



## WEEK IN ACTION!

Weekly News From Your Union ~ June 17 – July 21, 2017

Your union's weekly newsletter, *Week In Action*, is emailed every Friday afternoon. *Week In Action* is the best way to stay up to date with weekly VSEA news!

➤ Subscribe to *Week In Action* Online: [www.vsea.org/wia](http://www.vsea.org/wia)

### **Central Vermont VSEA Members Abruptly Learn They Must Now Pay To Park**

Just after *WIA* was emailed to members on the afternoon of July 14, VSEA began to receive calls and emails from members in central Vermont who, up until now, had been parking for free in Montpelier's popular Carr Parking Lot. The members informed headquarters that a memo had just been emailed to state employees, informing them that, beginning Monday, July 17, they would have to procure a parking permit from the city of Montpelier, and it would cost the employee \$60.

The memo came late Friday from BGS Deputy Commissioner Jennifer Fitch, informing workers who park in the lot that they are now "required to purchase a monthly parking permit from the City of Montpelier if you choose to park in the Carr Lot. Permits will be \$60 and will be good for 30 days and then you will have to renew the permit. Employees who have been using the Carr Lot should be prepared to find alternative parking if you do not wish to purchase a parking permit."

In addition to the new \$60 fee being added to employee's household budgets (many already stretched thin), many of the members who contacted VSEA complained about the State giving them little to no notice or time to make alternate arrangements. VSEA Executive Director Steve Howard made it clear this week to BGS Commissioner Chris Cole that the communication with workers could have been much better here, and Howard says Cole agreed, admitting it should have been announced earlier when BGS made the decision to cancel its lease of the Carr Lot, effective June 30, 2017.

Howard tells *WIA* that VSEA is exploring a few different ways to try to address the State's memo and the new cost to employees, including asking the State to secure a temporary lease while employees find alternate parking or requesting a shuttle from the DOL parking lot be in service year round, as opposed to just during the legislative session.

## **Judiciary Unit Bargaining Survey Is Live!**

VSEA members belonging to the union's Judiciary Unit are urged to complete a bargaining survey that should have been emailed to you earlier today. Your survey answers are critical to your elected Bargaining Team being able to come to the negotiating table with frontline Judiciary workers' priority issues in hand.

If you do not recall receiving today's earlier email containing the survey link, please check your spam folder. If you still don't see it, then contact VSEA Union Representative Brian Morse ([bmorse@vsea.org](mailto:bmorse@vsea.org)) to request the link.

Thanks in advance for participating in this important survey!

## **Central Vermont Chapter Annual Meeting Is July 25!**

The VSEA Central Vermont Chapter is holding its Annual Meeting on Tuesday, July 25, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Steak House Restaurant, located at 1239 U.S. Route 302 in Barre. Food and beverages being provided for both meetings!

If you have any questions or comments in advance, please feel free to contact VSEA's Central Vermont Chapter President, Cassandra Edson via email: [cassandraedson@hotmail.com](mailto:cassandraedson@hotmail.com)

## **Next Barre Chapter Meeting Is July 26!**

The VSEA Barre Chapter is holding its next meeting on Wednesday, July 26, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Quarry Restaurant in Barre. Food will be provided. Please RSVP (not required, but appreciated) or send questions to Barre Chapter President Sue LaFleche at [Suzanne.lafleche@vermont.gov](mailto:Suzanne.lafleche@vermont.gov).

## **Chittenden Chapter Schedules Annual Meeting For August 3!**

The VSEA Chittenden Chapter is holding its Annual Meeting on Thursday, August 3, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Division of Fire Safety Office, located at 380 Hurricane Lane in Williston. Food and beverages being provided!

## **Rutland Chapter Schedules Annual Meeting For August 10!**

The VSEA Chittenden Chapter is holding its Annual Meeting on Thursday, August 10, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Rutland Country Club, located at 275 Grove Street in Rutland. Food and beverages being provided!

Please RSVP in advance—or direct any questions or comments—to VSEA Rutland Chapter President Matt Jakubowski via email at [firebeevt@yahoo.com](mailto:firebeevt@yahoo.com).

## **Retirees' Chapter Schedules Annual Meeting For August 11!**

The VSEA Retired Members' Chapter is holding its Annual Meeting on Friday, August 11, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Canadian Club, located at 414 East Montpelier Road in Barre. Meeting registration officially begins at 9:30 a.m., and each retiree's reservation includes lunch!

The Retirees' Chapter recently mailed all Chapter members an Annual Meeting registration packet and form. If you don't recall receiving the packet, please

contact Retirees' Chapter President Bob Hooper by email at [hooper9999@gmail.com](mailto:hooper9999@gmail.com).

## **Time To Register For VSEA' 73<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting!**

VSEA is holding its all-members-invited Annual Meeting on Saturday, September 9, at the Stoweflake Resort in Stowe, Vt. This year's meeting, your union's 73<sup>rd</sup>, is an important one, as it's being held just after a new round of bargaining is scheduled to start with the State and in advance of October's expected federal budget cuts, which could adversely impact many public services. Members attending Annual Meeting will also be the first to hear the results of the officer elections that VSEA will be conducting in the coming weeks.

Reminder postcards about Annual Meeting are being mailed soon to all members. **All those who want to attend must register and reserve a room(s) by Tuesday, August 8.**

Friday night, September 8, there is a dinner banquet followed by an ADULTS ONLY dance - "**Flashback to the 50's & 60's**". Members are urged to come dressed in their best 50's or 60's attire and dance to the music of DJ, Allen Brown. Allen is a former VSEA member and AOT Employee. Prizes will be awarded for the best 50's and 60's costume. Have your picture taken in the photo booth by Emile.

[VSEA members can register online today here.](#)

## **Seats On The Bus Open Up For VSEA's 2017 "Day At Fenway" Event On August 27**

Due to some last-minute cancellations, about a dozen seats are currently open to attend second-ever "VSEA Day at Fenway" event. VSEA is sponsoring this trip to Fenway to see the Red Sox battle the Baltimore Orioles in a 1:05 p.m. start on Sunday, August 27. The cost is \$80 per person, which includes a bus ride to and from the park, as well as a ticket to the game.

If you and your family would be interested in joining your union and fellow members at Fenway on August 27, 2017, you should contact VSEA Union Representative Bob South by email at [bsouth@vsea.org](mailto:bsouth@vsea.org) or by phone at 223-5247. You can also contact VSEA Administrative Assistant Sue Devoid by email at [sdevoid@vsea.org](mailto:sdevoid@vsea.org) or by phone at 223-5247.

The remaining tickets will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis.

## **Discounted 2017 Great Escape / Splashwater Kingdom Day Tickets Now Available Exclusively At VSEA HQ!**

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

Park Open Now!

Discount Great Escape / Splashwater Kingdom tickets are now available for purchase and pick up at VSEA headquarters, and there is no service charge

attached. **VSEA is not offering the online ticket purchase option this year**, but HQ will mail your tickets to you in advance, but if you choose the mailing option, please ensure you reserve far enough in advance to receive your tickets.

2017 Regular Day Tickets = \$36 each (40% savings!)

To reserve and pickup your tickets, contact VSEA Administrative Assistant Sue Devoid by email ([sdevoid@vsea.org](mailto:sdevoid@vsea.org)) or by phone (802-223-5247).

## **VSEA All-Member Appreciation Day Event Is July 29!**

VSEA's Membership Recruitment Committee is inviting VSEA members from across the state to attend a special "All-Member Appreciation Day" event on Saturday, July 29, at Elmore State Park off Route 12 in Elmore.

VSEA will fire up the barbeque at noon, and members are welcome to spend the day enjoying the lake, hiking trails or any of the park's other outdoor activities.

To ensure VSEA has enough food on hand for the event, please RSVP to this event by Friday, July 14. Email your RSVP, including the number of people in your party, to VSEA Administrative Assistant Sue Devoid at [sdevoid@vsea.org](mailto:sdevoid@vsea.org). Members can also register online [here](#).

*Note: WIA was fortunate enough to be able to attend the Lamoille Valley's Chapter Annual Meeting at Lake Elmore in 2016, and the setting is gorgeous and there are a lot of activities for people of all ages. Nice place to spend a day.*

## **Submit Your 2017 VSEA Annual Meeting Award Nominations Online Today!**

It's time again to submit your nominations for a 2017 VSEA Outstanding Performance Award in the following categories:

- 1) VSEA Chapter of the Year;
- 2) VSEA Steward of the Year;
- 3) The Mazza Award — For Outstanding Service to VSEA;
- 4) The Macaig Award — For Outstanding Public Service; and
- 5) The Linda Coan Memorial Award — Outstanding VSEA Staff Member

Submit your nominations online [here](#). **The deadline to submit nominations is Tuesday, August 8, by close of business.**

"VSEA's Special Events Committee is urging members to give some thought to each of these awards and if you know of a deserving state employee—or a deserving Chapter—then please don't hesitate to send your nomination(s) to us," says VSEA Special Events Committee Chair Ken Bortell.

Winners will be announced at VSEA's Annual Meeting banquet on September 9 in Stowe.

## **Join Us Again For... VSEA NASCAR DAY 2017!**

Sunday, September 24, 2017

**New England 300 – NASCAR Sprint Cup Series**

New Hampshire Motor Speedway - Loudon, NH

Low \$80 price gets you:

A Premium Ticket; and

Transportation by Lamoille Valley Transportation\*

**Full payment must be submitted to VSEA by Friday, August 25.**

To make your reservation, please submit this online form here!

A VSEA chartered-bus pickup schedule will be announced soon!

### **Questions?**

Please feel free to contact VSEA Union Representative Bob South by email at [bsouth@vsea.org](mailto:bsouth@vsea.org)

New Hampshire Motor Speedway Website

## **Agenda Released For August 18 VSEA "Steward Summit." Register Today!**

In an effort to better educate frontline worksite Stewards about their role in VSEA, as well as provide them with enhancements to their existing skill set, VSEA's Field Department is hosting a series of "Steward Summits" across Vermont this year.

VSEA Stewards are learning the latest developments relating to contract enforcement and receiving an overview of the budget, safety and health and other challenges that lie ahead for state employees. Stewards attending are being asked to immediately help out by taking some of what they learn back to the worksite to educate their colleagues.

Three, six-hour trainings remain, and every current VSEA Steward is required to attend one session.

Here is the agenda released for the August 18 summit in Waterbury at the Best Western Hotel:

8:30 a.m. – Registration & Breakfast

9:00 a.m. – Welcome & Introductions

9:30 a.m. to Noon – Grievances (Learning the Basics) or Safety & Health

1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. – Role of Steward in an Investigation or Organizing (Member Recruitment)

2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. – Bullying in the Workplace

Future Steward Summits (all 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) are scheduled for:

October 20 – Hotel Coolidge, 39 South Main St., White River Junction  
November 3 – Holiday Inn, 476 Holiday Drive, Rutland

## **Connecticut State Employees' Extremely Generous Contract Concessions Still Not Enough For Some State Lawmakers**

Leaders of the 16 labor unions representing Connecticut state employees announced on Tuesday that voted overwhelmingly to support a generous package of wage and benefit concessions that will be used to address the state's budget deficit. However, some lawmakers are openly balking at the deal's quid pro quo, which is a promise to impacted state workers that they will not be laid off for four years and their contracts' current benefit packages would be extended for five years—untouched.

Fifteen of the state's 16 unions' (the Troopers union is currently not a dues-paying member in good standing) members agreed to double their pension contributions, create a hybrid pension/defined-contribution plan for future employees, increase health care co-payments and premiums and require active workers to contribute more toward their retirement health-care benefits. This deal (employees also made concessions in 2009 and 2011) is expected to save Connecticut \$1.57 billion over two years, yet it might not be enough for some lawmakers, who regrettably think the no-layoff promise and contract extension are too much and too kind. Rank-and-file workers are responding angrily.

"Middle-class workers have done their part," says Darnell Ford, an employee at the Department of Children and Families. "Now is the time for the legislators to do their part. We can't be the only part in this process."

CT Governor Dannel Malloy agrees, telling [\*The Norwich Bulletin\*](#), "State unions held up their end of the bargain—negotiating in good faith, leading their members through some tough changes, and ultimately rallying their members," Malloy says. "Now, it's up to the legislature to do their part and approve this agreement. We will continue to be available to meet with any legislator who may have questions about the value and significance of this agreement."

With the vote to agree or disagree to concessions behind them, CT state labor leaders are publicly cautioning that members' overwhelming support should not be viewed as a sign that labor is pleased with all policies at the state Capitol. Unfortunately, the leaders point out—as in Vermont—their members' calls for a more progressive income tax continue to be largely rebuffed by Malloy and most legislators.

## **If Searching For Child Care, Don't Forget This Important Resource For State Employees**

Longtime VSEA member, now retiree, Dave Clark has served on VSEA's Child and Elder Care Committee for many years, and he recently asked *WIA* to remind state employees about an important child-care resource that is currently available to them.

"The Committee has noticed a recent decline in employees' usage of the valuable child-care resources available to them, so we asked *WIA* to help us remind VSEA members about what is available," explains Clark.

VSEA members can [visit VSEA.org](http://VSEA.org) to learn more about the Committee's "Child-Care Referral Service" and other child-care resources for state employees, including possible child-care reimbursement to qualifying employees.

## **Reminder: VSEA Membership Recruitment Committee Sponsoring 2017 Recruitment Drive. Prizes Being Awarded!**

Last fall, VSEA's Membership Recruitment Committee launched a "Membership Engagement and Recruitment Initiative" to grow the union's ranks. The Committee asked members to talk with current agency-fee payers about the benefits of full-fledged membership and why the member should make the switch. If the member decides to upgrade their membership, the recruiting member will have the satisfaction of knowing they helped their union become stronger, but, in addition, the Membership Recruitment Committee will be awarding different levels of prizes to members, based on the number of new VSEA members recruited.

Here are the guidelines to participate and be eligible for a prize:

- Whether submitting your recruited member(s) name(s) on a physical recruitment card or online, **you must include your name as the recruiter**;
- Every member who recruits a new member will have his or her name entered into a drawing for the Grand Prize. The winner's name will be drawn at VSEA's Annual Meeting in September 2017, and the winner must be present to claim the prize;
- Team entries are being accepted. Please register with Membership Recruitment Committee Chair Katelyn Chase by emailing her at [kchase@vsea.org](mailto:kchase@vsea.org).
- Members who recruit a new member, who then agrees to join your union's political awareness committee (VTPAC) will receive an additional chance to win the Grand Prize, and
- The cut-off date for this competition is **August 30, 2017**.

Here are the different prize levels:

75 prizes awarded - \$10 gift card and a VSEA water bottle

40 prizes awarded - \$25 gift card and a VSEA hat

15 prizes awarded - \$50 gift card and a VSEA tote bag

8 prizes awarded - \$100 and a VSEA vest

1 Grand Prize - \$1200

*Note: WIA is periodically reminding members about this effort until its culmination in August 2017.*



## **Subscribe To VSEA Today!**

VSEA's Communications Department is happy to disseminate any and all communications the leadership, Chapters, Units, and others request, however, the lists the Department currently pull from are provided to the union by the State of Vermont. VSEA's Communications Department has found the lists to be dated, incomplete and sometimes lacking key information that was entered by a VSEA staff person but later overwritten or deleted during a State data dump.

To help VSEA more effectively reach active members—and really all those members who want to know what's going on in their union—VSEA will be working hard in the coming months to collect members' emails on its own and begin to build contact lists that cannot be altered by a State download.

You can help us get started by visiting, [VSEA.org/subscribe](http://VSEA.org/subscribe) and signing up for the VSEA communications you are interested in receiving.

Thank you in advance for subscribing. Please urge your colleagues to do the same.

## **Quote Of The Week!**

*"We have sacrificed to make Connecticut stronger. Why have [the State and lawmakers] only asked for sacrifices from working people?"*

*Hartford CT 11-Year Registered Nurse Cheryl Womack, commenting in [The Norwich Bulletin on July 18](#) about the State and lawmakers continually relying on service and job cuts, as well as contract concessions, to balance Connecticut's budget. Sound familiar Vermont?*

## **Are Required Emergency Drills Happening Where You Work?**

With the recent bomb threat at the State Office Building in St. Albans, VSEA wants to find out if the State of Vermont is following BGS emergency-situation protocol where you work.

The protocol on BGS' website reads:

"All owned and leased State Office Buildings occupied by State employees will practice a minimum of (1) evacuation fire drill every year and (1) Active Shooter and hostile intruder drill at least every two years. A record of these emergency drills should be recorded in the EML by the designated ECM on the day of the drill. The Safety Committees will coordinate drills with their respective sites. The Safety Committees shall meet within (14) days after the drills to discuss, critique, and analyze the drill."

VSEA wants to know if the proper training is occurring at your workplace and when it occurred last. Also, if you are unaware of this protocol, that's not good and VSEA wants to know this as well and also where you work.

Please send an email with your input to VSEA at [vsea@vsea.org](mailto:vsea@vsea.org). Write "Protocol Status" in the subject line.



## **VSEA Legislative Team's 2017 Legislator Scorecard**

At the June 13 Council meeting, VSEA Legislative Committee Chairperson Margaret Crowley provided a comprehensive overview of this year's legislative session, highlighting VSEA's many wins at the State House. Part of Crowley's presentation also included the distribution of a scorecard, providing each Vermont legislator's "right or wrong" vote on the following bills important to VSEA members:

- State's Attorneys Office Collective Bargaining;
- Beck Amendment To Interfere With Teachers' Right To Bargain Health Care;
- Paid Family Leave; and
- The Budget.

Find out how your local lawmakers rated by reviewing VSEA's FY2017 Session Legislator Scorecard [at VSEA.org](http://VSEA.org)

## **Threatened While On The Job? VSEA Wants To Know.**

VSEA President Dave Bellini is asking all state employees who are threatened while performing your job duties to provide an account of the threat not only to your supervisor or the State, but also to VSEA.

"VSEA wants to begin to compile its own record of threats against frontline state employees, no matter your occupation," explains Bellini. "I'm asking all employees who are threatened, especially those working in AHS, to take a few minutes to fill out an online form VSEA made to collect your report. The information will help us provide a firsthand account of the number of threats being made and where they are being made, in addition to some other things."

If you are a state employee who is threatened on the job, please click here to find the online report form, **which will remain confidential**, unless otherwise approved by you.

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

### **July 25**

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

### **July 25**

Central Vermont Chapter Annual Meeting  
Steak House Restaurant  
1239 U.S. Route 302  
Barre  
5:30 p.m.

### **July 26**

Barre Chapter Meeting  
Quarry Restaurant  
210 North Main St.  
Barre  
5:30 p.m.

**July 27**

Legislative Committee Meeting  
VSEA HQ  
Montpelier  
9:00 a.m.

**July 27**

Retirees' Chapter Meeting  
VSEA HQ  
Montpelier  
9:00 a.m.

**July 27**

Organizer's Monthly Worksite Meeting – WRJ  
State Office Building  
Room 120  
118 Prospect Street  
White River Junction  
12:00 p.m.

**July 27**

OCS Labor-Management Meeting  
VSEA HQ  
Montpelier  
9:00 a.m.

**July 29**

VSEA All-Member Appreciation Day Event  
Elmore State Park  
Just Off Route 12  
Elmore  
All Day – BBQ Begins@Noon