

# VC ECHOES

An AFTCA and New York Teacher Award Winning Publication

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1

SEPTEMBER 2002

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## Welcome Back, Valley Central

Another summer peeled away as quickly and easily as a layer of onion-full of sensory stimuli and perhaps even bringing a tear to one's eye. Hopefully your summer was both relaxing and invigorating, a chance to get away from the institution and widen your horizons, clear your heads, recharge your batteries, and spend time with friends and family.

Another September full of hope and promise, apprehension and questions-time spent in the company of our colleagues and in the task of educating our communities' children.

We hope the 2002-03 school year will be a good one for all of you-teachers, support staff and administrators. The beginning of new classes, trying to understand and meet state and local man-

dates and initiatives, working in safe, healthy and un-crowded environments, and keeping up to date with professional growth (*while maintaining our own families and personal lives*)

is always a challenge. For those of you just beginning your teaching careers or new to Valley Central, you have a strong, active teachers' association working on your behalf. Get to know your building reps and take advantage of the buddy system. Don't be afraid to ask the experienced members of the staff for advice and information. For you veterans of a few, several, or many (*many?*) years, use



your excellence, expertise and professionalism to assist new staff members and to continue to do the spectacular job of teaching you have always provided for our students. On behalf of the other officers of the VCTA, I wish each one of you a productive and memorable year.

~ Jay Sussdorff,  
Vice President

*No bubble is  
so iridescent  
or floats  
longer than  
that  
blown by  
the  
successful  
teacher.*

~ Sir William  
Osler

**Congratulations to the  
Forty- Three Teachers  
Given Tenure!**

## Sixth VCTA Health/ TSA Fair

*(see page three and four for information on Health and Comparable Coverage)*

To eliminate extra clutter from your mailboxes, the VCTA chose to select a small number of TSA companies on the basis of recommendations from our members and invite them to our Health/TSA Fair. These advisors are asked to provide our members with the best advice and investment options according to their needs.

**Dave Mazzetti and Ed Hayde,**  
**American Express Financial Advisors**  
 121 Old Main Str., Fishkill, NY 12524 (845) 896-7520  
*See our ad on page 12!*

**Christopher A. Joy, LUTCF**  
**Joy Insurance & Investments**  
 639 E. Main St., Middletown, NY 10940 (845) 342-4888

**Richard C. Gridley, Investment Consultant**  
**Tax Relief Investments**  
 72 North Montgomery St., Walden, NY 12586 (845) 778-3147

**James Stout, Salomon Smith Barney**  
 25 Main Str., Goshen, NY 10924 (845) 294-1300

**Al DeLorenzo, Aetna Investment Services, Inc.**  
 114 Route 17K, Newburgh, NY 12550 (845) 564-3654

*If you ever have a problem with one of these companies, please inform the VCTA so that we can re-evaluate their inclusion. You are not limited to using only these companies, you can choose any company you would like. The VCTA wants to make you well aware of the option of TSA's, but what you do with your money is your own business.*

***If you missed the Health/TSA Fair and would like information on TSA providers,  
 contact the Union office at 457-5899.***

*As a courtesy to the District, the VCTA also invites two financial companies with whom they deal extensively:  
Faculty Services ( common remitter for TSA's) and Myles Financial Services (handle the Cafeteria 125 Plan)  
 These are not VCTA selected companies, however, if you should have any problems with them,  
 contact the VCTA so we can let the District know.*

***If you do want to set up a TSA or  
 make a change in the amount you are currently investing ,  
 you must do so by December 31st.***

## What is a Tax Sheltered Annuity (TSA) ?

**A** Tax Sheltered Annuity is an opportunity for public employees, like those of us in education, to save money for retirement purposes on a pre-tax basis. Tax Sheltered Annuities are called TSA's for short and are referred to as 403(b) accounts by the IRS.

The TSA is considered the number one investment opportunity available to educators according to

Fortune magazine. The advantage of these accounts is that you save the money before taxes, so if you put away \$100 a check, assuming a 30% tax, you see only a \$70 difference in your net pay. When you file your tax return for the year the amount that you sheltered in the annuity is not counted as part of your gross which is another savings. And finally



when you do withdraw the money in your retirement years, it will be taxed in a lower bracket. The earlier you begin investing in a TSA the better, so don't wait to check into this opportunity.

The contributions in a TSA are invested in the stock market, so you should carefully consider the agent that you choose to handle your annuity.

## FAQ Concerning Health Insurance Choices

### ***What health insurance choices do I have?***

You have a federal right to choose an HMO rather than the indemnity plan offered by the District.

### ***What is an indemnity plan?***

The indemnity plan offered by the District is the *Orange-Ulster School District Health Plan*. This plan allows you to stay in the Beech Street/ Medichoice network or go outside the network with deductibles and 20/80 coverage.

### ***What HMO's can I choose from?***

You can choose any HMO you'd like, however the VCTA has helped to make three HMO's easily accessible. They are: **Empire-BlueCross/Blue Shield, MVP, & GHI.**

### ***Will I have to pay anything to choose an HMO?***

If you choose to use an HMO, the District will pay the dollar amount that they would have paid to indemnity plan to the HMO. You are responsible to pay the difference if the HMO is more. That difference is deducted from your paycheck pre-tax.

***If I didn't get a chance to pick up information on the health plans during the Health/TSA Fair, who***

### ***should I contact?***

If you would like information on the OUSDHP, contact Central Office. If you want information on Empire, MVP or GHI contact Rich Steger at the VCTA office, 457-5899.

### ***What does the VCTA recommend concerning the health plan choices?***

That decision is yours to make. *The VCTA wants you to know you have a right to choose, but does not endorse any one plan over another.* Consult your physicians, family, friends, colleagues, or the Internet to help you make your decision. Also ask yourself "What if..." questions, to be certain that doctors and hospitals would be available to you if you needed them in the future.

### ***What if I choose a health plan and then don't like it? Am I stuck with it until I stop working here?***

No. You may change your health insurance coverage every year, deciding in October (*the open enrollment period*) to change for the following year. The VCTA hosts an annual Health/TSA fair to let you continually compare coverage options. However, you must stay with the plan through December 31st of the year, once selected you will not



be able to change again until the next October.

### ***If I decide to switch insurance plans, when does the new coverage begin?***

If you select a different option this October, it will take effect as of January 1, 2003 will not change unless you select another option next October.

### ***How do I make a change?***

Fill out the application form from the HMO you have selected and send it to Polly Conigilio, Payroll Dept. at CO before October 31, 2002.

### ***Who can I contact with questions?***

Rich Steger, Vice President who works at Walden Elementary will be happy to talk with you. Contact him at the Union Office, 457-5899.



**The VCTA does not receive the rates for the HMO insurances until Tuesday, September 3rd (at the earliest) . The chart comparing the four health plans will be published in the October 2002 issue of the VC ECHOES.**

**It will also be distributed to buildings.**

**You must inform the District of your intent to change (an filled out application form for the HMO is enough to do this) by October 31st. Completed forms are sent to Polly Conigilio at CO.**

## FAQ Concerning Comparable Health Coverage

### *Who is entitled to insurance benefits?*

As a salaried or full-time employee you are entitled by contract to insurance benefits (*health, dental and optical*). If you are married (*or marry in the future*) your spouse and dependents are also entitled to benefits.

### *If I am married, am I still entitled to health benefits?*

It depends because there is a contractual comparability clause (Article XXV, D.2, pg. 16, Teachers' Contract) regarding health benefits. (*Dental and optical benefits are not affected by this clause*). The Comparability Clause applies under the given conditions: **You are married and your spouse PROVIDES health coverage for you & that coverage is COMPARABLE.**

### *What if my spouse does not have health insurance benefits?*

If your spouse does not provide insurance for you, you are entitled to family coverage.

### *What if my spouse's health insurance is inferior in comparison to the insurance I could get through the District?*

If your spouse's insurance is not comparable you are entitled to insurance through the District.

### *How is comparability determined?*

Comparability is determined by the District through a wholistic comparison of both plans. Since plans vary from providing company to providing company, **you must** provide your insurance summary and

booklets to allow for a comprehensive comparison. You should give a copy of the information to the Association, so that the Association can also review the plan as well in case you disagree with the District's findings.

### *What if the District determines my spouse's health insurance to be comparable, but I disagree?*

The contractual agreement allows for arbitration in such instances.

### *If I am not entitled to District health benefits, what do I get instead?*

If your spouse's coverage is determined to be comparable, and you agree with the finding; you are entitled to the District's buyout (\$1800).

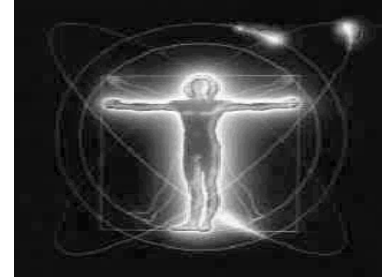
### *What if there is a change in my spouse's insurance and it is no longer comparable or if I get divorced or lose my spouse?*

If your marital status or insurance changes at any time, you can regain the District's coverage immediately. If you have a previously unforeseen health situation, you may be able to regain coverage.

### *What if my spouse's insurance is NOT comparable, but I would like to take the buy-out anyway?*

You can voluntarily elect to take the District's buyout if you would like to, as long as you are provided health insurance through another source.

### *What if I am single, never use my health insurance and would rather have the buy-out. Can I also elect*



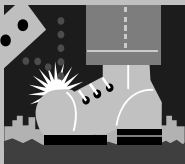
### *to take it?*

Not unless you have an alternate health coverage (*i.e. from another job*). You must show alternate coverage to elect to take the buyout.

### *What if I have changes but fail to inform the District (ie. Get married—have comparable coverage by spouse but never tell the District)*

You would be committing an act of fraud. The comparability clause is contractual just like your salary. It would be illegal for the District to hire you as a teacher, sign a contract to pay you and then never give you a paycheck. Likewise, you as a VCTA member (*or agency fee payer since this is a closed shop*) are bound by the clauses of the contract. If the District becomes aware that you have not disclosed such information to them—you could be facing legal charges and disciplinary action.

### *Who can I contact with questions? Vice President Rich Steger, Walden Elementary School, 457-5899.*



## If you are injured while at work, you may be entitled to Worker's Compensation.

**The District's Worker's Compensation carrier is:**

**Wright Risk Management, 377 Oak Street, Garden City, New York 11530-6542.**

*Give this address to your doctor if you have a workman's compensation claim.*

**Marvin Anderman is a Worker's Compensation attorney.**

**His phone number is 212-227-2300.**

**Members should contact him (and the VCTA) if they are having problems with a workman's compensation claim.**

## Cafeteria 125 Plan—But Where's the Beef?

**A**lthough a Cafeteria 125 Plan has nothing to do with food—it does allow you to save money two ways— which may allow you to go to an expensive restaurant with your “found” money! Cafeteria 125 Plans (*also known as Flexible Spending Accounts*) allow you to shelter money from taxes (*NO Federal, State, or FICA*) for the purpose of medical reimbursement or dependent care. The IRS allows a payroll deduction up to \$5000 pre-taxed for dependent care (*Day care for a child or dependent adult so that you can work*). As you pay your pay care provider, you submit receipts and are reimbursed from your Flexible Spending Account. The savings are realized a second time when you file your taxes as that income will not be subject to taxation.

Likewise, you are able to shelter \$2000 for Medical reimbursement of money that you pay for services not covered by insurance (*co-pay, prescription co-pays, dental or optical expenses*). Unlike the Dependent Care account, you may claim full reimbursement from your Medical account on the first day of the plan year.

It is important to realize

that any money not claimed during the plan year (October 1st—September 30th) is forfeited, so be sure to only shelter money you know you will be using.

The Cafeteria 125 Plan is part of the benefits package the Union negotiated on behalf of its members and should be taken advantage of, if it is beneficial to you.

The District has chosen Myles Financial Services to administer the Cafeteria 125 Plan. You may have already received and signed off on a letter to Myles over the summer. Otherwise you must meet with the representative from Myles even if you don't want to participate in the plans to sign off to that effect.

**The Myles representative will be in the buildings from 8:00 A.M.—1:00 P.M.. as follows:**

**September 10—HS & MS**

**September 12—Montgomery & Walden**

**September 13—Maybrook**

**September 17—East Coldenham**

**September 18—Berea and Adm. Bldg.**



**If you miss them, there will be a make-up date at the Administration Building on September 18 from noon—4:00 P.M.**

At these meetings, Myles representatives should only be explaining your options concerning Cafeteria 125 Plans. Although they offer other financial services, it is not the purpose of this meeting time to promote those products. If you wish to speak to them about such products, they should be making an appointment with you for another time. Should you feel that this is not the case, or you are being pressured to look at other products at that time, contact President Tim Brown at the Union office, 457-5899.

**The IRS rate for mileage reimbursement is:  
.365 cents per mile.**

**Contract Article XD:** *“For personal automobile use, teachers who are assigned to more than one (1) school per day shall receive the following compensation: mileage reimbursement at the rate used by the IRS.*



## What Teachers Make

We were all sitting around the table discussing life, and the man across from me decided to show his brains. He said the problem with teachers is, "What's a kid going to learn from someone who decided his best option in life was to become a teacher?" He reminded the other dinner guests that it's true what they say about teachers: "Those who can -- do. Those who can't --teach."

I decided to bite my tongue instead of his and resist the temptation to remind the dinner guests that it's true what they say about lawyers--because we were eating, after all, and this was polite company.

"I mean, you're a teacher, Susan," he said. "Be honest. What do you make?"

And I wish he hadn't done that because, you see, I have a policy about honesty: If you ask for it, I have to let you have it.

"You want to know what I make?" I asked.

"I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could. I can make C+ feel like a Congressional Medal of Honor and an A- feel like a slap in the face. (*How dare you waste my time with anything less than your very best?*)

"I can make kids sit through 40 minutes of study hall in absolute silence. No, you may not work in groups. No, you may not ask a question. Why won't I let you get a drink of water? Because you're not thirsty, you're bored ... that's why.

"I make parents tremble in fear when I call home: 'I hope I haven't called at a bad time, I just wanted to talk to you about something Billy said today. Billy said, "Leave the kid alone. I still cry sometimes, don't you?" And it was the noblest act of courage I have ever seen.'

"I make parents see their children for who they are and what they can be.

"You want to know what I make?

"I make kids wonder. I make them question.

I make them criticize. I make them apologize and mean it. I make them write. I make them read, read, read. I make them spell definitely beautiful, definitely beautiful, and definitely beautiful over and over and over again, until they will never misspell either one of those words again. I make them show all their work in math and hide it all on their final drafts in English.

I make them understand that if you have the brains, then follow your heart... and if someone ever tries to judge you by what you make, you-



pay them no attention. "You want to know what I make?"

"I make a difference. How about you?"

*~ from the Internet,  
Submitted by Erin Davis,  
Maybrook/Berea*

*"I make kids wonder..."*



### VC ECHOES Wins Another Award!

The VC ECHOES won an award in the Best Feature Story Category for the AFTCA Communications Awards. The winning story was, "*Terrorism Hits the High School*" written by editor, Patti Lunden from the October 2001 issue of the VC ECHOES. The AFTCA contest is a national contest. The VC ECHOES competed with other AFT newsletters from all over the country and was one of three winners selected.

## *Lend a Hand!*



Many of us return to another year at Valley Central. As we walk through the HS Auditorium doors on September 3rd, we are joined by new faces.

I would ask that veteran teachers take these new members under their wing and help them out as they begin their journey as teachers.

*~ Rich Steger  
Vice President*



### **Q: What is the Alternate Assessment?**

**A:** The Alternate Assessment takes the place of an observation.

It must address three of the New York State Evaluation Criteria.

Most ideas will work for the Alternate Assessment Method; Videotape Assessment, Peer Review, Self Review, Goal Setting; are only a few ideas.

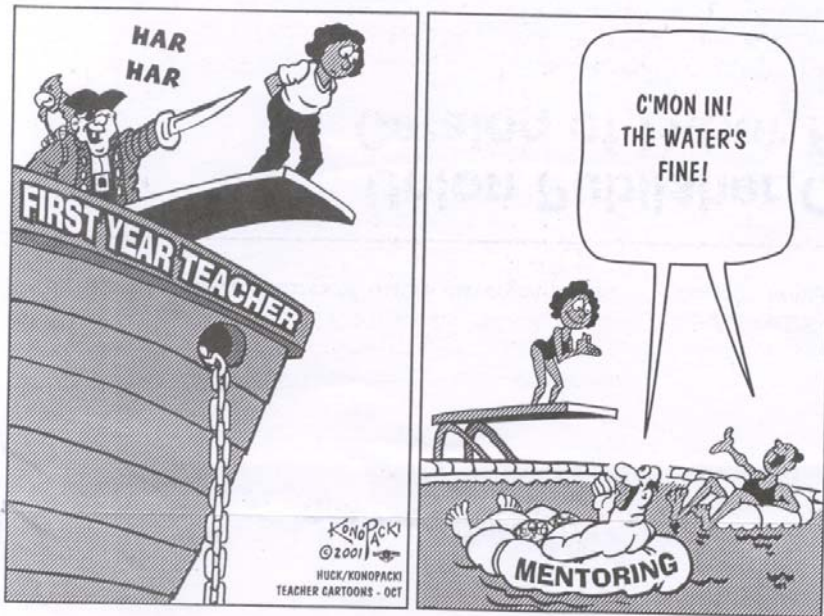
***Be creative; look at what you already do!***

The administrator and the teacher must mutually agree upon the Alternate Assessment Method.

***Remember the Alternate Assessment Method is taking the place of an observation. It should not take any longer to complete than it would to prepare for and complete a 40-minute classroom observation. If you have been assigned the Alternate Assessment for this year and have any questions please drop me a note at Walden Elementary School.***

*~Rich Steger , Vice President*

## Welcome New Members!



### You've got a friend in us...

Building Representatives will seek out the new teachers in their building and help them find a buddy for the daily requirements in their grade level/subject area.

Your Building Representative is your best source for union help... whether you are a first year, fifteenth year or last year teacher!

### Contacting your Union Representatives

Union Office, HS—457-5899

President : Tim Brown, HS

VP: Jay Sussdorff, HS (Secondary Issues, Health/Safety)

VP: Rich Steger, Walden (Health Insurance)

Secretary: Laurie Hey, MS (Maternity)

Treasurer: John Bonagura, EC (Membership Records)

Newsletter Editor: Patti Lunden, HS

### Building Representatives

**Berea:** Carol DeMicco, Sara Ackerson,  
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  
Marc Sperry, Joe Collins , Mike Steele

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

**Secretarial Representative:** Lucy Fox (HS)  
**Paraprofessional Representative:** Kathy Lennon (W)

## Welcome New Members!

### Dos and Don'ts for Successful Management of Student Behavior

- ✓ Do discuss and reinforce the rules to students.
- ✓ Do be consistent.
- ✓ Do make the students feel safe.
- ✓ Do be a good role model.
- ✓ Do review the rules when necessary.
- ✓ Do praise students for abiding by the rules.
- ✓ Do be compassionate and understanding but remain firm.
- ✓ Do provide corrective feedback to students who do not follow the rules.

### CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

The following information is selected from NYSUT's Effective Teaching Program (ETP) courses designed especially for new K-12 educators.

#### First Day Tips and Suggestions

- Greet students at the door.
- Direct students to assigned seats.
- Establish name identification through the use of nametags, introductions or roll call.
- Introduce students to the room arrangement; explain functions for different areas of the classroom.
- Introduce classroom procedures, model and post them.
- Introduce three to six classroom rules, explain and post them.
- Plan for maximum contact with students.
- Establish yourself as a leader of the class.
- Avoid distractions; stay with the class as much as possible.
- Learn students' names as soon as possible.

#### Effective Room Arrangements

Ensure that:

- High traffic areas are free from congestion.
- Students are always visible to the teacher.
- Storage space and necessary materials are accessible.
- Students can easily see instructional displays and presentations.

*The truth is that I am enslaved....  
In a vast love affair with seventy  
children.*

~ Sylvia Ashton-Warner

Effective classroom teachers establish clear and specific rules and procedures. Rules govern behaviors such as student talk and respect for others and their property; procedures apply to specific routines and tasks. Rules and procedures are taught to students as any other content area and are consistently reinforced by monitoring student behavior and applying reasonable and appropriate consequences. A hierarchy of consequences is established and re-evaluated throughout the year. Rules and procedures are clearly defined and modeled for students.

Effective classroom teachers prevent or discourage behavioral problems before they occur by:

- Knowing students' names and showing respect for them.
- Maintaining high levels of student involvement.
- Giving the impression of being with every student at all times.
- Frequently scanning the entire class.
- Directly interacting with students.
- Providing constructive feedback.
- Accurately targeting misbehaving students.
- Enforcing fair consequences for misbehavior.

*From NYSUT's  
What Every New Member  
Should Know*

### Parent-Teacher Conference



#### Tips from Veteran Teachers

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

# Creating a Professional Portfolio

By the Farmingdale Federation of Teachers

The purpose of a professional folder is to gather and maintain documents pertaining to your career as an educator. Many of the documents listed below need to be saved for future reference. For example, it is a good idea to save all of your post observation evaluations, end of the year evaluations and all correspondence from the district. It is also important to keep an accurate record of your absences, personal days, and conference days. Professional development documents, such as course transcripts and course pre-approval forms, should be filed away for safe keeping in case the district misplaces any of this information.

## CORRESPONDENCE

- Confirmation of appointment
- Letters to or from administrators
- Letters to or from you union
- Confirmation of tenure

## EVALUATION

- Post observation evaluations
- Lesson plans used for formal observations
- End of the year evaluations
- Tenure evaluation

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Prior approval forms for graduate courses
- Prior approval forms for conferences and workshops
- Lists of in-service courses completed
- In-service credits received
- List of graduate courses completed
- List of conferences and workshops attended
- College transcripts
- Requests for salary adjustments
- Increased Preparation forms (and related correspondence)

~ From NYSUT New Member Resources

## EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- List of extra curricular, interscholastic, or intramural activities
- Clubs
- Coaching
- Supplemental Assignment letter from Personnel

## CREDENTIALS

- Provisional certification
- Permanent certification
- College degrees
- Transcripts
- Test Scores (NTE, etc.)

## MISCELLANEOUS

- Approval from for requesting a personal day
- Absence form
- An accurate list of absences
- List of committee work and related correspondence
- Curriculum writing and related correspondence
- Tutoring and related correspondence
- Summer school and related correspondence
- Payroll cards for tutoring, curriculum writing, etc.



**VOTE/Cope has been instrumental in making the concerns and issues of education known to our State and National politicians...  
Be sure to make your voice heard—Give to VOTE/Cope.**

*You can sign up for Payroll Deduction of your contribution through September 30th!*

**NYSUT's Mid-Hudson Regional Office is sponsoring a *FREE* \* New Member Workshop to introduce new members to the Union and cover different topics of importance to them**

*Choose either one to attend*

**Monday September 30th at Holiday Inn,  
Kingston, NY**

**or Monday, October 21st at Holiday Inn,  
Newburgh, NY**



**Agenda**

**3:30 to 4:30 Registration/Review of Exhibits**

**4:40 to 5:55 Session I- Concurrent Workshops**

**6:00 to 7:15 Session II- Repeat of Concurrent Workshops**

**7:15 to 8:15 Dinner/Remarks/Door Prizes**

**WORKSHOPS**

**Certification Issues Discipline Strategies**

**What Every New Teacher Should Know: Your rights under  
Education Law and your local contract**

***\*There is a \$25 registration fee,  
which NYSUT will refund after you attend the workshop***

***(NYSUT considers new members as those with 3 or less years of experience)***

**For more information, contact your building representative or the VCTA Office, 457-5899**

# Understanding your paycheck

VALLEY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1 - PAYROLL ACCOUNT 112919

NAME STUBB, IMA		Emp# 19421	Soc Sec No. 12345678	Fed 0	State 0	M/S M	Prd. Ending 07/02/99	Check Date 07/16/99	Check# 112919
Gross		Fica	Medicare	Federal	State	Local	SDI		NET 666.41
YTD	1052.11	65.23	15.74	112.25	38.40				
YTD	16595.72	1028.52	240.65	1959.33	554.68				
RETIREMENT		Normal	Loans	Arts&craft	Total		KEY BANK, NEWBURGH NY		C 466.41
ERS NO	CPP	31.54			31.54				
TRS NO	YTD	100.00			470.80				
DEDUCT		UNTWAY	CR UN	Vcta	tSa	FlEx			
CPP	3.00	100.00							
YTD	36.00	1400.00							
Budget Code	Hours/Days	Actual Sal	CPP Amount	Fisc Gross	Budget Code	Hours/Days	Actual Sal	CPP Amount	Fisc Gross
A283C168		28407.00	1052.11	2104.22					
A2110463									
A285015									
A90608									
A285515									

usually finished in the first check of February.

**TSA** = pre-tax deduction to your TSA

**Flex** = pre-tax deduction to cafeteria 125 plan

**The Bank name** is present if you elect to utilize Direct Deposit of your check. Always check to make sure that the money went to the right bank, you may only send your check

to one place. **If you would like to have your check Direct Deposited, contact Polly Coniglio, 457-3171 before October 1st.**

**Commonly Used Budget Codes:**

- A21101214 = Salary
- Dept. Chair/Super. pay is added in to regular salary
- A2110461,462,463 = Chaperone pay
- A285015 = Extracurricular Salary
- A285515 = Coaching Salary

September 13th is a pretty important day for most employees in the district. It is the first pay date of the new school year. All of us understand the part of the check that we cash, it is the stub that is often a mystery. Here is a listing of what all those abbreviations and number codes mean.

**CPP** = Current Pay Period

**YTD** = (Calendar) Year to Date

**FICA + Medicare** = Social Security

**Federal** = Federal tax

**State** = State tax

**Retirement** = either NYSTRS, if you're a teacher or NYSERS, if you're a SRP. The amount of your contribution is listed under **Normal**.

**UNTWAY** = United Way donation

**CRUN** = deductions that you elect to put in the Valley Central Federal Credit Union.

**VCTA** = your union dues deducted in 10 consecutive pays beginning the second paycheck in September and

## Adding up your days...

You may have received your "Absence Verification Summary" with your "back to school" letter this summer. This summary reflects the days that you were actually absent, and the reason for the absence. There are basically five categories of absence; sick days, illness in family days, bereavement, field trip, and association days.

Each year you are allotted 15 sick days and 3 personal days; whatever you don't use are accumulated. In this example, 63.75 days were accumulated as of June 30, 2000 (1999-2000 school year) and 15 more sick days and 3 personal days, 3 Illness in Family, and 3 Bereavement days were credited for the 2000-2001 school year on July 1, 2000. 7 sick days and 3 personal days were used during that year, so on July 1, 2001 eight more sick days were accumu-

lated for a total of 71.75 (*Personal days would have also accumulated*).

Add 15 more sick days and 3 more personal days as of July 1, 2001 and this person had a total of 89.75 going into the 2001-02 school year.

The reason those 18 days for the 2001-02 year weren't reflected on the summary is because they were earned as you work. The only people who wouldn't have the total 18 days for 2000-01 are those who were out on unpaid leave, such as child care leave, or those who have accumulated more than 185 sick days since the contract caps the sick day accumulation at 200

09/21/00 Sick Leave	1.000				
09/25/00 Sick Leave	1.000				
09/26/00 Sick Leave	1.000				
10/02/00 Personal business	1.000				
12/01/00 Sick Leave	1.000				
12/08/00 Personal business	1.000				
01/09/01 Sick Leave	1.000				
02/26/01 Sick Leave	1.000				
03/23/01 Personal business	1.000				
03/30/01 Conference/Workshop	1.000				
04/27/01 Field Trip	0.500				
05/01/01 Sick Leave	1.000				
05/03/01 Association Day	1.000				
05/04/01 Association Day	1.000				
-----					
REAS REASON	DAYS	ACCUMULATED	CREDITED	DAYS	CARRY
CODE DESCRIPTION	TAKEN AS OF 06/30/00	ON 07/01/00	ON 07/01/00	AVAIL	FORWARD
-----					
1 Sick Leave	7.000	63.750	15	71.750	71.750
2 Sick Leave-Buy Back	0.000	0.000		*.***	*.***
4 Illness in family	0.000	0.000	3	3.000	0.000
5 Bereavement	0.000	0.000	3	3.000	0.000
6 Personal business	3.000	0.000	3	0.000	0.000
7 Conference/Workshop	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
9 Field Trip	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
13 Association Day	2.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
-----					
		13.500			

days. That is why that many choose to take advantage of the sick leave buy-back so that they don't accumulate more than 182 days at the end of any year (182+18=200).

Field trip, illness in family and bereavement days are granted when needed and do not accumulate if unused. Association days are utilized by the VCTA Executive Council to attend conferences and the like.



Jennifer? Jessica? Julie?  
Oh no, What is her name?

## 1,003 Great Things about Being a Teacher

Able to memorize thirty-two names  
(*nicknames included*)  
within the first week of school.

~ from 1,003 Great Things About Being a Teacher  
Lisa Birnbach, Ann Hodgman, Patricia Marx

**Do wonderful things happen in your building?  
Your classroom?**

**Do you know someone we all should know?**

**Tell your story,**

**Have it published in the VC ECHOES.**

*Have your building representative  
help you submit your story:*

**Montgomery:** Chris Brand      **Berea:** Sara Ackerson

**Walden:** Patty Joy      **Maybrook:** Donna Lloyd

**EC:** Holly Bacon      **MS:** Mary Bleau

**HS:** Patti Lunden

Photos can be submitted in JPEG format or as  
color photos which will be scanned and returned.

**Contact Patti Lunden, VM # 7664**

**VCTA Office: 457-5899**

**The VCTA is full of GREAT PEOPLE...**

**Let everyone know about them.!**

### 2003-2004 VC ECHOES Deadlines and Publication Dates

Deadline : October 8, 2003      Publication: October 17, 2003

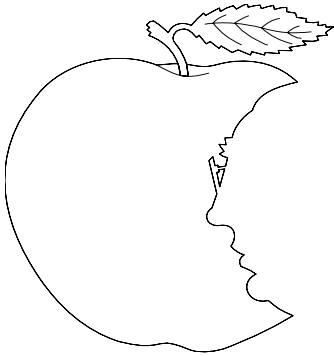
Deadline: December 3, 2003      Publication: December 12, 2003

Deadline: February 2, 2004      Publication: February 11, 2004

Deadline April 14, 2004      Publication: April 23, 2004

**RETIREE ISSUE:** Deadline: May 20, 2004      Publication: May 27, 2004

Deadline: June 7, 2004      Publication: June 16, 2004



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

Each year the District  
in conjunction with the Association  
nominates a teacher to be considered for

**NEW YORK STATE TEACHER OF THE YEAR.**

*Please submit the name of a colleague who you believes  
exemplifies the phrase "Great Teacher."*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Building \_\_\_\_\_

Years teaching \_\_\_\_\_ Years at VC \_\_\_\_\_

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


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

## Mac's Musings .... (from the Retiree side)



### Aloha!

Every year, the “back-to-school” sales start earlier and earlier. It really ticked me off when I was teaching at the high school. I was barely in vacation mode; yet the newspaper reminded me each day that school was practically upon us again. Needless to say, that is no longer a concern of mine! (*although I will be teaching a course on Shakespeare's sonnets in the L.I.F. E. program at Mt. St. Mary College this fall. However, the first class is not until September 17th.*) If you are over 55 (*and all retirees are!*), the L.I.F.E. program has some interesting offerings. Call Jennifer Taubach, program coordinator, at 565-2076 for information if you are interested in taking a course or two. Classes met once a week for eight weeks and are typically 90 minutes long. Now that advertisement was even longer than my usual ramblings!

For those new to the district—welcome! This column intends to keep retirees from the district in touch with active teachers and vice versa. It is important to note (*as I do each September*) that some opinions vented here are solely mine

and not necessarily those of the VCTA or NYSUT.

I am happy to be back writing the column and welcome your reactions to what appears here. I also am available to answer questions from retirees. I continue to serve on the VCTA Executive Council along with fellow retiree, Arline

Schnee Friedman. You can reach me at 845-778-7236 or at 6 Jessup St., Walden, NY 12586. Again this year, all issues (7) of the Echoes will be sent to retirees.

VC Retirees are prepared to help active personnel and wish all active members a successful and productive school year.

### Luncheon Lowdown

The 20th annual retiree luncheon will be held at Camillo's/ Crossroads Restaurant on September 4th, the day the kids return to school. This allows us to wave at the big yellow buses with wistful tear in eye and martini in hand! This year I sent out 196 announcements. Last year 105 retirees attended, and we hope to have more this year. As I write this on August 5th, returns are coming in with positive responses at 80%. I assume we all will be at our feisty best. I will report on the festivities and share some “Life After VC” snippets in the next Echoes.

### Nobody Asked Me, but...

- How frustrating to “business as

usual” perpetuated at the beginning of the school year. NYC and its mayor (*now also the de facto education guru*) names a chancellor who has zero educational background but mucho business experience! What message does that send to the education community?

- With the hours of “professional development” now required for teachers, school districts would do well to call upon the experience and expertise of retirees who have spent decades in the trenches.
- I wonder when the ivory tower folks in Albany will mandate and provide meaningful assistance to one-on-one mentoring for rookie teachers.
- As you can see, the old curmudgeon still is grinding axes.

### Amen!

Our condolences to the family of Lena Lease who passed away on July 10. Lena, a driving force behind the retiree luncheon for many years, was a retired high school English teacher and yearbook advisor. She would thunderbolt me for saying it, but I miss her already. She was truly one of a kind.

Thanks for turning to the back pages. Until next time, keep pushing back the barriers of ignorance in whatever venue life finds me. Peace.

~ Kevin McFadden,  
Retiree Representative

**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.

**You help give others a bright future.  
Do the same for yourself.**

With a 403(b) plan, money is taken out of your paycheck before taxes and deposited directly into a tax-deferred account.

That makes it a convenient and worry-free way to help make sure your retirement is everything you want it to be. Call your local American Express financial advisor today and learn more about how a 403(b) plan can help you do more.

**David J. Mazzetti & Edward Hayde**

*Personal Financial Advisors*

21 Old Main Street  
Fishkill, NY 12524

**(845) 896-7520**

*Complimentary Retirement Kits  
Available!*



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

**CALL TODAY 561-4311**

516 Union Avenue New Windsor

**As we begin our 41st year of service to our members, VCFCU has a new sign, but our motto remains the same!**



**“PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE”**

*Check out our website for our latest rates and loan offerings.*

**(845) 457-5592/5862**

[www.vcfcu.com](http://www.vcfcu.com)



## Advertising Section

Ads that appear in the VC ECHOES are seen by the 750 members of the VC Educational Community and their households. If you would like to advertise in the next issue of the VC ECHOES, use the form below.

**VALLEY CENTRAL TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION**  
**1175 Route 17 K**  
**Montgomery, NY 12549**  
**Tel./Fax: (845) 457-5899**  
**VC ECHOES**  
**ADVERTISEMENT CONTRACT APPLICATION 2002-2003**

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Issues ad is to appear in: Sept. 4 \_\_\_\_\_, Oct. 11 \_\_\_\_\_, Dec. 13 \_\_\_\_\_, Feb. 13 \_\_\_\_\_,  
 April 11 \_\_\_\_\_, Retiree Issue (May 30) \_\_\_\_\_, June 16 \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Size of Ad:** \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ \$30 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100

*\*Please attach scanner ready ad sketched design.*

*Size of boxes on back of form is approximate and may be slightly smaller or larger.*

**1/8th page = \$10 per issue      1/4 page = \$20 per issue      1/3 page = \$30 per issue      1/2 page = \$50 per issue, Full page = \$100 per issue ( An additional \$30 first time set up if not scanner ready)**

### TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

By signing this contract you agree to the following:

*We = VCTA, You = advertiser*

- 1) We reserve the right to deny an application without explanation. We do not accept applications for political advertisements, lest they be considered endorsements. We also reserve the right to cease publishing any ad at any time, refunding any money prepaid for publication. We do not accept advertisements from those who attack the AFL-CIO, AFT, NYSUT, or the VCTA.
- 2) We reserve the right to choose the ads published according to space available per issue, refunding any prepaid money should we choose not to publish the ad in a given issue. Should you choose to terminate this contract prior to its fulfillment, you will be refunded money prepaid for issues not yet printed on the date of termination.
- 3) You agree to provide scanner ready art for the ad or pay the first time set up fee. Should you choose to change your design from a previously submitted design, you agree to provide scanner ready art or be subjected to the set up fee again. The set up fee is applicable to each design rather than business.
- 4) You will receive the page on which your advertisement appears from each issue in which it is published as proof that it was published by fax or mail. You understand the entire issue is provided only to members, however it can be viewed on the VCTA website: [www.frontiernet.net/~vcta](http://www.frontiernet.net/~vcta)
- 5) We reserve the right to change the date of publication within 2 calendar weeks.
- 6) You agree to prepay by cash or check (*payable to the Valley Central Teachers' Association*) for the advertisement(s) upon acceptance of this application. You understand that if we owe you a refund due to conditions #1 or #2, you will receive a refund check after the publication of the issue from which your ad was omitted with notification that it was omitted.
- 7) You understand that this contract expires at the end of the school year. You will receive an application for the next year's issues at the end of the contract year. You will be given preference as a returning customer at the discretion of the editor.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please Return this form with ad to be scanned or information to: Patricia Lunden, VCTA, 1175 Rte. 17K, Montgomery, NY 12549  
 Ad can be e-mailed to [vcta@frontiernet.net](mailto:vcta@frontiernet.net) and then check/form sent under separate cover.

**These are the sizes available for ads, attach ad or sketch to form**

**1/8 page = \$10 per issue**

**1/3 page =  
\$30 per issue**

**Full Page = \$100  
per issue**

**1/4 page = \$20 per issue**

**1/2 page = \$50 per issue**

*Mark your calendar now!*

**VCTA Fall Fest**

**Friday,  
October 25, 2001**

**3:00 P.M.—6:00 P.M.**

**Stony Ford Clubhouse  
Orange County Park  
Hors d'oeuvres/Cash Bar  
Prizes**

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

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

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



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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**Paraprofessional Representative:** Kathy Lennon (W)

**VC ECHOES Editor**

**Patricia Lunden, (HS)**

**Email: [vcta@frontiernet.net](mailto:vcta@frontiernet.net)**

**NYSUT**

[www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org)

**AFT**

[www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org)

**AFL-CIO**

[www.aflcio.org](http://www.aflcio.org)

**Mid-Hudson Teacher Center :**

**(845) 255-2885**

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

**Employee Assistance Program**

**1-800-962-7487**

**Visit us on the Web!**  
**[www.frontiernet.net/~vcta](http://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  
October 6, 2002.**

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

As a member of the Valley Central Teachers' Association

(VCTA- our local union) ,

you are also a member of New York State United Teachers

(NYSUT—your state teachers' union),

and the American Federation of Teachers

(AFT– your national teachers' union)

and the AFL-CIO

(your national labor association– we are Local 3076).

## The Greatest Generation



**T**here were still too many “back-to-school” ads in August that reminded us that September was just around the corner, but this September, there was something different. In between the ads for glue sticks and back packs, were the many reminders that America approaches a solemn anniversary—a year has passed since September 11, 2001. Many have said that fateful day was the start of the new century. Certainly, it has changed the lives of all Americans and will continue to impact us in the years to come.

The events of September 11th called each of us to examine our lives not only personally, but collectively as Americans.

The generation of Americans who lived to experience the attack of Pearl Harbor has been called the “greatest generation”. We stand at the threshold of the next great American generation. They sit in our classrooms and we are charged with their education—an education that must help them meet the challenges before them. It is a most awesome responsibility and begs to question—how do we do this?

The answer: as we have in the past - by keeping our children center in all the issues of education. The new school year commences and the debates will begin again with test scores examined and analyzed, while newspapers will try to establish themselves as educational authority, and we educators will be accused of working only part of a year for a full year's pay as put little old ladies out of their homes because we are being paid far more than what we are worth. At the same time we

will be asked to do more with less time, less money and often less support. Yet despite all this, we will stay focused on what is most important in education—the children. The children are the reason we became educators, they are the reason we stay educators. Children need to be the center of all educational legislation and decisions—the true center and not just positioned for political gain. As their teachers, it is our responsibility to keep them at the true center of educational issues. In our classrooms they need us to keep them centered so that they may grow in an educational environment which allows them to reach their highest potential and become our next greatest generation of Americans.

*~Patti Lunden,  
Editor*