



# VRPA Advocate

Issue 91

Vermont Recreation & Parks Association

Summer 2018

## VRPA President's Perspective

Melissa Cate, CPRP,  
VRPA President



*Well it looks like our long winter is finally over and spring has sprung! I am so excited to get out into my flower beds and see the survivors poking up and even starting to bloom – at my house I'm enjoying daffodils, lilacs, phlox and bleeding hearts already and I can't wait to get my hands in the dirt and plant some vibrant annuals. I've also asked my husband to build me a raised bed so that I can plant a few herbs and vegetables... including Cindi Wight's tomatoes that I scored at the annual meeting silent auction!*

*Speaking of the annual meeting, I could not have asked for a better venue at which to kick off my VRPA presidency. Kudos to Betsy and Scott for selecting VINS and two superb educational sessions! It is with great enthusiasm that I enter into this leadership role with VRPA. I have served on the Executive Board for six years and could not ask for a better group with whom to work. We are excited to welcome two new at-large members, Brett Leonard of the South Burlington Recreation Department and Drew Pollak-Bruce from the SE Group, one of the first commercial members to serve on our board in ages. Brett and Drew will help the board as we focus on fiscal sustainability, diversifying our program offerings, and member outreach and advocacy.*

*As with any organization, VRPA is only as strong as its members and we are very fortunate to have an engaged membership with folks volunteering in a variety of capacities. If you have not already volunteered to help out your state organization, I would strongly encourage*

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## 75th Annual Vermont Conference on Recreation "Honoring the Past & Inspiring the Future" October 10 & 11, 2018

**P**lanning is well underway for this year's

Vermont Conference on Recreation. It's our 75th, this is one of the oldest state recreation conferences in the country. The Conference Committee has been hard at work since last December to ensure that we produce a conference that would make our predecessors proud. Mark your calendars to be at Lake Morey on Wednesday and Thursday, October 10th and 11th.

This year's keynote speaker, Adriane Benepe, is a senior vice president and director of city park development for The Trust for Public Land and is one of the nation's experts on the nexus of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors



in public-space development and management. In his career, Adriane Benepe has worked in leadership roles on park and public space conservation, design, construction, and operation, and in the areas of city planning, arts and culture, historic preservation, and landscape and urban design. He has also helped to create or empower several New York business-related organizations, from business improvement districts to park conservancies, including the Madison Square Conservancy, Jamaica Bay Conservancy, Historic House Trust of NYC, and Fort Tryon Park Trust. Mr.



Benepe holds a bachelor's degree from Middlebury College. He enthusiastically accepted our invitation to come back to Vermont to share his experiences and perspectives with the recreation professionals from Vermont communities, large and small. We look forward to welcoming him in October and meeting some of his colleagues from the Vermont office of the Trust for Public Land.

Modeling park build projects completed in recent years at the NRPA conferences and wanting to say thank you to the Lake Morey community after hosting our conference for the last thirteen years, you will have the opportunity on the first day of the conference to volunteer on an improvement project at the Fairlee Town Beach. This is the spot where the fireworks are shot from during our conference, how fitting. This was VRPA President, Melissa Cate's, idea and Josh

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## VRPA Executive Committee Officers

President	Melissa Cate, CPRP (Burlington)	865-5399
Pres-Elect	Ally Vile, CPRP (Essex)	878-1342
Secretary	Nicole Densmore, CPRP (Rutland)	773-1822
Treasurer	Jenn Turmel, CPRP (Colchester)	264-5643
Past President	Scott Hausler, CPRP (Hartford)	295-5036

## Executive Committee Members-at-Large

Brian Bevacqua, CPRP (Quechee)	299-2135
Matt Frazee (Stowe)	253-3054
Brett Leonard, CPRP (South Burlington)	846-4137
Drew Pollak-Bruce, CPRP (SE Group)	735-2370

## VRPA Office

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## VRPA Newsletter

The VRPA Advocate is published three times a year by the Vermont Recreation and Parks Association. Contributions to the newsletter are welcome, including commentary on subjects of interest to Vermont's recreation professionals and volunteers.

Editor – Betsy Terry Circulation – 450

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## VRPA Calendar of Events

### 2018

June 3	Summerama, Montpelier High School
July 21	VRPA-SJA State Track Meet, St. Johnsbury
Sept 25-27	NRPA Conference, Indianapolis
Oct 10-11	75th VT Recreation Conference, Lake Morey
Nov 15	Performance Showcase
TBD	December Quarterly Meeting
Jan 8-10	Northern NE Rec Conference, North Conway, NH

## Message from the Executive Director

At our recent Annual Meeting, we took the opportunity to commemorate VRPA's 70 years of service to Vermont's park and recreation providers. Throughout these years, VRPA



has maintained its commitment to provide a variety of educational and networking



opportunities, through the efforts of a dedicated membership and, for the last 20+ years with the assistance of an Executive Director.

As we do each year at our annual meeting, we also took time to celebrate our accomplishments of the past year too. Check out the pictures included in this newsletter and a copy of the Annual Report for a look at the year in numbers. Thank you to everyone who attended. We had the largest attendance in years and I am proud to note that more than half of us gathered at this year's VRPA Annual Meeting were certified park & recreation professionals.

And so, we begin another year in the life of VRPA. The Executive Committee will be meeting in early September to plan the year ahead. Please feel free to share your suggestions with our new President, Melissa Cate. A very special thank you to Andy Cappello and Geoff Beyer, who have shared their knowledge, vision, and good humor on

the Executive Committee for the last seven and four years, respectively. It was truly a pleasure working with you both.

My very best wishes to each of you and your departments for a successful summer season. I imagine this is the busiest time of the year for most of you.

I offer three suggestions:

**1. Approach each day being present in the moment.** Those who live in the moment tend to be happier, calmer, and more relaxed. I know from experience that when I am happy and calm, I do my best work.

**2. Don't be shy about telling your story.** There will be many wonderful things that happen in your programs and parks this summer; make time to notice them and tell the world about them.

**3. Practice self-care.** Take time to recreate yourself. Do whatever it takes to carve out quality time with your family and friends.

Have a great summer! We look forward to seeing you when we gather next as a group at the 75th Annual Vermont Conference in Recreation in October.

Betsy Terry, CPRP  
VRPA Executive Director

### VRPA Mission:

***Provide training and resources to help Vermonters to  
"Create Community through People, Parks and Programs."***



# Meeting Our Two New Executive Committee Members

By Betsy Terry, CPRP

Brett Leonard and Drew Pollak-Bruce joined the VRPA Executive Committee at the VRPA Annual Meeting on May 8th. We welcome their participation and insights on the board and look forward to working together for the next two years. Both Brett and Drew are Certified Parks and Recreation Professionals (CPRPs), increasing the number of CPRPs on our Executive Committee to eight.

### **Brett Leonard, CPRP Recreation Specialist, South Burlington Recreation & Parks**

For decades, the South Burlington Recreation Department has been providing VRPA with highly committed volunteers. Recreation Specialist, Brett Leonard, is the latest.

Brett started working with the South Burlington Recreation & Parks Department in the mid 80's while he was in high school and college and absent a 10-year period spent living out of state, he says he has taken on just about every part time role the department has had to offer. "I've been a playground leader and director, a camp counselor and director, a coach, referee, swim instructor, program

coordinator and have provided event support. Seizing on a rare opportunity, I moved into my full-time role with the department as a Recreation Specialist after spending the past 16 years as a special educator at the middle school level."

Brett shared, "I had supervisors who were wonderful role models throughout my many part-time years with the department. I witnessed their passion, dedication and how they made our community a better place to live, work and recreate. It's humbling, and very satisfying, to be following in those footsteps."

When asked about his greatest career accomplishments, Brett replied that obtaining his Certified Park & Recreation Professional (CPRP) certification last



September was especially meaningful. "It's a sign of my commitment to representing our department as a true professional. Now, having the opportunity to be a contributing member on the Executive Committee is an experience that I'm both proud of and thankful for."

One of the things that Brett appreciates most about being a member of the Vermont Recreation & Parks Association is the opportunity to network with and learn from other recreation professionals from across the state. "Our association is filled with a diverse membership that is talented, experienced and willing to share. Along with our quarterly meetings, I truly look forward to the professional growth opportunities available at our annual Conference on Recreation."

In his own recreation time, Brett enjoys kayaking, mountain biking, hiking and skiing. He has one amazing daughter, Emily, who just started her post college career endeavors in NYC. Brett says that he "thoroughly enjoys witty banter and a good laugh, and always appreciates a good friend and a good beer."

A bit of professional advice from lessons he has learned... "In the early years, I would have said Always have a plan "B", flexibility and preparedness are crucial. Now I would say, Change takes time, but never stop moving forward."

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# VRPA Personal Profile .....

## Drew Pollak-Bruce, CPRP Associate Planner, SE Group

In my seventeen years as VRPA Executive Director, Drew is the first commercial member to join our Executive Committee. It will be great to have a commercial member perspective sitting at the table with us as we set goals for the direction of VRPA over the next two years.

It is a small world in Vermont recreation and I first met Drew on one of his first work days in the Burlington office of the SE Group, having just arrived to Vermont from Colorado.

When asked about his path to Vermont and a career in recreation planning, Drew shared that "After I got my bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado I didn't know my path at all. I spent a few years as a ski bum in the Colorado mountains, technically I was snowboard racing and was doing a lot of training, but I worked nights at a Kinkos so I could be at the ski hill all day. At Kinkos, I would print SE Group's recreation planning documents and became obsessed—I had no idea that people did what they did for their job! After a few years of racing, I decided to go back to school for a Masters in Regional Planning, with a focus on Recreation, Tourism and Public Lands Management and the rest is history!"

Drew has had a lot of recreation jobs since his first one as a Snowboard Instructor at Shawnee Mountain at age 14, including having been a summer camp counselor, assistant publication editor, environmental analyst, parks and trails project manager, and recreation planner. His full-time career in recreation planning started with the SE Group in Frisco, CO before moving to SE Group's Burlington office in late 2014.

When asked about his greatest career accomplishments, Drew replied, "I am so happy any time a community can move forward on a project I have been involved with but getting my CPRP has been a pretty big personal achievement. I also love sharing what I've learned, so I'm pretty stoked on all the educational sessions I've been fortunate enough to lead at conferences locally and nationally."

So Drew, what do you do in your spare time? "I am crazy about bikes of all kinds and ride them year-round. I still snowboard a lot in the winter (resort, backcountry, and a little racing when I can) and I generally measure my summers



by the number of nights I spend sleeping in the woods. I love car camping, canoe camping, backpacking, etc. with my family. We also do a week-long family bike touring trip on a long-distance rail trail every year."

"My family are my whole world (other than recreation!) My wife—Amber—is studying Elementary Education at UVM and is a super-mom to our two amazing

children: Ben (2 years old) and Lily (5 years old). I bring them along on most of my wild adventures, and they are usually just as excited as I am to be there."

Drew said there are many things he values about being a VRPA member. "Through VRPA we can learn new ideas and techniques, share job opportunities, and learn from our peers, but I think the most important thing VRPA does is build a real community of recreation and parks professionals that support each other, know each other well, and have fun together. It's been a huge value to me as someone who is relatively new to the state." He closed by saying, "I love to talk so don't be afraid to say 'Hi' even if you're shy!"

Drew's advice... "Live in the moment—be present every day—and don't be afraid to follow your dreams. If it's what you love, it can't lead you astray."

Be sure to take the opportunity to have a conversation with both Brett and Drew the next time you see them.



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# Newport's CIT Program

In Newport, youth ages 13-16 are eligible to apply for the CIT (Counselor-in-Training) Program.

This is how they describe it in their summer program guide. *For some, the love of summer camp doesn't fade when you grow up. Our summer CIT Program is an opportunity to graduate from camper to skilled and qualified camp counselor through a four-week summer training program. After an application and interview process, six candidates will be selected to participate in an innovative season of fun and learning. Through hands-on experience and guidance from our seasoned Summer Rec Camp staff, CITs grow into confident, responsible and knowledgeable leaders. Focus will be on safety and personal development while under the supervision of qualified staff at Prouty Beach. By summer's end, CITs gain experience handling expected and unexpected emergencies, creating camp activities and memorable moments, shadowing veteran counselors and receiving First-Aid, CPR, and AED training. Participants must have completed their 7th grade school year before attending this program.*

The registration fee for the four-week CIT program is \$250 (early bird) and \$300 after May 18th.

### What do CITs do?

The schedule for a CIT is similar to the schedule for a camper, but from a completely different view point. CITs move through the camp day with more leadership tasks during activities and CIT workshops during free-times. As the summer goes on, CITs are eased into running activities on their own with support from senior staff.

### Do CITs get paid?

The CITs are not paid. Their CIT flyer reminds candidates that the experience is rewarding and an investment that will pay dividends in the future. Although salary



isn't one of them, benefits for CITs include cool t-shirts, CPR & First Aid certification, free field trips and most importantly, access to the staff-room candy jar!

### Can CITs be fired?

There are occasions where a Counselor-in-Training could be dismissed from the program for misconduct or other reasons.

### Are CITs guaranteed a job after training in the CIT program?

Although the CIT experience will make youth strong candidates for job openings, hiring each year is based on a variety of factors including availability of positions and the strength of the candidate pool. CIT program participants are encouraged to apply for camp positions when they feel they are ready, but Newport's CIT materials clearly state that a job offer should not be an expected outcome of the program.

For more information, contact Newport Parks & Recreation Director, Jessica Booth, at [jbooth@newportrecreation.org](mailto:jbooth@newportrecreation.org) or 802-334-6345.

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## Program Spotlight 2 .....

### Stowe's Survival Club

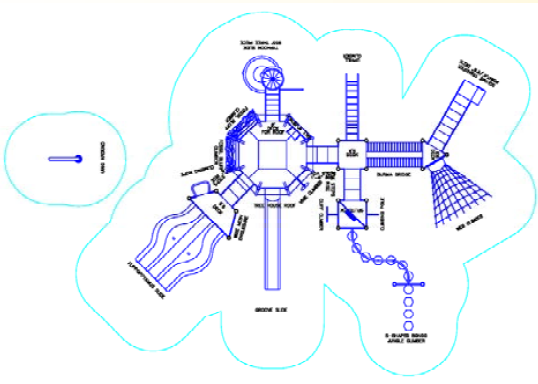
Looking for a new summer camp program? Here's a good one. The program guide describes it like this... *Are you ready to explore the wilder side of our forests? Our survival camp series offers campers the opportunity to learn different survival skills from fire building to shelter building to orienteering, plus much more that can come in use while camping or in case of an outdoor emergency. Please make sure to wear a pair of sturdy shoes, bring a rain jacket, and any other outdoor gear appropriate for the weather!*

The Survival Club is one of Stowe's Monday Club options; there are lots of other club options offered Monday through Thursdays, mornings and afternoons. Survival Camp meets every Monday, June 25th – August 13th, from 1:00 – 4:00pm. Daily rates are \$35/day for residents and \$40/day for non-residents or you can pay the whole season rate of \$160 (\$170 for non-residents). When space allows, registrations are accepted with just 24 hours advanced notice. Survival Club is available to youth in grades K-6.

For more information, contact Emily Boek, Stowe Program Director, at [eboek@stowevt.gov](mailto:eboek@stowevt.gov) or 802-253-6138.



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# Bayside Beach Inflatable Water Park

By Isaac Spivey, Program Coordinator, Colchester Parks & Recreation

In Vermont, there are some amazing programs, summer camps and new initiatives happening around the state in the field of Parks & Recreation. One NEW initiative happening in Colchester through the leadership of the Colchester Parks & Recreation Department is the addition of their new Bayside Beach Inflatable Water Park. In installing this new feature at the Bayside Waterfront location, the Colchester Parks & Recreation Department has become innovators in the field, being the very first Parks & Recreation Department to update their Waterfront location with an Inflatable Water Park open to the public, summer camp participants and families in the community.

Bayside Beach is an active and high traffic waterfront area in Colchester and has been an area the Colchester Parks & Recreation team has been looking to update. In an effort to utilize this area to promote recreation, community and fun, the Colchester Parks & Recreation Department installed, in the summer of 2017, a Water Inflatable course that included a 21' water slide, two floating 10' and 20' runways connecting the inflatable obstacles, as well as a climber stair inflatable obstacle. In the Colchester community, there was immediate excitement when it was seen for the first time out at the Waterfront area, and it has quickly become one of the most exciting attractions in Colchester.

Due to the success of the initial installation, the Colchester Parks & Recreation Department is installing additions to this Water Park area, showcasing the brand-new Bouncer obstacle and another water slide this upcoming 2018 summer season. The plan is to incrementally add features to the Water Inflatable Park in the future to



make this an exciting tourist destination and a spot that other communities can enjoy as well. This Water Inflatable Park will be located past the swimming area at the Bayside Waterfront, in addition to the growing Bayside Paddle Sports area, which showcases walk-on paddleboard and kayak rentals and SUP walk-on lessons. The growth of this Department and this Bayside Beach Waterfront area is something that is new to Vermont but may quickly become a trend around the state.

The Bayside Beach Waterfront will be offering 30-minute sessions at this new Waterfront feature, which includes access to the Water Inflatable Park as well as a PFD (Life Jacket) to wear for safety. Lifeguards will be out in the water watching all participants during their inflatable sessions, keeping the community safe during access to this feature.

Another new addition to the Waterfront is the new Inflatable punch

passes, which allows an individual or family to buy a pass that gets them five Water Inflatable sessions for the price of four. The Bayside Waterfront Staff is excited to install the new additions this summer, adding to the fun and beauty of the town of Colchester and the stunning Waterfront area. With the leadership of Director Glen Cuttitta, Assistant Director Derek Mitchell, Program Director Jenn Turmel & the Parks & Recreation team, this new Water Inflatable Park is now a feature attraction in the state of Vermont and will be opening June 25th for the upcoming 2018 Summer Season! If you are looking for a fun day on the water with friends and family, this new attraction in Colchester is definitely worth the visit!

# Rutland Residents Anticipate the Opening of their New Pool

By Kim Peters, Superintendent, Rutland Recreation & Parks

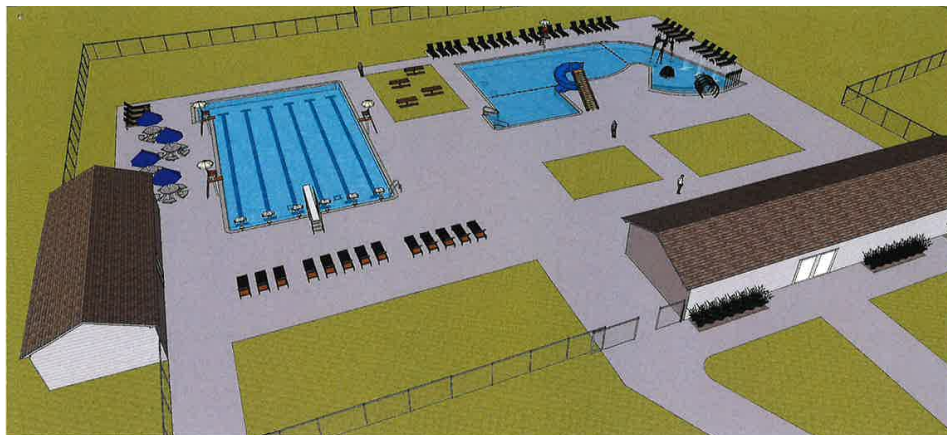
June 22nd, 2018 is Opening DAY for a long-awaited swimming pool in Rutland City. Rutland City has been without a pool for three summers. White Memorial Park swimming pool was closed after the 2014 Summer Season due to water leaks and the overall age of the pool which had an extended life of over 25 years.

The City of Rutland is fortunate to have White Memorial Park. The park has a play structure, basketball courts, tennis courts, baseball field, and now the addition of two new pools, one competition/lap pool and a family pool. The addition of the family pool with zero depth entry and water features will allow for more flexibility in scheduling events and create new aquatic programming opportunities.

Aquatics, holds a special place in my heart, as I have been an American Red Cross Certified Lifeguard for over 20 years, Certified USA Swim Coach for 20 years, Aquatics Director, and more recently a Certified Instructor for Lifeguarding, CPR, First Aid, and AED. In the last two years, I have certified over 30 high school and college age kids as lifeguards.

We are anxious to open these pools to the community and create new programs and opportunities to the public. My experience with aquatics and the ability to certify lifeguards and teach safety should create a smooth transition and hopefully, the community will feel that this is a safe place for families.

Our expectations for high-quality programs such as swim team and swim lessons will be a priority. We expect our morning and evening swim lesson programs to fill up quickly. We will also



*This is the design for the new Rutland pools. Stay tuned for photos of the new pools in action in the next newsletter.*

offer private lessons and teen/adult lessons. Rutland Swim Team will be home again after three years with new lane lines, starting blocks, and other fun equipment. Swim team is a sport where all ages and genders of the family can practice and compete together. We teach the fundamentals of swimming with a competitive edge.

All of our day camps will also be based out of White Memorial Park, which will allow for a camper to participate in swim team or lessons. The park has so many options and creates a positive and safe outdoor camp, we are excited to have this option this year.

We will also welcome other organizations, tapestry programs, camps, and corporations who would like to use the facility. Having two pools will allow for multiple groups to use the facility and pool at the same time. We also will promote lap swimming for adults and kids in morning, afternoon, and evening

times. Again, having two pools will allow for this to occur.

There are so many people and organizations to thank for the building of these two pools. First, Rutland Town allowed Rutland City to utilize their pool for the past three summers. Second, the community members, Mayor, and Board of Alderman for their continued support. The Recreation Department for spearheading this project and following the project closely. And Lastly, Russell Construction and all their contractors. NBF Architects, and Weston and Sampson for their leadership.

Editor's note: *Best of luck to Rutland with your pool opening! We look forward to an update in our next newsletter.*



# 75th Annual Vermont Conference on Recreation (continued)

Ryan, Owner of Timber & Stone, has taken the ball and run with it. The end product will make this valuable town resource more accessible. Stay tuned for more details.

The conference education program is nearly set and we are confident that we have multiple sessions of interest to everyone. Regular NRPA Conference presenters, Ryan Hegreness and Barbara Heller, will be with us and presenting sessions on marketing, innovative recreation programming, customer service systems, and leadership in today's park and recreation industry.

Colleagues from Vermont's local, state and federal park and recreation agencies, and some of Vermont's highest rated professional speakers, will be sharing their recent work in conference sessions. Some of the topics include How to Have an Effective Meeting, Time Management, Supervising Gen Z's, Inspiring Community Engagement, Changing How We Relate to Rivers, Creative Placemaking, Parks That Get Loved to Death, Multi-Use Trails, The Power of Positivity, Thriving as an Introvert in an Extroverted Industry, a VOREC update, and debuting the new Vermont Town Forest Toolkit. Both Vermont Systems and MyRec have User Groups scheduled as part of the conference schedule.

For the first time, we will be offering two sessions eligible for continuing education units towards your state pesticide licensing certification. Sid Bosworth and Randy Prostack, from the University of Vermont and University of Massachusetts respectively, will be presenting sessions on pest management on turf and landscaping. We have scheduled these sessions, in hopes that you will bring your maintenance staff with you to this year's conference.

The Exhibit Hall will be open on both days. We anticipate a sold-out exhibit hall. Exhibitors registered so far include Atlantic Golf & Turf, Clivus New England, Dunning Playground Surfacing, Franklin Paint, GameTime Park & Playground/Marturano, Kompan Playgrounds & Outdoor Fitness, M.E. O'Brien & Sons, Musco Sports Lighting, MyRec.com, New England Recreation Group, Northstar Fireworks, Parkink, Pioneer Athletics, SE Group, UltiPlay Parks & Playgrounds, USTA New

England, UVM Adventure Ropes Course, Vermont Display, Vermont Systems, and Weston & Sampson. There will be lots more by conference time. The Exhibit Hall is a great time to connect in person with the vendors you use throughout the year.

Conference Co-Chairs Todd Goodwin and Rob Peterson and the entire

Conference Committee look forward to hosting you at this year's 75th Diamond Jubilee Vermont Conference on Recreation. If you are passionate about parks and recreation, Lake Morey Resort is the place to be on October 10 & 11, 2018. Plan NOW to be there.

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# 2018 VRPA Annual Meeting

## Tuesday, May 8th at VINS in Quechee

*The VRPA Annual & Quarterly Meetings provide a great opportunity to network with colleagues from across the state.*



*Lee Barrett (Colchester), Jill Niles (Norwich) and Candice Holbrook (Burlington)*



*Joe Fox (St. Johnsbury), Brian Kaplan (Burlington), Melissa Cate (Burlington) and Matt Frazee (Stowe)*



*The Parks & Playgrounds roundtable group met up by VINS' new natural playground. (From L to R) Drew Pollak-Bruce (SE Group), Mollie Hatch (Bradford), Cathy Foutch (Killington), Jess Booth (Newport), Scott Hausler (Hartford), and Derek Mitchell (Colchester)*



*Our morning education session included a live raptor program presented by the staff at the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS). It was amazing, especially the hawk that flew just barely above our heads!*



*VRPA is 70 years old in 2018 and we took the opportunity to celebrate at the Annual Meeting with cake and balloons.*



*This was one of our largest Annual Meetings with 45 members attending the meeting and another 10 people attending for the award presentations and luncheon.*



*As we do at most of our meetings, we took time for roundtable discussions where attendees chose one of six topics most relevant to them and brainstormed together about related challenges and successes they are experiencing. The day was one of the nicest we have had so far and the roundtable groups all found gathering spots outside in the sunshine.*



# 2018 VRPA Annual Meeting (continued)



Outgoing VRPA President Scott Hausler (Hartford) presented his President's Citation Award to Brian Bevacqua (Quechee) for all his work getting the new VRPA website up and running.



April Cioffi and Nicole Densmore (Rutland) explained how the VIP Raffle works and encouraged everyone to submit a VIP tabulation form next year. Emily Boek (Stowe) won the \$1,000 professional development scholarship and Candice Holbrook (Burlington) was drawn as the first alternate in the event that Emily can't use the scholarship.



Jay McDonough, Program Director at Hartford Parks & Recreation received the Young Professional Award. Pictured here with family and co-workers (L to R) Scott Hausler, Jay McDonough, Jay's wife Jess, Dylan Kreis, David Dean, Corey Kenison, Justin Decoff, and Leo Pullar, Hartford Town Manager.



Certificates are presented at the Annual Meeting recognizing members' 5-year membership anniversaries. Stephanie Quaranta (Barre) received a certificate for 40 years of VRPA membership – impressive! Five-year certificates were also presented to: Jen Cotton (Burlington) – 5 years, Gail Devine (Woodstock), Lori Hickey (Rutland), and Betsy Cieplicki (Shelburne) – 15 years, Todd Goodwin (Williston) – 20 years, and Jill Niles (Norwich) and Harry Ladue (Windsor) – 25 years.



Cindi Wight (Burlington) conducted the installation of the 2018-2020 VRPA Executive Committee. (L to R) Scott Hausler (Hartford) - Past-President, Ally Vile (Essex) – President-Elect, Melissa Cate (Burlington) – President, Nicole Densmore (Rutland) – Secretary, Jenn Turmel (Colchester) – Treasurer, and Members-at-Large: Matt Frazee (Stowe), Brian Bevacqua (Quechee), Drew Pollak-Bruce (SE Group), and Brett Leonard (South Burlington).



VRPA Executive Director, Betsy Terry, presents Scott Hausler with a framed photo by White River Junction photographer, Judith Lombardo, as a token of appreciation for serving as VRPA President from 2016-2018.



Scott Hausler presents the gavel to incoming President, Melissa Cate.

**Special thanks to Todd Goodwin, Williston Parks & Recreation Director, for taking all these pictures.**



Marty Hornick from Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront received the Unsung Hero Award. (L to R) Cindi Wight (presented the award), Marty, and Marty's daughter Sally, wife Ann, and son Jake.



## VT Recreation & Parks Association 2017-18 ANNUAL REPORT

This past year was a transformative year for the Vermont Recreation & Parks Association as we subscribed to Wild Apricot, a cloud-based membership management system that allowed us to provide online registration for all our events, accept and track online payments, and manage memberships online. This had been on our to-do list for a while and with all the events that VRPA offers, it has significantly decreased the office time spent on event registrations and increased our efficiency. Special thanks to Brian Bevacqua for setting up the new website that enabled us to use Wild Apricot and to our commercial members who supported this venture by choosing to be our monthly website sponsors, thank you!

In January we conducted our biennial member survey and had a 22% increase in response rate. Thank you for taking the time to respond. These survey results help guide the planning for our quarterly meetings, annual conference, and other trainings. They will also help the new Executive Committee when they meet in September to set the agenda for the year ahead. It is noteworthy that 34% of the survey respondents are CPRPs (Certified Park & Recreation Professionals).

### MEMBERSHIP

The continued engagement and support we enjoy from our members and feedback we receive on program evaluations and informally, suggest that VRPA has had another good year. Nearly every Vermont community with part-time or full-time paid recreation staff is a VRPA member.

In 2018, 51 Vermont community recreation agencies and the VT Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation are VRPA members. Our total membership number is slightly less than last year, but the number of agency and commercial members remains consistent with previous years. Time and again, our members tell us that the networking opportunities provided by VRPA help them to do their jobs better. The recent member survey results confirm that networking is the member benefit valued most by our current members.

VRPA MEMBERSHIP				
2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14
344 members	372 members	394 members	362 members	294 members

### EDUCATION

Our annual state recreation conference provides a high-quality and affordable close-to-home training opportunity for departments of all sizes. The education program is diverse and relevant, we have fun, and the exhibitors tell us this is one of their favorite conferences. For the second year, 70% of our conference attendees attended both days of the conference. Our exhibitors enhance the conference experience and contribute significantly to the financial success of the conference. A very big thank you to the Conference Committee, they meet monthly all year long to prepare for our annual conference. This year's Conference Silent Auction netted more than \$5,000 that will be used to support educational programming in the year ahead and the \$1,000 professional development scholarship that will be awarded to this year's winner of the VIP raffle, thank you auction bidders! Vermont was host state for the Northern New England Recreation & Parks Conference in January. Thank you to Rob Peterson & Ethan Phelps for serving as Conference Co-Chairs, and everyone who helped to make the 2018 NNE Conference a success. Our other education offerings were a little lighter than the previous year since the VT/NH Maintenance Workshop is offered every other year and the Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) course is offered every three years, consistent with the 3-year CPSI certification cycle. For the third year in a row we offered a Certified Pool Operator (CPO) course and had our highest registration ever, likely the result of increased marketing to hotels, health clubs, and schools & colleges with pools; we plan to continue offering a CPO course every spring. We hosted well-attended Quarterly Meetings in December and March.

VRPA EDUCATION PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS					
	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14
Annual Meeting	39+3	44 + 7 guests	46	33	45
Certified Pool Operator Course	31	26	17	-	-
CPSI Playground Inspector Course	-	46	-	-	39
Quarterly Meeting - December	28	33	35	31	18
Quarterly Meeting - March	29	28	31	45	24
State Conference - Delegates	104	115	104	98	100
State Conference - Vendors	42	43	40	34	30
Summerama	91	117	144	129	118
VT/NH Maintenance Workshop	-	89	-	81	-



## PROGRAMS

For the tenth consecutive year, St. Johnsbury Academy hosted & sponsored our State Youth Track Meet, thank you St. Johnsbury Academy and Joe Fox! For the second year, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Vermont provided t-shirts for the athletes and officials. Our numbers were lower than in previous years, we are not exactly sure why, perhaps because we moved the meet a week later; we have moved back to the original third weekend in July for the 2018 meet. We had a successful Performance Showcase however the audience numbers were smaller than they have been. Extra effort will be made this year to attract more bands and better diversify the entertainment line-up for this year's showcase. Our summer discount ticket sales continue to decline which has been disappointing. We suspect that competition from so many other discount offers and online ticket sales is a big part of the reason. Again in 2018, we will look to utilize social media to try to increase sales. Our winter ticket program was discontinued due to lack of interest, again we suspect there are enough other discounts and passes already available.

VRPA PROGRAM PARTICIPATION					
	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14
State Track Meet	290	433	466	458	554
Showcase Audience	37	54	44	43	44
Summer Tickets Sold	3714	4,826	6,463	6,632	7,127
Winter Tickets Sold	-	62	16	-	-

## PUBLICATIONS

VRPA continues to offer all our publications and event notices in electronic format, including three newsletters each year, conference and meeting/event brochures, and weekly recreation check-ins. The weekly recreation check-in continues to be a highly rated VRPA member.

## FINANCES

As revenues from our discount ticket sales continue to decline, the Executive Committee has remained focused on developing a budget that allows us to continue to offer high quality programs and maintain a nearly full-time Executive Director. In the numbers below you can see that our annual conference continues to provide an increasing contribution to the overall budget. With an eye on sustainability, part of this effort has necessitated increasing some of our fees and charges; thank you to all our members for seeing the value in your membership and making adjustments at your end. Our commercial members support us in a variety of ways all through the year – you respond to every call and we couldn't do half of the things we do without your help, thank you very much. We ended the year with a \$1,247 net balance and \$89,477 in total assets.

### We ended FY2017-18 year with:

- \$241,644 in total revenue
- \$240,397 in total expenses
- \$1,247 net balance
- \$5,140 in Silent Auction income
- **\$89,477 in total assets**

### VRPA REVENUE HISTORY - % of Total

	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Tickets	58.0%	60.3%	72.2%	76.9%
Conference	17.1%	14.5%	10.5%	9.9%
Membership	5.9%	4.8%	5.3%	4.1%
Programs	6.6%	5.0%	4.6%	5.1%
Education	12.2%	15.2%*	6.2%	2.6%
Other	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	1.4%

\* CPSI course offered

### VRPA EXPENSE HISTORY - % of Total

	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Tickets	53.9%	57.5%	67.6%	71.6%
Member Services, inc. Ex. Director	23.7%	18.8%	19.6%	16.9%
Conference	8.9%	8.0%	6.4%	6.2%
Education/Progr.	10.4%	13.5%*	4.1%	3.3%
Gen'l Operations	2.8%	2.2%	2.3%	1.9%
Other	0.03%	<0.1%	0%	<0.1%

\* CPSI course offered

The synergy that occurs in our meetings is something to experience. Time after time, we go into Executive Committee, Summerama & Conference Committee meetings without pre-conceived conclusions and the results are amazing, you may have noticed them in our recreation education & program offerings. It seems to be more difficult to steal away from the office to attend outside meetings these days but rest assured, if you decide to become more involved in VRPA in the year ahead, you will receive as much or more than you give. As we celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> year of VRPA in 2018, we'd like to thank all our members for choosing to be part of VRPA...collectively we continue to do great things.

Thank you VRPA President, Scott Hausler and the entire Executive Committee for guiding us through this past year. Special thanks to Andy Cappello and Geoff Beyer who will be leaving the VRPA Executive Committee. We work hard to remain relevant and of value to you, our members. Your feedback is always appreciated; please don't ever hesitate to offer your suggestions. We look forward to working together in the year ahead.

### 2017-18 VRPA Executive Board

President-Scott Hausler President Elect-Melissa Cate Treasurer-Jenn Turmel Secretary-Ally Vile Past-Pres.-Andy Cappello  
Members-at-Large: Brian Bevacqua Geoff Beyer Nicole Densmore Matt Frazee  
Executive Director: Betsy Terry

# Empowering Parents to Practice Safe Skin

By Laurie Seaver, Practice Safe Skin Manager, IMPACT Melanoma

**W**ith summer programming around the corner, Parks and Recreation staff everywhere will soon be slathering sunscreen on themselves and their young campers to avoid harmful UV rays during their long days outside. Now, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing the rates of skin cancer has made sunscreen more accessible to staff, kids, and families in hundreds of park facilities and day camps nationwide. **IMPACT Melanoma** distributes hands-free sunscreen dispensers in a variety of outdoor venues to help the public keep their skin safe from harmful UV rays.

Programs interested in bringing these “Practice Safe Skin” dispensers to their communities can visit IMPACT’s website. Dispensers come with wall mounting hardware that can be used on any hard surface, and a case of broad spectrum SPF30 sunscreen which is water resistant and aquatic and marine safe. One wall-mounted dispenser and one case of sunscreen are provided to each approved applicant, with the condition that the awarded program assumes financial and operational responsibility to sustaining the equipment and resupplying the sunscreen

as needed.

In addition to their Practice Safe Skin program, IMPACT offers other educational resources to programs and parents:

- **Parent Tips:** A brochure with guidance for parents about how to protect their young children’s skin, as well as how to talk to teenagers about why skin protection is important.

- **UV Beads and Bracelets:** IMPACT offers wearable UV detectors to be used as helpful visual reminders for kids and adults alike. When exposed to UV rays, these translucent accessories turn blue, reminding the wearer that they need to apply (or re-apply) their sunscreen.

- **Mole Cards:** These business-card sized reference tools help people identify the early stages of skin cancer with images of the “A-B-C-D-E” warning signs.

- **Broad spectrum, SPF 15 Lip Balm:** A great sun protection tool for parents to send in their campers’ backpacks every day.

- [www.impactmelanoma.org](http://www.impactmelanoma.org): IMPACT’s website offers comprehensive information about skin safety, early detection, and other resources for staff and parents.

The website includes links to several PSA videos which provide helpful visuals and

testimonials from melanoma survivors.

To download or purchase materials for your program, visit <http://www.impactmelanoma.org> or (800) 557-6352.

The best way to arm your program participants with sun protection is to tell them the facts. People respond to knowledge, & knowledge is power. When parents are empowered with information about sun safety, they can teach their kids how to develop life-long skin protection habits. Below are some important facts about sun safety to share with staff and families:

- Use SPF 30 sunscreen with UVA/UVB protection
- Reapply every 2 hours
- Seek shade
- Wear a hat and sunglasses with UV protection
- Melanoma is the second most common form of cancer for teens & young adults ages 15-29.
- Only five severe sunburns in a lifetime increases the risk of melanoma by 50%.
- Unprotected skin can burn in 10 minutes or less.
- Tan skin is damaged skin



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Learn how you can bring the Friendship Swing to your community at [playlsi.com/friendship-swing](http://playlsi.com/friendship-swing).

*Your local playground consultant*



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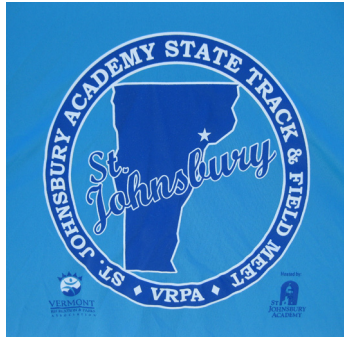
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# 2018 VRPA – St. Johnsbury Academy State Track Meet



**Saturday, July 21, 2018**

**Boys & Girls Ages 7 – 14 (as of 8-31-18)**

Registration open to  
individual athletes and teams

Go to [www.vrpa.org](http://www.vrpa.org)  
for meet details and rules.

Deadline to submit a  
Commitment Form is June 22nd.



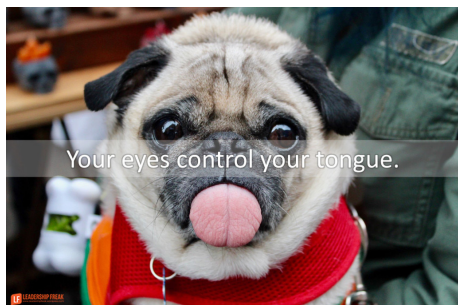
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# Be Positive to Solve the Negative Around You and... Choose Your Focus Because Your Eyes Control Your Tongue

**T**eams and organizations move in the direction of the words they use. The most important thing I can say about your tongue is it's a rudder.



## 7 powers of words:

1. Words determine direction.
2. Words invite resistance or open hearts.
3. Words convince or deceive.
4. Words cut or heal.
5. Words inspire or discourage.
6. Words make work difficult or enjoyable.
7. Words elevate your status or steal your reputation.

Warning: Negative words are more powerful than positive words because bad is stronger than good.

One of my favorite chapters in, *"Scaling Up Excellence,"* by Robert Sutton and Huggy Rao is, "Bad is Stronger Than Good: Clearing the Way for Excellence."

Successful leaders eliminate the negative:

1. Bad practices.
2. Stifling processes.
3. Nasty people.
4. Destructive attitudes.
5. Negative beliefs.

It's not enough to accentuate the positive. You have to eliminate the negative.

Hardwired complaining - Repeated complaining hard-wires the brain to do more complaining. The more negative you are, the more negative you become. (Travis Bradberry in [Emotional Intelligence 2.0](#)) Complaining contaminates environments.

Eyes and tongues - Choose your focus carefully because focus steers language. Walk around looking for mistakes and all you talk about is mistakes. Your eyes control your tongue. You talk about what you look at. Frankly, some leaders wouldn't have anything to say if they weren't complaining. If you constantly complain, do your team a favor and go away.

Choose your focus:

1. Focus on solutions. When problems

- emerge, turn quickly to solution-finding.
2. Focus on strengths. High performance comes from leveraging strengths not fixing weaknesses.
3. Focus on the future. Remember the future is built today.
4. Focus on gratitude.
5. Focus on progress. Energy increases with forward movement, as long as you

stop complaining that it's not enough.

Choose your focus because your eyes control your tongue and your tongue controls direction.

*Copied from the April 5, 2018 NRPA SmartBrief. For more tips on leadership empowerment 300 words at a time, go to <https://leadershipfreak.blog/> or [dan@leadershipfreak.com](mailto:dan@leadershipfreak.com).*

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## President's Perspective (cont'd)

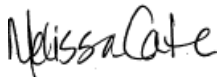
you to do so, you will not be sorry! We have opportunities that range in commitment from serving on an event committee all year to helping pick up auction items – even if you have only a few hours a year to offer, we will take it!

The VRPA volunteer opportunity that I am most excited about for this coming year is our Parks Build project that we will be completing at the Fairlee Town Beach as part of our 75th Annual Conference on Recreation. This idea came to me after attending the NRPA Congress in New Orleans and learning about NRPA's work to renovate the Lafitte Greenway. Each year as part of the Congress, NRPA members contribute time and materials to complete a park improvement project in their host city – so I thought, why not do the same on the local level? I outlined this idea to the conference committee and, happily, Josh Ryan of Timber & Stone, has jumped in with both feet to help manage and bring this concept to fruition. Josh met with town officials and has developed a plan to improve accessibility at the park and also to hopefully update some of their amenities – but we need your help! We will be looking for donations of both goods and manpower – so stay tuned for more information as to how you can get involved in this impactful project.

Like the seeds I will be planting in my vegetable bed, I'm hoping that, by fall, this project will have grown and blossomed and will serve to nourish the residents of Fairlee for years to come.

Here's wishing you all a fruitful, productive summer. I know that this can be the busiest time of the year for most parks and recreation professionals but I hope you all get the chance to take some time for yourselves, relax and enjoy my favorite season in Vermont.

Sincerely,



Melissa Cate, CPRP  
VRPA President



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June 20, 2018 • 7:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

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[WWW.NRPA.ORG/CONFERENCE](http://WWW.NRPA.ORG/CONFERENCE)



# Summer Job Opportunities Still Available at VYCC

Around the State...



VYCC's season of Conservation and Farm youth and young adult crews is nearly here. We have a few spots left for Crew Leaders and Crew Members and need your help filling them. These are all paid positions and include a range of hands-on skill building in carpentry, farming, trail building, and more. More info here: <http://www.vycc.org/we-want-you-for-our-last-crew-leader-and-member-spots/>



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# Coming to a State Park Near You: First Time Happy Camper Program

By Rochelle Skinner & Rebecca Roy,  
Vermont State Parks

Childhood memories of flashlight tag, catching that very first fish, and the smell of a campfire were formative experiences guiding our lifelong passion for outdoor recreation and the trajectory of our professional careers. Early experiences camping with friends and family created connections for us with the natural world and built our confidence as we overcome challenges and push our limits in every part of our lives. The pace of modern society, and the demands on family time keep some families from enjoying the same formative camping experiences.

Even with our great green heritage in Vermont, we have a new generation growing up without those important



connections to the natural world. An essential part of our mission at State Parks is to facilitate those connections, to

provide those impactful moments like feeling the slippery skin of a brook trout, or hearing a loon call in the night for the first time. We started a gear loaner program this year to help families overcome barriers preventing them from camping. Maybe they don't have the time, or the gear, or the knowledge of what to do when they get out there. This summer, in partnership with the Outdoor Gear Exchange, we will remove some of those barriers with a new First Time Happy Camper program.

At five state parks throughout the state: Bomoseen, Button Bay, Woodford, Brighton and Grand Isle, we will host three First Time Happy Camper weekends. Interested participants will request a particular weekend that works for them, and we will hold a lottery to select one family. We provide the family with some pre-trip planning information like a checklist of what to bring from home and what to expect.

When families arrive at the park, a park interpreter will meet them Friday evening and provide a tent, ground cloth, propane stove, LED lantern, headlamps, camp chairs, sleeping pads and day packs. Sleeping bags are available to purchase at cost, or families can bring blankets and pillows from home.

The park interpreter will show families how to use all the gear and help them set up camp. Throughout the weekend, park staff will check in with the family occasionally to make sure everything goes smoothly. We reserved some of the best campsites for this program. We want families to give camping a try, enjoy a fantastic experience, and make camping a new family tradition.

Other states have successful similar programs, this is the first time for Vermont. We are grateful to Outdoor Gear Exchange for helping make this happen, and we look forward to sharing stories from these first-time camping adventures. See you outside!



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- Tee Times
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- General Ledger
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- Purchase Orders
- PDA Handheld Interface

**WebTrac™**  
Integrated Internet Software

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- League Schedules
- E-RecTrac

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## VERMONT SENIOR GAMES ASSOCIATION PRESENTS: 2018 STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

If you are at least 50 years old (or will be by December 31, 2018) join in the fun of the Vermont Senior Games! No competitive experience necessary. The most important features of the Seniors Games are participation and striving for personal bests. **All events this year are qualifiers for the 2019 National Senior Games!** Contact VSGA Games! Coordinator, Andrea Stander 802-522-3284, for more info. Registration deadline is 10 days prior to the event.

- April 7 **SWIMMING\***  
The EDGE Sports & Fitness, Williston with the Masters Swim Club
- April 12 **BOWLING**  
Spare Time Lanes, Colchester
- May 19 **RACQUETBALL**  
The EDGE Sports & Fitness, Essex
- June 2 **HORSESHOES\***  
Sodbusters Horsehoes Club, Bristol
- June 22-24 **PICKLEBALL**  
Miller Recreation Center, Burlington
- June 30 **TRACK & FIELD**  
South Burlington High School
- July 29 **TRIATHLON\***  
Bayside Park with Colchester Parks & Recreation
- Aug 24-25 **TENNIS**  
The Quechee Club, White River Junction
- Aug 30 **GOLF**  
Neshobe Country Club, Brandon
- Sept 1 **5K ROAD RACE\***  
Northfield with the Central Vermont Runners
- Set 16 **CYCLING**  
Kennebunkport, Maine with the Maine Senior Games
- Sept 28 **BASKETBALL**  
Castleton University
- Oct 6 **10K RUN\***  
Shelburne with Green Mountain Athletic Association
- Oct 6 **TABLE TENNIS\***  
Shelburne Town Gym



\*These events offer same day registration when space allows.

Register online: **VERMONTSENIORGAMES.ORG**

# BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE VERMONT RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION

- ❖ Align yourself with 400+ professionals & volunteers who operate with a shared mission, vision, and values.
- ❖ Access tools and resources to position recreation and parks as essential community services.
- ❖ Develop strategies to advance and thrive within your profession and as an agency/organization.
- ❖ Build your skills and your professional network too.
- ❖ Shape our profession today and tomorrow.

- ❖ As a VRPA member, you will receive:

*Recreation Check-In* – Weekly information and happenings, via email.

*The Advocate* - VRPA newsletter – three issues a year, via email.

*VRPA Membership Directory* – Annual directory of member contact information, electronic format.

*Discounted Fees* – Conferences, workshops and event registration fees, and advertising rates.

*Professional Assistance* – In person and online.

*VRPA website* – Access the VRPA website at [www.vrpa.org](http://www.vrpa.org).

**Membership renewals were  
due May 1<sup>st</sup>. RENEW ONLINE  
at [www.vrpa.org](http://www.vrpa.org).**

## May 1, 2018 to April 30, 2019 APPLICATION AND ANNUAL RENEWAL

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Classification (See next page for classification descriptions)

☐ Agency (check one)

☐ 1-4 staff

☐ 5-10 staff

☐ 11 or more staff

☐ Individual Professional

☐ Board/Commission

(Includes ALL board/commission members)

☐ Commercial (inc. link from VRPA website)

☐ Student ☐ Friend ☐ Retiree (check one)

☐ Honorary Life

### Number of Persons

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- - One - -

\_\_\_\_\_

- - One - -

- - One - -

- - One - -

### Membership Fee

\$270

\$375

\$485

\$75

\$110

\$180

\$25

Complimentary

☐ Check Enclosed

☐ Payment Being Mailed

Total Amount Due

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**New memberships received in the months of Nov, Dec and Jan are half price. New memberships received in the last three months of our fiscal year (Feb, March and April) are full price and include the following year membership also.**

Would you like to become more involved with VRPA? Listed below are the various VRPA committees. Please check if you are interested and someone will contact you. Thank you for your interest!

☐ Membership ☐ Newsletter ☐ Performance Showcase ☐ Summerama ☐ Executive Committee

☐ Track & Field ☐ Awards ☐ Maintenance Workshop ☐ State Conference ☐ Northern NE Conference

☐ Other ways you'd like to help: \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a VRPA member who influenced your decision to join?

Are you a member of NRPA?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_

**RENEW YOUR VRPA MEMBERSHIP ONLINE TODAY at [www.vrpa.org](http://www.vrpa.org).**

**Or print this application and send to VRPA, 721 Main Street, Colchester, VT, 05446.**

Questions? Call the VRPA office at 802-878-2077.