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From the President

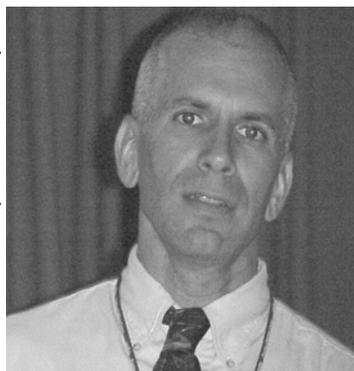
Evaluating the Commissioner and SED

The following has been excerpted from President Tim Brown's opening day address:

In a meeting here in the Mid-Hudson Valley last spring with local school district representatives, the Commissioner of Education was taken to task on the practicality of his new policies. The headline in the next day's newspaper quoted the Commissioner as responding, **"I WILL NOT BACK DOWN"**. I find it disheartening that the caption didn't read: **WE WILL DO WHAT-EVER IS BEST FOR OUR CHILDREN** or, perhaps even better, **COMMISSIONER AGREES SED POLICIES AND MANDATES WILL BE EVALUATED BY MEANS OF AN ANNUAL REPORT CARD TO DETERMINE EFFECTIVENESS**. What a unique concept. In the fantasy world that people such as myself often live the article would highlight and specify a plan for persons with *actual classroom experience* to move in and take over the State Education Department if SED policies and

mandates proved to be unsuccessful. Deaf ears would be the only response to excuses and whining on the part of Commissioner Mills and his band of merry men and women at the SED concerning inane facts such as :

- ⇒ ...but this isn't fair, the SED can't control funding (fortunately the SED can control many aspects of unfounded mandates, it simply chooses not to)
- ⇒ but this isn't fair...the SED can't control parental involvement (the greatest predictor of student success)
- ⇒ ...but the SED can't force students to be responsible (i.e. show up to school on time and every day, do their homework, study, be respectful, etc)
- ⇒ We can't control teen pregnancy, drugs, divorce, abuse
- ⇒ It's not fair. You're not looking at the big picture. You're using the SED as



President Tim Brown addresses the membership at Convocation.

scapegoats for family and societal problems that are generally beyond our control.

Oh, by the way, the news article would also read: *Annual SED report card will be available to all news media by August 1st and will also be available on line at www.outoftouchwithreality.org*. The article would further state that if 95% of all NYS schools do not attain the desired arbitrary levels of proficiency, regardless of sociodemographic factors such as poverty index, number of single parent families teen pregnancy rates, drug abuse and other crime related (continued on page five) factors, etc., the Commissioner will be deemed

**"An apple lasts
A short time in the
hands of a teacher.
A bit of wisdom
lasts a lifetime in
the mind of a
child."
~ Unknown**

**VCTA
Fall Fest
October 20th
3:00-6:00 PM
Stony Ford**

October is Open Enrollment month...



The VCTA Health and TSA Fair provided an opportunity for all VC employees to check out alternatives for Health Insurance. October is the month to change Health Care coverage if you would like to do so. If you picked up an information packet on one of the Health Care companies, then you will find an enrollment form inside. Fill out the enrollment form and send it to Polly Conigilo at Central Office by October 31st. *Your coverage will become effective*

as of January 1, 2001 and continue until you make another change.

If you wish to change from an alternate health care company back to the Orange-Ulster Schools Health Plan, contact Mrs. Conigilo at 457-3171 for an enrollment form.

Before you make any changes be sure that you have checked with your physicians to be sure that they accept that insurance.

Although the Association invited only three Health Care Companies to the Health Fair, by Federal Law you have the right to choose any HMO you prefer. You would need to contact that HMO on your own to arrange for enrollment.

Be aware that the District will only pay a single or family rate equal (or less) to the Orange-Ulster School District Plan. **That rate is \$274 for single coverage and \$610 for family coverage.** (This is the monthly rate that is paid on your behalf twelve months a year by the District.)

The VCTA does not recommend you choose any one company over the other; we encourage you to consider all your options and choose the coverage that best meets your needs.

HMO Rates compared to OUSDHP...(for a full comparison of plans, see page 6)

GHI

The package that they are offering is the same as last year however they taken off the cap on prescription drugs. Check to be sure that your doctor is accepting GHI. There are two copies of the directory at the VCTA Office.

The rate for GHI is \$264.97 for single coverage and \$675.97 for family coverage per month. Neither plan requires any contribution from the participant.

MVP

The plan being offered by MVP is the same as last year with the exception of drug coverage. The drug cost is \$5 for generic and \$20 brand and \$40 for non-formulary drugs.

The POS Option has been eliminated so you must stay in within the network. Enhanced Vision Care has been added.

The rate for MVP for single coverage is \$269.58 which is less than what the District is paying. Therefore single coverage on MVP will not cost anything toward premium. However, family coverage will be \$697.38 which is \$24 more per month than the District is paying to OUSDHP.

Empire Blue Cross/ Blue Shield

The Empire Blue Cross/ Blue Shield Direct Connection Plan is the same as the plan offered last year with the addition of acupuncture coverage. The Empire Plan has two rates depending upon where you live.

Orange, Sullivan, Ulster County: The rate for single coverage \$278.48 which is less than the District is paying and the rate for family coverage is \$724.03 which is more than what the District is paying. **IF YOU CHOOSE EMPIRE and live in ORANGE, SULLIVAN, ULSTER COUNTY, you pay \$26.03 x12 months deducted pretax from your pay.**

Rockland, Westchester, Dutchess, Putnam counties the rate for single coverage is \$292.81 a month which is less than what the District is paying for the OUSDHP. However the rate for family coverage is \$761.31 a month, which is \$63.00 more a month than what the District is paying. That difference would be divided between your two paychecks per month and deducted pretax.

Before changing your coverage, double check that your physicians accept the plan.

Also compare the major points of the plan to your current plan. Be sure the services that you utilize are covered. If you decide that you want to change insurance plans, fill out the enrollment form and send it to Polly Coniglio, at CO by Oct. 31.



**VCTA Fall
Fest**

**October
20th**

**Stony Ford
Country Club**

3:00 – 6:00

VCTA Officers Work Hard for Membership

I would like to thank my fellow VCTA officers for their hard work with the opening of school this year. Rich Steger and Jay Sussdorff worked hard organizing your opening day events. Rich, Jay, John Bonagura, and Laurie Hey represent the Association on Union, District, County, and State committees. Their efforts on your behalf will continue throughout the school year in numerous venues.

Vice-President Rich Steger (Walden Elementary) handles elementary issues/concerns, and chairs

the following committees: Health and TSA/Investment, New Member, Public Relations.

Vice-President Jay Sussdorff (High School) handles secondary issues/concerns, and chairs the following committees: Political Action, Health and Safety, Negotiations and Action.

Treasurer John Bonagura (East Coldenham Elementary) is responsible for Financial Accountability, Dues and Membership, Board of Education reporting and chairs the Professional Issues committee.

Secretary Laurie Hey (Middle School) is responsible for Minutes and Record Keeping, Maternity Issues and chairs the Grievance and Social Activities Committees.

To Rich, Jay, John, and Laurie—Thank you for everything you do for VCTA members, VC students and parents, and for making my job easier and bearable.

*~ Tim Brown,
President*

On Good Health and a Safe Environment Valley Central School District has a School Resource Officer

Valley Central can number itself as one of the few schools in Orange County to have a School Resource Officer (SRO) as part of its support staff. Officer Keith Lipsey, a familiar face to many in our communities and schools, is an Orange County native and a graduate of Newburgh Free Academy. He has worked for the Town of Montgomery Police on a full time basis for approximately three and one half years. Some of his community service activities include: DARE officer for eight years; the Bully Smart program; Safe Kids workshops; a yearly karate tournament that brings money back into the schools in the area; participation in our own Capabilities Week; and various other ways of giving to the children and communities that comprise our district.

Keith's hours are Tuesday through Friday for the full school day (7:33-2:38), and he is often here before and after those hours to provide his expertise. You can find him

in the main office or he can be contacted by radio through a secretary in the office. Although Keith spends much of the day at the High School, he is a District SRO which means he can and will continue to be utilized at all levels. He is still the DARE officer for Berea and East Coldenham as he has been in the past and he looks forward to participating in Red Ribbon Week district wide.

An SRO holds an officially trained position and is under the auspices of the building administrator, who has jurisdiction over the

SRO's activities. The officer is one link in the chain of partnership among law enforcement, schools and students. In his role as an SRO, Keith will carry out activities such as speaking to classes, teaming with the nurse or other support staff to run question and answer sessions

for students, speaking individually to students who are referred to him by staff members or who come to him on a voluntary basis, serving as a visible model for law enforcement personnel, and generally breaking down the stereotype of police being those having privileges associated with their position. Lipsey has already helped one student find a home, and has supported another by accompanying them to family court, not in an official role, but just for moral support. Keith has also been a guest speaker in many classes. He is

hoping that his role as an SRO will foster a positive relationship between the police department and the Valley Central community, especially its students.

When asked how the SRO program was working out in the High School, Assistant Principal Darryl Imperati replied, "Wonderfully well. Officer Lipsey's presence has made a noticeable difference. There have only been two fights this year so far, and there have been two significant drug arrests due to the fact that we have Officer Lipsey's ongoing presence

and added hall staff."



TMPD, Officer Keith Lipsey is VC's SRO

Lipsey credits the decline in school fights to the fact that he has been called in to de-escalate situations before they became violent. Before the SRO program was established, Lipsey's contact with students was being

called in from the outside after a situation had occurred. Lipsey makes a strong point that he is a resource for students first, hoping to show the human side of law enforcement to the children.

When asked about his mode of operation as an SRO, Lipsey replied, "Drops of rain make a hole in the stone not by violence, but by falling often."

It is Lipsey's hope that the entire community might learn to see police officers as resources rather than just enforcers. In my conversation with Officer Lipsey, I found him to be a dynamic, cooperative and motivated person, willing to go **more** than the "extra mile" to help both us and our students. It might be worthwhile to stop in, introduce yourself and find out firsthand what he and his position are all about. Good luck, Keith.

~ Jay Sussdorff,
Vice President

From the President

Evaluating the Commissioner and SED (continued from page one)

insufficient to the task.

He and his staff will, of course, be replaced and all future Commissioners will be required to take 175 hours of professional development every 5 years to prove their worth while keeping them abreast of the latest educational jargon and trends. All Commissioners will be required to finish their Ed.D within 3 years of accepting this appointed position. This must be accomplished without missing work or relinquishing any responsibilities or tasks delegated to the NYS Commissioner's position. Of course, I could go on and on ... Isn't it amazing how the Commissioner wants everyone and everything evaluated and micromanaged but himself and the organization he heads.

As educators we often get opportunities to convey our frustrations and anxieties to one another, but when the bell rings and our students walk into our

...Perhaps the real educational bias lies in the belief that all children should be the same, rather than accepting and celebrating their unique differences and talents.

classrooms we must put those fears and anxieties aside to do the job for which we are being paid. Those of us who spend time in the classroom know that all children can learn.

With respect to this, I believe all of us would agree with the Commissioner. However, those of us who spend time in the classroom also know that all children do not learn at the same pace, in the same manner, or to the same degree. Perhaps the real educational bias lies in the belief



that all children should be the same, rather than accepting and celebrating their unique differences and talents. For example, encouraging children with limited academic potential and/or

proficiency to celebrate their successes, or are we creating a generation of learners who, according to Commissioner Mills' education philosophy, will never make the grade

even when they are doing their best? We may lose an entire generation of learners if we do not address this. We must insure that our methodologies remain both caring and pragmatic rather than simply politically correct. If we fail to do this, the GED program may become the most popular NYS education program

of this new century.

~ Tim Brown

The Valley Central Scholarship Council



is sponsoring a

Goods and Services Auction

November 3rd

at the Valley Central High School

There is a large assortment of items to be auctioned!

For more information, contact Donna Barletta, EC

The Valley Central Scholarship Council is a nonprofit organization which has raised and given over \$490,000 to graduating seniors over the past thirty-six years.

A Comparison of Health Plans

(for specific details, consult the plan overview provided by each company)

<p>OUSDHP (\$300/800 - deductible) Co-Pay Individual (80% R&C) \$4875/pers. or \$8000/fam. Individ Out Pock Max \$1000/Family Max \$1800 Calendar Max: \$300,000 - Lifetime Max. Unlimited</p>	<p>MVP In Network Only</p>	<p>GHI HMO (formerly WellCare) Only In Network</p>	<p>EMPIRE Direct HMO In Network Only No Lifetime Maximum</p>
<p>In Network/ Out of Network OFFICE VISIT \$15 copay / Ded. + 80% (r/c)</p> <p>Specialist \$15 copay/ Ded. + 80% R&C</p> <p>Eye Exams Not Covered</p> <p>Well Baby/Child No Copay/ resp. for any chrg (see schedule)over R&C</p> <p>Routine Exams 19-49 1/ 3 years/No benefit 50+: 1 / 2 years/ No benefit (Pap/Mammo- different schedule)</p> <p>Mammography 100% in hospital only</p> <p>Hospital 100%/ \$250 ded per adm. 80% of R&C out pt. \$25/\$50</p> <p>Alcohol/Sub 100% 4 weeks/ 6 wks per year (inpatient) (out net) 100% R&C-\$250 ded.</p> <p>Mental Health(pre-cert.)No Copay-100 day (Inpatient) cal/80% up to 30 days + ded. (not cert.)50% up to 30 days+ded.</p> <p>Emergency100% following a \$25 per day ded. waived if admitted Accident -within 72 hrs\ Illness (life threat) Surgery</p> <p>Alcohol/Sub (Outpatient) 100% (60 visit limit)/100% R&C-\$25 per day ded</p> <p>Mental Health \$15 co pay - 100 visits/ 50%-out patient 30visits</p> <p>Labor/Delivery 100% / 80% of R&C Pre/Post Natal 20%/ Ded +80% of R&C *Labs 100% in hospital (out pt)(\$25 ded per day.) *XRAY 100% in hospital (out pt) (\$25 Ded. per day) *Radiology 100% in hospital (out pt) (\$25 Ded. per day) Radiation/Chemo 100% in hospital Durable Med. Not covered Diabetic Supp. Not covered (?)</p> <p>*Physical Therapy 100% (\$25 day ded.)if following hosp. or surg.</p> <p>Chiropractic Visits \$15/80% RC (100% if reach out pocket max. Must pre-cert. Before 16th visit or pay 50%)</p> <p>Hospice 100% Home/Health 100% Ambulance 100% (\$50 per trip limit) Nursing Home 100%/180 days per year Acupuncture DNA Nutritional Counsel DNA Prescip Drug \$5generic/\$15preferred/\$25non preferred</p> <p><i>*if in a non-network hosp. then \$50 per day ded. - if not in hospital ,then not covered</i></p>	<p>\$15 Copay</p> <p>\$15 Copay</p> <p>1 every other year</p> <p>No charge</p> <p>\$15/In System only \$15/In System only \$15/In System only \$15/ In System only \$15 (100% in hosp)/ 80% R&C</p> <p>No Charge/80% R&C</p> <p>No Charge Detox/ 80% R&C</p> <p>No Charge Short Term, Acute, Crisis/ 80% R&C</p> <p>\$50 – waived if admitted</p> <p>\$15 per visit (limit 60)/80% of R&C</p> <p>\$15 1st visit \$25 ea visit 2-5</p> <p>100%/80% of R&C Pre = \$15 / 80% of R&C \$15 per visit /80% of R & C</p> <p>\$15 per visit(100% in hosp.) / 80% of R&C</p> <p>No charge</p> <p>20% as copay/ 50% of R&C</p> <p>\$15 copay per visit (2 month max)/ 80% of R&C \$15 copay with referral</p> <p>Covered \$15 copay per visit/ 80% of R&C 100% Covered DNA DNA \$5generic/\$20 brand/\$40 non-formulary Can mail order 90 day supply at 60 day price</p>	<p>\$15 copay</p> <p>\$10 copay</p> <p>\$10 copay</p> <p>No Copay</p> <p>\$10 Gyn. No Copay (2x w/out referral) Pap Smear free</p> <p>No Copay</p> <p>No Copay</p> <p>No Copay 30 days No Copay 30 days \$35– waived if admitted</p> <p>\$10/60 visits</p> <p>\$10 visit 1-5 \$25 visti 6-20</p> <p>No Copay \$10 No Copay</p> <p>No Copay</p> <p>20% Copay/\$1500 annual max. \$10 Copay</p> <p>\$10 30 visits/60 days</p> <p>\$10 Copay</p> <p>Covered Covered 100% Covered up to 6 visits \$10 ea 2 visits \$10 each \$5 generic/\$ 10 preferred/\$20 nonpreferred</p>	<p>\$15 copay</p> <p>\$5 copay</p> <p>Not Covered</p> <p>No Copay</p> <p>\$5 copay (Well Woman, no PCP referral needed)</p> <p>No copay</p> <p>No copay (unlimited days)</p> <p>No copay/ 7days detox per year No Copay/ 30 days</p> <p>\$35 copay waived if admitted</p> <p>No Copay/60 visits(incl. 20 family visits)</p> <p>\$25 copay / 20 visits</p> <p>No Copay \$5 Copay first visit only No Copay</p> <p>No Copay</p> <p>No Copay No Copay \$5 Copay</p> <p>Up to 30 visits inpatient & 30 out \$5 Copay</p> <p>No Copay, 210 days lifetime No Copay 200 visits/year NO Copay No Copay/ 60 day per year Covered DNA \$5generic/\$15brand/\$25 non formulary</p> <p>Occup./speech/Vision Therapy \$5/ total 30visits</p>

Who's a bigger Yankee fan.
Who fell down at a parade.
Who's ahead in the polls.

Who cares?



THE REAL ISSUE IS:

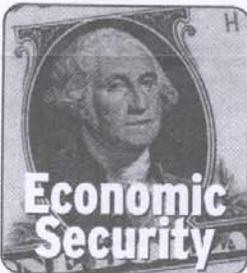
Who cares about working families?




Healthcare

Hillary Clinton supports a Patients Bill of Rights that is strong and enforceable, and protects HMO patients from insurance company abuses. She favors providing prescription drug coverage for all seniors under Medicare. (WASHINGTON POST 2/9/00; WWW.HILLARY2000.ORG)

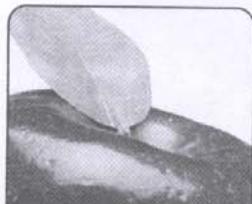
Rick Lazio sides with insurance companies in opposing a Patient's Bill of Rights that is strong and enforceable. He does not support providing prescription drug coverage for all seniors under Medicare. (HR 4250, 7/24/98; HR 2723, 10/7/99)



Economic Security

Hillary Clinton believes the federal budget surplus should be used to improve education, strengthen Social Security and Medicare, and pay down the national debt. She favors strong protections for unions and laws that protect the economic security of working families. (ASSOCIATED PRESS 5/24/00, 4/15/00; WWW.HILLARY2000.ORG)

Rick Lazio supports the Republican budget plan that puts top priority on huge tax cuts for the wealthy. He voted in favor of Newt Gingrich's budget in 1995 that cut \$270 billion from Social Security. Lazio voted to weaken laws that protect overtime pay, and to weaken laws that protect your pension. (HR 2491, 11/17/95; HCR 68, CONGRESSIONAL VOTE #77, 3/25/99; CONGRESSIONAL VOTE 744, 10/30/95)



Education

Hillary Clinton supports a College Opportunity tax cut that would give families a tax deduction of \$10,000 a year to help pay for college tuition. She supports improving our schools through smaller class sizes, funding for school repairs, hiring new teachers, and greater accountability for students and teachers. (NEW YORK TIMES 4/14/00)

Rick Lazio gets a poor rating from education groups. He voted to eliminate the Department of Education, cut funding for school loans, against funding to hire 100,000 new teachers, and against funding for school repairs. (HOUSE VOTE 2646, 6/18/98; HOUSE VOTE 3248, 9/18/98; HOUSE VOTE 4380, 8/6/98)

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR UNION



Information Sought Concerning Assessments

Last year, new state assessments and assessments the District voluntary decided to use at various grade levels seemed to affect the teaching load of many VCTA members. The Officers began a discussion with Central Office concerning the impact these new assessments could have on the work load of the staff. Central Office and the VCTA reached an agreement that the impact on the workload due to these assessments would be studied this year and action would be taken as necessary.

In order for the VCTA to have a clear picture of the impact of these assessments, we must have

input from our members affected. VCTA President Tim Brown has said, "It is imperative that teachers in every building, at every level, document all time that is being put into the preparation, administration, and assessment of these State and District tests."

Documentation from each individual affected will be compiled to show the impact on workload. If these assessments prove to be seriously impacting the workload of teachers, it would be considered a change in working

conditions and negotiations on the topic will be formally opened so that release time or financial compensation can be sought.

Your building representatives will continue to discuss this topic with you at building meetings. Please document your time from the beginning of this school year on so that when the documentation is called for, it can be provided.



"You've got to be in it, to win it!"

VC All Night Grad Party 2001 NOVEMBER	2001 Valley Central High School All Night Graduation Party
Name	<i>Daily 3 Digit Drawing</i>
Address	<i>Use NYS Lottery Number Straight</i>
Phone	<i>Daily Prize \$50 / Sunday Special \$75</i>
No. 751	MONTH OF NOVEMBER
Donation \$5.00	<i>Starting NOVEMBER 1st, 2000</i>
No. 751	

The Committee for the All Night Graduation Party is sponsoring a lottery fundraiser.

*Purchase a ticket for \$5.
During the month if the number of your ticket is the NY Lottery Daily Number, you win!*

**To purchase a ticket,
Contact Joan Horton, VCHS
457-3122 x 303**



As a service to the VC Community, the VCTA is compiling a Tutor List.

This list would be provided to each building so that if a parent were seeking someone to tutor their child your name could be referred. You could then choose to contact the parent and make arrangements on your own.

This list is voluntary.

The Tutor List is for the purpose of teachers making private arrangements outside of school with the parent.

If you would like to offer your services for tutoring, please contact VP Rich Steger, (Walden) at 457-5899.

Please give your name, a contact number and the subject that you would like to tutor.

This tutor list has nothing to do with the home tutoring program run by the District.



NYSUT Member Benefits and the VCTA present

Financial Building Blocks ®

“Foundations for Your Personal Financial Independence”

**Middle School Cafeteria
Monday, October 23rd
4:00 – 7:30 PM**

***\$10.00 for you and a non-member guest includes seminar materials
and a light meal***

Presented by Aetna Investment Services, Inc. on behalf of NYSUT Member Benefits

For further information — Call 800-626-8101

Myles Financial Services Not Endorsed by VCTA

I have received numerous questions regarding the Myles Financial Services' mailing to VCTA members before the opening of school this year. Myles is the Districts' choice to administer the IRS 125 Plan. The return address titled *Myles Employee Benefits* along with an attached sticker reading *Response Requested by September 5th—VCS D Employee Benefits* gave the appearance to many members that this particular company had the endorsement of the VCTA Executive Council and that a response was necessary. Neither of these assumptions are correct. The VCTA Executive Council does not give members' names and addresses to third party vendors. Your names and addresses were

provided by Central Office Administration.

All vendors invited to the Health and TSA Fair are informed of the ground rules regarding solicitation and the desire for an “even playing field” when it comes to doing business with our members. Most of the companies invited to the Fair provide many services; nevertheless, they have been invited to the Fair for the sole purpose of providing Tax Shelter Annuity (Mutual Fund, 403b, etc.) investment options. Although materials regarding other services/investments may be displayed at the fair, discussion concerning these other services should be initiated by VCTA members, rather than the investment representative. Any

other services you choose to utilize are, of course, at your discretion.

It is important that you feel comfortable with the vendors and services that are solicited for the Health and TSA Fair. Discussions will take place between Central Office, Myles Financial Services, and VCTA officers to address this particular situation. If at any time you have questions or concerns about the manner in which these services are presented, please inform your building representative.

~ Tim Brown, President

Highlights of the September VCTA Meeting

Assistant Superintendent, Maryanne Wilson had asked to review APPR document (Annual Professional Performance Review) with the VCTA. During our last contract negotiations, the VCTA fought to have the following language included: *The district and the Association will jointly develop an evaluation plan.* Anything that is not a traditional evaluation must be mutually agreed upon. Tim Brown stated that tenured teacher observations will include a minimum of one classroom observation every third year. During the years that a classroom observation does not take place and not later than the end of October, tenured teachers shall plan and mutually agree with their building principals alternate means of assessing their work.

Reps will eventually have a packet of form letters for members' use for child care leave and retirement.

Nominations for the Richard Aderson Award must be submitted by November 15, 2000.

Since VCTA meetings are open, they are our general meetings.

On the topic of Elementary Student Council and Elementary Student Yearbooks, a side agreement concerning salary has been reached.

The VCTA has discovered, through research on a recent grievance, that it does not matter what you get your Master's degree in, provided it is a state-recognized program.

Concerning New State and Local Assessment Exams- Tim Brown asked that every building at every level document all time put in to new state and district assessments so that we can document the impact on the workload to negotiate either release time or financial compensation.

60-70 teachers are now utilizing payroll deduction for VOTE/COPE which has been more successful the past few years than at any other time.

Salary notices include year as well as fro-

zen step.

Central Office gave out our addresses to Myles Financial Services. The VCTA will never give out names, addresses, etc. Our concern has been expressed to Central Office.

The grievance concerning Jane Dionne's personal days goes to arbitration on October 5, 2000. On Laurie Hey's grievance concerning a personal day, the District filed a stay of arbitration until a Clarkstown case is decided. The grievance concerning Katie Baloga's personal days will go to arbitration on November 9, 2000. Please let Laurie Hey or Mary Bleau know if anyone has had any personal days approved that are of a similar nature to those now being grieved.

A side agreement will be signed concerning Academic Eligibility Advisor. In the future, if an administrator or intern is not available to fill this role, an appointed teacher must be paid a stipend, which must be negotiated. It must not take place within the confines of the school day.

The VCTA will be compiling a Tutor list. If you are interested in being included on a tutor list, send your name to VP Rich Steger, Walden.

John Bonagura reported that administrators have been instructed by the BOE to ask during exit interviews why some teachers have left the district.

Kevin McFadden reported that 184 invitations were sent out for the Retiree Luncheon. Eighty-six attended- highest amount ever.

A meeting with Mr.Roden has been arranged for 10/26 to address retiree health concerns.

Toni Sperry reported that a staff member from Montgomery received a phone call at home from someone claiming to be from NYSUT, asking personal information about things happening in the building- number of injuries, etc. Tim Brown will investigate but in the mean time has advised that members DO NOT give out any information unless the VCTA has advised members that NYSUT is making such



Meet the Executive Council Arline Friedman, HS Building Rep.

Served on VCTA for 25 years. Has held position of Secretary, Newsletter Editor, Scholarship Fundraising, helped revise Constitution, Internal Elections Chair

calls.

Concern was expressed regarding the impact of AIS on children and teachers. Teachers need time to plan; children must give up play time. This is punitive to a child Joe Fracalossi questioned if this instructional task was being assigned as a duty. Tim Brown stated that this would be addressed in the next meeting with Central Office.

Special Ed buses at East Coldenham are not coming until after 4:00.

Door Duty is being assigned in Montgomery until 3:40. Tim Brown stated that this is essentially a lengthening of the school day and will be followed up.

Concern was expressed for the paraprofessionals, who do not have seniority and are transferred from the building for which they were hired. This is something that the paraprofessionals should address in their contract negotiations.

Rich Steger stated that when you call in for a Death in the Family day, all you need to state is the date and that the reason for your absence is a DIF. You need not elaborate.

Retirement questions should be addressed to Sheila Salinger at NYSTRS. VCTA Retirement Reps are John Solan, Kathleen Takvam, and Diana Shiner (alternate).

The next Executive Council meeting will be held October 17, 2000 at 3:45 PM at the VCHS Professional Library.

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



The annual Retiree luncheon on September 6 was most successful. One hundred and eighty-four announcements were sent to all VC retirees. Eighty-six attended the luncheon (*our largest group ever!*) Twenty-five others who were unable to attend took the time to respond, many with notes and/or phone calls. Chris at the Crossroads Restaurant did an excellent job once again; the food and service (*thanks, Mike Conklin, VC '93*) were excellent also. Best of all, the luncheon allows us to reconnect with our colleagues and to celebrate our service to the VC community. Needless to say, we all look younger every year, and our spirit is forever young. Lots of laughs, lots of old (*mostly true?*) stories – a pleasant afternoon.

Aside to whoever is listening...

The bill to enhance the pensions of combat-era military veterans, which was lauded in this space last month, still needs the *guy's* signature. (*Sometimes George is slow with pen.*)

To my dismay, I read the following in New York Teacher: "Like most pension legislation, the new amendment would not be retroactive; only active members of the date the original bill passed (*December '98*) would benefit. WHY? Veterans retired prior to '98 fought in the same conflicts. Is not this yet another example of "different

strokes"? (*See earlier harangues in past issues re: tier reinstatement for retirees*). The same article in New York Teacher states the amendment is "union-backed." Has NYSUT forgotten the retirees in this case? I hope I'm not the only one upset by this second example of "different strokes" regarding retirees.

The previous paragraph may seem cranky in light of the wonderful work the union has done regarding pension enhancement this past year. However, many of us were active when different tiers were added to the retirement system. It behooves all of us to be vigilant.

It is probably well to note something which I wrote in my first column in September '98: "The opinions...on some matters will reflect only the mercurial thoughts of the writer."

Retirees on the move (notes and calls from folks unable to attend the luncheon)...

- A Skip and Arlene Geiger were attending a reunion of the crew of the U.S.S. Wright – Skip's ship.
- A Bob Irving wrote regarding the death of his wife and our colleague, Joan. Our deepest sympathy.
- A Ed and Mary Saunders were in Utah to visit daughter, Sharon. They winter in Myrtle Beach.
- A Gonzalo Quintana had a gig in Puerto Rico – teaching Spanish. (I'm going to hire his agent!)
- A Chris Cuomo has relocated to Toms River, NJ. She hopes to join us at the 19th luncheon next September.
- A Dee Reisert reported in by

phone. She is still active in a zillion volunteer activities; as usual her spirit and energy are wonderful.

- A Nancy and Orin Segall have joined the board of the Newcomers' Club at their Cape Cod home. They are presently visiting daughter, Sue in California.
- A Ruth Kick enjoys keeping in touch via Echoes and the column. She now spends five or six months in Florida each year.

I hope I'm not the only one upset by this second example of "different strokes" regarding retirees.

A Millie Tillson is living in New Hampshire and became a great grandmother quite recently.

A Dora Blizzard and Jean Killin wrote from Florida. Dora is recuperating from an open heart surgery. Jean promises to be at a future luncheon, "if she can get these legs working". She is one of the most upbeat ladies I've ever met. Both send their love.

- A Marlea Smith and Ken were on a cruise at the luncheon time. She sends her best to all.
- A Harriet Kissel sends prayers and good wishes.
- A A speedy recovery to Carolyn and Ray Schumann who were injured in an automobile accident this summer. Marilyn Kelso reports that both are coming along well.

Thanks to all of you for the kind words about the column, the receiving of the Echoes, and the kindness of the VCTA officers and active members in remembering the retirees. Please continue to send me updates regarding your life after VC. I can be contacted by phone,

Mac's Musings...(from the Retiree side) *(continued from page eight)*

(845) 778-7236, or by pen:

6 Jessup Street
Walden, NY 12586

Some responses to health questions from retirees....

My thanks to Peter Roden and Polly Coniglio for their immediate response in setting up a meeting regarding these inquiries. We met on September 18.

Printed Information: Materials concerning prescription plan and Express Pharmacy are being sent out. There will be no booklets concerning PPO directories or plan descriptions. Plan descriptions can be accessed at www.ousdhp.com. The PPO material can be accessed at www.beechstreet.com. Beech Street (*successor to Medichoice*) can be reached for PPO questions at 1-800-640-6708 (NY and NJ). For all other states: 1-800-937-2277. Beech Street has a range of 400 hospitals and 350,000 providers nationwide.

Chiropractic Managed Care Network: (*Access Managed Health Care*) A listing of providers can be accessed by calling Access at 1-800-789-2642. OUSDHP is aware of problems with Access and is

monitoring them carefully.

Surviving Spouse: If the covered person dies, the surviving spouse is covered at no cost for three months, then pays 100% for individual coverage (*less MEDICARE when applicable*) for as long as desired (*no COBRA restriction*).

MEDICARE & Spouses: When the covered individual becomes primarily covered by Medicare, what is the status of the spouse? The spouse now is covered only by the indemnity plan (80/20) and is no longer eligible for the PPO benefit. At Mr. Roden's urging, this is being revisited by the Benefits Committee of OUSDHP, and change is possible after January 2001.

Beech Street Card (or lack thereof):

Retirees may still use their Mediplus cards. If problems arise, have the doctor or hospital contact Beech Street at 1-800-764-3433 or their web site (*see above*). Presently, the benefits committee is looking into issuing new cards that would include updated information.

Suggestions: If you change your address, it is **imperative** that you inform Polly Coniglio at (845) 457-3171.

Mr. Roden and I will be hosting a meeting on Retiree Health Insurance Questions and Concerns :

October 26h

3:30 PM

Central Office

Mrs. Coniglio will also be present. All retirees are invited.

This is a fine opportunity for retirees to express their concerns and to seek answers to problems in these areas!

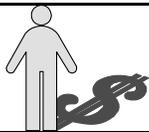
Curtain Call ...

Again, thanks for turning to the back of Echoes.

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

Peace.

~ Kevin McFadden



For an updated estimate of your retirement benefit, schedule an in-person interview with a NYSTRS representative.

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Nov. 20 Mar. 26
Jan. 29 May 7, 21

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Liberty Central HS
125 Buckley Street

Oct. 12 Mar. 15
Dec. 7 Apr. 19

POUGHKEEPSIE

(845) 486-4860
Arlington HS
1157 Rte. 55
LaGrangeville

Oct. 5, 19 Feb. 1, 15
Nov. 2, 16 Mar. 15, 22
Dec. 14 Apr. 2, 19
Jan. 4, 18 May 3, 10
June 4

Since the person scheduling your appointment is not an employee of TRS, please save your questions until your interview.

Advertising Section

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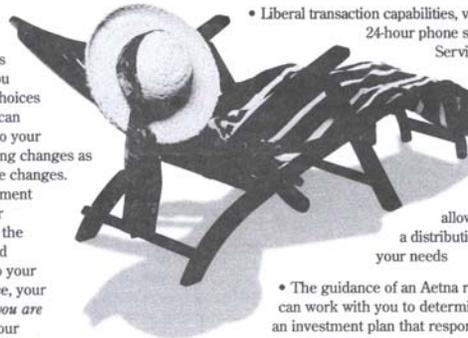
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VC ECHOES Editor

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Email: vcta@frontiernet.net

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Employee Assistance Program

1-800-962-7487

Visit us on the Web!
www.frontiernet.net/
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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 October 17, 2000. Any articles submitted to the VC Echoes will also be posted on the VCTA Web page.

Chaperone Pay

The rate of pay for chaperone duty is \$33.00 for home events and \$38.00 for away events. All duties except graduation are voluntary with pay. Graduation is paid at the "away" rate. If no one volunteers for a duty, teachers may be assigned. However, they may only be assigned to a chaperone duty once per year. To be paid for chaperone duty, a claim form must be submitted to the Business Office. Often teachers will not put a claim in for chaperone pay, thinking that it somehow will save the student money.

Chaperone pay is a separate line item on the District's Budget.

If someone wanted to truly donate their chaperone pay to a student organization, they should claim the pay and then donate it themselves.

R-E-S-P-E-C-T....



R-E-S-P-E-C-T,
find out what it
means to me.

Lyrics by Otis Redding, Jr.

The teacher shortage will surely focus attention on our profession. According to Newsweek, by 2010 one-half of the current teachers will retire. And well over half of new teachers walk away from the classroom within their first five years. These statistics present problems which require solutions, who better to provide the solutions than those of us in the field?

In 1967, Aretha Franklin belted out the lyrics

above. "Find out what it means to me..." how anyone finds out what it means to "us" will require input on our part. We need to let people know what we consider respect to be. For most of us, it probably entails more than just the amount of money in our paycheck. That amount of money is important, but it is not the only reason people go into teaching. After all, many smart people go into education and they are smart enough to know that there is better money out there.

Personally, I would like to see teachers portrayed in a better light. Last spring, I was at the movies and a preview was featured for Teaching Mrs. Tingle. I did not bother to go see this film nor rent it, but from the preview the plot appeared to be about a mean, wicked, vindictive teacher failing poor students undeservedly. The hero students torture her in her own diabolical home. Before the

release of this fine feature film, The Faculty was released. A movie about a school full of teachers from outer space. The last movie that I can recall showing any real respect for teachers in a real school situation was Mr. Holland's Opus which came out over ten years ago.

The time is right for teachers to be heard; we need to use our voices. Education is a major issue in many political races this year, next month; we need to use our votes. As the country comes to terms with this teacher shortage, it is we teachers, not Hollywood producers nor Washington politicians nor Albany legislators who should be defining our profession and asking for the respect we deserve.

~ Patti Lunden