



WEEK IN ACTION!

Weekly News From Your Union ~ August 31, 2015 – September 4, 2015

Today Is The Deadline To Cast Your Ballot In Officer Elections

Today is the deadline to submit your VSEA officer candidate ballot to headquarters. The positions being elected are President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Clerk and Treasurer.

VSEA's Elections, Rules and Nominating Committee will be tabulating the results, and the winners will be announced at the VSEA Annual Meeting on September 12, 2015, and later through official communications.

Any last-minute questions relating to the election process and/or ballot should be addressed to: Mary Poulos, ERN Chair, at Mpoulos@vsea.org, or Ray Stout at VSEA, (802) 223-5247.

VSEA Members Invited To 2015 Burlington Labor Day Event/BBQ

Working Vermonters and labor activists are gathering in Burlington on Labor Day (Monday, Sept. 7) for a celebration/barbecue, featuring speakers, musical performers and the official launch of a new worker friendly advocacy organization called Rights and Democracy.

The event begins at 2:00 p.m. in Burlington's Battery Park, and it ends around 6:00 p.m. VSEA is proud to be an event co-sponsor.

Hope to see you there! View event Facebook page [here](#).

DCF FSD Workers Urged To Complete Revised Safety Survey

In light of the recent tragedy in Barre, labor team members of the DCF Family Services Division's Labor/Management Committee are requesting that all DCF FSD employees please revisit and complete a revised safety survey concerning your job duties. While many employees did fill out a similar survey earlier in the summer, your team members are requesting that everyone take a few moments to fill out the revised survey, providing as much detail as possible. Please respond no later than September 11, 2015. The survey can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

VSEA Distributes "Lara Sobel Strong" Wristbands To Frontline DCF FSD Workers

VSEA Union Representatives and other staff conducted meetings on August 31 with DCF Family Services Division workers statewide, talking about the recent tragic events in Barre and learning what the frontline workers need most from their union moving forward. At several meetings, staff distributed purple wristbands with "Lara Sobel Strong" written on them to workers; a small tribute to their fallen colleague. The color purple was chosen because, according to family members, it was Lara's favorite color.

VSEA did a limited initial run of the wristbands, but requests for them are now coming from employees working throughout state government, so more have been ordered and will be available to all members in the coming days and weeks, beginning with making them available to members attending VSEA's Council and Annual Meetings on September 11 and 12.

If you and your coworkers would like some wristbands, please designate someone to gather numbers and sizes and send an email to dgibson@vsea.org with "Lara Wristbands" written in the subject line. The sizes available are youth (6" circumference) and adult (7" circumference). Please only order what you really need, as quantities are limited. **We would like to avoid individual requests, and would**

appreciate bulk orders to save on potential individual mailing or other associated costs.

The wristbands will also be available for pickup at VSEA headquarters in Montpelier.

VSEA Rank-And-File Leaders Meet With Key Legislative Leaders

VSEA first Vice President Michelle Salvador and member-leader John Howe initiated a meeting this morning with House Speaker Shap Smith, House Appropriations Chair Mitzi Johnson, House Appropriations committee member Mary Hooper, House Government Operations Chair Donna Sweaney and House Government Operations Committee member Maida Townshend. Also in attendance were Corrections Unit Chair Dave Bellini and Non-Management Unit Chair Bob Stone.

“We scheduled the meeting to address the Legislature’s recent interference in topics of collective bargaining and to establish VSEA member relations with powerful committees to foster ongoing discussions around matters of funding government,” explains Salvador.

The meeting was initiated after members John Howe and Retirees’ Chapter President Joanie Maclay collected 80 signatures on a petition at the Democratic Party’s Curtis Awards event earlier this year to oppose legislative interference in collective bargaining. The petition denounces a letter from two powerful House Committee Chairs to the State, where they suggest several draconian changes to state employees’ contracts.

“This is how member-run unions work” adds Salvador. “Members openly challenge the actions of lawmakers, even if the legislators are often our friends. Building these relationship opens the dialogue and advances our cause. The meeting was very productive and we are looking forward to furthering our conversations with these representatives.”

VSEA Judiciary Unit’s ULP Gets Hearing At VLRB

VSEA Judiciary Unit Chair Margaret Crowley, General Counsel Tim Belcher and others were at the Vermont Labor Relations Board on September 3 to participate in a hearing on the VSEA Judiciary Unit’s unfair labor practice charge against management for failing to bargain.

VSEA Judiciary Unit members wore green to the hearing and VSEA buttons, and they were joined in solidarity by Judiciary employees across the state wearing green and buttons to work. Crowley and other leaders also attempted to hand-deliver a petition to the Court Administrator that was signed by a majority of frontline Judiciary workers, but she was out of the office. Another attempt will be made soon. The petition calls on the Judiciary Branch to begin negotiations with VSEA right now, as opposed to the Judiciary’s usual late winter start (anywhere from December to February), which hamstring workers in bargaining because management has already submitted its yearly funding request to lawmakers.

For background on the Judiciary Unit’s ULP, click here: <http://bit.ly/1LxLOIt>

Belcher says he is hopeful the Board will now expedite its ruling and that VSEA’s Judiciary Bargaining Team will be sitting down soon to begin formal negotiations with management.

State Conducts Lottery To Determine Which 300 Employees Will Receive Retirement Incentive

In a September 1 memorandum, Secretary of the Administration Justin Johnson informs all agency and department heads that 311 eligible state employees applied for a retirement incentive being offered by the State as a cost-cutting measure. This was 11 above the number of incentives allocated, forcing the State to conduct a lottery this week to determine which 300 applicants would receive the offer. Johnson adds that, due to a short time frame to “conduct retirement seminars,” the State is waiving the standard two-week resignation notice requirement and is urging all those being offered the incentive to let their

supervisor/appointing authority know their decision as soon as possible.

Johnson says the State won't have a final list of employees retiring under the incentive until October 1 and he advises that requests for extensions up through March 1, 2016, will be considered on case-by-case basis.

Discount Sugarbush Ski Passes Return For 2015-2016 Season. LINK IS LIVE!

For the ninth straight year, VSEA is pleased to inform you that the VSEA Advantage Discount Program is once again offering discounted Sugarbush all-mountain (& other) ski passes for the 2015-2016 season. This year, Sugarbush is once again using an online sign-up feature, which went live on September 1. This year's rate will be (15+ VSEA sign-ups) \$899 + tax. Offer is available only to full-fledged VSEA members, meaning those who pay full dues. VSEA will be confirming names and status with Sugarbush representative. All-Mountain youth (\$479), child (\$30) and "20s" (\$349) passes can also be purchased from the link.

[Click here](#) to go to VSEA's website page with the link. If you receive an "access denied" message, it means you are not a registered with VSEA's website for "member-only" status, which is available to members paying full dues. If you want to register for member-only status, please [click here](#). To sign up to become a full, dues-paying member, please [click here](#).

Please share this notice with any VSEA members you know who might be interested in the Sugarbush deal.

A few notes:

- The program is open to full time employees, their spouse, partner in a same sex marriage. It is not meant for a "roommate" situation.
- Youth and child passes may be purchased only in conjunction with an adult pass.

Deadline to sign up is September 30, 2015!

Discounted Bolton Valley Season Passes Now Available To VSEA Members

For the third 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, 2015, 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. If you want to register for member-only status, please [click here](#). To sign up to become a full, dues-paying member, please [click here](#).

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 2015-16 Bolton Valley All Access Season Pass includes:

- 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); and
- 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 Member's Firefighter Son Seeks Kidney Donation

VSEA member Gerald Garrow is the Fire Safety Division's Chief Plumbing and Heating Inspector, and some of his coworkers recently contacted VSEA to let the union know about Gerald's son, Brent, a union firefighter who is in need of a kidney donation. Brent, a Local 2323 firefighter, is O-blood type. In an appeal on Facebook, Garrow's mother Jennifer writes, "If you are a potential donor or know someone who could help him. I'd be forever grateful!" She adds that he needs a new kidney by October to avoid dialysis.

If you are able to help, please contact the UVM medical center @ 877-467-5102.

VSEA Teams Continue Bargaining Overview Meetings

VSEA Judiciary and NMU Bargaining Team members and staff are continuing a series of meetings across the state to give frontline workers an overview of upcoming bargaining with the State, talk with you about where to go for information and let you know how you can assist your Team throughout negotiations.

Here are some newly scheduled meetings—by Bargaining Unit:

Non-Management Unit – Contact: Tim Boyle, tboyle@vsea.org or 802 595-9106

Montpelier – September 8 – DMV, First Floor Break Room – 11:00 a.m.

Montpelier – September 18 – Tax Dept., 133 State, Room 410 – Noon

Barre – September 16 – McFarland State Office Building, ESD Conference Room – Noon

VSEA Seeks Legislative Specialist

Your union is currently recruiting qualified individuals to fill the position of:

Legislative Specialist

Scope of work:

This position works under the supervision of the VSEA Legislative Director. This position is responsible for all aspects of legislative activities under the direction of the Director. This position oversees monitoring of assigned legislative issues. The Legislative Specialist works to ensure the completion of all legislative drafting, reports, and other documents necessary to VSEA's lobbying and political activities.

Job Duties will include:

- Assisting the VSEA Legislative Committee in the development of the union’s legislative priorities;
- Coordinating the lobbying and/or testifying activities of VSEA staff and members;
- Assisting the VSEA Legislative Committee and members in executing the unions legislative priorities through lobbying efforts;
- Testifying before legislative committees and at public hearings on VSEA’s issues;
- Developing excellent working relationships with member leaders as well as rank-and-file members in order to assist members in their union’s legislative advocacy;
- Researching legislative issues and preparing legislative reports as necessary;
- Working with VSEA’s communications team to assist with political and legislative messaging;
- Coordinating necessary action on proposed legislation;
- Collaborating with other unions and coalitions on legislation impacting VSEA members; and
- Coordinating VSEA’s political action and campaign support.

Experience:

Experience working with government, legislature, political campaigns or labor unions. Demonstrated experience building consensus and working relationships with a wide variety of persons and organizations. Demonstrated skills in verbal and written communication. Knowledge and understanding of the State of Vermont’s political landscape. Campaign experience is a requirement.

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!

“You come to this window to talk to security before you get entrance. Once in the two-story atrium, you still can’t get into the work environment. Visitors have to call state workers from phones and, if approved, get escorted through locked doors to their offices.”

Waterbury State Office Building Project Manager Mike Stevens in a [September 2 Seven Days story](#) about the new complex and some of the security measures being implemented following the recent tragedy in Barre.

{PUT IN SIDEBAR}

New To The VSEA Advantage Discount Program: Green Mountain Games

The VSEA Advantage Discount Program is pleased this week to welcome Green Mountain Games in Colchester.

Green Mountain Games

Paintball & Laser Tag

1751 East Road

Colchester, VT 05446

Contact: Scott Brisson or Adam Norton

Phone: 802 878-2905

Email: staff@vtpaintball.com

Website: www.vtpaintball.com

20% off individual rental packages; 10% off birthday party package

Have You Signed The VSEA 2015 Contract: Respect & Dignity Petition Yet?

As official contract bargaining on successor agreements begins, VSEA is reminding members to sign your union's "2015 Contract: Respect & Dignity" petition, which calls for good-faith bargaining, an end to cuts, cuts and more cuts and for lawmakers to stay out of the collective bargaining process (language prompted by a letter from the Chairs of two powerful House committees with their suggestions for what and how to bargain with state employees). To date, VSEA has collected more than 500 signatures on the petition, but we need more!

You can sign the online petition by [clicking here](#).

New VSEA Video Uses Recent Retiree Voices To Talk With Young State Employees Just Joining The Workforce

VSEA's Communications Department has produced an 11-minute video that features recent VSEA retirees talking about their experience in the union, why they got involved, the good the union does, the importance of being a steward and other things. VSEA will begin including a flyer in all new-member packets, steering the new member to the video link and asking them to take a few minutes and view.

"This is an additional tool for VSEA to use to recruit new members to get active in their union and help ensure it's still around when he or she is getting ready to retire and pass the baton to a whole new generation of Vermont state employees," says VSEA Communications Director Doug Gibson.

VSEA members can view the video by [clicking here](#).

VSEA Labor Educator Announces Fall 2015 Training Schedule

VSEA Labor Educator Tim Lenocho asked WIA to announce a new round of trainings he has scheduled throughout the fall 2015. If you are interested in registering to attend one or more trainings, you can do so by [clicking here](#). Please direct your training questions to Tim at tlenoch@vsea.org.

Department of Corrections Stewards

VTrans Training Center, 1716 US Rte. 302, Berlin

Wednesday, September 9

Steward 1: Introduction and the Basics

VTrans Training Center, 1716 US Rte. 302, Berlin

Wednesday September 16

VSEA Council Members and Chapter Officers

VTrans Training Center, 1716 US Rte. 302, Berlin

Wednesday, September 23

Steward 2: Protecting the Contract and Building the Union

VTrans Training Center, 1716 US Rte. 302, Berlin

Wednesday September 30

Steward 3: The Contract and Challenges in the Workplace

VTrans Training Center, 1716 US Rte. 302, Berlin

Wednesday, October 14

The Labor Activist (open to all members and union officers)

VTrans Training Center, 1716 US Rte. 302, Berlin

Friday, October 16

Health and Safety Issues

VTrans Training Center, 1716 US Rte. 302, Berlin

Wednesday, October 28

The Grievance

VTrans Training Center, 1716 US Rte. 302, Berlin

Friday, November 6

Steward 1: Introduction and the Basics

VTrans Training Center, 1716 US Rte. 302, Berlin

Friday, November 13

VSEA Council Members and Chapter Officers

VTrans Training Center, 1716 US Rte. 302, Berlin

Wednesday, November 18

The Labor Activist (open to all members and union officers)

VTrans Training Center, 1716 US Rte. 302, Berlin

Wednesday, November 25

Labor Management Committees for Stewards and Labor Team Members

VTrans Training Center, 1716 US Rte. 302, Berlin

Wednesday, December 2

Steward 2: Protecting the Contract and Building the Union

VTrans Training Center, 1716 US Rte. 302, Berlin

Friday, December 4

Representing Co-Workers in Investigations and Disciplinary Meetings

VTrans Training Center, 1716 US Rte. 302, Berlin

Wednesday, December 9

Steward 3: The Contract and Challenges in the Workplace

VTrans Training Center, 1716 US Rte. 302, Berlin

Friday, December 18

[Click here](#) to register for a training(s)!

Upcoming Meetings/Events/Holidays:

September 7

Labor Day Holiday
Most State Offices & VSEA Closed

September 7

Burlington Labor Day Celebration
Battery Park
2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

September 8

Board Of Trustees Meeting
VSEA HQ
Montpelier
9:30 a.m.

September 8

NMU Contract Overview Meeting
DMV
120 State Street, First Floor
Montpelier
11:00 a.m.

September 8

NMU Contract Overview Meeting
National Life
Winooski Conference Room
Montpelier
Noon

September 8

Brattleboro Chapter Monthly Meeting
State Office Building
Conference Room 148
Brattleboro
Noon

September 9

Steward Training: DOC
VTrans Training Center
1716 U.S. Route 302
Berlin
9:00 a.m.

September 11

VSEA Council Meeting
Jay Peak Resort
Jay
9:00 a.m.

September 12

VSEA 71st Annual Meeting

Jay Peak Resort

Jay

9:00 a.m.