



WEEK IN ACTION!

Weekly News From Your Union ~ September 21, 2015 – September 25, 2015

VSEA Establishes Fund To Assist Lara Sobel's Daughters

VSEA is pleased to announce that an online page is now live for members and others to donate to the "VSEA Fund for the Children of Lara Sobel."

"We've had requests from members and other Vermonters who were looking for a way to help, so VSEA was pleased to work with the Sobel family to establish this special fund," explains VSEA Communications Director Doug Gibson.

VSEA members and others can access the [donation page here](#).

Vermont Senator Introduces Bill To Kill Health Care Excise Tax

In early July, *WIA* reported that representatives of nearly all VSEA's Bargaining Teams were at the Best Western in Waterbury to meet with each other and representatives of the State and Vermont's congressional delegation to discuss the ramifications of the federal Affordable Care Act's (a.k.a. Obamacare) proposed excise tax on "high-cost" health care plans, which is being imposed in 2018. At the meeting, VSEA and the State mutually agreed there were real concerns about the tax's adverse impact to some 60% of Vermonters who have health care plans deemed to be "too rich with benefits." This group includes VSEA members, teachers and other Vermont union members, as well as a large number of Vermonters working in the private sector. To help avert damage from the tax, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders [announced this week that](#) is teaming with allies from across the aisle to introducing legislation to repeal it. Sanders' bill would impose a surtax on the wealthiest Americans to make up for an anticipated shortfall if the excise tax is repealed.

WIA will keep members updated on any developments around Sen. Sanders' legislation to repeal the excise tax on health care plans.

VSEA Board Of Trustees' Corrections Seat Open To Interested DOC Members!

For years, VSEA's Corrections Unit has been represented admirably on the VSEA Board of Trustees by Dave Bellini, who was recently elected VSEA President. Bellini's new post creates an opening on the Board, and VSEA is accepting [petitions](#) from interested workers who belong to the Corrections Unit.

If you're a VSEA DOC member who is interested in running to fill the Corrections Board seat, you must obtain 25 signatures or more on a [petition](#) and submit it to headquarters by 4:00 p.m., Friday, October 9, 2015.

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 nearly 900 signatures on the petition, but we need more!

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

Retiree Says “Thanks”

One of the VSEA members honored at this year’s Annual Meeting by then-President Martin was longtime VSEA activist Alton “Tony” Smith; a retired DCF worker. Tony reached out to WIA to include this short statement from him.

“Thanks to all involved in my Presidents Award at annual meeting,” wrote Smith. “The applause and chant of my name was great.”

“You are welcome Tony,” responds Martin. “You are beloved throughout our VSEA family, and the recognition is deserved.”

Deadline For Discount Sugarbush Ski Passes Is September 30!

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

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 Ope

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!

“The [State has] had this information [about AOT workers coming to the 9/15 scheduled bargaining session] for seven days and they initially made it seem like they were going to meet with us. Then, all of a sudden, out of nowhere, they kind of fell back on what they had said.”

VSEA AOT member Leavitt Sayers, in an informal press conference outside the Pavilion Building after delivering AOT workers’ contract issues there. The workers decided to personally deliver the issues after State negotiators cancelled their scheduled meeting with the workers at the last minute.

{PUT IN SIDEBAR}

VtSHARES Welcomes New Program to its Roster of Charitable Organizations: Girls/Boyz FIRST Mentoring Program

This piece was submitted to WIA by Doug Kievit-Kylar (VSEA & Sustainability Committee Member/Mentor with the Girls/Boyz FIRST Mentoring Program

The season of giving will soon be upon us once again as VtSHARES rolls out again this autumn. This is the time of year when we all invest in our fellow Vermonters by donating to charitable organizations designed to help those in need. Every year Vermont state employees demonstrate remarkable generosity of spirit through their donations to VtSHARES – and VSEA members have, and can continue to play an important role in supporting charitable organizations of their choice.

VtSHARES was established in 1977 as the State Employees' Combined Charitable Appeal (SECCA) to allow an annual, coordinated campaign to permit payroll deduction, thereby encouraging financial support from Vermont State employees for local charitable organizations providing services to Vermonters. The campaign allows employees to spread contributions over an entire year or to make a one-time gift through payroll deductions.

This is the first year that the Girls/Boyz FIRST Mentoring Program is included in the roster of charitable organizations that State employees may elect to support with a donation. As a mentor for nearly two decades in this program myself I urge you to learn what you can about mentoring, about this important program, and consider making a donation to support young Vermonters.

To learn more about mentoring, the program, or to volunteer as a mentor yourself please visit the Girls/Boyz FIRST Mentoring Website at:

<http://www.communityconnections.us/ProgramInfo/girlsboyz/GirlsBoyz.html>

The economy and environment have continued to be hard on many Vermonters, and supporting those in need has always been a trademark of state employees and VSEA members. I urge you to take part in VtSHARES and choose to make a difference.

VSEA Labor Educator Reminds That Some Fall Trainings Are Open To All

VSEA Labor Educator Tim Lenoach asked WIA to remind members that many of the trainings scheduled throughout the fall 2015 are open to all members (indicated below in blue).

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.

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 29**

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

September 30

Steward Training 2: Protecting The Contract & Building The Union
VTrans Training Center
1716 U.S. Route 302
Berlin
9:00 a.m.

October 1

Labor Educator's Monthly Worksite Meeting
108 Cherry St.
Room 3B
Burlington

October 1

NMU Bargaining Overview Meeting

DOL

Lobby Conference Room

Montpelier

Noon

October 2

Judiciary Bargaining Unit Team Meeting

VSEA HQ

Montpelier

9:00 a.m.