

WEEK IN ACTION!

Weekly News From Your Union ~ May 26, 2014 – May 30, 2014

Judiciary Unit Reaches Tentative Agreement!

Last week, WIA was reporting that the VSEA Judiciary Unit Bargaining Team and the State had reached impasse on a new contract, but things took a dramatic turn for the better on May 28 when a mediator met with both sides for 13 hours and they were able to hammer out a new tentative agreement. A short joint statement was issued on May 28, reading:

“On May 27, 2014, the negotiating teams reached a tentative agreement for a new two-year contract to begin July 1, 2014. This tentative collective bargaining agreement is subject to ratification by both the VSEA members of the Judiciary Unit and the Court Administrator before it can become effective. If both parties ratify the tentative agreement, there will be prompt and full disclosure of the terms of the new agreement.”

Note: The Judiciary Unit Bargaining Team is advising all members to check your email for a breakdown of what is included in the tentative agreement and next steps in the ratification process. In order to ensure you receive a ballot, please be sure that VSEA has your correct and current home mailing address. Please send updated home addresses to VSEA Union Representative Brian Morse at bmorse@vsea.org.

Barre Chapter Meeting Is Tonight! Legislators Attending.

VSEA members belonging to the Barre Chapter are invited to attend tonight's meeting at the Quarry Restaurant in downtown Barre. The Chapter will be joined by Sen. Bill Doyle (R-Washington), Rep. Paul Poirier (D-Barre) and Rep. Tommy Walz (D-Barre City). The meeting begins at 5:00 p.m. Appetizers will be served and door prizes are being awarded. Hope to see you there.

Registration Now Open For VSEA's 70th Annual Meeting

VSEA's Special Events Committee met this week to finalize the registration form to attend the union's 2014 Annual Meeting on September 13 at the Killington Resort in Killington. This year, VSEA is celebrating its 70th birthday, so the Committee is sponsoring a special birthday party event on Friday night, September 12.

Here is how the Committee is billing the events on the forms:

"The 70th VSEA Annual Meeting is being held on Saturday, September 13, 2013. All members are encouraged to attend the meeting and participate in the festivities. Friday night there will be a dinner banquet followed by a Happy Birthday VSEA Party (ADULTS ONLY). Feel free to wear your fanciest birthday attire! There will be games and tear-off tickets with the proceeds going to VSEA's Member Support Fund, so bring your dollars and play!!"

To find official VSEA Annual Meeting 2014 registration forms online, please [click here](#).

Chapter Presidents Meeting On Monday!

A reminder to VSEA Chapter Presidents that your committee is meeting Monday, June 2, at the McFarland State Office Building in Barre. The meeting begins at 9:30 a.m.

VSEA Associate General Counsel Rebecca McBroom Accepts Position With NEA

Note: Associate General Counsel McBroom asked WIA to publish the following letter from her to the membership:

To VSEA Members:

I write to notify you of my departure from VSEA. I tendered my resignation on Tuesday to Director Mitchell and President Martin. After a long, soul-seeking process, I have decided to accept a job as an attorney with the Vermont National Education

Association. I depart with a heavy heart, but it is the right time for me to move on to the next phase of my career and life. I depart for purely personal reasons, but I do believe that this is the best decision for me and for the organization at this juncture. I have nothing but the fondest sentiments towards the VSEA membership and the direction that this union has taken over the past few years. I will miss my job immensely, and I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to work so closely with such incredible and courageous people throughout my tenure here.

Thank you all for being such good friends. The amount I have learned from all of you is immeasurable. I will be here until at least June 13 and will be taking the next few weeks to make this transition as smooth as possible.

In Solidarity

Becca

VSEA ESD Labor Team To Spend Summer Visiting Worksites

Recognizing there has been a lot of change recently within the Economic Services Division, members of your ESD Labor Team and VSEA Organizer Tim Boyle will be coordinating a series of worksite visits throughout the summer and beyond to talk with ESD and HAEU frontline workers about your concerns and issues. We want to try and answer any questions you might have, as well as listen to your ideas about how to improve working conditions and the quality of the services you provide.

Our primary goal is to provide ESD and HAEU workers with a safe space to meet, both in a group and as individuals. Your ESD Labor Team wants to hear from you, especially as we begin the process of defining our union's long-term goals for VSEA members working in this division.

To date, the Team's informal meetings have been held at worksites during workers' lunch hours, and VSEA has provided food and refreshments members who attend. This arrangement seems to be working well, so expect to see an announcement about a meeting soon at your office. You can also help set a meeting up at your worksite by emailing TBoyle@VSEA.org.

Stay Safe In The Sun With Union-Made Sunscreens

Who knew? May 27 was National Sunscreen Day, and to honor(?) the occasion, the national AFL-CIO posted a message on its Facebook page urging working Americans to protect themselves from the sun with union-made Coppertone and Ban de Soleil products.

From the post: *"These union-made products not only protect your skin, but represent companies that protect a way of doing business that benefits the American middle-class worker. Both are made by members of the United Steelworkers and knowing that will make the kiss of the sun feel that much warmer."*

The Employee Assistance Program: A Valuable Resource For Employees Needing Help

VSEA Members! This is a reminder that your Employee Assistance Program is strictly confidential, free and here for you 24/7 at [1-888-834-2830](tel:1-888-834-2830).

Employees call for all sorts of reasons: stress, relationship problems, parenting issues, workplace issues, financial, legal, substance dependence or abuse, anxiety, depression, etc. When you call the general toll-free number, you will speak immediately with one of our licensed, masters' level counselors. That person will listen and help you with your issue and, if you wish to see a counselor in person near home or work, will provide you two names and contact numbers to set up an appointment. We are not just here for crises. We are here for the small stresses that when unaddressed can build up and lead to big problems.

Also, let us know if your office needs EAP brochures and we will get those to you. If you and your co-workers would like to have an EAP rep come to a staff meeting to explain the EAP (15 minutes), we are happy to do that, too. Call us at [1-888-834-2830](tel:1-888-834-2830) for any service.

VSEA Solidarity With FairPoint Workers

A contract covering 1,800 FairPoint workers across Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine is scheduled to expire on August 2. At the bargaining table, FairPoint representatives have made it clear that they are looking for some serious givebacks, including freezing the workers' defined-benefit pensions (moving workers instead into a contributory 401K-type plan) and discontinuing post-retirement health care benefits for active employees.

"Right now, FairPoint has basically said they want to reduce every benefit we've gotten over the last 40 years," International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 2326 Union Representative Mike Spillane told online media outlet *VTDigger*. "That includes health care coverage, tuition reimbursements and wages for starting workers—and freezing pensions." The IBEW represents 350 FairPoint workers in Vermont and the Communication Workers of America represents another 100.

Digger also reports that, for the first time ever in FairPoint's history in Vermont, the company has hired an out-of-state negotiator from Atlanta, Ga., to sit across the table from the union.

Note: WIA will keep readers updated on the progress of these negotiations, and let you know about any solidarity events or other requests for VSEA support and help.

VSEA Advantage Discount Program Pleased To Once Again Offer Discounted Day Tickets To:

The Great Escape & Splashwater Kingdom

"Two parks of fun for the price of one!"
Lake George, New York

Park Opens Today, May 23, 2014, & Splashwater Opens May 24, 2014

Discount Tickets Now Available Through VSEA HQ & Online*

2014 Regular Day Tickets — \$31 each (\$24 Savings)

To Get Tickets

Send or drop off check (made out to VSEA), noting how many tickets you need. VSEA can mail your tickets or you can pick them up at VSEA HQ in Montpelier. VSEA members can also order tickets online by going to GE's [homepage](#), looking in the upper right-hand corner for the "Promo Code" box and entering VSEA's promo code, which can be [found here](#)*. GE Phone Number: 1-888-792-3500

New this year is the Extreme Supernova thrill ride!

Note: You must be a registered VSEA website user to view the VSEA promo code. You can sign up online [here](#).

Deadline Is May 31 To Apply For 2014 Vermont State Colleges Staff Federation Scholarship!

A Vermont State Colleges' Staff Federation scholarship is intended to help VSEA members and their spouses, dependents or domestic partners who are seeking financial assistance to pursue post-secondary educational goals at one of the following: Castleton State College, Lyndon State College, Johnson State College or Vermont Technical College. The deadline to apply is May 31, 2014.

VSCSF scholarship applications should be sent to:

Monique Prive, Librarian
c/o Lyndon State College
P.O. Box 919
Lyndonville, VT 05851-0919

You can reach Monique by phone at 802-626-6364 or by e-mail at monique.prive@lyndonstate.edu for the application or if you have any questions.

Note: The VSCSF scholarship is not to be confused with the annual VSEA scholarship.

VSEA Needs To Know If Your Mailing Address Is Different Than Your Home Address

Many VSEA members have a mailing address that is different from their home address. They may keep a P.O. Box at the post office, or they may have a mailbox with an address different from their actual house address. If this is the case with you, please email the Union at nstein@vsea.org and let us know! Our reason is that the address information for our members that we receive from the State is unreliable. The State cannot report to us both a "Mailing Address" and a "Home Address." We only occasionally send paper U.S. mail, but, when we do, it's important, and includes: Ballots for Union elections, insurance information, and legally-required warnings of Union meetings.

If your mailing address is different from your home address, we need you to tell us! Email nstein@vsea.org. Thanks!

Upcoming Meetings/Events/Holidays:

May 29

Barre Chapter Meeting
The Quarry Restaurant
Barre
5:00 p.m.

May 31

Deadline To Apply For VT State Colleges' Staff Federation Scholarship (see *WIA* entry)

June 2

Chapter President's Committee Meeting
McFarland State Office Building
Barre
9:30 a.m.

June 3

Steward Training: Your Bargaining Unit's Contract (DOC)

Room 1A

108 Cherry St.

Burlington

9:00 a.m.

June 6

Steward Training: Solidarity, Power & State Policies

Room 104

100 Mineral St.

Springfield

9:00 a.m.