



WEEK IN ACTION!

Weekly News From Your Union ~ June 8, 2015 – June 12, 2015

VSEA Council Meets To Debrief On Fight Back Campaign & Legislative Session. Also Begins Strategizing For Future

Great turnout for the June 9 VSEA Council meeting at Vermont Technical College in Randolph.

The day began with a welcome and report from VSEA President Shelley Martin, who spent some time talking about her decision not to run again and how hard it was to leave the position. She also made a pitch for more VSEA members to follow her shoes and run for an elected union office or volunteer to be a work site steward. Martin was followed by VSEA Executive Director Steve Howard, who highlighted the many positive results of the union's Fight Back campaign, summarized the pros and cons of this year's legislative session and rallied members to get active in VSEA's upcoming contract fights and in the campaigns of politicians who support state employees and the Vermonters they serve. VSEA Legislative Director Ben Palkowski also contributed to the legislative session discussion, providing a summary of where bills with VSEA support ended up.

VSEA First Vice President Michelle Salvador then shared an informative Powerpoint presentation with the Council about the Fight Back campaign, pausing at times to break the body up into smaller groups, who were then asked to provide their collective input on things like what worked in the Fight Back campaign and what campaign communication tools were most effective. Some of the answers Council members provided led to some thoughtful debate about strategy moving forward.

At 11:45, the Council took a break to join in a celebration for this year's seven winners of a VSEA scholarship. The winners were selected last month by the union's Awards and Scholarships Committee, and a complete listing can be found in the *WIA* entry following this one.

After lunch, the Council spent a part of the afternoon reviewing and approving the Budget Advisory Committee's proposed budget to be sent to the union's Annual Meeting for a vote by members in September. The remainder of the afternoon included a thorough discussion about proposed Non-Management Unit bylaw changes and amendments and an opportunity for Council members to review and comment on old business or introduce and debate new business.

VSEA's Awards and Scholarships Committee is thanking Vermont Technical College for its hospitality.

VSEA Awards 2015 Scholarships To Seven Lucky Recipients!

At the June 9 VSEA Council meeting, the union's Awards and Scholarships Committee announced the seven winners of a 2015 VSEA scholarship award. Some of the winners attended a special ceremony at the meeting and they are pictured above receiving their award from Awards & Scholarship Committee Chair-For-A-Day Janis Henderson. Chair Pat Moulton was unable to attend and Janis graciously took the microphone.

Here are the winners, in alphabetical order:

- Reuben Allen. Reuben is an active VSEA member who works for Forests, Parks and Recreation as a Regional Ranger Supervisor in Springfield. He currently attending Southern New Hampshire University, where he is pursuing a master's degree in Organizational Leadership. He hopes to use what he is learning to further his career and help play an even larger role in positively impacting the lives of others;
- John Dickson...John is the son of VSEA member Peggy Burbank; a Case Services Manager with the Department for Children and Families in Morrisville. John is currently attending Lyndon

State College, where he is pursuing a major in criminal justice and a minor in anthropology. He says he loves helping people and wants to keep all of us safe;

- Jeremiah Kellogg; a VSEA member and librarian with the Department of Libraries. Jeremiah has been accepted to UVM and Johnson State, and he will be pursuing a degree in environmental science. Once graduated, he hopes to continue working for the State in a position related to his degree and course work;
- Alexander Klein; the son of VSEA member Anne Klein, a Registered Nurse with the Department of Mental Health; Alexander has been accepted to Champlain College, where he will study graphic design and digital media;
- Lynden Prior; the son of VSEA member Kristin Prior; a field director with the Agency of Human Services in St. Albans. Lynden is attending the University of Vermont, where he is studying Microbiology;
- Darren Ruiz-Sauer; the son of VSEA members Stephen and Bonnie Sauer, who both work at the Vermont Veterans' Home, one as a maintenance employee and the other as a licensed nursing assistant. Darren has already been accepted to Ridgewater College and Daniel Webster College, and he's still deciding whether to study construction management, electrical work or engineering. Post-graduation, Darren says he wants to use his major to help out in his community; and
- Dana Wiktorski; the daughter of VSEA members Marsha and Lee Wiktorski, who both work at Castleton State College. Not surprisingly, Dana is attending Castleton, where she is studying nursing.

Lamoille Valley Chapter Putting Call Out For Members To March In Morrisville's July 4 Parade. All Members Statewide Welcome!

This week's announcement that the Governor is not seeking re-election has opened the door for Morrisville's own Shap Smith to entertain a run for governor. In fact, Smith was quoted this week saying he is "seriously considering a run for governor. This means VSEA's Lamoille Valley Chapter has a great opportunity at this year's annual Morrisville Fourth of July 4 Parade to show Rep. Smith and other local politicians that state employees are united and prepared to stand strong in defense of the services we provide. That's because Smith and other elected officials will be marching in the parade, and so will we! The parade also affords us an opportunity to take our message to the public and enlist their support in our fight for the Governor and lawmakers to adopt a responsible budgeting process.

The Lamoille Valley Chapter is inviting all state employees (especially those who live and work in the Lamoille Valley) to march with the Chapter in this year's parade. Here are the details:

- Parade theme is an 'All American Holiday';
- Being held on Saturday, July 4;
- Beginning at 9:30 a.m., floats/marchers will be lining up at the Community College of Vermont Morrisville Campus. The parade begins promptly at 11:00 a.m. and it ends at the Peoples Academy High School; and
- VSEA members are urged to wear green!

Come to have a great time!

Questions? Email the Lamoille Chapter's Aimee Towne at aimee.kelley@hotmail.com, or call her at 802-793-4754

Central Vermont Chapter Meeting Is Monday!

VSEA's Central Vermont Chapter is meeting Monday, June 15, at the DOL at 5 Green Mountain Dr. in Montpelier. The meeting begins at noon in the second floor conference room, and Chapter President Cassandra Edson says the agenda will include discussions about the union's upcoming Annual Meeting and bargaining with the State.

Members with questions can contact Cassandra by email at cassandraedson@hotmail.com.

VSEA President Invites Female Members To Sign Up For 2015 NE Regional Summer School For Union Women

VSEA President Shelley Martin is inviting VSEA members interested in attending the 40th UALE Northeast Regional Summer School For Union Women to contact her today to let her know. This year's school is being held July 26-30 on the beautiful Penn State University Park campus in State College, Pa., and VSEA is sponsoring 10 members who want to attend.

The UALE Summer School includes classes and workshops on a variety of union-related topics. Women from all over the country and beyond learn the skills and knowledge needed to play leadership roles in their unions. Visitors from unions in other countries frequently participate. One of the most valuable aspects of the schools is the chance to meet and network with other union women from around the region and beyond.

"As a past participant in the Summer School program, I can personally attest to how empowering this experience is and how great it is to be joined at the event by like-minded, strong female labor activists from all over," Martin tells *WIA*. "You emerge from the week feeling energized and ready to put all you have learned to work for the members. It's a great experience, and it's really worth the time."

The deadline for interested VSEA members to let President Martin know that you would like to attend this event is the close of business, Friday, June 19! Send your letter of interest and contact information to Martin by email to smartin@vsea.org.

You can get updates on the UALE Northeast Summer School's Facebook page, which can be found by [clicking here](#).

Dale Whitlock Named Game Warden Of The Year

VSEA is congratulating 19-year state employee Dale Whitlock of Middlebury on being named the 2015 Vermont Game Warden of the Year. Pictured above presenting Dale with his award are (l to r) Col. Jason Batchelder, Lt. George Scribner, VSEA President Shelley Martin, the Governor and F&W Commissioner Louis Porter.

"It was an honor to meet and present Dale with his award this week," Martin tells *WIA*. "He's another great example of the quality public service state employees are delivering to Vermonters every day."

In an *Associated Press* story, Scribner called Whitlock "a team player who is always willing to drop everything to assist another warden or law enforcement colleague."

Whitlock told WCAX he was humbled by the honor, adding, "I'm doing what I'm supposed to do, which is be a face for the department and ultimately protect the resources of fish and wildlife for the state of Vermont and public safety."

Whitlock's district includes the towns of Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes, Waltham, New Haven, Bristol, Lincoln, Bridport, Weybridge, Ripton, and Addison.

Congratulations Dale!

VSEA Legislative Wrap-Up/Fight Back Debrief Meetings Continue

VSEA's Organizing and Legislative Departments are continuing to conduct a series of meetings to provide members with a summary of the 2015 legislative session, including wins and losses, what worked and what didn't and who stood with VSEA in members' fight against more cuts.

"I encourage VSEA members interested in learning more about what happened this session, or who have questions about the session, a candidate's record or the legislative process in general, to attend," VSEA President Shelley Martin tells *WIA*.

Here is the upcoming schedule:

Thursday, June 18

11:00 a.m. & Noon
DMV Office
120 State Street
Montpelier

Thursday, June 18

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
State Office Building
Newport

Thursday, June 18

Noon to 1:00 p.m.
National Life Building
Winooski Conference Room
Montpelier

Reminder: VSEA Members Enrolled In The Delta Dental Supplemental Plan Are Also Eligible For Vision Discounts

VSEA staff and leaders hear often that members would like to see the current vision benefit negotiated in members' contracts improved. Given this, VSEA wants to make sure that members enrolled in the Delta Dental Supplemental Plan know that you are also eligible to take advantage of a "Vision Discount Program" to help defray additional costs.

To see the vision discounts being offered through the supplemental plan, please [click here](#) and then click on the "Vision Discount Program" entry under the "VSEA Supplemental Dental Plan Info" heading.

NMU Bargaining Team Wants Your Leave Request Stories

The Non-Management Unit's Bargaining Team was at headquarters on June 3 to continue preparing for upcoming negotiations with the State this fall. One of the topics they discussed is the need to learn more from NMU workers about how long it takes different managers to process employee leave requests. Are workers' requests being approved or denied in a timely manner?

If you belong to the NMU and want to share your story about how long it took for managements to process your leave requests, please send your NMU Team a summary of how long it took and what the ramifications were. Did you miss a booking date due to a delay? Were you denied at the last minute, after waiting for days or weeks? Did you have to cancel a trip or event due to slow processing of your request? Was your family made to suffer because management was stringing you along on your leave request? Your NMU Team wants to know.

To share your story (confidentially, unless otherwise agreed to) with the Team, please send an email to

nmumail@vsea.org and write “My Leave Story” in the subject line. The Team thanks you in advance for responding to this request.

VSEA Seeks New Union Representative!

VSEA is actively seeking to fill an empty Union Representative position at headquarters in Montpelier. Here is a description for any member interested in applying:

Join Vermont’s most dynamic statewide union as its new Union Representative.

Job Duties will include:

- Membership advocacy;
- Complaint and grievance handling;
- Contract administration, enforcement, and representation in investigations;
- Organizing and other related duties associated with the strategic plan of VSEA;
- Handling all aspects of work related to membership services in an assigned field area; and
- Administration of the collective bargaining agreement through membership education and communication.

VSEA seeks to interview dynamic candidates with a track record of commitment to the labor movement and preferably two (2) years of experience as a union representative both administering and enforcing collective bargaining agreements. Interested and qualified candidates are encouraged to submit their resume and a cover letter detailing their professional involvement with and commitment to the labor movement to Rstout@VSEA.org. Exceptional candidates will be scheduled for an interview.

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 just been a spectacular crash, really. We’ve gone from this vision of being the first state to achieve universal health care, to limping along and struggling to comply with the Affordable Care Act.”

State Representative Chris Pearson, a member of Vermont’s Progressive Party, commenting in a [June 4 New York Times story](#) about the Administration’s failure to advance single-payer, universal health care for all Vermonters.

VSEA Member Launching “Labor Reading Group”

VSEA activist John Howe is inviting members to join him at a “Labor Reading Group” he is starting in Burlington. The group is holding its first meeting on Sunday, June 21 at 5:00 p.m. at the offices of the Vermont Workers’ Center, located at 294 N Winooski Avenue. The group will be reading passages from “How To Jumpstart Your Union,” which is a book about a recent strike by Chicago teachers and how they used their fight to build community and union power.

If you would like more information or have a question, please contact John at johnh@gmavt.net.

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.

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 15

Central Vermont Chapter Meeting
DOL
5 Green Mountain Dr.
Second Floor Conference Room
Montpelier
Noon

June 16

Chapter President's Committee Meeting
VSEA HQ
Montpelier
9:00 a.m.

June 17

Training: Health Care Facilities: Stewards & Leaders
VTrans District Office
61 Valley View
Mendon
9:00 a.m.

June 18

VSEA Legislative/Fight Back Update Meeting
DMV Office
120 State St.
Montpelier
11:00 a.m.

June 18

VSEA Legislative/Fight Back Update Meeting
DMV Office
120 State St.
Montpelier
Noon

June 18

VSEA Legislative/Fight Back Update Meeting
Emory Hebard State Office Building
Newport
11:30 a.m.

June 18

VSEA Legislative/Fight Back Update Meeting
National Life
Winooski Conference Room
Montpelier
Noon