

WEEK IN ACTION!

Weekly News From Your Union ~ October 13, 2014 – October 17, 2014

VSEA Reimbursement Notice!

Did you incur a union-related-business expense in FY 2014 but have yet to submit a reimbursement request to your union? **Now is the time to do so!**

VSEA is currently preparing for its annual fiscal audit, which is why it's imperative for your union to now collect all outstanding requests and then issue payments.

Thank you for your attention to this message!

If you are in need of a VSEA expense form, please email vsea@vsea.org to request one. Put "expense form" in the subject line.

Two VSEA Units Conduct Elections

Members of VSEA's Elections, Rules and Nominating Committee were at headquarters recently to count the votes from two VSEA Unit elections.

Vermont State Colleges' Unit election:

Chairperson – Janis Henderson – Lyndon State College

Vice-Chairperson – Sandra Noyes – Johnson State College

Supervisory Unit Bargaining Team election (6 top vote getters out of 10 nominees):

Sue Albert – DOL

Glenn Boyde – DOC

Roy Catella Jr. – DOC

Michael Manley Jr. – DPS

Matthew Nally – DPS

Joe Silvestri – DOC

Seeking DCF Members For DCF Labor/Management Committee

In worksites across Vermont, VSEA Union Representatives report good results coming out of several already established joint labor/management committees, including in places like AOT, DOC and ESD.

In response to DCF workers' concerns about being scapegoated for ongoing system-wide problems, VSEA is hoping to identify DCF members statewide who would be interested in being a part of a labor/management committee, if one can be created. Labor/management committees usually meet once a month.

If you're a VSEA DCF member who wants to sit on a labor/management committee that will hopefully soon be established to provide DCF workers with a stronger collective voice with management, please contact either VSEA Union Representative John Brabant (jbrabant@vsea.org) or Kelly Burns (kburns@vsea.org) to let them know.

VSEA Wants Your Input On Grants

With a budget deficit looming and departments and agencies being instructed to level fund and worse for FY2016, VSEA wants to try and determine:

- How much damage was done to grants targeted to your department/agency during the State's 2008/2009 budget-cutting exercises;
- How much of that damage has been repaired to date;
- How much money do you know or estimate was lost as a result of grants not being applied for due to lack of staff;
- Has there been a cut in your shop to the staff responsible for applying for grants in a timely manner;
- Can you cite an example of Vermont services or Vermonters themselves being harmed due to the loss of a grant; and
- How much of the service you provide depends on grant money?

VSEA understands that every member will not be knowledgeable about grants or how they relate to your department/agency, but if you do have firsthand knowledge about grants where you work, please take a few minutes to share what you know with your union. All information gathered will be considered confidential, unless otherwise mutually agreed to by the member and VSEA.

Thanks in advance for your help!

VSEA AHS Members Urged To Participate In Upcoming Budget Forum

Will the State's proposed FY2016 budget adversely impact the AHS service you provide? Here's your chance to publicly weigh in with the Administration.

The non-profit group Public Assets is sponsoring a special upcoming forum to discuss what budget cuts would mean to AHS services and the workers who provide them on a daily basis. The meeting is being conducted via Vermont Interactive Television, so VSEA members working across the state in DCF, ESD, HAEU, Corrections, Parole and Probation and other AHS services are urged to participate in a studio near you and make your voice heard.

Public Assets' Forum – AHS & The Budget

Tuesday, October 28

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

VIT Studios

[Click here](#) to read a Public Assets' post about the meeting.

[Click here](#) to read the State's information about meeting.

Auditor's Report On Vermont Designated Agencies Raises Eyebrows

The Auditor's office released a new report on October 15, detailing the practices of three of the

State's 11 Designated Agencies. These 11 entities received \$246 million from AHS in FY2013, and the Auditor's findings about how these dollars are being monitored by three Designated Agencies is raising some eyebrows.

According to a [VTDigger story](#) about the report, AHS "often fails to ensure that social-service contractors are providing the services they're being paid for," and "while the State monitors 'many facets of the agencies' performance, they don't generally compare the services budgeted to those actually performed' as part of inclusive rate contracts."

"Without making these comparisons, the State cannot ensure that Vermont clients are receiving the budgeted services they need and that the public is paying for," the Auditor told *Digger* in a statement, "The State has a responsibility to confirm that these payments fairly represent the services actually provided." The performance audit also found that in some instances the state makes duplicate payments to designated agencies.

The Auditor's report makes recommendations on reforms to implement, and AHS Secretary Harry Chen tells *Digger* that some are already in progress. Chen says AHS has begun "to require self-audits across programs at the end of the current fiscal year, and added compliance reviews to the DMH and DAIL quality-assurance programs. AHS will also clarify contractual expectations before granting funds."

Because there were only three Designated Agencies included in this Auditor's report, the findings could be just the tip of the iceberg. Vermont taxpayers have a right to know how their money is being spent, is it being spent wisely and are Vermonters receiving the promised and paid-for services from the State's Designated Agencies?

Hopefully, to be continued.

VSEA Members Invited To Alliance For Retired Americans 10th Annual Conference

The Vermont Chapter of the Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA) is holding its annual conference on Saturday, October 25, and VSEA retirees and members are invited to attend.

Titled "Addressing Senior Issues During A Time Of Political Turmoil," the ARA conference will feature several informative speakers throughout the day, including ARA's National Political/Legislative Director Eva Dominguez, who will talk about how seniors are fighting back on several fronts in Washington State, and Champlain Valley Agency on Aging Director John Michael Hall, who will talk more broadly about the senior issues impacting seniors at both the national level and right here in Vermont.

The meeting begins at 10:00 a.m. and ends at 2:00 p.m. It's being held at the Aldrich Public Library at 6 Washington Street in Barre. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m., and there is a \$15 registration fee for non-ARA members.

For more information, please contact ARA President Jane Osgatharp by phone at (802) 229-0850 or by email at annajaneo@aol.com.

Commentary Supports Frontline DCF Workers

An October 9 commentary in the *Times Argus* by Kate Piper and Mark Redmond is titled “Making Vermont Children Safe” and it begins by acknowledging that frontline DCF workers are not to blame for recent and tragic deaths of two Vermont children.

It reads: "...it is important to recognize and understand that individual caseworkers are not the problem. The issues of concern are systemic. Vermont’s DCF workers are a very dedicated, hardworking group of public servants.

DCF workers and VSEA appreciate the authors’ support and help to promote this important and timely message.

Brattleboro Chapter Raises \$200 For Shelter

Congratulations to VSEA Brattleboro Chapter members for raising more than \$200 for the Morningside Shelter by hiking together for the homeless on October 5. Brattleboro Chapter and other VSEA members who still want to donate can do so by dropping a check off to Chapter President Robin Rieske at the Department of Health or you can mail your donation directly to Morningside Shelter, identifying yourself as a VSEA member.

Rieske is thanking everyone who hiked and contributed to this successful Chapter-building effort.

Calling All Troublemakers! Vermont Troublemakers’ School 2014

The Vermont Labor Solidarity Committee and Labor Notes are pleased to announce that the 2014 Vermont Troublemakers School is being held Sunday, November 9, from 10:00 a.m to 5:00 p.m. in UVM’s Rowen Hall at 106 Carrigan Drive, Burlington.

New strategies centered on social justice unionism have animated recent struggles—from the [2012 Chicago Teachers strike](#) to the recent Teamster [Chittenden County Transit Authority walkout](#) in Vermont.

Join fellow troublemakers for a day of discussion, training, networking, and inspiration! We’ll discuss rank-and-file strategies for advancing our unions and demanding our rights.

Topics include:

- How to have an organizing conversation
- How to broaden member participation
- Reviving social justice unionism
- Developing rank-and-file leaders
- Winning contract campaigns

- Strikes and other worksite actions to win
- And much more

Here's a list of organizations whose members are contributing to shaping and building our Troublemakers School:

- VSEA
- CCTA Teamster Bus Drivers
- Vermont Workers Center
- United Academics at UVM
- Vermont Nurses and Healthcare Professionals (VNHP)
- VT-NEA teachers
- International Socialist Organization
- UE Locals in Chittenden and Washington Counties
- Vermont Migrant Justice
- Home Health Care Workers
- Howard Center AFSCME Local 1674
- Green Mountain Labor Council
- And more to come.

To register, choose a registration level at bottom of page, add to your cart and check out through our online store. (Look for "Shopping Cart" in the upper right corner of the page when you are ready to pay.) For more information or to get involved, contact Traven Leyshon at Traven.L@gmail.com or 802-522-3484.

Childcare will be available. Details to come.

Brattleboro Chapter Offering To Pay For Members To Attend Troublemakers' School!

Brattleboro Chapter President Robin Rieske is offering to finance Chapter members who want to attend this year's Troublemaker's School in Burlington. The Chapter will pay your enrollment fee, as well as travel reimbursement for a carpool. If you're interested, please contact Robin at rieske@sover.net by **Friday, October 31, 2014**.

ALERT! Post Office No Longer Recognizing Mail Sent To VSEA HQ Using Defunct P.O. Box Number

Stewards Urged To Review Cards

VSEA is issuing an alert to members NOT to use P.O. Box 518 when sending mail or other correspondence to VSEA headquarters in Montpelier. The Post Office is no longer forwarding mail sent to VSEA with the P.O. Box number. VSEA Stewards and other leaders are being asked to review any cards or literature you may be passing out in worksites to ensure the address printed on the material does not include the now defunct P.O. Box number.

As a reminder, VSEA's new and correct mailing address is:

VSEA HQ
155 State St.
Montpelier, VT 05602

VSEA Election Season Phone Banking Underway. Volunteer Today!

VSEA Legislative Director Ben Palkowski is soliciting volunteers to participate in upcoming phone banks to promote your union's endorsed candidates in the 2014 election, both statewide and local.

Here are the phone bank dates (all will operate from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at VSEA headquarters in Montpelier):

Monday, October 20
Thursday, October 23
Monday, October 27
Thursday, October 30

Members with questions—or members who want to phone bank but can't make one of the scheduled banks—are welcome to contact Palkowski (bpalkowski@vsea.org or 595-3558) to try and set up an alternate time or ask your question.

Barre Chapter Members...Mark The Date!

With an eye towards the upcoming 2014-2015 legislative session, VSEA's Barre Chapter is hosting a forum on October 30 and inviting Chapter members to share their thoughts and concerns about the budget, position and service cuts and other workplace issues with local

lawmakers and candidates for office. This is a great opportunity for Barre Chapter members to talk one-on-one with the decision-makers in Montpelier.

Barre Chapter Candidate/Lawmaker Forum

Thursday, October 30

5:00 p.m.

The Quarry Restaurant

210 N. Main St.

Barre

Retirees' Chapter Holding Special Meeting On Dec. 11 To Select Trustee For Windham & Windsor Counties

The VSEA Retirees' Committee is actively searching for a trustee to represent Windham and Windsor Counties. If you're a current dues-paying retiree who resides in Windham or Windsor Counties, and you're interested in running for this trustee seat, please send a letter of interest by 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, December 10, to VSEA RC President Maclay at jmaclay@vsea.org. Chapter officials will then hold a special meeting on December 11 to name a new Windham and Windsor trustee. The meeting begins at 9:30 a.m.

As always, if you are a lifetime member of VSEA and are interested in joining the VSEA Retirees' Chapter, please send your \$10 dues check to VSEA HQ or bring this payment to the special Chapter meeting on December 11.

VSEA Activist Trying To Collect Items For Holiday Charity Effort

Longtime VSEA activist Monte Mason is appealing to his VSEA brothers and sisters to help his niece collect unused shoe boxes to fill with needed items to send to underprivileged children around the world. Some of the items being collected to put in the shoeboxes include toothpaste and toothbrushes, writing implements and small toys.

If you have shoeboxes for Monte and his niece, or you want to donate some of the needed items, please contact Monte by phone (802) 888-4395 or email endoftail5@aol.com to arrange a pick up. You can also bring your boxes and items to VSEA headquarters and Monte will collect them periodically.

"Your help is greatly appreciated," says Mason.

Bolton Valley Announces Discounted Season Passes For VSEA Members

For the second year in a row, the VSEA Advantage Discount Program is pleased to offer discounted season passes to the Bolton Valley Ski Resort in Bolton, Vt.

VSEA members who order a pass before October 31, 2014, will receive a \$70 discount off the regular \$569 season pass price, making it just \$499. Like last year, this offer is available only to VSEA members who are currently paying full dues to their union.

The sign-up process is pretty straightforward, but, like last year, in order for a member to view the special VSEA discount promo code ([which can be found by clicking here](#)), you must be a registered user of the VSEA website, which also requires you to be a full dues-paying member.

After acquiring the special VSEA promo code, VSEA members can [go here](#) to place your season pass order.

Follow these instructions to make your purchase:

- Click on “Buy Online” and select pass products, accepting or declining pass protection and adding each product to your cart.
- In the Cart view, click on “Add/Change Guest” to set the pass holder's name and information to each pass product, then click “Proceed to Checkout.”
- Enter your Promo Code in the box where it asks for your promo code then click “Apply Code.” The cart should be refreshed and show the discounted corporate pricing.

A 2014-15 Bolton Valley All Access Season Pass includes¹:

- Unlimited alpine skiing and riding
- 100km of Nordic and backcountry skiing
- A 20% discount on rentals, retail shop purchases, group ski and ride lessons, and lodging (includes condos, suites, or hotel rooms)
- Sports Center Membership including access to an indoor heated pool, hot tub, and sauna

BV pricing allows you to build your own family pass. Adult passes are just \$499 and passes for youth 17 and under are just \$159 when purchased with a parent's pass.

If you have any questions, please contact Brad Battin at 802-434-6813 or bbattin@boltonvalley.com

VSEA Wants Member Input On Website Redesign!

In the coming months, VSEA’s Communications team will be devoting time to redesigning the VSEA website, making it cleaner and more user friendly. In advance of sitting down to begin the redesign process, VSEA’s Communications team is asking members to please take a few minutes to complete an online survey about VSEA’s current site and about what members want in a new site. VSEA is also interested in learning what websites appeal to you and why, and what websites aren’t so appealing and why.

To take the VSEA website survey, please [click here](#). Thanks in advance for your participation.

Upcoming Meetings/Events/Holidays:

October 21

Board of Trustees’ Meeting

VSEA HQ
Montpelier
9:30 a.m.

October 22

Addison Chapter Meeting
First Floor Conference
156 Court St.
Middlebury
Noon

October 22

Special Rutland Chapter Luncheon
Three Tomatoes Restaurant
Asa Bloomer Building
Rutland
12:15 p.m.
Please RSVP with VSEA Legislative Director Ben Palkowski (bpalkowski@vsea.org)

October 24

NMU Executive Committee Meeting
VSEA HQ
Montpelier
9:30 a.m.