

VC ECHOES

An AFTCA and New York Teacher Award Winning Publication

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2

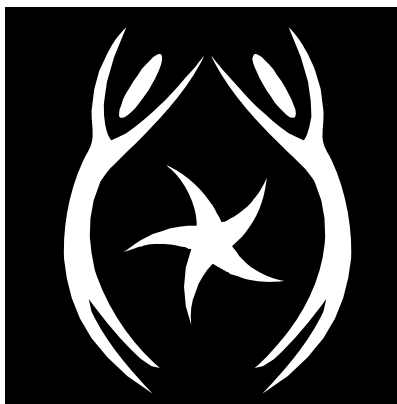
OCTOBER 2002

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Putting Children Center

For the second year in a row, your VCTA officers have procured a small opening day gift for members that includes our motto, **Putting Children Center**, above our **VCTA** logo. Many of you, however, are probably unaware of the origin or significance of this motto. Our newsletter editor, Patti Lunden, coined this phrase and explained its significance in her September 1999 *VC Echoes* article entitled "Centering Children." I would now like to read Patti's words to you before adding my own: *There is a banner in Central Office painted by a former student that shows children on a playground with the caption, "Putting Children First." It is a finely crafted banner depicting the caption, which was embraced by our last Superintendent [that would be the Superintendent that preceded Dr. Nugent], however I must admit I have never personally been totally comfortable with the word "first." Don't get me wrong, I also believe children are the most important aspect in education. After all, you don't go into the education*

field unless you love children, and if you ask anyone who works in our school system, I'm sure they would tell you that the children always come first. The problem I have with the word "First" is that it denotes a ranking. Of course the children should be first – it is where they belong. But it begs to question, who then is second? Or for that matter third, fourth or fifth? I'm sure there are as many opinions on who would be second, third, fourth or fifth as there are employees. One of the best parts of teaching is that every September we get the chance to do things a little better. Each new school year holds the hope of doing things a little differently, improving things that have worked in the past and reworking things that haven't. In that spirit, I would suggest that a better caption to describe the heart of our District would be "Putting Children Center." Center denotes the idea of being



surrounded by individuals who work together to create a circle of energy that lifts a child to their highest potential. Each member of the circle is as equally important as any other member, whether they be the person who cleans the school or hires the teachers, feeds the students, or nurses their wounds, teaches them, sets policy for them, or fundraises for their field trips. Putting children in the center helps to align the focus of every member of our educational community so that not only are they seeing the child, but they can also look across and see the others who also help to form the circle.

Patti's words of wisdom are truly insightful. If we truly want children to be successful, our

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The mediocre teacher tells.

The good teacher explains.

The superior teacher demonstrates.

The great teacher inspires.

~William Arthur Ward

Lisa Beamer on Good Morning America*

If you remember, she's the wife of Todd Beamer who said 'Let's Roll!' and helped take down the plane that was heading for Washington D. C. She said it's the little things that she misses most about Todd, such as hearing the garage door open as he came home, and her children running to meet him. She's now the Mom of a beautiful little girl, Mary.

Lisa recalled this story: 'I had a very special teacher in high school many years ago whose husband died suddenly of a heart attack. About a week after his death, she shared some of her insight with a classroom of students. As the late afternoon sunlight came streaming in through the classroom windows and the class was nearly over, she moved a few things aside on the edge of her desk and sat down there. With a gentle look of reflection on her face, she paused and said, 'Class is over, I would like to share with all of you, a thought that is unrelated to class, but which I feel is very important.

Each of us is put here on earth to learn, share, love, appreciate and give of ourselves. None of us knows when this fantastic experience will end. It can be taken away at any moment. Perhaps this is the

powers way of telling us that we must make the most out of every single day. Her eyes, beginning to water, she went on, 'So

I would like you all to make me a promise. From now on, on your way to school, or on your way home, find something beautiful to notice. It doesn't have to be something you see, it could be a scent, perhaps of freshly baked bread wafting out of someone's house, or it could be the sound of the breeze slightly rustling the

leaves in the trees, or the way the morning light catches one autumn leaf as it falls gently to the ground. Please look for these things, and cherish them.. For, although it may sound trite to some, these things are the "stuff" of life. The little things we are put here on earth to enjoy. The things we often take for granted. The class was completely quiet. We all picked up our books and filed out of the room silently. That afternoon, I noticed more things on my way home from school than I had that whole semester. Every once in a while, I think of that teacher and

remember what an impression she made on all of us, and I try to appreciate all of those things that sometimes we all overlook.



Take notice of something special you see on your lunch hour today. Go barefoot. Or walk on the beach at sunset. Stop off on the way home tonight to get a double dip ice cream cone. For as we get older, it is not the things we did that we often regret, but the things we didn't do.

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

*~ from the Internet,
submitted by Erin Davis,
Berea /Maybrook
Elementary School*

Citizens of Heaven

A citizen is an inhabitant of a city or a member of a state. During the sizzling summer months, several citizens of the Walden Elementary community suddenly became citizens of Heaven. A teacher's aide, Cathy Muller's mom, Betty Jo Decker was one of them. Also our new principal, Jane Malley's brother-in-law, Patrick and first grade teacher, Stephanie Collins' husband, John, unexpect-

tantly died.

In the Talmud, there is a phrase which states that "every blade of grass has its angel that bends over it and whispers, "grow, grow" Our new citizens' of Heaven lives often revealed whispers of servant-hood here on earth. They all left this earth having made it a better place. Their legacies of kindness will continue to be manifested in ways that will never be fully understood. They are now stewards of

faith. In Romans 10:17, faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. As we continue our transformation process with the breath of life here on earth, our loved ones now have become the breadth of love in heaven. We also know though, that this process is very painful. The family members miss them terribly. How is one to cope? Monty Roberts, the Horse Whisperer found out that horses are

(continued on page 7)

Putting Children Center

efforts to educate them must also include centering them. This task does not require mystical powers of insight, nor does it require some insightful trip to the abstract and probably nonexistent metaphysical plane; in fact, it's not all that mysterious at all: our first step simply requires that we collaboratively act as a caring family that wants the best for its children.

Many educational stakeholders, however, misinterpret the true meaning of child centeredness and, therefore, make the same mistakes that push many families down the slippery slope to dysfunctionism. Centering should not be mistaken as a synonym for enabling. Nor does centering require that other family members be sacrificed for the good of the children. Married couples, for example, must continually assess their relationship, promote and ensure honest communication, take needed time to meet one another's

needs, perhaps hiring a sitter to have an intimate evening out, or spend some of their hard earned money on gifts for each other. If married couples do not

take this time for one another, their relationship will suffer and their children will, therefore, suffer. It is inevitable. Dysfunctional families never put children center. They are incapable as a result of their dysfunctional nature.

The stakeholders here at Valley Central have often been referred to as the VC family. This is a good and desirable portrayal – one that should be embraced for the good of all, especially the children. The VC family, however, is also not immune to the pitfalls of dysfunctionism. For example, some might

believe that a teacher who arrives to work everyday at 6:00am and leaves work everyday a 6:00pm is a model employee – one that other employees should emulate. I, to the contrary, call this a potential model for disaster. For example, is this person married? Does s/he have children that s/he should spend more time with? Is the spouse understanding, or resentful? Have they even discussed the acceptability of such long hours? Is marital strife the result? And, of course, is this impacting the employee's ability to put children center?

Our *Putting Children Center* motto, like the family unit, can be symbolized by the wheel. We put our children in the center to protect and nurture them. The adults should be working together to ensure that the wheel is rotating correctly and in a direction that promotes positive growth. The children will be taught that they are a part of this wheel and are also responsible for proper rotation and direction. If any part of the wheel is damaged, the rotation and direction that promotes this positive growth can be altered.

This does not mean that we should avoid conflict for fear of getting a flat tire or worse yet, an overturned vehicle. *Putting Children Center* is not a fast food slogan designed to create a good feeling. It is a motto by which we try to live and work. Conflict is at times necessary to promote growth and hold the

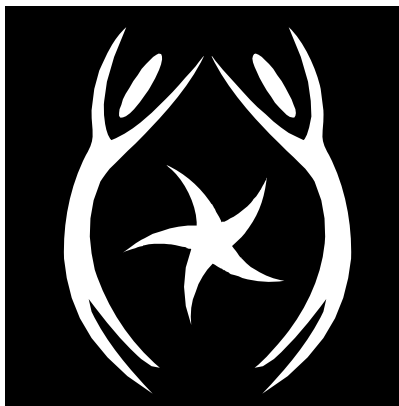
family together. Should a parent confront a disobedient child or let that child grow into a self-centered, self-indulgent brat? Should a spouse confront his/her partner concerning a perceived lack of respect or common courtesy, or let it slide while s/he continues to feel unloved and

unappreciated?

Members of school families are very similar and have similar struggles. It is for this purpose that teacher unions were formed. I have often heard employees my age and younger – those of us who were not around to see the struggles associated

with the forming of local unions – make statements such as: “The District gives me . . .” – you should stop yourself at this point and re-evaluate your words. Your salary has been negotiated at a cost, your benefits package has been negotiated at a cost, your workload, including your workday and work year have been negotiated at a cost. Very little you receive was freely given. Unions, like Boards of Education and PTSAs, were formed to ensure the survival of the family, to avoid the pitfalls of dysfunctionism, and to **keep** children center. At times the wheel rotates smoothly without conflict or tension, at other times the ride is rough. If we all remember to keep children center, our direction will remain true, and the rough parts of the journey will simply be a part of life's lessons from which we all grow.

This growth is a necessary prerequisite to successfully meeting the escalating challenges that face each member of the VC family. This growth can only flourish in environments where child advocacy



“We put children center to protect and nurture them.”

Putting Children Center

transcends the pitfalls of outdated hierarchical educational caste systems in favor of those that are child centered. Organized teacher unions are unique in their ability to advocate for children in a manner and to a degree that cannot be equaled by any other organized group of education stakeholders. In fact, there are no greater advocates for children and education than teachers and teacher unions. This unique position carries with it, however, a tremendous burden of responsibility that can never be set aside. We must remain ever vigilant. Let me share with you what Putting Children Center means to me from the vantage point of being your local union president.

- Putting Children Center means, at times, creating tension and friction to ensure that our children do in fact remain center;
- Putting Children Center means fighting for workers' rights, including salaries and benefits to ensure that we attract and retain quality employees;
- Putting Children Center means fighting abuse, mismanagement, and deception when necessary;
- Putting Children Center means taking a stand against those who would try to destroy our most treasured public institution, while at times, scapegoating those who work the hardest to put and keep our children center;
- Putting Children Center means fighting against the hurtful and politically motivated policies of institu-

tions such as the State Education Department when such policies are contrary to the motto Putting Children Center;

- Putting Children Center means never lying, cheating, or stealing to get your own way – honesty and integrity must prevail;
- Putting Children Center means all working toward a common goal;
- Putting Children Center means contributing to VOTE-COPE to ensure some measure of political clout and adequate education funding (Remember: NYSUT is the largest union in New York State with 480,000 members – we can and do make a difference);
- Putting Children Center means fulfilling our professional obligations in a manner that brings honor to ourselves and the VCTA.

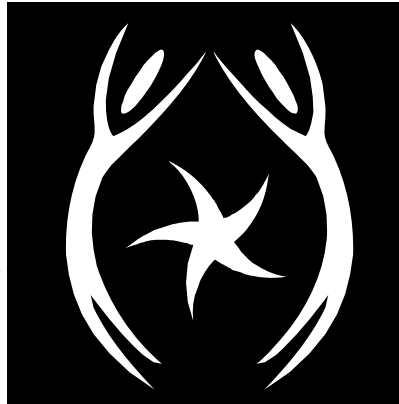
To summarize and conclude my thoughts and concerns, I ask all of you the following. Is the VC family working collaboratively as a family unit to center our children? Or, are there family members still attempting to hold on to a power base that is obsolete, ineffec-

tive and self-centered, in much the same manner that an unenlightened and insecure husband or father might try to retain control of his wife and children through intimidation, fear, and abuse?

Attaining and maintaining child centeredness requires all education stakeholders to look deep within themselves. We must explore and evaluate our motives and actions, and the impact that both of these have on the family unit. This task is difficult at best and perhaps frightening at worst. Dysfunctional families become and remain dysfunctional because they perfect the art of avoidance and denial. Looking beneath the surface to understand, address, and fix the real problems is too difficult and too frightening. Dysfunctional families are, therefore, content with a surface sweep. They are content with promoting the appearance of functionalism, the appearance of caring and child centeredness.

Under which category does the VC family fall? Are we content with a surface sweep, afraid of what we might see if we looked too deeply, or do we really have it all together in the manner that we present to outsiders?

*~ Timothy Brown,
President*



Get out and Vote!

New Members

As a new member of our statewide union, you have the opportunity to help shape the policies and direction of our organization by making your opinions known to your union representatives and local leaders. Representative democracy is important to our union.

Participating in elections is essential to a healthy democracy. That is why NYSUT is launching a statewide voter registration project. *We want you to be a part of this effort!*

It is very possible that you are not registered to vote. There are several reasons that this may be the case – you may have moved, or your preferred mailing address is not the same as your home address, etc.

Whatever the reason, it is worth the effort to verify your voting status. If you are not sure whether or not you are registered to vote, call your county Board of Elections.



If you are registered to vote but not enrolled in a political party, we urge you to consider enrolling. It does not matter into which party you enroll, but we do believe that joining a party greatly increases your impact on the political process.

Exercise your right to vote - and flex your political muscle.

~ Rich Steger, Vice-Pres.

County Board of Elections Phone Numbers

Orange
845-291-2444
Ulster
845-334-5470
Sullivan
845-794-3000
Dutchess
845-486-2473
Putnam
845-278-6970
Westchester
914-995-5700

NYSUT Makes NO Governor Endorsement

NYSUT will make no endorsement in this year's gubernatorial race.

"This has been a remarkable process," said NYSUT President Tom Hobart. "The strength of our union is our ability to discuss and disagree, yet still remain unified behind our core principles and values."

NYSUT Executive Vice President Alan Lubin said the union conducted an extensive review of the candidates' records and heard from hundreds of members from across the state. After a long, spirited debate that began in August at the union's endorsement conference, Lubin said, NYSUT's 75-member Board of Directors decided not to back a candidate for governor

"Both George Pataki and Carl McCall have very strong support among our members," Lubin said. "Overall, the governor has been a positive force for education, although he has made some questionable choices - including his failure to settle the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit and his lack of support for higher education. At the same time, Carl McCall has a long, strong record of support for education, while championing pension enhancements for public employees."

"In the face of the candidates' records, the NYSUT Board decided that NYSUT should not endorse," Lubin said. "This does not prevent NYSUT locals from endorsing in the gubernatorial race if they have a compelling reason."

The Board resolution said: NYSUT will make no endorsement for governor; "however, locals wishing to endorse on an individual basis may do so after they discussed the matter with their own executive boards and had their local president contact NYSUT's Executive Vice President to discuss the compelling local circumstances that move their consideration of the local's endorsement."

*~ from NYSUT publication,
The Bottom Line*

Are You In the House or Out Of the House?

"I'd like to hire my in-house people rather than my out-house people."

~ Russell Bock, VCHS Asst. Principal

The quote above was stated to the high school teachers at the September faculty meeting. To this end, Mr. Bock has rearranged the Evening High School schedule to begin earlier which accommodates the students who can take more classes and the staff who can teach Evening HS four days a week for forty-five minutes. All this reflects thoughtful planning on the part of an administration that seems to want to do the "right thing" both for students and for staff. This said, the VCTA finds itself in the stages of grievance proceedings against the District because an "in-house" person was passed over for an "out-house" person.

The VCTA teachers' contract includes language (*Article XVII*) defining the parameters of summer school, residential, and evening high school teaching. This fact indicates that such work is indeed considered bargaining unit work. After all, why would the negotiators bother to dicker over dollars and cents with those positions if it were not in the best interest of our unit members? If indeed this was not bargaining unit work, the dollars and cents would be better applied to our regular salary schedule.

The fact that we are in grievance proceedings over an evening high school position is confusing at best and sad at worst. The regularly appointed teacher in question applied for the position in writing within the District's deadline and waited for a reply which came only days before Evening School was to begin. The reply was that an outside person was being given the position because they were better qualified—the particular qualification is erroneous to the position but administration is standing by the decision. Such a decision is disheartening to the regularly appointed teacher and the VCTA—after all, what is the message of such a decision? Were this a non-tenured teacher relatively new to the District, and if I were in their shoes, I think I would start sending out re-

sumes. This decision indicates that the District's position is the regularly appointed teacher is good enough for day school but not good enough for evening school. An enigma even more mysterious when considered in terms of dollars—said position in day school requires the person to hold a master's degree and on that salary scale (*MA*) the hourly salary of evening school (\$30) is less than the hourly salary of even the first step of this scale. Our regularly appointed teacher is well beyond the first step of the salary scale. Perhaps administration does not want to hire this teacher for evening high school because their day performance is questionable—but tenure was given without incident. The entire situation begs the question, then why give the position to someone who is "out of the house". What adds insult to injury in this situation is that the "out-of-the-house" person is a retired VC teacher.

The administration would like to make retirement a gray area in this case (*no pun intended*), by saying a retired teacher is not really an out-of-the-house person. Retirement is a choice a teacher makes. Retiring indicates that the person is ready to pass the torch to the younger generation of Valley Central teachers. The VCTA constitution provides continued membership for the retired teachers, but charges no dues nor gives them any vote on Executive Council. They are no longer considered active members. Yet, the Executive Council chooses to mail the VC ECHOES regularly to the retirees at annual cost of roughly \$1000. This amount is equal to the local VCTA dues of 10 active teachers to keep the retirees connected to Valley Central through the VCTA. An open invitation is provided to our retirees to our annual Fall Fest. One entire issue of the VC ECHOES each year is dedicated to retiring teachers. The presence of the retiree representatives on Executive Council speaks to the wisdom and historical perspective that the active membership respects. The retirees in turn can support, and have in the past supported, the active teachers on picket lines, in phone banks and through the VOTE/Cope drive. In turn,



the active teachers have supported the retirees by helping to secure the permanent COLA, presenting resolutions on their behalf to NYSUT and most importantly, by never letting retiree health coverage be put on the table in exchange for something for active teachers. To have this retiree standing in the way of an active teacher is disappointing. The entire situation is an example of poor decision-making on the part of administration. The retiree in question is in a position to correct the poor decision by siding with the active teacher and stepping aside. Such is the expectation of the VCTA. Grievances cost money to pursue. The fact that this retiree will not step aside is not only insulting but costly to the active membership who already spends their dues on retirees, including this one.

The entire situation has raised many issues for the active VCTA membership. There is a constitutional provision that allows the VCTA Executive Council to revoke the membership of an active member. Perhaps the provision needs to be extended to our retiree membership as well. After all, if this retiree member considers himself more an in-house person than an active member and supports a poor decision by administration that places an active member in the out-house, then maybe the VCTA must consider who we allow to be in our house.

~ Patti Lunden,

Editor

Union Backs Spitzer, Hevesi

Even though the state's largest union is not endorsing any candidate for governor, it will not be silent in this crucial election year.

Executive Vice President Alan Lubin said NYSUT would actively work for Attorney General Eliot Spitzer's re-election, and put its full support behind Democrat Alan Hevesi for state comptroller. Both were endorsed by the NYSUT Board of Directors. In addition, NYSUT has endorsed 124 Democrats and 78 Republicans in state legislative races, as well as candidates in most of the state's congressional races.

"It is so important for members to get out and support those candidates - statewide, regionally and locally - who will protect the interests of public education," Lubin said. The state faces a projected \$11 billion deficit next year -

that's equal to two-thirds of state school aid. When state officials begin to wrestle with that deficit, "we need to have people in office who share our priorities," he said.

Lubin said the union would immediately kick-start its massive phone bank operation and rally its members to work for Hevesi and Spitzer in the statewide races and for regional candidates around the state.

"When NYSUT gets behind a candidate, we make a difference," he said. Spitzer was one who benefited four years ago.

The union's support for Hevesi in the comptroller race is especially important, he said. Hevesi has long been a friend of public education and organized labor.

Republican comptroller candidate John Faso is notorious for his positions against public educa-

tion and in favor of private-school vouchers that would take money away from public schools. The comptroller's office would give him a bully pulpit for his anti-union, anti-teacher agenda. This important statewide office also could serve as a platform for Faso as a potential successor to Gov. George Pataki.

"Alan Hevesi is the man for that job," Lubin said. "The Board said his background and experience reflect a commitment to support working families. His opponent, on the other hand, is off the chart at the wrong end of the scale."

~ From NYSUT publication, *The Bottom Line*

Citizens of Heaven (*continued from page two*)

terribly afraid to be alone. In my experiences with the deaths of my children, I have found that leaving you all alone is not the Lord's idea of company. Horses instinctively move toward pain. Roberts also noticed that the pressure of circumstances in the horses' lives drew them closer together, they always tried to remain a family. Communication amongst the horses is a special sequence of movements that grows for each situation, all done in silence. The Muslims say that two people have only learned to love each other when they can be silently together. I have found with the deaths of my children that just knowingness of their love has helped me with the touchlessness. I have also learned with my son, Mike, who is away at college, that even though he's not at home physically, that our hearts are silently

together. Another fact portrayed in the book, *The Man Who Listens to Horses*, was that in the equine universe, a horse's version is nearly 360 degrees, with only a slim cut of land right behind him that he cannot see and an even slimmer cut directly in front. In the grieving process, according to St. Bruno, "we must develop an eternal vision." "Each substance of a grief hath twenty shadows." Richard II, Act 2, Scene 3. In the shadow of my newborn daughter, Jennifer's, death, I developed an eternal vision. I was blessed with a breath-taking experience several years later while getting ready to talk about my daughter for a *Life in the Spirit seminar*, I heard her say to me, while lying in my bed, "I love you, Mommy." Because she died only living here on earth sixteen days, I had never heard the sound of her

voice before that night. That whisper of love helped me grow and will continue until I see her again. We need to just keep listening.

~ Jeanne Marie Flanagan

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, 2003 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 457-2400 x 8125 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 \$350 for single coverage and \$772 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 2003

*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 is \$15. The drug plan is \$5/\$10/\$20 with no annual cap.

The rate for GHI is \$299.33 for single coverage and \$763.27 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. The drug cost is \$5 for generic and \$20 brand and \$40 for non-formulary drugs.

The rate for MVP for single coverage is \$299.40 which is less than what the District is paying. Therefore single coverage on MVP will not cost anything toward premium. Family coverage will be \$774.42 which is \$2.42 more a month than the District is paying to OUSDHP. That amount would be deducted from your pay each month (\$1.21 per check) pre-tax beginning in January.

Empire Blue Cross/ Blue Shield

The Empire Plan has come up with a new Mid-Hudson rate which covers Orange, Ulster, Sullivan, Dutchess, Putnam counties. Westchester and Rockland are part of the New York City rate. Because it is a new rate, it is untested and has been inflated. Hopefully, the rate will be better next year.

Mid-Hudson Rate: The rate for single coverage \$348.76 which is less than the District is paying and the rate for family coverage is \$908.76 which is more than what the District is paying. **IF YOU CHOOSE EMPIRE FAMILY Coverage, you pay \$133.24 (a month) for six months deducted pretax from your pay. (This comes to roughly \$55 a check)**

New York Rate: the rate for single coverage is \$324.18 a month which is less than what the District is paying for the OUSDHP. However the rate for family coverage is \$842.87 a month, which is \$69.63 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 MVP or Empire Plan which requires a contribution, you will be charged the difference from January to June. If the OUSDHP rates should increase in July 2003 and that increase is more than the premium rate of your choice, you would not have to make a contribution for the remainder of the year 2003.

A Comparison of Health Plans

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

| OUSDHP (\$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 | \$350/ \$772 | \$299.40/ \$774.42 MVP In Network Only No Lifetime Maximum | \$299.33/ \$763.27 GHI HMO Only In Network | MH: \$278.48/\$906.76 NYC: \$324.18/\$842.87 EMPIRE Direct HMO In Network Only No Lifetime Maximum |
|---|---------------------|---|--|---|
| In Network/ Out of Network OFFICE VISIT \$15copay / Ded. + 80% (r/c) | | \$15 Copay | \$15 copay | \$15 copay |
| Eye Exams Not Covered | | 1 every other year | \$15 copay | Not Covered |
| Well Baby/Child No Copay/ resp. for any chrg (see schedule)over R&C | | No charge | No Copay | No Copay |
| Routine Exams 19-49 1/ 3 years/No benefit 50+: 1 / 2 years/ No benefit (Pap/Mammo- different schedule) | | \$15/In System only \$15/In System only \$15/In System only \$15/ In System only \$15 (100% in hosp)/ 80% R&C | \$15 Gyn. No Copay (2x w/out referral) Pap Smear free | \$15 copay (Well Woman, no PCP re- ferral needed) |
| Mammography 100% in hospital only | | | | |
| Hospital 100%/ \$250 ded per adm. 80% of R&C out pt. \$25/\$50 | | No Charge/80% R&C | No Copay | No copay |
| Alcohol/Sub 100% 4 weeks/ 6 wks per year (inpatient) (out net) 100% R&C-\$250 ded. | | No Charge Detox/ 80% R&C | No Copay | No copay (unlimited days) |
| Mental Health (pre-cert.)No Copay-100 day (Inpatient) cal/80% up to 30 days + ded. (not cert.)50% up to 30 days+ded. | | No Charge Short Term, Acute, Crisis/ 80% R&C | No Copay 30 days No Copay 30 days | No copay/ 7days detox per year No Copay/ 30 days |
| Emergency 100% following a \$25 per day ded. waived if admitted Accident -within 72 hrs\ Illness (life threat) Surgery | | \$50 – waived if admitted | \$35– waived if admitted | \$35 copay waived if admit- ted |
| Alcohol/Sub (Outpatient) 100% (60 visit limit)/100% R&C-\$25 per day ded | | \$15 per visit (limit 60)/80% of R&C | \$15/60 visits | No Copay/60 visits(incl. 20 family visits |
| Mental Health \$15 co pay - 100 visits/ 50%- out patient 30visits | | \$15 1st visit \$25 ea visit 2-5 | \$15 visit 1-5 \$25 visti 6-20 | \$25 copay / 20 visits |
| 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.) | | 100%/80% of R&C Pre = \$15 / 80% of R&C \$15 per visit /80% of R & C | No Copay \$15 No Copay | No Copay \$15 Copay first visit only No Copay |
| *XRAY 100% in hospital (out pt) (\$25 Ded. per day) | | \$15 per visit(100% in hosp.) / 80% of R&C | \$15 | No Copay |
| *Radiology 100% in hospital (out pt) (\$25 Ded. per day) | | No charge | No Copay | No Copay |
| Radiation/Chemo 100% in hospital Durable Med. Not covered Diabetic Supp. Not covered (?) | | 20% as copay/ 50% of R&C | 20% Copay/\$1500 annual max. \$15 Copay | No Copay No Copay \$15 Copay |
| *Physical Therapy 100% (\$25 day ded.)if fol- lowing hosp. or surg. | | \$15 copay per visit (2 month max)/ 80% of R&C | \$15 30 visits/60 days | Up to 30 visits inpatient & 30 out |
| Chiropractic Visits \$15/80% RC (100% if reach out pocket max. Must pre-cert. Before 16th visit or pay 50%) | | \$15 copay with referral | \$15 Copay | \$15 Copay |
| Hospice 100% | | Covered | Covered | No Copay, 210 days lifetime |
| Home/Health 100% | | \$15 copay per visit/ 80% of R&C | Covered | No Copay 200 visits/year |
| Ambulance 100% (\$50 per trip limit) | | 100% | 100% | NO Copay |
| Nursing Home 100%/180 days per year | | Covered | Covered | No Copay/ 60 day per year |
| Acupuncture DNA | | DNA | up to 6 visits \$10 ea | Covered |
| Nutritional Counsel DNA | | DNA | 2 visits \$10 each | DNA |
| Prescrip Drug \$5generic/\$15preferred/\$25non pre- ferred | | \$5generic/\$20 brand/\$40 non-formulary Can mail order 90 day supply at 60 day price | \$5 generic/\$ 10 preferred/\$20 nonpreferred | \$5generic/\$15brand/\$25 non formulary |
| *if in a non-network hosp. then \$50 per day ded. - if not in hospital ,then not covered | | | | Occup./speech/Vision Ther- apy \$5/ total 30visits |



*On behalf of all VCTA members,
The VCTA Executive Council
And Officers Wish to Extend
A Warm Welcome to Our New
Valley Central Superintendent,*

Dr. Richard Hooley.

*Welcome to the VC Family. We look forward to a
long and productive relationship.*



*The VCTA Executive Council
is proud to announce that*

Arline Friedman , (Retiree, HS)

*Was selected to receive the
Silver Recognition*

AFT Living the Legacy Award

*in honor of her thirty-four years
of service and involvement in our local
organization, the state federation and the national AFT.*

*The award was presented on July 18th at the AFT conference
attended by President Tim Brown.*

Arline received the award at the October VCTA meeting.

Pre-Retirement Planning Seminars

These daylong members 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 am to 4:00 pm, with registration from 8:00 am to 8:30 am. The fee to attend is \$10 for members and \$5 for guests.

2002 Fall Schedule

Call Toll Free 1-800-356-3128 x. 6180

Albany

October 28 (Monday)
November 15 (Friday)
The Desmond
Albany Shaker Road

Buffalo

December 6 (Friday)
Sheraton Inn
2040 Walden Avenue

Fishkill

October 25 (Friday)
Holiday Inn
I-84 Route 9

Utica

December 5 (Thursday)
Radisson Hotel
200 Genesee Str.

Ithaca

November 14 (Thursday)
The Clarion
Triphammer Rd/Rte 13

LI- Hauppauge

October 31 (Thursday)
November 23 (Sat.)
Islandia Marriot- LI
Exit 58 LIE

LI Melville

November 1 (Friday)
November 22 (Friday)
December 14 (Saturday)
Melville Marriot
Exit 49N LIE
1350 Old Walt Whitman

Rochester

November 13 (Wed.)
December 7 (Sat)
Radisson Inn
175 Jefferson Rd.

Syracuse

November 8 (Friday)
Holiday Inn
Syracuse/Liverpool
7th No. St. & Elec. Pkwy
Exit 37 NYS Thruway

Tarrytown

November 2 (Thursday)
Westchester Marriot
670 White Plains Rd.

Telephone the Retirement System in Albany at the number above. The office hours are 8:30 am to 4:00 pm. When calling be prepared to give:

- Social Security Number
- Date of birth
- Home address
- Home/ Work Telephone numbers
- Indicate if spouse will attend

If spouse is also a member have information for them as well.

At the time of the call, you will receive instruction on paying the seminar fee.

Payment by check, must reach us by three weeks after the date of your call.

You will receive a seminar agenda and confirmation letter that you should bring to the seminar.

**PLEASE BE PREPARED TO SHOW PHOTO IDENTIFICATION
AT SEMINAR REGISTRATION**

Privately Run Alternative School Shut Down In Syracuse

An alternative program for dropouts and disruptive youth run by a private company has been shut down after a ruling by a New York State Education Department official that the program is illegal. School districts in New York state are not allowed to contract out the "core educational functions" of their schools, but the Syracuse school district in March 2001 awarded a \$500,000 contract to Alternatives Unlimited to run the program. The Syracuse Teachers Association (STA) challenged the legality of the program and won an appeal in Au-

gust that forced the Syracuse Alternative Learning Academy to close before classes resumed in September.

SED official Richard Cate ruled that "this is clearly not a matter of contracting for peripheral services such as security services or a recreational program, but is the very core function of the school district." The program will be replaced by a "second opportunity school," planned with the union's input and staffed by certified teachers and STA members. "This is a huge win



for everybody, the kids and the Syracuse Teachers Association," said STA President Kate McKenna. ~ NYSUT The Bottom Line

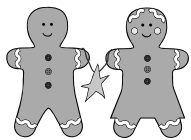
VCTA Fall Fest

**Friday,
October 25, 2002
3:00 P.M.—6:00 P.M.**

**Stony Ford Clubhouse
Orange County Park**

**Hors d'oeuvres/Cash Bar
Prizes (*including money!*)
DJ Erick Santana
Dart Games!**

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



**VC Scholarship Council Holiday Cookie Sale
Saturday, December 7, 2002
10 am—12 pm**

\$6.00 per pound *Fill a box with your favorite holiday cookies!*

We will again hold a raffle for several miniature Christmas trees with mini gingerbread ornaments. \$1.00 per ticket/ 6 for \$5.00

All proceeds go to Scholarship for VC Seniors.

Bakers needed. To help, call Kathy Sahl, 457-5466



**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 _____

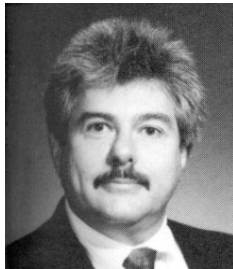
Please tell us why you think this person should be VC's candidate:

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

Evening Parent Teacher Conferences will be held on
Thursday evening, November 21st
Elementary 6 pm—8:30 pm.
Middle School 6:30 pm –9:00 pm
High School 6:30 pm—9:00 pm
Remember that attendance at these conferences 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.

Members are strongly encouraged to keep careful records of any professional development.

If you are having problems getting credit for professional development, contact your building representative .



Richard H. Aderson
“Make A Difference”
2002 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 18, 2002.

Awards will be announced in January 2003.

Studies Underscore Importance, \$\$avings Of Pre-School, and Kindergarten

Two recent studies underscore the importance of pre-school to student achievement and long-term financial savings.

* A study released last week by the Washington-based Economic Policy Institute reveals that kindergartners' reading and math test scores are directly linked to the students' socioeconomic levels. Children from poorer families bring learning deficits to kindergarten that students from families with higher incomes don't. Children in the lowest fifth of the socioeconomic strata had fewer books and computers and watched more television than kindergartners in the top fifth.

Researchers used data from the U.S. Dept. of Education's continuing study of 16,000 children who entered kindergarten in 1998. They found that once children entered school, those in the highest socioeconomic group scored 60% higher in math and reading than those in the lowest group. University of Michigan researchers Valerie Lee and David

Burkam said, "It is unreasonable to expect schools to completely eliminate any large pre-existing inequalities soon after children first enter the education system, especially if those schools are under-funded and over-challenged." Their report concludes that high-quality preschool programs, computers in the home and more "equitable distribution" in schools of students from different backgrounds can help reduce the learning deficits children bring to school.

* A cost-benefit study of 17,600 Philadelphia students confirmed both the academic value of full-day kindergarten and the financial savings in lower student retention rates. By the time students reached the third and fourth grades, former full-day kindergartners were more than twice as likely as children without any kindergarten - and 26% more likely than those who had half-day programs - to have made it without repeating a grade. The lower retention rate saved the district \$2 mil-

lion for every 1,000 kindergartners, reported Education Week.

Eight states (New York is not one of them) and the District of Columbia now require schools to provide full-day kindergarten. Nationally, about half of 5-year-olds attend them, surveys reveal.



In 1997, New York lawmakers passed Universal

Pre-K legislation committing \$500 million to the program for 4-year-olds over a five-year period. Funding freezes have limited annual aid to \$205 million for the program aimed at preparing children from low- and middle-income families for school.

~ From NYSUT publication, *The Bottom Line*

Regents Head Proposes Schools Share Resources

Regents Chancellor Robert Bennett last week dusted off an old issue that has been defeated repeatedly by state lawmakers: more equity in the way state school aid is distributed. This time, however, Bennett is proposing that rich school systems cooperate in training and sharing teachers and other resources with neighboring poor districts to help close the performance gap. The U.S. Dept. of Education, under the No Child Left Behind Act's student performance rankings, lists one in every eight schools in the state as "underperforming."

Bennett's proposals may get a new airing in the upcoming legislative session as the state faces a projected \$11 billion revenue shortfall.

Bennett calls for greater funding for high-needs schools at the expense of wealthier districts. He also envisions

regional approaches to closing the gap, including charter schools drawing students from several districts and greater use of county resources in programs based in schools. He argues, "If the center of the region disintegrates, and doesn't produce qualified people to go to work, it's a matter of time until the whole is in trouble." He adds, "It's in their own self-interest, because that's their workforce in 2020."

NYSUT's position has been to level up the funding, providing more aid to poor-performing schools but not at the expense of other districts. The "hold harmless" position NYSUT supports guarantees all school districts will receive no less in state aid than they did the previous year.

Bennett emphasized the possibility of "shared instruction opportunities" through more effective professional development for teachers. In recognizing

the importance of teacher professional development in student achievement, Bennett underscores the role of NYSUT-supported teacher centers across the state.

"For nearly two decades the state has had at its disposal the single most effective pedagogical training tool ever created - the Teacher Resource and Computer Training Center," noted NYSUT Executive Vice President Alan Lubin. "But historically these centers have had to struggle as their state funding has been repeatedly cut and then restored. They've never been fully funded, given the demand for the services. Funding for teacher centers should be doubled from its current level of \$30 million. That would go a long way toward reaching the higher standards we've adopted. Teachers teaching teachers, sharing the latest technologies, mentoring the newest of our ranks."

~ NYSUT *The Bottom Line*

VCTA Executive Council Meeting Highlights—June '02

President's Report

Vote-Cope- Jean McMahon had requested information on how Vote-Cope funds are divided. Toni Sperry indicated that she has a pie chart that may be helpful. Tim Brown will ask Jean if the chart will answer her questions. Kathy Manning asked for information regarding which candidates are supported with Vote-Cope funds. Toni Sperry indicated that during the recent Vote-Cope drive, 42 additional members signed up for payroll deduction.

Dues for 2002-2003- NYSUT and local dues are finalized. AFT will be voted on in July. A dues calculation chart was distributed.

President's recommendations: Editor, Benefit Trust, Professional Development. **Motion to appoint Patti Lunden as Editor: Pete Meisel. Second: Patty Joy.** Motion carried. The following individuals were reappointed and/or appointed to administer the Benefit Trust: John Solan (as retiree rep) for three years, John Bonagura and Sandy Strauss for two years, Jay Sussdorff and Melanie McNaughton for one year, and Doug Straebler (HS) and JoAnn Nowicki (MS) for three years. **Motion to approve these appointments to the Benefit Trust: Toni Sperry. Second: Mary Goldberg.** Motion carried. **Motion to approve Patti Lunden as a member of the Professional Development Team: Carol DeMicco. Second: Kathy Manning.** Motion carried.

Investment negotiations with District (457b and 401a)- Peter Roden has offered these two plans, which are different investment plans that would allow you to shelter more money. In return, the VCTA would limit the number of investment companies to those that are currently being utilized by more than one member. Tim will have some members (ie: John Solan) look into this further for more information. NYSUT will come in and do seminars and will be the common remitter free of charge, but they want a district contribution to our investment. (ie: a district contribution per member or according to salary). This is something that can be addressed in future negotiations. Patti Lunden stated her dissatisfaction with the September/December limit to make changes in contributions- it is our money and we should be able to make changes whenever we would like.

Superintendent search. We are entitled to have a couple of people on that committee. 2003-2003 Paydates (attached). Jay Sussdorff indicated that April 25 is a Friday that falls during Easter break. This is not a problem for those who have direct deposit. For those members who do not have direct deposit, the buildings or central office will be opened for one hour for those members who would rather pick up checks instead of waiting until Monday, April 28. Tim Brown responded to a question from Carol DeMicco that there is nothing contractual regarding

dates by which salary agreements must be received.

ERI Letter (attached)- The Board will not act on a retirement incentive until Tim Brown has a chance to review the numbers. Kathy Manning remembered a past practice precedent which waived the March 1 deadline to indicate the district of retirement intentions. Tim Brown indicated that clear contract language exists.

Committee of 100 Report (attached)- Mary Goldberg reported on the Committee of 100. Copies of her report were distributed.

NYSUT-Kingston office Summer workshop- 3 Para Leaders attending. The cost will be \$295 per person.

Mileage Rate increase to \$.365 per mile effective July 1, 2002 (currently \$.345)

July 5, 2002 included in holiday period (attached) Copies of a memo from Dr. Nugent were distributed.

5 vacancies on State Professional Standards and Practices Board for Teaching (see Tim Brown if interested)

At A Glance- MHTC (attached) Copies of the newsletter were distributed.

Public Forum for revisions to administrator certification requirements (attached)- Schedule and information for public forums was distributed.

NYS AFL-CIO Task Force on Prescription Drugs- Public Speak Out (attached) A Task Force will meet on June 17 to discuss escalating prescription drug costs and the impact on New York workers, retirees, and their families.

NYSUT hosts Information Sessions on Mentor Teacher Internship Grants (attached) Information was distributed.

Evaluation of paras- Tim Brown discussed para evaluations with Central Office and indicated that the VCTA feels that teachers will not and do not expect to be asked to sign any evaluation on a paraprofessional. That is an administrative responsibility. Central Office agreed. It is our position that the para works under the direction of the teacher and we understand that teacher input is necessary in order to do an evaluation. We will not get into the habit of doing a formal evaluation of a para, who is a part of the VCTA.

Tim clarified that in Executive Council meetings, an alternate does not vote if all reps are present. Retirees do not vote.

Grievance- A grievance regarding presidential proctoring duties at the HS was submitted at Step 1. Additionally, the District violated a side agreement and an established practice with regard to High School deadlines for submission of grades.

Secretarial Report

Lucy Fox reported that a grievance regarding an involuntary transfer was lost. It is Lucy's opinion that administrators were placated in this situation. She hopes that things are settling down for a while.

Paraprofessional Report

The paraprofessional officers will be attending a conference this summer.

Board of Education Report

John Bonagura reported that 43 teachers received tenure.

Kevin McFadden indicated that the BOE was waiting for Tim Brown to get back to them regarding a retirement incentive.

Editor's Report

Patti Lunden reported that during the last year, 11 ECHOES (184 pages) were published, and \$1,300 in advertising revenue was received. Patti can be contacted at VCTA@frontiernet.net

Dental/ Optical Trust

Sandy Strauss reported that the Trust owes a debt of gratitude to Marc Sperry and Orin Segall, who have worked very hard to keep the Trust solvent. (Marc and Orin resigned from the Trust, effective June 30.) Benefits have been increased and are being distributed to teachers, paras, and secretaries.

Retirees

Kevin McFadden welcomed new retirees to attend the 20th Retiree Luncheon on September 4. 105 retired teachers attended the luncheon last year. Kevin hopes more teachers will attend this year. Kevin also indicated that he has asked retirees to contribute to VOTE/COPE..

New Business

Motion to have five \$400 VCTA scholarships for this year's students: Marc Sperry. Second: Jay Sussdorff. Motion carried.

A sign-up list for participation in an administration/VCTA softball game was circulated. Jay Sussdorff wanted to inform members that Central Office is extremely concerned regarding teacher attendance- non-tenured and tenured. There is a possibility that the APPR forms will have a new check-box regarding teacher attendance on the evaluation form. Discussions with CO have been on-going.

Minutes from the September Meeting follow on the next page.

VCTA Executive Council Meeting Highlights –September ‘02

President's Report

In August, the officers met to streamline committees.

Fall Fest- The Fall Fest (*New Teacher Party*) will take place from 3-6 p.m. on Friday, October 25 at Stony Ford. The Council approved providing a DJ for the event.

Webmaster- Pete Meisel (*a VCTA member*) has volunteered to do this.

Motion to appoint Pete Meisel at a stipend of \$1000 to be the webmaster of the VCTA website: Toni Sperry. Second: Carol DeMicco. Motion carried. Pre-retirement Planning Seminars- Members age 45 and older and spouses/ companions are eligible to attend seminars to plan for retirement. Exec. Council reps were requested to post registration information in the buildings. The seminar schedule is also on the TRS website at www.nystrs.org.

Parent Conferences- A memo outlining dates and times for parent conferences was distributed. Parent conferences are scheduled for Friday, November 22, with evening conferences scheduled for Thursday, November 21. All teachers are required to be in attendance that evening.

Arline Friedman- "Living the Legacy Award Winner"- Copies of the letter from AFT informing Tim Brown of Arline Friedman's selection as an award winner were distributed. Arline was selected to receive the Silver Recognition Award for 34 years or more of service and involvement to the local organization, the state federation and the national AFT. A round of applause was offered.

Union Musician List- Copies of a list of union musicians/bands from the area was distributed.

Hudson Valley Area Labor Federation Grants- Information was distributed on grant funding to assist local unions with membership training and education efforts.

MH Teacher Center planned activities- Information regarding planned activities was distributed. For more details on events and for descriptions about new opportunities, the activities calendar may be accessed at www.dcboces.org/webevent.

NYSUT New Member Information Program- Information sessions will be held

on September 30 in Kingston and October 21 in Newburgh. Workshops will cover certification issues, student discipline strategies, and your rights under the education law and your local contract.

Financial Controls and Membership Information- A financial controls checklist was distributed. Membership reporting and per capita dues information was distributed.

Correspondence- Keith Lipsey (resignation), Nicole Feller (Corrine Feller Memorial)- Copies were distributed.

Scholarship Correspondence: Jacqueline Ingber, Sally Briggs, Jameson ElkinCondon, Cheryl Dambrot- Copies of thank-you letters from scholarship recipients were distributed.

Richard Aderson Award- Please let Tim Brown know if you would like to nominate someone for this award.

Paraprofessional Report

Kathy Lennon thanked the VCTA for sending the para reps to a conference this summer.

Board of Education Report

Tim Brown reported that he is including the BOE minutes in the VCTA Exec. Meeting binder for reference.

Editor's Report

Patti Lunden requested that reps let her know the names of members who are out on extended periods of leave (at least 3 months). She will be sending a form to each building so that ECHOES can be mailed to these individuals while they are on leave.

If anyone would like to submit an article that includes photos, Patti indicated that photos can be in jpg format, or she can scan them. She is also willing to come to your building with the camera.

Retirees

1. Kevin McFadden reported that 90 retirees attended the Retiree Luncheon on the opening day of school.

2. Kevin reported that the governor has not signed into legal form anything guaranteeing retirees' medical coverage.

It has been on a year-to-year basis.

3. Discussion took place regarding Orange-Ulster as originally a stop-gap while other plans were being considered, 20 years ago. At that time, the VCTA was promised that O-U would be comparable to or better than the Empire plan.

Old Business

Donna Lloyd reported that there have been problems with salary agreements and accumulated in-service credit. If anyone has documentation that their salary agreement or in-service credit is incorrect, simply send Tim Brown a copy with the statement "it's wrong" across the top.

Blocks of 3 credits, including those taken over the summer, should be credited by October 1.

New Business

Pat Darney reported that she had an optical claim denied because it had not been 2 full calendar years since her last claim. It is important that members keep track of the dates of exams, etc. in scheduling appointments when calendar years are taken into consideration in terms of claim approval.

Rich Steger requested that building reps return mentor lists to him.

Let Rich Steger know if you have any pictures of any past VCTA presidents. Pending grievances will be discussed at next month's VCTA meeting.

The next Executive Council meeting will be held November 19 at 3:45 PM at the VCHS Professional Library, Montgomery



Submitted by: M. J. Nally
 Taken from *Standards for a Profession*
<http://www.aft.org/psrp/standards/basic.html>
 American Federation of Teachers



Basic Skills

content knowledge... thinking skills...human relations...personal qualities

“The real work of paraprofessionals is rarely broken down into these elements. There exists a misconception that the only skill required is a desire to work with children and an (innate) ability to do so effectively. It is true that part of this work is instinctive, such as listening to children and understanding their needs. To support the educational process, and to do so effectively however, paraprofessionals must also enter the profession with basic skills to function in the workplace and then be trained in techniques and knowledge (the competencies) that support the process. Paraprofessionals also must understand the needs of their particular workplace, their role in the classroom and how their skills are used in that role.

Content Knowledge

- reading
- writing
- mathematical computation
- mathematical reasoning

Thinking Skills

- creative thinking
- decision making
- problem solving
- integrating new knowledge
- reasoning
- organizing and processing information

Interpersonal Relations/Human Relations

- communication skills - listening and speaking
- leadership skills
- respect for cultural diversity
- respect for views of others
- ability to work as a team member

Personal Qualities

- responsibility
- self-esteem
- sociability
- self-management
- integrity/honesty

Competencies with Advanced Training

- human growth & development
- behavior management
- instructional strategies
- laws, policies & procedures

These skills are adapted from the report of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) of the U.S. Department of Labor. “

Benefits Introduces New Retiree Dental Plan

NYSUT Benefit Trust has announced a new Retiree Dental Plan for its retiree members. The new plan is provided by MetLife. It offers a large number of in-network participating providers, both in New York state and nationwide. Participating providers offer the lowest out-of-pocket costs, and there are no deductibles when in-network dentists are used. The plan offers a reimbursement schedule for services provided by non-participating dentists.

The plan is being offered first to current participants in the original retiree dental plan through GHI.

These members have already received enrollment materials, along with an offer to enroll in the plan by Oct. 15 in order to receive special two-year transitional rates. (*Ed. Note ~ this information was received on October 15th—call and ask for rates*). Current participants who take advantage of this offer will have coverage effective Nov. 1. Plan information will be mailed to the balance of retirees sometime in November for coverage to be effective Jan. 1, 2003. (*UFT and PSC/CUNY retiree members will be excluded because they receive dental coverage from their local unions.*)

For more information, contact NY-

SUT Member Benefits :
(800) 626-8101,
or e-mail benefits@nysutmail.org.

~ From NYSUT publication, The Bottom Line

Mac's Musings ... (from the Retiree Side)



thankful.

This year, as mentioned last month, 196 announcements were sent out to all segments of the VC Family. As noted, 95 attended, 26 sent regrets, 18 with notes appended or follow-up phone call. I am, of course, prejudiced, but it struck me that this was one good-looking vital group, ranging in age from 55 years old to close to 90! A feisty crowd and intending to stay that way.

The retirees thank the Crossroads staff, especially Chris Camillo and Mike Conklin for continuing to make the luncheon such a joyous occasion for us.

Life After VC

Catch Joe DiBello's latest enhanced photography exhibit at Montgomery Library—scenes of the Wallkill Valley and a super job! Also drop in to see Ginny McFadden's exhibit of photographic studies at the Galley at Sarabae in New

Windsor. (*She has a great eye for beauty—except in husbands!*) Carolyn Post and Jean Larsen spent many nights this summer concertizing with the Pine Bush Community Band. Among those still doing some part-time work in education: Bruce Seguin, Bob Schoonmaker, Frieda Smith, Tom Moreau, Phil Shafer, Tom Knieser, Joan Horton, Trina Tersillo, Sally Schwartz, Brenda Oretsky, Bob Ciganek, Catherine Unverzagt—and there may be others. George Coates and Joe Bayno are still officiating at various athletic events, Howie Feldscher continues to compose and arrange music. Pat Iorlano is still serving as a school board member and is doing a six week stint as a biology teacher at Cornwall HS. Ernie Pettine serves as a village trustee in Montgomery. Ernie, Doug Jessup and Frank DeSantis still do work in tax preparation. Larry Winum's stamp business is busy as ever and Jack Matikiewicz is still the CEO of Joe's Pizza. My own work includes

Update:

September 4th marked the 20th annual VC Retiree Luncheon at Camillo's at the Crossroads. (*see following two pages for photos.*) This year 95 retirees gathered to share thoughts, to break bread, to tell the old stories one more time, to laugh at 20 year M.C.'s (*John Mirola*) jokes, and to applaud Table 5's last call for the chow line! Each year these worthies (*you know who you are!!*) seem to be called last. They are one group of guys who have not lost their wonderfully crazy sense of humor—and for that we are all

Mac's Musings ... (from the Retiree Side) (continued from page sixteen)

the Shakespeare class at the Desmond Campus, MSMC and some workshops/seminars for young and "wannabe" teachers. Joan Downey Palmer is a dynamo in her parish in St. Augustine, FL. Father Frank Wallner is the motivating force behind the growth of his Episcopal parish, Holy Cross in Kingston. Tony Cimorelli and John Napolitano meet regularly in South Carolina to play golf. The upstate (Champlain area) contingent includes Carol Hochreiter, Marilyn Kelso, Bruce Seguin and their spouses. Skaneateles is now home to Elena Stahl and her husband.

There's more, but I'll hold off until next time. If I missed you this time, I'll catch you next time. If you have some news to share - (845) 778-7236.

And a special thanks to

Lynn Ciganek for the wonderful luncheon pictures which grace this issue. A person who can always be counted on.

Nobody asked me, but...

Best wishes to Dr. Hooley on his appointment as superintendent of the Valley Central School District. It is our hope that the district will continue to cherish children, learning, understanding and wisdom during his stewardship of the district. He has a fine foundation of wonderful kids, and dedicated teachers, administrators and support staff.

Be wary of new and different programs that will take needed funding away from public school. I reiterate (*always strongly and perhaps stridently*) my feeling that public education should be reformed from within— not by remov-

ing funding to finance alternate roads to learning. (*And you thought I had lost my soap box!*)

Amen

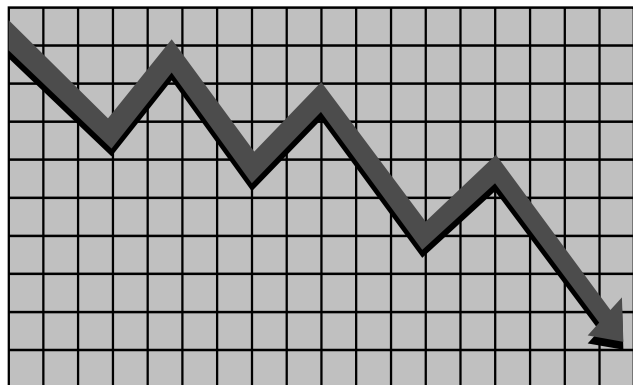
Condolences to the family of Ernie Carter who passed away in August.

Thanks for finding your way to the back of this distinguished missive, and until next time...

Keep pushing back the barriers of ignorance in whatever venue life finds you. Peace.

~ Kevin McFadden,
Retiree Representative

Recession's Toll: Jobs, Wages, Benefits



The economic foundations that families depend upon - jobs, wages, health insurance and retirement savings - are either unstable or deteriorating fast, according to a new AFL-CIO report. The result has been measurable increases in the last year of financial crises such as declaring bankruptcy or falling into poverty.

household income has declined for the first time since the early 1990s and that 1.3 million more people now live in poverty. The DOL reports stagnant unemployment and job growth. Personal bankruptcies are at an all-time-record high, workers suffering long-term unemployment are running out of benefits, and home mortgage foreclosures during the spring of 2002 were at the highest levels since 1972, says

The AFL-CIO also points to recent markers - from the Census Bureau and the Department of Labor - that reinforce the toll the recession has taken on working people. New Census Bureau data for 2001

show that median the AFL-CIO. The AFL-CIO issue brief can be found at the AFL-CIO Web site www.aflcio.org.

~ From NYSUT publication, *The Bottom Line*

Retiree Luncheon—September 4, 2002



Ginny "Mac" makes a get-away!



Larry Winum chats with Trudy and Leo Flax.



Industrial Arts King, Bob Brokaw— 46 years of service!



"Doc" Moran continues to keep a watch on the troops.



Catching up while enjoying the luncheon.



Anne Stone, Margaret Lawrence, and Marilyn Kelso listen attentively.

~ Photos courtesy of Lyn Ciganek

Retiree Luncheon—September 4, 2002



Mac displays VC ECHOES: (at least he's not talking!)



Frank DeSantis and Bob Schoonmaker make merry at Table 5.



Helen Bartlett, Trina Tersillo, Joe and Janet DiBello eye the M.C.



John Mirola looks the same in his 20th year as M.C. as he did at his first luncheon in '83.

Pre-lunch gab fest!



Brenda Oretsky has stories to tell!



The Brain Trust from '63 to '81, Bill Moran and John Mirola.



George Coates, Brenda Oretsky and Fil Bernatowicz check out the deserts.

~ Photos courtesy of Lyn Ciganek

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.

Now available for armchair travelers —

Andrew Elliot's Philadelphia Odyssey,

an account of a young Scottish
merchant on his way to becoming
a royal official before the Revolution.,

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(27 ils.)

"It is a good read ..." says
William Pencak, Editor
Pennsylvania History.

Special offer to *VC ECHOES*
readers with this ad — \$16.10
(includes shipping and sales tax).

Mail check to Summit Books
PO Box 703, Phillipsport, NY 12769.

**Ask yourself each evening:
What have I contributed today?
What have I learned today?
What have I enjoyed today?**

Lucy M. Jachera

Richard Gridley

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(845) 778-5296

(This phone number was incorrect in the September '02 VC ECHOES. My apologies for any confusion. ~ Ed).

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OCT '02

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.

Consider these important insurance coverages

The Member Benefits department of New York State United Teachers offers a variety of insurance plans, each designed to provide coverage for a specific set of circumstances. Brief descriptions of some of these plans are provided here. For more information, call NYSUT Member Benefits at 1-800-626-8101, e-mail benefits@nysutmail.org, or visit the Web at www.memberbenefits.nysut.org.

Disability insurance helps replace a portion of your income by providing tax-free monthly benefits if an illness or injury prevents you from working. In addition to the plan for NYSUT members and agency fee payers, a separate plan is available for associate members, retiree members, and spouses or domestic partners of NYSUT members. Applicants to either plan must be under the age of 64.

You can tailor the plan by choosing long- or short-term coverage; your monthly benefit amount up to \$5,000, not to exceed 60 percent of gross monthly earnings; and your waiting period, which is the amount of time you must be totally disabled before benefits will be paid. The longer the waiting period, the lower your premium payments will be.

Long-term care insurance helps pay the cost of custodial care and other long-term care expenses. The need for long-term care can happen at any age and at any time, due to an unexpected accident or illness. Basic health insurance and Medicare often don't cover long-

term care expenses. Unfortunately, many people don't find this out until they're actually faced with a long-term care situation. As a result, they end up paying for long-term care out of their own pockets and risk spending their life savings.

NYSUT members, agency fee payers, and their spouses or domestic partners are eligible to apply, as are their parents (and in-laws) and grandparents (and in-laws). The NYSUT plan lets you choose a comprehensive or nursing home plan, daily benefit amount, total lifetime benefit and home care/assisted living reimbursement amount. You may choose additional options to further tailor your coverage.



Catastrophe major medical insurance supplements your basic health insurance, including Medicare. Once the deductible is satisfied, the plan will pay up to 100

percent of eligible expenses not recovered by other insurance coverage for up to five years or up to \$2 million, whichever comes first. Your out-of-pocket expenses as well as expenses paid by basic health insurance count toward the \$25,000 deductible.

The plan also offers some nursing home, home health care and private duty nursing benefits. Members can apply, regardless of age. Coverage can be added for spouse, parents (and in-laws) and dependent children.

Advertising Section

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Remembering 9/11

New York will Never Forget!

The credit union is taking orders for commemorative coins in remembrance of September 11th.

*A portion of the proceeds
will be donated to support
the relief efforts.*

Liberty commemorative coin

\$19.95

Beautifully engraved with some of the events of September 11th
.999 fine silver

Certificate of Authenticity

World Trade Center commemorative coin

\$19.95

Beautifully engraved with some of the events of September 11th
.999 fine silver

Certificate of Authenticity

New York Skyline photo mint

\$30.00

This famed tribute to New York includes two uncirculated 24 karat gold plated NYS quarters, one each from the Philadelphia and Denver mints.

This is placed in an 11" x 14" oak frame.

Displays of each coin set can be seen at the office of VCFCU.

Make all checks payable to CUPAC.





*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)

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Robin Sinclair-Scott, Joanne Daniels

Maybrook: Donna Lloyd, Linda Siegel

East Coldenham: Holly Bacon, Beth Como

Walden: Patty Joy, Randy Sutter,
Kathy Bordone, Barbara Wutch

Montgomery: Toni Sperry, Chris Brand

MS: Mary Bleau, Mary Goldberg, Dana DeMasi
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HS: Heather Ford, Peter Meisel, Glenn Eckert,
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Paraprofessional Representative: Kathy Lennon (W)

VC ECHOES Editor

Patricia Lunden, (HS)

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NYSUT

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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, HS, by
December 6, 2002.**

*Any articles submitted to the VC
Echoes will also be posted on the
VCTA Web page.*

Your Right to Representation

As a member of the Valley Central Teachers' Association, you have the right to VCTA representation in any meeting with Administration. Should the Administration refuse to comply with your request for representation, the VCTA instructs you to attend the meeting, but say nothing.

If you feel pressured to make any reply, it should be, "I'll be happy to respond when I have representation from the VCTA present." Teacher members are represented by Building representatives, Secretary members by the Secretarial representative, and the Paraprofessionals by their building level para representatives. If the VCTA representative is uncomfortable with how the meeting is going, he/she can request the meeting be postponed until he/she has the opportunity to meet with VCTA officers and the NYSUT LRS as necessary.



Keeping Valley Central Center



President Tim Brown was a little surprised at the reactions he encountered after giving his opening day speech this year (*see page one*).

"The comments ranged from 'relaxed philosophical' to 'the most in-depth controversial presentation I've given in four years!'", stated Brown.

I asked Brown what he intended the speech to do and he quickly replied, "I meant it to be disturbing for everyone— management and workers, alike."

"As a health teacher I don't face the same end-of-year pressure to see my whole year interpreted in terms of one test; instead I reflect on whether my class made a difference, if my students gained positive things, and the most disturbing of all, does my being here make a difference, or even matter?"

"I think that as Valley Central stands on the threshold of a new era with the hiring of new superintendent, Dr. Richard Hooley, that the entire VC 'family' needs to ask itself these questions."

"I believe that Valley Central is a good school district. Dr. Nugent quoted Charles Osgood last year, stating even 'pretty good is not good enough.'

Are we ready to move past good and go to excellent?"

Brown makes use of many analogies in his speech including Valley Central as a family complete with parents and children. The children are the students of the district, of course. So who are the parents?

"All the stakeholders at VC are the parents— this is a polygamous marriage where everyone should be an equal partner— the Board of Education, Central Administration, Middle Management, Faculty, Support Staff, Parents and Community. And as in a healthy marriage the parents need to be partners— best friends for life."

"Family" is the word that has been used to describe VC since its inception as a district. Families come in all types from the Soprano family to the Brady Bunch. The Soprano's eliminate anyone who gets in their way and the Brady's never have a problem that can't be solved in fifteen minutes. Neither family is a realistic, honest portrayal. A good family can take a good, long hard look inside, and improve itself. A dysfunctional family can't stand to look inside— it is consumed by outside appearance."

"I believe Valley Central needs to move into its next phase of history as a family with a level playing field of stakeholders given equal re-

sponsibility and equal respect. We need to approach the next level standing shoulder to shoulder in cooperation, which means we may sometimes need to go toe-to-toe in conflict - because it is often through conflict that we are able to reach a level of cooperation. I believe that when the VCTA as an Association began to assert itself with the administration in a positive way, there was a positive effect on the standards, the district and most importantly, the children. The workers had to speak out then and still need to speak out now; likewise, district management had to listen and still needs to listen if we are *all* to continue to have positive effects on Valley Central."

"There is currently no formal communication between the BOE and the VCTA reps. How sad that the only time we had to meet to discuss issues is during conflict."

"So I again pose the question: is the Valley Central District ready to look inside-to explore and evaluate our motives and actions, and the impact that both of these have on the Valley Central family unit? For the well-being of all the stakeholders, I certainly hope we are."

*~ Patti Lunden,
Editor*