

# Vocational Instructor

Local 4200A ~ AFT/CT, AFT & AFL-CIO

Volume MMVI Issue 8

"It Pays  
To Be Taught  
By a Vo-Tech  
Teacher"

OCTOBER 2006

## On the Road Winds Down School Visits Successful

A very busy September and October schedule of school visits for union leadership is coming to an end. Beginning at the end of August, SVFT Vice President Rick Tanasi and SVFT Executive Union Representative Ed Lang began visiting each school. By the end of the month, these full-day school visits will be completed.

According to Vice President Tanasi, the time and effort put into an early-in-the-school-year round of visits has been very worthwhile. "Ed and I have had the opportunity to meet new teachers, reconnect with veteran teachers, deliver materials to teachers who are in the BEST portfolio year, and address member's questions and concerns."

The visits also provided at the very beginning of the school year the opportunity to problem-solve while on-site. Ed Lang reported, "our close-out meeting with the school principals has resulted in resolving class size overages and contract language problems before the end of the day." Another problem was resolved when a significant mold problem at a school undergoing renovation was detected and remedied with the assistance of John Woodmansee, Health & Safety Consultant.

The officers want to thank the school union representatives who have coordinated the officer visits.

Another round of school visits is

## Investing In Future Leadership

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of the SVFT Executive Union Representative?
2. Why is our local 4200A?
3. What is the relationship between the American Federation of Teachers and AFT-CT and the SVFT?
4. What is the history of collective bargaining? Of the American labor movement?
5. When did the SVFT begin its New Leadership Program?
6. How many of the current SVFT officers completed the New Leadership Program?

The answers to these six questions and much more information will be covered in the next session of the New Leadership Program. The program consists of fifteen hours of training. Previously, four very successful sessions have been held. The dates/times/location for the upcoming leadership training will be determined this fall. Please consider increasing your involvement in your union by participating in SVFT's New Leadership Program. If you are interested in the program or have any questions, please contact Rick Tanasi at the union office (1-800-378-8020).

## New Reps Elected

Congratulations to these teachers who were recently elected school union representatives and will serve in these positions for the 2006-2007 school year.

Janis Hochadel  
Science Instructor  
J. M. Wright THS

Stan Jarosz  
Electronics DH  
E.C. Goodwin THS

Marco Kinsella  
Mathematics Instructor  
Bristol TEC

John Sylvestre  
Electrical DH  
Grasso/Southeastern THS



## Inside This Issue

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CDL Requests**

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A New Student  
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Calendar**

## **Notes for the SVFT Retirees**

AFT Retirees are sponsoring a December 3rd conference at the MDC Training Center in Hartford. At this conference there will be three main topics:

"Virginia Gibson, a Social Worker and Gerontologist, will speak on "Patient Bill of Rights" and "Assisted Living or Nursing Home?"


"Judge S. Elkin, West Hartford Probate Court Judge, will speak on the facets of trusts.

"A representative from the CT Consumer Protection Department will speak on identity theft and other frauds.

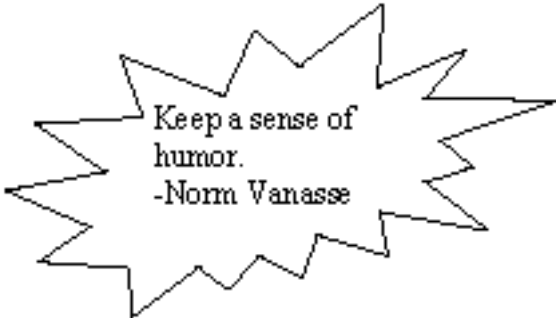
Information will be mailed to the SVFT Retirees in the fall.

Chairperson of AFT Retirees, Phyllis Kornfeld is looking for help with the November 2006 election. If you are able to volunteer your time, call the AFT/CT office at (860) 257-9782.

On another note, retirees are invited to receive information from the UCONN Health Center on Celebrating Aging. Call the Center at (800) 535-6232.




Learn something  
new everyday.  
-Elizabeth Tischio

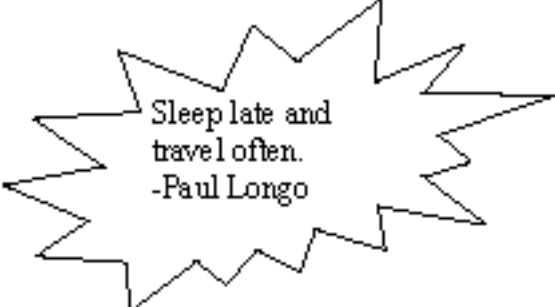


Keep a sense of  
humor.  
-Norm Vanasse

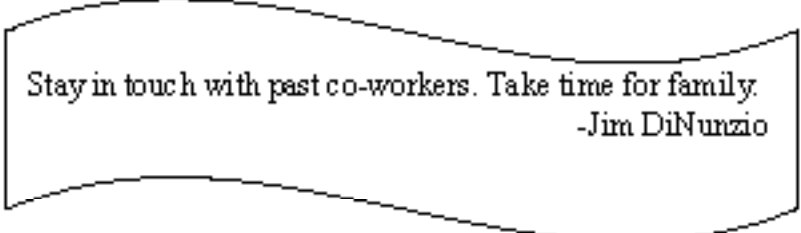
## **SVFT Retirees Offer Advice to Prospective Retirees**




Visit the  
Villages.com  
-George  
Appleby



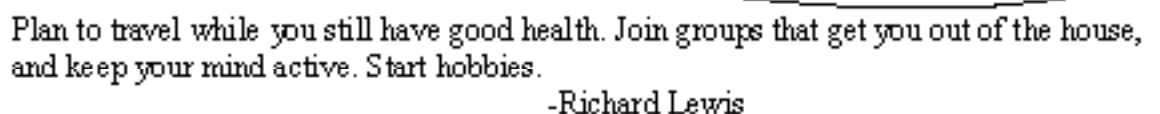
Sleep late and  
travel often.  
-Paul Longo



Stay in touch with past co-workers. Take time for family.  
-Jim DiNunzio



Keep it simple.  
-Joe Nessing



Plan to travel while you still have good health. Join groups that get you out of the house,  
and keep your mind active. Start hobbies.  
-Richard Lewis

# Everything You Always Wanted To Know About ERIP's But Were Afraid to Ask

by Ed Lang, SVFT Executive Union Representative

Whether visiting schools or answering the phones at the union office, the question I'm asked most often is, "Is there going to be an ERIP?" OK, I admit it, I often ask myself the same question. It's my opinion that a combination of three reasons explains why this is the most frequently asked question. First, when something is offered a number of times, it creates an expectation that it's only a matter of time before being offered again. Second, as time passes a significant number of employees who were not eligible last time around have become eligible if something similar to what was offered before is offered again. Third, hope springs eternal.

I've chosen a Q + A format to give some background information on ERIP's, without fueling the fire that the next one is right around the corner.

## 1. What is an ERIP?

ERIP is an acronym formed from the words Early Retirement Incentive Program. It is synonymous with the following terms: "handshake", "golden handshake", or "buy-out", when referring to a retirement package. Basically, an ERIP is a program offered by the employer to employees nearing retirement as an incentive to retire early.

## 2. Why would an employer offer an ERIP?

The premise is that the employer (in this case, the State of Connecticut) will save money by reducing the number of active state employees. It is also part of the equation that the high-salaried employees who retire will be replaced by new employees on or near the bottom of the pay scale. Therefore, reducing the total number of positions and replacing employees at less cost will lower the cost of running the state.

## 3. What are the characteristics of an ERIP?

The last two ERIP's were very similar. To be eligible employees had to be fifty-two years of age by May 31st of the year the ERIP is offered, and have ten years of actual credited service in the State Employee Retirement System. Those taking the ERIP received three years either added to age to meet eligibility (55 years old) or add the three years or the balance left after using a portion of the three years to establish eligibility to the employee's credited service. The state benefited by delaying the payout on leave accruals and spreading that payment over a number of years.

## 4. When have ERIP's been offered?

In 2003, 1997, 1992, and 1989.

## 5. When would I know if an ERIP will be offered?

This is a very difficult question. SEBAC negotiated the first three ERIP's with the state, so employees were well aware that an ERIP was imminent. In 2003, the ERIP was not negotiated with SEBAC. Instead it was part of the Governor's state budget proposal, and subsequently approved by the legislature. SEBAC filed a lawsuit contending that implementing an ERIP without negotiations was illegal, since an incentive program would impact the pension fund and downsize state government. Long after state employees became ERIP retirees, SEBAC lost the lawsuit and chose not to appeal. The most recent ERIP has increased the likelihood that any future ERIP's will be presented to the legislature as part of the Governor's proposed state budget, and not announced until January or February.

## 6. What is SEBAC?

SEBAC stands for State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition. By state statute, SEBAC negotiates pension and insurance issues for state employees and state employee retirees. SEBAC V, the current agreement between the coalition and the state expires in 2017.

## 7. What have been some of the issues with past ERIP's?

Teachers who belong to the Teachers Retirement System are not guaranteed inclusion in the program. Three times, those in TERS were allowed to participate. Once, they were not. In 2003, those taking the ERIP had to retire no later than May 31st, so special arrangements had to be made so teachers could finish the school year as re-employed retirees.

That's it! Did you notice I limited myself to a lucky number (7) of questions?



Elizabeth Webb (Wilcox) and Bruce Ejzak (Wolcott) at the Palace Theatre in Waterbury.

## ***Host of Topics Discussed @L-M***

The following topics were addressed at the September 15th Labor-Management Committee meeting.

The SVFT introduced its two new committee members: Ben Russell (Bristol) and Ed Leavy (Bullard-Havens).

The union presented a number of issues raised in writing during the summer, but unaddressed in responses from management. The responses from management at the meeting are as follows: 1. Management has nothing in writing from OPM or from the Governor's office indicating that the State Department of Education will maintain the same number of full-time instructional positions in the CTHSS in the next biennial budget. 2. Prior to June 2006, the State Department of Education had no written policy covering the salary placement of new hires. 3. Management refused to provide the names of any teachers who had spoken to the superintendent in favor of CTHSS initiatives. 4. SVFT President Aaron Silvia said that he found it difficult to believe that the decision to not use the Connecticut Convention Center on August 25th had nothing to do with union objections (as recorded in the June Labor-Management Committee minutes) but according to Assistant Superintendent Druzolowski's memo to staff the decision to not use the Convention Center on August 28th and re-locate to Waterbury had everything to do with issues raised by the union. Mr. Silvia asked, "Isn't it true that by the time Central Office notified anyone of the use of the Palace Theatre, the unions had cancelled the Convention Center boycott?" The superintendent said she did not know.

The problems developing schedules for the beginning of the school year were discussed. Rick Tanasi reported that at two schools, teachers were without class lists on the second day of the second cycle. Management reported that ACES was paid \$34,000 for some PD and to develop the schedules. However, due to the two cycles, number of electives, and differences between schools, ACES was unable to complete the schedules. SVFT leadership asked how much of the \$34,000 had been refunded. The superintendent said that ACES had worked very hard to fulfill the contract, but no money was refunded. Mr. Silvia said, "So if a customer brings a vehicle into the auto shop and the kids work really hard but we can't fix the problem, we still charge?" That question wasn't answered. Mr. Lang suggested that schedules be developed in the spring with a dry run before the end of the year, so problems could be identified and fixed before the new year begins.

The #110 Unique Department Head endorsement

was discussed. Union leadership pointed out that on some DH job postings the #110 is listed as a requirement; on others it indicates that the #110 must be secured upon appointment; contrary to published certification regulations effective 7/1/06 non-certified #110 candidates have been appointed to DH positions over certified #110 candidates; there's been talk of interim #110 or DSAP #110 but nothing in writing. Leadership said it was deplorable that management had not communicated to the teachers any information on this topic. On another issue, management has failed to communicate that the Department of Administrative Services mandated that re-employed retirees in the CTHSS must be separated effective 12/31/06.

Mr. Silvia asked if any teachers had been involved in the decisions to change the student recruitment timeline and process. The answer was no.

Ann Druzolowski gave a status report on schools NCLB status. J.M. Wright and Prince are currently in year four "In Need of Improvement". Bullard-Havens moved off the list. Because Goodwin achieved "safe harbor" the school remains in year three "In Need of Improvement". In response to a question from Pat Keavney regarding reconstitution, the superintendent stated that action has already been taken - implementation of curriculum, new administrators - to address the "In Need of Improvement" designation.

The next Labor-Management Committee meeting will be held on October 23rd.



SVFT Union Representative Janis Hochadel and Vice President Rick Tanasi discuss union issues with Karen Harris at J.M. Wright THS in Stamford.

## "We Need a New Student"

by Aaron Silvia

The former President of the American Federation of Teachers, the late Albert Shanker, used to tell a story that had many of the elements we face each day - assessment, approval, change, politics, etc.

It's a once upon a time story of a leader who once a year walked out onto the palace balcony to greet and be greeted by his constituents. Part of the ritual was the statement made by an aide, "Your majesty, your people await you," followed by the question upon his return, "What do you think?" Year after year, the leader returned from the balcony praising the wisdom of his subjects and how uplifted he personally became by their positive approach. After a particularly hard year, a year of great poverty and suffering, however, the winds had shifted. The happiness and applause turned to derision and threats. A sobering experience indeed. Upon his return, the aide asked the customary question, "What do you think?" The leader's response, "We need a new people."

Is there any parallel between this once upon a time story and what is now happening in the CTHSS?

We know that in 2004 a new commissioner, new state Board of Education, and a new superintendent were charged with improving the v-t schools. Schools were listed as In Need of Improvement, schools were listed as not meeting AYP, the preparedness of v-t graduates was criticized by business groups and scrutinized by the media. The charge brought wholesale change's: grouping, scheduling, name changes, new books, updating curriculum and alignment with standards, math and language arts labs, etc. etc. But the big question is did this group of decision-makers (most supposedly, educators) come to the underlying conclusion that "We Need a New Student"?

Yes they did. In the past two years what's been exposed is the prospective v-t student in demand - one whose a good bet to score at least proficient on a tenth grade academic performance test and who likes the high school in the sending district.

Enrollment data from Central Office indicates that there are more than four hundred less freshman enrolled this year than five years ago. The most disingenuous strategy to improve scores is to enroll only more academically proficient students, and it's a sad commentary when educators are making value judgments on students. It's a flawed perspective, disconnected from reality. A teacher from Prince Tech, who was trying to be truthful not negative, once said to me, "They can call it Harvard all they want, it's still Hartford." The irony of meeting the challenge of NCLB, leaving no child behind, is the CTHSS is leaving hundreds and - when you factor in Grades 10, 11, and 12 and year after year - thousands behind.

According to the latest CTHSS newsletter, the system will be launching a student recruitment drive with posters listing "The TOP TEN Reasons Why Students Should Consider Attending A Technical High School". Reason #1: IT'S LIKE YOUR LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL. Apparently it's a trip down memory lane to think of those who attended our schools because of quality programs: architectural drafting, automotive technology, culinary arts, graphics, fashion, info systems, etc. Gone are the days when you became a v-t student to become an electrician, hairdresser, machinist, mason, etc. What a tragic mistake to stop celebrating the differences and instead promote the sameness.

I think we all know that in Shanker's story the answer was not a new people and in the CTHSS it's not a new student.



A Union of Professionals

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

### **t-source: Professional Growth for Members**

t-source is an AFT community created for teachers, by teachers. Members are invited to learn, connect and participate with the materials presented at this new site. Whether you are new to the profession or a seasoned veteran, you will find something to refresh your commitment and improve your practice. Visit <http://www.aft.org> and register for t-source.

## Moving Time

Interested in a transfer? Interested in becoming a Department Head? Read this article!

The window to transfer to a job opening in another school is open, and will remain open until the close of business on May 15, 2007. All vacancies are posted on the school district's website [www.cttech.org](http://www.cttech.org). These postings are for seven days only, so if you're thinking of transferring make it a habit to check the postings twice a week. If no internal candidate applies within the seven days, then applications are accepted from those who are not in the system.

Until the issue of what's happening with the #110 Unique Department Head endorsement post-July 1, 2006 is clarified (see Labor-Management article in this issue), the union is advising anyone seeking a posted Department Head position to apply.

Although the contract clearly states that four years of full-time service is required to apply for a transfer (this was the Board's proposal in the last negotiations), apparently a "new" contract has been written. Members, who by contract are ineligible to apply for vacancies, have communicated directly with the superintendent of schools expressing both their interest in the vacancy and the hardship endured by remaining in their present position. The superintendent has arbitrarily said yes to some - administrative transfer - and no to others. While the union has grieved these voluntary "involuntary administrative transfers, membership should be advised that this is happening, and what to do if you are in such a situation and are interested in a posted vacancy.

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### ***Longevity Payment This Month***

Longevity is paid twice a year to teachers (full and part-time) who have at least ten years of credited service.

The longevity payment schedule is as follows: \$175 after 10 years; \$350 after 15 years; \$525 after 20 years; and \$700 after 25 years.

The first longevity payment of the 2006-2007 school year will be included in the check dated 10/26/06.

An employee's eligibility for longevity is covered on pp. 12-13 of the contract.

Anyone who does not receive the longevity payment but believes they should have, and anyone who believes they were paid an incorrect amount should contact the union office.

## Seniority List Distributed

At the October 11th Executive Council meeting, each school union representative was provided with a copy of the SVFT Seniority List. The school reps will make this information available to membership.

The document lists all full-time instructional staff by subject area in rank order from most to least senior, first listing the Department Heads followed by the instructors.

The Seniority List is important for two reasons. First, seniority may provide an individual contractually with entitlement to a vacant position. Second, the elimination of positions in a specific subject area will impact the least senior individual(s) teaching that subject in the system and have the least seniority.

New teachers - PLEASE NOTE - the ranking of teachers who began on the same date is done according to Article 22 Section Three in the contract. This ranking of teachers who started at the beginning of this year has yet to be done. Therefore, once completed the placement on the seniority list of teachers who began on 8/25/06 may change from what's indicated on the list just distributed.

Teachers should check that the Seniority List is accurate. Errors should be reported to your school union representative. Union reps will contact Ed Lang, who will then report the discrepancy to Central Office for verification and correction.

## **DON'T FORGET**

**THE DEADLINE TO JOIN THE  
SVFT SICK BANK IS**

**NOVEMBER 1ST**

**ACCESS THE ARTICLE IN  
SEPTEMBER'S VOCATIONAL  
INSTRUCTOR (at [www.svft.org](http://www.svft.org))  
OR REFER TO  
ARTICLE 4 SECTION FOUR (i)  
OF THE CONTRACT  
FOR FURTHER DETAILS**

## Union Endorses Candidates

The SVFT has endorsed more than thirty candidates running for either the State Senate or House of Representatives in the upcoming election. The union's endorsement is based upon the candidate's responses to the SVFT PAC Questionnaire, the candidate's record of support for our members and our schools, the endorsements made by AFT-CT and the AFL-CIO, and membership input.

Below is the list of those endorsed. The district precedes the candidate's name. The SVFT encourages membership to support these candidates on November 7th.

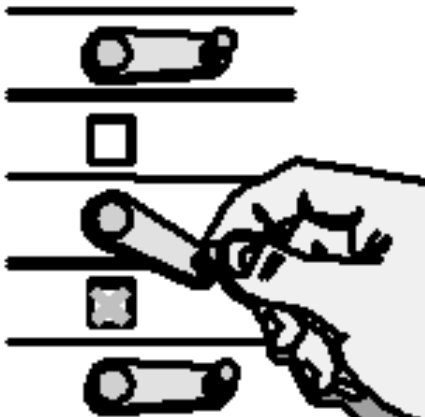
### STATE SENATE

2nd Eric Coleman	17th Joe Crisco
3rd Gary LeBeau	19th Edith Praque
4th Mary Ann Handley	20th Andrea Stillman
5th Jonathan Harris	22nd Bill Finch
6th Don DeFronzo	27th Andrew McDonald
11th Martin Looney	31st Tom Colapietro
12th Ed Meyer	35th Tony Guglielmo

### STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

5th Marie Kirkley-Bey	73rd Jeff Berger
7th Douglas McCrory	77th Roger Michele
13th John Thompson	81st Bruce Zalaski
20th David McCluskey	87th Steve Fontana
25th John Geragosian	89th Vickie Nardello
46th Melissa Olson	90th Mary Fritz
48th Linda Orange	119th Richard Roy
49th Walter Pawelkiewicz	120th John Harkins
56th Claire Janowski	126th Christopher Caruso

Note: It is expected that the following candidates for the House of Representatives will be endorsed at the October Executive Council Meeting: 53rd Bryan Hurlburt, 74th Selim Noujaim, and 84th Chris Donovan.



## CDL Request Brings Action

Using one's CDL (Commercial Drivers License) is pretty much everyday standard operating procedure for construction trade teachers in the CTHSS. In addition, teachers who have a CDL may be driving for field trips or shuttling students to other locations where school renovation projects are underway. In addition, coaches who have the license and drive to games can earn a negotiated CDL bonus.

So the question is, "why is it so difficult to get a CDL?"

That was the question asked by Angel Perez, SVFT Union Representative at Eli Whitney THS, and several others. The question exposed a real "need" of membership and brought union action.

SVFT Vice President Rick Tanasi did the research, found an approved training school, but found the availability of training sites too limited and the costs too high. Addressing the issue internally, however, proved more productive.

Rick and Ray Mencio, consultant for construction trades, coordinated a training and testing program at Wilcox Tech in Meriden. More than fifty teachers signed up for the two separate sessions. The training was presented by Ray Tanguay (Oliver Wolcott THS Drafting Instructor. To date 100% of those who completed the training have passed the test and have a Commercial Driver's License. The approximate out of pocket cost of the program is \$125.

Two additional DMV test dates are scheduled - October 11th and October 18th. Future training and testing will be scheduled sometime in early spring 2007. If you are interested in getting a CDL or have questions, please contact Rick Tanasi (1-800-378-8020) or Ray Mencio

**WHAT ARE THE SVFT'S  
GOALS FOR  
2006-2007?**

**FIND OUT AT WWW.  
SVFT.ORG**

## Vocational Instructor

is the monthly newsletter of the  
State Vocational Federation of Teachers

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**CALM**

**AFTCA**

# OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY

		10/11 School Visit Ellis THS  Executive Council Meeting 5PM	10/12 Contract Negotiations 9AM	10/13
10/16	10/17 American Arbitration Association - Sabbatical Leave	10/18	10/19 System-Wide PD meeting @CREC 8AM	10/20
10/23 Health & Safety Visit Cheney THS  Labor-Management Meeting @SVFT 9AM	10/24 American Arbitration Association - Teacher Dismissal	10/25	10/26	10/27
10/30 American Arbitration Association - Denial of Union Representation	10/31	11/1 Sick Bank Enrollment Forms Delivered to C.O.	11/2	11/3 Executive Committee Meeting 9AM
11/6	11/7 ELECTION DAY	11/8 Executive Council Meeting 5PM		



Teachers at Bristol TEC get union information and news at Ben's Union Corner. Here school union representative Ben Russell poses in front of the school's union bulletin board.