



TODAY

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Why Scudder Parker should replace Jim Douglas

Printed here are statements by the candidates for governor, demonstrating the differences between them on 9 matters of importance to Vermont educators and why it is that Vermont-NEA is so enthusiastic about the prospect of Scudder Parker becoming Vermont's next Governor. A next to the statement indicates the candidate's agreement with Vermont-NEA's views. In their own words...

Issue: Vermont-NEA views	Jim Douglas's views	Scudder Parker's views
Uses of Education money: Should be limited to public education matters as specified in Act 60.	For 2007, proposed adding the costs of teacher retirement, among other things, to local property taxpayers, while publicly decrying the burden of property taxes.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "Jim Douglas is playing a shell game with Vermonters' property taxes.... [T]he rhetoric of the Governor does not match the reality of his maneuvers in the Legislature. I strongly agree with Vermonters who have demanded Mr. Douglas stop his raid on the Education Fund."
School spending: Education is "labor-intensive" and no service is more important to fund properly than the education of our children.	"It's something we have to control. I think [a cap on property taxes] is the only answer." He proposes a 3.5% limit on budget increases for schools, while he has proposed state budgets with 6% increases.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "Our property taxes are rising because of the increasing costs of health care for [educators and other public employees]." On Douglas's proposed cap on school funding: "[It would] dramatically limit local control and override the democratic process...The state needs to help towns manage their budgets, not issue unilateral mandates."
No Child Left Behind: A misguided and underfunded federal intrusion into the functioning of local public schools.	"[It] isn't just a clever name for a landmark law, it's a commitment to measuring the progress of every student."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "[Its] implementation has placed unbearable strain on public schools...The federal government's lack of funding and rigid methods...have proven unworkable...The rigidity in NCLB's one-size-fits-all approach minimizes the ability for schools to address their own unique needs."
Early Education: Our education system should mirror what science tells us about the importance to developing minds of 3 and 4 year olds.	"I don't think adding two grades to the public education system is the way to go."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "I will work hard to strengthen early childhood education..." "This is probably the best investment of education dollars we can make...Quality early education benefits children of all social and economic groups."
Health care: Last year's legislation provides a useful first reform step, but does nothing to separate health care access from employment or ensure access to <u>all</u> Vermonters.	[In the wake of last year's legislation:] "It's off the table as far as I'm concerned, but there are some ideologues who believe the state should run everything including the health care system." "[W]e must encourage special health savings accounts for Vermonters."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "Access to health care should be continuously available to all Vermonters. It should not be tied to employment or programs with complicated and arbitrary eligibility restrictions."
Teachers Retirement: Should be funded each year at the actuaries' recommended level.	Proposed flat-lined appropriation in 3 successive years, with modest increase for 2007 tied to shifting entire program cost to property taxpayers, while reassuring active teachers vested in the system, correctly, their benefits are not in jeopardy.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> "[As Governor], I will strive with the General Assembly to preserve this long-term commitment to our teachers and appropriate the actuarially required amount each year going forward. Vermont's teachers deserve nothing less than our best efforts."
Employees' exercise of rights: They should be respected for doing so.	During Colchester teachers strike, referred to strikers, exercising their rights, as "unseemly." "...So, philosophically I've never believed it appropriate for public employees to strike."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marched on the picket line with Colchester teachers during their strike.
Labor voting record as legislator	1 right; 11 wrong (as House member in the 1970s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 23 right; 1 wrong (as state Senator in the 1980s)
Attachment to President Bush	Has been state chair of current President's campaigns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outspoken critic of this President

INSIDE

It Can Happen Here 2	Destination ImagiNation 5
In Memoriam 3	Washington West Celebrates Teaching 5
My Dear Family & Friends . 3	House Party in Canaan for Peter Welch 7
Helping Students Appreciate Shakespeare ... 4	REA Rappers 7
New Book by Essex Teacher 4	Bargaining Summit 8

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It Can Happen Here.

By **Angelo J. Dorta, President**

In today's uncertain world, we know unexpected violence can intrude upon our school lives, just as it can in any other American workplace. Yet, almost naturally, we resist full acceptance of such a remote possibility. After all, we live in relatively serene and neighborly Vermont. It can't happen here, can it?

The answer turns out to be "Yes, it can happen here, too." The tragic lesson was learned near the end of a late August teacher in-service day at Essex Elementary School and along a mundane, two-mile stretch of state highway in Essex Center. Yet, it warranted profound attention from everywhere in Vermont precisely because deadly violence in our schools so drastically disturbs our shared sense about what's right and decent about Vermont schools and communities.

The rampage didn't originate at the school. The shootings in Essex were rooted in a domestic clash and then spilled over into the school. Students weren't in session yet.

Regardless, the physical and emotional harm to Essex Elementary School staff, including post-traumatic stress, and the aftereffects on school parents and their primary-age children likely are similar to other violent U.S. school incidents over the past decade. We only can imagine the apprehension and safety concerns of school staff who re-entered the building and of parents whose 5-, 6-, or 7-year-olds attend school there. Similarly, what fears may be in the minds of students themselves based on what they've heard from parents, neighbors, or broadcast media, or even based on directly knowing the adult school victims?

One of the two teachers who died in the shootings, Alicia Shanks, was a long-time Essex Town School District colleague of mine for nearly 20 years, although we taught in different elementary schools. Her outgoing personality was so sparkling and full of life. She also had a great sense of humor, and everyone knew her 30-plus years of extreme dedication to students, co-workers, families, and the teaching profession. Her academically and athletically gifted daughter, Emily, won a \$1,000 Vermont-NEA college scholarship in 1997.

My wife, Peggy, and I joined Alicia and her husband Steve for an afternoon on their boat once long ago, and we'd see each other from time to time at school district social events and also while doing errands in places around town over the years, even after I left Essex schools to become Vermont-NEA President. Besides keeping tabs on Emily's success in the New York City financial investment business, I'd often see son John Shanks working the counter at the Essex Discount Beverage Store only a mile from the school.

I didn't know Essex Elementary first grade teacher Mary Jenkins Snedeker, who was wounded in the attack and who thankfully will recover, nor St. Albans Town Educational Center second-grade teacher Linda Lambesis, who was killed in her nearby home just prior to the shootings at Essex Elementary School, as personally as Alicia. However, their decades of service as teachers devoted to their students and as long-time Association members are well known to colleagues, friends, and parents in Essex and St. Albans.



A thousand friends, family members, fellow teachers, and former students filled the chapel at St. Michael's College on August 28 for Alicia Shanks' funeral. Alicia taught first and second graders at the Essex Elementary School.

The next day, another huge crowd of mourners attended services for Linda Lambesis at the First Congregational Church in Essex Junction. Linda taught at the St. Albans Town Elementary School.

Linda was murdered in her home on August 24. Minutes later, the same gunman murdered Alicia in her classroom, and shot another teacher, Mary Snedeker, who survived.

In a small state like Vermont, we're all shocked and saddened and extend our deepest condolences. No one in those school communities, and no Vermont educator, is untouched by the shootings. As educators, we feel the excitement of a school year's new beginning and are very familiar with the workings of in-service days. But, we're understandably perplexed by the vagaries of fate when a killer stalks the hallways of a school.

Many counseling, human services, and mental health agencies remind us that coping with nearby tragedy is a *process*. And, it's a process that everyone experiences differently, just as all people heal emotionally at their own pace. Temporary, general-

ized anxiety over personal and family safety is common. Profound sadness and grief are normal, too, just as anger against the offender is a frequent reaction.

Acknowledging our strong feelings about the crisis is the first important step to emotional recovery. Talking with others, spending additional time with family, close friends, clergy, and pets, and participating in remembrances and memorial services all help. If feelings of hopelessness persist or we suffer difficulty sleeping, concentrating, and coping, it is wise to seek professional assistance.

Very young and adolescent students affected by traumatic events should be helped to understand that fear and confusion are expected responses that eventually will disappear. Preschoolers and elementary school children might report stomachaches or headaches, refuse to go to school or to see friends, or display tantrum behavior. They need family companionship and reassurance, regular family routines, avenues of expression through conversation, play, and art, and stricter supervision of media reports about violence. Reasonably firm limits and consequences for misbehavior and emphasis on good deeds and other positive human behaviors also are advisable.

Experts suggest that parents' and close adults' willingness to *listen* to children's intimate feelings and thoughts, without necessarily forcing a conversation, is a valuable tool for diminishing pre-adolescent and adolescent students' worries. Maintaining customary schedules for social and recreational activities and participation in community observances ought to be encouraged. Unusual, obsessive worry about the tragic event several months later should prompt intervention by professional counselors.

At this crucial time, in whatever appropriate ways possible, we need to express our sorrow. We must somehow find ways to help remember the significant lives and contributions of our fallen colleagues, Alicia and Linda, and to provide support to faculty and staff members in Essex Elementary School and in St. Albans Town Educational Center, as well as to employees in both school districts generally.

The only meager lesson I can draw from this unnecessary tragedy is to be appreciative and vigilant regarding our personal and work lives, which often normally function in a "cruise-control"-like mode. Yet, virtually anything can happen at nearly any time, whatever is good and important to us can be drastically altered or snatched away in a split-second moment, through no particular fault of our own.

Let's all try to be thankful for what we have and to value the important people in our lives, every day. ■

IN MEMORIAM

Mary Alicia Shanks

Veteran first and second grade teacher and Vermont-NEA member Mary Alicia (Workman) Shanks, age 56, was shot and died tragically in her Essex Elementary School classroom on August 24, 2006, an in-service day for teachers.

Alicia was a life long resident of the Essex area, and devoted her life to her beloved family (husband Steve and children Emily and John) and her first and second grade students. She was a beautiful, gracious, strong and loving person, who emanated humor and joy wherever she went.

She was born on August 4, 1950, in Burlington, daughter of the late Richard Workman and Eileen (O'Sullivan) Workman and the granddaughter of Mamie Emily (Lovell) Workman. Alicia lost her mother to cancer while a teenager, and with her grandmother Mayma raised her six younger siblings, assuming the role of mother at that young age – a role she continued all her life.

Alicia graduated from Johnson State College in 1972, with a degree in Elementary Education, and was immediately hired by the Fairfax Elementary School, where she had done her student teaching. After several years, she moved to the Essex Elementary School, where she taught first and second grade for nearly 25 years.

Alicia was a talented and outstanding teacher, who taught innovatively and lovingly. She was the kind of teacher who received letters of tribute from her students when they graduated from college, thanking her for giving them the self-confidence and will to succeed.

She did graduate work at UVM and St. Michael's College, and won an award from "Instructor" magazine for a class project on Native American customs called "Deeds of the Heart." Alicia's articles were published in the Governor's Institute of Vermont "Leading and Learning" magazine. She was a Baird Center

Mentor for Residential Care, she served on the Board of the Essex Community Historical Society, and she belonged to the Alpha Delta

Kappa Teachers Honorary Society and Deedee's Mah jong Group. Alicia loved Golden Retrievers, genealogy, family photograph albums, and family heirloom items. She recently discovered her mother's birth family roots in Ireland, and rejoiced in her Celtic heritage and her Irish relatives.

On October 7, 1972, she and Stephen Shanks were married at her Aunt Helen's home in Castleton, Vermont. Emily Eileen was born in 1977 and John in 1982. Their happiness with each other and their two children made their home a beacon of joy to all who knew them.

Alicia is survived by her husband of 34 years, Stephen; her children Emily and John; her siblings Rick Workman and wife Elena of Jericho, John Workman and life partner Giles Hunter of Essex Jct., Martha Workman and Wayne Phelps of Essex, Geoffrey Workman and his wife Sharon of Buckfield, Maine, William Workman of Colchester, and Laurie Malenfant and her husband Joe of Colchester; her mother in law Janet Shanks of South Burlington, brothers and sisters-in-law Michael and Cindy Shanks of Burlington, Judy (Shanks) and Carney Howell of Eliot, Maine; Susan (Shanks) and Eric Ayers of So. Burlington, twenty nieces and nephews, one grandnephew and one grandniece; her extended family, cousins and many friends; and her many years of students and student teachers.

Memorial Contributions in Alicia's memory may be made to the Baird/Howard Center Development Office 208 Flynn Ave. Suite 3J Burlington, VT 05401. ■



Linda Stewart Lambesis

Veteran elementary school teacher and Vermont-NEA member Mrs. Linda Stewart Lambesis, age 57, was shot and died tragically in her home in Essex on August 24, 2006.

The daughter of Stanley M. Stewart and Kathleen Fredette Stewart, Linda was born February 11, 1949, in Burlington, Vermont. A graduate of Essex Junction High School in 1967, she received her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Vermont in 1972, and immediately began her teaching career at St. Albans Town Educational Center.

Following in the footsteps of her mother and grandmother, Linda was a devoted teacher of elementary children and was preparing to begin her 35th year of service. She was known for reaching out to all children, especially those at school who needed extra support. She had an uncanny ability to engage them in learning, despite any difficulties they experienced outside her classroom. Linda can be described as a gift to the teaching world.

Linda also loved spending time with friends and family. Over the years, she provided loving and unwavering support to families of friends and colleagues during their times of need. She also loved to laugh and possessed a dry wit reminiscent of her father, Stanley. At any gathering, Linda could be seen telling stories and cracking jokes, keeping her audience entertained.

Linda served as President of the homeowners' association where she lived and was an active member of the First Congregational Church of Essex Junction. She was a former President of the Greater St. Albans Jaycee Women, president and chief negotiator of her local teachers' association, a tireless fund raiser and President for the St. Albans Town Boosters' Club, and participated in many other worthwhile community activities.

Above all else, Linda loved her daughters, Jennifer and Andrea, and

was actively involved in their daily lives. Linda had a big heart and gave without limit to those she loved. Linda's life revolved around her two daughters, Jennifer and Andrea and, later, her son-in-law Matt.

Linda is survived by her daughters, Jennifer Sturgeon and her husband, Matthew Sturgeon of Milton, and Andrea Lambesis of Essex Junction; her mother, Kathleen F. Stewart of Burlington; her sister, Carol Stewart Willey of Burlington; Linda's former husband and father of their daughters Arthur Lambesis of St. Albans.

Linda was extremely fond of a nephew, nieces, and great-nieces. Linda also leaves behind many cousins, beloved friends, colleagues, students and former students. Linda was predeceased by her father, Stanley Morse Stewart.

During this time of sorrow, the family would like to extend condolences to the other families and community members whose lives have been affected by the series of tragic events that included Linda's death.

Linda's family also expressed thanks for the outpouring of support from the community, as well as the diligent efforts of the Essex and Vermont State Police, Sheriff's Departments, surrounding law enforcement agencies and all other agencies that offered their support.

Gifts in Linda's memory be made to the Linda S. Lambesis Scholarship Fund which will benefit a Bellows Free Academy student from St. Albans Town who plans to enter the field of education. Donations may be sent to Bellows Free Academy, c/o Ned Caron, Principal, 73 South Main Street, St. Albans, VT. 05478. ■



My Dear Family & Friends...

Helen Lanthier, a friend and colleague of Linda Lambesis, delivered this remembrance at Linda's funeral.

As a colleague and former teammate of Linda Lambesis, my thoughts throughout the last week have been mostly of her. I've had time to reflect on our time together – the happy, the sad, the hopeful, and even the argumentative. Through all those times, whether in agreement or disagreement, I always knew where Linda stood and I sensed the power of her passion. I started wondering what she would say if she had personally gathered all of us together here today – and in a way, that's just what she has done. While I would never presume to speak for Linda, I believe she might share a message something like this:

My Dear Family and Friends:

Know that I love you. I want you to live your life passionately and fully. In so doing, embrace the children. Find the little boy without a coat and the young girl without boots. Then, go to the store and be sure they have them before the end of the day. Take two of your friends with you so that they learn from your doing. Next year, three boys and three girls will be warmer – and the next, a full 12 children will have been touched by you. Love grows.

And I want you to read! Read to yourselves, to your children, to

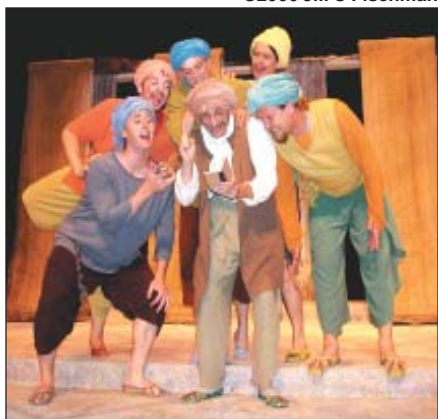
your neighbor's children, to the children of the world. Read with a voice that is loud and strong and enticing. Read to the children only those books you love so they never doubt your infatuation with story. Embrace them as you read so they feel the warmth of a good story, well told. Be sure they become fast friends with Peter Rabbit, Harry Potter, and Miss Alaineus. Take them down the road to Oz and on other roads less traveled.

Never be afraid to speak your mind. In your words, you will find friend and foe, but from all you will find respect. Maybe most importantly, remember to be happy. Never lose an opportunity to share a bit of your life with another, to laugh out loud a belly laugh so immense that others turn to wonder about the fun.

Remember that I love you.

Linda, you found the children who needed clothing and brought me along with you so that I could continue the work. You read to your children and the children of so many others, and now they will be forever friends with Peter Rabbit. You always spoke your mind and you will be respected always. Your life's journey touched many and was all too brief. May you find peace and comfort in God's arms as so many children found the same in yours. God speed, Linda. Have a little fun up there.

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Helping Vermont Students Appreciate Shakespeare

Making Shakespeare more accessible for students, including making the Bard's plays come alive in the classroom and on stage, is the goal of an educational outreach program aimed at schools in Vermont and New Hampshire.

The program is the brainchild of the NorthEast Shakespeare Ensemble (NESE), a non-profit repertory theatre company formed to bring Shakespeare and the best of the classics to scenic Vermont and New Hampshire each summer. Representatives from NESE will be at the Vermont-NEA Educators' Convention in Essex Junction on October 18 and 19 to answer questions on its program and the educational aids and resources it will be providing for interested teachers.

Education has been an important part of NESE's mission since its inaugural 2004 season, when it provided free tickets to its production of *Twelfth Night* to local schools and libraries to help youngsters appreciate what makes Shakespeare so enriching. This spring, NESE expanded its educational outreach by conducting a series of in-school workshops in six elementary and secondary schools in Vermont and New Hampshire, in addition to giving the students free tickets to its production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which ran for seven performances at the Lebanon Opera House in June. Workshop leader, Sean Eastman, collaborated directly with participating teachers to tailor the workshop activities to the age, abilities and interests of their students. The participating schools in Vermont were Norwich Elementary School, Rivendell High School, and the Waldorf School in Quechee.

In 2007, NESE plans to expand the number of schools involved, and to provide workshops for English teachers to help with their teaching of Shakespeare.

For more information about NESE, come to the Vermont-NEA Educators' Convention, or visit: www.NESEtheatre.org email: info@NESEtheatre.org

New Book by Essex Teacher Helps Make Reading "as Easy as Math"

WATERBURY – Have you ever wondered why so many children who are fairly proficient in math have difficulty learning to read? How can they be so competent in one academic area that requires manipulation of symbols but so frustrated in yet another? Vermont teacher Kathryn Grace has written about her answer to this phenomenon: an innovative teaching method that has quickly gained national recognition.

Kathi Grace's new book is an instructional tool that strengthens phonemic awareness while simultaneously building an association of sounds to the spellings of words. She explains that *Phonics and Spelling Through Phoneme-Grapheme Mapping* (Sopris West Publications, 2006) was created to help students understand the reality that the number of sounds (phonemes) they hear in a word may be different from the number of letters (graphemes) that represent those sounds.

For example, the word *cat* has three sounds /c/ /a/ /t/ and three letters, while the word *eight* has only two sounds /a/ t/ that are represented by five letters. (The four letter grapheme [eigh] represents the sound of long a in this word.)

To complicate matters further, some words actually have more sounds than letters. For example, *ax* has three sounds /a/ /k/ /s/ but is represented by only two letters, since the letter x says /ks/. This can be a truly frustrating concept for those children who seek to find mathematical logic in their world.

Therefore, according to Kathi, it is essential that children understand that once you leave the predictable VC and/or VCV patterns of words most often found in very early reading, the one to one correspondence between a sound and its grapheme is far less prevalent.

Phoneme/Grapheme Mapping provides the one to one correspondence easily grasped and familiar to young students as a math concept, but often lacking in sound-to-spelling relationships. Using color coded blocks to represent vowels and consonants and a graph paper grid to illustrate the correspondences between sounds and letter combinations, a child is able to use his/her mathematical logic to make sense of our alphabetic system. Its multi-sensory elements help to bridge the brain's phonological (sound) and orthographic (print) processors to strengthen learning and recall. It supports the development of automaticity and fluency with reading and spelling for all ages in one-on-one tutoring, small group and large group settings.

Kathi Grace's work is important in view of an often overlooked com-

ponent of No Child Left Behind that requires teachers to use *research based* literacy instruction to help improve our nation's reading performance. Current research on phoneme awareness demonstrates that early instruction linking speech sounds to alphabetic symbols strengthens phonemic awareness, decoding skills, spelling and word reading.

In 2003, Dr. Bonita Blachman et al found that instructional models with explicit teaching of phonologic and orthographic relationships produced results wherein students demonstrated advanced knowledge of the internal structures of words. Additionally, when students with deficit word level skills received small group, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonemic decoding, they achieved scores solidly within the average range according to Dr. Joe Torgesen and his team of researchers in 2003.

Dr. Louisa Moats, a nationally acclaimed researcher, teacher trainer and author of several professional development programs for teachers of reading, has written that Kathi Grace's program "embodies the true meaning of 'the alphabetic principle,' which is much discussed and seldom taught in such an engaging, logical, organized and complete fashion." Moats has included the principles and practices of Phoneme-Grapheme Mapping in her LETRS professional development manuals for teachers of reading. Kathryn's work has also been cited in several leading education publications as an example of research based interventions that are student and teacher friendly.

Phonics and Spelling Through Phoneme-Grapheme Mapping is published by Sopris West Educational Services, a division of Cambrium Learning Company and is available on the web. For more information: customerservice@sopriswest.com or phone 1-800-547-6747.



About Kathryn Grace

Kathryn earned her BS in elementary education and her MED in reading and language arts from UVM. She also has a Certificate of Advanced Study in Language and Learning Disabilities from St. Michael's College.

Kathryn is a learning specialist in the Essex Town Schools and a consultant for the Stern Center. She conducts literacy workshops throughout the state and country and, for the past four years, has been a featured presenter at the International Dyslexia Association's annual meeting. With the help of then Washington County Senator Jeb Spaulding, she authored Senate Bill 106, the Early Literacy Bill, advocating for earlier identification of the literacy needs of children.

She has received several educational awards, including the Robert T. Stafford Distinguished Service in Special Education Award, the Vermont-NEA Teaching Excellence Award, and the American Legion Auxiliary Educator of the Year Award. ■



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Destination ImagiNation Offers Exciting Challenges

BURLINGTON – Destination ImagiNation is a worldwide, Creative Problem Solving program for students in kindergarten through college. DI, a Vermont-NEA partner, is a community-based, school-friendly program that offers kids a chance to develop problem-solving and teamwork skills that they will use throughout their lives. DI brings families, communities and schools together to help their students apply and integrate the subjects learned in the classroom with interesting and unusual situations.

Although the high point of the DI program may seem to be the regional, state and world competitions, getting there is more than “half the fun.” This summer, various members of the DI Board of Directors and DI team members have taken DI “on the road” and visited a variety of fairs, town celebrations and theme days. At these events, kids have been able to participate in creative activities and practice solving “Instant Challenges.” DI participated in the Palettes of Vermont project and provided the palettes and a variety of materials for the children to use.

To participate in DI, teams of five to seven kids choose one of five team challenges. These teams are usually school-based and coached by parents or teachers. Often DI is part of the “after school” program offered by a district. Honing a unique and creative solution to the challenge takes weeks and sometimes months, and draws on talents that range from artistic to technical. DI meshes nicely with the Vermont Framework of Standards and its problems can be used to assess the accomplishment of some of the Grade Cluster Expectations developed by educators around the state.

The 2006-2007 challenges are exciting!

In Direct Flight, teams will design

and construct aircraft and show they soar, perform stunts and then land exactly where the team plans.

In CSI:DI, teams will become a crime fighting team that will invent gadgets that will illuminate the evidence that will allow them to shed some light on an investigation and solve the case!

In Round About Courage, teams will create and present a story of a Heroic Adventure that includes a “Personal Challenge” for the Hero to overcome. The story will include a technical set piece that operates without electricity and will be presented in the style of Theater in the Round.

In Switching traDitions, teams will create a presentation in which they let their senses take them through a world of Traditions, zooming around the world in nanoseconds. The presentation will let them really appreciate different cultures using all of their senses.

In Card-DI-ology, teams will present a story about the impact of CARDS on our lives, such as cards that we use for identification, cards to open doors, and cards to use as money. Using playing cards the team will build a structure that will be tested to see how much weight it can hold.

The Vermont DI staff is available to present hands-on workshops to introduce children and adults to the program. Schools may be eligible for a free membership in DI. For further information, contact Pat DiLego (maiaseven@aol.com or 802-864-8636) or check out the DI website: www.destinationimagination.org or the state DI site website: www.creativeimagination.org. There is also a link to DI on the Vermont-NEA website. The state organization, Vermont Creative Imagination, Inc., is a Vermont-NEA partner. ■



Washington West Celebrates Teaching

By Linda Radtke, WWSU Mentor Coordinator

WAITSFIELD – The first year of teaching is not easy. In fact, nationally, a third of all teachers in the first five years leave the profession, up to a half in difficult urban public schools. To help new teachers survive—and even thrive—in their transition to the classroom, Washington West Supervisory Union’s mentoring program recognized both mentors and their protégés in May at the 1824 House in Waitsfield.

The retention rate in the Washington West district this year is 100%, and new teachers say that part of the reason is the mentoring program. One of the beginning teachers in the district considered quitting the profession after a rough first week. She remarked, “that first Labor Day has come and gone, and I’m still here, thanks to my mentor. Her sense of humor and perspective has been an invaluable gift, and has had a positive impact on my first year of teaching. She was an example of good teaching for me—but, more importantly, a mentor and a friend.”

Washington West’s annual *Celebration of Teaching* brings together school board members, administrators, veteran teachers, and teachers new to the profession for an afternoon of presentations, documenting the new teachers’ growth working with students in the classroom. The district uses the Pathwise program, which provides a format for mentor and new teacher to talk about teaching. Mentors observe classes and help their protégés improve instruction, suggest resources, and serve as guides through the difficult first two years. The program was a finalist in a national Recognition Program this year. Vermont-NEA Professional Programs Director Sherry Gile collaborated with the district in training mentors.

This year, Charlotte Danielson, a pioneer researcher in teacher effectiveness and the original creator behind the Pathwise program, worked with Washington West administrators in the morning, with the twelve mentors in the afternoon, and addressed the new teachers and their mentors at the Celebration. Ms. Danielson believes that because teaching is com-

plex, it is helpful to have a road map through the territory, structured around a shared understanding of teaching.

A framework of professional practice for teaching is useful not only to practicing educators but also to the larger community, because it conveys that educators, like other professionals, hold themselves to the highest standards. By providing an agreed-upon framework for excellence, a framework for professional practice serves to structure conversations among educators about exemplary practice. A uniform framework allows those conversations to guide novices as well as enhance the performance of veterans. She met with School Board members the following day, as well, to help report program accountability.

Director of Curriculum and Assessment Edith Beatty and Mentor Coordinator Linda Radtke spearheaded the effort, joined by veteran teachers Kathi Orr, Fran Raymond, Lisa Atwood, Carol Gargon, Chris Whalen, Diane Villemaire, Adrienne Magida, Pam Menz, Jessica Diem, Carla Lewis, Dan Greenleaf, and Tom Young.

“Flying up” from the program after the second year of work with a mentor, music teacher Michael Close (Moretown) and English teacher Tedin Lange (Harwood) spoke of their successes with students due to the mentoring program, which helped them design effective “hands-on” activities to engage students and to increase motivation. They also commended the mentors who took time to hear their concerns and design ways to solve problems in the classroom.

First year teachers from each building presented evidence of their work throughout the year to principals, board members, mentors, and Superintendent Robert McNamara. New teachers participating in the mentor program are: Carol Senning, Jen Rock, Ian Craig, Dan Morse, Mike Coyle, Nancy Daigle, Amy Scribner, Ilona Peterson, Sara Pomerantz, Ann Beattie, and Jeremy Hill. A new group of teachers and their mentors will join this group this year in the journey to a successful and reflective period of induction. ■

Vermont-NEA Seminars on Retirement Security & Financial Planning

(Open to members only. Recommended for ALL ages.)

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:

- **September 28, 2006** Black Bear Tavern, St. Johnsbury
- **October 5, 2006** Vermont-NEA, Montpelier
- **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. Go to www.vtneaprofessionalprograms.org to register online. Or contact Ellie McAndrew at Vermont-NEA: 1-800-649-6375 or emcandrew@vtnea.org. When you register, please share with us:

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

LOCAL ACTION

Vermont-NEA Member Martha Allen Hosts House Party for Peter Welch

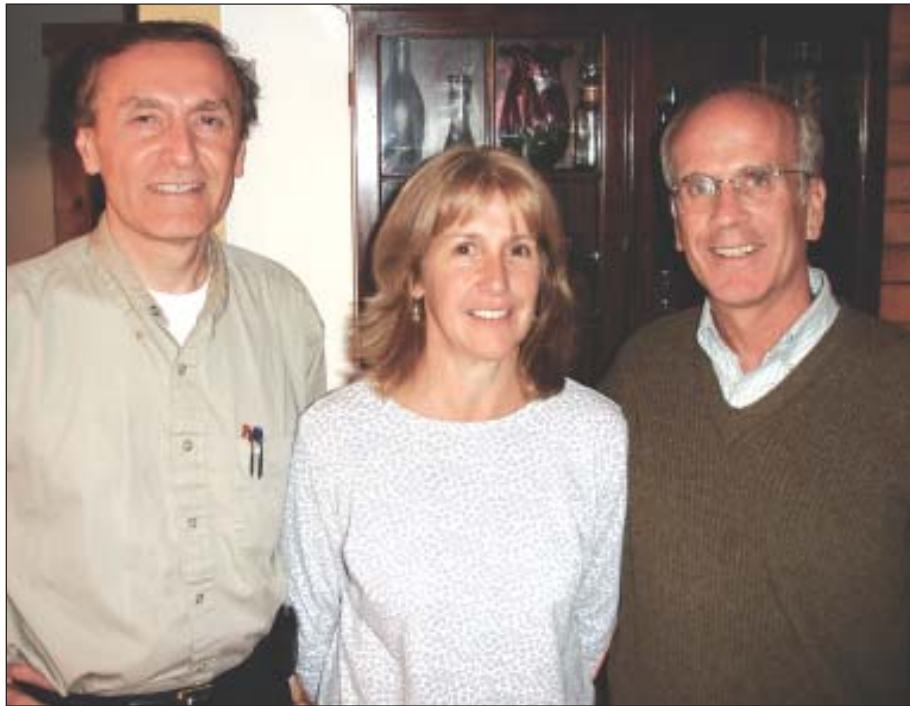
CANAAN – Canaan sits squarely on two borders, one with Canada and the other with New Hampshire—you cannot go further north or east and still be in Vermont. Surrounded by dense pine forests and pristine lakes, Canaan is truly a jewel in the kingdom.

As in many Vermont towns, Canaan's school is the center of the community. In fact, the Canaan School also serves families in the communities of Norton, Bloomfield, Brunswick, Lemington and Brunswick. Some students even walk to school across the Connecticut River bridge from West Stewartstown, New Hampshire.

Its educators serve families from preschool through twelfth grade and its architecture reflects decades of change in both the demographics of the community and in educational philosophy. For instance, there was a time when "physical education" meant kickball at recess, the "library" was a corner of a classroom, and two or three rooms could serve the entire community. This is clearly no longer the case. However, like a one-room schoolhouse from the past, it's not uncommon in the Canaan school to see a high school student helping a younger child; there is a pervasive feeling of "we're in this together."

It is in this backdrop that Vermont-NEA-recommended candidate Peter Welch attended a "house party" organized by Library Media Specialist and Vermont-NEA Board Director

Martha Allen. Martha and her husband Scott McKibben (also a teacher at the Canaan School) invited several community members to their log house for an informal evening with Peter Welch, candidate for the U.S.



Senator Vince Illuzzi (L) was a guest at Martha Allen's House Party for Peter Welch, the candidate Vermont-NEA supports for the U.S. House.

House. In all, some fourteen community members attended -- everyone from carpenters and musicians to public school and college teachers. It was a diverse group.

"I enjoyed hosting the party very much. I was impressed by the quality of the discussion and the comments and questions of the guests. I would do this again in a heartbeat!" said

Martha.

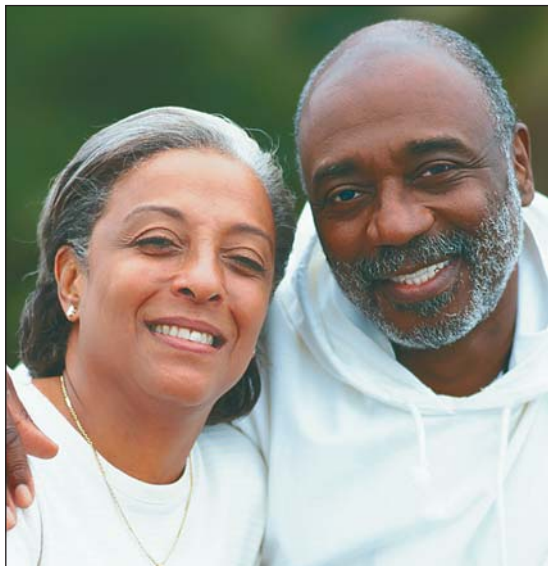
While noshing around the cherry dining room table or sitting at the hand-carved breakfast nook, guests of all ages bantered about health care, tax policy, the environment, the situ-

ternational relations. We are spending billions of dollars on this war and that money should be spent in our country on education and services to help our struggling middle and lower income people," said Allen.

Martha and Scott's seventeen-year-old son, Wyatt, described the evening as "impressive," and it was. Wyatt and his older brother Cody asked several pressing questions about global warming. Said Wyatt. "It is refreshing to have a politician listen to me," said Wyatt.

After the gathering, Peter and his son joined the bonfire built outside by Cody and Wyatt and then camped out in what Martha calls the "hard-tent" (essentially a hunting cabin) on their property. The next day, Peter attended the "Moose Festival" in Canaan. In between moose watching tours and tasting moose stew and moose burgers, Peter met citizens in Canaan and asked for their support.

The Vermont-NEA Board of Directors has recommended Peter Welch because of his decades of work supporting issues important to educators, from school funding to the fiscal integrity of the state teachers' retirement system. Association board members appreciate his long-standing commitment to high quality health care as a fundamental right of citizenship, his belief that Congress must fix and fully fund No Child Left Behind and, especially, his intention to re-shape national priorities. – Tom Walters



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Peter Welch lays out education agenda, accepts Vermont-NEA recommendation

BURLINGTON – Peter Welch, candidate for Vermont’s seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, formally and gratefully accepted Vermont-NEA’s recommendation for election at an August 24 press conference. He was joined by Chittenden South EA President Christopher Hood, Vermont-NEA President Angelo Dorta, and Connecticut Senator Christopher Dodd, a leader in Washington on education and children’s issues.

Welch took the podium and spoke the words win the him Vermont-NEA’s enthusiastic support. “Education opportunity leads to economic opportunity,” he declared. “This is why one of government’s greatest responsibilities is to assure that all children, regardless of wealth or where they live, have access to high quality public education from kindergarten through college.”



Senator Chris Dodd of Connecticut joined Vermont-NEA President Angelo Dorta supporting Peter Welch for Congress.

Vermont-NEA Photos by Tom Walters



CSEA President Chris Hood told reporters that Peter Welch is committed to supporting and strengthening Vermont’s public schools.

He continued: “I am committed to helping provide educational opportunities for all Vermont children. I am firmly committed to the tradition of local control of education. However, the federal government can and must be an effective partner with state and local governments and must not impose unfunded mandates.”

CSEA President Christopher Hood told reporters why he supports Peter Welch: “As a classroom teacher,

I witness how opportunities provided to all students serve as a bridge to achievement and future success. Peter understands this, and is committed to supporting and strengthening our public schools.”

“I’m proud that my organization stands with others this morning as staunch supporters of Peter Welch’s candidacy for the U.S. House of Representatives,” said Vermont-NEA President Angelo Dorta. “Once elected, Peter Welch undoubtedly will become a leader in the U.S. House to re-shape current misguided policies emanating from the Republican Congress and White House in Washington, D.C.... Of great specific concern to Vermont-NEA members is the grossly flawed No Child Left Behind Act. Like all of us, Peter believes that public schools must help every child succeed. But, Peter also understands that excessive standardized testing of students and negative labels for schools are wrong and ineffective and that underfunding the law by billions of dollars is unconscionable.”

Senator Dodd joined Welch in calling for reform of No Child Left Behind and reversing of budget cuts imposed by the Bush Congress.

President Dorta says Peter Welch will be an excellent Vermont U.S. House Representative and he promises that Vermont-NEA is doing everything legally permissible to encourage Association members to work on Peter’s behalf during the campaign and to cast their votes for him in November.

“Without question, Peter Welch is the candidate most willing to and capable of strengthening public education, supporting the health and safety programs needed by children and families, and respecting the rights and responsibilities of school employees,” declared Dorta. ■

Upcoming Association events...

September 18

Vermont-NEA Board meets in Montpelier

September 25

Deadline for October issue of *Vermont-NEA Today*

September 30

Vermont-NEA Bargaining Summit for local negotiators and other leaders at the DoubleTree in South Burlington.

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

October 20

Educators’ Convention continues at meetings throughout Vermont



Attend the workshop on *Communicating with Parents* with Deb Walsh of the National PTA and Priscilla Beaulieu, President of the Vermont PTA
October 19, 8:00 am / Expo Centre



Hear National Education Association President Reg Weaver
October 19, 10:30 am / Expo Centre



Join the afternoon session with youth violence expert Dr. James Garbarino, author of *Lost Boys* and *See Jane Hit*
October 19, 1-4 pm / Expo Centre

FREE luncheon reception for Dr. Garbarino at noon!

Rutland EA Members Got Perks

RUTLAND – When it comes to starting the school year off right, the leaders of the Rutland Education Association can’t be beat.

In a summer message to her executive council, REA President Ellen Green said that for years she has gotten up in front of REA members (and new folks) -- after the administration started the year with their speeches and vacated the premises along with half the audience -- to give a fairly stiff speech (you know the one!) imploring folks to read their contracts and get new members and support their negotiating team.

This year, Ellen proposed “something completely different to liven things up a bit and celebrate the fact that we have a good contract.” She wrote a Rap for REA called “Members Got Perks” and arranged for performance time early on the district’s opening meeting agenda. “I know it’s wacky, but it might set a great tone for the year,” she cajoled her colleagues.

By all accounts, it was great fun. Picture a chorus of school teachers in bling and baseball caps, some serving as mouth percussionists, singing this to the rhythm of

“Baby Got Back,” a rap Ellen calls disgusting, but catchy...

2006 REA-RAP: Members Got Perks

©2006 Ellen Green

(But I don’t think I’ll quit my day job.)

I like big perks, and I cannot lie

You Union Members can’t deny

When your Rep walks in

With a little bit of grace

And a contract in your face

You get JAZZED!

We’re professional: We teach and care about kids!

More benefits I’m spying

While solidarity I’m eyeing

O Buddy let me tell you now

Members got perks! (Wicka, wicka AH!)

OPPORTUNITIES

Vermont-NEA Bargaining Summit offers training and deliberation for local Association negotiators and other local leaders

Saturday, September 30, 2006
8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., lunch included
DoubleTree Hotel, South Burlington

To register: www.vtnea.org or 1-800-649-6375 x 111

For decades, Vermont-NEA local Associations have bargained hard -- and successfully -- to increase salaries and improve benefits for educators.

This Bargaining Summit spells out how local Associations can stay on course...

Over the past 16 months, Vermont educators have experienced unprecedented events and serious challenges...

- Four teacher strikes with health insurance coverage at the core.
- Sharp opposition to teachers' actions by some community members.

- Increased pressure to pay a greater share of health insurance premiums.

- Looming property tax, education funding and school budget issues.

We encourage local Association negotiators (teams preferred) and other local leaders to attend Vermont-NEA's first annual Bargaining Summit. It will be an important opportunity to share information and experiences with fellow Association leaders from throughout the state.

The morning will begin with a panel of teachers from local Associations that recently went on strike: Or-

leans Central EA in May 2005, Colchester in October 2005, Barre EA in December 2005, and Green Mountain NEA (Chittenden East) in May 2006.

Each participant also may attend two of four sessions being offered to address the issues local Associations must be prepared to deal with as they negotiate. Locals sending at least two participants will be able to get all the training being offered.

Make plans now to send a team from your local to the Summit! No fee. Space is limited.

The sessions:

Building a Strong Association for Bargaining

Maintaining Affordable Health Insurance

Improving Salaries

Organizing for a Crisis



FREE Book!

All attending the Vermont-NEA Bargaining Summit on September 30 will receive a free copy of "Q & A: The Most Provocative Questions Asked of Educational Professionals and How to Answer Them," by David Smith and Lynn Coffin.

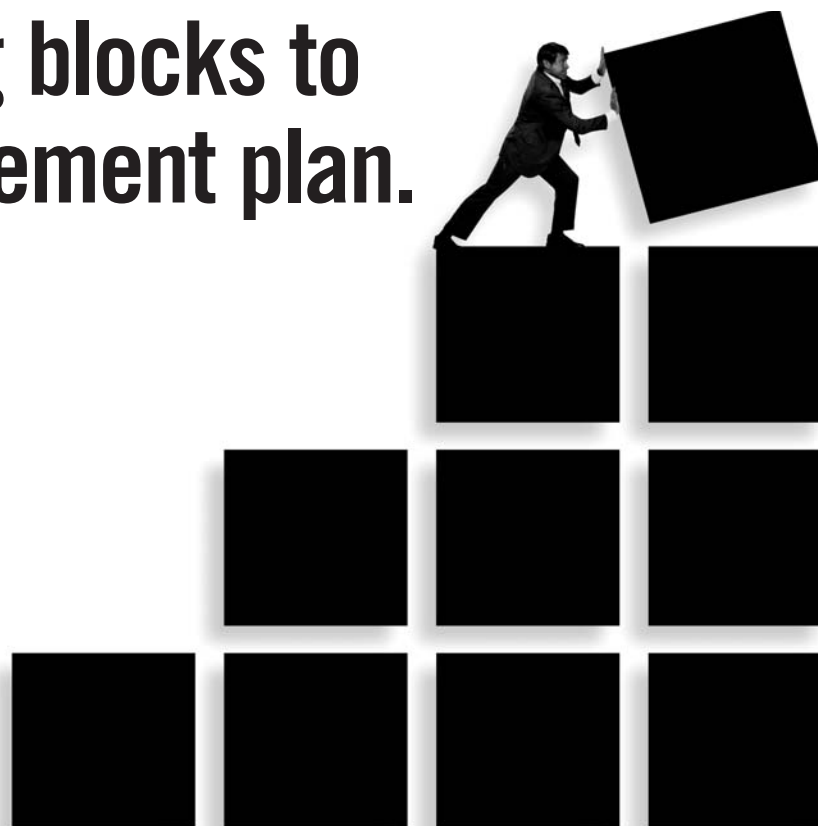
Annual Free Day Coming Soon at The Restore

The ReStore is again ready to help with your arts'n'crafts for the new year. We have lots of 3-ring binders! We have paper! We have all kinds of boxes. We have string, wood turnings, sticky-back vinyls, die-cut shapes, and lots of fabric.

At least come and check out our Free Room! If you buy 100 of anything, you get 15% off.

ALSO watch for the announcement of our annual Free Day, the first Saturday in October!

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