

THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATIONISTS

Meeting of February 5, 2014 held at Maple Tree, McFarland

ARC President Sheree Vande Brink called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm.

45 people were in attendance. The menu was broasted chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, cole slaw, carrots, served family style for \$14. Meal also included ice cream sundaes, coffee and milk.

A moment of silence was observed for friends and family who have passed and for our troops who are serving in harm's way.

The January minutes were read and approved.

Financial Report

Opening balance for Savings is \$223.05 and Checking is \$509.90.

Dividend on Savings account for January was \$.02.

\$585.00 to Maple Tree for meals, tax and gratuity (paid out of cash collected at the door.)

Activity on Checking account:

DEPOSITS: \$45.00 – proceeds from lunch, \$2.00 dues from new member.

EXPENDITURES: none

Closing balance for Savings is \$223.07 and Checking is \$556.90.

New Members

Alan Crossley attended his second meeting and was voted in as a new member.

Guests

Recently retired Chief Conservation Warden Randy Stark attended as a guest of Tom Thoresen. Randy said when he walked in today it was great to see Harley Lichtenwalner in attendance, because Randy recalled that it was 31 years ago that Harley was one of the interviewers on his initial hiring panel! How time flies.

"Frank-n-Miller Report"

A motion made and seconded to approve Ed Frank and Jim Miller's continued representation of ARC to the Coalition of Annuitants. Voice vote all in favor. \$10 payment is ARC's share of the annual dues. (Ed and Jim represent the other DNR retiree organizations around the state and COA annual dues are split 5 ways.)

Ed Frank gave the report. Said he has calculated his adjustment, and though there is still some reduction because of earlier hits, everyone should be in good shape.

Highlights from the COA minutes: The State of Wisconsin Investment Board (SWIB) announced the preliminary returns for the WRS trust funds; 1) the Core Fund, the larger of the two WRS trust funds with diversified holdings in domestic and international stocks, bonds, loans, real estate and private equity, ended the year with a preliminary return of 13.5 percent. The preliminary market value of the Core Fund on December 31, 2013, was approximately \$86.5 billion, and 2) the Variable Fund, an optional, U.S. and international stock fund, ended the year with a preliminary return of 29.0 percent. The Variable Fund's preliminary market value was approximately \$7.2 billion on December 31, 2013.

SWIB's U.S stock investments, which saw a return of 35.4 percent, had a significant effect on performance. The Variable Fund has 70 percent invested in the U.S. stock market and the

remaining 30 percent of the fund is in international stocks that earned 13.9 percent. The Core Fund is 50 percent stocks split almost evenly between international and U.S. The Core Fund includes other types of investments used to help provide diversification. Both funds surpassed their preliminary one-year benchmarks of 12.9 percent and 28.0 percent, respectively. The benchmarks include market comparisons for the various types of assets managed by SWIB. In fact, both the Core and Variable Funds ended the three-, five- and ten-year periods ahead of their benchmarks.

SWIB has earned positive returns each year since 2009 for the Core Fund and in four of the last five years for the Variable Fund. "It is a tremendous relief to see the market downturn of 2008 in the rear view mirror and enjoy the accumulated positive performance from 2009 through 2013," Williamson said.

Total assets under management at SWIB are about \$101.3 billion as of Dec. 31, 2013. This includes, along with other state and local government investments, approximately \$94 billion in trust funds of the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS), which provides benefits to over 579,000 current or former employees of state agencies, the university system, school districts and most local governments. The WRS is the 9th largest U.S. public pension fund and the 28th largest public or private pension fund in the world.

Old Business

An electronic version of the ARC member directory is available, sign-up sheet on table if you'd like it sent to you via e-mail. The directory will not be posted on the ARC website since all of the members' information would then be accessible to the public. Paper copies of the 2014 directory are on the back table as well. Thanks to Dave Ives for maintaining the records.

New Business

Sheree talked about a process to handle meeting cancellations (it happened once before during a severe February snowstorm.) Rick Wojciak will post information on the website by the morning of the meeting in the event of a cancellation. Check www.wisarc.org if weather is "iffy" and travel is hazardous. Please make a phone call to anyone you know who doesn't have e-mail access. E-blast (e-mail message to all members) is also an option for short notice cancellations that may not be weather related, e.g., meeting venue has power outage or other problems.

Roger Larson gave details on Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters Lobby Day Tuesday, February 11. If you would like to visit with your legislator that day, sign up in advance on-line at www.conservationvoters.org or at Monona Terrace at 9:00 am that day. The focus is on mining, high capacity wells, and legislation that limits local government's ability to regulate activities in their municipalities.

The March meeting is at the Great Dane Brew Pub in Fitchburg. Chuck Pils will be presenting a program about his trip to Africa – lots of great photos of landscape and wildlife, be sure to attend! Also, when you arrive, proceed directly to the meeting room and order beverages there, that helps us meet a required minimum sales which covers the room rental.

Wisconsin DNR news ran a nice article about Dave Gjestson's book "The Gamekeepers."

Floyd Stautz announced that the southern WISARC group will meet February 24 at the Olive Garden in Bonita Spring. Join them if you are in Florida later in the month.

Deaths and Illnesses

Eric "Pete" Jensen passed away January 14. He was a forester for the DNR.

Francis "Pat" Schraufnagel died on January 28. Pat was responsible for the development of Wisconsin's first intrastate and interstate water quality standards. He also gave investment seminars to fellow employees.

Benjamin Kregel died January 27, in Wausau. Ben worked at the Tomahawk headquarters for several years. He also served on the Wisconsin Bingo Control Board.

Gen Bancroft is recovering from surgery to repair an aneurism. We wish her well.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Harley Lichtenwalner is 81 on February 6, Floyd Stautz turns 80 later in February, John and Brenda Hagman celebrate their 39th wedding anniversary on Valentine's Day.

Jokes

Rick Kalvelage shared deer humor, and Kermit Traska told several senior citizen/retiree jokes.

Trips

Ed Frank was in Hawaii in January. He and Deane took their whole family to Maui in celebration of their 60th wedding anniversary.

Jerry Rodenberg and his wife drove up to the Apostle Islands recently and walked out onto Lake Superior to see the frozen sea caves. It's not every year that the ice is thick enough around the islands to make the mile walk out there. Jerry said the trip is well worth it, a unique experience right here in Wisconsin, many spectacular photos of the sea caves and the ice formations are circulating.

Chuck Pils visited the Chicago Field Museum on February 4 with the Friends of the Arboretum. He found it was interesting to learn that one of the volunteers in the herp area is 93 year old Bob Inger. Bob was a colleague of Karl Schmidt, a noted herpetologist who lived for a time in Stanley, Wisconsin. Chuck told the unfortunate story of Schmidt's death in 1957 after he was bitten by an exotic boomslang snake sent to him for identification.

Meeting adjourned at 1:45 pm.