



Vermont-NEA

TODAY

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Burlington Teachers and Firefighters Honor Student Achievers



Tiffany Grant-Savage, a second grader at H.O. Wheeler School, won a ride on a Burlington fire truck in a drawing, but she earned the right to be included in the drawing with achievement in reading, behavior and attendance. A student achiever in every one of Burlington's elementary school's was selected for a fire truck ride.

BURLINGTON -- May 10 was a very special day for a few lucky Student Achievement Award winners in Burlington's elementary schools.

Classroom teachers recommended students to receive the Awards, which are sponsored by the Burlington Education Association. The Awards honor "those students who have attained the skills and attitude necessary to become productive members of the workforce or to further their education and training." Students were selected who met the qualifications in the area of Academics, as well as the qualifications in two of these three areas: Attendance, Community Service, and Behavior.

The Student Achievers received certificates signed by BEA President Terry Buehner and Superintendent of Burlington Schools Lyman Amsden at ceremonies at their schools. Then, in each of the city's elementary schools, one Student Achievement Award winner was selected in a drawing to receive the Grand Prize: A ride in a Burlington Fire Truck.

Nine-year-old Tiffany Grant-Savage was the lucky winner at H.O. Wheeler School. She was eligible for the drawing for the fire truck ride because she had been honored the day before for her Academic achievement in the area of Reading Recovery and for meeting achievement qualifications in Attendance and Behavior.

At 8:30 a.m., the Burlington City fire truck, manned by Firefighter Matt Trombley and Lt. Brian Mayer, pulled up to the school. Tiffany's entire second grade class was treated to a tour of the truck and its "cool" equipment -- fire axes got the biggest oohs and ahs. Then Tiffany climbed into the cab for her ride. The siren screamed and she was driven off, her classmates jumping in delight and clamping hands over ears at the noise.

This great fun -- the brainchild of BEA President Terry Buehner -- was repeated all morning at schools throughout the city. ■

Vermont-NEA Photos/Art Huse



President Angelo Dorta (R) joined BEA President Terry Buehner (L) at the first fire truck visit in Burlington May 10 to show his support for BEA's unique Student Achievement Award Program.

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The precious gift of collective bargaining

We should thank our lucky stars for having collective bargaining in our professional lives. One only can imagine how much worse off we'd be without it.

Recent experiences at Lake Region and Hazen Union High Schools and in Caledonia North probably remind our fellow teachers there of what I mean. The same is true for education support staff in Montpelier, Washington Central, Essex Town, and Vergennes. How many others in schools around Vermont still are destined to learn this fact-of-life firsthand?

The negotiations wear-and-tear can be grueling on everyone involved, including Vermont-NEA staff, who always are on-site and working hard to produce an equitable, respectful, and lasting settlement. Sometimes a strike is inevitable, however. After all, it can be very difficult to salvage labor-management relations when they've soured too much. Also, sometimes the numbers simply don't add up to satisfy the parties' minimal requirements and expectations. Not often though, only 19 times in over 30 years, but sometimes.

How could we survive economically and professionally without the right to organize ourselves and to bargain collectively? Without the right to regularly sit down face-to-face as equals with our school district employers and to seriously express our needs, hopes, and aspirations? What chance would we have against foot-dragging, against low-ball and wait-for-next-year proposals, against high-price for-hire Boston law firms, and against power-tripping and out-of-touch school board representatives?

The only correct answers are little and none. Just ask local Association leaders from states that lack collective bargaining statutes. Their meek "meet-and-confer" substitute most often allows them to be part of the discussion, but not part of the decision-making. They're invited to the banquet table for the ambiance, but they cannot eat the meal.

Local control in Vermont communities and the options available to Vermont-NEA local affiliates result in a variety of bargaining proposals and final settlements customized to local needs, preferences, and resources. Below are several topics that are near and dear to my own heart, and so I offer them for your consideration:

- Starting salaries for new teachers of at least \$35,000, a wage level that is comparable with other college graduates who take their four-year diploma into the workforce for the first time and that permits them to live balanced lives and to pay their education loans and other normal expenses.

- Variable hourly pay rates of \$10.94 and higher for Education Support Personnel that at least are equal to flexible "livable wage" scales established by the Vermont Legislature's Joint Fiscal Office to account for employee dependents, health insurance costs, etc.

- Teacher mid-career earnings of at least \$55,000 after 10 years of experience and a masters degree or comparable graduate studies, and \$70,000 or more for our most accomplished senior colleagues.

- Minimal insurance deductibles and co-pays available to teachers and support staff through the carefully crafted and cost-effective health, dental, and long-term disability plans offered by the Vermont-NEA/Vermont School Boards Insurance Trust collaborative known as VEHI (Vermont Educators Health Initiative).

- 403(b) retirement plans, with school district matching contributions, that will augment Vermont State Teachers Retirement System pensions and will provide at least some improved retirement security for ESP members who so desperately need it.

- Job security provisions based on "just cause" for dismissal and on seniority for reductions-in-force that uphold substantive and due process rights for employees and that minimize faculty/staff anxiety and disruption when layoffs occur.

- "Agency fee" to guarantee that ESP non-members also contribute to the local Association costs of representing the entire local bargaining unit during negotiations and grievances.

- Language to explicitly preclude school district initiatives to subcontract and privatize education services without first negotiating over them with local Associations.

- Mandatory binding interest arbitration to settle serious contract disputes faster and without the threats of school board impositions and strikes.

- One- to three-year structured induction programs to help new teachers and paraeducators successfully fulfill the instructional and professional responsibilities of daily school life with the regular assistance of carefully selected, paid, and trained veteran educators as mentors.

- Local faculty- and staff-majority committees authorized to decide programs and budgets for sustainable, relevant, and high quality professional development focused squarely on crucial student achievement and teaching-and-learning issues, such as standards-based instruction, student as-



Angelo Dorta joined Hazen President Dale Prüchard on an informational picket line.

essment practices, etc.

- Differentiated, extra-pay-for-extra-work contracts that stipulate specific selection criteria and additional training, compensation, and time for voluntary leadership by qualified teachers and school support staff (mentors and other peer assistance providers, instructional team leaders, curriculum and professional development specialists, standardized assessment coordinators, members of local professional standards boards, school improvement planning teams, and recruitment and hiring committees).

- Time for job-embedded, hands-on collegial professional development work, including training in computer technology and Internet applications, mentorships, demonstration and practice teaching, instructional team planning and consultation, action research, etc.

- Tangible support for teachers who voluntarily choose the National Board Certification program for professional development, including fee subsidization, local standards board full re-licensure credit, additional professional days, and negotiated annual compensation on the teacher salary schedule upon completion.

- Professionally valid frameworks and procedures for fair and rigorous staff evaluations that focus on instructional performance and support staff tasks, that document our competence to the community, and that actually are implemented as planned.

- Clerical support, computerized data, release-time and other forms of needed assistance from school districts to enhance the ability of local professional standards boards to re-license professional educators in an organized and speedy fashion.

Our collective bargaining rights guarantee that our union and professional voices certainly will be heard. Those rights are a precious gift that we all should cherish. Let's use them wisely.

Angelo J. Dorta, President

Mediated settlement averts Hazen teachers' strike

Vermont-NEA Photos/Jason Winston



Pickets encourage Hazen negotiators on the day of the final mediation.

Vermont-NEA Photo/Joyce Foster



Hazen President Dale Pritchard and Co-President Judy Henchel (L-R, back) with negotiators James Lockhart, Norma Wiesen, and Steven Light (L-R, front).

HARDWICK -- Federal mediation on May 8 ended 17 months of negotiating and averted a strike at Hazen Union School in Hardwick. The 41 teachers already had voted unanimously to strike if the mediation failed, but their negotiators emerged in the wee hours of the morning with an excellent deal.

Teachers' work to achieve a settlement began months ago and intensified this spring with the appointment of a crisis committee. Paraeducator Cecile Dyke served as a member of the committee. In a show of support, paraeducators made it clear to the administration that they would not perform any teacher work should a strike take place.

The school board, meanwhile, believed they would get lots of support in town for their position that only new or starting teachers should get salary increases. They were wrong.

A community outreach campaign that included mailings, leafleting and "lots and lots" of personal phone calls built support for teachers. Two-hundred citizens attended a school board meeting and supported a fair settlement for teachers.

Still, the board resisted a settlement, and teachers voted unanimously to strike if a last ditch mediation failed.

A picket line to encourage negotiators went up at the school at 3:30 p.m. on the day of the mediation, and it was impressive. Joining Hazen teachers were Vermont-NEA officers and members of the state Association Board of Directors, Hardwick community members, parents, and representatives from local unions, including: Caledonia North EA, Orleans Central EA, North Country UHSEA, Hyde Park, Lamoille North EA, Hazen ESP, Morrisville EA, Teamsters Local 597, United Nurses and Allied Professionals Local 5109 (Copley Nurses), and Craftsbury Teachers. At 1:00 a.m. when the settlement was reached, 33 people still were at the school!

The settlement answers teachers' concerns about the inadequate amount of money which was being offered by the school board, as well as unfair distribution of the money. The new contract boosts total money and calls for a minimum increase of \$1500 per teacher. Total new money increases are 7.29% this year, 4.22% in 2002-03, and 4.98% in 2003-04. Base/maximum salaries for each of the three years are \$24,500/\$46,383 this year, \$25,761/\$48,019 in 2002-03, and \$26,528/\$49,448 in 2003-04.

Dale Pritchard is the Association president and Steven Light is the chief negotiator. The local is advised by Vermont-NEA UniServ Director Joyce Foster. ■

**VOTE Becomes
"Vermont-NEA
Fund for
Children and
Public
Education"**

Vermont-NEA is creating the "Vermont-NEA Fund for Children and Public Education" to make certain that the Association has the resources to help elect education-friendly men and women to public office during the fall elections.

The new fund replaces VOTE. The new name more accurately reflects the Association's focus on local and state issues that are central to public education.

Created this year, the Fund empowers us to engage in the political process. Voluntary funds collected from members go to support candidates for governor, school board and the State Legislature – public officials who will direct public school spending and priorities over the next several years.

Fundraising for the new Fund will stress personal contact – with calls to members at home in May to ask for pledges and contributions. The theme is "On the Road to Great Schools." It's intended to encourage every teacher to contribute one dollar a pay period – or roughly \$25 a year.

The campaign will focus on Vermont-NEA members who previously have not given to the Association's political fund, as well as soliciting those whose contributions have already helped elect friends of education.

"There are strict limits on the use of Association dues," points out Vermont NEA President Angelo Dorta. "In most instances, we cannot use dues monies to engage in politics, and so we must raise voluntary contributions for the *Fund for Children and Public Education*. These funds will be critical to our ability to support pro-education candidates directly, print and distribute materials, run phone banks, conduct door-to-door voter campaigns and even underwrite radio commercials in support of Vermont-NEA recommended candidates."

"We're hopeful that every Vermont-NEA member will contribute \$1 a pay period through payroll deduction, where that is possible, or by writing a check to the *Fund for Children and Public Education* and sending it to Vermont-NEA. We will use this money to keep on the road to Great Public Schools," says Dorta.

Political planning for the campaign season, and beyond

By Frank Grasso

What is the relationship between following: Sunblock, Watermelon, and Defending Public Education?

No, this is not a question on the SAT's. This is how many of us will be spending some of our time this summer. Vermont-NEA and the Association's new Grassroots Lobby Organization (GLO) have begun planning for the campaign season -- a campaign season that will prove to be very important to each and every one of the 10,000 members of the Vermont-NEA family. The two major themes of this campaign are *Respect for Education Employees and Strengthening Public Education*.

A Plan to Forge Relationships

Our plan is to look well beyond November 5th, Election Day, and focus on forging a solid working relationship with the new legislators in the next legislative session. The approach toward public education exhibited by some current members of the House of Representatives this past session makes it mandatory for Vermont-NEA to identify pro-public education incumbents in both Houses of the Legislature and do everything we can to make sure they get re-elected. We also must recognize, through our recommendation process, strong pro-public education candidates, from local school boards to the State House, who are willing to challenge those incumbents who are not for the best interests of Vermont's public institutions and working families.

We must elect a Governor and other statewide officers who will make a commitment to strengthen and defend Vermont's public education system.

We must offer every resource at our disposal in order to help our recommended candidates get elected in November.

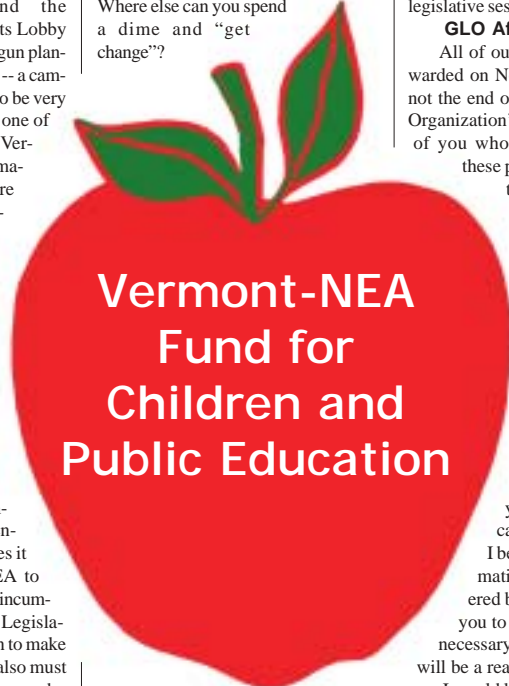
Having a membership committed to local candidates and willing to volunteer in their campaigns is an important element in achieving success at the polls. But, we must do more.

Fund Established

Vermont-NEA cannot use member dues in political campaigns. Any money given for that purpose must be a separate voluntary contribution to a fund specifically designated for that purpose. *The Vermont Fund for Children and Public Education*, formerly VOTE, has been established for that purpose.

The Fund will be a non-partisan fund created with members' voluntary financial contributions. We will use that money to promote local and statewide candidates resolved to strengthen

public education and respect school employees. Pretty soon, if not already, each Association member will be contacted by representatives of Vermont-NEA and asked to contribute via payroll deduction one dollar per paycheck, less than ten cents per day, to this fund. Where else can you spend a dime and "get change"?



Reporting How Candidates Measure Up

Soon after this legislative session concludes, Vermont-NEA will compile a legislative "report card." We will list each House and Senate member and how they voted on bills and amendments critical to public education and working families. This report card will kick off the *Measure Up* campaign.

Articles in the August and September issues of *Vermont-NEA Today* will compare and contrast candidates for public office.

In July, a candidate questionnaire asking where candidates stand on educational issues will be sent to incumbents and challengers. The information gathered from the questionnaires and, in some cases, personal interviews with the candidates conducted by Vermont-NEA County and House Coordinators (GLO), will be included in the Voter Guide. Statements by the candidates, and the names of Vermont-NEA's recommended candidates will also be included. The Voter Guides will be distributed to every member in late October by Vermont-NEA local presidents.

The county and house coordinators and any interested Association members will get together at a meeting on August 5th in Killington. The coordinators will make recommendations to the Board of Directors for

early recommendations of targeted seats in order to allow members to volunteer to help with local campaigns, if they desire.

August will be taken up with putting together the Voter guides and incumbents' report card from the last legislative session.

GLO After the Election

All of our hard work will be rewarded on November 5th, but this is not the end of the Grassroots Lobby Organization's responsibility. Those of you who have volunteered for these positions will be kept on

the political activists list and be kept informed with issue papers throughout the next legislative session. Vermont-NEA will provide analysis of pending legislation and seek the input of GLO activists on potential legislation.

I would like you all to know that I am not a big fan of calling you at home about political or legislative matters. I believe that routine information is more easily delivered by mail or email. I want you to know that if I do feel it necessary to call you at home, it will be a real emergency.

I would like to thank these Association members for volunteering to be the coordinators in their respective Counties and House districts:

- Chris Hood**
- Carol Willey**
- Martha Allen**
- Maida Townsend**
- Barb Carter**
- Cheryl Carrier**
- Toni Lobdell**
- Barry Ferraro**
- Ann Buffum**
- Maggie Bensen**
- Linda Owen**
- Linda Walker**
- Steve Perrin**
- Lisa Champagne**
- Karen McGee**

If I have omitted anyone who wishes to be part of the Grassroots Lobby Organization (GLO), I apologize and urge you to contact me as soon as possible. Furthermore, we still need volunteers in Addison County, Bennington, Caledonia County, Franklin County, Lamoille County and Orange County. No matter where you live, if you are interested, we will welcome you into the program. And as always, call or e-mail me with any questions or thoughts.

I wish you a hot summer, cool nights, and sweet watermelon. Use sunblock... and help elect pro-public education and working family representatives. ■

Middletown teachers settle three years - 16%, 4.5%, 4.5%

MIDDLETOWN SPRINGS -- The Middletown Springs Education Association represents seven teachers. Until last month, they were paid according to a "hiring schedule" with a starting salary of \$20,909.

That sorry situation changed at mediation on May 2. This small Association achieved a three-year contract that implements an indexed salary schedule and increases new money 16% in 2002-03, 4.5% in 2003-04, and 4.5% in 2004-05. The base salary/maximum salary moves to \$25,228/\$50,708 in year one, \$25,603/\$51,462 in year two, and \$26,005/\$52,270 in year three.

"A big factor in Middletown's success is the fact that chief negotiator Bob Bruttomesso started attending Rutland area Regional Bargaining Council meetings in the fall," says Vermont-NEA UniServ Director Sean Leach.

Sean praises the Middletown Springs negotiating team, which includes Joy Ray. "They worked with our negotiations training materials, set



Vermont-NEA Photo/Sean Leach

(L-R) Middletown negotiators Bob Bruttomesso and Joy Ray with Association members Sherry Lantman, Lorraine Wilkins and Karen Ames.

achieving an indexed salary schedule as their goal, and maintained frequent communications with me to get input, advice and reaction as the bargaining process moved along."

Other contract improvements the two-person team achieved include: a

new optical/dental fund, increased tuition reimbursement, increased conference/workshop funds, and an increase in guaranteed prep time. Teachers agreed to Dual Option co-pays of 2% in year one, 3% in year two, and 5% in year three. ■

Orleans Central settles at mediation

Vermont-NEA Photo/Joyce Foster



The Orleans Central negotiating team: (L-R, front) Chief Negotiator Cindy Smith, Lois Charron, Joan Alexander, Julie St. Marie (L-R, back) Jennifer Ullrich, Janice Delany, Cathy Bennett, President Topher Warring, and Gerard Piette.

ORLEANS -- The 110 members of the Orleans Central Education As-

sociation settled a three year contract at mediation last month, after a vigor-

ous strike prevention campaign.

Teachers set up headquarters and pressed their case right up to the mediation session on the eve of their strike vote.

At the mediation, some 130 people holding informational picket signs lined the walkway at Lake Region Union High School as school board members and Federal Mediator Ira Lobel entered the building. A settlement came that night.

The Orleans Central settlement calls for new money increases of 2.3% this year, 2.3% in 2002-03, and 3.7% in 2003-04.

Health insurance is improved so that the board pays for increases of up to 12% from the previous year.

Base/maximum salaries move from \$26,500/\$47,117 this year and next, to \$26,951/\$47,918 in 2003-04. ■

NEKETA settles three years

Vermont-NEA Photo/Joyce Foster

NEWPORT -- For the first time in years, the Northeast Kingdom Elementary Teachers Association reached a contract settlement before the expiration of their current agreement.

The salary settlement calls for new money increases of 7.18% next year, 6.59% in 2003-04, and 6.13% in 2004-05.

The new agreement also provides additional sick leave and excellent protection for both new teachers and mentor teachers. Mentors will not evaluate, nor will they testify in any hearing regarding the performance of a teacher. ■



NEKETA negotiators: (L-R, front) Linda Kiser, Sandra Madey, Richard Blais (L-R, back) Elizabeth Mason, Chief Negotiator Robert Bishop, and President Alan Wood.

Order FREE brochures...

Summer Reading for Kids

MONTPELIER -- Vermont-NEA's annual *Summer Reading for Kids* brochure is now available, and we're taking orders!

These FREE brochures are intended for sending home with students. They feature reading recommendations for grades K-3, 4-8, and 9-12. Call Ellie's voice mail at 1-800-281-4430, ext.104, to place your order: Tell her how many you need and where they should be mailed.

The booklist, published it as a community service by Vermont-NEA, was compiled by school librarians Angelica Harris of Alburg, Shannon Walters of Burlington, and Dan Greene and Vicki Palmer of Union-32. Leda Schubert, library media consultant for the Vermont Department of Education, edited the list. It is posted on the Vermont-NEA website at

www.vtnea.org/blist-16.htm

Booklist to be featured on WCAX-TV's Across the Fence

The books featured in this year's *Summer Reading for Kids* brochure will be featured all summer in short segments on WCAX Television's noontime farm and home show, *Across the Fence*. In each one to two-minute segment, a different teacher will describe and recommend a book from the brochure.

The school librarians who volunteered their service and expertise compiling the Vermont-NEA booklist -- Angelica Harris of Alburg, Shannon Walters of Burlington, and Dan Greene and Vicki Palmer of Union-32 -- also are arranging for teachers to be videotaped for the TV segments at their schools in Alburg, Burlington, and East Montpelier.

Angel, Shannon, Dan and Vicky deserve our gratitude and congratulations for this volunteer work -- as do all their friends and colleagues who are being recruited for television debuts!

Will Mikell, the new producer of *Across the Fence*, hopes these taped book recommendations can become an annual event. Tune in! ■

NEA Long Term Care Insurance: The Superior Solution

By Mark L. Hage, Director of Benefit Programs

"Have you gotten "the phone call" yet?"

That's how Joe Blanchette, a benefits administrator for NEA Member Benefits, begins his talk with teachers and support staff about the need for long-term care insurance (LTCI). The "phone call" is the one from siblings or parents informing us that a family member has been stricken by some disease or injury that will require extended custodial care. It could be care provided by a nursing home, an assisted-care facility, or daily home-care assistance. Whatever form it takes, care of this sort is generally required for much longer than a few days or weeks; often, it can be needed for years. Further, it is very expensive, and it is *not* paid for or adequately insured in many cases by Medicare, Medicare supplements, or BCBSVT medical insurance.

Joe speaks from personal experience: "After that first call comes, many more take place as family members struggle to find ways of taking care of loved ones and also paying for it. It happens all the time."

The Need

Not surprisingly, many of us deny or don't imagine that we'll ever need long-term care. We always think it will happen to someone else. The statistics tell a different story:

- One in three males over age 65 will likely face long-term care needs.

- Fifty percent of all women turning age 65 will have long-term care needs before they die. Ninety percent of women who reach the age of 80 will need long-term care services.

- Over 40 percent of individuals currently requiring long-term care are working adults between the ages of 18 and 64.

Car accidents, falls, diabetes, strokes, Parkinson's, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, and a host of other illnesses and events can change our lives in sudden and profound ways, which underscores the necessity of being financially prepared for such events.

The Cost

High-quality long-term care is never cheap — the cost of nursing home care in Vermont ranges from \$55,000 to \$75,000 a year. When you consider that the average stay in a nursing home is now just under three years and that longer confinements are frequently necessary, especially for loved ones suffering from Alzheimer's and severe dementia, the financial ramifications for a family are enormous.

Even long-term care services that are provided in a person's home cost between \$20,000-\$40,000 annually, depending upon need. Moreover, it is not unusual for those in need to have home care expenses as well as assisted living and nursing home expenses. No matter how savvy we are with personal finances and investments, the extraordinary costs of long-term care will have a significant impact on our annual budgets and retirement plans.

Who will pay for these long-term care costs? Not Medicare. Not Blue Cross Blue Shield. Can you afford to care for a loved one without sacrificing your retirement nest egg or the financial well being of your family, or without imposing a great burden on your children? As important, once your assets are depleted, you lose your freedom of choice if you are forced to go on Medicaid, the government assistance program. Given demographic patterns, it is usually women who suffer most, according to Blanchette. Statistics show that, on average, a mar-

ried woman outlives her husband by 17 years. "Many women spend years taking care of their husbands, and when their spouses die, some can be left destitute and unable to support themselves." Single individuals face similar challenges. Who will assist them? Who will help pay for their long-term care expenses?

The Solution

Long-term care insurance (LTCI) is a smart and affordable way to transfer medical risk and to preserve our independence. With another American turning age 50 every seven seconds, baby boomers and their parents are rapidly coming to grips with these realities and turning to LTCI.

With well over 100 insurance companies competing in the market, the task of finding the right company and plan can be daunting. Many of us are inundated with LTCI promotions every day. Fortunately, Vermont-NEA members don't have to scour the market in order to identify an excellent plan from a mediocre or poor one. NEA has done the research for you.

NEA's Superior Solution: NEA MemberCare Long-Term Care Insurance

NEA has designed an exceptional group LTCI program for its members. It combines superior benefit features with a reliable insurer, very competitive prices, and a commitment to member education and service. The bottom line is that NEA MemberCare Long-Term Care Insurance is an exceptional product. It is preferred-risk, group insurance that is available *only* to NEA members and their families, including members' parents, parents-in-law, spouses or domestic partners, and adult children.

Unlike most other insurance carriers, which frequently provide just three or four standard plan offerings, the NEA program offers members

greater flexibility to custom design their benefits. Additionally, NEA MemberCare agents are trained specialists in long-term care. They are not "casual" LTCI agents whose real interest is in selling investment products, homeowners insurance, life and auto insurance. They are experts in long-term care and they know their industry well.

Not only will you get a competitively priced, top-tier insurance plan, you will also have the assurance of quality that only comes from knowing that NEA stands behind its endorsed providers and programs. Michael Reilly, Member Benefits Consultant for NEA Member Benefits, is right on the mark when he says to our members: "If you have a problem with any other insurer, like a billing error or a claims dispute, it's you alone against a massive insurance company. Good luck! If a problem arises with anyone endorsed by NEA Member Benefits, you have the 2.6 million-member NEA standing with you and advocating for you. It makes a big difference."

Don't buy LTC insurance until you investigate NEA's LTCI plan

NEA's LTCI program is a preferred-risk, group insurance program available to NEA members, their spouses, domestic partners, parents, parents-in law and adult children. Even if you have recently purchased a LTCI plan from another carrier, it will be worth taking a look at the NEA's LTCI program.

For more information on how you can secure affordable, high-quality long-term care services, and protect your retirement and your future, call **1-800-884-2675**.

For general information about long term care and the NEA's LTCI benefit design, you can also go to www.neamb.com.

Vermont-NEA Members Talk About Long Term Care Insurance

Ralph and Kathleen Dodge are typical of many Vermont-NEA members. They were excellent teachers, loyal members of their local Associations, and they planned carefully for retirement. Recently, they left the classroom to live out their dreams. Like most, they thought that they had properly planned for a secure retirement, but as they heard more stories about friends and family who had suffered disabling injuries and illnesses, they realized that the greatest threat to their retirement security came from unplanned expenses arising from long-term care needs.

Consequently, the Dodges undertook an investigation of the long-term care insurance market. According to Ralph, "We researched long-term care plans and did not find a program that we felt fully addressed our interests and needs until Joe Blanchette introduced us to the NEA policy."

Ralph and Kathy were attracted to the NEA's commitment to customized plan design, rather than having to conform their individual needs to the standard plans often found in the marketplace. Kathleen says, "The coverage that is offered through NEA stands out for its comprehensive options. The flexibility of the NEA program and our ability to craft an individual program that fit our personal finances and our anticipated needs was a major factor in determining our choice of plans."

Most people now buying NEA's long-term care policy are educators who are still working in schools. The average age of Vermont-NEA members and their families covered by NEA's LTCI plan is about 56. One Vermont couple, however, reflects the latest thinking around long-term care: buy young while you can. Rather than waiting until their sixties, when the premiums start to increase dramati-

cally and many can't qualify due to deteriorating health, **Wayne and Ann Whitehill** decided to investigate LTCI while they were in their thirties. "It just made sense to make sure our future was secure and our families would not have to worry about the financial burden if something happened to us," says Wayne. "Besides, the younger you are, the cheaper it is."

The Whitehills also took advantage of the NEA's group program to buy a LTCI plan for Wayne's mother. According to Wayne, "When our dad passed away last April, we began talking about what would have happened if he had spent years in a nursing



Wayne and Ann Whitehill

home. We can't afford to pay for the prices nursing home's charge and we didn't want to have to sell everything, including the family farm, which has been in our family since 1881." Wayne got together with his brothers and sisters and they pooled resources to buy LTCI protection for their mother. ■

Vermont Senator James M. Jeffords wins NEA Friend of Education Award

Photo/www.jeffords.senate.gov

MONTPELIER -- Vermont Senator James M. Jeffords will be honored in July by our 2.6 million-member National Education Association as NEA's 2002 Friend of Education.

The prestigious NEA award will be presented to Senator Jeffords at the national Association's annual meeting/Representative Assembly in Dallas, Texas.

"Vermont Senator James M. Jeffords has left an unparalleled, consistently positive imprint on federal education initiatives since 1975," wrote President Angelo Dorta in his letter nominating the Senator. "Sen. Jeffords devotes himself to special education, full funding of IDEA, and disability rights; to workforce development and school-to-work programs; to Head Start and early childhood education programs; to high student academic standards; to high quality teacher preparation and professional development; to before- and after-school services at schools and community centers; to education technology; and to school arts programs."

Senator Jeffords' switch from Republican to Independent last spring was precipitated in large part by his commitment to federal funding for education. He could not abide the inadequate support proposed by the Bush Administration, especially for special education. Angelo says his switch to Independent "showed his willingness to publicly exercise the courage of his convictions regarding public education issues."

Senator Jeffords has maintained a strong working relationship with Vermont-NEA and NEA Government Relations. According to NEA staff, "His office frequently contacts NEA staff for input on key education issues, and he has always granted NEA requests for meetings and dialogue."

These comments from NEA Government Relations staff are from a July 2000 memo. They show the Senator's resolve when it comes to education:

■ As one of the few moderate



Senator Jim Jeffords will receive the National Education Association's highest award in July at the NEA Representative Assembly.

Republicans in the Senate, his voice is often critical to temper the proposals of his more conservative colleagues.

■ Senator Jeffords routinely fights for increased federal resources for public education.

■ Senator Jeffords' votes in support of increased investment in education, or in opposition to anti-public education initiatives, often go against the leadership of his party. He is often one of a handful -- or at times the only -- Republican voting in favor of NEA's position.

■ Senator Jeffords has a long history of opposition to private school vouchers. He also opposes so-called Title I "portability plans that would al-

low federal Title I dollars to follow students to private or religious schools.

■ Senator Jeffords routinely fights for increased federal resources for public education. Senator Jeffords opposes allowing tax-free withdrawals from Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) for k-12 private and religious school or home schooling expenses.

NEA's Friend of Education Award has been presented annually for 30 years, since 1972. Vermont-NEA has submitted the winning nomination three times: first for Joan Ganz Cooney, creator of Sesame Street; second for Vermont Senator Robert T. Stafford; and now for Senator James M. Jeffords.

Upcoming Association events...

June 8

Vermont-NEA Board meets in Montpelier.

June 30-July 5

NEA Annual Meeting.

July 29

Vermont-NEA Summer Leadership Conference (SLC) at the Hampton Inn in Colchester.

August 1

Vermont-NEA SLC at Mt. Snow's Grand Summit.

August 5

Vermont-NEA SLC at Killington Grand Hotel.

August 7

Vermont-NEA SLC at Lyndon State College.

Federal tax law changes make purchase of "service time" for retirement easier

MONTPELIER -- For teachers thinking now about purchasing "service time" from the Vermont State Teachers Retirement System, we want to remind you that changes in federal tax laws enacted last June have made it much easier financially to do this.

Among other things, the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 permits teachers to transfer monies from their 403(b) and other retirement plans into the Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System (VSTRS) to purchase service credit or to repay refunded contributions while they are still employed. This direct, "trustee-to-trustee transfer" is *tax free*. Retirement funds can also be transferred tax free into local government retirement systems under the new law.

To learn more about this financial transaction and its potential benefits, contact a retirement counselor at VSTRS at 1-800-642-3191. We also recommend that you consult with one of Vermont-NEA endorsed 403(b) providers or your personal financial planner to assess the fiscal impact and advantages of this transaction on your retirement accounts.

Vermont-NEA's Endorsed 403(b) Providers:

VALIC:

1-800-448-2542

New England Financial:

1-877-313-2801

NEA Valuebuilder:

1-800-632-8258

Letter

National Board Certification

I read an interview of Bob Chase in the May NEA Today magazine. One of the accomplishments that he cites is the NEA's proactive support and discussion about issues of quality -- "quality teachers, quality support staff, and quality educational opportunities for kids." The examples he gives include the NEA's promotion of National Board Certification.

Other state affiliates openly embrace, endorse, and promote National Board Certification as a quality professional development experience that ultimately benefits all educators. The

Massachusetts Teachers Association is one example of a New England NEA state affiliate that sponsors training for facilitators that will support NBC candidates. They also sponsor candidates by providing workshops and application fee support.

Isn't it unfortunate that our state organization, when asked to actively promote and support the only program in the state of Vermont that supports National Board Certification, backs away and refuses due to the perpetuation of misconceptions that are based on opinion, conjecture, and fear, and not on fact? The discussion at the April

RA was a prime example of this. Many delegates left with a distorted view of National Board certification in Vermont due to the tactics of those that wish to prevent Vermont-NEA from promoting professional development programs that improve educator quality.

**Laurie Lawrence, Coordinator
World Class Teaching Project**

Editor's Note: Vermont-NEA Today prints all letters to the editor from Vermont-NEA members. Letters must not exceed 200 words, and may be edited for clarity.



2002 Vermont-NEA Summer Leadership Conferences

This summer, Vermont-NEA will offer one-day leadership conferences around the state for easy access and to accommodate your busy schedule!

Who's invited?

Association officers, negotiators, grievance reps, membership chairs, building reps, active members... and anyone who may soon have one of these roles.

What's the cost?

The meals and conference are provided free!

Where can you attend?

Select the date/location that's most convenient for you!

Each Conference starts at 8:00 am and ends at 4:00 pm

July 29	Colchester	Hampton Inn
August 1	Mt. Snow	Mt. Snow Grand Summit
August 5	Killington	Killington Grand Hotel
August 7	Lyndonville	Lyndonville State College

The Choice is yours. Select one of five strands...

Nuts & Bolts Bargaining: I'm the Negotiator. Now what? This workshop is designed to make you comfortable with your role as a negotiator by answering your most basic questions before you begin meeting with your Board. We'll demystify Vermont's two bargaining laws, talk about putting together a bargaining team, and discuss preparing your contract proposals. We'll examine salary schedules and wage indexes and look at "alternative" pay schemes. Finally, we'll take a close look at the impasse resolution procedures: binding arbitration, factfinding and mediation. This is a practical "You can do it" approach to bargaining your contract.

Bargaining Behavior and Attitudes: This program is perhaps the most important training any union negotiator can attend. Whether a novice or an experienced bargaining team member, this high-powered workshop will provide you with important skills and a critical understanding of the process. Topics include: Dynamics and psychology of negotiations, verbal skills at the table, crisis bargaining and overall planning for the entire negotiations process. Appropriate for both teacher and support staff negotiators.

Building/Association Reps & Officers Training: If you're a building/Association Rep, officer, or simply someone in your Association who always seems to be "the one" who does all of the work, this workshop is for you. This workshop will provide you with the information you need to do your various assignments and easy, effective methods for handling varied tasks. You'll take home a "survival kit" designed to save you time and work. Association teams, as well as individuals, will find this workshop tailored to meet their needs.

Solving Workplace Problems: This workshop will give you the skills and information you need to handle and resolve problems. It is based on the philosophy that vigilant, well-trained and assertive union leaders are the key to protecting and en-

hancing members' rights, benefits and working conditions. A union with good internal communication — that knows and polices its contract and that responds swiftly to real or potential conflicts — is your best defense. There is no magic to filing, processing or arguing a grievance... we'll show you how. And we'll work on building a union culture that identifies problems before they happen, or before they escalate into grievances.

Treasurer & Membership Chair Training: This workshop will help you sign up members, and then know how to keep track of them and their dues. Technical training includes: Processing instructions, monthly activities (billing statements / rosters/ reports, adds/deletes/proration, sending money, reconciliation of account); and a General Treasurer's (FRS Contact) training which covers record keeping/reporting/ tax exemption, financial controls/transmittal agreements, and dues categories/audits/local budgeting). We will also cover planning membership campaigns, designing promotional activities and understanding agency fee provisions.

Registration

Name: _____

Local: _____

Address: _____

Home phone: _____

Summer Email: _____

Which conference location/date: _____

Workshop Choice: _____

Mail to Vermont-NEA, 10 Wheelock Street, Montpelier, VT 05602

or

email sparker@nea.org to register for Killington or Lyndonville

email rturner@vtnea.org to register for Colchester or Mt. Snow

July 15, 2002 is the registration deadline.