

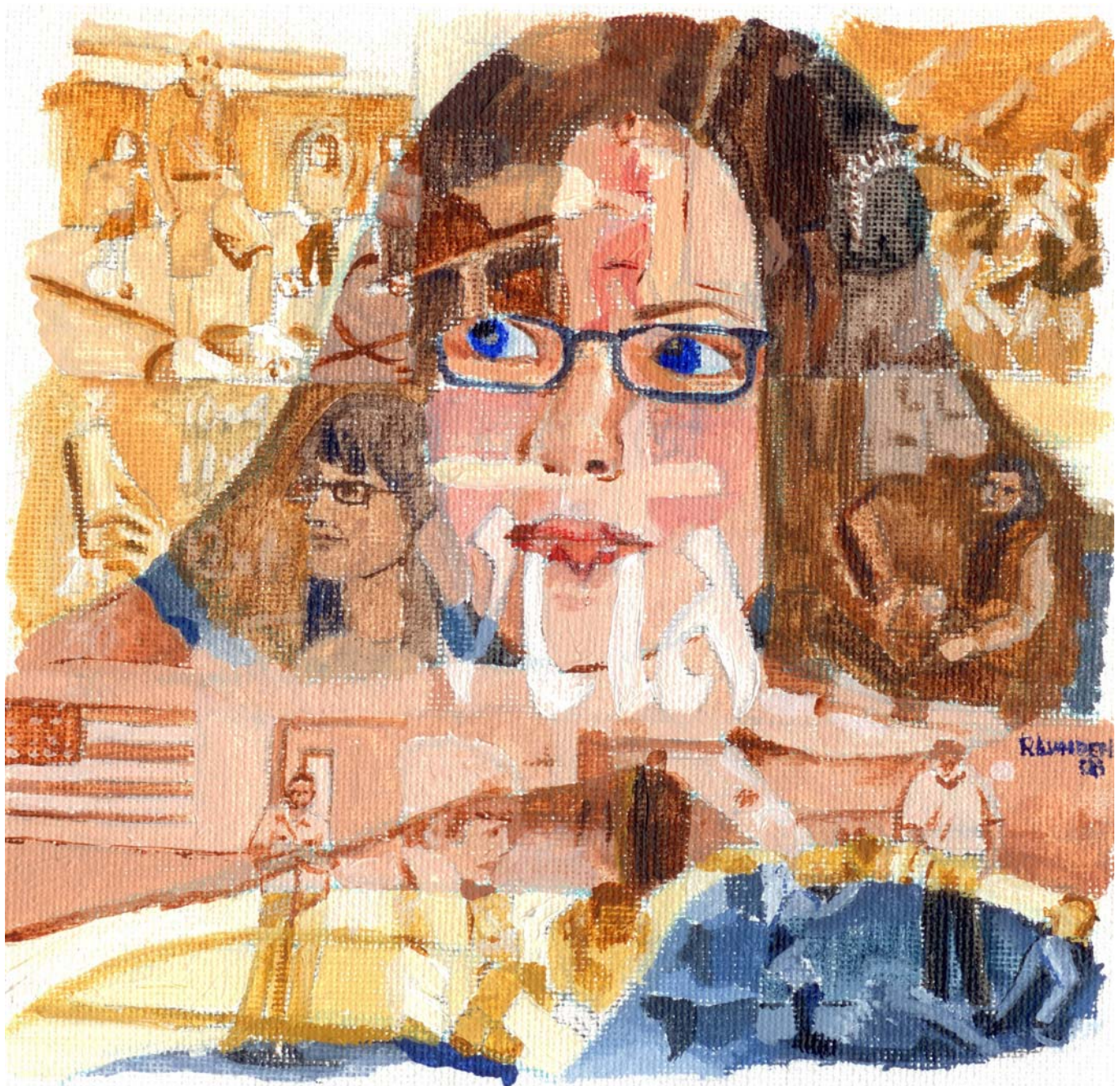
VC ECHOES

Volume 11, Issue 1

Valley Central Teachers' Association

September, 2008

"PUTTING CHILDREN CENTER"





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September, 2008

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*VC Echoes is
a NYSUT
and AFT
Award-
winning Pub-
lication!*

Valley Central Teachers' Association 1175 State Route 17K Montgomery, NY 12549

VCTA Officers:

President, Timothy Brown (HS) VM 7613
Vice Pres., Richard Steger (Walden) VM 5648
Vice Pres., Patti Lunden (HS) VM 7664
Secretary, Laurie Hey (MS) VM 6646
Treasurer, Erin Davis (B) VM 1636

Executive Council Building Representatives

• Berea: Donna Clark, Lisa Daily, Robin Sinclair-Scott, Maura Crown (A)
• East Coldenham: Sandy Carroll, Mary Devitt, Cathi Heil
• Maybrook: Linda Draughn, Donna Lloyd
• Montgomery: Brian Ackley, Gail Nozell, Melinda Sulzbach
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Want to Contribute to the Next Issue?
*Article contributions or Letters to the Editor
should be sent to
Meghan Riley, HS, by September 19th, 2008*

• High School: Bob Jurgens, Pete Meisel, Christine Mello, Antoinette Oakes, Diane Ruggles, Jennie Sexton, Keith Sexton, Carolyn Zayas, Lisa Aguilera (A), Jedd Beukelman (A), Meghan Riley (A), Melissa Verlin (A)
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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.

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

About the Cover: "Putting Children Center"

This cover is a painting that is actually made up of ten images. There is an image of a young girl who has taken a moment to reflect on the book that she has been reading. There are nine 2"x2" paintings within this image. Together and separately, these images represent the motto of the VCTA, "putting children center." This motto is the "litmus" test of our union leadership. How do we put children center? By questioning the motives of decisions we make we honor this motto. We know that it takes everyone in this district to keep children center, the focus of all our efforts.

Within this image are several scenes: an image of a softball game, an elementary Physical Education lesson, an environmental lesson with an alligator, a food service worker, a secretary, a classroom teacher, a principal in a reading group, a custodian and the VCTA logo. There are so many more images that could have been utilized—this is just a sampling.

Each one of us at Valley Central offer our students so many opportunities to learn and to grow on so many different levels. We envision a district where every person employed is valued, and where every valued person understands the weight of the responsibility entrusted to them by our community. We literally hold the future of our community in our hands daily as we shape the lives of the children of Valley Central.

This painting was done by Patti Lunden, VP. The original is a 6"x6" acrylic painting on canvas paper that combines 10 distinct images. Images for this painting were gathered from the artist's personal collection, from the VCTA website, the VCSD websites and from royalty free clip art images.

Welcome Back

There is no greater hope in education than the thought of a new September. September is the renewal of ...everything. Our custodial and maintenance crews have repaired and cleaned our classrooms making them shiny and like new. Offices are stocked with fresh chalk and dry erase markers, pencils and index cards. Copy machines, like the teaching staff, have had a well-deserved rest. We all begin the year anticipating that first day...those new students and all the great things we will achieve.

Then September turns into October which blends into December which melts into February and once April hits...well, we know it's the beginning of the end. Year after year we cycle through our school years. As one year blends into another, it is most important to remember that no matter if this is our first year, fifth year, fifteenth year, or twenty-fifth year...this is the most important year to our students.

This summer at a graduation party, there was a circle of VC students sitting on a lawn talking with great anticipation about where they will be going in Fall 08. They named off schools like SUNY, CUNY, Brown, Bucknell, RPI, Springfield, MIT, etc. They aspire to be teachers, doctors, lawyers, physical therapists and engineers to name a few vocations. While these students' end goals may change as they grow into adults, they are leaving Valley Central strong, confident and extremely enthusiastic young men and women. Remember, the subject matter did not make these students successful, it was the delivery and what took place in between the curricula from Kindergarten through 12th grade. Their success and desire is from the love of children and the passion for learning that is evident in classrooms across the District every day. The amazing thing in listening to them talk, was the realization that they are going forward with great anticipation because of the work of Valley Central staff who put them center every day.

Whether you step into your classroom for



Sweet September has come again! What a great year this will be!

the first time or the thirtieth time this September, be aware of the anticipation you feel...the hope that you harbor. Hold on to it tightly as the months begin to wear on you, and recall that feeling when you start to wonder mid-year, "Do I really make a difference?" The answer is YES! You make a difference in the life of a child everyday. What an awesome honor and responsibility. From Kindergarten (actually, beginning this year, pre-Kindergarten) until senior year there are so many lessons to teach and learn and each one of them makes a difference.

We have been entrusted with the best our community has to offer us, their children. It is our charge to help them transform from the kids in our classrooms to young adults journeying far and wide with hope for and anticipation of the future. On behalf of the VCTA, we wish you a wonderful school year filled with great achievement.

~ Patti Lunden and Rich Steger, VPs

Does your retirement measure up?

Average 401(k) account balances for age groups:

20s: \$24,169

30s: \$50,930

40s: \$91,848

50s: \$137,766

60s: \$140,957

bankrate.com

Did You Know?

According to fidelity.com a 65-year-old couple retiring today would need \$215,000 set aside just to pay for medical expenses over a 20-year span

To E-mail or Not to E-mail...that is the Question!

This year we all received an internet usage agreement to sign along with our salary agreements. When you signed that document you basically agreed to only use the internet available through school for school-related business.

When the District introduced work e-mail years ago, one of the concerns of the VCTA membership was how much it would add to our daily workload. At first, we advised that members need only check their work e-mail a few times a week. Certainly some members still adhere to that schedule, but a good number check their e-mails daily, if not several times daily, both at work and at home. Like cell phones, e-mail has become an electronic necessity. It is important to be cognizant of a few points:

- **Your work e-mail is owned by the taxpayers of the district and the state and is totally TRANSPARENT. Your e-mail can be “FOILED” by any taxpayer. When using your e-mail, always bear in mind that what you are saying in print could be published publicly.**
- **Your e-mail account is meant for school business and not personal use. Be aware of who has your e-mail address and what they might be sending you through your school e-mail.**

All of our supplies and equipment are provided by state and local tax dollars. Therefore, any taxpayer can view your e-mail account under the Freedom of Information Law. And deleting your e-mail won't hide anything. Deleted e-mails can be recreated—look at the internet usage policy you just signed—it says so in black and white. Be sure to remain professional in using your account. Your school e-mail account would be the wrong place for

those Internet jokes that get forwarded from well-intentioned friends. Save those for your home e-mail. Your e-mail account should not be used for anything but school business—period. Don't set up an E-bay account with it or use it to complete your online graduate courses.

- **You should exercise caution when communicating with parents through e-mail.**

The great thing about e-mail is it is a quick way to communicate. We all tend to type out fast e-mails without worrying too much about capitalization, spelling or grammar. Often our thoughts can get way ahead of fingers and while we may think that we said one thing—we may actually skip or add words that may be interpreted differently by the reader. NYSUT has cautioned that members be careful in how we respond in e-mails—especially to parents. VCTA members have already found themselves in situations where they had to defend what they meant or didn't mean in an e-mail to a parent. When we speak to someone on the phone we can immediately interpret meaning from tone and inflection of the voice. That is all lost in e-mail. Probably the best course of action in responding to a parent by e-mail is to acknowledge receipt of the e-mail and offer your voicemail extension and the best time to reach you during the day so that the conversation can be had by phone.

Remember you didn't have to read this article on paper. It is available in cyberspace on the VCTA website (www.vcta.net). To infinity and beyond!



~ Patti Lunden, HS, VP

*“And deleting
your e-mail
won't hide
anything.”*

*Deleted e-mails
can be
recreated...”*

Politics as Usual

This summer the NYS Senate passed a tax-cap bill promoted by the Governor. Many of these Senators had previously openly professed the limitations and shortsightedness of this proposed legislation, indicating that it would never pass. So why did many of these Senators vote yes? The obvious answer is politics, votes, and a lack of integrity. Telling people that you are face-to-face with what they want to hear can make that particular day much easier for the deceiver. Ignoring facts, if these facts will cost you votes or necessitate a proactive work ethic that requires one to educate constituents regarding the truth, is also inconvenient at times. A "tax-cap" is an emotionally appealing concept. Who would possibly say no to such an overdue public safety measure? Unfortunately, the politics driving tax-cap legislation are very similar to the politics that often drive other aspects of education or other publicly funded programs.

To illustrate, consider the "No Child Left Behind" legislation. The title alone virtually assures that this legislation will initially be embraced by all; otherwise, dissenters risk ridicule and accusations of insensitivity and elitism. After all, to not embrace NCLB must mean that one wishes "children to be left behind." Similarly, a failure to embrace extreme inclusion (the politically correct direction we seem to be heading regardless of facts) must mean that one wishes to "exclude" certain children, separating them from their friends and peers, permanently scarring them for life, eliminating any chance they may have for success. As you can see, it is all in the presentation. Life is often a game of semantics that manipulates emotions without regard to the truth or facts.

The truth behind the Senate tax-cap vote is that many of these politicians voted yes to look good in the eyes of their constituents (i.e., politically correct), while simultaneously assuming that the NYS Assembly would reject the Senate's bill by voting no or submitting a bill of their own. This Senate vote represents the lack of ethics that many of us have come to expect from a disproportionate number of

our elected officials. A tax-cap is a wonderful concept; who could argue with semantics that promise to keep taxpayer money in taxpayers' pockets by relieving the tax burden currently placed on property owners?

Property tax laws are certainly unjust and, in my opinion, unconstitutional since property taxes do not consider one's income. Income tax laws are certainly unjust and, in my opinion, unconstitutional since these tax laws favor the rich while simultaneously draining the life-force from the middle class. I am quite confident that I could survive on 65% of a \$1 million annual salary as easily as I could survive on 65% of a \$100,000 annual salary. In fact, one might suspect that one could do considerably better with a \$650,000 take-home pay than with a \$65,000 take-home pay. Yet our income tax laws are written such that the \$1 million income pays a smaller percentage in taxes than the \$100,000 income, realistically never losing the same 35% of income to taxes. What a country...if you're rich! Another unjust and, in my opinion, unconstitutional tax law involves the disproportionate amount of property that does not get taxed due to loop-holes in our current system. New York State currently has over \$552 billion dollars of tax exempt property owned by, for example, various religious groups, scouting organizations, etc. I am not convinced that religious or scouting organizations need thousands of acres to carry out their various activities. The communities in which these organizations purchase land and property often suffer devastating losses in revenue, making it impossible to properly sustain local infrastructure and schools. I cite these examples merely to make the point that an arbitrary tax-cap without providing alternative funding solutions is nothing more than political grandstanding and scapegoating. Shame on the members of the NYS Senate who were a party to this!

The bill passed by the NYS Assembly, on the other hand, attempts to create property tax relief while simultaneously recouping lost revenue through Albany.

(cont'd on pg 6)

Politics as Usual (cont'd from pg 5)

The property tax relief bill passed by the Assembly is called a Circuit Breaker. Following is some information from NYSUT regarding this proposed legislation that will hopefully inform each of you as to the truth behind the emotional semantics.

What is a Circuit Breaker? How Does it Work?

- A circuit breaker is a tax rebate or credit that limits a taxpayer's total property taxes to a percentage of their household income.
- A property tax circuit breaker would protect homeowners from a property tax bill that is too high relative to their household income.
- The state sets a maximum percentage of income that a household is expected to pay in property taxes. When a property tax bill exceeds that percentage the state—through a circuit breaker—reduces property taxes in excess of this level.

Why a Circuit Breaker? Tax fairness for all taxpayers! A circuit breaker would:

- Provide immediate relief to those who need it the most— seniors and low and middle-class homeowners .
- Make the overall tax system more progressive.
- Provide tax relief without harming the quality of education or jeopardizing funding for crucial public services.
- It is a more equitable system of taxation, not just controlled spending or a one time benefit.

Public Support:

- 75 percent of voters back a Circuit Breaker that would limit property taxes to a percentage of homeowners' incomes and fund that break through a tax on millionaires.
- A poll conducted by a tax policy group (TREND NY) showed that voters overwhelmingly support legislation that would limit a taxpayer's total property taxes rather than a cap on school taxes.

Why Not a Traditional Tax Cap?

- It is “regressive” because it is based on property value regardless of your income (ability to pay).
- It will at best limit future tax increases; taxes will still rise.
- There is already a “contingency budget” mechanism in place.

Doesn't New York Already Have a Circuit Breaker?

- Yes, but it has the lowest maximum income for eligibility compared to other states—homeowner household incomes must be less than \$18,000. The maximum benefit is \$375 for seniors and \$75 for those residents under age 65.
- STAR—The STAR tax relief program enacted last year, rebates taxpayers based on household income but does not consider the size of a household's property tax bills relative to income.

Is There a Legislative Proposal to Expand New York's Circuit Breaker?

- Yes, among the proposals is legislation that would cap the maximum real property tax paid by New Yorkers who have a household income of \$250,000 or less. Homeowners would receive an income tax credit equal to 70 percent of the taxes paid over an allowed percentage cap. The property tax percentage cap would adjust from 6 to 8 percent, according to income.

(cont'd on pg 7)



Politics as Usual (cont'd from pg 6)

What would the Governor and Senate's proposal mean for education funding?

- The state and local school districts share the cost of public education. The primary source of local revenue for education is the property tax.
- The state has not paid its full share of the cost of adequate and reliable state aid for educating children and providing necessary supports.
- In 2007 the State's portion of aid to education was down to 44.3 % from 48.2 % in 2002.
- A tax cap does nothing to prevent public service costs beyond localities' control from rising much faster than the cap (employee health insurance costs, special education costs, and the high gas cost of heating buildings and operating school buses).
- Strong state aid has helped school districts hold down proposed tax increases—average proposed increases this year were down by almost half from two years ago (i.e., 3.3 percent vs. 5.9 percent in 2006-07).
- A tax cap will not lower taxes or prevent them from going up, they will go up.
- Tax caps, if enacted in 2004, would have cost NY schools \$1.3 billion in funding over the past 4 years.
- A cap already exists: contingency budgets.

How does a tax cap affect education issues?

- A cap will undo progress made toward achieving funding equity across school districts. Through the new "foundation formula" the State has begun to address these inequities and begin to close the achievement gap.
- Studies have found evidence that property tax caps lead to lower student test scores and higher dropout rates.

How do tax caps disproportionately hurt lower-income school districts and communities?

- State aid covers a much smaller portion of school budgets in wealthier communities and much larger portions in needy school districts.
- Lower-income communities, whose students need the most help to reach higher standards, are less able to have the votes to override property tax caps—leaving them even worse off and widening the achievement gap.

What else should we know?

- A tax cap takes away the voice of voters—New Yorkers *have* and *want to keep* local control.
- When asked to choose between quality schools and lower taxes, New Yorkers repeatedly choose investing in their public schools. This year, voters approved nearly 93 percent of school budgets statewide. In fact, voters approved 84.3 percent of budgets with tax increases greater than 4 percent proposed by the Property Tax Commission.

In other states:

- Similar caps have failed in Massachusetts and other states because they do not address rising costs beyond the control of school districts, inevitably leading to cuts to education programs that serve children and other public services.
- In California, Proposition 13 destroyed the quality of public education and led to disastrous cuts in programs and harmful increases in class size.

Urge your representatives to present responsible solutions such as the Circuit Breaker legislation. Visit the VCTA's Legislative Action page and follow the Circuit Breaker links to send a message to your Senate and Assembly representatives. Join NYSUT members who are urging leaders in Albany to NOT cap our children's future.

⇒ http://vcta.net/legislative_action.htm (or)

⇒ <http://www.nysut.org/cps/rde/xchg/nysut/hs.xsl/contactelectedofficials.htm>

—Tim Brown, HS

Health Insurance 5% Contribution Rates Sept-Dec

The health plans per pay amount is based on 8 payments for the 4 months of Sept-Dec 2008. From Jan-June we pay for 8 months over 12 pays. Please remember, we are paying for July and August during the January through June pays.

MVP, Empire, and GHI will change in January 2009. New premium amounts will be given to members when known. Remember, our employee contribution for this year is 5%.

⇒ INDECS Individual= \$15.48	⇒ INDECS Family = \$33.65
⇒ MVP Individual = \$12.49	⇒ MVP Family = \$32.36
⇒ Empire Individual = \$14.85	⇒ Empire Family = \$131.06
⇒ GHI Individual = \$14.21	⇒ GHI Family = \$85.41

If you have any questions, please contact Rich Steger or Patti Lunden at the union office, 457-5899.

KNOW YOUR CONTRACT...

UNION SPOTLIGHT



Did you know that you will be paid an additional stipend if you achieve National Board Certification? See CBA, Article XIX, Section D for full details!

If you are interested...

New Guide Helps Members Navigate National Board Certification: The latest version of a joint AFT-NEA publication on National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification is now available. The 2008-2009 edition of "A Guide to Understanding National Board Certification" demystifies the certification process by translating its rigorous requirements into manageable tasks that are clearly explained. A link to this publication can be found on the forms page of our website: www.vcta.net.

How to Reach Your
Union Officers:

457-5899

(union office)

The office is located at
Valley Central High
School, next to the
side entrance.

Valley Central's Tenure Recipients: 2008

School:

Berea

East Coldenham

Maybrook

Montgomery

Walden

Middle School

High School

Name:

Tara Hart

Patricia Steinhilber

Mary Devitt

Doreen McGrath

Mary Ann Norman

Rachel Friedman

Christine Reese

Brian Ackley

Angela Ciruzzi

Christine Fredell

Kelly Harrison

Dawn Salony

Nancy Donaldson

Susanne Driscoll

Suzanne Eastwood

Nancy Phelps

Lisa Coney

Derek DeVoe

Casey Doty

Jeffrey Schaper

Kevin Wentworth

Tenure Area:

Elementary Education

Elementary Education

PreK, K, Gr. 1-6

Elementary Education

Special Education

Elementary Education

Physical Education

Music

Elementary Education

Remedial Reading

Pre-K, K, Gr. 1-6

Childhood 1-6

School Media Specialist

Elementary Education

Remedial Reading

Elementary Education

Home Economics

Pre-K, K, 1-6

Mathematics

Biology

Social Studies

Congratulations!

Important Information

The 2008 IRS rate for mileage reimbursement is:
50.5 cents per mile.

(Please note that this is an increase from 2007)



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..."

WILL YOU BE RETIRING THIS YEAR?

Check out the new video on the NYSTRS website. It is called "Countdown to Retirement" and gives suggestions to follow each month of this last school year!

The new schedule for fall prereirement seminars will be posted in mid-September at:

www.nystrs.org/main/preret.html

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

The District's Worker's Compensation carrier is:

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

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

Marvin Anderman is a Worker's Compensation attorney. His phone number is (212) 227-2300.

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

VCTA FALL FEST 2008

Date: Friday, October 17th

Place: Otterkill Country Club

Time: 2:45pm

Cost: \$5.00 for active members

\$13.00 for Retirees and non-members

MUSIC! FOOD! FUN! PRIZES!



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 2008 t-shirt (*t-shirt money is a direct donation*)
- ♥ Decide to walk on October 19th 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 19, 2008 at 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: Janine Maridou

Looking for Something? Find it on www.vcta.net!

Health Insurance Articles (Do I have to take buyout? Health FAQs)	Select <i>Health & Finance</i> ⇒ <i>Health Insurance</i> , and there is a link at the bottom of the page to the articles
CAF 125 Plan Article	Select <i>News & Outreach</i> ⇒ <i>ECHOES Newsletter</i> , and select the September 2006 edition, article on pg 5
Committee Assignments for Building Reps	Select <i>Local Information</i> ⇒ <i>Executive Council and Committee Lists</i> , scroll down to Committee Assignments
Calendar of Events (including Executive Council Meetings)	Select <i>Local Information</i> ⇒ <i>Announcements and Calendar of Events</i>
Need a Form? Writing a child care leave letter? Many forms and templates are available on the site!	Select <i>Local Information</i> ⇒ <i>Forms, Letters, FAQs</i> , lists follow
New Member? Great resources for you!	Select <i>Local Information</i> ⇒ <i>New Members</i> , there are many useful links!

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@vcsd.ouboces.org	Any questions or concerns that do not fit the following
Stephen Bangert--- sbangert@vcsd.ouboces.org	Business Office—payroll, TRS, insurance, purchasing
John Hunter--- jhunter@vcsd.ouboces.org	Curriculum & Instruction—prof. dev., mentoring, credits
Sheila Lease-Murphy--- smurphy@vcsd.ouboces.org	Human Resources—teacher files, salary contract agreements, leave requests

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

☛Welcome Back Valley Central!

I can't believe I am writing the September column early!! That has to be a first for this scribe who has raised procrastination to an art form. I hope that Meghan will not suffer from shock in receiving these thoughts early. Today is the 31st of July, and the deadline for the column is August 15th. Wonders indeed will never cease. A special word of warm welcome to those new to the VC family.

☛Starting the Year Off Right

Haply (and happily) our active teachers begin this year with a new and timely contract. This indeed is joyful news. As I suggested in the June column, starting the school year with a fair contract in place is a real "leg-up" for a pleasant and successful school year. Valley Central teachers have always been hard workers. This "contract-pat-on-the-back" will further enhance this historic diligence. We retirees continue to support the efforts of our active compatriots. Have a great year.

☛Mac Update

In the annual "Mac is back" update, I take note of the swift passage of time. My (and Ginny's) grandchildren continue to grow like the proverbial weeds. Nate, now 13, has forsaken soccer for football in 8th grade. Meg is 12 and a dancer and actress in 7th grade. Joe (5 yrs.) and Claire (also 5 yrs.) begin kindergarten this year, Joe in Skaneateles and Claire in Pittsfield. Ian is two and still thinks his grandfather is relevant. What blessings and reminders of the lengthening (and fleeting) autumn years. I continue part-time teaching at the Mount—beginning my 51st year in the classroom. Again the immortal Vonnegut intones, "And so it goes."

☛The Yearly Caveat

If indeed you turn to the back pages, it is good to be reminded that these views and/or opinions are mine and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the State Education Department, the Valley Central School District, NYSUT, or VCTA. I am grateful to VCTA for allowing this occasionally pompous retiree voice to be heard in these pages.

☛Nobody Asked Me, But...

My favorite morning during the school year is Wednesday when the "Retired Old Men..." gather (all six or seven of us) at the 84 Diner to re-tell the old stories and to laugh anew. At these sessions, we are young again.

If you are ticked off at state problems with education, don't be hesitant about informing your legislators and/or the crowd at the State Education Department.

Be supportive of fellow teachers in other districts where there is labor strife and be supportive of union members in other fields during this difficult economic time where CEO's make big bucks and lay off faithful and long-standing workers.

Remember how important our profession is to the young men and women in our schools. We are men and women for others; the others are the students. Keep them center.

☛The Retiree Luncheon-

Information has been sent (as of 8/11). The luncheon this year will be at Spruce Lodge. The present plan is to have the luncheon on the traditional day—Wednesday after Labor Day and the first day of classes. Notices have gone out to approximately 225 retirees scattered around the country. Our number of attendees last year (c. 70) was down from the two preceding years. I'm hopeful that the number will climb again. We shall see. I'll report on the luncheon in the October issue.

☛Amen!

Thanks for turning once again to the back of the issue. It is a pleasure for me to talk to you through ECHOES. Again a special welcome for new staff people, administrators, and teachers. A successful and happy year to all. Until next time, keep pushing back the barriers of ignorance in whatever venue life finds you.

Peace!

—Kevin McFadden, Retiree Representative



Support Our Local Businesses!



DISCOUNTED AUTO AND HOME INSURANCE

As an employee of the Valley Central School District you are eligible for a reduction off the already competitive Auto and Home insurance through Travelers Insurance Group, a top rated carrier.

Get first-rate protection from the first company to insure against accidents in 1864. In addition to the group discount additional discounts apply: multiple policies, multiple vehicles, hybrid vehicles, accident prevention, anti-theft, anti-lock brakes, passive restraint, driver training, good student, student away at school, new home, protective home device, etc..

Enjoy personal service from local licensed insurance professionals that can maximize your insurance protection while reducing your costs. JOY INSURANCE AGENCY, Inc. is the Travelers administrator for the hard working educators of the Valley Central School District. As a member of the Valley Central School District you can count on receiving the right coverage at the best price from JOY INSURANCE.

Find out why your fellow educators are already enjoying the benefits of this unique plan. Call 342-4888 or just fax your policies to 342-9117. Policies can also be e-mailed to chris@joyinsurance.com

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www.vcfcu.com
E-mail:
vcfcu@frontiernet.net

Watch here for exciting news!

How are Credit Unions Different Than a Bank?

1. Members are the owners of the credit union.
2. The credit union is a nonprofit organization.
3. It is run by a local Board of Directors who are familiar with our members and their needs.

So, How Does This Affect You?

1. We are able to provide you with high quality services (see web page).
2. Friendly Service
3. Convenient hours with a central location within the school district.

Don't forget about the special discounts exclusively for VCTA members!

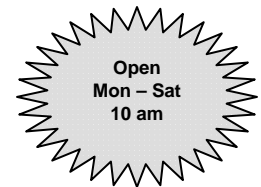
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Tickle Your Funny Bone: Teacher Applicant (circulating on the web, author unknown)

After being interviewed by the school administration, the eager teaching prospect said:
"Let me see if I've got this right...You want me to go into that room with all those kids and fill their every waking moment with a love of learning, and I'm supposed to instill a sense of pride in their ethnicity, modify their disruptive behavior, observe them for signs of abuse and even censor their T-shirt messages and dress habits.

You want me to wage a war on drugs and sexually transmitted diseases, check their backpacks for weapons of mass destruction, and raise their self esteem. You want me to teach them patriotism, good citizenship, sportsmanship, fair play, how to register to vote, how to balance a checkbook, and how to apply for a job.

I am to check their heads for lice, maintain a safe environment, recognize signs of anti-social behavior, make sure all students pass the state exams, even those who don't come to school regularly or complete any of their assignments.

Plus, I am to make sure that all of the students with handicaps get an equal education regardless of the extent of their mental or physical handicap. I am to communicate regularly with the parents by letter, telephone, newsletter, e-mail and report card.

All of this I am to do with just a piece of chalk, a computer, a few books, a bulletin board, a big smile AND on a starting salary that qualifies my family for food stamps! You want me to do all of this and then you tell me... I CAN'T PRAY!!! ARE YOU CRAZY? OR DO YOU JUST THINK I AM? !!!"

Welcome to all of the VCTA's New 2008 Members!!!



Congratulations, Debbie Calvino, Winner of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Teaching! VC had 3 winners this year. Look for full story in October.

