



Vermont-NEA

# TODAY

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## Vermont-NEA members join NEA's Read Across America celebration

*"Oh, the Places You'll Go" is the theme for the fourth annual reading celebration*

MONTPELIER -- The joy of reading - as well as its necessity - is taking center stage in Vermont and throughout the nation on March 2, when for the fourth year, the National Education Association invites every child, every teenager, every adult in every community to celebrate Read Across America.

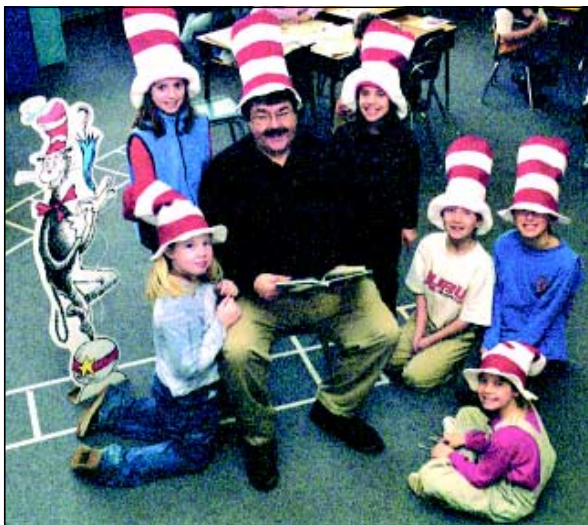
The annual literacy event - the largest in the nation, if not the world - coincides with the birthday of children's author Dr. Seuss (Theodor Geisel), whose beloved books and zany characters provide the backdrop for what NEA President Bob Chase calls: "a day of fun with a purpose. We hope students of all ages will explore with us the fun, adventure, and magic that reading - and books - provide. We want readers young and old to join us for the ride."

Last year the reading extravaganza engaged more than 30 million participants. Even more are expected to be involved in Read Across America activities this year. Those scheduled to honor reading on March 2 include First Lady Laura Bush, Members of both Houses of Congress, mayors, governors, and state legislators in all 50 states. Actor Morgan Freeman is chairperson of the 2001 event. He said that getting a library card when he was eight, "opened up a whole new world for me."

Opening up the world through books and reading is the message behind *Oh, the Places You'll Go*, the theme for this year's festivities. Taken from the Seuss title, the theme provides teachers, librarians, parents, students, authors, actors, politicians, and others an opportunity to share the jour-



Special educator Jay Burnell of Bennington will wear a cat costume for Dr. Seuss's birthday. He plans to wave to morning traffic in downtown Bennington to promote Read Across America activities.



Art teacher Charlie Guyette reads *The Cat in the Hat* to students at Fletcher Elementary School (in circle from left): Caytlyn LeDuc, Rachael Johnson, Tasha Bushell, Corey Vincelette, Carter Peterson, and Chelsea King.

neys they have traveled through books as well as the world of ideas that books have opened for them.

In dozens of schools and libraries in Vermont, students will be engaged in special Dr. Seuss activities:

- Making Oobleck in Grand Isle, to go with the story *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*;
- Cat in the Hat pajama parties and

teachers in Cat Hats in Sharon;

- Calls home to "catch 'em reading" in Fletcher;

- Making books that "stretch the idea of what a book can be" in Norwich;

- Listening to Mayor Peter Clavelle read in Burlington;

- Playing "Where's the Cat" among local merchants in Brandon.

Have fun, everyone!

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# Will no child really be left behind?

Newly elected President George W. Bush has made education his top policy priority. His "No Child Left Behind" plan was released on January 23rd and focuses on struggling schools, educator quality, high standards, and school accountability. The proposal, which still lacks specific legislative and funding details, has several strengths, some very serious flaws, and many unanswered questions.

School vouchers remain one of the most troubling elements. As outlined,

schools that fail to make "adequate yearly progress" for three consecutive years could lose federal Title 1 funding, approximately \$750 per child for remedial reading and math. These Title 1 students then could transfer to higher-

performing schools, including private schools not required to meet state student achievement and educator quality standards. Prior Bush Administration statements indicate that \$1,500 would follow each child to the chosen school, thus possibly creating an additional \$750 per child unfunded mandate for sending school districts.

Similarly, President Bush's plan also contains a thinly veiled voucher surrogate. It seeks to broaden tax-free college education savings accounts (ESAs) to include kindergarten through 12th grade education-related expenses up to \$5,000 per year. Expanded ESAs primarily will benefit affluent families, especially those with children already in private schools, and will do little for the 90% of students in public schools. K-12 ESAs also will deplete tax revenues from the country's general treasury, money that otherwise can be used to improve public education for all students.

Any voucher system simply drains needed resources from schools. Only the few departing students who actually gain admittance to their chosen schools are likely to benefit, while the vast majority remain behind in schools facing hard problems with less financial aid. Voters consistently and decisively have rejected vouchers in every one of approximately two dozen statewide ballots, most recently in California and Michigan. Election Day polling indicates that 78% of the citizens favor fixing public schools, while only 16% preferred private school vouchers as the best solution for struggling schools.

Many of the President's laudable recommendations regarding educator quality borrow heavily from last spring's amendment to the Elementary

and Secondary Education Act offered by moderate Democratic Senators Joseph Lieberman and Evan Bayh. All teachers must be properly licensed and certified within several years. States and local districts must establish high standards for federally financed professional development, and mentoring of new teachers is specifically noted. Unfortunately, however, the particular training needs of paraeducator largely are overlooked.

Other positive components appar-

proficiency would lose federal Title 1 funds. Conversely, financial rewards would be offered to schools where diverse students achieve satisfactorily.

Alignment of assessments, curricula, and professional development would be extremely essential if the President's approach becomes law. So, too, would be adequate school resources. However, it is alarming to think annual testing may become the sole measure of student and school performance. Indeed, current federal

*...the President's allowance of federal funds for "tenure reform and merit-based teacher performance systems" is more problematic. Teacher tenure ("just cause" in Vermont) is a state issue, and teacher due process and fair dismissal rights should not be abridged. Merit pay plans are subjective, divisive, usually limited by quotas, and financially difficult to sustain. They have failed wherever they have been tried dating back to the 1920s.*

law permits school improvement to be demonstrated not only by student assessment results, but also partially through measures such as attendance, dropout, and student retention rates. Current law also requires the use of multiple

measures of student performance.

Whether such multiple measures still might be permissible is one of the many unanswered questions at this time. Who will pay the costs of such student assessments mandated by the federal government? What will be the impact on the learning standards and student assessment systems already established in nearly every state during the 1990s? How will validity, reliability, and adherence to professional standards for assessments be assured? Can effective safeguards against excessive testing and overreliance on tests be implemented?

Finally, the President Bush's plan embodies the Republican penchant for consolidation of most federal aid that emanates from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act into large "block grants." Perhaps block grants will increase flexibility and respond best to local needs, as many Republicans assert. But, they also may eliminate or dilute national priorities, jeopardize targeted federal assistance based on demonstrated need, undercut the intended purposes of many critical programs, and put state governors too much in direct control of funds distribution.

President Bush now inherits the "Education President" mantle he coveted so much. However, honest intentions and genuine concern will not suffice beyond his presidential honeymoon period. True worthiness for the title will be definitively revealed only when he submits specific legislative language and funding requests pertaining to public education. And then we will see whether, indeed, no child is left behind...

**Angelo J. Dorta**  
President

All for the price of a cup of coffee every two weeks...

# Vermont-NEA's proposed 2001-02 budget will add staff, boost service to members

By Joel D. Cook, Executive Director

The Association has embarked on several paths to more and better service to our members. All of that is reflected in the budget to be presented and voted at the Representative Assembly in early April, and which appears in the pages of "The Call" inserted in this edition of *Vermont-NEA Today*.

First, I wonder how many members ever consider the number of collective bargaining agreements Association staff must oversee. The answer is, in our small state, we have more than 150 local Associations and we work to keep up with nearly 300 contracts through the professional activities of just six UniServ Directors.

A dozen years ago, when the Association last added to the UniServ staff, we had "only" about 170 contracts. A dozen years ago, our total membership was not quite 7000. Today, it exceeds 9,500. At last year's Representative Assembly, President Angelo Dorta announced we expected to add a UniServ position this year. The proposed budget reflects that

addition.

Second, we have adopted and are implementing formal standards to guide UniServ staff and local Associations in their approaches to organizing, negotiating contracts, and processing grievances.

Third, we have assigned our organizing staff to work with UniServ Directors to help local Associations focus their structure and contracts around the geographic unit of their supervisory union. At the level of the Association, we are approaching representatives of school boards and superintendents to enlist their support for combining more of our contracts at the level of the supervisory union, since to do so is in just about everyone's interest.

Fourth, we are striving to enhance our capacity to focus public attention on ways to assure an ongoing, high quality teaching corps. They are recruitment of young people to teach, the many ways school systems can support them through improved working conditions, and the importance of providing teachers at the end of their careers the prospect of a dignified,

comfortable period of retirement.

Fifth, we will be adding to our legislative and government agency advocacy by formally assigning portions of my time, of one of the Association's attorneys, and of our organizing staff, in addition to our President, to this important arena of Association advocacy.

Sixth, we are scrutinizing our training efforts on behalf of members in an attempt to reach more of you -- in more locals -- by arranging for a series of one-day events, distributed more broadly geographically.

Seventh, we have undertaken a major review of virtually all internal Association policies to make sure they continue to reflect appropriate, well-considered means of operation.

To do all of this, the Board of Directors has constructed a budget that focuses on these important efforts. The biggest change from the current budget, of course, stems from the addition of a professional staff person. All told, the \$20 dues difference between this and next year's budgets will amount to the price of a cup of coffee every two weeks.

## National School Nurse Certification by State

*"Vermont has set a wonderful example..."*

Alabama .....	15
Alaska .....	36
Arizona .....	12
Arkansas .....	18
California .....	3
Colorado .....	5
Connecticut .....	115
Delaware .....	41
Florida .....	37
Georgia .....	8
Hawaii .....	1
Idaho .....	7
Illinois .....	72
Indiana .....	8
Iowa .....	14
Kansas .....	7
Kentucky .....	4
Louisiana .....	3
Maine .....	8
Maryland .....	43
Massachusetts ..	117
Michigan .....	17
Minnesota .....	5
Mississippi .....	8
Missouri .....	23
Montana .....	2
Nebraska .....	5
Nevada .....	5
New Hampshire ..	28
New Jersey .....	21
New Mexico .....	16
New York .....	77
North Carolina ..	174
North Dakota ....	1
Ohio .....	38
Oklahoma .....	2
Oregon .....	5
Pennsylvania ....	15
Rhode Island .....	1
South Carolina ..	29
South Dakota ....	2
Tennessee .....	6
Texas .....	132
Utah .....	2
<b>Vermont .....</b>	<b>28</b>
Virginia .....	43
Washington .....	5
West Virginia ..	1
Wisconsin .....	18
Wyoming .....	5
Overseas .....	1

## In Brief

### Letter: Teachers Desperately Needed in Northern Ghana

Last summer, seven U.S. teenagers and I spent six weeks in the northern, and poorest, section of Ghana. Our goal was to learn what it is like to live in a developing nation. Having worked there and visited twice to arrange this trip, I was not surprised by the poverty and other problems faced by the people, especially in small villages. What did shock me was the fact that no schools we saw had enough teachers, and some village schools had no teachers! Our Ghana trip leader, who grew up in the north, told us that this is the situation throughout the northern regions.

I came home determined to do all I can to find people willing to help the Ghana young people so eager for an education. Since I am a retired teacher, my first thought was to try and reach those who have taught and would like an opportunity to continue helping young people learn and grow. We are looking for people willing to teach one term, 3 1/2 months, or at least two months if an entire term is not possible. I have a flyer about this program that suggests ways to raise money for transportation and expenses in Ghana.

Also, I will be contacting foundations to get financial help for our volunteers. Call or write me for information at 46 High Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301 (phone: 802-258-2257).

**Rich Hiler**

### Reading Partners

More than 40 national partners have come on board with NEA to promote reading in their own special ways. Students in Youth Service America, for example, are directing their enthusiasm and creativity into reading-related service projects in their local communities to celebrate Read Across America and Youth Service Day (April 22). There will be prizes for model projects. Players in the National Football League Players Association have traded their helmets for red-and-white striped "cat hats" and will be reading with children in their home communities as well as some team towns. The Los Angeles Dodgers will launch Dodger Reading Day on March 1 in honor of NEA's Read Across America and hold reading time-outs for local children -- both at the team's spring home in Vero Beach, FL, as well as at Dodger Stadium.

The Newspaper Association of

America Foundation's Newspapers in Education program is sponsoring an "Oh, the Places Words Can Take Us" writing contest for students of all ages. Boys and Girls Clubs of America is making plans for major Read Across America events in Los Angeles, Dallas, and Atlanta. Saturn/UAW retailers across the country are planning reading activities in their stores, as well as providing cars and drivers for the ubiquitous Cat in the Hat.

For the list of NEA's Read Across America partners as well as a run-down of state activities, visit [www.nea.org/readacross](http://www.nea.org/readacross). Also available on the site are Seuss quizzes, sample proclamations, and other information about the nation's premier reading event.

### Vermont-NEA member Beth Dutton featured in publication

*Teaching Holocaust Literature* is a new book comprised of essays in which noted Holocaust educators discuss how they have successfully taught short stories, poetry, novels, drama and memoirs at the secondary level. Included is Windsor, Vermont, author and educator Beth Dutton in the chapter *Tapping the Sensibilities of Teens.* ■



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**1/2 page VALIC ad**

# CANDIDATES

Elections scheduled in April

## Meet your Vermont-NEA candidates

MONTPELIER -- With terms expiring at the end of June, several important positions within the Vermont-NEA governance structure are up for election this year, including:

- ✓ President -- a two-year position
- ✓ Vice President -- a two-year position

- ✓ Secretary-Treasurer -- a two-year position
- ✓ Six Seats on the Vermont-NEA Board of Directors -- each a three-year position
  - UniServ I, Area 1
  - UniServ II, Area 1
  - UniServ III, Area 2

- UniServ IV, Area 1
- UniServ VI, Area 1
- UniServ VI, Area 2
- ✓ 15 State Delegates to the NEA Rep Assembly -- a one event position. The NEA RA meets in Los Angeles this year. Each delegate will receive a stipend of \$1,100 to offset the

cost of travel and accommodations. The election is held over a two-week period in April, with ballots mailed to the home of every Vermont-NEA member. Winners will assume their positions on July 1. These are the candidates:

### For President

**Angelo J. Dorta** is seeking a fourth two-year term as President of Vermont-NEA. He taught grades 3-4 at Founders School in Essex Town.

#### Position Statement "For the Members"

I seek to serve the best interests of Vermont-NEA's hard-working teachers and support staff. You are the collective heart and soul of our excellent Vermont schools. Your daily instruction and classroom relationships shape the future of our students and of our state. No one should feel greater pride and awe in their life's work.

That vital work should be valued. It deserves respect. It needs support.

I will continue to use my 22 years of elementary school service and my experience as President to help you as an educator and union member. Higher salaries, better retirement health benefits, truly professional treatment, and high quality public schools remain top priorities. Support staff face especially difficult problems.

The Association needs a multi-year statewide media campaign to renew public esteem for your work and for Vermont schools. Too many citizens do not know nor appreciate your fine teaching and caring attitude. They do not readily understand the challenges and demands of each school day. They often overlook positive student and school results.

Finally, Vermont-NEA is seriously



**Angelo J. Dorta**

hindered by lack of a Director of Teaching and Learning. We somehow must fund a staff position beginning in 2002-03 dedicated to instructional leadership and school improvement. Our members deserve and need expert Association assistance and consistent advocacy on professional issues, as well as on traditional labor concerns.

I ask for your vote and strong recommendation to your colleagues. My leadership ensures Vermont-NEA shall remain member-driven, member-governed, and member-accountable. That is, for the members.

### For Vice President

**Bonita "Bonnie" Tuscany** is seeking a second full term as Vice President of Vermont-NEA. She teaches fifth grade at Morristown Elementary School.

#### Position Statement

As my first full term as Vice President comes to a close, I would like to remind you that I consider it an honor and privilege to represent the members of Vermont NEA. Please remember that YOU (Association members) ARE Vermont-NEA. Our endeavors have to benefit you. We need to continue to advocate for our practitioners.

The Vermont-NEA Board strives to be a cohesive group, working together for all of the members of Vermont-NEA. Opportunities exist for people to disagree and still work for the membership. As an Association, we must understand the demands and expectations placed on placed on classroom teachers, special services providers, paraeducators, custodial staff, cafeteria staff, office staff, all members. As a practicing classroom teacher, I feel that I have that perspective.

We need to be aware of the implications of educational reform and how it impacts our practitioners. We need to recognize partners and allies, and determine our direction as a state organization, the members' organization. We must forge partnerships. We must keep watch on health care, stan-



**Bonnie Tuscany**

dards, assessments, accountability, professional development needs, National Board Teacher Certification, ACT 60, school choice, privatization, vouchers, re-licensing, and other issues before our members, and we must be willing to support them as needed.

It is my strong desire to continue to represent you and work for you, so I am running for re-election as Vice President of Vermont-NEA. I would appreciate your vote of support in the upcoming election. I would also like to express my thanks to all who choose to vote. It is so important that we exercise that right.

### For Secretary-Treasurer



**Jeff Isham**

**Jeff Isham** of the Valley EA is seeking re-election as Vermont-NEA Secretary-Treasurer.

#### Position Statement

Vermont's public schools need the support of all educators to ensure that all children have an opportunity for success in life. With the development of Vermont-NEA's Purpose and Priorities Statement, our leaders have a plan for the Association's role in this priority. You, as a Vermont-NEA member, have the opportunity every two years to choose individuals to promote these Association priorities. During my tenure as Vermont-NEA Secretary/Treasurer, much of my work has been behind the scenes to ensure that the Association runs smoothly and efficiently. I thank you for your past support and ask for your vote during this year's April election.

### For UniServ I, Area 1 Director

**Shelton Shepherd** of the Burlington Education Association is seeking election as Vermont-NEA Board Director.

### For UniServ II, Area 1 Director

**Lydia Alexander** of the Danville Teachers' Association is seeking re-election as Vermont-NEA Board Director

### For UniServ III, Area 2 Director

**Jay Burnell** of the Southwestern Vermont Education Association is seeking re-election as Vermont-NEA Board Director.

### For UniServ VI, Area 1 Director

**Corrie Palmer** of Ferrisburgh ESP is seeking re-election as Vermont-NEA Board Director.

### For UniServ VI, Area 2 Director

**Francis Trask** of the Orange Southwest Education Association is seeking election as Vermont-NEA Board Director.

*continued on page 6...*

# CANDIDATES

## For UniServ IV, Area 1 Director

**Thomas J. Gallagher** of the Lamoille UHS EA is seeking re-election as UniServ IV, Area 1 Vermont-NEA Board Director. He is a technology education teacher at Lamoille Union and has been an Association member for 23 years.

### Position Statement

As I complete my first term on the Board of Directors, I wonder, "Where has the time gone?" I have met many new friends and educators, as well as learned much about the area in which I have served. Fellow educators have given me their opinions on a variety of issues, and I have tried to serve them to the best of my ability. I would like to continue to serve the members of UniServ District IV, Area 1 for another term.

With the newly elected Representatives in Montpelier, I believe we must be even more vigilant in protect-



*Tom Gallagher*

ing our rights and our jobs. There is no organization that can do that better than Vermont-NEA.

## For Vermont Delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly

(You may vote for 15)

**Martha Allen** of the Essex North EA is a middle school language arts teacher at Canaan Memorial School and has been an Association member for 22 years.

### Position Statement

As an active member of the NEA, I have attended five Representative Assemblies and am in my second year as Northeast Region Director of the NEA Peace and Justice Caucus. I am eager to continue this work, along with promoting public education. I would appreciate your vote for RA delegate.



*Phil Bailey*

**Philip F. Bailey** of the Windham Southeast Education Association is a paraprofessional at Green Street School in Brattleboro. He has been an Association member for 10 years.

### Position Statement

I am running for delegate for the NEA Representative Assembly. For the past five years, I have gone to other Representative Assemblies. I have learned a lot about how the Association runs. I would like to go back and represent the rights of all of the

members. I would vote NO! to vouchers, private school funding, and anything that would take funds away from public schools.

**Lisa Boskind** of the Northeast Kingdom Elementary TA

**Jay Burnell** of the Southwestern Vermont Education Association



*Lisa Champagne*

**Lisa Champagne** of the Windsor Southeast Education Association is a special educator at Windsor Jr./Sr. High School. She has been a member of the Association for 12 years.

### Position Statement

It has been a privilege to represent Vermont at the last five NEA Representative Assemblies. Participating in the world's "largest town meeting" is a challenging, exhilarating, rewarding, exhausting, and exceedingly important responsibility. This is also my fourth year serving as Vermont's alternate on the NEA Resolutions Committee. I would consider it an honor to continue to represent you.

**Delia Clark** of the Essex Educators' Association is a multiage (3,4,5) teacher at Founders Memorial School in Essex Town. She has been an Association member for 30 years.

### Position Statement

I have enjoyed representing Vermonters at the RA and am looking forward to continuing to do so. If elected, I will listen to debate carefully and give consideration to all points of view before voting. I am eager to continue my work on the Resolutions Committee. Thanks for your support in the past.

**Thomas J. Gallagher** of the Lamoille UHS EA is a technology education teacher at Lamoille Union and has been an Association member for 23 years.

### Position Statement

I have attended the five previous Representative Assemblies and have participated in debates and discussions of concern to educators in our country and state. With the new regime in Washington, D.C., we must be even more vigilant in fighting the forces of vouchers, privatization, and the attempts to dismantle our public school systems.



*Carol Hinchey*

**Carol Hinchey** is a member of the Essex Junction EA

### Position Statement

Simply entering the convention hall as one of some 10,000 elected delegates to the NEA RA is simultaneously awe-inspiring and humbling. For the past several years I have had the privilege of representing Vermont-NEA. I have enjoyed being an active member of the NEA Elections Committee, Early Childhood Caucus and the Gay and Lesbian Caucus.

I ask for your vote again this year. Thank you!

**Linda Howard** of the Twinfield Staff Association

**Jeff Isham** of the Valley Education Association teaches at Moretown Elementary School.

### Position Statement

The Annual NEA Representative Assembly is the closest event to Vermont's Town Meeting. It is impos-

sible to explain the amazement of watching over 10,000 delegates from around our country participate in a business meeting of this size. All the important decisions of our Association are made during this five day event held each summer. I ask for your vote to allow me to return to this year's meeting in Los Angeles.



*Laurie Lawrence*

**Laurie Lawrence** of the Burr & Burton Academy TA is a teacher at Burr & Burton and has been an Association member for 10 years.

### Position Statement

I believe our state association should take an active partnership role in working with stakeholders on the improvement of public education through improved teacher quality. We must actively take a role in the development of more challenging professional development, improved pre-service teacher evaluation, and peer coaching and mentoring programs.

**Bonnie Tuscany** of the Morristown Educators' Association is a fifth grade teacher at Morristown Elementary School. She has been an Association member for 30 years.

### Position Statement

Each year that I attend the representative assembly, I still marvel at its magnitude. It is so impressive to be in attendance at such a large town meeting. Democracy at work. I would appreciate your support. Thank you.

**Terri R. Vest** of the Twinfield Education Association is a teacher at Twinfield Union School. She has been an Association member for 19 years.

### Position Statement:

I have served as a Vermont delegate to the National Representative Assembly for the past 4 years. I have also served on various committees at a state level and have served as local leader and officer for 8 years. I feel my experience can benefit Vermont-NEA members. Please vote for me.

**Eric Weiss** of the Union-32 High School Association teaches at Union 32 High School.

### Position Statement

I have been a delegate to the NEA

*Continued on page 7...*

# 17 Vermont school nurses achieve national certification, bringing state total to 28

RANDOLPH -- Seventeen Vermont school nurses achieved national certification just before the start of this school year, bringing the total number of school nurses in Vermont who hold the title "National Certified School Nurse" to 28.

The National Association of School Nurses Vermont Director, Dale Baril, RN, of Sherburne Elementary School in Killington reports that the summer of 2000 brought together school nurses from many areas of Vermont to study for the National Certification Examination for School Nurses. She says the nurses came from many school districts with one thing in common: "to prepare for and join the more than 350,000 nurses in the United States and Canada that hold professional certification."

Currently there are 1,303 school nurses certified by the National Board of Certified School Nurses (NBCSN). According to Baril, "The increase in the number of school nurses taking the certification exam is testimony to the interest of school nurses to engage in an ongoing process of self-evaluation and growth."

Baril facilitated the study sessions with Gail Dailey, RN, of Molly Stark Elementary School, Bennington. The eight-week summer review was held at Gifford Memorial Hospital in Randolph, and was devoted to reviewing the five content areas of the exam: Health Appraisal, Health Problems and Nursing Management, Health Pro-

motion/Disease Prevention, Special Health Issues and Professional Issues.

The four-hour exam was administered to the candidates in August at the Vermont Technical College in Randolph. Due to the increased interest and number of Vermont school nurse candidates, NBCSN arranged for the exam to be held in Vermont. This year, 226 school nurses became certified from 28 states.

Currently, school nurses must hold a nursing license from the State of Vermont and an educator's license with an endorsement from the Department of Education. National Certification is voluntary, but school nurses benefit from recognition of their specialty area of practice, reduced risk management and enhanced professionalism.

In 1985, the National Association of School Nurses developed guidelines for the certification program, and selected the Professional Testing Corporation (PTC) to administer the examinations and report the results. In 1986, with assistance from the National Association of School Nurses' president and other committee members, the title "Certified School Nurse" (C.S.N.), was chosen for those school nurses who successfully completed the examination. In 1999, the word "National" was added to the title, making it National Certified School Nurse (NCSN). This new title is issued to school nurses who have successfully completed the requirements desig-



A group of National Certified School Nurses met last month at Gifford Memorial Hospital in Randolph: (L-R front) Janice Whitaker, Deborah Raleigh Cecot, Mary Waite, Ann Bannister, Martha Ide, (L-R, back) Sherry J. Clarke, Nancy J. Bouffard, Dale Baril, Kary Towne, Anne Marinello, Sally Kirn, Louise B. Mongeon, Gail Dailey, and Sharon Trefry.

nated by the National Board of Certified School Nurses and continue to update their certification.

Baril points out that this national certification aids the profession by encouraging and acknowledging professional achievement in a specific specialty field. She says, "The certification process helps school nurses to maintain currency in our profession, and offers a chance to grow professionally."

Baril was thrilled with the interest and enthusiasm of the candidates: "The entire process -- school nurses traveling great distances for several months, working together supporting each other in this endeavor, and achieving the certification -- is a tremendous accomplishment. I am proud to work

with such outstanding school nurses."

Vermont's National Certified School Nurses are enthusiastic about the professional growth and challenge of the certification process. "It was well worth my time and energy to prepare and take the National School Nurse Certification exam," said Bennington school nurse and Vermont-NEA member Gail Dailey. "Preparing for this exam challenged my knowledge and skills while networking with other school nurses around the state. It also gave me the opportunity to promote the dedication and professionalism of school nursing."

Fair Haven school nurse and Vermont-NEA member Mary Waite, who achieved national certification in 1991,

*Continued on page 8...*

*Continued from page 6...*

Representative Assembly for the past three years. This is a meeting of 10,000 representatives from around the country that sets the agenda for NEA programs for the upcoming year and it is important that Vermont's voice be heard. I believe that I have represented the voice of Vermont teachers well and will continue to do so.

## For Retired Delegate to the NEA RA (Vote for one)



Nancy Cotter

**Nancy Cotter** was a member of Essex-Caledonia NEA and is retired from teaching fourth grade at the Lunenburg Elementary School. She has been an Association member for 23 years.

### Position Statement

As local president, negotiator, grievance chairperson, and Vermont-NEA delegate, I've worked for policies honoring and strengthening the efforts of school staffs to provide excellence in education in a safe environment for all children. As your delegate, I'd listen to your concerns and continue these efforts at the national RA.

**Jay Kaplan** was a member of the Essex Junction Education Association and is retired from teaching at Essex High School.

### Position Statement

I serve on the retirement board and have been responsible for protecting and improving your benefits. I have attended the Representative Assembly and successfully introduced new business items that will improve our security. We need somebody who is an expert in retirement matters at the convention. Please let me have the honor of representing you.

## Congratulations to Vermont's National Certified School Nurses:

**Christine Armstrong**, RN, C.P. Smith Elementary School, Burlington  
**Ann Bannister**, RN, Rutland High School  
**Deborah Raleigh Cecot**, RN, Clarendon Elementary School  
**Sherry Clarke**, RN, State Street Elementary School, Windsor  
**Anne Cohn**, RN, Ferrisburgh Central School  
**Susan Cota**, RN, Rockingham Central Elementary School  
**Marsha Cox**, RN, Lamoille Union High School, Hyde Park  
**Gail Dailey**, RN, Molly Stark Elementary School, Bennington  
**Rebecca Davis**, RN, Chamberlin Elementary School, So. Burlington  
**Nancy Gooch**, RN, Canaan Memorial School  
**Sally Kirn**, RN, Northfield Middle/High School  
**Anne Marinello**, RN, Woodstock Union High School  
**Arlene Scott**, RN, Westminster Center School  
**Karolyn Towne**, RN, Milton Jr. Sr. High School

**Sharonlee Trefry**, RN, Bristol Elementary School  
**Janice Whitaker**, RN, Middlebury Union Middle School  
**Robin O'Neill Wright**, RN, Hyde Park Elementary School  
**Dale Baril**, RN, Sherburne Elementary School, Killington - June 1997  
**Nancy Bouffard**, RN, Milton Jr. Sr. High School - August 1997  
**Dianne Hubbard**, RN, Castleton Elementary School - March 1991  
**Martha Ide**, RN, Barre Town Elementary School - March 1991  
**Virginia Incerpi**, RN, Danville School - March 1990  
**Claire Molner**, RN, Proctor Jr./Sr. High School - August 1991  
**Louise B. Mongeon**, RN, Winooski M/High School - June 1999  
**Carol Sheldon**, RN, (Retired Lifetime), Sharon - March 1993  
**Esther Swett**, RN, (Retired Lifetime), Mendon - March 1995  
**Mary Waite**, RN, Fair Haven Elementary School - March 1991  
**Nedra Willard**, RN, Barnet School - March 1991

Continued from page 7...

said, "National certification was a goal I wished to attain both personally and professionally. It is a standard used to gauge professional competency in school health nursing."

Danville school nurse and Vermont-NEA member Virginia Incerpi is a past president of the Vermont State School Nurses' Association (VSSNA). She achieved her national certification in 1990 and still values the experience: "I took the exam because I wanted motivation to do a thorough review and that did it for me. I get compulsive about having to take tests. It was a commitment and I had to follow through. I spent a lot of time reviewing and found it beneficial to my job."

"I believe in high standards and accountability in our educational system," said Milton school nurse and Vermont-NEA member Kary Towne, who was awarded national certification this past year. "When the organized effort began last year to encourage school nurses to become nationally certified, I knew this was a challenge I was ready for. I feel this certification is an excellent opportunity for school nurses to document achievement at the national level. I would encourage all school nurses to pursue national certification."

Becky Davis, South Burlington school nurse and Vermont-NEA member, also has just achieved her national certification. "I took the exam primarily for professional development, an opportunity to study, consult and collaborate with school nurse colleagues around the state," she said, adding: "This exam was well worth it, and I would recommend it to other school nurses, as I believe it is a wonderful tool to further education for school nursing."

Health educator and Vermont-NEA member Janice Whitaker of Middlebury is a past president of VSSNA and a new nationally certified school nurse. She said, "I think it is essential for school nurses to be recognized for our expertise in our specialty practice. National certification is a significant way of demonstrating and recognizing the special skills and knowledge nurses bring to the educational setting."

In a statement sent to the certified school nurses by NBCSN board member Jan Hootman, she praises Vermont's efforts: "To have 28 nationally certified school nurses is commendable, especially considering your numbers... Your study for and passing of the national school nursing certification examination affirms your commitment to the delivery of quality professional school nursing services." ■

1/4 page New England  
Financial ad

## Applications due March 16

# Teen writers to gather at Champlain College

High school juniors from Vermont are invited to apply for the Young Vermont Writers' Conference (YVWC), a summer writing workshop hosted by Champlain College, a four-year, private college in Burlington. For dedicated young Vermont writers, the weekend event on May 11-13 offers a chance to meet other teens who share their passion for telling the stories of their lives, and to study the craft with some of the state's most celebrated authors and teachers. Vermont novelist, short story writer, and poet David Huddle, will deliver the keynote address and read from his work. Students will participate in intensive workshops in fiction, poetry or creative nonfiction. They'll exchange and critique manuscripts, hear readings from faculty members, and share their work

with others on board an open-mike cruise on Lake Champlain.

Participants stay in Champlain's Victorian-era residence halls and use the resources of the state-of-the-art campus that overlooks Lake Champlain. Meals are taken alongside faculty in the campus dining hall. High school teachers can apply to attend as chaperones and participate in their own workshop.

The all-inclusive fee for the three-day conference is \$100 for students; \$35 for teacher-chaperones. Applications to attend this event must be postmarked by March 16. For an application, visit the YVWC web site at [www.champlain.edu/write](http://www.champlain.edu/write) or contact event coordinator Larissa Vigue at [viguel@vbmail.champlain.edu](mailto:viguel@vbmail.champlain.edu) or (802)865-6406. ■

## Grant deadline is March 15

March 15, 2001 is the deadline for the first round of applications for Innovation Grants, a new program from the NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education. Up to 200 grants of \$2,000 each will be awarded to small teams of educators to try out innovations that lead to student achievement of high standards.

Applications are invited from teams of two or more public school teachers, education support personnel, and/or public higher education faculty and staff. Preference will be given to applicants who serve economically disadvantaged and/or underserved students. Preference will also be given to applicants who are members of the National Education Association.

Innovation Grants may be used for resource materials, supplies, equipment, transportation, software, and professional fees. Grant funds may also be used for professional development necessary to implement the innovation, and will support activities for

18 months from the date of the award. Notification of successful grant applications will be made by August 1, 2001.

Funding for the Innovation Grants program will be provided entirely by the NEA Foundation. This is the first time in the Foundation's 32 years that a grant program has been funded solely from resources of its endowment, which is supported by the 2.6 million members of NEA.

"Innovation Grants will give educators opportunities to test out their own best ideas about how to help students achieve high standards of learning. NEA members should be especially proud that through the work of their members and the support of their foundation, they are directing the future for education excellence," said Judith Rényi, executive director.

Information, complete guidelines, and applications are available on The NEA Foundation website: [www.nfie.org](http://www.nfie.org) ■



279 North Winooski Avenue, Burlington, VT 05401  
A Non-Profit Technology Training Division of CCTV (802) 860-4057 ext. 20

### Announces the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Summer Teacher Computer Training Workshop July 9 – 13, 2001

Our Summer Computer Training Workshops are hands on learning experiences with ample computer lab time and practice time to learn the skills introduced.

The July 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> offering will be at our training facility in Burlington, VT. CyberSkills/Vermont provides two instructors for each training session. Seating is limited to 15 participants. The instructor of record holds a Masters of Education degree.

Three graduate credits awarded through the Professional Development Outreach Center at Trinity College of Vermont 208 Colchester Avenue, Burlington, VT. Credits awarded by Southern New Hampshire University.

Total Cost is \$963.00 per participant, including tuition.

We do accept school purchase orders.

Call Harold Smith at (802) 860-4057 ext 27

## Report from the State House

By Joel D. Cook  
Executive Director

Here's a report on some proposals under consideration in the State House.

### Retirement health insurance.

To date, the Governor has inserted \$3 million to help pay for improving the current inadequate benefit to 80% premium coverage for the retiree and 50% coverage for his or her spouse. The House Appropriations Committee has heard from State Treasurer Jim Douglas, who questioned the adequacy of the amount. Without going into detail, active teachers would be called upon to increase their contribution to the Retirement System an average of some \$250 or so to improve this benefit. The Chairs of the House and the Senate Government Operations Committees have both lent their strong support to this effort, and it stands as a top priority of the Retired Teachers Association as well as Vermont-NEA for this session.

If you would like to lend your support to this effort, it would be quite useful to contact your legislators now about the importance of this issue both for the thousands of currently retired Vermont teachers and the many hun-

**Do you want the Legislature to improve the health insurance benefit for retired teachers? Contact your legislators -- at home, or at the State House in Montpelier:**

**1-800-322-5616**

dreds of active teachers considering retirement.

**Choice.** There are two live proposals right now. We expect others. H.104 would change the law passed just last year and H.174 would create 15 charter schools annually:

**H.104.** Under current law, each public high school is supposed to join with at least one other to provide some students the capacity to attend an out of district high school. If the parties agree to a funding arrangement, it is followed. Absent agreement, no money changes hands. H.104 would transform that provision into a State mandate that the block grant otherwise given the "sending" district would go to the "receiving" district. The important question is whether money should "follow" students, and at what "cost."

**H.174.** Vermont-NEA thinks Vermont law already permits most any public school to transform itself into

what amounts to a charter school and that Vermont has more than enough public schools to support already. The law permits schools to request variances from strict adherence to State regulations so long as they can otherwise meet the increasingly strict established accountability standards. The last thing we think Vermont needs is a mandate requiring local communities and taxpayers generally to support the operation of yet more schools in the state. This bill would require the State Board of Education to consider chartering up to 15 more schools each year. It also has provisions that restrict the rights of their employees and limit the control of local school boards over their own schools. As is the case with H.104, this bill would require a local school district to cede to the charter school the block grant funds of any of its students attending it.

**School funding.** The House Ways and Means Committee contin-

ues examining our school funding law. The Committee wants to retain the "equity" (really "equality") provisions of current law while removing its sharing provisions, and it wants to accomplish that without intruding into local school district spending and budget decisions. That is a tall order to fill. The Committee has focused on the meaning of "equity" and has had testimony from attorneys involved directly or indirectly in managing or analyzing the Vermont Supreme Court's 1997 Brigham decision. Most recently, the Chair of the Committee, Richard Marron of Stowe, has floated the idea of increasing the per-student block grant to such an extent that any need otherwise to equalize spending capacity across districts would be minimized. Raising the block grant from about \$5400 to about \$6600, as he has suggested, could be accomplished by raising the statewide property tax rate from \$1.10 to \$1.34. To replace the remaining millions of dollars from the "sharing pool" would require a further infusion of money from the State General Fund. Stay tuned. ■

Contact [jwinston@nea.org](mailto:jwinston@nea.org) to get legislative reports via email.

## Should the money "follow" students?

*We need all educators and local taxpayers to pay careful attention to two dominant, if inconsistent, themes emerging in the current Legislature. On the one hand there are plenty of legislators looking for ways to change our school funding law to reduce the burden on local property tax payers. On the other hand, there are plenty of legislators looking for ways to expand opportunities for some students without having the State pay anything for it. These two themes are on a collision course, and local schools and local taxpayers are at ground zero.*

**School funding.** The House Ways and Means Committee has been actively considering ways to make school funding less reliant on the local property tax, particularly as it bears on budget requirements above what the State provides. Its major objective is to try to find an alternative to the sharing mechanism that still maintains both equality and local spending decision authority. Whether its work grows out of greater concern for taxpayers in property wealthy towns or property tax payers generally, its members are seeking ways to alleviate local property tax burdens. In all likelihood, whatever the other contours of its plan, it will almost assuredly be recommending other tax sources to replace school funds otherwise obtained through the local property tax. Good, bad, or indifferent, that is the focus of legislative attention for the moment.

"Expanded opportunities." At the

same time, from different corners of State government comes the call for new and different approaches to providing education to some students. Whether under the heading of charter schools, expanded school choice, alternative programs for dropouts, or dual enrollment in high school and college, all the proposals have a common element. It is the assumption that they should be paid with money that already goes to school districts in the form of the per pupil block grant. That is, no idea for broadening opportunities for students apparently is good enough in the eyes of its proponents to recommend that the State actually pay for it. Instead, each idea is accompanied by a requirement that the school district to whose school a student would otherwise go should cede all or some of the block grant that student represents. In the jargon of the State House, "money would follow the students."

**How money would follow students.** The per-student block grant currently hovers around \$5400. Under one Ways and Means idea, it might grow as high as \$6600 or so. Whatever the amount of the block grant, it is not attached to any assessment of actual cost. Rather, it is merely the end result of a calculation that itself is based on a cumulative amount of money the State is willing to pay. This makes all proposals to use the block grant as the basis for paying for these outlying programs all the less meaningful.

Here's what "money follows the students" really means. Let's assume, in a school choice program, a student

from a relatively low budget high school enrolls in a relatively high budget high school instead. If money followed her, her home high school loses the \$5400 block grant she represents and, by virtue of State mandate, her home district faces its own "choice." That is whether to ask local taxpayers to pay more to make up the difference or to cut opportunities for students remaining there. In fact, "let the money follow the student" is code for "let's make local school districts and local taxpayers pay for yet another State-imposed mandate."

**A partial list.** Here are some of the ways money following the student will be considered:

✓ **H.104** would change the existing high school choice law to mandate that the block grant accompany any student choosing to attend a high school other than his or her local high school.

✓ **H.174** would create so-called "charter schools," in a proposal with many deficits. For any student attending a charter school, the block grant that would otherwise go to the school of the student's home district would be siphoned to the charter school.

✓ **The Youth Challenge Program**, designed to address specialized needs of students at risk of becoming dropouts, is a residential program idea that would be paid with each student's home district block grant, supplemented by \$8000 in federal funds.

✓ State colleges and the Department of Education are floating a proposal for "dual enrollment" in high

school and college. While the cost of similar programs in some other states is borne by the state, the current proposal would have local school districts forfeit a portion of a student's block grant.

In each instance, and in any other instance in which a proposal to have money follow the student is present, the local school district is left either to backfill the unfunded State mandate with increased local taxes or to cut its own program offerings to its remaining students.

**Examples.** If a charter school were to arise somewhere in Chittenden County, and some students in South Burlington were to enroll in it, the already hard-pressed South Burlington taxpayers and school system -- and all the remaining students -- would face the "choice" of paying more taxes or cutting more programs.

In Williamstown, as another example, if the school choice law required the town to send block grant amounts with any student deciding to attend, say, Spaulding High in Barre, Williamstown's taxpayers and school system -- and all the remaining students there -- would face the "choice" of paying more taxes or cutting more programs.

So, when you hear that legislators are trying to reduce the burden of local property taxpayers, listen to the background noise as well: What are they also considering that might just make that burden worse? And, by all means, let your own legislators know you are listening. ■



**Full Page UVM  
Distance Learning ad**

## Board boosts ESP Award, approves 2001-02 budget proposal



The Vermont-NEA Board devoted the early portion of their January 3 meeting to a conversation about licensing with Doug Walker of the State Education Department. Eric Weiss (R) represents the Montpelier area.

MONTPELIER -- The Vermont-NEA Board of Directors spent time reviewing and approving a budget for 2001-02 to bring before the Association's annual "town meeting," the Representative Assembly. The new budget expands services to members, primarily through the addition of a seventh UniServ Director to work in the field with local Associations. Vermont-NEA Vice President Bonnie Tuscany will present the proposed budget at the April 6 evening session of the Representative Assembly at the Holiday Inn in Rutland.

In other action, the Board:

- Approved a \$250 donation to Green Mountain Power workers to support their three-week strike and settlement.

- Voted to add a cash prize of \$1,000 to Vermont-NEA's ESP Award, effective this year. ■

### Coming Events

- March 1**  
Deadline for Vermont-NEA Human & Civil Rights Award nominations
- March 2**  
Dr. Seuss's 97th birthday  
Read Across America
- March 6**  
Town Meeting Day
- March 9-10**  
Vermont-NEA ESP Conference at the Sheraton Conference Center in South Burlington
- March 10**  
Vermont-NEA Board of Directors meets at the Sheraton Conference Center in South Burlington
- March 17**  
St. Patrick's Day

### Reserve your room for the Vermont-NEA Rep Assembly

The 2001 Vermont-NEA Representative Assembly will convene on Friday evening, April 6, at the Rutland Holiday Inn. The Awards Dinner, complimentary for delegates, begins at 5:00 p.m. The first Business Meeting begins at 7:30 p.m., with credentials check at 7:00 p.m. The second business session will be called to order at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday.

Call 1-800-462-4810 to reserve your overnight accommodation. Be sure to mention that you are part of the Vermont-NEA group to get the special \$79 rate.

## What is an NEA Director?

By Wayne Nadeau  
NEA Director for Vermont

There are 173 voting members of the NEA Board of Directors, nine of whom are on the Executive Committee. Of the nine, three are our executive officers (Pres., VP, Sec-Treas.). Of the voting directors, each state has a minimum of one director on the Board, plus an additional director for each 20,000 NEA Active members. In addition to state affiliate directors, retired members have six directors, students three directors, and at-large have sixteen directors (one administrator, 15 ESP).

Directors adopt policies and procedures consistent with the will of the members as expressed by the actions of our Representative Assemblies (RA). We develop and recommend a two-year budget to the RA, are advocates on association positions in and out of our states, and work as a liaison between the national and our state affiliates. We are all elected representatives, elected by the constituent group whom we represent. We may serve two three-year terms.

For more specifics on our responsibilities you may either contact me or refer to the NEA 2000-01 Handbook, which each local president should receive.

Vermont has one director on the NEA Board. That individual must be an active full time teacher. Vermont's NEA Director does not receive a stipend (No, I am not advocating for one), but is reimbursed for expenses incurred while performing his/her duties as a director. The NEA Director for Vermont sits on the Vermont NEA Board of Directors and its Executive Committee.

How active a director is in getting out to members is directly related to



Wayne Nadeau

the individual's professional work schedule, a need to have a life, and his/her own initiative. It is most difficult to attend local association meetings that are an hour away when one's duties require one to be on duty from 8am until 3:30pm. This year I have had to rely heavily on your Vermont-NEA Board representatives and they rely on regional bargaining meetings when there is one to attend.

Statewide meetings such as the Vermont-NEA RA -- in Rutland this year on April 6-7 -- and the Vermont-NEA ESP Conference -- in Burlington this year on March 9-10 -- are great opportunities for me to hear from you and to answer your questions about the organization. The Fall Area Meetings also serve as another format for me to hear your concerns and for you to hear the message of our president and your reaction to that message.

Some of you may not have the slightest idea about the opportunities that I have mentioned for your input into the workings of this organization, or for your opportunity to understand how our organization does work for us. If you so choose, I encourage you to ask your local leaders about these

opportunities. I am certain they are looking for your help in keeping our organization focused on the needs of our members.

Although all the meetings I have mentioned are for conducting the business of Vermont-NEA, it is valuable time for your NEA Director to hear from members on what is important to them and what they are facing on the front lines of public education. Vermont-NEA's yearly RA does provide for a NEA Director's report, and at that time I attempt to report to you the state of public education and what our colleagues are facing in other parts of the country.

It is only an attempt, for even with this column and the NEA Director's speech at our state Representative Assembly; I can only provide you a touch of what I am exposed to when I travel outside of Vermont. What is troubling is to watch the movement of ideas from various interest groups or well financed individuals as they begin in one state and get the necessary financing to touch our lives in Vermont. When legislators and other policy makers attend conferences, they receive a plethora of information on how to improve education. It is bewildering and generally not from public education advocates.

I have written extensively on these activities and will continue to do so. Knowing what is coming our way allows us to prepare, and working together as one strong association of dedicated public education employees, 2.6 million nationally, we can refute these false remedies, for we are the experts on education.

As always, another method of keeping me informed is to contact me at: wfnadeau@yahoo.com, 802-860-6410 (h), 802-888-4261 vm 503 (s). ■

### What's new on the Vermont-NEA Website...



[www.vtnea.org](http://www.vtnea.org)  
Read Vermont-NEA Today Online

Association members now can read and print out the Association's monthly newspaper online. Beginning with the January 2001 issue of *Vermont-NEA Today*, the newspaper is available on the Association's website as an Acrobat file. Go to [www.vtnea.org](http://www.vtnea.org) and select "Read Vermont-NEA Today Online" to select a newspaper and, if you need it, load Acrobat Reader into your computer.



**1/4 page Canter ad - color**

**1/4 page Johnson State College ad**

**1/2 page AIG ad**