

VC ECHOES



Valley Central Teachers' Association

Volume 9, Issue 1

September, 2006

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Is Valley Central a Violent Place?



*... a first kiss that doesn't end up
on the VADIR report!
See page 6*

Welcome Back, *(to the future?)*, Valley Central

Tomorrow we enter (and re-enter) our classrooms looking at the face of our collective future for the next 13 years as we prepare Valley Central's children—from the youngest kindergartener to the Senior Class of 2007—to enter the world. It is an awesome responsibility to know that we hold the future in our hands, at least figuratively. Preparing the future...I wonder if it is even possible to accomplish this task. After all, how are we to know what the future holds, or how best to prepare this next generation for it? How did those who taught us just a few years ago (and so many years ago) know how to prepare us for our future—this present day? Think of Stephen Spielberg's Back to the Future II set in the year 2015 where hover cars no longer utilize roads: is this really only 9 years away?

On April 30, 2006, Andy Rooney's (60 Minutes, www.cbsnews.com) commentary revisited predictions made in 1986 about what life would be like in 2001. Giant farm animals and walks on Mars were predicted as were cures for cancer and baldness, entertainment center bathrooms, cars that are voice-commanded, and 6-hour work days/30 hour work weeks. None of the predictions made in 1986 were realized in 2001, or in 2006 for that matter. Certainly the predictions were not made off the cuff, but after diligent research. But of course, a prediction is nothing more than a hunch—at best, an educated guess.

An unpredicted rising trend is the corporate intrusion into education which has dictated that children are like products on an assembly line that can be measured according to input (teacher preparation) and output (test scores/teacher accountability). It is now also dictating that we need to prepare children to be productive future workers. As educators, we have lived with these ridiculous concepts thrust upon us by corporate interests in our recent (and distant) past and no doubt will continue to live with them in our immediate future. One thing has become very clear: the corporate world has no idea what education is really all about. Which brings to mind the question, again – how are they, or we, to know what the job trends of 10 or 20 years from now will be?

At www.careerplanner.com it is pointed out that

many of the “hot” jobs of the 1980's (telephone operator, typesetter, draftsman technician) have become obsolete. Carpenters, plumbers and electricians are and will be in demand. As we prepare all our students for college, we might better worry that as many students make it to SUNY Delhi or Lincoln Tech as head to Georgetown or Princeton.

The reality is that no one really knows what the future holds. To best prepare our students for the future we must help them to learn how to think, how to care, and how to make a difference today and tomorrow. Across history, no matter what the age or era, people have always had to think and care, learn and love to ensure that the future becomes the present and eventually, the past. The corporate world may want us to help children become productive workers, but that vision is most certainly short-sighted. They will certainly need to be much more than just productive workers to carry on this civilization, and to live meaningful and fulfilling lives. Let the corporate world tend to the voice-commanded cars and bathroom entertainment centers, and we'll take care of the future by putting children center, always.

~ Patti Lunden, Vice President

Direct Deposit— More Convenient for You

If you have direct deposit, verify that your check is being sent to the correct bank. If you do not have it, but would like to, you may sign up for it through October 1st. See your building principal for the form. Direct Deposit saves you a trip to your bank and a trip to school if a payday falls on a snow day or a vacation day!



**Your money comes
easily with Direct
Deposit!**

The Questions about “Comparable” Health Coverage— Or Do I have to take the buy-out?

Who is entitled to insurance benefits?

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

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

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

What if my spouse does not have health insurance benefits?

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

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

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

How is comparability determined?

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

and booklets to allow for a comprehensive comparison. You should give a copy of the information to the Association, so that the Association can also review the plan as well in case you disagree with the District's findings. If you find yourself having to review your spouse's insurance with the District, you are strongly urged to have Rich Steger or Patti Lunden present with you. The VCTA negotiated this language with the District and our goal is to protect your right to have the best coverage available for your family.

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

The contractual agreement allows for arbitration in such instances.

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

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

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

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

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

You can voluntarily elect to take the Dis-

trict's buyout if you would like to, as long as you are provided health insurance through another source.

What if I am single, never use my health insurance and would rather have the buy-out. Can I also elect to take it?

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

What if I have changes but fail to inform the District (For example, I get married—have comparable coverage through my spouse but never tell the District)?

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

Who can I contact with questions?

- Rich Steger (Walden) ext. 5648
- Patti Lunden (HS) ext. 7664
- Union Office 457-5899

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

The District's Worker's Compensation carrier is:

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

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

FAQ Concerning Health Insurance Choices

What health insurance choices do I have?

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

What is the indemnity plan?

The indemnity plan offered by the District is the Orange-Ulster School District Health Plan.

This plan allows you to stay in the GHI/Devon/Beechstreet network or go outside the network with applied deductibles and 20/80 (reasonable and customary) coverage.

What HMO's can I choose from?

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

Will I have to pay anything to choose an HMO?

If you choose to use an HMO, the District will pay the dollar amount to the HMO that they would have paid to the indemnity plan. You are responsible

for paying the difference if the HMO is more. That difference is deducted from your paycheck pre-tax. (This is in addition to the 5% already deducted toward health insurance).

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

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

What does the VCTA recommend concerning the health plan choices?

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

tals would be available to you if you needed them in the future.

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

No. You may change your health insurance every year, deciding during the open enrollment period (see box below) to change for the following year. The VCTA hosts the annual Health/TSA fair to let you continually compare coverage options. However, you must stay with the plan through December 31st of the year, once selected you will not be able to change again until the next year.

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

If you select a different option during the open enrollment period, it will take effect as of January 1, 2007 and will not change unless you select another option next year.



How do I make a change?

Fill out the application form from the HMO you have selected and send it to Christina Howe at Central Office by the last day of the open enrollment period.

Who can I contact with questions?

- Rich Steger ext. 5648
- Patti Lunden ext. 7664
- Union Office
457-5899

Central Office and the VCTA have agreed to set the open enrollment period once all rates are received. Therefore, 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. It will also be published in the October 2006 issue of the *VC ECHOES*. 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.

What is a Cafeteria 125 Plan? Is it for you?

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

Likewise, you are able to shelter \$2000 for Medical reimbursement of money that you pay for services not covered by insurance (*co-pay, medical and prescription co-pays, dental or optical expenses*). Unlike the Dependent Care

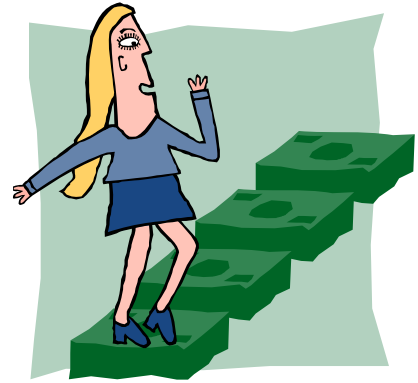
account, you may claim full reimbursement from your Medical account on the first day of the plan year.

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

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

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

At these meetings, AFLAC representatives should only be explaining your options concerning Cafeteria 125 Plans. Although they offer other financial services, it is not the purpose of this meeting



time to promote those products. If you wish to speak to them about such products, they should make an appointment with you for another time. Should you feel that this is not the case, or you are being pressured to look at other products at that time, contact Vice President Rich Steger (Walden Elementary).

**The 2006 IRS rate for mileage reimbursement is:
44.5 cents per mile.**

(Please note that this is an increase from 2005)



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

Is Valley Central a Violent Place?

On May 22, 2006, the Times Herald Record promptly published a report card of area schools in the category of violence (<http://archive.recordonline.com/archive/2006/05/22/news-kwvadir-05-22.html>) The State Education Department requires all schools in the state to report violent and disruptive incidents (VADIR report). The VADIR system was established by the SAVE legislation in 2000, and is connected to NCLB at the federal level since states are required to designate persistently violent schools which NYS defines by weapons incidents. VADIR categories for reporting include: sex offenses, assault with serious physical injury, assault with physical injury, robbery, minor altercations, arson, intimidation, reckless endangerment, burglary, bomb threat, criminal mischief, criminal harassment, weapons possession, riot, false alarm, larceny, drug and alcohol related incidents and other disruptive incidents.

The Valley Central School District was ranked as the fourth most violent school district in the region for 2004-05 and also leading the pack with the most sex offenses reported. A total of 10 sex offenses were reported that year for our district, three of which were elementary level incidents of children trying to kiss one another. There are flaws with this reporting system as small districts and large districts are compared, and as a Pine Bush parent commented in an article with regard to his district's reported number of drug and alcohol related incidents compared to Middletown, "If you're not catching it, you're not reporting it." His comment rings true, and even the Record recognized that some districts fudge the numbers. NYS Comptroller Alan Hevesi has become so suspicious that numbers are being fudged by districts, that he has audited the 2003-04 report and found a significant number of underreported incidents. Commissioner Richard Mills has stated that SED will work on improving the collection and reporting system to clarify definitions and provide train-

ing for those responsible for reporting to cut down on the incidents of misreporting. All this is well and good, but the bottom line remains that reporting the incidents correctly solves only half the problem, the other half is what to do about the problem of violence itself.

Shortly after the VADIR information was published, Glenn Doty of the Wallkill Valley Times wrote of a friend he had who moved out of the area to escape the violence of Valley Central. I wonder where his friend ended up. Where does a violence free school district exist? Part of the problem is when a reporting system is established, such as VADIR, the general public often treats the information as new. Violence in school is not new. In 1976, Al Shanker, president of NYSUT addressed the RA on the issue of violence in schools; have we really failed by not wiping out violence in thirty years? I don't think so. Violence in general is not new. And, unfortunately, violence is part of human nature. We are not nice to one another all the time. Violence goes back to Paleolithic times when one clan would wipe out another clan to possess it's cave. A flip of the channel or internet to Iraq and Israel shows that we haven't really evolved much from our cave days. We're still out there beating the stuffing out of each other. If our world is a violent place, it is unrealistic to expect our schools not to be violent too. Violent incidents take place in the world and take place in our schools. Violence is not the issue. It is how we deal with the violence that is the issue—the lessons we learn from the violence and teaching our children that violence is not the answer.

(continued on page 7)

Is Valley Central a Violent Place? (cont'd from pg 6)

Is Valley Central a violent place, I would say no, based, not on the VADIR, but on the actions taken by our staff in dealing with violence. The incident is dealt with, and the children are educated as to why such actions are inappropriate, unacceptable and not tolerated. It has consistently been my experience at Valley Central that violence is not swept under any rug. It is important to remember that while the general public may want to remember their school experience as golden and untarnished— in reality it wasn't. The only thing we can do to convince folks that Valley Central isn't a violent place is to stay centered on our children, continuing to teach them lessons of peace and hope that their generation will be the one to make peace and not violence the norm in this world.

~ Patti Lunden

Vice President

VC ECHOES Deadlines and Publication Dates 06-07

Deadline: September 22, 2005

Publication: October 6, 2005

Deadline: November 22, 2005

Publication: December 8, 2005

Deadline: January 26, 2006

Publication: February 9, 2006

Deadline: March 23, 2006

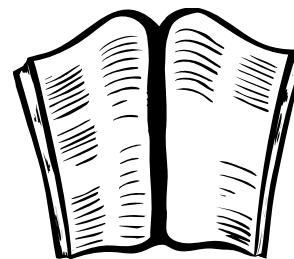
Publication: April 6, 2006

Retiree Issue: Deadline: May 11, 2006

Publication: May 25, 2006

Deadline: June 9, 2006

Publication: June 16, 2006



Get those articles in!

★ Anyone interested in a fall
★ (Oct)
★

★ Defensive Driving Course ★

★ Please e-mail Tim Brown at
★ tbrown@vcmail.ouboces.org
★

★ This course qualifies you for a
★ discount on auto insurance pre-
★ miums. We need to see if
★ enough people are interested to
★ set up a class for October.
★

Did you like the new VCTA
T-shirts modeled by your
officers on opening day?

Visit vcta.net to view
pictures of VCTA products
currently available!

You can also get prices and
place orders online!



Congratulations on receiving tenure!!!

District:

Tara Rounds School Psychologist

High School:

Darryl Imperati Secondary School Principal

Peter Anzovino Science

Jedd Beukelman Science

Melissa Bonacic English

Mary Giorgianni Science

Kathleen Manning Mathematics

Kerri Meyer Special Education

Meghan Riley Social Studies

J. Michael Score Social Studies

Middle School:

Sonya Berger Science

Laurie Cauther Mathematics

Jennifer Santacroce Music

Erin Scherf Education of Speech and

Hearing Handicapped

Montgomery:

Douglas Luciano Physical Education

Michael McCoy Elementary Education

Delia Morilla Elementary Education

Kelly Pluchino Special Education

Diane Wierl Elementary Education

Maybrook:

Catherine Heil

School Social Worker

Julie McGuirk

Remedial Reading

Walden:

Regina Crossley

Elementary Education

Andrea DeCastro

Special Education

Nancy Kuriplach

Special Education

Janet Malloy

Elementary Education

Mary Wingerden

Elementary Education

Lisa York

Elementary Education

East Coldenham:

Sandra Carroll

Elementary Education

Berea:

Jane Malley

Elementary School

Assistant Principal

William Carter

Elementary Education

Linda Lettieri

Elementary Education

Dory O'Rourke

Elementary Education

We are very proud of you!

Important Meetings and Pay Dates



**Mark Your
Calendars!**

VCTA Executive Council Meetings

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 4:00 pm.

September 12, 2006
October 10, 2006
November 14, 2006
December 12, 2006
January 9, 2007
February 13, 2007
March 13, 2007
April 10, 2007
May 8, 2007
*June 12, 2007

*The June Meeting is a dinner meeting held at the Spruce Lodge. New Retirees are congratulated at 4:00 pm, dinner is served at 4:30 pm, and the meeting is called to order at 5:00 pm. If you wish to attend the dinner, call Laurie Hey, 457-5899 and she will tell you the cost.

Board of Education Meetings

2006-2007:

September 11, 25
October 10, 23
November 13, 27
December 11
January 8, 22
February 12, 26
March 12, 26
April 16*
May 14, 29
June 11

All Board of Education meetings are held at the Administration Building Board Room at 7:00 pm. Student presentations when scheduled begin at 6:45 pm.

*Tenure Review

Teacher Pay Dates 2006-2007

September 8	February 9
September 22	February 23
October 6	March 9
October 20	March 23
November 3	April 6
November 17	April 20
December 1	May 4
December 8 (Health Buy Back)	May 18
December 15	
December 29 (No Vol. Ded.)	June 1
	June 8 (Health Buy Back)
January 12	June 15
January 26	June 22 (Reg & Multi)
	(No Vol. Ded.)



Upcoming VCTA Events...

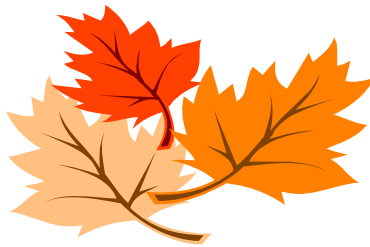
VCTA FALL FEST 2006

Date: Friday October 13, 2006

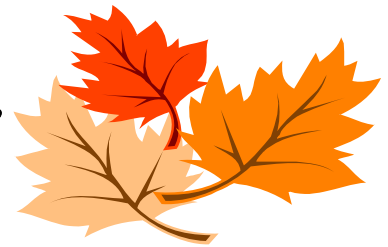
Time: 3:00 pm—6:00 pm

Place: Stony Ford Clubhouse
at Orange County Park

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



Hors d'oeuvres, Cash Bar,
Prizes!!!



Please Join Us!

A good time will be had by all!

See you there...

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



Top 5 Reasons to Participate in Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

5. It's a nice way to spend a Sunday morning in the Fall
4. NYSUT is a flagship sponsor at 14 of these events throughout the state
3. Money raised goes to education, research, advocacy and patient services through the American Cancer Society
2. 220,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year, 40,000 of them will die of breast cancer
1. *You or someone you know may be one of them*

How you can help....

- ♥ Buy a Making Strides 2006 t-shirt (*t-shirt money is a direct donation*)
- ♥ Decide to walk on October 15th and collect money from everyone who's ever hit you up for a donation!
- ♥ Donate money to someone on the VCTA team!

EVENT:

Sunday, October 15, 2006

Woodbury Commons

7:45 am Registration, Walk begins at 9:00 am

Walk is 5K and non-competitive

For more information, contact your building coordinator or check the VCTA website, www.vcta.net

Building Coordinators:

Berea: Robin Scott

East Coldenham: Holly Bacon

Walden: Rich Steger

HS: Patti Lunden

Montgomery: Christine Giudice

Maybrook: Donna Lloyd

Middle School: Maddie Brooks

CO: Sheila Lease-Murphy

Straight from the Heart

I decided in June to ride in el Tour de Tucson (*see pg. 13*). The Tour de Tucson is an annual 108 mile bicycle ride in Arizona. Most bicycle people will refer to it as a century ride, which is 100 miles. Why did I decide to do this? I realized that it had been about four years since my last century ride. That meant that it had been four years since the last time I did volunteer work and fund raising for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Where did the time go? I couldn't believe that it had been four years. I had told myself after my last century ride at Lake Tahoe, Nevada in 2002, that I would someday do another ride. I thought someday would have been sooner, rather than later. The experience of the training, meeting people fighting for the same cause, the children and adults that I met that had leukemia, and the feeling that I had when I finished was so fulfilling that I just had to do another century ride for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. In case you were wondering, the el Tour de Tucson 108 mile bicycle ride will be completed in one day.

"Someday" came at the end of June. Quite frankly, I felt burnt out during this past school year. Why was I burnt out? It came down to working too much.

Even though I teach at Berea Elementary School, every Wednesday and Thursday, I spent at evening high school which would go until 7:00PM. On Tuesday night I would go back to the Valley Central pool and work until 9:30.

Then the other nights I would assist at different sporting events. By the time I got home, I had no energy left and just crashed. The days just got too long for me, and I realized that there was no time left for ME and the things I liked to do! The stress built up and I ended up at the end of the school year with shingles and trouble with my right eye. Both were stress-related medical conditions. That's when I remembered that I needed to get back to spending time doing something other than work. My community projects were neglected last year from the extra hours of work I put in. I am presently involved with Project Linus, Labs4Rescue, and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Don't get me wrong I enjoy working, but working too much just left a hole in my heart, like something was missing. Actually, I do have a hole in my heart so that feeling is quite real.

In July I spent my time teaching swimming lessons. Teaching swimming is something that I have been

doing since I was in college. I then spent the rest of the summer on my bike. My training started out as intermittent, just like the rain. So every time I got back on the bike, my butt felt like it had never been on the seat. Then the heat set in and a ride in the middle of the day just wasn't working. I decided that I needed to get up at dawn and ride then. Like Lance Armstrong would say, "I'm not on drugs; I'm on my bike eight hours a day, seven days a week." Okay, so I wasn't on my bike eight hours a day, but I was on it a lot and still got a natural high from training. That feeling was enhanced by knowing that I can help others by helping raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Helping children is what I do as a teacher during the school year and I love that feeling.

Why stop there? So I got back on the bike and asked everyone I knew to be part of my team and help support me in my quest of a century ride.

I know that this school year will be different. I have chosen not to work the extra long hours that I did last year. I will continue to train on the bike until my ride in November 2006. I will also spend more time making blankets for Project Linus, which is my newest community project and is very close to my heart. Project Linus donates blankets to children in need. (For more information go to www.projectlinus.org). I missed the time that I spent making all those blankets. Like finishing a century ride or any endurance event, it gives me a feeling that is indescribable.

I love teaching and always give 100% to my work, but work is work. Sometimes work can be overwhelming, and you need to take time for yourself. For me, taking time to do for others makes the hole in my heart feel better if not physically at least figuratively, because I'm not only doing something for myself, I am doing something for my community. As teachers, we contribute to this community during our work hours, as people it is important to contribute to our community, when we aren't working. Believe it or not, making time to give back to your community will help keep you balanced and fulfilled. Find something that you are interested in and help out. It will take your mind off of work, yet you are still working to build a better community. I hope happiness will fill your heart as it does mine.

~ Erin Davis, Berea , Bldg. Rep



On Saturday, November 18, 2006, I will be riding with Team in Training, in Tucson, AZ. I have decided to take on this challenge to not only prove to myself that I can ride a bicycle 100 miles in one day ... but to help raise money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Every 10 minutes a child or adult dies from leukemia, lymphoma or myeloma (all are blood cancers). The survival rate in children has increased to 80%, but it is still the number one disease killer of children in America.

I want your help so that we can change that. I want you to join my team, not as a cyclist, but as a sponsor. Please be part of my TEAM and make a donation to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

If you know of someone that you wish to Honor for their battle against these cancers or Remember someone who lost their battle, please send me their name and photo (if possible) and I will proudly ride with their name and photo on my shirt as I peddle 100 miles around Tucson.

Hopefully you have never had someone you know diagnosed with one of these diseases. Let's keep it that way, so please donate to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Please cut the form on the right and send it back to me as soon as possible.

Erin Davis
316 Lake Vue Drive
Montgomery, NY 12549
845-863-5153

**People ask why I am going to
ride 100 miles?**

**The best answer I saw on a T-shirt:
"If you think peddling 100 miles is hard,
Try chemotherapy."**

*In accordance with the Internal Revenue Code, the amount
you donate is 100% Tax Deductible.*

TNT PLEDGE FORM

Yes! I will help find a cure in recognition of the efforts of:

Erin Davis

My goal is to raise \$5000 for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. I am participating in the El Tour de Tucson 100 mile bicycle ride on Nov. 18, 2006

Name _____

I select to donate (please circle):

\$25 - This is the first letter I get from you in
ages and all you want is money.

\$50 - Half a buck a mile is worth a smile.

\$75 - Erin you're crazy, but a good cause. I'm in!

\$100 - The age Erin will feel at the end of the ride.

\$200 - Two dollar a mile club.

\$500 - Heck its tax deductible & Erin's riding not me!

\$_____ Make up your own amount - large or small. I will
take any contribution to cure this disease.

◇ Check Enclosed

Make check payable to Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
and send it to Erin Davis, 316 Lake Vue Drive, Mont-
gomery, NY 12549

◇ On Line Donating

<http://www.active.com/donate/tntwhv/tntwhvEDavis>

◇ Credit Card Donation

Please circle

AMEX

MasterCard

VISA

Credit Card # _____

Exp. Date _____

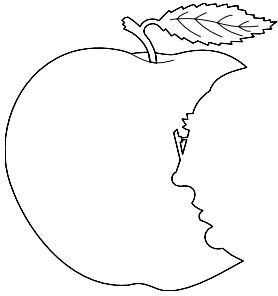
Card Holder _____

Signature _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____



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

Each year the District
in conjunction with the Association
nominates a teacher to be considered for
NEW YORK STATE TEACHER OF THE YEAR.

Nomination requires nominator to fill out paperwork.

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

Colleague's Name _____

Colleague's Building _____

His/Her Years teaching _____ His/Her Years at VC _____

Why should this person be VC's candidate for Teacher of the Year?

Your Name _____, VM _____

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

Greetings! Welcome back, Valley Central: the new, the fairly new, the veterans (grizzled and otherwise!). It does not seem even remotely possible that I have been retired from the high school for fourteen years. The calendar reads July 17 and the submission date for the column is the 15th of July. Ergo, as in so many facets of my life, I am already behind for school year 06-07. As is usual for me, even after all these years, school dreams begin as soon as I start thinking about a new school year. I guess that is the sign of a "lifer." I begin my school year on July 31, teaching an Elderhostel course on *Shakespeare's Sonnets* at Mt. St. Mary College. I expect I will have 30 students for the week's course. We will also view the Bard's Midsummer Night's Dream at Boscobel. Last year's crew ranged in age from 55-89 — a truly lively bunch and great fun. In the fall I'll be teaching a course on *Shakespeare and Tortured Relationships* in the L.I.F.E. program at the Mount. So, my teaching now is very part-time, but it is enough to keep me off the streets!

I certainly hope that all the branches of the VC family will have a very successful school year. As VC teachers, retired and active, our focus is on putting students center. If we all do this, the process will work. Kids will gain knowledge, leading to wisdom and the skills and values necessary to becoming productive human beings who will be men and women for others. Have a wonderful year.

—Nobody asked me, but...

—The state legislature is still dragging its feet (surprise!!) on passage of the "Forgotten Mommies" bill and NYSUT is not pushing for it as hard as they should. Also, the legislature has to be pushed to bring about equalization of the retirement tiers. It is up to all of us—retired and active—to propel our legislators to action on these matters.

—I was pleased to see a recent item stating that public school kids are doing as well as or better than private school kids on standardized tests. It's about time that we got deserved credit in the media.

—I spent Saturday evening and Sunday morning (7/15

and 7/16) enjoying the festivities of the reunion for the Class of 1976— a truly fine groups of kids— now 48 years young. A very special time was had on Sunday morning with the dedication of the a tree and plaque in memory of the 17 deceased members of the class. A beautiful ceremony was held on the high school's front lawn with the relatives of the deceased members present. Kim Baty-Kosteczko, the reunion chair, should be commended for her work and for her words. Rev. Brian Randazzo (VC '74) was one of the speakers , as was yours truly. Bob Ciganek and Sam Tucker were among those attending. This class can be most proud and we can be most proud to have in some way helped them in their life's journey. Thanks to Darryl Imperator, HS principal for his presence and help.

(cont'd on page 16)



Welcome Back, VC!



"I certainly hope that all the branches of the VC family will have a very successful school year."

24th Annual Retiree Luncheon!

Wednesday,
September 6
12:30 pm
at
Camillo's
Crossroads
Restaurant

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

—Caveat

Each year I remind you all (and myself!) that the thoughts and opinions, the views and the comments in this space are mine and do not necessarily reflect the views of the State Ed Dept, the district, NYSUT, or the VCTA. Also, I am grateful to the VCTA for allowing this retiree voice to be heard. (Perhaps, Tim, this voice will become less strident as it becomes ever more ancient!)

—The 24th Annual Retiree Luncheon!!

The luncheon will be held on Wednesday, September 6 at Camillo's Crossroads Restaurant at 12:30 pm. A summer

Musings is presently being sent out (7/24) with all the information. Last year 100 retirees attended. It's a great time to rekindle old friendships and to share the old stories, some true, some partially true and some splendid fabrications. I'll report on this gala in October.

—Condolences

To the family of Bill Cocks, 22 year principal of our middle school and one of VC's true gentlemen. His talents and his counsel will be sorely missed.

Thanks, Meghan, for deciphering my rambling thoughts. Be well. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

—Amen

It's great to be back chatting with all of you. Welcome again to the new members of the VC family and thanks for turning to the back pages. And until next time, keep pushing back the barriers of ignorance in whatever venue life finds you. Peace.

~ Kevin McFadden

Retiree Representative

Problems for Central Office?: What to do....

If you have an issue for Central Office contact the appropriate superintendent and Tim Brown, Patti Lunden, or Rich Steger.

Contact Information for Central Office:

Name/ Email Address:	Questions Concerning:
Dr. Richard Hooley— rhooley@vcso.ouboces.org	Any questions or concerns that do not fit the following
Christina Howe— chowe@vcso.ouboces.org	Business Office—payroll, TRS, insurance, purchasing
John Hunter— jhunter@vcso.ouboces.org	Curriculum & Instruction—prof. dev., mentoring, credits
Sheila Lease-Murphy— smurphy@vcso.ouboces.org	Human Resources—teacher files, salary contract agreements, leave requests

Tentative Committee Assignments for 2006-07

Newsletter Editor: Meghan Riley

Dental and Optical Trust: Sandy Strauss (MS)

Scholarship: Mary Bleau (MS)

Kathy Bordone (W)

Lori Myerson (W)

Bob Jurgens (HS)

Elections: Doug Straebler (HS)

Echoes Articles:

Berea: TBA

East Coldenham: Denise Pagliocca

Maybrook: Donna Lloyd

Montgomery: Chris Brand

Walden: Patty Joy

Middle School: Joe Collins

High School: Mindy Kane

Budget Vote Analysis: Sandy Strauss, Joe DeVenuto (MS)

Mid-Hudson Teacher Center: Jane Dionne

Professional Development: Rich Steger (W)

Laurie Hey (MS)

Mary Bleau (MS)

Kitty Sarro (Mont)

Denise Pagliocca (EC)

Linda Siegel (Maybrook)

Patti Lunden (HS)

TBA Berea

(retirees)

Phone Bank: Bob Jurgens, Mindy Kane, Doug Straebler (HS)

Tammy Coleman (MS)

Sandy Tarallo (Maybrook)

Kevin McFadden (Retiree)

Refreshments: Meghan Riley

Defensive Driving: Carol DeMicco (Berea)

Grievance: Laurie Hey (MS)

Committee of 100: Tim Brown (HS)

Teachers Retirement System:

Patty Joy (W)

Patti Lunden (HS)

Rich Steger (Alternate)

Tim Brown (Alternate)

Robin Scott (Alternate)

Membership Reporting:

John Bonagura (EC)

Holly Bacon (EC)

Erin Davis (Berea)

Financial Controls: Kevin McFadden

Correspondence: Eileen Purcell (HS)

Diane Ruggles (HS)

Carolyn Zayas (HS)

Antoinette Oakes (HS)

VOTE/COPE: Robin Scott (Berea)

Arline Friedman

VOTE/COPE Building Coordinators:

Berea: Erin Davis

High School: Eileen Purcell

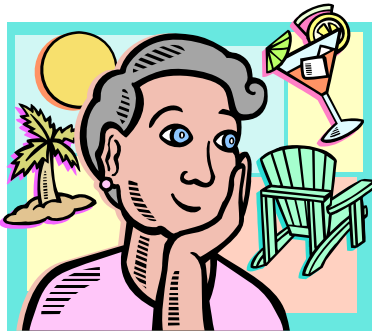
Middle School: Tammy Coleman

Walden: Mary Ellen Mangiamele

EC: Holly Bacon

Maybrook: Donna Lloyd

Montgomery: Gail Nozell



*Did you know that the
New York State Teacher's Retirement System
isn't just for Retirement?*

You are entitled to many benefits right now!

Find out how you can best utilize your NYSTRS
and plan for your financial future.

The VCTA invites all members of the NYSTRS to attend a “Mid-Career Pre-Retirement Seminar”

*intended for an audience of members
with more than 10 years to go before they can retire.
(age 25 until ?...depending on when you began teaching)*

**Don't wait until you're old and grey
to find out how you can benefit from
one of the strongest retirement systems in the world.**

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

Advertising Section

Ads that appear in the VC ECHOES are seen by the 900 members of the VC Educational Community and their households.
If you would like to advertise in the next issue of the VC ECHOES, use the form below.

VALLEY CENTRAL TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

1175 Route 17 K

Montgomery, NY 12549

Tel./Fax: (845) 457-5899

VC ECHOES

ADVERTISEMENT CONTRACT APPLICATION

Business Name _____

Contact Name _____

Address _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Issues ad is to appear in: Oct. _____, Dec. _____, Feb. _____, April _____,

Retiree Issue (May) _____, June _____

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

**Please attach scanner ready ad sketched design.*

Size

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

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

By signing this contract you agree to the following:

We = VCTA, You = advertiser

1) We reserve the right to deny an application without explanation. We do not accept applications for political advertisements, lest they be considered endorsements. We also reserve the right to cease publishing any ad at any time, refunding any money prepaid for publication. We do not accept advertisements from those who attack the AFL-CIO, AFT, NYSUT, or the VCTA.

2) We reserve the right to choose the ads published according to space available per issue, refunding any prepaid money should we choose not to publish the ad in a given issue. Should you choose to terminate this contract prior to its fulfillment, you will be refunded money prepaid for issues not yet printed on the date of termination.

3) You agree to provide scanner ready art for the ad or pay the first time set up fee. Should you choose to change your design from a previously submitted design, you agree to provide scanner ready art or be subjected to the set up fee again. The set up fee is applicable to each design rather than business.

4) You will receive the page on which your advertisement appears from each issue in which it is published as proof that it was published by fax or mail. You understand the entire issue is provided only to members, however it can be viewed on the VCTA website: www.frontiernet.net/~vcta

5) We reserve the right to change the date of publication within 2 calendar weeks.

6) You agree to prepay by cash or check (*payable to the Valley Central Teachers' Association*) for the advertisement(s) upon acceptance of this application. You understand that if we owe you a refund due to conditions #1 or #2, you will receive a refund check after the publication of the issue from which your ad was omitted with notification that it was omitted.

7) You understand that this contract expires at the end of the school year. You will receive an application for the next year's issues at the end of the contract year. You will be given preference as a returning customer at the discretion of the editor.

Signature

Please return this form with ad to be scanned or information to: Meghan Riley, VCTA, 1175 Rte. 17K, Montgomery, NY 12549

Ad can be e-mailed to vcta@frontiernet.net and then check/form sent under separate cover.

Advertising Section

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.



Rob Sassi (VCHS)

Sells Real Estate!!!

Thinking of selling?

Spotted a house you like?

For Personal Professional Service

Give Rob a call!

Home Office # (845) 361-1588



Curabba Realty

129 Wickham Avenue
Middletown, New York 10940
Office (845) 343-1464 x253
Toll Free 1-800-511-1464 x253
Fax (845) 344-3300

Each Office Is Independently Owned And Operated

Robert C. Sassi
Licensed Real Estate Professional



Robin Briand

INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT

459 Goodwill Road

Montgomery, NY 12549

Home: (845) 457-4063

Office: (845) 457-2400 Ext. 6610

rbriand@HVC.RR.com

Memory Keeping at Its Best



R.J. Smith Realty

Bus. (845) 561-2095 x-402

E-mail: markjtierney@rjsmithrealty.com

730 Broadway, Newburgh, NY 12550

MARK J. TIERNEY

Associate Broker

**REAL ESTATE
SOLUTIONS**
"Our companies open doors for you!"



**Valley
Central**
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION



**Valley Central Federal
Credit Union**

is a non-profit organization owned
by you and operated solely,
"For Your Best Interest".

Here at the credit union you will
receive personalized service. We are
here to address all your financial
needs, so be sure to take advantage
of our services. If you are not a
member, we invite you to fill out a
membership application to join
our credit union family.

*"Where people are worth more
than money."*

17 Walnut Street

Montgomery, NY 12549

(845) 457-5592/457-5862

FAX: (845) 457-3197

HOURS: 8 AM-5 PM

Advertising Section

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.



Service Center, Inc.
24 Hour Towing Specialists
(845) 457-5520

Bob Reynolds, Manager

****Special Discount for VC Employees****

Present your VC ID badge
 at time of payment to save 10%!!!

- | | |
|-----------|--------------------|
| -Tune Ups | -NYS Inspections |
| -Brakes | -Oil Changes- |
| -Exhausts | -Lube, oil, filter |

Just south of I-84, 2040 Rt. 208, Montgomery

The Personal Advisors of
Ameriprise
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Andrew Buscetto
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 with the practice of
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Mazzetti and Associates
 A financial advisory practice of
 Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc.
 25 Market Street, Suite 501
 Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
 Bus: 845.454.3021
 Fax: 845.454.0737
 andrew.x.buscetto@ampf.com

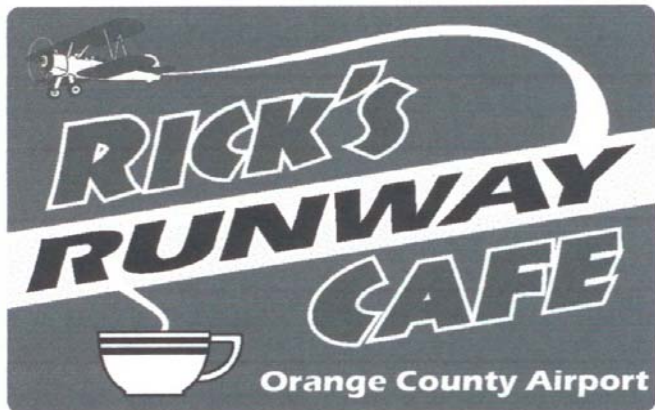
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MARY KAY®

Gheri Cola
 Independent Beauty Consultant

60 Maple Ave
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 (845) 567-6306
 gcola@marykay.com



(845) 457-6323

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

VALLEY CENTRAL
TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



1175 State Route 17K
Montgomery, NY 12549
Tel./Fax: (845) 457-5899

WE'RE ON THE WEB!!

WWW.VCTA.NET

President, Timothy Brown (HS) VM 7613
Vice President, Richard Steger (Walden) VM 5648
Vice President, Patti Lunden (HS) VM 7664
Secretary, Laurie Hey (MS) VM 6646
Treasurer, John Bonagura (EC) VM 2604

VCTA Executive Council Building Representatives

- Berea: Erin Davis, Robin Sinclair-Scott, Carol DeMicco
- East Coldenham: Holly Bacon, Denise Pagliocca
- Maybrook: Donna Lloyd, Sandy Tarallo
- Montgomery: Chris Brand, Gail Nozell, Jane Dionne, Mike Gonzales (alternate)
- Walden: Kathy Bordone, Patricia Joy, Mary Ellen Mangiamiele, Lori Myerson
- Middle School: Mary Bleau, Tammy Coleman, Joe Collins, Joe DeVenuto, Sandy Strauss
- High School: Bob Jurgens, Mindy Kane, Antoinette Oakes, Eileen Purcell, Meghan Rilley, Diane Rugles, Doug Straebler, Carolyn Zayas, Glenn Taylor
- Secretarial Representative: Lucy Fox (HS)
- Paraprofessional Representative: Kathy Lennon (W)

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 September 22, 2006.

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

Need to find an important date or information about benefits, even curriculum resources?

Check out the new VCTA web site at www.vcta.net!!

A New Year and New Beginnings...

Time seems to fly ever faster each year. It is hard to believe that another school year is upon us! For me, it is harder still to believe that I am not teaching this year, at least not in the classroom. I have a brand new little student, Liam, who I will be focusing on this year at home!

This year is a critical one politically for education. New Yorkers have the opportunity to vote in many important elections this September and November, the repercussions of which educators will feel for years to come. Among the critical contests is the race for US Congress. NYSUT's endorsements are primarily based upon a candidate's voting record on education, health and labor issues. NYSUT has made an unprecedented early endorsement for John Hall—US Congress, District 19. On September 12th, John Hall will face opponents in the Democratic primary and on November 7th will hopefully challenge Sue Kelly in the general election. Sue Kelly has an abysmal voting record when it comes to education, health and labor issues. For more information on John Hall and other NYSUT candidates, visit vcta.net and select John Hall's link on the home page and visit the VOTE-COPE page for a full listing of NYSUT endorsements.

As a new mother, I am even more concerned (if possible!) with the future of public education in New York State than I already was as an educator. It is a high-ranking issue in my personal hierarchy when choosing candidates. It is very exciting to know that we have an opportunity to effect real change in Albany this year. By doing so, we can provide our students and our children with new opportunities and challenges in the years to come.

I urge everyone to take advantage of this chance and vote in their respective primaries on September 12th and in the general election on November 7th.

Welcome to all of the new members of the VC family and welcome back to all the veterans! It's going to be a great year!

~Meghan Rilley