PEF

HEARTLAND 8

A Newsletter for Region 8
Public Employees' Federation
"The HEART of PEF"
BOX 12414, ALBANY, NY 12212-2414

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ROCKEFELLER DRUG LAW REFORM POLICY

PEF President Roger Benson and Secretary–Treasurer Jane Hallum, using their authority under PEF's Constitution, have set the following as PEF policy. The policy must be approved at the next Executve Board meeting in June to remain PEF policy.

PEF supports Rockefeller Drug Law reform because we believe the current system results in unnecessarily long sentences for drug offenders and does very little to provide effective treatment for them in correctional facilities or in the community. However, we believe the following changes must be made to the Governor's proposed legislation (S4237) if New York State is to make a significant impact on our drug problem.

1.There must be a significant increase in the availability of drug treatment slots in correctional facilities and in the community, including significantly more residential beds. Such an increase should include either an increase in beds at the Willard Drug Treatment Campus or a new Willard type facility.

2.In order to create incentives for offenders to seriously participate in treatment programs, indeterminate sentences should be maintained for all drug offenses. When drug offenders are released from a correctional facility, they should be on specialized intensive parole supervision (maximum caseload of 25 parolees per Parole Officer, mandatory periodic drug testing, and a minimum of 6 parolee contacts per month, including 4 out of office contacts for at least six months). They should then be kept on intensive parole supervision for at least one additional year.

3.If determinate sentences are instituted, judges should have discretion to sentence felons to up to five years of post-release parole supervision.

4.The Willard Drug Treatment program should be expanded to an intensive six-month program similar to the DOCS Comprehensive Alcohol and Substance Abuse Treatment (CASAT) program, with arrangements for mandatory post-release treatment and parole super-

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TROY BUILDING DEAL INVESTIGATED

A major redevelopment project for Troy that involved moving offices of the Department of Health to the former Stanley Building in Troy, fell apart as a result of an FBI investigation.

OGS has said that the plan was an excellent financial opportunity and that it is common for the state to lease buildings in need of major renovations.

The state's plan to have Laberge Group, a Colonie-based engineering and development firm, renovate a former Troy department store and lease space to the Department of Health fell apart in January as a federal criminal investigation unfolded into the way the lease was negotiated. About 100 of the 152 workers who were to be relocated are currently working at the Frear Building in downtown Troy.

The relocation project was announced last June by Gov. George Pataki and Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno during a publicity tour of Troy.

The investigation apparently centers on the way leases for the former Stanleys department store building, which is located on Third Street, were awarded and allegations of bribery. The target of the investigation, which stretches back several months, has not been identified.

Four months ago, when OGS officials learned about the criminal investigation, they had to negotiate a lease for the Department of Health to remain at the Frear Building for another year.

State officials have declined to release the rental costs.

The Office of General Services was still seeking approval of the lease in early January when the state comptroller's office quashed the deal.

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Coordinator's Corner

What's in a Word or Phrase?

By Jeff Satz,
PEF Region 8 Coordinator

I'm always amazed by the creativity of interest groups in spinning the meaning of the English language.

Governor Pataki, for example, has been heard to use the phrase "further efficiencies in State Government". This phrase was uttered in the context of how the bill for PEF programs would be paid for -- especially in the context of a major diminution of the current surplus.

There are many possible efficiencies that may be extracted from State Government. Generally speaking, the following are not on the table:

•Reduce patronage sinecures.

•Cease contracting out in cases where such contracting is more costly or less cost efficient than using State workers to perform the function.

•Reduce funding or bring greater accountability to politically popular "sacred cow" programs that aren't producing effectively.

•Lead by example, by cutting high executive staff salaries and shaming the Legislature to follow suit.

Wringing minor procedural efficiencies at the implementation level (agencies and facilities) is in the cards and may, in aggregate, produce substantial savings.

Those who are savvy understand that, as a practical matter, "efficiencies in State Government" really means reducing the State workforce. This is the quickest fix of all with the minimum of political fallout.

Reducing personnel costs will yield a guaranteed savings within a relatively short time. The public perceives that there is an overabundance of State workers. In reality, New York State Government is dwarfed by anachronistic, multi-layered local government and school district systems. Thus, the percentage on all public payrolls as distinct from just State payrolls is quite high.

State jobs are often administrative and perceived as remote and faceless. Thus, the town highway crew may be well perceived by the public, but the State Department of Transportation, who may monitor to insure service quality or may administer grants to the town highway departments, is an unknown quantity to the public.

Much State work is regulatory. Too often, the public who receives services is not aware of the benefit, or is not articulate in extolling the virtues of the State regulatory function.

Very articulate constituencies, on the other hand manifest disdain for State regulations. The State worker, who implements but doesn't establish policy, becomes the scapegoat. In this circumstance the inspector, auditor, or investigator, etc., becomes the one visible entity in an otherwise faceless, malevolent bureaucracy.

Finally, the State workforce is involved in operations for which there is no private sector equivalent, because such needs aren't perceived as profitable. Thus, State workers serve disadvantaged populations as a safety net of last resort.

All of the foregoing is not to say that changes or improvements in State operations shouldn't be made in the interest of true efficiency. It should, however, be understood that it may take longer for the adverse impact of an axe wielding approach to be felt. Either the work won't get done, or it won't be performed efficiently. When the skilled and dedicated network that provided the services, that had hitherto been taken for granted, is decimated or dispersed it can't be readily replaced.

"Invest" is a word that has assumed horrendous implications. Whenever I hear politicians or representatives of select interest groups talk about investing, I clutch reflexively at my wallet and contemplate Swiss

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HEARTLAND

A newsletter by and for the members of Region Eight of the Public Employees' Federation, AFL-CIO

Publisher	Jeff Satz
Editor in Chief	Richard Bojman
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Articles and letters may be sent to: Heartland, Box 12414, Albany, NY 12212-2414.

Editorial

Apology

In the last February issue of Heartland, there was an article entitled “Americans With No Abilities”. This article was intended to be humorous, a mere spoof.

More than 50 members have spoken to me about this article. Almost all of them found it funny. Some, however, thought it to be true and called PEF headquarters to find out what the union was doing about it.

Unfortunately, two other people have contacted Heartland and found the article very offensive. To all of those who may have been offended, we at Heartland apologize. It was never our intent to belittle or denigrate any one or any group.

Perhaps the small number of those complaining is an indication of the insensitivity of the general public to the issues facing the disabled. That is something we will address.

We have been asked to provide space for articles that promote the cause of our disabled members. We have agreed to do so. It should be noted that while there are hundreds if not more disabled members of PEF, to our knowledge, no publication of PEF devotes any space to issues affecting the disabled. Thus Heartland will be the first.

PEF is obliged to represent the needs of all it’s members and to that end we call on PEF’s leadership to do more. For example, there are statewide committees to deal with issues regarding veterans and nurses, but there is no committee to deal with issues faced by the disabled members of PEF. Furthermore, PEF rountinely schedules events such as the annual convention at sites that are not accessible.

It should be pointed out that a recent Supreme Court decision limited the rights of employees to sue State Governments under the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In negotiation over office space design with New York State, management has held that the ADA does not apply to them. These are issues PEF has been silent on. Why ?

•To comment on this editorial or any other article in Heartland, contact us at pefreg08@yahoo.com. Your comments are welcome.

Word or Phrase - cont’d

bank accounts.

To me, investing means a commitment of resources to an endeavor or enterprise, with the hope of a profitable return on the resources committed. There are different levels of risk when one infests. Usually, there is a correlation between higher risk to capital, and the potential for higher return.

To politicians the word "invest" is verbal camouflage for spending tax dollars on what they perceive is in their political interest. In recent years, there has been a healthy skepticism as regards taxing and spending, thus the use of the word invest to delude the taxpayer that there might be a return.

Education is a beneficiary of major expenditures of our tax dollars. It is also an area of spending that most often gets labeled as an "investment". For many years, we've been lectured about hiring more teachers, the panacea of smaller classes, capital expenditures, etc. Classes are probably smaller now than when I went to school, which goes back further than when I want to admit. Yet, a crisis in education is proclaimed on all sides of the political divide.

I wish that I had those tax dollars of mine, that politicians have "invested" in education. I'd have quite a retirement nest egg and I'm not sure that the education shambles would be worse than they presently are.

I consider education to be important, in ten-ns of quality of life. From self-enrichment to economic development, to the aesthetic value of knowledge, a well-educated populace is critical to all sorts of individual and social vitality. There are no simple solutions to such problems as redundant bureaucracy, social malaise (changing family structure), inequities in financing education, and too much emphasis on a feel good atmosphere, and excessive permissiveness to the detriment of leaming.

The bogus palliatives, which are where these "investments" are directed, clearly have not remedied tire situation.

Fresh thinking and hard choices must accompany any new spate of taxing and spending also known as "investing". There needs to be accountability as regards a reasonable return.

I for one don't want my account churned by the

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WORD OR PHRASE - CONT'D

political equivalent of an unscrupulous investment broker. Like the investment broker, the politician gets paid whether the investment yields a return or a loss.

In the future, I may opt on these pages to peal the skin off other buzzwords and phrases. I urge readers to carefully dissect the hidden meanings behind public policy as enunciated by politicians or high-level government managers.

ADA ENFORCEMENT

Through lawsuits and settlement agreements, the Department of Justice has achieved greater access for individuals with disabilities in hundreds of cases. Under general rules governing lawsuits brought by the Federal government, the Department of Justice may not sue a party unless negotiations to settle the dispute have failed.

The Department of Justice may file lawsuits in federal court to enforce the ADA, and courts may order compensatory damages and back pay to remedy discrimination if the Department prevails. Under title III, the Department of Justice may also obtain civil penalties of up to $50,000 for the first violation and $100,000 for any subsequent violation.

How to File Complaints

Complaints about violations of title I (employment) by units of State and local government or by private employers should be filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Call 800-669-4000 (voice) or 800-669-6820 (TDD) to reach the field office in your area.

Complaints about violations of title II by units of State and local government or violations of title III by public accommodations and commercial facilities (private businesses and non-profit service providers) should be filed with the Department of Justice.

Please send complaints to:

Disability Rights Section
Civil Rights Division
U.S. Department of Justice
Post Office Box 66738
Washington, DC 20035-6738

You may also call the ADA Information Line to ask about filing a complaint with the Department of Justice and to order forms that can assist you in providing information about the violation.

LETTERS

Dear Editor Bojman:

An editor's note proceeding my annual report to the delegates, stated that this report appeared on the PEF website in March 2000. I suspect that the note's purpose was to shed doubt upon my credibility as to the timing of the dues increase. When did we know it, how much did we know, and at what point in time did we release information to the membership about our financial status. I don't know about you, Mr. Bojman, but in March 2000, this administration was totally focused on securing a contract for our members.

The last thing on our minds was the status of our resources. We were in full combat gear, and had presented to the Executive Board in March 2000, a request for a half million dollars for a media campaign. We were not distracted from our mission. We knew of the impending per capita increase from SEIU, the SEIU Convention in May, where that increase, most assuredly would be implemented, but it was not time to be distracted from our goal.

I remember being at the SEIU Convention, receiving daily updates from President Benson on the status of contract negotiations, being shh'd from the 32BJ delegation, as our members gathered around to ask questions about the contract. Nothing that was going on at that Convention, was more important to me or the other PEF delegates than our contract.

It wasn't until after the proposed contract was announced on June 11, 2000, that we could finally turn our attention to other things. Then after years, of suffering with the fiscal constraints imposed by a lack of a contract, we were able to look at our situation. I wasn't convinced that we needed a dues increase. I had to sit down and look at what the new contract would give us in revenue, look at our actual expenditures for the five years preceding the current fiscal year, and project out the succeeding future years. My email files tell me this occurred sometime late in June, because a cost comparison of five years was mailed to me by the Director of Finance, Tom Curley, on July 7, 2000. We had met with the auditors in mid-June 2000, so the figures that you say appeared on the website in March of 2000, prior to the fiscal year's end, did not officially exist. I remember asking the auditors their opinion of our financial status.They definitely could see problems ahead, a negative cash flow.

So, if an attempt to discredit me was made, it has backfired in your face, and you are the one that has some ulterior motive, and in fact are not credible. I find it

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disconcerting that all your editorials in the Heartland, are not identified as such. An article appears with no byline. Who wrote it? Maybe you are the one trying to hide something from the members.

Jane Hallum
Secretary-Treasurer

(It seems reasonable to me to assume that a document dated March 31, 2000 was actually written at that time. If it wasn't, it should have been so noted.

As for having something to hide, I wasn't running for office in May 2000, Jane Hallum was. Draw your own conclusions. -ed)

March 29, 2001

Dear Heartland Editor,

In a recent issue of your publication, an editorial opined that PEF's political contributions and endorsements accomplish little for PEF members and for the politicians themselves; therefore PEF should change it's practices regarding both activities.

The writer of that editorial apparently is not fully informed regarding the magnitude of PEF's influence in the political and legislative arenas. It is true that the PEF Executive Board (the elected representatives of the membership) endorsed 226 legislative candidates (1 39 Democrats and 87 Republicans) in the last election at the state and federal levels, and that the $490,000 of political contributions over the past two years and the 53,000 potential votes cast in that election are divided amongst those candidates. However, PEF has greater influence than those numbers would suggest because of how those dollars and members are used.

The PEF Legislative Department identified 18 races for state office that would be decided by relatively close margins, and in which we had an endorsed candidate (9 Democrats and 9 Republicans). PEF put extra resources into those races ' including money, mailings, staff and member involvement. This involvement included both working on PEF's phone banks and working in the candidates' campaign headquarters. In those 18 close races, the PEF endorsed candidate won EACH ONE! These candidates recognize the importance of PEF's support in their campaigns, and a few of them have specifically credited PEF for their victorys. As the saying goes, it's not how much you have, but how well you use it.

What did we get for our success in the political arena? We got success in the legislative arena. Sixteen

Letters - cont'd

PEF supported pieces of legislation were passed by both the Senate and the Assembly, and fourteen of them were signed into law. Many of these bills have been advocated for by PEF for years, and as PEF has devoted increasing resources to the political and legislative arenas, our efforts are now coming to fruition. Two examples highlight our influence in this arena. Democratic Assemblyman Eric Vitaliano, whom PEF has supported for years, is the chair of the Assembly Governmental Employees Committee. He is the primary sponsor of many of PEF's pension reform bills, and shepherded them through the legislative process. As a result, we gained passage of COLA, Tier Re-instatement, Tier Equity and other bills. Republican Senator Thomas Morahan, whom PEF helped to win his first term in 1 998 and his re-election last year, is chair of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. He sponsored and pushed through the Veteran's buy back legislation at our request, as well as the later amendment. This was also signed into law.

We have also been successful in the state's budget negotiations, keeping agencies budgeted for more than they otherwise would have been, keeping facilities open that might otherwise have been closed, and keeping members employed who might otherwise have been laid off.

And this year, with the help of our endorsed federal elected officials, we have a good chance of passing our Deferred Compensation legislation.

Anyone who says that PEF's political and legislative program isn't accomplishing anything of significance to PEF members doesn't know what they are talking about.

Ken Brynien,
Vice President PEF Statewide PAC Chair

P.S. In addition, please correct another factual error in the aforementioned editorial. PEF did not give Assemblyman Vitaliano $10,000. He only Received $2,700.

(The COLA that was passed was not the PEF Performance COLA that had been killed by Assemblyman Eric Vitaliano for the previous several years. That COLA was killed because the NYC union & AFL-CIO opposed it. They had raided their pension funds to provide 7% raises while state workers were getting zeros.

After NYC workers became part of the State Retirement system the AFL-CIO proposed a COLA which limits any increase to 1/2 the CPI on only the first

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RETIREMENT DREAMS AND PHANTASIES
(Personal reflections on a public issue)

By Howard G. Baumgartner

When I got my first State job in 1977, my then girlfriend's father was quite excited for me. "This is wonderful," he said. "You will never have to do any real work, and you will be able to retire at full pay when you get to be fifty!"

Well, I imagine that these are common fantasies for someone who has never worked in government. Many private sector types really believe that public employees are ripping them off, beginning with their first day on the job, and continuing until they die, almost on the public dole, after many years of milking the public cow.

The truth is, of course, quite different. Most public employees do have to work quite hard, for all of their working lives. And as far as I know, no public employee gets to retire at full pay at the age of fifty. But if these fantasies make the taxpayers feel better, who am I to deprive them of this pleasant illusion?

Still, I wish that there were a little more truth in this fantasy. I would really like to be able to retire, and look forward to, say, twenty years of happy, well funded retirement.

I'm afraid that my official life expectancy makes me doubt my ability to accomplish this goal. I think that I would need to retire by the age of fifty-eight. at the latest, in order to enjoy twenty years of retired bliss; and my status as a Tier III pension member makes it difficult for me to retire much before the age of sixty-two.

This isn't all that bad, really. It is better than the retirement picture facing most private sector employees. But it still means that I will need to survive until I am at least eighty-two, which seems unlikely. Also, having spent all these years accepting the abuse of private sector people who think that all public employees are worthless, I feel as though I'm entitled to some extra consideration.

My odds would be better had I started working for the State two years earlier. I would then be a Tier I employee, and be able to retire at the age of fifty-five.

There is still some chance that I may be able to realize my fantasy. There are some actions that could be taken by the State legislature to make my dreams come true.

For instance, they could pass legislation creating true Tier parity, so that all State employees were treated in exactly the same way. Right now our treatment is equal but separate; and those of you who followed the civil rights movement of the 50's know what that means.

Or, the Legislature could pass legislation allowing me to buy extra years of service credit. There are a couple of reasonable "excuses" they could use to justify this. First, I was involuntarily unemployed for a period of 14 months while on a civil service preferred list. They could allow me to purchase 14 months of service credit. This would certainly help me, and those like me.

Or, there is relief suggested by recent pension reforms. The Legislature recently passed a law saying the Tier III employees had only to contribute money to the retirement fund for a period of ten years. I have been contributing for twenty-three years. If they would be willing to give me additional service credit for the years of contributions over ten years, I would be able to pick up significant time. I might actually be able to retire by age fit\fty-eight.

Unfortunately for me, such legislation would need to be pushed by someone, and no one seems eager to do that. What we would need is the enthusiastic support of someone with power and influence; and there don't seem to be many people with power and influence who are really concerned with the needs of the many members like myself. If only I could secure the support of the Governor, or the Comptroller, or the majority leader of the State Senate!

If only I could secure the support of the PEF leadership! But they seems to have other eggs to fry.

But I live in hope. Perhaps PEF will wind up helping me in another way. Perhaps, during the next contract negotiations, they will secure pension reform helpful to those like me. They will need to give up something in return, of course. Perhaps they will help us in exchange for requiring all PEF employees to punch timeclocks. Or maybe they will get all Tier III employees an year of extra service credit by agreeing to a four year contract with no salary increases whatsoever. PEF has done similar things before. Perhaps they will do it again.

As I said, hope springs eternal. Perhaps I will be able to retire early anyway, by virtue of the wonderful performance of the stock market!

FBI - CONT'D

In a letter dated Jan. 5 to an official in the state Office of General Services, the comptroller's office said the Stanleys building lease was being returned to OGS without approval because of serious allegations of fraudulent conduct by the landlord.

The comptroller's office said in the letter that the allegations were the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation by the FBI and the U.S. attorney's office and that due to the allegations and the investigation, it is not clear that the landlord can be considered a responsible contractor.

No one has been charged in connection with the probe.

Though the state killed its plan to rent office space from Laberge Group in Troy, the company, which specializes in municipal projects and commercial and industrial developments, already has another large lease contract with the state in Albany.

In 1997, Laberge Group paid $9.65 million for a 12-story building at 41 State St. that has been the Department of State's rented headquarters since 1995. The lease agreement signed by the Department of State in 1995 was to expire this year.

But shortly before the building was sold, the state rushed through a new lease with Laberge worth about $17.2 million, according to internal state memorandums.

The rush came at the request of Ronald H. Laberge, who is founder of Laberge Engineering & Consulting and president of the limited liability company that purchased 41 State St., according to an affidavit contained in state records.

OGS memos said the urgency was justified because the new contract would save the state an estimated $856,000 over the course of the lease.

It's not clear what may become of the former Stanleys department store building. The five-story building, which is known as the Gay Building, was purchased in March 2000 for $385,000 by a limited liability company set up by Laberge Group, according to Rensselaer County property records.

In order to make the building ready for state workers, a costly renovation was needed. Troy officials had viewed the project as a cornerstone of their effort to rejuvenate a struggling downtown. City lawmakers voted last fall to leverage the city's future federal aid against a $3.5 million low-interest loan that was to be used by the company to renovate the building.

However, the federal aid was contingent on the state signing a long-term lease.

REGION 8 PAC REPORT

At the February meeting of the Region 8 PAC, Region 1 Coordinator, Joyce Degenhart joined the Region 8 PAC for this meeting.

Local Endorsement Guidelines were discussed.

Discussion on the possibility of an early endorsement of Comptroller Carl McCall was discussed. The PAC was not as favorable toward former HUD Secretary, Andrew Cuomo.

At the March meeting, Newly Credentialed members Hiram Eberlein, Arlea Igoe and Gustavo Santos were welcomed.

The Region 8 PAC's Legislative Reception, planned for March 28 was discussed. Also discussed was the PAC's Dinner for Council Leaders planned March 22. These events were held as planned, and were considered to be succesful.

At the April meeting, Officer elections were held. Lou Matrazzo was elected as PAC Chair, Tom Commanzo was elected as Vice Chair, Rob Grace was elected as Secretary. These officers were unopposed. George Mata, Steve Redler and Gustavo Santos were all nominated for Treasurer, after the first round of voting, and no candidate could get more than 50% needed, the top two candidates, Gustavo Santos and Steve Redler were voted on and Steve Redler was elected.

The Region 8 Pac formally adopted new local endorsement guidelines.

Discussion about the PAC's legislative priorities was deffered to the Legislative Initiatives sub-committee. Also deferred was discussion on the proposed changes to the Rockefeller Drug Laws.

At the May meeting, several issues were discussed, among them the parking fee for uptown locations.

PEF President Roger Benson had issued a policy statement on changes to the Rockefeller Drig Laws. Discussion on this new policy was deffered to the Legislative Iniatives Committee.

PEF leader tells lawmakers to add, not cut Parole Officers

ALBANY-Public safety will be improved and taxpayers will save money in the long run, if state lawmakers reject the governor's proposed state budget cuts for the Division of Parole.

That's the message today from Parole Officer Willis Toms, who testifies at a state budget hearing on behalf of the 1400 parole officers represented by the New York State Public Employees Federation.

"Parole is short staffed, and short staffing is dangerous, Toms says. "It is dangerous for the communities where parolees live, it's dangerous for our Parole Officers, it's dangerous for local police and it's dangerous for parolees themselves.

"The proposed budget has the potential-through the reduction of 27 positions-of adding nearly 2,000 cases to the caseloads of the remaining parole officers," Toms continues. "The average caseload of our officers in New York City is almost 83 parolees. With caseloads as high as these, it is impossible to properly supervise and monitor parolees."

And Toms warns that the problem will only worsen if the Rockefeller Drug law reforms are enacted, as more inmates would be released under parole supervision, parole caseloads will also increase.

Toms says the Public Employees Federation is asking lawmakers to restore funding for the 27 positions, and add funding to hire more officers to handle the higher caseloads. The union leader says effective parole supervision is a cost effective criminal justice strategy.

"It has been estimated that parole supervision costs approximately $3,500 per parolee annually and incarceration is estimated at over $35,000 per inmate annually," Toms says. "Preventing parolees from violating parole and returning to jail is safer for the public and is fiscally responsible. It is in all of our best interests to enhance parole supervision."

Letters - cont'd

$18,000 of pension. This is what actually passed.

The average PEF member working today will not get the full benefit of a COLA because they tend to have larger pensions. - ed)

NYC Union Negotiation Update

After months of deadlocked negotiations, the president of New York City's teachers' union declared that contract talks were at an impasse while Mayor Guiliani insited that talks were moving forward.

It is expected that Mayor Giuliani will try to reach a pattern-setting agreement with one of the unions seeking considerably less than the unions for the teachers and the police officers, which are both demanding raises of more than 20 percent.

The Giuliani administration has publicly offered a 2.5 percent wage increase a year for two years, but City Hall has indicated it might go slightly higher. Municipal union leaders insist that they could not accept less than what the Transport Workers Union, representing the city's bus and subway workers, received in the first two years of its current contract —5 percent and then 3 percent.

The Giuliani administration has argued that an 8 percent increase over two years would drain the city's finances. But many union leaders have said their workers deserve even more than 8 percent, noting that the city has a large budget surplus and that municipal workers took a two year wage freeze in their expired five year contract.

The Municipal Labor Committee, which coordinates bargaining for 100 unions representing city workers, originally decided that the United Federation of Teachers or the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association should negotiate the first contract because they could, in theory, make the strongest case for large raises.

Those two unions could make a compelling argument that the city was having a hard time recruiting and retaining teachers and police officers because suburban salaries were often at least 25 percent higher. Salaries for the city's teachers now start at $31,900 and top out at $70,000. Salaries for police officers begin at $31,305 a year, rising to $55,268 after 20 years.

The city's talks with the union representing 26,500 police officers faltered because city officials would not seriously entertain its demands for a raise of more than 30 percent. Insisting that the talks were at an impasse, the police union asked a state panel, the Public Employment Relations Board, to order a settlement that it hoped would lift the salaries of the city's police officers to suburban levels. The Giuliani administration has gone to court, insisting that it was improper for the P.B.A. to take the matter to that panel.

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NYC UPDATE - CONT'D

Shortly after a bargaining session ended, the union's president, Randi Weingarten, said that the two sides were deadlocked, with the city offering its 80,000 teachers a raise of 2.5 percent a year for two years, and with the union seeking an increase of more than 20 percent to catch up with suburban salaries.

Asserting that the talks were still moving forward, City Hall officials indicated that they would ask a state labor relations board to rule that there is no impasse. Such a ruling would mean that the state would not appoint a mediator or a panel to recommend a settlement, thus leaving it to the city and union to resume negotiations on their own.

The Giuliani administration has repeatedly said that the city cannot afford the wage increase of more than 20 percent that the United Federation of Teachers is seeking. Were the city to grant such an across-the-board increase to the teachers and all other municipal workers, it would cost the city $4.3 billion a year, Mr. Hanley said.

The president of New York City's teachers' union declared that contract talks were at an impasse and asked the state to name a mediator and, if needed, an impartial panel to recommend a settlement. If mediation fails, the next step will be for the state board to appoint an impartial three-member panel to recommend a nonbinding settlement for the teachers. But the employment relations board can conclude that there is no impasse and decline to step in.

The teachers' contract expired Nov. 15, and state law bars them from striking.

She said that it was no surprise that the city was having a hard time recruiting and retaining teachers when salaries were considerably higher in the suburbs. She noted that the city pays starting teachers $31,910, compared with $40,000 in Yonkers, and that the city pays teachers with a master's degree and four years' experience $38,598, compared with nearly $52,835 in Yonkers. The maximum salary for the city's teachers is $70,000, compared with more than $90,000 in Yonkers.

With the teachers and the police seeking hefty pay increases, city officials have concentrated their bargaining efforts on unions making more modest demands. The city's strategy, officials involved in the negotiations said, is to reach agreement with one of those unions in the hope that such an accord would set a pattern for all municipal unions while also undercutting the police union's case before the state panel.

The Giuliani administration understandably fears that if the state panel orders a large increase for the police before any other union reaches a settlement, that could set a pattern for all the other unions.

The fear among many teachers and police officers is that District Council 37 and Teamsters Local 237 might accept 8 percent in increases over two years, modeled after the first two years of the transport workers' agreement.

If District Council 37 and the Teamsters reach the first agreement, teacher and police union officials said they will press the city to drop its lock step practice of having every union accept the same increase as the first union to reach a contract. The average salaries of District Council 37 members is slightly more than $25,000 a year.

TUITION REIMBURSMENT

The PSTP Voucher and Voucher Alternative Programs ended with the expiration of the 1995–1999 PEF/State collective bargaining agreement on April 1, 1999. When these programs ended PEF was in negotiations with the State of New York for a successor agreement. During the prolonged contract negotiations some PEF represented state employees continued to pursue their educational goals. Specifically members attended college courses during the Fall 1999 and Spring 2000 semesters.

Article 15 of the agreement provides funding in each fiscal year of the agreement for the professional development of the members of PS&T bargaining unit. The funding is provided for the majority of these programs on a meet and confer basis. Numerous meetings were held with representatives from the Governor's Office of Employee Relations since the ratification of the 1999– 2003 PEF/State collective bargaining agreement to discuss reimbursing PEF represented employees for tuition costs incurred during for the Fall 1999 and the Spring 2000 semesters.

PEF's position was and continues to be that both the State and the employee benefited from the employee's continued education and funding was provided in the agreement for that fiscal year, based on this, reimbursement should be retroactive to the beginning of the contract. However, the GOER representatives would not agree to provide funding for tuition costs incurred prior to August 11, 2000. The State will not agree to fund a reimbursement program for the Fall 1999 and Spring 2000 semesters. The agreement only requires the state to meet and confer with PEF on this issue. Since the State will not agree to this reimbursement program, there will not a retroactive tuition reimbursement program for the Fall 1999 and Spring 2000 semesters.

In order to make up for the limited retroactive

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EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT

Listed below is a brief summary of the Executive Board meeting held March 8 & 9, 2001 at the Quality Inn, in Albany.

Roger introduced, and swore in, 2 new Executive Board members. June Edwards and Darwin Richards, both from Education.

The printed agenda for this meeting was approved with a few changes in the ordering and several new items.

Minutes from the December meeting were accepted as presented, with one change in the attendance list.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report:

Roger Benson gave an introduction to the budget, explaining the Administration's rationale behind it.

The Budget Advisory Committee (Bill Parolari) made a short presentation, followed by a question and answer period.

A motion was put forth to approve the budget. Jane handed out an errata sheet, and also offered several minor adjustments. The budget was approved as presented.

There was a motion approved for MIS to look at upgrading PEF's computer hardware & software, and to come back to the Board with recommendations.

There was a discussion regarding Division accounts at Amalgamated Bank.

Immediately after Lunch, the Board was addressed by Denis Hughes, President of NYS AFL-CIO. During his speech he talked about their Legislative Agenda, which includes Taylor Law reform (need to level the playing field), pensions, and privatization. His speech was followed by a question and answer period.

A motion was approved to pay one member for a day of EOL ($164.50), which had been docked from his pay.

There was a report on the use of PIN's to be used on petitions, instead of Social Security numbers. It seems to be well accepted, but there is a need to educate our members on how to use it.

There was a discussion on inaccurate postings of L/M expenses. L/M chairs need to be able to review expenses. This will be made available on a regular basis.

President's Report:

Roger gave an update on his Administration's priorities.

Job Security. Majority of the problems are in OMH. There are currently 2 closures pending.

Stronger Contract. This is a continuing process. He expects to have a new Contract Team in place by this year's convention.

Retirement Reform.. Still actively pursuing many issues. Looking for help from NYS AFL-CIO.

Civil Service Enforcement. Currently 3 lawsuits pending.

A question and answer period took place.

Roger mentioned that the first arbitration for Article 12.17 (Timekeeping) will be the D.O.T. case, on May 7.

A motion was approved to send the Albany Housing contract to their membership, for ratification.

Roger Scales gave an update on several pending issues. Article 12.17. DOT scheduled for May 7. Standby / On Call and OT Meals effective dates. Arbitration set for April 23.

Unit Determinations. Currently negotiating with GOER. Next meeting date is March 29.

A question and answer period took place.

Recessed for the day at 4:03 pm.–Returned into session on 3-9-01, at 9:30 am.

Convention Committee.

This year's convention will be held in Niagra Falls, Oct 14–17.

The agenda for this year's convention was approved.

The travel policy for this year's convention was approved.

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E-BOARD - CONT'D

Roger Benson presented Staff Recognition Awards to:

Sylvia Simone, Secretary at our Region 3 office, in Rochester.

Robert Jackson, Director of Field Services, at our Region 10/11 office in NYC.

Roger presented a proposed Side Letter Between SEIU and PEF. The intent is to create general parity between the per capita taxes that PEF pays to SEIU and those it pays to the AFT.

He stated that this would increase our net cash flow a minimum of $1 million over the next 5 years.

A motion was made to approve the side letter. After a period of questions and answers, it was approved.

Roger made nominations for an Ethics Hearing Panel: Booker Ingram, Kartikey Adhvaryu, Paula Hennessy, Tom Van Bramer, Nancy Becker. All were approved.

Member Items:

Executive Board Members as Stewards – Deferred to the Presidents Report at the next meeting.

Location of Executive Board meetings–Motion approved to postpone to the next meeting, so that a report can be prepared for us to act upon.

Dredging of the Hudson River. A Resolution was approved in support of dredging.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am.

Our next meeting is scheduled for June 21 & 22, at the Best Western Airport Inn, on Wolf Rd, in Colonie.

DRUG REFORM - CONT'D

vision in community-based programs with guaranteed placement upon release from a correctional facility.There should be an expanded number of community-based residential programs for parolees.

5.The DOCS CASAT program should be expanded to become the main drug treatment program offered in correctional facilities. In addition, comprehensive drug treatment programs should be reinstated in all maximum security correctional facilities.

TUITION - CONT'D

reimbursement the PEF representatives to the Professional Development Committee and GOER agreed to fund the following programs:

1) PSTP Voucher Program for the Fall 2001 and Spring 2002 semesters–one voucher for one course up to a maximum of $600 per semester,

2) A Special Additional voucher for the Fall 2001 and Spring 2002 semesters up to a maximum of $600 per semester. Undergraduates can use the special additional voucher to take a second course in each semester. Graduate students can us the special additional voucher towards the cost of the graduate level course that the PSTP voucher did not cover and if there is a balance left over it can be applied to the tuition cost of a second course.

A special Summer 2001 semester VALT tuition reimbursement program will be established. Undergraduate and graduate students can apply for the Summer 2001 semester for reimbursement of tuition of 100% up to a maximum of $600 for college credit-bearing course work taken at any accredited college or university.

The funding for the special additional vouchers for the Fall 2001 semester and the Spring 2002 semester and the reimbursement program for the Summer 2001 semester was provided from unallocated funding included in Article 15 for the fiscal year 1999–2000. The guidelines for the above programs are in development and have not been provided to the administrator as yet.

HEARTLAND WANTS NEWS!

In the hope of publishing a little MORE NEWS, and a little LESS DEBATE, we solicit the following material:

For a **BULLETIN BOARD**, we request Division leaders to send us notice of upcoming Division activities and events and such other information as they would like to share with our members.

For **DIVISION NEWS**, we request copies of Division Council minutes. These will be reviewed for items which might be of interest to members of other Divisions within the Region.

For **COMMITTEE REPORTS**, we request copies of Region 8 Committee minutes. Division Committees may also submit reports, if they feel them to be of general interest.

April 2001 Civil Service Report

The PEF Region 8 Civil Service Committee met on April 24, 2001 at PEF HQ.

The committee discussed the progrees of the Article 78, Zone Scoring case now before the Supreme Court in Albany County.

The committee was concerned that attorney Lisa King, who has been handling the case since PEF first brought suit, was not in court to present the case. Ms King was reported to be in Buffalo on another case. The case was instead presented by Dionne Wheatley. Former Civil Service Committee Chair, Lou Barr suggested that PEF Legal Counsel, Bill Seamon wanted Ms Wheatley to take over the case.

The Committee has invited MS King to their next meeting to discuss this particular case.

There was concern about the relationship between the Committee and the PEF Legal Department.

In other business, the response to a survey sent out by PEF regarding Parallel Career Ladders had very poor response, only 5 of 100 surveys were returned. The Committee will attempt to have additional surveys sent out.

Social Activism or Member Interest?

By Dennis Anderson

Some Executive Board members just used their positions to advance their personal social activist agendas at the expense of PEF member interests. Why risk officially sanctioning a policy that could reduce the amount of money available for State Operations, (which funds PEF members' salaries)?

At its March 8th & 9th meeting, PEF's Executive Board passed a resolution calling for the dredging of PCBs from the Hudson River by General Electric. There is always a price to be paid for social activism, but it may not be readily apparent without first connecting the dots between cause and effect. A few E-Board members did oppose the dredging motion and pointed out that this issue does not impact the terms and conditions of PEF members' employment. The social activists prevailed by waiving the green flag of environmentalism and asserting that the environment in which we live is of overriding importance.

There is some merit to both positions. The real question is not whether to dredge or not to dredge, but whether it furthers PEF's ability to improve the terms and conditions of employment for its members to support a resolution calling for dredging. Few are inclined to challenge the emotional assertion that the environment is of overriding importance. Will dredging actually improve the environment? There is enough disagreement in the scientific community on this question that the answer usually boils down to the feeling of tile respondent rather than a scientific proof.

There is a history to this issue that must be considered to fully comprehend the implications of PEF going on the record in writing as in favor of compelling dredging. At the time General Electric discharged PCBs into the Hudson River under New York State discharge permits, it was not known that PCBs were a toxic substance. As a matter of fact, PCBs were the safest dielectric at the time because they were not flammable or explosive. Not only was GE was in full compliance with the existing environmental laws, but they voluntarily stopped discharging PCBs into the Hudson River, began their own clean up efforts, and stopped manufacturing with PCBs prior to their becoming illegal in 1977. I am not trying to pin a medal on GE, they simply acted to continue to conduct business within the law and make a profit.

Consider that New York State also issued discharge permits to Ciby-Geigy, Hercules, and others in the upper Hudson River area who have possibly discharged other pollutants into the Hudson River. It would be naive to think that GE will acquiesce to pick up the tab for other polluters. Since Ciby-Geigy and Hercules have left New York State, it is unlikely that they will be paying for any clean up. What do you think GE will argue in court when it opposes paying for the entire cost of a rnandated dredging? Should it come to it, GE can make a persuasive legal appeal that the regulator who issued the discharge permits bears some responsibility for the presence of PCBs and other pollutants in the Hudson River.

If GE succeeds to some degree with that argument in court - a plausible possibility in my opinion - the State of New York could be under a court order to pay some part of the cost of dredging. The impact on the terms and conditions of employment of PEF members then becomes a bit clearer. Do you think the Governor at that time will look to reduce the politically popular Aid to Localities or cut funding for State Operations (which funds PEF member salaries) to pay the State's share of the cost of dredging? With PEF on the record as favoring dredging, the answer to that one should be obvious.

PEF should have maintained its neutrality on

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Is The Roth IRA a Better Way to Save For Your Retirement Than The Deferred Compensation Plan?

By Robert Fisher

A series of changes in federal law already enacted and others that are under consideration could make the Roth Individual Retirement Account ("Roth IRA") a better modality for most state employees to save for their retirement than the Deferred Compensation Plan.

I have been urging people to fund a Roth IRA for some time even if they are participants in the Deferred Compensation Plan. I am even more convinced now than ever before that the Roth IRA may be a more attractive option because of the new regulations put into effect by the Internal Revenue Service just this past January 2001 and new legislation that is being considered bv Congress. Consider the following:

1.The Roth IRA provides tax free income. In contrast, the income from the Deferred Compensation Plan withdrawals is taxed at the Plan participant's tax rate for the year when the withdrawal was made. Currently, the combined maximum tax rate for a New York State resident would be in excess of 46%. Even for most New York State residents, it is likely to be about 35% at the present time. In other words, at least a third of the income and possibly nearly half of the income would go to pay taxes.

Also important in this connection is the fact that it is entirely possible that when you retire you will not be in a lower tax bracket; in fact you can be in a higher tax bracket. For example, about the time you retire you could inherit a large sum in the form of 401K plan funds from a deceased relative or spouse. Even if we make the reasonable assumption that you as a beneficiary will arrange to take minimum payments from this 401 K pot each year - the amount of which will be set by the new IRS distribution tables - this could still be enough to raise your tax bracket. In that circumstance, the advantages of a Roth IRA become obvious.

2.If legislation under consideration by Congress is passed, the amount of posttax income that someone can contribute to a Roth IRA ora traditional IRA (which for some may have a tax advantage in the year the contribution is made) will rise to $5,000 a year. For someone in the highest income tax bracket, the income received from that would be the same as the income from about $10,900 in pretax dollars. What is especially important to remember though is that if left long enough, the Roth IRA provides a net income higher than a higher amount contributed in pretax dollars. The key to deciding whether to invest in a Roth IRA versus the Deferred Compensation Plan may be how long one can leave the money to grow. I suggest that employees who expect to work at least fifteen more years may find that the Roth IRA is a better modality for them.

3.The third advantage of the Roth IRA is the countless choices of investment vehicles that you can utilize. The Deferred Compensation Plan offers many choices but while most are decent there may be better ones not offered in the Plan. Especially if you want an REIT in your portfolio the Roth IRA is desirable from the standpoint of where you put your money. REITs are a suitable investment for those seeking diversification of their assets. Most money managers recommend a small portion--perliaps five percent-- of one's total assets be in the form of a REIT.

Initially, the Roth IRA was not well received by many people who placed much too much emphasis on an immediate tax benefit such as they could receive from a traditional IRA or the Deferred Compensation Plan. But one should keep uppermost in mind the likely worth of one's assets at the point where the nestegg is needed to provide income. Under realistic assumptions, the Roth IRA performs better than other modalities for those who can leave the money for a sufficiently long time.

(The author is a PEF shop steward. He has served as Chairman of the PEF Pre-retirement Planning Committee from 1997-2000 and is now a member of the Pension Committee)

Activism? - cont'd

this complex issue. Regardless of how one decides the dredging question, it was inappropriate and counter to PEF members' interest to have pushed this social activist agenda at the expense of PEF's future bargaining position.

The silver lining for PEF members in this dark little cloud is tinged with irony. The price of the E-Board's inappropriate social activism may not come due any time soon because it is unlikely that the 'business friendly' Bush Administration will compel dredging. Even if it does, GE has the resources and the will to carry on protracted litigation.

A Resolution Calling for the Dredging of Polychlorinated Byphenyls (PCBs) From the Hudson River, By the General Electric Company

Whereas, the health and beauty of the Hudson River is critical to the economic vitality of our communities and the river is an asset to the entire region, and

Whereas the Hudson River has been designated an American Heritage River and its valley has been designated a National Heritage Area, and

Whereas nearly 200 miles of the Hudson River - from Hudson Falls to New York City - is a federal Superfundd site, because of PCB contamination, and

Whereas PCBs are the most significant contaminant limiting full use and enjoyment of the Hudson River and PCBs were banned in 1976 because of a variety of known carcinogens with detrimental effects on humans, wildlife, and the entire regions' eco-system, and

Whereas, PCBs remain in the Hudson River exposing humans and wildlife to their effects, and

Whereas, an estimated $40 million has been lost, every year, over the past 20 years, because of the closing of Hudson River commercial fisheries and restrictions on recreational fishing, and,

Whereas the Hudson Valley has lost an important cultural heritage and way of life, for both urban and rural people, and the economic vitality of the river continues to be hampered by the limitations on recreational use of the river and the stigma of PCB contamination, and

Whereas, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has determined that, without remediation, dredging, the current levels of PCB contamination will continue indefinitely, affecting the future of at least another generation, possibly two:

Therefore, be it resolved, that PEF supports the findings of the proposed remediation plan in the Hudson River Reassessment being conducted by the EPA, under the Superfund, and urges EPA to complete the reassessment and issue a record of decision without delay, including the evaluation and timely implementation of remedial actions, which include environmental dredging. The Public Employees Federation urges a course of action, which will most effectively restore the Hudson River, while evaluating technologies that can be used to destroy PCBS, and

Be it further resolved, that PEF urges EPA to fully consider public opinion, complete the assessment and remediation work as quickly as possible, and

Be it further resolved, that PEF ask our international unions, SEIU and AFT as well as NYSUT and the New York State AFL-CIO to urge their support of this resolution.

Uptown Parking - cont'd

fight to retain the best possible terms and conditions of employment.

The State Campus is more akin to such corporate campuses as Corporate Woods and Wade Road-Holland Avenue is more akin to the Thruway Authority location; Wolf Road locations are similar to their neighbors e.g. Colonie Center, Borders, Toys R Us. I dare say that employees of those concerns don't pay to park.

Some would argue that given the spasmodically parlous fiscal situation of New York State, uptown employees should help the State by remitting $3.00 plus taxes per pay period. This is but a grain of sand in the Sahara Desert of the Governor's $83 billion budget proposal. Anyway, parlous State finances never deterred our politicians from feeding luxuriantly from the public trough.

Finally, PEF intends to fight this ill-conceived management initiative in various arenas. To do this successfully, members cannot be passive. Back in the early 1970's the State Office Campus employees represented by the CSEA won through by civil disobedience when the State Administration attempted to impose parking fees.

PEF and CSEA will be calling on you as this situation escalates. I urge you to heed the call.

PEF Budget

Projected Annual Revenues	2001	2000	Change
Dues & Fees			
Membership Dues	$24,051,880	$19,854,073	+ $4,197,807
Agency Shop Fees	$348,120	$1,259,579	- $911,459
Total Dues & Fees	$24,400,000	$21,097,726	+ $3,302,274
Per Capita Dues (AFT & SEIU)	($6,138,450)	($5,515,727)	+ $622,723
Divisional Per Capita Distributions	($1,038,005)	($754,979)	+ $283,026
Affiliation DUES (AFL-CIO & Labor Councils)	($170,480)	($236,938)	- $66,458
Total Pass Thru	($8,885,935)	($6,507,644)	+ $2,378,291
Net Income	$15,514,065	$14,590,082	+ $923,983
Other Income	$909,420	$1,613,188	- $703,768
Total Projected Revenue	$16,423,485	$16,203,270	+ $220,215
Proposed Annual Expenditures			
Total Direct Staff & Program Expenditures	$12,760,490	$11,870,911	+ $889,579
Operating Expenses	$3,006,295	$3,141,732	- $135,437
General Administrative Expenses	$656,700	$1,335,567	- $678,867
Total Proposed Expenses	$16,423,485	$16,348,210	+ $75,275
Deficit	$0	($239,274)	- $239,274

Figures for 2001 are from the PEF Draft Budget for 2001. Figures for 2000 are from the PEF Annual Report for 2000.

Uptown Parking - cont'd

were somewhat offset by increased costs in such areas as health insurance. The State having grudgingly provided small raises seeks again to pick tl-ie back pocket of its employees.

We believe that beyond just increasing the misery index of its employees, the State is attempting to change the term and condition of free parking for those employees who still have it. In this way, the State clears the decks to move employees with great alacrity, to God-forsaken inner cities. Once there, workers will be left to the mercy of unscrupulous landlords and purveyors of privately owned parking.

The State loses nothing. The unions must negotiate in good faith. If an impasse occurs or six months elapses, the dispute gets referred to last offer binding arbitration. Each side places its final position before the arbitrator. The latter picks one or the other. As the status quo party in this case, State workers can't do better than to retain the current situation. Management can't do worse than maintenance of the current situation. Management, therefore, has everything to gain and nothing to lose by negotiations that could culminate in an arbitrator's decision.

Some of our downtown brothers and sisters may think that because they pay to park everyone should. The reality is that charging fees at uptown locations will not mean that downtown parking costs won't be increased.

In fact, current disparities may help hold down escalating costs downtown, and protecting current terms and conditions has resulted in more parking downtown, which benefits those being moved as well as long term downtown employees. It is clearly our union's function to

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Parking Update

Nine thousand state workers who have long enjoyed free parking at the W. Averell Harriman State Office Campus and several other sites are facing a new fee for the spaces.

The fee—$3 every two weeks—is the first charged for parking in these areas, and marks the first attempt to implement such a charge since the 1970's.

The state announced the idea Thursday at a meeting of a joint Downtown Parking Committee. It would also cover parking on Holland Avenue and Wolf Road.

New York and public employee unions agreed to contract language in the early 1980s allowing a fee, although details must be negotiated, said Mary Hines, spokeswoman for the Governor's Office of Employee Relations. If the two sides can't agree, the issue would go to an arbitrator.

"The state has always felt that there should be some sharing in the cost of parking,'' she said.

Hines said the state wants to cover the cost of maintenance and administration, and put some "equity'' into parking for all employees. Many other state workers pay for parking, she noted, so charging all a fee would be more fair.

The news comes as the state and unions are discussing another controversial parking issue, the possible closing of a 1,500-car lot off Washington Avenue Extension. Those employees who now park and catch buses there would be switched to downtown peripheral lots, according to Office of General Services spokesman Randall Sawyer. He said no decision has been made, though a date as early as July 2001 has been suggested.

At the same time, the state is moving more than 1,500 workers from the Department of Environmental Conservation's headquarters on Wolf Road to a new office building downtown, which has parking for only 1,225 cars in a garage and nearby lot. OGS says any overflow would go to other peripheral lots.

Sawyer said the state considers the closure of the Washington Avenue lot a plus for workers, who would be able to park closer to work, but employees are worried about the increased traffic downtown and question whether the state will really have enough parking. The city of Albany has once again proposed a residential permit parking scheme this year, it would include all streets within a 1 mile radius of the new East Garage.

In addition, OGS has also raised the parking fee for all lots including the peripheral lots by 15.4 %, effective April 12, 2001. The increases range from $56.16 per year for peripheral lots to $224.64 per year for covered reserved parking. The increases were announced in a memo released on March 14, 2001.

Controversey has surfaced over this garage as well, with city officials claiming the State Workers are not parking there in order to park for free on city streets. OGS has said that it issued 2800 permits forthe 2400 spaces in the garage but many permits have not been issued to State Workers by their agencies. This has resulted in the apparent under utilization noted by the Albany officials.

Uptown Parking Fees Increase Workers' Misery Index

By Jeff Satz,
PEF Region 8 Coordinator

For something seemingly mundane, parking is a labor relations issue that resembles a ripened sunburn at the peel and scratch stage.

On March 1, 2001, "a day that will live in iiifamy", New York State opened a new front in its ongoing war against State employees, by demanding negotiations on State Campus parking. The uninitiated might ask how one equates a demand for negotiations to war. The answer quite seemingly is that the aptly misnamed Governor's Office of Employee Relations is seeking to use a contract clause allowing for negotiations on parking rates as a lever to take away a long-standing term and condition of employment from uptown employees.

We had to read in the newspaper the next day that the parking proposal was suddenly expanded to include Wolf Road and Holland Avenue locations. When PEF asked that the demand for negotiations be put into writing, it was then further expanded to the Schenectady location being built for DOT Region 1. We can argue that the State should pay its workers to park in Schenectady.

The State is asking for $3.00 per pay period plus applicable taxes. This doesn't seem like a lot of money, but the State has resumed annually increasing the rates (per the contract) for downtown lots and garages. You can rest assured that once parking charges are imposed uptown they will also go up.

State workers received four years of zero salary increases during the 1990's. Such raises as were received were often paid late, were at best modest, and

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