



Vermont-NEA

TODAY

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The official publication of the Vermont-National Education Association - Vol. 68, No. 3 - October 2001

Vermont-NEA members star in Association radio campaign

MONTPELIER — Outstanding Vermont-NEA members are the stars in new 60-second radio spots produced by Vermont-NEA and NEA. The spots — nine in all — aired throughout Vermont for two weeks at the opening of the school year, and will air again for two weeks at the start of the legislative session in January.

The spots were created using excerpts from recorded interviews with six Association members. A narrator opens each of the spots, saying: "Vermont educators are working to make sure our public schools keep getting better." He then introduces our Association members this way:

- Meet Tom Walters. He teaches instrumental music at Mount Mansfield Union High School.
- Meet Diane Bahrenburg. She teaches English and social studies at Colchester High School.
- Meet Susan Adams. She teaches physical education at Jericho Elementary School and she was Vermont Teacher of the Year in 2000.
- Meet Cheryl Currier. She's an audio-visual coordinator — and a lot more — at North Country Union High School.

• Meet David Ely. He teaches science at Champlain Valley Union High School and he won the 2001 Vermont-NEA Award for Teaching Excellence.

• Meet Michele Forman. She teaches history and social studies at Middlebury Union High School, and she's the 2001 National Teacher of the Year.

The messages delivered by these Vermont-NEA members celebrate



Vermont-NEA Photo by Art Huse

Tom Walters, music teacher at Mount Mansfield Union High School, tells Vermont radio listeners: "I don't know of any school that wouldn't welcome community members to come and visit and see firsthand what goes on in the public schools."

what educators and public schools are accomplishing for children, and make clear what we all must do to make sure "Vermont Public Schools Keep Getting Better."

Tom Walters is featured in two of the spots. In the first, he speaks about the rewards of teaching:

"I point out to kids who are thinking about being teachers that it is one of the most rewarding professions in the world. It is so much fun watching someone come into school the first day, in their 9th grade year, and then

watch them walk away in that cap and gown four years later. It is just unbelievably rewarding. I would encourage anyone who does not believe that to come spend some time in their public school. I don't know of any school that wouldn't welcome community members to come and visit and see firsthand what goes on in the public schools. We're very proud of what we're doing. There's certainly improvement to be made. I'm very positive about the way that we're helping to change society for the better."

Cheryl Currier speaks with pride about the important role of Education Support Personnel in Vermont schools:

"The best part of my job is working with kids.

"Educational support personnel have more close contact with kids than anyone else in the building. You know exactly what's going on with those kids day after day after day.

"You're mother to them, father to them, you're everything to them. When they come through the door you have to make them feel good about themselves because if you don't, they aren't going to learn.

"Anyone who walks through our doors can be successful if they so choose. And to me it means that we have to engage every student in what is going on in the school no matter what it is. Some make bad choices, but that's not a permanent thing.

"Kids are wonderful if you give them the time."

In her spot, **Susan Adams** describes how teachers make a difference:

"We're all working together towards the same purpose, educating the children in the best way we can and to tell you the truth, I get excited every single morning I come into that school and I feel excited until I leave.

"The greatest reward of my job is watching students being involved in the process of learning, and seeing them struggle. And then seeing some of them actually accomplish a goal that they never thought they could and knowing that you've helped that happen. It's a feeling that gives you so much energy, and you just want to find a way

Continued on page 4...

INSIDE

Local Association mentors, new teacher success	2	Investment seminars for members only	5
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry	3	Art teachers will meet in Randolph	5
Honor retirees	3	Bullyingproofing our schools	6
David Ely is a national award finalist	4	Blanchette to head up NEA's LTC insurance	7

Presorted Standard
U.S. Postage PAID
Permit No. 30
Burlington, Vermont

Vermont-NEA
TODAY

Published monthly except July by Vermont-NEA, Inc.
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Subscription Price: \$6.00 per year. Vermont-NEA assumes no responsibility for claims arising in connection with products or services advertised in Vermont-NEA TODAY.

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Local Association Mentors, New Teacher Success

In many Vermont school districts, new teachers are replacing retired educators at a steadily increasing rate. These intrepid beginners confront society's lofty expectations for student achievement and also Vermont learners who are more educationally, culturally, and linguistically diverse than ever before. As novice teachers, they need to quickly master effective instruction and classroom management skills. Student progress, parent support, and job satisfaction all depend on a successful transition.

Recently, thirteen local Associations from eight different counties and their school districts took a significant step together to assist new teachers from the start. Twenty-six seasoned classroom teachers volunteered to work as mentors of new teachers during the 2001-02 school year. They attended a week-long training from August 13th-17th. The training was sponsored by Vermont-NEA for its members using special project grants from the NEA Northeast Regional Office.

Participants were recruited by Vermont-NEA through local Association Presidents. Costs for two trainers, books and materials, and food were shared on a 50/50 basis by Vermont-NEA and the school districts. All other necessary expenses were paid with school district funds, including overnight accommodations, evening meals, travel, and professional stipends. There was no cost for participating local Associations.

Prospective mentors were trained in the PATHWISE Induction Program. It is based on Charlotte Danielson's widely respected 1996 book, *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*. PATHWISE was specifically developed by Ms. Danielson and the Education Testing Service (ETS) to support new teachers during their first two years in the classroom. It incorporates the best elements of the California Formative Assessment & Support System, the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project, and several other Beginning Teacher Support initiatives in California and elsewhere. The 160,000-member Michigan Ed. Assn. also uses PATHWISE.

PATHWISE is conceptually sound and carefully documents the mentoring and induction activities. It employs a common language of teaching and learning to help mentors and beginning teachers to analyze planning and preparation, instruction, classroom environment, and professional responsibilities. Ten sequenced events ("inquiries," "profiles of practice," and "individual growth plans") conducted over one or two years, depending on available time, comprise the program's

core structure.

PATHWISE introduces the PLAN-TEACH-REFLECT-APPLY cycle and promotes the successful application of 22 research-based principles of effective teaching. The new teachers assess themselves regularly using rubrics that describe performance levels. Resource kits are provided for the mentors, beginning teachers, and district administrators.

The biggest payoff actually occurs in following years. After mentoring a beginning teacher, the experienced

New teachers who are mentored are four times less likely to leave the teaching profession in the first five years.

mentors will be invited back to a three-day "training of trainers" workshop. The workshop qualifies them to train other new mentors in the PATHWISE Induction Program. Consequently, for a very modest financial investment, participating local Associations and school districts will gain the on-going capacity to train an unlimited number of additional local PATHWISE mentors and thereby support an unlimited number of beginning teachers in the future.

Two important issues of concern emerged during the week. The first was levels and types of school district support needed by mentors and beginning teachers. PATHWISE trainers strongly recommended at least 5 full days (or 10 half-days) of release-time for each mentor and each beginning teacher to school district administrators who attended a required first-day meeting. Each day, participants asked questions or commented on ways to ensure sufficient school district support, including additional compensation and reimbursements, targeted professional development, local re-licensure credit, professional recognition, and reasonable and justifiable contractual and workplace accommodations for mentors and new teachers. Also, a written survey of mentors and administrators included several items to gauge district assistance, rewards, and professional recognition for mentors and novice teachers.

The second concern examined possible use by school administrators of the mentor/new teacher relationship and related documents for formal evaluations of new teachers. PATHWISE trainers sought to allay any anxiety by describing the "formative" nature of mentorships. They outlined the PATHWISE expectation of a procedural "firewall" that must separate mentorships and formal performance evaluations of novice teachers by administrators. They explained the importance of mentor/new teacher

confidentiality to foster the trust and honest communication necessary to discuss teaching strengths and weaknesses and to build strong professional relationships. Finally, they advised mentors to be certain that only new teachers retain sole possession of all documents produced during the mentorship months.

Education research is clear and consistent regarding the value of mentors for beginning teachers. The quality of their instruction is more likely to improve more quickly. Satisfaction

with their jobs is higher, despite first-timer stresses and strains. Greater satisfaction leads to greater permanency. New teachers who are mentored are four times

less likely to leave the teaching profession in the first five years.

Higher retention rates among beginning teachers is especially important given today's growing subject area and geographic shortages. Temporary waivers of requirements for teacher licenses are dramatically increasing: 56 in '97-'98 (0.67% of total teachers), 135 in '98-'99 (1.61%), 315 in '99-'00 (3.08 %), and 450 last year (4.41%). Retention of highly skilled and highly satisfied teachers is a prime weapon against the proliferation of license waivers that threaten our professional standards and integrity.

Interestingly, research and anecdotal evidence also reveals that the most effective and most sustainable mentor and induction programs quite often are developed, implemented, and overseen collaboratively by local Associations and school district officials. Such local Association involvement enhances the likelihood of successful collective bargaining to obtain sufficient school district support based on known mentor/new teacher experiences. Of course, local Association involvement also guarantees that Association-member mentors will have first contact and prolonged contact with beginning teachers, will immediately demonstrate to them the professional value of Association membership, and thus will help stimulate higher rates of enrollment in the Association.

These local Association and school district leaders understand that Vermont's School Quality Standards require by September '02 "a mentoring system for professional staff in their first two years of employment with the school." Together, they have built a local Association-school district-Vermont-NEA partnership to pave the way for their success. We should salute their foresight, dedication, and wise use of labor-management cooperation to aid our valuable and vulnerable new teachers.

Angelo J. Dorta, President

Wouldn't it be amazing to teach at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry?

Vermont-NEA Photo by Art Huse



Janet Bowker of the Essex Educators' Association

Janet Bowker delivered this speech as president of the Essex Educators' Association in August a year ago.

...Welcome and welcome back. I am honored and humbled to be your Association president for this second year.

Two days before leaving for three weeks at our camp in Maine, David and I were at the Book Rack standing in line at midnight for our copy of the fourth Harry Potter book. One of the first things we packed for the trip was our set of the four books. Many of you know that our camp is in the woods, with no conveniences, and whatever we take with us we carry along the quarter of a mile path through the woods. So, we really consider the importance and necessity of everything we pack. There was no question that we would bring these books and a few others to read by both daylight and the light of the oil lamp.

As I read the first three books while David read the fourth, I often thought, "Wouldn't it be amazing to teach at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry? Let's see, my own magic wand with a core of magical substances selected for me personally, to ensure the best possible magic available to my students and me. While Harry's wand contained holly, unicorn hairs, phoenix tail feathers and heartstrings of dragons, what would be best for me? Pages from the *Essex Design for Learning*, science and math standards, pints of patience, and vials of flexibility? Just think, a few waves of this magic wand and the entire class would meet the standards!

And, the sorting hat... surely the difficulties of the placement process would be over forever! As each child entered school he or she would sit on the stool, have the sorting hat placed on her head, and the hat would announce the child's teacher's or team's

name! And, the broomsticks, my own Firebolt! Forget the long walks in the hallways, the unsynchronized clocks in the buildings, I'd never be late for meetings if I could fly to them on my Firebolt!

But, the reality as we all know is that the magic available to the faculty and staff at Hogwarts is not available to us in Essex. There is, though, something very magical about our work! We have all marveled at the seemingly magical event of children learning to read. It is, however, preceded by great quantities of top quality teaching work and energy. Though I have never really considered the pointer I use to help children find their place when we read big books or charts together as a magic wand, perhaps there is just a bit of magic in it!

And, the math problem solving activities... actually I think there is something magical about the fact that second graders are able to solve problems using a great variety of strategies by the end of the school year. But, again, we should not forget the work of teaching that takes place day in and day out throughout the school year that can often create the illusion that a magical event has taken place.

There was however, no sign of magic in an article I read in the *Bangor Daily News* last month. Massachusetts has designed a new program to persuade people to become teachers. It consists of a \$20,000 signing bonus, and a seven week training program. I don't think anyone in this room believes that there could be enough magic available during that seven week course to help create the best teachers that our children need and deserve!

We all need to continue to do the work we do so well, to look beyond the problems and challenges of each day, and realize that there is not a magical remedy available to us. But, that by making the most of our teaching time with children, by being the vibrant people and excellent educators we all are, that by the time our students leave Essex Town Schools it will seem as though something magical has taken place!

Have a wonderful, magical year!

Some locals deliver a special "welcome back"

A great speech from the president at the start of the school year is just one way that local Associations welcome back their members. We heard about a few other special efforts to start the school year off right...

In Randolph, Brookfield and Braintree the Orange Southwest Education Association-ESP Unit sent a welcome back letter from President Cindy Norton to members at their homes. She announced that "a group of very smart and energetic people have volunteered for our Membership Committee..." and she promised a general meeting of the ESP Association "for members and non-members alike!" with a speaker "to explain the financial, legal and organizational benefits of belonging to the Association."

In Burlington, the Burlington Education Association, facing a negotiations year, delivered a powerful leaflet to members, with a message from President Terry Buehner: "You told us in a survey this past spring that improved salaries are your priority. Ninety-five percent (!) of us say that a base salary of \$35,000 and a top (MA+30) salary of \$70,000 should be BEA's goal..." The leaflet, titled "How Burlington Compares," lists the top salaries paid in eight other Chittenden County districts. Six of the districts have salaries greater than \$60,000 by 2003. "Let your BEA Building Reps know your feelings about how Burlington teacher salaries compare..." Terry urges.

In South Burlington, the South Burlington Educators' Association distributed a very attractive blue folder to each member. A welcome back letter from President Kathy Buley was enclosed, along with highlights of the SBEA contract settlement, a contract Q&A, and a salary schedule. The 2001-02 base is \$29,996. MA+30 maximum is \$56,382.

Locals recruit seasoned teachers for mentor training

SOUTH BURLINGTON -- These local Associations recruited experienced teachers to be trained as new teacher mentors in the PATHWISE Induction Program, sponsored this summer by Vermont-NEA. Congratulations to these Association members who now are trained and have volunteered to mentor new teachers this year:

Barb Fitzpatrick, Pamela Taylor and Steven Flint of the Addison Northwest Teachers Association

John Tague of the BFA-Fairfax Education Association and **Steve Emery** of the Georgia Teachers EA
Allyson Coburn and Nancy Perkins of the Blue Mountain Education Association

Ellen Emery and Terry Francis of the Essex Junction EA

Sharon Wright and Carol Hickey of the Richford Town Teachers Association

Heather McLeod, Alice Toth and Dorothy Toof of the Grand Isle

Supervisory Union-NEA

Kathy Buley, Richard Roy and Ann Sorrell of the South Burlington Educators Association

Beth Loiselle, Catherine Lovejoy and Diane Smith of St. Albans Town Education Association

Doug Bergstein and Jeff Isham of Valley EA

Pam Arnold and Cynthia Gregoire of Washington South EA

Lisa Champagne and Karen Hill of Windsor Southeast EA

Let's honor these retirees...

A few Vermont-NEA members who retired last year were not included on the Honor Roll published in August. We offer our gratitude and congratulations to:

Barbara Pelkey of the Washington Central Education Association served 21 years.

Fletcher Coolidge of Green Mountain-NEA served 37 years.

Alice Hyster of the Chittenden South Education Association taught at CVU.

Vermont-NEA radio ads air on these stations...

Go to www.vtnea.org to read the full text of Vermont-NEA's nine radio spots. And listen up in January when they will play again on these stations:

Barre, Montpelier, Central Vermont:

WORK / WWFY / WSNO

Rutland, Stratton:

WVAY / WEXP

Bellows Falls, White River, Connecticut River Valley:

**WZSH / WSSH / WNHV
WTSV / WLPL / WWOD**

Champlain Valley:

WEZF / WCPV

Burlington, St. Albans:

WOKO

Northeast Kingdom:

WGMT

Waterbury:

WDEV

Rutland:

WZRT

Brattleboro:

WTSA

Bennington:

WJAN

Vermont-NEA radio ad campaign

Continued from page 1...

to be better and better and better at doing it.

"And that's why I feel excited about my work. I know I'm making a difference."

Diane Bahrenburg expresses her love of teaching, and her concern for new teachers:

"The first day I walked into a classroom, I was only four years older than my students. I was idealistic and enthused. Twenty-two years later I'm still idealistic and enthused. I know that many of the same emotions that I felt my first year, they're universal, so new teachers will feel them. But I also think that today, it's such a daunting responsibility and such a daunting task for the new teachers that I just hope that they stay. And it usually takes about five years to either discover this is something I want to do for the rest of my life, or this is too low a salary for my education and I'm not going to stick it out. And that's a real concern for me, and I think it should be a concern for everybody."

David Ely is concerned about attracting talented people to the profes-

sion who is not qualified to teach. I don't want to drive over a bridge engineered by someone on a waiver. I don't want to be treated by a doctor on a waiver. And I think teaching is just as important as engineering and as medicine.

"The economy has changed and people have choices today that they didn't have years ago.

"I think the state of Vermont needs to continue to assess where we are in education, and to continue to value education and provide the financial resources necessary to encourage talented people coming out of college to enter the profession."

Michele Forman is featured in three spots. She emphasizes the excellent job Vermont public schools are doing, she gives credit to supportive communities, and in this spot, she speaks against waivers:

"How can we hope to talk about raising students' standards if we don't first raise teacher standards? I think we've made an unfortunate choice to issue waivers, that is to issue a temporary teaching certificate to some-

one who is not qualified to teach. I don't want to drive over a bridge engineered by someone on a waiver. I don't want to be treated by a doctor on a waiver. And I think teaching is just as important as engineering and as medicine.

"It's imperative that we support new teachers coming into the classrooms.

"We must give them mentoring programs. We should give them a reduced load. We must ensure that every child in America has a highly qualified, good teacher in the classroom."

Thanks to NEA

Radio advertising is expensive and, therefore, usually out of reach for Vermont-NEA. But thanks to a public relations grant from NEA, which is paying for air time, and thanks to free technical and staff support provided by NEA Advertising and Broadcast Services, we are able to advertise. We are letting Vermonters know what educators are thinking and accomplishing for Vermont public schools — and we are reminding our communities that Vermont public schools **KEEP GETTING BETTER.**

Vermont-NEA members (only!) will get FREE tote bags at Convention

Vermont-NEA members who attend the Educators' Convention October 18 in Winooski will receive a free shoulder tote bag. The totes are dark blue with a bold white slogan:

WE KEEP GETTING BETTER!



Vermont-NEA
9,800 Educators
www.vtnea.org

Vermont-NEA underwrites VPR programming

Starting in September, Vermont-NEA began underwriting programming on Vermont Public Radio. Our contract calls for 10 "spots" each week over six months: September, October, November, January, February, and March. Listen for these words on VPR: "... supported by listeners like you and the Vermont-National Education Association, 9,800 Vermont educators working to make sure Vermont public schools **KEEP GETTING BETTER.**"

Vermont-NEA's David Ely is a finalist for the first-ever NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence

Vermont-NEA Photo by Art Huse



In the official letter nominating David Ely, science teacher at Champlain Valley Union High School, for the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence, President Angelo Dorta wrote: "...Dave's slew of honors and recognition...over the past three decades leaves no doubt about his subject expertise, pedagogical skill, and enormous zest for teaching and learning.

MONTPELIER — When he won Vermont-NEA's Award for Teaching Excellence in May, David Ely of the Chittenden South Education Association won \$1,000 and became Vermont-NEA's nominee for the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. Among the criteria for the award, nominees are recognized for teaching excellence, for advancing student learning, and for advocacy of the teaching profession and public education.

Over the summer, a National Selection Panel chose five finalists for the prestigious national Award from the nominations from all NEA state affiliates. Vermont-NEA's nominee, David Ely, is one of the five finalists.

This is an important honor. Ely already has traveled to Washington, D.C. for a final interview, and will attend the NEA Foundation's seventh annual Salute to Excellence Gala on December 6 in Washington, D.C. where the top winner will be announced and will receive a commemorative plaque and \$25,000. Each of the five finalists also will receive a \$10,000 award from the Horace Mann Insurance Company.

Congratulations to David! He will be honored at the Vermont-NEA Educators' Convention at the Winooski Educational Center on October 18 for winning the Vermont-NEA Award and for being a national finalist.



Convention booklets are on the way!

WINOOSKI — Vermont-NEA has lined up a terrific Convention program for this month's 150th annual professional meeting of Vermont educators, and the official Convention booklets are in the mail to members' homes.

Workshops on Thursday, October 18, at the Winooski Educational Center will showcase excellent classroom units and strategies — all aimed at

supporting educators and adding a little pizzazz to our classrooms!

The Convention program on October 18 also will include:

- The General Assembly, which will celebrate the professional accomplishments of teachers and will honor **David Ely**, winner of the 2001 Vermont-NEA Award for Teaching Excellence.

Vermont-NEA offers Investment Seminars

Vermont-NEA is offering three investment seminars on Wednesday Evening, October 17, at the Educators' Convention. Preregistration is required. Only members may attend.

Getting Started with 403(b) Retirement Plans

5:00 - 6:30 p.m. / Room 119

Whether you are 25 or 55, no public school educator should be without a 403(b) plan. It should be part of any school employee's personal retirement strategy. This seminar will introduce the basics of retirement planning with special emphasis on 403(b), 403(b)(7) retirement plans and their remarkable tax advantages. If you are looking for information to get you started toward a secure retirement, this workshop is for you.

Investing in a Volatile Market

5:00 - 6:30 p.m. / Room 122

Everyone has high risk tolerance and seems to be an expert when the stock market averages double-digit

gains for the better part of a decade. It's hard to make a mistake. When the inevitable market correction occurs, however, it is especially important to stick to your long-range plan and to avoid rash investment decisions. This workshop will review how to make the best out of such difficult investment times.

Getting Ready for Retirement: A Pre-Retirement Checklist

5:00 - 6:30 p.m. / Room 123

While informative for all, this seminar is especially designed for those who are nearing retirement. Many of the issues you will need to address will be covered, including Social Security, state retirement pension guidelines and calculations, health care options through Medicare and your non-qualified retirement savings, and much more. Start asking those important questions now rather than waiting for the day you leave work. You'll thank yourself for it.

- A keynote address by **Jim DeFilippi**, veteran teacher and author who is well known and appreciated for his quick humor.

- A news conference right after the General Assembly featuring **Vermont-NEA President Angelo J. Dorta**, who will field questions from reporters and Convention-goers.

- A performance by the Mount Mansfield UHS Jazz Band, under the direction of Tom Walters.

How to Register

Clip, fill out and mail the registration forms provided in the Convention booklet. Vermont-NEA members (only) may register for Wednesday night and Thursday workshops by sending email to register@vtnea.org

Directions to the Winooski Educational Center

Winooski's newly renovated Educational Center will host the annual Vermont-NEA Educators' Convention this year. Take Interstate 89, Exit 16. Turn toward Winooski (Right at the end of the exit ramp if you are travelling from the North, Left if you are travelling from the South). The school is almost within sight, on the left.

The main driveways at the front of the educational center are for exiting only. The school entrance is a side street, just past the school and a little gas station on your left.

Food Sales to Benefit Playground

Winooski parent and citizen volunteers who belong to a group called P.L.A.Y. — Playgrounds of a Lifetime for Area Youth — will provide some wonderful home cooking for sale at the Convention, along with coffee and pastries and sandwiches, all to raise funds for a new playground at the school for area youngsters.

This is a great cause, so bring your appetite to the Convention on Wednesday evening, October 17, and Thursday morning through lunchtime, October 18.

Attention Classical Language Teachers!

VCLA changes Convention meeting site

The Vermont Classical Languages Association will convene its Annual Meeting on Friday, October 19, 2001 at 9:00 a.m. Rice Memorial High School. The meeting had been scheduled and is listed in the Vermont-NEA Convention as being at Trinity College in Burlington, but Rice has a large parking lot which will be more convenient for members. For information, contact Judith Miles at jam@together.net

Art Teachers present fall Conference: "down to eARTh"

"down to eARTh"

The Vermont Art Teachers' Association will present its fall conference -- "down to eARTh" -- at the Randolph Elementary School and Chandler Music Hall and Art Gallery in Randolph on Friday, October 19, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Scheduled events include a keynote address by Candy Barr and morning and afternoon workshops on a variety of clay/pottery techniques, jewelry, silk painting, and sculpture. There will be a light breakfast, lunch, afternoon snacks, vendors and a raffle.

Contact Rita Braun for information and a registration form: (H) 988-2264, (S) 334-7921, ext. 3320, email supermom50@hotmail.com

Vermont-NEA Investment Seminar Registration

Wednesday evening, October 17, 2001, 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.

Check your workshop choice:

- Getting Started with 403(b) Retirement Plans
- Investing in a Volatile Market
- Getting Ready for Retirement: A Pre-Retirement Checklist

Your name: _____

School: _____

Home address: _____

Phone: (H) _____ (S) _____

Investment Seminars are free and open for Vermont-NEA members only: first come, first served. PREREGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

Please clip and mail this registration request to: Vermont-NEA, 10 Wheelock Street, Montpelier 05602

Or register by voice mail: 1-800-281-4430 ext. 104

To eliminate bullying, first we must agree not to tolerate it

Bullyproofing Our Schools

By Bob Chase, NEA President

As another school year begins, some parents will be thinking not of standardized test scores and quality teachers, but of the age-old problem of bullying.

Santana High and Columbine have forced adults to focus on bullying. But in truth, bullying has always had serious ramifications. And the consensus among leading researchers such as pediatric psychologist Dorothea Ross is that bullying today is more frequent and much more vicious than it was 10 to 15 years ago.

If we adults continue to insist that bullying is a normal part of growing up, even a "character building" experience, then, to be blunt, we have never listened, I mean *really* listened, to a child who has been victimized by persistent bullying. For children who are constantly picked on, ridiculed, threatened, harassed, or robbed, school becomes torture. They will even consider suicide as the only way of making their torment stop.

Let us dispel, once and for all, the myths. Bullying exacts a terrible toll on children. Their school work suffers, their physical and mental health suf-

fers, and the scars can last a lifetime.

Bullying is also bad for the bullies because they never learn about consequences. Sixty percent of the boys identified as bullies in middle school had one criminal conviction by age 24, according to psychologist Dan Olweus in his groundbreaking work, *Bullying at School*.

Another revealing study, reported by Dorothea Ross, takes us inside the minds of the bullies. When high school seniors in a Virginia school were asked why they had relentlessly persecuted much younger boys, one said: "Pick on people? We do that all the time. We pick on the little guys. We don't leave them alone. Why do I do it? To have fun. To really have fun." Other troubling discoveries also

emerge from Ross' research.

One is that the child who is being bullied often does not tell his or her parents. They are too afraid, ashamed, or discouraged. Secondly, when parents complain to the schools about bullying, "generally, little is done to correct the problem and school officials react with total indifference, although sometimes they go as far as to blame the victim."

In the wake of the recent schools shootings, however, this may be changing and not a minute too soon. Not only do schools need to set up procedures for conscientiously dealing with individual instances of bullying, the adults in a school must make clear that they will not tolerate bullying.

A single school assembly will not solve the problem. Every school, el-

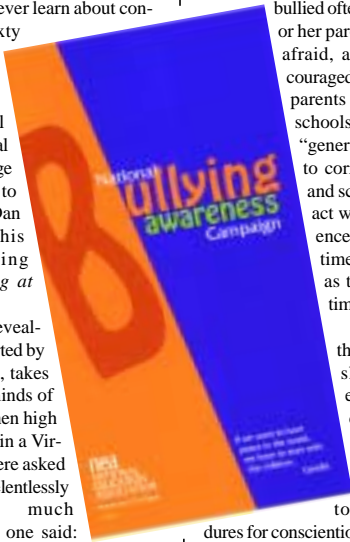
ementary or secondary needs to create and enforce a formal code of conduct. What's more, students, teachers, and school support staff must be trained in how to intervene effectively. Eliminate the silent bystanders, and we go a long way to eliminating bullying.

Every time an adult does not speak out or intervene when witnessing the bullying or harassment of a student, they are complicit in that abuse.

Another theme from the research is that bullying can become particularly virulent if the victim is thought to be gay or lesbian. We must incorporate this knowledge into our anti-bullying efforts.

Bullying may be as old as the hills, but resources exist today from the National Education Association and other organizations to help adults prevent it. In fiction, Harry Potter possessed magical powers to silence his bully-the abominable Dudley Dursley. In real life, children don't have such magic at their disposal. Caring adults and concerned communities are all that kids have to protect them.

Bob Chase is a middle school teacher and president of our National Education Association.



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October 4, 2001	Arlington	West Mountain Inn
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November 8, 2001	New Haven	Roland's Place
December 6, 2001	Putney	Putney Inn
December 13, 2001	St. Albans	Old Foundry
January 17, 2002	Manchester Center	Moose Crossing
January 24, 2002	St. Johnsbury	Lincoln Inn
February 7, 2002	Morrisville	Charlmount Restaurant
March 14, 2002	Quechee	Black Angus Cafe
March 21, 2002	Mt. Snow - Wilmington	Grand Summit Hotel

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Blanchette leaving Vermont-NEA to head up NEA's Long Term Care Insurance program

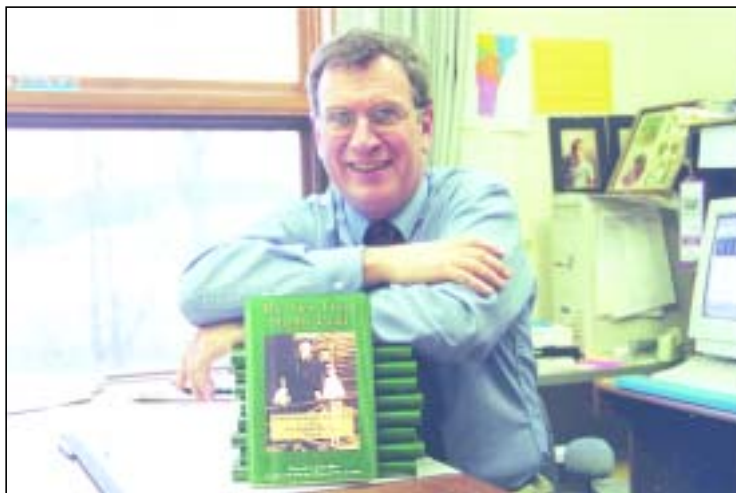
MONTPELIER — Veteran Association staff member Joe Blanchette is leaving Vermont-NEA this fall to head up NEA's Long Term Care (LTC) Insurance program. He says his mission will be to develop and manage NEA's LTC program in New Hampshire, Vermont and New York, and to establish an agent force in these states.

Vermont-NEA members who have worked with Blanchette over the years know that he *always* is a man with a mission. He taught history and social studies at Champlain Valley Union High School through the 70's, and as chief negotiator, led his local out on Vermont's first-ever teachers' strike in September of 1978. He was a founding member of Vermont-NEA's first Regional Bargaining Council and served, briefly, on the Vermont-NEA Board of Directors.

Blanchette joined the Vermont-NEA staff in 1983 as UniServ Director for Chittenden and Addison counties. He was a key player in the Association's push to increase teacher salaries from dead last in the nation to the middle of the rankings, and in the process he built a reputation as a tough, talented negotiator.

A new mission attracted Blanchette in 1993: the cost and quality of members' health insurance. He changed jobs within the Association, becoming Vermont-NEA's first Director of Benefit Programs. In that capacity, he continued his work consulting and advising members in the field and also guided Vermont-NEA's partnership with the Vermont School Boards Insurance Trust to create the Vermont Education Health Initiative (VEHI), a health insurance purchasing coalition.

Now Blanchette will work on NEA's LTC program, and he assures us we'll be seeing a lot of him. In fact, he says he is looking for teachers interested in a career change or part-time work to bring the LTC insurance



Joe Blanchette, posing here after the publication of his book about his Irish heritage, is leaving Vermont-NEA after nearly 20 years of service.

message to Association members. He's open to start scheduling information sessions to speak about the LTC issues we all face personally and for our parents. "The NEA program is available to members, their children, spouses, parents, grandparents, and

domestic partners," says Blanchette, who already is in campaign mode!

Joe Blanchette has been a unique and hugely productive staff member. We are grateful for his years at Vermont-NEA, and wish him success in the years to come. — LBH

(Canter ad)

October 15 is application deadline for NEA Foundation Learning and Leadership Grants

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Applications for NEA Foundation Learning and Leadership Grants are invited for submission by October 15, 2001. Public school teachers, education support professionals (ESP), and higher education faculty and staff are encouraged to apply for individual grants of \$1,000 each; and for group grants of \$3,000 each.

The grants enable educators to implement their own professional development, based on the learning needs of their students. Preference is given to members of the National Education Association.

Grant guidelines and applications are available on the NEA Foundation website, www.nfie.org/programs/leadership.htm, or through the foundation at 202-822-7840. Information about recent grant recipients and tips on how to apply are also on the website.

NEA Foundation Learning and Leadership grants fund professional development experiences selected by the grantees themselves. Grantees first identify their students' learning needs, and then propose professional development that addresses those needs. Grantees may deepen their content

knowledge or may sharpen their teaching skills in order to improve student performance. Grantees also share their new knowledge and skills directly with their colleagues.

NEA Foundation Learning and Leadership Grants advance the work of The NEA Foundation to make high-quality professional development an integral part of teaching. These efforts are based on the belief that having a well-prepared and knowledgeable educator is the single most important factor in helping students succeed.

In partnership with the National Education Association, the foundation works to ensure that all public educators have opportunities throughout their professional lives to acquire new knowledge and develop new skills. Learning and Leadership Grants advance the mission of the foundation, which is to empower public education employees to innovate, take risks, and become agents for change to improve teaching and learning.

CEA member wins Cruiser

Christine Kaletta, a member of the Connecticut Education Association has won the AIG contest for a PT Cruiser.

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