

THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATIONISTS

Meeting of February 4, 2015 held at Vintage Brewing Company, 674 S. Whitney Way, Madison.

ARC President Laurel Steffes called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

47 people were in attendance. The choices offered and cost (with the number ordered) were: soup and salad, \$10.00 (17); burger and fries, \$11.00 (15); BBQ pork sloppy joe, \$12.00 (3); fish sandwich and fries, \$13.00 (12).

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:

Paid \$471.00 to Vintage for meals, tax and gratuity.

Opening balance on February 1 for Savings is \$223.29 and Checking is \$64.10. Dividend on Savings account in February is \$.02.

Activity on Checking account for February:

DEPOSITS: \$69.00 proceeds from lunch, \$8.00 dues for 4 new members.

EXPENDITURES: \$ 0

Closing balance on March 1 for Savings is \$223.31 and Checking is \$131.10.

Guest:

Amanda Husk, volunteer coordinator at Agrace Hospicecare, joined us for lunch.

New Members:

Brian Buenzow, Pete Flaherty, Sally Kefer, Bob Mather all were attending their second meeting and were voted in as members.

"Frank-n-Miller Report:"

Jim Miller said he recently found out about the Well Wisconsin program open to anyone in WRS and their families. If you complete the program and questionnaire, you'll get a \$150 Visa card. A suggestion was made to have the DNR rep for the program attend a meeting and tell us about it. Miller said he will make a contact.

Bob Schaefer said that the Core fund ended the year with a preliminary return of 5.7% and Variable ended with 7.3%. ETF anticipates modest increases this year. Approval will occur at the April Board meeting, annual adjustment will appear in the May 1 payment. There may be some changes to health insurance premiums.

See page 2 of the ETF newsletter for election information. Bill Ford is our current representative and does a good job.

At the January meeting of the Coalition of Annuitants, Executive Director of SWIB Michael Williamson was there. He talked about the long term plan being 40-50 years out.

Mark your calendars for the COA annual meeting on May 18. Registration information on the COA website.

A few members asked questions about the European Market and our investments, and about the impacts to Variable. Go to the ETF website for a good discussion of actuarial analysis.

Old Business:

President Laurel Steffes offered her appreciation to Linda Netzer for setting up the meeting venues for 2015.

Several members have filled in information about their volunteer activities on the ARC website, there's a tab on the left side of the page if you want to add your own information. Rick Wojciak is inserting a logo for the different organizations.

New Business:

Correspondence – received acknowledgement of thanks for contributions to the Natural Resources Foundation from NRF, and from the family of Bob Deer for the memorial in his name. Second Harvest Foodbank thanked us for the contribution.

Rick Wojciak has 2015 state trail passes available. He sells them for the standard \$20.00 fee, but as a member of the Friends of Badger State Trail, all of his sales will return \$4.00 directly to the Badger State Trail account for ongoing maintenance and improvements.

Laurel summarized the highlights (and lowlights) of the Governor's budget which were presented just last evening (February 3.) You will find a number of items affecting DNR in an addendum to these minutes. Of particular interest:

- A cut of \$13.3 million in GPR to DNR, taken almost in its entirety to the Parks program, but DNR will be allowed to raise sticker and camping fees.
- A freeze on Stewardship purchases until Stewardship debt is paid down to a ratio no more than \$1.00 in debt for every \$8.00 in land values – a milestone expected to take 13 or more years, possibly eclipsing the authorized length of the program.
- Removing policy making authority from the Natural Resources Board. It would become an advisory board.
- A plan to relocate management of the Forestry program to northern Wisconsin.
- No increase in hunting, fishing and trapping licenses.
- The sunset provision on ballast water would be removed.
- Provide one time funding to expand the capabilities of the Surface Water Data Viewer database.
- A reduction of 66 FTE in research and educator positions.

Rick Wojciak is embarking on a 3,200 mile bike ride from San Diego, California to St. Augustine, Florida. He leaves March 1 and explained that he intends to use his trip to raise money on behalf of the Cure Alzheimer's Fund. Rick will put a link on the ARC website should anyone like to contribute.

Jim Leverence mentioned the upcoming Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation – Badger Chapter banquet that will be held on February 28 at the Marriott in Middleton. This is the chapter's 25th year and two of the national organization's founders will be there.

Deaths and Illnesses:

Ed Frank underwent surgery for a hip replacement.

Jeanice Harrington is living at Oakwood Village on Mineral Point Road. David Daniels said she is in rehab there, would enjoy visits.

Ed Faber, former Real Estate Director, passed away on January 13.

Art Peterson, UW-Madison Soils Science professor, passed away on January 26.

Program:

Rick Wojciak introduced Amanda Husk, volunteer coordinator at Agrace Hospice. Amanda gave an interesting 20 minute presentation about the mission of Agrace which is to provide support and care to those with a life expectancy of less than 6 months. They serve the area in and around Dane County. Agrace was started by volunteers 35 years ago, and remains a non-profit organization. Ninety percent of those who have chosen palliative care remain in their own homes or in assisted living facilities. There is also an inpatient facility located in Fitchburg available for short and long term residents.

Agrace is always looking for volunteers. Every kind of volunteer talent is welcome, they can usually find a place for you. An example she gave was that someone who likes gardening could help on the grounds of the Fitchburg facility where they have extensive plantings, or go along with a staff member to someone's home, and while staff cares for the patient, the volunteer can provide yard maintenance that the resident is unable to do. There are also those who sit vigil with patients to give families some relief. Agrace operates thrift stores on the east and west side of Madison, staffed by volunteers. (Consider taking donations of household goods or clothing there.)

Amanda concluded by thanking Rick Wojciak for his weekly commitment to assisting with meal preparation at the Fitchburg facility. The only "requirement" to be a volunteer is that you are caring and compassionate. Contact information for their offices: Madison – 608-327-7163, Janesville – 608-314-2922 and Baraboo – 800-553-4289. Information is posted on the ARC website volunteer page as well.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.