

A message from CSEA Long Island Region President Jarvis Brown



I am pleased to begin this month's message with the tremendous success of the region board's push for officers to be trained in grievance, discipline and interrogation. Unit

and local officers heard the "alarm" and have been heading the call.

To date, more than 200 officers have updated their required training.

The next big event the Region One Board and I are preparing for is the New York City Labor Day Parade, which is September 7, 2024. We will be showing our union pride as we march with our CSEA family from Regions Two and Three.

In order to make traveling easier for members, the region board and I will be chartering two buses to take region members to the parade.

Members who have a working email on file with CSEA will be receiving a message with further details. Those who do not can speak to their local and unit officers for more information.

I am looking forward to the CSEA contingent putting on a grand display at the parade. I am equally hopeful that we will have the full involvement of Long Island members. I do not think members realize how important having a proper showing at major events like the New York City Labor Day Parade is. While it is a fun day, it is also a time when all eyes are on union members. A large showing makes CSEA look strong to the masses and is a signal that CSEA members are formidable opponents to those that may come against us. A small showing proves otherwise. Join us at the parade and be a part of building our union's strength and notoriety in New York State.

The region board is working with CSEA's Education and Training

Department to develop the curriculum for the upcoming Long Island Region One Workshop, where we will be getting back to CSEA basics. Too many members speak negatively about CSEA while not being educated on the abundance of resources at their disposal due to their union membership. I feel confident that after attending the workshop, members will have a broader understanding of CSEA and a more positive perception of what it has to offer.

The Region One Board and I will also be continuing our efforts to interact more with members around the region by meeting you where you are – member meetings and local and unit events. We want to familiarize ourselves with region members, so you know us by face and name and feel comfortable speaking with us candidly. These open lines of communication will lead us toward making this region a more cohesive unit.

I ask that members meet us halfway and work toward educating themselves more about the happenings in their units and locals. An educated membership is a more powerful membership that has the tools to hold their management and union leadership responsible for their actions.

It is equally important for members to know that the Region One Office, located at 3 Garet Place in Commack, is open to region members. Do not hesitate to stop by if you are in need of counsel or if you would like an introduction. You can also call the region office at 631-462-0030 if you feel more comfortable securing an appointment for us to speak.

As you can see, there are several opportunities for members to get to know their region representatives and other members from around the region. I ask that you use the upcoming events as an opportunity to recommit yourselves to our union and recognize the role that every member has to play in it. I hope to

Long Island Region Executive Board Members



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District



Barbara Truglio
Board of Directors
Nassau County School
District



Abraham Johnson
Board of Directors
Mental Hygiene

see new and old faces at the events. Our newfound relationships will make for a stronger region.

Sincerely,



Jarvis Brown
CSEA Long Island Region President

Strengthening our union through education

COMMACK — The CSEA Education and Training Department offers various labor education workshops for members who wish to grow CSEA's strength at their worksites. Some topics include, contract negotiations, shop steward training, labor history and public speaking.

The workshops are regularly updated to reflect the ever evolving needs of CSEA's membership.

Your attendance at the trainings includes more than just sitting in your seat and listening. CSEA Labor Educators provide opportunities for individual participation, group discussions and roll playing.

The combination of practical experience and written theory gives members the foundation they need to apply their newly acquired knowledge on and off the job.

Many workshops are held at the CSEA

Long Island Region office in Commack, but your unit or local can arrange to hold workshops at a location determined by the unit or local. In most cases, the meetings are held at your CSEA unit or local office.

Contact your local or unit president if you would like to request a training in your area.

— Wendi Bowie



What are Weingarten Rights?

Weingarten Rights are union members' legal right to request union representation during an investigatory interview that could lead to adverse consequences. If you find yourself in this situation, recite your Weingarten Rights to your employer and contact your CSEA representative.

To receive a wallet sized copy of your Weingarten Rights for yourself and your fellow members, contact the CSEA Legal Department at 518-257-1000.

Weingarten Rights

If this discussion, meeting or telephone call could in any way be related to my being disciplined or terminated or affect any of my working conditions, I exercise my federal rights and hereby request that my union representative or shop steward be present. Without their presence, I choose not to participate in this discussion or meeting.



Member Spotlight

Editor's Note:

In an effort to highlight the exemplary work of members in our region. The CSEA Long Island Region One Board is highlighting members in our region.

First up is William Merker, a 22-year CSEA member



Merker

from the Town of Riverhead Unit. During a discussion with CSEA Long Island Region Communications Specialist Wendi Bowie, Merker spoke about relationship with his co-workers and his dedication to unionism. If you know a member who you think we should highlight, send us an email at cseabusiness@gmail.com. Please provide the member's name along with a description of what makes them stand out among their peers. Are they especially helpful? Do they bring joy to the workplace? How so?

Submissions will be reviewed by the Region One Board. If approved, the selected member or members will be contacted for an interview.

Wendi Bowie (WB): Your unit president Terri [DeFilippis] (TD) wrote some really beautiful things about you in her submission. I usually only hear people speak that fondly about someone at a funeral [Merker and DeFilippis laugh]. Based on the submission, you seem to work very well with members, are you an activist?

William Merker (WM): I'm a shop steward, but I was the treasurer on the Suffolk Local 852 board for a term. Because I do electrical work, I travel to all of the buildings in our unit, which I use as an opportunity to relay messages on Terri's behalf.

TD: People really like Billy. He has a gentle approach when speaking with members that other people don't, even when the member is wrong.

WB: What made you become a CSEA member?

WM: I used to work the night shift for the Riverhead School District; I had a child and wanted to work the day shift. I spoke to a friend who was a CSEA member and

he helped me go through the process of becoming employed with the town and becoming a member.

I come from a union family; both my father and my brothers are union members
WB: Tell me more about the ways you assist in your unit.

WM: Before Teri puts out letters, she'll have me review them to see if there is a better way to express a point. We bounce ideas off of each other a lot; we want to make sure we have the most accurate and up-to-date information for members. If I don't have a full explanation for their question, I try to find the answer myself or I direct them to Terri.

TD: Billy is feet on the ground. He is with people in the buildings so he always knows what's happening and everyone's wants and needs.

WB: Why did you decide to become an activist?

WM: Power for CSEA. I like to interact with people, to help people. People don't always understand the benefit of union membership. I try to explain to them that the only reason we get to negotiate for better wages and medical benefits is because we are union members.

TD: He [Merker] is a great advocate when it comes down to explaining things about our contract. Contract language isn't easy for everyone to understand. He knows how to articulate things in a way that makes the information easily digestible for everyone.

WM: Sometimes people will call me and ask me what a certain part of the contract means. Other times, people don't believe what Terri is saying, strictly because Terri doesn't have the relationship with them that I have. They accept certain information from me because they know me.

WB: Sounds like you're good at relationship building. How has the been helpful to you?

WM: I like to talk to people and figure out what problems they're having and hopefully resolve those problems before they elevate. Members know that about me, which is why some of them seek me out. Members also trust me because I'm not afraid to say, 'I don't

know.' I will not give members the wrong information because I didn't research to find the right answer. Often times, members will ask another member for feedback who hasn't had the proper training to give an informed answer, then they get upset because they were told the wrong thing.

WB: CSEA has really been stressing the importance of training, lately. Why should members attend CSEA's classes?

WM: If everyone utilized the free training we're being offered, members would have a better understanding of what CSEA membership is all about. The classes aren't just for activists, anyone can take them and learn from them, they're especially good for members unfamiliar with CSEA. You learn the responsibilities of the organization vs. the membership's responsibilities. Knowledge is power. People don't see that.

WB: What does that power look like to you?

WM: A unified membership body. For example, I think more members need to attend member meetings. If our employers see how many of us attend those meetings, they will know that we are a unified, powerful force.

We also increase our level of understanding at member meetings. It's where we learn about what is happening in our units and locals. We get to talk directly to our union leadership about issues we're facing. Some member attend to find out what CSEA, the organization, is going to do for them. Well, you also have to be willing to help yourself if you want to build CSEA's power at your worksite.

WB: What is the value of union membership?

WM: The understanding that someone is here to help you when you need it. Your contract has value because your employer is legally obligated to follow its parameters. Our contract includes salary grades, sick time and accruals. Those things hold a lot of value.

WB: What do you appreciate about CSEA?

WM: Just being in it and getting to know new people. I like participating in union duties and knowing that I'm doing something that is helpful for other members of the work force.

Preparing for retirement

COMMACK — Preparing for retirement can be a daunting task. Sorting through mounds of paperwork while retaining all of the necessary information can seem like an insurmountable endeavor for even the most patient of individuals.

That is why CSEA Long Island holds retirement seminars throughout our region, like the one recently held at Nassau Community College.

Representatives from a variety of vendors such as our union's Retiree Division, New York State and Local Retirement System, Pearl Insurance and New York State Deferred Compensation Plan are present to answer questions.

The specifics of each pension tier are also discussed during the two-hour presentation.

Keep in mind, CSEA has retiree locals in both Suffolk and Nassau County that we encourage our retired members to join.

If you would like to join the CSEA Retiree Division, download an application from csea.org or request an application from the CSEA Long Island Region office in Commack.

— Wendi Bowie



After more than a year of negotiations, the CSEA Garden City Public Schools Unit has finally come to a contractual agreement with the school board, with no concessions. Congratulations on your success.



Honoring Diversity

COMMACK — The CSEA Long Island Region One Human Rights Committee recently held its annual International Day Festival, an event created to celebrate the various ethnic backgrounds of Region One members.

At the opening ceremony, committee members read quotes from well-known human rights activists from diverse backgrounds, including A. Philip Randolph, Cesar Chavez and Mary Harris

“Mother” Jones. The names of the winners of Region One’s first college scholarship were also announced. Three graduating high school seniors were awarded the \$2,000 scholarships.

The event included ethnic food tasting, face painting, a visit from the Wheatley Heights Fire Department and ice cream from Mr. Softee.

— Wendi Bowie



Committee uplifts members' voices for positive change



COMMACK — The CSEA Long Island Region has several committees, that regularly meet to discuss particular issues that impact members on Long Island.

One of those committees is the region Human Rights Committee, which was created to uplift the voices of historically disenfranchised groups and establish ways for CSEA members to celebrate each other's differences.

For many years, the committee has held well-attended events like the Festivals of Light, which takes place during the holiday season and celebrates the various religious and cultural observances of members, and the Annual Region One International Day Festival. The latter event recognizes the many cultural backgrounds of region

members and will be held at the CSEA Long Island Region office on June 8, 2024.

The group's upcoming efforts are the observance of International Human Rights Day, a day that is celebrated annually on December 10. The day was chosen in remembrance of the General Assembly of the United Nations adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, almost 76 years ago. The document details the inalienable rights that all human beings are entitled to as citizens of this world including but not limited to, freedom from discrimination, the right to Social Security and the right to desirable work and to join trade unions.

In addition, the committee will be embarking on a Dignity in the Workplace

campaign, creating a foundation for region members to work in a safe environment where their psychological health is recognized as a vital component of their well-being. The campaign aims to offer resources to members who are in a toxic work environment where they are experiencing bullying and abuse.

"One of Dr. King's famous quotes that resonates with me in these current times is 'Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter,'" said CSEA Long Island Region One Human Rights Committee Chair Audrey Hadden. "True unity and union solidarity can only flourish in an environment where mutual respect, dignity, fairness and equality thrives."

— Wendi Bowie



Political Action Committee is the key to building union power

The Region One Political Action Committee (PAC) is an active and engaged committee of members representing locals across Long Island. CSEA like many unions are always under attack by outside groups like the Freedom Foundation or facing difficult labor relations with management. The goal of the Region One PAC is to fight to protect our benefits, secure better contracts, and elect union-friendly candidates.

The Region One PAC gives a voice to all our units and locals in Suffolk and Nassau Counties. We participate in village, school, town, and county board meetings. We review legislative proposals and referenda from our state and local governments and if needed take action to make sure our members' interests are being protected. We screen candidates to ensure that anyone who receives CSEA's endorsement has earned it. We then work hard to help those endorsed

candidates with campaign activities to be victorious. We also work with and guide each of our unit and local PACs, which are required by the CSEA constitution.

The Region One PAC is working hard for every single member of CSEA, from Orient Point to the Queens border, and every unit and local in between. To learn more, visit <https://cseany.org/legislative-political-action>.

— Sue Castle



Long Island Region celebrates Pride

HUNTINGTON — CSEA Long Island Region One participated in this year’s Long Island Pride Parade. There were several CSEA members in the crowd of onlookers who expressed their happiness that CSEA had a contingent in the parade. Spectators from other unions did the same. One CSEA

member ran up to CSEA’s marchers to give everyone a high five.

CSEA has a long history of supporting its LGBTQIA+ members through its affiliation with Pride at Work, an AFL-CIO constituency group that organizes mutual support between the organized labor movement and

the LGBTQIA+ community to further social and economic justice.

To learn more about Pride at Work, visit: <https://www.prideatwork.org>.

— Wendi Bowie





Raising money for our nation's heroes



COMMACK — The CSEA Long Island Region 1 Veteran's Committee held their annual charity car wash, today. The committee members, member volunteers and guests worked all day to raise over \$2,000 for local veterans in need.

Thank you to everyone that donated and lent their time to make the event a great success.

— Wendi Bowie





Delegates show union strength at AFSCME Convention

LOS ANGELES — CSEA Long Island Region AFSCME delegates joined other delegates from around the country at the AFSCME 46th International Convention.

CSEA is AFSCME's largest local.

The group spent a week networking, learning skills and designing political action plans.

During business sessions, CSEA delegates addressed the room about

proposed resolutions before voting on those resolutions and amendments.

AFSCME International President Lee Saunders and International Secretary-Treasurer Elissa McBride were nominated for another term. Both ran unopposed and will be leading AFSCME for another four years.

— Wendi Bowie

