

# Vocational Instructor

Local 4200A ~ AFT, AFTCT, & AFL-CIO

Volume MMXIII Issue 2

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

FEBRUARY 2013

## Best Intentions

*Brian Bisson, SVFT Treasurer*

Where to start? I remember the evening the idea to purchase a new SVFT office building was conceived. The idea was pure genius! Find a low cost property, in a commercial zoned area, located in central Connecticut that had a structure ready to renovate. The idea quickly expanded to involve a multitude of CTHSS programs the opportunity to partake in the rebuilding of the new SVFT office. Architectural Technologies, Carpentry, Electrical, Fashion Merchandising and Entrepreneurship, Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning, Information Systems Technology, Media Production, Plumbing, and probably more would help in the remodeling process.

What are the benefits of such a bold venture? First and foremost, it would highlight a large array of skilled instructors and their students. Second, it would employ the services of fellow union brothers and sisters. Third, the project would appropriately invest union reserves into a property that will continue to appreciate in value, and act as a source of income by leasing professional office spaces. Fourth, the SVFT would pay the State for the services of the programs involved, so shop instructors could use the money to help improve their programs. Fifth, the union office would be centrally located in the state, free from monthly rent expenses, and have the convenience of fellow labor unions in the area. Sixth, the SVFT would collaborate with management on a project that would promote the CTHSS to the general public.

What are the drawbacks? After the approval by the union's lawyer and accountants was received, I was not been able to come up with any disadvantages.

What happened? An exhaustive search was held to find the right property until we discovered 439 Main Street, Wallingford, CT. The price was right, and the process to purchase the property began. We set up a meeting last spring with Central Office staff to discuss the logistics of employing the various trades, and the need to set a work schedule to organize the project. We asked to be treated the same as any other customer. I attended this meeting, and I believe there was a true interest by all parties involved to see this



### *Winter 2013 SVFT Office Building*

project happen. We were told we could have students and instructors ready to start in the fall, as long as the building was ready for new construction.

Next? The union officers, their families, and union members all pitched in during the summer to remove the copper plumbing, the electrical wiring, and the sheetrock in the house to prepare for the arrival of students and instructors scheduled to begin work when school went back into session. The existing chimney was deemed to be unsafe, and therefore removed by a qualified contractor. Communications continued with Central Office during the summer months for clarification of further steps to take to ensure work would begin in a timely manner. Insurance to cover the students was necessary, so a policy was purchased. The deed, proof of insurance, and a building permit was submitted to Central Office on September 19th. The Central Office safety consultant visited the site next, and listed safety concerns that needed to be addressed before construction could begin. In light of these safety concerns, the SVFT hired a licensed CT asbestos, lead, and mold abatement contractor. The officers met with a representative from this company and described the project, and how union members

*Continued Pg 2.*

**"Best Intentions" Continued**

and CTHSS students would be reconstructing the building. The representative came back with a lengthy list of tests to be performed to ensure the house was safe for all to work in. The union agreed to these terms, and the testing and abatement process began, and ended with final retesting and certification from the company that the house was clear of any harmful contaminants. All of these reports were sent to Central Office in early November. The next few weekends were spent cleaning additional debris from the house as best as possible without the use of a power source.

Insurance? Check. Health and safety issues? Check.

Now the work begins, right? Wrong. We sent a sizable check to one of our carpentry departments in expectation of their arrival. A Central Office consultant notified us the insurance policy we had bought and presented to Central Office over the summer was insufficient, and we needed to buy additional insurance. Our response? Let us know what we need to purchase to proceed. The Central Office consultant worked directly with the insurance agent to identify the necessary policy, and the additional policy was purchased. This consumed most of December.

On January, 7th, we received a call from the CTHSS lawyer. She stated the original insurance policy we provided Central Office in the summer was sufficient and stated the additional policy was not necessary. We were able to get our \$6600 check for that policy returned. Insurance? Check. Again.

Now the work begins, right? Wrong. On January 8th, one of our carpentry departments arrives, ready to begin work. A visit is made that same morning by the Central Office safety consultant. The SVFT is informed the house is still not clean enough to permit students and instructors on site. We requested additional information on how to make the house clean enough to allow production to begin. A shop vacuum is purchased and used to accomplish the additional cleaning requests.

Now the work begins, right? Sadly no. We receive communication demanding additional testing of certain areas of concern on the first floor and in the

air... despite the fact that the building is open to the elements. The report that we had turned into the safety consultant in November is no longer sufficient. No one will be permitted to start construction on the site until these tests are performed.

Where do we go from here? On January 25th, a meeting was scheduled at the union house with key Central Office staff and SVFT officers to try, one final time, to figure out how to proceed. At the conclusion of the meeting, the SVFT decided we need to move forward on the project, and we begin discussions with contractors who have graduated from our system and the Carpenters' Union.



Along with my fellow officers, I am extremely disappointed this great plan to highlight the capabilities of our system has been crushed, at least for now. I believe in health and safety. I continue to educate myself through participating in AFT health and safety trainings, as well as obtaining OSHA training certifications. I care for the health and safety of my students and fellow staff, and the health and safety of

all the instructors and students in this system. I've spent time with the safety consultant, and respect his knowledge and concern for everyone's health and safety. But, after a licensed company performed multiple tests, performed abatement on areas with contaminants, retested, and certified the building to be safe for occupancy, I can't help but wonder, what else is there?

Ultimately, in the end, the SVFT will complete the renovations to the property at 439 Main Street in Wallingford with or without the collaboration of the CTHSS. It is still in the best interests of the members of the SVFT to own our office in Wallingford. It is still our mission to educate the people of Connecticut in the role our instructors and graduates play in building Connecticut's workforce. If at some point the CTHSS feels they can collaborate on the project with us, we would be more than willing to try again.

# SVFT

## Representing the Individual

*Ed Leavy, SVFT Executive Union Representative*

The most common statement I get when I go into a school – after “Please tell me you aren’t here for me” – is “I wouldn’t want your job.” Some of that sentiment is because they believe I deal with nothing but problems (which is basically true), but mostly it is because I spend all my time making sure that people who shouldn’t be teaching are kept in front of students. They believe I, and by extension the union, are on the wrong side. Obviously, I disagree.

Most teachers I represent in discipline cases are viewed by their colleagues as good teachers. Things happen. Students for some reason make false claims. There can be confusion between what the teacher intended and the way it was perceived by others. Teaching is enormously difficult and stressful, now more than ever, and even good teachers make mistakes. They say things they wouldn’t usually say or in some other way let the strain show. The discipline process for them is alien and frightening, and I try to guide them through it so that they know they are being treated fairly and get a resolution that is just. No one enjoys the process, even if the person is fully exonerated. If it is handled correctly however, everyone can move forward, as Shakespeare wrote, “sadder but wiser.”

There are of course members I represent who do not have the respect of their colleagues. There are people whose job performance is difficult to defend, but it is my job to defend it. It has been my experience, however, that when administrators follow the processes that have been negotiated, when they follow the discipline and evaluation protocols correctly, there is little I can do for a defense. What I absolutely reject is the idea that a teacher’s performance can be bad enough to justify termination, but not of enough concern to have the administrators actually leave their office and do observations. I reject the idea that teachers should be disciplined for not following policies that the system itself is not following. I reject the idea that just because “everyone knows that teacher is terrible,” that procedures do not need to be followed and the due process provisions we fought to have in our contract can be ignored. When unions are willing to ignore violations of due process, or overlook administrative failures to take the steps necessary to adequately demonstrate the reason for discipline, then those unions lose the trust of their members and the respect of management. As they should.

Have I ever fought to return teachers to the classroom whom I would not want to teach my own children? Yes I have. At those times I have had some, um, intense conversations with the other officers about the impact that teacher has on other teachers who are dedicated in doing their jobs. I didn’t sleep well some nights because of that. But I have lost much more sleep wondering if I have done enough to make sure that all the processes have been followed and all the teacher’s rights have been protected, whoever that teacher is. That is the job I was elected to do, so I strive to do it to the best of my ability.

## Representing the Many

*Jan Hochadel, SVFT President*

Have you ever been asked a question that helped shape your life or work? An SVFT member and good friend of mine said to me a few years ago, “It seems like all the union does is defend bad teachers. What are you doing for the rest of us?” At the time he had a co-worker who was on administrative leave, and there were members in the building that felt it would be in the best interests of the teachers and students if he “just got fired.” How could anyone say this? Because people who work in schools are passionate people who are trying their best to help students have a better future. Their perception is that the “bad teacher” is making the jobs of those around them even tougher, and it is the union’s fault for defending them.

When I hear someone say, “How can you defend that person? How can you do that to me?” my heart goes out to them. I am not in the school or left with students who are looking for answers and guidance. I do not have to put in grades for another teacher, or cover curriculum that they never got to, or deal with students who are allowed to do nothing for one period and get mad that they have to work for me. I do understand, and remember, the frustration.

With my friend’s comment in mind, every day I remind myself, “I have to do my best to represent the many.” For the past year, this concern has manifested itself in the form of the new teacher evaluation program. By doing my best to ensure our system adopts a version that will fairly evaluate members, I can work to develop a process that will acknowledge and help good teachers, and identify teachers who need improvement but seem either not be able to or want to improve. A good evaluation process – and one that is properly administered – prevents teachers from having to do extra work to make up for the teachers who do no work at all.

It is important to remember that we represent all our members, but there is a difference between “representing” and “defending.” We have to make sure that the processes are appropriate and they are followed, but that does not mean we defend bad teaching. Teaching is too important and too difficult for us to maintain that just showing up and waiting for summer is good enough. The majority of our members are dedicated to their jobs and their students; for them to pay dues to an organization that acts as though that dedication doesn’t matter is an insult to them.

There is a tension within a union between representing all members, and representing those members whose job performance make everyone else’s life harder. That tension exists within our office, and it exists within me. That tension can be positive, because we have to represent all members. Sometimes it feels, even to me, that those two sides are in conflict. But if I remember my friends words every day, that we have to work for “the rest of us” too, then we can concentrate on big issues and not simply be a union that represents “people in trouble.” Then we are truly a “union of professionals.”



## Budget Committee Hard at Work

SVFT Treasurer, Brian Bisson, and the rest of the Budget Committee, has finished preparing the proposed annual budget for 2013-2014. The process began last month with the accumulation of necessary information, contracts, and patterns of spending. Budget preparation is an arduous task and is reviewed by several people to check all the details and computations. The proposed budget was presented and accepted at the Budget Committee Meeting. At the March 1st Executive Committee Meeting and the March 6th Executive Council Meeting, the proposed budget will again be reviewed for approval. Building Representatives are encouraged to share the proposed budget with all members in their buildings. If a member would like to make any adjustments, they should contact their Building Representative to bring forth the suggestion at the next council meeting scheduled for Wednesday, April 3rd.

The proposed 2013-2014 budget will then be brought before membership for review and approval on Thursday, May 16th at the General Membership Meeting, scheduled for 6:30 PM at Prince THS in Hartford.

The time-line and the approval process for the annual budget are outlined in our Constitution and By-Laws and must be strictly followed. If any member has any questions about the budget process, please feel free to contact the union office.

## Scholarship and Professional Development Grants Available

The SVFT Scholarship Program has been revised and is now seeking applications. A total of nine \$1,000 scholarships are available for students, and mini-grants for professional development are available for members.

To be eligible for a \$1,000 scholarship, a student must be the son or daughter of an SVFT member and must be a high school senior who will be continuing his/her academic or vocational education in 2013-2014.



Applications may be downloaded from the union website <http://svft.ct.aft.org> or requested by contacting the union office. The application lists the additional required documentation. Completed applications must arrive at the SVFT office before May 15, 2013. The SVFT Scholarship Committee will announce the names of the scholarship recipients on or before June 1, 2013.

Members may apply for an SVFT mini-grant by submitting a typed letter (not more than 250 words) with your name, school where you teach, and explaining how the money will be used. Mini-grants not totaling more than \$1,000 will be awarded. Letters of Application must arrive at the SVFT office before May 15, 2013 and announcement of those receiving mini-grants will be made on or before June 1st.

Our state affiliate, AFT-CT, also offers scholarships for our members, which can be found at <http://aftct.org/scholarships>. Anyone with questions about the SVFT Scholarship Program should contact Vice-President Greg Beyer at the union office.

HOMEBUYING + REFINANCING

**Share your benefits with your family.**



**+ GET MORE FROM MEMBERSHIP**

**+ Mortgage**

Competitive mortgage rates and special union-member protections are also available to your children and parents.



A Union of Professionals  
**AFT+**  
Member Benefits

**+ for more information about this and other savings:**  
**[aft.org/members](http://aft.org/members)**

AFT + is your advocate. For information on all AFT + programs, call 800-238-1133, ext. 8643, or e-mail [afplus@aft.org](mailto:afplus@aft.org). The AFT has an expense reimbursement and/or endorsement arrangement for marketing this program. For more information, please contact AFT Financial Services at 800-238-1133, ext. 4493; send an e-mail to [disclosureinfo@aft.org](mailto:disclosureinfo@aft.org); or visit [www.aft.org/benefits/disclosure](http://www.aft.org/benefits/disclosure).

# Labor History: The Twinkie Debacle

By Ed Leavy

My appearance to the contrary, I have never been a dessert or sweets eater, and therefore do not have that sense of nostalgic loss that others may have in hearing that Hostess has gone out of business. Actually, I always found Twinkies kind of gross, and the knowledge that they have no known expiration date – Twinkies literally never go stale – made me more apprehensive than hungry. Still, it is impossible to consider the bankruptcy of Hostess without recognizing its implications for the American economy and the relationship between labor and management in this country.

Early headlines stated the November strike of the unionized Hostess employees precipitated the closing of the company. Hostess had been preparing for liquidation months before the strike began, however. Lance Igon, a spokesman for Hostess, acknowledged the company had been “engaged in contingency planning including the preparation of liquidation analysis, given the uncertainty around labor negotiations... [not being bound to union contracts is] a core component of the restructuring.” It is not surprising that they thought the labor negotiations would be “uncertain”; Hostess was proposing an 8% pay cut for workers in the first year, then 3% raises over the next three years, and a 1% raise the final year, leaving the workers approximately where they are now after half a decade. Hostess workers, whom Forbes magazine used as an example of the “absurd levels of compensation demanded by unions,” make an average of \$43,000 per year. While demanding the 8% concession from workers, Hostess gave its CEO a 300% raise, increasing his annual compensation from \$750,000 to \$2,225,000.

The strike has become a Rorschach test on how we view the role of labor in this country. John Tamny wrote in Forbes Magazine, “[A]mid Hostess’s hurtle toward bankruptcy copious amounts of ink were spilled on how the snack maker’s decline signaled the horrors of labor unions stuck in the past... Not asked enough amid Hostess’s decline was why its managers employed American workers to begin with. Forget about the fact that the workers were unionized and led by unions demanding absurd levels of compensation, the better question was why Hostess snacks were being baked in the U.S. at all... [T]he real, unreported story was that Hostess’s decision to bake goods in the U.S. was a waste of limited labor and, as such, anti-profit.” Tamny goes on to state that whoever eventually buys Hostess will move production “to Mexico or some reasonable facsimile,” a move he heartily endorses; after all, bankruptcy “really only means a positive change in ownership.”

An opposite tact was taken by Paul Krugman, the Nobel-Prize winning economist, in The New York Times. (A link to the entire article has been on our Facebook

page). Krugman points out that in the 1950’s, when Twinkies and Wonder Bread became iconic American products, the top 0.01% of the wealthiest Americans paid 70% federal income tax, more than double what they pay now. Additionally, these moguls “also faced a labor force with a degree of bargaining power hard to imagine today. In 1955 roughly a third of American workers were union members.” As Krugman points out, these differences had a dramatic impact on the wealthiest Americans; he refers to a Fortune magazine article from 1955 that indicated the “vast mansions, armies of servants, and huge yachts of the 1920s were no more; by 1955 the typical executive, Fortune magazine claimed, lived in a smallish suburban house, relied on part-time help and skippered his own relatively small boat.” While the lives of the very wealthy may have been diminished from the past (and clearly the present day), the same is not true for the country as a whole; the American economy in the “high tax, strong-union decades after World War II were in fact marked by spectacular, widely shared economic growth.” Krugman views the Hostess experience as a symbol of why we must return to the policies and practices that allowed Hostess, and America, to be successful.

It would be easy to conclude this article by saying that these two visions – one, in which the need to maximize profits demands that companies outsource jobs to underdeveloped countries; the other, where companies think in terms of stakeholders and not simply shareholders – are competing for the soul of the American economy, but that is not the case. The competition seems over. Maybe corporate bankruptcy “really only means a positive change in ownership,” but 18,000 Hostess employees are out of work, their pensions threatened. Hostess was, however, able to find the money to pay 19 executives a total of \$1.8 million in bonuses as part of its liquidation plan; none of them will be put in the unenviable position of having to skipper their own boats for a while. The response from the public was not outrage, but a collective shrug. It’s what we have grown to expect. The soul of America’s economy, the soul of America itself, has been taken by a small group of people who believe their bonuses are far more important than 18,000 families now struggling to survive. As long as the rest of us are willing to accept it, that is the way it is going to be.

*This article is based on a number of articles gathered from the internet, most notably “The Twinkie Manifesto” by Paul Krugman and “Michigan’s Right-to-Work and The Hostess Bankruptcy: The Two Non-Stories of the Year” by John Tamny.*

## Sick Bank is Moving



**Damaris Hernandez,  
State Department of Education  
Bureau of Human Resources**

For more than three decades, SVFT members have benefited from the support of the Sick Bank. As anyone who has had to rely on the Sick Bank can attest, the need is usually unexpected, but it is always a relief when the members realize that they are entitled to the benefit. The Sick Bank provides these members financial security in the event of long-term, catastrophic illness.

When Linda Jakab retired, Chris Beloff took over the responsibilities of this valuable program. Working closely with Damaris Hernandez in the State Department of Education Bureau of Human Resources, Chris soon realized that Damaris often had the necessary documentation needed to complete the sick bank request. As the Human Resource departments – Central Office and Hartford – looked at restructuring the responsibilities, Damaris’s current assignments of FMLA and Workers’ Compensation made her the perfect fit for managing the Sick Bank.

SVFT members who have completed three years of full-time service, or three years and sixty-six days of 32-hour service, are eligible to join the SVFT Sick Bank during the enrollment period. Upon becoming a member, a participant will have one day deducted from his or her sick leave accrual. Thereafter, all members have an additional day deducted from sick leave only when the bank becomes depleted.

Members and prospective members are reminded that being a member of the Sick Bank does not guarantee the right to draw days. Each case is reviewed by the Sick Bank Committee – Damaris and two SVFT members – who decide to either approve or deny a request to draw days from the bank. With the changes in personnel, HR and the SVFT decided we needed to clarify the process and review guidelines. The new enrollment form will now ask members to identify their job functions, so that it is clear whether “light duty” can be considered. Members who wish to take advantage of the Sick Bank must have exhausted all sick and personal leave time. Other factors the committee will consider include previous sick bank usage, and (per contract) the employee’s history of sick time use and whether the illness qualifies as “catastrophic.” For the purpose of the Sick Bank, catastrophic means the employee is incapable of performing the essential functions of his/her job, and that any required surgery could not be performed during vacation time without medical repercussions. Stress-related illnesses and pregnancies without significant medical complications are not considered.

The SVFT has worked with Damaris, a Cheney Tech graduate, on Workers’ Compensation and FMLA issues many times during the past few years. She is a pleasure to work with – professional, cooperative, honest, and fair in the manner which she handles her responsibilities. We look forward to working with Damaris in her new role.



## Years of Service Recognized

The SVFT Leadership would like to thank the following teachers who have completed at least twenty-five years of credited full-time service in the CTHSS. (Note: Information is based upon Seniority List of November 2012)

Years of Service	Name	School	Subject Area
43 years	Nylander,Louis L	H C Wilcox THS	Social Studies
39 years	Lennon,Brian W	Oliver Wolcott THS	English
35 years	Silvia,Aaron	Howell Cheney THS	English
	Snyder,Mark	A I Prince THS	Physical Education and Health
34 years	Dolan,Robert	E C Goodwin THS	Mathematics
33 years	Bishop,Keith R	Oliver Wolcott THS	English
	Roberts,Vivian R	Oliver Wolcott THS	Spec Education/Special Needs
	Russo,Linda S	Platt THS	Hairdressing & Barbering
	Voytek,Craig S	Bullard Havens THS	Culinary Arts
32 years	Cramer,Pamela P	W F Kaynor THS	Licensed Practical Nurse
	Crane,Arthur	Oliver Wolcott THS	Social Studies
	Iannuzzi,Nancy	Emmett O'Brien THS	Mathematics
	Soucy,Paul R	E C Goodwin THS	Mathematics
	Strattman,Linda	H C Wilcox THS	Social Studies
	Hayden,Cynthia	H C Wilcox THS	English
	Elliott,Raymond A	Windham THS	Social Studies
31 years	Gerrish,Theodore R	Platt THS	Mathematics
	Ivers,Karen	Bullard Havens THS	Licensed Practical Nurse
	Marrone,James	Emmett O'Brien THS	Social Studies
	Wagner,Janet	H C Wilcox THS	Mathematics
	Curry,Sarah	A I Prince THS	Physical Education and Health
	Celmer,Stephen F	Platt THS	English
30 years	Avallone,Wendy L	Oliver Wolcott THS	Mathematics
	Jones,Trevor G	Wilcox THS	Mathematics
	Hickey,Jeffrey	Bullard Havens THS	Guidance & Counseling
	Clabby,Constance A	Windham THS	Physical Education and Health
29 years	Cullen,Robert A	Howell Cheney THS	Welding & Metal Fabrication
	Procko,Dorothy	E C Goodwin THS	Computer Education
	Terry,David W	Platt THS	Culinary Arts
	Russell,Benoit N	Bristol Tech Education Center	Manufacturing Technology
	Pearce,Theresa L	Platt THS	Science
	Opramolla,John P	Platt THS	Science
28 years	Houlihan,Gail L	W F Kaynor THS	Spec Education/Special Needs
	Palladino,Vincent	H H Ellis THS	English
	Perez,Angel	Eli Whitney THS	Manufacturing Technology
	Shaw,Deirdre J	A I Prince THS	Science
	Stebbins,Richard M	Henry Abbott THS	Manufacturing Technology
	Rheiner,Jeffrey A	E C Goodwin THS	Culinary Arts
	Zadroga,Richard E	Windham THS	Spec Education/Special Needs
	Marconi,Jean A	Bullard Havens THS	Guidance & Counseling
	Carbone, Thomas J	H C Wilcox THS	Carpentry
	Mohr, Carrie	H C Wilcox THS	Physical Education and Health
27 years	Danielczuk, Stanley P	Oliver Wolcott THS	Guidance & Counseling
	Hanlon, Joseph	Bristol Tech Education Center	Welding & Metal Fabrication
	Marinelli, Louis N	Vinal THS	Culinary Arts
	Menard, Caren A	W F Kaynor THS	Science
	Nemergut, Daniel P	Emmett O'Brien THS	Social Studies
	Patrick, Kathryn H	W F Kaynor THS	Physical Education and Health
	Pecoraro, Louis J	Norwich THS	Social Studies
	Sansone, Christopher G	Emmett O'Brien THS	Carpentry
	Snopkowski, John A	W F Kaynor THS	Social Studies
	Stabile, Karen R	Bullard Havens THS	Mathematics
	Varonka, Michael	Emmett O'Brien THS	Manufacturing Technology
	Weston, Jan Marie B	Windham THS	English
	Wrenn, Regina	Vinal THS	Licensed Practical Nurse
	Zahacewski, Gary R	Oliver Wolcott THS	Culinary Arts
	Boucher, Douglas E	W F Kaynor THS	Science
	Pulito, Roger D	E C Goodwin THS	Physical Education and Health
	Gryguc, Gerald M	Oliver Wolcott THS	Dean of Students
	Leavy, Edward C	Bullard Havens THS	English
	Janiga, Robert M	Wilcox THS	Science
	Dunlap, Thomas	Bullard Havens THS	Graphics Technology
	Vagell, Jeffrey	Vinal THS	Physical Education and Health
	McGirr, Kathleen	Cheney THS	Welding & Metal Fabrication
	Isidro, Maria	Bullard Havens THS	Bilingual Ed. Services
	Emmons, David	Kaynor THS	Automotive Technology
	Dzialo, Peter	Eli Whitney THS	Social Studies
26 Years	Panasci, Theodore	Kaynor THS	Carpentry
	Giannettino, Andrew	Platt THS	Electromechanical Technology
	Simmons, Raymond	Bullard Havens THS	Carpentry
	Bullard, Robert	Norwich THS	Graphics Technology
	Thomas, Calvin	Emmett O'Brien THS	Electronics Technology
	Krodel, Deborah	Norwich THS	Spec Education/Special Needs
	Carew, John	Platt THS	Plumbing
	Ramos, Francine	Bullard Havens THS	Physical Education and Health
	Huhn, Frederick	Cheney THS	CADD
	Farrell, David	Platt THS	Carpentry
	DeSousa, Linda	Kaynor THS	Hairdressing & Barbering
	Lorusso, Michael	Oliver Wolcott THS	Electrical
	Burke, Patrick	Wilcox THS	Social Studies
25 Years	Marinan, Donna	Wilcox THS	Hairdressing & Barbering
	Mitchell, Marva	Kaynor THS	Psychological Services
	Hanko, Patrice	Bullard Havens THS	Graphics Technology
	Lester, Jeanne	Emmett O'Brien THS	Physical Education and Health
	Smith, Paul	Windham THS	Physical Education and Health
	Salemme, Ralph	Platt THS	Plumbing
	Weidner, William	Vinal THS	Psychological Services



## SVFT Provides Testimony

The SVFT officers have been busy so far this term at the Legislative Office Building offering testimony



on items of importance to members. On January 22, Vice-President Greg Beyer spoke in support of the nomination of Sharon Palmer as Connecticut's next Commissioner of Labor at a hearing before the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. Sharon, as most members know, served as President of AFT-Connecticut before being selected by the Governor to lead the Dept. of Labor. In Greg's testimony, he noted Sharon's strengths as a leader and builder of consensus. Her contributions to the debate about teacher evaluation during last year's session were also praised. Her ability to lead a diverse organization like AFT-CT, which includes teachers, healthcare workers, and other professional employees, was a highlight of Greg's presentation. The committee must have agreed, as Sharon was unanimously confirmed following the public hearing.

The SVFT was back at the podium in Hartford on January 31 as Executive Union Representative,



Ed Leavy, offered testimony on House Bill 5713, An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Labor History in the Public School Curriculum. Ed addressed the Labor and Public Employees Committee and made the case for labor history to be taught to all public school students in Connecticut. He said, "With union membership nationwide at its lowest point since the Great Depression, we are in danger of losing the social and economic context in which organized labor grew and thrived, the mistakes that have been made, and the role that labor may play in our state and nation's future." Ed also pointed out the contributions the labor movement has made to our society that often are forgotten, like the 40-hour work week, pensions, and workplace safety requirements. He answered several questions about State-sponsored mandates and how labor history would be taught. Hopefully, the bill will continue to make progress through the state legislature and become law.

### Vocational Instructor

*is the monthly newsletter of the State Vocational Federation of Teachers*

President.....Jan Hochadel  
Vice President..... Greg Beyer  
Executive Union Rep.....Ed Leavy  
Treasurer.....Brian Bisson  
Secretary.....Linda DeSousa  
Newsletter Editor.....Mitch White  
Office Manager.....Nicole Conti

P.O. Box 290  
Rocky Hill, CT 06067  
(860) 721-0317  
800-378-8020  
Fax# 860-721-0323  
Web "<http://svft.ct.aft.org>"

