

THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATIONISTS

Meeting of February 3, 2016 held at Babe's, 5614 Schroeder Road, Madison

ARC President Bruce Chevis called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

41 people were in attendance. The choices offered and cost (with the number ordered) were: burger with fries \$15 (7); cod sandwich with fries \$15 (17); grilled chicken breast sandwich with fries \$14 (5); raspberry walnut chicken salad \$16 (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 for February

Paid \$534 to Babe's for meals, tax, gratuity (from cash collected.)

Opening balance on February 1 for Savings is \$223.53 and Checking is \$310.39.
Activity on Savings account - dividend \$.02.

Activity on Checking account:

DEPOSITS: \$109.00 total includes proceeds from lunch, donations, and dues for new members.

EXPENDITURES: \$75.00 to NRF, memorial for Joseph Rubesch

Balance on March 1 for Savings is \$223.55 and Checking is \$344.39

Guests/New Members

Alfred Kaas and Tim Andryk were attending their second meeting.

Al Kaas was introduced by Mike Staggs. (Al's first meeting was the Holiday Party so didn't get a formal nomination at that time.) He started working for the DNR as an LTE in 1980, was hired full time in 1983 on the Fish Ops crew in Eagle, then worked at Nevin and Lake Mills hatcheries before taking on statewide responsibilities as Fish Culture Section Chief for the Bureau of Fisheries, a position which included oversight over the state's 15 hatcheries. Al retired in January 2015.

Al Kaas and Tim Andryk were unanimously approved for membership and paid their \$5 lifetime dues. Welcome, Al and Tim!

Guests attending their first meeting:

- *Sharon Cook* – introduced by Tom Thoresen. Sharon was with DNR from 1975 – 1982 as legislative liaison to Tony Earl and Buzz Besadny. She has since worked in government affairs and on a number of governmental councils. Sharon now lives in Milwaukee and connected with Laurel Steffes on Facebook.
- *Steve Miller* – introduced by Chuck Pils. Steve worked for DNR since 1974 starting his career as a wildlife manager in Marinette and Cumberland. Later he was in the Central Office as director of the Bureau of Wildlife Management and then served as Division Administrator for Facilities and Lands. Chuck noted that Steve, an Ohio transplant, was an outstanding athlete and “all-everything” in his high school and college days.
- *Cheryl Goodman* – introduced by Dennis Schenborn. Cheryl will be retired February 5 from her position as a Budget Analyst for Fisheries Management in the Central Office. After a year as an LTE, she was hired permanently by DNR in 1981 for a position in Fisheries Management. She has remained with Fisheries throughout her 35 year career, with responsibilities in budget management, work planning, grants and capital development.

"Frank-n-Miller Report"

Ed Frank said preliminary returns for Core and Variable are hovering at or below 1%. No decrease in annual annuity adjustments for Core is anticipated, but there may be a decrease in Variable when final figures are announced. Ed advised everyone to read the information in ETF Bulletin about dental coverage.

Jim Miller sent an e-mail passing along information about potential changes to the state health care offerings. Here's an abbreviated version of the information he transmitted: After a special meeting in January, the board that oversees health benefits for state workers decided to vote next month on a move toward self-insurance. The Group Insurance Board plans to vote in February on whether to issue requests for proposals from companies that would assist the state in self-insuring workers, on a regional or statewide basis, starting in 2018. The state could save \$42 million a year by self-insuring state workers instead of buying insurance from 17 HMOs, Segal Consulting said in a report to the board. The state would pay benefits directly and assume the risk for large claims, likely hiring one or more insurance companies to administer the program.

Separately, the board is considering another recommendation by Segal to offer no more than two health plans in each of three regions, plus one statewide plan. The Wisconsin Association of Health Plans, which represents 12 of the 17 HMOs in the current program, said the moves would disrupt the state's competitive health insurance market, reduce access for patients and increase risk and costs to the state. Legislators and state worker unions have also expressed concerns, in part about the impact on the state's health care system overall.

Twenty states self-insure all state employees, and an additional 26 states self-insure some of their workers, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Ken Vieira, a consultant from Segal, told the board that Wisconsin should join most states in self-insuring most of its workers. But board member Michael Heifetz, referring to Wisconsin's unusual predominance of regional health systems and provider-owned health plans, said: "Our market is vastly different than other markets." Segal's report in November said self-insurance would let the state avoid \$18 million in Affordable Care Act fees, cut \$11 million in administrative costs and eliminate \$11 million in insurance company profits, among other savings. The move would also give the state more control over benefits, which would help it avoid the health law's planned "Cadillac" tax on rich benefit programs, Segal said. To prepare for unexpected claims, the state would need to increase its cash reserves, Segal said. But the Wisconsin Association of Health Plans noted that in December Congress suspended the Affordable Care Act fees for 2017 and delayed the "Cadillac" tax from 2018 to 2020. Meanwhile, the board is also considering changes in pharmacy benefits and wellness programs, along with restructuring the cost tiers for health plans. Last year, it doubled most out-of-pocket costs for medical services this year, though premiums are down slightly.

Old Business

None

New Business

We have a number of new member so will probably generate the ARC directory in a month or so to get it up to date. Rick Wojciak discussed how we may distribute electronic copies. Last few years, a pdf file was sent to those who requested it, worked well, saved printing costs. However Rick cautioned against leaving documents in your Inbox as those items are subject to exposure if your computer is hacked. Better to download and "save" in your hard drive. What he proposes is that a link to the directory will be attached to an e-blast, and Rick would get a message from those who wish to download, and the directory will be sent to them. Rick also advised people not to generally "reply to all" on large distributions.

Legislative Update

Tom Thoresen talked about SB459. This bill is being pushed through quickly, and if it passes, there will be impacts to wetland protection. There is also an aquaculture bill in the works. Members are urged to contact their legislators with their comments and concerns.

Question was asked about a proposal to develop an easement through Kohler-Andrae State Park for the purpose of creating a main entrance to a new golf course development comparable to Whistling Straits.

Steve Miller was familiar with the issues, said talks have been ongoing, major considerations for wetlands and setting precedents for appropriate use of state park property.

Deaths and Illnesses

ARC member Karen Trow passed away on February 1. Karen worked for DNR for more than 40 years, and was a frequent attendee at ARC meetings until she had physical setbacks in 2014.

Nancy Horn passed away on January 18 after a 2 year battle with brain cancer. Nancy worked for many years in the Dodgeville DNR office, in customer service and for Forestry.

Steve Fix passed away on January 31. Steve worked for DNR for many years in water regs and zoning, and in the water resources program before leaving for DATCP.

Steve Lewis, longtime engineer for DNR Parks and Boating Access, is not well and receiving hospice care at home. He turns 72 today.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Floyd Stautz turns 82 this month, and Gerry Dorscheid notes that he hit his 20 year anniversary – of being retired!

Trips

Bruce Braun visited New Zealand in December.

Bruce and Patty Chevis were on an extended visit to Europe in the fall, visited Prague, Berlin, Budapest, Bucharest and Istanbul. They combined travel on their own with Intrepid Travel tours.

Meeting adjourned at 1:35 pm.