CSEA to library trustees: 'Show some respect'

By Ruth N. Geller and Melissa Hale- Spencer

GUILLERLAND—It will continue to fester between the Guilderland Public Library’s board of trustees and its protesting workers.

The board’s Sept. 12 meeting was marked by angry pickets outside the library doors and by frustration and rage within.

Before the meeting, CSEA protesters, including library staff, marched for the second time in objection to extended Sunday hours and loss of time-and-a-half pay for working them.

Kate Luscombe, labor relations specialist for Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA), said the protest that night, "Employees are upset and disturbed by the board's lack of respect. They want their pay." Protesters echoed her message carrying signs that read: "Show Some Respect to CSEA, We want our Pay." Some chanted the same slogan as motorists driving on Western Avenue honked their horns to express solidarity with library employees.

Library employees claim that they are paid far less than library staff at other local branches, but, according to reference librarian Maria Buch, "salary increases are not the issue here, and have nothing to do with us here, and have nothing to do with CSEA to library trustees: 'Show some respect'."

Coyotes in New Scotland

A pack of trouble?

By Lynn Rothenberg

NEW SCOTLAND — Howling coyotes in the distant, starry night conjure up romances from movies and books about the Old West, which portrayed cowboys sitting around campfires as coyotes filled the night air with their mournful howls. But what if these furry intruders were in your backyard?

According to Tom Monroe, of Upper Flat Rock Road, there is a den of coyotes living comfortably approximately 200 feet from his back door. They live in property next to his, in an old abandoned trailer, he said. Monroe has three young children and is concerned for his family's safety.

Although he has not actually seen the animals, Monroe said he first started hearing them in May. The cries of young pups were audible along with their parents. Usually he heard their howling "anything from 12 to 5 a.m." Recently he heard them while his children were in his above-ground pool, playing during lunchtime.

"That's not normal," said Monroe. "When you hear those animals, it's scary with their growling and crying noises." Monroe maintains he no longer has any rabbits, raccoons, or squirrels around his property.

"Mentor for everyone

V’ville says goodbye

By Jo E. Prout

VOORHEESVILLE—Beloved school administrator Linda Walkenbritt spent her life educating, inspiring, and befriending all whom she met. She died Saturday, Sept. 16, at St. Peter's Hospital in Albany after battling cancer for more than a year. She was 53.

Family, friends, coworkers and students filled Congregation Beth Emmet in Albany to capacity on Monday to return the respect which Mrs. Walkenbritt has shown to each of his or her students.

"Linda was always thinking of other people," said her son-in-law, Brett Singer. "She always had a kind word for everyone. She put other people before herself. Right up until the end, the hardest thing was getting the phone away from her. She was asking for your calls, or sending cards.

Her son, Jeremy "Jamie" Walkenbritt, said those gathered that he thought of Mrs. Walkenbritt in two ways, as "my mom," and as someone who gave of herself to others. He invited his mourners to keep the part of her that she had freely given, and to remember her.

"Honor, morality, and conscience were the words used to describe Mrs. Walkenbritt by her friend and supervisor Dr. Alan McCartney.

"She taught our students ... and she lived — those virtues," he said. "She touched so many people and lived a life that was worth respect, and I believe her memory will be well-respected." Mrs. Walkenbritt earned two master's degrees in reading and administration, and spent more than 20 years with the Voorheesville Central School District, first as a teacher, and then as an administrator.

Classes in Voorheesville were cancelled Monday, so that Mrs. Walkenbritt’s friends and family could mourn her.

Eagle brought back to life

By Melissa Hale-Spencer

GUILLERLAND — The bald eagle looked patient in the human hands of its rescuers Tuesday.

Sally Morgan held the seven-month-old eagle — a male that was found injured and clinging to life — as she was at work at The Animal Hospital in Guilderland. Tuesday, after removing a protective wrap from the eagle's tail feathers, they put it in a large outdoor cage so it could recover its muscle tone in preparation for release to the wild today.

"I was swooping him although he could rip me apart if he wanted to," she said.

Becker has been involved in wildlife rehabilitation for a quarter-century. He still finds it thrilling. "When a bird like this looks at you, he looks in your eyes right through to your soul," said the vet.

The bird Morgan held had fluffy eyes with large black pupils centered on either side of a sharply curved yellow beak. Its white-feathered head had the noble look of the bird on the President's flag. But rather than clutching an olive branch and a head of arrows in its powerful talons, it clutched Morgan's arm.

Becker gently removed the film that had been wrapped around the eagle's tail feathers, to protect them while it was being treated Tuesday, he was being moved to an outdoor cage, where he could regain his strength and be observed before his release.

Becker said he admired the eagle's calmness and attributed it to the birds' intelligence. "This passive response is unique to eagles," said the vet. "They struggle hard for 30 or 40 seconds, then stop. They don't waste their energy." The vet went on, "They're not inherently mean birds, either. He could bite her hand for holding his foot," he pointed out, "but he doesn't."