

**CHAPTER SEVEN**  
**THE VALLEY STREAM TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION**  
**(VSTA)**

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**The Advent of the Teachers' Union**

**"The Taylor Law, officially entitled the Public Employees' Fair Employment Act, is Article 14 of the Civil Service Law, enacted in 1967, and the Taylor Law governs labor relations between public employers and public employees in New York State. The law is named after Prof. George W. Taylor of the University of Pennsylvania, chairman of Gov. Nelson Rockefeller's committee on Public Employee Relations (also known as the Taylor Committee), whose report and recommendation formed the basis for the law.**

**"The Taylor Law's purpose is to foster harmonious and cooperative labor relations in the public sector and to avoid strikes (City of Newburg v. Newman, 69 N.Y. 2<sup>nd</sup> 166 (1967))."**<sup>1</sup>

As early as the 1940's, teachers in Valley Stream organized. The local papers reported that in 1945 a unit of teachers planned to organize at Central High School.<sup>2</sup> Mr. John M. Smith of the Central music department headed the Valley Stream Faculty Association. Mr. Stanley Michael who became president in 1947 succeeded him.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1950's the Condon-Waldlin Law directed the rules governing negotiations in the public sector. Public employees could be fired for striking. If re-hired, they were placed on probation for five years, could not receive raises for three years, and could be subject to heavy fines and/or jail sentences.

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<sup>1</sup> School Law, 27th Edition, New York State School Boards Association, 1988 at 224.

<sup>2</sup> See also Public Education in Valley Stream, Supra note 2, Volume II District Thirteen Scrapbook, at 886, 2,794 and 2,795.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II District Thirteen Scrapbook, at 94, 95, 107, 108 and 110. This is the same John M. Smith that the Valley Stream band shell is named after. Volume XXII VSCHSD History, Chapter Two – The 40's and 50's at 1, 8 and 9.

Even with these draconian measures the teachers of New York City did strike on November 7, 1960. The strike was called to win teachers the right to collective bargaining and to set the stage for teachers to formally choose the newly formed United Federation of Teachers to represent them.<sup>4</sup>

The then superintendent of schools, John Theobald, said that he would never bargain with his “family.” And on the evening of November 6, he announced on the radio that he would fire every striker in accordance with the provisions of the Condin-Wadlin Law.

True to his word, Theobald fired the New York City striking teachers. But later that day Governor Nelson Rockefeller stepped into the fray and the order to fire the strikers was rescinded. The one-day strike set in motion a chain of events that led to the city’s teachers securing the first written collective bargaining agreement in the nation.<sup>5</sup>

In 1967, after a series of strikes by teachers and other employees throughout the state, including the twelve-day New York City transit strike of 1966, the legislature passed the Taylor Law which repealed Condin-Waldlin. For the first time, teachers had a right to be represented by a union and to bargain collectively for their salary and terms of employment.

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<sup>4</sup> The United Federation of Teachers (UFT) was formed on March 16, 1960. The author of this project, Valley Stream Schools history (Bill Stris) was a UFT member for 33 ½ years [1967 to 2001] and UFT chapter leader for 15 years. In 1980 he received the Trackenberg Award. The Valley Stream Teachers Federal Credit Union was formed in 1939. See also Public Education in Valley Stream, Supra note 2, Volume I District Thirteen History, Chapter Two, the Thirties at 6.

<sup>5</sup> History buffs may recall that the strike took place the day before John F. Kennedy was elected the nation’s 35<sup>th</sup> president.

On June 28, 1966, the Valley Stream Teachers Association was accepted as the teachers' official negotiating agent in UFSD No. 13. Out of 172 possible members, 132 were signed. At this time a separate association vied for the loyalty of the teachers' union. The following passage from the District 13, December 20, 1966 minutes explains the situation:

“Trustee Holder reported that the officially recognized faculty group is the Valley Stream Faculty Association with whom we have signed a formal agreement which included the Association’s 1966-67 salary proposals verbatim. The Valley Stream Federation of Teachers is a second group in our area with whom we have had no official relationship.”

The high school district newspaper reported the following in March of 1967:

Negotiations are currently taking place between the Boards of Education and the Valley Stream Teachers' Association. The Association, an affiliate of the National Educational Association, is officially recognized as the exclusive agent for negotiations for all teacher personnel in the four districts.

Valley Stream established a new precedent in June of 1966 when its Boards of Education entered into formal agreement with the Teachers' Association which outlined procedures for negotiation and mediation as well as ways of enabling the teaching staff to take part in educational planning for the district.<sup>6</sup>

On September 19, 1967 Valley Stream Union Free School District No. 24 passed the following resolution:

“That the Civil Service Employees Association Inc., Nassau County, be duly recognized as the bargaining representatives for the

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<sup>6</sup> See also Public Education in Valley Stream, Supra note 2, Volume XXII VSCHSD History, The Observer, March 1967 Vol. 1 No. 1 at 2.

custodial staff of District No. 24 and that payroll deduction of dues be made provided that the appropriate authorizations are filed in our business office.”

“That the Valley Stream Association of Educational Secretaries be duly recognized as the bargaining representative of the secretarial staff in District No. 24.”

The Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) was called in to conduct a hearing to settle a dispute between the Valley Stream Teachers’ Association and the Valley Stream Federation of Teachers as to who represents the teaching staff of the Valley Stream Districts. The school attorney for District 24 summarized the situation as follows:

Mr. Spelman reviewed events of the past year or so, during which the Valley Stream Federation of Teachers had made a number of efforts to have the Valley Stream Teachers’ Association discredited as representatives of teachers in ours and our sister districts. At a recent meeting before PERB, the various parties had agreed upon an election by the teachers to make this determination. This election has been scheduled for March 6, 1969.<sup>7</sup>

On April 22, 1969 School District 24 attorney “Spelmen advised the Board of the receipt of certification from the Public Employees Relations Board that the Valley Stream Teachers’ Association had been designated and selected by a majority of the teaching personnel as their exclusive representative, said certification being dated March 31, 1969.”

The June 28<sup>th</sup> resolution was reaffirmed on December 19, 1967 in the form of the Public Employees Fair Employment Act of 1967. On May 28, 1968 the following

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<sup>7</sup> District 24 Board Minute Books, February 25, 1969. See also Public Education in Valley Stream, Supra note 2, Volume II District Thirteen Scrapbook, at 2,743 and 2,768.



organizations were recognized by District 13 after adoption at the May 23, 1968 Meeting of Joint Boards:

- Valley Stream Teachers' Association,
- Valley Stream Association of Educational Secretaries,
- Nassau Chapter of the Civil Service Employees' Association and
- District 13 Cafeteria Personnel Association.<sup>8</sup>

The four matrons in District 13 joined the custodial and maintenance employees bargaining unit on March 25, 1969. The secretaries joined the Valley Stream Teachers' Association in 1977, the Teaching Assistants joined in 1981, the Registered Nurses in 1986, District 13 Full-Time Aides in 1996 and School Aides on December 17, 2002. The VSTA became the exclusive bargaining representative in District 13 of the full-time Teaching Assistants on July 1, 2002.<sup>9</sup>

For the Taylor law in Union Free School District Thirty see Volume XIV, *The Friendly Schools* October 1968 Vol. XIII, No. 1 p. 2.

The following newspaper articles focus on the early years of the VSTA:

- "Valley Stream Teachers Sign New Contract"<sup>10</sup>
- "VSTA Officially Recognized – bargaining agent for 13, 24, 30 and high school"<sup>11</sup>
- "VSTA has been notified by the Public Employees Relations Board that the Association has been certified as the result of three separate elections

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<sup>8</sup> See also Public Education in Valley Stream, Supra note 2, Volume VA District Thirteen Newsletter, March 1969 Vol. XVI, No. 2 at 5 – February 1968 Vol. XV, No. 2 at 2 – March 1969 Vol. XVI, No. 2 at 5. For VSTA photos see Volume II District Thirteen Scrapbook, at 1,665 to 1,667.

<sup>9</sup> District 13 Board Minute Book, December 17, 2002 at 2.

<sup>10</sup> Valley Stream Maileader Newspaper, July 21, 1966 Vol. 44, No. 43 at 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, January 12, 1966 Vol. 44, No. 15 at 11.

as the exclusive bargaining agent for the purposes of collective negotiation and the settlement of grievances.”<sup>12</sup>

The Teachers’ Union in the 1960s became involved in the consolidation study of the Valley Stream districts.<sup>13</sup> In the 70s they published a column in the local papers.<sup>14</sup>

In 1996-97 the president of the Valley Stream Teachers’ Association, Richard Herrmann<sup>15</sup> wrote a series on the history of the organization. The series is quite informative and gives the employees’ point of view.<sup>16</sup> I have included it in this project:

Valley Stream Teachers’ Association Officers

VSTA Presidents:

Denis Kiely	South High School	1960-62
John Davies <sup>17</sup>	Memorial Jr. High School	1962-65
Harvey Brody	North High School	1965-66
William Gimello	Central High School	1966-68
Barbara Herber Jordan	Memorial Junior High School	1968-69
Noel Giambalvo	District 30	1969-71
Cathy Meneilly	District 30	1971-72
Charles Messner	South High School	1972-74
Richard Herrmann <sup>18</sup>	Central High School	1974 to present

Valley Stream Federation of Teachers’ Presidents prior to merger:

Joe Falco	Central High School	1965-66
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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, April 24, 1969 Vol. 46, No. 26 at 13.

<sup>13</sup> See also Public Education in Valley Stream, Supra note 2, Volume I District Thirteen History – Chapter Six Volume II District Thirteen Scrapbook, at 1312, 1345, 1346, 1352, 1386.

<sup>14</sup> Valley Stream Maileader Newspaper, November 25, 1976 Vol. 53, No. 37 at 4. This was similar to Albert Shanker’s “Where We Stand” articles of the United Federation of Teachers in NYC. Tough Liberal, Albert Shanker And The Battles Over Schools, Unions, Race, And Democracy by Richard D. Kahlenberg 2007 Columbia University Press at 136 to 142.

<sup>15</sup> See also Public Education in Valley Stream, Supra note 2, Volume II District Thirteen Scrapbook, at 3,458 “Herrmann receives Educator of Excellence award.”

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume II District Thirteen Scrapbook, at 1,647, 2,998, 3,068, 3,097 and 3,098.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume XXVB VSCHSD Newsletter The Observer 1991 Vol. 25, No. 5 at 10.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume VB District 13 School News, November 1984, Vol. XXXII, No. 1 at 2. Photo of Richard Herrmann signing contract.

John Davies <sup>19</sup>	Memorial Jr. High School	1966-68
Richard Herrmann	Central High School	1968-72

Valley Stream Teachers' Association Vice-Presidents:<sup>20</sup>

Arthur Monk	Central High School	1966-67
Barbara Herber Jordan	Memorial Jr. High School	1967-69
Joan Duck	District 30	1968-69
Richard Lupoletti	North High School	1969-70
William Meier	Memorial Jr. High School	1970-72
Maria Sheridan	District 13	1973-88
June Innella	District 30	1988 to present
Al Arnone	District 24	1996 to 2000
Patrick Naglieri <sup>21</sup>	Memorial Jr. High School	2000 to present

Valley Stream Teachers' Association Treasurers:

Herbert Hertel	Central High School	1967-69
Zelda Stepner	District 24	1969-71
John Ford	South High School	1972 -88
Alan Hoffman	Memorial Jr. High School	1988- to present
Gerald Camilleri	District 30	1999 to present

Vote/Cope Coordinators:

Constance Cummings	District 30	1975-77
Warren Steele	North High School	1977-80
James Harnett	District 13	1980-92
Steven Borman	Memorial Jr. High School	1992 to 2003
Julian Farrell	South High School	2003 to present

Merger: New York State Teachers' Association (NEA) and United Federation of Teachers (AFT) became New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) in 1973.

Valley Stream Teachers' Association became Valley Stream Teachers' Association (VSTA), Local 1633, NYSUT/AFT.

VSTA Newsletter Editors: (Created in fall of 1973)

Richard Herrmann	Central High School	1973-74
Frank Velleca	Central/ South High Schools	1974-88
Michael Bassen	Central High School	1988-92
Stanton Bishop	Central High School	1992-2000
Susan Rollero	Memorial Junior High School	2000 to present

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Volume XXVB VSCHSD Newsletter The Observer 1991 Vol. 25, No. 5 at 10

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, VSCHSD Newsletter The Observer June/July 1996 Vol. 30, No. 5 at 11. Dorothy Meltzer is mentioned as VSTA Vice president from 1974 to 1996.

<sup>21</sup> Valley Stream Teachers' Association (VSTA) Newsletter Vol. 28, No. 2 November/December 2000 at 3. Al Arnone becomes principal of the Buck Elementary School in District 24.

the

VSTA

A History of

*This is the first of a multi-part series on the history of the Valley Stream Teachers Association set within the context of major social, political, and educational developments of five decades beginning with the 1950's. The material contained herein was compiled from VSTA records and past newsletters, information supplied by NYSUT, the P.E.R.B. News, old newspaper articles, and the memories of several members. Readers are invited to add their own recollections of events or significant omissions relevant to this history by sending letters-to-the editor. (Especially appreciated would be the year in which the Valley Stream Teachers Association was actually chartered—sometime in the middle 50's—but no record of that event can be found.) In addition, the VSTA needs photographs as well as identifications of teachers in the few photographs that we do have. Many thanks go to VSTA President Richard Herrmann for compiling the materials and writing the installments.*

*Next Issue—"The Turbulent 70's"*

## The Fifties: School

Valley Stream teachers were represented under the banner of the New York State Teachers Association (NYSTA), affiliate of the National Education Association (NEA)...

Terms like "union" and "collective bargaining" were, at the time, considered politically incorrect, teachers preferring euphemistic works like "professional association," and "professional negotiations." Often the administration who were also eligible for membership in the state and national associations collected NYSTA and NEA dues from teachers...

The Condon-Wadlin Law controlled negotiations in the public sector. Public employees could be fired for striking, and if re-hired, were placed on probation for five years, could not receive raises for three years and could be assessed heavy fines and jail sentences. The law was so Draconian that in cities with strong union political clout, politicians were reluctant to impose Condon-Wadlin penalties.

The teachers' salaries schedule in Valley Stream ranged from \$3,215.50 to \$6,213 over sixteen steps in 1952. Teachers received an extra \$400 if they had 45 additional graduate credits. All working conditions were unilaterally set by the school board's by-laws and could be changed at any time at the board's discretion. All four V.S. districts did not always have the same salary schedules which were unilaterally determined by each of the four boards...

In 1954 the Supreme Court struck down the "separate but equal doctrine" in Brown vs. Board of Education and would lead to integration of the nation's public

# the Early Years

## Boards Call the Shots—

schools...

The book, *Why Johnny Can't Read*, became a bestseller and touched off a national debate on public education...

In Valley Stream, teachers began to express their concerns about low salaries and formed a Teachers Interest Committee (TIC). The four boards responded by forming an Education Interest Committee (EIC) and established procedures for meeting with faculty representatives. These sessions were consultative and advisory in nature rather than formal bargaining as they would become in the decades ahead...

## Condon Wadlin Rules

In 1957, high school teachers set up the Valley Stream High Schools' Benevolent Fund, Inc., to which the district's teachers contributed for the purpose of providing interest free loans and grants to teachers "in dire need."...

On October 4, 1957, the then Soviet Union took the lead in the space race by launching Sputnik I into orbit, an event which also launched another national uproar into America's science education and demands for educational reform...

It was an era of the Korean War, Nuclear Testing, the first hydrogen bomb, McCarthyism,

loyalty oaths, the Cold War, Jim Crow, Payola, TV quiz show scandals, rock and roll (aka race music and moon-dog music) Elvis, Brando, James Dean, and movies like *The Wild One*, *Ben Hur*, *Blackboard Jungle*, and *Rebel without a Cause*. On Broadway were *My Fair Lady*, *Seven Year Itch*, *Waiting for Godot*, and *Peter Pan*. *Catcher in the Rye* caught on with students. Their dress styles were pegged pants, greased hair, saddle shoes, poodle skirts, and pony tails.

## The Sixties—Teachers Unionize...

### Taylor Law Passes...Condon-Wadlin Repealed...

By 1960, in New York City the United Federation of Teachers, Local 2, of the American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO), was formed through a merger between the New York Teachers Guild and the High School Teachers Association, headed by Charles Cogen. The UFT defeated an NEA affiliate for the right to represent city teachers in 1961 and secured the first collective bargaining agreement in the state in March 1962. In 1964, Albert Shanker succeeded Cogen who moved on to head the AFT.

In Valley Stream, a starting salary "jumped" to \$5,5000 by 1962. Extra Pay for Extra Services required teachers to work an activity at no pay for 75 hours before being eligible for extra pay...

In 1965 Valley Stream teachers split into two rival organizations, the new Valley Stream Federation of Teachers, Local 1633, affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO) and the incumbent group, the Valley Stream Teachers Association, keeping the majority of its members and

ties with NYSTA and NEA. Over 100 teachers joined neither group. This same year each of the four Valley Stream boards passed a resolution to establish a formal Joint Boards' Negotiating Committee and the following year officially recognized the NEA affiliated Valley Stream Teachers Association.

In 1966, the newly formed Valley Stream Federation of Teachers took successful legal action to stop school boards from requiring teachers to self accident insurance to pupils. The

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## The Early Years—The Sixties, from p. 7

plaintiff was Gerald Hupert from UFSD 24.

In 1967, after a series of strikes by teachers and other public employees throughout the state, including the 12 day transit strike in 1966, the legislature passed the Taylor Law, repealing Condin-Wadlin. For the first time teachers had a right to be represented by a union and to bargain collectively for salary and other terms of employment. Nevertheless, labor at first denounced this law because it still prohibited strikes and allowed the employer (through a process called a Legislative Hearing) to impose a settlement if mediation and fact-finding failed...

In January 1967, the first picketing of the school board occurred over what was claimed to be a reneging of a salary adjustment and was spearheaded by the newly-formed but small V.S. Federation of Teachers as a way to attract members by demonstrating a new militancy. Later this same year Valley Stream teachers and the four boards of education agreed to their first formal contract, effective July 1, 1967.

In 1968, the Valley Stream Teachers Association, still the incumbent NEA bargaining agent, opened its first office at 104 South Central Avenue and hired its first secretary, Lillian Garrity. At the same time, the VSTA Executive Council, patterning the VSTA along the governance structure of the

NEA, created the position of a paid Executive Secretary to carry out VSTA policies and administrative duties and hired Bill Gimello, a Central social studies teacher and former VSTA president...

In March of 1969, the NEA affiliated Valley Stream Teachers Association turned back a challenge by the AFT affiliated Valley Stream Federation of Teachers in an election to choose a bargaining agent...

In 1969, VSTA and Boards declared impasse and settled a contract based on a fact-finder's report.

In the same year, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Tinker vs. Des Moines*, that neither "...students or teachers shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech at the school-house gate."

David Selden, AFT president after Cogen, summed up what occurred for teachers in the 1960's: "The teacher rebellion was a nationwide upheaval carried on at the local level, district by district... The goals of the embattled teachers were the usual worker goals—higher wages, better benefits, and improved working conditions. Perhaps the ultimate goals were higher status and dignity."

The sixties was an era of civil unrest marked by anti-war and draft protests, the "New Frontier," the "War of Poverty" and the "Great Society," the civil rights movement, Martin Luther King, the March on Washington,

political assassinations, a tune-in, turn-on, drop-out cultural climate, Woodstock, flower power, Peace corps, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Doors, the Byrds, Joplin, Bob Dylan, student sit-ins and strikes, long hair, flared pants, and movies like *Easy Rider*, *The Graduate*, and *Dr. Strangelove*. The play *Hair* appeared on Broadway. Popular books included *The Other America*, *Silent Spring*, *Portnoy's Complaint*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Catch 22*, *The Peter Principle*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, and Marshall McLuhan's *Understanding Media*. Sports championships were won by the Jets, Mets, and Knicks over their counterparts from Baltimore, while Joe Namath and Muhammed Ali grabbed sports headlines. There were 41 strikes by public employees after the passage of the Taylor Law in 1967.



Picketing in "The Early Years"

# VSTA Taps Two for Key Posts

The VSTA Executive Council, in accordance with the union's constitution, recently filled two important positions by approving Al Arnone as a Vice-president and Patrick Naglieri as Grievance Chairman. Arnone, nominated by VSTA President Dick Herrmann, will complete the second of former Vice-president Dorothy Meltzer's two year term vacated through her retirement last June after twenty-two years in office. Naglieri, nominated by Herrmann as well, will deal with grievances at the district stage, a function heretofore performed by the VSTA president himself.



Al Arnone, the current Director of the Valley Stream Teacher Center, is a sixth grade teacher at the William L. Buck School in District 24 where he began his full-time teaching career in 1976, was excused in 1980 and taught in Hewlett-Woodmere until

being recalled to Valley Stream in 1984. Arnone had been the Unit Leader in District 24 from 1990 through June 1996, and has also served a member of the union's executive council, a trustee of the VSTA Welfare Fund, an member of the Teacher Center policy board, and a representative to the NYSUT Representative Assembly for the past five years.

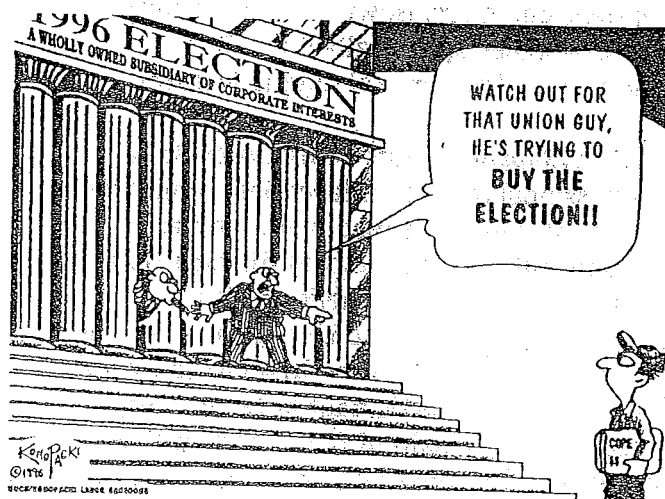


Pat Naglieri, a current Co-unit Leader at Memorial Junior High School for the past four years, began his career through special education in District 24 in 1981, went into the private sector, in 1982 but returned to Valley Stream at

Memorial the next year where he has remained, first as a special education teacher and then in 1990 as a full-time guidance counselor. Naglieri has been a delegate to the union's executive council, a member of the VSTA teachers' negotiating committee, and a representative to the NYSUT Representative Assembly for the past three years.

# Business Groups Outspend Labor 7-1

While Newt Gingrich and other far right politicians have been hollering about union political activities, business groups have contributed \$242,000,000 to candidates this political season, mostly to Republicans, according to a new report by the Center for Responsive Politics. That's "nearly seven times the \$35,000,000 given by labor groups and \$10,600,000 more than given by such ideological or single-issue groups as the National Rifle Association....," the *Washington Post* reported.



# Herrmann Answers Channel 12

The following is the text of President Herrmann's response to a Channel 12 editorial delivered by Peter Kohler, Director of Editorial Services, endorsing five year renewable tenure.

A Channel Twelve editorial recently supported abolishing the current tenure law and replacing it with a new system of five year renewable tenure. Your position, however, echoes that of the New York State School Boards Association's and Suffolk Assemblywoman Debra Mazzarelli's back-door attempt not only to reduce cost by weakening teacher unions but to curtail academic freedom in public schools and has nothing to do with improving education of teacher performance.

Renewable tenure, surely an oxymoron, is simply a scheme designed to make it easy for

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## All tax deferred annuities are not created equal!

**Sue:** I've been setting aside money into my tax deferred annuity for several years now.

**Jill:** I have, too. I'm enrolled in Opportunity Plus, the tax deferred annuity designed specifically for NYSUT. It's really going to add to my retirement years.

**Sue:** Gee, I'm not in NYSUT's program. Aren't they all the same?

No, Sue, all tax deferred annuities are not the same. They generally share many common features such as investment choices, borrowing capabilities through loan provisions, toll-free access, account rebalancing, model portfolios, settlement options and more. However, Opportunity Plus, designed specifically for NYSUT members, offers several unique features.

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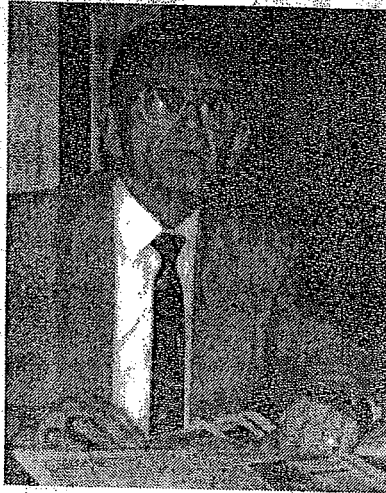


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# Working for You—Carl Riccobono

The VSTA is a democratic organization that depends on the leadership and service of its many members who can shoulder responsibility. Some are highly visible, and others quietly labor behind the scenes. Somewhere in between lurks Shaw Avenue teacher Carl Riccobono, always striving to better the working environment for his fellow teachers.



Clearstream Avenue principal Bob Cohen.

Carl's first classroom experience was a student teaching stint in Elmont. When a position at Shaw Avenue, his former grade school, opened up, Carl jumped at the chance, and the rest is history.

No look at Carl's life and career is complete without mention of his family. Carl married the former Maryanne Wallace who also taught at Shaw Avenue. Today Carl

Carl's VSTA service includes Negotiating Committee for the last three contracts, Shaw Avenue building leader, Executive Council delegate, and a host of minor but necessary tasks. Carl freely admits that working under the mentorship of retired District 30 stalwarts Noel Giamvalvo and Jack Giacalone drew him into VSTA activism.

This activism, however, might have started even earlier, when Carl attended Central High School and had an English teacher named Richard Herrmann! After Central Carl earned his Bachelor's degree at St. John's, a Master's at Queens, and then back to St. John's for another Master's and a Professional Diploma. Carl's fellow students in graduate school at St. John's included former VSCHSD Math Chair John LaFrano, Central chemistry teacher Andali Raghunath, and

and Maryanne enjoy a family life enriched by seven children—two out of college, two in college, two at Central, and one in Clearstream. Maryanne teaches at the Grace Methodist Church Nursery School. With all this he still squeezes two personal passions into his schedule—sports and coin collecting.

Carl adds credence to the cliché that holds that to get a job done ask the busiest person available, for he somehow will find the time for it. Thanks Carl for your contributions to the Valley Stream educational community.

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**Keglers:** New members are needed for the V.S. Bowling League which meets each Wednesday after school at the San-Dee Lanes in Malverne. Call Charley Zipperlen, 825-6924 for details.

## ANDREW D. FINE, D.D.S.

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the

VSTA

History of  
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## The Seventies: The VSTA

By the beginning of the decade it was becoming clear that teachers had begun to drastically improve their salaries and working conditions relative to what they had been in the past. In 1971, however, the state claimed it was in a fiscal crisis, and the legislature and public turned their wrath on teachers, culminating in the passage of a number of anti-teacher bills spearheaded by Charles Jerabek, a state law-maker, from Long Island. Among the most egregious of these were an extension of the probationary period from three to five years and the repeal of guaranteed minimum salaries...

The actions of the legislature would lay the ground work for an eventual merger between the two competing statewide teacher organizations—the AFT's United Teachers of New York (UTNY), previously known as the Empire State Federation of Teachers and the NEA's New York State Teachers Association (NYSTA)...

Earlier, in 1970, the Valley Stream Teachers Association moved its office to 101 Rockaway Avenue, into a building that had once housed a fledgling Valley Stream Teachers Federal Credit Union formed by a group of Valley Stream Teachers, an enterprise that would eventually become the Nassau Educators Federal Credit Union...

The U.S. Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)...

In the spring of 1971, when the VSCHSD Board unilaterally changed the working conditions of English teachers, assigning them to five instead of four classes which had allowed for more time

# The Turbulent 70's

## Grows but so Do Anti-teacher Measures

to teach writing, members of both the rival Valley Stream Teachers Association and the Valley Stream Federation of Teachers combined for a massive picketing of the board of education meeting which, at the time, was held in its district offices located in the County Federal Savings Bank building at 85 Hawthorne Avenue...

*Newsday* carried a story of how nearly the entire Central High School faculty—men in suits and ties, women in dresses—showed up for work wearing sneakers to protest the slippery wax used on floors in the building. The article was entitled "A Real Slick Protest." The District changed the wax it had been using!

That same year the Public Employment Relations Board ruled that Valley Stream's department chairpersons were in the teachers' bargaining unit...

The Executive Secretary of the VSTA made a formal proposal to consolidate the four Valley Stream school districts during a meeting with the Executive Council of the Valley Stream PTAs...

1972 began the "great excessing" as enrollments began to decline. The VSCHSD staff would drop from 462 in 1971-72 down to 341 by 1980-81, a loss of 121 positions during this

decade...

Congress passed Title IX prohibiting sex discrimination in education...

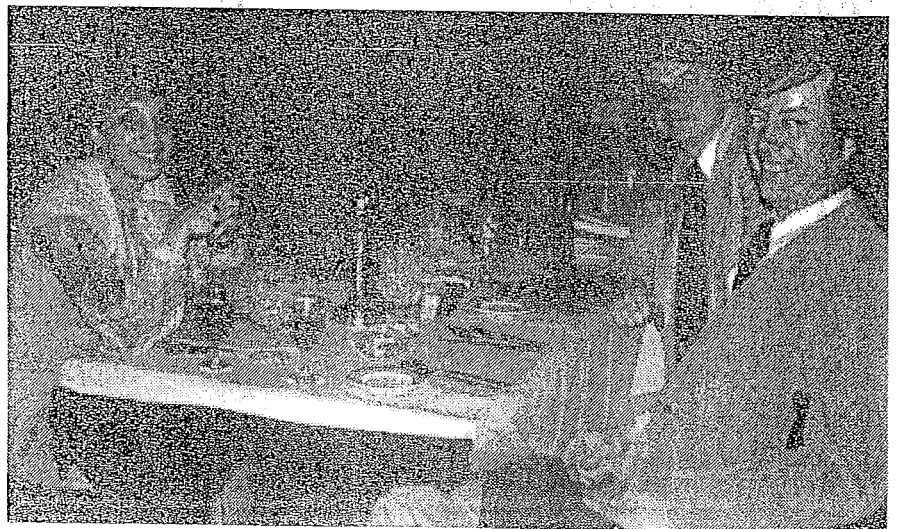
At the state level, a new dawn arose for New York's teachers with the merger between the NEA's New York State Teachers Association and the AFT's United Teachers of New York overwhelmingly approved through a statewide membership referendum in the late spring of 1972. Initially the merged group was to be called the New York Congress of Teachers with its first combined Representative Assembly to be held in March 1974 at the in Kiamesha Lake, NY. Due to a labor dispute at the Concord and the similarity of name with the New York Congress of Parents and Teachers, the convention

was moved to Montreal and the name changed New York State United Teachers (NYSUT). The conflict with the national NEA and AFT was resolved by requiring all NYSUT members to pay dues to both national organizations...

At this convention South High School science teacher Bob Simpson was elected as a member of the NYSUT Board of Directors...

At the local level, merger talks, at times acrimonious, began between the leaders of the rival Valley Stream Teachers Association, headed by VSTA president Charles Messner and the Valley Stream Federation of Teachers, Local 1633, headed by VSFT president Richard Herrmann. Nevertheless, the two

*See page 9*



*A photo from the 1970's: from left—NYSUT Secretary Toni Cortese, NYSUT President Tom Hobart, and VSTA President Richard Herrmann*

Artie Sanger



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## The Turbulent Seventies, from p. 7

groups finally agreed on a local merger in October 1972, and the unified group became the Valley Stream Teachers Association, Local 1633...

The NYSTRS created Tier II, effective July 1, 1973...

In December 1973, the *VSTA Newsletter* was founded with its first editor, Richard Herrmann, who would subsequently challenge and defeat incumbent Charles Messner for the VSTA presidency on May 1, 1974...

The infamous "Legislative Hearing" allowing school boards to impose settlements was repealed this same year...

At a general membership meeting in December 1975, attended by over 400 members, a "no-contract, no work" was adopted in principle if it became clear the Boards were not negotiating in good faith. (This principle was reaffirmed in 1978)...

1975 also saw passage of Federal Public Law 94-142 guaranteeing children with

hired labor lawyer, Ike Perlman, to help with negotiations...

In 1976 the VSTA won an arbitration award in UFSD #30 when an arbitrator ruled the District could not deny a teacher who returned after exceeding the sick-day benefits she had accumulated prior to being exceeded...

At the state level, NYSUT, through a resolution at its annual convention in March 1976, disaffiliated from the NEA after a bitter internecine feud but retained its labor ties to the AFT/AFL-CIO...

Through NYSUT lobbying, the legislature repealed five year probation and returned it to three...

In January 1976, syndicated columnist, Nick Thimmisch, angered over spread of teacher unionism, writing in *Newsday*, described teachers as 'draft dodgers, young married birds panting for a new TV...the usual lot who couldn't find other jobs...' and yearned for the "...school marm, her hair in a bun, her silver rimmed glasses...her virginity intact...and the drafty old gent in a baggy suit and run-down heels."

The New York state AFL-CIO installs a phone bank in VSTA office to campaign for VOTE/COPE endorsed candidates. Over 7,000 calls are made with held of dozens of members...

*Concluded on page 10*

**Columnist Nick Thimmisch, writing in *Newsday*, described teachers as "draft dodgers...who yearned for the school marm, her hair in a bun, her silver rimmed glasses...her virginity intact...and the drafty old gent in a baggy suit and run-down heels."**

Frank Velleca succeeded Herrmann as editor of the *VSTA Newsletter*...

By 1973, VSTA Executive-secretary, Bill Gimello, resigned to work for NYSUT and the VSTA abolished the position. In the fall of 1974, the NYSUT regional office in Jericho assigned the late Vince Callaci to the VSTA as its Labor Relations Specialist...

In 1974, the VSTA won its first arbitration award when an arbitrator ruled the VSCHSD violated the contract by failing to discuss a change in educational policy with the VSTA prior to its implementation...

disabilities to a free appropriate public education and required both a state and local commitment of resources to carry out the federal mandate...

In the spring of 1975, Central teachers began a work-to-clock as protest over District's transfer of a veteran teacher...

On January 16, 1975, the VSTA inaugurated a tri-weekly column on educational concerns entitled, "As We See It," written by VSTA president Richard Herrmann. The column would run for the next six years and appear in as many as four area weekly newspapers...

In the fall of 1975 the VSTA

## The Turbulent Seventies, *from page 9*

The NYSTRS created Tier III, effective July 27, 1976...

In 1977, the VSTA won the famous "snowball duty" grievance when an arbitrator ruled that the VSCHSD could not assign teachers to a building assignment after student dismissal...

In November, the 350 member Lakeland Federation of Teachers concluded a 43 day strike which had resulted in eight of its leaders sentenced to jail members and a loss between \$7,000 to \$10,000 in fines and penalties...

Valley Stream Association of Educational Secretaries, later changing name to Educational Office Personnel, affiliated with VSTA in 1977...

Over 300 VSTA members turned out at VSCHSD Board meeting to protest massive layoffs scheduled for the 1977-78 school year...

1978 saw one of the lengthiest teacher strikes in history when Levittown United Teachers went on strike for several months. Their president, Martin Cullinan, was sentenced to jail and after release attended VSTA fall social. VSTA members had donated \$15,000 to striking Levittown teachers as part of a statewide collection...

VSTA won an arbitration case in grievance over Districts' unilateral decision to make-up three snow days by shortening Easter vacation in 1978...

The U.S. Department of Labor began issuing two Con-

sumer Price Indices, a new one for All Urban Households and the other for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers. Teacher contracts began containing references to the former...


A major election in NYSUT took place when its president Tom Hobart was challenged by Dan Sanders. VSTA played key role in Hobart's successful re-election bid in spring of 1978...

It was an era marked by the end of the Vietnam War and the draft, Kent State, Watergate, Nixon's and Agnew's resignations, long gas lines, high inflation, a national wage freeze, "Whip Inflation Now" (W.I.N.) buttons, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, "Saturday Night Live," American hostages in Iran, disco-music, punk rock, Earth Day, wide-lapels, bell bottoms, mutton chop side-burns; best selling books included *The Best and the Brightest*, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, *Future Shock*, and *Fear of Flying*; movies were "Star Wars," "Deer Hunter," "Sleepers," "Saturday Night Fever," and "Apocalypse Now." *MS* magazine hit the stands, while on Broadway there were "Jesus Christ, Superstar," "Grease," "A Chorus Line," and "Children of a Lesser God." In pop music there were disco, Isaac Hayes, "The Eagles," "Fleetwood Mac, and Don McLean's "American Pie." There were 217 strikes by New York public employees of which 65 were by teachers...

## A First: VSTA Hits 100% Membership *from p. 1*

Finally, 131 retirees have opted to register with the VSTA bringing the grand total of combined active and inactive members to 871, the second largest NYSUT local in Nassau County.

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Contact your local AFT leader for more information about these members-only programs offered by the AFT.

# Letters to the Editor

The VSTA welcomes correspondence. Printed below are excerpts from recent letters.

From NYSUT President,  
**Thomas Hobart**—

Dear Dick:

Good job on your response to the Channel Twelve issue of tenure. We need more responses around the state. We encourage members of the Board, and local presidents in every area, to make those responses. Yours fits in very well.

[Mr. Hobart refers to the letter by Richard Herrmann reprinted on this page in the November/December VSTA Newsletter]

From **Kay Egan (30)**—

To all at VSTA:

I was so pleased to read the article about Carl Riccobono. It's nice to know he is receiving the recognition he so richly deserves. I was probably his best audience when he demonstrated his wonderful sense of humor. Best wishes to Dick Herrmann—he's one in a million!

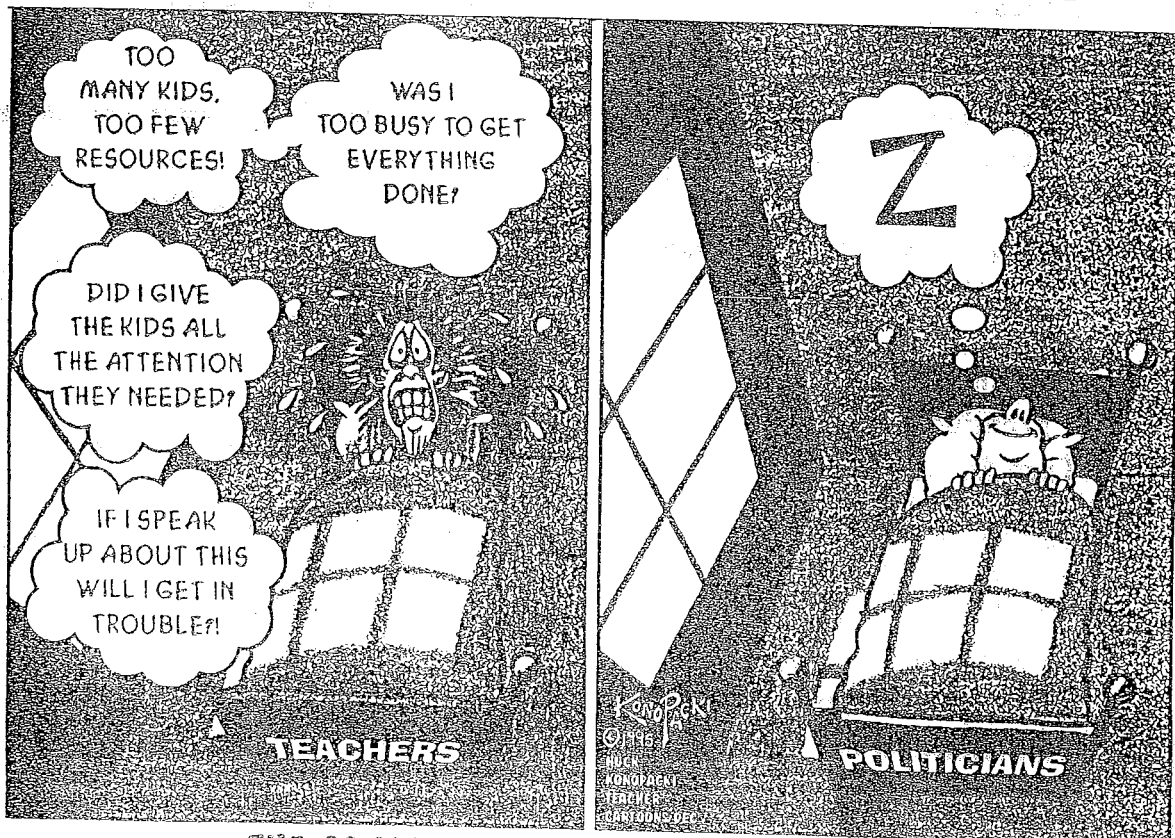
From **Jack Giacalone (30)**—

Great keeping up with information about VSTA through the *Newsletter*. Glad to read about the achievement of 100% membership and the article about Carl Riccobono.

PS: also joined T.R.I.F.—  
Teachers Retired in Florida.

From **Marie Federici (30)**—  
Dear VSTA:

I enjoyed reading the latest issue [VSTA Newsletter] especially the article on the history of the VSTA. A part of it referred to a teacher who was excecised in 1976 and whose accumulated sick days were denied. VSTA won an arbitration award, and the sick days were restored. Well, that teacher won, ME! How nice to know that I contributed to VSTA's history and success! Please keep those *Newsletters* coming



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# Working for You—Marilee Camisa

Around thirty years ago little did Marilee know when she signed on to help Irwin Newman (ret. C) plan a faculty retirement dinner that she was beginning a career long involvement in the VSTA. Although the scope of this involvement has widened, Marilee still plans these dinners.

Marilee's route to Valley Stream began at St. Johns where she earned a B.A. as a math major and stayed on for a Masters in math ed. After a student teaching stint in Lynbrook, she began casting about for a job. Alerted to an opening at Central by her insurance agent, whose wife was the principal's secretary, she applied there, got the job, and signed on in the fall of 1964. After ten years at Central, she was transferred to South where she has remained.

As a math teacher Marilee has worked with the many changes in her discipline—the new math, sequential math, new instructional methods—but assumes a philosophical stance. Change occurs in cycles, but mathematical verities remain constant. The trick now, she says, "is to blend technology in with the math basics in an interesting yet productive manner."

At South, with encouragement from unit leader Eileen Duffy, Marilee blossomed as a VSTA activist. She started as an Executive Coun-



cil delegate, and then moved on to the Negotiating Committee, participating in the last three contracts. In addition to these duties, as well as the aforementioned dinners, Marilee serves as a co-unit leader at South with Eileen.

Marilee finds that working with different personalities with different agendas as a worthy challenge. "When you are a unit leader or a negotiator, you must be open-minded to reach a successful conclusion," she says.

As with teaching, Marilee now looks at VSTA work with a veteran's perspective. She knows how hard Valley Stream teachers worked to get what is now spelled out in the contract and hopes that the new teachers prepare themselves to take the place of her generation. Yet she is quite aware of the special difficulties confronting new teachers on their road to tenure—difficulties not in place when she was hired.

Over the years Marilee has enjoyed trips abroad and has also spent summers augmenting her math skills at Yeshiva University, Brooklyn College, and SUNY Westbury. Nearly a livelong resident of Malverne, she also owns a vacation home on Cape Cod where she participates in local organizations.

## ANDREW D. FINE, D.D.S.

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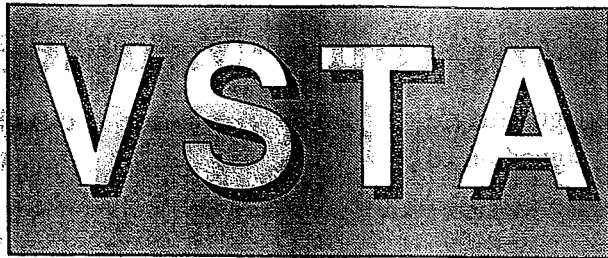
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## The Eighties:

*This is the third of a multi-part series on the history of the Valley Stream Teachers Association set within the context of major social, political, and educational developments of five decades beginning with the 1950's. The material contained herein was compiled from VSTA records and past newsletters, information supplied by NYSUT, the P.E.R.B. News, old newspaper articles, and the memories of several members. Readers are invited to add their own recollections of events or significant omissions relevant to this history by sending letters to the editor. (Especially appreciated would be the year in which the Valley Stream Teachers Association was actually chartered—sometime in the middles 50's—but no record of that event can be found.) In addition, the VSTA needs photographs as well as identifications of teachers in the few photographs that we do have. Many thanks go to VSTA President Richard Herrmann for compiling the materials and writing the installments.*

*Next Issue—"the 90's"*

In 1980, the average national inflation rate hit 13.5% while the negotiated wage increases in the private sector averaged 9.5%. The average teacher salary schedule on Long Island increased by 5.8% and continued to lag behind the cost-of-living...

NYSUT President, Tom Hobart showed up at the VSTA's fall social at Goldies...

A group of L.I. businessmen formed a Long Island Action Committee to explore ways to reduce school tax increases...

In 1981, the VSTA won an important grievance in the VSCHSD when an arbitrator ruled the district could not discontinue paying health insurance when a teacher exhausted his sick days...

Also in 1981, Regents Competency Tests (R.C.T.) were implemented as a graduation requirement, supposedly to raise standards...

The VSTA filed an Improper Practice charge with P.E.R.B. after the VSCHSD directed teachers to grade RCT's, after school, without remuneration. P.E.R.B. upheld union's position...

In September of 1981, a "Solidarity Day" was organized by labor to protest President Reagan's economic policies. VSTA representatives, Marc Emmernan and Eileen Duffy attended...

This same year high school

# The Expansive 80's

## VSTA activities grow with the times

Teaching Assistants became members of the VSTA...

In 1982, the Taylor Law was amended to make it an improper practice for a public employer to refuse to continue all the terms of an expired agreement until a new one is negotiated. This change would help level the playing field between the public employer and employee by preventing the former from arbitrarily denying benefits to the latter...

This same year the VSTA negotiated a severance pay clause in contract for excessed teachers, believed to be the first such clause in a teacher's contract in New York State...

For the first time L.I. teacher salaries began to outpace the cost-of-living by 1982 and would offset some of the big losses of the 70's...

The VSTA won a key grievance in UFSD 13 when an arbitrator overturned District's refusal to restore unused sick days to a teacher whose health leave ended earlier than expected...

Long time VSTA office secretary, Lillian Garrity retired and was replaced by Anita Kelly...

In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in

Education published *A Nation at Risk* as an 'imperative for educational reform'...

Also in 1983 NYSTRS created Tier 4...

This same year the VSTA won two more major grievances when in the first case an arbitrator ruled in UFSD 24 that a returning excessed teacher could suffer no loss of accumulated benefits, and in the second case an arbitrator ruled in UFSD 13 that the District had failed to restore the proper number of days to a teacher's sick bank which were used for Worker's Compensation injury...

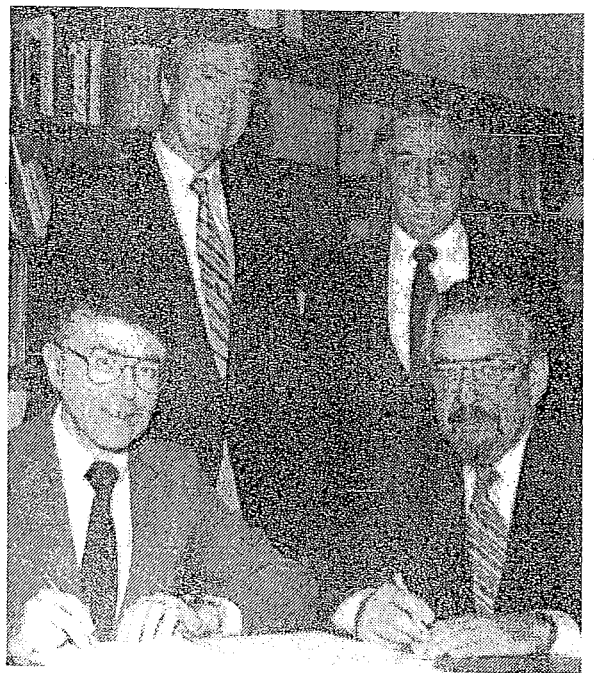
In 1984, the courts upheld that the "Sunshine Law" did not apply to collective bargaining in the public sector. In this same year P.E.R.B. ruled that school districts could not unilaterally sub-contract out for services. It also ruled that the threat of a strike violated the Taylor Law...

In the fall of 1985, the Valley Stream Teacher Center

opened with a \$70,000 grant from the N.Y. S. legislature. Carl Botti became the Center's first director...

In 1986, the VSTA and four districts jointly implemented a highly successful Mentor-Teacher Internship Program after the districts received an \$194,950 grant through the N.Y. State Education Department, only one of twenty-four districts in the state at this time...

See page 9



Signing a two year contract between the VSTA and the Boards in 1988 are clockwise from upper left Mr. Richard Herrmann, President of the VSTA; Dr. Thomas J. Lee, District 13 Superintendent of Schools; the late Mr. Paul Fromer, Chairman, Boards' of Education Negotiating Committee; and Mr. Harris Dinkoff, President of the District 13 Board of Education.

Artie Sanger



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New York Leads Nation,

from page 1

To keep teaching, only 28 states require what is termed a "second-stage certificate." These certificates vary widely. But in New York, prospective teachers must do even more to earn certification, such as"

- Successfully complete two years of teaching;
- Obtain a master's degree (New York is one of only eight states to require this);
- Pass more rigorous state tests (New York is one of only three states to require this);
- Complete a video-taped performance-based assessment (New York is the only state to require this.).

By Comparison, to keep teaching in North Carolina, a teacher need only pass a local district's assessment of performance. No other state requires as much as New York to receive permanent certification.

Roslyn Brown, who manages NYSUT's Effecting Teaching Program, noted that more than 10,000 teachers enrolled in the program's graduate level education courses and seminars in improve teaching and learning this year, an all-time record since the program began 17 years ago..  
[Reprinted from NY Teacher, Nov. 11, 1996]



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## The Eighties, from p. 7.

This same year Governor Cuomo initiated the Excellence-in-Teaching program in which the legislature earmarked a portion of each district's state aid to be used to boost the salaries of beginning teachers to a regional average. (If a district was already paying at least the region's average starting salary, the E.I.T. funds were usually divided equally among the entire teaching staff. The amounts were generally small.)

Also in 1986, the U.S. Congress passed an AFL/CIO sponsored bill, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, (C.O.B.R.A.) which required all large employers to provide employees leaving their employment with an opportunity to maintain their health related insurances at the group rate for at least eighteen months through out-of-pocket payments...

During this same year registered nurses became members of the VSTA and negotiated their first contract through the efforts of Rhoda Levine, an R.N. in UFSD 13.

The VSTA moved its office to its current location at 33 East Merrick Road...

In 1987, long-time Labor Relations Specialist Vince Callaci, who had been assigned to work with the VSTA, retired and was replaced by current L.R.S. Madeline Litzky...

This same year NYSUT sponsored legislation passed and granted employees in the New York State Employees Retirement System a full year's retire-

ment credit for working the ten month school year. This had a beneficial impact on members of the Educational Office Personnel Unit of the VSTA. In the spring, the VSTA conducted its own evaluation of the VSCHSD administrative program, publishing its finding in the *The VSTA Newsletter*.

In 1988, Mike Bassen (C) was named the third editor the *VSTA Newsletter* since its founding in 1973...

In November of that year, the *New York State School Board Journal* ran a four page article on how negotiations are conducted in Valley Stream...

VSTA President, Richard Herrmann, was elected chairman of the Long Island President's Council, a confederation of nearly one-hundred NYSUT locals from Nassau and Suffolk counties...

This same year saw the controversial asbestos removal debates in District 13...

On the national level the concept of Charter Schools (a public school within a school run by teachers and parents) was endorsed at the American Federation of Teachers convention, an idea which eventually would be seen by some as controversial because of fears that it could lead to privatization...

On Long Island another taxpayer revolt began to surface when 44% of Nassau County school budgets were turned down of the first ballot...

In the fall of 1989,

*Newsday* ran a series of articles on Long Island teacher salaries, headlines "The \$50,000 Teacher." L.I.'s teacher union leaders blasted the *Newsday* series as "incendiary," predicting that the articles would inflame the public and exacerbate difficulties at the bargaining table. Many locals, including the VSTA, urged members to boycott *Newsday*. The editors agreed to meet with a large contingent of teacher union presidents to exchange views...

Also in the fall the VSTA agreed to implement the American Federation of Teachers' Educational Research and Dissemination Program (E.R.&D.) "designed to furnish members with a variety of information related to educational research." Esther Levine was appointed as the Local Site Coordinator...

A VSTA membership survey revealed that the vast majority of teachers felt they had little or no voice in educational decision making...

Earlier in the year, the Tennessee State Education Department published "Project S.T.A.R." (Student-Teacher Achievement Ratio), a defini-  
*Concluded on page 10*



Central teachers protest policy for staff transfers.



## Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)

The VSTA is in the process of updating its Membership Handbook. The following text will appear as a new section and is printed here for your information.

Signed into federal law in 1993, the Family and Medical Leave Act gives most Valley Stream school employees who have worked for the District full-time during the previous year the right to take an unpaid leave (or paid leave, if accrued), upon request, up to twelve weeks (i.e. sixty days: When school is closed—vacations, summer—that time is not charged to FMLA). Such leave will be granted because of the birth, adoption, or foster care of a child, or because of the employee's own serious illness (but for no fewer than three consecutive work days) or because the employee is needed to care for a family member (i.e., child, spouse, parent but not in-laws).

Leave requests should be made at least 30 days in advance whenever possible. (Spouses within the same district are jointly entitled to a combined total maximum of twelve work weeks.)

Under certain circumstances this leave may be taken on an intermittent basis (e.g., three weeks here, four weeks there) within a twelve month period.

When the employee uses more than three consecutive days related to pregnancy (i.e., prior to and after birth), the District may designate these days to FMLA leave time. When such employees are cleared by their doctor, they may return to work or use any remaining FMLA days to care for the newborn and/or then go on unpaid child care leave under their union contract, if they wish. (Unpaid child care leave time may be chargeable to FMLA.) During any unpaid FMLA time the District is responsible for its

## The Eighties, from page 9

tive study showing that in most cases smaller class size was more educationally efficacious than larger ones...

The 80's was an era marked by the Reagan Revolution—"trickle-down" economics, growing demands for tuition tax credits, school vouchers, more teacher strikes, George Bush, Mario Cuomo, "Perestroika," the emergence of Madeline Hunter, the Lincoln Savings and Loan Scandal, the bombing of a marine barracks in Beirut, U.S. invasion of Panama, explosion of a Pan Am 747 over Lockerbie, Scotland, inflation, Jim and Tammy Bakker, ABSCAM, Oliver North, Ivan Boesky, the end of the Berlin Wall; the first woman on the Supreme Court, baseball players' strike; N.Y. Mets, Giants won championships; Shuttle Challenger exploded carrying teacher Christa McAuliffe, world-wide spreads of AIDS. Top movies included *E.T.*, *Ordinary People*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Platoon*, *The Color of Money*, *Rain Man*, *An Officer and a Gentleman*, *Gandhi*; top books included *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, Salmon Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Lonesome Dove*; in music there were Paul Simon's "Graceland" album, Steve Winwood's "Higher Love," Michael Jackson's "Beat It" and "Thriller," Bette Midler and Tina Turner; on Broadway were *Little Shop of Horrors*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Les Miserable*, *Cats*...

There were 55 strikes by public employees in New York.

share of the employee's health insurance premium but can recover what it paid if the employee resigns at end of FMLA leave.

Only classroom teachers who request short FMLA leaves towards the end of a semester but who plan to return prior to the end may be required to remain out on leave until the new semester begins.

This article is intended to outline the major features of the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Sometimes the employee's situation can be complicated and therefore all are urged to call the VSTA office or consult with their building representative prior to submitting FMLA requests.



# VSTA NEWSLETTER

## VALLEY STREAM TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Volume 24, Number 4

Mar./Apr. 1997

### VSTC Parent University a Success

Approximately 100 people attended the Valley Stream Teacher Center Parent University, and it proved to a hit with the community members who attended. The intent of the Parent University was for parents and community members to find out more about what is happening with their children and their schools. A variety of nine workshops concerning parenting, technology, educational issues, and innovations was offered and held at Memorial where the VSTC is located.

Following registration, a keynote speaker, psychologist

*See Page 12*

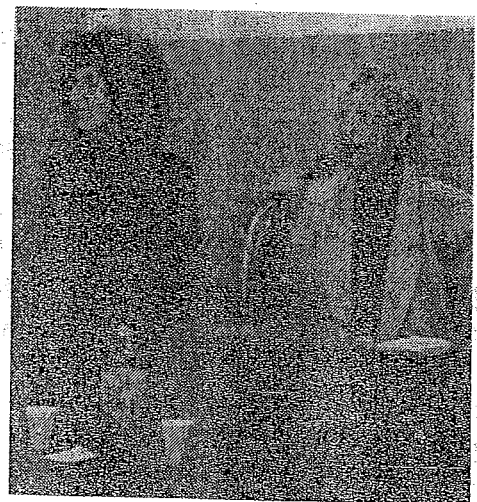
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### VSTA Meets NYSTRS

Sheila Salenger, teacher member of the New York State Teachers' Retirement System Board of Directors, met with Valley Stream teachers March 19 at Memorial Jr. High School.

Ms Salenger established early on that she clearly was a woman on a mission. In her opening remarks she pointed out that the \$62,000,000,000 in the TRS make it a target for cash thirsty politicians. TRS funds are protected, however, by the state constitution. Ms Salenger emphasized that NYSUT members must vote against the upcoming referendum asking voters if they want a constitutional convention. If such a convention comes to pass, legislators may try to access this money for other state purposes. If this happens, benefits of present and future teachers could change. What NYSTRS members must avoid is a situation similar to New Jersey. Governor Whitman has and is still attempting to tamper with the public employees' pension system, which has no constitutional protection, to balance the state budget.



*Maxine Vogel introduces Sheila Salenger.*

Ms Salenger also distributed retirement checklist, emphasized the value of planning, reviewed spousal protection options, stressed the importance of a private consultation with a TRS rep, and answered questions from the floor.

Because so many signed up and managing a workshop such as this with over 50 people is unwieldy, the VSTA arranged for Ms Salenger to return in April to offer a second workshop for those unable to make this one.

A number of attendees expressed their appreciation to Maxine Vogel (S) for inviting Ms Salenger and planning the workshops.

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## EDITORIAL: Another Look at School Reform

Critics, thinkers, educators, and self-styled experts have analyzed and proposed reforms for the so-called problems in American schools. The problems and the failure of the reforms to address them, however, pose no mystery to Temple University psychology professor Laurence Steinberg whose research team studied 20,000 teenagers in nine different American communities for four years. In his article that appeared recently in the *Vassar Quarterly*, Steinberg attributes this failure to a "general disregard of the contributing forces that, although outside the boundaries of the school, are probably more influential."

He sees disengaged parents as the prime problem. Helping children with homework and encouraging them to do better is not the issue since these actions make little difference anyway. True involvement physically draws the parent into the school, such as attending extracurricular activities, back to school nights, and teacher conferences. Giving up free time reinforces the notion that schools are important and a part of family life in the child's mind.

Steinberg identifies American peer culture as a contributing force in student disinterest. He discovered that "students who work a lot perform worse in school, are less committed to their education, and are less engaged in class than their

classmates who work less or not at all." Socializing and watching television also fit into this category. All this leads to "an activity schedule that demands little academic energy from students when they are not actually in the classroom."

Steinberg recommends eight measures for improving American schools. They are quoted below but without the supporting details.

•First and foremost, we must transform the national debate over causes and cures of our achievement problem from one about reforming schools to one about changing students' and parents' attitudes and behaviors.

---

### **No curricular overhaul... will succeed if students do not come to school interested in learning.**

•Second, we must make clear that the primary activity of childhood and adolescence is schooling—not just finishing school, but actually doing well in school.

•Third, we must have a serious and open discussion about the high rate of parental irresponsibility in this country and the toll it is taking on youngsters' lives.

*See page 3*



# OP-ED Page

## Renewed Threats to Teachers

State Senator Kenneth LaValle (R/C) has recently introduced a bill to require teachers to obtain renewable licenses every three years. Perhaps not as insidious as the proposed legislation of Suffolk State Assemblywoman Debra Mazzarelli (R/C), co-sponsored by Nassau State Assemblyman Gregory Becker (R/C), calling for five year renewable tenure, a scheme that would erode academic freedom and virtually destroy teacher unions, the renewable license plan, co-sponsored by State Senators Caesar Trunzo (R/C) and James Lack (R), would require teachers, every three years, to take

State approved in-service courses (at teacher expense), pass State sanctioned examinations and assessments, prove their good moral character and ethics, and then pay a fee to the S.E.D.!

In expressing its opposition to this latest politically motivated attack on teachers, NYSUT declared:

"This bill indicates once again how woefully misinformed the general public, including some of our elected representatives, is about the current standards for training, certification, and accountability of teachers in New York State. If anything, this legislation weakens the authority

of the existing Teacher Education Certification Practice (TECAP) Board and the current dual system of accountability within Section 3020-1 of the Education Law and Part 83 of the Commissioner's Regulations which the other profession do not have."

These kinds of proposed legislation provide one more reason why teachers ought to contribute to VOTE/COPE. Doing so will be a lot less expensive in the long run when compared with the potential expenses to be incurred should such bills get passed by the legislature. (And we do not have a governor who would veto them.)

---

### EDITORIAL: Another Look at School Reform, *from page 2*

- Fourth, schools must expand efforts to actively draw parents into school programs.
- Fifth, we must make school performance really count. We must recognize that the prevailing and pervasive peer norm of "getting by" is in part a consequence of socializing students within an educational system that neither rewards excellence nor punishes failure.
- Sixth, we should adopt a system of minimum national standards and performance examinations for promotion and graduation within American schools.
- Seventh, we should do away with remedial education at four-

year colleges and universities.

- Finally, we must reconsider the proposition that after-school employment is inherently beneficial for teenagers in light of the changing nature of the labor force and the increased demand for high-skilled, highly educated worker.

Mr. Steinberg concludes his analysis with the observations that "no curricular overhaul, no instructional innovation, no change in school organization, no toughening of standards, no rethinking of teacher training or compensation will succeed if students do not come to school interested in and committed to,

learning. In order to understand how this commitment develops ... we need to look not at what goes on inside the classroom, but at students' lives outside the schools' walls.

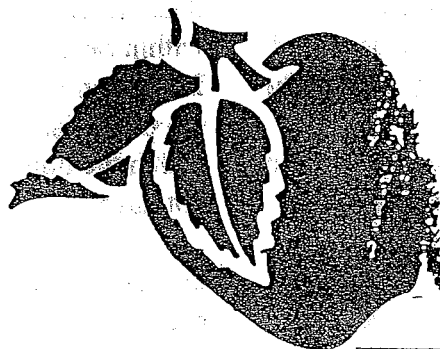
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### Correspondence

From NYSUT President,  
Thomas Hobart—  
Dear Richard:

Except for the terrible photo of me that you placed in your *VSTA Newsletter* under "The Turbulent 70's," I think your stories are terrific. I didn't realize you were so young back then.

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# Let's Prepare For

Steve Borman

VSTA Political Action Chair

It is that time again for our annual VOTE/COPE campaign. Most of you are used to my messages regarding the importance of your VOTE/COPE contribution and have responded generously in the past, but this year the need is even greater.

For those of you who haven't contributed or for those new to the profession, let me remind you that VOTE/COPE is the lobbying arm of NYSUT. The money is used to lobby Albany and our legislators, first and foremost, for the children of our state. NYSUT pushes for increased state aid. This year the starting point is \$302 million, and it is just a starting point. It is the first year that there is at least a base from which to climb instead of a hole. Unfortunately, we have been so hard hit in previous years that this year's proposal will bring many of us back only to the level of eight years ago.

NYSUT is often alone on this issue on increased state aid. The New York State School Boards Association and other state organizations often have their priorities skewed. Instead of focusing on working together to get the most for our children, they have often zeroed in on tenure reform and have spent their energies pointing their fingers at a few "bad" teachers. Even our legislators have told us

these efforts are misguided, yet these groups persist. We are the lone voice demanding more for our children.

This year, in addition to more state aid, NYSUT will lobby for Teacher Centers. We are asking to raise standards—something we all agree on. However, we need to ensure that our teachers have the updated information and that our children attain the capacity to meet those standards. Teacher Centers provide a vital service.

The devastation of the SUNY/CUNY system is another NYSUT concern. With decreased funding, tuition costs are increasing programs cut, and the quality of what we offer jeopardized. Tenure reforms, now recertification issues, along with the vote on a state constitutional convention, all pose threats to what we are about as professionals. As you may be aware, the New York State Constitution requires that every twenty years an automatic referendum be placed before the voters seeking a constitutional convention. This would be a disaster for the New York State's teachers. The constitution protects our pension benefits. As long as it is not amended, no law may be passed reducing these benefits. A convention, however, would leave that protection on jeopardy. Without our VOTE/COPE

# VOTE COPE

contributions, our effectiveness is diminished.

As the round of meetings with legislators here, as well as in Albany, enters into full swing, make sure you are doing your part. Be informed, and be outspoken when you hear misconceptions and inaccuracies. Be prepared to write letters or make phone calls, and most of all make a contribution of \$20 or more to our VOTE/COPE drive. Your dollars make a difference to your professional investment and, most importantly, to our children. I look forward to an even more successful campaign than we had last year.

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Announcing the  
**New York State AFL/CIO 1997 Scholarship**

The New York State AFL/CIO will award a four-year scholarship to a 1997 graduating high school senior who intends to pursue a career in labor relations or a related field. The scholarship will be for \$2,000 a year for four consecutive years for a total of \$8,000.

To be eligible, the applicant must meet the following criteria:

- A 1997 high school graduate
- A parent or guardian who is a member of a union affiliated with the NY State AFL/CIO
- Accepted in a course of study in *labor relations* or a labor related interest such as history, economics, law, political science, sociology, or journalism at an accredited institution of higher education in New York State.

The applicant must submit a completed application form by May 9, 1997. For application and further details contact the VSTA office. The applicant must also submit:

- A letter of recommendation by a teacher/counselor from the applicant's school
- An official transcript and SAT scores.
- An essay of 400–500 words on the topic: **While polls and focus groups show that American workers realize the value of unions, union density is low in the U.S., mainly because of legal barriers to organizing and employer resistance, worse here than in any other developed industrial country. Describe the difficulties faced by U.S. workers who want to form unions. Explain how empowering workers through unions would enhance democracy in the U.S.**

Finalists will be selected and interviewed. The winner will be selected, and all finalists notified of the decision in June. The winner will be formally announced at the NY State AFL/CIO Labor Recognition Dinner and is invited to attend.

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## Crisis in Education?

### One Teachers' Appeal: If Technology is part of the Answer, Isn't Training the Key?

by Esther Zager Levine, EdD

#### *Views from a technology using teacher*

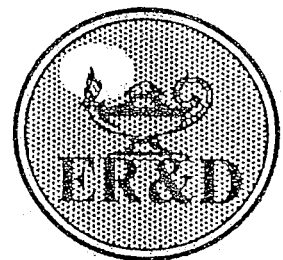
A decade ago Howard Rheinhold said, "At its best, the infant educational software industry seems to be manifesting a whole new way of thinking about learning that uses the capabilities of computers to exploit children's natural capacity to learn." What happened to that dream, to the promise that computers would transform our antiquated educational system and prepare our youth

for the information age? It is this writer's belief that integrating computers and other technology into the classroom must be an important part of the educational reform effort. Computers and other technology are already a major part of society, business, industry, and are ever present in our personal lives. Whether we, as teachers, like it or not, computers and other technology are here to stay. We need to be versed in their application to the teaching-learning process.

#### *Are there New Roles for Teachers?*

Teachers and schools can no longer sit on the fence with technological inactivity. We owe it to our children to provide them with knowledgeable teachers who can unlock the power of technology and provide students with the tools of our working society. One of the main ingredients for progress presently lacking in our educational system is a financial investment

*See page 13*

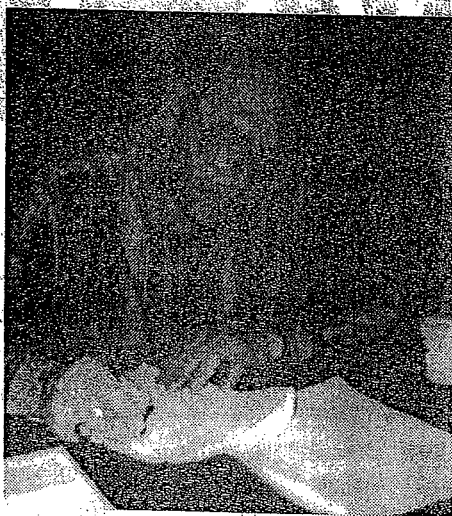


# Working for You—Alan Hoffman

The planets must have been in line that December day in 1965 when Oswego senior Alan Hoffman, expecting to graduate in February, met Valley Stream teacher recruiter, John Sykes, who was seeking a history teacher for a mid-year appointment at Central. As a Utica native Alan had never heard of Valley Stream, but he responded to Mr. Sykes's invitation to visit Valley Stream during the Christmas break for a formal interview. Al accepted the job offer and so jumped directly from commencement to classroom two months later.

Alan did not need the help of the planets to get involved in union work, however. About a year or so after signing on, the local NEA affiliate completed negotiations on a new salary agreement. Al's perusal of this agreement revealed several provisions that he did not like. After considerable thought, especially since he did not yet have tenure protection, he figured that the newly formed AFT local in Valley Stream would be more receptive to hearing his objections. Looking back, Alan sees this event as the starting point in his union activism.

Years passed; the former NEA VSTA and AFT locals merged; Alan earned a Masters at Hofstra, completed additional graduate work at Stony Brook,



and got transferred to Memorial; but union activism remained a constant in his career. VSTA contributions include Election Committee co-chair and Parliamentarian as well as his present jobs—Executive Council delegate and treasurer. As treasurer of the VSTA, Alan's duties are myriad. He is required to make deposits, counter sign checks for disbursements, questions reasons for expenditures, prepare monthly financial state-

ments for the membership, file taxes, reconcile accounts, and help the Finance Committee prepare its yearly budget. These are not casual responsibilities. Doing the job properly usually demands four visits to the VSTA office each week. And these tasks must be done properly as Alan's handiwork is exposed to scrutiny by the VSTA's own Audit Committee, NYSUT authorities, and the IRS. President Richard Herrmann says, "The IRS occasionally errs in studying our returns, but Alan has never erred in preparing them."

What with teaching and frequent trips to the VSTA office, Al puts in a long work day. He does have a private life which he shares with his wife and two children in their South Huntington home. When Alan can snatch spare time, he spends it reading, traveling, or fishing.

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History of A

The Nineties

The state's share of aid to education had already begun to decline significantly with a resultant shifting of costs for public education to local property owners and stimulating the growth of Tax PACs...

In 1990, Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation, published a report, "The Condition of Teaching: 1990," advocating teacher involvement in educational decision-making...

Locally, the VSTA conducted its first membership evaluation of building principals...

On Long Island, many teacher unions, including the VSTA, often with the support of administrators, advocated a boycott of Newsday because of the newspaper's perceived continuing animus against teachers and their unions...

In 1991 the VSTA released the results of its own study showing that school taxes accounted for little more than 4% of the average taxpayer's income while nearly 27% went for other taxes such as federal, state, sales, excise, town, village, and social security...

Another VSTA membership survey revealed that 74% of members believed that supervisory classroom observations had little or no impact towards making them better teachers (similar results were found in a 1987 VSTA survey.)...

For the first time ever, the school year opened with no signed, formal Memorandum of Agreement for a new contract for teachers.

As part of massive cuts in state-aid to education the legislature eliminated funding for Teacher Centers and Mentor-

This is the first of a multi-part series on the history of the Valley Stream Teachers Association set within the context of major social, political, and educational developments of five decades beginning with the 1950's. The material contained herein was compiled from VSTA records and past newsletters, information supplied by NYSUT, the P.E.R.B. News, old newspaper articles, and the memories of several members. Readers are invited to add their own recollections of events or significant omissions relevant to this history by sending letters-to-the editor. (Especially appreciated would be the year in which the Valley Stream Teachers Association was actually chartered—sometime in the middle 50's—but no record of that event can be found.) In addition, the VSTA needs photographs as well as identifications of teachers in the few photographs that we do have. Many thanks go to VSTA President Richard Herrmann for compiling the materials and writing the installments.

Next Issue—"The Turbulent 70's

# the Now Nineties

Teacher Internship Programs. In Valley Stream, however, teachers voted overwhelmingly to donate part of their E.I.T. money to keep Valley Stream's Center operating. An editorial in the *V.S. Herald* congratulated the teachers' action...

During the year, VSTA members contributed \$1,000.00 to the Allied Printing Trades Council to aid families of striking *Daily News* employees and received a letter of appreciation from A.P.T.C. President George McDonald...

In March of 1991, the board of Regents approved "A New Compact for Learning," as a means of localizing education decision making to the building level.

In 1992 the Regents issued regulations regarding the "Compact: requiring all boards of education to comply by submitting a district plan in 1994...

Unemployment hit a ten year high...

At the NYSUT convention, the *VSTA Newsletter* was voted best overall paper in its category...

This same year Jerry Camilleri was selected as the Director of the V.S. Teacher Center...

Teachers as well as Teaching Assistants again voted overwhelmingly to donate a

portion of their E.I.T. money to keep the Teacher Center open after the legislature failed to provide adequate funding...

Steve Borman succeeded Jim Harnett, who retired, as VOTE/COPE Coordinator...

New York State legislature passed Agency Fee Law requiring public employees who refused to join their union but who were covered by a collective bargaining contract to pay a fee to their union in an equivalent amount to dues paid by members...

Michael Bassen stepped down as *VSTA Newsletter* editor, and Stan Bishop became the fourth editor since the establishment of the paper...

In 1993, long-time VSTA office secretary Anita Kelly retired, replaced by Patricia DeProspo, the third full-time office secretary in VSTA history...

The philosophy of "inclusion"—that all students, regardless of the nature or severity of their disability, should be educated in the general classroom—began to emerge setting off a national debate...

In January, VSTA President Richard Herrmann appeared on radio station WBAB-AM to debate the founder of the Long Island Tax PAC's, Irving Gerber. The two made a return engagement two weeks later (Herrmann was invited back for two additional shows later in the spring to discuss educational-labor issues). He was also invited to address the L.I. Civic Action Council along with TaxPAC perennial litigant, Robert Schultz, from upstate...

In August, the Family Medical Leave Act (F.M.L.A.) was passed by the U.S. Congress and signed by President

*See page 10*



Artie Sanger

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## The Nineties, from page 7

Clinton...

In October, new state legislation allowed members of the teacher retirement system to claim retroactive credit to the date they were initially hired in any district if they could show they were not informed of their right to join at the time. This law affected many who began their careers as part-timers or substitutes...

This same year the State Education Department tightened up requirements for teacher certification...

Also in this year the Governor's Task force on Sexual Harassment issued a report detailing the significant incidence of sexual harassment in schools, recommending school boards adopt policies regarding the issue and that training to prevent sexual harassment in schools be provided to staff and students...

In 1994, Al Arnone became the V.S. Teacher Center's third Director...

In Patchogue-Medford, the school board challenged the concept of teacher tenure, but their efforts would be eventually thwarted by the courts...

VSTA members broke their all-time VOTE/COPE contribution record topping \$5,000.00...

In the winter of 1995, the VSTA and Boards of Education began what would turn out to be the longest impasse in the history of Valley Stream school contract negotiations...

*Forbes* magazine devoted several issues attacking teacher unions...

In the spring of 1995, the VSTA conducted its second membership evaluation of building principals which found that elementary principals continued to be rated more favorably than high school principals although the rating of the secondary principals improved significantly since 1990...

In June members approved a constitutional referendum enabling the VSTA to represent full-time teacher aides in negotiations...

The 1995-96 school year opened with no

See page 9



*The Nineties, continued*

contract settlement...

On December 12, 1995, unable to reach agreement for a new teachers' contract, the boards' and union's negotiating committees declared impasse. That evening over 250 members turned out at the high school board meeting in silent protest. Over the next six months, protests would escalate to include massive picketing, the wearing of payday black and colorful buttons showing solidarity, pre-school gatherings, and working-to contract. The state's Public Employment Relations Board assigned mediator Dr. Rosemary Townley to try to help bring the sides to agreement...

In January a major study by business and education groups revealed that the expense of education on Long Island, considering the cost-of-living, was in line with the rest of the state while the quality was better here...

In February *U.S. News and World Report* devoted an issue

to "how teacher unions are wrecking our schools"...

In April *Newsday* issued results of a poll showing four out of five Long Islanders rated their schools favorably, giving them an "A" or a "B"...

On May 21, 1996 the state legislature passed a law requiring a common voting day for Long Island school budgets, labeled "Super Tuesday" by *Newsday*. Ironically, despite the hopes of the Tax PACs that it would lead to massive budget defeats, nearly 90% passed...

VSTA members far surpassed their previous VOTE/COPE contribution record reaching \$9,000.00...

VSTA Executive Council created the position of VSTA Political Action Coordinator and named Steve Borman as its chairman.

For the first time ever during a political party's national convention to pick a candidate to run for president, the nominee, Robert Dole, attacked teacher unions on national TV for alleged failures in American education...

By September of 1996, teachers and the four boards of education finally ended their longest contract dispute when both sides ratified a new three and one-half year pact...

The New York State School Boards Association launched a state-wide campaign lobbying for five-year renewable tenure, seen by teachers as an end run to eliminate their tenure and break their unions to reduce costs...

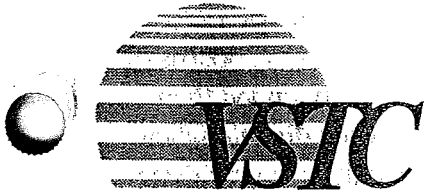
Two more L.I. school districts—Middle Country and East Islip—forced new teachers to sign independent five-year renewable tenure contracts. The two local teacher unions, with help from NYSUT, took the matter to the courts...

Long-time leader of the American Federation of Teachers (A.F.T.) Albert Shanker died at a time when the A.F.T. and N.E.A. were moving closer to a nation merger.

The decade of the 90's has been marked by increasingly strident attacks on teacher tenure and their unions; calls for vouchers, privatization of schools, and raising academic standards; it was the end of the Cuomo administration in Albany and the beginning of the Pataki era; the prominence of Newt Gingrich and the "Contract with America," third party candidate Ross Perot, passage of N.A.F.T.A., Bill Clinton's election for two terms as U.S. President; calls for a balanced budget; there were the Persian Gulf War, Clarence Thomas and



*Concluded on page 14*



## VSTC Parent University a Success,

from page 1

by Marie Stone, VSTC Publicist

Dr. Maryanne Driscoll, presented an innovative, humorous, and engrossing dissertation on parenting that everyone could associate with. Attendees then went to their chosen workshops.

Before leaving, attendees were asked to fill out a Parent University evaluation form and add their comments. An overwhelming response of "yes" was checked off for the following: The presentations were well organized and understandable; The workshops provided me with the opportunity to increase my awareness of the topics covered; and, I would like to see additional parent workshops throughout the year. Some

additional comments included numerous praises.

The Parent University committee members should be commended for their efforts: Chairperson Diana Pirrone, Joanne Lufrano, Neil MacDermott, and Anne Winn.

The Valley Stream Teacher Center's Policy Board would like to extend a special thank you to the following people for the workshops they instructed to make the Parent University such a success:

- Albert Arnone (Buck), for "Surfing the Net"
- Gerard Camilleri (30), for "Introduction to the Computer at Home"

•Mamie Eng, (Waldinger Public Library), for "Creative Uses of the Public Library"

•Maureen Florio (Leadership 2000), for "Speak Easy"

•Marsha Iverson (C), for "Careers of the 21st Century"

•Robert Kaufold (M), for "Managing the World of Teenagers"

•Neil MacDermott (Carbonaro), for "Incorporating Computer Use and School Work"

•Dr. Barbara Mackie (Buck), for "Parents as Reading Teachers"

•Susan Rollero (M), for "Your Child and Study Skills at Home."

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## Another Threat to Teachers: Privatization

Major players in the for-profit education industry banded together recently to form the Education Services Council, a clearinghouse and lobbying group that will attempt to loosen federal, state, and local restrictions on contracting out.

The group plans to develop model laws and contracts, build coalitions, and highlight privatization "success stories." The Council will also lobby at the federal level for more contracting-out options within existing programs.

Another major push of the Council will be to help schools "more accurately measure in-

house costs." If this is accomplished schools would then be encouraged to use the more accurate data for comparison of prices charged by for-profit firms.

According to the Council's Executive Director, Albert Foer, the organization will work to eliminate such obstacles to contracting out as "state laws that require districts to accept low bids without consideration of quality" and "collective bargaining agreements that give unions the ability to block or frustrate any contracting."

Among the members of the new group are Education Alter-

natives, Inc., the Edison Project, ServiceMaster, and Huntington Learning Center.

The Edison Project, which is now trying to convince the Roosevelt school district to contract one elementary school to Edison, announced recently that it had raised an additional \$30.5 million to bankroll expansion of its ventures.

The new money comes from mostly new investor through venture capital groups and institutional sources in several states. According to Edison's founder, Christopher Whittle, the new investment brings total investments to \$100 million over the four year period of the project.

## **Crisis in Education?** *from p. 6*

in teachers and their training. Corporate America and private and public foundations funded by them are making some impact on the problem, but much more is needed. Partnerships between schools and industry, schools and universities, and international collaborations are also part of the answer. It is essential that we make an investment in the future generation by training our teachers right now.

### ***What Has Been Done to Train Teachers?***

During the past ten years there has been an infusion of software and hardware into our schools without an accompanying investment in teacher training. Integration of computers into the classroom lags far behind their comparable integration into the everyday worksite. In-service education is sporadic and lacks time for application and reinforcement of training. As a result we have already produced a generation of youngsters who need to be extensively retrained by their employers. I believe this is the time to step up our efforts at training teachers. Now, at a time when the national trend is to involve more of the shareholders in the process of education of our youngsters, is also a time to involve more of those who have skills to share in the process of training teachers and students.

Teachers who use technology have begun to link up to support one another through organizations and teacher telecommunication all over the country. It is time we also linked with local industry and business and let our

students know what the modern workplace is like! Teachers and administrators alike need to discover the impact that computers and other technology can have on their everyday work environment and on the future of the youthful population they serve. Those who use technology can teach others to integrate it into traditional modes of teaching.

### ***What Impact Have Computers Had in Schools?***

The most dramatic integration of computers and other technology in the schools has been felt in the teaching of English, business subjects, and in special education classrooms. Technology has also been used successfully to reach the at-risk student. As the at-risk (of failure) population in public schools rises, sometimes reported to be as high as 25-30% of the total school population, the use of computers and other technology looks promising for several reasons. First, it equalizes education by improving the quality of educational experiences and promoting shared social knowledge, much as television did in the 60's and 70's. Second, it encourages and empowers learners to use their unique learning styles, strengths, and interests while they are engaged in learning. Finally, it facilitates the design of multi-sensory interdisciplinary units of study by teachers working together. I believe that this is the final frontier of innovation left for us to explore in the classroom!

Former Secretary of Education Terrell Bell said, "Unless teachers have full access to technological tools, and learn to use

them to teach effectively, these tools will always remain only an adjunct to the classroom and not a powerful means of transforming the educational process." According to *Power On! New Tools for Teaching and Learning*, the U.S. Office of Technology Assessment reported that, "the vast majority of teachers today have had little or no training in the use of technologies." They report that what it will take to encourage all teachers to use technology in their classrooms is, "to give preservice and inservice teachers continuous access to computers and related technology and require them to use these tools as readily as they use paper and pencil." Investing time in training and time for thoughtful application of the training into practice seem critical ingredients in the effort to integrate computers and other technology into the schools. School systems, communities, and teachers themselves need to make a concerted effort to elicit the help of our companies and corporations to help train our teachers.

### ***What Can Be Done?***

While much has been said and written about school reform, little of it has been focused on technology education for teachers. The Teacher Resource and Computer Training Centers have been in existence for over a decade in New York State, yet the impact on classroom instruction at the secondary level is minimal. Some additional means must be found to assure that necessary changes in classroom instruction will become priorities for federal state, and local mandates. The mechanism is already in place to make this a

*See page 15*



## Excess Medical Expense/Vision Insurance

(The VSTA is in the process of revising its Membership Handbook. The following is an updated section dealing with your Excess Medical Expense/Vision Insurance and is printed here for your information.)

This insurance is provided by the VSTA Welfare Fund through negotiated contributions from the four boards of education.

Your Excess Medical Expense Program covers amounts in excess of those payable by your underlying Blue Cross/Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's Major Medical, to an annual maximum of \$1,000,000 unlimited lifetime maximum. In short, this Program picks up charges covered under the "Empire Plan," where Blue Cross and Metropolitan Life's Major Medical Program leave off. If you or a covered family member exhaust \$1,000,000 of Major Medical expenses in a calendar year, and/or your Blue Cross benefits, this Program will begin to pay for covered expenses.

An additional feature of your Excess major Medical Expense Insurance includes a co-insurance reimbursement benefit which could reduce much of your out-of-pocket expenses incurred when you use NON-PARTICIPATING providers under the Metropolitan

Life Insurance Major Medical Program. First, you submit these claims to Metropolitan which will reimburse you for 80% of your expenses once you have satisfied the required deductibles, but you are responsible for the remaining 20% which becomes an out-of-pocket cost to you. (Fortunately there is a level that your expenses can reach where Met pays 100%. At this writing, that amount is \$6,250.00 although periodically this ceiling may be raised.) Then you send copies of all your statements and bills to First Rehabilitation Insurance Company, and you will be reimbursed for a significant portion of your out-of-pocket costs.

The following example illustrates how this benefit works: Suppose as the result of using non-participating providers you had \$7,000.00 in covered medical expenses above your deductible. Metropolitan will reimburse you \$5,000.00 (80% of the first \$6,250.00) and another \$750.00 (100% of any amount over \$6,250.00), for a total of \$5,750.00. You still have \$1,250.00 out-of-pocket costs (not counting the mandatory deductibles). The co-insurance benefit described at the beginning of this section will pay you 20% of whatever covered expenses you submitted between \$1,625.00—an actuarial figure determined by First Rehab—and \$6,250.00. In the example above, you would get an additional reimbursement computed by multiplying 20% of the difference between \$1,625.00 and \$6,250.00 which is \$925.00, thus reducing your out-of-pocket costs from \$1,250.00 to \$325.00, not counting deductibles.

**The Nineties,** from p. 11  
Anita Hill, O.J. Simpson criminal and civil trials, explosion of TWA Flight 800, Ruby Ridge, the burning of the Koresch Compound in Waco, Texas, the Oklahoma City bombing; emergence of domestic terrorism; "political correctness;" corporate downsizing, massive worker layoffs, and higher C.E.O. salaries; the Million Man March; John Sweeny elected new head of AFL-CIO, promising a revival of the labor movement; in fiction author John Grisham; in education E.D. Hirsh's *The Schools We Need*, John Goodlad's *A Place Called School*; the abortion controversy; claims of life-forms on Mars; increased space exploration, popularity of the Internet, growth of the World Wide Web, and introduction of Windows 95; blockbuster movies *Schindler's List*, *Jurassic Park*, *independence Day*, *Forrest Gump*, and *Pulp Fiction*; in popular music Pearl Jam, Hootie and the Blowfish, Dave Matthews Band, R.E.M.; re-emergence of alternative and folk music; Broadway revivals; cancellation of 1994 World Series due to year-long player strike, era of the Chicago Bulls in the N.B.A., Atlanta Braves in baseball; N.Y. Yankees won 1996 World Series; N.Y. Rangers won 1994 Stanley Cup; sixteen strikes by N.Y. State public employees.

(N.B. The small co-payments made to participating providers cannot be included in adding up your total covered medical expenses under this benefit.)

**Announcing**

## VSTA on the Internet

Internet Address:  
<http://www.vstc.com>

As part of the Valley Stream Teacher Center's website, The Valley Stream Teachers' Association will have its own web "link." When you visit the Teacher Center's web page, look for the link that says VSTA, and click on it. You will find interesting articles from the latest edition of our *Newsletter* and *President's Reports* as well as past editions, valuable information included in the *VSTA Handbook*, and from time to time late breaking information of interest and importance to all VSTA members. If you do not have access to the internet, stop by the Teacher Center, and we will be glad to help you get on-line! See you on the internet.

### VSTA Newsletter Wins 3 Awards

Deborah H. Ward, editor of *New York Teacher* recently informed the VSTA that the *VSTA Newsletter* is a winner in the 1997 NYSUT-New York Teacher Journalism Competition. In Category IV, for 651-1000 members, garnered a First Award for Best Feature, an Award of Merit (general excellence of membership publication), and an Award of Merit for an editorial. The *VSTA Newsletter* is the only one in Category IV to receive three different awards and one of the few award winners on Long Island.

### Crisis in Education?

*from page 13*

reality in technology. Business and industry, working with teacher centers and the educational issues departments of states and unions must be tapped for the excellent expertise that already exists there. Some

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of the present foundation and corporate grant monies and personnel training monies can be redirected to include release time for employees who could be training the nation's teachers. We can stem the crisis in education with the inclusion of training for teachers in the use of technology!

There has been wide agreement that system-wide reforms must occur for our schools to become world class. However, I believe not enough attention is being paid to the promise of technology in teaching. As teachers become regarded as professionals and participate as partners in school decisions, they must also come to understand that schools will be able to move into technology only if they themselves are dedicated to it. Schools must move toward full utilization of technology to provide our students with situational learning through simulations, interactive, multi-sensory, and collaborative learning experiences which will better prepare them to take their place in a strong one. Now, more than ever, we all need to work together to make that place a strong one. Let the VSTA, your district's in-service committee, and the Valley Stream Teacher Center know that you want to receive training in integrating computers into your classroom!

*"They do me wrong who say I  
come no more,  
For every day I stand outside  
your door."*

*N. Malone, Opportunity*

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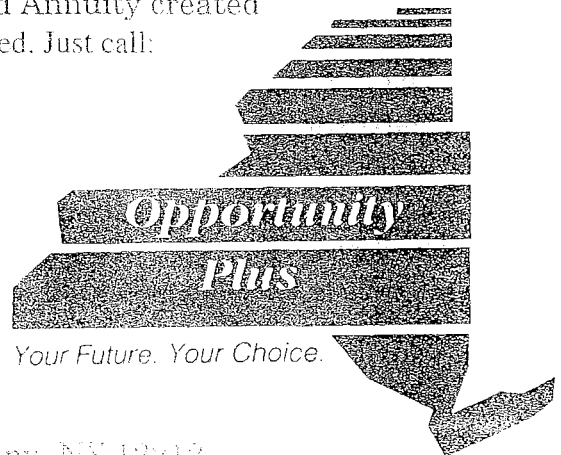
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the  
Valley Stream Teachers Association



# newsletter

LOCAL 1633



VOL. 1 No. 1

December, 1973

## VSTA STAND ON CBC: NO PROGRAM WITHOUT TEACHERS' INVOLVEMENT

VSTA president Chuck Messner's objections to implementation of any Competency-Based-Certification (C.B.C.) program without teacher participation was the major issue raised at an Educational Consultation meeting held between VSTA representatives and CHS District administrators at Dr. Stille's office on Monday, December 3. Dr. Stille denied that the district had entered into a C.B.C. agreement with anyone.

Competency-Based-Certification (C.B.C.) is a State Education Department plan fundamentally to revise the ways that school teachers throughout New York State are expected to be trained and certified

### AROUND THE OFFICE

In addition to many regular duties, VSTA officers have taken on some additional responsibilities. Chuck Messner, VSTA president, is a member of the N.Y.S.U.T. Convention Committee which selected the sites for the next three delegate assemblies: the 1974 convention will be held in Montreal; the 1975, in New York City; the 1976, in Toronto. (NYSUT delegates from V.S. will be elected by the membership in January). Maria Sheridan, VSTA vice-president, has been named chairperson of the V.S.T.A.'s own educational council. At the last Educational Consultation meeting, Dr. Stille agreed to contact vice-president Sheridan. Dick Herrmann, VSTA secretary, has been named editor of the V.S.T.A. newsletter, beginning with this issue.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

We are looking for an appropriate name for our newsletter. Please send your suggestions to the office at 101 Rockaway Avenue, Valley Stream, New York, 11580, in care of the Newsletter. (We will offer some kind of small prize to the winning entry.)

We also welcome any suggestions or comments you have regarding this first issue.

Finally, we would like to have a Letters-to-the-Editor section and welcome your letters signed and sent to the above address.

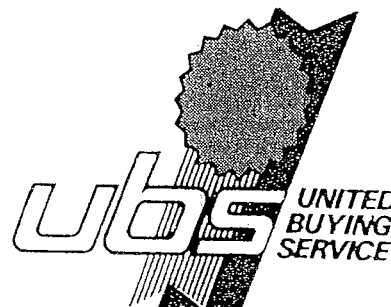
*Dick Herrmann, Editor*

in the future. Student-teachers, in addition to regular education courses, would be given specific tasks and awarded certification on the basis of how well they performed those tasks in classrooms during trials as teachers. The State Education department plan requires that any program set up between a cooperating district and university must include participation by teacher representatives.

VSTA concern over any C.B.C. program in Valley Stream developed as a result of a regular faculty meeting at Memorial J.H.S. last month during which a Hofstra representative spoke to the faculty on C.B.C. At around the same time the faculty was informed that the student-teacher program at Memorial was being substantially expanded.

Dr. Stille assured the VSTA that the concurrency of events at Memorial was mere coincidence.

Representing the VSTA were Chuck Messner, president; Maria Sheridan, vice-president; Dick Herrmann, secretary; Nick Nanos, Memorial Chapter chairman; Frank Velleca, Central Chapter chairman. For the administration were Walter Stille, district principal; Milton Michener, district curriculum coordinator; John Glynn, principal, Central; Charles Wood, principal, North; James Bergen, principal, South; Lou Schwartz, principal, Memorial.



## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING NEWS

### Maternity Leave May Be Sick Leave?

The second highest court in the State has ruled that pregnant teachers should be granted sick leave in the same manner as other teachers suffering from temporary physical disabilities are granted sick leaves. In two different cases this summer, one from New York City and one from East Williston, the Appellate Division upheld State Human Rights Division decisions which ordered Boards of Education to grant paid sick leave to pregnant teachers on the same basis that other teachers who are temporarily disabled are granted paid sick leave.

The decision in East Williston has been appealed to the NYS Court of Appeals. At the present time, however, it is clear that pregnant teachers must be treated the same as other teachers who are unable to work because of disability.

### Court Rules School Calendar is Negotiable

The School Board in Oswego unilaterally changed the work year for school administrators. Their organization filed charges with PERB. The school board claimed, "...the establishment of the length of the work year of its employees is within the exclusive province of the Board, because it is) a fundamental governmental decision bottomed on the Education Law."

The Appellate Division of the courts upheld PERB's earlier decision that the Oswego board was in error, "...We cannot agree....(the Taylor Law) requires public employers to negotiate terms and conditions of employment...The term 'terms and condition of employment' means salaries, wages, hours....The length of the work year is a function of hours of work and thus a 'term of employment.'"

### Changing Terms of Employment

In a recently published decision that could at some time have implication for Valley Stream, PERB took an unusual step of requiring a public employer to compensate employees for losses, plus interest, they sustained because of the employer's improper practices. The Board of Education of Buffalo refused to bargain with a union that represented certain maintenance employees. While it was refusing to bargain, the Board unilaterally reduced wages of some of the employees.

PERB found that for the Board "to change terms and conditions of employment without negotiation with the certified representative of the employees, although such negotiations had been requested, is a clear violation of the obligation to negotiate in good faith. Further, to change unilaterally terms and conditions of employment in derogation of the certified representative's status is so inherently destructive of employees' rights that the employer must be presumed to have that as its purpose."

## ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF VSTA MEMBERSHIP

### Through Affiliation with New York State United Teachers:

1. Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance (Automatic to all members at no cost; basic coverage equals \$1500.
2. Disability Income Protection Insurance-Mutual of Omaha
3. Automobile Insurance-Horace Mann Insurance Co.
4. Homeowners and Tenants Insurance-Horace Mann Insurance Co.
5. Tax Sheltered Annuity Program-Aetna Life & Casualty
6. Travel Program
7. Consumer Discount Buying Services-Two endorsed programs; United Buying Service and Purchase Power, Inc.
8. Group Life and Group Dental Insurance Plans-Available to affiliated locals on a group basis.

### Through Affiliation with National Education Association:

1. Life Insurance-4 Plans
2. Accidental Death Insurance
3. In-Hospital Income Insurance
4. Prescription Service
5. Travel Program
6. Auto Leasing
7. Discount Book Purchase Plan
8. Homeowners and Tenants Insurance
9. Mutual Fund

### Through Affiliation with American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO):

1. Life Insurance-2 plans
2. Prescription Service
3. Accident Insurance-For individual members
4. Accident Insurance-For locals on a group basis
5. Disability Income Insurance
6. Supplemental Hospital Indemnity Insurance
7. Loss of Sight, Hearing or Speech
8. Travel Program
9. Occupational Liability Insurance-For members of locals on a group basis (Optional with your local)
10. Professional Liability Insurance for your local and officers.
11. Fidelity Bonds-For local officers

Additionally, the VSTA has its own local Drug Prescription Plan with Valley Clinical Laboratories on 238 Rockaway Avenue to which the organization pays an annual dues of fifty dollars but any member using the plan pays nothing. (Other employees such as custodial, secretarial, pay a one dollar fee.) The plan entitles you to pay only 20% above Red Book Price (pharmacy wholesale price) on prescriptions.



# ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS ROUNDUPS

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

### District 24

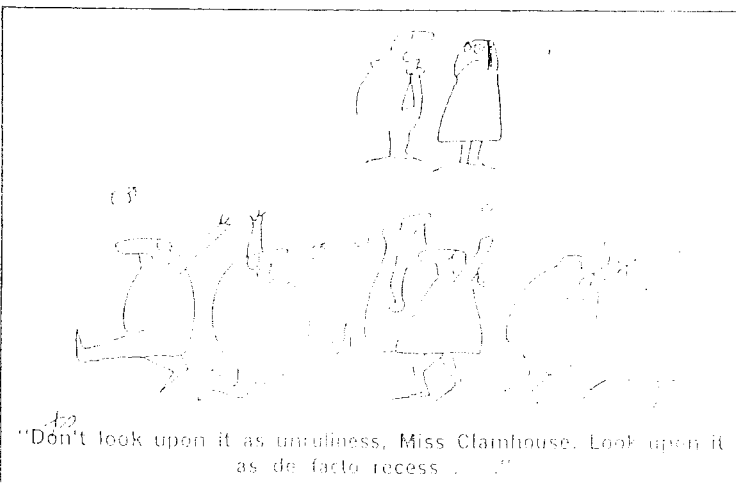
Despite the fact that teachers in District 24 are supposed to have an uninterrupted fifty-five minute lunch period and despite the fact that teacher-aides are employed by the district to supervise the children during the lunch break, both in the cafeteria and on the playground, teachers are still assigned lunch time duties. This means that in addition to having to remain in the building during the entire period they must also spend ten minutes in the cafeteria at the beginning of the period, and five to ten minutes on the playground at the end of the period, or a loss of fifteen minutes from their lunch period....When it appeared that A/V people in district 24 might be able to use the new contract to establish parity within the village for their services, the district principal, under the direction of the Board, abolished the positions....VSTA district leaders are Annette Higgins and John Koronakos.

### District 30

District 30's Noel Giambalvo filed a grievance last June regarding specialists and special teachers as substitutes during last two weeks of school. The matter was amicably settled as a result of a meeting between VSTA representatives and district 30 administrators....Carl Riccobono reports 100% faculty membership in local P.T.A....VSTA District leader is Lois Benedetto...

### District 13

A grievance regarding bus duty has been filed in District 13....A retiring nurse-teacher has been replaced by an R.N. in one school....The faculty at Howell Road decided to forego sending each other holiday cards and instead donated the amount that would have been spent to charity....Apparently a decision has been made, again without consulting classroom teachers, to switch I.Q. tests from 5th to 6th grades....Jim Harnett is District leader.



## HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICTS

### Memorial J.H.S....

With one car stolen already this year, parking lot security still a problem at M.J.H.S....Other problems reported from there include lack of secretarial services, lack of proper facilities for many teachers of laboratory classes....A number of complaints have been heard regarding administrator handling of discipline, especially of cases involving lunch-time disturbances....Jack Frymire has taken on grievance representative duties for building....Nick Nanos, whose hard-hitting flyer on C.B.C. prompted some resentment from Dr. Stille at the last Educational Consultation meeting, is building Chapter Chairman, assisted by Dorothy Meltzer....

### Central H.S....

Central's VSTA chapter publishes its own monthly newsletter called "News and Views," edited by Dick Herrmann....Chapter chairman, Frank Velleca, has presented a number of complaints to the building principal on dozens of issues raised by teachers, including maintenance repairs and P.A. announcements interrupting class, poor quality of cafeteria service, condition of faculty rooms and parking lots, equalizing of department budgets, distribution, fair treatment of teachers....Chapter has taken a tough stand on communications between administrator and VSTA (a copy of which appears elsewhere in this newsletter....Cherie Cotton is assistant chapter chairman

### North H.S....

A grievance regarding extra-pay for extra services has been filed here and has proceeded to the district stage....VSTA chapter at North is working hard to add to the membership which doubled last year. Dick Judge is chapter chairman, assisted by John Wynne....

### South H.S....

Ralph Foster of South H.S. will head committee to "ameliorate the controversies" in proposed constitution.... Dick Reilly is chapter chairman, assisted by Charles Donohue.

## TEACHERS ASKED TO PROTEST 'PURE JUNK' ON SATURDAY MORNING

Calling the bulk of Saturday morning children's television "pure junk," NEA President Helen D. Wise asked the nation's teachers to protest by writing to the speaker in an editorial in the December issue of the *NEA Review*. Special features in the upcoming issue, now in the mail, include photo stories on teaching in the shadow of Watergate and testimony on behalf of a national collective bargaining bill, a four-part report on NEA thrust in higher education, and a summary of this fall's

## THE INK BEGINS TO DRY... AT LAST

The VSTA's and the Boards' Negotiating Committees signed a Stipulation of Agreement in the early morning hours of October 31, 1991 and VSTA members were relieved to hear later in the day, through a memorandum to teachers outlining the terms of the settlement, that an accord was tentatively reached for a new two year teacher contract. Nothing was really final, however, until both sides subsequently officially ratified what the negotiating committees signed. That ratification process would not conclude for nearly the next four weeks.

The first step was to follow up the Negotiating Committee's October 31st memo with a more

detailed summary of the new terms in the "President's Report" as well as in the VSTA Newsletter, both distributed to all members. Next the union would have to get approval of its Executive Council on November 4th, hold a general membership meeting on November 7th and a secret ballot vote of all teacher members during the day on November 12, 1991 in which 96% of the 487 votes cast approved the proposed settlement. That same evening the high school district board also voted 7-1 to authorize its president to sign the contract. (The lone dissenting vote was cast by a New York City teacher and U.F.T. member, Mr. William Stris.)

Nevertheless, the three elementary district boards still had to take this same enabling vote separately at their regular monthly meetings - with UFSD #24 approving on November 21st, UFSD #30 on November 25th and finally UFSD #13, by a margin of 4-2, on November 26th. (The two dissenting votes were Karen Delfino and, again, Stris.) The last step was the actual signing of the signature page by the four board presidents, their chief negotiator and the VSTA President later in December.

Teachers received their salary increases, retroactively, in the December 15, 1991 paychecks.

### VSTA SOCIAL SUCCESS

A large turnout of members attended the November 22, 1991 Annual VSTA Thanksgiving Holiday Social at Goldie's Restaurant in the Gibson section of Valley Stream. Holiday baskets of turkeys and trimmings were won by Carol Konits (N) and Dennis Treubig (C); Baskets of Cheer were won by Christine Dankenbrink (C), Karen Homer (C), Elizabeth Sweeny (13), Susan Chiesa (13) and Jerry Camilleri (3). Door Prizes were won by Dan Saitta (C), Ann

Hayden (C) and June Innella (30). There were many other Flea Market raffle winners.

Special thanks go to long-time VSTA Social Chairman John Koronakos, who retired from UFSD #24 last year but returned to run the show again this year. John expressed his deep appreciation to Eileen Duffy (S), June Innella (30) and Mike Turner (C) who helped with running the social.

Members of the teachers' negotiating committee were recognized during the social.



VSTA SOCIAL: (Left to Right) Standing, Marilee Camisa (S) member of VSTA Negotiations Committee, seated George Beyer,



Unit Leader (30), Social Chairman John Koronakos and Henry Kohlman (30) enjoying themselves at VSTA social.

### Percentage Tops Record But... AID CUTS REDUCE MEMBERSHIP BASE

Another fallout of the severe cut-backs in state-aid to education for this year is the impact on union membership. The diminished state-aid not only forced school districts to lay-off experienced teachers but also eliminated Mentor-Teacher Intern Programs which provided many replacement positions for younger teachers. Consequently, there were fewer teachers for unions to enroll. An analysis of current VSTA membership dramatizes this domino effect.

While the VSTA can still claim 99.8% full-time teacher membership, this percentage is calculated on a reduced base. For example, last year the VSTA enrolled 99.8% of 549 full-time teachers (there is one agency fee payer); this year the union has 99.8% of 528, a net decrease in the four districts of 21 full-time teachers, approximately seven being lost through lack of state funding for the M.T.I.P.. Another six of the 21 lost full-time teaching positions resulted from the retirements of four school-

More on 3

Published by  
**VALLEY STREAM TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

Local 1633

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American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO)

Member Union Teacher Press Assn.

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**EDITORIAL**

**GOOD NEWS  
FROM  
OLD  
GRADS**

Recently the Valley Stream Central High School Alumni Association held a twenty-fifth anniversary reunion for the class of '66. Along with the invitations came an Alumni Association solicitation for increased membership and a reminder of "... the very special school we attended, the very special education we received and the very special teaching staff we had the privilege of being tutored by..." Not only are these words flattering but most

**FORMER STUDENTS WERE  
LEARNING BEFORE  
NEW-AGE EDUCATIONAL  
JARGON**

timely. It's rewarding to hear that former students, now in the real world and years later, realize they had been learning even before the advent of new-age educational jargon such as "macro and micro skills," "supportive supervision" and "learning styles."

**WANTED: POLITICAL COURAGE**

Everyone concerned with the state's fiscal crisis has a so-called solution to the problem. The governor's is to reduce state-aid to education by \$974 million, a plan supported by the Assembly Democratic Conference. (If such reductions are made, the four Valley Stream Districts stand to lose a combined \$1,084,397). The

**THE FOUR VALLEY  
STREAM SCHOOL  
DISTRICTS CAN LOSE  
OVER 1 MILLION DOLLARS**

Republicans are proposing "no cuts in public education aid," provided that agreement is reached to cut welfare, including Medicaid, by \$1.6 billion - something which is highly unlikely. County and city political leaders are calling for lay-offs, wage-freezes, furloughs and elimination of critical services.

One obvious solution is to add a temporary surcharge to the state income tax, the kind of proposal previously urged by the state AFL-CIO, NYSUT, the Commissioner of Education and others. (Remember, a major contribution to the state's current revenue shortfall was the legislature's reducing the income

tax rates four years ago after wrongly anticipating a healthier economy. It is time to correct that error.)

So why have our state politicians stubbornly resisted an income tax increase? Simple. They want to stay in office, regardless of damage done to public service and education. They well know that if local school districts and municipalities, dependent on property taxes, wish to survive, these local governments will be forced to drastically raise property taxes. And then who takes the heat!

**IT'S A CYNICAL GAME  
PLAYED BY OUR  
GOVERNOR AND  
LEGISLATURE**

It's a cynical game plan by our governor and legislature. Property owners will still get stuck with tax hikes, will then blame their school boards and county leaders while the state-wide politicians can say, "Don't blame us, we aren't the ones who raised your taxes!"

## TEN YEARS AFTER

A recent comparison between a 1991-92 statistical profile of staff in the high school district with a profile of staff in 1981-82 shows some marked changes. For example, ten years ago there were 313 teaching positions while today there are 252.8, down 60.2 while the number of administrators dropped from 15.2 to 13.

In 1981-82 there were 177 (56.5%) male teachers and 136 (43.5%) female teachers compared to the current 105.4 (41.7%) male

and 147.4 (58.3%) female. (While the ratio of male to female has changed in all four high schools, South reflects the biggest change from 68% male to the current 34%.)

Ten years ago 80.1% of teachers were reared in New York State; today 86.5% are native New Yorkers. In 1981-82 the mean average teaching experience was 18.5 years; today it is 16.6 years but the median average of 18 remains the same. A decade ago 93.9% were tenured; today 75.9%

are tenured reflecting a younger faculty.

In 1981-82 95.5% of staff had more than three years experience; today that figure is 80%. Finally, ninety-eight percent of teachers ten years ago held at least a Masters degree compared with today's ninety-one percent. (The above statistics are based on the annual Staff Survey compiled by the VSCSD. Similar surveys were not available from the elementary districts.)

## FEELING SICK?

Feeling feverish? Throat sore? Gotta go to work anyway, because there's so much to do?

Do your workers a favor. Stay home.

Stalwart employees who go to work despite obvious flu symptoms are just making matters worse for people they work with, experts say.

"They are very contagious, with the potential to infect others,"

says Dr. Pedro Antonio Piedra, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston.

"They pass the flu to their coworkers, who take it home to their families when they clock out. That's why, when you have an influenza epidemic, it's truly an epidemic. It hits all age groups," Piedra says.

Flu can spread through offices the same way it does in schools - a single cough, for instance, "goes

20 to 25 feet across the room."

"People are most contagious from about one to two days prior to symptoms to possible two to three days into it," he adds. That's when they're most infectious and most likely to spread it to others."

"If you think you have the flu, stay home until your fever is gone and you stop coughing and sneezing," Piedra says.

From

Roslyn T.A. "Reporter"

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## Regents To Grant Unions Role In Shared Decision-Making

The Board of Regents appears ready to give local teachers' unions the right to select the teachers to serve on district teams drawing up shared decision-making plans. The Regents reached unofficial agreement on that and other issues at their November meeting and are expected to take formal action in December.

In reaching consensus, the board rejected a proposal by Regent Emlyn Griffith that would have required school boards to approve how unions selected teachers for the district committee. NYSUT

Second Vice President Toni Cortese thanked NYSUT local leaders throughout the state for their efforts in recent weeks in opposition to the proposed amendment.

"This is the first time the Regents have taken the initiative to recognize the role of unions," she said. "We applaud their decision and welcome the opportunity for full participation in the selection process."

The regulations the Regents likely will approve at their next meeting provide for several important steps:

1. By Sept. 1, 1994, every school district and BOCES will be required to have a plan for the participation by teachers and parents with administrators and board members in school-based planning and shared decision-making. Teachers and administrators on the committees will be selected by their respective bargaining organizations.

2. A district's or BOCES' shared decision-making plan must include: the issues subject to cooperative planning; how the various parties will be involved; how improvement in student achievement will be evaluated; how parties will be held accountable for the decisions in which they participate; how disputes will be resolved at the local level; and how the plan will meet state and federal requirements for the involvement of parents.

3. There is an appeals process -- to the commissioner of education -- if a district or BOCES fails to involve all parties in development of a plan, as required; fails to address required subjects; or fails to provide for "meaningful participation" in executing the plan.

4. If a district or BOCES already has negotiated with the union participation of teachers or administrators, that agreement must be incorporated into the required plan.

While complimenting the Regents for providing for meaningful union involvement, Cortese decried the fact that in 1994 the regs will enable a school board to adopt a plan whether or not all parties agree on it. In the original proposal last spring, a board would not have been able to act without agreement by all parties.

From **The Bottom Line**

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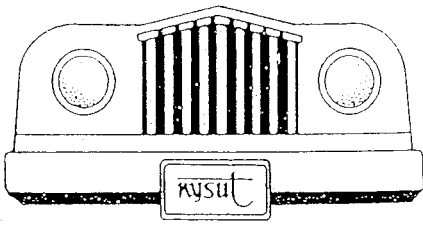
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### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When the Gods wish  
to Punish us . . .  
They answer Our  
Prayers.

# USTA Newsletter

## Valley Stream Teachers Association

Volume 23, Number 1

Sept./Oct. 1995

### USTA Loses 25 Members to Retirement

Retirements once again infused a bittersweet atmosphere to the month of June as VSTA members bade farewell to friends and colleagues, wishing them health and happiness in their future endeavors.

District 13's retirees all came from Wheeler Ave. Joan Burtis taught 4th grade most of her 30 years. In addition she represented her district as a Teachers' Retirement System delegate for several years. Third grade teachers Audrey Schiffman and Rosalie Ferrera retired after 30 and 28 years respectively. The 5th grade lost Nancy Stalb, a 27 year veteran. Florence Shapiro, who taught 5th grade and helped develop the

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### In This Issue

- 2 Editorial
- 3 Op—Ed
- 7 VSTC Mini Grants
- 9 Eye on EOP
- 11 Know Your Contract

### Negotiations Look Grim

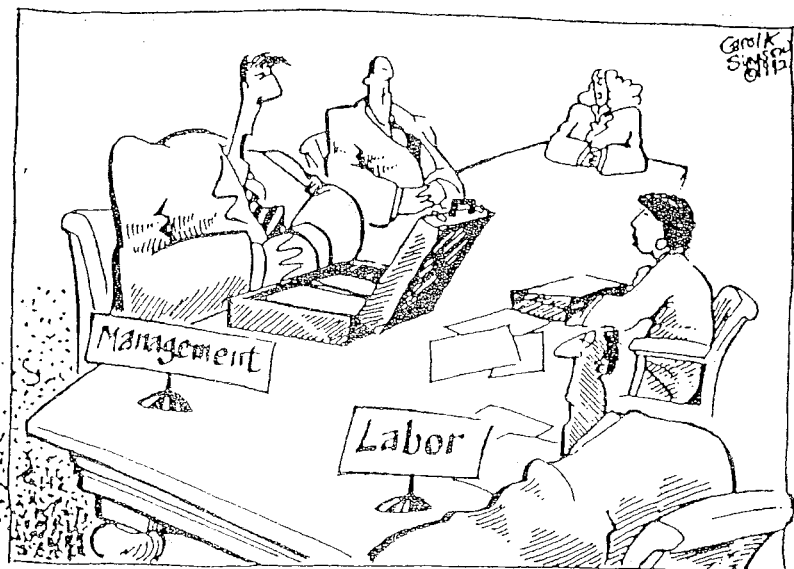
According to VSTA President, Dick Herrmann, the union and the four boards of education have never been so far apart this late in the negotiations process. "Usually both sides by now have an idea what the parameters of a settlement will most likely take. That does not appear to be the case at the moment," said Herrmann.

Difficult negotiation is not peculiar to Valley Stream anymore. In fact, a recent *N. Y. Times* article on the subject reported that 34 Long Island

districts have opened without teacher contracts—20 in Suffolk and 14 in Nassau. The article also quoted the president of the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association as attributing the increased intransigence of school board negotiators as a reaction "to budget defeats, concerns from taxpayers, and a massive loss of state aid over the past five years."

A source close to negotiation in Valley Stream expressed concern that the boards might

See page 5



"WE SAID WE'D BE HAPPY TO CONDUCT NEGOTIATIONS... WE NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT REACHING AN AGREEMENT."

Published by  
**VALLEY STREAM TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

Local 1633

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## **EDITORIAL: The Yogi or the Commissar**

Some years ago Arthur Koestler entitled his study of political change *The Yogi and the Commissar* as he saw in those terms symbols for polar opposites—change from within and change from without. Mr. Koestler saw value in both, but if he were to temporarily leave the grave to study public education he would only find the handiwork of the commissar.

Career teachers soon become accustomed to the rhythmic demands for reform and change that are visited upon them from above—the supervisory class that hears the latest trends at the myriad conferences that they are privileged to attend. And some value comes from these trends when they are backed by research, reason, and experience. Too often, however, teachers observe little more in these trends and calls for reform than vocabulary and metaphors that are sexier than the ideas they mask. The current flap over standards illustrates this. Albert Shankar last summer did his readers a service by pointing out that New York's new social studies standards are too vague to have any value.

The problem stems, of course, from the commissar approach. But the yogi is not dead! Last summer the AFT announced to its members and to the public September 6 its campaign for standards of conduct and standards of achieve-

ment. This is a major media initiative with various stages of implementation to promote the AFT's *Bill of Responsibilities for Learning*, a document that supports higher standards as well a call for a climate for learning through stronger school discipline. The *Bill* reflects the results of public opinion polls as well as teacher views. According to AFT president, Albert Shankar, "Our challenge

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**"Our challenge is to harness strong, existing public support"**  
**Albert Shankar**

---

is to harness strong, existing public support and position our union on behalf of the same goals." The yogi's desire for school order and non-gimmicky education needs amplification by the AFT and your support. Without them the demands of the commissars—vouchers, privatization, school prayer, vague educational reforms, and inclusion—will prevail.

The VSTA heartily endorses this campaign and asks its member to study it carefully as local participation is part of the implementation plan. The VSTA asks teachers to post the *Bill* and track the campaign by reading both *The American Teacher* and the *New York Teacher*.



# UNTA OP-ED PAGE

June 21, 1995

Letters to the Editor

This Week Publications, Inc.

425 Smith Street

Farmingdale, NY 11735

Dear Editor:

Apparently columnist Paul Townsend prefers exaggeration and misinformation over accuracy in his weekly diatribe against L.I. public school teachers and their unions. For example, in describing teachers' salaries he seems compelled to inflate them by what he "estimates" to be an additional 35% in fringe benefits. A more accurate figure, however, can be found in a N.Y. State Education Department study which reveals a significantly lower amount at 27.6%, (and a figure, incidentally,

in one column that the median salary, with benefits, is \$101,000; in another column he claims it is \$97,570 and in still another, \$90,000,—all, of course, computed with the 35% fringe benefits figure. Nevertheless, in one recent column he had to admit that after checking with "his sources" in the S.E.D., the L.I. median salary was closer to \$61,000 which he then pumps back up into the high \$90,000 range by adding in his exaggerated fringe benefits and by somehow "assuming" this "median teacher" made extra money by working after school and during the summer, etc. The trouble with his assumption is that he has no way of knowing whether this statistical teacher does such extra work. Some do; some don't—so his estimates are

claims it was \$1.2 million, then \$800,000. But according to the "1994 Client and Public Corp. Annual Reports," as of Feb. 1995, the union actually spent \$638,434.

The same kind of carelessness with statistics characterizes his claims about pupil costs. In one column, for instance, he told his readers that the average per pupil costs for L.I. public schools is \$10,847, but in a different column he tells them that figure is four times the \$4,502 per pupil cost of private schools. Doesn't Townsend even bother to read his own columns or is he simply like one of those L.I. students he claims can't do basic arithmetic?

I hope Paul Townsend edits his *L.I. Business News* with more care and accuracy than he writes his weekly column.

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## "...Townsend's figures attacking teacher unions are inaccurate."

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tally, considerably less than the average of 40.3% in the private sector, according to a 1994 study by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Research Center, based on 1,057 participating firms representing 2.6 million employees in both manufacturing and non-manufacturing).

Townsend also throws around statistics that are not only inaccurate but inconsistent about L.I. teacher median salaries, claiming

irrelevant. (Moreover, the median-only means that there are about an equal number of teachers who make less and who make more.)

Even Townsend's figures attacking teacher unions are inaccurate. For example, in one column he claims the teachers' statewide union spent \$1.7 million in lobbying last year; in another column he cites that figure as \$1.6 million; in still another he

Very truly yours,  
Richard E. Herrmann  
President  
Valley Stream Teachers Assoc.

*Richard Herrmann wrote this letter, which appeared in Pennysaver last summer, in order to refute the attacks by Paul Townsend of the L.I. Business Assoc. which appear in his paid weekly column. Although other readers also reacted to this teacher bashing, Mr. Townsend nevertheless claimed last month that no one has yet challenged his figures. Please note that this letter is consistent with AFT President Al Shankar's call to action as described on page 2. SDB*



Although Richard Herrmann's letter printed on page 3 has not yet yielded any published reaction, it did elicit this gratefully received response.

August 4, 1995

Dear Mr. Herrmann:

As an 11th grader, I was in your English class. ...

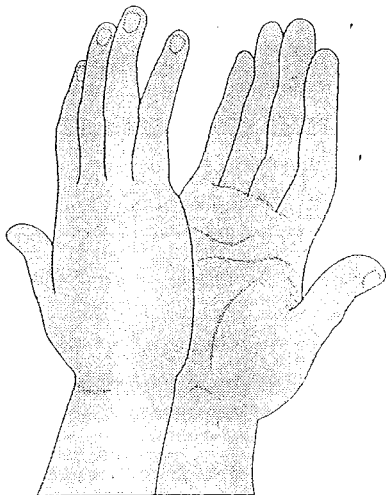
I graduated from college as a secondary English teacher; however, through circumstances, I began my career as an elementary teacher and loved it. (I still do—after 29 years!) The kiddies are eager to learn, excited, and challenging. (I teach 4th graders)

I've been teaching for the Patchogue-Medford Public Schools since 1968. As you may be aware, our school board denied tenure to two well-qualified teachers. So although I do love teaching, the school board is rather difficult which resulted in job actions on the part of the teachers. These actions, although very necessary, are not pleasant.

It is with the foregoing in mind that I wish to express my sincere thanks for writing a rebuttal to Paul Townsend's column. Several times I've thought about writing to the paper, but, have never done so. His diatribes against teachers beg for a response. Thanks for doing it!

I hope that all is well for you.

Sincerely,  
Your former student,  
Eleanor Golding Ryder



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paint themselves into a corner with unrealistic expectations of what the teachers would settle for hoping to appease small but vocal community Tax PACs who will be critical of the board no matter how a settlement ends up. Such groups, said the source, claim that the issue is taxes, but much of it seems to be pure resentment against teachers. "There is a perception that teachers receive a very good salary for working fewer than 10 months a year and getting off on holidays," said labor lawyer Barry Peek in the *N.Y. Times* article. "But we are losing sight of the value of teachers. I would hope that as politicians get on board the family values train," Peek went on to say, "people will begin to hold teachers in higher esteem because education is an important family value. "The major issue in current negotiations is, as usual, money—salary and benefits. One Valley Stream board member, an alternate on the Board's Negotiating Committee and a New York City school teacher, was quoted in the July 6, 1995 *Maileader* as saying, "The board has indicated to the public that we are seeking a zero percent increase in the teachers' contract for next year." In response, Dick Herrmann said such statements are counter productive to achieving settlement. "We assume he is not willing to take a wage freeze in his next contract when his union, the U.F.T., begins negotiations with the city this fall."

To date both sides in Valley Stream have met fifteen times without coming to any agreement. Nevertheless, the VSTA is not yet asking members to take any action unless it becomes clear that a reasonable and fair settlement does not seem possible otherwise.

Little or no negotiations have taken place between the boards and school related personnel units whose contracts also expired last June—educational office personnel and secondary teaching assistants, both represented by the VSTA. (R.N.s are in the last year of their contract.)

Members of the teachers' negotiating committee include Marilee Camisa (S), Susan Chiesa (13), Lorraine Danis (24), Carl Riccobone (30), Roy Somers (N), Patrick Naglieri (M), Dennis Treubig (C), VSTA Vice-presidents June Innella (30) and Dorothy Meltzer (M); Madeline Litzky, a NYSUT labor relations specialist, Ike Perlman, a VSTA labor lawyer, and VSTA President, Dick Herrmann. (Burt Goldfeld (N) is filling in for Roy Somers who is out ill).

**Reminder:**

The *VSTA Newsletter* needs your input. Please send articles, photographs, poetry, cartoons, artwork, announcements, and faculty news to me at the VSTA office, Central High School, or AOL Stanton 358.  
SDB

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## Retirements, *from p. 1*

gifted and talented program, taught for many years at Dever before ending her career at Wheeler.

District 24 said goodbye to three teachers and to nurse, Evelyn Scanlon who worked for 17 years, the last four at Buck. Buck also lost kindergarten teacher Carolyn Dalton known for her involvement in Writers Workshop and Whole Language during her 33 years. Judy Keshner, kindergarten teacher and published writer, leaves Brooklyn Ave. but plans to continue her writing. Barbara Dellamonte established a library in each of the district's schools for teaching 3d grade at Brooklyn Ave.

Farewells in District 30 went to Janet Fariel, Linda Muckle, and Miriam Sweat. Janet Fariel began her career as a contract sub in all the elementary districts before moving on to teaching full time for the last eight years, at Shaw Ave. and

then Clearstream Ave. Janet and Miriam Sweat both represented District 24 at Executive Council. Miriam Taught 3d and 4th grades at Shaw Ave. for 30 years where she held various PTA positions and served as VSTA building rep. Linda Muckle spent her entire 33 year career at Shaw Ave. teaching art.

Among those VSTA members who have retired from the high school are former union activists Rudy Fusco who served on the VSTA negotiating committee in 1971 and Don Seaman who was a member of the union's negotiating committee in 1973. An army medic during the Korean War, Rudy taught math for 33 years at Central H.S. where he also coached football for 20 years. Don who moved to Valley Stream in 1941, attended elementary school in District 24 before graduating from Central, taught science at South for 39 years. Both also served on various VSTA committees and as delegates to the VSTA Executive Council during their years in the VSHSD.

Other long-time union members who retired this past June include guidance counselor Harriet Angel, who worked at Memorial, North, and South during her 27 years in the District; Adrian Biagioli, who taught math at South since 1963, becoming department head in 1983; John Blaney, another math teacher from North, worked in the district for 33 years and was a contributor to various math text books; Enid Freeman served the District as a science teacher for

34 years, starting at North in 1961, and moving to Memorial in 1973; Charles LaPalme, also a product of District 24 and a Central graduate, ended up teaching at his alma mater for 33 years where he was a department chairman since 1989; Sandra Lehman, still another math teacher at South for 26 years, was a runner-up as Nassau County's Math Teacher of the Year in 1987; Bill Linkner, taught physical education at South since 1963, coached football and wrestling, becoming the school's athletic director in 1978; Ina Luadtke taught home economics at South for 28 years, was chosen as the New York State Home Economics Teacher of the Year in 1980; John Zabatta is another product of Valley Stream, attending elementary school in District 24 and graduating from Central where he later taught physical education since 1961. John coached football, wrestling, gold, and was named Nassau County Coach of the Year in 1992.

Among the Educational Office Personnel VSTA members retiring were Lydia Hollingshead, a Valley Stream Resident, who worked in the attendance and guidance offices at North since 1968 and Anne Mormile, also a Valley Stream resident, who began her career in the district office in 1975. (A special article was devoted to Anne in the June edition of this *Newsletter*.)

The VSTA wishes the best for these members as they enter their retirement years. Their service and friendship will be missed by many.

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## Mini Grant Winners First Round—1995-96

The following teachers have been awarded mini grants for the current school year according to Valley Stream Teacher Center publicist, Marie Stone. The proposals, described below, are already in place. Applications for the next round of mini grants will be available shortly.

**Jessica Bayer, Willow Road ... The Art and Craft of Cultural Traditions ...**

Through the use of recreating craft objects, students will "tour" the world and learn about various cultures.

**Sheila Blunt, Central ... Painting with Artist-Mentors ...** Through the use of slides of modern and contemporary periods of art, students will respond by creating their own network of artistic expression and expand their understanding of the artists' work.

**Barbara Clarke, Maureen Spiess, Clearstream Ave. ... Colonial Curriculum in the Social Studies Program ...** Fourth grade students will wash, comb, and spin wool into yarn and learn the necessary steps in making clothing, blankets, etc., tying into the current social studies curriculum.

**Anne Holland, Dorothy Pantason, Jane Berzner, Roz Freeman, Brooklyn Ave. ... Islamic Imprints on Western Civilization ...** Students will examine the development and broad influence of the Islamic civilization on math, science, art, and literature from the 7th century to the present. To augment research details, CD ROM technology and on-line data base searching will be used.

**Guy Jacob, Wheeler Ave. ... Columbus Plaza: A Cartographic Journey ...** Students will measure Columbus Plaza and do all the work and research necessary to create a map. This project enhances and extends what students learn through the *Graphic Learning* program.

**Kate Lallier, Andrea Sommella, R.W. Carbonaro ... Keepers of the Earth: A Native American Approach to the 4th Grade Science Curriculum ...** Native American social studies will be integrated into the science and language arts curriculum through American literature, storytelling, and music.

**Louise Marchesi, Eileen MacPherson, James A. Dever ... Ancient Mathematical Mysteries...** Ancient civilization

curricula will be integrated into core mate concepts, and students will obtain a greater appreciation of ancient man in terms of their contributions to the fundamentals of mathematics.

**Fran O'Hara, Holy Name of Mary ... Just Mercer Mayer and Me ...** By studying Mercer Mayer and his works, first grade students will develop a love of reading. A team-teaching, cross-curricular approach to reading, language arts, and library science by the first grade teacher, fifth grade teacher, and librarian will be developed.

**Carol-Ann Ohlandt, Holy Name of Mary ... "LEAP" into Literature ...** Through the use of trade books used to enrich the basal approach, students will be more stimulated and become better readers.

**Joanne Penna, Blessed Sacrament... Los Indios de la America Latina ...** Students will become familiar with the life styles of ancient civilizations by viewing videos, reading folk takes, listening to music, and comparing modern musical instruments with instruments that they will make.

*see page 11*

Artie Sanger



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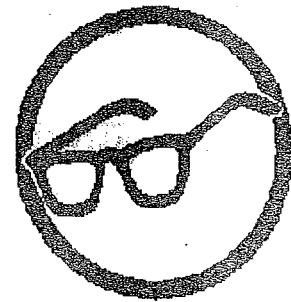
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# Working for You &

by Stan Bishop

## Eye on E.O.P. about Marie Natoli



Yes, some logic does lie behind a single column with double titles. The subject of the left title is Marie Natoli, the author of the "Eye on E.O.P." columns. Although VSTA members are aware that our union is composed of many units, some may not know that VSTA leadership often taps into the talent pool found in these units. An example is Marie Natoli who is not only an Executive Council delegate and unit leader for the E.O.P. unit, but she serves on vital committees such as auditing, finance, and negotiations.

Marie began her Valley Stream career in 1979 as a clerk-typist at South High School. Within two years she moved to District 30 as stenographer. The District 30 promotion also offered Marie the opportunity for VSTA activism. Before Connie Dearing, clerical representative to the Finance committee, retired, she asked Marie to take her place. Marie has held other positions since, but she never left the Finance Committee which she has chaired for the last three years.

The next promotion took Marie in 1982 to North High School as Dr. Alden's secretary, and three years later she moved on to VSHSD office where she currently serves as Steno-Secre-

tary (her official Civil Service title) to business manager, Dr. Goldberg. She handles a variety of responsibilities such as all Civil Service personnel procedures, district insurance liability, telecommunications, workers' compensation, various aspects of the budget process, as well as a host of other tasks.

Marie is well qualified for



her VSHSD and VSTA work. Trained as a medical assistant, she took 30 required college credits when she decided to seek a job as school secretary in NYC. This experience qualified her for the job, but it opened a new world which only more education could satisfy. Somehow Marie managed to combine raising a family and steer her way through Queens College, Nassau C.C., and Adelphi en route to a Bachelor of Science degree. Not satisfied with that, Marie went on to Hofstra and earned a Masters

in secondary education in 1991.

Marie finds school work fulfilling, but she is concerned about the status of clerical work and the women who do it. Marie believes that society is slow to change its attitudes towards the value of work that women do. She observes that in the 1980's strides were made towards job/salary equality but senses that given the present economic picture, women are moving backwards. VSTA activism affords her the chance to act on these concerns. Her leadership of the E.O.P., her columns in this *Newsletter*, and her Finance Committee work are all testimony to this. She says, "The most gratifying aspect of my VSTA work is the opportunity to work with other people in an atmosphere that promotes learning and sharing."

Marie's activism at work carries over to her private life. As a believer in life long education, she teaches in the Oceanside Continuous Education Program as well as the Valley Stream Adult School where she team teaches with her husband. Her interests include reading, cooking, biking, traveling, and anything to do with music. She sings with the Keynoters, a Valley Stream choral group led by VSTA

*See page 11*

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\* Not available to retirees.

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## **Know Your Contract: Grievance Procedure**

From time to time a member's concern may be over an apparent violation of the contract. In this case, what should the member do? The member should consult with a union building representative as soon as possible to ascertain whether or not there are grounds for a grievance.

Here are some basic rules and definitions with which each member should be familiar:

1. Filing a Grievance is not a privilege: it is a right guaranteed both by contract and law. (An employer may not discriminate against any employee who files a grievance.)
2. A Grievance is defined as: any claimed violation, misrepresentation, or misapplication of any of the provisions of the agreement.
3. A Grievance must be filed within 20 working days of the occurrence of the alleged grievance.
4. The initial stage of the grievance procedures in the contract is generally informal. (This early informality more often than not allows for the member's complaint to be resolved quickly, since many times the district has merely made an honest mistake and is willing to make the correction without going through the more formal and lengthy grievance procedure.)
5. When there is no resolution at the informal stage, a Grievance then becomes a formal procedure. Therefore, it is always important to retain written documents related to the dispute and to be accurate about the facts.
6. There is no cost to any member throughout the Grievance process—either at the local stage or arbitration stage.
7. Arbitration is a stage where both the employer and the union agree on an impartial outside person to hear both the employee's complaint and the employer's position, and to render an impartial, objective opinion as to who is correct.

*For the complete explanation of what is involved in filing a grievance, members should review their contract section titled "Grievance Procedures."*

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## **Mini Grant Awards,** *from p. 7*

**Lorraine Schloss, Central ... Quick Take Portfolios ...** With the use of an Apple Quick Take camera, special education students will photograph their "culinary delights" and participation projects and use them for a portfolio of experiences.

**Anne Sheppard, Patty Horowitz, R.W. Carbonaro ... Rhythms of the Environment ...** This project will enrich the standard curriculum in that the children will be instructed in various forms of poetry, drawing themes from the science curriculum, and they will create a personal anthology of illustrated poems using HyperCard by Apple.

## **Working for You,** *from page 9*

member, Charlie Zipperlen (13). She contributes to her church by serving as lector and the pre-cana ministry, with husband Dom. Enjoying her four grandchildren and family activities round out this busy life.

The VSTA is grateful for Marie's contributions to both the E.O.P. unit and the union at large.



*"They do me wrong who say I  
come no more,  
For every day I stand outside  
your door."*

*N. Malone, Opportunity*

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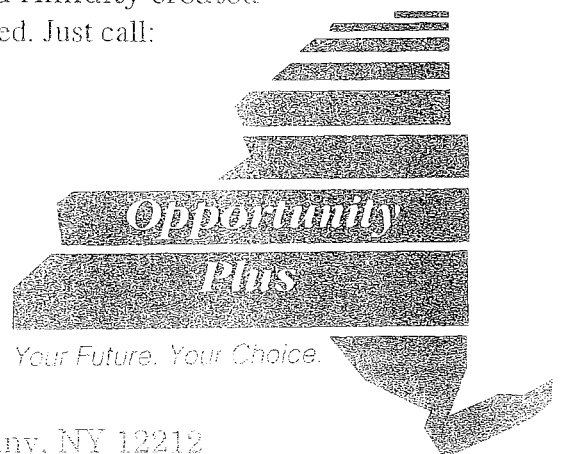
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# ON CENTER

Valley Stream Teacher Resource and Computer Training Center Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1

October 1986

**Botti**

by  
Carl  
Botti

## Language

A message from the Center Director

The past year has been one in which the Valley Stream Teacher Resource and Computer Training Center has progressed from merely a gleam in the eyes of its creators to a thriving organization serving the more than 500 teachers in the Valley Stream area. Throughout this time we have offered eleven inservice courses, more than two dozen workshops, and "entertained" over 300 visitors at the Center. More than half of our \$12,000 software library has been borrowed by people interested in the role of the new technology in education.

What does all this mean? It means that the teachers in Valley Stream have decided that although it may be easier to continue along the road of indifference to changes in the educational scene, it is not the path of choice. They are willing to sacrifice their own time for the purpose of exploring new and exciting developments in the field of teaching.

It is within this framework of enthusiasm towards our chosen profession that the Teacher Center operates. Our goals are your goals.

*Cont. page 7, column 1*

## VALLEY STREAM TEACHER CENTER GRANT RENEWED AT \$80,000

by Gerard Camilleri

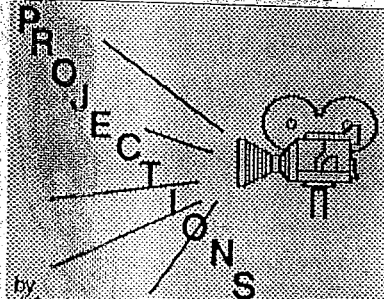
A message from the Policy Board  
President

The new school year brings a new improved edition of the Valley Stream Teacher Resource and Computer Training Center. Our current budget represents a 14% increase in the amount of state funding received last year. That amounts to a total of \$80,000 that is used toward running a Center that is responsive to the needs of the teachers of Valley Stream.

The Center facility will be expanded for the coming year. The room next door will be converted to a Center office. This will allow the Center to be utilized as a classroom for workshops, research, and courses. The CHSD has generously donated the cost of the renovation to the Center. This will help to allow the Center to expand services to the teachers of Valley Stream.

The Center was off to a good start last year. This was due to the very active participation of many of members of our component

*Cont. page 7, column 2*



by  
John Lutrano

A message from the Project Director

While contemplating what I want to say, I find myself thinking back to the successes of last year and planning for the future. The Center has been truly fortunate to have such dedicated teachers involved with our programs during the 1985-86 school year. This includes our Board Members, our in-service teachers, and our staff. A particular note of appreciation goes to our teaching assistant, Margaret Dunn, who mans (persons) the Center on a full time basis. Her presence is responsible for the Center's successful operation.

Besides continuing a schedule of in-service and workshop programs, we will be expanding our software library and establishing a Mini-Grant Program. However, the most important part of the Center is you. Unless you express your needs, unless you use the facilities, unless you ask the questions, unless you check out software, unless you make a conscious effort to explore

*Cont. page 7, column 1*

page 1

Valley Stream  
Teacher Center  
Policy Board  
Representatives

District 13

Tom DiGiorgio  
Ken Kavanagh  
Vivian Romano

District 24

Doris Cohen  
Matt Melillo  
Marcy Stricoff

District 30

Jerry Camilleri  
David Kutcher  
Sue Wasserman

Blessed Sacrament  
Holy Name

Monica Tobin

CHS

Carl Botti  
Marsha Iverson  
Esther Levine  
John Lufrano

Parent Rep.

Joyce Seelig

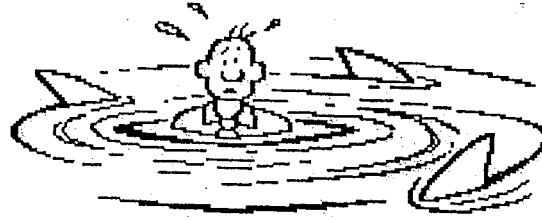
Higher Ed. Rep.

Joel Mittler - C.W. Post

Industry Rep.

Glen Frommater - Sears

*Ever feel like you were in  
over your head at the  
computer lab?*



*Maybe we can help?*

*The Center is open daily until 6:00.  
Drop by or give us a call at 561-1492.  
The Valley Stream Teacher Center  
Room 312 - Memorial Jr. High School*

CENTER TO FUND  
MINI-GRANTS  
FOR THE  
86-87  
SCHOOL YEAR

This year's grant provides money for the institution of a system of mini-grants. Details of the program have not been fully worked out at the time of this printing. As soon as the policy board has ironed out the final details of the program you will be apprised of all the necessary information. Complete information on the program should be available in the next edition of this newsletter.

A software review  
by Margaret Dunn

SOFT



CENTERED

The computer and educational software are new forms of supplementary materials to be used in the classroom. Just as students have been provided with workbooks for drill and practice and pen and paper for writing, they can now be given a computer program to complete the same task. Using these materials provides the motivation and enjoyment that makes learning more meaningful.

Whether using text books and workbooks or a computer and software it is necessary to choose the materials that will best suit ones needs. The time it takes to find the appropriate materials can be well worth the end results. Because the use of computers in the classroom is a relatively new idea it may take some time for teachers to become familiar with the best materials. The Valley

Stream Teacher Center has established a software library which holds over 200 titles and is continually growing. Teachers can come to the Teacher Center at any time and, with the assistance of Center staff, learn how a program is run. The software can then be borrowed by teachers for use in their classroom.

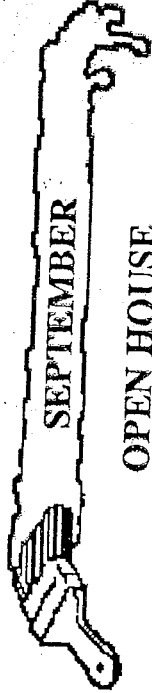
To assist in choosing software for your use, the Teacher Center newsletter will include a review of a piece of software in each issue. You know what your students need and are capable of doing. Being familiar with just a few programs will provide a foundation for choosing others that will help reach the goals you have set.

Kidwriter, used on the Commodore 64 computer and developed by Spinnaker for the second and third grades, presents a new way for young students to enjoy writing. Using the 99 graphics and several different background scenes included in the program, students are able to create illustrations and then stories which relate to their pictures. After completing each page, students are given the option of going on to another page; these pages can be linked together to form storybooks. Finished products can be loaded from the data disk onto the screen so that students can share their work.

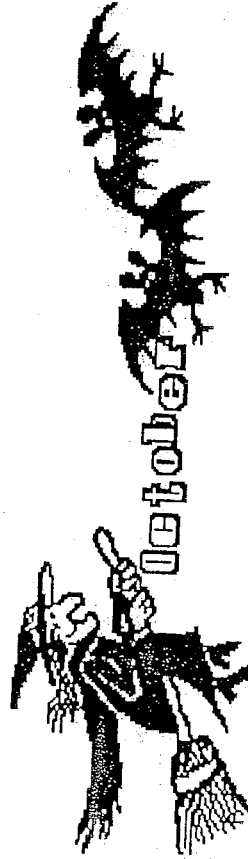
The students will need to be introduced to some terms, keys on the keyboard, and the word processing functions of the program before they begin. As they use the program, they will develop the skills needed to run it on their own. The program is menu driven; students are given options to choose from and by pressing one key they are given either another menu or instructions to move on to the next step. Moving from one step to another is done very easily. For example, if the student chooses the option (M)ake a new story from the first menu they need only to press the M-key, indicated by (M). This is consistent throughout the program.

There are some aspects of the program, not mentioned in the user's guide, which should be brought to the attention of the user. Students must make any necessary corrections before going on to the next page; the program does not allow the user to edit a story or page after it has been saved. This also means that each student's story must be completed in one sitting. Also, the text is automatically typed in capital letters. It is not necessary to print the stories the students have created but it would be a nice touch. Although this version of Kidwriter will not print, there is an updated version that will. These characteristics of the program do not have to hinder its use. The combination of the ease of use of the word processor and the fun of illustrating the stories makes Kidwriter an effective motivational writing tool. (Special Note: Spanish and French versions of Kidwriter have also been developed.)

# COMING ATTRACTIONS



Come and visit the Center at room 312 Memorial Junior High School. See what your Center can offer you and find out what you can offer the Center. The OPEN HOUSE will be held Tuesday to Thursday, October 14 - October 16 from 3 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. Refreshments will be served.

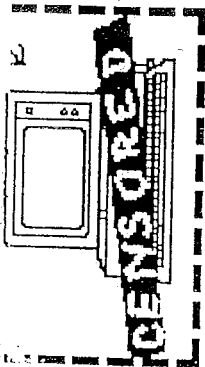


All inservice courses will begin the week of October 20. Remember to register for a course as soon as possible.

## OCTOBER WORKSHOPS

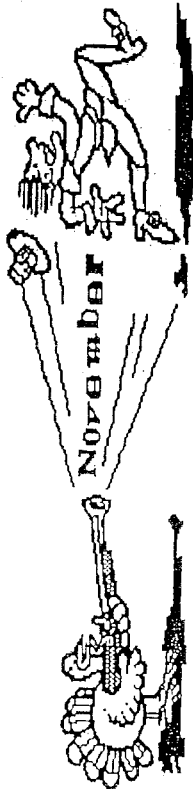
All workshops will be run from 3:30 to 5. They will be held at the Teacher Center - Room 312 Memorial Junior High.





Oct 20.....Software Evaluation - Part 1 - This workshop will concentrate on what to look for when previewing educational software. It will consider what makes a good piece of software and survey the various types of programs that are available.

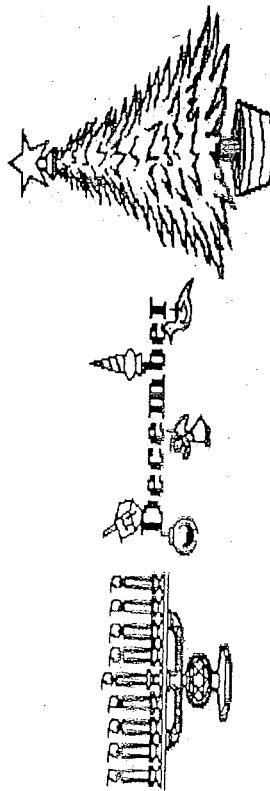
Oct 27.....Software Evaluation - Part 2 - This workshop will be more involved with the possibilities of how to apply various pieces of software into everyday curriculum.



Nov 17.....Software centered on Language Arts. This workshop will present a variety of programs in the Language Arts area followed by a group discussion on how they might be implemented in the day to day curriculum.

Nov 24.....Software centered on Math. This workshop will present a variety of programs in the Math area followed by a group discussion on how they might be implemented in the day to day curriculum.

Dec 1 .....Software centered on Social Studies. This workshop will present a variety of programs in the Social Studies area followed by a group discussion on how they might be implemented in the day to day curriculum.



Dec 8.....Software centered on Science.

Dec 15.....Software centered on Teacher Utilities.

## HARVARD RESEARCHER MAKES BREAKTHROUGH IN USER FRIENDLY COMPUTER APPLICATIONS

Noted Harvard computer research analyst Dr. Theodore Bratton - Striggs claims to have devised the most efficient method for turning on the computer. Dr. Bratton - Striggs, in a dramatic departure from most of his more scientifically oriented colleagues, has devoted most of his research to address the needs of the novice computer user.

Bratton - Striggs suggests that the computer, if it is to have a truly dramatic effect on society, must be accepted by the masses. Using this as his basic premise Bratton -

Striggs has renewed his already considerable efforts toward educating the average citizen in the use of the computer. Shunning the technical manual approach, which he has harshly criticized as an abysmal failure, this radical researcher has developed his approach in more human terms. Using techniques that are common to the experiences of the non-computer user, he has attempted to synthesize those experiences and channel them toward a non-threatening approach to the new technology.

I recently had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Bratton - Striggs at his research facility on the Harvard campus. He lead me to his suprisingly lushly appointed lab. My imagined stereotype of the cloistered scientist in an antiseptic lab was immediately dispelled. The lab itself looked more like what one would expect to see on the pages of Town and Country than a research facility. Softly lit and done in rich wood tones, the room was dominated

by a magnificent overstuffed leather couch. An obviously expensive stereo setup also caught my eye.

The doctor himself, clad in a smoking jacket of paisley patterned silk, also caught me off guard. The interview began with me being slightly disoriented.

GC- I thought that we were going to meet in your lab doctor.

B-S- But this is my lab. I sense your confusion. Don't be concerned, it's a very common reaction for first time visitors.

GC- I must admit that it's like no lab I've ever seen.

B-S- That's because the work I'm doing is a decided break from what is traditionally considered scientific method. I am attempting to popularize what has heretofore been almost exclusively the realm of the technocrat or the really hardcore enthusiast. To do this I must devise methods that will meet the novice on common ground. I have to tap sources that are common to the human experience.

GC- I see. Perhaps you could give me a concrete illustration of the concept.

BS- Of course. The major project for the present year concentrated on the most basic concept in the field. That is of course, how to turn on a computer. I've totally avoided the concept of switches and power; avoided all mention of high and low voltage in favor of tapping primal experiences that are common to all.

GC- I'm fascinated, Doctor. How does this work.

BS- It's quite simple really. I've found that you can turn on most computers with soft lighting, a little wine and cheese, and some Johnny Mathis music in the background.

GC- Amazing.

BS- Not really. It's really quite basic. I figured that if it worked with Emi-Lou Osbourne in the '60s, why not try it with a MacIntosh in the 80's. Some things just don't change.

GC- And you claim that this new system will work on all computers?

BS- Hey, nothing foolproof. I have found though that this is usually effective for most mid-priced computers. If you're involved with some of the low end models, like a 64, you can sometimes turn them on with just a burger, some fries, and a drive-in movie. It's just a matter of knowing what you're dealing with. The higher the level of sophistication, the greater the expense.

GC- I noticed that you have failed to mention IBM.

BS- IBM is a whole other ball of wax. The usual techniques simply won't turn them on. I have found that they respond well to a three piece suit and a sensible business luncheon.

GC- I'm finding all this quite incredible, Doctor.

BS- You think that's something! Let me tell you how to turn on a randy Tandy...

As the doctor rambled on about spandex suits and steel studs I quietly let myself out.



Cont. from page 1, column 1

Our successes are your successes. Governed by a policy board of predominately teachers we exist to serve the needs of the educational community. Facing a new year can bring on a mixture of emotions. Please take advantage of the resources and facilities of the Teacher Center.

Cont. from page 1, column 3

the technology available, the Center will not meet its goals. As part of our annual Grant Application we have polled you on your needs and we appreciate you taking some time to respond. But during the course of the year you may have a particular need that was not considered in our questionnaire. I therefore request that you do not hesitate to pick up the phone and call us or visit. We are always willing to listen to your ideas or answer your questions. The truly remarkable thing about our Center is that we have a wealth of resource people at our disposal. Let's make use of them - the price is right and the dividends are high.

Cont. from page 1, column 2

districts. We hope that this new year will be one that sees even greater teacher participation.

Participation does not only mean attending courses and workshops. It also means actively suggesting new ideas and area of involvement for the Teacher Center. The Center exists to serve all the teachers of Valley Stream. Your teacher representatives are eager to hear from you. [A list of your policy board members can be found on page 2.] Please feel free to contact them with your concerns.

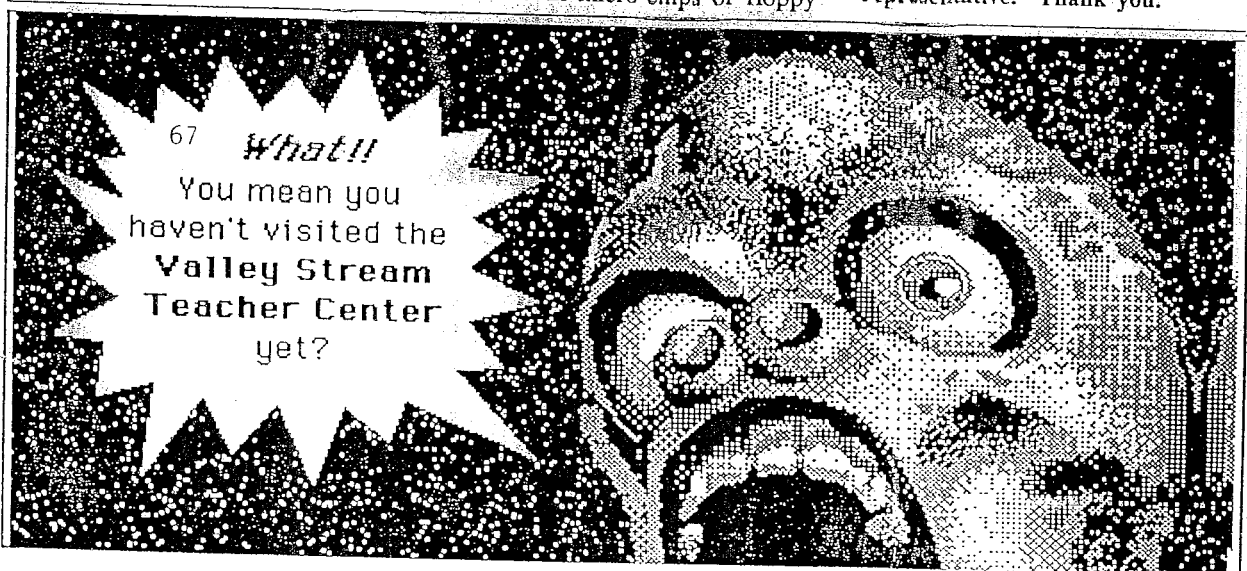
Our main thrust has been the use of technology in the classroom. Simply put, it is to encourage the use of the computer as a teaching tool. This newsletter will feature innovations in the field of educational computing and spotlight its use by innovators in Valley Stream.

As a resource center it is imperative for us to tap the primary sources available to us. The most important resources available can't be found in micro-chips or floppy

disks. The experiences and imaginations of the teachers of Valley Stream are what the Center seeks to tap. Together we can do so much more than any one of us alone. The Center provides us with a place to share what we know and find out about what we don't know.

The Center should be thought of as a clearinghouse rather than a lab. Ideas are the main commodity that we are dealing with. At present, the main focus of those ideas has been computer oriented. The key point to remember is that the Center is still in the formative stage. Take an active part in its development. It's a lot more rewarding to make something grow than to just stand by and watch it grow.

**NOTICE:** The State Education Department has selected the Valley Stream Teacher Center as one of the outstanding Centers to participate in its annual evaluation program. If you are one of the randomly chosen teachers for their study, we ask you to cooperate with the state representative. Thank you.







## CENTRALLY LOCATED

On Center Classified Section

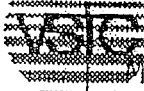
Is there anything you wish to share with your colleagues: an upcoming event - school related or not; are you selling or looking for a car, house, computer equipment - any item that your colleagues may be able to help you with.

Describe your event or item(s) on the form below (25 words or less please) and forward to Valley Stream Teacher Center Newsletter, Memorial Junior High School. Be sure to include the name and phone number of the person interested parties can contact.

-----  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

INTERSCHOOL MAIL  
  
Centrally Located  
  
Valley Stream Teacher Center  
ROOM 312  
  
Memorial Jr. High

RECEIVED



MAR - 1997

# ON CENTER

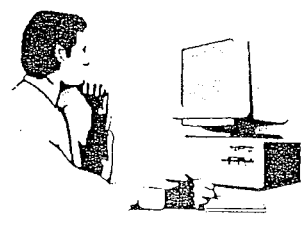
Volume 9, Issue 2

VALLEY STREAM TEACHER CENTER  
ROOM 312 - MEMORIAL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL - 561-1492

March 1997

## FROM YOUR CENTER DIRECTOR, ALBERT O. ARNONE

It seems that every year at this time I have to send you the same message. Once again, Teacher Centers were not included in the Governor's budget for next year. This makes the seventh year in a row. It is



particularly disheartening because the State Education Department just got through telling us how important our role will be in training teachers for the new state standards. According to the NYSUT paper, Commissioner Mills is at odds with the governor over this issue. Once again, I must

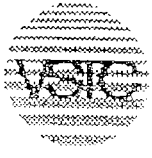
ask all on all members to seek out their New York State legislators and write letters in support of your Teacher Center. NYSUT should also have a letter for Teacher Centers that you will be able to automatically E-mail to your congressman through their web site. The internet address is <http://www.nysut.org>. If you do not have access to the internet, stop by the Center and we will be happy to connect you.

Our spring courses and workshops begin the week of March 10. If you are going to sign up for any courses, please do so as soon as you receive notification.

If you wait until the last minute, there is always a chance that we might have to cancel courses due to low enrollment. Don't forget our deal: If you took two courses offered by the Center in the '96-'97 school year, the rest of your courses and workshops through June '97 are free.

Our mini-grant program awarded 16 mini-grants this year. We also awarded six conference grants.

Our Parent University was given on January 25, 1997 and received rave reviews. It started with a keynote address by noted psychologist, Dr. Maryanne Driscoll, and continued with workshops in many different areas that included the internet, teenagers, study skills, and careers, just to name a few. Our Parent University Committee is to be commended for such an excellent job. Members of the committee were Diana Pirrone (District 24), Neil MacDermot (District 24), Anne Winn (Parent Representative), and Joanne Lufano (District 30). Lorraine Lamond and Carol Biscardi of your Teacher Center, also worked very hard to make our first attempt a success.



CHECK THIS OUT AND PASS THE WORD!  
WE ARE NOW ON THE INTERNET!



Preview our list of upcoming courses and workshops, including dates, times and descriptions. Plus, you can register for courses and workshops while you're on-line. So, while you are surfing the net be sure to view our site and learn more about your Center.

Our web address is <http://www.vstc.com>.

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Albert O. Arnone-Director  
Carol Biscardi, Assistant Director  
Lorraine Lamond-Center Assistant  
Marie Stone-Publicist/Editor

### Quotable Quotes:

*"Learning is a treasure which  
accompanies its owner  
everywhere!"*



Do you feel like you need some practical strategies in your classroom? This upcoming course is sure to put you on the right track (and you can earn 3 graduate credits from the College of St. Rose at the same time).

Read on . . . .

## RESOLVING CONFLICTS IN SCHOOLS AND CLASSROOMS EDU666 TEI (Teacher Education Institute)

This hands-on course emphasizes the following: appreciation for diversity, conflict resolution, cooperation, communication, emotional expression and responsible decision making. It presents a proven and innovative approach to creating safer, more productive classroom environments based on creating "Peaceable Classrooms".

The class will meet on two weekends in the Central High School Library on April 11, 12, 13 and May 9, 10, 11. On Fridays the classes will be held from 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., and on Saturday and Sunday 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Marsha Iverson is the instructor and the course fees are \$395, plus \$35 for materials, and \$25 Teacher Center fee. A \$50 deposit should be made payable to Teacher Education Institute and a \$25 check made payable to the Valley Stream Teacher Center should accompany your reservation.

Tap your own creativity to produce more effective classroom materials, newsletters and flyers by using the PageMaker Desktop Publishing Program. Your Center is offering two great courses.

## PAGEMAKER

March 18, April 1, 8, 15, 29  
3:45 - 6:45 p.m.  
Instructed by Ed Eagan



## PAGEMAKER II

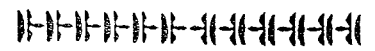
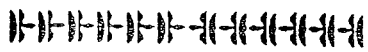
May 6, 13, 20, 27, June 3  
3:45 - 6:45 p.m.  
Instructed by Ed Eagan

Learn the basics of page layout and design using PageMaker software. By combining text with graphics the results will be more satisfying. Basic keyboarding and computer familiarity are required to get you started. Bring samples of your classroom materials presently in use.

Now that you know basic layout, why not expand your knowledge to use the full capabilities of PageMaker! Learn about advanced templates, sorting pages, library palette, placing of scanned photos and other advanced features and Adobe additions.

*Your Center* not only has the latest in Macintosh Computers, printers, Desktop Publishing Stations, etc., it also has a great Lending Library. It's loaded with a wide variety of software, books, videos, pamphlets and magazines that you may find informative and valuable in your classroom.

This is your Center - take advantage of it!



Your VSTC is proud to announce that 16 mini-grants have been awarded for teacher developed projects. All mini-grants are judged by the Mini-Grant committee on the basis of individual merit without regard to district, origin, grade level, or previous awards granted. The recipients and their projects are:

**Maryanne Funai and Peter Giarrizzo**, Memorial Junior High School, for **"Enriching Curriculum Through the Use of the Internet in the Classroom."** Students in the social studies and special education classes will be introduced to the cornucopia of information available via the Internet. After extensive research students will create a Memorial Travel Guide to India and China.

**Amy Agnesini**, South High School, for **"Fitness Lending Program."** Students in grades 7-12 will improve their personal fitness levels through the establishment of a lending equipment program.

**Ellen Palazzo**, North High School, for **"Kids on the Block Disabilities Awareness Program."** High school students will moderate a puppet show addressing disability awareness to 3rd and 4th graders at a number of Valley Stream elementary schools.

**Vickey Sisson**, Blessed Sacrament School, for **"Young Authors in the Making."** Students will be introduced to the writing process, book parts and publishing their own stories.

**Arlene Ryan, Rosalind Freeman and Jane Berzner**, Brooklyn Avenue School, for **"Celebrating the Arts."** Biographies of famous people in the arts will be read by 5th grade students who will then prepare presentations based on the people they have studied.

**Caroline Bertalli**, Clear Stream Avenue School, for **"ESL Home Reading Connection."** Using various prints and audio media this project will increase reading fluency, interest comprehension and confidence in 1st grade ESL students.

**Kate Lallier**, R.W. Carbonaro School, for **"The Genre Project: Close Encounters with Science Fiction."** After extensive science fiction reading students in grades 3-6 will develop a genre kit for teachers who would like to implement a unit of study on a particular genre.

**Julia Healy**, Howell Road School, for **"Making Musical Instruments."** Students in grades K-6 will make their own musical instruments that will not only be functional, but be art objects as well. The entire school will perform on these instruments on "Special Persons' Day."

**Fay Egge**, R.W. Carbonaro School, for **"Physical Education Through the 'I's of a Child."** Using a rotating station setup, students in grades K-6 will increase Physical Education skills while integrating critical thinking and academic activities into a Physical Education environment.

**Barbara Clarke**, Clear Stream Avenue School, for **"A Long Island Story Quilt."** Fourth grade students will design and create an original story quilt about Long Island and will work together to create a written story about the quilt.

## MINI-GRANTS *continued*

**Eileen Wallace**, James A. Dever School, for "**Spell Well.**" This project will consist of a school-wide investigation of the importance of spelling well. Students will participate in a variety of activities that engage them in thinking about spelling. The project will encompass a school week with a different focus on each day.

**Jessica Bayer, Fran Achtziger and Sue McKenna**, Willow Road School, for "**A Peaceful Place.**" Students in grades K-6 will research and design an outdoor garden. This garden will be used during lunch recess as a quiet contemplative area.

**Rosemary Capitelli and Corinne Lavin**, Wheeler Avenue School, for "**Nature Through a Poet's Eye-First and Third Graders.**" Through the use of photography 1st and 3rd graders, as buddies, will visit Squirrel Nut Trail and photograph nature. They will then write poems based on their pictures. The final project will be a book of the collected poems and photographs.

**Karen Skolnick, Paula Huber and Kristen O'Brien**, Wheeler Avenue School, for "**Legal Eagles-The Constitution Works.**" Sixth grade students will research and write legal briefs on constitutional law decisions that relate to the issues of national security and freedom of the press. They will role play at Federal Hall in legal teams as attorneys and justices.

**Lois Waxman, Corinne Weinstein and Karen Skolnick**, Wheeler Avenue School, for "**Breakfast of a Champion-Technology for the 21st Century.**" First and 5th graders will incorporate text, graphics and digital photography to produce a 3-dimensional box, similar to a cereal box. The projects will serve as a pilot program for the integration of digital photography into student projects.

**Paulette Lowe**, South High School. Students will study and analyze a variety of art forms from different cultures using the process of art criticism and art history. They will then create projects that reinterpret the art or themes of these cultures in the context of modern day Valley Stream.

S T O P !

Do you feel like your computer is running amok and you're ready to smash it? Hang in there, your Center has a workshop with a solution.



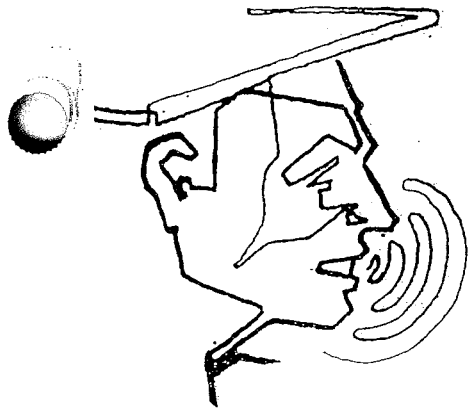
### BASIC MACINTOSH TROUBLESHOOTING WORKSHOP

May 9 - 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.  
Presented by Ed Eagan

Understand the Mac setup and take some of the frustrations out when errors occur. You'll receive answers to questions such as: How are errors corrected without losing data? How can they be avoided? What errors cannot be corrected. How do you perform hardware checks, partition large disk, add memory? And, more!

\* \* \* \* \*

**Need some help with telecommunications?** Do you have questions concerning Internet/World Wide Web; Hofstra Internet Accounts; Netscape, and/or America OnLine? Your Center is here to help you. Call for an after school appointment. Individual or small group training is available and the fee is \$5.00 per person.



# THE TEACHER SPEAKS

Non-Profit Organization  
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Volume I, No. 1



OCCUPANT

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FRANKLIN SQUARE, N.Y.

## GOOD SCHOOLS REFLECT GOOD COMMUNITIES

### TEACHER TURNOVER — WHY ??

It is probably more difficult today to obtain qualified and experienced teachers for our Valley Stream schools than at any previous period in our history. The increasing turnover of faculty in our four districts indicates that either transient, rather than career teachers, are being employed, or, that too many experienced teachers are finding it to their advantage to move elsewhere. There are also those, as there are in other professions, who apparently have little or no aptitude for teaching and thus leave by request.

The common problem of career teachers, administration, the Board, and the community is that of reducing the increasing teacher turnover. All agree this does not help our children as they start their careers in our schools. There are many suggestions to this end that might be advanced by a teachers' group. All are important to the career teachers who might have stayed in Valley Stream and very important to those who are staying.

1. Greater coordination between teachers and administration, within a building, within a district, and within a village. Although we still operate as four separate and distinct districts, the ability to plan and share ideas among buildings, districts, and grade levels might be one factor to help keep teachers interested in Valley Stream schools. Some coordination does exist at the

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### ?? TEACHING: 9 TO 3 ??

"Morning, Elizabeth. . . Morning, Mr. Green."

(8:05 A.M. . . . I'm early this morning. Think I'll go upstairs and work on my attendance register until homeroom at eighty-twenty-five. Hope Joel brought his note; this is the fourth time I've asked for it. . . . Oops, better check my mail and pick up the dittoed exams for third period class. Hmmm. Six library notices, a meeting with the assistant principal about Mike, a professional meeting Wednesday night—better put that on my calendar. Good, a detailed outline of procedure for the assembly this Thursday. Ha, another finance company in Omaha wants to lend me money at the drop of a hat. Wish they'd invent a way to finance me some time. . . . THAT I could use!)

"Excuse me? Miss Jones wants to see me this afternoon? We have a Faculty Meeting; then a department meeting 'til four. . . . I'll make it during my unassigned period." (Third floor . . . thought I'd never make it. Gosh, 8:10.)

"George, what are you doing wandering in the halls? You know

you're supposed to be downstairs 'til the bell rings. No, you may not put your coat away first. No, I will not give you a pass. You know the rules. Go NOW, George. Yes, bring your Lit book to class. You had company this week-end and didn't do your homework? No, tomorrow is not as good as today. We'll discuss it during special help class. Well, Wednesday, then." (8:15—the register will have to wait!)

\* \* \*

(Arlene late again for homeroom. That's another note I must get. Better write it down.)

\* \* \*

"First period is about to begin, Martha. Please take your seat. Pass your written work in, class. No, Ralph, it was not due tomorrow. Boys and girls. I'd like to return the exams I corrected this week-end. What's that, Jack? Now, be honest, young man. Who had more of your time the evening before the test—Will Shakespeare, or Gene Sheppard? Our opinions on the matter are somewhat different, but this is no time for a debate. In the first question, the answer should have been. . . ."

\* \* \*

"Second period has already begun, class. Tony, pass out the paper. Yes, Ann. I did assign the exam for today. I'm sorry you forgot about it, but you must learn to remember. Postpone it? If I did that everytime someone forgot, we'd be here 'til August. Certainly,

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**THE TEACHER SPEAKS**

Official Publication of  
**VALLEY STREAM TEACHERS  
 ASSOCIATION**  
 Valley Stream, N. Y.  
 Districts #13, 24, 30, C.H.S. #1

Volume I, No. 1

May, 1959

**Editorial**

**IS THE PENDULUM  
 SWINGING?**

In past American societies, teachers frequently had been relegated to the position of those who should be seen but not heard.

In more recent times, teachers have risen to the point where they are accepted as first class citizens with "voting privileges" but the strong feelings of anti-intellectualism which have swept across this nation have tended to make teachers hide their strong lights behind a bushel. And because some could not bear to carry the social stigma attached to the profession, they left it to follow a more socially accepted calling and where they could make their voices heard. Our nation is now sadly reaping the seeds it has sown. Education which was good enough for our fathers and our fathers' fathers is no longer good enough for us. The tremendous leaps the world has taken in science brings into focus even more dramatically the terrible lag in our cultural learnings due to the crawling pace of education, the foundation of our culture.

Even if they wanted to, teachers can no longer remain behind the scenes in the fight to close the widening gap between our science know-how and cultural lag. What earthly good will our earth and sun satellites be to us if we cannot develop the thinking minds needed to keep the world from destroying itself?

Teachers know that they no longer can remain silent. They recognize the need to recruit the best to the field and to make education the safeguard of our nation. They know that to bring education out of the doldrums, they must make YOU understand the importance of their work.

Dedicated to the proposition that education points the way to the survival of all free men, we bring you "The Teacher Speaks".

**A DAY WITH THE SMALL FRY**

Throughout these lines  
 The teacher is "she",  
 With our apologies  
 To every "he".



A teacher's day  
 Begins at nine  
 Or so they say —  
 Does yours? Does mine?

She rises up rather tired,  
 From writing up reports,  
 But on the whole, she's rested,  
 And seldom "out of sorts".

She garbs herself attractively  
 (Or does the best she can),  
 And as she drinks her coffee,  
 Is thinking of a plan  
 To teach the day's arithmetic  
 With fervor and such skill  
 That every child will get an "A"—  
 (Or hopes that he will.)

She then begins the drive to school,  
 Obeying traffic laws,  
 But pondering at each red light  
 On what may be the cause  
 Of Judith's shyness. Can she be  
 "Emotionally unstable"?  
 And as for Bill's "aggressiveness",  
 Is that the proper label?

Arriving at the office,  
 She speaks a cheerful greeting,  
 Then reads the bulletins, to check  
 The date of Teachers' Meeting.

She next attends her mailbox,  
 Cleans it out with zest,  
 Then hurries to the work room,  
 To "ditto up" a test.

Next to the classroom she repairs,  
 And writes the chalkboard full,  
 Fixes the bulletin boards, and goes  
 To stand in front of school.  
 For to us all, bus duty comes,  
 Inevitable as taxes,  
 So while a teacher is "relaxed",  
 Alas if she "relaxes":

When, later on,  
 School has "begun"  
 She thinks that working  
 Will be fun.

Let's get right to it—  
 Banking first.  
 Then Johnny has  
 A terrific thirst.

The sick have returned,  
 Are sent to the nurse,  
 And Peggy goes too,  
 Her cold being worse.

One must have homework  
 To give a sick brother,  
 So goes to his teacher—  
 And meanwhile another  
 Must go to the library:  
 Three more to "Speech",  
 And the teacher at last  
 Becomes able to teach  
 All those left within reach.

The children spell,  
 They read and write:  
 A story of space ships  
 They recite.

They go to lunch  
 When it is time:  
 The door is locked—  
 Then, "I've left my dime."

The teacher returns,  
 Unlocks the door,  
 And a mile down the hall  
 She staggers once more.

Her lunch soon eaten,  
 She flies like a swallow  
 To draft some rules  
 Our profession should follow.

She finds some paper  
 To make a chart.  
 The class has Science,  
 And then some Art.

A few hours later  
 Home she capers,  
 Her brief case filled  
 With unmarked papers.



The Public Relations Speakers Bureau  
 of the  
 Valley Stream Teachers Association  
 will provide educational programs  
 upon request from community groups.

## TEACHING, NOT A CONSOLATION PRIZE

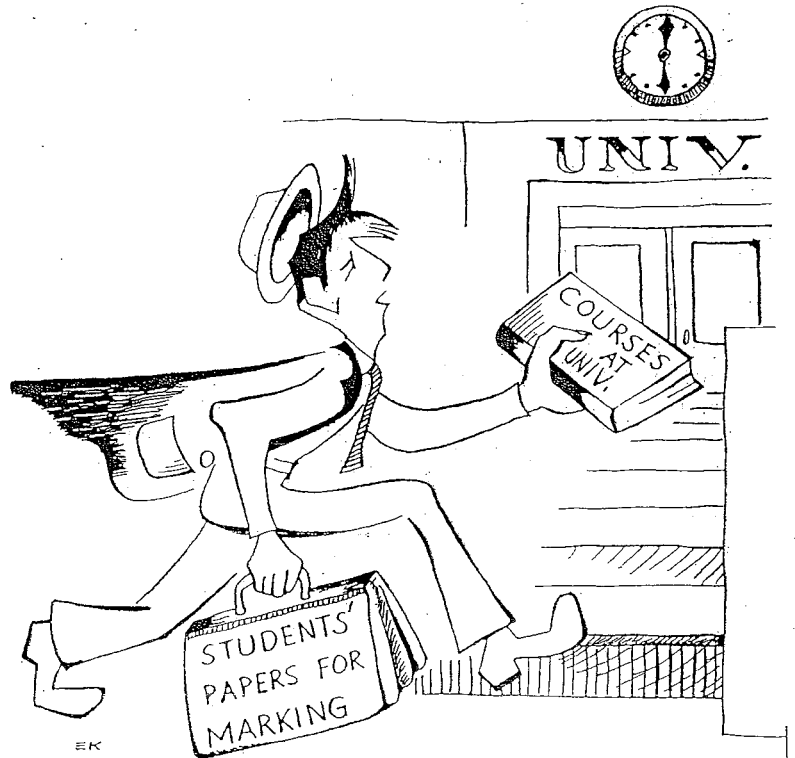
One of George Bernard Shaw's caustic quips often has been quoted to disparage those who have elected teaching as their profession. Said Shaw, "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches." There are many teachers in the Valley Stream system who can give the lie to this witticism. Some have made teaching their chosen career when their talents might have led them into more lucrative fields; others have left businesses of profit because teaching was their first love; still others have been forced to interrupt their teaching intermittently to take jobs offering more financial promise.

In the past, monetary rewards were never the lure to secure teachers. Young men and women still do not seek out teaching as a career because of financial returns. Rather, there is something else involved that propels a person into teaching. That something defies definition because it is intangible. It is a mixture of love for children, a desire to spread knowledge, an urge to lead the young, and a happiness and excitement in seeing young minds develop.

A qualified legal secretary teaches Secretarial Practice in our system, a successful poet works in Guidance, an editor of textbooks teaches English, a mortician teaches Biology, a public accountant teaches Business Arithmetic, a commercial artist teaches Basic Art, a linguist teaches Spanish—to the classroom these teachers bring a rich background of varied experiences in the fields outside teaching.

Miss Helen Welsh, librarian at North High School, appears in *Who's Who of American Women*. She has been President of the School Library Section of the New York Library Association. She has written numerous articles published in library journals. Besides, Miss Welsh is a skilled photographer and is presently engaged in making a public relations motion picture of the Valley Stream schools. She has been offered a fellowship by the Institute of Amateur Cinematographers of Great Britain.

Ray Boffardi of the Wheeler Avenue School has worked as a social worker and investigator for



A teacher in the State of New York is required to take six semester hours in each ten-year period in order to maintain an active license. In addition, many teachers continue to enrich their backgrounds, far in excess of requirements. Although teachers are remunerated for each additional fifteen semester credits (up to a certain point) it is approximated that a teacher must work over two years before he begins to "break even" financially for this additional work, notwithstanding the cost of becoming a teacher in the first place.

A survey of our schools this year indicates that of a group approximating seven hundred teachers, well over one-half are currently enrolled in graduate courses. It is estimated that our teachers will have completed over six hundred courses, totaling some eighteen hundred semester hours, at a total cost of \$45,000, assuming each semester hour costs at least \$25.

the Welfare Department, as a sales representative for Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, and as a bookkeeper for Swift and Company.

Philip Fromhartz, a member of the Science Department at Central High School, was until last year the owner-manager of a silk screen supply business. He sold this business after fourteen years to enter the teaching field. He has also been an analytical chemist for the New York State Department of Labor and a bacteriologist for the New York City Water Supply Department. At present he admits that he earns one-third to half of his average income of the last fourteen years.

Another teacher at Central has worked as a department head of an advertising agency, assistant personnel director of a chain of de-

partment stores on the West Coast, as a working and consulting editor for a large publishing house. "Three times during my twenty-two years of teaching I have been forced to quit teaching in order to earn enough money to return to teaching," he writes.

C. Lawrence McCue, A-V Coordinator and Science Consultant in District 24, is a skin diver on the side. He operates the only private SCUBA (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus) school in the metropolitan and Long Island area. One of his responsibilities as a member of the Queens Mineral Society is gathering collection specimens and gem stones in submerged quarries and pits for fellow members. He has also aided in unearthing artifacts and pot-

(Continued on Page 4)



**TEACHER TURNOVER—WHY?**

(Continued from Page 1)

present time, but improvement is handicapped by differences in building policies and philosophy.

2. **Salary.** Until recently, the salaries offered teachers in Valley Stream had been "about average" for Nassau County. The past year, the scale prescribed by our joint Boards has been close to the bottom of the Nassau County list. Our starting salaries for inexperienced teachers are as good as any school. After the third year, the scale begins to lose by comparison. The scale is set by the Boards, who seem to feel that they are carrying out the desires of the parents and taxpayers. So far as the teacher with a number of years' experience is concerned, the loss in cash to him and to his family is important, but so is the loss of prestige among his friends in the profession who are working in other schools. Low salaries offered to those with four or five years of successful experience is one main reason we are unable to obtain this type of teacher replacement in Valley Stream.

3. **Reduction of Class Load.** In some, but not all of our districts, our Boards are further economizing by increasing class size, and by establishing staggered sessions. The results can be the same as though a member of the medical profession were asked to handle 15-30% more patients in the same time and with the same financial remuneration. It seems obvious that, in most cases, each pupil is receiving less individual instruction as a result.

4. **Teachers—Resource People.** Most of the staff, regardless of experience or degrees, are taking various types of professional courses within and outside the current teaching field. This makes available a great pool of interested, experienced and professionally-minded educators. It would seem that this reservoir could be utilized by the individual districts, and that members of each staff should be encouraged as individuals or in committees to express opinions and make recommendations regarding the improvement of the educational system. There has been a tendency to confine the ideas and initiative of the teacher to his

**TEACHING NOT A CONSOLATION PRIZE**

(Continued from Page 3)

shards of American Indian origin in now submerged villages. Another aspect of his work involves underwater salvage. He has also participated in an all-out conservation department effort to rid the North Shore of star fish. He and his fellow sportsmen were able to dredge up some 50,000 star fish last summer, much to the delight of the commercial oystermen.

Dexter Reynolds, a teacher at Memorial Junior High School, has had extensive experience in the field of the drama. He toured the country for three years with the Stanley Wolf Company; he has worked in summer stock in New Hampshire and in Montreal. He formed his own touring company, the Vermont Repertory Theater, with which he toured New England for a year in the capacity of actor-director. He was responsible for the forming of two other stock companies, the Summer Stormers in Middlebury, Vermont, and the Livermore Players in Livermore Falls, Maine. He has performed in approximately three hundred productions, playing roles as wide in range as Romeo to Sakini (Teahouse of the August Moon). He has studied dance for three years with the famous Katherine Dunham. At present he is considering the formation of a summer training company of the arts for young people.

In the area of music Valley Stream teachers have shown considerable talent. Annette Higgins of the Brooklyn Avenue School has appeared on the concert stage, on the air, and on the operatic stage. In addition she has been a guest soloist with the New York Conservatory Philharmonic and the Queens Oratorio Society. The wife of Robert Higgins, a philologist, and the mother of three children,

classroom, whereas he actually wants to feel that he is a contributing member of a team.

These paragraphs indicate what may be some of the reasons for our abnormal turnover of teaching staff as expressed by one faculty committee. They may not all apply to any one school district.

Mrs. Higgins says that her most ardent and appreciative audiences have been her very own third grade pupils.

At South High School Robert Griffin and Robert Leist teach music. Mr. Griffin sings as a soloist at an Episcopal Church and as a cantor at a Jewish Temple. He has also been a concert singer at stadium concerts. Mr. Leist has directed the Princeton University Band and has made arrangements for numerous publishing houses in New York City. Roger Elliott teaches English at South High School. He has been the operatic director for the Seattle Civic Opera Company; he has participated in an opera theater in Maine, toured as an actor-dancer, acted in the French theater, and now trains actors. Another teacher writes, "The training I had prepared me more than adequately to compete with other musicians; however, I somehow felt teaching young children would be more rewarding in the sense of making music become a new and exciting experience for youngsters."

This article has given in part the picture of teachers in the Valley Stream School System who were able by training, talent, and experience to make a choice in choosing a profession. In each instance the teacher in question wrote similar answers to the question, "Why did you choose teaching?" One said quite simply, "I wanted to." Another answered, "There was not really a choice. Teaching came first always. The gleam in the eye of the learning child and the excitement of the classroom dispelled any other temptations."

For these teachers, teaching is no consolation prize accepted warily; it's the blue ribbon award for a happy career.

The teachers mentioned in the above article represent only a small percentage of those who possess outstanding and diversified abilities.

## THE STUDENT...HIS FUTURE

(Mr. Vander, a C. E. teacher, Louis Holmes, a 6th grader, Elizabeth Bensen, an eighth grader, and Mark Andrews, a Junior in High School, are meeting to work on an agenda for the forthcoming address, "Youth Looks At the Schools.")

**Mr. V.:** You boys and girls have been chosen to represent your respective schools on this panel. We might start by asking ourselves what our schools mean to us, and what we expect to get out of them. Are we ready?

**Mark:** I've got some questions lined up. First, what do we all want from our educations?

**Eliz.:** Shouldn't education prepare us for the different walks in life? You know, I mean being lawyers, and doctors and secretaries?

**Louis:** Gee, I don't know what I want to be. I think a foreign correspondent would be just great, but I don't spell so good. And I'd have to know a language, or something. Maybe I could sell stocks and bonds, but I don't know if I have the personality. Have I????

**Eliz.:** In our school, we have counselors who give us tests and things so we can get ideas what we'd like to be. Too bad you don't. Well, maybe when you get to Junior High, you'll know. What are you going to do, Mark?

**Mark:** I'm seriously considering getting into I.T.M., but that's a tough college to aim for. You see, I want to be a scientist, but we don't have advanced courses in Bio and Chem in our school, or special Math seminars, which really makes it difficult for me to compete.

**Eliz.:** I take Science now, but our teacher says we can't do some of the experiments because we lack the equipment.

**Louis:** You know, I really try hard to spell right. I go down to the spelling and reading clinic every week, but I wish I could go more often. What'll I do? Say, Betty, what do you want to be?

**Eliz.:** I think I'd like to be a practical nurse. Our school nurse, Miss Wayne, says that I seem to have the qualities for it. But I'll have to go to a special school after high school to prepare for such a career. Too bad we can't have that kind of course in our high school pro-

gram.

**Mark:** They do in some schools, you know. My friend, Jerry, in California, has a sister who's training to be a practical nurse, right at Nuys Van High. Jerry, himself, incidentally, was raving about his Spanish class. He's interested in becoming a translator, and in a recent letter, he was explaining the various techniques they use with tape recorders, mikes, and other electrical equipment.

**Mr. V.:** That's known as Language Lab, Mark. The program has been very successful on the West Coast. Speaking of what we'd like, I'd be extremely pleased to teach a course in American Government to seniors.

**Eliz.:** You know, Mr. Vander, I just don't understand my C.E. I try and try. I'm not much good in English either, and this year we have a Regents—six hours. My friend, Mary, doesn't have such a long exam, and I understand her C.E. book. Why's that?

**Mr. V.:** Your friend, Mary, probably attends a school where multi-track courses are offered. That means that the courses, especially in English and C.E., are taught in accordance with the ability of the student. You see, Betty, some boys and girls may do well in one area of study, but not quite so well in another. It's a very good method, and has been quite successful all over the country.

**Mark:** It's only right that the college-bound student be required to do more intensive work in certain areas, and the non-college bound to emphasize other aspects of his education. Speaking of the senior year, Mr. Vander, I'd love to be able to take a special English course in, say, Comparative Literature, in addition to my regular class. Even though I want to be a scientist, I feel that I should develop a good background in literature.

**Mr. V.:** You are so right, Mark. A good understanding of literature is a fine foundation for any other type of reading.

**Louis:** Gosh, you people are talking about things I never heard of. What about my problems? In my class, some of us are reading one story, others another, and Miss

Brown is so busy running back and forth, she hardly has time for any individual work with us. And what about my spelling?

**Eliz.:** I can understand your feelings, Lou. When I was in the fifth grade, I just didn't understand fractions, but everybody else did, and the teacher had to continue, even though she'd help me after class. I still don't know fractions well, and my Math suffers from it. It's awful to be in a class with kids who know so much more than you do. It makes you embarrassed to ask questions.

**Mr. V.:** Your teacher probably had to handle too many students of varying needs, Betty. The ideal situation is what we call homogeneous grouping. That means that boys and girls are put together in classes according to their ability to learn and absorb the information given them.

We've covered a good bit of ground today. Perhaps we should list some of these ideas on paper.

**Mark:** Good. Let's:

1. Counseling should start in elementary school.
2. Students should have individualized programs, according to ability and aims.
3. More elective courses should be offered on secondary level to complement the sequences of upper grade students.
4. Advanced language, math and science courses should be offered to those who seriously want them, regardless of size of class.
5. Courses such as Distributive Education, Advanced Home Economics, Nursing Techniques, Advanced Office Practice, etc., should be offered to those students following a terminal education program, so that placement in the business world could be facilitated.
6. Spelling, reading, and other remedial work for students with specific problems should be adequately provided, with the consultants involved free to pursue such a program.
7. Electives in art, music, and other cultural areas should be supplied according to need.

(Continued on Page 6)

?? TEACHING: 9 TO 3 ??

(Continued from Page 1)

it's going to count. . . ."

**(Whew! Fifth period. Now for Miss Jones and then, lunch.)**

"George, what are you doing, wandering around the halls? The library is the other way. No, you can't go that way. Come, George, let's go!"

"May I remind you that the bell has rung, and this is Study Hall? Sorry, but you may not have a pass to see Mr. Mooney. He's teaching now. Young lady, a study hall was meant to do studying in . . . it is not to be mistaken for a beauty salon . . . (phone rings) Hello? No, Betty, George Meyers is in my English class, not my Study Hall. Bye . . ."

"Chuck, you and Susan will have to make up the exam you missed last Friday. . . Yes, tomorrow afternoon is fine. Sorry, Chuck, but team practice will have to wait. All right, everyone. Let's consider this comment about the novel you're reading. Van Wyck Brooks, of course, is one of the leading critics of our time. . . ."

**(I want to get down to Faculty Meeting early. I have some material to distribute about the Blood Bank regulations. That reminds me, I must schedule a meeting for next Tuesday afternoon. . . .)**

"Yes, Miss Drummond, I'm ready to make my report to the English teachers about my impressions of the last N.E.C. meeting. The discussion had to do with the teaching of the English novel . . . Yes? Of course I'd be willing to chair the meeting for tenth grade curriculum. It's due by the end of May, typed? Fine."

**(I must get to that meeting with**

Miss Jones. . . . oh, the phone.)

"Miss Jones, I'm on my way down. You can't make it? A parent? Another time? Tomorrow afternoon? Sorry, I've scheduled a make-up for my seniors. After that, I'll be meeting with the literary magazine group to do layout. . . . How's four-thirty? Good."

**(Well, I'll have to wait for Miss Simms 'til five-thirty when we can go to supper. Her language group meets tonight. I hope my night school class remembers to bring the material I requested. . . . English for the foreign born is certainly interesting work. . . . I think I'll mark these comps, now.)**

Phone rings: "Hello, Mr. Sullivan. Yes, I served on that committee last year. It seems to me we held a basketball game for the Scholarship Drive. Yes, I could get the exact amount of the proceeds. I'll put the information in your mailbox on my way out tonight. I'd be glad to be in a show this year for the 'Fund'. Bye."

"Hello, Miss Drummond. Yes, I'm here. Miss Simms and I are going to dinner at the Green Parrot. You'd like the curriculum by the fifteenth of May instead? I'll have it. By the way, may I use the phonograph Thursday and Friday? I'm doing some work in dramatic techniques with the Juniors. . . . Include a revision of the comp skills in the curriculum? O.K. Yes, I agree, five references for a research report in tenth grade. . . . Suppose we limit the Essay Contest to one grade level? Good. . . ."

**(Maybe I can get back to these comps now. Let's see. . . .)**

"Hello, Robert, looking for me? Your speech for Honor Assembly?"

THE STUDENT—HIS FUTURE

(Continued from Page 5)

That's not a bad agenda, is it, Mr. Vander?"

Mr. V.: That sounds like a fine program, students. Many schools have already instituted some of the courses and ideas suggested here today. If enough people show real understanding of the educational needs of the boys and girls in our schools, this agenda may become a reality sooner than we expect. Let's hope the community strongly supports your plea.

Certainly, I'll go over it with you. Let's have a look. . . ."

Phone rings: "Hello? Yes, Miss Simms. I'm ready. We'll just have time to grab a sandwich. I became engrossed in Robert's speech. You were tied up, too?—I'll be right down."

**(Hmm. I'd better take these papers home. I promised them back tomorrow. The comps will have to wait until Wednesday. No, they can't . . . I have a meeting with the printer about the magazine . . . and Thursday is plan book night . . . a P.T.A. meeting, too. I'd better have dinner out. Well, I'll have to mark them tonight. Another 2 A.M.!!)**

"George, it's seven o'clock! What are you doing here? Waiting for Joe? No, I haven't marked them yet. You took the exam today, you know. Tomorrow, sure. I'll do them tonight. Goodnight, George. . . ."

"Miss Simms, here I am. You had an unexpected call from a book salesman? It doesn't matter. We've got a half-hour for supper. Where can we go in a hurry?"

"Yes, George, you will need your notebook tomorrow. GOOD-NIGHT."

**A PLEA - - - -**

If, as a nation, we recognize that education is our best safeguard to a free society, then we must bend every effort to strengthen all phases of education so that it will be able to do the job we want it to do.

We need more qualified teachers, more classroom space, more textbooks, more good thinking about the importance of education in our lives. In short, we need a dramatic break-through in the minds of men relative to the position of education and educators as our front line of defense. Schools, educators and students need your support. Don't let them down and don't let yourselves down. It is no longer a question of how much it will cost but rather how soon we can achieve a break-through.

# VALLEY STREAM TEACHERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

*The exclusive bargaining agent for all teachers in C.F.S. #1, Districts #18, #24 and #30*

SUITE 14 - 104 SO. CENTRAL AVENUE, VALLEY STREAM, NEW YORK 11580 - VA 5-6332

## THE TENURE LAW

1970

### Purpose

The purpose of tenure is to provide the best possible teaching service for children by protecting the employment of the professional staff. Contrary to popular belief, tenure is not the right to hold a job for life. Tenure is the right to continued employment during good behavior and competent and efficient service and guarantees against dismissal for arbitrary, personal or political reasons. This right is insured by legal procedures that must be observed whenever the right to continued employment is threatened. Tenure is a statutory right in the State of New York.

### Limitations

Tenure rights to a position can be acquired only when the position is embraced by the statutes and there is a bona fide vacancy there in. Part-time teachers, substitutes or others appointed to positions of teachers absent on leave, cannot acquire tenure (except in New York City).

### Tenure Area

Tenure relates only to the position held. The area of a teacher's tenure is established by the original appointment, the nature of the work required and performed. Tenure usually is granted to a teacher only in a tenure area for which he is certified. Certification requirements have recently been increased. Examples of tenure area are: junior high, secondary (academic), special areas (music, art, physical education, vocational, etc.). The elementary school and secondary school normally represent separate areas of tenure.

### Probationary Period

A teacher must serve a probationary period before being granted tenure. The probationary period is normally three years of satisfactory teaching and one day of the fourth year. Tenure is granted in an area and in a school system. Tenure is not granted for teaching in a specific school building.

A teacher may be required to accept assignment only within his own tenure area. A teacher who transfers to a new tenure area must serve a probationary period in a new position before he can attain tenure. However, he retains his tenure rights in the former area. Should the new position be abolished after he secures tenure, he must be placed on a preferred eligible list for reappointment in the new area, should a position be reestablished within four years. Teachers retain tenure on a seniority basis within their area of tenure, when positions are abolished.

### Board Resolution

All appointments require a board resolution.

### Observations

Ethical and professional considerations require that school authorities observe probationary teachers periodically. Complete records should be kept on the quality of the teachers work and his compliance with the local by-laws.

### Reasons For Dismissal

The law does not require the superintendent or the board to give reasons for dismissal prior to tenure appointment. Ethics require school authorities to warn teachers of unsatisfactory service and a teacher should be given reasonable time to improve his performance.

(over)

VSTA - NYSTA - NEA - A UNITED PROFESSION

Protection Against Unjust Dismissal

A tenure teacher cannot be dismissed except on specific charges after a full hearing. Once tenure is granted, the teacher can be removed only for cause. Otherwise, tenure is terminated only by loss of certification, retirement or resignation.

Valid causes for removal are:

1. Behavior on the part of the teacher which renders his services undesirable or which prevents such teacher from exercising the wholesome influence that a teacher should exercise over his pupils.
2. Neglect of duty.
3. Refusal or failure to comply with reasonable direction and instruction of his superiors.
4. Disorderly conduct.
5. Immoral conduct.
6. Physical disability.
7. Incompetency or inefficiency in performing services as a teacher.

Tenure By Acquiescence

Should the superintendent and/or the board fail to take any action and should a teacher be allowed to continue to serve in the same tenure area beyond the expiration of his probationary period, such teacher may be considered to have acquired tenure by acquiescence.

Not Transferable

Tenure is not transferable to a different school district, except when two or more tenure districts consolidate to form a new district.

0261

## **History of the VSTA**

The Sept/Oct 1996 issue of the VSTA Newsletter contained the first of a four-part series on the history of the Valley Stream Teachers Association, beginning with the 1950's. Mingled in with the union's history are references to parallel state and national events as well as steps in the development of our state and national union. This history is in the process of being included in the VSTA's new website by Memorial Junior High School's Anthony Cardinale and can be read by going on-line at [www.valleystreamteachers.org](http://www.valleystreamteachers.org) or by calling the VSTA office for a printed copy. The current issue of the Newsletter and succeeding ones will reprise topics from that history. The first piece deals with the VSTA office.)

The Association opened its first office in 1968 at 104 South Central Avenue, hiring the first secretary, Lillian Garrity. In 1970, inadequate parking facilities and lack of working space forced the Association to move to larger accommodations in an old two-story commercial building at 101 Rockaway Avenue, the original site of a fledgling Nassau Educators Federal Credit Union, then known as the Valley Stream Teachers Federal Credit Union created by original VSTA members, long since retired.

The VSTA was forced to move again in 1986 when a new owner of the building decided to convert it into apartments. The VSTA decided to explore the feasibility of moving into one of the fifteen school buildings in Valley Stream, possibly saving on rent. Unfortunately, that idea did not work out because the only space available was at North H.S. or at the Willow Road School. In addition to not being centrally located for a large number of members, the Districts wanted the same rent we were already paying outside the schools but more importantly would offer only a one a year at a time lease which could be terminated at any time if a district's space need ceased, as it soon did. (The Lawrence Teachers Association was just recently evicted from their

school building office and is now looking for space outside the schools.) Moreover, using a room within the schools would have decreased the independence of union operations during non school days and hours. Finally, many members felt they preferred privacy, away

**The VSTA Office  
is, indeed, a no  
frills work place  
but gets the job  
done.**

from the administration, particularly if the office were located in their building.

Thus, the VSTA moved for the third time to its present location, upstairs to an office in the Brother's Aluminum building at 33 East Merrick Road. By that time Mrs. Garrity had retired and was replaced by Anita Kelly, who had been working as a secretary in UFSD Twenty-four. She turned down a job offering as the principal's secretary to opt for the VSTA. Anita retired in 1993 and was succeeded by current office secretary Patricia DeProspo, who had been working as a classroom/media aide, also in UFSD Twenty-four.

Most of the furniture and equipment in the office has a history of its own. The conference table was purchased for ninety dollars back in 1975 and six of the metal chairs were picked up at a church bazaar for one dollar a piece by the late Frank Valleca and a former unit leader at South H.S. The desk used by the president is actually an old solid wood door laid over an old metal typewriter desk, both stained with simulated wood grain, net cost \$17.50 (\$10.00 for door and \$7.50 for stain!) The desk used by the secretary, when she is not at the computer station (new) is an original metal desk from 1967. The office still has the original file cabinets from thirty-five years ago but did need to buy an additional file and storage cabinet a couple of years ago as the membership grew and the amount of records increased. Two plastic chairs were donated by another office at 101 Rockaway Avenue. The fax machine was donated by the former dental plan administrator, J.J. Newman & Co. because they needed to communicate more quickly with the office, which is used by the VSTA Welfare Fund. The VSTA office is, indeed, a no frills work place but gets the job done. The computer was paid for out of our annual VOTE/COPE rebate as is the copier.

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# Newsletter Wins Award



NYSUT President Tom Hobart (left) and First Vice-president Toni Cortese (right) present "Award of Merit" to VSTA Newsletter editor Susan Rollero (center) for her article on lead contamination in Memorial Junior High School's rifle range and two nearby classrooms in November, 2002. The article which appeared in the Nov./Dec. '00 issue was entered in the recent annual NYSUT Journalism competition category of Best Articles on Health Issues and recognized at the NYSUT RA in N.Y.C. this past April.

## VSTA Unit Leader Named to Who's Who

South High School's VSTA co-unit leader and a technology teacher, Ed Fare, was recently selected for inclusion in the seventh edition of Who's Who Among America's Teachers, 2002. He was previously included in the sixth edition, 2000, which puts him among only two percent of the nation's teachers who are selected more than one time.

His first nomination came from a student at North and the second from one at Central.

Ed was previously awarded a Community Service Award by the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and most recently named as Valley Stream Firefighter of the Year 2001 by the Lynbrook Elks.

## History of the VSTA

(cont'd from p. 6)

Mrs. DeProspero opens the office at 10:00 a.m. each school day and leaves at 4:45 p.m. The office almost always operates considerably beyond 4:45, manned by the VSTA president and other union representatives who

hold meetings there, from the VSTA Welfare Fund trustees, to the Executive Board to retirement consultations to committee meetings to individual members with problems or concerns.

The VSTA has never held an "open-house" because of space limi-

tations and the volume of work that needs to be done on a daily basis, serving close to 1,000 members. It is truly an office with all work and no play. Nevertheless, members who have never been there are always welcome to stop by and say hello.



# VSTA NEWSLETTER

## VALLEY STREAM TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 30, NUMBER 5

MAY/JUNE 2003

### VSCHSD District Directors Survey Results

Fewer than one-third of VSCHSD teachers who responded to a VSTA survey distributed in April felt that district directors made them better teachers or were even needed. The results were even less supportive for the five academic area directors in which only one in five respondents indicated directors made them better teachers or were necessary.

It should be noted, however, that these composite results cannot be applied to each individual director since some scored significantly higher and others significantly lower than the norm for the group.

Just those teachers who worked under the supervision of a district director were asked to evaluate their own director on how well that administrator performed on the job, ranking them from "almost always performs at the highest level," to

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### Potential Crisis Averted

A major crisis in relations between the Valley Stream Teachers Association and the Valley Stream school boards was averted during an April 29, 2003 joint meeting of the boards when a proposal which could have had the effect of breaking up the long-standing practice of negotiating common contracts among the four districts was withdrawn for a lack of support.

Had the plan been implemented, it would have meant that each school district could attempt to negotiate apart from the other three, possibly resulting in different employee contracts in each of the four districts.

Valley Stream is one of three areas in the state with a central high school district. The three feeder elementary districts —UFSD's Thirteen, Twenty-four and Thirty — send their pupils to the four secondary schools in the VSCHSD. Each of these districts has a separate board of education and budget. Members of the elementary districts select three of its members to sit on a nine member high school board. When the VSTA negotiates, it meets with a Boards' Negotiating Committee (B.N.C.) comprised of representatives of all four district boards in order to reach a common settlement, a process sometimes referred to as coalition bargaining.

The intent of the proposal for separate rather than joint bargaining, in the minds of many who heard about it, was to weaken the VSTA through a divide and conquer strategy. They pointed out, for example, that in the other two school systems structured similarly to Valley Stream, Sewanhaka and Bellmore, elementary teachers are generally paid less than secondary teachers because each of these districts negotiates individually through separate unions.

According to various sources

close to the situation, one of two board members have envisioned the breakup of coalition bargaining in Valley Stream for several years but

VSTA representatives... characterized the plan as a thinly veiled attempt at "union busting."

any such proposal never got off the ground until after the last contract settlement when the new VSCHSD superintendent allegedly was dissatisfied with the present negotiating process that has been in place since the 1950's.

When the VSTA first learned of the proposal through an anonymous tip in April, union representatives confronted the VSCHSD superintendent with the rumored plan at the April fifteenth Educational Consultation meeting. The superintendent denied being the initiator of the proposal but acknowledged that it would be the main topic at the next joint meeting of the four boards at the end

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# Dr. Valenti Responds To VSTA

(The VSTA Newsletter sent an advance copy of the "Potential Crisis Averted" article to Dr. Ronald Valenti, Superintendent of Schools, VSCHSD, offering him an opportunity to comment. The following is his response.)

VSTA's editorial states the "...new VSCHSD superintendent allegedly was dissatisfied with the negotiating process...in place since the 1950's.

Incorrect on two counts.

First, I was not allegedly dissatisfied. I was actually dissatisfied with the failure to caucus bargain on specific secondary issues, particularly the 9 period day. I have no difficulty with joint bargaining on salary and related compensation issues.

In my view, the last round of teacher collective bargaining failed to use valuable time efficiently. We should have scheduled more separate caucuses to address K-6 and 7-12 educational and program items and reserved joint bargaining solely for salary and related compensation matters.

Second, the negotiating ar-

angement, unique to Valley Stream, is, in the final analysis, a political decision, not a legal requirement. As a matter of public policy, school boards can agree to bargain directly (or jointly) with any employee group. Of the nine units in the VSCHSD, the Board bargains jointly with four (teachers, nurses, clerical staff, custodians) and independently with the remaining groups. As long as boards achieve their legitimate bargaining goals, they will remain politically satisfied with the current practice.

April 15 Educational Consultation Meeting

The VSTA editorial slated for June references a "rumored plan" and "union busting" to suggest some major conspiracy has been uncovered and avoided.

That's silly!

At the April 15 ECC meeting, I offered the following factual statements well in advance of the April 29 Joint Boards meeting and June editorial:

1) The VSCHSD Board of Education discussed in Executive Session the

merits of joint vs. independent bargaining and requested an attorney analysis to assess their legal standing.

2) The Board reached a consensus to bring the matter to Joint Boards for further discussion.

3) I specifically stated at the April 15 ECC meeting a final decision to bargain independently was wide open and far from a "slam dunk."

4) It is in the joint districts' interest to maintain a common salary schedule to avoid district hopping within Valley Stream and to remain competitive with our neighboring districts.

As a matter of public record, the High School Board withdrew their resolution, after extensive discussion, at the April 29 meeting.

While school boards and unions would prefer certain contentious matters never be discussed at all, democracies work differently. Personally, I think the democratic process worked well and future bargaining will be improved.

*Crisis Averted, continued from p.1* of the month. VSTA representatives openly expressed their skepticism about the superintendent's role in this initiative and characterized the plan as a thinly veiled attempt at "union busting."

The VSTA subsequently contacted the legal department of the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) who viewed the issue as a

potential land mark case which they would pursue.

Said VSTA president Dick Herrmann, "Regardless of how the courts might have eventually ruled, had the joint boards actually carried through on this plan, it would have permanently contaminated the good relationships we have had, for the most part, with our four boards of education. Fortunately for all in-

involved, good sense prevailed at their April 29 meeting because the overwhelming majority of board members present apparently saw no reason to plunge the districts into protracted, contentious litigation and destroy the good will and morale of their employees that have existed for decades. It is sad that there were a few who may not have understood this or did not care."

## Editor's Note:

In his response to the VSTA Newsletter article, Dr. Valenti, in citing the 4/15/03 E.C.C. meeting with union representatives, says he offered factual statements "well in advance of the 4/29/03 Joint Boards meeting" regarding the plan for separate bargaining. He characterizes any suggestion that there was some conspiracy as "silly!". The fact is that when Dr. Valenti finished covering his agenda items at E.C.C., he was then as if he had any other items to discuss and he said he did not. That was when the VSTA confronted him with a rumored proposal and only then was there any discussion on the topic. Moreover, the VSCHSD board meetings to which he refers were closed to the public and the union.

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VSTA contract signed – 1963  
L. to R.: William Gimello-President VSTA, Robert Carbonaro-District 24 Superintendent  
and Arnold Bucksbaum-President District 24





VSTA contract signed – 1963

L. to R.: William Gimello-President VSTA, Robert Carbonaro-District 24 Superintendent  
and Arnold Bucksbaum-President District 24



VSTA contract – 1963  
L. to R.: William Gimello-President VSTA, Sherry Quick-VSUFSD 30 Principal  
and Dr. Robert Bell-VSUFSD 30 President





VSTA contract – 1963  
L. to R.: William Gimello-President VSTA, Sherry Quick-VSUFSD 30 Principal  
and Dr. Robert Bell-VSUFSD 30 President



VSTA contract – 1965  
L. to R.: William Gimello-President VSTA, Dr. Walter Stille-VSCHSD Superintendent  
and Mrs. Elenor McAuliffe-President VSCHSD





VSTA contract – 1965  
L. to R.: William Gimello-President VSTA, Dr. Walter Stille-VSCHSD Superintendent  
and Mrs. Elenor McAuliffe-President VSCHSD



William Gimello  
VSTA

James A. Dever  
District 13 Principal

Howard Holder  
VSUFSD 13 President

1965

Valley Stream Teachers' Association President Richard E. Herrmann addresses union's Executive Council – March 9, 2000

