

VC ECHOES

Volume 13, Issue 3

Valley Central Teachers' Association

January 2011

CONGRATULATIONS, NANCY RYPKEMA!



NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHER

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

Valley Central Teachers' Association

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VCTA Officers:

President, Tim Brown (HS)
Vice Pres, Richard Steger (W)
Vice Pres., Patti Lunden (HS)
Secretary, Scott Warner (HS)
Treasurer, Jennie Sexton (HS)

**Contribute to the February issue!
Articles or
Contributions
should be sent to
Meghan Rilley, HS, by
21 January 2011**

Executive Council Building Representatives

•Berea: Lisa Daily, Robin Scott, Maura Crown
•E. Coldenham: Sandy Carroll, Cathi Heil
•Maybrook: Linda Draughn, Donna Lloyd
•Montgomery: Brian Ackley, Gail Nozell, Andrea Smyth
•Walden: Mary Ellen Kawauchi, Janet Malloy, JoAnn Sweikata
•Middle School: Chris Arndt, Sonya Berger, Mary Bleau, Tammy Coleman, Joe Collins, Frank Di Pasqua

•High School: Jedd Beukelman, Nancy Brother, Roberta Betanzos, Deborah McKenney, Christine Mello, Antoinette Oakes, Beverly Risco, Melissa Verlin, Keith Sexton (A)
•Secretarial Representative: JoAnn Cassisi (HS), Philomena Davis (MS)
•Paraprofessional Representative: Kathy Lennon (W)

The VC Echoes is the official publication of the Valley Central Teachers' Association—Local 3076—and is published regularly during the school year. Any articles submitted to the VC Echoes will also be posted on the VCTA web site.

Congratulations, Nancy!

National Board Certified Teacher

Congratulations are in order for Nancy Rypkema. Nancy is the first Valley Central Teacher to achieve National Board Certification. She accomplished this by completing a rigorous list of requirements including video analysis, tests, and accomplishments. The Valley Central Board recognized Nancy's achievement at the Board of Education meeting on January 10th at 6:30pm.

—Tammy Coleman, MS, Bldg Rep

Find out more about Nancy's accomplishment on page 5!

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

VC = Valley Central Cares!

Throughout September and October 2010, the Valley Central Community raised over \$5000 to combat cancer. The VCTA organized the sale of Making Strides t-shirts and LIVESTRONG bracelets. We made registration forms for the Making Strides Walk available throughout the VC community and many members walked to help battle breast cancer. We sold Ribbon cards and held a dress down to battle cancer. Part of the funds were donated to the Making Strides campaign of the American Cancer Society while the balance was donated to general cancer research through the American Cancer Society.

In addition to all this fundraising for ACS, there was an additional dress down sponsored to benefit the family of Wyatt Zingarelli, a VC student and son of a VCTA member. Wyatt is an 8th grade student who was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma in the beginning of the summer. His mother is Carol Ann Kronyak, a high school teacher. For six months, Wyatt went through surgery, chemo and radiation treatments. Happily, Wyatt was finally healthy enough to return to school in December. In October, a dress down was organized and held for the HS, MS and WES. On that day the HS and MS art departments wore t-shirts that proclaimed "Wyatt Rocks" in his honor.

The t-shirts sparked much inquiry especially among Wyatt's classmates in the 8th grade and that resulted in another fundraiser—the 8th grade art club approached advisors Kathy Foti and Jennifer Trojan and made over 100 more t-shirts to sell throughout the MS. They posted signs announcing Wyatt's return and students and teachers throughout the MS wore their shirts as they crowded the middle school lobby at 8am on December 8th to welcome Wyatt back to school. When the out-

reach report was made at the November VCTA Executive Council meeting and the story of the "Wyatt Rocks" shirts was told, Walden Elementary Building Representative, Mary Ellen Raskopf asked if the Walden teachers could also buy shirts since Wyatt had been a WES kid. By the end of the week, an additional 30 shirts were ordered by the WES staff—they wore their shirts on December 8th as did the HS and MS art teachers. The 8th grade art club made a \$250 profit on the shirt sale and presented Wyatt's mom, Carol Ann Kronyak, with gift cards for a ski trip made possible by the Make A Wish foundation. Wyatt is doing well and is happy (well, as happy as any 8th grade kid is) to be back to school.

In December, the VCTA held our annual holiday dress down to benefit the food pantry. In total, \$1635 was raised for the Montgomery Food Pantry. As we returned from holiday break, the VCTA community was called upon to come together for one of its members. Wendy Treiland, a paraprofessional at Walden Elementary lost her home and all its contents on Christmas morning to a terrible fire. Wendy's daughter and son are students at WES. The paraprofessional unit organized a dress down for January 7th which was postponed to the 10th due to the snow day. In total, VCTA members contributed \$3,810. The Walden building alone raised \$2405. The Valley Central community can always be counted on to care about each other and our community in good times and in bad.



—Patti Lunden,
VP, VCTA, HS
Art

MS Art Department:
Kathy Foti, Patti Lunden,
and Jennifer Trojan

In the News...

This issue's column focuses on current developments that affect teachers throughout New York State. In this installment of In the News..., VCTA President Tim Brown summarizes and comments on issues discussed in NYSUT UNITED, 1/11.



*Tim Brown
Tackles the
Issues*

Rich vs. Everyone Else: Nothing ever seems to change. "Is it simply coincidence that the very ones who demonize public servants, working families and unions are the very same ones who have amassed the greatest wealth during the worst recession?" (Iannuzzi, NU, 1/11, p. 3) Although public servants are, like other professions, a mixture of "sinners and saints," I find it incredibly insulting that perpetrators and recipients of unethical Wall Street activities responsible for our financial collapse get to frame the "blame message" simply because they have the money to do so due to their unethical behaviors.

VOTE-COPE: The above, of course, makes VOTE-COPE more important than ever. Corporate political contributions have skyrocketed after the Supreme Court's decision to eliminate common-sense limits to these super-powerful organizations. Corporate leaders would have you believe that unions control or have undue influence on politics; the truth is that a small percentage of Americans actually belong to a union today and that unions contribute only about one-tenth of the money that corporations provide each year. "We need everyone to contribute to compete and make sure our voice is heard." (Pallotta, NU, 1/11, p. 7) Please contribute during this year's VOTE-COPE drive. If you are already contributing, please consider increasing your contribution to \$100 per year—this is approximately \$4 per pay

"Please contribute during this year's VOTE-COPE drive. If you are already contributing, please consider increasing your contribution to \$100 per year."

check. If you wish to make this change now you can download the form at: <http://vcta.net/votecopec.htm>.

Cuts Pending: With a state budget deficit of over \$9 billion, cuts in education are inevitable. However, these cuts are being planned in conjunction with a potential tax-cap that would leave public school without adequate funding. \$1.7 billion was already cut in last year's budget, resulting in 9,500 lost positions, increased class

sizes and lost programs. "You can't drastically reduce state support and at the same time limit a local school district's ability to meet its educational obligations and not expect catastrophic results." (Iannuzzi, NU, 1/11, p. 5) Unfortunately, at this time there is no way to predict the outcome of education and teacher scapegoating. Both President Obama and Governor Cuomo seem to take solace in blaming public education for everything from poverty to the recent financial collapse...if only schools had done a better job with these CEOs when they were younger.

—Tim Brown, President, VCTA, HS, Health

Walden Elementary Holiday Craft Fair

On December 3, 2010 the annual Holiday Craft Fair took place at Walden Elementary. This fair is an over 25 year tradition. All items are priced from 5 cents to 5 dollars, once again keeping with tradition, to give the students an affordable place to shop. The years have seen changes though. Once upon a time, gingerbread houses were made as our high ticket items. Now we have wreaths and such. The picture depicts this year's helpers for that special project night. A good time of work and general camaraderie took place. As a result of this night and the many hours of work by others making crafts, the children once again enjoyed their day of shopping.



Pictured Above Are: Janeane Patterson, Sheila Murphy, Kathy Lennon, Wenda Heaney, Kathy Caltavuturo, Michelle DiPerro, Eileen Panagiotopolos, Lori Velez, Danielle Amen, Margaret Boldrin and Melinda Stapinsky.

—Wenda Heaney, Paraprofessional

What you need to know about National Board Certification

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards improves teaching and student learning. National Board Certified Teachers are highly accomplished educators who meet high and rigorous standards.

Like board-certified doctors and accountants, teachers who achieve National Board Certification have met rigorous standards through intensive study, expert evaluation, self-assessment and peer review. NBPTS offers 25 certificates that cover a variety of subject areas and student developmental levels.

In a congressionally-mandated study, National Board Certification was recently recognized by the National Research Council as having a positive impact on student achievement, teacher retention, and professional development.

Since 1987, more than 82,000 teachers have achieved National Board Certification. These teachers prepare America's diverse student population with the skills it needs to compete in the 21st century workplace.

History

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was established in 1987 in response to a central recommendation of the Carnegie Commission's report, *A Nation Prepared Teachers for the 21st Century*. The Board was conceived as an independent, non-governmental body focused on improving student learning by setting clear, high, and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.

http://www.nysut.org/cps/rde/xchg/nysut/hs.xsl/nationalboard_13124.htm

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

Thanksgiving is in two weeks. Once again, the passage of time astounds me. I can recall that, in my youth, time seemed to drag. That is not the case any more. There must be a message in that.

Each year I'm reminded at this time of thanksgiving how much I have to be thankful for: health and happiness, my own family and my VC family. I am also troubled at this time that so many people are suffering in this stagnant economy with lay-offs, chronic unemployment, etc. My heart especially goes out to kids who might be hungry and homeless. I'm happy to see our association (AKA our union) hold events that benefit the local food pantries. It is especially gratifying to see our retirees volunteering in Meals-on-Wheels, at food pantries, at clothing drives, etc. And how special is it that our school nurses, social workers and psychologists are always looking out for our kids who may be suffering. I'm thankful for all of you!

—Nobody asked me, but...

—It really sickens me to hear the governor and other elected officials talking about the "need" perhaps to cut state aid at the halfway point of this school year; at the same time there are "surprise" new mandates and increased test expectations. Class sizes in most districts are up. The state still expects more for less. And still various pundits find it necessary to criticize us and our profession. I keep hoping that better days are coming.

—I was reminded that our pension plan is safeguarded constitutionally. There is talk afoot about calling for a new convention which might change that safeguard. We cannot allow that to happen. Don't be fooled by the happy talk on the benefits of a Constitutional Convention—and let your elected officials know of your displeasure.

—Old News

—63 retirees attended the Retiree luncheon. This is down from last year. About 30 folks dropped a line with regrets, for which we are thankful. Those attending enjoyed a fine meal and fellowship. John Mirola (32 years retired!) was again a masterful master of ceremonies.

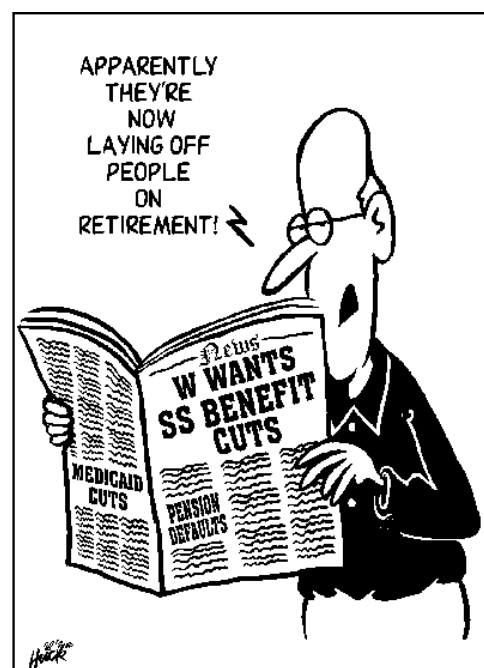
—Retirees are reminded to report change of address or change of status (turning 65, etc.) to Central Office.

—Amen

Have a safe and happy holidays. As always, 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

P.S.—Congratulations to those faculty members and graduates who were inducted into the VC Hall of Fame. And congrats to Mike Bellarosa for a fine job in organizing it.



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

Mactech! The impossible has happened. From now on, the ECHOES (and, ergo, this humble column) will be available to retirees on the VCTA website. It is truly a marriage across the ages. I am sitting here (on 12/20/10) writing the column on lined paper with an old ballpoint pen, and you will read it on your computer. Old Mac has in some small way become technologically literate (or is that an oxymoron?). So, remember that you now access ECHOES and the musings on the VCTA website. I will still use my pen and paper; Meg will still be reading my chicken scratch and transferring these musings to the web. The dinosaur has moved into this century!

—Condolences

—Condolences to Bob (Zeke) Ciganek on the lost of his dear wife, Lynn. Lynn Ciganek was a very special member of the VC family: a long-time member and officer of the scholarship council, multi-time chairman of VC's Antique and Art Show, faithful chronicler of VC's Golf Team. She will be sorely missed. Our sympathy also to her sons (Rob and Brendan) and their families.

—Retiree News

—I continue to run into and speak to many of the retirees and am astounded at their energy and spirit of volunteering in a wide variety of activities. It reminds me once again that these long-time friends are very special people. I also wonder if any of you would like to share some of your retirement thoughts in this column. Drop me a line or an e-mail (!!!!), and I'll include those thoughts in this space. Ginny will check the e-mails as I stand hopelessly by!! We are at 6 Jes-sup St., Walden, NY 12586 or at gkmcf@frontiernet.net.

—Nobody Asked Me, But...

—With all the constant talk of testing and accountability and data-driven initiatives and all the educational jargon, I've been thinking of Socrates and Aristotle. They put Madeline H. and the Wonger to shame. Socrates got his data face to face with his disciples/students. Aristotle didn't need fancy jargon in preparation; he dealt with what?, why?, how? And people learned.

—I've also been concerned with young teachers becoming discouraged and frustrated with developing into solid instructors. Observations and filling out forms won't do it. Modeling would be a big help.

—This past year has been a difficult one for schools and school people. This year's prognosis apparently is for more of the same. My hope is that the public will recognize the hard work of teachers and staff and that there will be more support for those in the educational trenches.

—Amen

A happy, healthy, prosperous and blessed 2011 to all. 'Til next time, 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

Teacher Resource

www.grants4teachers.com

Easy, fast search for grants by state!

