



# TODAY

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Vermont-NEA Photo by Art Huse



*Winooski's successful ESP negotiators: (L-R Front) Sally Grenon, a paraeducator with special needs children; Debbie Chevrette, kindergarten paraeducator; Linda Gelinas, elementary paraeducator; and MaryLee Grigsby, paraeducator and chief negotiator. (Back) John Malcovsky, a teacher, served as number cruncher for the ESP team.*

## Winooski ESP settle 3 years, boost pay 24.59%

WINOOSKI -- Without mediation, without fact finding, and without a crisis buildup, paraeducators in Winooski have settled a three-year contract that provides a new money increase of 24.59%. Pay rates for the 42 paras now range from \$8.12 per year in 2002-03 for a high school graduate with no experience to \$12.60 per hour in 2005-06 for a college graduate with 12 years' experience.

Para pay rates are set out on a 7-

step salary schedule, with experience steps 0-2 years, 3-4 years, 5-6 years, 7-8 years, 9-10 years, 11-12 years, and "over 12." There are two columns, one for high school graduates and the other for college graduates with associate's or bachelor's degrees.

"Along with our step system and along with the raises, we also kept our longevity stipend, which is \$1,000 a year and our insurance buyout, which is \$1,250 a year, for those who take

it," explains chief negotiator MaryLee Grigsby.

This outstanding settlement is a tribute to both the hard-working ESP team and a school board interested in providing a respectable wage for paras. Chief negotiator MaryLee Grigsby points out that both sides compromised.

It certainly helps, as well, that paras in Winooski enjoy a lot of community support. According to

MaryLee: "We're the core group that passes budgets every year. We helped raise most of the taxpayers' kids."

Congratulations to negotiators Linda Gelinas, Diana Atherton, Sally Grenon, Debbie Chevrette, Sue O'Brien, and MaryLee Grigsby (chief). John Malcovsky, a teacher, served as number cruncher for the ESP team. Vermont-NEA UniServ Director David Boulanger advises the local. - LBH

### INSIDE

<b>A Retention Crisis, Not a Shortage</b> .....	2	<b>Letters to the editor</b> .....	6
<b>Myths and Facts about ESEA</b> .....	3	<b>Candidate position statements</b> .....	7
<b>Vermont-NEA seeks select group of educators</b> .....	4	<b>Letters continued</b> .....	10
<b>New staff position proposed</b> .....	5	<b>Welcome Bob Raskevitz to Vermont-NEA staff</b> .....	15
		<b>BEA Black History Month placemats</b> .....	16

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**“...a Retention Crisis, Not a Shortage...”**

By Angelo Dorta

The seminal 1996 report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), entitled *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, forcefully summed up the most glaring oversight in the two-decade-long effort to retool U.S. schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: "On the whole, the school reform movement has ignored the obvious: What teachers know and can do makes the crucial difference in what children learn...Student learning in this country will improve only when we focus our efforts on improving teaching."

NCTAF challenged our society to provide all students with "access to competent, caring, and qualified teachers" by 2006 and termed such access as each child's "educational birthright." How much has been accomplished in 6½ years?

NCTAF's follow-up assessment last month, "No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children," reveals a surprising twist to the assumption of persistent teacher shortages as the primary reason for too few qualified teachers: "*The conventional wisdom is that we can't find enough good teachers. The truth is we can't keep enough good teachers...Teacher retention has become a national crisis...[and] is now undermining teaching quality...and driving teacher shortages.*" (Underlined emphasis added.)

The Commission analyzed National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data showing that the nation dramatically increased its supply of teachers during the 1990s and —except for mathematics, science, special education, and bilingual education—generally produces enough teachers each year. In fact, new Bachelor's and Master's degree education graduates increased by 50% between 1984 and 1999, but only slightly more than half of them sought teaching jobs and were hired.

More than 250,000 teachers leave the classroom each year. "Movers" go to new teaching jobs in other schools, while "leavers" depart the profession either temporarily or permanently. "Teacher turnover" refers to movers and leavers, but "teacher attrition" includes only those who are leaving teaching.

Apparently, retirement is not at all the primary reason for teacher attrition. Teachers are nearly three times more likely to quit teaching for other reasons: "Poor working conditions and pay are driving qualified teachers out of many of these schools. Lack of administrative support, insufficient time to collaborate with colleagues, inadequate resources, and student discipline problems all contribute to high turnover and attrition. Wages are as

important to teachers as they are to those in other professions, and they are much more likely to leave districts with low wages."

A long-time leading expert, Dr. Richard Ingersoll of the University of Pennsylvania, comments that teaching is increasingly "a revolving door occupation," with approximately 33% of all new teachers leaving after three years and almost half of them gone within five years. Attrition in high poverty urban schools may be one-third higher than the national averages, meaning that inner city poor and minority students are much more likely to have inexperienced teachers, substitute teachers, and "out-of-field" teachers who lack the necessary academic subject knowledge and proper license endorsement required for their teaching assignment. Out-of-field teachers often lack even a college minor academic concentration suitable to one or more of their assigned classes.

Excessive teacher turnover and attrition also are endemic to small, low-income rural communities. Geographic isolation, desire for metropolitan culture, insufficient financial resources, and inadequate opportunities for professional growth are the leading reasons that new teachers who begin their careers in rural schools soon migrate to larger and wealthier school districts or find totally different employment. Inevitably, the students left behind in those impoverished rural schools suffer through the same "passing parade" of unqualified replacements and short-term substitutes as their urban peers. In fact, the Commission explains that poverty-stricken and dysfunctional schools and their students in both urban and rural settings suffer through the same "downward spiral...teaching quality declines, student achievement suffers, and the cycle of educational inequity is repeated from one generation to the next."

In a similarly disturbing cycle, high teacher turnover and attrition then becomes the fundamental excuse for hiring ill-prepared and unqualified people to replace the leavers and movers. Again, the NCTAF Report uses recent NCES data to prove that underprepared replacements are twice as likely to quit by the end of the very first year than someone who has completed a high quality teacher preparation program. "*Hiring additional underprepared individuals only keeps the revolving door spinning. We have mistaken the symptom for the problem,*" the Report notes. "*The real problem is that these schools are not retaining a sufficient number of teachers with the proper preparation and credential.*"

There also is a financial cost to pay for an unwillingness to break the turn-

over/attrition "churn." Annual hiring costs are driven upward. A Texas cost analysis recently estimated a \$329 million annual loss attributed to state-wide teacher turnover.

Investment in teacher professional development does not yield a full return, either. Too many teachers leave before the school district can gain improved student achievement from the professional development work that has sharpened teachers' instructional skills, as well as from their added years of classroom experience. Long-term school and district action plans are rendered ineffective when faculty constantly face turnover and attrition "brain drain."

Believe there will be a strong tendency for Vermont educators and school boards to minimize news of a "retention crisis" as not a particularly pertinent issue in Vermont schools. After all, many of us see and work with the same colleagues each day. Often, however, they happen to belong to the same broad age range and same stage of adult life. Look deeper and longer, however, and you'll find evidence everywhere.

Why do so many younger new teachers start their employment in the Northeast Kingdom or Central Vermont, but end up in Chittenden County if they haven't started families yet? Why do schools in the southwest and southeast corners of the state see so many of their teachers departing for work in Massachusetts and New York schools? Do you know an excellent and committed teacher who became so frustrated with foolish school operations, policies, and dictates, or with persistent unprofessional treatment, that he/she finally resigned in favor of a teaching job somewhere else? Was it you?

Why did nearby Plattsburgh area school districts place such strong, aggressive recruiting ads in Vermont publications last year inviting comparisons between employment opportunities? Why are so many of us so irritated by the rapid rise in Vermont teacher license waivers since 1997 and so downright angry about the newly proposed notion of an "emergency license" that requires only a high school degree? How many former math, science, or technology colleagues took jobs with IBM, start-up computer firms, or other private companies while you stayed in the classroom? Why do Vermont superintendents often feel so discouraged at out-of-state recruitment job fairs?

Why did several Vermont supervisory union school districts have no one teaching on a license waiver, while eight other Vermont supervisory union school districts had between 20% and 34% of their total SU staff working on waivers?

The answers to these Vermont questions just might be in the new NCTAF Report. ■

## How the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) affects you...

# Myths and Facts about ESEA

By Mark Hage

The new Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) is enormously complex and difficult to understand. Vermont-NEA will continue to educate its members about the law and on how to survive its most onerous provisions. This article addresses some of the common "myths" about the law that have arisen in the last year.

**Myth:** ESEA gives administrators new powers to fire personnel or to extend the workday for teachers and support personnel.

**Fact:** We've heard from some local leaders that certain administrators believe the law gives them the power to override provisions of the collective bargaining agreement in their district. **This is false.** NEA fought hard to preserve collective bargaining laws and your workplace rights during the period when the new ESEA was being drafted — and we won. Here is the wording from the statute if you need to drive home this point:

*Nothing in this section shall be construed to alter or otherwise affect the rights, remedies, and procedures afforded school or school district employees under Federal, State or local laws (including applicable regulations or court orders) or under the terms of the collective bargaining agreements, memoranda of understanding, or other agreements between such employees and their employees.*

Any effort by a school board or administrator to unilaterally nullify or qualify provisions of your collective bargaining agreement to comport with their understanding of ESEA should be collectively resisted. Notify your UniServ Director immediately if such a problem develops in your district.

**Myth:** Paraeducators must have or get an associate's or bachelor's degree to meet the law's definition of "highly qualified" and to retain their jobs.

**Fact:** The law's new qualification standards DO NOT REQUIRE paraeducators to have or to earn an advanced college degree. Attaining such a degree is one way to become "highly qualified" under the law, but it is not the only way. Paras can satisfy the regulations also by having a minimum of two years of college OR by passing a rigorous assessment in math and reading at the local level. Many Vermont school districts, alone or in tandem with others in their supervisory unions, and with the support of the state, are moving forward with creating assessment systems that reflect their curricula and staff needs and that are manageable to implement.

**Myth:** Local assessments for paras striving to meet the new qualification standards under the ESEA must include a test of some kind.

**Fact:** A local assessment need not be a test. It could be, or a test might be one option among several (e.g., workshops, courses, portfolios, administrative evaluations, etc.). The law does NOT dictate one method for assessing paras, which means local Associations have an opportunity to shape the discussion about how best to meet the new standards. A growing number of local school districts, in fact, appear open to this kind of collaboration. Local Associations should have a significant voice in devising a system of assessments that is fair, adequately funded, and meets the needs of a diverse workforce. Again, the system that is ultimately developed within a school district or supervisory union may employ multiple assessment tools.

One last point: local Associations should be advocating now that their districts only hire paras that meet the law's definition of "highly qualified." This is consistent with the new law, which requires that paras hired on or after January 8, 2002, be highly qualified before they start work. For paras hired prior to January 8, 2002, the law gives them until January 2006 to meet the new standards.

**Myth:** The new ESEA contains a provision — the Coverdell Teacher Protection Act (TPA) — that protects teachers and support personnel from lawsuits filed by students and their parents for injuries allegedly caused by school employees.

**Fact:** TPA is so narrowly drawn in respect to liability protection and so rife with exceptions that it affords school employees almost no real protection from lawsuits. The coverage applies only to cases where a student's injury occurs while an employee is attempting to discipline a student or maintain order in the classroom or school. It offers no real protection from run-of-the-mill cases that give rise to most of the lawsuits filed for alleged negligence or for student injuries suffered outside of a disciplinary context. For example, TPA does NOT protect teachers or ESP who are sued because a student was

- ✓ hurt on the playground
- ✓ injured during a lab experiment or in a vocational class
- ✓ beaten up by other students
- ✓ assaulted on a field trip.

Nothing in TPA prohibits students or their families from filing lawsuits against school employees, and it provides no money to reimburse school employees for costs incurred while defending themselves from groundless legal actions.

In other words, TPA can't hold a candle to the \$1 million liability protection that comes with membership in Vermont-NEA.

**Myth:** ESEA's sanctions against "failing" schools go into effect after



Mark Hage is Vermont-NEA Director of Member Benefits

the 2013-14 school year.

**Fact:** Wrong. A school district's entire student body and select subgroups (e.g., major racial/ethnic groups, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and students with limited English proficiency) must demonstrate 100% proficiency in required testing domains by the close of the 2013-14 school year. However, the advancement toward this final goal is governed by system of progressive benchmarks set by the state between 2002-03 and 2013-14. The failure to meet these testing benchmarks can result in severe sanctions against school districts receiving Title I funds well before the close of the 2013-14 school year.

**Myth:** The Bush administration is committed to funding ESEA to make it work.

**Fact:** On January 8, 2003, the one-year anniversary of the reauthorized ESEA (also known as the "No Child Left Behind Act"), Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts and Representative George Miller of California, both of whom played a major role in drafting the law, criticized the president for refusing to adequately fund it as promised. Here are excerpts from that letter:

"We oppose the Administration's budget that, if adopted, will result in the worst education bill in seven years. The Administration's budget falls \$7 billion short of the resources promised in the Act, and it cuts funding for *No Child Left Behind* initiatives by \$90 million. In addition, it funds less than half of the federal commitment to special education, an estimated \$11 billion shortfall that affects over 6 million American children with disabilities."

"Although the Administration has not yet released its 2004 budget, early indications are troubling. We understand that the Administration's 2004 proposals will continue to break the *No Child Left Behind* promises. The \$12.3 billion that the Administration proposes for Title I for low-income children falls more than \$6 billion short of the \$18.5 billion called for by the Act — leaving behind over half of the eligible children." ■

## Upcoming Association events...

### March 1

Deadline for Vermont-NEA Human & Civil Rights awards.

### March 3

Dr. Seuss's birthday observed / Read Across America

Deadline for April issue of *Vermont-NEA Today*

### March 4

Town Meeting Day

### March 28-29

Vermont-NEA Representative Assembly

### March 31-April 13

Vermont-NEA Election Weeks

### April 14

Election ballots due at Vermont-NEA office by 5:00 p.m.

## Soldiers and Sailors Act

Under the Soldiers and Sailors Act, MBNA, the endorsed provider of NEA Member Benefits' credit card program, will extend a special 5.9% fixed annual percentage rate on the credit card account of any active duty military personnel. This special rate will continue for as long as the individuals remain on active duty (or until their balance is paid in full).

If Association members are military reservists called to active duty, they must meet the following criteria to get the special rate:

(a) their account must be opened prior to being called to active duty;

(b) there must be a balance on the account when the military orders are received;

(c) authorized users do not qualify; and

(d) the 5.9% remains on the account for as long as the person is on active duty, or until the balance is paid in full.

To qualify for the rate, the member must send the MBNA the following:

- A copy of the members military orders
- Name
- Unit Name
- Commander's Name
- Entry date into Active Duty
- Length of Active Duty
- Phone number

Members may use this special fax number to forward the information above: 302-458-0394.

## 4-H GROWING CONNECTIONS is offering a training opportunity in garden-enhanced nutrition education

You are invited to participate in a four-hour training to:

- increase your knowledge about garden-enhanced nutrition education,
- learn fun, hands-on activities and develop skills for working with young people, and
- receive a free copy of the 4-H Growing Connections curriculum.

### What will the training prepare you to do?

The training will prepare you to collaborate with UVM Extension staff and other volunteers to lead a 4-H Growing Connections program in your community. You will receive training about how to plant gardens and prepare recipes with youth while introducing them to basic ideas about nutrition, food safety and food security. The time commitment is flexible, depending on your needs and interests. You do not need previous gardening or youth experience to participate in the training.

Trainings are scheduled from 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at the following UVM Extension Offices:

- Wednesday, April 2nd, Rutland
- Friday, April 11th, St. Johnsbury
- Wednesday, April 16th, Brattleboro
- Monday, April 28th, Burlington
- Wednesday, April 30th, Berlin

For more information about 4-H Growing Connections and / or to register for a training please contact:

Michelle Monagas  
4-H Gardening and Nutrition Coordinator  
617 Comstock Rd; Suite 5  
Berlin, VT 05602  
802-223-2389 x16  
1-866-860-1382 x16 (toll free)  
michelle.monagas@uvm.edu



## Call for PDA Trainers

# Vermont-NEA is looking for a select group of experienced educators

MONTPELIER -- Teaching has never been easy, and it never will be. From the first day a teacher steps into a classroom until the last, the academic and social challenges he or she faces are complex and enormously demanding. Other professions expect a great deal from their practitioners as well, but few demand as much as our school districts and provide so little in the way of practical and sustained support for those who do the work. This is especially true for teachers in the first three years of their career.

**Nationally, 30% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years, and the casualty rate rises to 50% in urban districts.** This is a disgrace, and a real threat to the quality of public education, the integrity of the teaching profession, and the effectiveness of local Associations.

Vermont-NEA believes we can help stop the exodus of new educators by not only improving salary and working conditions, but by responding to the call of these teachers for specific advocacy programs that focus on progressive, tested and practical measures for running a rigorous and student-centered classroom.

Vermont-NEA is looking to recruit a very select group of experienced educators to plan and present intro-

ductory workshops on classroom and behavior management for elementary, middle school and high school teachers with 0 to 3 years of teaching experience. These workshops will constitute the initial offerings of a new program — the **Vermont-NEA Professional Development Academy**—and will be presented at this year's Summer Leadership Conferences. In time, PDA will be expanded to include workshops and seminars for veteran educators as well as novices.

To design and present this summer's PDA curriculum, we need a cadre of six to eight veteran educators who will form three teams (elementary, middle school and high school) of no less than two trainers each. Prospective trainers must

- ✓ have taught at least seven years in a Vermont public school, have excellent communication skills, and possess a strong commitment to the Association;
- ✓ have developed and honed successful classroom management and behavior practices conducive to establishing clear objectives and fostering student learning;
- ✓ enjoy working with and teaching adults, and who can translate their classroom management skills into a tangible and practical introductory program for new educators;

- ✓ can facilitate positive interactive exchanges in a workshop context, as well as disseminate information;
- ✓ enjoy planning and collaborating with other adults in a team setting;
- ✓ commit to working the following three days of Summer Leadership: July 31, August 5 and August 7.

The trainers will work with Mark Hage, Director of Member Benefits, from late March through the end of June, to plan the workshops. Each trainer will receive a respectable honorarium and be reimbursed for mileage and expenses.

If you would like to be a part of this exciting new program, please e-mail Mark Hage at [mhage@vtnea.org](mailto:mhage@vtnea.org), and provide him with the following information:

- ✓ your name, home address and home telephone number
- ✓ the school where you teach
- ✓ years of teaching experience
- ✓ the subject(s) or grade level(s) you teach
- ✓ your level of education (BA, BA+30, MA, etc.)
- ✓ a brief synopsis of any experience, if any, you have had working with student teachers or as a professional mentor.

The deadline for applying is **March 14.**

## Future Educators of America Chapter in South Burlington initiates new members

SOUTH BURLINGTON -- The Future Educators of America Chapter here is one of only two in Vermont (the other is in Colchester). Last month, the South Burlington High School Chapter initiated its first members, twelve students who now will explore the field of education while still in high school. Vermont-NEA member Miki Grady is an advisor for the group.

Future Educators of America is sponsored by Phi Delta Kappa, the professional fraternity in education. The purpose of FEA is to coordinate information for students about teaching as a profession, employment opportunities, financial assistance options, and other educational issues.

These are the twelve SBHS students who were initiated:

Aimee Alexander, Katie Charbonneau, Erika Crabtree, Heather Daubenschmidt, Ashley Saint Gelais, Lisa Kay Herzl, Shannon Kynoch, Michael Leonard, Ben Porter, Anjali Root, Sara Shover, and Bret Zeno.

We wish them well!



Vermont-NEA President Angelo Dorta attended the initiation ceremony for these future educators, students at So. Burlington High School.

## Vermont-NEA Board proposes new staff position to deal with new federal law and to serve new members

By Joel Cook, Vermont-NEA Executive Director

Next year, at about this time, the Association intends to hire a professional staff person who will provide two basic needed services: an advocacy focus on the requirements of federal law as they bear on the qualifications of both teachers and paraeducators, and the expressed interests of new members in receiving help through the Association in adapting to their new career in education. Not only will this person, whose job title tentatively will be Educator Quality Advocate, provide valuable assistance in our overall advocacy mission – in local school districts and with the Legislature and Department of Education – but he or she will also provide valuable assistance in inducing educators, particularly younger educators, who have not yet joined the Association to do so.

To get us underway, the Board of Directors has authorized this position and included several dollars in next year's program budget to support it. Vermont-NEA has also led a group of small states in seeking NEA financial assistance for this position here and a comparable position in other states. That way and, in combination with a collaborative focus by the Association and its local leaders to increase our membership, the size of any further dues increase to sustain the position will be minimal. Here, I describe what has led the Board to add the Educator Quality Advocate to the existing advocacy staff of the Association.

**Federal law.** Unlike any federal law in our lifetime, the so-called "No Child Left Behind" Act – or "NCLB," that's "Nickelby" – imposes on states and schools and teachers and paraeducators and, well, students as well, obligations unseen before. The National Education Association has diverted many staff at the national level to address the problems, and some opportunities, NCLB presents. Most state Associations have done similarly. So have we at Vermont-NEA, but, because we are such a comparatively small Association (the sixth smallest in the nation), we simply do not have the flexibility in our staffing needed to protect the rights and address the needs of our members adequately.

You may have read the articles appearing in these pages over the past several months describing NCLB. You may have attended one of the meetings we conducted during the past fall in seven locations around the state or other meetings before them. At the fall meetings, our Member Benefits Director Mark Hage, with a supporting cast of President Angelo Dorta and me, described the salient features of

the law and our intention to protect and help our members meet its mandates. Or, you may have attended a regional bargaining council meeting where the discussion centered on the current and upcoming obligations under this law. Or, you may have attended one of the half dozen training sessions regarding paraeducator qualifications conducted in December by Mark and Organizer Ellen David Friedman. Or, you may simply have participated in meetings in your school about it. No educator will be immune from the direct or indirect effects of this law.

We have tried for this past year to do a satisfactory job preparing Vermont-NEA members for the law's impact and working with State officials to affect their approach to it. Even if you think what we've done has been satisfactory, we know it has not been enough. While the Association continues to provide the more typical array of advocacy services to local Associations and members, we just do not have the time either to develop the expertise required of us to do right by our members or to advocate successfully in the many venues where the law is discussed and the Association should have a presence on your behalf. In this context, the Educator Quality Advocate will have formal responsibility for:

- monitoring regulatory and other developments at the state and federal level regarding qualifications and professional development for teachers and paraprofessionals;
- advocating for state and local school district fulfillment of their obligations to provide and pay for high quality professional development; and
- assisting and advising other Vermont-NEA staff in advocating on behalf of members regarding educator quality, licensing, certification, and professional development.

**New educator assistance.** We know from what our members tell us, and from what young educators have told other Associations around the country, that they want from their union both traditional advocacy and more help with adjustment to their professional lives than they receive from their schools. We have recently been attempting to respond, both because it is what our members have told us they want and, significantly, because we know it is a way to attract new educators to join our ranks.

NEA tells us that membership recruitment around the nation is in a slump. Nevertheless, it is 2.7 million strong. The slump has not hit Vermont-NEA, and more than 10,000 Vermont educators are members of this Association. Unless we pull together, however, to recruit more members and, in

particular, to attract to membership young educators new to the profession – including college students interested in public education careers – we could face a period where our membership numbers peak, and with it, of course, the number of educators who contribute to the costs associated with membership. The amount of dues is determined both by the size of our budget and the size of our membership. The larger our numbers, the more manageable do our dues obligations become.

You may have read about – or been one of the lucky few to have participated in – our "I Can Do It" workshop for teachers in the first couple of years of teaching. This direct approach to classroom management techniques and coping skills has been a major success wherever it has been tried, and it was just that this past fall in Colchester. We brought 30 new teachers together for a one-day intensive workshop, and they left with new appreciation both for their career choice and for what this Association can mean for them. Some participants even joined the Association in order to be eligible to participate. The only bad news is that we were forced to turn away at least a dozen new teachers because we simply ran out of space and did not have the resources to sponsor a second workshop. We would like to be able to conduct this type of training for as many new educators in the state as are interested. With an Educator Quality Advocate, we would have an individual committed to doing that and related activities to attract educators to our ranks.

**Expanded Professional Development Opportunities.** In addition, we know from speaking with veteran educators that there are programs they would find useful in developing their craft. The Association should bring them to Vermont, but we miss many opportunities for lack of a staff member assigned to work on these projects. The Educator Quality Advocate, therefore, also will be a grant writer and broker for professional development services that teachers and support personnel tell us they want.

Vermont-NEA's formal purpose is "to make sure our members have a satisfying work environment where they are acknowledged for the work they perform and where the work they perform helps students do their best." To do that in a world where NCLB breathes down on us all, and where educators expect their union to advocate for them in a variety of ways, we believe the addition of the Educator Quality Advocate is an important one for our future. ■



### Vermont Chess Association offers workshops for teachers

**MONTPELIER** -- Educators teach chess in the curriculum and in after school programs throughout the U.S. In Vermont, there are more than a hundred elementary and high schools with active chess clubs and programs.

Under the auspices of the Vermont Chess association, a series of five chess workshops will be held in Burlington, Rutland, Montpelier and White River. The all-day seminars are for educators who have a smattering of chess knowledge and would like to know how chess is best introduced to children in grades K-8.

The chief instructor is John Balch, Director of the Vermont Chess Camp, now in its seventh year, who has worked with educators for the past 24 years in dozens of Vermont schools. He offers a one page, open-book test for teachers to determine if they should be in the newcomer or "smattering" group.

Each participating teacher will receive materials covering the object of chess, simple checkmates, stalemates, castling, en passant and other basics, as well as dozens of easily grasped, delightful chess puzzles. A follow up program for the entire school year includes additional teaching materials and counsel.

Studies available from the U.S. Chess Federation show that chess instruction improves reading and math skills. Mr. Balch has found that children who learn chess will, in most cases, develop focus, imagination, patience and attention span, all qualities essential to succeed in chess as well as in any other discipline.

Each workshop is from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For cost and registration information, contact John Balch at vtchess@gmavt.net or 802-496-2525.

March 22 - Windjammer - South Burlington

March 29 - Best Western - White River Junction

April 12 - Capitol Plaza - Montpelier

April 19 - Howard Johnson - Rutland

April 26 - Quality Inn - Putney Rd., Brattleboro

# LETTERS

**Vermont-NEA Today welcomes letters to the editor from Association members. Letters must be no more than 200 words in length and may be edited.**

## **Reelect Angelo Dorta**

Angelo Dorta should be reelected as Vermont-NEA President.

I have been a teacher since 1969 and have held various elected offices in the Vermont-NEA in both Grand Isle and Chittenden South Supervisory Union. Over the years, I have seen great leadership provided by the presidents of Vermont-NEA. Angelo has been one of the best. He has personally shown support for all teachers in Vermont and recently made a special effort to support Vermont's arts teachers.

Angelo knows how to support the greater educational community when it makes the right decisions. He also knows how to lead the way with constructive criticism when it doesn't. He is an important resource for all of us as professionals, but most of all knows what is best for kids, and how to keep public education strong and vital to our great state.

Angelo has done a great deal to keep us on the right track. This is an especially important time for public education. There are many who, for various reasons, would like to see it weakened. Angelo will continue to be a voice for the right reason. Please give him your support.

## **Tony Pietricola**

Chittenden South EA

## **Angelo is professional, approachable, effective**

I am writing in support of Angelo Dorta for reelection as Vermont-NEA's President. I have been an educator in the Burlington School District for the past 20 years. I have worked under the Vermont-NEA leadership of several Presidents, but none, in my opinion, have been as professional, approachable, or effective as Angelo has been.

As Past President of the Burlington Education Association, as well as a member of several negotiation teams, I found Angelo to be most helpful in dealing with many major issues. Phone calls, letters, or emails to Angelo are always answered promptly and information that is requested is delivered accurately and professionally.

I am always amazed at the number of activities that Angelo participates in and supports on the national, local and personal levels. He is truly a role model of the type of NEA member we should all strive to be in our state, our schools and our communities.

## **Donna Robert**

Burlington EA

## **A proven and trusted leader**

Angelo Dorta has been an outstanding Vermont-NEA President. A forward-thinking individual, he elo-

quently represents his constituents and has been highly involved in issues critical to Vermont's students and educators. Angelo Dorta is a proven and trusted leader and a highly visible presence statewide. His continuing involvement in such major educational initiatives as new teacher mentoring and retention, alternative licensure, school choice, and the role of the arts and literacy in our schools is vital as we face considerable pressure from varied public and political constituencies.

Please join me in supporting the reelection of our much-respected leader: Angelo Dorta.

## **Jane Goodman**

Essex Junction EA

## **Support our current president**

I am sending this email in support of our current Vermont-NEA President. If there is a name of a Vermont supporter of quality teaching and education in Vermont, Angelo's name always comes to my mind immediately. Angelo truly cares about the education community in our state. He is aware of the abilities as well as concerns of our teachers and our children. Angelo takes the time to know our educators. It seems that no matter where I go, whether it be an educational assembly, forum, or conference, more often than not, Angelo is there or involved in some way. Angelo is a true advocate for the teaching profession and we have been blessed with his support and leadership. We owe it to Angelo and the education of Vermont to continue to support his position as Vermont-NEA president.

## **Jennifer Dube**

Blue Mountain EA

## **We need Angelo now, more than ever**

As a long time member of Vermont-NEA, I would like to encourage all educators to vote in the upcoming election, and show your support for our current president, Angelo Dorta. Over the years, Angelo has served us well as a spokesperson articulating educational issues across the state. No one has worked harder to educate the general public as to the important role we play in delivering a quality education. With a new administration currently in power in Montpelier, (one that was rejected by the majority of Vermont voters), we need Angelo now, more than ever!

## **John A. Devino**

Colchester EA

## **I will vote for Angelo**

As a past President of the Burlington Education Association, a member of the Vermont-NEA Bylaws Committee and a National Trainer for NEA Women's Leadership Training, I have known Angelo for many years. I am happy to support Angelo Dorta's candidacy for President of Vermont-NEA.

Angelo represents the members of Vermont-NEA in many public are-

nas. He is articulate and he has an excellent command of the issues. His leadership has proven to be very helpful in the past and I believe that he should be allowed to continue as President of Vermont-NEA. I will vote for Angelo and I encourage you to do the same.

## **Linda Deliduka**

Burlington EA

## **Bonnie is knowledgeable**

For those of you that don't know me, I have been a member for 28 years. I have served as a local leader, a Vermont-NEA Executive Committee member, and a member of the Vermont-NEA Board of Directors.

During those years and activities I had many opportunities to work with Bonnie Tuscany. Bonnie grew in the Association as many of us, up through the ranks. She knows what it takes to get a job done. Bonnie knows the rewards of being proactive, and the need to reach, even though stretching comes with risks. She also knows the dangers of becoming too content.

Bonnie and I did not always agree. It was during those occasions that I learned to respect her. I found Bonnie to be a good and willing listener. She was always prepared. After the issue was decided, the opposition ended as well. There was never any lingering animosity; it was time to move forward for the good of the whole.

In conclusion, Bonnie is knowledgeable, she possesses the ability to interact with people, and has a tireless work ethic. A vote for Bonnie will never be misplaced.

## **Lester Butterfield, Jr.**

Caledonia North EA

## **Terri Vest has tremendous leadership skills**

I am writing this letter in support of Terri Vest for Vice-President of Vermont-NEA. Terri is an active member of the organization on several levels and has tremendous leadership skills. She has served as President of her local association at Twinfield, as an NEA Representative Assembly delegate, and serves on the NEA Human Rights Commission. She is an active advocate for quality professional development and support of paraprofessionals and teachers. Terri is also a member of the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators, and is the chair of the Higher Education committee. As a vocal member of the VSBPE, Terri has opposed the new licensing regulations for the Emergency License. I urge you to vote for Terri Vest for Vice-President.

## **Laurie Lawrence**

Rutland

## **Angelo has served us well**

I am writing this letter in support of Angelo Dorta in his bid for reelection to the position of Vermont-NEA President. Angelo is a person of the highest integrity and principles, and has served Vermont's public school

teachers and their students well. He places the best interests of students and teachers in the forefront, and is well-respected by educators and policy-makers on many levels. I have had the opportunity to work with Angelo on several state-level committees and have firsthand knowledge of his commitment. Angelo always articulately and knowledgeably represents the interests of teachers and students in these interactions, working for the improvement of working conditions, school climate, and professional development in addition to the bread-and-butter issues of salary and benefits. For example, he has been an active advocate for increasing salaries (the \$35,000/\$70,000 initiative), for supporting new teachers (he was instrumental in bringing the Pathwise mentor training program to Vermont), and for improving the public image of teachers in the state (he obtained grant money for the radio ad campaign for Vermont-NEA). In closing, Angelo Dorta is a tremendous asset to educators and students, and to this organization. I urge you to reelect him as President of Vermont-NEA.

## **Laurie Lawrence**

Rutland

## **Support Terri Vest for Vice President**

I encourage members to vote for Terri Vest in her bid for vice president. I have had the pleasure of working with her these past two years on the Vermont State Board of Professional Educators and have seen her active commitment to Vermont's teachers. She has been our advocate on the VSBPE and with the Department of Education on such teacher issues as endorsement qualifications, professional development and opposition to waivers. Again, I urge the Vermont-NEA membership to support Terri for vice president.

## **Fran Brock**

Burlington EA

## **Vote for Bonnie Tuscany**

I am writing in support of Bonnie Tuscany who is running for Vermont-NEA President. I had the good fortune of working with Bonnie on the Vermont-NEA Board of Directors, first as a fellow board member and then as vice president. Bonnie is an active participant in all discussions and represents members well. She is a veteran classroom teacher who knows the growing demands of our profession. Bonnie is a great number cruncher! She understands the budget process and what the financial impact of Vermont-NEA programs has on our dues dollars. Bonnie's ability to listen to an issue, advocate for members, and to take action on the issue is her strongest quality.

I urge you to vote for Bonnie Tuscany for Vermont-NEA President. Look for your ballot to come to your home in April!

## **Cherrie Torrey**

Hartford EA

*continued on page 11...*

## 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:

✓ Four statewide offices -- Presi-

dent, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, and NEA Director.

✓ Four seats on the Vermont-NEA Board of Directors -- each a three-year position

✓ 15 State Delegates to the NEA

Representative Assembly, plus a Retired Delegate -- all one-event positions. The NEA RA meets in New Orleans this year. Each delegate will receive a stipend of \$1,400 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 Vermont-NEA President

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

#### Position Statement

*"...strengthen the union and build the profession for a better future..."*

Thank you for your trust in my leadership and for the opportunity to serve as your Vermont-NEA President. It is a great privilege and great responsibility to represent Association members and to help promote public education. Such work requires *passion and energy, commitment and knowledge, vision and judgement,* and effective *communication skills*. These same qualities mark my 30 years as a classroom teacher and Association leader.

The truly significant issues of this election, however, are about you, your colleagues, and your students. They are about the well being of your state and local Associations, our teacher and ESP professions, and Vermont public schools. They are about basic professional respect and treatment.

Consequently, responsible Association candidates should be clear and specific about future leadership goals and intentions. I believe Vermont-NEA must:

- **Promote professional teacher salaries, affordable health insurance choices, improved retirement benefits**
- **Help ESP gain Livable Wage pay, better health insurance, genuine retirement benefits, professional development**
- **Help shape or oppose specific federal ESEA/NCLBA provisions to best serve Vermont students, educators, schools**
- **Survey working conditions of all Vermont educators to help local Associations increase professional teacher/ESP support, au-**



**Angelo J. Dorta**

**thority, time, resources**

- **Extend public relations ads to TV/print media to highlight successful Vermont educators and public schools**
- **Consider Association-sponsored online professional development**
- **Aid new teachers through mentors, formal induction programs, reduced dues**
- **Organize/help sustain NEA Student chapters at Vermont colleges**
- **Support school anti-racism, equity, and diversity by leveraging NEA resources**

Achieving success on traditional bread-and-butter union issues while also improving public education and advancing members' professional interests are necessary and complementary priorities. Together, we can strengthen the union and build the profession for a *better* future.

I ask for your vote and for your strong recommendation to your colleagues. ■

**Bonnie P. Tuscany** is seeking a first term as President of Vermont-NEA. She teaches fifth grade at Morrystown Elementary School.

#### Position Statement

A theme heard often lately is changing times. Regardless of the times, there are many changes that impact our members. Rising health care costs, vouchers, privatization, standards, high stakes testing and numerous regulations affect our members on a daily basis.

More recently, ESEA, the No Child Left Behind Act, has implications that will place many more pressures on us at the state and local level. Vermont NEA needs to be there for our members.

Vermont NEA's Purpose and Priorities statement clearly defines the purpose of our organization.

*"Vermont-NEA wants all children to have an excellent education. Our purpose is to make sure our members have a satisfying work environment where they are acknowledged for the work they perform and where the work they perform helps students do their best."*

So, Vermont-NEA has to be available to our members at all times.

It is important to remember, as an Association, that we need to have two lenses:

First, a zoom lens that will focus on the individual members and their needs as classroom teachers, specialists, paraeducators, custodial staff, bus drivers, clerical staff, all members.

But, we also need to have a wide-angle lens to view the overall system and its impact on our members and our Association. Through this, we can recognize partners and allies and determine our direction. As a state organization, it is important to forge ahead with solid partnerships.

We must keep watch and con-



**Bonnie P. Tuscany**

tinue to build strength within our membership. We need to work as a cohesive group, working together for the members of Vermont NEA. It is vital that there be strong working relationships among Vermont-NEA staff, the Board of Directors, local leaders and the members.

Please feel free to contact me. I look forward to talking to you. I can be reached at (802) 244-5082 or [bpt45@aol.com](mailto:bpt45@aol.com). ■

### For Vermont-NEA Secretary-Treasurer

**Jeff Isham** is seeking a fourth term as Vermont-NEA Secretary-Treasurer. He teaches at Moretown Elementary School.

#### Position Statement

As a vocal advocate for greater participation and involvement by local Associations and by local leaders in Vermont-NEA decisions and policy matters, you will find me at most Vermont-NEA meetings around the state. My accomplishments in the last six years include many facets of the Association rarely seen by the member-

ship. I have led many of the internal changes of the Association. These include the rewriting of the Association policies, advancing the use of electronic communication among Board members and other internal functions of the Board of Directors. I have served on the VEHI Board of Directors since its inception and have just completed my tenure on the VITA-Learn



**Jeff Isham**

Board as Vermont-NEA's representative. Other duties have included being a member of the Vermont-NEA Elections Committee, Executive Committee, Budget Committee and other assorted assignments. My energy and commitment to the Association has expanded this past year to include professional development activities. I have com-

pleted the Pathwise Mentoring training, as well as becoming a Trainer for the Praxis Test. In August I began a three-year term on the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators.

You can see that I don't just ask members to become involved; I myself continue to become involved in all of our Association's advocacies.

Please vote for me...

Jeff Isham for another term as your Vermont-NEA Secretary -Treasurer. ■

# CANDIDATES

## For Vermont-NEA Vice President

**Tom Gallagher** is seeking a first term as Vice President of Vermont-NEA. He teaches at Lamoille Union High School.

### Position Statement

It is hard for me to believe that my first Vermont teaching job started thirty years ago! I was employed as an Industrial Arts teacher at Mount Anthony Union High School. I belonged to an NEA local in my previous job on Long Island and immediately joined SWVEA. Eventually, I became involved with Association business as a Building Rep, member of the negotiating team, and local President in 1978.

In 1980 I left the teaching profession to pursue another career as a Motor Coach Operator. During that time, our union was involved in a bitter seven week strike. I was one of the picket captains, and coordinated duties as well as trying to help keep spirits up.

When I returned to teaching in 1990, technology, working conditions and salaries had changed drastically. However, the value of the Association was still apparent to me. I became re-involved in Association work, serving on the negotiating team, being elected to the Board of Directors of Vermont-NEA in 1997 and as delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly for five years.

The strength of our organization is in its membership, and as Vice-



**Tom Gallagher**

President, I would like to be able to serve the professionals who do such fine jobs educating the children of Vermont. It is my belief that when employees are comfortable with their working conditions, they can spend more time and energy in their profession as educators. The officers of the Association must be able to work together, and I believe that I am capable of achieving that goal. We are facing difficult times, and need a strong Association to support us.

As a member, you have a right, as well as an obligation, to exercise your right to vote. Please take a moment to fill out and return your ballot when you receive it. ■

**Terri Vest** is seeking a first term as Vice President of Vermont-NEA. She teaches at Twinfield Union School.

### Position Statement

I am Terri Vest and I am running for Vice President of Vermont NEA. For the past six years I have been involved in NEA activities all levels, serving as a local Association president, a member of various state committees, and a member of various national committees. I believe my experiences have been both broad and deep and have provided me with an excellent background to serve you well as Vice President.

In my various activities, I have begun to prioritize my efforts into certain key areas for educators. I'd like to share those priorities with you:

**Working Conditions:** The "teacher shortage" has been a hot topic lately. I believe the "teacher shortage" is not a result of recruitment issues, but retention issues. The number one issue from the Fall Area Meetings last year was working conditions. We must improve working conditions for educators throughout the state and we must do that through contract negotiations.

**Professional Development:** New endorsement competencies and state mentoring requirements for teachers and ESEA requirements for teachers and paraeducators make real professional development opportunities vital



**Terri Vest**

for members. Vermont-NEA should be providing guidelines and advice for locals that are working to support their members.

**Membership:** Vermont-NEA needs to revitalize our efforts to add to our membership, especially among preservice teachers and support staff. Only with a strong Association can we stand against groups who want to undermine public education.

By working together on these issues and others we can maintain a strong Association — an Association that speaks for its members and that stands with its members in times of crisis. I hope you will consider me when you vote. ■

## For NEA Director from Vermont

**Jay Burnell** is seeking election as NEA Director from Vermont. He teaches in Bennington.

### Position Statement

Ever since I entered the teaching profession in 1974 in Oakfield, Maine, I have always been an active Association member. In the past 29 years, I have held the office of local president twice, been a negotiator for over 20 years. I have been a unit representative for most of the 20 years I have been a special education teacher in the Mt. Anthony Union School District. I currently serve on our negotiating team, executive committee and representative council.

At the state level, I have been attending Vermont-NEA Representative Assemblies since the late 80's. I have served on the Board of Directors for 8 years, the budget committee for 7 years, Executive Committee for 5 years, various committees and was the Association representative to the Governor's Task Force on Governance in 1992-3. I have been a delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly for the past five years, as well as, in 1992. I am currently serving on the NEA Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision Study Group representing the Northeast.

As you can see, I have a lot of experience advocating for our Asso-



**Jay Burnell**

ciation and will continue to represent our Association in all matters, especially ESEA and IDEA. All aspects of the educational workforce are being affected with mandates and standards that are being set for us by outside forces.

Professional development is crucial and as a small state we need an advocate for services and funds that will allow us to meet the ever changing challenges set forth by ESEA and IDEA. I will be that advocate, working closely with our state officers and board.

I have and will continue to be an effective advocate for Vermont-NEA. I will equally represent every member, ESP, Teacher and Student Association members alike. ■

**Joyce Sullivan** is seeking election as NEA Director from Vermont. She teaches in Brattleboro.

### Position Statement

Leadership experience, a strong voice, and responsiveness to members is key to the NEA Director position. These qualities make me your best choice as your state leader on the NEA Board of Directors.

✓ **Leadership Experience:** I have frequently been a delegate to the NEA-RA. I have worked with the delegation to promote issues of importance to Vermont members. I served a 3-year term on the NEA Resolutions Committee plus another 2 years as alternate. In this capacity, I participated in the standardized testing and document section review subcommittees. I have also served a 3-year term on the Vermont-NEA Board, chaired the Resolutions Committee, and currently chair the Partnership and Sponsorship Committee.

✓ **Strong voice:** I've presented and spoken about new business items to the 10,000 NEA-RA delegates. On the Resolutions Committee, I proposed, questioned, supported, or spoke against resolutions based on the benefits of these resolutions to Vermont members. As a Director, I would continue my advocacy for Vermonters at Board meetings and work with other Board members to promote issues of



**Joyce Sullivan**

mutual interest.

✓ **Responsiveness to Members:** It's the NEA Director's responsibility to be accessible to the membership via e-mail, phone, or letter. If elected, I'll continue the current practice of writing an article for *Vermont-NEA Today* after each Board meeting to keep members informed and provide information for members to give me feedback on.

The issues that we face as NEA members are vast. It's crucial for the NEA Director to vote for or against new policies based on benefits to all members and the children and parents that are served in our public schools. In the NEA, we need to speak as one collective voice for strong public schools and well educated citizens. To speak as a collective voice, make Joyce your choice for NEA Director. ■

# CANDIDATES

## For Vermont-NEA Delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly

### Philip F. Bailey Windham Southeast EA

I am running for delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly. I have represented Vermont-NEA for the past seven years and it has been a privilege. I feel that talks between the NEA and the AFT will be a hot topic this year again. I would like the opportunity to represent Vermont again this year. I would appreciate your vote and thank you for your support.



### Lisa Champagne Windsor Southeast EA

I have been elected to represent Vermont at the NEA Representative Assembly since 1996. This is also my second year as Vermont's elected member on the NEA Resolutions Committee. I promise to use my experience and my knowledge of the many important issues affecting education today to ensure that Vermont is heard. When you vote this spring, please remember me. It would be an honor to again represent you at the NEA RA.



### Kim Kimler Salisbury EA

I am president, grievance and negotiator for Salisbury, and past political action chair and candidate inter-

viewer for Vermont-NEA. As a member of the bargaining unit that just settled a tentative agreement in mid January merging six rural schools together, I am most interested in bringing equitable agreements to supervisory unions in the form of merged contracts. I am an active voice in central Vermont for all educators looking to participate at a new level.

### Carol Hinchey Essex Junction EA

Do you know what happens at the NEA RA? State caucuses meet daily to discuss proposed resolutions, new business items, and other business brought to the assembly of 10,000 voting delegates. The remainder of the day is spent in the convention hall, debating and voting.

Vermont's 15 delegates lobby for issues that affect our state's schools and their employees. Please support me in my efforts to represent Vermont's interests. Thank you!



### Jeff Isham Valley EA

The NEA Representative Assembly is the single most important event for the Association each year. The large gathering of NEA members from around the country decides the direction of the Association for the



coming year. As an experienced NEA Delegate I wish to return to the 2003 RA in New Orleans and engage in the debate and decision makings. Vote Jeff Isham for 2003 NEA RA Delegate!

### Joyce Sullivan Windham Southeast EA

I ask for your vote as an experienced NEA delegate. I would like to participate in discussions regarding the implementation of ESEA and other topics affecting children, teachers, and education support personnel. Two new leaders will be elected to the NEA Executive Committee. Wayne Nadeau, our current NEA Director from Vermont, is a candidate. If elected, I would play an active role in helping him win one of those NEA Executive Committee seats.



### Terri Vest Twinfield EA

I'm Terri Vest and I'm running for NEA Representative Assembly. I have been attending the Representative Assembly for the past 6 years. I feel that I have represented Vermont well and would appreciate the opportunity to do so again. Please feel free to contact me through Vermont-NEA if you'd like to discuss issues. Thank you again for your vote.



### Bonnie Tuscany Morristown EA

I consider it an honor to be a delegate to the National RA. As I have said before, it is such a thrill each year to walk into the Representative Assembly, a large town meeting of educators from every affiliate. It is wonderful!!!



### Also on the ballot for NEA Delegate...

Martha Allen, Essex North EA  
Gary Barton, Rivendell EA  
Jay Burnell, Southwestern VT EA  
Charles Hess Jr., Lamoille UHS EA  
Linda Howard, Twinfield SA  
Alison Sylvester, Green Mt. NEA  
Francis Trask, Orange Southwest EA

### For Retired Delegate...

Jay Kaplan, retired member of the Essex Junction Education Association, is a candidate for retired delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly.

### Position Statement

For the past five years, I have represented retired teachers at the Representative Assembly. As you may know, I have been on the State Retirement Board for the past 15 years. I have used my time at the RA to strengthen our retirement security. I have successfully introduced legislative items and numerous new business items that have helped insure, protect, and improve the retirement benefits. Please let me have the honor of representing you again. ■

## For Vermont-NEA Board of Directors

Carol Hinchey is running for re-election to the seat on the Vermont-NEA Board of Directors representing Chittenden County, Area 3. She teaches in Essex Junction.

### Position Statement

To my colleagues in Essex Junction, Essex Town, Milton and Westford: It has been an honor (and quite a bit of work) to serve on the Vermont NEA Board of Directors. I continue to enjoy this work, and would like to serve you for another term.

Please give me your support when you complete your ballot. Please also give me your input, so that I can represent you well, taking your questions and concerns to the state level of our professional organization.

Thank you!  
Carol Hinchey  
email: cahinchey@aol.com ■

On the ballot in a special election for Board Director representing Chittenden County, Area 1 will be Linda Deliduka of Burlington.



Carol Hinchey

On the ballot for Board Director representing Addison-Rutland, Area 2 will be Diane Alberts of Proctor.

Cindy Pierce Bubrouski, MS, is running for election to the seat on the Vermont-NEA Board of Directors representing Central Vermont, Area 2. She works as an instructional assistant in Montpelier.

### Position Statement

As a Montpelier Instructional Assistant for the past 6 years, and as president and chief negotiator for our local, the Montpelier Educational Support Staff Association, I believe that I am well-acquainted with the issues facing all central Vermont Association members.

The goals of respectable wages, affordable health insurance benefits, and necessary professional development are common to all bargaining units. Vermont-NEA is the tie that binds us, helping us to remain focused on the values that are important to us.

Vermont-NEA is a vital source of strength and support for public education, and its providers. Together, we take pride in our achievements, and face a future of uncertainties. Our



Cindy Bubrouski

solidarity sustains us for the challenges ahead.

As your Area 2 Board Director, I will be a strong advocate for your concerns. Thank you for your consideration, and your vote! ■

# LETTERS

## **A vote for Bonnie is a vote for us**

It is with pleasure and confidence that I support Bonnie Tuscany in her bid for President of Vermont-NEA. I have known Bonnie as she's come up through the ranks of association service over the past decade. Bonnie is outspoken, fair, and knowledgeable in her representation of Vermont's teachers. I look to Bonnie to increase member representation and activity in Vermont-NEA. It is my belief that a vote for Bonnie is a vote for us, the members.

**Barbara Barbour**  
Windsor Southeast EA

## **Make Bonnie Tuscany Vermont-NEA President**

I am writing in support of Bonnie Tuscany's candidacy for President of Vermont-NEA. I first met Bonnie when I joined the Board of Directors of Vermont-NEA in 1999. She was very helpful to me in my new role as a board member. I believe Bonnie has the qualities necessary to lead our association. Her tenure as vice-president has given her the knowledge and insight into the workings of this association. Her negotiation experience is an invaluable asset. Her dedication to the profession and to Vermont-NEA is evident in all that she does. What impresses me most about Bonnie, though, is her organizational skills and her ability to get things done efficiently and quickly. Please make Bonnie Tuscany your next Vermont-NEA president.

**Pat Vana**  
North Country Union EA

## **Bonnie will serve us well**

I should very much like to encourage a vote for Bonnie Tuscany as the next president of Vermont-NEA.

I had the pleasure and good fortune to work closely with Bonnie for a considerable period of time during my ten year stint on the Vermont-NEA Board of Directors, and afterwards while I chaired the Vermont-NEA Human and Civil Rights Committee. I always found her to be knowledgeable about NEA matters, evenhanded, efficient, effective, and energetic in all that she did. There is no question in my mind and from my years of working with Bonnie but that she has the experience and the dedication to serve us well.

**Beth Dutton**  
Windsor Southeast EA

## **Angelo embodies a bold style of leadership**

I'd like to express my strong support for the reelection of Angelo Dorta as Vermont-NEA President. Intelligent, passionate, and committed to improving conditions in our public schools, Angelo embodies a bold style of leadership that celebrates our association's proud traditions and embraces innovative ideas that will help us meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

I've witnessed Angelo's integrity and vision in a variety of settings, but one venue stands out. Every fall the Colchester Education Association kicks off the year with a back-to-school breakfast, and every year Angelo makes the pilgrimage to offer his support. His annual presence speaks to his level of commitment, but as impressive is how each year he offers a few words that always hit the right notes. Absent is the hollow, feel good rhetoric that ignores the real challenges that confront educators. Instead, Angelo reminds us that our future is in our hands, that we must work together to succeed, that we must be vigilant in our pursuit of excellence in our schools and open-minded about ways to increase the stature of our profession. Thank you Angelo!

**Bill Rich**  
Colchester EA

## **Angelo has proven leadership qualities**

I am writing in support of Angelo Dorta. I met Angelo eight years ago when my teaching career first began. I was a student teacher with his wife Peggy, but guidance for the future of my career was a Dorta family affair. I can remember the night both my wife and I (now a Special Educator at Charlotte Central School) went over for dinner with the Dortas. We felt so warmed by their support for our budding careers. Angelo didn't see me as his wife's student teacher, but as a valuable young member of a profession he cared greatly about.

I'll never forget the motivation Angelo showed towards helping me further my career. He saw something in me that led him to believe I could help make a difference in the world of education. Now after being a third and fourth grade teacher and member of Vermont-NEA for seven years, I have the same trust in Angelo Dorta. I believe he has the proven leadership qualities it takes to help professional teachers develop in a rapidly changing economic and political climate. I knew then and I know now, that Angelo has a vested interest in the future of all teachers.

**Dave Bouchard**  
Chittenden South EA

## **Bonnie's expertise and experience is what we need**

I encourage your support of Bonnie Tuscany for President of Vermont-NEA. Bonnie's expertise and experience is what we need in our leadership. Her knowledge of the issues and willingness to listen to colleagues and the membership makes her the best candidate for this position.

I have worked with Bonnie on the Vermont-NEA Board of Directors and as a delegate to both the state and national conventions. Bonnie has a clear grasp on local, state, and national issues and a keen sense of what needs to be questioned, re-evaluated, and perhaps changed. She listens well to what members have to say and takes

their input into consideration when making decisions on issues which affect us all.

The presidency is an important leadership position. It requires an ability to work well with Vermont-NEA's staff, Board of Directors, local presidents, and all categories of members. In addition, she needs to continue developing working relationships with other state presidents, NEA leaders, and legislators at the local, state, and national levels. Bonnie has demonstrated her capabilities in these venues as our Vice President, and I'm sure will represent us well as our President.

Please vote for Bonnie Tuscany for Vermont-NEA President.

**Joyce Sullivan**  
Windham Southeast EA

## **Angelo Dorta has my support**

I would like to cast my support for the continued leadership of Angelo Dorta. His long-standing role as President of Vermont-NEA has brought us far in our professional gains. I believe that he has tirelessly and positively led us to more recognition as professionals and helped us gain greater financial rewards through salary and benefits. During his tenure we have seen our ESP get the recognition and Livable Wage they deserve. I am in agreement with his comments about the ESEA/NCLBA. I have always admired his energy and ability to speak to the issues no matter how difficult.

Although I do not claim to fully understand the politics and implications of all a President of Vermont-NEA needs to command, from my perspective Angelo has done an outstanding job during very difficult times in public education. If he desires to continue in this role, he most certainly has my support and appreciation.

**Paulette Gagne**  
Washington South EA

## **Trustees support Angelo**

We are Trustees on the Retirement Board for the Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System. We take very seriously our fiduciary responsibility to ensure maximum Retirement System gains on behalf of Vermont teachers. We also have known Angelo for nearly 20 years, first as a local leader and statewide Association activist and now as our Vermont-NEA President.

Without question, if members want to be assured that their Retirement System remains a top Association priority and receives the informed scrutiny needed, Angelo Dorta is the best candidate for Vermont-NEA President and should be reelected. We say that because we regularly meet and work closely with Angelo and Vermont-NEA staff. Angelo often personally attends our Retirement Board meetings and works hard to be knowledgeable on complex and volatile retirement issues. As a veteran teacher himself, he understands the

great importance with which members view Retirement System activity and results. He has consistently shown strong support for Retirement Board policies and practices required to produce the best retiree pensions and benefits achievable for Vermonters. The 60% improvement in the retiree health insurance benefit gained in 2001 is a significant example of Angelo's commitment and work.

Vote for Angelo to continue excellent Retirement System advocacy.

**Jon Harris**, Green Mt-NEA  
**Jay Kaplan**, EJEA-Retired  
**Joe Mackey**, Essex Junction EA

## **Joyce Sullivan for NEA Director**

Joyce Sullivan is a candidate for the NEA Board of Directors and deserves our support. Having worked with Joyce for the past fourteen years, I have appreciated her steadfast devotion to protecting the rights of educators and children. She has extensive experience in the NEA, having served in a variety of capacities at local, state and national levels. She has demonstrated a thorough understanding of education issues as well as her commitment to furthering the interests of teachers and support personnel. I am confident that Joyce has what it takes to be an effective spokesperson for Vermont educators and would be an excellent director on the NEA Board.

Please vote for Joyce Sullivan for NEA Director.

**Sue Rusten**  
Windham Southeast EA

## **Bonnie listens, includes, brings together, leads**

I am writing in support of Bonnie Tuscany in her bid to become president of Vermont-NEA. As a teacher, local union officer and member of the Vermont-NEA Board of Directors, I have seen Bonnie from many different perspectives. From each view she has proven to be a knowledgeable, dedicated, hard working, caring professional. I believe her real strength will be her ability to bring everyone to the table as Vermont-NEA moves through what looks to be a difficult next few years. Bonnie is a team player, team leader and that is what we are going to need as president. Both on the public stage and in the day to day, week to week operations of Vermont-NEA Bonnie will continue to do what she has done so well in her various roles both in the class room and at the union level: listen, include, bring together, lead.

**Francis Trask**  
Orange Southwest EA

## **Angelo provides a measured, articulate voice**

I am asking you to support the reelection of Angelo Dorta for President of Vermont-NEA. I have been an ESP member since 1992. Angelo Dorta has been a great help to me. He encouraged me to go to a National

# LETTERS

Conference for Support Professionals and arranged for me to attend the Northeast Regional Women's Leadership training. He has been an asset to many support professionals in Vermont. I am currently on the Board of Directors and have been involved in local, state and national NEA activities.

Angelo Dorta is a strong advocate for Vermont at the state and national levels. His presentations at regional and national events are eloquent. His testimony at the State House provides a measured, articulate voice for Vermont-NEA members. Angelo Dorta's ability to encourage and provide support for ESP and teacher members is strong and unwavering. We can't afford to lose such a powerful advocate. I urge you to vote for Angelo Dorta, President, Vermont-NEA.

**Linda Howard**  
Twinfield Staff Association

### **Angelo supports beginning teachers**

I am a teacher at a large high school in Vermont. As we hire more and more new teachers in our district, we recognize the need for more comprehensive mentor programs. Angelo Dorta and the Vermont-NEA have been instrumental in grant writing, in providing training to potential mentors, and in supporting local mentor programs. Angelo attended mentor training himself and participated in some of our mentor/beginning teacher meetings. Angelo supports new and beginning teachers and is an advocate for professional development opportunities in our schools.

**Ellen Emery**  
Essex Junction EA

### **I give Joyce Sullivan all my support**

I am sending this letter in support of Joyce Sullivan for NEA Director representing Vermont.

Joyce has been an enthusiastic and hard working NEA member for as long as I can remember. She has held many positions locally and on the state level of NEA. Joyce has represented us with outstanding character, and discipline. Her honesty and dedication has distinguished her, on many occasions, at the local and national RA's.

She has been an advocate for ESP members as well as teachers. Joyce believes in a strong union, and that is all of us together. As a ESP member, I give Joyce Sullivan all my support. I know she will do an outstanding job for all of us.

**Phyllis Cote**  
Windham Southeast EA

### **We need Angelo to be our public voice**

A remarkable change has taken place in the Vermont education community over the past few years. We are no longer an afterthought in the minds of policymakers. The voice of Vermont educators is being heard in

the statehouse, the department of education, the board of education, and on various committees and task forces across the state. Our perspective is sought after and respected in the process of developing laws, regulations, and policies.

This is a result of the respect Angelo Dorta has earned representing our interests and the interests of the families we serve. We need an articulate, respected educator to be our public voice. That's Angelo.

**David Schoales**  
Colchester EA

### **Jay Burnell for NEA Director**

I am writing this letter in full support of Mr. Jay Burnell's candidacy for Vermont NEA Director. Jay has a long-term involvement in our local union, serving on the Executive Committee, Negotiating Team, and the Building Representative's Council. He keeps us fully abreast of local, state, and national union business, and provides a great deal of critical historical information. Jay's devotion, dedication, and commitment are important to our local association. Without reservation, I am confident Jay will display the same impressive qualities representing Vermont to the NEA.

**Stephanie R. Peters**  
Southwestern Vermont EA

### **My answer: Angelo**

I am pleased to recommend Angelo Dorta for another term as President of the Vermont-NEA. As I plan to retire after 40 years of teaching, I know that my retirement is better than previous generations because of our efforts through the Vermont-NEA. We had the ideas, but it was the hard work of our elected and appointed officers that really made the difference. I would describe Angelo as dedicated, energetic, competent, knowledgeable, and one who worked for the members of the Vermont-NEA. When asked by a colleague who I was going to vote for. My answer was easy -- Angelo.

**Ed Daniel**  
Franklin NW-NEA

### **Bonnie's knowledge and guidance has been invaluable**

I encourage your support of Bonnie Tuscany for Vermont-NEA president. Bonnie possesses the experience, skill, and fortitude to effectively serve as president of the Vermont-NEA.

Bonnie is a dedicated, respected professional who is an integral member of both our Science and Leadership Committees. In her role as a member of the Morristown Elementary School Leadership Committee, Bonnie recognized the need for and strongly advocated for the committee membership to include a paraprofessional voice. In doing this, she helped to acknowledge paraprofessionals as part of our school community and to define the important role they play in educating our students.

In my years as a teacher in the Morristown school system, Bonnie's knowledge and guidance has been invaluable in navigating me through the intricacies of our local master contract as well as NEA benefits. In addition to this, I have gained pertinent knowledge relative to student learning. Her constructivist approach to learning has given me new insight to different methods of teaching, which in turn has improved my skills.

Again, I strongly encourage your support for Bonnie Tuscany as Vermont-NEA president. I believe she encompasses the leadership quality needed to guide our organization into the future.

**Jennifer Peszek**  
Morristown EA

### **Keep Vermont-NEA in capable hands**

I strongly endorse the reelection of Angelo Dorta as president of Vermont-NEA. I have been an educator in Vermont since 1977. I was honored by my colleagues with the Teacher-of-the-Year distinction in 1998, and received the NEA Human and Civil Rights Award in 1999. My support for Angelo is rooted in numerous professional endeavors where I witnessed firsthand his effective and genuine commitment to the needs of Vermont teachers.

A few years ago Angelo invited me and other colleagues to an NEA Board meeting, where it was resolved to offer assistance to bargaining teams to begin the process of negotiating for equity in partner and dependent children benefits for gay and lesbian teachers.

As technical educators faced unique licensing and professional development issues and needs, I appealed for a larger NEA awareness and investment in these members. Angelo got directly involved and met frequently with us and tuned in to technical education in Vermont. I know he will be invaluable as we technical educators in Chittenden County face the governance and contract issues involved in the creation of a new technical high school.

Please join me with your vote and keep Vermont-NEA in capable and articulate "hands."

**Lynn Vera**  
Essex Junction EA

### **Angelo Dorta will keep us on the alert**

Angelo Dorta has my vote for President. Accessible, compassionate, honest and personal, describe Angelo. When we first met in 1995, Angelo learned my name and never forgot it. He has promptly responded to my calls and followed through on issues I raised.

Angelo has ably addressed the bread and butter union issues. But more than our personal needs fill Angelo's vision. This is the true measure of a leader in the field of education. In Vermont and nationally, Presi-

dent Dorta has been involved in taking risks in the arena of human rights.

Recently at our resolutions committee meeting Angelo brought to us concerns about children at risk, gender equity, racism and sexism, and student sexual harassment, all of which needed stronger language in our resolutions document. This is the breadth of vision a principled educational union leader should have..

Education, or more precisely, students, teachers, and our community are in for difficult times with the current national and state governmental leadership. I have confidence that Angelo Dorta will keep us on the alert and lead us courageously on the high ground that balances the needs of the membership with the needs of children, the community and the world.

**Tom Luce**  
Barre EA

### **Jay Burnell for NEA Director**

It is my pleasure to endorse Jay Burnell for the position of NEA-Director. I have worked along with Jay on the Board of Directors and have found that he has the interests and well being of his fellow educators as his primary mission. As a delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly, Jay has been able to present his views to delegates from other states, in a direct and persuasive manner. His personality makes it easy for him to communicate well with others and would, in my opinion, make him an excellent NEA Director for Vermont.

**Tom Gallagher**  
Lamoille UHS EA

### **Angelo has our best interests at heart**

Angelo Dorta is running for reelection as President of Vermont-NEA. As President of Vermont-NEA for the past 8 years, Angelo Dorta has been a very strong advocate for teachers and education support personnel. As a classroom teacher for 30 years and as a leader in his local association, Angelo became thoroughly familiar with the issues he now so passionately strives to improve as Vermont-NEA President.

Angelo has earned the respect of members and association leaders through his tireless lobbying for our common goals of competitive salaries, affordable health insurance options and better retirement benefits. In addition, he has always been available to support members in situations unique to their local associations.

Some of Angelo's accomplishments on our behalf during his Presidency include: a fairer Vermont-NEA dues structure, an increase in health insurance payment for retired teachers, working on the ESP livable wage campaign.

Some of his leadership experiences, in addition to 8 years as Vermont-NEA President are: the NEA Professional Standards and Practices Committee (6 years), NEA Annual Meeting and RA (13 years), VT Edu-

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# LETTERS

cation Coalition (8 years), Vermont-NEA Legislative Lobbyist (8 years).

We support Angelo's reelection for President. He has our best interests at heart!

**Cheryl King & Jane Phillips**  
Milton E and SSA

### **Bonnie is one of the hardest working people I know**

I am writing in support of Bonnie Tuscany's candidacy for President of Vermont-NEA. I have had the distinct pleasure of working with Bonnie since 1992; first as a fellow delegate to the national representative assembly, next as a fellow board member and then as Vice President of Vermont-NEA. I have served with her on several committees within Vermont-NEA, such as the Executive Committee, Budget Committee, Strategic Planning Committee and Policy Review Committee. She is quick to grasp the issue at hand and then to help formulate plans to address the issue.

Bonnie is one of the hardest working people I know within the organization, both at the state level and the national level. This has enabled her to build a strong network at both levels that will help Vermont-NEA to move forward. Bonnie's untiring dedication to our membership, experience in the classroom at both the elementary and college level and her expertise in governance at the local, state and national levels will benefit all members of Vermont-NEA.

I urge you to support and vote for Bonnie Tuscany as President of Vermont-NEA.

**Jay E. Burnell**  
Southwest Vermont EA

### **Thank you, Angelo Dorta**

I am writing to invite you to vote in our upcoming Vermont-NEA presidential elections. I urge you to support our incumbent president, Angelo Dorta.

We are in a crucial time for the future of public education, and I believe Angelo's past leadership is an indication of what we can trust him to pursue in the future. Angelo has worked very hard to help shape or oppose specific federal ESEA/NCLBA provisions so that the federal mandates can be adapted to fit Vermont's students and teachers. With the faltering economy, fair salaries and wages are forefront of everyone's minds - Angelo's record on promoting professional teacher salaries, ESP Livable Wages, viable health insurance choices and decent retirement benefits speaks for itself.

I could go on about his public record, but I'd like to speak personally about his help for our local Association. My husband and I became copresidents this past year, and we're both very new to positions of leadership in the Association. Angelo has spoken personally with us, offered his assistance, and guaranteed help through our UniServ Director. His support for us and our Association has

helped put together a renaissance in Rutland. Thank you, Angelo Dorta, for your leadership and caring!

**Ellen Green**  
Rutland EA

### **Joyce Sullivan for NEA Director**

I would like to recommend Joyce Sullivan for the position of NEA Director from Vermont for the national board. I have known Joyce for a long number of years, both personally and professionally, and know her to be a committed union advocate, knowledgeable about the teaching profession and the needs of teachers and support staff workers, ethical, and hard working.

I had the pleasure of serving with her on the Vermont-NEA Board of Directors for three of the ten years I sat on the board and have good experience of the kind of worker for union members that Joyce is. She is exactly the kind of dedicated person we need on the national board.

**Beth Dutton**  
Windsor Southeast EA

### **I wholeheartedly support Angelo Dorta**

I am writing this letter of support for Angelo Dorta in his reelection for Vermont NEA president. I am a middle level educator at Shelburne Community School and have been an association member since 1994. I have served as Vice President and grievance person for the Shelburne unit of the Chittenden South Education Association.

I wholeheartedly support Angelo in his candidacy for president. His many achievements during his tenure as president, not to mention his years as a classroom teacher and leader, are testimony of his dedication and contributions to our profession. He is ever mindful of the challenges facing today's educators and advocates on our behalf at the local, state and federal level. His integrity, knowledge, commitment and respect are evident in his many endeavors and accomplishments.

Angelo is a friendly and sincere person. He makes people feel welcome and at ease, and makes a point to remember your name. His interest and concern for teachers is genuine.

As our profession faces greater challenges with top down national mandates, a struggling economy, and fostering and maintaining quality education, we need Angelo's energy, intelligence, experience and leadership now more than ever.

**Meghan M. O'Donnell**  
Chittenden South EA

### **Angelo is well-known and highly respected**

As President, Angelo Dorta has been involved in myriad activities that benefit Vermont's educators and students.

During the civil union debate, Vermont teachers were accused of some-

how promoting a homosexual agenda, whatever that might be. Angelo was a strong public voice in proclaiming that Vermont-NEA and its members did have an agenda, which was to support all Vermont students, gay or straight. He met the accusation head-on and helped to expose it for the fraud that it was.

As Vermont's first chartered Future Educators of America chapter, Colchester High School's newest club, *FEA: Tomorrow's Educational Leaders*, has over fifty students currently working on several exciting service projects. Angelo has been extremely interested and personally supportive. This has meant a lot to us as we set out to develop our new club.

Finally, my teaching partner, Bill Rich, and I were recently honored in Washington at an NEA event. Many national association officers attended. From watching him interact with his peers, it was obvious to us that Angelo is well-known and highly respected. Vermont is a small state with relatively few members; we are fortunate to have a president who can represent us well and influence the national agenda.

**Brad Blanchette**  
Colchester EA

### **I support Bonnie Tuscany**

I am writing this letter in support of Bonnie Tuscany for Vermont NEA president in the upcoming April Election. I had the pleasure of working with Bonnie as a VISMT Associate in 1996 and have continued to see her involvement with the NEA organization and field of education on an ongoing basis since that time. Her knowledge in the fields of science, mathematics, and technology is exemplary. She is a dynamic individual who knows what is taking place in the classrooms of Vermont. She has represented the teachers and ESP of Vermont both locally and nationally over the past twelve years. I hope you will join me in supporting Bonnie in her bid for President of Vermont-NEA.

**Leslie Ercole**  
Essex-Caledonia-NEA

### **Angelo is committed to educators**

Angelo Dorta is personally, professionally and passionately committed to the educators of Vermont. His tenure as President of Vermont-NEA has been marked by a change in the perception of our organization by most other organizations in the state interested in the education of Vermont's children. Before his presidency, Vermont-NEA was clearly identified as the advocate of educator rights, working conditions, professional salaries, retirement considerations and other issues that are part of our mission as a union.

This advocacy continues under Angelo's leadership. Due in substantial part to his tireless efforts, Vermont-NEA is now also recognized throughout the state as the advocate for edu-

cator excellence, mentoring for new teachers, educator professional development, the elimination of licensure waivers and the recruitment of young people into the profession.

As a member and former chair of the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators, I saw Angelo at nearly every meeting of this board. His input into our conversations was sought and welcomed because of his clear and coherent vision of the important position of educators in the life of Vermont's children.

As a former Vermont-NEA Board member who worked with Angelo, I enthusiastically support his candidacy for President of our Association.

**Judy Allard**  
Burlington EA

### **Bonnie is the clear choice**

I am writing to express my sincere support of Bonnie Tuscany's candidacy for President of Vermont-NEA. Bonnie and I have been colleagues in the Morristown School District for the past 15 years. Her total commitment to our association as chief negotiator for 12 years has been obvious to all of us who have benefited from her skills and efforts. Bonnie's understanding of local, state and national issues make her the clear choice for this office.

With 27 years in the classroom, Bonnie has a deep and heartfelt understanding of what members care about. She has a genuine love, commitment, and respect for public education, teachers and support personnel. Bonnie's experience and dedication will benefit all members. I encourage you to vote for Bonnie as Vermont-NEA president.

**Linda M. Brady**  
Morristown EA

### **Bonnie is a dedicated teacher and committed member**

I have known Bonnie as a parent, teacher and colleague in Lamoille County for the past 18 years. Bonnie is a dedicated teacher and a committed member of Vermont-NEA.

As vice president of Vermont-NEA these past many years, Bonnie understands the inner workings of our organization and understands what is needed to continue to move Vermont-NEA forward. I believe Bonnie would be an effective, hard working and committed president for Vermont-NEA. I believe she has had both the interests of teachers and students on her mind as she has pursued the mission of Vermont-NEA in the past, and will continue to do so as president of Vermont-NEA in the future.

**Don McDowell**  
Stowe Teacher's Association

### **Bonnie is a strong leader**

I am writing in support of Bonnie Tuscany's candidacy for President of Vermont-NEA.

I have worked with Bonnie for the past 18 years as a classroom teacher at Morristown Elementary School. I have known Bonnie to be a creative

# LETTERS

and caring teacher. She has been a strong leader in our school, serving as President and Vice President of our association. Bonnie has worked diligently as a teacher leader on both the math and science curriculum committees, helping our school to create engaging, standards-based programs for our students.

Bonnie has not only worked hard at serving the students and teachers of our school, she has also found time to serve Vermont Educators in many capacities as Vermont-NEA Vice President and committee member. She is an experienced and knowledgeable leader, and most importantly, understands the demands of being a classroom teacher.

I encourage you to vote for Bonnie Tuscany as Vermont-NEA President.

**Chantal Bingenot**  
Morristown EA

### Angelo deserves support

Angelo Dorta leads the Vermont-NEA with energy, professionalism, and passion. As the voice and face of our union, he delivers a consistent and articulate position on issues that affect all teachers and ESP members. As the Douglas administration proposes vast changes to public education, it is critical for me to know that Angelo's ideas, wisdom, and commitment to improving the profession will lead our Association.

Angelo Dorta deserves our continued support.

**Christopher Hood**  
Chittenden South EA

### Angelo has earned respect in the State House

I am writing to lend my support to Angelo Dorta for President of the Vermont-NEA.

As a member of the Vermont-NEA for fourteen years and a state legislator for the last seven years, I have had a unique opportunity to see our Association leadership in action. Angelo has been a strong voice for public education. Due to the respect that Angelo has earned in the State House, he is often called upon to testify in committees. During the difficult times and discussions about equal opportunity funding for students and about school choice, Angelo testified regarding the Association's viewpoint. He also testified on behalf of retired teachers in my committee, Government Operations, as we discussed health care benefits. We were able to increase the benefit from 50% state payment to 80%.

Another issue that the new administration plans to bring to the legislature is empowering the governor, instead of the State Board of Education, to appoint the Commissioner of Education. We in education know the negative effect of the further politicizing of our public schools.

We need Angelo Dorta, with his dedication, competence, knowledge, and communication skills as the President of our professional organization

to lead us through these challenging times.

**Donna Sweaney**  
Woodstock Elementary EA

### Give Bonnie your vote

I wanted to write in support of Bonnie Tuscany's candidacy for President of Vermont-NEA.

Bonnie and I have taught together at Morristown Elementary School for the past seventeen years. During that time she has been our school's Teacher of the Year.

Bonnie has always taken staff development seriously as a way to improve her practice. She took part in a Star Schools grant, which brought many technological advances to our school. She was a VISMT Associate for two years. In 1991 she became an Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow teacher. For several years she has been teaching graduate courses as an adjunct professor at the University of Vermont. Most recently, she has been teaching a math and science methods course at Johnson State College for graduate-level preservice teachers.

Bonnie's other significant contribution to our district has been her work as a negotiator. She has always put forward constructive and realistic ideas which meet the needs of all sides. As a result, we have had years of peaceful and speedy negotiations.

Bonnie has devoted endless hours as Vice President of Vermont-NEA. Her experience and dedication will make her an excellent Vermont-NEA President. I strongly urge you to give her your vote.

**Marilyn May**  
Morristown EA

### Vote for Tom Gallagher for Vice President

I would urge people in the upcoming election to vote for Tom Gallagher for Vermont-NEA Vice-President.

Tom stands out on two main fronts: experience and ability to work with and bring people together. Tom has been active in Vermont-NEA for a number of years and is on the Board of Directors. As a result of this experience, he knows the job and the people. Tom has proven time and time again that he can work with the diverse group that makes up Vermont-NEA because he puts the organization, not himself, first. I think that those characteristics make him the choice for this important job. I hope that Vermont-NEA members during the next few weeks will take the time to look at Tom and his record because I am sure that if they do they will see as I do that he is the best choice for the position.

**Francis Trask**  
Orange Southwest TA

### Support Jay Burnell for NEA Director

Jay Burnell is running for NEA Director from Vermont. I wish to speak in support of his candidacy. The main issue, as I see it, is experience.

Our representative to NEA should be well grounded in what is going on in Vermont and on the national stage. Jay is the qualified candidate in both of those areas. He is a long time Vermont-NEA member, member of the Board of Directors and many time attendee at regional leadership meetings and the National RA. Jay has worked with our current board representative at both the state and national level. Jay knows the issues, the background, and the job, which makes him, in my view, the natural choice. I hope that all members will do the math and come to the same conclusion that I have.

**Francis Trask**  
Orange Southwest TA

### We need Angelo's leadership

I am writing in support of Angelo Dorta to be reelected as president of the Vermont-NEA. As a member of Vermont-NEA for 20 years, I urge each member to take the time to vote.

I know Angelo professionally and personally. He is energetic and dedicated to the professionalism of all teachers in the state of Vermont. We need Angelo's continuing leadership for the challenging times ahead. He has proven his ability to promote professional teachers' salaries, affordable health insurance choices, and improved retirement benefits.

Angelo has strongly stressed professional standards throughout education. He has advocated for teachers by being one of the first to criticize the teacher license "waiver." I feel that all students need to have qualified licensed teachers with high professional standards.

Most important to me is how Angelo is clear and visible on the issues that face teachers and students everyday. In the coming years, the voucher issue will be there and Angelo will be able to effectively communicate how important public schools are!

**Ronda Curry**  
Green Mountain NEA

### We need Angelo's experience and expertise

Vermont-NEA means a lot to me. This is why I want to express my support for Angelo Dorta as president. During my thirty-seven years as a teacher, I've had the opportunity to work with him as a local, state, and national leader. He has earned my highest respect, even when our opinions differed.

At the local level he bargained tenaciously and wisely. As a president he was a creative leader. He was an enthusiastic participant in the Regional Bargaining Council.

At state and national levels he has been a strong advocate for children, teachers and support staff. His knowledge of the issues gives him the ability to speak with clarity and conviction about matters which impact all of us. Also, he has worked hard to keep professional committees strong and active.

Angelo became president of Ver-

mont-NEA with a dream of increasing the involvement of teachers and support staff in their professional organization and his commitment to Vermont-NEA members has always guided him. With the current change in governmental leadership at both the state and national levels, the teachers and support staff of Vermont-NEA need more than ever a leader with the experience and expertise of Angelo.

**Delia Clark**  
Essex Educators Association

### Angelo is a proven leader

I write to support Angelo Dorta's reelection as president of Vermont-NEA.

A proven leader, Angelo has represented and led our organization well. He has tirelessly and courageously worked to raise the standards of teaching in our state and increase public understanding and appreciation of our work as professionals. His passion for and commitment to our work is clear. I continue to be impressed by Angelo's ability to bring sensitive and sometimes difficult issues such as financial compensation before the public in an insightful and respectful manner.

At the national, state, and local levels today we as educators face serious challenges and potential opportunities. Angelo's experience and skill, his knowledge and proven effectiveness will be invaluable to us. His efforts have benefited us all, and I am pleased to endorse Angelo's candidacy.

**Michele Forman**  
Middlebury UHS TA

### Vote for Terri Vest for Vice President

I would like to express my support for Terri Vest's candidacy for vice president of Vermont-NEA. Terri brings to the office an ability to work with people, energy, commitment, enthusiasm, and a clear understanding of public education at the national, state, and local levels. She understands the major issues facing our profession today and will provide leadership at the state level as we address them. As a National Board Certified teacher, Terri will work to support teachers throughout the state. She seeks to address the looming teacher shortage through improved working conditions and professional development. Terri has extensive experience in mentoring programs, and she understands that teacher support is a key to increasing student learning.

We are fortunate to have Terri as a candidate; she will work tirelessly to improve education in our state and nation. I encourage you to vote for Terri Vest for vice president.

**Michele Forman**  
Middlebury UHS TA

### Angelo Dorta has the necessary leadership skills

I have been a teacher at Champlain Valley Union High School

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# LETTERS

for almost 30 years. During my long career as a teacher, I have been an active member of our local Association and I have participated in many statewide Vermont-NEA initiatives and meetings.

Over the past 30 years, Vermont-NEA has continued to grow and to evolve as a dynamic professional association and strong union. Under Angelo Dorta's leadership over the last eight years, the Association, in addition to vigorously supporting local union and labor issues, has pursued a number of important teaching and learning initiatives. These new support systems are essential to help teachers and paraprofessionals stay current in our quickly changing profession of public education.

I urge my colleagues to support the candidacy of Angelo Dorta for President. He has been instrumental in helping create a new vision for our Association as we move into the new millennium of Vermont public education, and I believe he has the leadership skills necessary to complete these ongoing endeavors.

**David Ely**  
Chittenden South EA

## **Support Joyce Sullivan for NEA Director**

It is with great enthusiasm that I support the candidacy of Joyce Sullivan for a position on the NEA Board. Joyce has been an involved member of Vermont NEA and her local WSEA for many years, serving in numerous capacities. Because of her lengthy involvement at both the state and local levels, she is acutely aware of the issues that we as Vermont educators face in our classrooms daily. As our representative to the NEA Board, I have the greatest confidence that our concerns will be aired and that we will have a strong advocate working on our behalf.

Please support the candidacy of this hard working, dedicated professional.

**Dennis Ladd**  
Windham Northeast EA

## **Bonnie is ready to 'step up to the plate'**

Bonnie Tuscany has the intelligence, integrity and energy to be Vermont-NEA's next president.

I have had the pleasure of working with Bonnie for the past four years in my role as board director. Bonnie is an educator bringing a teacher's perspective to board discussions. She is a leader advocating for public education, teachers and support staff at both the state and national level. Bonnie's understanding of the budget process and her keen sense of the cost-benefit of programs contributes greatly to board decisions and to keeping costs down.

Vice-presidency has given Bonnie the opportunity to learn the operations of the organization at the local and national levels. Vice-presidency has allowed Bonnie to enhance her lead-

ership capabilities and strengthen her resolve to work for us. She is ready to 'step up to the plate.' I support Bonnie Tuscany in her bid for presidency.

**Lydia Alexander**  
Danville TA

## **Angelo's Got Game**

I cheer for Angelo Dorta. He's been on the education team for as long as I've known him. I met Angelo over 25 years ago when he was a union leader and 4th grade teacher in Essex Town. He impressed me immediately with his dedication to the two things that I hold dear as a teacher, the students and the union that represents and sustains the educators who teach them. His informed, articulate voice always spoke to the important issues related to student learning and the conditions under which teachers worked in Essex. I've continued to be impressed by his dedication as he represents the teachers and support staff of our state. I'm proud of the leadership he provides our Association and the representation of the Vermont-NEA in the public arena. He truly is a champion of our game. Angelo should continue as our president.

**Kevin Sullivan**  
Essex EA

## **Bonnie will offer a new perspective**

I am writing to support the candidacy of Bonnie Tuscany for Vermont-NEA President.

I have worked with Bonnie at Morrystown Elementary for the past thirteen years. In this time I have witnessed Bonnie's leadership qualities. Bonnie served as vice president, president, and chief negotiator for Morrystown Educators Association. Bonnie understands the demands put on teachers and is always willing to listen and offer her support. Most importantly, Bonnie is a classroom teacher who will offer a new perspective to the role of President. Bonnie has been involved at the local and national level and is a team player. She is a mentor to her colleagues and is an adjunct professor at the college level. Bonnie faces challenges with enthusiasm and professionalism, always keeping in mind what is best for the students and educators of Vermont.

Bonnie's experience shows her dedication and commitment to the Vermont-NEA.

Please join me in supporting Bonnie Tuscany for our next Vermont-NEA President.

**Beth Yando**  
Morrystown EA

## **I am a candidate for Vermont-NEA President**

I am a candidate for Vermont-NEA President. I know I still have what is required to do an excellent job: desire, energy, judgement, command of the issues, communication skills, and the respect of Association members, education policymakers, elected officials, and coalition representatives. I

simply need the opportunity to continue working on behalf of Vermont-NEA's 10,000 members.

This election is crucial to our economic and professional lives. There are serious new educational and Association challenges posed by the federal ESEA/No Child Left Behind Act, difficult Retirement System issues, Douglas Administration stances on school funding and school choice, the struggling economy's impact on contract settlements, school budgets, and job security, needed mentor programs for new teachers and new support staff members, and inadequate salaries and working conditions that hinder efforts to recruit, develop, and retain highly qualified teachers and ESP.

As Vermont-NEA President, my proven, trusted, and steady leadership can help surmount such challenges. Like never before, achieving success on traditional bread-and-butter union issues while promoting public education and advancing members' professional interests are complementary priorities. That is why I stand for and with Vermont-NEA members. Together, we can strengthen the union and build the profession for a better future.

**Angelo Dorta**  
Vermont-NEA

## **We can count on Joyce**

I am so pleased that Joyce Sullivan has decided to run for NEA Director from Vermont. I have known Joyce since 1986. She has been a very active member both locally, statewide, and nationally. Vermont has always been a little state with a big voice within NEA. Joyce is well known and respected. I know we can count on Joyce to serve us well and see that our voice continues to be heard.

**Barbara Barbour**  
Windsor Southeast EA

## **Elect Joyce Sullivan**

I write in support of Joyce Sullivan for the NEA Board of Directors. I have known Joyce for more than ten years, and I have witnessed her strong involvement with and support of the Association.

Joyce and I are English colleagues and first and foremost she has demonstrated being an advocate for children and education.

Her involvement with the Association has spanned over 19 years. In those 19 years, she has held positions such as: WSEA Secretary, President, Negotiations Chair, Grievance Committee member, WSEA Wire Editor and organizer of the Education Fair.

On the Vermont-NEA level, Joyce has been a delegate, a member of the Resolutions Committee as chair, chair of the Partnership and Sponsorship Committee and a member of the Board of Directors.

Joyce has also served as an NEA delegate and as a member of the NEA Resolutions Committee.

Joyce Sullivan has truly demonstrated a commitment as an active

participant in all aspects of the Association. Your vote for her in April for the position on the NEA Board of Directors will assure all members that we will have a competent advocate representing all of us! Let's elect someone who will integrate her expertise and commitment for us!!

**Diane Abel**  
Windham Southeast EA

## **Joyce has served our members well**

I write in support of the candidacy of Joyce Sullivan for NEA Director from Vermont. Having worked with Joyce for fifteen years at Brattleboro Area Middle School, I can attest to her commitment to her students and profession. Joyce has served our members well in many capacities: past president of WSEA; Grievance Chair; Negotiations; Editor of the WSEA Wire, and mentoring new faculty. Additionally, Joyce has represented Vermont at both the regional and national level. Joyce Sullivan brings all the necessary skills to the position of Director.

Cast your vote with confidence for Joyce.

**Judy van Wageningen**  
Windham Northeast EA

## **Angelo will guide us**

I am writing to endorse Angelo Dorta's candidacy as president of Vermont-NEA. I have known Angelo for over fifteen years, first as a strong local Association leader, and then as president of Vermont-NEA. In both roles, I have always been impressed by Angelo's total dedication and professionalism. Angelo's consistently astute assessment of issues that face our profession, coupled with his intelligent and articulate manner, have ensured that his leadership has been of the highest caliber.

Perhaps Angelo's greatest strength as a leader lies in his ability to recognize his dual role in strengthening both our union and our profession. Angelo understands that this elevation must occur on both fronts, and has worked tirelessly toward this goal, increasing both professional opportunities and wages and working conditions.

There are many critical issues facing our profession in the coming months on the federal, state, and local levels. I believe that staying the course and maintaining a strong and knowledgeable voice in the role of President will best serve the needs of our Association. Angelo's proven leadership, vision, and skills will continue to effectively guide us through the challenges that lie ahead, and I hope you will join me in giving him your support.

**Kathryn Buley**  
South Burlington EA

## **I strongly endorse Angelo Dorta**

Angelo Dorta has illustrated strong moral character in his tenure

## Welcome Robert Raskevitz to Vermont-NEA staff



*Bob Raskevitz joined the Association's UniServ staff in January.*

MONTPELIER -- Robert "Bob" Raskevitz joined Vermont-NEA's UniServ staff in January. He is working with local Associations in the Upper Valley District, which includes Orange and Windsor counties.

Bob attended high school in Amherst, Mass., earned a BS in animal science, with a minor in economics, at U-Mass, and earned a master's degree in fisheries and wildlife ecology at Oklahoma State.

Bob got his first taste of teaching on a canoe trip in the arctic when, as part of the trip, he was required to become an expert in an aspect of the arctic and teach others on the expedition. He took a job as a long-term substitute and says he "absolutely loved it." But, Bob checked the teacher salary schedule and realized he "was never going to own a home without a master's degree." He chose Oklahoma, earned his master's, and accepted a job at Leland & Gray UHS in Townsend. Bob taught science there for 16 years, at one point teaching grades 7, 9, 11 and 12 in the same day. He settled eventually in grade 8, his favorite.

"On my very first day at Leland & Gray, I was approached and asked to join the Association," said Bob, "and in my family, you join the union -- my father was a union member, and my grandfather, and my uncles..."

So Bob joined his local and handled grievances, served as president, and worked on the successful merger of his district's elementary

schools and support staff. Now, Bob's goal is to help merge Associations and bargaining as he serves Vermont-NEA locals in the Upper Valley.

He says the biggest problems facing educators are time and public perception. "Action plans, course work, the framework of standards, testing, meetings -- requirements that take a lot of time are a serious problem," he explains, adding: "The public perception of what's going on in school is so defeating, when the fact is that children today are wonderful, as wonderful as they have ever been."

"If I can make teachers' lives better, the daily lives of children will be better," says Bob. "And to me that's very important."

"Time with my family" tops Bob's list of favorite activities. He also enjoys fishing, hunting, and muzzle loader shooting. Right now, he's reading a biography of Teddy Roosevelt.

Bob, his wife Mary, and son Thornton are soon moving to East Randolph, where they've found a house "with great possibilities." -LBH

as president. He was there for local schools being placed on technical assistance and personally assured teachers that their concerns would be heard as he helped write letters and spoke in support of teachers to state representatives.

As Vermont became more culturally diverse, he worked to protect in our by-laws all protected categories of civil rights. He provided multicultural training at our state conventions and leadership conferences. The Human & Civil Rights Award was his way of recognizing teachers who exemplify outstanding work in protecting and enhancing the rights of teachers and students.

Angelo listened to the financial concerns of ESP staffs and supported a 3-tier/workhours-based system of paying dues. He has been vocal time and again regarding our students' achievements, always declaring it is outstanding professional teachers and ESP that make our schools a success. He never turns down an invitation into a classroom to meet students and witness firsthand their academic achievements.

As president of the Burlington Education Association, I want to thank Angela Dorta for having the quality of character we need at the state level to represent us as a professional organization. I strongly endorse his candidacy.

**Terry Buehner**  
Burlington EA

### Mark your ballot for Bonnie

I was very pleased to learn that Bonnie Tuscany is running for president of Vermont-NEA. I served with Bonnie on the Vermont-NEA Board of Directors for eight years and, during that time, found many things to

admire about her. Bonnie clearly understood the whole budget process and was able to clarify it for others. In her role as budget presenter, no question was glossed over or trivialized. Bonnie is a perceptive listener, able to hear between the lines and state the essence of a speaker. She molds different opinions into workable action. Every member can expect to be heard with Bonnie as president.

Bonnie is tireless when it comes to representing Vermont-NEA all over the state. I know she will continue her established practice of attending regional events and meetings in the Rutland area, collecting input from a wide range of members in the process.

Mark your ballot with confidence! A vote for Bonnie Tuscany is a vote for a hard-working, involved president of Vermont-NEA!

**Cyndie Clark**  
Proctor EA-Retired

### Mr. Dorta provides knowledge, dedication

It is a pleasure for me to write a letter of support for Angelo Dorta to continue as president of Vermont-NEA. I have had the occasion to work with Mr. Dorta in numerous instances from summer workshops to negotiation support meetings to VSBPE meetings around the state of Vermont.

Mr. Dorta is genuinely focused on improving the quality of education in Vermont. He has led the campaign for the licensing of all classroom teachers. He has advocated for improvement in collective bargaining and he has supported teacher efforts for increases in salary and benefits.

At VSBPE meetings, where I have served as a teacher member for three years, Mr. Dorta has been an articulate spokesperson for the im-

provement of teacher quality and Vermont education in general. He has advocated for teachers before the Vermont Legislature, the Commissioner of Education, and the Vermont Board of Education.

As an educator for 33 years and as president of our local Association for several years, I have felt that Mr. Dorta provided the competence, the knowledge, dedication and communication skills necessary to lead our membership. I fully endorse Angelo Dorta to continue to serve as our Vermont-NEA President.

**Stanley A. Blicharz**  
Rutland Town EA

### Join me supporting Angelo Dorta

Vermont-NEA President Angelo Dorta is hard-working, energetic, and knowledgeable about the critical issues we face. He is committed to doing an excellent job.

I can personally speak about Angelo's dedication to the recruitment and mentoring of new teachers. In 1998, when I was studying elementary education as an undergraduate student at UVM, Angelo worked closely with my classmates to educate all of us on the issues facing teachers in Vermont. This year, as I have begun my first year as an educator, Angelo has continued to check in with me. He recognizes the challenges I face in my first year and has offered support, both personal and through mentor trainings, such as the PATHWISE Induction Program and "I Can Do It" for new teachers. In a profession with high turnover rates and the need for quality educators, his dedication to the recruitment, training, and retention of new teachers is critical.

Our profession faces serious new

challenges. Angelo will continue to lead with compassion and commitment and will try to make this profession better for us and for the children we serve. I urge you to join me in supporting Angelo Dorta in his run for reelection as president of Vermont-NEA.

**Sara Hennessey**  
Essex EA

### Angelo deserves your vote

I am writing this letter in support of Angelo Dorta for reelection as president of Vermont-NEA. I have been a loyal Association member for 33 years. I believe Angelo to be unconditionally the best candidate for the position. He is the leader that we need to represent us as we face the many crucial issues in education today, such as the ESEA/No Child Left Behind Act, changes in school funding, school choice, and student testing.

I have known Angelo both personally and professionally for the past 27 years. I have seen him face the challenges of a classroom teacher, a contract negotiator, the president of our local union, and of course, president of Vermont-NEA. I have found him to be extremely dedicated, motivated, and competent. He is the proverbial advocate for student and teacher rights and concerns. His compassion for children and his insight to their point of view, along with his ability to articulate on their behalf have made Angelo the respected leader that he is. Angelo cares about people. He has the instinct to do what is morally correct. He is a beacon for social consciousness.

Angelo Dorta has my vote -- he deserves your vote as well.

**Bob McCann**  
Essex EA

## Burlington EA organizes student and community celebration of Black History Month

BURLINGTON -- In February, Black History Month, the Burlington Education Association organized a celebration that centered on student work and relied on the support and cooperation of restaurant owners throughout the city.

For their part, students researched various events and personalities important in the history of African Americans in this country, then designed placemats depicting what they learned.

The best placemat designs, from all grade levels, were selected, and the student designers were awarded Certificates of Achievement for Outstanding Placemat Design by the Burlington Education Association.

BEA duplicated the award-winning placemats and distributed hundreds of them free of charge to dozens of Burlington restaurants.

The placemats are beautiful. These were among the best:

- Michael from Champlain School, in a drawing inspired by Faith Ringgold, drew an Underground Railroad car with a smiling African American woman flying overhead toward freedom. It made a very attractive placemat.

- An 11th grader at Burlington High School designed a placemat celebrating the accomplishments of black Hockey player Anson Carter. The placemat even included a quiz about

black players through history in the NHL, a great lesson for diners awaiting their salads!

- A 6th grader from Hunt Middle School designed a placemat in green, orange and purple that told the story of Ida Bell Wells Barnett, who was born a slave and became a newspaper writer and activist for African American rights.

- Courtney, a 3rd grader at H.O. Wheeler Elementary School, designed a colorful placemat titled, "I Like Martin Luther King, Jr." The biggest word in her collage of information is "PEACE."

BEA President Terry Buehner says restaurant owners were very receptive to the idea of celebrating African-American History Month, and welcomed the students' educational placemats.

Dan and Susan Rogers own Cannon's, a very fine new restaurant on North Avenue in Burlington. The Rogers have a four-year-old son, which is one reason they welcomed and used the Burlington student placemats.

"We have a child of our own," said Dan Rogers, adding, "We are a family restaurant, so it's a perfect tie-in. It's a great thing to make the community aware of the subject matter and also to celebrate children's art. Put all those things together and it's a perfect match." - LBH

Vermont-NEA Photo by Art Huse



BEA President Terry Buehner, Susan Rogers, Dan Rogers, and Vermont-NEA President Angelo Dorta set a table with student placemats at Cannon's Restaurant, 1127 North Avenue in Burlington.



The Rutland High School Chapter of the National Honor Society tries on Cat hats in preparation for Dr. Seuss's birthday.

## Celebrating Dr. Seuss

RUTLAND -- Kathy Lopes of the Rutland Education Association emailed this message to Vermont-NEA: "My husband, Ray Lopes, and I are the advisors for the Rutland High School Chapter of the National Honor Society. Our members are in the process of planning a day of reading to elementary students in our school district. With more than 30 members of the NHS, we plan to go into as many classes as possible on that day to share the fun of reading with our young

friends. Our target date is March 3 (for obvious reasons!). Depending on how many hats we can find, we would either all wear one while reading or try to have at least one person per building wear one as we march in to battle illiteracy."

This message won 30 Cat hats for Kathy Lopes and her students. Vermont-NEA gave away hats to members planning special Seuss celebrations. Go to [www.vtnea.org](http://www.vtnea.org) to read about more Seuss plans!

## Woodstock UHS takes Public Speaking Crown

MONTPELIER -- Sixty-seven students from eleven high schools recently participated in the Vermont State Forensics (public speaking) tournament at the State House in Montpelier. At the end of three qualifying rounds and a final championship round, Woodstock emerged as the Vermont State Forensics champion. Champlain Valley placed second.

This activity, sponsored by the Vermont Debate and Forensics League, a Vermont-NEA partner, has worked for 25 years to promote better public speaking in Vermont.

Individual winners included Andrea Lash of CVU in Drama with Sophie Shackleton of Woodstock second. South Burlington won the poetry competition with Kate Magill placing first and Brett Colasacoo second. In Prose it was Carmel Levy of Woodstock winning, with Kari Jennings of Northfield second. Tom Coen of CVU won the Extemporaneous Speaking event and Gavin Heverly-Coulson placed second. With eighteen contestants in the Impromptu Speaking category, Sean O'Hara of Rutland emerged the winner and John

Bergeron of Woodstock placed second. Allison Neal of Northfield won Oratory and CVU's Anne Marie Brooks was runner-up. Radio Announcing was won by Deirdre Yee of Montpelier with Olin Gay of Blue Mountain second.

Judges for the events were selected because of their expertise and representation. They included English professors, radio and communication technicians, public policy advocates, attorneys and an independent filmmaker. Mark Hage, Vermont-NEA Benefits Director and a former English teacher commented that the students he judged were the best he has heard in his four years associated with this activity.

VDFL soon will be sending out a letter and enclosures making available resource materials and people to support the integration of more public speaking into their curriculum, developing a public speaking course or designing a co-curricular activity to promote speech.

For further information contact Bill Haines, President VDFL, (802) 229-9303 or [bill@mhs.mps.k12.vt.us](mailto:bill@mhs.mps.k12.vt.us).