



TODAY

Website:
www.vtnea.org

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Photo by Shannon Walters



BEA members – plus Association members from Washington Central, Essex Junction, Addison Northwest, Chittenden East, Winooski, and Chittenden South – marched in Burlington’s Labor Day Parade. Their T-shirts read: “Burlington Teachers - Keeping Burlington a Livable City.”

“We will not join the race to the bottom!”

BURLINGTON — The big issue that faced teachers in Burlington is not much different than the issue facing educators in Orleans Central in May 2005, Colchester in October 2005, Barre in December 2005, Chittenden East in May 2006, and educators throughout the state right now: school board efforts to reduce the amount their district will contribute toward health insurance coverage.

What was different was the campaign developed in Burlington to change public attitudes. The Burlington Education Association framed the debate in two new ways.

First, they made the case that every citizen is hurt when teachers’ benefits are reduced, saying: another cut for us means more cuts are coming for you. It’s a “race to the bottom,” with employees doing the running and

employers collecting the prize.

Second, BEA talked about how a race to the bottom jeopardizes the city’s standing as a livable city with high quality public services, including great schools.

“Burlington is a different kind of city,” said BEA President Terry Buehner. “For the last 25 years there has been a commitment to high quality services, making it one of the most livable cities in the U.S. There has been a strong commitment to workers and to a decent standard of living. We want to carry on this legacy and join our allies in the city who agree that Burlington must remain a livable place for every Burlington resident. This means: No race to the bottom!”

The Burlington School Board proposed doubling the health insurance premium co-pay for teachers

from 10 to 20%, while making cuts in leave, retirement benefits, and teacher education. BEA’s answer was this: We can’t, in good conscience, participate in this downward spiral which will, in the end, hurt everybody. We will not join the “race to the bottom.”

BEA negotiators, headed by Jim Donoghue, pointed out that the school board’s proposal put much of the contract on the chopping block — class size, substitutes, lunch, retirement benefits, sick days, personal days, course reimbursement, pension plans, discretionary days, salary, health insurance, and more.

Terry Buehner said BEA’s goal was to settle an acceptable contract and do everything possible to avoid a strike. As they awaited the fact finding report, teachers went to work for a settlement. Their Contract Cam-

paign Committee met through the summer, and their Community Support Committee, with help from the Vermont Workers’ Center, is met weekly with other labor unions, parent groups, and community supporters to plan outreach to parents, community leaders, and voters. They distributed leaflets door-to-door, created an internal newsletter called “Common Sense,” and established an excellent website, overseen by BEA member Rebecca Smith.

Planning and work by BEA paid off in September with a three-year settlement. Health insurance premium co-pays are 11%, 11.5% and 12%. New money increases are 4.6%, 4.4%, and 4.2%. By the 2008-09 school year, the base salary for teachers in Burlington will reach \$36,487, and the top salary will be \$72,974. ■

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"Prepare Now to Prevent Later"

Despite the relative safety of our public schools, we know a crisis can occur at any time. Crises can be caused by events such as severe weather and other natural disasters, serious accidents like crashes and explosions, bomb threats, spills of hazardous materials, and infectious diseases. Also, recent shootings in Essex, Colorado, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania starkly remind us of the grim fact that intruders and intentional violence — either targeted or random — sometimes happen at school.



President Angelo Dorta addressed the Vermont-NEA Bargaining Summit on Sept. 30.

Pre-planning for school crises can and should be done. In fact, it's required by Vermont state law. In "Fire and Emergency Preparedness Drills" (Title 16, Chapter 33, Section 1481), the statute says that monthly drills during the school year shall be held as "described in the school's emergency preparedness plan."

If a disaster strikes, school staff must be ready to seek and provide safety for their students and for themselves in accordance with the preparedness plan. Staff will have to assist and reassure students even as they need to manage their own strong first emotions and reflexive responses. Initial adult actions in a school emergency can mean the difference between life and death and must not be left to chance. Therefore, school faculty and staff must well understand the plan's procedures, appointed roles, and assignments of responsibilities.

Planning and practicing in advance creates familiarity with emergency routines and confidence in them. It trains human behavior when clear thinking and right actions otherwise might be easily overwhelmed by unforeseen threatening circumstances and quickly unfolding events. And, with a set plan in effect, necessary proper adjustments can be made more promptly to counter a specific threat. Obviously, plans should be updated and practiced regularly by all participants.

Prior planning for a variety of emergencies will be most effective if

school board policies and administrative procedures are consistent with school- and district-level crisis guidelines. Of course, the plan should be collaboratively designed by educators, emergency service providers, police, parents, mental health professionals, and other community partners. It must establish coordination between local fire, police, and medical emergency services and designated school leaders. Efficient communication systems and a clearly ordered chain of command are essential, too.

Most schools create a School Crisis Team to lead the emergency preparedness effort. The principal usually serves as the team leader, with the school nurse, counselor, resource officer, custodian, and at-large teacher and other ESP representatives also included. The team assists with monthly emergency drills and usually activates the plan by making necessary, crucial initial decisions spawned by an incident.

To help protect our students and colleagues, local Association leaders also should read and assess their own school's plan. Although district administrators, rescue personnel, and police have primary responsibility for crisis management, Association representatives should be ready to ask questions and offer suggestions, if necessary, based on known real-life experiences and available substantive knowledge about proper responses to crises. Everyone has a personal and professional stake in making sure that the plan is as good as possible.

Two documents are important for evaluating a school's preparedness to face various dangers successfully. The *Vermont School Crisis Guide* can be downloaded from the Vermont School Boards Association website at www.vtvsba.org, as well as a school safety checklist. Developed by a statewide group of emergency management specialists, educators, and health workers, the *Guide* provides a general framework of procedural advice ("priority procedures"), role responsibilities, and a convenient method for recording pertinent information for a wide range of possible school emergencies. Each principal and superintendent receives a copy of the *Guide* in a three-ring binder so that it can be customized by the insertion of locally applicable policies, procedures, and emergency services information. A

crisis training DVD for conducting and debriefing "table-top" emergency exercises also is included.

The *NEA Crisis Communications Guide and Toolkit* can be obtained from NEA's public website (www.nea.org). It details recommended Association preparations before a crisis occurs, necessary steps to take during a crisis, and ideas for how to move beyond the crisis in order to support long-term healing and to re-build hope. The NEA's publication can serve as a resource for examining current school crisis plans and for revising them. It offers samples and templates of information letters and press statements, safety checklists and crisis drill scenarios, and ready-to-copy fact sheets for students, parents, and the media. It's a perfect complement to the *Vermont School Crisis Guide*.

Unfortunately, many of our older schools are not satisfactorily constructed and equipped for maximum safety against intentional harm in today's world. Controlling access to the school may require new rules for visitors or a study of the options for altering building entrances and exits. If two-way communication between the school office and every room is not available, cell phones ought to be purchased and available to improve emergency communications. The school alarm system should be frequently tested, maintained, and "zoned" to indicate specific school areas entered by an intruder. Finally, the issue of keys and door locks — whether doors should lock from inside or outside — must be scrutinized from all perspectives and decided.

As mentioned in the *Vermont School Crisis Guide*, it's unlikely that schools and communities always can be totally prepared, since school emergencies take many forms and — by nature — are unexpected and unpredictable. However, acting quickly and calmly to comply with practiced crisis training procedures will do much to ensure protection for everyone. Although it is terribly sad to have to accommodate such new societal realities, our local Associations can and must help do everything reasonably possible to safeguard our students and co-workers, while still keeping public schools open to well-meaning parents and citizens. —Angelo J. Dorta

The *Vermont School Crisis Guide* and a school safety checklist can be downloaded from the Vermont School Boards Association website at www.vtvsba.org

The *NEA Crisis Communications Guide and Toolkit* can be obtained from NEA's public website at www.nea.org

Windham Southeast Teachers Organize for Strike, Achieve Settlement

BRATTLEBORO — Even as top Local Association leaders from throughout the state convened at the Vermont-NEA Bargaining Summit in South Burlington to discuss negotiations strategy and how to handle job actions, some 350 of their colleagues in the Brattleboro area were down to the wire.

The Windham Southeast Education Association — representing teachers in the Brattleboro, Dummerston, Guilford, Putney and Vernon public schools and the Windham Regional Career Center — met their boards on Saturday, September 30, for a last ditch effort to get their contract settled before the WSEA strike vote, scheduled for that Wednesday.

The mediated bargaining session was a success. Details of the settlement were not available in time to meet our deadline, but we know the deal, which is for three years, increases both salaries and teachers' contribution toward their health care insurance co-pay.

Bargaining began early this year, and teachers worked without a contract since August. "Our members have been very patient during this long negotiations process," said WSEA President Peter Cannizzaro.

That patience wore out in late September, and teachers began preparing for a strike.

"We teachers don't want to strike, but we will if we need to," Cannizzaro said in a news release. "We want to be with our students in our classrooms and on the playing-fields — but we are united in seeking a fair contract."

On the Friday afternoon before the successful mediation, over 200

teachers and supporters of WSEA crowded into the Association's new Crisis Headquarters at the River Garden in downtown Brattleboro.

Jack McKiernan, chief negotiator for WSEA, explained that salaries and health insurance were the issues keeping the two sides apart. "Since the last contract, we have been willing to pay part of our health-insurance premiums," he said. "But if we pay a higher percentage of the premium costs, we need salary increases that at least cover those increases and a rise in the cost of living."

"We need a settlement that makes sure that all teachers in the WSESU

at least maintain their current standard of living," Cannizzaro added. "Teaching is one of the most important jobs in any community, and we believe that the taxpayers want fairly compensated educators in the schools with their children."

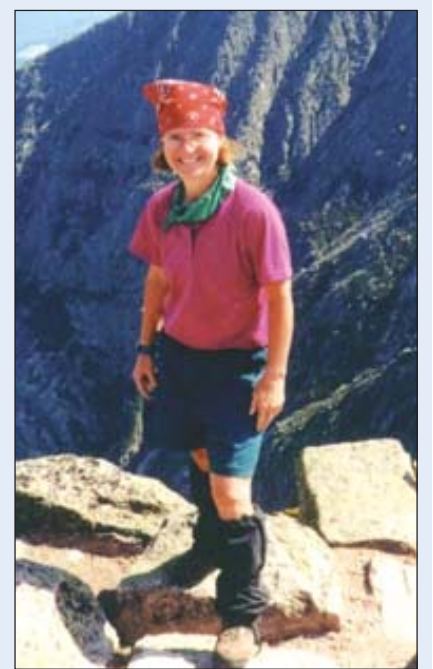
Cannizzaro then announced that teams of teachers were organizing to carry out a strike. "We hope we won't be here long," he said of the new Crisis Headquarters.

His hope came true the next day, when a tentative settlement was reached. Congratulations to the teachers of WSEA, for standing their ground and achieving a settlement. ■

Photo by Kathie Lovell



Jack McKiernan, chief negotiator for the Windham Southeast Education Association, Scott Noren, head of the Crisis Committee, and Peter Cannizzaro, WSEA President. Cannizzaro announced that if the Sept. 30 negotiating session with school boards' representatives did not produce a tentative agreement, the leadership planned to call for a strike vote.



Vermont-NEA Member Marty Layman-Mendonca Remains in Coma

WHITE RIVER JCT. — Marty Layman-Mendonca, a much loved 20-year veteran paraeducator, then teacher at White River School, was delivered home in September, still in a coma. She was brutally attacked in Scotland on July 5 while hiking the Great Glen Way. When she did not arrive at the appointed time, friends called the police who found her using a police dog. The man who beat her nearly to death was arrested several days later and has since pled guilty. (You can Google Marty Layman-Mendonca for details.)

White River School librarian Gail Haynes says Marty was a good friend who loved her students and enjoyed hiking. "I could say more, but words cannot capture the depth of her," Gail said. "To list her qualities and character would take pages."

Marty's friends have organized themselves to raise money. Her transportation home was very expensive, as is the continuing care she needs as a coma victim.

In October, the school and Upper Valley community came out for a highly successful fundraiser that featured local artists, student performances, an auction, and raffles. It was heart-warming. Organizers were stunned by the generosity of donors.

Still, more is needed. **Please send a contribution!** "We hope that Marty will recover to the point when she can return to us..." says White River School Principal Christopher Ashley, adding: "In the unhappy event that she does not survive, her friends intend to establish a scholarship in her name at Hartford High School."

Send contributions to White River School, 102 Pine Street, White River Jct., VT 05001. Checks should be made out to WHITE RIVER SCHOOL.

This fund raising effort is not tax-exempt.

Parents, school staff, administrators, and all who care about kids and schools are invited to this important presentation at the Vermont-NEA Educators' Convention!

A Session with Dr. James Garbarino, Nationally Recognized Expert on Youth Violence

Thursday afternoon, October 19 / Champlain Valley Expo Centre

Are you concerned about the "toxicity" of our modern culture? Do you see the effects of violence on children and students? Dr. Garbarino has examined the research related to youth violence in both boys and girls. He will share his rich insights and practical suggestions for making a difference in the lives of our young people. The event runs from 1-4 pm, with a **book signing and FREE luncheon** reception at noon. Books will be available for sale, thanks to Barnes & Noble. The luncheon will be an informal cold buffet, open to all.

Presenter Dr. James Garbarino is the author of *Lost Boys* and *See Jane Hit*. He was legal, as well as therapeutic, advisor to the family of Dylan Kiebold after the **Columbine High School shootings**. He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association.

The \$50 registration fee (**\$40 for Vermont-NEA members**) is payable to the event sponsor and organizer: Swanton, Vt. Public Schools. **To register**, send a check and your contact information to: Julie Benay, Associate Principal, Swanton Schools, 113 Grand Ave, Swanton VT 05488, or...FAX a signed purchase order to (802) 868-3389.

This is an important opportunity. Vermont-NEA encourages teams of people from your school who care about kids — from administrators to parent volunteers — to come hear Dr. Garbarino and attend the post-presentation "Next Steps" discussion.



Photo by Martha Elmes



Imagine... “Whirled Peace”

LYNDON — In today’s world, peace needs to become more than just a word. On September 21, 2006, the Lyndon Town School took part in an international art and literacy project called “Pinwheels for Peace” by planting pinwheels with messages of peace and cooperation on the front lawn at the school.

Pinwheels for Peace is an art installation project started in 2005 as a way for students to express their feelings about what is going on in the world and in their lives. In 2005, groups in 1,335 locations throughout the world, including Vermont, were spinning pinwheels on September 21st — that’s approximately 50,000 pinwheels spinning throughout the world. This year, Lyndon art teacher Martha Elmes coordinated a Pinwheels for Peace project.

All students and teachers at the school created 600 pinwheels of all shapes and sizes as part of the creative process. Students wrote and drew their thoughts about living in harmony with others on both sides of the pinwheels in their classrooms. Then, fifth and sixth grade students assembled the pinwheels, with a little help from Barry Lebarron, industrial arts teacher.

This project is not necessarily associated with the conflict of war. It relates to the violence/ intolerance in our daily lives, to peace of mind. To each of us, peace can take on a different meaning, but in the end, according to Martha Elmes, it all comes down to a simple definition practiced at the Lyndon Town School: “A state of calm, with no anxiety, the absence of violence, freedom from conflict or disagreement among people or groups of people.”

Left: Sixth graders at Lyndon Town School celebrating “Pinwheels for Peace” on the lawn in front of school.

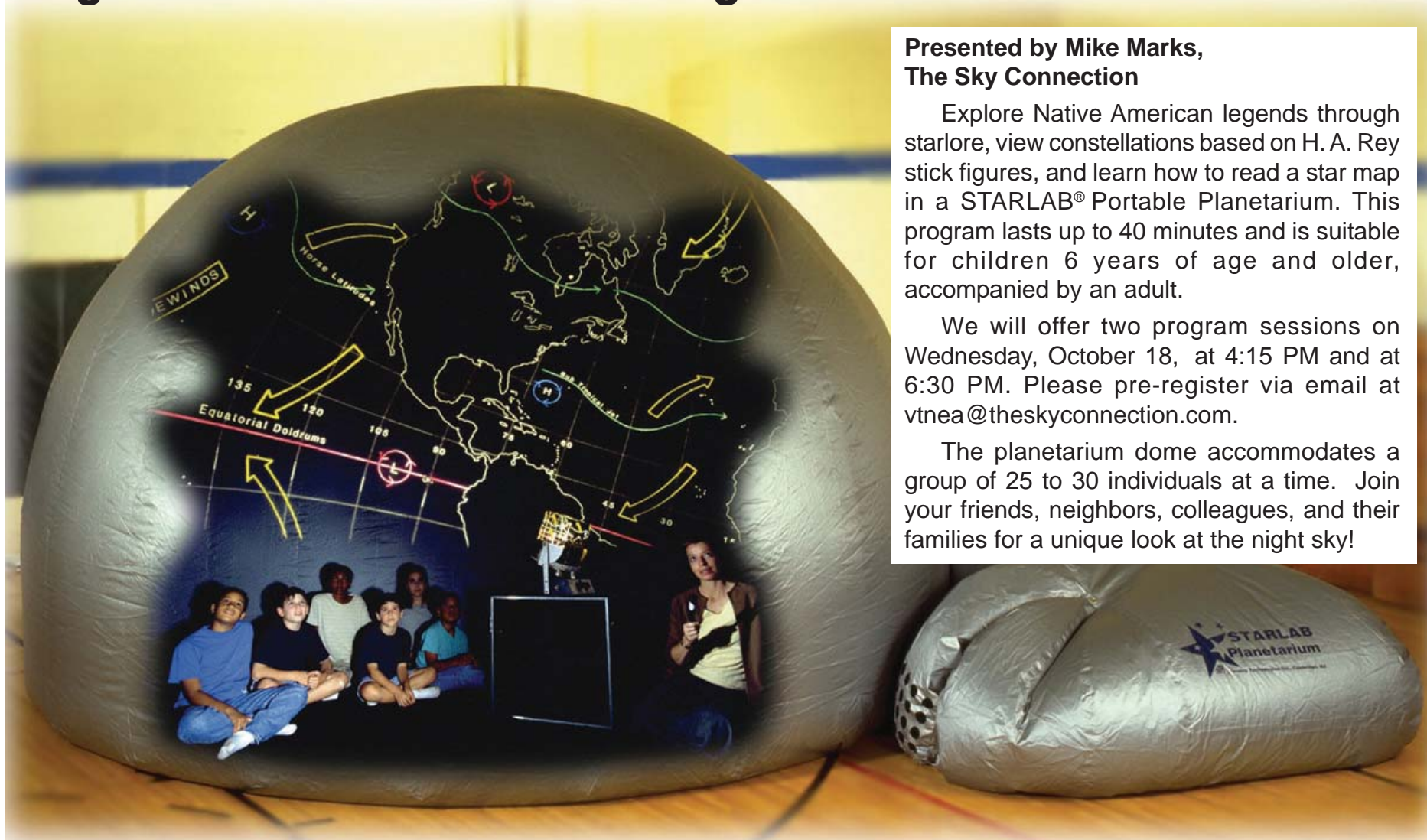
A Vermont-NEA Educators’ Convention Family Evening Event: “Night Skies over Vermont” Program in a Portable Planetarium

**Presented by Mike Marks,
The Sky Connection**

Explore Native American legends through starlore, view constellations based on H. A. Rey stick figures, and learn how to read a star map in a STARLAB® Portable Planetarium. This program lasts up to 40 minutes and is suitable for children 6 years of age and older, accompanied by an adult.

We will offer two program sessions on Wednesday, October 18, at 4:15 PM and at 6:30 PM. Please pre-register via email at vtnea@theskyconnection.com.

The planetarium dome accommodates a group of 25 to 30 individuals at a time. Join your friends, neighbors, colleagues, and their families for a unique look at the night sky!



Review Your Retirement Status...

On Thursday, Oct. 19, from 8:00 am – 2:30 pm, teachers may schedule a personal review of their retirement status with the Vermont State Teachers' Retirement system. *Call 802-828-2305 to make your appointment with a member of the VSTRS staff*, who will conduct the retirement reviews at the Educators' Convention.

A Retirement and Investment Seminar for New Teachers

Open to members only.

On Wednesday, Oct. 18, from 6:30 - 8:00 pm in the Stevens Room at the Champlain Valley Expo Centre, new teachers in career years 1-7 may attend this special seminar designed to help you learn how to think about and prepare for retirement...on a new teacher's salary! The following topics will be covered:

- Information on the Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System (VSTRS) and how to maximize earnings and benefits.
- Why you will want to supplement your retirement income with a 403(b)/457(b) program through payroll deductions and how these programs will dovetail with your Teachers' Retirement and Social Security.
- Recommendations for establishing a productive relationship with financial services company and a financial planner.

Register at www.vtnea.org/conv06_reg.htm

Vermont-NEA Seminars on Retirement Security & Financial Planning

Open to members only.

Each seminar will provide a comprehensive overview of the major components of a smart retirement "roadmap." The seminar will run from **4:00 until 6:00 p.m.**, with light refreshments provided. Here is the list of seminars:

- **October 26, 2006**
Holiday Inn, Rutland
- **November 9, 2006**
Hotel Coolidge, White River Junction
- **November 16, 2006**
Old Foundry, St. Albans
- **November 30, 2006**
Putney Inn, Putney
- **December 7, 2006**
West Mountain Inn, Arlington

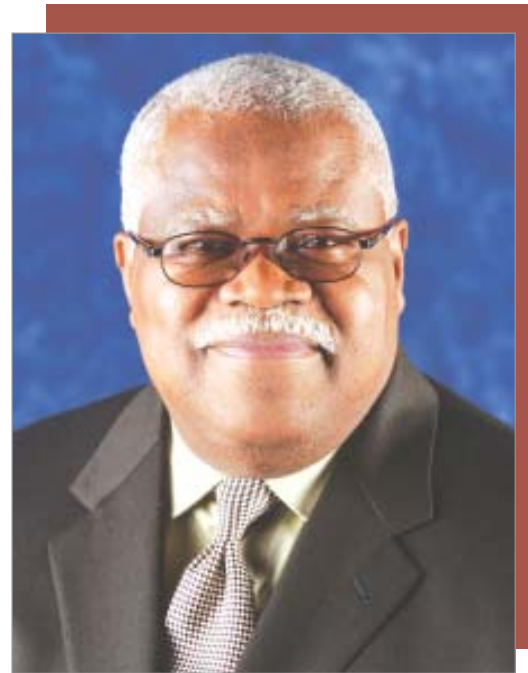
These seminars are free but limited to 30 members each, so please don't delay in registering. To register, email emcandrew@vtnea.org with us:

- Your full name and e-mail address (in case we have to cancel)
- The school where you work
- Your school and home phone

Reg Weaver

NEA President Reg Weaver to address Vermont-NEA Educators' Convention!

"Great Public Schools: A Basic Right for Every Child."



Vermont-NEA is honored to announce that Reg Weaver -- the middle school science teacher from Harvey, Illinois, who is serving his second term as president of our 3.2 million-member National Education Association -- will deliver the Keynote Address at the 155th annual Vermont-NEA Educators' Convention...

**Thursday, October 19, 2006 / 10:30 a.m.
Champlain Valley Expo Centre
Essex Junction**

President Weaver speaks for educators and provides a powerful voice for public education in the nation's major media, from The New York Times, USA Today and The Washington Post, to CNN, C-Span, ABC, AP Radio, and National Public Radio. He is our powerful advocate and a dynamic presenter...

All are welcome, including walk-ins.

Vermont-NEA members may reserve special seating:

www.vtnea.org/weaver.htm

It's not too late! Plan a perfect day for yourself at the Oct. 18-19 Educators' Convention...

The stretch between the opening of school in August and mid-October is the longest without a break of the school year. *Take a few minutes for yourself! Read about the wonderful programs being offered for educators on October 18 and 19 at the Champlain Valley Expo Centre, and make your plans!* You'll find everything you need in the Educators' Convention Guide insert to the September issue of *Vermont-NEA Today* or online at www.vtnea.org

Get a FREE Canvas Tote Bag at the Vermont-NEA Welcome Table!

Canvas shoulder tote bags will be distributed **FREE** (while they last!) to Vermont-NEA members who stop by the Vermont-NEA table inside the main entrance to the exhibit hall. (It's navy blue this year, with a red handle and that beautiful apple and pencils art...) Vermont-NEA board members and staff will be

there to greet you and answer your questions.

Enjoy the Education Exhibit!

Stroll through the Exhibit on Wed. night (Oct 18) from 5-8 pm and/or Thurs. (Oct 19) from 8-1 pm. It's the largest annual education exhibit in Vermont. *You'll find food, lots of free stuff, vendors anxious to serve you, and friends you haven't seen since last October at the Education Exhibit!*



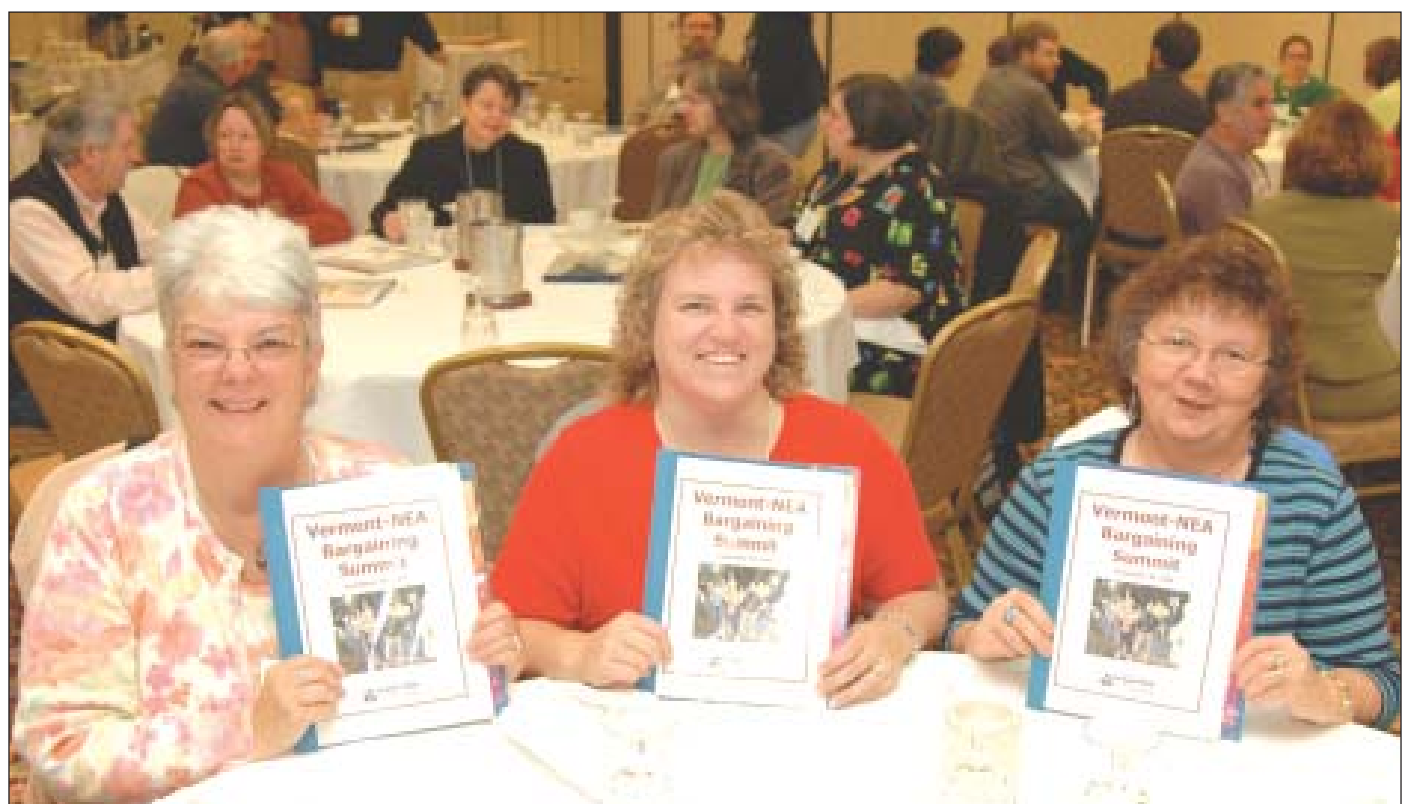
Mark Hage Vermont-NEA Director of Benefit Programs, moderated a panel of leaders from Vermont's last four teacher strikes. Here, Mike Long, Colchester's chief negotiator listens closely to remarks by Terri Szymanski, president of Green Mountain-NEA and chief spokesperson for Chittenden East teachers during their strike this past spring.

Association Leaders Convene for Bargaining Summit

SOUTH BURLINGTON — September 30 was a good day. In Brattleboro, the Windham Southeast Education Association achieved a contract settlement at mediation, just three days before their scheduled strike vote. And, in South Burlington, top Association leaders convened for training and to discuss how the Association will keep to its successful course, increasing salaries and improving benefits for educators.

"Vermont-NEA and its local affiliates are both labor unions and professional Associations," President Angel Dorta told the local leaders in his welcoming remarks. "We're hybrids, and that's exactly as it should be. We need not entertain an either/or debate, pitting traditional union advocacy against professionalism. We know from organizational experience and common sense that we need appropriate Association involvement in both domains..."

"Our union status and collective bargaining rights legally guarantee that our voices must be heard. Our standing as professional associations speaks also to the well-being of our students, our schools, our profession and our communities. We have the challenge, therefore, of ensuring that our words and actions remain faith-



The Twinfield Support Staff Association sent a team ready to learn! (L-R) Linda Howard, Sandra Rivers, and Elaine Russell. Sandra and Elaine are new members of the negotiations team.

ful to both aspects of our common organizational heritage."

Deliberation began with a panel of teachers who most recently led their local Associations on strike. They shared inside stories and insights only those who have "been there" possess. Panelists were **Jerry**

Piette for Orleans Central (May 2005), **Mike Long** for Colchester (October 2005), **Ric Nudell** and **John Pandolfo** for Barre (December 2005), and **Terri Szymanski** for Chittenden East (May 2006).

Then began sessions to address the issues local Associations must be

prepared to deal with as they negotiate: Building a Strong Association; Maintaining Affordable Health Insurance; Improving Salaries; and Organizing for a Crisis.

The Vermont-NEA Bargaining Summit now will become an annual meeting. Next year: Rutland. ■

Vermont-NEA Will Honor ESP

MONTPELIER — Vermont-NEA established an annual ESP Award in 1992 to recognize the growing role of Education Support Professionals within the Association, and to honor their outstanding contributions. Since then, support professionals from every corner have been celebrated.

The winner is presented a \$1,000 award and automatically is nominated by Vermont-NEA to receive the National ESP Award.

How to Nominate

We urge all local Associations to nominate one of their members who has made outstanding contributions in their school and their Association.

Nominations are made by completing the nomination form available online at www.vtnea.org/ESPAward07.pdf.

Who Can Be Nominated

The person being nominated must have been a Vermont-NEA member for at least three years (including this year). Exceptions will be made if the local Association is less than three years old.

Deadline for Nominations

Nominations must be post-marked, emailed or FAXed to Vermont-NEA Headquarters in Montpelier by Monday, November 20, 2006:

Selection of the Winner

Nominations will be reviewed by

the Vermont-NEA ESP Award Nominating Committee, which will make a recommendation to the Vermont-NEA Board of Directors. The Board will select the winner.

Award Presentation

The Vermont-NEA ESP Award will be presented at the Awards Banquet at the Vermont-NEA Representative Assembly on March 31, 2007, at the Rutland Holiday Inn and Conference Center.

The national ESP Award will be presented at NEA's annual conference for Education Support Professionals on March 9, 2007, in Nashville, Tennessee.

NEA Director's Report

NEA Directors Lobby Congress

By Joyce Sullivan, NEA Director for Vermont

Congress was scheduled to recess within days of our lobby efforts. So, as they prepared to wrap up before the November election, 181 NEA Directors arrived on Capitol Hill to deliver our messages.

I met with Chris Saunders in Senator Leahy's office and made contacts with staff members at Senator Jeffords' and Congressman Sanders' offices.

Our senators have agreed to support extending the educator tax deduction and school construction program and increasing the minimum wage without combining those provisions with estate tax reform.

Senators Jeffords and Leahy signed a letter drafted by Senators Specter and Harkin to Senator Frist (Senate Majority Leader), Senator Reid (Senate Minority Leader), Senator Cochran (Chairman of the Appropriations Committee), and Senator Byrd (Ranking Member of the Appropriations Committee), urging them to provide no less than the 2005 funding for labor, health, and education programs. Congressman Sanders agrees that overall funding for programs under NCLB should be funded at no less than the 2005 funding level.

ESEA Authorization

NEA leadership and staff have been busy since the Representative Assembly, promoting our Positive Agenda for ESEA Authorization. Executive Committee member Becky Pringle shared that we have built a coalition of 90 groups that support our agenda. The coalition is called the Forum on Education Accountability www.edaccountability.org.

NEA wants to hear your stories about how ESEA/NCLB affects you, your class, your school, and your community. Go to www.nea.org/esea/tellyourstory.html. Leaders use our stories to clarify how this law plays out in our schools.

Political Action

We are receiving on site assistance with the governor's race and the U.S. Congressional race from NEA. Linda Manny from our Northeast Regional Office is working with Vermont-NEA staff and governance to assist us in promoting pro-education candidates in these races. The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education will financially assist candidates chosen by our members and pay for mailings to members about these candidates. Remember: these funds are donated voluntarily by members and do not come out of your dues dollars.

Friends in Maine?

Directors and the president of the Maine Education Association request that you encourage your friends and family from Maine to vote no on question 1 that is an attempt to cap spending on education. This could severely impact jobs for ESP members, guidance counselors, librarians, school nurses, and the quality of services available to students in the classroom.

Northeast Regional Conference

This year's conference, hosted by Maine, will be at the Marriott Hotel in Boston (Copley Square) on January 19-21, 2007. Our conference theme is "Great Public Schools: A Basic Right for Every Child."

Highlights of the workshop offerings include: Exploring Adolescent Fears, By Kids for Kids (a competitive venue for children's inventions that may be selected for patenting), Schools After Crises and Natural Disasters, NEA's Tool Kit to Advance Public Education, and fighting back against negative tax initiatives. Some popular workshops from last year will be repeated: Identity Theft, Gang Awareness, Indoor Air Quality, and International Relations.

President Reg Weaver, Secretary-Treasurer Lily Eskelson, and Vice-President Dennis van Roekel will be our three key note speakers. The budget hearing will be scheduled at a time

to allow maximum participation by members and will not conflict with a meal or travel to the hotel this year.

If you participated in the conference in 2006, you will receive an e-mail announcing the conference and an opportunity to register on line. Conference registration begins October 16, 2006. Please note that hotel reservations are made separately, by the individual, and are not part of the registration on line.

Women's Leadership

Prior to the Northeast Regional Conference, NEA will sponsor a Women's Leadership Training Conference (January 17-19, 2007). This will also be held at the Marriott. For further information, go to the NEA website (nea.org) or contact either Pam Rios (prios@nea.org) or Diane Hicks (dhicks@nea.org).

National High School Essay Contest

To celebrate National American Indian Heritage Month, there is a contest open to 9th-12th graders. The topic is "Why is reconnecting the circle with Native Americans important today?" For more information, go to www.reconnectingthecircle.com or call me for a copy of the hand out.



Joyce Sullivan (Jas3@sover.net) represents Vermont on the NEA Board of Directors.

Past Winners of the Vermont-NEA ESP Award

1993

Janice Sicard, Paraeducator
Orleans Central EA

1994

Christine Allard, Paraeducator
Chittenden South EA

1995

Mary Smokoski, Cook
Orange Southwest EA

1996

Ron Watts, Custodian
Woodstock Elementary EA

1997

Mary Hobbs, Library Assistant
Blue Mountain Union EA

1998

Alfa Gautreau, Secretary
Orange East EA

1999

Lynnca Perkins, Paraeducator
Fairfield EA

2000

Karen Greene, Paraeducator
Winooski EA

2001

Cheryl Currier, AV Coordinator
North Country Union EA

2002

Carolyn Godbout, Paraeducator
Rutland School Staff
Association

2003

Beverly Klandl, Classroom
Assistant
Chittenden South EA

2004

Betsy Howard, Paraeducator
Woodstock Union High School
Education Association

2005

Regina Sears, Paraeducator
Rutland Support Staff
Association

2006

Linda Howard, Paraeducator
Twinfield Union School

Upcoming Association events...

October 18

Educators' Convention opens at the Champlain Valley Expo Centre. Exhibit hours: 5-8 pm

October 19

Educators' Convention continues at the Champlain Valley Expo Centre. Exhibit hours: 8 am-1 pm

NEA President Reg Weaver addresses the General Assembly at 10:30 am

The session with Dr. James Garbarino begins at 1:00 pm

October 20

Educators' Convention continues at meetings throughout Vermont

Odyssey of the Mind Coaches Trainings

BURLINGTON — Coaches Training for the 2006-2007 Odyssey of the Mind season will be offered on Saturday, November 4th at Mill River Union High School in North Clarendon, and on Saturday, November 11th at Camels Hump Middle School in Richmond, Vermont. An additional training may be scheduled in early December in a location to be determined.

Odyssey of the Mind is the original and largest creative problem solving program in Vermont, with over 60 schools and 100 teams expected to participate in the 28th Annual Vermont Odyssey of the Mind Tournament on March 10th, 2007, at the University of Vermont.

Anyone interested in serving as a coach, membership coordinator, or just interested in learning more about the Odyssey of the Mind program and creative problem solving strategies is welcome to attend. There is no cost to participate, but attendees are asked to pre-register by visiting the website



at <http://vt.odysseyofthemind.org/Training.html> or by calling Toll-Free 1-800-805-5422.

To request more information about the Vermont Odyssey of the Mind Program, to get a Start-Up Kit, or to schedule an Awareness Session in your local area, contact Tim Perkins, Vermont Association Director, at vtotm@accessvt.com, call the number given above, or visit <http://vt.odysseyofthemind.org>

Meet Michele Cross... New Field Agent for A+ Auto Insurance Plan

The A+ Auto and Home Insurance Program, underwritten by California Casualty and endorsed nationally by NEA Member Benefits, has a new field marketing manager for Vermont, Maine and New Hampshire. Her name is Michele Cross. You can contact her at 603-755-2281 or leave her a message at 800-964-3903. You can also drop her an e-mail at mmcross@aplus.com.

Call and Response: Addressing Racism in our Culture Through Education

Educational Community Member,

Please join us at CALL AND RESPONSE, the third annual professional development workshop on traditional West African music, dance and surrounding social issues.

Developed by Jeh Kulu Dance and Drum Theater and several community partners, this workshop is ideal for teachers in Social Studies, Language Arts, Gender Studies, Music, and Physical Education; para-professionals; education students; and all others interested in world cultures.

Addressing Racism in our Culture Through Education

Thursday, Nov 2nd, 2006 — 9:00am-3:15pm
Memorial Auditorium, Burlington Vermont

**REGISTER BY OCT. 16th for Early Registration Discounts!!!
Please Pre-Register by Oct. 27th to Reserve Your Space.**

Racism in the global and local context.

- 10:15 – 11:00 Minister and Social and Civil Activist, Rico Diamond, discusses the real problem of Racism
- 11:15-12:00 Beginner Drum workshop with Mohammed Guisse of Senegal
- 12:00 - 12:30 Lunch is served on site
- 12:30 - 1:00 Lunch discussion with French Teacher, Modou Ndione of Senegal
- 1:00 - 1:30 President of the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program (VRRP), Bob Sanders
- 1:30 - 2:00 Closing discussion/activity
- 2:00 - 2:45 Beginner Dance class with Soriba Simbo Camara of Guinea
- 3:00 - 3:15 Presentation by Jeh Kulu Dance & Drum Theater

Contact vtddfest@yahoo.com, or call (802) 355-0755 or (802) 859-1802.
For more information and to register online go to www.jehkulu.org

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están disponibles a pedido.

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