

VC ECHOES

An AFTCA and New York Teacher Award Winning Publication

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 4

FEBRUARY 2005

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American Federation of Teachers' Executive Council Issues Statement on the Proposed Privatization of Social Security

Social Security has for nearly 70 years provided a predictable, guaranteed benefit to millions of older and disabled workers and their survivors. This benefit, funded exclusively by Social Security payroll taxes paid by workers and their employers, is one that can and should be safeguarded for generations to come.

The Bush administration claims that radical changes to Social Security, including privatization, are necessary to maintain the solvency of this program. Significant changes to a program of such consequence require and, indeed, demand informed discussion and should not be reduced to sound bites, platitudes or scare tactics.

In truth, Social Security is not headed for disaster, but many people agree that modest steps should be taken to maintain the integrity of this program upon which millions of current and future beneficiaries rely. However, the financial strain privatization would impose upon the Social Security program would pose serious and long-lasting perils to the stability of this tremendously successful program.

Privatizing Social Security would add \$2 trillion to the already runaway federal deficit. The Bush administration's proposed changes to Social Security will do nothing to enhance this program's solvency. In fact, in order to restore solvency to a privatized Social Security program, younger workers' benefits would have to be cut by 26-45 percent – a prospect that is totally unacceptable.

Analyses of privatization proposals show that younger workers will get hit twice: once with a reduction in Social Security benefits and again with the burden they will be forced to carry to pay off the grossly expanding federal debt.

Popular assumptions that Social Security will “run out” before younger workers can collect the benefits they have earned are not supported by reality. Social Security taxes to be collected and money owed to the Social Security system are adequate to allow full benefits to be paid until 2042. Additional modest adjustments would further stabilize this important program.

Privatizing Social Security and reducing benefits

would jeopardize not only younger workers' long-term retirement benefits, but also the disability and survivor benefits provided by this program. Thirteen million Americans currently rely upon such benefits, and it is safe to assume that few of them ever anticipated needing this life-saving benefit.

Privatizing Social Security will unnecessarily destabilize a program that has allowed hundreds of millions of Americans to live with dignity and security. The administration's current proposals would weaken the program and undermine its long-term financial stability. We will work with members of Congress, as well as with the labor movement and other allies, to strengthen Social Security to ensure that it will provide its promised benefits for generations to come. Workers have earned this benefit by paying into it over time and they should not be guinea pigs for a flawed social experiment.

~ AFT Press Release

What will make unions relevant in the future will center on understanding of how building alliances with groups that share our values and ambition can create a better world. At the heart of any lasting alliance is the demand for respect—being treated as human beings not just as human resources.

~ Peter Boespflug

FAQ'S On Child Care Leave

Q. Who can help me with my letter of notification?

A: The Association has a form letter that you can use to draft your letter to notify the District of your pregnancy and leave. Ask your Building Rep. for it. You must notify the District at least two months before the leave begins, although you can tell them earlier.

Q. How much of my accumulated sick time can I use to cover my absence due to pregnancy and delivery?

A: You can use your accumulated unused sick time for any time during your pregnancy that your doctor finds you unable to work. You can also use your sick time to cover the 6-8 weeks following delivery that you stay home to recover. (These weeks are counted by calendar date not by school days, days off and snow days do not count against your sick time). You do need to provide a note to Personnel for extended period of time (over 5 days). If your doctor wants you to leave work before delivery, you simply need a note from your doctor to cover the time up to delivery and then another following delivery. If you leave on your Estimated Date of Delivery but don't deliver until two weeks after, you can use your sick time to cover that time, since your doctor has provided a note. The 6-8 weeks follows the actual delivery date, not the estimated date of delivery. If there are complications and you have run out of sick time before the end of the 6-8 week period after delivery, you can utilize Article 22, C "Additional Compensation for Sickness" which states the following:

"Beginning with the **fourth year of service**, a teacher who shall have used his total accumulative sick leave **shall be paid the differ-**

ence between his salary and that of the substitute in cases of extended period of illness for a period not to exceed one year beyond the exhaustion of all accumulated sick time." p.13 Be sure to indicate estimated date of delivery in the letter used to invoke this clause.

Q. What is Child Care Leave and how is it different from sick time?

A: If you choose not to return to work following the 6-8 week period after the delivery of your child you can utilize child care leave. Child care leave is unpaid time. Your pay is prorated (See page 5 for an explanation of Pro-Rationing) which means you get paid for the amount of time you've actually worked and/or have sick time to cover. After that you use "leave" time— a position (not necessarily the same position) is held for you but you are not entitled to be paid, nor are you entitled to benefits after the FMLA time has elapsed. You may use up to two years of child care leave. The leave would begin following the last day of sick time coverage. If you had initially only taken a year and then wished to extend the leave for another year, you must make a written request at least two months before the initial leave ends. (i.e. if your leave is to end June 30th you would need to submit the request to the Superintendent by April 30th). Article 22, H, pg. 13.

Q. What is Family Medical Leave?

A: Family Medical Leave (FMLA) is the result of a federal act that provides for 12 calendar weeks of continuous medical coverage during a period of leave. The law allows for the FMLA to run concurrently with sick time. So when you start your sick time, your FMLA will start also. If you start your sick time with delivery and have 6 weeks of sick time after delivery,



you would still have six weeks of FMLA time at the beginning of your child care leave. If you were to go out earlier than your delivery date, the FMLA would begin at that time and run for twelve calendar weeks from that date. If the District provides the coverage for your family, then after the FMLA period you will need to pay for your insurance. You pay the full monthly cost for the plan you have elected, (OUSDHP, MVP, Empire, GHI). You will pay the District monthly until the end of your leave. Since your leave ends on June 30th, the District will pick up the insurance for July and August preceding the school year that you return. If you take the Buy-out, you receive a prorated portion of the Buy-out according to your FMLA coverage.

Q. If I am non-tenured, how will my leave affect my position?

A: You receive tenure based on three working years (30 months) rather than calendar years from your date of hire, so it will take longer for you to gain tenure by calendar. However, pregnancy and leave are not reasons for dismissal. If fact, were you to lose your job based on those grounds, you would be advised to file a lawsuit for discrimination.

If you have any further questions, please contact Laurie Hey at the MS or at 457-5899.

Valley Central Teachers Association
SIXTH ANNUAL



BLOOD DRIVE

WHEN: February 24, 2004
WHERE: VCMS Library
TIME: 1:30 to 7:00 p.m.



For appointment call or see
Kathy Manning, RN. 457-2400 ext. 6017

Blood collected and snacks provided by
THE HUDSON VALLEY BLOOD BANK

Give the Gift of Life!!



From the Dental/Optical Trust:



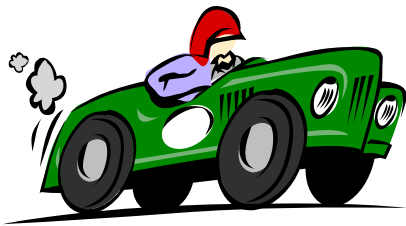
Make sure that your information is up to date—
if your marital status has changed
or you've had children.

Inform Sandy Strauss (MS) so that changes can be made.

Be sure to Mail in your Claims to SIDS.

Do not send your Claim Forms to Sandy Strauss.

A Regional Forum on Grade 3-8 Testing Program and the ELA/Math Curricula Grade by Grade will be held March 16th at Ulster BOCES in New Paltz Contact Jane Bullowa at 255-1402 x 1278 for more info.



**Do you need to
reduce points on your
drivers' license?
*How about dropping the cost of
your car insurance
by ten percent?!***

Defensive Driving Course for VCTA members and their family members.

March 7th and 8th

4:00 pm– 7:00 pm

Middle School Cafeteria

The cost is \$30 for the six hour course .

Light refreshments will be served each evening.

Course registration is limited.

To make a reservation, send this form to: **Marc Sperry, Middle School**
Bring a \$30 (per participant) check to the course made out to DMDI.

Name _____

Building _____, VM _____

Family Members Attending: _____

Pro-Ration: Pro-What?

Salary is pro-rated whenever an employee is not working for the entire year that a salary covers. Such would be the case for retirement during the school year, being hired when the school year is already begun, or taking leave without pay for part of the school year. The chart below seeks to explain Pro-ration through a salary example. If you have any questions regarding Pro-ration contact a VCTA Officer through your Building Representative.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Schedule Step	Salary	Unit Work Days	Daily Wage	# Days Worked	Entitlement	# Pays	Period Pay
MA 1	42402	187	226.75	187	42402.00	21	2019.14
MA 1	42402	187	226.75	187	42402.00	25	1696.08
MA 1	42402	187	226.75	95	21541.12	11	1958.28

Example 1: Pro-ration for 187 contractual workdays. Full time was worked, therefore, the entitlement reflects full amount.

Example 2: Same as previous but figured on 25 pays.

Example 3: Pro-ration for 95 days worked and 11 pays to the end of time worked (in this case-end of January)

If the employee is out on leave from the end of January through the end of the school year the entitlement for the year is \$21,541.12. If the employee takes some leave time without pay and then returns to work April 1, the pro-ration is computed again using the number of days worked from April 1 through the end of the school year. See example below.

Schedule Step	Salary	Unit Work Days	Daily Wage	# Days Worked	Entitlement	# Pays	Period Pay
MA 1	42402	187	226.749	57	12924.67	6	2154.11

If you add the days worked in column E in examples 3 & 4 and then add the number of days of unpaid leave the total is 187.

When you return to work it is possible that your period pay will be less or more than you previously received because the entitlement is divided over the number of remaining pays in each instance, but the entitlement(s) will show the full amount for the days worked. This is the only formula used for pro-ration.

High School Tsunami Relief Effort Helps to Bring Relief

VCTA members Gail Blaine, Rachael Garland and Alicia Voss who advise the HS Teen /Volunteer Club and Student Government Association respectively, organized a Tsunami Relief Effort at the High School from January 18-21. Over 300 medical and baby items were donated by staff and students. \$1000 was collected over the four day effort through drop jars on the cafeteria lines, collecting at the Dance Show, through a faculty dress down day, and from donations by other high school clubs. The \$1000 was donated to UNICEF.

NYSUT Still Collecting for Tsunami Relief Effort

Tom Hobart recently returned from the Tsunami area where he delivered donations collected from NYSUT locals.

NYSUT is still collecting to help with the Relief Effort. Checks from local unions, individuals or school groups should be made out to NYSUT with "Tsunami Relief" written in the memo section and mailed c/o the President's Office, NYSUT, 800 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, N.Y. 12110-2455.

All contributions collected by NYSUT are going directly to those in need.

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

VCTA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

To be eligible you must:

- 1) Be either a VCHS graduating senior, or a graduating HS senior whose parent is a VCTA member
- 2) Have an average of 85% or better
- 3) Fill out the following form completely (*type or print*)
- 4) Submit a letter of recommendation from one of your high school teachers. Have it mailed directly to the VCHS c/o 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.

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 VCHS c/o Guidance Office, at the address above by May 27, 2005.

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



The VCTA Lunch Box Project

As we get ready for Spring to return, we need to help our kids get ready for summer.

Please collect lunch and snack items for the Montgomery Food Pantry to help feed our children lunch this summer.

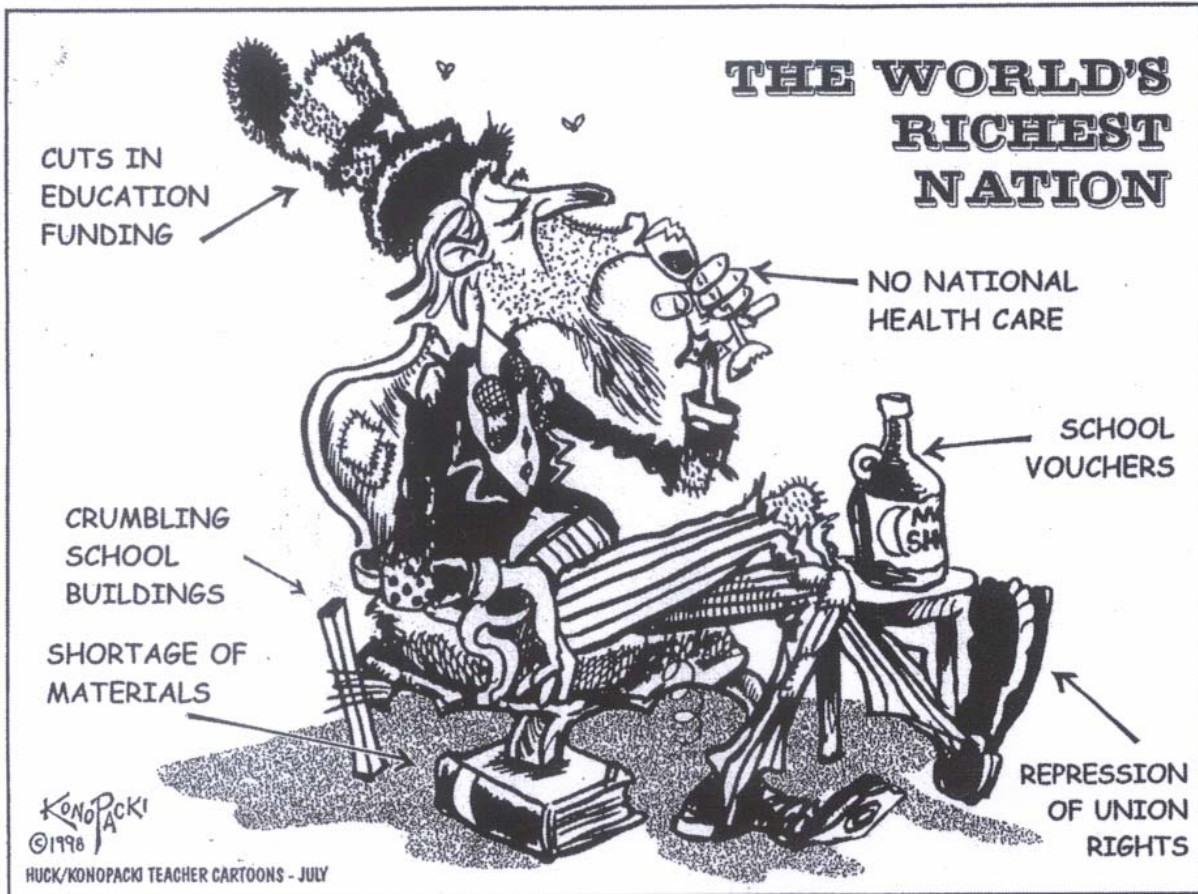


Just pick up an extra lunch-type non-perishable item when you do your weekly shopping from Spring through the end of the school year.

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

Bring the items to the VCTA Lunch Box located in the Faculty Room in your school.

The food will be delivered to the Montgomery Food Pantry which serves the entire Valley Central Community.



Highlights of the December VCTA Executive Council Meeting

Secretarial Report

Arline Friedman reported, on behalf of Lucy Fox, that the secretaries are awaiting arbitration. She distributed a note from Lucy stating that they hope to meet with the mediator at the beginning of the new year. Debbie Bennie is now working in the high school guidance office, filling Marie Conley's position. Marie went to CO to fill Teresa Lennon's position.

Board of Education Report

High school and middle school strategic improvement plans have been completed.

Editor's Report

Patti Lunden reported that Echoes will be distributed this week.

Standing Committees

Rich Steger reported that there are positions available on the PDT for representatives from Berea, Montgomery, the High School, and Maybrook. Please submit names to Rich if anyone is interested.

New Business

Rich Steger requested that members let him know if their doctors have dropped OU/Indecs. Forms were sent out to members- please return them to Rich.

Rich Steger indicated that, in regard to the National Do Not Call list, telemarketers can call your cell phone as of January 1.

Donna Lloyd asked if in-service was available for committee work. Members of long-standing district committees receive in-service credit. Tammy Coleman advised members to make sure that they sign in at each meeting and keep track of the dates and times of your attendance at these committee meet-

ings.

President's Report

New 2005-6 School Calendar- Copies were distributed. Discussion followed. No decision has been made regarding 9/2 (Friday). Reps should ask building members for input.

Tutoring Agreement- Copies were distributed. 3:1 ratio is a change in terms and conditions. This was agreed to and is not to be exceeded except in extenuating circumstances. Tutoring is differentiated- there involves no evaluation of students or submission of lesson plans.

VCTA Blood Drive- The Blood Drive will be held on February 24, 2005 from 1:30 to 7:00 p.m. in the Middle School **library**, not the back gym.

OUSDHP Minutes from October 19, 2004- Copies were distributed.

NYSTOTY- Applications were discussed.

Health Selection Cutoff Date- The District has worked with Indecs on behalf of members who have extenuating circumstances.

Local 1141 Request- NYSUT Support Staff- Tim Brown stated that he will write a letter in support of these union workers.

NYS AFL-CIO 2005 Scholarship Application- Copies were distributed. Please share them with building members.

Computer Purchase Invoice- A copy of the invoice was distributed.

NYSTRS report- Patty Joy and Patti Lunden prepared a report on the TRS annual meeting. Copies



were distributed and will appear in Echoes.

NYSUT-Staples Partnership Grants- Copies were distributed. Deadline is January 5, 2005.

Workers rights Law Center- Information was distributed. **Motion to send a donation of \$100: Toni Sperry. Second: Chris Brand.** Motion carried.

Dismissal of Staff- A teacher was convicted of a felony charge for actions outside of the district. The charge did not involve children. The teacher's certification was revoked. The district has the right to look at the behavior of teachers outside of school (i.e.: conduct unbecoming a teacher). Things outside of school can have an impact on tenure and as a non-tenured teacher, the VCTA can offer no protection. Any felony charge must be reported to the district.

VCTA member vs. leave replacement- Tim Brown indicated that it is understood that leave replacements are not members of the VCTA until the member's health benefits run out. A leave replacement is not a member of the bargaining unit and is not entitled to benefits until after the 12 weeks of FMLA runs out. They will not be probationary while they are a leave replacement. The district can give whatever benefits they want, but once the individual becomes a member of the VCTA, they get all benefits.

Laurie Hey, Secretary

Highlights of the January VCTA Executive Council Meeting

Secretarial Report:

The Secretaries are currently in mediation.

Board of Education Report:

There were two presentations: Wellness and Technology. There was talk of redistricting but the Superintendent is not rushing into it. Possibilities involved making a K-2 building, etc.

Editor's Report:

Patti Lunden reminded members of committee assignments to provide two articles for the Echoes since we are approaching the mid-point of the year. Articles should be focused on members not students.

Dental Optical

Sandy Strauss reported that D/O is holding the second meeting of the year. Improvements in the Plan are being considered.

Sandy reminded members that they should mail their claims-not send them to him.

Retirees

Arline Friedman reported that she had attended an ED 14 meeting at which privatization of Social Security was discussed. She had a letter to upload to the website. Discussion ensued. Tim Brown reminded younger members that privatization is not the answer.

Kevin McFadden reported on efforts for Tier I Reinstatement for those who retired prior to the Legislature's "Mama bill". Women who left teaching, were placed in Tier 3 or 4 upon return. Already retired women were not able to reinstate to Tier I as active women were when this bill passed. He requested that members contact their legislators and ask them to support this bill.

Old Business

Marc Sperry reported that the defensive driving course will take place on March 7 and 8 from 4-7pm in the Middle School. The cost is \$30. Application is in (this) ECHOES.

Toni Sperry had a question regarding the calendar for 2005-06 referring to Article 14 section A of the CBA. Discussion followed. This will be addressed at the next Cabinet meeting at CO.

Erin Davis asked a question regarding VCTA scholarships. Tim Brown provided clarification. Any child in the District can apply for the scholarship. If a VCTA member has children who reside outside of the district, those children may also apply for the scholarship.

Patti Lunden indicated that she has pins available at \$10 each to support the AFT in Africa effort which supports South African teachers, 30% of whom are infected with HIV/AIDS. Contact Patti to purchase a pin.

Rich Steger indicated that he is still looking for members to serve on the PDT. Let Rich know if you are interested, meetings are the third Thursday each month.

Kevin McFadden indicated that the Budget Advisory Committee is looking for members. Jay Sussdorff will represent the VCTA. Patti Lunden will also be there.

New Business

Problems with the sub calling system were discussed. There are many issues.

Carol DeMicco raised the question of having a sick bank. Tim Brown reported that this was a topic of discussion during negotiations. We currently have a version of a sick bank, in which you are paid the difference between your pay and the sub's pay after your 4th year of employment.

President's Report

New mileage rate are now in effect—40.5 cents per mile.

All Night Grad Party sponsorship was discussed. It was decided to stick with the \$150 donation.

OUSDHP Health Beat was attached. Encourage members to inform Rich Steger if doctors are no longer partici-



pating in the Plan.

Planning Periods and School delays. In the case of a 2-hour delay, some buildings have an abbreviated schedule that allows for all teachers to receive a planning period. In other buildings, this is not handled in the same way, the two hour delay is considered planning time. Tim Brown has spoken to LRS Steve Berman who advises this is not a grievable issue.

OUSDHP minutes were distributed.

Patti Lunden and Rich Steger were congratulated for being quoted in a national newsletter the AFTCA Catalyst.

A thank you was received for the \$100 donation to the Workers' Rights Law Center of NY.

A Regional Forum on Grade 3-8 Testing Program and the ELA/Math Curricula Grade by Grade will be held March 16th at Ulster BOCES in New Paltz. Contact Jane Bullowa at 255-1402 x 1278 for more info.

A letter sent to Tom Hobart and Marianne Perry regarding negotiations of NYSUT workers was distributed.

Tim Brown pointed out the waste of money by AFT mailing out a letter re: Tsunami Relief in a 60 cent envelope. The letter could have been sent in bulk with the savings being donated to the relief effort.

Patty Joy asked if the 05-06 calendar was a reflection of opening day behavior. She was told it was not, it is the calendar adopted by the County.

~ Laurie Hey, Secretary

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



best wishes). Mr. Keefe, a retiree from Hempstead Public Schools (37 years) served that district as Retirement System delegate for 25 years—longer than my 20 year tenure!

Life After VC

Jim Becker, former Walden Elementary teacher and now retired

Greetings to all: Snowbirds, Sun-seekers, Senior Shovelers of Snow, Happy Winter Lovers and all other categories of retirees—and to our active brothers and sisters glued to the radio seeking information on snow conditions and the relative health of very chilly school bus engines. Winter is truly with us. I was not the only creature moaning last week (January 24th to 31st); even my trusty back door thermometer groaned at 10 to 1 degrees below zero. Far be it from me to remind you that spring is on the way (although I do use such cliches!)

Two reminders—Interested in subbing? Call CO at 457-2400 x. 8119. Interested in Adopt-A-Match program of Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Orange County? Give me a call at 778-7236 or email us at GKMCFA@aol.com. I have info that I'll then send to you. Or you may contact Dr. Mary Ann Wilson directly re: this program at OC BO-CES.

Questions? Retirees may and should contact David Keefe with any questions they may have for the board of the NY State Teachers' Retirement System. He now represents retirees on said board. He replaces Josephine Davenport who represented us for eight years. (Ms. Davenport has our gratitude and

former school business administrator at Garrison and Greenwood Lake, has opened Cohen's Old World Bakery in Walden. The original Cohen's Bakery is in Ellenville. Their baked goods are outstanding. Drop in to see Jim and enjoy some delectable goodies. If you are having a breakfast for a group or cakes for parties, Jim can take care of that for you.

Gene Martin, retired Phys. Ed. Teacher at Walden and track coach at VCHS, will be inducted into the Rockland County Track and Field Hall of Fame on Saturday, May 7, 2005. Gene, a Tappan Zee HS graduate (1955) was a star member of the TZ track squad which won county, sectional and state titles in '54-'55. Congratulations, Gene. (The "retiree reprobrates" from Tables 5, 8, 13,12 also send their congratulations).

Tom Knieser, retired VCHS math king, will be exhibiting his beautiful photographic works at the Josephine Louise Library in Walden during April. Mark your calendars to see this fine work in a beautiful space.

Sam Tucker, retired HS guidance counselor, has been very busy with 82nd Airborne alumni and with veterans' affairs in general. He

recently was invited to a change-in-command ceremony for Col. Bob Kuhlow, USMC (VC '69), one of VC's finest young men (and one whale of a football player on VC's undefeated football team in 1968).

My compatriot, Orin Segall, retired HS Business teacher and wife, Nancy, retired Walden 2nd grade teacher, are still digging out of the snows surrounding their Cape Cod mansion. It has to be the first time Orin and Nancy missed the Credit Union dinner.

~ **Condolences** to Jan Legere and family on the passing of Joe, former head custodian in our elementary schools. Jan is a retired elementary paraprofessional.

~Nobody asked me, but...

Thanks to the tireless staff (and director Stan Davie) for all the work that goes into the Credit Union dinner—and for the work they do for the VC family.

I can never figure out the state aide bureaucratic mumbo jumbo which cuts money from more needy school districts and enriches wealthier districts. Am I the only one with this problem?

I'm saving some State Ed. Zingers for next time.

Amen!

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

~ Kevin MacFadden

Retiree Representative

Considering Retirement?

Have you contacted the NYSTRS yet?

In-Person Consultations: Face to face meetings with a System representative allows you discuss your unique situation and leave with a printed estimate of your retirement benefit.

2005 Dates/Local Places : *(Call number at site to make an appointment)*

Albany (800) 348-7298 Appointments are scheduled year round, M-F during business hours

Kingston (845) 943-3056 : March 10, April 13, 28, May 5

Liberty (845) 292-5400 x 2005: March 22, April 7, May 3, 18

Video consultations: Is identical to an in-person consultation using a computer to computer connection. Call (800) 348-7298 x 6100 to schedule an appointment.

Local Sites: Central Valley Elementary School, Elmsford– Southern Westchester BOCES, Lagrangeville– Arlington High School

Did you know you can (and should) contact NYSTRS as far as ten years in advance of your Retirement?

Pre-Retirement Seminars: Are day-long meetings conducted throughout the state. They are designed to assist active members (and spouses/companions) age 45 or older. Topics covered include: STRS and SS benefits, financial planning, legal issues, taxes and retiring with a state or local incentive. The emotional and social aspects of adjusting to retirement are also discussed. Call (800) 356-3128 x 6180 to register for seminar.

Local Sites: Fishkill, May 12; Albany, May 10

If I Want to Retire Now, Who Do I tell?

The District: Notify the district in writing of your intention to retire by March 1st to be eligible for the additional step increment. If this is the first year of eligibility, you will be entitled to the district retirement incentive if you notify by March 1st. The VCTA has provided building reps with a form letter to assist members in composing their notification to the district. The letter is also on the VCTA website.

NYSTRS: *Informing the District is not enough. You must apply for retirement benefits with the NYSTRS. If you plan to retire as on June 30, 2005, you may file no sooner than 90 days prior. Plan on filing by April 1st. Contact the NYSTRS for forms. *The VCTA urges all members to contact the NYSTRS for guidance with this process.**

You prepared to teach...Prepare to retire.

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.



The Retiree Edition of the VC ECHOES will be published on May 26, 2005. Biographies are due by, May 11th. Send them to Patti Lunden, HS.

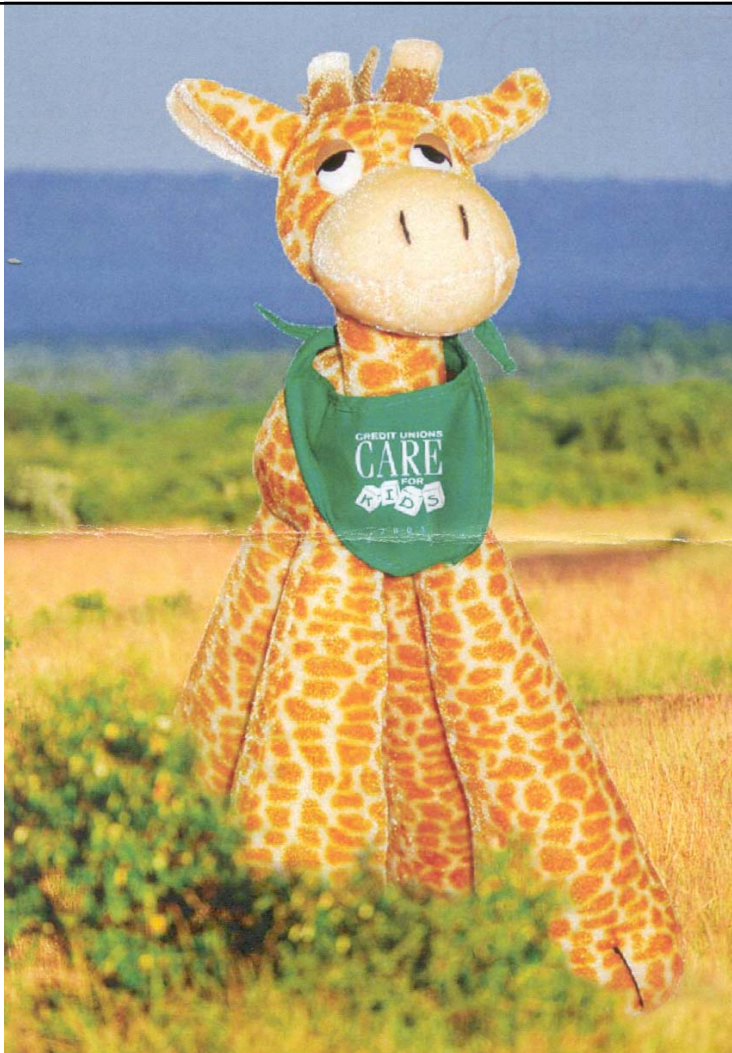
Hard Copies or Disks may be submitted. If submitting on disk, please use Microsoft Word (2000)-Times New Roman 10pt. If submitting digital pictures, please have them in JPEG format.

If you're having trouble writing, the following format is usually helpful. Each person is given a maximum of two pages (*about 1500 words total*), (*unless there are extenuating circumstances.*) Please try to bear this in mind when writing and sending pictures. If more than one person is writing for a retiree, please try to coordinate your articles, (*i.e. one author writes on one aspect of the person, another takes a different topic or view*)

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 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 take his/her picture.

**For more information, contact Editor, Patti Lunden, HS.
Union Phone/Fax: 457-5899 VOICE MAIL x7664**



"Care for Kids Campaign"

Lose your heart to "Jesse" the giraffe for a good cause.

This cuddly giraffe can be purchased for \$5 with all proceeds of each purchase donated to Cancer Research for Children, a Westchester based organization. *If you do not wish to purchase a giraffe, a \$1 donation can be made and your contribution card will be posted on the credit union's "Wall of Honor".*

Purchases can be made at the Credit Union or through Diane Ruggles, HS (ext. 7686)

AFT-Africa AIDS Campaign Receives New Grant

The U.S. government will provide an additional \$3.8 million for teacher union sponsored AIDS prevention, care and advocacy programs developed by African teacher unions in collaboration with the AFT-Africa AIDS Campaign, the AFT's multi-country, multiyear program to assist African teachers dealing with the AIDS crisis. AFT members have raised more than \$160,000 in contributions for the programs, and more than 20 AFT locals have provided more than \$1 per member for the African efforts. Now, those fundraising efforts have been leveraged to produce millions in federal assistance, which will enable teacher unions in South Africa, Kenya and Swaziland to expand their programs.

The AFT-AFRICA AIDS Campaign pin is a powerful symbol of our efforts to assist the teachers of Africa in their ongoing efforts to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Your contribution to the campaign will go directly for union initiatives to provide resources for HIV/AIDS education, teaching materials and supplies. The AFT, U.S. government agencies and private foundations are providing funding for other program expenses.

Make your tax-deductible contributions to the AFT Educational Foundation, or AFTEF.

Checks should be sent to Patti Lunden, HS.

Suggested Minimum Contribution
\$10.00



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 March 23, 2005.

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

What is the Retirement Incentive Offered by the District:

CBA, Article XXV, Sections G/H

An employee who informs the Superintendent by March 1 in the year of retirement shall receive an additional increment, an amount which will be equal to the increment of the step on the salary schedule at which s/ he retires.

Any teacher with 10 years service to the District and who has at least ten years' credited service in the NYSTRS and who retires on or before June 30, 2005 in their first year of eligibility, in accordance with the rules and regulations of the NYSTRS without incurring a penalty shall be paid Sixteen Thousand Five Hundred (\$16,500) dollars.

Note: This amount decreases by June 30, 2006.

Privatization

According to the "Privatizing highways part of Pataki's plans", (TH-Record, January 21,) Gov. Pataki is considering selling parts of the State highway system, bridges and tunnels to private industries. These private industries would care for the roads and charge tolls for motorists to use them. The State would be paid part of the toll and would be relieved of caring for the roads. So if Pepsico owns part of the NYS Thruway- will I be fined at the tollbooth if I am drinking a Diet Coke?

The concept of the privatization of Social Security is being currently debated in Washington. I wonder when anyone will question if the name of the system will change under privatization—shouldn't it be called My Own Security, or The-Heck-with-You-I'm-Just-Worried-About-Me-Security. I have 25 years to go before I can collect any kind of Security, yet the idea of private accounts seems to fly in the face of the intent of Social Security. I never saw my money as being put into a little account just for me. Wasn't the intent that

our money is a promise—Our money is used to support those in the System now, and when we are old enough to enter the System, it will be there for us. I know the current fears-too many baby boomers in the system for younger workers to support- but how does taking money out of the system to give to folks to fiddle away in the Stock Market guarantee the future of this country any better? What about the folks in the System right now- there will be less money in the system and yet their benefit won't change-if you believe that then Gov. Pataki has a bridge to sell you, real cheap.

I think what bothers me the most about the privatization of roads, bridges and Social Security is the statement it makes about our society at this present moment in our country's history. Where has the concept of neighbor helping neighbor gone? Of pooling part of our money for the greater good? No one likes



to pay taxes, but those taxes are used to pay for many things together that we could not afford as one. As we have all escaped to the backyard decks of our home we've lost touch with our front yard neighbors and with the concept that not only do I have a responsibility to help that neighbor as a decent human being- but I have a responsibility to help my future neighbors, the children in our classrooms who will have to clean up the mess we may create with privatization.

~ Patti Lunden,
Editor