



Vermont-NEA

# TODAY

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## Kathy Douglas of Ferrisburgh Central School wins Vermont-NEA History Day Award

MONTPELIER — Students from throughout Vermont show their projects and compete each year at the Vermont History Day competition, sponsored by the Vermont Historical Society. The kids win awards and the right to compete in the National History Day contest.

One award presented at Vermont History Day recognizes the tremendous effort of teachers who participate in the History Day program. Teachers guide their students' research and coach History Day teams, all on top of a demanding classroom load.

This year, Vermont-NEA member Kathy Douglas was honored at the annual Vermont History Day competition. And what a perfect choice she is for this award. Jennifer DePrizio, who coordinated the History Day competition in Vermont for the Historical Society, had this to say: "Kathy Douglas clearly demonstrated superb guidance of her History Day students. She has been working with the History Day for over ten years. In addition to working closely with her students to develop research and communication skills through their History Day projects, Kathy is dedicated to the expansion of the History Day program throughout the state."

Kathy Douglas certainly supports Vermont History Day, and proves her dedication with outstanding work on behalf of her 6th grade students. There is not enough room for Douglas' History Day students to construct and keep their projects at school. A lot of the work gets done at students' homes, with support from parents. "I couldn't do it without the parents," says Douglas, who keeps a schedule of home visits to guide her students' History Day projects. "She is the driving force," says parent Bruce Baldwin.

Douglas is a hard driver. These were projects created by her students:

- ✓ "A Light in the Dark," a project about lighthouses on Lake Champlain
- ✓ "Vermont's Big Boom," a project about the Merino sheep industry
- ✓ "Steamboats of Lake Champlain"



- ✓ "Baseball in Vermont"
- ✓ "Ferrying: A Frontier on Lake Champlain"
- ✓ "Midwifery in Vermont"
- ✓ "The History of Land Grants"

The winner of the Vermont-NEA History Day Award is selected by the Vermont Historical Society's History Day Coordinator, and she receives a certificate at the state contest and a check for \$250 from Vermont-NEA.

"Our hope is that this Teacher Award will encourage more teachers to get involved in History Day, which is now a Vermont-NEA Partner event," said Association President Angelo Dorta in a letter to Kathy Douglas. "Thank you," he said, "for your excellent effort supporting students, and for representing the great work being accomplished by Vermont's teachers." ■

*Above: Kathy Douglas (L) was at Montpelier High School on April 7 to coach her students with entries in the Vermont History Day contest. This project by Elias Baldwin (center) explores lighthouses. Bruce Baldwin (R), was there to support his son.*



*Right: Sixth graders Stephanie Kempton and Elizabeth Sure presented a project called "Vermont's Big Boom: A Frontier in the Merino Sheep Industry." Here they pose with their teacher Kathy Douglas.*

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# Our ESP and their importance

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Each March, Vermont-NEA hosts a conference for education support personnel (ESP) members. The Association and its local affiliates have as many reasons to honor their importance in Vermont public schools as we have ESP colleagues working beside us each day.

My mother was a school cook for nearly 30 years in Connecticut. Being Italian and a food-lover by nature, she had great pride in the daily lunches prepared by her and her co-workers. She knew most of the elementary students — my friends and peers — and called them by name. After all, she collected their lunch money and milk money each morning and spooned the food onto their

trays at noon. Furthermore, we all lived in the same town, some of us in the same neighborhoods.

My sister and I were proud of who she was and what she did. As we ate our toast and drank our milk before school at a stainless steel counter amid the large, commercial kitchen equipment, we would watch and listen to the teachers get their coffee and visit with her and the two other "kitchen ladies." Easy familiarity and genuine fondness were evident. Years later, on visits back home with my own growing family, I learned from several elderly educators and former classmates that her smile, a kind word or two, or a kidding remark added a spark of warmth and caring for many young school children.

Consequently, as a teacher, I always could identify the child or two each year whose self-confidence and pride were boosted by opportunities to help the custodian, or to bring a message to the school secretary, or to sit close to the bus driver. My youngest son was one of those kids, too. One year, my entire class and I even took a "field trip" to our school kitchen at Founders Memorial School in Essex Town: We made the bread rolls, we helped mix the vats of soup, and we planned a week of healthy meals later in the month for the entire school.

My mother worked with her hands and on her feet all day long. She had overall management responsibility for food preparation, equipment and supplies, finances, and sanitation in her school kitchen. She earned about \$7 per hour and a Social Security benefit when she retired. I wish that she had a union to represent her during those years.

Many of my mother's lessons still live on with me. Take time to know and value your ESP colleagues is one lesson that I would recommend to any teacher, administrator, or school board member. They make a positive difference in the school climate for children and adults, enhance student and par-



Angelo J. Dorta

school district for at least 10 years. 54% have completed some college and 29% have completed other forms of post-secondary training.

Education support personnel often work directly with our most challenging and medically fragile students. 48% provide care to students with special learning needs. Nearly 80% have some responsibility for ensuring student and staff safety, and it is the primary duty for half of those ESP members.

Their major source of work satisfaction is the personal fulfillment that they obtain from doing their jobs. However, wages, health insurance, and retirement benefits usually are too inadequate and the threat of privatization constantly looms. In

fact, 75% are concerned about losing their jobs to privatization, and 40% report that the work of at least one ESP job group in their school district already is sub-contracted.

Over 1,500 education support staff belong to Vermont-NEA, roughly 15% of our total membership and a small portion of 300,000 NEA ESP nationwide. They work with teachers and administrators in every school district as classroom paraeducators and in

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ESP members Corey Palmer and Michele Newton of Ferrisburgh served as delegates to the 2001 Vermont-NEA Representative Assembly.

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NEA's national survey of ESP members every 5 years also quantifies the commitment, experience, and caring that we witness each day in Vermont schools. 81% plan to stay with their jobs until retirement, and over 40% have ten years of experience and have worked in the same

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Vermont-NEA Photo by Jim Landon



The 2001 Vermont-NEA Scholars' Bowl champions are from Burlington High School (L-R): Rachel Winer, Isaac Backus, Joel Wertheimer, Jocelyn Crawford, Jessica Agnew-Blais, Kiran MacCormick, Patrick Bradley, Sheng Li, Coach Kevin Commo, Coach David Rome, and Bill Haines, representing Vermont-NEA.

## Burlington team wins Vermont-NEA Scholars' Bowl

COLCHESTER — Teams of high school scholars from Mt. Anthony, Hanover, Essex Junction and Burlington squared off on April 7 at St. Michael's College for the final championship matches of the 2001 Vermont-NEA Scholars' Bowl. Thirty-two teams participated this year, and for the third consecutive year,

Burlington won. They will represent Vermont at the Panasonic Bowl in Disneyworld in June.

Vermont-NEA is the sponsor of the Scholars' Bowl. "We are proud to sponsor this academic competition," said Bill Haines of the Association's Partnership/Sponsorship Committee, representing Vermont-NEA at the fi-

nal matches. He presented certificates to Mt. Anthony students and trophies to Burlington. "It seems most appropriate that the teachers' organization of the state should have a relationship such as this," he told the crowd. "What a credit all the Scholars' Bowl students are to their schools, parents, teachers and the State of Vermont." ■

## Letters

### Vote was shortsighted

Last weekend in Rutland, the Vermont-NEA held its annual Representative Assembly. I was disappointed in both the number of attendees participating in our deliberations and in the direction we took there.

Only 60 to 65 delegates were able to attend the meeting, and of that number, many were serving two roles. Some participated as Association Officers and many others as Vermont-NEA Board of Directors. I'm grateful they are willing to serve and appreciate the time and energy they pour into our organization. However, it's time for many of us in the organization to take our service responsibilities more seriously and participate in the single most important group assembly we have each year.

Additionally, I was disappointed in the voting body's decision to delete \$8,000 earmarked for professional teaching and standards committee work. The intent of this group was to look into ways of helping teachers with mentor programs, national board certification processes, and other issues related to teaching and learning from the educator's point of view.

During the discussion, one representative even remarked that national board certification was just a matter of paperwork. I vigorously disagree. I'm not board certified and, at this point in my career, will not pursue it. However, I have the highest personal and professional regards for those who are moving our profession forward by working through this difficult process. I believe the vote to delete money for

this type of professional work was shortsighted and wrong.

**David Ely, Teacher  
Chittenden South EA**

### We should be about more than contract negotiations

I would like to express my disappointment with the budget vote on Saturday 4/7 at the Representative Assembly in which \$8300 for Teaching and Learning Programs was cut out of the proposed budget. The amount that was cut out would have been covered by a \$1.00 a year dues increase. This money was to be used by the new Teaching and Learning Steering Committee to begin to set up support programs for National Board Certification, peer assistance, mentoring, and instructional leadership.

I believe it is extremely important for our Association to branch out into areas of instructional leadership and teacher quality enhancement for the sake of improved student learning. It is not enough for our Association to be concerned only with salary and benefits issues. We need to begin to push for improvement of teacher quality. Our members expect us to offer more services, to do more than just provide financial gain. While contract negotiations should continue to be the primary focus of Vermont-NEA, it should not be the only thing that we are about.

**Laurie Lawrence  
Burr and Burton Academy TA**

### We kept with a prudent plan

I am happy to report that in these

uncertain economic times your retirement board as performed exceptionally. In comparison with other public retirement plans, we have achieved the following grades, 1 being the best 100 the worst. These results are our latest report on December 31, 2000.

- 1) for the last quarter - 7
- 2) for the last year - 19
- 3) for the last 3 years - 21
- 4) for the last 5 years - 15

These results are not created by accident. I have been on the retirement board since 1988 and helped create the plan which is now in place. We have stayed with the plans with relatively little risk and didn't follow the high flyers. We kept with a prudent plan and planned for difficult times. While most funds lost money last year we made money. We take seriously the trust you have put in us.

I would particularly like to give credit for maintaining this plan to Joe Mackey and Jon Harris. Joe Mackey has done a wonderful job in communicating with the legislature and fighting for improvements in funding and pushing for better medical benefits for retirees.

Joe is running for reelection this spring and I urge you to give him your enthusiastic support in his election. Reelection of Joe Mackey will help insure excellent results in the future.

**Jay Kaplan, retired**

*Vermont-NEA prints all letters from members. We recommend a length of 200 words and reserve the right to edit for length. Email letters@vtnea.org*

## "Let's Kick it up a Notch!"

### Jim DeFilippi will deliver Convention keynote

We are in for a real treat on Thursday, October 18, at the Vermont-NEA Convention General Assembly. Jim DeFilippi — author of *Duck Alley* (1999) and *Blood Sugar* (1993) and veteran teacher at Winooski High School — will deliver the keynote address. DeFilippi has written a column for the Burlington Free Press, is a regular contributor to his local Association's newsletter, *Winooski Wisdom*, and is appreciated for his talent as a presenter and for his very quick sense of humor.

### Ken Peterson to speak on teacher evaluation

Vermont-NEA will kick off Convention week by hosting a Professional Issue Conference on Teacher Evaluation on Saturday, October 13. Our special guest will be Professor Kenneth D. Peterson of Portland State University, nationally recognized expert in personnel evaluation and author of *Teacher evaluation: A comprehensive guide to new directions and practices*.

Local presidents will be invited to attend heading a supervisory union team that consists of Association members, plus the superintendent, administrators, and school board members. ■

## Mountain Review 2000

Teachers may submit the work of students K-12 to the Vermont Council of Teachers of English annual publication of student writing, *The Mountain Review*.

Please do not send anthologies or class sets of a particular assignment, and use judgment if you plan to send a lot of writing. Teachers should select quality pieces for submission and review each submitted piece carefully for possible plagiarism. All entries must meet these requirements:

1. Type all entries. Double space prose. Single space poetry.
2. Limit poetry to 50 lines maximum and include a line count.
3. Limit prose to 850 words maximum and include a word count.
4. Include a title.
5. Edit carefully.
6. At the end of each entry, include the author's name, grade, school, and teacher.

No manuscripts will be returned. The deadline is June 10, 2001. Send entries to: Sheila Mable, Mountain Review Editor, South Burlington HS, 550 Dorset St., So. Burlington, VT 05403 ■

# Vermont-NEA presents scholarships, Human & Civil Rights Awards

Vermont-NEA Photos by Art Huse



The 2001 Vermont-NEA Scholarship winners are (L-R): Eben Sargent of North Country UHS, Samantha Treu of Green Mountain UHS, Taryn McLaughlin of Rutland HS, and Nicholas Miller of South Burlington HS.



Human and Civil Rights Award winners (front L-R): Jessie Palatucci, Callie Ewald, and Katie Blake of Windsor HS pose with Vermont-NEA President Angelo Dorta and HCR Committee Chair Beth Dutton of Windsor.

**RUTLAND** — The Vermont-NEA Representative Assembly began as it does each year with dinner and the annual presentations everyone loves to see: Human and Civil Rights Awards and Maida F. Townsend Scholarships to several truly exceptional students. Scholarship Committee members Ann Lavery, Lucinda Clark and Cherry Torrey presented the awards.

### The Scholarship Winners

**Eben Sargent**, the son of Linda and David Sargent, attends North Country Union High School. Eben already operates a small business making Adirondack chairs. He plans to attend Dartmouth in the fall.

**Samantha Treu** is the daughter of Frank and Toby Treu. She attends Green Mountain Union High School, where she helped found an alcohol and drug abuse prevention group. She plans a career in psychology.

**Taryn McLaughlin**, the daughter of James and Wendy McLaughlin, is a senior at Rutland High School. Taryn is active in community service projects, and will study management and marketing this fall at a New England college.

**Nicholas Miller** is a senior at South Burlington High School. His parents are Robert and Jane Miller. Nicholas says his parents are "impeccable role models from whom he learned that knowledge is the key to everything in our world." He will attend Colby College in the fall.

### HCR Awards

Vermont-NEA Human and Civil Rights Committee chair Beth Dutton of Windsor introduced these outstanding students, winners of the Association's annual HCR awards:

**Jessie Palatucci**, a sophomore at Windsor High School, is a founding member of VKAT, Vermont Kids Against Tobacco, and an active member of "In Your Face Guerrilla Theatre," a group of high school students who travel across Vermont performing skits on eating disorders, temptations with drugs and sex, and other teen issues.

**Callie Ewald**, a freshman at Windsor High School, is one of only two teenagers serving on the Vermont Tobacco Evaluation and Review Board, and she is an active member of the Truth and Legacy Foundation, youths who work to fight big tobacco companies. Through her church, Callie participates in a work camp to repair and construct homes for the needy.

**Katie Blake**, a senior at Windsor High School, is a member of the Vermont Teen Leadership Support Program and serves on its Youth Advisory Council. She gives workshops on drugs, alcohol, drinking and driving, discrimination, and other issues vital to teens.

# Vermont-NEA Representative Assembly delegates adjust, approve budget

Vermont-NEA Photos by Art Huse



*Jim Kiehle of Brattleboro, representing the Windham Southeast Education Association, reminded delegates of the teaching and learning resources provided by our national Association.*



*Robert Chaffee is a retired member. He serves as parliamentarian for the Rep Assembly.*



*Vice President Bonnie Tuscany conducted an information session on the proposed budget.*



*Board members Jay Burnell of Bennington and Tom Gallagher of Lamoille check delegate credentials.*



*Alison Sylvester, a first-year teacher at Moretown, attended her first RA with veteran delegate Jeff Isham.*

RUTLAND — Leaders selected to represent their local Association members gathered on a rainy week early in April for Vermont-NEA's annual "town meeting," the Representative Assembly. Delegates debated, adjusted and approved a 2001-02 budget, acted on New Business Items and Resolutions, and made a small amendment to the Bylaws.

### Budget Debate

Vermont-NEA Vice President Bonnie Tuscany conducted an informational session on the proposed budget on Friday evening. Decision-making began on Saturday morning.

Delegates voted to cut a new line item from the proposed budget: \$8,300 for Teaching and Learning Programs. The cut reduced proposed dues by \$1, from \$20 to \$19. Four delegates spoke against the proposal, but arguments by the two makers of the motion about why they believe the new expense is not necessary persuaded the majority. A proposal to reduce dues to \$13 failed, with only the maker of the motion speaking in favor. A motion to increase money set aside for scholarships by \$5,000 failed.

The total budget, adjusted down by one dollar, was passed without further discussion by a voice vote.

### Other Business

The delegates acted on New Business Items, tabling a proposal that Vermont-NEA begin an effort to seat a practicing public school teacher on the State Board of Education and approving a letter of support and a financial contribution to the Hawaii State Teachers' Association, which is on strike.

An NBI calling for a new staff position at Vermont-NEA to handle issues of teaching and learning was withdrawn, as was an NBI that directs Vermont-NEA to advocate for an improved health insurance benefit for retired teachers, because this advocacy already is occurring.

### Resolutions

Delegates approved changes to Resolutions to deal with an improved health insurance benefit for retired teachers. They passed new Resolutions on Driver Education, Teacher Compensation, Peer Assistance, and Safe and Orderly Schools. They deleted F-7 Underutilization of Teachers from the Resolutions.

### Bylaw Amendment

Finally, delegates marked ballots to amend Article XI, Section 1bii. of the Bylaws to make Vermont-NEA Resolutions Committee, which is chaired by "the individual representing this Corporation on the NEA Resolutions Committee" be "vice-chaired by the individual representing this Corporation as alternate on the NEA Resolutions Committee."

# Legislature gears up to wind down

By Joel Cook, Executive Director

The Vermont Legislature is about to start an almost traditional "overtime" period, during which the Senate has to deal with any tax measures, since they have to emerge from the House first, as well as the budget. Other issues either enjoy new life during this period, or they simply lie around waiting for another day. The tax measure of most significance is the proposal to change the school funding law. While there are dozens of budget issues we follow, the one grabbing the lion's share of our attention has been and is the health insurance benefit for retired teachers. One of the other issues we are watching very closely is the homosexuality/censorship bill. Here is where things stand on April 13.

## School funding

On April 13, the House Ways and Means Committee passed, by an 8-3 vote, a 25-page bill that would revise some basic features of Vermont's school funding law. The bill has its strengths, and it has its weaknesses. Procedurally, it will now be assigned to the House Appropriations Committee where it will stay, by rumor, until the House Leadership determines there are or are not sufficient votes for the full House to pass it. If it passes, it moves on to the Senate.

The bill would increase the State's share of the cost of public schools by about \$63 million. \$16 million would come from a hoped-for State budget surplus and \$47 million from a 20% increase in the sales tax across the state, from 5% to 6%. The lead author of the plan, Richard Marron (R. Stowe), refers to this money as a shift away from the State's reliance on the property tax in paying for schools. One big difficulty facing the bill is that the 25% of our communities with the greatest property wealth would receive more than 60% of its benefit, while the 25% of our communities with the lowest property wealth would receive only about 6%. A major challenge for Vermont-NEA, therefore, is to balance the amount of this benefit with the manner in which it is intended to be distributed.

As significant is a broad distaste, especially within the business community generally, for an increase in the sales tax. It may very well be this issue around which the fate of this measure depends in the House. In addition, there is concern that the \$16 million in projected surplus will not appear, creating an immediate, new funding problem.

## Distribution of the money

Most of the added revenue would be distributed to school districts in the form of a significant increase in the per pupil block grant, from about \$5400 to more than \$6800 in FY 03. To pay for that increase, the statewide property tax rate would climb from \$1.10 to \$1.23.

Under current law, households with below \$75,000 in income can pay their State school tax as 2% of their income. Under the proposal, this would increase to 2.24% to reflect the same proportionate increase in the block grant. Under current law, those same households can pay any additional local school tax needed to round out their school budget as an added percentage of their income. Under the proposal, that would no longer be available: no matter what your income, the "local share" would be paid in the form of a property tax. The plan also eliminates the option for households below \$75,000 to claim a \$15,000 exemption on the value of their homestead property.

Under both current law and the proposal, households with below \$47,000 in income are insulated from having to pay more than 5% of their income in combined school and municipal taxes.

There are other, even more arcane provisions that affect various policies and local budget decisions, but these are the broad provisions that form the body of the proposal. From a large policy perspective, the proposal would decrease the property tax share of school spending to about 55%. It does not simplify the law.

## Is it good for schools & kids?

The most difficult part of the analysis is bumping up against those who say that "sharing" across districts deprives their children of the school programs they want to provide for them. We also confront a traditional faction that says spending on schools is unrelated to quality. The inconsistency between these two propositions is obvious but often ignored.

## The extent of sharing

There are two kinds of "sharing" going on under current law. Communities with very high property wealth could spend a lot of money on their students without a property tax even as high as the current statewide tax rate of \$1.10. For those communities – generally ski towns – taxpayers already share their property wealth with the rest of the state. For example, take a district that adopts a budget that calls on it to spend, say, \$9000 per pupil, and that needs only a \$.70 property tax rate to raise it. Under current law, since all districts pay the statewide property tax at the \$1.10 rate, this district, and other property wealthy ones like it, already share some of their tax base with the rest of the state.

The second level of sharing – the sharing pool – is broader and the object of most of the attention. It is a method that accomplishes two important matters of public policy. It addresses the constitutional obligation to raise school funds in a way not tied to differential community wealth. It also addresses the strong value Vermonters place in setting spending and program levels locally. If we didn't care

about the latter – local control – the State might as well just set a significantly higher statewide property tax level, prohibit anyone from spending more, and be done with it. If we didn't care about the former, the State might as well return to local property tax rates without regard to the issue of substantially equal educational opportunity. The pending proposal does that, by virtually eliminating the sharing pool and telling districts that want to spend more than the State provides them to do what they did historically: levy a local property tax. This is the provision about which there would be follow-up litigation, under the question, "How much equality of educational opportunity is substantial?" Would the significant increase in the State school tax, still raised equitably statewide, provide sufficient "equity" so that even higher spending could dispense with further "equity"?

What should a bill to improve this law include? Here is a list of some concepts we, and others, have advanced:

- An increased block grant, resulting in reducing reliance on the sharing pool;
- A block grant that grows each year by a realistic amount;
- A method of appraising property statewide that is fair, fairly administered, and uniform;
- A way of making plainer for taxpayers the connection between school taxes and any prebates or rebates; and
- A realistic definition of "homestead" for purposes of determining "income sensitivity."

## Retired Teachers' health insurance benefit

The subject of several earlier reports, there has been no actual status change. The House-passed "improvement" in this benefit, from "50/0" of the JY premium to "65/0" of the 250 Comp premium, is awaiting consideration in the Senate Appropriations Committee as part of the State budget. We are scheduled to present the issue to that committee on Tuesday, April 17. The Senate's Government Operations Committee has already passed S.33, which would improve the benefit to "80/50" of the 250 Comp plan premium. You may already have read, through electronic messages, of any news between my writing this and your reading this.

## Homosexuality/Censorship

Those involved in this bill's life have been struck more than anything else by the fact that it has any. Its current formal status is one of dormancy. There is no further consideration of this bill scheduled.

Here's what it would do. The formal statement of purpose reads: "This bill proposes to prohibit an employee of a school district from encouraging, promoting or sanctioning homosexual conduct." Here is the full text;

- (a) An employee or agent of a

school district, while engaged in any activity related to employment in the school district, shall not in any manner encourage, promote or sanction homosexual or bisexual conduct. No employee or agent of a school district shall instruct, counsel or advise a student that a homosexual or bisexual orientation is innate or unchangeable.

(b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the first amendment right of a student to freedom of speech or association, or any other constitutional right.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit AIDS education, instruction about human sexuality or guidance counseling, provided that any instruction or counseling about homosexual or bisexual conduct includes a warning about the serious health risks associated with such behavior, and does not include instruction, counseling or advice that a homosexual or bisexual orientation is innate or unchangeable.

(d) In this section, "homosexual conduct" means same-gender sexual behavior and "homosexual orientation" means the desire or inclination to engage in homosexual conduct.

Here's what the Committee has heard: The House Education Committee conducted one 3-hour session on this specific bill, hearing an overview of the health curriculum statute followed by half a dozen witnesses condemning both the Health Education Resource Centers (HERCs), which provide materials to schools about AIDS education and related health studies materials from four locations around the state, and a local school district that, the witnesses claimed, did not protect a heterosexual student properly. The Committee followed up with another two hearings regarding the extent to which the State is and should be involved in developing local school district curricula.

Here is what might happen: Behind the scenes, people have been trying to figure out what to do. The bill presents a huge, potential embarrassment to the House in general. It does not have enough support in the committee to emerge, certainly not in its original, unconstitutional form. The concern is that, even if it is amended in the committee, an amendment to that amendment would appear in the full House, requiring it to consider the original bill. In the meantime, there has been virtually no testimony solicited in opposition to this specific bill. We have been assured that, if the bill somehow is awakened that we, and others, would be provided ample opportunity to express our views. There is some discussion about approaching the Department of Education to examine the contents of the HERCs for materials with political rhetoric. There is also discussion about sanitizing the bill of any reference to sexual orientation and expanding the already expansive role local communities have in setting the health curriculum, particularly around matters of sexuality.

## UniServ Position Notice

Vermont-NEA is creating a 7th UniServ District and, accordingly, will be hiring a 7th UniServ Director, to provide services to local Associations in Rutland and Addison Counties. We are accepting applications for this position anytime between now and the end of May. Starting date will be in early August.

UniServ Directors are field representatives and are the primary link between leaders of local groups of educators and Vermont-NEA itself. Their primary duties are: to provide training, guidance, and technical assistance to local Associations in maintaining their organization and in negotiating their collective bargaining agreements, and to help local Associations enforce those agreements, through advice to and direct representation of Associations and individual members before school boards and administrators, fact-finders, mediators, and arbitrators. The UniServ Directors constitute about half our professional staff and work in concert with our organizing, legal, communications, and member benefits personnel.

UniServ positions require people with unusually strong and broad skills, including: unlimited dedication to the interests of both public education and public school educators; excellent interpersonal skills with both groups and individuals; extensive ability to work collaboratively as well as individually; thorough working knowledge of employee rights as well as education and labor laws and processes; excellent oral and written communication skills; understanding of public policy issues and trends affecting public education and educators; interest and involvement in political action activities as they relate to public education and educators; good computer, math, and typing abilities; a willingness to work evenings and some weekends on Association business; and adaptability.

Applications should be submitted by no later than May 31 and should include a cover letter explaining the applicant's interest in and background for the position, a resume, one or more writing samples, and names of no fewer than three references. Please direct applications or inquiries to Joel D. Cook, Executive Director, Vermont-NEA, 10 Wheelock Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05602.

**Equal Opportunity Employer**

### Vermont-NEA Leadership Conference Agenda

8:00 - 9:00 am	Continental breakfast (optional)
9:00 - 9:15 am	Greetings from President
9:15 am - 12:15 pm	Workshops - session #1
12:15 - 2:00 pm	Lunch and recreation
2:00 - 5:00 pm	Workshops - session #2
5:00 - 5:30 pm	Social (optional)
5:30 - 6:30 pm	Dinner - optional, no charge, but you must pre-register

### Registration

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Which conference location/date: \_\_\_\_\_

Workshop Choice: \_\_\_\_\_

RSVP for dinner (dinner is optional):  yes  no

Clip and mail to Vermont-NEA, 10 Wheelock Street, Montpelier, VT 05602  
or email sparker@nea.org  
July 15, 2001 is the registration deadline.



## Vermont-NEA Summer Leadership Conferences 2001

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

### Who's invited?

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

### What's the cost?

None. The meals and conference are provided free!

### Where can you attend?

Select the date/location that's most convenient for you! Each Conference starts at 8:00 am and ends at 5:00 pm

Tuesday, July 31	Mt. Snow	Mt. Snow Grand Summit
Wednesday, August 1	Killington	Killington Grand Hotel
Tuesday, August 7	Stowe	Stoweflake Resort
Wednesday, August 8	St. Johnsbury	Lincoln Inn

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

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

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

**Solving Workplace Problems:** This workshop will give you the skills and information you need to handle and resolve problems. It is based on the philosophy that vigilant, well-trained and assertive union leaders are the key to protecting and enhancing members' rights, benefits and working conditions. A union with good internal communication — that knows and polices its contract and that responds swiftly to real or potential conflicts — is your best defense. There is no magic to filing, processing or arguing a grievance... we'll show you how. And we'll work on building a union culture that identifies problems before they happen, or before they escalate into grievances.

**Building a Sustainable Association:** This is for you if you are a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Building Rep., Membership Chair, Newsletter Editor, ... or are about to become one! You want to know how to do your job, more efficiently and more effectively. You want to know what kind of help is available to you. You want to know how to involve more members, how to solve conflicts, how to set goals and achieve them, how to use your Association to make life better for all your colleagues. That's what we'll be learning about. Very practical solutions, tailored to your real needs.

**Political Action and Political Power:** There are members of Vermont-NEA living in every town in Vermont. We are the largest union in the state, and can speak with a strong voice to our elected officials. Learn about how you can help win victories in Montpelier on issues that matter concretely: retirement, health insurance, livable wage, school funding, special education, school violence and more. We will focus on how to communicate with members, organizing grass-roots lobbying, and ways to advocate with elected officials.

**1/4 page Canter ad - color  
(Same as last month)**

**1/4 page VALIC ad  
(Same as last month)**

**1/2 page AIG ad - color**