

VC ECHOES

An AFTCA and New York Teacher Award Winning Publication

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2

OCTOBER 11, 2001

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When Tragedy struck, Union Members Responded

How do we help our students cope with a world that is a far more frightening than it was a few weeks ago?

In the aftermath of the September 11th acts of terrorism, NYSUT members across the state helped schools and public institutions respond.

In New York City, United Federation of Teachers members dealt with crises and reassured students and parents.

City schools dismissed children in an orderly fashion September 11; many UFT members stayed late with children who could not locate parents—in some cases, parents who were dead or missing in the World

Trade Center collapses.

On Sept. 11, UFT President **Randi Weingarten** worked side by side with Chancellor **Harold**

Levy to make plans for the city schools in the aftermath. Schools were closed Sept. 12, but guidance counselors, social workers, psychologists, crisis teams and administrators reported to school to prepare school response plans.

At Stuyvesant High near the World Trade Center, students and staff watched the explosions from classroom windows, and then evacu-



ated as the crisis deepened. At the Borough of Manhattan Community College, where Professional Staff Congress members work, school buildings were used as shelters and as emergency center for police and fire response.

Many schools in the metropolitan area were used as shelters September 11 for displaced people—including *(continued on page 7)*

From the President

Memorandum of Agreement between the Panacea Central School District and the "Where's the Beef" Teachers' Association

Being a negotiations year, I felt it would be appropriate to highlight some recently negotiated items as they appear in the recently signed:

Memorandum of Agreement between the Panacea Central School District and the "Where's the Beef" Teachers' Association in the nearby village of Rose Color Glass, in the

State of Education.

In the first year of the contract Panacea teaching salaries will increase by an average of 50% to be in line with local unionized Sanitary *(continued on page eight)*

These then are my last words to you: be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living and your belief will help create the fact.
~ William James

What's Black and White and Read in every Building? The VC ECHOES!

We have decided to switch our printing format to using white paper rather than gray paper which was constantly jamming our copy machine.

We hope you don't mind the change.

~ Patti Lunden, editor

The NYSUT Polling Center will be conducting a survey sampling of Math, Science and Social Studies Teachers across the state.

The purpose will be to determine implications and the impact of state standards and the administration of Regents Exams.

NYSUT appreciates the cooperation and contributions of members who participate in these surveys.

If you administered and scored a Regents in Living Environment, Physical Setting Earth Science, Global History and Geography and/or US History and Government and would like to contribute directly to this survey, go to the NYSUT website, www.nysut.org.

New York Teacher is seeking the answer to the following question:

Were the latest Regents Exams easier/harder/the same as previous versions? They will share your letters along with survey results.

Write: New York Teacher, 159 Wolf Rd. Box 15008, Albany, NY

Or Fax: (518) 454-6415 Email: nyteach@nysutmail.org

Mark your calendar now!

VCTA Fall Fest

**Friday,
October 19, 2001**

3:00 P.M.—6:00 P.M.

Stony Ford Clubhouse

Orange County Park

Hors d'oeuvres/Cash Bar

Prizes (*including money!*)

DJ

Bin Laden Dart Games!

***This event is free for all active and retired members and
their spouses or significant others***

**Come spend time with your old
friends
and make some new ones as we**

Directions: Stony Ford Country Club is located in Orange County Park. Take 17K through Montgomery to the intersection of 17K and 211. Turn LEFT on to 211, follow through village to Rte 416 (LEFT at Airport). Take 416 and watch for signs for Country Club. It is located at the top of the hill.

October is Open Enrollment month...



The VCTA Health and TSA Fair provided an opportunity for all VC employees to check out alternatives for Health Insurance. October is the month to change Health Care coverage if you would like to do so. If you picked up an information packet on one of the Health Care companies, then you will find an enrollment form inside. Fill out the enrollment form and send it to Polly Coniglio at Central Office by October 31st. Your coverage will become effective as of January 1, 2002 and continue until you make another change.

If you wish to change from

an alternate health care company back to the Orange-Ulster Schools Health Plan, contact Mrs. Coniglio at 457-3171 for an enrollment form.

Before you make any changes be sure that you have checked with your physicians to be sure that they accept that insurance. Also compare the major points of the plan to your current plan. Be sure the services that you utilize are covered. If you decide that you want to change insurance plans, fill out the enrollment form and send it to Polly Coniglio, at CO by Oct. 31.

Although the Association invited only three Health Care Companies to the Health Fair, by Federal

Law you have the right to choose any HMO you prefer. You would need to contact that HMO on your own to arrange for enrollment. Be aware that the District will only pay a single or family rate equal (or less) to the Orange-Ulster School District Plan. **That rate is \$314 for single coverage and \$698 for family coverage.** (This is the monthly rate that is paid on your behalf twelve months a year by the District.) **The VCTA does not recommend you choose any one company over the other; we encourage you to consider all your options and choose the coverage that best meets your needs.**

HMO Rates for 2002

*The following rates are not final until the State gives approval.
Please remember some rates may change.*

GHI

The co-pay for the GHI plan has increased to \$15. The drug plan is \$5/\$10/\$20 with no annual cap.

The rate for GHI is \$264.97 for single coverage and \$675.97 for family coverage per month. Neither plan requires a contribution from the participant.

MVP

The HMO plan being offered by MVP is the same as last year with the exception of drug coverage. The drug cost is \$5 for generic and \$20 brand and \$40 for non-formulary drugs. **The POS Option has been eliminated so you must stay in within the network.** Enhanced Vision Care has been added.

The rate for MVP for single coverage is \$269.58 which is less than what the District is paying. Therefore single coverage on MVP will not cost anything toward premium. Family coverage will be \$697.38 which is also less per month than the District is paying to OUSDHP.

Empire Blue Cross/ Blue Shield

The Empire Blue Cross/ Blue Shield Plan has increased the co-pay to \$15. The Empire Plan has two rates depending upon where you live. **Either family plan will require a contribution from the participant.**

Orange, Sullivan, Ulster County: The rate for single coverage \$278.48 which is less than the District is paying and the rate for family coverage is \$724.03 which is more than what the District is paying. **IF YOU CHOOSE EMPIRE FAMILY Coverage and live in ORANGE, SULLIVAN, ULSTER COUNTY, you pay \$26.03 (a month) for six months deducted pretax from your pay. (This comes to roughly \$10 a check)**

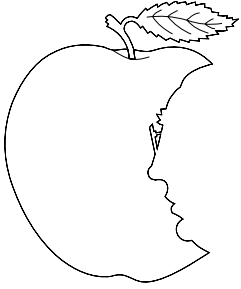
Rockland, Westchester, Dutchess, Putnam counties the rate for single coverage is \$292.81 a month which is less than what the District is paying for the OUSDHP. However the rate for family coverage is \$761.31 a month, which is \$63.00 more a month than what the District is paying. That difference would be divided between your two paychecks per month and deducted pretax.

If you choose the Empire Plan which requires a contribution, you will be charged the difference from January to June. If the OUSDHP rates should increase in July 2002 and that increase is more than the Empire Premium rate, you would not have to make a contribution for the remainder of the year 2002.

A Comparison of Health Plans

(for specific details, consult the plan overview provided by each company)

<p>OUSDHP \$314/ \$698 (\$300/800 - deductible) Co-Pay Individual (80% R&C) \$4875/pers. or \$8000/fam. Individ Out Pock Max \$1000/Family Max \$1800 Calendar Max: \$300,000 - Lifetime Max. Unlimited</p>	<p>\$269.58/ \$697.38 MVP In Network Only</p>	<p>\$264.97/ \$675.08 GHI HMO Only In Network</p>	<p>UP: \$278.48/\$724.03 DOWN: \$292.81/761.31 EMPIRE Direct HMO In Network Only No Lifetime Maximum</p>
<p>In Network/ Out of Network OFFICE VISIT\$15copay / Ded. + 80% (r/c)</p> <p>Eye Exams Not Covered</p> <p>Well Baby/Child No Copay/ resp. for any chrg (see schedule)over R&C</p> <p>Routine Exams 19-49 1/ 3 years/No benefit 50+: 1 / 2 years/ No benefit (Pap/Mammo- different schedule)</p> <p>Mammography 100% in hospital only</p> <p>Hospital 100%/ \$250 ded per adm. 80% of R&C out pt. \$25/\$50</p> <p>Alcohol/Sub 100% 4 weeks/ 6 wks per year (inpatient) (out net) 100% R&C-\$250 ded.</p> <p>Mental Health(pre-cert.)No Copay-100 day (Inpatient) cal/80% up to 30 days + ded. (not cert.)50% up to 30 days+ded.</p> <p>Emergency100% following a \$25 per day ded. waived if admitted Accident -within 72 hrs\ Illness (life threat) Surgery</p> <p>Alcohol/Sub (Outpatient) 100% (60 visit limit)/100% R&C-\$25 per day ded</p> <p>Mental Health \$15 co pay - 100 visits/ 50%-out patient 30visits</p> <p>Labor/Delivery 100% / 80% of R&C Pre/Post Natal 20%/ Ded +80% of R&C *Labs 100% in hospital (out pt)(\$25 ded per day.) *XRAY 100% in hospital (out pt) (\$25 Ded. per day) *Radiology 100% in hospital (out pt) (\$25 Ded. per day) Radiation/Chemo 100% in hospital Durable Med. Not covered Diabetic Supp. Not covered (?)</p> <p>*Physical Therapy 100% (\$25 day ded.)if following hosp. or surg. Chiropractic Visits \$15/80% RC (100% if reach out pocket max. Must pre-cert. Before 16th visit or pay 50%)</p> <p>Hospice 100% Home/Health 100% Ambulance 100% (\$50 per trip limit) Nursing Home 100%/180 days per year Acupuncture DNA Nutritional Counsel DNA Prescip Drug \$5generic/\$15preferred/\$25non preferred</p> <p><i>*if in a non-network hosp. then \$50 per day ded. - if not in hospital ,then not covered</i></p>	<p>\$15 Copay</p> <p>1 every other year</p> <p>No charge</p> <p>\$15/In System only \$15/In System only \$15/In System only \$15/ In System only \$15 (100% in hosp)/ 80% R&C</p> <p>No Charge/80% R&C</p> <p>No Charge Detox/ 80% R&C</p> <p>No Charge Short Term, Acute, Crisis/ 80% R&C</p> <p>\$50 – waived if admitted</p> <p>\$15 per visit (limit 60)/80% of R&C</p> <p>\$15 1st visit \$25 ea visit 2-5</p> <p>100%/80% of R&C Pre = \$15 / 80% of R&C \$15 per visit /80% of R & C</p> <p>\$15 per visit(100% in hosp.) / 80% of R&C</p> <p>No charge</p> <p>20% as copay/ 50% of R&C</p> <p>\$15 copay per visit (2 month max)/ 80% of R&C \$15 copay with referral</p> <p>Covered \$15 copay per visit/ 80% of R&C 100% Covered DNA DNA DNA \$5generic/\$20 brand/\$40 non-formulary Can mail order 90 day supply at 60 day price</p>	<p>\$15 copay</p> <p>\$15 copay</p> <p>No Copay</p> <p>\$15 Gyn. No Copay (2x w/out referral) Pap Smear free</p> <p>No Copay</p> <p>No Copay</p> <p>No Copay 30 days No Copay 30 days \$35– waived if admitted</p> <p>\$15/60 visits</p> <p>\$15 visit 1-5 \$25 visti 6-20</p> <p>No Copay \$15 No Copay</p> <p>No Copay</p> <p>20% Copay/\$1500 annual max. \$15 Copay</p> <p>\$15 30 visits/60 days</p> <p>\$15 Copay</p> <p>Covered Covered 100% Covered up to 6 visits \$10 ea 2 visits \$10 each \$5 generic/\$ 10 preferred/\$20 nonpreferred</p>	<p>\$15 copay</p> <p>Not Covered</p> <p>No Copay</p> <p>\$15 copay (Well Woman, no PCP referral needed)</p> <p>No copay</p> <p>No copay (unlimited days)</p> <p>No copay/ 7days detox per year No Copay/ 30 days</p> <p>\$35 copay waived if admitted</p> <p>No Copay/60 visits(incl. 20 family visits)</p> <p>\$25 copay / 20 visits</p> <p>No Copay \$15 Copay first visit only No Copay</p> <p>No Copay</p> <p>No Copay No Copay \$15 Copay</p> <p>Up to 30 visits inpatient & 30 out \$15 Copay</p> <p>No Copay, 210 days lifetime No Copay 200 visits/year NO Copay No Copay/ 60 day per year Covered DNA \$5generic/\$15brand/\$25 non formulary</p> <p>Occup./speech/Vision Therapy \$5/ total 30visits</p>



**We're looking for a few great teachers...
And we know they're in VC Classrooms.**

Each year the District
in conjunction with the Association
Nominates a teacher to be considered for
NEW YORK STATE TEACHER OF THE YEAR.
*Please submit the name of a colleague who you believes
exemplifies the phrase "Great Teacher."*

Name _____

Building _____

Years teaching _____ Years at VC _____

Please tell us why you think this person should be VC's candidate:

Return this form to your building rep. by October 30th.

One

As the soot and dirt and ash
rained down,
We became one color.

As we carried each other down the
stairs of the burning building
We became one class.

As we lit candles of
waiting and hope
We became one generation.

As the firefighters
and police officers
fought their way
into the inferno
We became one gender.

As we fell to our knees

in prayer for strength,
We became one faith.

As we whispered or shouted
words of encouragement,
We spoke one language.

As we gave our blood in
lines a mile long,
We became one body.

As we mourned together
the great loss,
We became one family.

As we cried tears of grief and loss,
We became one soul.

As we retell with pride



of the sacrifice of heroes,
We become one people.

We are
One color
One class
One generation
One gender
One faith
One language
One body
One family

One soul
One people
We are The Power of One.
We are United.
We are America.

~ Cheryl Sawyer, a professor at UH
ClearLake (from Internet)

When Tragedy struck, Union Members Responded (continued from page one)

Southside Senior High in Rockville
Centre and Plainedge High in
North Massapequa.

Members
of the Public Em-
ployees Federa-
tion, a union of
government work-
ers based in New

*To donate to the
NYSUT 9-11
Disaster Relief Fund,
see page 10.*

York state, worked in offices in the
World Trade Center. Dozens were
reported missing.
PEF is affiliated with
the AFT. The PEF
office in Manhattan,
six blocks from the
trade center explo-
sions, was evacuated.
In the immediate af-
termath, the UFT mad

Brooklyn office space available to
PEF.

The New York State AFL-
CIO and Food and Commercial
Workers Local 342-50 and 1500
arranged and loaded donated food
and beverages for delivery to fire-
fighters in New York City.

~From NYSUT's
The Bottom Line

We will be there to support our students and our communities in every way possi-
ble as all of us attempt to cope with the aftermath of this tragedy.
Our affiliates in New York City—the United Federation of Teachers and the
Professional Staff Congress at CUNY—have opened their buildings to shelter
those in need. Our members will mobilize to help with blood drives and disaster relief. Most im-
portantly, we will reach out to support our students as they try to cope with a world that is a far
scarier place than it was yesterday.”

September 12, 2001

*NYSUT President Tom Hobart, Executive Vice President Alan Lubin, First Vice President
Antonia Cortese, Second Vice President Walter Dun and Secretary-Treasurer Ivan Tiger.*

From the President

Memorandum of Agreement between the Panacea Central School District and the "Where's the Beef" Teachers' Association (continued from page one)

Engineers. Additionally, teachers receiving post-junior high school degrees will be compensated with salary adjustments commensurate with these honors and achievements. Therefore, teaching salaries are projected to be increased by an additional 100% for those teachers with a single Masters Degree to their credit.

The parties recognized that very few jobs or professions required anything remotely close to a Masters Degree for gainful employment. Furthermore, to their credit, many Panacea staff members have earned credits well beyond a Masters Degree, including two or more Masters.

According to the signed Memorandum of Agreement, parents will be required to attend all school conferences that pertain to their child's performance. They must review their child's homework assignments each night and ensure all assignments are completed and turned in on time. Panacea parents must also ensure that their child is well rested, well fed, on time to school, and courteous at all times.

Parent Report Cards will be published in the local Panacea newspaper right next to the State's School Report Cards. The local newspaper (affectionately called *The Untimely and Misinformed*) has assured local parents that no misleading statistics, statements, or comparisons will blemish these sacred Parent Report Cards. In fact,

they have promised community parents the same diligence and fairness that has been extended to all public schools by the media in recent years.

Furthermore, chronically complaining parents will be required to prepare two weeks of lesson plans and teach 10 full days of heterogeneous classes. These classes shall include, but not be limited to, children with police records, kleptomaniacs, compulsive liars, psychologically challenged children, children who sleep during class because their after school job doesn't end until 4 a.m., chronic drug abusers, etc. One of these classes must, however, contain these parents' own annoying little "pooch-kin." When this experience has been completed, the parent will earn a Scapegoat Card. This card entitles the bearer to freely scapegoat public education and all of its working members for all of their child's misdeeds for the remainder of the school year.

The agreement also requires Panacea parents to pay for their own home tutors when students are suspended or expelled. This became a hot topic during ne-



VCTA President, Tim Brown

gotiations when all parties recognized that verbal and physical assaults on staff had been increasing since the media reported that tutors were provided at taxpayer expense to these suspended disruptive and sometimes violent students,

while well behaved students and their parents were often stuck with the bill.

Finally, but perhaps most importantly, all parties in the Panacea Central School District agreed that old farts, ~sorry ~ apologies, ~I mean veteran teachers, should be treated with the dignity and respect commensurate with their longevity, dedication, wisdom and self-sacrifice. The parties agreed that veteran teachers should be revered as the district's most precious natural resource. They were described as wells ~ actually, they appear to be bottomless pits at times because if you put food on the table they just seem to appear out of nowhere ~ they are wells of knowledge that mentor and shape our new teachers. They are the stabilizing influence and backbone to the Panacea Central School District.

In a joint press release, the parties stated the following: Too many communities have taken for
(continued on page nine)

Due to the September 11 tragedy, the September VCTA meeting was postponed until September 19th. The minutes of that meeting will be published in the November ECHOES along with the minutes of the October meeting.

The October meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 16th at the Professional Library in the HS beginning at 3:45pm. VCTA meetings are open to its members.

From the President**Memorandum of Agreement between the Panacea Central School District
and the "Where's the Beef" Teachers' Association
(continued from page eight)**

granted the stabilizing influence of dedicated long-term employees. Just as children tend to thrive in the love provided in a stable home environment, students also thrive in a stable and caring school environment.

Our newest generation of professionals entering the education system has demonstrated themselves to be more transient than preceding generations. This generation has been weaned on the concept of economic advantage and social mobility. They are not fooled and they are, therefore, less accepting of salary schedules that cease to be competitive within a few years.

Improving starting salaries was a necessary step for the Panacea Central School District to attract new staff. But if we stop here, we have simply delayed the inevitable

for a few years. In fact, the turnover has already begun. Recently hired Panacea staff members, looking to the future, have begun to jump the fence for greener pastures. The impact that this transience has on the overall school environment is not unlike the impact that divorce has on a family. Schools cannot excel if they are constantly being torn apart and reorganized on a yearly basis.

The Panacea Central School District can no longer afford to treat its dedicated veteran teachers as second-class citizens. It is no longer acceptable, in fact, it should never have been acceptable to take advantage of our most senior partners in education simply because it has been easy to do so. If we con-

tinue to take this natural resource for granted our students will pay the price, both academically and emotionally.

It is my hope that Valley Central will learn from the Panacea Central School District. It is my hope that all of the players in the education system here at Valley Central will also recognize and value, beyond rhetoric and lip service, this wisdom that comes with experience and age.

~ Tim Brown

**Robin McMillan nominated for Disney Award**

Robin McMillan teaches first grade at Montgomery

Congratulations to Montgomery Elementary's own Robin McMillan who was nominated for Disney's American Teacher Awards! This award honors teachers whose practices exemplify creativity in teaching and who inspire a joy of learning in their students.

Robin, a first grade teacher, joined the faculty in September 2000 after teaching for eleven years in New York City. Robin's warm style and phenomenal skills quickly caught the eye of parents and her colleagues. Last spring Robin was nominated for the Disney Award by a parent. Robin completed the rigorous application process in the Elementary category.

Although Robin recently learned she is not the recipient of the award, she was thrilled and touched to be honored. We feel so lucky to have her as part of our Montgomery Elementary family.

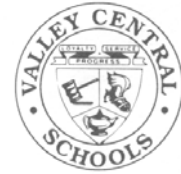
~ Adrienne Hershfield,
Montgomery Elementary School

**The schools
of the
country
are its
future in
miniature.
~ Tehyi Hsieh**

An Open Letter from our Superintendent

October 3, 2001

The terrible, catastrophic events of September 11, 2001 have had a profound effect on our schools, our surrounding communities, and our nation. Given the close proximity to our school district, I assume that some of our employees have suffered the loss of extended family members, relatives and friends. Yet, as educators and role models for our students, we have been, and continue to be, required to provide comfort, stability, and a sense of security for those thousands of students who come under our charge each and every day.



OFFICE OF THE
SUPERINTENDENT

September 11, 2001 will be remembered as a tragic event in history that has most likely changed the definition of freedom as currently understood. Yet, in our school district it will be remembered as a day that we came together to ensure the safety of our students and provided a safe return to their parents/guardians at the end of the school day. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to each and every staff member who assisted in the orderly dismissal of our students to assure a safe release to parents.

Even though we mourn those who have been lost, let us be proud that we live in a country that symbolizes freedom and opportunity. Valley Central is a special place, a place where ALL staff pull together to help each other, even in the worst of times.

I am grateful for all that you do on a daily basis and I thank you for your help in making all of our students feel secure on September 11, 2001.

Sincerely,

Arthur H. Nugent, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

NYSUT Launches Relief Fund

With an initial contribution of \$100,000, the NYSUT Board of Directors endorsed the launch of a NYSUT 9-11 Disaster Relief Fund. The fund will aid NYSUT members and other public union members affected by the terrorist attacks September 11.

"NYSUT locals and our members have always been generous in times of need," said NYSUT President Tom Hobart. "There is no greater moment for us to come together as a union and assist our colleagues who suffered immeasurable loss in this disaster."

A portion of the NYSUT funds will support the American Federation of Teachers Recovery Fund. NYSUT continues to support relief efforts by the American Red Cross, United Way and the AFL-CIO Union Community Fund.

The union also offered support to teachers forced to relocate due to the World Trade Center collapses. The NYSUT Member Benefits Department has pledged \$40,000 to provide books and supplies to teachers and their students.

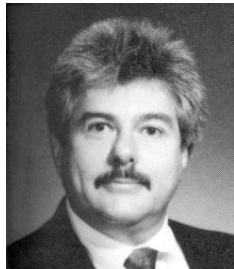
To contribute, send donations to: NYSUT 9-11 Disaster Relief Fund, 59 Wolf Rd. Box 15008, Albany, NY 12212-15008.



An Invitation to all VCTA members From the Valley Central Scholarship Council

The Valley Central Scholarship Council is an independent, not-for-profit corporation designed for the sole purpose of providing financial assistance to graduates of the Valley Central School District who wish to further their education. Since its inception in 1964, over \$500,000 in scholarships have been awarded to seniors who attend academic and/or vocational institutions beyond high school. Money is raised every year through donations and fundraisers, which include selling refreshments at our football and basketball games, our Holiday Cookie Sale in December, and the Art and Craft Show in May. **The VC Scholarship Council is currently seeking new members who are interested in helping us continue this worthwhile tradition at Valley Central.** If you are interested in joining, please contact Kathy Sahl (457-5466) or June Guidry (564-4212). We hope you will support our fundraising events throughout the year.

Thank you!



Richard H. Aderson
"MAKE A DIFFERENCE"
2001 AWARD

**Orange-Ulster BOCES is
seeking nominations for the Richard H. Aderson Award.**

Richard Aderson was Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Services and Personnel in the Valley Central School District. He tragically lost in life, and is remembered as an outstanding administrator and a prominent voice for all children and their educational needs.

**The "Make A Difference" Award recognizes the
accomplishments of an outstanding educator
in our BOCES region.**

If you would like to nominate someone for this award,
contact your Building Representative for a copy of the nomination form.

Nominations must be submitted by NOVEMBER 12, 2001.

Awards will be announced in January 2002.

VCTA Members Walk for Juvenile Diabetes

We were high and dry over the Hudson River. On Saturday, September 29, a group of committed teachers, paras and family members joined the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Walk for a Cure. It was a hike but well worth the effort.

Upwards of \$300 dollars was collected from around the school district. Fil Bernatowicz and Kay Sherman collected on the Conference Day and at the Retirement Luncheon. Juvenile Diabetes affects our children at all levels. Supporting the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation with money is worthwhile and doing the Walk is

healthy exercise! Join us again next year.

~ Gail Roberto

Berea Elementary School



Pat Darney, Yvonne Sternemann and Katie, Denise Scott and Gail Roberto



Gail Roberto, Lenette Walsh, Pat Darney, and Denise Scott

Most Americans love their public schools

The approval rating for public schools is at an all-time high, while support for school voucher programs continues to decline, according to the 33rd Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools.

The poll shows that 51%



of the public assigns an A or B to schools in their communities—the first time a majority of the public have given grades this high. The high marks for schools may explain why 72% said they preferred reforming the existing system

to alternative schools. Also, an overwhelming 88% of the public

support raising teacher salaries as a strategy to deal with the anticipated teacher shortage. The entire poll is posted at the Kappan Web site, www.pdkintl.org.

~ From NYSUT's,
The Bottom Line

To sleep, perchance to dream, of better grades

High school students are likely to attend more classes, behave better and get better grades if they can sleep later on school mornings, according to a study of thousands of Minneapolis high schoolers. Attendance and continuous enrollment have improved significantly in Minneapolis schools since the district changed the start time

from 7:15 AM to 8:40 AM, reported University of Minnesota researcher Kyla Wahlstrom.

~ From NYSUT's,
The Bottom Line



Districts free to say “no sweat”

A new state law frees public school districts to reject business with manufacturers that use child labor or sweatshops to make school apparel.

The new legislation, signed into law last month by Gov. George Pataki, is believed to be the first of its kind in the nation. It gives new energy to the NYSUT backed struggle against sweatshops and child labor launched by the NYS Labor-Religion Coalition in 1998. The “Sweatfree Schools” campaign renewed efforts to build on the eight of 705 districts statewide that have signed on to the campaign pledging not to purchase apparel (caps, uniforms, sweatshirts, etc.) manufactured in sweatshops.

NYSUT Executive Vice President, Alan B. Lubin said, “In signing the Sweatfree Schools bill,

the governor deserves credit for recognizing that our schools have an obligation to set a positive example for our children in the fight against illegal sweatshops and child labor. By giving school districts flexibility to consider labor standards in purchasing school uniforms and apparel, New York moves closer to the day when no high school football player, for example, wears a jersey made in an illegal sweatshop, or by a child working 15-hour days for pennies.”

School boards are no longer required to accept the lowest bidder and may consider labor standards when awarding bids to purchase apparel. Now districts may consider labor conditions such as employment compensation, working conditions, the right to join a union and the use of child labor. The legislation takes some of the

burden of proof from school boards and places it on manufacturers. “Failure to provide school boards” with “sufficient information” about labor standards is grounds for not receiving a contract or being labeled a non-responsible bidder.

NYSUT President Tom Hobart, Co-Chairman of the Coalition with Albany Catholic Diocese Bishop Howard Hubbard, thanked lawmakers and labor and religious activists who helped enact this new law.

“This law fights illegal sweatshops in New York and abroad,” he said. “It reaffirms for our students that New York state is committed to justice in the workplace.”

~ From NYSUT's
The Bottom Line



**The VCTA
is seeking
a member
to coordi-**

**nate our own “Sweatfree”
efforts. If you would be in-
terested in helping us with
this worthy cause, contact
President Tim Brown, 457-
5899.**

**Please
continue to keep track
of two things:**

Coverage— when you are taken from teaching your own class to teach someone else’s due to a lack of a sub.

AIS Preparation—The administration insists that AIS at the elementary level is a duty. Please keep track of any preparation you feel is professionally necessary, outside of that duty time, in order to be effective.

**Evening Parent Teacher Conferences will
be held on
Tuesday evening, November 20th.
Remember that attendance at these confer-
ences is contractual (*unlike the voluntary
Open House nights*),
and if you are absent,
the administration has the right
to require that you
make up the evening another night.**

The Superior Teacher—Valley Central

1. His primary interest is the student;
2. He brings to the classroom a strong background in his subject area, and is able to communicate that background to his students;
3. He actively seeks out the students who need extra help whether in or out of the classroom;
4. He has the ability to deal in a fair in ethical manner with students and parents;
5. He possesses to a high degree those qualities which project a strong adult image;
6. He demonstrates an awareness of the need for self-improvement and seeks out methods which will improve his effectiveness.

Published 1/2/73

The more things change, the more they stay the same...

Top Parent Concerns: Funding, Overcrowding, Teacher Shortage

Parents say the biggest challenges facing public schools are inadequate funding (63%), overcrowding (49%) and shortage of teachers (48%). Fourth among parent concerns is low student achievement (43%), according to a study by the independent firm Market Facts, Inc. that conducted the parent poll for Horace Mann Educators Corp.

The poll measured parent support for raising student achievement: (63%) for raising teacher pay, (44%) for requiring universal pre-school, (41%) for adopting uniform statewide curricula, and (29%) for year-round schooling. Only (18%) mentioned extending the school day.

~ From NYSUT's *The Bottom Line*

Parent-Teacher Conference



*Tips from
Veteran
Teachers*

1. **DO** always greet parents warmly at the door.
2. **DO** start the meeting by showing that you care and know something positive about their child. Summarize the student's strengths before raising problems.
3. **DO** dress in a way that reflects the meeting's importance and your respect for the parent(s) and their child.
4. **DO** rehearse what you want to say.
5. **DO** use materials from the student's work folder.
6. **DO** use positive, nonverbal behavior.
7. **DO** engage parents in planning best ways to help their child.
8. **DO** give parents something to take home with them.
9. **DO** use clear and descriptive terms.
10. **DO** end positively, with a proactive message of hope.

nysut NEW YORK STATE UNITED TEACHERS



Teachers' own school spending hits \$589

Teachers spend an average of \$589 of their own money on school supplies and instructional materials per year, with kindergarten and pre-K instructors laying out the most, reports the National School Supply and Equipment Association.

The group reports these and other findings in its "Retail Market Awareness Study" conducted by Quality Education Data last spring. For information, contact NSSEA at (800) 395-5550 or see the Web site: www.NSSEA.org.



New York State Teachers' Retirement System

10 Corporate Woods Drive
Albany, New York 12211-2395

(800) 356-3128 or 447-2666 (Albany-area calls)

Web Site: www.nystrs.org

George M. Philip, Executive Director

PRERETIREMENT PLANNING SEMINARS

(This schedule is also on our website: www.nystrs.org)

These daylong meetings are designed to help active members of this System prepare for retirement. During the course of the day, discussions are devoted to financial planning, taxes, legal affairs, adjusting to retirement, Social Security and Retirement System benefits, and other pertinent topics. **Members age 45 and older and spouses/companions are eligible to attend.** Seminars are held 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with registration from 8:00 to 8:30 a.m. The fee to attend is \$10.00 for members and \$5.00 for guests. Please see below for information on making a reservation.

2001 FALL SCHEDULE

Call Toll Free 1-800-356-3128, Ext. 6180

We will begin taking calls on Wednesday, September 12 for all areas below.

ALBANY October 13 (Saturday) November 16 (Friday) The Desmond Albany Shaker Road	ITHACA October 31 (Wednesday) The Clarion Triphammer Road & Route 13	L.I.-SMITHTOWN November 9 (Friday) Sheraton Long Island 110 Vanderbilt Motor Parkway, Exit 53 LIE	TARRYTOWN November 29 (Thursday) Westchester Marriott 670 White Plains Rd.
BUFFALO December 6 (Thursday) Sheraton Inn 2040 Walden Avenue	L.I.-HAUPPAUGE October 26 (Friday) December 1 (Saturday) Islandia Marriott-L.I. Exit 58 LIE	ROCHESTER October 30 (Tuesday) December 7 (Friday) Radisson Inn 175 Jefferson Road	UTICA December 5 (Wednesday) Radisson Hotel 200 Genesee Street
FISHKILL November 14 (Wednesday) Holiday Inn I-84 – Route 9	L.I.-MELVILLE October 25 (Thursday) November 10 (Saturday) November 30 (Friday) Melville Marriott Exit 49N LIE 1350 Old Walt Whitman Rd.	SYRACUSE October 11 (Thursday) Holiday Inn- Syracuse/Liverpool 7 th No. St. & Elec. Parkway, Exit 37 NYS Thruway	

TO MAKE A RESERVATION: Starting on September 12, please telephone the Retirement System in Albany at our toll-free number, 1-800-356-3128, ext. 6180 for the seminar above you wish to attend. **Reservations can only be made by calling the Albany office weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.** When calling, please provide your Social Security number, date of birth, home address, home and work telephone numbers and indicate if your spouse/companion is attending. If your spouse/companion is also a member, please have the above information for him/her also. At the time of your call you will receive instructions on paying the seminar fee noted above. **We request that your payment, by check, reach us no later than three weeks after the date of your call. Your reservation may be cancelled and made available to other members if you are unable to meet this deadline.** Once we receive your payment we will send you a seminar agenda and a letter confirming your reservation, which you should bring to the seminar. **Please note that prior to the seminar we must give the hotel a guaranteed count of attendees. Once this final count is given, or after the seminar fills, the seminar fee is not refundable.**

PLEASE BE PREPARED TO SHOW PHOTO IDENTIFICATION AT SEMINAR REGISTRATION

Secretarially Yours



Welcome back! I guess I'm a little late. I wish to welcome Jill Conklin as a new secretary to Don Crispell High School Assistant Principal. Marie Conley is now in the Guidance Office. I am now secretary to

the new Assistant Principal for Evening High School who is still unnamed as of yet at this time.

If there are any other changes I guess no one has told me. Please contact me if you know of any.

We are looking forward to a wonderful new school year with lots to be thankful for. New computers, new phone system and many and varied things which will make our lives as secretaries at Valley Central a little bit better.

We will be having a unit meeting within the next month and hopefully everyone will be able to attend.

If you have any contributions for this column please contact me at the High School, 457-3122x 314.

Have a great year filled with health, happiness, and prosperity.

~ Lucy Fox
Secretarial Representative

MacNote #1



Reisert on their passing. They were both cherished members of our VC family.

108 Retirees attended the luncheon on September 5th.

I leave you with a favorite quote of mine, written in the 1930's by Monsignor John A. Ryan, a giant in the field of social reform. "Effective labor unions are still by far the most powerful force in society for the protection of the worker's rights and his or her improved condition. No employer benevolence, public sympathy or increase of beneficial legislation can adequately supply for the lack of organization among the workers themselves."

Until next time, keep pushing back the barriers of ignorance in whatever venue life finds you. Peace.

~ Kevin McFadden

Pondering the expense of sending out every issue of ECHOES, I decided that I would do a column for every other issue to be sent out to retirees. I promise to make each of those columns:

- A) more interesting
- B) more bombastic
- C) more pompous
- D) more *(fill in your own adjective)*

A "MacNote" may appear in the alternate issues.

Deep sympathy to the families of Tony Amodio and Dee

Former NYSTRS Members have left \$2 Million Unclaimed

If you know a family member, friend or casual acquaintance who at some point worked in a New York State public school, please tell them NYSTRS may have some money for them.

There are 3,300 former members who have a forgotten "account" with the system.

Please encourage former school employees to visit our web site at www.nystrs.org and click "Abandoned Accounts" They will be prompted to enter a name or teaching location. They will be informed on the spot if there is money for them.

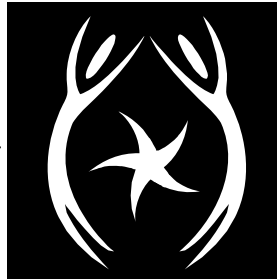
Putting Children Center

Just why would the VCTA chose a logo about “putting children center”? That was the question a building representative had at our last meeting when we were discussing the shirts available below. Basically the answer is one of semantics.

The more popular phase in education is “putting children first.” It was painted on a banner and hangs in our Central Office. My first editorial in my first issue as editor of the ECHOES addressed

this concept. By using the idea of first, a ranking is naturally implied. Of course, the children should be first—they are the most important. But who should come second or third in education? Parents, Board of Education, Central Administration, Building Administration, Teachers, Secretaries, Paraprofessionals, Custodians, Cafeteria Workers and the list goes on. By

changing the word first to center a different picture is drawn. The child is placed in the center and all the other players in the education field surround the child; level with one another, focused on the child, reaching out together to help that child achieve all that he/she can.



~ Patti Lunden

putting children center
vcta

Buy a VCTA Shirt!

Shirts come in 3 styles:

Blue Golf Shirt, Short Sleeve Denim and Long Sleeve Denim
(Denim Shirt Color Choices: Light Blue, Black, Forest Green, Indigo, Khaki, Natural, Navy, White)

All shirts have logo embroidered on them.

All VCTA members receive a \$2 discount on the first shirt they purchase.

Return this form to your Building Rep. Or the VCTA office

Name _____

Building _____

SIZE: S M L XL *2XL *3XL

Blue Golf Shirt ____ Short Denim ____ Long Denim ____

Color: Blue, Black, Green, Indigo, Khaki, Natural, Navy, White

Payment due on receipt. Checks payable to VCTA.

Prices:

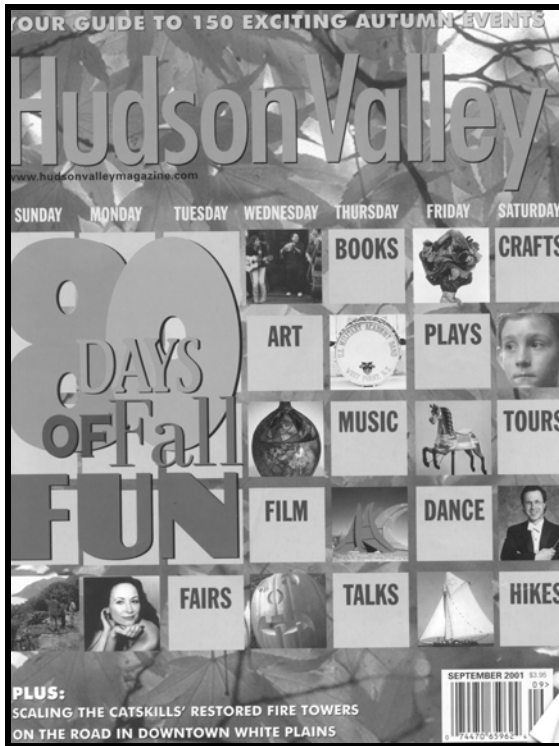
Golf Shirt- \$20 plus tax

Short Denim- \$25 plus tax

Long Denim- \$27 plus tax

(Prices listed before discount)

* Larger sizes +\$2



Hudson Valley Magazine 12 issues for only \$10

***Make your check payable to:
HUDSON VALLEY MAGAZINE***

Send your check along with your
name and address to the
VCTA Office c/o Tim Brown,
High School
by November 2nd.

We've got mail...

VCTA ~

I would like to express my appreciation for the gifts received from the Association upon my retirement.

I hope that all of your teaching years pass as quickly as my 33 years.

*Again thanks,
Ernie Pettine*

Dear Members of the VCTA,

Thank you very much for selecting me to receive the Donald Brooks Memorial Scholarship. I appreciate your kindness and support of education at the High School! Thanks!

*Sincerely,
Sarah L. Miressi*

Dear Valley Central Teachers' Association,

I am writing to you in regards to receiving a Valley Central Teachers' Association Scholarship at my graduation ceremony. I feel honored to have received such a commendable award. This award is going to help me further my education at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts where I will be studying Speech Language Pathology/Audiology. I am excited to attending in the fall and look forward to the many more contributions I can make to the college and the community. I appreciate this award and I thank you once again! Sincerely, Kate Rode

Dear Members of the Valley Central Teachers Association,

I would like to take this opportunity to express to you my sincere appreciation for the Valley Central Teachers Association Scholarship that I received on the evening of my graduation. I am truly grateful to have the chance to receive such a prestigious scholarship and award.

In the fall, I will be attending Rollins College where I plan to pursue a major in the area of International Studies. I will work hard to achieve my academic goals and I plan to enjoy college for the four years I am there.

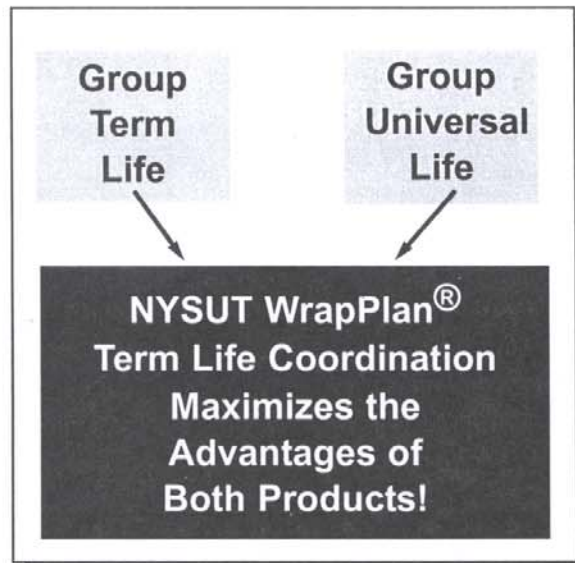
Again, words cannot express how grateful I am for this noble award. Thank you so much for allowing me to receive this honorable scholarship, I sincerely appreciate it; thank you.

*With love,
Brianna Clair*

Financial Obligations Don't End at Retirement... Neither Should Your Life Insurance!

The NYSUT WrapPlan® Term Life Coordination Program has been developed to complement term life insurance coverages available to members. The plan coordinates with the NYSUT Term Life Insurance Plan, other individual term insurance policies, and any term life insurance coverages provided to members from their local union affiliation or employer.

The common characteristic of term life insurance is that coverage typically terminates or dramatically decreases at retirement. When this loss of coverage occurred in the past, the options were limited. Members could apply for an expensive conversion policy, apply for fully underwritten coverage if they were healthy, or simply forgo the needed protection. The WrapPlan® allows members and spouses to apply for a lesser amount of coverage (as little as 50% of their current term benefit), and have the protection increase when their term insurance decreases or terminates. This benefit, which can be custom designed for a member's



individual family, financial, and career needs includes the following features:

- Coverage may be continued to age 95.
- Premiums may be set to produce as much or as little cash value as desired.
- Up to \$200,000 of coverage is available without a medical examination or blood test.
- Coverage amounts and increase dates may be adjusted to meet a member's changing financial picture.
- Account values accumulate at competitive interest rates, on a tax-deferred basis.

NYSUT Benefit Trust negotiated several other features that make this plan unique. To find out more, call the plan administrator, Future Planning Associates, Inc., at 1-800-626-0291.

The WrapPlan® is a group Universal Life Insurance policy underwritten and issued by Transamerica Life Insurance Company of New York. The Policy Form Number is 3-180 38-197. The NYSUT WrapPlan® is administered by Future Planning Associates, Inc.

Advertising Section

These ads will be seen by over 750 members of the VC Educational Community and their households. If you would like to advertise in the next issue of the VC ECHOES, contact Patti Lunden, 457-5899 for rates.

***Join us at the
Orange County
Country Club!***

**November 7, 2001
At 4:00 PM**

**Will you retire in the next
1...5....10 years?**

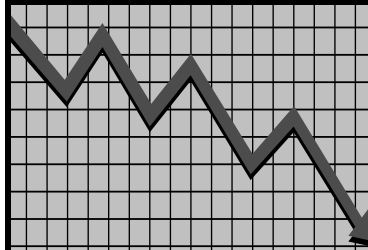
Find out how you and your loved ones are affected by the Pension Options in the NYS Retirement System. As you enjoy an informational dinner seminar, learn:

- Strategies to maximize your NYS pension.
- How much income you will have in retirement.
- Costly mistakes to avoid.
- What COLA will mean to you.
- Why early planning is essential.

Peter Knapp, CLU and Edward F. Manners, JD are registered representatives of New England Securities. They have personal experience with the NYS Retirement System and will be sharing their extensive knowledge on the subject. While explaining this important financial matter, your questions and participation are welcome.



Please call (914) 347-5241 to make a reservation and choose an entrée.
Seminar Fee: \$10 Spouse welcome
New England Financial Group
120 White Plains Road
Suite 204
Tarrytown, NY 10591



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a plunge, your
MEMBER-OWNED
Credit Union stands
firm
And always ready to**

***“ Where people are worth
more than money.”***

17 Walnut Street
Montgomery, NY 12549
(845) 457-5592/457-5862
FAX: (845) 457-3197
HOURS: 8 AM—5 PM (M-Th)
FRIDAY until 5:30 PM



- Sports and Work Injuries
- Neck and Lower Back Pain
- Headaches
- Shoulder and Arm Pain
- Muscle Spasms
- Pinched Nerves

CALL TODAY 561-4311
516 Union Avenue New Windsor



**House for Sale
Montgomery**

**4 Bedroom, 3 Bath Colonial
On 1.2 Acres**

**Call Jim Tate,
457-3162**

Advertising Section

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794 Rte. 17M (1/4 mile east of Rte. 302) Middletown, NY 10940
Owned and operated by Brian Baker (VC class of '80)
and Jeff Baker (VC class of '73). Established in 1988.

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\$19.99/ month

200 Free Minutes/month

Includes

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\$29.99	400 minutes
\$39.99	600 minutes
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Add up to 3 partners for only \$14.99
each on rate plans \$29.99
(Share plan minutes)

Only available through

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Limited Time Only!



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: (845) 457-5899

President, Timothy Brown (HS)
Vice President, Jay Sussdorff (HS)
Vice President, Richard Steger (Walden)
Secretary, Laurie Hey (MS)
Treasurer, John Bonagura (EC)

Building Representatives

Berea: Carol DeMicco, Sara Ackerson,
Robin Scott

Maybrook: Donna Lloyd, Linda Siegel

East Coldenham: Rebecca Pace, Holly Bacon

Walden: Patty Joy, Randy Sutter,
Brenda Newman

Montgomery: Toni Sperry, Chris Brand

MS: Mary Bleau, Mary Goldberg, Dana DeMasi
Marc Sperry, Joe Collins, Mike Steele
Kathy Manning

HS: Heather Ford, Jane Hillis, Peter Meisel,
Glenn Eckert, Joe Fracalossi,
Jean McMahon, Bob Jurgens

Secretarial Representative: Lucy Fox (HS)

Paraprofessional Representative: Kathi Russo (Montg)

VC ECHOES Editor

Patricia Lunden, (HS)

Email: vcta@frontiernet.net

NYSUT

www.nysut.org

AET

www.aft.Org

AFL-CIO

www.aflcio.org

Mid-Hudson Teacher Center :

(845) 255-2885

<http://www.mhtrc.dcooces.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 Patricia Lunden
at the HS by October 23, 2001 .
Any articles submitted to the VC
Echoes will also be posted on the
VCTA Web page.

The Importance of Building Meetings

The VCTA Officers depend on our Building and Unit Representatives to be our eyes and ears in the buildings, to ensure that the contract is being adhered to and that our members are being given the proper support to perform their jobs. Your building representative and unit representatives need your input. The structure of the school day makes it impossible to see one another on a daily basis, that is why your attendance at monthly building meetings is essential. Building meetings are usually well attended near the end of a contract or after its expiration. But we need your input long before, and long after negotiations. Seek out your building representatives, find out when and where meetings are held and then make time in your schedule to attend building meetings.

It is not a UNION without you!

American Heroes

The lead story on the 5:30 AM news on September 11th was about Michael Jordan returning to basketball. I don't know why I paid much attention to that story that morning—I'm not much of a sports fan. But it did stick in my head. Michael Jordan is probably the greatest basketball player of all time and has been regarded as a hero by many. He has had a wonderful career as a player, has sold many items for corporate America and undoubtedly inspired many American children to be just like him. Of course, by the 5:00 PM news on September 11th, the lead story had changed, as did so much else.

After I realized the impact of the tragedy of that day, I along with many other Americans knew that nothing was ever going to be the same. For about a week you couldn't even find a story on any newscast about sports. Instead of talking about men and women who are paid great sums of money to chase balls around a field, we heard about men and

women who are surely not paid what they are worth (*some mere volunteers!*) to run into burning buildings in the midst of disaster to save the lives of others. Stories of men and women trapped on hijacked planes who, knowing they were going to die, did not cower in a corner but attacked their attackers in order to save the lives of those on the ground. Stories of teachers who got thousands of school children safely out of the neighboring schools. Stories of Army Reservists and National Guardsmen (*and women*), including the VCTA's own Jonathan Ford, who left what they were doing to answer the call of duty in our country's time of need. Stories about the men and women whose job it is to search for bodies among a pile of rubble which contains unspeakable tragedy as they carry out the bodies of brothers and sisters lost to us. Stories about men and women who helped each get out of hell on earth, strangers in a stairwell who took care of one another, who blessed the fire and police



men marching up the stairs to their own demise. Stories of business men and women who stopped as they ran away from the area long enough to donate a pint of blood. The media has broadcast many stories of American heroes since the September 11th terrorist attack. Some stories have yet to be told and certainly the days to come will yield more stories of American heroes. Recently, Tom Brokaw wrote a book entitled The Greatest Generation which contains the stories of the people who fought World War II. As someone born well after that generation, I often wondered if we would ever see another time of a "great generation" in this country. I believe we are witnessing it now. God bless America.

~ Patti Lunden