that he wants to cut state government, the state is facing a potential $9 billion budget deficit for 2011, and health insurance costs continue to increase,” said CSEA President Danny Donohue.

“Both sides will have their work cut out for them in getting to a contract that’s fair and respects the hard work and sacrifices our members make,” Donohue said.

In fact, the negotiating team has already suffered from the state’s difficult financial situation, losing member Keith “Scott” Pulver, who was laid off from his state job.

CSEA state contracts expire April 1. At press time, Cuomo had not offered any indication about the start of negotiations. Cuomo also had not made public most of his choices to head state agencies, including the Governor’s Office of Employee Relations.

On these pages are the state Executive Branch and Unified Court System negotiating team members.

Keep up to date at www.csealocal1000.org

CSEA will be updating bargaining unit leadership and members with postings to the CSEA website’s member-only area.

Administrative Services Unit

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<td>Shana Davis</td>
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<td>Deborah Downey</td>
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<td>Casey Walpole</td>
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Institutional Services Unit

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<td>Abraham Benjamin</td>
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<td>Kathy Button</td>
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Operational Services Unit

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<td>Frank Strack</td>
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<td>Robert Tumpano, chair</td>
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Division of Military and Naval Affairs

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<td>Brian Kissinger</td>
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Unified Court System

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<td>Nicole Ventresca-Cohen</td>
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Workers demonstrate against workplace violence, layoffs

BRONX — On a bitterly cold afternoon, nearly 100 Bronx Psychiatric Center workers held an informational picket outside the center’s grounds and called for an end to workplace violence and layoffs that are putting workers and patients at risk.

CSEA members employed by Kingsboro Psychiatric Center, Metropolitan DDSO and the State Insurance Fund joined the workers

“Fiscal and administrative mismanagement at the Bronx Psychiatric Center has created a critical and dangerous situation for patients and workers,” said CSEA Bronx Psychiatric Center Local President Abraham Benjamin. “Workplace violence is on the rise and direct care workers are being laid off yet more managers, earning double their salaries, are being hired.”

Gov. David Paterson plans to lay off 898 state workers by the end of 2010. The state Office of Mental Health targeted 55 workers for layoffs, 28 of them at Bronx Psychiatric Center.

Workers were joined by state Assemblyman Rory Lancman, chair of the Subcommittee on Workplace Safety, who recently released a report revealing an unacceptably high rate of non-compliance with the state’s Workplace Violence Prevention Law.

“Psychiatric centers are most prone to workplace violence, but they have the lowest rate of compliance.” Lancman said. “We’re not talking about sick leave or wage increase. We’re talking about people getting beaten up.”

Several workers who have been assaulted on the job participated in the demonstration.

“We already don’t have enough staff on the premises and the governor wants to lay off more workers?” said Roslyn Akinware, a mental health therapy aide at Bronx Psychiatric Center.

According to recent data compiled by CSEA’s Occupational Safety and Health Department, the state injury rate is twice the national average. If New York state dropped its injury rate to just the national rate, it would save $121 million in direct and indirect costs. By comparison, the 898 layoffs would save $65 million.

Bronx Psychiatric Center had the highest number of incidents in the Office of Mental Health (including forensic facilities) in 2009-10, and the center’s lost workdays nearly doubled from 3,449 in 2007-08 to 6,462 in 2009-10, the highest of any civil Office of Mental Health facility.

“It’s very devastating. We’ve never had the direct care workers targeted,” said Benjamin. “We are the ones on the frontline working with patients on day-to-day activities. How can they cope with their issues if there’s no one left?”

— David Galarza

Avoiding the ‘hex’ of chrome in the workplace

There is a hex in the workplace that CSEA members should avoid.

That hex is hexavalent chromium, or hex chrome, which is a form of that metal that is much more toxic than its other forms and with extended exposure can cause liver and kidney damage and lung cancer. Immediate effects of exposure include skin rashes and ulcers, and possible skin allergies and asthma.

If you work with metals, particularly stainless steel, you could be exposed the hexavalent chromium.

To know if a product contains hexavalent chromium, first check the name on the container label. If it says chromic acid or chromates, then it contains hex chrome. If you are unsure, check the ingredients section on the Material Safety Data Sheet. It can also be created in the workplace when welding or cutting any steel that contains chrome, like stainless steel. Chromium is also present in recycled steel, and in welding wires and sticks.

If there is a possibility that workers have been exposed to hex chrome in the workplace, the employer is required, under the PESH Chromium (IV) regulation, to find out if employees are overexposed. The most common way is to take air samples on employees when they are working where the exposure could occur.

If employees are overexposed, the employer must take action to reduce the exposure below the permissible exposure limit (PEL), by first controlling the workplace, like providing ventilation, and then by providing personal protective equipment like respirators.

If exposures above the PEL are present, the employer must also provide areas for employees to separate their work clothes from their street clothes and have places to wash and eat that are not contaminated with hex chrome containing dust.

If you think you might be under the chrome “hex,” you should check labels and an MSDS for the products you use. Contact your unit or local president if you have any concerns.

CSEA also has a fact sheet on hexavalent chromium that is available on our website at www.csealocal1000.org in the occupational safety and health area with more information on this material. CSEA’s Occupational Safety and Health Department staff can also provide help on this matter.
CSEA “Polar Peeps” team dominates Central New York Polar Plunge

ONEIDA LAKE — They were definitely ‘freezin’ for a reason,’ as 48 CSEA Central Region “Polar Peeps” teammates took the Polar Plunge into Oneida Lake to benefit the Special Olympics.

Team Captain Jeffrey Colburn said the air temperature was below freezing as the plungers hit the 40-degree water, but that didn’t stop the team from plunging and reaching their goal of raising more than $20,000 for the Special Olympics.

Special Olympics New York CEO Neal Johnson presented a plaque to Colburn and Central Region President Colleen Wheaton for being the event’s highest fund-raising team. Johnson also posed for photos with the Central Region Judiciary Local “Chain Gang,” who won the best costume award.

The Central Region “Polar Peeps” Team was the winner of last year’s CSEA Polar Cap award, presented by CSEA President Danny Donohue, for raising the highest total of any CSEA region throughout the state. They’ve already set the bar high on this year’s competition.

— Mark M. Kotzin

Central Region “Polar Peeps” team members take the plunge in Oneida Lake, including Team Captain Jeffrey Colburn, dressed in the yellow Peeps suit. Central Region President Colleen Wheaton is to Colburn’s immediate left.

“Polar Peeps” Team

Knowing they will gain strength by being part of CSEA with the support of 300,000 members, they can then negotiate with the college for a stronger, better contract.

— Jill Asencio

Suffolk County Community College workers organize to join CSEA

Workers employed by Suffolk County Community College (SCCC) are organizing to join CSEA. They recently filed a petition with the state Public Employment Relations Board (PERB).

The college workers (blue collar, white collar, and campus security from all three SCCC campuses) are organizing because after having been represented for the past 26 years by an independent employee association, they don’t believe that organization addresses their specific issues. Knowing they will gain strength by being part of CSEA with the support of 300,000 members, they can then negotiate with the college for a stronger, better contract. Their campaign is called SCCC Workers for Change.

PERB will oversee an election, scheduled for Jan. 11, to determine which union the workers want.

SCCC Workers for Change has received organizing support from CSEA volunteer member organizers across Long Island including Suffolk County Local President Bill Walsh, SUNY Stony Brook Local President Carlos Speight and Maria Navarro, Suffolk County Education Local.

As Madison County Local activist Karen Bright watches, SUNY Binghamton Local President David Lee gets down and chilly in the waters of Oneida Lake.
When pitching PEOPLE to CSEA members, Betty Jo Johnson knows better than to talk about politics. “Most folks don’t like politics,” said Johnson, the CSEA Central Region PEOPLE Committee chair. “They don’t want to think that their money is going to a politician.”

Instead, Johnson and her committee members speak about issues that resonate with workers like health care, pensions and layoffs. “There are no Democrats, there are no Republicans and there is no Tea Party,” said Johnson. “There are only union issues.”

It’s a strategy that has served the committee well and garnered them the coveted PEOPLE Cup at this year’s Annual Delegates Meeting. The committee recruited nearly 400 members.

Dedicated committee members

They also had three PEOPLE recruiters of the month: Mohawk Valley Psychiatric Center Local President Michael Patterson, Madison County Local activist Karen Bright and Broome Developmental Center Local President Patti Kolata.

“Once somebody comes up to the PEOPLE table, they’re already halfway there,” said Johnson. “It’s just a matter of zeroing in on what affects that person directly and doing it quickly.”

Johnson, who works at the Madison County Department of Social Services’ Child Support Unit, also credits their success to the use of current technology. She also credits committee members, who stay on top of local issues that are important to CSEA members.

“You need to have dedicated committee people who are willing to read their e-mails and the local newspapers and magazines,” Johnson said. “We read The Work Force and the CSEA website, and also have an e-mail communication system that we stay on top of.”

PEOPLE helps us fight back

Scheduling meetings and covering a region that stretches from the Canadian border to Pennsylvania is no easy feat, especially during the winter, but Johnson heaped praise on committee members who schedule conference calls or maintain regular contact to make sure the work is being done.

“Now more than ever, with the anti-union climate at the state and federal level, we need every member to be as involved as they possibly can be,” said Johnson. “They need to join the fight.”

Johnson cited the recent Supreme Court decision, commonly referred to as the Citizens United decision, which allows corporations to spend unlimited amounts of money on political campaigns, as a major reason to get every CSEA member involved with PEOPLE.

“The only weaponry we have is provided through PEOPLE,” said Johnson.

With a new state administration, Johnson fears the new governor will try to balance the budget on the backs of workers, cutting services and jobs.

“They may try to change the rules governing our pensions,” said Johnson. “That’s why we worked so hard to elect state Comptroller (Tom) DiNapoli.”

Working with CSEA PEOPLE Coordinator Cheryl Palmer, Johnson and committee members intend to work just as hard to continue building PEOPLE membership and protect union members.

“Cheryl is a tough taskmaster,” said Johnson. “She is extremely good at what she does and she sets the bar.”

— David Galarza
Empire Plan health insurance changes effective Jan. 1, 2011

CSEA would like to remind active New York state Empire Plan enrollees that the following changes will take effect Jan. 1, 2011.

Basic Medical Annual Coinsurance Maximum: Increase from $500 to $515

When a CSEA active state Empire Plan enrollee uses a non-participating Empire Plan provider, claims are paid under the Basic Medical Program.

The Empire Plan pays 80 percent of reasonable and customary charges for covered services after the annual deductible is met. The remaining 20 percent that the individual is responsible for is considered “coinsurance.” The annual coinsurance maximum effective Jan. 1, 2011 is $515** for the enrollee, $515** for the enrolled spouse/domestic partner and $515** for all dependent children.

Once the annual coinsurance maximum is met, the Empire Plan pays 100 percent of reasonable and customary charges for covered services.

** The $515 coinsurance maximum expense is reduced to $309 for calendar year 2011 for employees in (or equated to) salary grade 6 or below.

United HealthCare Reimbursement: Non-Network Hospital Coinsurance

Should an individual use a non-network hospital or skilled nursing facility, they are responsible for a coinsurance of 10 percent of the billed charges for services, up to a coinsurance maximum of $1,500 for the enrollee, $1,500 for your spouse/domestic partner and $1,500 for all dependent children combined. Effective Jan. 1, 2011, the previous benefit that allowed enrollees to request up to $500 reimbursement under United HealthCare, to offset the $1,500 coinsurance maximum, will be eliminated.

Please contact the CSEA Health Benefits Department at 1-800-286-5242 with questions.

NYSHIP special enrollment period for young adult dependents to end Dec. 31

NYSHIP enrollees have until Dec. 31, 2010, to add to their health insurance coverage eligible dependents up to age 26. As a reminder, NYSHIP will change its eligibility rules to cover eligible dependents, up to age 26, in compliance with the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) effective Jan. 1, 2011.

NYSHIP enrollees can add eligible dependents up to age 26 during a special enrollment period, which began Nov. 1, 2010 and ends Dec. 31, 2010. An enrollee’s young adult children can be added to family coverage at no additional cost. If the NYSHIP enrollee currently has individual coverage, the enrollee will need to switch to family coverage.

Enrollees looking to add a young adult child to their coverage should complete and return the “Young Adult Dependent” transaction form to their agency health benefits administrator (typically in their personnel office) by Dec. 31, 2010.

Save the Date …

April 1 — 3, 2011

STATEWIDE WOMEN’S CONFERENCE

Desmond Hotel, Albany, N.Y.

Get the latest on issues that concern women in CSEA and the labor movement! Subscribe today to Essentially Women, a quarterly publication dedicated to working women.

Visit CSEA’s website at www.csealocal1000.org and follow the link on the home page for a downloadable coupon. Just fill it out and mail it in!

CSEA accepting Irene Carr Leadership Award nominations

CSEA is also accepting nominations for the Irene Carr Leadership Award through Feb. 1, 2011. The award, named for former Statewide Secretary Irene Carr, will be presented at the union’s Women’s Conference in April (see above for more). Learn more about the award and download the application from CSEA’s website at www.csealocal1000.org.
The state Division of Budget has approved the Empire Plan’s premium rates for the 2011 plan year. New York state active employees have until Dec. 31, 2010 to change their health insurance option.

Although the Empire Plan has experienced a modest premium increase this year, some of the HMOs have experienced SIGNIFICANT increases. New York state pays 90 percent of the cost of the individual premium and 75 percent of the cost of the dependent premium for HMOs; however, the state’s contributions toward HMO premiums are capped at the state’s contribution to the Empire Plan premium. Enrollees in an HMO with premiums that exceed this Empire Plan cap will experience higher enrollee biweekly contributions.

To change your health insurance plan during the Option Transfer Period, see your agency health benefits administrator as soon as possible. Ask for the Health Insurance Transaction Form PS-404 and return the completed form to your agency health benefits administrator by Dec. 31, 2010.

The following represents the 2011 biweekly rates for CSEA-represented, New York state active employees. This list is organized by region and includes the cost difference from the October 2010 rates. Please review the 2011 rate options carefully.

### 2011 NYSHIP rates for CSEA active state employees

#### Biweekly employee contribution

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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Plan name</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Difference from 2010</th>
<th>Family</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
The CSEA Employee Benefit Fund is here to help you protect your health, including your oral health.

EBF dental plans were designed to keep you healthy. If you have an EBF dental plan, make it a point to take advantage of this valuable benefit this year. If you do not have an EBF dental plan, let one of our senior benefits specialists know. It is possible one of our products will fit nicely into your next contract.

Why should you guard your oral health? The link between oral health and overall health is more important than you may think. When your teeth and gums are healthy, the bacteria naturally occurring in your mouth does not usually enter your bloodstream. Gum disease and invasive dental treatments can allow this bacteria to enter your bloodstream. Certain medications and medical treatments can also disrupt the normal balance of bacteria in your mouth.

Some researchers believe this bacterial imbalance and inflammation in the mouth are linked to other health problems. Poor oral health can affect your quality of life. Tooth decay is the single most common chronic childhood disease; it is five times more common than asthma and seven times more common than hay fever. Children lose more than 51 million school hours annually due to dental related illness. Adults lose more than 164 million hours of work annually due to dental disease.

EBF can help play an important role in protecting your oral health through one of the fund’s dental plans. For more information, visit EBF’s website at www.cseaebf.com or call EBF at (800) 323-2732.

**Conditions linked to poor oral health**

**Cardiovascular disease:** Some research indicates bacteria from gum disease can travel through your bloodstream into your heart affecting your cardiovascular system.

**Pregnancy and birth complications:** Gum disease has been linked to premature birth and low birth weight babies as disease-causing organisms originating in the mouth have been found in the placenta or amniotic fluid.

**Diabetes:** The destructive inflammatory processes that are common with periodontal disease are closely related to diabetes. Diabetes increases your risk of gum disease, decay and infection. Poor oral health can also make your diabetes more difficult to control as infections may cause blood sugar to rise.

**Osteoporosis:** Beginning stages of bone loss may show up in your teeth. Routine X-rays may allow your dentist to identify bone loss and suggest treatment.

Skills for Success courses offered

This winter and spring, CSEA members employed by New York state, local government agencies and the private sector have opportunities to take Skills for Success training courses offered by the NYS & CSEA Partnership for Education and Training (Partnership).

Course participation, as space permits, by CSEA-represented employees in local government agencies, school districts, state authorities and the private sector is sponsored by the CSEA WORK Institute.

More than 120 classes are scheduled statewide from Jan. 3, 2011, through June 15, 2011. The training is available at no cost to employees or agencies.

All courses are held at conveniently located training sites. In order to increase participation in courses while limiting time away from the office, the Partnership is piloting a select number of courses using condensed evening and webinar formats.

**Eligibility**

Employees are eligible to participate in Partnership courses if they are:

- A CSEA-represented New York state employee (ASU/02, OSU/03, ISU/04 or DMNA/47).
- A CSEA-represented employee in local government agencies (county, city, town, village), school districts, state authorities or private sector, as space permits.

**For more information**

A web catalog of the Skills for Success courses is available on the Partnership’s website at www.nyscseapartnership.org. The catalog contains course descriptions, course schedules, training locations and an application form that can be downloaded and printed.

For more information about Skills for Success courses, call 518-486-7814 or, for areas outside the Capital Region, call 800-253-4332, or e-mail at learning@nyscseapartnership.org.
Schultz is PEOPLE Recruiter of the Month

Jim Schultz, of the Hudson River Psychiatric Center Local in the Southern Region, is the PEOPLE Recruiter of the Month for November. He recruited 16 new PEOPLE MVP members.

“I’ve been involved in PEOPLE since the 1980s because we need lobbying power in Washington D.C. to fight for programs like Social Security,” said Schultz, who chairs the region’s PEOPLE Committee and co-chairs the region’s Community Action and Safety and Health committees. “More than ever, we need to fight to protect programs such as these so we can maintain quality of life in our older years. None of us want to work into our 70s, especially when we’ve paid into Social Security our entire working lives. PEOPLE helps us fight for what’s right.”

CEA’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.

Remember: ‘Don’t Zone Out’ during winter

Winter is here and with it comes snowy and icy road conditions.

CSEA members who work on highways spend many hours clearing, salting and sanding roadways, often in inclement weather, to make them safer for us to drive.

As you’re driving this winter season, please continue to remember to “Don’t Zone Out,” and urge your families, friends and co-workers to do the same.

Visit the Don’t Zone Out page on CSEA’s website at www.csealocal1000.org to learn more about the Don’t Zone Out campaign.

January CSEA calendar of events

Long Island Region:
• Jan. 19-20: Steward Workshop, Sign-in: 5:30-6 p.m.; Workshop: 6-9 p.m., CSEA Long Island Region Office, Commack

Metropolitan Region:
• Visit the Metropolitan Region page on CSEA’s website at www.csealocal1000.org for the latest on events in your region.

Southern Region:
• Jan. 19-20: Local Government/Private Sector Grievance Representation Workshop, Sign-in: 5:30-6 p.m.; Workshop: 6-9 p.m., Webutuck Jr./Sr. High School, Amenia
• Jan. 25-26: Contract negotiations: Constructing Proposals Workshop, Sign-in: 5:30-6 p.m.; Workshop: 6-9 p.m., Rockland County Local Office, New City

Capital Region:
• Jan. 5-6: Steward Workshop, Sign-in: 5:30-6 p.m.; Workshop: 6-9 p.m., Rensselaer County Public Safety Building, Troy
• Jan. 12-13: Steward Workshop, Sign-in: 5-5:30 p.m.; Workshop: 5:30-8:30 p.m., Peru Primary School Building, Peru. This workshop is open to Capital and Central Region members. Please call the Plattsburgh Satellite Office at (518) 563-0761 to register.
• Jan. 25-26: Local Government Discipline: Representing Members in Interrogations Workshop, Sign-in: 5:30-6 p.m.; Workshop: 6-9 p.m., Holiday Inn, Schenectady

Central Region:
• Jan. 12-13: State Government Grievance Representation

SMITHTOWN SETTLES CONTRACT — CSEA members in the Smithtown Fire District unanimously ratified a five year contract that provides for annual salary percentage increases and precludes an increase in health insurance contributions ...

Battery SATURDAY — The Village of Suffern Unit was a co-sponsor of the second annual event called Battery Saturday. The event allowed residents to drop off used batteries at a village site, rather than having to make a longer trip to the county recycling facility. The CSEA unit is active in many village activities.

AFSCME, Union Plus scholarship applications deadline approaching

Applications are being accepted for the 2011 Union Plus Scholarship and AFSCME Family Scholarship programs.

Union Plus Scholarship Program grants union members or family members scholarships from $500 to $4,000 each year. Applications for the Plus Union scholarships must be postmarked no later than Dec. 31, 2010.

Each year, the AFSCME Family Scholarship Program provides 10, $2,000 scholarships to high school seniors that will be renewed for $2,000 each year for a maximum of four years, provided the student remains enrolled in a full-time course of study. The scholarship may be used for any field of study. Applications for the AFSCME scholarship must be postmarked no later than Jan. 31, 2010.

For more information and an application form, visit the websites listed below or contact your unit or local president:

AFSCME Family Scholarship: www.afscme.org/members/880.cfm

Union Plus Scholarship Program: www.unionplus.org/college-education-financing/union-plus-scholarship

Discipline: Representing Members in Interrogations Workshop, Sign-in: 5:30-6 p.m.; Workshop: 6-9 p.m., Ramada Geneva Lakefront, Geneva
• Jan. 25-26: Steward Workshop, Sign-in: 5:30-6 p.m.; Workshop: 6-9 p.m., CSEA Rochester Satellite Office, Rochester
• Jan. 29: State Government Grievance Representation Workshop, Sign-in: 8:30-9 a.m.; Workshop: 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., CSEA Western Region Office, Amherst

For more information, contact your region office (phone numbers are listed on Page 4) or visit your region page at CSEA’s website at www.csealocal1000.org. Please note that additional events may be scheduled in your region, so check the website regularly.
CSEA’S CENTENNIAL YEAR was one of the most dynamic in our history. The union marked its 100th anniversary, but there wasn’t much opportunity for celebrating as economic challenges at the national, state and local levels dominated attention throughout the year.

CSEA stood strong against attacks on public employees, demands for unilateral concessions, threats of layoffs, and all manner of budget difficulties across the state.

CSEA helped elect state Comptroller Tom DiNapoli in a tight race in which the CSEA vote made the difference. The union launched a statewide Don’t Zone Out campaign to improve road and highway safety and CSEA members were leaders across the state when it came to involvement in community service and support of charitable and service organizations.

CSEA members can be proud of their union for its century of service, but more importantly, all members should take pride in our union for the accomplishment and strength of 2010.

Special Message: State of our union 2011
Everyone knows we need jobs. Especially jobs that add value to our communities.

Keeping people working should be job 1.

There are no easy answers. But some politicians think public sector layoffs are a quick fix. They're wrong.

There are no real savings by eliminating jobs because:
- Layoffs mean paychecks won't be spent in the community
- Income taxes won't get paid
- Services won't be available
- Work that generates revenue won't get done.

Politicians who talk about creating jobs while promoting layoffs are talking out of both sides of their mouths.

Everybody knows New Yorkers have had enough of that!

Since 1910

CSEA
New York's LEADING Union