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# VSTA E-Newsletter

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## VSTA Social 2018!

On Friday, October 12th, Kasey's Rooftop 32 in RVC was filled with VSTA members galore enjoying one of the last warm days of the season! With over 300 members in attendance, it is safe to say that this year's social was once again successful. The crowd was treaded to their favorite tunes courtesy of Ginger Calderaro, of South High School's band, T Minus Ten. Always a great time, this event kicks off the school year and allows members to mingle and share in our union pride!



### *Did You Know...?*

Did you know that in Section 5.7 of the teachers' contract (Teacher Leave Time and Absence) there are over 18 clearly defined reasons for teacher sick and personal days? Many individuals erroneously believe that personal days must be "requested". False! The contract clearly states that the days **shall be used for...** no actual *request* needs to be made. The practice of "informing" administration should still be followed, however, **a formal request is not needed!**

# Valley Stream Teachers' Association

Valley Stream, New York - Local 1633  
www.vsteachers.org

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**Ginger Calderaro**  
*E-Newsletter Editor*

## *It's the Death of the Field trip, Old Sport!*

By Deirdre Gordon

For years my colleague and I would take students on a field trip to Coe Hall at Planting Fields Arboretum and then to Hempstead House at Sands Point Preserve. We would trek along the North Shore in a chartered bus to expose our students to the Gold Coast as we read *The Great Gatsby*. At Coe Hall they experienced the opulence of the 1920's as they explored the summer mansion of the Coe family. Tour guides led them to secret rooms behind library shelves, cellars that stored copious amounts of liquor, and informed them that despite Prohibition, alcohol could be legally consumed in the privacy of one's home. At the Guggenheim estate we walked along the expansive green lawns that lead to the Long Island Sound imagining *Gatsby* across the bay longing for the green light at Daisy's dock.

This year the images of green lawns and green lights were put to the wayside and replaced with a different green image... *My School Bucks*. Albeit the intention of implementing the program is to safely monitor funds and be more convenient for parents, it has become an administrative impediment to the educational enrichment that fields trip offer. Not to mention, seemingly less convenient for parents when accruing an added fee for the use of the program.

Field trips, such as the aforementioned, move quickly and fees are often determined by the number of students on a bus. This is a dynamic number influenced by administrative clearances, health, finances, and academic performance. *My School Bucks* has made it impossible to create such a field trip because it may now take months to get a trip off the ground. Steps now include submitting a plan and waiting for administrative approval, creating a trip account in *My School Bucks* and waiting for it to be set up, only then can a teacher collect funds from students and deposit it into the account. In the meantime, bills accrue, and one needs to request checks to pay for tickets, buses, and other fees. Yet maybe funds have not cleared or been rectified. Deadlines work in conjunction with a *two-check request allotted each month*. *Museums, ticket offices and bus companies are not going to permit reservations without immediate deposits. Let alone, checks will not be rendered for cash tips for bus drivers, tour guides and food service.*

In the time taken to create the trip the expansive green lawns are now as blue as *Gatsby's* and "we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past" (Fitzgerald 189).

# *NYSTRS Annual Delegates Meeting*

*By Dr. David Fritz*

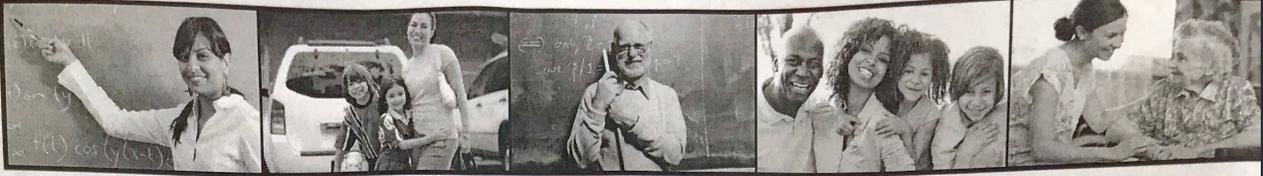
On November 4th and 5th, Patrice Davidson (Central), Lisa Smaldon (13), Jean Oestreich (24), Colette Giardella (30), and David Fritz (South) had the privilege of representing the Valley Stream Central School District at the NYSTRS' 2018 Annual Meeting of Delegates. In addition to the many information sessions, the delegates elected a teacher-member to the NYSTRS Board of Trustees.

The sessions themselves were informative and offered many facts concerning the retirement process. "It is crucial that we, as delegates, share this information with our colleagues," Vice President Davidson said. Many topics were offered during the breakout sessions. Delegates had the opportunity to attend various educational breakout sessions:

- **MyNYSTRS: Your Information on Your Schedule**
- **Social Security Information**
- **Disability, Divorce and Death Benefits**
- **Know the Rules Before Working in Retirement**
- **Test Your NYSTRS Knowledge**
- **NYSTRS Services—We Offer Free Delivery**
- **Retirement Security—Plan Early!**

At the meeting itself, the delegates unanimously re-elected Long Island's William Floyd School District teacher Ron Gross to a new three-year term on the NYSTRS Board of Trustees. Gross, who is president of William Floyd United Teachers and has taught social studies in his district for 30 years, was first elected to the Board last year to fill the unexpired term of Timothy Southerton, who retired from teaching in June 2017. Gross's new term runs through January 2022.

The updated Benefit Pension should be reviewed by members to ensure that the correct beneficiary, contract information, and service credit is up-to-date. As delegates we encourage you to review this information carefully and thoroughly to ensure that it is accurate.



## Union-endorsed benefits designed for NYSUT members

Whether it's our endorsed homeowners or auto insurance plans, life or disability insurance, financial or legal service plans, or any of our travel, entertainment or shopping offerings, NYSUT members have the **Power of the Union** behind them when participating in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

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- Retail Store Discounts
- Sports & Concert Tickets
- Theme Park Discounts
- Car Buying Service
- Heating Oil & Propane Savings

We encourage you to take the time to explore the Member Benefits website and find out all we have to offer NYSUT members.

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