



WEEK IN ACTION!

Weekly News From Your Union ~ October 16 – October 20, 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

VSEA Judiciary Members Score Victory, As Management Finally Sits Down To Bargain

Last Wednesday, VSEA Judiciary Unit members were outside the Vermont Supreme Court and the Washington County Courthouse, leafleting the public to call attention to the Court Administrator's refusal to bargain with Judiciary workers in a timely fashion. What a difference a week makes! *WIA* is happy to report that, in response to the leafleting and a recently filed unfair labor practice that VSEA leveled against the Judiciary for refusing to bargain, the Court Administrator met at the Labor Board late last week with VSEA Unit Chair Margaret and Unit Vice Chair Beth Aiken, where the parties agreed to begin bargaining in good faith on October 20.

"VSEA Judiciary Unit members are very pleased with management's decision to come to the bargaining table this week and not put off full negotiations, including over money, until January or February, which is a timeline that doesn't serve employees well and that workers have been trying to get changed in recent negotiations," explains Crowley. "Judiciary Unit members believe that negotiating a new agreement now will give lawmakers and the State some time to allocate whatever money is necessary to fund the contract's terms and conditions agreed to at the table. In the past, when we started in January or February, we would not reach an agreement with management until after the legislature had already adjourned, which made it hard to get the funding needed for the improvements our members deserve."

VSEA Judiciary Unit members add that this is a huge victory for the employees because this is the earliest that management has ever agreed to start bargaining.

St. Johnsbury & Newbury AOT Garages Presented With "Spirit of the ADA" Awards

VSEA is sending congratulations to AOT members at the St. Johnsbury and Newbury VTrans garages, who this week were awarded "Spirit of the ADA" awards for their "exemplary work supporting workers with disabilities." Top State officials, lawmakers and other dignitaries were at the AOT Garage in St. Johnsbury on October 17 to present the awards to the management and staff of both garages.

According to a State press release about the awards ceremony, this award is given to “employers who reflect the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act in their employment practices, including:

- Recruitment, outreach and equal accessibility in the application, interviewing and hiring procedures for people with disabilities.
- Use of on-the-job accommodations, modifications, progressive employment methods and/or creative solutions for successful training and employment of people with disabilities.
- Accessible physical structures, buildings, work stations and equipment, and services.
- Support for the employment of a person(s) with a disability as an overall employment strategy.”

Your Survey... Your Future: VSEA Corrections Survey 2017

VSEA sent an email to Corrections members this week, reminding them to complete a recently posted, comprehensive, online survey to find out how DOC employees feel about their working conditions and what their priority issues are moving forward.

VSEA Corrections leaders on the Unit’s Bargaining Team and Executive Committee will be using employees’ answers to help them shape their agendas and draft beneficial policies. Your Unit’s survey results will also be shared with VSEA’s Legislative team, so it can begin to educate lawmakers about how they can help Vermont’s Corrections workers provide the safest and best service possible to our state’s taxpayers.

To Take The Survey, please contact VSEA Organizer David Oppenheimer by email at Doppenheimer@vsea.org or call him at 223-65247.

Thanks in advance for completing this very important survey!

Next Waterbury Chapter Meeting Is October 30

VSEA’s Waterbury Chapter will meet on Monday, October 30, beginning at noon at a to-be-determined location (see next week’s *WIA*). Food is being provided.

If you have any questions in advance, please feel free to contact Waterbury Chapter President John Mangione via email: mangioneart@comcast.net.

VSEA Member Sought To Take Over For Retiring District 5 Trustee

A petition is now available online for VSEA members interested in running to fill VSEA’s District 5 Board seat; a leadership role that allows you to serve as the voice for **Rutland & Bennington’s** VSEA members at the Board table.

Two years remain on retiring Vets’ Home employee Barbara King’s current term, meaning whoever is appointed to the position will serve out her term and then have to run for official election in the next campaign cycle.

To be eligible for election to the District 5 seat, a member must reside or have an assigned workstation--and continue to reside or have an assigned workstation--in District 5.

If interested, you must be a member in good standing, and you must collect the signatures of 25 or more full, dues-paying VSEA members.

[Download A Petition on VSEA.org](#)

The deadline to submit your petition is Thursday, November 2, 2017!

If you are unable to access a petition online, please contact VSEA headquarters at 223-5247 to request to have a hard copy petition mailed to your home.

More Time Contributions Needed Now To The Non-Management Unit's Sick Leave Bank!

Donations Being Accepted October 1 To December 31

VSEA member Dawn Carrillo staffs the Non-Management Unit Sick Leave Bank, and she is again asking *WIA* to sound the alarm that the bank really needs your donated hours. NMU members can donate a few hours to your Unit's sick leave bank from **now until December 31, 2017**.

"Just donating an hour of your time can mean the world to a fellow employee," reads a new flyer DHR is circulating. It also informs state employees that they can **donate any amount of annual- or personal-leave time** to the NMU Sick Leave Bank. "Know that you are performing a wonderful service by helping your friends and fellow employees, who, along with their families, are struggling due to serious health issues," the flyer concludes.

[VSEA members interested in donating some much-needed time to the NMU, Corrections and Supervisory Sick Leave Banks can find a donation form here.](#)

"I want to thank every member for considering a donation to your Unit sick leave bank," says VSEA President Dave Bellini. "Even if you only donate one hour to the bank, these one-hour donations add up. It's so worthwhile because your donation is going to help a fellow state employee who is battling a serious illness."

Health Care Is The Topic Of The VT Chapter Of The Alliance For Retired Americans 13th Annual Conference

The Vermont Chapter of the Alliance for Retired Americans (VT ARA) is holding its 13th annual conference on **Saturday, October 28**, and VSEA retirees and members are invited to attend.

The feature topic of this year's VT ARA conference is "From Expensive To Affordable: Vermont's Health Care Future" and featured speakers include Dr. Deb Richter and Public Assets Institute President Paul Cillo. A representative from Senator Bernie Sanders' office will also be providing an update on S. 1804, which is also known as the "Medicare for All Act of 2017."

Conference participants are invited to join in the discussion about how we can

work together to overcome the challenges that are currently preventing Vermont from being able to provide quality, accessible and affordable health care coverage to all its citizens. The VT ARA wants to send conference participants home with the knowledge and tools they need to educate their fellow Vermonters about the need "to establish universal, publicly financed primary health care in Vermont."

The official meeting begins at 9:30 a.m. and ends at 2:00 p.m. It's being held at the Montpelier Senior Activity Center, located at 58 Barre Street in Montpelier.

Conference Registration is \$15 per person or \$20 for 2 and includes morning refreshments. The cost of lunch is \$10, and membership in the Vermont Alliance for Retired Americans is \$10 per year.

For information or to register, contact Jane Osgatharp,
President: annajaneo@aol.com or **(802) 229-0850**.

Sign Up Today For February 2018 VSEA Trip To TD Garden For Boston Bruins Game

Based on the popularity of the first few member bus trips sponsored by VSEA, your union's Membership Recruitment Committee (a small group of rank-and-file state employees who coordinate and host VSEA's outings) recently polled members to find out what kinds of bus trips you want the Committee to pursue in the future. Coming up number one was a trip to Boston for a Bruins game, so the Committee is wasting no time responding, scheduling the following:

VSEA Boston Bruins Bus Trip

Saturday, February 3, 2018

TD Garden, Boston

7:00 P.M.

Section: Balcony 321

\$170 Per Person - 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 TD Garden on Saturday, February 3, contact VSEA Union Representative Bob South. You can reach Bob by email at bsouth@vsea.org or by phone at 223-5247.

Important! VSEA will be taking the names down of those interested, as members contact VSEA, but you will not be officially on the bus until full payment is received at headquarters. Please make checks payable to VSEA.

Congratulations CCV Educators On Unionizing!

VSEA is congratulating the Community College of Vermont's (CCV) 500+ "adjunct faculty" on voting 298-131 on October 12 to unionize. The vote count translates to 80% of the unit's members' casting votes in the election. CCV faculty are joining the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), which is a natural fit, as the AFT already represents faculty at all Vermont State Colleges.

In an [October 13 Rutland Herald story](#) about the vote, CCV Educator Emily Casey thanks management for not interfering in the election, saying, "We feel like they were professional and they allowed us to have a fair and free election."

The CCV faculty says its primary issues in upcoming bargaining will be a to have a greater say in CCV "governance" and to implement a step process, which does not currently exist.

New Report Examines Policies To Improve Economic Outcomes For Working Women

Politico reports on October 19 about a newly released report this week from the Brookings Institute's Hamilton Project, titled [Modernizing U.S. Labor Standards for 21st-Century Families](#). In it, the authors identify caregiving responsibilities, burdensome scheduling practices, and wage discrimination as the three main roadblocks to women improving their economic outcome. Some of the solutions to the problem suggested by the report's authors include: creating a paid leave policy that accounts for all reasons someone would need it; making employers cover the costs of last-minute schedule changes; and prohibiting employers from asking about salary history in job interviews.

Maryland Lawmakers Launch Investigation Into Assaults On Workers At State's Largest Psychiatric Hospital

WIA has reported recently about VSEA members' concerns about patient-on-worker assaults at the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital (VPCH); most recently, a vicious September 12 attack on four VPCH workers that sent three of them to the emergency room. Judging by [a story this week in the Baltimore Sun](#), VPCH workers are not alone in their efforts to educate lawmakers about the assaults and lobby them to help.

According to the *Sun* story, some Maryland lawmakers are so alarmed at what they are hearing that a formal investigation of the state's Health Department and its handling of the crisis.

From the story:

"[The assaults on workers are] terrible," says Del. Shane Pendergrass, the Howard County Democrat who chairs the House Health and Government Operations Committee. "I have to think about the people who work there, and who would want a job where you're going to get assaulted?"

Pendergrass said she asked the Senate Finance Committee to join the inquiry into the facility.

Finance Committee Chairman Thomas "Mac" Middleton said he has so many concerns about the state's ability to treat mental health patients that he wants his own briefing from state health officials.

"What are they going to do about this?" said Middleton, a Charles County Democrat. "It is reaching a really, really chaotic situation right now. It needs to be addressed."

Pendergrass said lawmakers will also demand answers on why the state has failed to provide treatment for all the mental health patients referred by the criminal justice system — patients that are instead languishing in jails for months at a time.

A Baltimore judge held five top Maryland officials in contempt of court last month for failing to address that problem more quickly.

"We had thought things were moving forward. We thought there was a plan in place, and it is disheartening to see that we are not moving forward," Pendergrass said. "We are moving backward."

Note: AFSCME represents workers at the Maryland psychiatric hospital and [issued a statement](#) on the investigation.

Workers At Large Colorado State Psychiatric Hospital Lobby For Increased Pay To Compensate For Hazards Of Job

From a [10/19 Montrose Press story](#):

"One woman brushed aside [the State Mental Health Director's] claim that CMHIP staff pay had to be consistent with similar state employees.

'We're not in the same basket as (state personnel) elsewhere. We go to work everyday wondering if we're going to be assaulted.'

The woman got an ovation from the crowd."

Worker At Maine Psychiatric Hospital Suing Former Patient For Assault

The [Caledonian Record reports this morning](#) that a worker at a state of Maine psychiatric hospital is suing a former patient who was later sentenced to prison for assaulting her. The nurse alleges the patient punched her in the head from behind, causing serious injuries.

Study Finds Vermont Has Nation's Second-Highest Prison Health Care Costs

A [new study this week from the Pew Charitable Trusts](#) finds that Vermont spends the nation's second-highest amount of money, per-inmate to provide health care. According to the report, California spent the most in year 2015 at \$19,796 and Vermont spent \$13,747.

Other NE State's Costs:

Connecticut \$5,565

Maine \$7,397

Massachusetts \$8,948

New Hampshire N/A

New York \$7,047

Union Rep Holding Vet's Home Meetings

VSEA Union Representative Rachael Fields has scheduled a series of meetings to talk with Vet's Home employees about their issues and concerns.

If you work at the Vet's Home, please mark one of these dates and times down to stop by and talk with Rachael:

October 25 (Upstairs Board Room)

November 29 (Crispe Room)

December 27 (Crispe Room)

Available Times: 6:30 a.m., 1:00 p.m., 2:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.

President Bellini Wants Your Cost-Savings Idea(s)!

Thankfully, Vermont's public services were spared this week, when the legislature's Joint Fiscal Committee voted to approve a State-drafted rescission plan to address a budget hole in this year's budget—without any cuts. But heading into the January 2018 session, VSEA members already know it's going to be another case of "new budget year, new budget deficit." It's a Vermont problem that refuses to go away, and our state's quality public services and many of the men and women who deliver them continue to suffer as a result.

In past deficit years, VSEA members have been asked to voluntarily submit cost-savings ideas to headquarters, in hopes that some of your ideas could be adopted and implemented, eventually generating the funds needed to save a service or jobs. In 2010, the Vermont Legislature followed VSEA's lead, passing legislation to provide cash awards to state employees whose ideas were vetted by a special committee and found to generate savings. Unfortunately, this legislation sunset in 2012, and lawmakers have not resurrected it--yet.

For this reason—and in advance of the 2018 legislative session—VSEA President Dave Bellini is again asking frontline state employees with "department- or agency-specific cost-savings ideas" to please submit them to VSEA as soon as possible. Again, President Bellini is looking for department or agency-specific ideas, and nothing "philosophical," he politely requests.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this very important request.

[Submit Your Cost-Saving\(s\) Idea\(s\) Here](#)

VSEA Advantage Discount Program 2017 Killington & Pico Ski Offers

New this week, the VSEA Advantage Discount Program is pleased to welcome the Killington and Pico Resorts back your union's popular longtime, ski-discount program:

Killington Ski Resort

Killington Resort is offering VSEA members a discount on day tickets!

- \$76* each (nearly a \$40 savings!)

Killington Resort is offering VSEA members a discount on day tickets!

- \$50* each (nearly a \$30 savings!)

* *No blackout dates or restrictions*

Program Terms & Conditions

- Upon purchase, a ticket order will be created in the Killington Resort & Pico Mountain ticket system under the client's name.
- Tickets may be picked up at any ticket window location throughout Killington Resort or Pico Mountain.
- Killington Resort Tickets are valid any day during the 2017/2018 season at Killington Resort.
- Pico Mountain Tickets are valid any day during the 2017/2018 season at Pico Mountain ONLY.

Important! VSEA is waiting for Killington to send a link for members to use, but you can still order your Killington tickets today by contacting VSEA Administrative Assistant Sue Devoid, who will give you the code you need. Sue can be reached by email at sdevoid@vsea.org or by phone at 223-5247.

One VSEA Steward Summit Left In 2017. Register Today!

On November 3, VSEA's Field Department will close out a series of "Steward Summits" it has been hosting across Vermont this year.

One six-hour training remains, and remember that every current VSEA Steward is required to attend one session, so here's your last chance in 2017.

November 3 – Holiday Inn, 476 Holiday Drive, Rutland

[Click Here To Register For Steward Summit](#)

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 click [here](#) 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.

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 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!

"[The assaults on workers are] terrible. I have to think about the people who work there, and who would want a job where you're going to get assaulted?"

Maryland House Health and Government Operations Committee Chairperson Shane Pendergrass, commenting in a [Baltimore Sun story this week](#) about lawmakers launching a formal investigation into spike in number of patient-on-worker assaults at the state's largest psychiatric hospital.

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:

October 23

NMU Bargaining Team Meeting
VSEA HQ
Montpelier
8:00 a.m.

October 25

Union Representative Meetings @ Vets' Home
Veterans' Home
Upstairs Board Room
Bennington
Various Times

October 26

Corrections Unit Bargaining Team Meeting
VSEA HQ
Montpelier
8:00 a.m.

October 26

Supervisory Unit Bargaining Team Meeting
VSEA HQ
Montpelier
8:00 a.m.

October 26

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

October 26

Lamoille Valley Chapter Meeting
State Office Building
63 Professional Drive
Morrisville
12:00 p.m.

October 27

Chapter Presidents Meeting
VSEA HQ
Montpelier
9:00 a.m.

October 27

OCS Labor / Management Committee Meeting
VSEA HQ

Montpelier
9:00 a.m.

October 28

Vermont Chapter of the Alliance for Retired Americans
13th Annual Conference
Montpelier Senior Activity Center
58 Barre Street
Montpelier
9:30 a.m.