



## WEEK IN ACTION!

Weekly News From Your Union ~ May 25, 2015 – May 29, 2015

### **VSEA Members Win Right To Bargain For Binding Arbitration!**

VSEA President Shelley Martin welcomed the State's signing on Tuesday of S. 72: an act relating to binding arbitration for state employees and other Vermont workers covered under the State Employee Labor Relations Act. Currently, VSEA members, State Troopers and UVM employees are not permitted to bargain for grievance arbitration, which is another avenue to take member grievances to a neutral hearing officer.

“VSEA members and VSEA union representatives have been telling union leaders for years that they would like the right to bargain for a neutral arbitrator to decide grievances, which is why we lobbied so hard to get S. 72 passed and now signed into law,” explains Martin. “Right now, the Vermont Labor Relations Board decides grievances, but members tell us having a neutral arbitrator—and not having their case become part of a public record—will help make the grievance process less intimidating. Again, I would stress that this bill only allows VSEA the right to bargain for this binding arbitration, and we must now sit down with the State and make it happen. Having the State's support will certainly help us make our case when we bargain again soon with the State.”

Martin adds VSEA's thanks to Senators Kevin Mullin and Philip Baruth and Representatives Helen Head, Tom Stevens and Jean O'Sullivan for successfully guiding the arbitration bill through their committees of jurisdiction and helping to make today's signing possible. She also thanked the Department of Human Resources for working cooperatively with VSEA throughout the session to advance the bill.

### **WIA Is Celebrating Its 500<sup>th</sup> Edition With A Contest To Win Great Escape Tickets!**

Next week's edition of *WIA* is the 500<sup>th</sup> produced since Communications Director Doug Gibson started informally numbering the publication when it launched back in 2005. To celebrate the occasion, the VSEA Communications Department is sponsoring a contest from now until next week's 500<sup>th</sup> edition.

**Tell us in 75 words or less why you are VSEA proud.** That's it. Pretty simple. A short essay about what your union means to you and your family or how your union helps you in your day-to-day work life. Whatever words convey best how you feel about your union.

We'll choose three winners and publish the winning short essays in a future edition of *WIA*.

First place = 4 day tickets to the Great Escape + VSEA pint glass + VSEA t-shirt

Second Place = 2 day tickets to the Great Escape + VSEA pint glass + VSEA baseball hat

Third Place = 2 day tickets to the Great Escape + VSEA pint glass + VSEA window decal

*Deadline: You must submit your essay to the VSEA Communications Department by 4:30 p.m., Thursday, June 4. Email your essay to Doug Gibson at [dgibson@vsea.org](mailto:dgibson@vsea.org) and put "WIA 500" in the subject line.*

## **VSEA Fight Back Campaign Debrief Meetings Begin**

VSEA leaders and organizers are returning to worksites next week to begin a new round of meetings to debrief with members about the VSEA's "Fight Back" campaign and discuss what worked what didn't and where there is room for improvement.

Here is where Fight Back campaign debrief meetings are scheduled for next week:

### Tuesday, June 2

Fight Back Campaign Debrief  
DOL  
Green Mountain Drive  
Lobby Conference Room  
Montpelier  
Noon

### Thursday, June 4

Fight Back Campaign Debrief  
Agency of Agriculture  
Room 210  
Montpelier  
Noon

## **VSEA Legal Team Grieving Cases Of "Arbitrary Discipline"**

Last week, VSEA Associate General Counsel Justin St. James had a grievance hearing at the Vermont Labor Relations Board (VLRB) for a member of the Corrections Bargaining Unit. He described the case to *WIA* as one of "arbitrary discipline," explaining that "VSEA correctional officers have some of the toughest jobs in the state, and the last thing they need is to be randomly disciplined for doing their jobs." He adds, "When management violates collective bargaining agreements and ignores just cause, we will continue to vigorously pursue those cases at the VLRB."

Closing briefs were submitted in the case on May 27, and VSEA is optimistic that the VLRB will rule in favor of the correctional officer.

This is the second discipline grievance the VSEA legal team has taken to the VLRB in the last five weeks.

*WIA* is hoping to periodically keep readers updated on the outcome of this grievance and others VSEA's legal team is filing.

## **Workers' Center Invites VSEA Members To "Stroll With The Heifers" On June 6!**

The Vermont Workers' Center is inviting any and all interested VSEA members to join their "Strolling With The Heifer's" parade contingent on Saturday, June 6, in Brattleboro. The popular event draws Vermonters from across the state, and if you would be interested in marching in the parade with other workers, please email Ellen Schwartz at [eschwal@myfairpoint.net](mailto:eschwal@myfairpoint.net), or call her at 802-257-4436.

Workers are gathering at 9:30 a.m. at the Church Street Plaza on Flat Street, and the Workers' Center group is in Division 4 and will be carrying a large "Put People First" banner.

VSEA members are encouraged to wear a union t-shirt and carry a banner if you have one. Brattleboro Chapter President Robin Rieske is offering to let VSEA members carry the Chapter's banner if you would like. If interested, please give Robin a call at 802-275-7232.

There is also an opportunity for Chapters to drop literature on an informational table being set up on Friday, June 5, beginning at 5:00 p.m. and continuing through the event.

For more information, please visit [this event Facebook page](#), set up by the Workers' Center.

## **“Jimmy Higgins: A Life In The Labor Movement” At Old Labor Hall Tomorrow!**

VSEA members are invited to take a stroll through early 20<sup>th</sup> Century labor history by attending a Saturday, May 30, one-man performance of “Jimmy Higgins: A Life In The Labor Movement.”

Harlan Bakery plays Jimmy Higgins, a fictional reporter and labor activist who takes you through major moments for trade unionism and radicalism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. You'll hear tales of encounters with Eugene Debs and others opposed to U.S. involvement in World War 1, stories about covering 1930s organizing drives for tenant farmers and auto workers, and a recounting of meeting the Progressive Party's 1924 Presidential candidate Robert LaFollette.

A promotional piece for the show says, “Baker's play deftly weds the personal and political, and history looks like what it is...the gathered threads of human lives.”

In addition to being an adjunct professor in the Theatre Department at the University of Southern Maine, Baker is also an actor, a former member of the Maine legislature, a union activist, and a democratic socialist.

The show begins at 7:30 p.m. and tickets are \$15 or \$12 for students and seniors. They are available at the door or you can purchase in advance by [clicking here](#).

For more information, please email [info@oldlaborhall.org](mailto:info@oldlaborhall.org), call (802) 479-5600 or (802) 331-0013, or check out the Hall's website by [clicking here](#).

## **VSEA Creates Webpage About State's Retirement Incentive**

VSEA has created a webpage about the State's retirement incentive for members to learn more details about the incentive. VSEA members can find information on the incentive by [clicking here](#).

If you have questions about anything on the page, please contact the State's Retirement Division, which is located in the State Treasurer's Office. The phone number is (802) 828-2305, or you can visit the Division's homepage by [clicking here](#).

*Note: This incentive is available only to employees working in the Executive Branch. Employees working in the Legislative and Judiciary Branches are not eligible.*

## **Monday Is The Deadline To File Petition To Run For One Of Four VSEA Board Of Trustees' Seats**

Monday, June 1, 2015, is the final day for interested VSEA members to file a petition to run for any one of the following Board of Trustees' seats up for election this year:

- Non-Management Unit Trustee;
- Judicial Unit Trustee;
- District #3 (Newport/Island Pond, Lamoille County, Northeast Kingdom and St. Johnsbury)
- District #6 (White River Junction/Springfield/Brattleboro)

VSEA members interested in running for one of the Board seats above can find a filing petition [here](#).

## **Discounted 2015 Great Escape/Splashwater Kingdom Day Tickets Now Available Online! Hard Tickets For Pickup Coming Soon!**

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

Park Opens May 16, 2015, & Splashwater Opens May 23, 2015

Discount tickets are now available to purchase online by [clicking here](#), but in order to access this page, which also includes the required VSEA username and password, **you must be a registered “member-only” VSEA website user** ([you can sign up here!](#)). Please note that there is a service charge for purchasing online.

VSEA will also soon be receiving a batch of hard tickets that members can pick up at headquarters, and there is no service charge attached.

2015 Regular Day Tickets = \$33 each (\$25 savings over price at gate)

### **Quote Of The Week!**

*"It's really time to start approaching [the state's ongoing deficits] from the perspective of Vermont's need for significant restructuring of the tax code, rather than just looking at it as a spending issue. This is a revenue problem, not a spending problem."*

VSEA Executive Director Steve Howard, offering a different approach to solving Vermont's ongoing budget deficits in a [May 27 VPR story](#) about the State having to make far fewer position and service cuts than initially anticipated.

### **VSEA Insurance Representative In Berlin Next Week**

VSEA Insurance Representative Joanne Woodcock will be in Berlin three days next week at the following location to talk with interested VSEA members about member-only insurance benefits.

#### June 2

Green Mountain Psychiatric Care Center  
Berlin  
12:00 to 3:00

#### June 3

Green Mountain Psychiatric Care Center  
Berlin  
12:00 to 3:00

#### June 4

Green Mountain Psychiatric Care Center  
Berlin  
12:00 to 3:00

Receive information on disability coverage, family life insurance, family accident and cancer coverage. You must be a member paying full dues to be eligible for this VSEA benefit. If you are an agency-fee payer, Joanne can provide you information about signing up for full membership.

## **File Your Petition Today To Run To Be A VSEA Officer!**

Petitions to run for one of VSEA's five top elected official seats are due 60 calendar days prior to the union's Annual Meeting on September 12. This makes the deadline Tuesday, July 14, 2015.

- VSEA President
- VSEA First Vice President
- VSEA Second Vice President
- VSEA Clerk
- VSEA Treasurer

VSEA members interested in running for one of the "Elected Officer" positions above can find a filing petition [here](#).

*Note: If running to be an elected officer, please make sure you clearly indicate the office you seek in the space provided. Primarily, this means distinguishing between First and Second VP.*

## **June 30 Deadline To Self-Nominate For VSEA Departmental Council Seat**

VSEA Elections, Rules and Nominating Committee Chair Mary Poulos is reminding VSEA members that now is the time to self-nominate for a VSEA departmental Council seat.

All departmental Council seats are open, and current terms will expire on September 30, 2015. The deadline to submit a self-nomination form is Tuesday, June 30, 2015.

You can find a self-nominating form by [clicking here](#).

(Opens/ downloads as a PDF)

With more than 120 VSEA members, the VSEA Council is one of your union's primary governing bodies and its largest and most diverse, with departmental representatives from across state government. The Council meets quarterly and retains a right to override decisions made by the VSEA Board of Trustees.

Questions? Please contact VSEA Administrative Assistant Ayla Hudson at 802-223-5247, or by email at [ahudson@vsea.org](mailto:ahudson@vsea.org).

**To determine the best fit for you, here is a complete list of the number of Council seats available, by departmental heading:**

Aging and Independent Living = 4 Seats

Agriculture = 1 Seat

Attorney General = 1 Seat

Auditor of Accounts = 1 Seat

Buildings and General Services = 5 Seats

Children and Families = 10 Seats

ACCD/Housing = 1 Seat

ACCD/Economic Development = 1 Seat

ACCD/Marketing and Tourism = 1 Seat

Commission on Women = 1 Seat

Corrections = 10 Seats

Criminal Justice Training Council = 1 Seat

Defender General = 1 Seat

DVHA = 2 Seat

Education = 2 Seats

Environmental Conservation = 3 Seats

Finance and Management = 1 Seat

Financial Regulation = 1 Seat  
Fish and Wildlife = 1 Seat  
Forests and Parks = 1 Seat  
Health = 6 Seats  
AHS/Rate Setting and Auditing = 1 Seat  
AHS/IT Unit = 1 Seat  
Information and Innovation = 1 Seat  
Judiciary = 3 Seats  
Labor = 3 Seat  
Library = 1 Seat  
Liquor Control = 1 Seat  
Lottery = 1 Seat  
Mental Health = 4 Seats  
Military = 2 Seats  
ANR = 1 Seat  
Natural Resources Board = 1 Seat  
Public Safety - Civilian = 4 Seats  
Public Service Board = 1 Seat  
Public Service Department = 1 Seat  
Secretary of State = 1 Seat  
Tax Department = 1 Seat  
Transportation Agency = 10 Seats  
Transportation Agency/DMV = 2 Seats  
Treasurer's Office = 1 Seat  
Vermont Veterans' Home = 3 Seats  
Vermont State Colleges = 4 Seats  
Vermont Housing Authority = 1 Seat

### **Upcoming Meetings/Events/Holidays:**

#### **June 1**

Deadline: Board Of Trustees' Seats  
*See WIA Entry*

#### **June 2**

Board Of Trustees' Meeting  
VSEA HQ  
Montpelier  
9:00 a.m.

#### **June 2**

Child & Elder Care Committee Meeting  
VSEA HQ  
Montpelier  
9:30 a.m.

#### **June 2**

Fight Back Campaign Debrief  
DOL  
Green Mountain Drive  
Lobby Conference Room  
Montpelier  
Noon

**June 3**

NMU Bargaining Team Meeting  
VSEA HQ  
Montpelier  
9:00 a.m.

**June 4**

Corrections Bargaining Team Meeting  
VSEA HQ  
Montpelier  
9:00 a.m.

**June 4**

VSCSF Executive Board Meeting  
VSEA HQ  
Montpelier  
9:00 a.m.

**June 4**

Training: Steward 1: Introduction & Basics  
VTrans Training Center  
1716 U.S. Route 302  
Berlin  
9:00 a.m.

**June 4**

Fight Back Campaign Debrief  
Agency of Agriculture  
Room 210  
Montpelier  
Noon

**June 5**

Special Events Committee Meeting  
VSEA HQ  
Montpelier  
9:30 a.m.

**June 5**

Benefits Advisory Committee Meeting  
VSEA HQ  
Montpelier  
1:00 p.m.

**June 6**

Strolling With The Heifer's Parade  
March with the Vermont Workers' Center  
Brattleboro  
9:30 a.m.  
*See WIA Entry*