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## Creating Crowds

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Keith Goslant were recognized for their years of service and promptly re-elected to another term. Also elected were co-chairs Bill Lippert of Hinesburg and Susan Aranoff of Randolph. A motion to wave elections and appoint the entire slate candidates for regional reps and at-large members was approved. Members are Mary Hurlie, Peggy Luhrs, Oak La-Galbo, Susan Murray, Lynn Goyette, D. Dudley, Laurie Levinger, Laurie La-barthe, Terje Anderson, Howdy Russell, Chris Wesslowski, Carey Johnson, Gene Barfield, Chris Monahan. For information on upcoming coming coalitions plans and events, contact them at the address on resource page. ▼

## State Worker's

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UVM's decision not to appeal the VLRB's June ruling requiring them to cover same-sex partners clearly encouraged VSEA. Just weeks after the decision, Union Director Thomas Whitney wrote to Personnel Commissioner Thomas Torti saying, "the State and VSEA have a mutual obligation to see to it that the State's insurance plans provide benefits similar to those ordered in the UVM case..." Later, Whitney wrote, "...it is not our intent to defer the issue to the next round of bargaining as we believe you have a legal obligation to provide benefits now." Even so, Governor Howard Dean is urging the union to "put domestic partner benefits on the table" in the ongoing contract negotiations. Dean says he supports benefits, but only if coverage extends to heterosexual partners as well. "It irks me," said Dean, "that benefits can only be gained by getting married."

Whether benefits will be "on the table", and what exactly that means, is still uncertain, according to Jansen. "We've been waiting to study the draft from the Governor's Health Care Authority before making any decisions." He declined to speculate whether the union would move to include all partners of state workers, regardless of sex. The state contract expires next June. "At this point, we are not close to agreement on anything," said Jansen adding, "even if we do reach agreement (on domestic partner benefits), we still have to negotiate implementation." ▼

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