

VC ECHOES

An AFTCA and New York Teacher Award Winning Publication

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 7

MARCH 27, 2002

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Dr. Nugent Announces His Retirement

Dr. Arthur Nugent, last month announced his plans to retire on June 30, 2002 after having served as Valley Central's Superintendent of Schools for three years. Although his superintendency at Valley Central may seem short lived, his career at VC has been a long one. As Dr. Nugent stated, "Thirty -three years in one district is a long time."

Dr. Nugent describes his career as fulfilling the American Education Dream for any teacher: to have spent his



Dr. Arthur Nugent will retire as District Superintendent on June 30, 2002.

first Superintendent's Conference day and his last Superintendent's Conference Day in the same auditorium and to have in that time frame,

gone from being a new teacher in the district to being it's superintendent. Dr. Nugent began his career in 1967, as a part-
(continued on page seven)

VC ECHOES wins Five Awards

The VC Echoes is a winner in the 2002 NY-SUT-New York Teacher Journalism Competition. According to Deb Ward, New York Teacher's Editor-in-Chief, "all three judges remarked on the unusually high quality of this year's entries making your achievement even more noteworthy."

The VC Echoes

competes in Class IV, which includes locals with 651 to 1,000 members. On Saturday, April 27, 2002, Echoes editor, Patricia Lunden will be presented with the five awards during the New York Teacher Journalism Luncheon at the 2002 Representative Assembly in New York City. *(See page 13 for a listing of awards)*

Congratulations to Patti and all contributors to the award winning VC Echoes.

~Tim Brown

**There was
once a pretty
good nation,
Pretty proud
of the
greatness
it had,
Which learned
much too late,
If you want to
be great,
Pretty good is,
in fact,
pretty bad.**

~ Charles Osgood

From the President

The Chain That Won't Be Broken

In many working environments the relationship between managers and workers is mutually respectful, supportive and caring. This in turn, tends to create an environment of trust, comfort, professional excitement and energy, which improves productivity. Under such conditions, union activism seems almost unnecessary, a thing of the past, or something necessary for “others.” Unfortunately, not all managers or workers see the value of the preceding.

Just as some workers will at times need a “kick in the butt” for motivational purposes and to remind them of their responsibilities, there are managers who need to be reminded that their role should not parallel a petty tyrant or a mobster whose sole purpose is to exert power and control through intimidation and abuse.

We are fortunate here at Valley Central. Most managers and workers are professional, caring, dedicated, supportive and hard working. When managers believe these qualities to be lacking in a particular worker, they have many options available to them by which they can take corrective action. When workers believe these qualities to be lacking in a particular manager, however, it may appear they have few options.

A single worker is a single link in a chain of worker perform-

ance. By itself, this link can be isolated, worn down and broken, regardless of the validity of a particular manager's concerns, and regardless of the efficacy or ethics of the methods employed.

Managers who fit the description of petty tyrants also tend to model their heroes—bullies. Bullies attack those they believe to be too weak, new, or passive to protect themselves. As their confidence grows, they bully others who were previously off limits.

Thus, the chain is often responsible for its own weakness and/or destruction. When workers cower in the face of abuse—when workers adopt the attitude that they are responsible for only themselves—when workers erroneously believe they can or will remain unaffected by the bullying around them—when workers, afraid of being noticed themselves by the bully, remain silent in the face of abuse—the chain weakens, the bully strengthens, and the working environment is destroyed.

Unions, however, exist to prevent this very thing from happening. This is why a Collective Bargaining Agreement exists. This is why there is a legal due process procedure. This is why there is an organized union structure (*that's all*

of you). Managers who are confident and competent have no reason to bully. Those who are not may know no other way. With this in mind, I give the following advice. If

you are having a meeting in which you are being bullied or reprimanded you have a right to ask for a union representative before proceeding. If you are

refused a union representative, I strongly suggest you say nothing from that point forward and immediately inform a union representative when the meeting is over.

For extreme cases of abusive behavior (*e.g., aggressive verbal abuse, sexual harassment, etc.*), a worker may find it necessary to terminate the meeting him/herself. The worker should then immediately report this behavior to his/her union representative as well as any other official persons or agencies as may be appropriate. You will never face this situation with a confident, competent and caring manager. Like a good doctor comfortable with a patient seeking a second opinion, a good manager will welcome union representation to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

~Tim Brown



**Alone we're nothing, together we're everything -
it's the whole philosophy of Labor.”
~ Leon Davis, President AFL-CIO Local 1199**

A Call for Nominations

The Valley Central Teachers' Association will hold elections for its Officers and Building Representatives Tuesday, May 21st.

The term for Officers is two years, July 1, 2002– June 30, 2004.

Positions open are as follows:

- President and NYSUT/AFT Delegate
- Vice President and NYSUT/AFT Delegate
- Vice President and NUSUT/AFT Delegate
- Secretary and NYSUT/AFT Delegate
- Treasurer and NYSUT/AFT Delegate

Nomination forms (*page four*) must be returned by April 22nd to VCTA Internal Elections Committee Chairperson, Randy Sutter, Walden Elementary. Nominees for Officers are expected to provide a short biography and photo for publishing in the April issue of the VC ECHOES. Contact Editor, Patti Lunden to be photographed. Biography is due by April 23rd. The term for Building Representatives is one year, July 1, 2002—June 30, 2003. Each building is entitled to 1 representative per every 15 teachers or fraction thereof ($8/15 = 1$ representative). If there are more candidates for building representative than positions, the candidates with the most votes become representatives while the others can be alternates. Contact your current building representatives to let them know that you are interested in becoming a building rep. Building Rep. Elections are handled by the current building representatives.

The proposed VCTA Budget for the 2002-03 school year will also be put up for a vote on the same day. The VCTA Budget Advisory Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 10th at 3:45 pm in HS Room 97. If you would like to attend, please call Tim Brown at 457-5899 by April 9th.

Nomination Forms for the Secretarial Unit Representative and the Paraprofessional Unit Representatives are on page five. The term for these representatives is two years. These units will become independent after the 2002-03 school year, so officer positions are being voted on.

VCTA Officer Nomination Form

July 1, 2002– June 30, 2004

I, _____, nominate

_____ for the position

Of :*(check appropriate position)*

- _____ President and NYSUT / AFT Delegate
- _____ Vice President and NYSUT/AFT Delegate
- _____ Vice President and NUSUT/AFT Delegate
- _____ Secretary and NYSUT/AFT Delegate
- _____ Treasurer and NYSUT/AFT Delegate

This nomination is SECONDED by: _____

Nominee's Signature _____

*Return this form to Randy Sutter, VCTA Internal Elections Committee Chair,
Walden Elementary School by April 22, 2002*

Nominees are expected to submit a short biographical statement explaining:

- 1) How long they have taught, and where they have taught at VC*
- 2) Involvement in the VCTA*
- 3) Why they would like to hold office in the VCTA*

*Biography will be published in the April 30th edition of the VC ECHOES.
Please contact Patti Lunden, 457-5899; Voice Mail ext. 7664
to arrange to have your picture taken.*

Election will be held May 21, 2002 in all buildings.

VCTA Secretarial Unit Nomination Form

I, _____, nominate

For the position of:

_____ Secretarial Unit President/ VCTA Executive Council Rep.

_____ Secretarial Unit Secretary-Treasurer/Exec. Council Alt.

This nomination is seconded by _____

Nominee's Signature _____

Return this form to Randy Sutter, Walden Elementary School by 4/22/02.

VCTA Paraprofessional Unit Nomination Form

I, _____, nominate

For the position of : (check appropriate position)

_____ President / VCTA Paraprofessional Unit Representative

_____ Vice President / VCTA Paraprofessional Unit Alternate

_____ Secretary

_____ Treasurer

This nomination is seconded by _____

Nominee's Signature _____

Return this form to Randy Sutter, Walden Elementary School by 4/22/02.



*A Six– Hour Defensive Driver Safety Course
Given by DMDI Services, Inc and hosted by the VCTA*

Dates : Tuesday, April 30th and Wednesday, May 1st

Time: 4 PM—7 PM

Place: Middle School Cafeteria

Cost: \$28

Light Refreshment will be served.

Reduce your insurance costs by 10% for three years

Take up to 4 points off your license

To Sign Up: Return this form with a check for **\$28, made out to “DMDI Services, Inc.”** (with “VCTA Driver course” written in memo) to Marc Sperry, MS x 6013 or Toni Sperry, Mont. x4616

Name _____ School: _____ ext. _____

The VCTA Sponsors its Third Annual Blood Drive

The Third Annual VCTA Community Service Blood Drive was held on February 28th. The Hudson Valley Blood Services set up shop in the back gym of the Middle School. Thanks to Mr. Bartle and his crew for getting the room ready!

Forty two donors, which included staff, spouses and parents, rolled up their shirt sleeves, put their feet up and gave the gift of life.

The Blood Bank reported a blood shortage in February and was very appreciative of the donations. Thanks are extended to everyone who participated.

~ Kathy Manning, RN

Middle School Representative



Carolyn Lahue honored at EC Founder's Day Celebration

East Coldenham's PTA held its annual Founder's Day celebration on Wednesday, February 20, 2002. At this celebration, Mrs. Carolyn Lahue was the honored recipient of the Life Member Award. The look on her face was priceless! Among the guests who came to join in the ceremonies were Dr. Nugent, Carolyn's mom and dad, brother, sister and family, music teacher colleagues (Sharon Satkowski, Nancy Lagoy and Sam Schackleton) and former student, Gina Belfione. The school plaque will be engraved with her name on it and she was awarded the PTA Life Pin during the program.

Carolyn has been a music teacher for the Valley Central School District since 1986, sharing her time between East Coldenham and Maybrook Elementary Schools. During this time, she has been the instrumental and choral teacher for both schools. This required her to juggle her schedules in both buildings to meet the needs of the children and the building principals.



While at East Coldenham, Carolyn has assisted in many full length musicals the school has produced over the years with the third, fourth and fifth grades. She returns

to the schools several times during the year to conduct band and choral recitals for the parents. Over the past couple of years, she has also started a Select Chorus for the musically talented fourth and fifth graders. These rehearsals are held during early mornings before classes start. Each year, her Select Chorus treats the Central Office Staff to a musical Christmas greeting. Carolyn also works with the first graders on a Holiday program in December for the school's and parents' enjoyment

(continued on page eleven)

Dr. Nugent Announces his Retirement *(continued from page one)*

time Middle School Music teacher. He was hired full time the next year. By 1974, he was assistant principal and in 1980 he became principal of East Coldenham. In 1987, he "went up the road to the old farmhouse (which served as Central Office) and was named Director of Personnel and Curriculum under then Superintendent Jim Coonan. That position eventually was divided and he became the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. In 1999, he assumed the position of Superintendent fol-

lowing the departure of Beverly Ouderkirk.

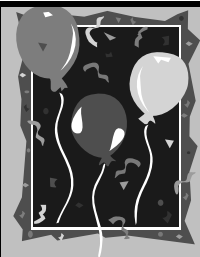
*...the district has been
well served by
Dr. Arthur Nugent.*

Three years can seem like a short amount of time, or a very long amount of time depending on what is happening within that space of time. For Dr. Nugent's tenure, these three years have flown. VCTA President Tim Brown says, "Art is a hometown boy who had the best interests of the district at heart." And the district has been well served by his interests. When Dr. Nugent became Superintendent, Valley Central was poised to begin

its Bond Project building. Dr. Nugent states that this was one of the biggest challenges to complete and he is hopeful that before he leaves his office for the last time on June 30, 2002, it will be finished. The building project led to the redistricting plan that was implemented under Dr. Nugent and the full-day kindergarten program now in place district-wide. Dr. Nugent is particularly proud of the Technology Plan which is coming to fruition. He has been part of this plan since it was in the planning committee and he is excited to see it being put into place. Among the other accomplishments Dr. Nugent is proud of is the establishment of Central Regis-

(continued on page thirteen)

Save the Date!
A Retirement Party for Dr. Arthur Nugent
Thursday, June 20th
Inn at Central Valley



Notes from the 2002 NYSUT Health and Safety Conference

The annual NYSUT Health and Safety Conference was held in Albany on March 8th and 9th, 2002.

This conference gives association representatives, officers, school related professionals and NYSUT officials the opportunity to be educated and updated on relevant health and safety issues in the workplace. Additionally, a wealth of information from various organizations and agencies is provided as a support network for locals.

There were two general sessions during the conference. The first featured Louise Slaughter, Congresswoman from the 28th district. She spoke of her passion for and her record on education specific to health and safety issues that affect the learning environment. She indicated the need to continue to push for positive legislation and conversely, the difficulty of funding such legislation in the present economic climate. Congresswoman Slaughter was a vibrant and authentic supporter of these issues and of NYSUT's role

in identifying and addressing them. The second session, featuring three speakers, headlining Laura Sahr, emergency planning liason from our State Education Dept., focused on emergency planning in light of the

many weather related catastrophes, incidents of school violence, and events surrounding 9/11/01.

Attendees also took part in two 2-hour workshops. There were seven separate workshop topics for each of the two sessions. I attended Union Strategies for Effective Joint Committees (*and Collective Bargaining*) and Workplace Mapping. The first workshop was concerned with establishing effective Health and Safety Committees at the building and district levels that communicate from the individual through channels to management and vice versa. Effective strategies for contract language were also discussed, based on possible



discrepancies between district and association goals. It was surprising and pleasing to find that although our own programs at Valley Central are not perfect, these channels of communication were far more involved and superior to those in many other districts around the state. The second workshop, Work-Place Mapping, allowed us to pick a real world

health and safety issue that existed in a school district that one of our colleagues was from, and make a layered map (*based on many criteria and data*). Creating this map allowed us to get an overall sense of not just the physical problem but how it affected staff and students at several levels. It also indicated lines of communication on the issue and whether they were set up effectively.

Rather than go into greater detail, if you have any questions or have an interest in anything you have read and would like further information, please contact me via interoffice mail, the association telephone or a voice mail message (7697).

~ Jay Sussdorff,
Vice-President

It was surprising and pleasing to find that although our own programs at Valley Central are not perfect, these channels of communication were far more involved and superior to those in many other districts around the state.



Although the dental checks you receive are valid for sixty (60) days, please cash them in a timely manner to facilitate accurate record keeping by your trust. Thank you!:)

CBAC and the 2002-2003 School Budget

It is difficult to understand a school district's budget process. One has to balance the need for programs, staffing and safety with mandates, funds and taxes. This is the third year I have sat on the Citizens Budget Advisory Committee as a representative for the VCTA. During this time I have come to realize that the process does the important job of allowing the constituents of the Valley Central School District to learn about and have a voice in the important work that takes place. The major obstacle to maintaining or adding desirable items to a budget is, of course, the timely passage of adequate state aid. As we all know, the Governor's budget does nothing to assist us for the upcoming school year. A budget increases incrementally year after year, if only because the costs increase as part of a normal economy. This year the state budget provides us with no new money; in fact, we will see a decrease of several hundred thousand dollars while costs inexorably rise. How much of the burden of making up this difference should fall on the taxpayers? Where can savings be made without hurting existing programs and staff? We could look at this situation from our personal point of view-teacher, student, administrator, parent/taxpayer-and exhibit a severe case of myopia. On

*We are receiving
\$600,000 less in state
aid for the 2002-03
school year ...*

the other hand, we could be informed and reasonable given the circumstances and look at the panoramic view. The facts and figures are simple. We are receiving \$600,000 less in state aid for the 2002-03 school year while the proposed budget, prior to going to the BOE for consideration and adjustments, is 6.47% more than this year's. Tax rates and evaluations have not yet been finalized, so a dollar figure on tax increases is not yet able to be calculated. The fund balance can be used to help alleviate the tax increase, but it cannot be so depleted that there is no reserve for next year. Using it all in any one year to hold down the tax levies would have very negative affects on the following years.

Having said all this (and presenting a rather gloomy picture), let it be said that the process and the people involved in it are making every attempt to come up with a budget that balances the needs of our students with the costs necessary to provide them with the best education possible. Investing in our schools is paramount to the success of our children and (to a larger extent) our future. We want students, school personnel, parents and resi-

dents of our district to know that education in a safe environment is being carried on at the highest levels we can provide. The CBAC is everyone's chance to become an "educated consumer" and to have a venue to speak one's mind on the issues. This year's attendance was significantly higher than in previous years, and indicates that people are taking advantage of their right to be informed before voting on a budget, certainly a good sign!

There are several dates of interest in the budget timeline:

- April 15-BOE adopts budget**
- April 19-BOE petitions due (2 seats are up for election)**
- Week of May 6-Budget brochures mailed to district residents**
- May 7-Printed budget available to public**
- May 8-Candidates night - 7:30, MS Café.**
- May 13-Registration day- 1:00-8:00, elem. schools**
- May 14-Budget hearing-7:30. C. O.**
- May 21-Budget Vote-7am-9pm, all elem.schools**

If you would like any of the information provided at the four CBAC meetings, please contact me at the high school.

*~ Jay Sussdorff,
Vice President*

Contact your Legislators!

Go to the NYSUT Web Site, www.nysut.org, and select "Contact your Legislators".

Fill out the required fields (name, address, phone, e-mail) and then you can e-mail or fax a letter that NYSUT has written or you can write your own!

It takes only a minute of your time to make a difference!



Committee of 100... An Important Day

Over 600 NYSUT members from all over the State were at the Committee of 100 in Albany on March 12, 2002 to lobby for improvements in State support for public education, K-12, and higher education.

This year's Committee of 100 Lobby Day was a most important day. It was important because the problems we face are the most serious in memory. We acknowledge the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon and the revenue shortfalls and budget problems. We still have a responsibility to our children of today and future generations to protect and strengthen our public elementary and secondary schools, as well as SUNY, CUNY and the community colleges of our State.

When visiting Senator Bill Larkin, he felt it was absolutely the #1 priority of the Senate to reinstate the building aid package that was deleted in Gov. Pataki's budget for this year. Senator Larkin felt it was important to get the entire education package in place before the May 21st Budget vote state-wide.

The two different branches of government disagree on how much extra monies are available for

the state budget. Anywhere from \$230 million to \$437 million is said to be there. Governor Pataki has stated, he needs to know where this extra monies are so they can actually sit down and formulate a state budget on time.

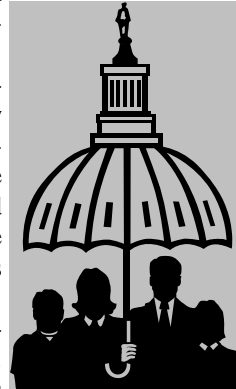
The 9-11 tragedy actually cost the state of New York \$14,000 business revenue to the state treasury. The cost of Insurance from Ground Zero 9/11/01 has caused the state to be 3-4 billion dollars short.

The proposed BOCES Flex Aid package is out. Special Education money is still in. Bullet Aid has been in place for the four years providing \$3000 per elementary K-6, per building, per district. Districts use this money for grants and to give extra monies for the students. It is hoped Bullet Aid will still be available.

When meeting with Assemblyman Howard Mills, he was optimistic that education will now be in a timely manner, as the governor is looking with an open mind. The present freeze is actually a decrease, so everyone is aware of the needs

of the education package. When meeting with Assemblyman Tom Kirwan, he agreed

that Building Aid is a first priority. Mr. Kirwan was honest to state that Gov. Pataki's budget was realistic and not to expect too much extra money to be available.



Assemblywoman Nancy Calhoun was very well prepared for our meeting. She felt that there should be a correction to the Building Aid package problem that was done last October. Ms. Calhoun asked us our opinion on the lowering of the passing grade on the Regents exams to 55. She also felt the formula for state aid needed to be revamped. There is presently a case in court that may very well do that.

In conclusion, the day was very somber and yet hopeful that more monies would be available for state aid for education. The question is: Where is that money going to come from?

~ Mary J. Goldberg,
Middle School Representative

It should be noted that Dr. Nugent and BOE President, Mr. Bob Santo were in Albany the week before us, also lobbying for more money for Valley Central's building aid problem.

*This day was important
because the problems we face
are the most serious in
memory.*

NYSUT Activists Lobby for Education Programs, More Funding

One of NYSUT's key concerns is ensuring teachers in every district have the resources and training to help students meet the Regents; new higher academic standards. Lubin said NYSUT's goal is to make sure no student gets left

behind. "We've raised the bar for the kids. Now we have to raise the bar for the state," Lubin said, "We can't just set higher standards and expect school children to meet them. NYSUT supports higher standards, but we also support providing the resources to make sure they meet those standards."

The Committee of 100— or should I say 700— carried a message that the Legislature and the governor need to hear: New York can't wait to invest in education."

~NYSUT News Release

Hoops for Heart a Success at Maybrook Elementary School

The week of February 4, 2002, students at Maybrook Elementary School helped fight heart disease and stroke by participating in Hoops for Heart. All students in grades 1-5 participated in the Hoops for Heart Hot Shot Contest. Forty-four students raised \$2430.60 for the American Heart Association.

Hoops for Heart is a program designed to promote physical fitness and heart health through the fun activity of playing basketball. The event is co-sponsored by the American Alliance by Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

"We're very proud of all

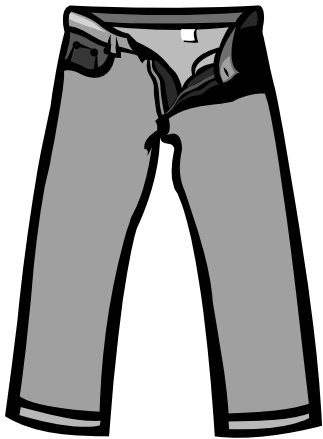
the students who participated and collected donations," said Erin Davis, Hoops for Heart coordinator.

~Donna Lloyd,

Maybrook Representative



Hoops for Heart Coordinator, Erin Davis with student, Patrick Starro.



Denim Day a Success!

The Valley Central All Night Grad Party Committee would like to thank all the employees of Valley Central who participated in the district-wide Denim Day.

A grand total of \$1010 was collected.

A special thanks to Donna Suydam and Diana McElroy for designing flyers and to the nurses for collecting the contributions in each building.

Carolyn Lahue (continued from page four)



grade recognition program. There also is the All District Concert in June, which requires a lot of extra planning and time.

Anyone who does all of these things must have a great love for children and for music. Carolyn's dedication surely shows

these programs. Students who have had Carolyn as a teacher have greatly benefited from her musical talents—as she brings music alive for them—and all of us at East Coldenham. She is truly deserving of this award from the PTA.

~ John Bonagura,

Treasurer

In June, Carolyn helps with the fifth

through her enthusiasm in directing

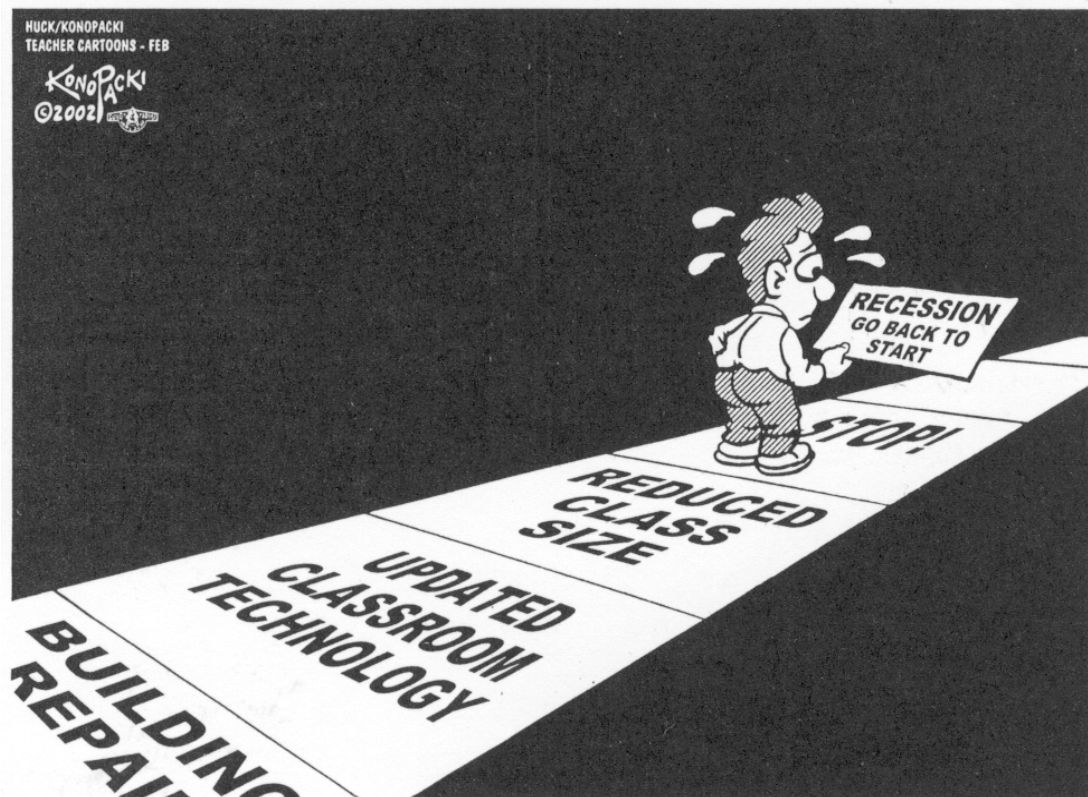


The Annual **VOTE-COPE Drive** is coming!

This drive is primarily for those who don't use payroll deduction to give.

Those who utilize payroll deduction for VOTE-COPE have been contributing each paycheck.

Payroll deduction forms will be available if you would like to arrange to give your contribution by that method for the 2002-2003 school year.



Dr. Arthur Nugent announces his Retirement (*continued from page seven*)

tration, expanding the Gifted and Talented program at the Elementary level, the establishment of new positions and maintaining class sizes in the low 20's at the elementary level.

Dr. Nugent is humble about one of his major accomplishments; as Tim Brown says, "Art Nugent has worked very hard at improving the relationship between the various bargaining units, Central Office and the Board of Education." His hard work has paid off, as he leaves there are contracts in place with every bargaining unit. He sees compromise as being key to his success in bargaining those agreements and credits the negotiators on both sides of the table with looking at both the needs of the unit and the needs of the district and coming to a fair agreement between the two. He also recognizes the need to establish trust with his employees at every level so the relationships will work. Tim Brown describes Dr. Nugent as the best superintendent Valley Central has had in the sixteen years that Brown has been employed here. Brown says, "I am sorry to see Art leaving at a time when things are working so well; we have gotten comfortable in our relationship... and now he's going." As we will

miss Dr. Nugent, he also will miss us. When asked what his fondest memory of Valley Central will be he immediately responded, "the people of Valley Central. In all the years that I have been here, Valley Central has always had unbelievably kind, generous and caring people working here on every level."

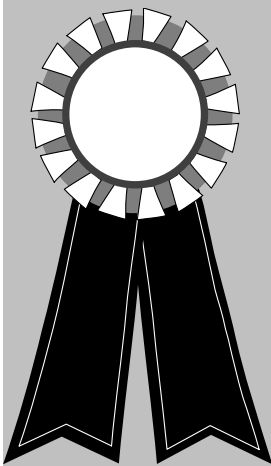
So just where will Dr. Nugent go now that he's leaving Valley Central? The first thing he will assure anyone is, that he is not leaving to become an educational consultant. He has planned as far as the first six months of his retirement. He is going to take time off just to enjoy life and the many things he has had little time for in the past and he is going to spend time with his family. He credits his wife as being his biggest incentive to retire; his wife retired from an administrative position last year, and he admits he has had a hard time leaving for work knowing his wife had each day off.

In reflecting on his career path, Dr. Nugent expressed concern over the amount of time that was taken away from his family as he attended to his duties in his many administrative positions. Dr. and Mrs. Nugent have two grown children, Ryan and Trisha. He warns

that administrative positions often call for working all day and then part of the evening leaving little time for one's own family. He often wondered if this had an ill effect on his children but his fears have been put aside. His son, Ryan is a plant manager for General Motors in Detroit. His daughter, Trisha is a teacher who has just obtained her administrative certification in Boston and will be looking to carry on the Nugent family legacy in administration.

On June 30, 2002, Dr. Nugent will close the door on this part of his life as he journeys into retirement. He can leave knowing that he has accomplished much in his long career here, most important of late, is the progress and the stability he has brought to Valley Central. He has been a good and faithful servant to the Valley Central School District which has been enriched by his contributions. On behalf of the VCTA, we wish you health and happiness and long, relaxing retirement.

~ Patti Lunden,
Editor



VC ECHOES wins Five Awards!

- First Award, Best Original Cartoon, "Sweating the Test", June 2001**
- First Award, Best Article on Education Issues, "Testing at VC," February 2001**
- First Award, Best Article on Health Issues, "Stress," February 2001**
- Award of Merit, Best Report on Community Outreach, "Erin Davis is Part of Team in Training," March 2001**
- Award of Merit, Best Feature Story, "VCTA Treasurer John Bonagura Honored..." February 2001**

Valley Central Teachers' Association

1175 Route 17K • Montgomery, New York 12549 • Telephone/Fax: 845-457-5899 • Internet: www.frontiernet/~vcta
 Affiliated with the New York State United Teachers, American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

To be eligible you must:

- 1) Be either a VCHS graduating senior, or a graduating HS senior whose parent is a VCTA member
- 2) Have an average of 85% or better
- 3) Fill out the following form completely (*type or print*)
- 4) Submit a letter of recommendation from one of your high school teachers. Have it mailed directly to the VCTA at the address above. Your teacher must sign the back of the envelope across the seal.
- 5) Attach a letter, approximately 500 words, in your own handwriting, in which you should indicate something about your hopes and ambitions in life. Also indicate any part-time or summer jobs, how much you saved last year, your plans for this summer and any other information you feel would be of interest to the scholarship committee. This letter is one of the more important parts of your application.

Name _____ ID # (*office use only*) _____

Date _____ Is your parent a VCTA member? _____

Are you a VC student? _____ If no, what High School? _____

Age _____ College you plan to attend _____

Major Course of Study _____

Father's Occupation _____ Mother's Occupation _____

Siblings living at Home or at College (*first names only*) Age Grade in School or Occupation

Comments: (*include unusual expenses, hardships*)

Honors and Awards—Academic:

Honors and Awards other than Academic:

School Activities:

Community Activities:

Mail application to the VCTA c/o Tim Brown, at the address above by May 23, 2002.

There are no better advocates for children and education, than teachers and teacher unions.



“Care for Kids” Campaign
Valley Central Federal Credit Union

**Join the Valley Central Federal Credit Union in
“adopting” a puppy for a good cause.**

**This cuddly terry-cloth puppy can be purchased for \$5.
\$3 of each purchase is donated to the Children’s Cancer
Fund at Westchester Medical center.**



**If you do not wish to purchase a puppy, a \$1 donation
can be made and your contribution card will be posted on the
Credit Union’s “Wall of Honor”.**

***Purchases can be made at the Credit Union office or see Diane Ruggles at the HS
in Room 101.***

**Can you think of someone who would make
an outstanding
Board of Education member?**



***Someone who is pro-education and
truly understands the needs of both
students and teachers?***

**The VCTA will consider endorsing such an individual.
Contact President Tim Brown for more information.**

The deadline for petitions is April 19.

Two seats are up for election.

The election is May 21.

***In the past, VCTA-endorsed candidates have won
the most votes in their BOE elections.***

Statement By New York State United Teachers on Passage of School Defibrillator Legislation

What price should we put on a student's life? The New York State School Boards Association apparently thinks \$3,000 is too much.

"While the School Boards Association is urging the governor to veto this bill, which would require defibrillators on school grounds and at school events, New York State United Teachers strongly supports it. We urge the governor to sign it.

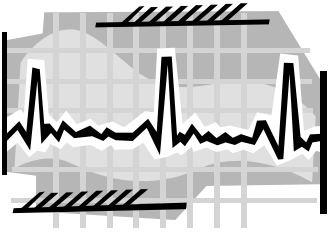
"We agree with the School Boards Association the state should pay for the defibrillators. But if the choice is between spending money and saving kids' lives, that choice is a no-brainer. The safety of our children must come first. Teachers and other school professionals know that. The School Boards Association should know that.

"Defibrillators should be available at all sporting events and other activities that require strenuous

The safety of our children must come first. Teachers and other school professionals know that.

physical exertion, or include large crowds of people. NYSUT has also called for cell phones to be available at all school events, so - in case of an emergency - there is no delay in calling 911.

"The School Boards Association says defibrillators cost too much, but NYSUT believes the issue is about more than money. In March 2000, a Long Island student died of cardiac arrest during a high school lacrosse game. One of our members - Rachel Moyer, of the Port Jervis Teachers Association - lost her son, a 10th grade honor student, when he collapsed during a basketball game at a rural high school in December 2000. Without a defibrillator to restart his heart - and the nearest hospital 25 miles away - young Gregory Moyer died. Rachel Moyer has made it her personal crusade to ensure this tragedy doesn't visit



any other family. Passage of this bill honors her and other NYSUT members who have fought to have life-saving equipment on school grounds.

"We believe the state should fund the purchase of defibrillators. If the state can't -- or won't -- pay, however, school boards, teachers, school health professionals, and local community and business groups could form public-private partnerships to raise money to ensure these life-saving machines are readily available. Our kids' safety shouldn't have a price tag."

*~Alan B. Lubin
Executive Vice President
NYSUT*

Code of Conduct...Everyone's responsibility

On June 11,2001 the VC Board of Education adopted a Code of Conduct which provides a framework for students' rights and responsibilities and procedures to deal with violations of school set rules. It identifies the roles of stakeholders implementing this policy and specifically directs teachers to familiarize themselves with the requirements of the Code. Section E specifies that it is the ex-

pectation that "student discipline be progressive, i.e., a student's first violation should merit lighter penalty than subsequent violations." It would stand to reason that vice versa is true. Teachers have as much responsibility as administrators in ensuring that the Code of Conduct is adhered to. Teachers should have received a copy of this Code of Conduct and they should become very familiar with it. If a teacher has a concern that the Code

is not being adhered to, they should first their building administrator. If this does not rectify the problem the teacher should then contact their VCTA representatives who can bring their concerns to the Executive Council to be addressed.

~ Patti Lunden

Is your best friend retiring this year?



*Pay tribute to him or her
by writing a short biography of their
teaching career at VC to be published in
the Retiree and Achievements
Special Edition of the VC ECHOES.*

For forms to help you write a biography,
contact Editor Patti Lunden, HS.

Union Phone/Fax: 457-5899

Voice Mail: 7664

...today's retirement age would be 82 if the original benchmarks used to set the age at 65 were still followed. In the late 1800's, an adult working male's "average" life span was 67 years. It was determined that he should have two years of leisure before he died. Today, that life expectancy has climbed to 84.

~ Edie Weiner, president, Weiner, Edrich, Brown, Inc. futurists and trend analysts



Hey, Where's Mac?

Not to worry...he hasn't permanently retired...
we all know he still has far too much to say!

Kevin McFadden has taken one month off, and so Mac's Musings will return to the next issue of Echoes. And certainly, Kevin will make up for lost words as only McFadden can!

Highlights of the February VCTA Executive Council Meeting

President's Report

The 2002-03 School Calendar was distributed.

End-of-Year Schedules were distributed. Teachers at the Middle School will score standardized and state assessments during afternoon sessions. The Elementary schedule includes 4 half-days.

A memo received from Bob Klein was distributed regarding the safety of the stage. No teacher will have liability if the District says that the stage is safe.

Tim Brown reported that he had received only one nomination for NYS Teacher of the Year. The VCTA has a procedure in place for the processing of nominations however, this worthy nomination did not meet time constraints.

AFL-CIO Scholarship Information was distributed. Applications must be submitted by May 15, 2002.

The NYS Labor-Religion Newsletter was distributed.

NYSUT is sponsoring a 2002 Organizing Institute during the week of July 8th-11th. This institute helps to develop organizing skills at the local and state-wide union level. Tim Brown asked that any Executive Council member interested in attending, contact him.

Copies of Governor Pataki's 2002-03 executive budget were distributed.

Copies of the Health and Safety newsletter were distributed.

The OUSDHP minutes from January were distributed. It was noted that Liberty Central School District is withdrawing from the plan and enrolling in another plan that offers a greater number of providers in their area. Orin Segall noted that the plan Liberty has chosen is not self-funded. He indicated that OU offers very few physicians in the New Paltz area. Rich Steger indicated that 40 teachers use plans other than OU.

Copies of questions and answers for the Annual Delegate Meeting (11/11/01) of the NYSTRS was distributed.

A bulletin regarding a Regents proposed Code of Ethics was distributed. NY-

SUT's position is that a pledge is not a state requirement for licensure or certification for any of the other professions and therefore should not be a requirement for teachers.

Copies of a summary of a meeting with Middle Level educators and Commissioner Mills were distributed.

Copies of proposed resolutions (for submission to the 2002 NYSUT Representative Assembly) were distributed. The VCTA proposed resolutions in regard to Tier Equity and Tier Reinstatement. The resolutions were submitted by Patti Lunden and Kevin McFadden, respectively.

Copies of a VOTE-Cope message were distributed.

Copies of the Mid-Hudson Teacher Center minutes were distributed.

The HS Progress report/ report card side agreement were distributed. Reports (on disk) are due on Wednesday following the end of the five-week period and the quarter, however staff members are requested and encouraged to submit disks on Monday or Tuesday when possible.

The grievance concerning the Montgomery Bus situation is being worked out through a side agreement. The VCTA presented the grievance to the BOE on 1/28/02. Paraprofessionals will relieve teachers at 3:30 so that teachers can leave. Tim Brown announced that Dr. Nugent has announced his retirement effective June 30, 2002. Discussion followed this announcement.

Secretarial Unit

Lucy Fox reported that everything is status quo with the Secretarial Unit.

There were no reports from the Paraprofessional report, elections report, BOE report, Editor's report, or Dental/Optical Trust report.

Retirees

Kevin McFadden reported that retirees would send a letter to the governor regarding mandated coverage for retirees

and that there would be something in the next Echoes concerning VOTE-Cope.

Arline Friedman announced that the next ED 14 Retiree meeting, on March 20. Retirement concerns should be brought to her by then.

John Solan and Diana Shiner are VC's NYSTRS representatives.

Old Business

Tim Brown clarified that the State has yet to announce anything about the retirement incentive.

Tim Brown reported that he has been investigating how other locals separated their paraprofessional units. He believes that the VC paraprofessional unit should separate from the VCTA at some time. While we would still work together as NYSUT locals, the paras would run their own meetings and handle their own budget. Discussion followed.

There was no report from Standing Committees.

New Business

Jean McMahon questioned the safety of staff in regard to threats. Tim Brown indicated that teachers have the option of filing charges. The first filed charges must be addressed before counter suits/charges can be addressed. Any members with questions should see building representatives. Rich Steger and Tim Brown recommended teachers refer to the Code of Conduct and BOE policy. It was noted that the BOE has an obligation to see that BOE policies are adhered to.

The Executive Council met on March 19 and will meet again on April 16, 2002 at the Professional Library in the HS at 3:45 pm.



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.



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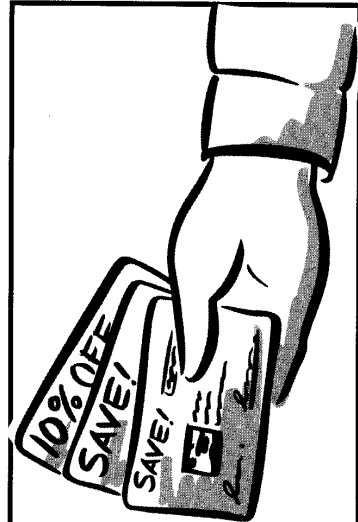
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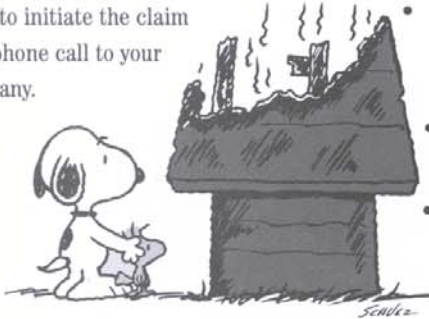
Be Calm *After* The Storm

What if your home were ravaged by fire, storm, or some other disaster? Try to be calm. If your property sustains major damage, your first priority should be to ensure that you and your family are safe. But remember, even if you have sufficient insurance coverage, you'll still need to initiate the claim process with a phone call to your insurance company.

Call your insurance company immediately from a safe location. Some

insurers, like the NYSUT Benefit Trust-endorsed MetLife® Auto & Home, can refer you to reputable contractors to guarantee timely repairs in the event of a crisis. Be sure to document emergency repair expenses and purchases related to the claim, such as plastic, tarps, and plywood to cover broken windows, doors, and holes, and rental car receipts, if your vehicle were rendered undrivable. You may be reimbursed for such expenses.

Simple proactive measures can help ensure your claim will be processed in a timely fashion and you'll be fairly compensated for your loss. Before a tragedy occurs, walk from room to room in your home itemizing and videotaping or photographing your property. Keep the list and photos or videotape safely off the premises, along with receipts or owner's manuals. Being prepared before a catastrophe strikes is easier than trying to compile a complete list in the midst of ruins.



Other proactive measures to take once you have purchased the protection you need:

- Always thoroughly read your policy to determine and understand what it covers.
- Clarify any coverage questions you have with your insurance company.
- Store a copy of your policy off the premises, such as in your office or in a bank safe-deposit box.
- Keep a list of policy and insurer phone numbers in your wallet.
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It's helpful to have copies of your current policies handy when you call.

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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 Meisel, 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

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AFL-CIO

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<http://www.mhtrc.dcboces.org>

Employee Assistance Program

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Visit us on the Web!
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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 April 23, 2002.
Any articles submitted to the VC
Echoes will also be posted on the
VCTA Web page.

Union Representation

If you are having a meeting in which you are being bullied or reprimanded you have a right to ask for a union representative before proceeding. If you are refused a union representative, I strongly suggest you say nothing from that point forward and immediately inform a union representative when the meeting is over.

~ Tim Brown

(For more on this topic, see page two.)

Where does all the time go?

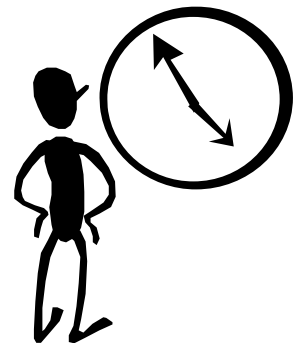
*"I'm late, I'm late,
For a very important date!"*

~ Alice in Wonderland

As I write this we are about to go on Spring Break and when we return we will be at the beginning of the end...the fourth quarter. I am left wondering, where did all the time go? One of my colleagues once described his day in terms of George Jetson. Remember how George just hopped on an escalator which then took him through the day? He said he felt like he stepped on that escalator the minute he stepped through the door's threshold and it didn't stop until the day ended. Lately that seems like an accurate description. I often find myself passing other teachers who seem to be hurrying through their day to complete all their tasks before the end comes. There's no time to stop and chat, we all have too much to do.

The idea that teachers sit around faculty rooms talking is laughable—there's no time for that! Remember, those teaching journals we had to keep during student teaching to reflect—there's no time for that either. We're all Mad Hatters rushing through each day to check off all the things we've put down on our to do list...if we had time to make a to do list! Before you know it, we go from asking each other, "How was your summer?" to "How was your year and what plans do you have for this summer?"

Vice President, Jay Sussdorff postulated that teachers today work twice as hard then teachers did twenty years ago at prep time, lesson design, and paperwork not because twenty years ago, teachers were by any means "slacking" but simply because it seems that each passing year more and more demands are made on teachers time...from Xer-



oxing, checking mail, filling out endless forms for just about everything imaginable, checking voice mail, cleaning up a desk, setting up a room, getting to the next classroom, grading papers, progress reports, report cards, CSE meetings, parent conferences and the list goes on and on. One plan period a day is scarcely enough time to catch your breath, go to the bathroom and then try to get everything you need to do done. I could go on and on about this topic, but unfortunately not only have I run out of room, I've just run out of time!

~ Patti Lunden,
Editor