

VC ECHOES



Valley Central Teachers' Association

Volume 9, Issue 2

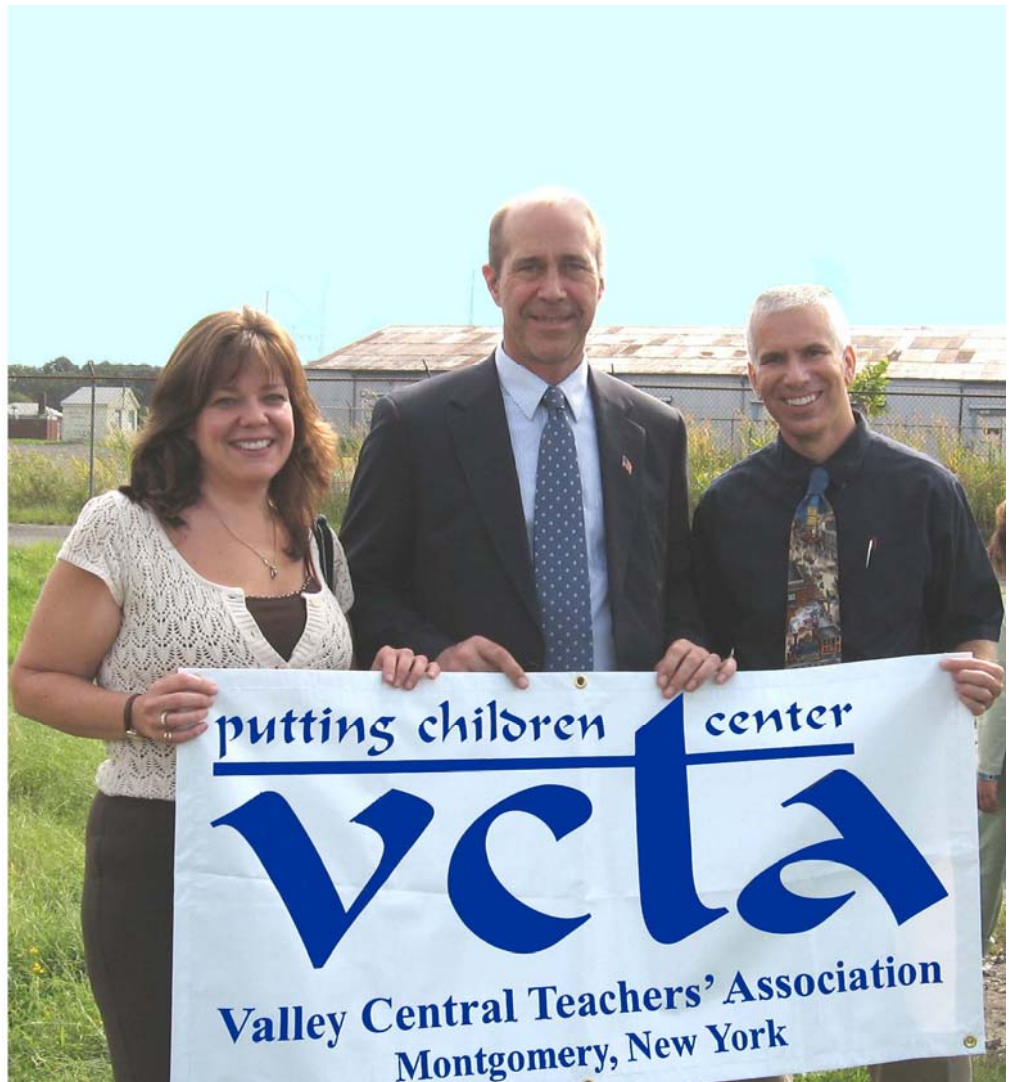
October, 2006

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US Congress Candidate John Hall Puts Children Center



VCTA Vice President Patti Lunden, Congressional hopeful John Hall, and VCTA President Tim Brown display the VCTA banner after Hall's Press Conference

See related story on page 2

Primary Winner John Hall Puts Children Center

John Hall, a former county legislator and school board president is a 35-year member of Local 802 AFM and AFTRA. As a member of Congress, he “will be a strong and powerful voice for workers’ rights, economic justice in the workplace, fair trade policies, health care and education for all and corporate accountability.” John Hall received an unprecedented early endorsement from NYSUT for US Congress in District 19. Hall’s decisive win in the September 12, 2006 primary pits him against incumbent Sue Kelly. Sue Kelly has a dismal voting record for education, labor and health issues. The AFL-CIO congressional voting record archives indicate that Kelly voted against AFL-CIO positions 12 out of 15 times in 2005, giving her a mere 20% approval rating by these standards. Her lifetime voting record on issues related to education, labor and health is a disconcerting 28% (www.aflcio.org). AFT archives indicate that Kelly’s record is even worse. Of the ten major issues highlighted on the AFT’s website for 2005, Sue Kelly voted against AFT positions 9 out of 10 times, giving her a horrendous 10% voting record on matters of importance to children and education (www.aft.org).

At a September 6th NYSUT sponsored press conference US Congressional Candidate John Hall, NYSUT President Dick Ianuzzi, Newburgh Teacher Peter Gonzalez and former NFA Student Laura Garcia addressed an audience outside of NFA at Stewart regarding NCLB and property taxes. NYSUT President Dick Ianuzzi compared President Bush’s tactics to a bully on the playground who picks on the most vulnerable child. The vulnerable child being picked on at this playground is the English Language Learner who is now required to take the same tests as other children as soon as s/he arrives at the schoolhouse door. Ianuzzi referred to these newly arrived students along with our special education population as the easiest targets for NCLB, ultimately setting these children and their schools up for failure.

As reported in the Times Herald Record on September 13, 2006, “only one of [Valley Cen-

tral’s] subgroups failed to make adequately yearly progress—students with disabilities.” Most rational people would assume that there is something inherently wrong or unfair about NCLB if the same subgroup(s) are not measuring up to this arbitrary standard. “It only takes one subgroup to have the whole school labeled,” said John Hunter, VC’s Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. “It’s a small segment of our total population...about 6 or 7 percent.” More importantly—what essential educational services are these children being denied due to our efforts to adhere to this politically motivated national policy?

Former NFA student Laura Garcia and her teacher Peter Gonzalez also voiced their concerns regarding the negative impact of NCLB. Laura, a NFA graduate and current OCCC student came to Newburgh at the age of nine speaking only Spanish. Laura was provided with three years of ELL classes before entering regular education classes. Laura said that if she had to face what today’s ELL students must face she would have failed and been embarrassed for her family.

John Hall was very clear when he told the crowd that he would stand up for public education. Hall is the son of two teachers and the father of a teacher, giving him insight into both the politics surrounding contemporary education as well the practical needs inherent in our current system—a system that is constantly being held hostage to these politically motivated changes and mandates. Hall describes public education as the great equalizer, leveling the platform for all students. He believes that NCLB as presently implemented sets students and schools up for failure with no true recourse for reforming education. He also recognizes the need for property tax reform for schools in New York to succeed and the need for the federal government to support the American Education system financially, rather than simply providing lip service and unfunded mandates.

(cont’d on page3)

Primary Winner John Hall Puts Children Center (cont'd from page 2)

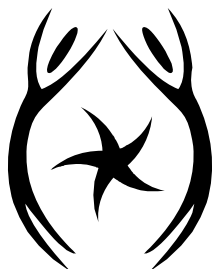
How you vote is certainly a personal decision. The VCTA and NYSUT have carefully researched the candidates' records and believe John Hall is the best choice for children, education and working families.

In the words of Alan Lubin, NYSUT Executive Vice President, "Our members work and vote for candidates who support the issues they care about: quality public schools, colleges and hospitals, as well as access to affordable health care for all New Yorkers. John Hall supports our issues, so NYSUT is supporting John Hall. To learn more about John Hall check out the following Internet sources:

- <http://www.thejournalnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060914/NEWS10/609140326>, Hall Wins Every County In Race To Take On U.S. Rep. Sue Kelly, The Journal News, 9/14/2006.
 - <http://www.nynews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060915/NEWS02/609150347/1018/NEWS02>, Hall Backed By 5 Rivals From Primary, The Journal News, 9/15/2006.
- <http://www.johnhallforcongress.com/>, John Hall For Congress Home Page.

For more information about the endorsement process and a full list of NYSUT endorsements visit www.vcta.net and select the VOTE-COPE page.

—Tim Brown
President, VCTA



Have You Got SOUL: Sweatfree, Old Glory (American), Union, Local?

Why does our website contain so much repetitive rhetoric regarding where to shop? Why do your union officers at the local, state, and national level continue to promote American-Made Sweatfree Union products? And why do VCTA officers promote the concept of buying from local vendors over large retail stores when possible? Answering the second and third questions should adequately explain the rationale for the first.

Why do your union officers at the local, state, and national level continue to promote American-Made Sweatfree Union products?

- The term union is synonymous with unity. As union members promoting unity, we should want other groups of people to enjoy the same benefits that we fight so hard to gain and retain for ourselves. These benefits are unlikely to be realized outside of a union setting with collectively bargained benefits and working conditions. We are not the only laborers who desire adequate health benefits for our spouses and children. We are not the only laborers who wish an adequate retirement package that will enable us to enjoy our final years of life as a reward for working thirty plus years on "Maggie's Farm." For those of you without gray hair, Maggie's Farm is a Bob Dylan song.

Buying American-made products helps to ensure that American citizens are employed. America needs industrial as well as professional workers. Although many would acknowledge that some professions may merit greater work-related compensation based on a plethora of credentialing criteria (e.g., a high school diploma vs. bachelors, masters or doctoral degrees), this should by no means be misinterpreted as an institutional caste system. Full-time jobs or careers in any profession should have the following expectations:

- o adequate salary compensation to support their families;
- o adequate health benefits or medical care;

(cont'd on pg. 4)

Have You Got SOUL: Sweatfree, Old Glory (American), Union, Local?

- o a safe working environment; and
- o an expectation of an appropriate retirement package that enables them to retire before dying on the job of old age.
- If everyone were to become a “suit” (i.e., a doctor, lawyer, etc.) and we were to eliminate manufacturing and industrial trade jobs, as has been the trend in the United States over the last few decades, who will be left to pay the doctors and lawyers for their services? The Chinese economy is not improving because everyone is aspiring to higher education in China—China’s economy is improving because they have discovered their own industrial revolution combined with higher education aspirations. They value both and they desire both. Unlike the current U.S. trend, China is learning to be self-sufficient while we are giving away American jobs legislatively and economically by purchasing cheaper overseas products, often made in sweatshops under atrocious working conditions.
- Which brings me to point three within this question. These cheap products that increase U.S. unemployment are often made in sweatshops that take advantage of the poorest and most fragile members of these cultures. Child labor is so rampant in many of these countries that multiple international oversight organizations are having virtually no impact on this abusive trend. Many organizations and people look at these countries as opportunities to get rich on the backs of a poor, fragile and generally uneducated workforce. There are, however, still organizations and people in the world who recognize that the *ability to accomplish something in a specific manner* (by this I generally mean cheaper) does not necessarily translate to *should accomplish in this manner*. It is possible for individuals and corporations to act ethically and still realize a healthy profit. Yes—a company such as Wal-Mart could change many of its practices with regard to these concerns and still realize a hefty profit. “At the end of 2005, Wal-Mart ranked #2 on the Fortune

500 with sales of \$312 billion and net profits of \$11.2 billion, and was America’s largest employer with 1.39 million workers. However, because Wal-Mart fails to provide company health care to over 775,000 of its workers, Wal-Mart ranks #1, among all companies in America, with the highest total number of workers without company health care insurance and is the #1 abuser of taxpayer funded public health care in 18 of the 19 states where statewide data has been reported.” (<http://www.wakeupwalmart.com/images/americanpays.pdf>)

Why do VCTA officers promote the concept of buying from local vendors over large retail stores when possible?

- Local businesses pay taxes. The solvency of local business impacts local school taxes and, therefore, what the local community is willing and able to do monetarily for public education.
- The parents and grandparents of our students own local businesses. Their ability to be homeowners, obtain health care and donate time and money to this community depends completely upon our patronage as local citizens. Local “mom and pop” stores are the glue that hold our community together. These “mom and pop” shops frequently donate time, money and products to fundraising efforts within our communities—a recent example of this being the construction of the Walden Elementary Playground. In contrast, the 5 surviving Walton Wal-Mart family members, having amassed \$80 billion, donated a whopping \$5 thousand to the Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund (www.forbes.com). Here at home, VCTA members, with assets slightly less impressive than the Walton Wal-Mart family, donated \$2, 875 to the Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund. Not everyone, however, believes my statements regarding “mom and pop” shops to be valid or accurate.

(cont’d on pg. 5)

Have You Got SOUL: Sweatfree, Old Glory (American), Union, Local?

An article posted on the internet by the Associated Press on August 18, 2006 titled “Andrew Young Resigns from Wal-Mart Group,” attributes Young, who had been hired by Wal-Mart to “improve its public image”, with the following:

- o “In [a] Sentinel interview, Young was asked about whether he was concerned Wal-Mart causes smaller, mom-and-pop stores to close.”
- o “Well, [Young said,] I think they should; they ran the ‘mom and pop’ stores out of my neighborhood,” the paper quoted Young as saying. “But you see, those are the people who have been overcharging us selling us stale bread and bad meat and wilted vegetables. And they sold out and moved to Florida. I think they’ve ripped off our communities enough... (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14406528/>)
- I would like to say with complete confidence that Richard’s Ice Cream stand has never served me stale bread with my hamburger. In fact, the service is so good at Richard’s that they often start preparing my chocolate shake as my truck rolls into the parking lot.

This brings me to the initial question: *Why does our website contain so much repetitive rhetoric regarding where to shop?*

- We do not expect you to shop exclusively at businesses located in your village or town. I am quite confident that local businesses will not have all of the items that you need or want, nor do I look at the world with rose-colored glasses—I recognize that some local “mom and pop” stores may not be any more ethical than Wal-Mart. I do, however, hope that all of you will shop locally as much as possible.
 - o Stimulate the local economy;
 - o let your face be seen in local business; and
 - o support the families of the children that

we teach.

- Although some might say that this is a losing battle and our fight to save our community is simply postponing the inevitable, I believe it is a battle worth fighting. Caring or altruistic people don’t simply fight the battles they think they can win—sometimes they engage in a battle because it is the right thing to do regardless of winning or losing.
- I do not know of any local “mom and pop” businesses that impact our community the way Wal-Mart impacts the communities in which they build. Two University of Pennsylvania researchers (Stephan J. Goetz and Hema Swaminathan) from the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology conducted a study to determine Wal-Mart’s impact upon local communities. They discovered “that the presence of Wal-Mart unequivocally raised family poverty rates...” They also concluded that Wal-Mart “is not bearing the full economic and social costs of its business practices. Instead, Wal-Mart transfers income from the working poor and from taxpayers through welfare-programs directed at the poor to stockholders and the heirs of the Wal-Mart fortune, as well as to consumers. These transfers are in addition to the public infrastructure subsidies often provided by local communities. Regardless of the distributional effects, the Wal-Mart business model appears to extract cumulative rents that exceed those earned by owners of other corporations, including Microsoft.” (<http://cecd.aers.psu.edu/pubs/PovertyResearchWM.pdf#search=%22Walmart%20and%20County%20Wide%20Poverty%22>)
- It is important to note here that I am not trying to demonize Wal-Mart Employees. To the contrary, it is our desire to see Wal-Mart employees realize the American dream of adequate salary compensation and health benefits for their labors. In the words of Rich Bender, President of the Washington State Labor Council:

(cont’d on pg. 6)

Have You Got SOUL: Sweatfree, Old Glory (American), Union, Local?

- o “People who work there aren’t bad people; they’re just struggling to get by like the rest of us. People who shop there aren’t bad people either; in many cases they are lower-income folks on tight budgets who are just hoping to find bargains. But we, as a society, have to recognize that Wal-Mart and any other corporation that shares its business model are destructive. Their business model kills middle-class jobs, promotes a race to the bottom on wages and benefits, and costs taxpayers millions of dollars every year. And we, as a society, have the right—and the responsibility—to say, “enough is enough.” (<http://blog.aflcio.org/2006/08/28/evil-doesn't-describe-wal-mart>)

- o “In Washington state alone... some 3,200 Wal-Mart workers had to turn to taxpayer-funded health care plans...their company—the richest one on the Planet Earth—chooses not to offer affordable health benefits” (<http://blog.aflcio.org/2006/08/28evil-doesn't-describe-wal-mart>).

- We here at Valley Central are not working our tails off for large corporations like Wal-Mart to take the American Dream away from our students. We want our students to become entrepreneurs. We want our students to have the skills and the opportunity to carry on or start a family busi-



ness. If we remember the importance of community, we can help to keep this dream alive. Listen to your heart and nourish your SOUL.

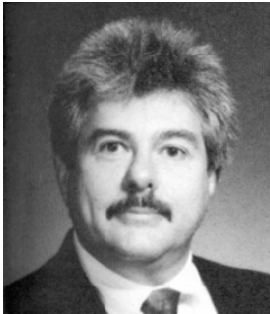
Buy:

- o Sweat-free,
- o Old Glory/American,
- o Union and
- o Local.

Support our community!

~Tim Brown

Announcements



Richard H. Aderson

“Make A Difference”

2006 Award

Orange-Ulster BOCES is seeking nominations for the Richard H. Aderson Award.

Richard H. Aderson was Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Services and Personnel in the Valley Central School District. He tragically lost his life, and is remembered as an outstanding administrator and a prominent voice for all children and their educational needs.

The “Make A Difference” Award recognizes the accomplishments of an outstanding educator in our BOCES region.

1. The recipient must have demonstrated genuine contribution to the field of education, and a humanistic concern for faculty, students and all persons in education.
2. The recipient must have a strong record of the achievement of excellence in educational related service to children.
3. The recipient must be a living example of commitment to “Making A Difference” in children’s lives.

If you wish to nominate someone, please visit vcta.net to download the nomination form. Go to the announcements page and click on the link.

Celebrate!!!

International Credit Union Day

October 19th, 2006

Cookies will be available in the Faculty Rooms of each Building as a Special Thank-You for the Patronage and Loyalty of Our Members.



**Valley Central Credit Union’s
Annual Dinner Dance**

When: January 27, 2007

**Where: Spruce Lodge, Route 17K
Montgomery**

**What to Bring: Yourself, Your Friends,
and a Healthy Appetite**

**RSVP To: Stan Davie (Manager) at
457-5592**

Important Information

As of the date of publication, the health insurance rates have not been received. Central Office and the VCTA have agreed to set the open enrollment period once all rates are received. The chart comparing the four health plans will be distributed to all buildings as soon as the rates are received and the date is set. You must inform the District of your intent to change (a filled out application form for the plan of your choice is enough to do this) by the last day of the open enrollment period, no exceptions. Completed forms are to be sent to Christina Howe at Central Office.

Voting on Constitutional Changes: November 14

Due to the merger of NYSUT and NEANY each local is obligated to make adjustments in its local constitution reflecting this change. Other changes to improve efficiency and better reflect current local practice have also been proposed. These proposed changes will be finalized at the October 10 Executive Council Meeting and will be voted on by the general membership on November 14. Although these changes may seem too subtle to merit a vote in the eyes of many, this voting process is mandated by federal law to ensure a democratic process within the organization. To preview these changes go to www.vcta.net and select "Constitution and Bylaws" under the "Local Issues" category on the home page. Proposed changes are in ***Bold and Italics***. Deletions are represented with a Double Strike-through. Building representatives will organize voting within each building and will inform their members about location and times as we approach November 14.

VOTE-COPE Deductions will begin in October.
Now is a great time to adjust your contribution!
The VCTA suggests a \$50.00 per year donation.
The form is available at www.vcta.net on the
VOTE-COPE page

“Bum Hunting”...A New Sport?

Over the course of the past week, there have been three horrific school shootings. One of these shootings was allegedly perpetrated by a high school student, 15-year-old Eric Hainstock, apparently angry about a reprimand over tobacco and frustrated with being picked on by other students. Until this recent rash of violence, most, if not all, school shootings have been carried out by students. What causes children to commit such violent and senseless acts?

While contemplating this question on Sunday evening, I was watching *60 Minutes*. They had a segment about something called “Bum Hunting.” There are not too many possible interpretations of what this means; it either involves the tracking of rumps or it is the disgusting “hunting” of homeless people by groups of teens with the express purpose of beating or otherwise harassing them. Many of these “bum hunts” have resulted in serious injury and some in the death of the victim. The most widely known example being the case in Florida with two teens currently awaiting trial.

What has inspired this new “sport?” A series of movies entitled “Bumfights” has been cited by many of the young men who have been arrested as their inspiration. When asked by *60 Minutes* why he participated in such an act, the suspect responded that they “thought it would be funny” and that they were “trying to copy Bumfights” which they had watched “hundreds of times.” Would this still have happened if they had never seen the movies? Admittedly, there is an enormous difference between watching something and actually carrying it out. It is quite clear, however, that this difference is much smaller as your age decreases.

As people who have constant interaction with young people, we all know that they—teenagers especially—do not always think. And when they do, they do not think like adults. They are not adults, no matter how much they want to argue to the contrary. There are some connections that they do not make, most notably with regard to consequences.

I like to think that I am not *too* far removed from this generation. I am ten years out of high school and came from a generation that was all about “Save the Homeless,” so how did we come to the generation of “Beat the Homeless” in such a short period of time? Movies about beating the homeless would never have flown in my overly PC teen years. Why is this attractive to our children now?

Though there are those who will disagree and

think me elementary in my thinking, I feel that a large portion of that responsibility lies with the media and the music and movie industries. Think about it, the creator of this “Bumfights” actually participated in and filmed the random beating and abuse of homeless people. What were his consequences? Felony charges dropped and 1.5 million dollars for the rights. Now his videos are in the stores and being aggressively marketed to the youth of America. Most parents would not buy their children something called “Bumfights” but the kids will get access to it some other way or watch it at their friends’ houses. Parents don’t stand a chance against these industries even with intended “controls.”

We need to assign accountability to those who produce violent media and market it to young people; much like the tobacco companies have been called to task for the ill effects of their products on society. They are choosing what our children see and regard as “cool.” It’s not *The Cosby Show* and *Growing Pains* anymore. When money is involved, social responsibility flies out the window. As a community and as a society, we must protect our children. These companies are making that very difficult at a time when our children are most susceptible.

It has been my own personal experience that I was a lot more tolerant of violence in my younger years. I could actually watch a horror movie and think it was funny or cool and not hide my eyes or cower under a blanket or think about “that poor boy’s mother” as I do now. I can barely stomach the evening news at this point. In conversations with friends and family, I have found this to be the case with many of them, too. Even so, as a teen, real violence like that portrayed in “Bumfights” would have disgusted me. Now it is the norm for violence.

Eric Hainstock could not fully understand how his actions would affect the lives of Mr. Klang’s family or his own family. These families have been destroyed and can never be rebuilt in the same way. Shattered lives, these are the true and lasting effects of violence. We must stop allowing the media to glorify violence, wrap it up, and sell it to our children.

Our children are being assaulted in their schools. Too often, it is other kids that are the assailants. They do not have to accept violence as simply a part of their lives. We need to try to teach them how to deal with violence. We need to teach them compassion and forgiveness. As a community and as a society, we must finally stand up and say “no more.”

—Meghan Riley

The World is a Scary Place...

Last week after news of the shooting in Bailey, Colorado; my sixth-grade daughter turned to me and proclaimed that the world is a scary place, but she's not worried because nothing bad ever happens around here. I didn't have the heart to tell her that bad things happen everywhere. In the days between my thinking about writing this article and actually doing it, two more school shootings have occurred as well as several lock-downs. Yes, the world is a scary place. And it is even scarier when it intrudes upon what should be a safe haven for our children...our schools.

For many years, Vice President Rich Steger has written about the need to safe guard our children on days when our schools are opened wide to the public during national education week, voting primaries and during our school budget vote. Opening our schools for national education week is a wonderful way to show off the great job that is done daily for our children. And one of the things we do daily is keep our buildings and children secure. If the District will only release a child to a specified parent/guardian on file, why let anyone walk through the doors that day to wander our schools? How about sending home a letter emphasizing the need to ensure the safety of our children and saying that while parents/guardians are welcome, id's will be checked upon sign in? And if a grandparent wants to attend the day, send home a release form. Or send an invitation with an RSVP and insist that only those who respond will be given access to classrooms? And, put more people on front desk duty to help check people in and give them visitor's tags. That way everyone can see that safety is truly taken seriously.

Our elementary schools are used as polling places in May for our school budget vote. This has been done for years at Valley Central. But times have changed. Years ago during deer season, you might see a shotgun in the back window of a truck in the high school parking lot. Today such an occurrence would be met with

quite a different reaction than years ago, as well it should be. Isn't it time to update our election practices? Wouldn't it be safer to have the polling held at district office as is done in many of our neighboring districts? The board room could be utilized and could be decorated to represent all our schools. We have the technology to have power point presentations that show off our programs, and we can help ensure the safety of our students at the same time. Or the Spring Superintendent's conference day could be moved to coincide with the Budget Vote; this would eliminate one possibility of our children being a smorgasbord for potential predators.

Last year, the VCTA leadership was asked by Central Administration what our reaction would be to cameras in the schools to help our administrators keep our buildings safe. President Tim Brown wholeheartedly supported the idea saying the safety of our children was paramount to our mission as a union. With a MS/HS complex the size it is, and filled to the brim with students cameras make sense. Cameras are not yet a reality in our schools, hopefully, they will be in the near future.

Ensuring the safety of the 5000 children who cross the doors of our buildings daily is an awesome responsibility shouldered by all the faculty and staff of every school in our district. The VCTA encourages our members to be proactive in keeping our children safe by questioning anyone in the building who you don't recognize or who may not have an ID tag on. We encourage members to be active in crisis planning in your building and encouraging drills so everyone is prepared in the event of a crisis. Yes, the world is a scary place, and bad things can happen here. The key is to be as prepared and proactive as possible and to remember that keeping our children safe is putting children center.

—Patti Lunden, Vice President

Monthly Reminders...

“Mid-Career Pre-Retirement Seminar”

Wednesday, October 18, 2006

4:30pm — 7:30pm

High School, North Cafeteria

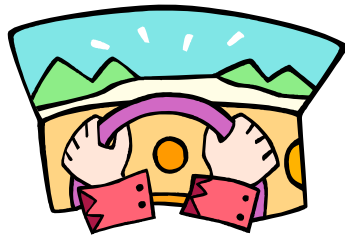
Please RSVP By October 13, 2006 to

Patti Lunden, VP

via email, voicemail (7664),

or at the union office, 457-5899

Defensive Driver Course



Dates: October 24th and 26th

Time: 4:00 — 7:00 pm

Place: VCHS, Professional Library

Cost: \$30.00

*E-mail Tim Brown (tbrown@vcmail.ouboces.org)
if you wish to attend.*

*Please remit payment in advance . Checks should
be sent to Tim Brown (HS) and be made out to
the VCTA with Defensive Driver Course in the
memo.*

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selection and
prices

E-mail ordering!

⇒ Fast

⇒ Simple

⇒ Convenient

Upcoming VCTA Events...

Why I Walk...

- ♥ Because someone else once walked and it made a difference for me...
- ♥ Because I have a daughter
- ♥ Because 200,000 women will be diagnosed this year *(and 1,000 men)*
- ♥ So 40,000 of them don't have to die

Early Detection is a key factor to survival.

Breast Self Exams and Mammograms can save your life.

And guys, don't forget...you should have your prostate checked beginning at age 45.

Join the Team!

Donate!

Buy a Ribbon Card!

Participate in Dress Down Day- October 13th!

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

October 15th

7:45am Woodbury Commons



VCTA Fall Fest

Date: Friday October 13, 2006

Time: 3:00 pm—6:00 pm

Place: Stony Ford Clubhouse
at Orange County Park

Please Join Us for Food and Fun!!!



A Community Puts Children Center

Over night a playground magically appeared in the middle of a boring patch of blacktop. Well, that's what it seemed like to the excited students at Walden Elementary School. Mouths hung open in awe. "Whoa!" and "Where did that come from?" were the most repeated statements from students who were instantly stopped in their tracks. Over a month into the new school year, the students are still running out to recess and racing out of school at the end of the day to enjoy the playground.

The adults however, know that the playground didn't magically appear; it was the result of our community coming together for our children. Intense fundraising over the past two years has finally produced a playground. Parents, Walden Elementary School employees, and community members spent countless hours organizing and running these fundraisers.

This is only Phase 1 of our playground project. Senator Larkin has helped us get a big jump on Phase 2. He has secured a \$25,000 grant for our playground project. Thank you, Senator, for putting our children center.

The following individuals gave their time, sweat, and hearts to help install the playground:

Phil Amundsen	Steven Landsman	Steven Blasch	Richie Lendle
Tom Clegg	John Masterson	Glen Connolly	Cathy & Peter Muller
Erik DeFont	Bill & Thomas Sherman	Eddie Dunn	Rich Steger
Scott Eickler	Mel & Carolyn Wesenberg	Doug Feffer	Mark
Brian & Zack Krzeminski			

While all of the above individuals spent countless hours on the playground. Brian Krzeminski shut down his business, **Mid-Hudson Interior Finish**, for 2 weeks to oversee the successful construction of the playground. Your commitment to our children is greatly appreciated.

Many people have commented on the fancy safety surface under and around the new playground. The material is called Pebbleflex. A special thank you goes to **Hudson Valley Pebbleflex**, owned by Tom Clegg and Brian Krzeminski. Because of you, our children can play hard and fall softly. *(cont'd on page 14)*



A Community Puts Children Center (cont'd from pg. 13)

Our local businesses have played a major role in the success of this project. They donated products and services and time for various fundraising events. They took the time to put our children center. Please put them center when your needs arise.

—Rich Steger, Vice President

The following establishments contributed cash donations:

Above Grade Home Inspections

Dr. Morrison

H&R Block Cash for Champions Campaign

International Union of Operating Engineers Local 825

Jacobowitz & Gubits

Joy Insurance

Ryan Insurance

State Farm Insurance Good Neighbor Grant

Verizon Volunteer Incentive Program

Walden Elementary School PTO

Walden Elementary School Student Gov't Pennies from Heaven Campaign

Walden Elementary School Teachers - Casual Days

The following businesses supported Walden's Biggest Game of Musical Chairs:

Cash Donations for Chair Sponsorships:

Buzzy's Tree Service

Clippers

Dr. Guneratne

Lillo's Pizza

Loose Ends

Outdoor Affair

Item Donations for Prizes:

Happy Herbs Soap

Loose Ends

Master Lee

Poetic Beauty Salon

Walden Federal

(Cont'd on page 15)

The following businesses supported our 2005 Tricky Tray:

4H Rising Stars
 Adam's Fairacre Farms
 Avon
 Bed, Bath, & Beyond
 Blazing Bagels
 Brownie Troop #20
 Camp Robbins YMCA
 Carmela's Restaurant
 Cascarino's
 Charlie Brown's Steakhouse
 Chinatown Kitchen
 Chiropractic Health Center
 Clipper's Hair Salon
 COC Music
 Cohen's Old World Bakery
 Cookie Lee Jewelry
 Copperfield's Café
 Country Wines & Liquor
 Curves
 Dancer's Pointe
 Dark Horse Cycles
 Daxxon Chinese Restaurant
 Eavens Affordable Detailing
 Family Business
 Fancy That
 Fantasy II Nails & Tanning
 Flowers By Anita
 Formula H Motorworks
 Gillette
 Green Jade Chinese Kitchen
 H & R Block
 Hodgson's Farm & Garden Center
 Hoe Bowl
 Home Interiors
 Hudson Valley Conservatory
 Hudson Valley Renegades
 Jack Granata Painting
 Krispy Kreme
 La Famiglia Pizza
 Lana Pattison-Privitera
 Longaberger Baskets
 Loose Ends Unisex Salon
 Lowe's
 M&M Paperback Exchange
 Maple Hill Gifts
 Mark T Mitchell, DDS
 Mary Kay Cosmetics
 McB's Salon
 Michael Audette's Studio 100
 Mid-Hudson Interior Finish
 Millspaugh Furniture
 Ming Jie's House
 My Father's Bible Book Store
 Nature's Pantry
 Nutrena
 Orange County Choppers
 Panera Bread
 Pic-A-Flick Video
 Pizza Plus
 R&R
 Red Robin
 Roosa Jewelers
 Sam's Club
 Scotts Corners Golf Course
 Sherri's Hair Design
 Shop Rite
 Smalling School of the Arts
 Stewart's Shops
 Stop & Shop #528
 The Daily Bean Café
 The Hairworks
 The Little Gym
 The Merchant's Depot
 The Pleasant Dollar Store
 Therapeutic Massage
 The Thruway Market
 Timeless Shoes
 Times Herald Record
 Tomorrow Morning
 Town of Wallkill Golf Club
 Village Sampler
 Walden Animal Deli
 Walden Diner
 Wal-Mart #2104
 WES PTO
 Y-Scoop YMCA

The following businesses supported our 2006 Tricky Tray:

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 Ciardullo Printing
 Clayton Delaney's Dining Saloon
 Clippers Hair Salon
 COC Music
 Cohen's Old World Bakery
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 Cracker Barrel
 Creations by Pamm
 Curves
 Daxxon
 Dominick's Sports Bar & Grill
 Exxon/Mobil
 Fab III Pizza
 Fancy That
 Flowers By Anita
 Formula H. Motorworks
 Frank's Pizza
 Gold's Gym
 Guido's
 H&R Block
 Hannaford
 Hess
 Hoe Bowl
 Home & Garden Party
 Home Interiors
 Hoshin Black Belt Academy
 Hudson Valley Conservatory
 Hudson Valley Renegades
 Ice Time
 Jack Granata Painting
 John's Quality Clothiers & Tailors
 Lana Pattison-Privitera
 Little Acres Aviary
 Longaberger Baskets
 Loose Ends Salon
 Lowe's
 M&M Paperback Exchange
 Maple Hill Gifts
 Mark T Mitchell DDS
 McDonald's
 Medicine Shoppe
 Mid-Hudson Interior Finish
 Millspaugh's Furniture
 Ming Jie's House
 Modell's
 Montgomery Florist
 Nature's Pantry
 New Beginnings Dance Studio
 New To You Consignment Boutique
 Nutrena
 Pampered Chef
 Panera Bread
 Pineapple Day Spa
 Pizza Plus
 R&R
 Red Apple Dental P.C.
 Richard's Dairy Shed
 Roosa Jewelers
 Sherri's Hair Design
 Shop Rite
 Smalling School of the Arts, Sohn's Appliance Center
 Spice Castle
 Stewart's Shops
 Stop & Shop
 Studio 100
 Subway
 Tastefully Simple
 The Bagel Café
 The Clever Caterpillar
 The Daily Bean
 The Hair Café
 The Hairworks Salon
 The Lady's Gym
 The Little Gym
 The Merchants Depot
 The Pleasant Dollar
 The Thruway Market
 Therapeutic Massage
 Timeless Shoes
 Tin Brook Treasure Barn
 Tomorrow Morning
 Village Sampler
 Walden Animal Deli
 WalMart
 WES PTO
 West's Ceramic Supply Inc.
 Westwood Daycare

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

Ola! Salve! Wie gehts!— Today is the 28th of September—the 12th birthday of my grandson Nate, the oldest of the most recent generation of McFaddens—how time does fly! Speaking of time, the writing of this column is late again. How can anyone with so much time manage to put things off until after the last minute? I sometimes wonder how I managed to work full-time plus and to get other things done too? Could age be creeping up on me?

Speaking of age, the Wednesday morning breakfast group (Raunchy Old Men Eating Out), begun some 15 years ago, has begun the present school year's weekly meetings. I am pleased to announce that none of us has improved at all. Busting chops and raucous laughter are the order of each Wednesday morn—and we enjoy every moment.

—Retiree Luncheon Report

About 200 announcements were sent out to all VC retirees (from all bargaining units, not just VCTA.) Approxi-

mately 120 responded. 87 attended the luncheon. Many of those who could not attend sent notes which I will share with you in this or ensuing columns. John Mirola, the MC for the 24th time—every one of the luncheons—was in fine form, as usual. John, now retired over 25 years, was a splendid teacher, coach, and assistant superintendent. He also was a founding father and still president of the Valley Central Federal Credit Union. Many thanks again, John.

On another front, the boys in the back were depleted in number and generally well-behaved. (You know who you are!!) Seriously, a pleasant time was had by all, the long retired and the recently retired.

Thanks to Ginny for all her help, to Stan Davie and the Credit Union crew for the help with deposits and withdrawals, to Chris Camillo, Rachel T. and the Crossroads folks for a splendid luncheon.

Life After VC (Culled from retiree notes and calls)...

—Gonzalo Quintana (HS), heard from for the first time in a while, is still very busy with immersion courses in New Paltz

through BETAC and International Language Systems. He sounds great.

—Alice Gutter (elementary librarian) checks in from Rockville, MD. She still attends many programs in the DC area and is looking forward to some apple picking with family in the Mid-Hudson at Tannillo's.

—Theresa Miller (CO) characterizes retirement in Florida as "Wonderful!"

—Frank and Mary Digilio (HS) send a beautiful letter (as always) from Boca Raton. Both are busy with many hobbies and activities.

—Ed Kubina (Berea), one of the boys in the back, missed his first retirement luncheon in many years and sends his best to all from Florida.

—More next time!! Oh, the suspense!!



Congratulations to Mac on another wonderful luncheon!

—Amen

I'm off to grandson Ian's baptism in Pittsfield, so I'll cut the missive short. I hope all the active teachers have gotten off to a great start. It was a pleasure for me to speak to new teachers of the district at the orientation. Finally, thanks for turning to the back pages. Keep pushing back the barriers of ignorance in whatever venue life finds you. Peace.

~ Kevin McFadden
Retiree Representative



New York State Teachers' Retirement System

10 Corporate Woods Drive
Albany, New York 12211-2395

(800) 356-3128 or 447-2666 (Albany-area calls)

Web Site: www.nystrs.org

George M. Philip, Executive Director

Preretirement Planning Seminars

These daylong meetings are designed to help active NYSTRS members age 45 and older prepare for retirement. During the course of the day, discussions are devoted to: System benefits; financial planning; legal affairs; adjusting to retirement; Social Security; and, other pertinent topics. Please note that these seminars are not designed for one-on-one retirement counseling. Spouses/companions are eligible to attend. Seminars are held 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., with registration from 8 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. There is no fee to attend, but you must register in advance. **Please see below for information on making a reservation.**

Fall 2006 Schedule

Call 800-356-3128, Ext. 6180 to register

We will begin taking calls on Tuesday, September 12.

ALBANY October 27 (Friday) December 6 (Wednesday) NYSTRS Headquarters 10 Corporate Woods Drive	FISHKILL November 2 (Thursday) Holiday Inn Route 9 Exit 13, I-84	L.I.-MELVILLE November 10 (Friday) November 30 (Thursday) December 16 (Saturday) Melville Marriott 1350 Old Walt Whitman Rd. Exit 49N, LIE	SYRACUSE October 18 (Wednesday) Holiday Inn- Syracuse/Liverpool 7 th North St. & Electronics Parkway, Liverpool Exit 37, NYS Thruway
BUFFALO November 18 (Saturday) December 8 (Friday) Millennium Airport Hotel 2040 Walden Avenue Cheektowaga	L.I.-HAUPPAUGE November 11 (Saturday) December 1 (Friday) Islandia Marriott Long Island Exit 58, LIE	ROCHESTER October 13 (Friday) December 9 (Saturday) Radisson Hotel Airport 175 Jefferson Road Henrietta	TARRYTOWN November 3 (Friday) Westchester Marriott 670 White Plains Road
UTICA October 19 (Thursday) Radisson Hotel 200 Genesee Street	OWEGO November 17 (Friday) Treadway Inn and Conference Center 1100 State Route 17C		

TO MAKE A RESERVATION: Starting on September 12, 2006, please telephone the Retirement System in Albany at 800-356-3128, Ext. 6180 and specify the seminar above you wish to attend. ***You can only make reservations by calling the Albany office weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 4:15 p.m.*** When calling, please provide your Social Security number or EmplID, date of birth, home address, and home telephone number. Also indicate if your spouse/companion is attending. If your spouse/companion is also a member, please have the above information for him/her, too. After your call we will send you a letter confirming your reservation, along with directions to the meeting and the seminar agenda. Please bring this material with you to the seminar, along with photo identification and your most recent *Benefit Profile*. ***If you make a reservation and subsequently cannot attend, please call the number above as soon as possible to cancel so that we can offer this reservation to another member.***

Please Be Prepared To Show Photo Identification at Seminar Registration.

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These ads will be seen by over 900 members of the VC Educational Community and their households. If you would like to advertise in the next issue of the VC ECHOES, contact Meghan Riley, 457-5899 for rates.

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Car Rentals - Alamo, Avis, Budget & Hertz
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Heat USA

Other Services

Consumer Credit Counseling Service
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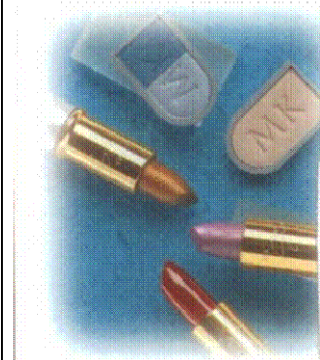
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Vice President, Richard Steger (Walden) VM 5648
Vice President, Patti Lunden (HS) VM 7664
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Treasurer, John Bonagura (EC) VM 2604

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- East Coldenham: Holly Bacon, Denise Pagliocca
- Maybrook: Donna Lloyd, Sandy Tarallo
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The VC Echoes is the official publication of the Valley Central Teachers' 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
Meghan Rilley, HS, by November 21, 2006.*

Any articles submitted to the VC Echoes will also be posted on the VCTA web site.

VCTA Executive Council Meetings:

10 October

14 November

12 December

All VCTA Executive Council Meetings are General Meetings to which the entire membership is invited. The meetings are held on Tuesdays, in the Professional Library at the HS, and are called to order at 4pm.

Article 19 of the Retirement and Social Security Law ceases the 3% contribution for Tier 3 and 4 members after 10 school years of participation of service credit.

This is a direct result of your VOTE-COPE Contributions.

If you have 10 years of service credit, check your pay stub to be sure that you are not making contributions to the retirement system (TRS).

Extra payments do not increase your retirement benefit.

If you are still having the 3% deducted from your pay, please contact:

Christina Howe, Assistant Superintendent for
Business at chow@vcasd.ouboces.org

and

Patti Lunden, VCTA Vice President

plunden@vcmail.ouboces.org