

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Vote Yes on May 15	2
VCTA Celebration	3
Write for Retirees	4
VOTE-Cope	5
Ergonomics	7
Retiree Delegate	7
Former teacher runs	8
Science survey says	8
APPR Record	8
Safety net	9
Charter School Decision	10
Teachers forgotten	11
VCTA Highlights	12
Mac's Musings	13
Heart of a Teacher	16

Valley Central nominates Kathleen Sahl for NYS Teacher of the Year

In a concerted effort between her colleagues, former students, the Association, and the District, Kathleen Sahl, a 5th grade teacher at East Coldenham has been nominated for the prestigious New York State Teacher of the Year award. Sahl has 18 years experience in teaching having taught at EC in her current position for eight years; before that she subbed for the district for five years and also taught a year of elementary school in Utah and three years in New Jersey. Sahl holds her Master's in Education from New Paltz and also has a Bachelor's in Elementary Education from Kean University. She is permanently certified as a K-6 teacher and holds certification in Biology- General Science for grades 7-12. Sahl has been recognized for her excellence as an educator in the past two years having

been named the Orange County Conservation Teacher of the Year in 1999, the New York State Conservation Teacher of the Year,



New York State Teacher of the Year nominee, Kathy Sahl is an avid advocate for science education.

(Elementary Ed.) for the 1999-2000 school year and most recently received the Dean's Award for Excellence in Teaching from SUNY New Paltz.

Sahl lives in the Valley Central Community and is an active member of it. She is a member of the East Coldenham PTA, and is currently the Co-president of the Valley Central Scholarship Coun-

cil, although her own children have graduated. She is also an active member of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Montgomery where she served as choir director for eleven years and as a CCD teacher. She is also a member of the Mad Mat Club. (Sahl's son, Joe, wrestled during his high school years at VCHS.) At school, Sahl

(continued on page six)

high school years at VCHS.) At school, Sahl

From the President

2001-2002 School Budget Shows Promise

The VC Board of Education, in consultation with the Budget Advisory Council, is proposing a 10.8% increase in the proposed 2001-2002 school budget. The

Valley Central School District has consistently been at the very bottom of the list when it comes to per pupil expenditure in Orange County. In fact, VC has been at the very bottom of the list

when it comes to per pupil expenditure when compared to all 58 Mid-Hudson Valley schools. This expenditure is in stark contrast to the results attained by our

Teaching kids to count is fine, but teaching them what counts is best.

~ Bob Talbert

(continued on page ten)



Support
New York's Children
Vote Yes on Your
School District's Budget
May 15, 2001

If you voted in the November elections you are registered to vote in your school district's election.

You have a voice. You have a vote. Use it!

Vote for Valley Central's Budget!

On Tuesday, May 15th, the Valley Central School District will present a budget that reflects the needs of a growing district that wishes to provide the highest quality of education for its students. The Citizen's Budget Advisory Committee worked long and hard to create this document. What you will see is one of the most far-reaching plans to date. Included are full day kindergarten, technology and many other programs and personnel that will continue to assist our students in achieving and surpassing the standards set by the Commissioner and the State Education Department. During these meetings to develop a budget, it was clear that the

consensus of opinion was to stop being recognized as the school with the lowest per pupil expenditure (*a sort of backhanded compliment, at best*) in the Hudson Valley, and to move ahead with a sensible and aggressive plan to make Valley Central and its students even better. Read the mailings and the other forms of information you receive very carefully. The increase is not insignificant, but it is reasonable and prudent. Check to see how much the STAR program reduces that increase and how little, in the final tally, a price you will pay for the future of your children and the future of our region and country.

We, the Valley Central Teachers' Association, encourage

you, residents of the district, to get out and vote. Support education and the futures of you and your children. There is no better investment!

*~ Jay D. Sussdorff
Vice-President*

“Property taxes funding schools and school districts affecting property values...it is a vicious cycle where neither one improves.”

~Jed Bartlett, The West Wing

*2nd Annual VCTA Celebration
to Honor Retirees and Achievements*



**Sunday, May 20th
2:00 pm - 5:00 pm**

*Hors d'oeuvres, desserts
Cash bar*

Spruce Lodge
Route 17K, Montgomery

**\$12 Active VCTA Members
\$17 Retired Members and Non-members**



Please RSVP by Friday, May 4th

Send this form to:

Laurie Hey, Secretary (MS)

or mail to:

*Laurie Hey, Secretary
Valley Central Teachers' Association
1175 Route 17K
Montgomery, NY 12549*

Name(s) _____

I will be attending the VCTA Celebration on May 20th.

Please make checks out to: Valley Central Teachers' Association

\$ 12 for active members \$17 for retired or non-members

Is your best friend retiring this year?

*Pay tribute to him or her
by writing a short biography of their
teaching career at VC to be published in the Retiree and
Achievements*

*Special Edition of the VC ECHOES,
Please submit by May 14, 2001*

Use the questions below to aid you in writing that biography. Please try to limit your article to 200-500 words. Pictures, current and past, are welcome. (*Yearbooks can be used –all materials will be returned to you*)



Who: Is this retiree?

What: Do they teach or work?
Is their educational background?
Have they advised or coached?
Will be missed by this person's retirement?
Will they do after retirement?

Where: Have they taught and for how long?

When: Did they come to VC?

How: Have they made a difference?
Have they touched the lives of their students?

Why You should give to VOTE-Cope

By now you may have been approached by your building rep(s) and asked to make a donation to VOTE-Cope. And you're probably wondering, why should you?

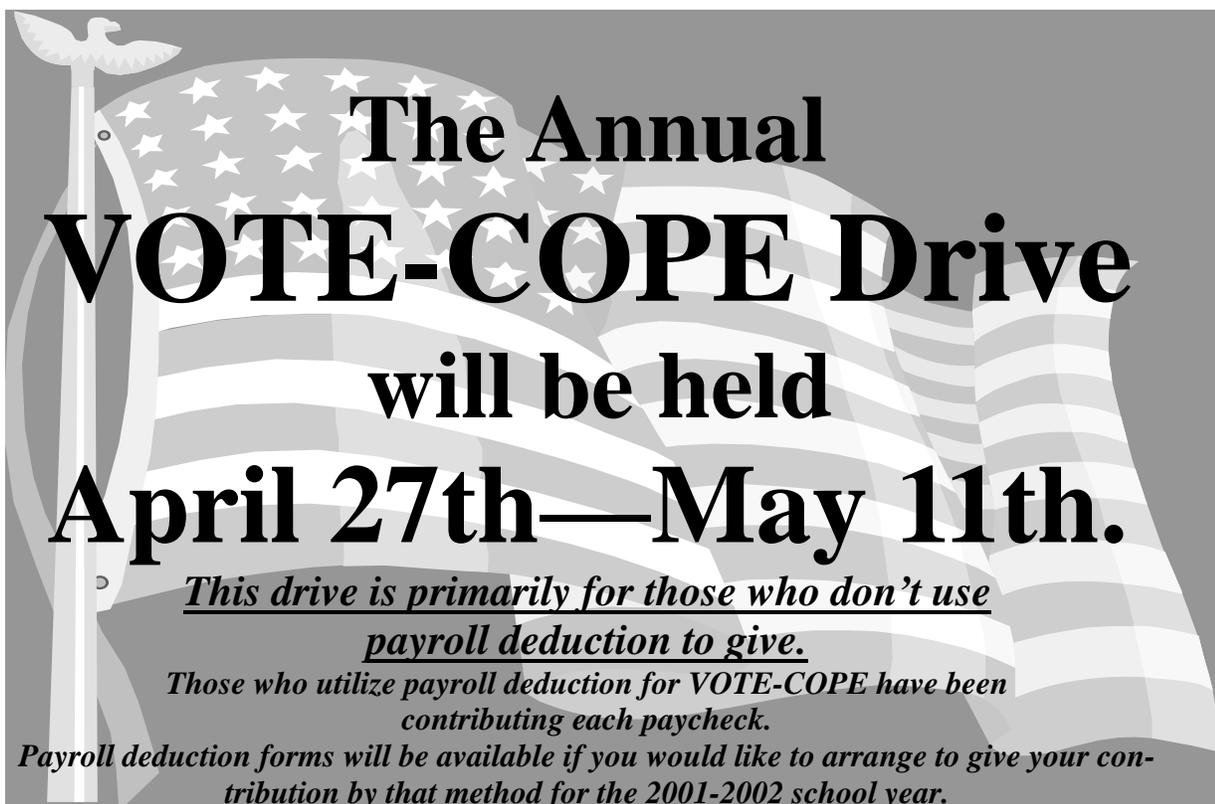
VOTE-Cope is the political arm of NYSUT. The rules governing political action fundraising prohibit NYSUT from using any part of dues for political activity. For NYSUT (*that's you*) to have any voice in politics, it must seek funding apart from dues. The VCTA has secured payroll deduction for VOTE-Cope and over 60 members are utilizing this method. It is a pain-free method of giving. You authorize an amount to be deducted over the course of the year from your paycheck. A \$25 donation breaks down to about \$1.30 a paycheck if you get 21 checks. If you are one of the 60 members who utilize payroll deduction, you have

made your donation for the year and need to give nothing more, unless you'd like to. If you don't use payroll deduction you can still give cash or check. The suggested donation is \$25 or more, but any amount will help to make a difference.

So just where does the money go? The largest portion goes right back to local unions for their own political action campaigns. Then the next largest part goes to supporting pro-education causes on a statewide basis, like funding the advertisements you'll be seeing in a few weeks to get out the yes vote on May 15th for school budgets. The money is also used in lobbying efforts to increase state aid to education or for legislation to improve the state's pension systems for all public employees. The Safe Schools Legislation and Tier Enhancement passed into law last year are excellent ex-

amples of the direct effect of VOTE-Cope money. Lastly, the money is used for the endorsement of political candidates, both Republican and Democratic who by their voting record and position have shown themselves to be allies of education, labor and civil rights.

VOTE-Cope is not just for teachers. The VOTE-Cope refund of money to the VCTA; the legislation VOTE-Cope works on, and the candidates it endorses also benefits our secretary and paraprofessional members. President Tim Brown has said that he would like to see 100% of the VCTA membership make a donation this year. When you are approached by your building rep, please give. As NYSUT Vice President Alan Lubin says, "Legislation helps those who help themselves."



**The Annual
VOTE-COPE Drive
will be held
April 27th—May 11th.**

*This drive is primarily for those who don't use
payroll deduction to give.*

*Those who utilize payroll deduction for VOTE-COPE have been
contributing each paycheck.*

*Payroll deduction forms will be available if you would like to arrange to give your con-
tribution by that method for the 2001-2002 school year.*

Valley Central nominates Kathleen Sahl ...*(continued from page one)*

coordinates the Yankee Candle Fund-raiser, Pasta for Pennies, the Science Fair and the Painted Lady Butterfly Program. She is also the coordinator for the Fifth grade Talent Show, the Student Council and advises the East Coldenham Elementary Environmental Center. Sahl has also served as coordinator of the Galaxy Program at East Coldenham which is an educational venture with the 105th Division of the NYS Air National Guard based at Stewart Airport.

One of her former students speaks fondly of her stating that her love of science is infectious. Another spoke with admiration for the care and concern that Sahl showed her not only as a student, but seven years later when she not only still knew her name but genuinely cared about what was going on in her life.

In her statement of teaching philosophy, Kathleen Sahl states "teacher means not only an instructor, but also a counselor, doctor, lawyer, mediator, secretary, treasurer, mentor and most often, a much needed friend. An outstanding teacher is able to fulfill this challenge, blend it with a caring attitude, and encourage each student to take responsibility for their education."

Sahl sets a standard in her classroom that every child will advance their reading and math abilities by one year in her class. She also sets a standard of giving each boy and girl in her class a compliment each day

feeling that it is the least they deserve. She encourages the love of reading in her classroom by having her students reach out to younger children. Her students are instructed in how to read to children, and discuss their own favorite authors as they learn to read to kindergarten-ers.

As Sahl mentors her students she also mentors her colleagues. She came to East Coldenham as a substitute after the cafeteria wall collapse. Her role was to assist grieving teachers with the workload and help to guide the student body back to a sense of normalcy. Colleague Theresa Concors says that it was through Sahl's gentle and soft-spoken manner that she was able to help many of the teachers carry on with their responsibilities in the face of such horrific tragedy. Sahl states that she finds inspiration in teachers she works with and says, "I aspire to be a great teacher because I believe that they are great teachers."

Surely, one of the things that sets off a great teacher is a dedication that does not end with the afternoon bell. Sahl has dedicated herself to infusing her love of science throughout the East Coldenham community. She believes that by strengthening the science component of elementary education, the entire curriculum can be strengthened. To this end, she has dedicated herself to the development of a 40-acre area on the school's property which includes hard-

wood areas, a pond, a stream, wetlands and a field area. She is actually working on the site and developing lesson plans at all grade levels for the site. She is also working to develop a formal environmental center to be used by all schools in the District. She has worked with the OC Soil and Water Conservation District in her efforts and has left her impression there as evidenced by the Conservation Teacher of the Year awards she has won. She has also volunteered with local boy scout troops to help the boys earn their science badges.

Like a pebble which sends ripples through a pool of water, Kathleen Sahl has gently affected the quality of education and life at East Coldenham and Valley Central. East Coldenham teacher Theresa Concors recalls an incident where a bird flew against her classroom window and lay stunned on its ledge. She asked Sahl to look at it. Sahl picked the bird up gently and placed it in a nearby tree. The bird never fluttered a feather as she held it. Concors says, "This is what Kathy does. She gently takes everyone she meets and makes them feel safe."

The VCTA is proud of its teachers, especially teachers like Kathleen Sahl who epitomize the very best of educational professional. We applaud her daily efforts and are proud to nominate her for NYS Teacher of the Year 2002.

~ Compiled from Nomination Packet



"I aspire to be a great teacher because I believe they (my colleagues) are great teachers."

How to nominate someone you know for NYS Teacher of the Year 2003

In September your building reps. will have a brief local nomination form available.

You fill out the form and the building reps bring it back to the October Executive Council meeting. There the nominees are discussed and the Executive Council decides which nominee will be put forward for nomination. The nominee must then fill out a basic data sheet which is signed by a building rep, the association president, the building principal and the superintendent. They must also submit a resume, and statements of philosophy and classroom innovation, how to strengthen the teacher profession, and what their message as teacher of the year would be.

Additionally, they need letters of support from the superintendent, the principal, their colleagues, and students.

The nomination packet is due to State Ed. by March 1st.

On Good Health and Safe Environment—Ergonomics

Injured Workers Tell Bush Administration a New Worker Safety Standard Is Needed Now

A group of workers suffering from job-related injuries delivered a petition to the Bush administration's Department of Labor April 25, challenging it to develop a standard to protect workers from ergonomic injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

The first substantive piece of legislation President George W. Bush signed after taking office overturned the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's ergonomics standard—issued last year after 10 years of work by the agency, unions and public health activists.

"There is an urgent need for a new standard. An estimated 190,000 workers have suffered from job-related repetitive stress injuries since March 20, when President Bush signed legislation that killed the ergonomics standard," AFL-CIO President John Sweeney told a Capitol Hill press conference and

rally April 25.

Business groups have long opposed the drive to win workplace ergonomic protections for workers.

"If these injuries affected CEOs, we would see change tomorrow," said Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.). "But these injuries harm average workers—computer operators, waitresses, truck drivers, office workers—the people who keep America going every day," he said.

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) told the 300 people gathered at the rally outside the U.S. Senate, the Bush administration—after the president signed the legislation killing the ergonomics standard—claimed it was concerned about protecting workers from workplace ergonomic injuries. "We will work together to have an ergonomics standard that protects

workers and find out if it is just rhetoric or if there is concern at high levels of the administration," she said.

The petition, signed by dozens of union, occupational safety and health, public health, civil rights, religious, women's and other organizations, outlines the scope of the ergonomic problems,

presents a synopsis of the scientific research and presents some successful workplace ergonomic programs. "The evidence is overwhelming. The need for the standard is profound. Work-related MSDs [musculoskeletal disorders] are preventable.... Workers will continue to pay a high price for further delay.... We ask that you give this matter the highest attention," the petition to Chao said.

~ from AFL-CIO website

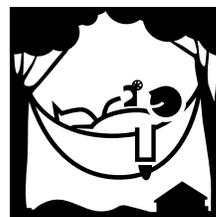
The biggest workplace safety and health problems are "ergonomic" hazards caused by heavy lifting, repetitive work and poorly designed jobs.

New York State Teachers' Retirement System Delegate Election

*Delegates to the Annual Meeting must be elected in
odd number years for a two-year term.*

Our current delegates are John Solan and Diana Shiner, with alternate Kathleen Takvam.

**If you would like to be a delegate, please contact the VCTA office (457-5899)
so an election can be run.**

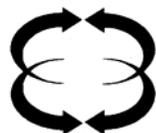


NYSUT has Issued a Call for Proposals

Twentieth Annual Statewide Conference on Inservice Education

Implementation of New Standards: Professional Development is Key

November 15-17, 2001 Crowne Plaza Albany Hotel



If you would like to submit a proposal for a presentation, contact your building rep. for a form.
Presentations accepted are given one free registration to the Conference and a \$100 stipend

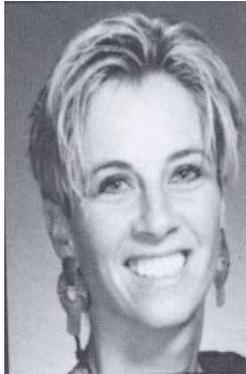
Melissa Bonacic to run for OC Legislature

Former high school English teacher and VCTA Executive Council secretary, Melissa Bonacic has announced her intention to run for the Orange County Legislature representing the 2nd OC Legislative District which includes the City of Port Jervis, the Town of Greenville and Districts 3 and 7 in the Town of Deerpark. Bonacic is seeking the Republican and Conservative Party nominations.

Bonacic taught tenth grade English for five years and was also senior class advisor. She left at the end of the 1998 school year to have a child and then took a two year child care leave. (*Melissa is married to Henry Marker and their son,*

Cameron is almost three). She decided at the end of that leave not to return. She is currently working as State Senator Thomas Morahan's Orange County Representative. She holds a BA from the University of Scranton and her Masters in English Education.

Bonacic has always been very involved with local politics. She is the daughter of State Senator, John Bonacic and is a member of the Greenville Fire Department La-



dies' Auxiliary, the Orange County Citizen's Foundation and the Orange County's Women's Republican Federation.

Bonacic has stated her intention, if elected, is to represent her district with energy and vitality. For those who worked with Melissa at the high school, we know that she will surely do just that as well as be a strong advocate for the needs of education and the interests of teachers and students. We wish her all the best in her election bid.

~ Patti Lunden

(The March 28, 2001 edition of the *Independent Republican* was used as a source.)

RA will review Science Survey

The pace of the Regents' drive to raise academic standards - and the struggle by many districts to keep up, particularly in science - will be at the center of debate when the NYSUT RA convenes in Rochester May 3. Some 2,600 delegates will weigh the findings of a new survey of science teachers that shows many districts are not fully prepared to implement the new Regents science requirements.

The survey reveals significant shortfalls in many areas of science education, including professional development, and the adequacy of science labs and lab safety equipment.

NYSUT President Tom Hobart said there is "growing concern that too many public schools are, right now, ill equipped to ac-



commodate all the students who must pass a Regents science exam and for the first time, meet lab requirements in order to earn a high school diploma."

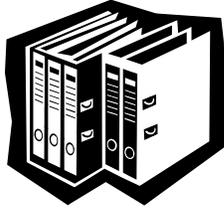
~ NYSUT Bottom Line

If you are doing an Alternate Assessment for your observation

The only thing you are required to hand in is the alternate assessment record according to the APPR committee. These forms are due to your principal by May 15th.

Regents approve safety net

The Board of Regents has approved a proposal to extend the safety net for students with disabilities. It allows students with disabilities who do not pass a Regents exam required for their class to meet the requirements for a local diploma by passing the Regents Competency Test or the equivalent in that subject.



data on how students with disabilities are performing on required Regents examinations. This will include freshmen entering ninth grade in September 2001-2004. See the proposal at <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/pdf/bra3.pdf>.

~ NYSUT Bottom Line

This action extends the safety net for another four year to allow enough time to gather further



**Do you use
Cable TV
in your
classroom?**

Time Warner Cable is looking for teachers who use cable television as a classroom resource in a creative way.

Winners receive \$1000 and a trip to Washington, DC for an award celebration.

Call the Time-Warner Education Hotline for information (212) 420-4823



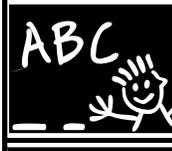
The Christa McAuliffe Fellowship Competitive Grant Program

Open to outstanding, full-time school teachers with at least eight years classroom experience.

Winners will exemplify the high levels of teaching proficiency, commitment, creativity and enthusiasm that characterized the late teacher-astronaut Christa McAuliffe.

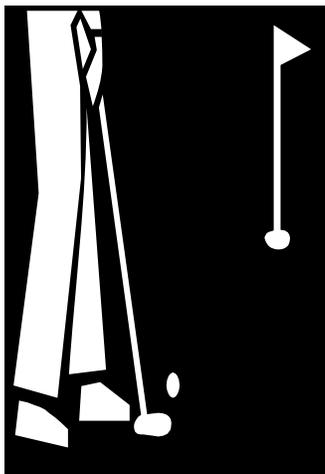
Application forms and supporting materials for this federal program, administered through the states,

**Contact the Office of Teaching
SED, Albany, N.Y. 12234;
call (518) 474-6440; or email slake@mail.nysed.gov.**



A series of live television broadcasts to help students prepare for Regents Exams,
Regents Review Live!, will air on community or education access channels May 10-20.

These are produced by New York Network/SUNYSAT in collaboration with the state's teacher resource and computer training centers. Call your cable or public TV station for specifics, or visit the project's Web site, www.regentsreviewlive.net.



**The Valley Central High School PTSA
is sponsoring its annual Golf Tournament
On Saturday June 2, 2001 (Rain date: June 16th)
at the Winding Hills Executive Golf Club, Route 17K Montgomery**

Check In: 8:30 am Start: 9:00 am

Cost is \$50 per person

(18 holes golf, continental breakfast, and lunch)

Carts are an additional \$10 per cart

Make checks payable to VCHS PTSA Pre-registration is required

Deadline to Register: May 29, 2001

For more information, call 361-3884

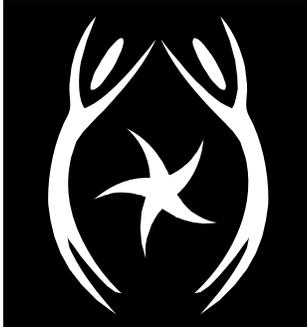
From the President

2001-2002 School Budget Shows Promise (continued from page one)

students and teaching staff on standardized assessments.

The Valley Central Teachers' Association applauds this Board's decision to "put children center." This new budget includes many needed program changes, additions and supports that can be better identified in Jay

Sussdorff's article on page two. The most notable component of the proposed 2001-2002 school budget, however, is the implementation of a district-wide full day kindergarten program. This constitutes a major change in staffing, curriculum, and, most importantly, our ability to provide early intervention education



***Put Children Center
Vote YES on May***

programs to children at an age when it is most needed and most effective. In a small rural school in St. Lawrence in 1965, I reaped the benefits of full day kindergarten. Thirty-six years later, the Valley Central School District will finally catch up to this decades old concept.

It is my hope that this year's budget proposal represents a

foreshadowing of things to come: a desire to do the right thing, simply because it's the right thing to do; a desire to take a stand; a response to embarrassment over our district's long history of spending less on our children than our neighboring school districts (*and being proud of it regardless of the impact on the*

educational process and product).

I encourage all VCTA members who live in the Valley Central School District to vote yes on May 15th. Furthermore, I encourage all VCTA members to remind friends, acquaintances, and neighbors of the importance of funding to quality education, while soliciting their support for this year's school budget. It is crucial that we support our Board of Education when they have the courage to make needed changes that directly benefit instruction.

Vote YES on May 15th.

~Tim Brown

Two Looks at a Court Decision on Charter Schools

There are two lessons to take away from a charter-school ruling in appellate court issued earlier this month.

Examining fiscal issues in the troubled Roosevelt district in Nassau County, the Appellate Division of state Supreme Court rejected a constitutional challenge to charter schools even as it clarified a route for public school districts to challenge charter schools.

Lawyers for Roosevelt argued that the district would suffer "irreparable harm" by the loss of \$1.2 million to \$1.7 million a year to the Academy Charter School, approved in 1999. The unanimous decision found that school districts do not have the exclusive right to state aid that must now be

passed along to charter schools located within the same district, according to the Associated Press.

The appellate court failed to strike down the Roosevelt charter school, but did find the Roosevelt district has a right to challenge the charter plan by suing the SUNY Board of Trustees to claim its approval of the Roosevelt charter was "arbitrary and capricious."

"It is encouraging to see the Appellate Division affirm NYSUT's belief that a chartering entity must consider the impact on finances and programs that a proposed charter school will have on area public schools," said Bob Carillo, NYSUT special project



coordinator. "This is in keeping with the spirit and letter of the New York State Charter School Act of 1998."

The ruling comes at a time when the Board of Regents is urging the Legislature to pass a bill authorizing a more direct state takeover of the district that has been plagued by security problems and administrative turnover.

~ NYSUT Bottom Line

Teachers: "Forgotten Players" in Reaching Public

When it comes to involvement in decisions in their own districts, 70% of teachers say they're "left out of the loop," according to a new report, "Just Waiting to be Asked," by the non-partisan national research firm Public Agenda.

When school leaders do make an effort to ask teachers about policies, 70% distrust district leaders' motives and believe they want to win teacher support for "what the district leadership wants to accomplish." Public Agenda reports treating teachers as "forgotten players" breeds distrust and hampers reform. The report says teachers believe that "their districts will take up a reform only to drop it as the winds of change sweep their district."

Teachers regard new reform measures as simply a "temporary phenomenon, driven by whatever new 'regime' is installed ... or whatever new fad has hit the education field."

The research firm concluded: "Simply expecting teachers to automatically internalize the district's agenda would seem to be wishful thinking—teachers have seen too much to merely 'get with the program.'"

Public Agenda President

Deborah Wadsworth said administrators should pay attention to teachers' growing feelings of alienation because they are "such trusted ambassadors to parents." She called teachers a "linchpin" in efforts to secure public support for education changes.



Other findings:

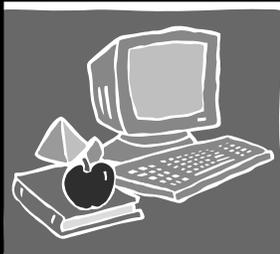
- A whopping 97% of teachers said "the most important thing community residents can do for schools is to give educators their strong support."
- Also, 94% agreed that "one of the best ways to win support of non-parents is to bring them inside to see the schools."
- While school board members and superintendents (72%) believe that few board members "tend to represent the interests of specific, narrow constituencies," 47% of teachers report that "several" or even

a majority of their district's board members are there to represent narrow constituencies.

- More than half (53%) of the public, and 57% of parents, admit they didn't vote in the last school board election.

- Both school board members (88%) and superintendents (87%) agree that "schools are most responsive to active, vocal parents." Board members (86%) and superintendents (77%) say "non-parents rarely pay attention to the schools unless there is a crisis."

~NYSUT Bottom Line



READING RESOURCES AROUND ON THE WEB

Teachers can build excitement for reading during

Reading Is Fun Week, celebrated the first full week in May (May 6-12),

by tapping into the Reading is Fundamental Web site:

www.rif.org/about/rifweek_acts.html.

School employees can turn libraries, cafeterias and classrooms into a "Treasure Island." Let students follow a map to find a treasure (books), build a castle from shoeboxes (one for each book read).

These and many other ideas are available on the Web site.

Another source is TeachersFirst.com.

It has reading lists and resources for students who have trouble finding something "interesting" to read at www.teachersfirst.com/matrix.htm.

Highlights from the VCTA March Executive Council Meeting

\$100 was contributed to the Orange County Teachers' Association for membership.

Elementary buildings have one snow day remaining; Middle and High School have two.

Retirement Incentive Language- Employees must let the District know of intention to retire by March in order to retire on June 30 of that school year through June 29 of the following school year. The incentive will be paid in two equal installments.

Retirement Incentive- Letter of Agreement was distributed. Unit members are eligible if they are over the age of 50 (as of June 30, 2001) or are on Step 20 or above and have ten or more years of service in the district and are not otherwise eligible to participate in the retirement incentive set forth in Article XXV E. of the 1997-2001 Collective Bargaining Agreement. To take advantage of this early retirement incentive, the unit member must notify the district of his/her intention to retire prior to 4/1/01.

Revised 2001-2002 School Calendar was distributed. 187 total days.

In-Service Guidelines were distributed. Discussion followed. The rate of pay and prep time allowance is not contractual. Unit members should let the district know what they want.

American Teacher Awards (Disney Learning Partnership)- Nomination information was distributed. Application deadline is May 25.

Chester Teachers' Association Rally- Information and directions to Chester were distributed.

District Budget Vote- Jay Sussdorff reported that the full budget, with no cuts, is around \$52+ million, an increase of five-and-a-half million dollars, including full-day kindergarten. The tax rate increase is 11.7%, before STAR money. A Town of Montgomery house assessed at \$150,000 will see no tax increase because the STAR will coun-

terbalance that increase. A house assessed at a lower amount may see a decrease, at a higher amount may see an increase. The projection of increase for a house assessed above \$150,000 will be about \$100 per year. Tim Brown reported that there has not yet been a response for a pro-education candidate to run for the Board of Education. The deadline for petitions is April 11. Discussion followed.

A note from Armand Caputi (accompanied by a check for VOTE/COPE) was read.

There will be a District sponsored health and wellness fair on April 28 from 9 am- 1 pm in the VCHS gym. Mary Goldberg is representing the VCTA at the Committee of 100, (our lobbying group to the legislature), representing 440,000 voters.

Conference Day has been changed to May 25. This is good, because hopefully the computer labs will be completed by then. Internet access is moving slowly..

Bond Project- Some things scheduled for summer will be done over Easter vacation. Montgomery and Berea might be completed by the end of the school year.

Computers at Coldenham and Maybrook have issues regarding monitor style and size. Maybrook needed laptops, due to space concerns. John Bonagura asked if other schools were having difficulty getting ink and indicated that all requests must go through Greg DeNunzio. Discussion followed.

Orin Segall reported that the Benefit Trust audit was approved. The next meeting will be May 1.

John Bonagura distributed NYSUT cards (for new members) for reps to distribute.

Toni Sperry reported that 43 members took the VCTA-sponsored defensive driving course.

Chris Brand reported on the Steel



Meet the Executive Council

Beth Como
East Coldenham Building Representative

Beth teaches fourth grade at East Coldenham. This is her first year on Executive Council. Beth serves on the Building Reports Committee.

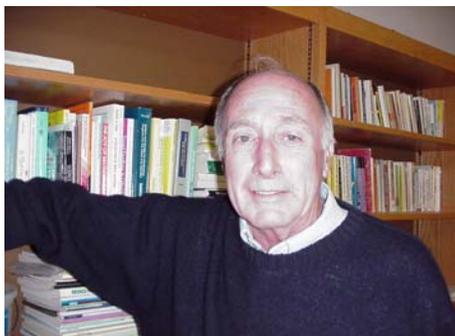
Worker's Union at Montgomery. Tim Brown relayed details of his phone conversation with a representative from the Steel Worker's Union. Chris Brand indicated that UPS delivery personnel made Montgomery deliveries to Central Office because they wouldn't cross the picket line.

Toni Sperry asked what had happened to the tutor list. Rich Steger reported that he sends it to those who request it (mostly MS/HS guidance counselors). CBA Negotiations- We are a year away from exchanging proposals. As we get closer to negotiations, questionnaires will be distributed and an action committee will be formed, as in the past. Tim Brown recommended Jay Sussdorf and Mary Goldberg as negotiators for the next contract. Arline Friedman stated that all levels should be represented in negotiations.

Jay Sussdorf reported that the next edition of VC Echoes will include an article about safe schools legislation and how it affects school districts. Two new committees are being formed to address Safe Schools-Safe Schools committee and Code of Conduct committee. These committees must have documents in place by July 1, 2001. We would like to have all levels represented, as it is very important for teachers to be represented on these committees. Let Jay Sussdorff know if you are interested in serving on either of these committees.

The next Executive Council meeting was held April 24. The May Executive Council meeting will be held May 15th at 3:45 PM at the VCHS Professional Library, Montgomery.

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



lina. The imagery in Marion's letters reveals a true disciple of Keats, Wordsworth, Blake, *et al.*

Although the setting was a sad one (*Mary Frances's funeral*), it is always a pleasure to see and chat with Sam Tucker, Bill Moran, Helen and Florence Morrissey and Lu Walters. I am, in so many ways, reminded of the kindness and loyalty of the Valley Central Family.

Rest in Peace, Mama Euclid

A day or two after submitting copy for last month's column, I again felt an enormous loss—both professional and personal. Mary Frances Morrissey (*affectionately known as Mama Euclid by students and staff*) has passed away. Mary Frances was the long-time chair of the high school math department and a dedicated purveyor of corollaries, theorems and other math stuff. Our deepest sympathy to husband, Charley and son, John on her passing.

Word from the far-flung retiree troops

A call from Ada Metzging, retired nurse-teacher, once again that it is indeed a "small world after all". Ada wintered in Florida. As she was leaving a quilting seminar, she was stopped by fellow retiree and now long-time Florida resident, Carol Maas, former high school art teacher. Carol enjoys Florida life, her copies of Echoes; she sends her best to all. A few days later, a knock on Ada's door revealed none other than superfan, Ed Kubina, retired from Berea and doing his spring training baseball camp visits. Ed's mother-in-law lives in the same development as Ada. Ada had a wonderful winter.

Another nice note from mentor and friend Marion Underhill, retired from high school English department. She keeps me up to date on things cultural and educational in her beloved adoptive state of North Caro-

Nobody asked me, but...

Today (*April 24th*) is fax day for "Retirees for Tier I". As you know, I have used this space and letters to New York Teacher to rail against the inequity of retired teachers not being reinstated to their original retirement tier when still-active teachers were reinstated several years ago. The state legislature (in its less-than-infinite wisdom) decided it would be too expensive. Fact: the money is not state money! It is Teacher Retirement System money! Will the legislature ever wake up! Retirees for Tier I are "deluging" our state reps with faxes today, calling for their support.

There are today in our state 3000 women who left teaching to raise families, returned to teach, were placed in a different tier, and retired prior to tier reinstatement legislation. These women are clearly being discriminated against. All of us, retirees and active teachers, paras, secretaries, must take action now.

What can we do? What is being done? VCTA is supporting tier reinstatement through NYSUT. Each one of us personally can write our legislators in Albany (*or fax them*) to support Bills S2171 (*State Senate*) and A2903 (*Assembly*). Also remind them that teachers vote are tired of them "making nice" to teachers only at election time. There is not way that I personally will vote for anyone who is not supportive of teacher needs—in action, not only words.

I have also asked teacher reps (*VCTA*) to gather signatures on

petitions which I have distributed. They will return them to me, and we will do the rest. Thanks.

- Apropos of the never ending testing syndrome, I enjoyed the rational approach of Yonkers FT president Steve Frey: "Schools need more time to prepare their students and to put in place academic support programs. The pace of testing is accelerating so quickly that it hinders the efforts to assess the progress that's been made."
- Syracuse has become the latest district to hire a for-profit firm to run some of its schools. Some folks never learn. Don't let it happen where you live and teach. Vigilance!!
- Some interesting comments in New York Teacher re: Codes of Conduct. One letter states: "Codes are not needed; enforcement of codes is."

Some dates to remember:

- Sunday, May 20th. 2:00—5:00 pm VCTA Celebration for Retirees and Achievements. See page three for response form.
- Annual Retiree Luncheon—Wednesday, September 5th. Put it on your calendar; I'll be sending out material in July.

Amen! (*Can you tell that I only have a few minutes before I must submit this copy to Patti Lunden, beloved editor? By the way, congratulations to Patti on another award winning year for Echoes.)*

Thanks for being faithful to the back pages.

Until next time, keep pushing back the barriers of ignorance in whatever venue life finds you.

Peace.

~ Kevin McFadden

Advertising Section

These ads will be seen by over 750 members of the VC Educational Community and their households. If you would like to advertise in the next issue of the VC ECHOES, contact Patti Lunden, 457-5899 for rates.



"Kind of reminds me of my first day teaching second grade."

Cellular One



Special Digital Rate

Available to all VC Employees

\$19.99/ month

200 Free Minutes/month

Includes

- Call waiting,
- Call forwarding,
- 3-way calling,
- Caller ID,
- Free Phone E-mail,
- Detail Billing,
- & Voice Mail

With Extended Local Area

includes

*all of NY and parts
of PA, NJ, CT, & Mass.*

Free Digital Phone

NEC 2600

Cellular One is now only opening digital accounts; analog accounts and products will no longer be sold. However, all current analog contracts and rates will be honored. You may upgrade your account within two months of its expiration.

Call

Debbie DeAgostine

(914) 541-3711

Mention this ad!

**FORMULA
H
MOTORWORKS INC.®**

**Servicing
Honda & Acura
Automobiles**

Tel.
(845) 344-5511

Authorized
HONDA
Power
Equipment
Sales & Service

794 Rte. 17M (1/4 mile east of Rte. 302) Middletown, NY 10940
Owned and operated by Brian Baker (VC class of '80)
and Jeff Baker (VC class of '73). Established in 1988.

James R. Stout
Financial Consultant

845-294-1300

Toll Free **877-558-3887**

Charles E. Carnes
First Vice President—Investments
Sales Manager

Eileen Reichle
Sales Associate

SALOMON SMITH BARNEY

A member of citigroup

**SALOMON SMITH BARNEY
INC.**
25 Main Street
Goshen, NY 10924
FAX 845-294-4367

Advertising Section

These ads will be seen by over 750 members of the VC Educational Community and their households. If you would like to advertise in the next issue of the VC ECHOES, contact Patti Lunden, 457-5899 for rates.

Ashcroft and Associates

MARK J. TIERNEY
LIC. REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON

277 HUDSON STREET
CORNWALL-ON-HUDSON, N.Y. 12520
OFFICE: (845) 534-9300
FAX: (845) 534-9066
HOME: (845) 778-7393
EMAIL: Lennymit@aol.com

 **MLS**

Dine out and **SAVE 20%!**

That's on everything you order... including beverages, tax and tip!

Simply register up to three credit cards with iDine Prime. Then use them to pay your bill at any participating restaurant and **save 20% on the entire amount**—including all food, beverages, tax and tip! As an AFT member, you enjoy a special low membership fee of just \$29 a year—an immediate savings of \$20! To enroll, call the toll-free number listed below and have your AFT MasterCard, your American Express, Visa or Discover card handy.



Call to enroll now!
1-877-491-DINE (3463)

Mon.-Fri. 8am-10pm/Sat. 8am-5pm ET
Be sure to mention code **AFT7**.



VALID THROUGH 7/01

A long-term financial plan for people who are short on time.

Individual Tailored Investment Strategies

- Mutual Funds
- Annuities
- Pension & Profit Sharing Plans
- Tax Exempt Investments
- Income Protection Plans
- IRA/Keogh Plans

David J. Mazzetti

Personal Financial Advisor

21 Old Main Street
Fishkill, NY 12524
(845) 896-7520

Complimentary Retirement Kits Available!

American Express Financial Advisors, Inc.
Member NASD
IDS Life Insurance Company



Send More for Your Money



Your union membership helps you save money when sending flowers!

No matter what the occasion, there's no better way to express your wishes than with the AFT PLUS Flower Service.

Save 15% on floral arrangements, roses, plants, wreaths or gift baskets.

Minimum order—\$29.99. Order toll-free, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

To place an order call:

1-888-667-7779



Provided by  **The FLOWER CLUB**

VALID THROUGH 7/01



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

Valley Central Teachers' Association
1175 Rte. 17K
Montgomery, NY 12549
Tel./Fax: (845) 457-5899

President, Timothy Brown (HS)
Vice President, Jay Sussdorff (HS)
Vice President, Richard Steger (Walden)
Secretary, Laurie Hey (MS)
Treasurer, John Bonagura (EC)

Building Representatives

Berea: Carol DeMicco, Sara Ackerson,
Gail Roberto

Mavbrook: Donna Lloyd

East Coldenham: Beth Como, Diane Paolo

Walden: Barbara Winchell, Randy Sutter,
Brenda Newman

Montgomery: Toni Sperry, Chris Brand

MS: Mary Bleau, Mary Goldberg, Dana DeMasi
Paul Dederick, Joe Collins, Mike Steele
Kathy Manning

HS: Arline Friedman, Jane Hillis, Peter Meisel,
Glenn Eckert, Joe Fracalossi,
Jean McMahon, Bob Jurgens

VC ECHOES Editor

Patricia Lunden, (HS)

Email: vcta@frontiernet.net

NYSUT

www.nysut.org

AFT

www.aft.org

AFL-CIO

www.aflcio.org

Mid-Hudson Teacher Center:

(845) 255-2885

<http://www.mhdc.dcboces.org>

Employee Assistance Program

1-800-962-7487

Visit us on the Web!
www.frontiernet.net/~vcta

*The VC Echoes is the official
publication of the Valley Central
Teacher's 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 Patricia Lunden
at the HS by May 22, 2001.
Any articles submitted to the VC
Echoes will also be posted on the
VCTA Web page.*

Voluntary Transfers

In the event a teacher should request a transfer to a vacant or new position, length of service will be the key consideration provided that school needs, experience and qualifications are substantially equal. If such request is denied, the applicant shall be granted a conference or written explanation.

There shall be a posting period of ten (10) school days for new positions and immediate vacancies, provided teachers vacating the positions give the District at least thirty (30) days written notice.

In the event a new position or vacancy should occur during the summer, notification of the same will be sent to the Association President.

A teacher may submit to the Personnel Administrator a request for transfer which will remain active for two (2) years from the date of such notice unless withdrawn by the teacher. There shall be no limitations on the number of such requests a teacher may submit.

Collective Bargaining Agreement; Article VIII, sec. 1-4

The Heart of a Teacher

It's that time of year again—accountability time. Tests will be given and scored and teachers will be held accountable for their students' results. Cohorts will be examined, numbers will be submitted and State Ed. will work its magic creating yet another school report card. Of course, those numbers will only tell part of the story. They won't reflect who the children were who took those tests—how much time they spent on homework, how much support their education was given at home. They also won't reflect that much about the children's teacher. They won't tell you anything about the "teachable moments" that occurred in that classroom, how many nights the teacher worked into the wee hours of the morning perfecting a lesson, how the teacher worried about their students after they left the room, how those children made that teacher laugh, how that teacher cried if something bad happened to

one of those kids. No, those test scores won't tell you that.

Once upon a time ago there was a elementary teacher in a depressed city school system in the heart of its ghettos. There was a college nearby and a sociology professor sent his students out to make a study of 200 young children of the area. They had to write an evaluation of those children. In every case, the college students concluded those kids didn't have a chance. About twenty five years later another sociology professor decided to find out what had happened to those kids, so he sent his sociology class out on its mission. Of the original 200, 20 had passed away, but 176 of the remaining 180 had achieved more than ordinary success as lawyers, doctors and businesspersons. The professor was astounded and sought out each of the children, now successful adults, to ask



them, "How do you account for your success?"

Each time he was told about a certain elementary teacher. Long retired, but still very alert,

the professor was able to track down the teacher and asked, "How did you do it? How were you able to inspire those kids to be successful?"

The old teacher's eyes began to sparkle and she gently said, "It was really very simple," she said. "I loved those children."

There will never be a test devised that will truly be able to score the real accountability of a teacher—for true accountability lies in the heart of each teacher.

~ Patti Lunden
(Story paraphrased from Internet)