

Keep 5 **ALIVE!**



The CSEA Central Region 5 Safety & Health Committee Newsletter

Joe Miceli, Safety & Health Committee Chair

Colleen Wheaton, Central Region President

Safety Happenings: Around the Region

Highlights of safety and health issues being handled around our Region - by Occupational Safety and Health Specialist Josh Kemp

City of Oneonta - CSEA attempted to work with the city on their Workplace Violence Prevention (WVP) program. After they refused, the union filed a complaint with the Department of Labor’s Public Employee Safety and Health (PESH) Bureau, citing their lack of a required WVP program. This issue remains under review by PESH.

Onondaga County - Rosamond Gifford Zoo - PESH cited the County on violations of walking-working surfaces regulations. Union members were working on a flat roof, without protections. Within the abatement period, employees were also working on a nearby pitched roof, without protections. CSEA called in an imminent danger complaint to PESH. A willful violation citation is pending.

Onondaga County - Department of Social Services - There has been an ongoing Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)/mold concern on a DSS floor at the Civic Center, resulting in

respiratory issues for some employees. CSEA has been working with the County to test and remedy the issue.

Massena Memorial Hospital - Store clerk Steven Zyzik was found unresponsive at work and died in transport in January. His death appears to be from natural causes and non-occupational. Both CSEA and PESH investigated.

City of Watertown - PESH issued notices of violations to the City over the workplace death of CSEA member Gregory Eliopoulos, including several serious violations that have since been corrected (*see related article, page 4*). A second inspection from an imminent danger complaint found violations regarding improper use of an electrical panel. CSEA OSH Specialist Josh Kemp provided Lockout-Tagout Training to all employees at the Sewage Treatment Plant to help remedy the violations.

NYS Parks - Finger Lakes Region - CSEA provided Work Zone-All Hazard Training for State Parks employees in the Finger Lakes Region.

SUNY Oswego - continuing to build the Local’s Safety and Health Committee and to work on issues such as lockout-tagout, permit-required confined space entry and hearing conservation programs.

NYS Canals - A PESH program inspection found that employees working on a winter project to replace lock doors in Waterloo had a lead exposure 15 times the permissible exposure limit.

Liverpool Public Library - CSEA is working with the library to remedy IAQ concerns. A business next door to the library is burning wood throughout the day and causing adverse health effects for library workers.

Statewide Safety Conference proves valuable to attendees

By Communications Specialist Mark Kotzin

CSEA’s Central Region had the second-largest group of attendees to the recent Statewide Safety and Health Conference held in Lake Placid.

With 219 attendees, Region 5 was very well-represented at the weekend conference, which featured numerous workshops on Health and Safety topics, as well as a moving Workers Memorial Day observance and tribute, honoring those workers lost since the previous biennial conference.

SUNY Cortland Local 605 President Tom Hingher said that the conference was a great opportunity for networking and sharing common goals and concerns.



Tom Hingher

“The best part of attending the health and safety conference is that we are all there for the same common goal – the protection and safety of our union brothers and sisters,” Hingher said. “It’s also a great opportunity to network with the group whether in different workshops or just hanging out at a tailgate party. The energy is amazing!”

Otsego County Local 839 Activist Matt Harper said that safety training can be valuable in community disaster situations.

“I enjoyed and learned much from having volunteered as a moderator for some

classes such as Building stronger Locals & Units/ Winning the war,” he said. “Also the Plenary Session on Sunday was very effective in showing how using organizing skills coupled with Health and Safety training

can be utilized to bring a community together in time of need. As a PEER Trainer and Officer for my Local and Unit it helps to practice these possible scenarios and to brainstorm with others to find effective solutions.”



Matt Harper

The importance of focusing on safety and health

There are few things that should matter more to union-represented workers than our worksite safety and health. After all, if you can't come home at the end of the work day in the same (hopefully good) condition in which you arrived, then the money you earned that day isn't worth very much.

Just ask the family of CSEA Jefferson County member Gregory Eliopoulos who was killed on the job last November. They could tell you first-hand about real sacrifice and the true meaning of making worksite safety a priority.

Unfortunately, nothing will ever bring their loved one back to them, but we hope it provides his family some comfort to know that we recently honored his memory at multiple observances of Workers Memorial



Colleen Wheaton

Day, both at our State-wide Safety and Health Conference in Lake Placid, and also when we planted our "Living Memorial" in Seneca Falls in his memory. Hopefully also knowing that we worked cooperatively with the City to correct any safety violations so that this type of incident never happens again brings them further comfort. His tragic loss will forever be remembered and lead to safety improvements so that his death will not have been in vain.

As we move forward in our efforts to strengthen our union, I hope that everyone will recognize the strong emphasis we continue to place on workplace safety and health. As I've noted before, we are one of very few unions in the country that has an

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Department staffed by highly trained professionals in their field. When surveyed, our members consistently rate health and safety at the top of their priorities, and that makes sense -- nobody wants to get hurt or sick at work.

Recently, we had more than 200 activists from our Central Region attend the Statewide Safety and Health Conference. You will read more about what they learned in this newsletter. I point this out because this is certainly an important service our union provides, but it is not mandated. We need to maintain a strong union in order to have the resources to continue having an OSH Department and opportunities like our safety conferences. This is why we need everyone to commit to sticking with our union. Enough said.

In Solidarity,



A message from the Chair

by Joe Miceli, Chair, Region 5 Safety & Health Committee

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Joe Miceli

Well, another Statewide Safety and Health Conference has come and gone. I've heard nothing but good comments on it. Everybody seemed to enjoy the class selections, which I think were very different from past Conferences. Can't wait to see what's in store for us two years from now.

On the Monday following the Conference we held our Region Workers Memorial Day Observance at People's Park in Seneca Falls. This is a beautiful location right on the Seneca River. It was very well attended. This is the ninth time we have done this, so that leaves eleven more counties to go. We will be starting to work on next year's observance right away. We have to pick a County and find a location. Then we have to find a point person to do the majority of the work, such as finding a specific

location, and locally purchasing a tree, among other things. This year our point person was Donna Anastasio. We couldn't have done any of this without her, so thank you Donna for all your hard work.

I said it last year and again this year, as I read one name at the observance -- even one name is too many. Everybody deserves the right to go home to their family after work. That didn't happen for Gregory Eliopoulos from Local 823. Our hearts go out to his family and I feel it falls on all of us to do our very best to try to make sure it never happens again. If you see something unsafe then report it to someone. If you are asked to do something you feel is unsafe, then ask to be assigned something else until someone can check the situation out.

Have a great summer. Work Safe and Be Safe,



Workers Memorial Day in pictures

Photos by CSEA Communications Specialist Mark Kotzin



CSEA Region 5 observes Workers Memorial Day 2018 at People's Park in Seneca Falls (clockwise from top):

Attendees listen in reverence as Pastor Dan Mulcahey delivers his benediction; CSEA Central Region Executive Vice President Tammy Witteman welcomes those attending; a close up shows the plaque marking the tree we planted as a living memorial from CSEA; Seneca County Local 850 President Donna Anastasio places the marker dedicating the living memorial; and Health & Safety Committee Chair Joe Miceli, second from right, addresses the crowd.

We need to know!



If you come across a **serious workplace hazard** or have any type of **emergency situation** arise that has or could jeopardize the safety of CSEA members, you should immediately notify your nearest CSEA Officer, and request that they **immediately report the situation to CSEA’s Occupational Safety and Health Specialist Josh Kemp.**

CSEA can most effectively respond to emergency situations and protect your safety with **prompt notification.** This allows us to assess the situation and to hopefully address problems **before** anyone is hurt.



OSH Specialist Josh Kemp can be reached at **(800) 559-7975, ext. 3376.**

Region 5 Safety & Health Committee Members

- Joe Miceli, Chair, SUNY Oswego.....(315) 806-3893
- John Brown, Regional Advisor.....(315) 269-4096
- Heather Berry, Region 5 Judiciary.....(315) 956-4188
- Arthur Briggs, Mohawk Valley Psych. Ctr.....(315) 717-9780
- Ralph Cavo, Oneida County.....(315) 941-6876
- Matthew Crim, Herkimer County.....(315) 219-7686
- Ronald Doughty, Upstate Medical University.....(315) 464-4351
- Matthew Harper, Otsego County.....(607) 610-4147
- Tom Hingher, SUNY Cortland.....(607) 753-2120
- James Jackson, Oswego County.....(315) 341-2906
- Lynn May, Jefferson County.....(315) 405-1879
- Don Page, CNY DDSO.....(315) 336-8413
- Linda Park, Onondaga County.....(315) 435-3280
- Tom Ryan, Cayuga County.....(315) 283-1974
- Tom Simchik, Madison County.....(315) 264-8940
- Kevin Thompson, Black River Valley State Employees.....(315) 782-4473
- Marlene Wescott, SUNY Morrisville.....(315) 247-8866

Note: Our Safety & Health Committee is always seeking additional activists to be appointed by their presidents who have a commitment to safety and health issues. Committee nomination forms are available by calling the Region Office at (800) 559-7975.

Safety Report: Watertown makes progress after fatality

By CSEA Communications Specialist Mark Kotzin, reprinted from the CSEA Work Force

WATERTOWN — City of Watertown officials continue to make safety improvements following the workplace death of CSEA member Gregory Eliopoulos.

Eliopoulos, a process worker at the city’s Wastewater Treatment Plant, died in November 2017 when he was struck by a fitting from a high-pressure line.

The resulting investigation by the state Department of Labor’s Public Employee Safety and Health (PESH) Bureau found numerous violations that contributed to the incident.

Since that time, CSEA’s Occupational Safety and Health Department, city officials



Gregory Eliopoulos

and the plant’s workers have been working cooperatively to remediate those violations, and recently the PESH Bureau confirmed all the violations were corrected.

CSEA Occupational Safety and Health Specialist Joshua Kemp said CSEA has been satisfied with the city’s cooperation.

“On the plant level, both workers and management have worked together to create safety programs that go above and beyond requirements. They took what they had and what they’ve learned and created exceptional programs, which they intend to expand moving forward,” Kemp said. “We give them credit for taking the worst situation

imaginable and working with us to make positive improvements to ensure this type of tragedy never happens again.”

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- OSH Specialist Josh Kemp