

VC ECHOES

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 5

MARCH 6, 2000

VCTA Teacher Wins International Recognition

The VCTA is proud to announce the international recognition achieved by one of our teaching members. Jane Dionne, a teacher at Montgomery Elementary School, was selected to present her paper entitled, "Teaching Hemingway to Elementary Students", at the International Hemingway Conference, which was held in Bimini in January of this year. Jane attended from the third through the ninth of the month, at her own expense. As noted by her professor/mentor/liaison at S.U.N.Y. New Paltz, Dr. Harry R. Stoneback, "All teachers and administrators in the front line of institutions (i.e., our elementary schools) should be proud of the participation of one of their teachers in this conference. We here at the Hemingway Society and Foundation...are pleased and proud to include, for the first time in the history of our conference programs, elementary school teachers who are doing important work in Hemingway studies...these panelists will enrich and deepen their knowledge of literature through participation in these conferences, and we



Jane Dionne, recipient of the Anna Othilia Hagland-Helmer Josephs Award Recognizing Literary Excellence

know that such fine teachers will carry that knowledge back to their elementary classrooms."

From approximately one hundred forty participants, fifteen awards and fellowships were given. Jane was honored as one of these recipients with the Anna Othilia Hagland-Helmer Josephs Award Recognizing Literary Excellence for her work. The Award was signed and presented by the keynote speaker, Derrick Walcott, 1992 Nobel Poet Laureate. Jane presented the stories and art work created by her elementary students who studied Hemingway's stories and style of writing. The students' work was praised by the professors attending the con-

ference. Jane was invited to return to the conference in two years by the Director of the Conference. To say this is an impressive and uncommon achievement would not be overstating the fact. Jane has created, for herself and the Valley Central School Community, something to be extremely pleased with and proud of. Kudos and congratulations to you, Jane – may your successes continue and enrich our students' lives!

~Jay Sussdorff

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

The Art of Teaching 2

The Living Weather 3

EC Cookies 3

DARE Officer Wins 4

Gore on Education 8

PTSA goes to Market 9

VCTA Elections 10

Video Requirements 10

Ads are coming 11

Pay Teachers More 12

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *MS Safe Action Team*, pg. 4
- *On Good Health and a Safe Environment...FAQ's on the Orange Ulster School District Health Plan*, pg. 5
- *Save at the Pharmacy*, pg. 5
- *VCTA Highlights*, pgs. 6-7
- *AFL-CIO Boycotts*, pg. 9
- *State sets teleconferences for Math*, pg. 10
- *Mac's Musings*, pg. 12-13

From the President... The Art of Teaching

In the last edition of *Echoes*, Jay Sussdorff spoke passionately about the new establishment's desire and attempt to both quantify and qualify the teaching-learning process. This concept, however, is neither new nor innovative. Educators have been attempting to objectify this process for centuries. I believe this desire is innate. We all possess the will to repeat and improve upon our successes with students, and I believe we can and do accomplish this when we evaluate our methodologies in relationship to desired outcomes.

Problems that may arise, however, are two-fold:

1) Are the desired outcomes realistic and desirable? For example, I truly believe the latest "eduspeak" premise that proclaims that all children can learn. However, I do not believe that all children can attain the same level of mastery regardless of hereditary or environmental influences, nor do I believe that this politically incorrect complication can be overcome by simply providing unlimited time and resources (neither of which will, of course, be forthcoming from the education gods).

2) **If** one believes the preceding, then it certainly seems that modern teachers are stuck between the proverbial "rock and a hard place." If expectations are continually changing, does it not follow that

methodologies must also change to better meet these expectations? Therefore, it would appear that teachers must seek new, creative, and innovative methodologies to ensure success.

Why then, at a time when creativity and innovation are most needed, do we see a state and national movement to quantify the teaching process. I once again bring you Jay's words: "... why do I feel as

if some huge, amorphous beast is attempting to pull me into its maw, chew me up, swallow me, digest and assimilate me, and regurgitate me as an educational action figure with no uniqueness or singularity or identity of my own, just spouting or espousing all the 'right' ideas and methods?"

I certainly hope the education gods, in their attempt to quantify the educational process, do not forget the most important ingredient in the education formula. William Alexander Percy says it well: "As with all great teachers, his curriculum was an insignificant part of what he communicated. From him you didn't learn a subject, but life. . .

.Tolerance and justice, fearlessness and pride, reverence and pity, are learned in a course on long division if the teacher has those qualities, . . ."



...when teaching methods are applied to the human condition they become, in part, an art form.

The process of attempting to both quantify and qualify the teaching-learning process is admirable and necessary. I believe this process improves us all. It is a process, however, without end. There will never be **an** answer. It is a process that can never completely account for the uniqueness of the human condition. Teaching methods and techniques are generally not right or wrong in some objectively scientific manner because when teaching methods are applied to the human condition they become, in part, an art form.

Editorial, Tim Brown

Do you know something we should know?

The VC ECHOES is the voice of the VCTA Officers, Executive Council and members. It is our goal to promote the honors, achievements and ideas of our members. If you or a colleague have been honored for an achievement, or if you have an innovative lesson or classroom activity, a program that you have developed, or

event in your building that should be covered, let us know. Also if you have an idea or opinion you would like to express, write to us.

We will publish articles that positively contribute to the welfare of this union and its members. We will accept no attacks on any union members. We will accept a thoughtful discussion of all related issues in the

letters column. We reserve the right to reply to those that seem to reflect a misunderstanding of the union and its policies. Send articles or letters to Patti Lunden, Editor at the HS.

~ Patti Lunden

Jeanne Flanagan takes steps toward NYS Academy for Learning and Teaching

Walden Elementary School physical education teacher, Jeanne Flanagan is in the process of seeking induction into the New York State Academy for Teaching and Learning. She has submitted an interdisciplinary learning unit she has designed, developed and implemented called **The Living W.E.A.T.H.E.R.** (*Witness Every Action That Has Environmental Responses*) as part of the validation process for induction. **The Living W.E.A.T.H.E.R.** is a unit of lesson plans for every elementary level, kindergarten through fifth grade, which enables students to realize actions have effect individual movement, group movement and environmental movement. Standards in early language, science and physical education are being met in the lessons while children learn group dynamics and leadership skills. There is cooperation between Walden and

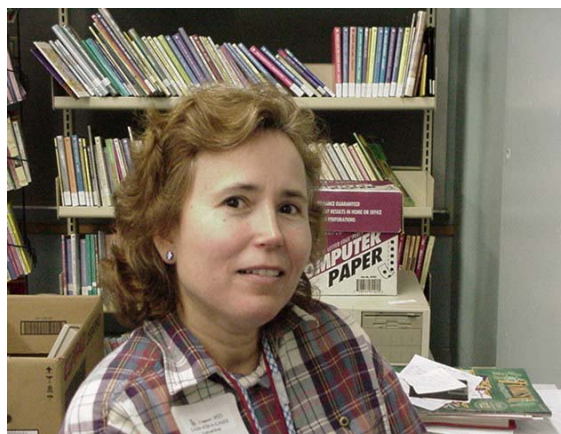
Berea Elementary as Berea's weather station is consulted for information used in the lessons. Additionally, fourth and fifth graders utilize a digital camera in their lessons giving them access to technology as well.

If accepted for membership in the Academy, Jeanne Flanagan and VC would be recognized in the State Education Department's Executive Bulletin

and on the Department's web site at the NYS Academy for Teaching and Learning,

*The Living W.E.A.T.H.E.R. is
a unit of interdisciplinary
lesson plans for every
elementary level . . .*

www.nysatl.nysed.gov, and her work would also be eligible to appear on the Academy's web site.



Jeanne Flanagan presents *The Living Weather* at the 1999-2000 Statewide Peer Review on March 19 – 21, 2000 in Albany.

A number of teachers who belong to the Academy have appeared on State Ed. Teleconferences, and public television broadcasts (PBS), and have presented their work at statewide conferences. Members of the Academy are introducing the peer review process to school districts as a viable means of professional development focused on higher learning standards.

East Coldenham Students Bake Cookies for Veterans



Since 1990, the student body at East Coldenham Elementary has baked cookies and made cards two times a year for the veterans at Castle Point Medical

Center.

Half of the school contributes cookies on Veteran's Day and the other half of the school contributes cookies on Valentine's Day.

Parent volunteers come to school on the delivery date and help make individual bags of cookies for the hospital patients.

East Coldenham teacher, Donna Barletta is the coordinator of this yearly project.

~ John Bonagura

*The most
extraordinary thing
about a really good
teacher is that he or
she transcends
accepted
educational
methods.
~ Margaret Mead*

D.A.R.E. Officer Keith Lipsey Makes a Difference to Many Children



Officer Keith Lipsey, DARE Officer

Mrs. Laura Aderson presented Officer Keith Lipsey, Town of Montgomery Police Officer and DARE Officer in the District, with the second annual Richard H. Aderson "Make a Difference" Award in memory of her husband (*see insert*) at a meeting of the Board of Education on February 14, 2000. Officer Lipsey is a certified DARE Officer and School Resource Officer as well as a SAFEKIDS/Bully Smart Instructor and certified Juvenile Specialist. He holds an AAS degree and Master points from the Law Enforcement Educators of America. He is also a Professor of Martial Arts in American Taekwondo, holds a Masters from the National College of Martial Arts, Doctoral points from the Martial Arts Educators of America and is certified eighth degree black belt.

Officer Lipsey has great respect for education and recognizes it as of "the utmost importance for the foundation of true personal career independence." In receiving his award, Officer Lipsey stated that the "true recipients were the teachers and staff who assisted him with the DARE program and who gave to the children on a daily basis." Officer Lipsey currently works as the DARE Officer in East Coldenham and Berea and has been the DARE Officer for Walden and Maybrook. When he enters each building, the students are always happy to see him. He often stops in to eat lunch with the 4th and 5th graders at Berea and the children vie for the opportunity to sit with Officer Keith. EC Paraprofessional Lillian Belfiore said, "Officer Keith has taught my son karate since he was ten and I've seen the positive influence he has had on my son." As a DARE Officer, Keith's responsibilities include instructing the program, "teaching the absolutes about drugs and violence as opposed to the politically correct aspect of relativity and graduating the students at a culminating exercise."

Officer Lipsey has worked with Valley Central students for the past seven years, and looks forward to continuing his work and would like to eventually see personal empowerment programs executed through his realm as School Resource Officer. He integrates his devout Christian faith and belief in God in his work and believes that security and integrity are found in the "rules,

regulations and practices of life" which should be delivered in a loving way so that the recipient knows that they are being cared about and loved. Officer Lipsey exudes an enthusiasm for life which is attested to by his entire demeanor, he literally brings smiles to the faces of all he encounters, young and old. When asked for his reaction to winning this award, Officer Lipsey said that he was "highly honored". We, too, are highly honored to have Officer Keith as such a dynamic force in the lives of our students.

~ Patti Lunden



Former Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services and Personnel, Richard H. Aderson lost his life tragically when he was murdered on February 5, 1997. The "Make a Difference"

Award was designed as a living memorial to him. He was a prominent voice for children and is remembered as "inspiring others to believe in themselves and reach their fullest potential". Award recipients demonstrate a genuine contribution to the field of education, possess a humanistic concern for faculty, students and all persons in education, have a record of excellence in educational related service and be a living example to making a difference in children's lives.

Safe School Action Team: Creating a Win – Win Situation

In response to the unfortunate violent happenings in schools around the country and student interest in creating an anti-violence group, the VC Middle School has formed a Safe School Action Team. This is a team of students that meet once each week during their lunch period to discuss teenage problems and potential unsafe situations such as school violence, alcohol and other drug problems, peer pressure, and issues of diversity and acceptance. The Team hopes to help provide positive ways of dealing with these issues through proactive interventions in our school.

The group has been busy making posters to promote peace in our school. They have also organized a series of workshops on the topic of bullying. Officer Keith Lipsey will be the guest speaker. A door decorating contest with a non-violence/anti-drug theme was held with the entire sixth grade participating. (*The winning door was Mrs. Brooks' door.*) In the future a group of students from the Safe School Action Team will visit elementary schools to speak to fifth graders about the Middle School. The Team is also asking local businesses for donations to award random acts of kind-

ness in our school.

The Safe School Action Team could not exist without the dedication of VC Middle School staff members Dawn Moore, Christina Wynn, Pat Horowitz, Jamie Sadowski and Jamie Weiner. Their hope is to give the students a voice in making the school environment comfortable so that the learning experience can be optimized since children learn best when they feel they belong and are safe.

*~ Kathy Manning, RN
Middle School*

On Good Health and a Safe Environment

Most employees who have health coverage from the District utilize the Orange Ulster School District Health Plan. Assistant Superintendent for Business, Peter Roden, serves as the District's representative and a member of the OUSDHP Board of Trustees. Mr. Roden approached the VC ECHOES to ask for an opportunity to discuss the plan and answered some frequently asked questions concerning the plan.

1. What is the relationship between OUSDHP, Indecs, Medichoice, Quantum, PCS? OUSDHP contracts with INDECS. INDECS has a master contract for services with Medichoice/MRC which has now been taken over by Beech Str. OUSDHP contracts directly PCS (prescription drug), Quantum (mental health), and Access Managed Health Care (chiropractic). It also contracts with Pius XII for EAP services.

2. How does the Beech Street Capp Corp. merger affect my Medichoice coverage? Will I be issued new cards, directories?

The Beech Street Cap Corp. merger should not affect coverages. I just received the latest directory. Of course the list of providers constantly gets updated. I plan on reproducing one copy per building. However, the most up-to-date directory is on the Beech Street web site (www.beechstreet.com). New ID cards have not been issued but we plan on discussing this at our March meeting. My best guess is that we will be issuing new cards in the near future.

3. Where can I obtain the most up-

to-date directory of providers/ plan summary? Go to the web sites:

www.ousdhp.com and
www.beechstreet.com.

4. What is the difference between a PPO and an Indemnity provider?

The PPO (Participating Provider Organization) is made up of providers who have agreed to be part of our network and are willing to accept the \$15 Copay. If your doctor is not in our PPO, you should encourage him or her to join. They can do this by contacting INDECS or Beech St. The indemnity plan is the traditional plan which requires you to meet the deductible (\$250 for individuals) and then pays 80% of the R/C (Reasonable and Customary) charges.

5. How can I find out what is R/C for my area? How is R/C determined? R/C is based on a National Data Base compiled by the National Health Insurers. We are at the 90% level in the geographical area where the service is provided. To see if your provider is within the R/C limits you would first need the CPT codes and cost from your doctor, and then you could call INDECS for the R/C for those procedures. I see this as fairly complicated, but if your doctor gives you accurate information, it can be done. Of course, the easiest way is to use a network provider who has agreed to accept INDECS's fee schedule.

6. What lab fees will I be responsible for? In network labs are now \$15. Out

of network labs have the deductible, coinsurance (80%/20% out of pocket) and it's also subject to the R/C. Certain labs fees are not covered such as trying to have your home or school water tested. Also, doing a urine analysis to see if your child is doing drugs would not be covered.

7. What if I am denied coverage for a service or treatment? How can I appeal? You can appeal to the plan.

However, first I suggest that you contact INDECS to go over the reasons for denial. If you're not satisfied, contact me and I will discuss it with you. At that point I can appeal on your behalf to the Appeals Committee which is made up of trustees like myself. You can review the appeals procedures in detail by going to the OUSDHP web site (p. 53-p.63). There is also an external appeal to the NYS Dept. of Insurance.

8. Can I appeal a bill if I disagree?

Yes, based on the appeal procedures of the plan.

If you have any topics you would like to see covered or questions you would like answered on health or the working environment, please submit them to Patti Lunden, Editor at the HS.

Until next time, may you enjoy good health and a safe environment!

Prescription Savings Available

Maintenance prescription costs can add up quickly, even when they are covered by a prescription plan. Express Pharmacy Service can help OUSDHP members save money and time on maintenance prescriptions. By contacting Express Pharmacy Service at 1-800-222-3383 (PO BOX 419096; Kansas City, MO 64129-0844) orders can be placed for a three month (90 day) supply of

a prescription for a cost of only \$10.00. Compare this to the usual \$10.00 for a 30 day supply of a prescription and a \$20 savings is realized. If you contact Express Pharmacy, you will need to give them your social security number, tell them that you are an employee of the VCSD and that your medical insurer is the OUSDHP and INDECS.

MVP offers a mail order drug service that provides for a 90 day supply of a prescription drug at a cost of two copayments rather than three.

Empire offers a mail order drug service that provides for a 90 day supply of a prescription drug at the normal three copayment cost.

*~ Marc Sperry
Middle School*

VCTA Executive Meeting Highlights...January 2000



Treasurer John Bonagura and Vice President Rich Steger discuss the committees they are in charge of after the meeting.

The Association has received a copy of the District's Shared Decision Making Plan which requires the President's signature to be recertified by the state.

Parent conferences for 2000-01 were discussed. It will be suggested that the evening conference be held on Monday, Nov. 20th and the full day on Tuesday, Nov. 21st. It will also be suggested that the evening begin and end earlier.

The new copy machine was delivered on Jan. 13th and is working nicely.

OUSDHP is now utilizing the Birthday rule. If there are any problems as they switch over, contact Mr. Roden.

The Association will investigate hosting a TRS Seminar this year.

Coaches will soon receive a schedule of pay dates.

In the event that the OUSDHP should terminate, the expectation of the Association and District is that we would return to the NYS Empire Plan. A "termination plan" is required by the state insurance commission.

The District will offer an Early Retirement Incentive.

The District intends to continue to hire LPN's as Health Aides on the Para schedule.

An issue is arising over how many TSA companies employees can utilize through payroll deduction. A grievance is being filed over personal days.

The lack of substitutes has been discussed with Central Office.

CO is hiring many 2 and 3 hour paras and want to change

the benefits for part time employees. The Paras are not in favor of any change.

If a Para has to assist a child with toileting, the Para should bring the child to the Nurse's office and have a witness.

Montgomery 4th grade teachers were told to make a presentation to the BOE on ELA tests. When the teachers declined, they were asked to have students make the presentation.

An ad contract for the VC ECHOES is being considered.

If members need to add a spouse/child to their Dental and Vision coverage, they should contact Sandy Strauss.

Gov. Pataki has signed a bill to allow tier reinstatement for the NYSERS. However, Pataki vetoed legislation to eliminate discrepancies between Tiers 2,3,4. Kevin McFadden suggests that members write to Gov. Pataki and remind him that not only do we teach, we vote.

There is a very interesting article in the recent NY TEACHER concerning National Certification and what some Districts are doing to encourage teachers to pursue National Certification.

Green registration forms have been sent to members who are not currently

registered with NYSUT. They should be filled out and returned as soon as possible

Walden 5th grade teachers are being paid chaperone pay for the play field trip.

Members should check their NYSTRS statements because mistakes have been made.

A VCTA Celebration of Retiring Members 2000 will be held on May 7th from 3:00 – 6:00 PM at Spruce Lodge, at a cost of \$10 for active members and \$15 for non-active and non-members. Hors d'oeuvres will be served with a cash bar, coffee, tea and cake will follow the presentations.

The June VCTA Executive Council will be held at Spruce Lodge on June 13th.

The OUSDHP Board of Directors that they are not going to provide a plan summary to each member but are going to send a Summary to each District which the District could copy as needed or by request. The summary is also available on the website, www.ousdhp.com.

Paraprofessionals who are part time do not have any contract language concerning child care leave.

Members who inform the District they wish to retire after March 1st may not be entitled to any portion of the retirement incentive. A suggestion was offered that the District should offer the incentive to people who are past their date of eligibility and still teaching.

Paychecks should be checked to ensure the proper amounts are being withheld. If a mistake is made in a TSA deduction, the mistake would need to be corrected before the end of the next calendar year.

For further details of the January meeting, consult your building representative or check the minutes posted in your building.

VCTA Executive Council Highlights . . . February

Dates for next year's VCTA meetings were considered.

A total of \$116 was donated to the Westchester Teacher Assistance Fund.

Anyone considering Early Retirement should include a request to "continue health benefits to age 55."

Anyone considering retirement should attend Teacher Retirement Seminars and not retire without first consulting the Teacher Retirement System.

The VCTA Retirement Form Letter is available to anyone who needs it.

The VCTA is currently involved in trying to resolve two grievances; one on TSA's and one concerning personal days.

A resolution written by Kevin McFadden concerning Tier Equity was submitted to NYSUT and will be presented and defended at the RA.

Kevin McFadden will be writing a form letter to Gov. Pataki to address Retirement concerns such as equity and COLA.

Reps are now receiving copies of the OUSDHP Directors' meeting. Medi-choice has merged with Beech Street.

NYSUT has advised the Association on teachers' responsibility concerning fights. Procedures for reporting and testing after contact with blood were discussed.

The NYS AFL-CIO is offering scholarships for June 2000.

Coaching pay date schedule has been received.

Jay Sussdorff is representing the VCTA at District Budget meetings.

The STAR deadline is March 1.

The District has approached the Union to consider allowing teachers to have AIS "duty" with 5 classes, and not have other duties.

VC ECHOES editor, Patti Lunden had an article from the November VC ECHOES, *What's in a Name*, cited and quoted in the AFTCA Catalyst, a national newslet-

ter source for editors of the AFT affiliate newsletters.

Correspondence was received from NYSUT on Al Gore, The Walden Rotary Club, the New York State Board of Regents concerning the State Aid Proposal, and the VC PTA Council.

At this time the administration and the union members on the Professional Development Plan Committee have agreed to disagree on the issue of the committee's purpose.

The APPR committee has been meeting to develop a plan. Superintendent, Dr. Nugent would like to see the committee's work completed by the time Assistant Superintendent Ron Revelle retires on March 31st.

The search for a new Assistant Superintendent for Personnel is proceeding.

The Paraprofessional Evaluation Process is now being reviewed by the Principals.

Different practices are occurring in different buildings concerning paraprofessionals being paid for quarter hour increments.

On mornings of inclement weather Paraprofessionals have been in charge of classrooms of up to 28 children for at least 30 minutes.

Four hour paraprofessionals who work two hours on snow days are being made to take full personal days on those days since they are only working two hours.

A paraprofessional hired in April 1999 is still awaiting an answer as to how many personal days have been earned.

An announcement concerning officer elections will be printed in the March VC ECHOES.

DARE Officer Keith Lipsey who works with the elementary students, was awarded the Richard Aderson "Make a Difference" Award.

A more accurate count of building numbers



HS Rep Arline Friedman checks her date book as next year's meeting dates are considered.

will be obtained to ensure we are not wasting copies.

A motion was made to establish an ad section in the VC ECHOES.

With the establishment of an ad section, teachers who wish to advertise in the ECHOES will be expected to pay.

A special edition of the ECHOES will celebrate the Retiring members. Articles will be sought for those members.

There is a rally for COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) for Retirement on May 9th.

A suggestion will be made that the District provide no-cost flu shots.

The VCTA will host a Celebration of our Members honoring Retiring members on May 7th, 3 PM– 6 PM at the Spruce Lodge.

An inquiry was made concerning Night School and the changing of assignment days. The matter will be investigated.

An inquiry was made concerning OUSDHP coverage while out of the country. The best course of action is to contact OUSDHP for the answer.

For more information concerning these issues consult your building representative or the minutes of the meeting posted in your faculty room.

The next Executive Council meeting will be held March 21st, 2000 at 3:45 in the HS Professional Library.



Al Gore for better schools and a brighter future for our children!

☒ **Smaller Classes**

Gore worked to enact a law to hire 100,000 new teachers nationwide and lower class sizes in the early grades. Gore has a long history of supporting a higher level of investment in our schools. (Omaha World Herald, 4/9/99; New York Newsday, 1/21/99)

☒ **Repair Schools**

Gore is working to help local school districts to fund school repairs and construction. This program is necessary to relieve overcrowding and lower the number of students in each class. (Gannett News Service, 1/21/99)

☒ **Quality**

Gore favors stronger discipline for our kids, higher standards for our teachers and more accountability for student performance. He wants to modernize our classrooms to prepare our children for a new and different future. (Boston Globe, 1/18/00; Manchester Union Leader 1/15/00; U.S. Newswire, 12/16/99)

Your union has researched all the candidates for president. Because none is better on working family issues than Vice President Al Gore, he has been endorsed by the AFL-CIO.

Vice President Gore has also been endorsed by the AFT and NYSUT.

VOTE.

You are more powerful than you think.

NEW YORK PRIMARY – MARCH 7, 2000

McCain on Education:

In the primaries he has won, John McCain's victories have been largely accredited to crossover Democrats and Independents. He has been viewed as an alternative to George Bush's conservative Republican image. However on education GOP presidential contender John McCain "stood squarely with the Republican Party on education" in a major policy speech this month that attacks teacher unions while promoting block grants and vouchers. In a Feb. 10th speech in Spartanburg, S.C., McCain repeatedly attacked teacher unions, saying "It's time to break the grip of the education monopoly that serves the union bosses at the expense of our children," the *New York Times* reports. He also pressed for block grants of federal education funds and for vouchers.

The PTSA brings Market Day to VCHS

The VCHS PTSA (Parent, Teacher, Student Association) is participating in "Market Day". This fund-raiser is monthly and growing in participation. We are grateful to the Middle School PTA for allowing us to use their resources and helping us to get started in this program.

Each month faculty, staff and parents are given an order sheet describing products, prices and specials. Frozen meats, desserts, snacks, potatoes, vegetables, or drinks can be purchased for prices comparable to supermarkets. Order forms can be placed in the PTSA mail box in the HS Main Office or through the Internet.

The forms are self-explanatory. The due date and pick up date for each month are on the back page of the order form. Pick up is usually on a Tuesday at the Middle School Cafeteria between 3:00-4:00 PM. Payment is due at pick-up. Checks can be made payable to "Market Day" or may be charged through the Internet. In order to distinguish High School orders from Middle School orders a list is made of all orders each month. Anyone who orders on-line is asked to let Kathy Synder know so that the VCHS PTSA will get the credit. The PTSA receives a ten percent commission from the total order.



The support that we have received is greatly appreciated.

~Kathy Synder
PTSA President

AFL-CIO National Boycotts

Picket lines are not always obvious and sometimes the easiest way to support a fellow union worker is to simply boycott a product. Please keep the following brands in mind when shopping and avoid buying them.

- ⇒ Boycott **measuring, cutting, and machine tools and pumps by Brown & Sharpe Mfg. Co.** and support *union machinists*.
- ⇒ Boycott **Jet Equipment and Tools, Inc.** and support *the Teamsters*.
- ⇒ Boycott **Southwire commercial, industrial and cable and Do-It-Yourself brand homewire** and support *electrical workers*.
- ⇒ Boycott **Hills, Archer, and Ivory Hill men's' and boys' trousers** and support *electronic workers*.
- ⇒ Boycott **Black Entertainment TV-BET Cable, Action PPV and Jazz** and support *electrical workers*.
- ⇒ Boycott **table grapes that do have the United Farm Workers' label** on the carton or crate and support *Farm Workers*.
- ⇒ Boycott **Diamond brand canned and bagged walnuts** and support *the Teamsters*.
- ⇒ Boycott **milk under the Farmland Dairy** and support *the Teamsters*.
- ⇒ Boycott **pickles and relish under the Mr. Olive, Food Lion, and Harris Teeter label** and support *the Farm Labor Organizing Committee*.
- ⇒ Boycott **furniture from Canbrough Oak, Downing Street, Cherry Creek, Hood and Straits Collections** and support *Electronic Workers (Furniture Division)*.
- ⇒ Boycott **Alitalia Airlines** and support *Machinists*.
- ⇒ Boycott **Best Western-Grosvenor Resort at Disney World** and support *Hotel & Restaurant workers*.
- ⇒ Boycott **gas at Crown, Fast Fare and Zippy Mart** and support *Paper, Allied Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers*.
- ⇒ Boycott **Four Points by Sheraton in Waterbury, CT, Holiday Inn Sunspree Hotel in Kapaa, Hawaii, New Otani Hotel in LA** and support *Hotel and Restaurant workers*.
- ⇒ Boycott **CF & I Steel** and support *Steelworkers*.
- ⇒ Boycott **Cigarettes from Best Value, Camel, Century, Doral, Eclipse, Magna, Monarch, More, Now, Salem, Sterling, Vantage and Winston** and support *Bakery Confectionary & Tobacco Workers*.

VCTA Elections Upcoming

Biannual elections for VCTA officers will be held on May 16, 2000. Annual elections for Building Representatives (teachers unit) the VCTA budget and an amendment to the VCTA Constitution will also be held that day. Voting will be in individual buildings. The Secretarial Representative and Paraprofessional Representatives election will also be held on May 16.

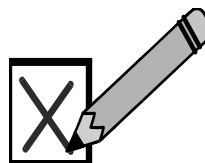
Nomination forms for officers are due to Arline Friedman at the HS by April 19, 2000. [The constitution mandates forms are due by April 20, 2000 but that is the first day of Spring Break.]

Petitions are available from your Building Representatives if you are interested in running. Persons

nominated will be required to sign the nomination form to demonstrate his or her willingness to run for office (Bylaw VI, Section 2)

When submitting nomination forms all candidates must also include an informational sketch which will be published in a Special Edition of the VC ECHOES.

Building Representatives do not need to submit a nomination form but they must be tenured. The Secretarial Representative and Paraprofessional Representatives must be past the probationary period. Each building is allowed one representative for every fifteen members or fraction thereof (8/15). Members who work in multiple buildings are



included in the count of the building where they receive their paycheck. A Building is allowed one Alternate for every two Building Rep. positions. Alternates need not be tenured. Secretaries and Paraprofessionals are allowed one alternate each. If there are more candidates available than positions, the positions are filled by highest vote (*in order*) and the candidate who doesn't win a position automatically becomes an alternate.

A VCTA Budget Advisory meeting will be held March 20, 2000 at Room 118 in East Colderham.

~ Arline Friedman

Teacher Videos Currently Required through 2009

Rumors that the required videotape of classroom performance no longer will be required for permanent certification are premature.

The Assessment of Teaching Skills Performance (ATS-P) video will be required until at least 2009, states NYSUT's updated *Briefing Bulletin* No. 00-03, "New York State Teacher Certification Exams". Pre

... the Board of Regents is scheduled to adopt new regulations governing teacher certification in June, but any changes would not go into effect until February 2004

pared by the Division of Research and Educational Services, the publication details the ATS-P requirements and resources to obtain training and is available from the Mid-Hudson NY-SUT office.

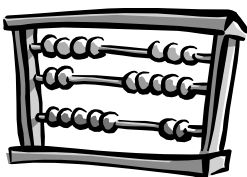
The

Bulletin points out that the Board of Regents is scheduled to adopt new regulation governing teacher certification in June, but any changes would not go into effect until February 2004. Until that time teacher certification will be guided by current regulations and testing structure, meaning that the video "will be required until 2009"

~ from "The Bottom Line"

NYSUT publication

Teleconferences Set to Train District Math Assessment Scorers



teleconferences for elementary and intermediate math assessments.

They are:

Grade 4 – May 31

Grade 8 – June 1

The State Education Department (SED) has set dates for training

The SED will not hold regional sessions this year and has instructed "schools or districts [to] make every effort to make sure that a BOCES, district, or non-public school consortium near you will carry the teleconferences." Each district or school consortium should have a representative attend the teleconference and then train district scorers on how to mark the tests. Sites choosing to show the conference are directed to

register and obtain additional information by e-mailing John Quinn at Jquinn@mail.NYSED.gov.

The grade 4 test will be administered May 17-19 and the grade 8 test is May 18-19.

~ from "The Bottom Line"

NYSUT publication

NYSUT's Variable Life Insurance Offers Choices

Savvy marketers of everything from colas to cars to kitchen cabinets know that the best way to appeal to value-conscious consumers is to offer choices and options. The phrase, "Have it your way," evolved from a fast-food slogan to a universal sales strategy.

Although it took awhile, financial products and services have also come around to this point of view. Life insurance was one of the last. Up until a short time ago, premiums paid in return for the death benefit "disappeared" into the insurer's holdings. Surprisingly, many people – although accustomed to the many choices offered them in the 21st-century marketplace – still regard this kind of life insurance as the only game in town.

It isn't. NYSUT Member Benefits has developed a life insurance product called Variable Universal Life Insurance (VLI).SM It offers a range of investment options into which policyholders can direct their

premium payments, making it much more of a true "investment" in financial security. The investment options can be personalized to individual needs and risk tolerances, including fixed, conservative, aggressive or mixed allocations.



The cash value accumulated by the policy also allows individual financial needs to be more easily met. VLI lets policyholders access their funds through loans or surrenders, for college expenses or even retirement. Underscored all of the ways to customize the policy is permanent life insurance protection.

There's even a choice of how to pay the premiums, and ways to change and adjust premium investment allocations. VLI is available to all NYSUT members and agency fee payers up to age 80. It's life insurance for the way we live today... and want to live tomorrow.

For more information about VLI, call NYSUT Member Benefits at **1 (800) 626-8101**.

**Big name retailers,
big savings are just
a click away!**



Shop the **Plus** Online Marketplace

You'll find:

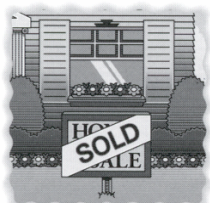
- The brands you love;
- The best deals around town;
- The convenience of shopping at home or workplace; and
- The service you deserve.

**Just go to the
Plus Online Marketplace!
www.aft.org**

VALID UNTIL 7/00

Buying or selling...

you'll be sold on our great
mortgage and real estate
benefits!



**AFT PLUS
MORTGAGE AND
REAL ESTATE**



1-800-981-3798

Mon-Fri 8:30am-9pm; Sat 9am-1pm (ET)
Se habla español. Equal Housing Lender

VALID UNTIL 7/00

Beautiful Timeshare Condos for Rent

In U.S. \$600 wk, Out of U.S. \$700 wk
Request early for best locations
Call Kathleen Takvam 457-3478

Exercise Machine – Bodyshaper

Staircase pedals for feet, rowing motion for arms
Adjustable and folds
Brand New – \$125
Call 778-3754

The VC ECHOES enters the Age of Advertising

It all began with a phone call from a local restaurant who wanted to advertise in our newsletter. I discussed the topic with President Tim Brown, and we both had the same initial reaction—*we don't do advertising*. But then we both thought about, and wondered why not?

The VC ECHOES costs about \$200 per issue to produce between paper and postage. The idea was presented to the VCTA Executive Council in December and they approved the proposed ad contract at the February meeting. The Executive Council decided that advertising would be limited to two pages per issue. Ad spaces come in three

sizes; \$5 per issue for a space the size of half of a business card, \$10 per issue for a space the size of a business card, and \$30 for a triple business card space. Ads are sold per issue and there is a separate charge for set-up if the ad is not scanner ready. If there are enough ads for the entire ad section, NYSUT and AFT ads will appear elsewhere in the issue. The VCTA is reimbursed for NYSUT endorsed ads and AFT ads at higher rates each time they are run.

The topic of "teacher" ads (for businesses owned by teachers or "for sale" ads) was discussed and it was decided the only

way to ensure the contract was fair to all is to make such ads subject to the same charges.

Ads will start with the next issue; if you are interested in running an ad, contact Patti Lunden at the HS or call/fax 457-5899.

~ Patti Lunden

Pay Teachers More, Improve Student Learning

Over the next five years, school districts should make teaching contracts year-round and “pay teachers accordingly for these additional months” as a way to improve teaching quality and student achievement, said Education Secretary Richard Riley in his final State of American Education address.

He said higher pay for more work is “a better idea” than salaries based on student test scores.

Riley said the additional time should be used for intensive teacher training, planning and for summer school to provide help for struggling students. He did not propose sending children to school all year; “Decisions about school schedules are best left up to each individual school district.”

Hiring teachers for year-long jobs makes sense with the standards push, Riley added. Over the past few years nearly all 50 states have been imposing strict standards that include tougher tests, elimination of

“social promotion”, and denial of high school diplomas. He advocated “no slow down or moratorium” in putting high standards in place, but said a “mid-course” review is needed because students are being “traumatized, not challenged” in some cases.

“We can no longer get teachers on the cheap,” Riley said. He pointed to a \$32,000 a-year gap between experienced teachers holding a master’s degree and their counterparts in other fields.

“I have come to the conclusion that we will never really improve American education until we elevate the teaching profession and come to grips with the issue of teacher compensation,” Riley said.

The cost, however, could be a barrier. The average payroll hike

nationally for a two-month extension of the work year is estimated at 18%. In New York State the cost to extend the work year by one day would be about \$55 million just for teacher salaries and pensions.

Riley said, “In this time of economic prosperity, with state coffers expanding, there can be no excuse for short-changing our students and their teachers.”

Riley also called for an overhaul in the way the nation recruits, prepares, inducts and retains good teachers. He repeated his call for ending out-of-field teaching and upholding high standards for who gets into the classroom.

~from “The Bottom Line”

NYSUT publication



*The VCTA Executive Council is hosting
“A Celebration of our Retiring Members and Recognition of Achievements”
On Sunday, May 7, 2000 from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm at the Spruce Lodge, Montgomery
Hors D’oeuvres, Program and Dessert
Cost: \$10 for active members; \$15 for non-active or non-members*



Retiree Alert...

A recent mailing from NYSUT to retirees regarding a COLA rally in Albany presents a challenge and opportunity to all VC retirees. We all

Mac’s Musings...(from the Retiree side)

bemoan the lack of a cost-of-living adjustment to our pension payments. Are we prepared to go to Albany and let our legislators and the “ever-affable education governor” (*this month’s cynical remark! Sorry, I couldn’t help myself.*) know that we deserve a COLA and deserve it now? The NYSUT mailing has all the info and a return commitment card. The rally is on Tuesday, May 9th; buses will be leaving from the NYSUT office in Kingston. Sign

up now. Remind the Albany politicians that teaching may be in our past, but voting remains in our present and future.

Nobody asked me, but ...

After writing about the many VC alumni/alumnae who have chosen teaching and school related work as the vocation/profession, it struck me that we are also very proud of our former students who have done so well in other trades and professions.

Mac's Musings ... (continued from page 12)

A quick run through some 30 year-books and a deep prodding of the memory and the following come to mind. Many alumni have been successful in the retail field. There are many dentists, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, lawyers, social workers, insurance agents, practicing here and farther afield. I count at least five judges – one county, three town, one village. We have many fireman, policeman and correction officers. There are several master electricians, mechanics, plumbers and builders – several of whom have bailed me out of water or darkness. Several architects come to mind, even more engineers and a plethora of accountants. There are among our graduates a number of clergymen and clergywomen. Many graduates have made a career in all branches of the military, both officers and enlisted personnel. At least five journalists and several librarians come immediately to mind; another memory search recalls several farmers and stone masons. How privileged all of us have been in being even a small part in the lives of these fine men and women.

The articles in the January 24 issue of the VC ECHOES by Sally Grodin, John Solan, and Kathy Takan, the active delegates to the New York State Teachers' Retirement System, again sent me down memory lane. (*It must be true. I am getting older!*) I can recall when we had only one delegate, Peg Park and Doug Jessup as alternate; then Doug took over as delegate with me as alternate; then I was delegate for more years than I care to remember with Tony Gesso as alternate until '90, then Sally Grodin until she took over as delegate in '93 when I shuffled off. As the Latin poet said, "Tempus fugit" (*Time flies*) Thanks to Sally, John, and Kathy for keeping everyone up to date on retirement "stuff". Sally's check list is most valuable as you think about retirement – even for those young in the field. John's

comments remind again (*as I have done often*) that NYSUT and NYSTRS can not change inequities in our retirement system; only the legislature can. His suggestions regarding contributing to VOTE-COPE and bombarding your legislators with letters and voting for those politicians who truly support education are right on the mark for active and retired members.

Congratulations...

To Diane Ruggles, VCHS, on being honored as an "Orange County Woman of Achievement"

(*Ed. Note: Diane's achievement will be covered in the next issue of the VC ECHOES*)

To Ed Ross (*who "supposedly retired in '81"*) who was honored on February 15th by the PTA's, PTSA's and PTO's of the District for his 60 years of service to Valley Central. Ed still leads the High School Enrichment Program, guides the exchange student program and teaches at OCCC. Ad multos annos (*To many years*), Ed, and clean off your desk!

Best wishes for good health and much happiness in his retirement to Ron Revelle, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, who retires on March 31st. Ron is a VC grad with the class of '62. All the best!

Some sightings, some soundings some notes ...

Marilyn and Bob Kelso – Bob is a former Board President and Marilyn a retired PE teacher – are enjoying the new home in the Schroon Lake area. Both love winter and skiing. If you think it's cold here...

My compatriot, Orin Segall, is enjoying winter at Cape Cod with his wife and fellow retiree, Nancy. Orin keeps tabs on the VC Breakfast Club (*and keeps me focused at VCTA meetings*) with a monthly visit. Orin reports a phone chat with John Na-

politano in South Carolina. John, the last of the Driver Education teachers at Valley Central is back on the golf course again.

Had dinner in Rhinecliff with Frank Wallner (now Father Frank of Holy Cross Episcopal Church in Kingston and English department member from '68 to '90) and Tom and Sue Kneiser. Tom, retired Math chief at the high school, is at OCCC teaching four classes, doing in-service programs at VC and elsewhere. His list tired me out.

Alice Gutter (retired elementary librarian) is off again to winter in Spain. Her sister, Vivian Naltan, retired school nurse-teacher, along with husband Mike, is gracing Newport Beach, CA for the winter months.

Ginny and I truly enjoyed seeing and listening to Pat Carfizzi (VC '91) in a featured role in Rigoletto at the Metropolitan Opera. He was excellent. We visited him backstage; his enthusiasm for his work and his graciousness are a credit to him and to his family.

Exit...

As usual I have gone on too long. This, however, is it. You need nod off no more. **As ever, thanks for getting this far, and , until next time, keep pushing back the barriers of ignorance in whatever venue life finds you. PEACE!**

~ Kevin McFadden

P.S. We appreciate your letters and calls with news of yourself or other VC retirees to:

Kevin McFadden
6 Jessup Street
Walden, NY 12586
(914) 778-7236



*There are no greater advocates
for children and education
than teachers and teacher unions.*

Valley Central Teachers' Association
1175 Rte 17K
Montgomery, NY 12549
Tel./Fax. (914) 457-5899

President, Timothy Brown (HS)
Vice President, Jay Sussdorff (HS)
Vice President, Richard Steger (Walden)
Secretary, Patricia Lunden (HS)
Treasurer, John Bonagura (EC)

Building Representatives

Berea: Carol DeMicco, Sara Akerson,
Bryan Guidice

Maybrook: Donna Lloyd, Sandy Tarallo

East Coldenham: Donna Barletta, Sandy Carroll

Walden: Barbara Winchell, Randy Sutter,
Brenda Newman

Montgomery: Toni Sperry, Kathy Takvam

MS: Laurie Hey, Mary Bleau, Mary Goldberg,
Joe DeVenuto, Marc Sperry, Mike Steele
Kathy Manning

HS: Arline Friedman, Jane Hillis, Peter Meisel,
Glenn Eckert, Dennis Delfino, Bob Jurgens

Newsletter Editor
Patricia Lunden, (HS)
Email: vcta@frontiernet.net
NYSUT
www.nysut.org
Mid-Hudson Teacher Center:
(914) 255-2885
<http://www.mhtc.dcboces.org>
Employee Assistance Program
1-800-962-7487

Visit us on the Web!
www.frontiernet.net/
~vcta

*The VC Echoes is the official
publication of the Valley
Central Teacher's
Association – Local 3076 and
is published regularly
throughout the school year.
Article contributions or
Letters to the Editor for the
next issue should be sent to
Patti Lunden at the HS by
April 18, 2000.*

The Taylor Law

Before there was a Taylor Law, public employees in NY had no collective bargaining rights. Under the Condon – Wadlin Act, 1947, striking public employees were penalized by being fired. They could only be re-instated under a three-year pay freeze and five-year probation. The Taylor Law was passed in 1967 following a series of public-sector strikes. Under the Taylor Law employees have the right to organize and bargain collectively with their employers, the right to representation by employee organizations of their own choosing, and the right to negotiate and enter into written contracts. The Taylor Law also provides for the resolution of impasses, prohibits improper practices by either side and created a Public Employees Relations Board to administer the law.

While the Taylor Law grants public employees the right to collective bargaining, it denies them the right to strike. The penalties for striking are loss of pay for each day the employee is on strike, plus a fine of an additional day's pay for every day on strike; and potential discipline for misconduct.

NYSUT is always attempting to win legislation to improve the provisions of the Taylor Law. For example, a 1982 amendment mandated that if a collective bargaining agreement expires, its terms and conditions continue until a new agreement takes effect. An earlier improvement eliminated the "probation penalty" - probation for one year – against tenured teachers who went on strike.

~ from the NYSUT website

How long can we wait?

With yet another school shooting; this time a six year old killing another six year old, questions must be raised past "why?" Certainly this child killer will be analyzed, studied and emotionally dissected, and perhaps years from now there will be an offering of some unreasonable reason for such a horrendous act. If this is, hopefully, an isolated, bizarre and tragic incident can we rest easy believing that it won't happen again? (*Isn't that what we hoped on April 21, 1999?*) With the anniversary of the Columbine tragedy fast approaching, are we any closer to addressing how such an event happened in our post-modern "civilized" society?

American education has changed with the times and schools are filled with many positions (student assistance counselors, psychologists, social workers

to name a few) that in the past were limited to one or two job titles servicing a district. Those same positions today provide many jobs throughout school districts in an effort to best serve children. Certainly it was debated (*and probably still is*) whether the school house is truly the place that such services belong, but the reality is that right now the school house may be the only place where students in need will be served.

Obviously, a review of the number of school shootings in the last decade would indicate that key components in the affective development of America's children are missing whether that be due to societal changes, ethical changes, or value changes. Certainly, another debate could easily arise over the addressing of affective



needs in the school setting as to whether it is the role of education to teach basic ethics and values and prepare children emotionally as well as cognitively. The business world, which we have taken such lengths to mirror, is already applying the findings of emotional intelligence research in their fields. The question that must be immediately answered in response to the death of Kayla Rolland, is how long can we afford to wait to begin applying the same research to the field of education?

~ Patti Lunden