

VC ECHOES

An AFTCA and New York Teacher Award Winning Publication

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APRIL 2005

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VCTA Officers Attend Historic NYSUT RA

On Wednesday, April 6th through Saturday, April 9th, VCTA Officers, President Tim Brown, VPs Jay Sussdorff and Rich Steger were delegated to an historic Representative Assembly. Patti Lunden, Editor, also attended. This was a historic RA because it was the celebration of the career of Thomas Y. Hobart, NYSUT president for 33 years. As Tom adjourned the RA on Saturday afternoon, he began his retirement, well earned and deserved. NYSUT's founding president was roasted, toasted and celebrated for his three decades of service to the union that he built. In tribute to him it was announced that the "house that Tom built"- NYSUT's headquarters in Latham would be renamed the Thomas Y. Hobart Building in his honor and in a resolution vote Tom Hobart is the first to be named President Emeritus.

The business of the RA is to review the reports by NYSUT officers on their respective responsibilities, to celebrate the membership with recognition of Teacher member of the Year, SRP of the Year, Healthcare Professional of the Year and Retiree member of the Year. The Al Shanker Award for lifetime



VCTA President Tim Brown, VP's Jay Sussdorff and Rich Steger await a General Session at the RA.

achievement was presented to former AFT President, Sandra Feldman. The delegation was addressed by Dennis Hughes, NYS AFL-CIO, Alan Hevesi, NYS Comptroller, US Sen. Chuck Schumer, Commissioner Dick Mills of SED, Sheldon Silver, NYS Assembly and US Sen. Hillary Clinton. A delegation of teachers establishing a teacher union in Mexico and the President of the South African Delegation of Teachers also addressed the delegates. We also elected our next president, Dick Ianuzzi, who had served NYSUT as 1st VP. A new 1st VP, Kathleen Donahue was elected as well.

There were many recognitions at the RA and the VCTA was recognized

specifically for our VOTE-Cope participation, and participation in the AFT Africa campaign. The VC Echoes was recognized for winning three journalism awards.

This body meets once a year to also consider resolutions that shape the legislative lobbying of NYSUT. Over 145 resolutions were discussed and decided upon.

~ Patti Lunden, Editor

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Our fundamental task as human beings is to seek out connections—to exercise our imaginations. It follows, then, that the basic task of education is the feeding of the imagination.

~Katherine Paterson

VCTA Blood Drive A Huge Success

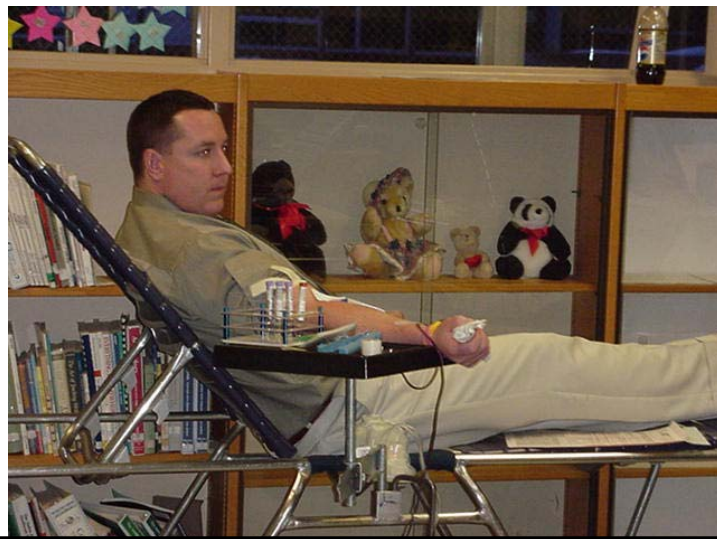
The sixth annual VCTA blood drive was another success this year. We had forty-seven participants even with the threat of a winter storm.

The snow waited until we were through and everyone made it home safely with our stomachs full of Lorna Doones. A great big “THANK YOU” goes to Donna Suydam who typed the flyer, Barbara Introcaso for the use of the Middle School Library, and to Mike Bartle and his evening staff for their hard work moving all the furniture for us.

We are already planning next year’s blood drive. I’ll see you there! *Kathy Manning, RN- MS*



Kathy Manning has organized all of the VCTA’s Blood Drives. We are grateful for her service to the community!



Read All About It!

The VC ECHOES won Three MORE Awards!

In the 2005 NYSUT Journalism Competition sponsored by the New York Teacher, the VC ECHOES was recognized as follows:

Award of Merit, Best Article on Health Issues

“Making Strides Against Breast Cancer:”

A Personal Reflection by Patti Lunden”; Oct. 2003

Honorable Mention, Best Feature Story

“Jim Lignori Will Continue His Quest,” by Eileen Purcell; Retiree 2004

Honorable Mention, Best Editorial or Column

“No Soldier Left Behind,” by Patti Lunden; April 2004



How Can I Be a Building Rep?

Each building is allowed a certain number of reps corresponding to the number of teachers in the building. (Teachers who teach in more than one building are counted in their "home" building). One Rep. is allowed for every 15 teachers, or fraction thereof (I.e.: $38 / 15 = 3$ reps (2 with 8 left-over because 8 is over half of 15). Every building is entitled to an alternate for each representative. Alternates are welcome to attend meetings but may only vote if they are filling in for a representative not in attendance.

What are My Responsibilities as a Building Rep?

Attend VCTA Executive Council meetings (every third Tuesday at 4:00 pm, Professional Library, HS). At these meetings, you will hear the issues before the membership and help to advise the officers as to how to handle the business of the VCTA. You are also to hold monthly building meetings to keep your building informed. You will be expected to serve on a VCTA committee. (Most committee service is easy to work into your schedule and is not burdensome). At the end of the year (June meeting) if you have been at 8 of the 10 VCTA meetings and met your committee responsibility, your local VCTA dues (\$100) is returned to you in gratitude for your service.

How Do I Run?

Inform the head building rep. In your building of your intention to run. If there are more people running than there are positions for reps, an election is held. The people who have the most votes fill the available spots and the other people are alternates. If you are unsure of the head building rep. of your building, or have any questions or concerns, contact the VCTA Office at 457-5899, or President Tim Brown at the HS.

Proposed VCTA Budget 2005-06

		% Dues	Unit #	Est. Dues	Total
Retirement	\$1000				
Membership	\$2000				
Audit	\$1000	Full	418	\$100	\$41,800
Delegates	\$3500	3/4	20	75	1,500
Admin.	\$5000	1/2	25	50	1,250
Assoc.	\$ 350	1/4	85	25	2,125
Pub. Rel.	\$ 500	1/8	45	12.50	563
Legal	\$ 300				
Misc.	\$2250				
Pres.	\$6000				
VP	\$3000				
VP	\$3000				
Sec.	\$3000				
Treas.	\$3000				
Editor	\$3000				
Print/Copy	\$ 800				
Sec. Rep.	\$ 550				
Para Rep.	\$ 750				
Social	\$1500				
Print. Rnt	\$5000				
Ins.	\$1000				
TOTAL:	\$47,500				
		Total Estimates	593		\$47,238

**Voting on the VCTA
Budget will take place for
Teacher Bargaining Unit
Members in each building on
May 17th.**

The Annual VOTE-COPE Drive will be held May 2nd through May 13th

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

Those who utilize payroll deduction

for VOTE-COPE have been contributing each paycheck.

*Payroll deduction forms will be available if you would like to arrange
to give your contribution by that method for the 2005-2006 school year.*

See your Building Representative to make a Contribution!

Why should you give to VOTE/Cope?

Your career is
affected by
politics at all
levels -
federal, state, and local.

Your PAC (Political Action Committee) is called Vote/Cope - the Voice Of Teachers in Education, the Committee On Political Education.

Your PAC helps influence the laws made in Washington, Albany, and in your own backyard.

In Washington, Vote/Cope helps prevent the passage of anti-public education measures like vouchers and tuition tax credits. Vote/Cope helps elect pro-union, pro-public

education Senators and members of Congress.

In Albany, Vote/Cope focuses lawmakers' attention on increased aid to public education, improved pensions, and the elimination of retirement tier inequities. It keeps legislation like the Triborough Amendment (*which continues the terms of expired contracts until successor agreements are negotiated*) and tenure laws intact.

And back home, Vote/Cope supplies the resources necessary to run campaigns for school budget initiatives and elections of pro-public education candidates for school board races. Yes, the single greatest category of Vote/Cope expenditures comes in the form of rebates to locals for these purposes.

When we speak with one voice, we

make a difference. Your PAC gives you the clout you need to strengthen the teaching profession. Smaller class sizes, greater investments in technology and in capital improvements, higher standards and the resources to achieve them are all a part of Vote/Cope. You should be a part of Vote/Cope too.

Contribute generously today.

*~Obtained from the Internet,
Courtesy of the Rochester Teachers
Association*

**VOTE/COPE Solicits and
Accepts Only Voluntary
Contributions.**

**CONTRIBUTIONS OR GIFTS
TO VOTE/COPE ARE NOT
TAX DEDUCTIBLE.**

Montgomery Elementary's Tsunami-Relief Fund Collection A Huge Success!

Thanks to the generosity of students and staff, Montgomery Elementary School has collected \$1,025.68 for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)!

Montgomery Elementary's Student Council and the Peer Mediation team coordinated the collection of money for the victims of the December 2004 tsunami. Each classroom had a container for the money, which was col-

lected weekly. The groups worked hard to get as much money as they could. The money will go to UNICEF, an organization that provides emergency assistance and funding for countries in crisis. Assistance includes health care and disease prevention as well as education.

A great big "thanks" to all who contributed to our efforts! Having recently completed Random Acts of Kindness Week, we are all so

proud of everyone's willingness to help other children in distant lands.

VCTA members Toni Sperry, Kathy Russo, Melissa Sulzbach, and Adrienne Hershfield, organized the children's efforts along with the assistance of the PTA.

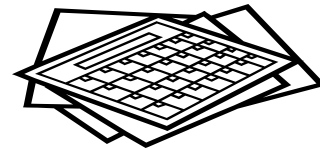
~ Adrienne Hershfield, Mont.

What a Difference a Day Makes!

There has been a great deal of discussion and some confusion regarding the 2005-2006 school year calendar originally adopted by the Valley Central Board of Education on January 10, 2005, specifically the date of Friday September 2. As the calendar was first presented it was somewhat unclear what that day would be. Thursday September 1st was a Superintendents conference day and the first day of school for students is Tuesday September 6, after the Labor Day weekend. September 2nd wasn't a conference day. It wasn't vacation day. Was it simply a continuation of the summer break, which had been interrupted by the September 1st Superintendents conference day? What was September 2nd going to be?

This question was brought up at the January 18th VCTA Executive

Council meeting and explored at length at the February 15th meeting. Some things were clear. Without counting September 2 as a school day or a conference day 187 days had been assigned. That is in adherence to our collective bargaining agreement. A four day weekend is more attractive than a 3 day weekend and this we assumed to be the reason for the Friday September 2 "Mystery Day". One more thing was clear. This arrangement was definitely not in adherence to our collective bargaining agreement. Page 8 Article XIV 'Work Year' section A. prohibits the work year of teachers from beginning earlier than one day prior to the first day that student attendance is required except in the case of new teachers attending orientation. The VCTA executive council decided



this needed to be pointed out to the School Board.

The final outcome of the calendar conundrum is that the Board readopted the 2005-2006 calendar on February 28, 2005 with the September Superintendent's Conference Day changed to September 2, 2005. Our labors will begin before Labor Day but not more than one day prior to the first day of student attendance and now we have the final, final 2005-2006 school year calendar.

~ Patty Joy, Walden



**In Africa, 12% of teachers are HIV Positive
25% of Male Teachers, aged 25-34 are HIV Positive
4,000 Teachers died in 2004 due to AIDS
1 Teacher dies every 2 hours from AIDS**

**You can help make a difference through the AFT Africa Aids Campaign
By contributing \$5 for a Red Bracelet or \$10 for a pin, you can help
Combat the spread of this deadly disease.**

Make a difference—Contribute today. Contact your building rep. / or Patti Lunden, x7664

From the Vice President

Does the Elementary School Lunch Menu Facilitate Learning?

Life is about choices, so it is understandable that we must allow our students choices in the cafeteria. As parents we try to encourage our children to be independent thinkers by offering choices. Since our children are young, we limit their choices so that their choices do no harm. Parents trust the well-being of their children will always be the focus of the decisions we make as educators. I have been privileged to have cafeteria duty many times during my 11 years of teaching. I need to let all our members know that what I have seen is not even close to being in the best interest of the children we serve.

Picture for a moment, a third grade boy sitting down with his lunch tray. His lunch consisted of Cocoa Pebbles, chocolate milk, an ice cream (called ChocoTaco), a can of Snapple, and a cup of canned pineapples. It doesn't take a Health teacher to see that this lunch is more than lacking in nutritional value. Imagine, this third grade boy trying to sit in class and concentrate 20 minutes later. This young man must have been bouncing off the walls. Fast forward 1 hour later as this young man comes crashing down off of that sugar high. If he is able to somehow stay awake, learning is not going to take place. Picture for a moment, the teacher trying to teach with not just 1 student in this situation, but maybe 5 or 6 or more. By the time this student's body was able to regulate his blood sugar levels, it is time to go home.

What will this student score on

the ELA? What could his score be if he has lunches consisting of well balanced nutritionally based meals?

We can no longer look the other way. Our children today are the first generation to have a lower life expectancy than the prior generation. 28% of school age children in New York are overweight. 20 years ago Type II Diabetes was almost never found in children, today doctors are seeing unprecedented growth. The U.S. Surgeon General has declared obesity in children and adolescents an epidemic. Lunch is the most consistent meal of the day for many of our students. It is **our** responsibility to see that they receive at least one balanced meal a day. The PTO has asked for changes to be made and the BLT has asked for changes to be made. **No changes have been made.** The food they consume is harming their health as well as their education. If we stand by and do nothing, **we** are harming their health and their education.

Visit the cafeteria and see what choices our students have. Please take notice and send me any suggestions.

The following are some of my suggestions:

- Corn is a vegetable, but it is also a starch. Very high in carbs and very low in nutritional value.
- If you offer cereal choices, why not eliminate the garbage (*cocoa pebbles, corn puffs, fruit loops, etc*)
- The teachers have the option of



choosing a salad for lunch, why not the elementary school children?

- Eliminate the fruit from a can—you know the kind saturated in sugar syrup.
- Most kids like fresh fruit.
- Most kids like raw vegetables.
- Snapple is not a healthy choice, too high in sugar.
- Eliminate Waffle bar, its just a “Make Your Own Sundae” without the ice cream.
- If you must sell ice cream everyday, limit the number to 1 per child – not 2 or more.
- Stop selling chips, ice cream, and Snapple. The children don't need those choices.

I'm sure this would create a profit loss, but what is really important?

~ Rich Steger, VP

Don't Believe the Spin

UNDER A PRIVATIZED SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM:

They say:

The program is voluntary. **THE FACT IS:** The program is NOT voluntary. Your retirement benefits are cut by at least 40%, even if you do not choose a private account.

They say:

You'll make more money with private investments. **THE FACT IS:** The government will take back 70 cents in your Social Security benefits for every dollar in your account when you retire—on top of the 40 percent cut in your guaranteed retirement benefits.

They say:

You'll personally direct your retirement investments. **THE FACT IS:** You don't control your money—politicians will pick Wall Street firms to control your investment accounts, a process corrupted by politics (think Enron!).

They say:

You'll be able to pass on your retirement benefits to your heirs. **THE FACT IS:** For most retirees, there will be little or nothing left to pass on because most Social Security investments cannot be passed on to heirs.

Public employees' pensions are under attack.

Governors and state legislatures are attacking public workers' pensions, making Social Security's guaranteed safety net all the more vital.

Social Security privatization would explode the US budget deficit.

Privatizing Social Security would saddle our children with \$4.9 trillion in debt in the first 20 years alone, mainly borrowed from foreign countries such as China and Japan.

We must strengthen Social Security, but we must take the time to get it right.

We can strengthen Social Security without slashing benefits. First, we must require Congress to pay back the money borrowed from the trust fund. We could end the "wealthy wage exemption" so CEO's pay the same Social Security taxes on their salaries as we pay on ours. We could repeal the Bush tax cuts for the top 1 percent of taxpayers. And we could help working families build private pensions and savings on top of Social Security.

Find out what you stand to lose: Use the Social Security Benefits Calculator to see how much you would lose—the younger you are, the more you will lose!

<http://democrats.senate.gov/ss/calc.html>

AFL-CIO [www.aflcio.org/social security](http://www.aflcio.org/social%20security)

Social Security-FIX IT. DON'T RISK IT.

NYSUT Has Its New President

Dick Ianuzzi was elected as NYSUT's new president to succeed Tom Hobart who retired at the close of the 2005 RA. Ianuzzi had been appointed as 1st VP of NYSUT 10 months prior. Ianuzzi is a 34 year classroom vet having taught 4th grade in Central Islip, NY. He was the president of the Central Islip Teachers Association for 32 years, and served in many positions in NYSUT. He looks forward to working together with all the members of NYSUT to build a common union awareness building community through promoting social justice to strengthen the solidarity of NYSUT members at the state and national levels. He looks forward to the path ahead of him and one of his first challenges will be to oversee the merger of NYSUT and the NEA-NY.

Kathleen Donahue, of Hilton Teachers Association was elected as the new NYSUT 2nd VP. She has taught 12 years at the elementary level in special education and 18 years at the secondary level in Social Studies and interdisciplinary English/Social Studies. She has been an adjunct at SUNY Brockport for 5 years. She launched a Democracy in Education program in Poland. She has been president of the Hilton TA for 24 years, Monroe County Fed. Of Teachers for 21 years, an at-large director for 6 years and also served on the NYSUT executive committee for 6 years.



NYSUT's New President Dick Ianuzzi



NYSUT's Officers: Ivan Tiger, Sec.-Treas.; Kathleen Donahue, 2nd VP; Dick Ianuzzi, Pres.; Maria Neira, 1st VP; Alan Lubin, Exec. VP.

LOAN FORGIVENESS AVAILABLE FOR TEACHERS

If you took out a Perkins or Stafford loan after Oct. 1, 1998 and there is no outstanding loan balance and you meet one of these qualifications— you may be eligible for loan forgiveness.

Perkins: One of three qualifications must be met: 1. Teach full time in an elementary or secondary school where more than 30% population receives free/reduced lunch, or receives family public assistance. 2. Teach in a shortage area: Math, Science, Foreign Language. 3. Teach special ed. Apply through the college or university that holds the loan.

Stafford: If you don't have an outstanding Fed. Family Education Loan or Direct Loan Balance as of 10/1998, you may have up to \$5000 of your Stafford loan canceled.

1. You must teach full-time for five consecutive years in an elementary or secondary school where more than 30% student population receives free/reduced lunch. At least one of these years must occur after 1997/98.
2. Loan must have been made before 5th year of qualifying teaching.
3. Cannot be in default.

Valley Central Teachers' Association

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

To be eligible you must:

- 1) Be either a VCHS graduating senior, or a graduating HS senior whose parent is a VCTA member
- 2) Have an average of 85% or better
- 3) Fill out the following form completely (*type or print*)
- 4) Submit a letter of recommendation from one of your high school teachers. Have it mailed directly to the c/o VCHS Guidance Office at the address above. Your teacher must sign the back of the envelope across the seal.
- 5) Attach a letter, approximately 500 words, in your own handwriting, in which you should indicate something about your hopes and ambitions in life. Also indicate any part-time or summer jobs, how much you saved last year, your plans for this summer and any other information you feel would be of interest to the scholarship committee. This letter is one of the more important parts of your application. *Don't put your name on letter.*

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

Date _____ Is your parent a VCTA member? _____

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

Age _____ College you plan to attend _____

Major Course of Study _____

Father's Occupation _____ Mother's Occupation _____

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

Comments: (*include unusual expenses, hardships*)

Honors and Awards—Academic:

Honors and Awards other than Academic:

School Activities:

Community Activities:

Mail application to the VCTA c/o VCHS Guidance Office, at the address above by May 25, 2005.

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





The VCTA Lunch Box Project

If you have 24 students in your class,
6 may be hungry this summer!
You've fed their minds, now help feed their tummies!

Pick up an extra lunch item anytime now through June
to help stock the Montgomery Food Pantry for the summer .

*Tuna Fish, Peanut Butter, Jelly, Condiments,
Spaghetti-o's, Soup,
Snack items, Cookies, Juice, Juice boxes,
Crackers, Mac-n-Cheese, etc.*

**Bring the item(s) to the VCTA Lunch Box located
in the Faculty Room in your school.**

If you prefer, a donation can be made to the food pantry.

***Make checks out to "Montgomery Food Pantry"
and give to your building representative.***

*If you would like to help to deliver food to the food pantry please contact your Building
Representative or the VCTA Office, 457-5899*



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

Highlights of the VCTA February Executive Council Meeting

Secretarial Unit Report

Lucy Fox reported that the contract was settled in mediation. It is a 4-year agreement with salary increases of 3% per year and an incremental insurance contribution that is 3-5% respectively.

Paraprofessional Report

Kathy Lennon reported that six paras are attending a SRP conference in Cooperstown in March.

BOE Report

John Bonagura reported that the Richard Aderson Award was given to a teacher of the Hearing Impaired from BOCES. The resignations of Jay Sussdorff and Bob Mooney (for retirement) were accepted.

Retirees

Kevin McFadden reported that two bills are before the State Senate regarding "Forgotten Mommies". He is urging members to contact legislators concerning the bills.

Patti Lunden reminded members to notify the District of an intention to retire by March 1 and to also apply for retirement with the NYSTRS.

Old Business

Patti Lunden spoke to the issue of pro-rationing for retiring during the year.

Patti Lunden asked that buildings start collecting food for the VCTA Lunchbox project in April.

John Bonagura indicated that many people are not having dues taken out of their pay. This is being remedied.

Standing Committees

John Bonagura indicated that the APPR committee would like end of year evaluations and observation reports to be combined. Tim Brown clarified that observations do not need to be announced.

New Business

Toni Sperry suggested that a letter regarding the constitutional convention be drafted so that it can be signed by the membership and mailed.

Kevin McFadden will draft a "Mommy Memo" which Chris Brand will post on the VCTA website.

Robin Sinclair-Scott inquired about pediatric dentists on behalf of members in her building. Orin Segall referred her to pages 13 and 14 in the D/O booklet.

Chris Brand reported that paras are uneasy about their positions due to the precarious budget situation. Jay Sussdorff indicated that at the first CABC meeting staffing was discussed and Dr. Hooley would like to do everything in his power not to cut staff. Paras do not have seniority rights with regard to excessing employees. Secretaries are civil servants and are last hired, first

fired.

President's Report

Copies of updated OC percentage increases were attached.

Copies of a NYSUT memo on Middle-level requirements was distributed and discussed. Patti Lunden pointed out that under these guidelines any changes must be made using a shared decision making process.

ERS retirement consultations can be arranged through the NYSUT Elmsford Office (914-592-4411).

Information on the NYSUT Social Services programs was distributed.

Information on Health Care and OUSDHP minutes.

Copies of legal guidelines for CSE meetings were distributed. Special Ed teachers are advised to take notes slowly for accuracy, but do not make more work for him/herself.

Motion to allow 05-06 to go without challenge failed. Motion to recommend that calendar is amended to be in line with language of contract carried.

~ Laurie Hey,
Secretary

Send the following in a letter to:
Lic. Juan Carlos Romero Hicks
Governor of the State of
Guanajuato
Mexico

Dear Governor:

I am a teacher in New York State and am concerned about the situation with the teachers of the SABES program in Guanajuato. Please act immediately to:

1. Reinstate the teachers of the SITESABES union who have been fired.
2. Set a date for a secret ballot election to be held to determine the union which will represent the teachers of SABES;
3. Ensure that the rights of the teachers of SABES guaranteed by Mexican law and international conventions are respected.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
(Your name, title, address)

Highlights of the VCTA March Executive Council Meeting

Secretarial Unit Report

Lucy Fox reported that the contract was signed and distributed. Some salary amounts were incorrect and had to be done again. Everyone has received retroactive pay.

Paraprofessional Report

Kathy Lennon reported that they are still working on a snow day issue.

BOE Report

John Bonagura and Kevin McFadden reported that the bond project was discussed. Auxiliary parking of Walden was also discussed. BOCES offered a presentation on distance learning and the BOCES Budget was read.

Dental/Optical Report

John Bonagura reported that the Trust will improve benefits as of July. Erin Davis requested forms be put on the VCTA website.

Retirees

Kevin McFadden read resolutions published in the NY Teacher re: retirees' health benefits and the resolution regarding the "Mommy Bill".

Old Business

Toni Sperry reported that the VCTA web page is okay.

John Bonagura requested that any NYSUT registration forms be returned to him.

Tim Brown urged all members to

check their paystubs.

Marc Sperry reported that the Defensive Driving course was held with about 25 people in attendance. Kevin McFadden thanked Marc for his help in making the course available.

New Business

Marc Sperry raised the issue of employees who make vacation plans during a recess and are subjected to changes made by the airline beyond the employee's control. Discussion followed. Tim Brown will pursue the issue with CO.

Lucy Fox asked anyone who would like to make a contribution on behalf of a para member whose spouse has been diagnosed with cancer to contact HS secretary, Pat Zillig.

Tammy Coleman questioned corrections regarding form letters on the VCTA website. She also reported that a teacher from the MS was overpaid. The mistake was brought to the attention of administration and Payroll

Gail Nozell reported that a new employee had encountered a problem with a paycheck but felt they were not having the problem solved at Payroll. Tim Brown asked for documentation concerning the matter so he could pursue it further.

President's Report

Tim Brown reviewed new calendar

for the 05-06 school year. The pay date issue is complex. Brown offered different scenarios for pay periods and discussion followed. Brown sought direction from the Executive Council on this matter.

Tim Brown reviewed the new VCSD application for teachers, particularly the section on background checks.

Council members were requested to read SED updates on 3-8 testing and OUSDHP minutes on their own.

Payments for credits were discussed. No dated have been decided and the VCTA has to consider a lump sum payment for a credit jump. Discussion ensued. This same method of payment would be pursued for coaches and extracurricular advisors.

Official retirements from the district buildings were noted.

Information re: the Empire Plan was distributed. Tony Sperry raised the issue of a pregnant teacher who was planning to give birth at one of the affected hospitals. It was suggested this member should contact Rich Steger to review her options.

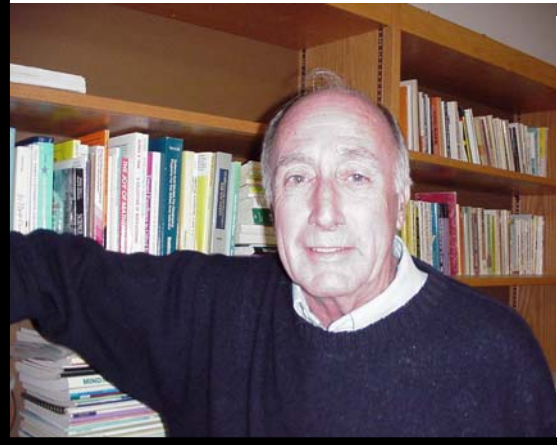
~ Diane Ruggles, HS Rep.

At it's April meeting, the VCTA unanimously endorsed the proposed VCSD school budget and bond proposal for the 2005-06 school year.

Please support the Budget and bond proposal. If you are a VCSD resident be sure to vote on 5/17/04! It Matters!

Also remember to vote in your own community if you don't live in the District!

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



*Even Retirees need a
Spring Break...*

Mac will be back in June!

Is your best friend retiring this year?

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

Hard Copies or Disks may be submitted. If submitting on disk, please use Microsoft Word (I have 2000)-Times New Roman 10 pt. If submitting digital pictures, please have them in JPEG format.

***The Retiree Edition of the VC ECHOES
will be published on May 27, 2005
Biographies are due by Wednesday, May 18.
Send them to Patti Lunden, HS.***

1. Who is this person? Where did they grow up, go to college? What brought them to Valley Central? What is his/her family status (Spouse, Significant other, children?)
2. When did they begin teaching at Valley Central? Where else have they taught? What have they taught while they have been here? Have they advised or coached any extracurricular activities? Have they been involved with any aspects of the school community? (PTA, Scholarship council) Have they been actively involved in the VCTA?
3. What is unique about this person? What are the contributions they have made in their classroom and outside their classroom?
4. How has this person made a difference to VC: colleagues and students. How will their presence be missed?
5. Where are they headed after they retire? What do they plan to do with their time in retirement? Do they have any hobbies or other careers they plan to pursue? What are they looking forward to most about retirement? What will his/her colleagues miss about them? What do his/her colleagues hope for the retiree?

PICTURES: I need at least one picture of the retiree. You may send pictures with the biography, which I will scan and return. (I can scan from old yearbooks, etc.) Artwork (caricatures) are also acceptable and can be scanned. It is great to have pictures from throughout a person's career. I will try to include as many as possible if they are sent. If no pictures are sent, I will contact the retiree to come take his/her picture.

Advertising Section

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



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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 June 3, 2005.

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

Transfers
Article VII, CBA

Voluntary: If a teacher requests a transfer to a vacant or new position, length of service will be the key consideration as long as school needs, experience and qualifications are substantially equal. If the request is denied, the applicant shall be granted a conference or written explanation.

Involuntary: Volunteers are considered first. The Superintendent decides who is to be transferred based on his opinion of school needs. If there are no volunteers, and experience and qualifications are substantially equal, the teacher with the least length of service will be transferred.

What would you stand up for?

At the NYSUT RA, a delegation of Mexican teachers/organizers of SITESABES, an independent, democratic teachers union addressed the delegates. They had lost their jobs because they were trying to start a union. In Mexico, the government controls the unions. SITESABES is fighting an uphill battle for recognition to represent and negotiate for teachers in the rural Mexican state of Guanajuato. The leader of the group told us of the conditions that they were hired under— a teacher receives \$800 a month with no health benefits or sick days. They are entrusted with the stewardship of educating the children with no school materials or even a school building. When hired a woman must sign an undated letter of resignation in case of pregnancy. So these young teachers with the help of the New York State Labor Religion

Coalition and NYSUT, have started on a long and arduous road to building a union from the ground up.

It is a story straight from our union's history. We enjoy the salaries we earn, the benefits we receive, the conditions in our contract because of the willingness of VCTA/NYSUT/AFT/AFL-CIO members who were willing to stand up for what they believed in. We can take pride in what this union has achieved but we must remember our contract, as Thomas Hobart has said "does not provide any more that we are entitled to for the service we render." As members of the VCTA we are charged with protecting our contract not only for ourselves, but for the rights of the members who will follow in our footsteps.

There has recently been a commercial on television that shows a series of images of folks helping one another while

a pleasant tune underscores the images with the message, "it's not a hand-out, it's a helping hand." Juxtaposed are images of working folks, hotel workers, mechanics, etc. The commercial is for a supplemental drug prescription program for folks either without health insurance or whose benefits are so basic they don't include health insurance. Hotel Workers and Mechanics are now the working poor whose benefit package (if they have one) doesn't include drug benefits. The thought that crossed my mind as I realized how unpleasant this commercial actually was... how much longer before that commercial runs with images of educators or nurses? Sooner rather than later unless we are willing to stand together as a union at all levels, locally, statewide, nationally and internationally.

~ Patti Lunden, Editor
See page 11 to help the members of SITESABES