

## VC ECHOES

Volume 16, Issue 6

Valley Central Teachers' Association

Retiree Edition 2014

### VC'S RETIREE CLASS OF 2014



CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES TO  
ALL OF VALLEY CENTRAL'S 2014 RETIREES!

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

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## Valley Central Teachers' Association

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

### VCTA Officers:

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Vice Pres, Richard Steger (EC)  
Vice Pres., Patti Behr (MS)  
Secretary, Christine Mello(HS)  
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**20 August 2014**

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*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.*

## VCTA Blood Drive

**T**he VCTA held its second blood drive of the school year on Wednesday, May 14th. Donations were slow at the start, but picked up around dinner time. We collected a total of 34 units of blood.

I would like to thank the Montgomery Fire House for allowing us to use their facilities at no cost. Also, two of my 7th grade students volunteered their time to greet donors and make their visit enjoyable. Thank you girls!

I was given some jaw-dropping facts and statistics from the blood bank personnel. 60% of all adults are eligible to donate, but only 2% donate. The morning of the blood drive there were only 12 units of O- blood available to the Bronx, Hudson Valley and Staten Island. Just one or two car accidents could wipe out the supply on hand! Donations of blood are critically needed - please get out and donate - you just may save a life! Blood drives for the next school year are tentatively scheduled for **January 15th and May 15th** - I hope to see you there!

—Sonya Berger, MS, VCTA Blood Drive Coordinator



## **Debra Calvino Retires from Teaching**

**W**here does one begin to capture the passion, dedication and excellence that Debra Calvino has brought to 33 years of teaching at Valley Central High School?

Deb graduated from V.C. in 1977. After four years at Mount Saint Mary College, she returned home...but this time as a teacher. She began her career in Special Education, but after a couple of years she moved to the Math Department. She taught under several different department chairs before becoming Department Supervisor in 2004.

During her years here, she served as Junior Class Advisor, participated in faculty plays, and various other school activities. Her love for teaching and her students has been obvious in everything she has done. She has been an encourager, defender, and a champion for those in her department and every child entrusted to her care.

In 2010, her efforts were rewarded publicly when she became the New York State Teacher of the Year. This honor was well-deserved.

Everyone who knows Deb, knows that education is her heart and her life. Although we will be sad to see her retire from her teaching position, we wish her the best as she continues to use her gifts and talents for the betterment of the Valley Central School District. Congratulations, Deb, on a job well done! You are loved and you will be missed.

—Gail Quitoni, HS, Math

## **Laura Casey to Retire in December**

**T**his year was the last full year of teaching for Mrs. Casey; she will be retiring in December 2014. She has been an important member of the East Coldenham family for 33 years.

During her career, Mrs. Casey has taught special education and kindergarten, however, most students will recall her as their hardworking and inspiring second grade teacher. Her students will always remember her caring personality, commitment to excellence, and impeccable sense of style. They will never forget cursive handwriting, learning chess and “Friday projects”. Her students always had fun and gained a valuable appreciation for learning.

Upon retiring, Mrs. Casey plans on spending most of her days in Delaware, where she and her husband have built a beautiful home. She will spend her time on the beach, reading, and shopping (for shoes, of course!). Mrs. Casey will enjoy having the time to travel more often, having her children visit, and to knit fashionable clothing for her future grandchildren. East Coldenham will not be the same without Mrs. Casey.

—Jennifer Guidry, EC



## Farewell, Mrs. Clark

**D**onna Clark, dedicated and loved educator, is retiring after teaching years at Valley Central. Donna taught for five years at East Coldenham and eighteen at Berea. She taught Special Education classes for eight years, and first or second grade for the other years.

Donna was known for teaching by doing, not lecturing. She taught out-of-the-box, teaching the children about real life and things meaningful for them, in addition to the state curriculum. She was, in other words, a complete teacher. She instilled in her students a love of reading in a way that would be envied by any other professional.

Where might we find Donna today as she enjoys her retirement?

- Spending time with her adored granddaughters, Bea and JoJo,
- Fly fishing down at the river,
- Riding her front loader as she builds a stone wall,
- In her wine cellar with her husband Lou, planning for and overseeing production of the fine wines of the "Louis and Clark" winery,
- In her organic garden (where she coaxes vegetables and herbs to thrive even in the harsh north-east winter),
- Collecting and restoring eighteenth and nineteenth century antiques (her expertise in this would amaze even those who know her well),
- Kayaking on the streams of the Delaware watershed,
- Drawing and painting in her home art studio,
- Traveling with Lou to all manner of near and far places (hiking through Yosemite anyone?),
- Voraciously reading historical stories, and, frankly, anything else she can get her hands on,
- Bird watching as a member of the Audubon society,
- Being a gracious host to her many friends who find visits to the Louis and Clark manor and grounds a peaceful, rejuvenating experience. Donna has helped many a VC teacher regain equilibrium and perspective through these weekend stays, preparing them for a return to the maelstrom of modern teaching.

Donna's former students remember her very fondly. When fifth grade students were recently asked what they remember about Mrs. Clark, some of their memories were:

- "Bird watching. Mrs. Clark provided binoculars, and we would put food in the feeders outside the window."
- "Taking care of the earth was very important to Mrs. Clark, and she taught us ways to take care of the earth."
- "She used to read us lots of great books that she loved herself."
- "She gave away things for free! She gave away books and all kinds of other stuff."
- "We used to do crafts with Mrs. Skahen's class on 'Freaky Friday'."
- "I remember making paper boats. We all lay down on the floor and blew them across the room."
- "Once we saw a possum, and then we had an entire lesson about possums."
- "I remember Mrs. Clark made a homemade loaf of bread, and then she brought in the ingredients to make jam, and we all made jam together."
- "She loved all of her students the same."
- "We could tell she loved us. We felt just the same."



The comments the many children made get to the heart of who Mrs. Clark is and has been – a real teacher devoted to the personal, intellectual, and character growth of the children in her charge. We all wish Donna well, and we all thank her for the great service she has given this community.

For me, she was an amazing teacher and is a wonderful friend. I miss teaching next door to her. We collaborated for seventeen years, and, as Donna always reminds me, "We never had an argument or disagreement."

—Gail Skahen, Berea

## **Goodbye to a “Bonnie” Math Teacher!**

It's often said, and accurately so, that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone. That can apply to teachers as well. The best of us usually work and dwell in relative anonymity, and after a long, often underappreciated career, fade into the setting sun of retirement.

Bonnie Crisci is retiring this year and we, as 8<sup>th</sup> grade Gold team members, will certainly miss her, as well as the Valley Central Middle School community. If you were a student who had the good fortune of having Mrs. Crisci as a teacher, you know of her dedication, her love of her craft and her subject, and in short, her excellence.

Bonnie has served this school district for the better part of three decades. She has taught generations of students throughout the greater VC area. She taught Algebra to those who were advanced in math, or “spoke the language.” Usually her students scored in the high 90's on the regents exam, often taking full credit for the achievement for themselves. But we teachers know that without her dedication and pre- and post-session review classes, going far above and beyond what was required of her, those student scores almost certainly would have been lower.

In Mrs. Crisci's case it wasn't just with the gifted students that she showed herself to be gifted. It was more often with the struggling student, the math-phobic child who, from years of struggle and frustration had concluded they were “dumb” and simply could never “get it.” That was the student that gave Bonnie the most satisfaction, as she again went the extra mile of lunch sessions and pre- and post-sessions until the student had that “aha” moment that all teachers live for.

So it is with sadness we say goodbye to our “Bonnie” math teacher—one of the finest to have graced the halls of this school or any in the district. We wish her a long, healthy, and happy retirement. We appreciate and will do our best to emulate the example she gave of dedication and excellence. As with all great teachers, some person will be in her position next year but somehow that person will be unable to replace the irreplaceable. He or she may be good, even excellent, but not Bonnie. We say a heartfelt thank you Bonnie for all you've done, but what's more, for who you are!

*-Penned by Paul Dederick but felt by all.*

## **Thank You, Bonnie!**

When I think of the words “consummate math educator”, Bonnie Crisci immediately comes to mind. It has been my honor and privilege to work with her. Bonnie always thinks of her students first - all students of all ability levels. Spending hours to perfect her lessons in order to enable her students to glean complete conceptual knowledge, not just memorization of meaningless routines, has been her way of life. She is passionate about ensuring that her students understand the math, not just get the right answer.

Our Math Department and the students of Valley Central will miss her but wish her a happy, healthy, and blessed retirement. It is most deserved!!

Thank you again for the opportunity,

—Debbie Calvino, HS, Special Education

## **Nancy Drennan Retires**

**N**ancy Drennan has worn many hats over the course of her career. She holds three permanent certifications, Elementary Education N-6, Art K-12 and Gifted and Talented Education, and has put them all to good use.

Nancy began her career as an art teacher. Her artistic gift is evident as you observe her student's wonderful projects. One day I had the privilege of seeing her wonderful portfolio. She took great pride in sharing each creative project. Her next venture was in the area of Gifted and Talented. For several years she was both teacher and coordinator of the program for the Hyde Park Central Schools.

In 2001, Nancy came to Valley Central School District as the full time Spectrum teacher in Walden and Montgomery Elementary Schools for four years. When the position was eliminated, Nancy taught second grade for one year then moved to third grade, taking her students along! She has been teaching third grade in Walden Elementary ever since. She has been very generous in sharing her rich classroom resources which she has been collecting for many years. Talking with Nancy has inspired some great ideas and I usually leave with an armful of books and projects.

Retirement promises Nancy the luxury of pursuing the many things she loves to do. Some of her favorite activities include traveling, antiquing, and gardening. She is also planning on devoting more time to her love of drawing and painting. She is most excited about spending time playing with her grandchildren.

Nancy's face still lights up when she talks about her husband Bob. They met in SUNY Oswego and have been happily married for 41 years. She is mom to Tom, Beth and Julie and grandmother to Ryan and James who are the joys of her life. She says, she is especially looking forward to spending more time with family

and friends and sleeping until dawn!

Nancy has been a wealth of support and advice to me during my first year in third grade. I will miss my "neighbor", but I am excited for this wonderful new phase she is beginning in life.

Best Wishes, Nancy, for a long and happy retirement!

—Nancy Desole, Walden





## **Please Don't Go, Supervisor Joe!**

“Drive it like a Rolls Royce, not a Chevy Vega.” Run that phrase past any one of Joe Fracalossi's students, and each one will smile and tell you that it is Mr. Frac's motto for presentations, assignments, and life. For the past thirty years at Valley Central, Joe has not only held this expectation for his students, but he has lived and modeled it to everyone as a teacher, supervisor, colleague, mentor, and friend.

Born at Saint Luke's Hospital in Newburgh and raised in Walden, NY, Joe attended Walden Elementary School until third grade before transferring to Most Precious Blood for grades 4-8. Joe graduated from Valley Central High School in 1975. He went on to SUNY Plattsburgh where he majored in Health Education, a new major at the time.

After teaching in both part and full time positions at Mount Carmel in Middletown and Saint Columba in Chester from 1979-1984, Joe headed back to school at SUNY New Paltz to complete his credits for Biology and General Science certification plus complete his Masters Degree in Secondary Education. After receiving a phone call from Kevin McFadden notifying him of an open position, Joe interviewed and was hired to teach by Vic Haggard. He began teaching at Valley Central High School in 1984 in a science leave replacement position that then turned into a tenure track position, and he has been an inspirational teacher and a cornerstone in the Valley Central community ever since.

When Joe began teaching, he had an extremely challenging schedule teaching various levels of general science. Joe mastered “Science on a Cart,” —a phrase with which all science teachers quickly become familiar—travelling from room to room and setting up equipment for lessons and labs as his students were walking through the door. When he became supervisor in 1997 after receiving his Masters Degree in School District Administration from SUNY New Paltz, he vowed that no



science teacher would ever have to move classrooms without a plan or lab prep period in between. He has worked for the past seventeen years to fulfill that promise and to lead and advocate for us with the utmost honor and professionalism as our Science supervisor.

After many years teaching general science, Joe began teaching health and Regents Biology. In 1999, he piloted the Science Research Program at Valley Central. Since its inception, Science Research has experienced a multitude of success. Thanks to Joe's dedication and guidance, many students have won awards at regional, state, and even international competitions. Travelling with his students as far as Indiana, New Mexico, and California, Joe has dedicated countless hours after school and on his weekends to this program. Most definitely, many graduates of the program who have sought continuing education (*cont'd on pg 8*)

## Please Don't Go, Supervisor Joe! (cont'd from 7)

in the science research field can trace their inspiration, skill, and talent back to Joe's hard work and commitment to their success.

Who would have known during her 1999 interview with Joe and Bob Klein that Terri Campbell would be meeting the man of her dreams that day? Joe and Terri met at Valley Central and married in 2005 on the shores of Jackson Lake in Grand Tetons National Park. In fact, he has become somewhat of a National Parks "junky," and has spent many summers vacationing with Terri and their two sons, Eli and Wyatt, in beautiful US and Canadian national parks. This summer, to begin his retirement, Joe plans to explore Sleeping Bear Dunes National Park on Lake Michigan. He has many trips planned for the future, including excursions to Alaska and Europe. Presently, however, Joe spends much of his free time preparing the field behind his house and building a fence for his other retirement project, a beautiful garden and vineyard. We look forward to tasting the fruits of his labor.

Valley Central will be losing a true pillar of its community with Joe's retirement. Albert Einstein once said, "Setting an example is not the main means of influencing another, it is the only means." Joe not only sets an example for his students, but for teachers, parents, and administrators as well. Joe's life centers around and defines all that the teaching profession, at its best, should be. Whether he is masterfully teaching within his classroom, mentoring a colleague, selling apples alongside his students to fund Science Research trips or organizing the graduation

ceremony, Joe takes an active role in the lives of those he touches by serving as a role model, providing constant support and academic, social and moral guidance. Each day, he lends a hand, a ready ear, a kind word, advice or constructive criticism to anyone who is in need.

Joe has helped to "break in" eight principals and countless teachers, including both of us. Without his support and guidance, we can honestly say we would not be the teachers we

are today. His heartfelt passion for teaching and his students and his unwavering support and leadership has inspired our department for nearly two decades. We will miss his presence in the Science office, we will miss our lunch chats with him, and we will miss his guidance. But, we



will miss seeing our dear friend on a daily basis most of all. As we sang at his retirement party, "If it hadn't been for Supervisor Joe, where we'd be, we just don't know. Please don't go. Say it ain't so. We will miss you Supervisor Joe!" Joe, best of luck as you embark on this new phase of your life. May your retirement journey be filled with health, happiness, and relaxation. Valley Central is truly losing one of its best! Best wishes, Farmer Joe!

With love,

—Jane Meisel and Jennie Sexton, HS, Science



## Eileen Panagiotopoulos to Retire from Walden

**E**ileen Panagiotopoulos has put her heart and soul into every position she has ever had. She consistently sets high standards for herself and her students. Eileen's teaching career has had many highlights. As a matter of fact, no matter what Eileen is doing, you can count on every paper being highlighted a different color, collated and paper clipped together. And don't worry; she has a backup copy if you need one.

Eileen was born and raised in Yonkers, New York. She received a B.S. in Art Education from SUNY New Paltz in 1977. Soon after college, she met and married her husband of thirty-five years, Evan. They met in a Greek diner. Imagine that! Evan and Eileen started a visual merchandising company in Westchester; The Window People. This is where Eileen first learned the constructivist approach.

After her children started school, Eileen got her M.S. in Elementary Education and started working in 1993 as a Kindergarten teacher at WES. As a Walden resident, she was able to bring her son, Alex, and her daughter, Diane, with her to school every day. She "loved every minute" of her thirteen years in Kindergarten. Sometimes, if you listen hard enough near room # 29, you can still hear her students clapping every syllable of "Pan-a-gi-o-top-ou-los." No "Mrs. P" for Eileen! She saw her multisyllabic surname as a teaching opportunity. (Plus "Mr. P" would not allow it!) While teaching Kindergarten, Eileen also used her creativity and art background to author and illustrate many emergent reader books that are still in use today. She also found time to co-author a Language Arts Intervention Curriculum, be a mentor teacher, and lead a variety of



math workshops.

In 2007, after completing 100 hours of intense training, Eileen became a certified Reading Recovery teacher. To balance off her half day reading position, she took on the challenge of a half day AIS math position. This was a big decision, but once it was made, Eileen embraced both positions with unbridled verve. She believed very strongly in the Reading Recovery Program and always enjoyed the thrill of seeing that magical moment when a student became a reader. As a Reading

Recovery teacher, she regularly tested her mettle during the notoriously nerve-wracking "behind-the-glass" lessons. As anxiety provoking as they were, Eileen was happy to endure the trauma because she always learned something new that helped her change the course for a struggling reader. Eileen was disappointed when the program was "discontinued" in 2013.

Eileen's move to the AIS Math position coincided with the creation of the NYS learning standards.  
(cont'd on page 10)



*Eileen with her first Kindergarten class at WES*

## Eileen Panagiotopoulos to Retire from Walden



As she was perfecting her teaching skills, Eileen encountered the works of Catherine Fosnot and John A. Van de Walle. Luckily for Walden, she enthusiastically shared these “radical” math ideas with her colleagues. Eileen single-

handedly introduced the Rekenrek, the open number line, and the part-whole model to our little school. This was well before the modules were even a sparkle in the State of New York’s eye.

Eileen has been on the cutting edge of education and has demonstrated consummate

professionalism throughout her career. She will be greatly missed. Eileen’s tenure at Walden represents only one part of her “part-whole” experience. Seems like a good time for Eileen to get out the highlighters and start adding more parts.

This time, you don’t have to “**Show Your Work.**” With admiration,

—*Suzanne Eastwood, Nancy Phelps, Jessica Tsantes and Lori Velez, Walden*

## Farewell, Mrs. Sahl!

It is with mixed feelings that we bid farewell to Mrs. Sahl. She has been a part of the East Coldenham family for 26 years.

One passion Mrs. Sahl’s fifth grade students will remember is her love and excitement for science. It was always fun for her students to have a lesson interrupted so she could give a nature lesson because a woodpecker, flock of turkeys, a family of deer, etc. were outside their window.

Another skill that has entertained students is Mrs. Sahl’s guitar playing. Her musical ability has also been used by singing to students to get their attention, find who the owner of a paper is,

and to just have fun. Mrs. Sahl has organized Pasta for Pennies (to help the Leukemia Foundation), the science fair, the talent show, the Greenkill trip, Yankee Candle fundraiser and many other activities. Mrs. Sahl will spend her time traveling, hiking, skiing, knitting, and reading those books she has not had time to read (with a cup of hot tea). She will be greatly missed by the students and staff of East Coldenham, but we wish her a wonderful retirement.

—*Jennifer Guidry, EC*

## **Grace Skopin to Retire**

**G**race Skopin worked at the Newburgh Developmental Learning Center and as an early intervention service provider for the Orange County Department of Health before becoming a member of the Valley Central team.

For 13 years, she was a Special Education teacher at Berea Elementary School. She worked skillfully with many of our most needy students in a variety of self-contained classes. Her thoughtful, giving nature was well-received by the students in her care and we are sure they felt the love she showered on them each day. As a result, these students were able to learn and progress toward achieving their IEP goals. She could differentiate instruction to meet the vast abilities and diverse needs of her students yet convey the feeling of unity as a whole class. She was always thinking about her students and what activities she could create to best meet their individual needs. She must have spent most of her salary on materials or prizes, crafts and gifts she lavished upon them!

She was just as generous with staff members; always lending a helping hand or sharing a good book, a great idea or original material. She was involved in many committees that help foster the wonderful climate at Berea. Her help with Celebration of Capabilities is one of the many things that I miss the most! (Along with attending a conference-say at Beth Israel! – remember Gracie?) In the many years I sat in CSE meetings with her, she was truly “Grace” in the midst of “times of discontent!” Grace had a way of saying what needed to be said in a way that was not combative and palatable to her listeners. She conveyed truth; maximized the positives, minimized the negatives and left everyone feeling good about the experience.

When Sheila Lease-Murphy was principal at Berea, she observed Grace in the classroom and watched her grow as a teacher. Her creation of hands-on lessons to help her stu-

dents master content and engage her students she called truly exemplary. Her lesson planning, IEP's and paperwork were all completed at a high level. She was also impressed at how Grace could reassure and support the parents of students with disabilities while involving them in their child's education. She would communicate with them daily about milestones, ideas for home practice as well as behavior (triumphs or failures) in a thoughtful, gentle way.

Due to a dramatic change in her health, Grace's invaluable time at Valley Central was cut short robbing us all of a dedicated employee, a loving teacher, a generous friend and a benevolent colleague. Even during her cancer treatments, she continually reached out to her Berea community in her supportive demeanor. She finally decided to retire because of her ongoing medical needs. At her retirement dinner, Sheila perfectly summed up what many feel about the privilege of knowing Grace. She said, “Grace, you are who we all want to be at the end of our careers – a teacher who smiles at the student who repeatedly says, “I still don't get it”. Please know that you will be remembered at Berea/Valley Central as a very special, dedicated teacher who we will deeply miss. Kudos for a job well done!!

Lovingly submitted by,

Lovingly submitted by,

—Dolores O'Brien & Wanda Calderon, Berea





## **A Long and Winding Road: Chuck Tudor Retires**

**A**fter Chuck Tudor closes his door in room 215 for the last time this June, someone else will be opening it this fall. Although his position will be replaced, no one will ever replace Chuckie. He is certainly (and gratefully) one of a kind.

For the majority of us, our careers began similarly. We graduated from college and sought a teaching job. Some of us were lucky enough to walk right into a job after college, while others took a little longer to find their niche. A few of our colleagues have become teachers as a second career. However, I seriously doubt that anyone followed the same path into education as Mr. Tudor.

After graduating from NFA (back in the Dark Ages), Chuck attended Braden's Prep School in Cornwall. After a year there, he entered the beginning of a long college career. First he attended the University of South Carolina where he majored in "Frat Party." After a year, he transferred to OCCC, and then returned to USC. He wasn't finished yet.....one more trip back to Middletown and OCCC for a second time. Around this time, he tried his hand at construction. Then in the late 60s he moved to New Britain, Connecticut to indulge in a new skill that would tap his artistic talents: candle making. He enjoyed life in the 60s, traveling to craft fairs, selling his candles and just being groovy. At this time, he also took some classes at Central Connecticut State. Of course the logical and mature move after this was to Amherst, Massachusetts to sell insurance. Additionally, it was at this time he had his first experience with mentoring when he took in a foster child.

The seventies were well underway and Chuck still had not found his true passion in life.....and then he met Barb. He had moved back to Newburgh and began to work for a friend's family business. Still not fulfilled vocationally, Chuck moved to Chicago to begin the fast-paced life of a commodity broker. Barb joined him in Chicago and they began their

family in Evanston, Illinois.

No surprise, but the commodity business wasn't for Chuck. He and his family returned to Newburgh where he eventually landed a job for an inhalation therapy company. His role was to equip newborn babies with apnea monitors. He also worked with AIDS patients and others that needed inhalation therapy. (If anyone has ever tried to share a health related story with Chuck, you know how totally squeamish he is!) Maybe the health field was not his destiny!

It was right about this time that Chuck got the motivation to return to school and finish his degree. He got a job managing a pharmacy and started taking classes at New Paltz. In 1993 he received his degree in Education from Empire State College. He had managed to accrue quite a few credits for all of his invaluable "life experiences." After a year of subbing, he finally found his long-awaited home at Valley Central Middle School, and we are certainly glad he did!

Now, Chuck has wrapped up another chapter in his life and is ready to retire. Those of us who know him well, also know that his story won't end here. Soon, we'll be hearing about his new adventures...maybe as a butcher or a baker (He's already done the candlestick maker thing!). There will be a huge void in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade hallway next September. We will all miss his unique sense of humor, his vast knowledge of history, and his dedication to his students.

—Laurie Dilenzo, MS



## Walden Secretary, Arline Clark Retiring

**A**fter many years, Arline Clark will be leaving her daily place in Valley Central Schools. Her quiet good humor will be missed in the school's Main Office and throughout the building.



*Arline Kiernan  
Age 4*

Born Arline Kiernan, she attended Valley Central Schools. As there was no kindergarten in Valley Central at the time she started school, Arline attended the St. Andrew's Schoolhouse for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades. She spent her 3<sup>rd</sup> grade year at Walden, which would later become her place of employment. Arline attended East Coldenham Elementary School for her 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade years, when it was brand new, returning to Walden for 6<sup>th</sup> grade! From grade 7 through 12 Valley Central High School was her daytime "home", until she graduated from VCHS, at the age of 16, in 1969.

Arline became Mrs. Clark in 1985 when she and John Clark were married. Their son, Jonathan, born in 1987, attended Walden Elementary and the Valley Central Middle and High Schools – a 2005 graduate.

Her employment with the district has lasted 20 years. She worked in the Walden Computer Lab when it was in the "new wing" and continued as the para when the new lab replaced the old. As the computer teacher in Walden, I was fortunate to have her as my "lab partner" for several years. When the Walden Elementary School secretary retired in 2000, Arline Clark was hired to fill that position, and has done so with professionalism for 14 years.



*Arline in  
High School*



*Future Secretary: Already behind a VC desk at the age of 5!*

Despite the fact that the list of responsibilities is long, Mrs. Clark made it look easy.

Students, staff members, administrators and parents have all benefitted from her efficiency and pleasant demeanor. She will certainly be missed.

Best Wishes for a long, happy and healthy retirement!

*—MaryEllenRaskopf-Kawauchi, Karen Smith & your Walden "Family"*



## **Anita Feller Retires**

**A**nita Feller began her career at Valley Central School District in 1986 as a speech aide to Mrs. Paula Lewis at the Montgomery and Berea Elementary Schools. She worked with many students to help them practice the correct production of speech sounds in all positions of words. Back in those days when we had a speech correction program; she might see up to seventy students in one week in groups of up to five. It was busy, but very rewarding work! Many a student learned to say sounds like the /s/, /l/, /r/, /ch/ or /sh/ correctly while practicing with Mrs. Feller. She also helped the therapists create new games and activities for the students to enjoy. In addition, she helped with the mountain of paperwork and student folders that this job entailed.

Anita worked at Berea for most of her 27 years in employment. At Berea, she was involved with several committees like *Celebration of Capabilities* or *Principal's Council* that demonstrated her commitment to the school and community. In 2006 with the elimination of the speech correction program, she began working in the heartwarming yet challenging position of a special education paraprofessional. She joined forces with her fellow retiree, Grace Skopin, and labored together to meet students' needs and help them meet their academic goals. A quote by Ms. Sheila Lease-Murphy at the retirement dinner summed up what others feel about Anita, "I believe that we can honestly measure Anita's successes through the influence that she has had on all of us. Her love of all of our children, but more specifically our neediest students, has been inspirational. Her calm, gentle voice encouraging a student to attend to a task or complete a lesson creates such pride in a child and is a lesson for us!"

Throughout her devoted time at Berea, Anita ever strove to provide each student with her very best each day by bringing the best out in them. She genuinely enjoyed the students in

her charge and shared her love with them as well as her knowledge. Again, Ms. Murphy capsulized Anita's demeanor by saying, "Her patience, acceptance and tolerance of student differences are a model for all of us to ponder when we are working with these special students."

Anita has many friends from the Valley Central community not only through her job, but also due to the extra-curricular activities she and her family are involved in. Little League, soccer, basketball, traveling teams, etc. are but a few of these activities. Her entire family are sports enthusiasts. Her family's generosity and selflessness honoring Corinne enables many students to receive scholarships in her memory to advance themselves. She assists her family in educating the public about the ovarian cancer, its symptoms and treatments. Her family never tires to fundraise for this worthwhile mission.

A thank you at the retirement dinner and now is not enough to express the gratitude we hold for Anita's devotion, show of love or commitment to Valley Central. Her four children were educated in this district and she is proud to say that her grandchildren now travel the halls of Montgomery and the Middle School—soon to be High School! She will be sorely missed in the halls of Berea, but at least two days a week she can be seen at exercise class in the gym! Sometimes we are lucky enough to have her substitute! Kudos for a job well done!!

Lovingly Submitted by,  
—Dolores O'Brien and Wanda Calderon,

Berea





## Dolores Mundy Retires from the Middle School

**W**here do we begin & how can we sum up the last 20 years of Dolores' memorable career at Valley Central?

Dolores came to the Middle School in 1994 from the corporate world in New York City; where she was also born & raised. She started her career as the Assistant Principal Secretary to Jane Depew. Dolores then became Principal's Secretary- aka Ned's "wing woman"- in 2004 after another legendary secretary, Jo Mendola, retired!

Dolores is married to Jon and they will be celebrating their 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary in July! She enjoys cool nights sitting on their deck by the fire delighting in each other's company and conversation. They have one daughter, Sarah, and the newest addition to their family is

Bella; a playful and mischievous kitten. She is a lover of ALL books, but mostly you'll find her engrossed in a good historical novel. Dolores can recommend THE book because she has read it all!

She also caught the "travel bug" in the last 2

years while accompanying Jon on a few of his business trips. Since taking up traveling and leaving Gheri and the girls at the office helm- she's been to St. John's, San Francisco, Japan, England, Hawaii, Ireland, Spain, Copenhagen; just to name a few! We are grateful to Dolores for thinking of us upon her return when she brings gifts! Her future travel plans include Rio de Janeiro and Branson, Missouri; where Jon has a book signing!

Our fondest memories of Dolores are what we call "Doloresisms". Her uncanny ability to recall interesting and unusual facts/trivia about her travels, and anything she has read or listened to. Dolores, we will miss you more than you will ever know! Always remember this- people come into our lives for a reason, a season, or a lifetime! You, my friend, are a friend for a lifetime! This isn't goodbye-it's see you around!

—Respectfully Submitted by your "Office Peeps"

## Walden Principal Veronica Casillo Retiring

**I** often talk about the Valley Central family and how special it is because of its caring, dedicated members. Their support of one another and their students is remarkable and it makes Valley Central the great place it is!

Veronica "Ronnie" Casillo has been part of the VC family for twenty years as a Teacher, Assistant Principal, Director of Math and Principal and is the quintessential Valley Central girl.

Ronnie is the first person to cheer on a struggling child, enthusiastically attend and participate in school and community events, praise a teacher or staff member for their excellent work and support a colleague by sharing strategies for success. She is fair and honest and has created a program where students can meet with success and staff feels supported. Ronnie is the first to volunteer to work on difficult issues with me and is flexible with eve-

rything! She is friendly and warm and it shows in everything she does.

As this school year ends, Veronica Casillo will join the ranks of our Valley Central family whom we no longer see on a daily basis. Ronnie's post-VC plans include travel, spending time with family and wintering in Florida. What a wonderful reward for a successful career!

Your Valley Central family will miss you terribly, and will always value your contribution to the Valley Central students and your legacy will live for years to come. Congratulations Ronnie!

—Sheila Lease-Murphy, Ass. Supt



# *Congratulations!*

