

THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATIONISTS

Meeting of January 6, 2016 held at Maple Tree restaurant, McFarland.

ARC President Laurel Steffes called the meeting to order at 12:55 pm.

55 people were in attendance. The cost of the meal was \$15.00 for broasted chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, bread, cole slaw and carrots, served family style. 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 November minutes were read and approved. A brief meeting was held at the December holiday party, those items are included with the November minutes.

Financial Report:

Paid \$715.00 to Maple Tree for meals, tax and gratuity (out of cash collected.)

Opening balance on January 1 for Savings is \$223.51 and Checking is \$667.39
Dividend on Savings account January is \$.02.

Activity on Checking account for January:

DEPOSITS: \$146.00 (includes \$110.00 proceeds from lunch, \$10.00 dues from 2 new members, \$26.00 donations for memorials)

EXPENDITURES: \$10 to Ed Frank for COA annual dues; \$400 to "rsw productions" Rick Wojciak for 2016 webmaster services (partial payment on \$600 invoice); \$75 to Natural Resources Foundation, memorial in honor of Karen Trow; \$18 to Summit Credit Union for supply of checks.

Closing balance on February 1 for Savings is \$223.53 and Checking is \$310.39.

Guests and New Members:

There were 2 guests attending their second meeting and eligible for membership - *Mary Farmiloe and John Nielsen* were voted in as members. Laurel said this was actually Mary's third meeting; she had been at the Holiday Party and was recruited to sell tickets at the raffle table. She thanked Mary for jumping in to help!

Guests attending their first meeting:

- *Carol Nielsen* – introduced by Richard Wedepohl. Carol worked for DNR for 31 years. She worked for Forestry in various field capacities in Sawyer and Iowa Counties, then became administrator for the MFL/FCL in Central Office. Upon retirement in July 2015, Carol was the Division of Forestry's Private Forestry Specialist.
- *Tom Muga* - introduced by Roger Larson. Tom started with DNR in 1977 as a chemist working at Southern District HQ, Fitchburg. He moved to Central Office in 1978, worked for the Bureau of Watershed Management as an engineer. Became Section Chief in Wastewater in 2008, and retired January 2015 after 38 years of service.
- *Tim Andryk* – introduced by Brian Buenzow. Tim and Brian go back to days together as college students. Tim started working for DNR in 1986 as a wildlife biologist. In 1993, he moved to the Bureau of Legal Services and became the attorney for Fish and Wildlife. From 2011 through 2015, Tim was Chief Legal Counsel. He retires on January 8, 2016.

"Frank-n-Miller Report:"

Ed Frank said that the end of the year was somewhat disappointing, the "Santa Claus rally" fizzled! Stay tuned for final adjustments from ETF.

On the health insurance front, ETF has contracted with Segal Consulting to study self-insurance. They are giving a report to the Group Insurance Board. No action to be taken until late in the month. Consider if costs go up substantially and people leave the system to get coverage elsewhere, what will happen to those who stay and how will their costs be affected?

Ken Wiesner brought up an item for discussion with members who may be close to running out of their health insurance escrow account, or anyone who has already had that happen. He will need to make some decisions during the "It's Your Choice" period in October so he is prepared for coverage in 2017. Several members who are in the same situation offered advice and will talk offline with Ken about the decision making process they went through. A suggestion was made to go to the website of *The State of Wisconsin Board on Aging and Long Term Care*. Jim Miller talked about health insurance plans at our October 2014 meeting. Here is information in regard to the services provided by Board on Aging and Long Term Care:

Jim Miller cautioned that there is no one (health care) plan that is best, everyone has unique health care needs. The State of Wisconsin Board on Aging and Long Term Care offers good advice. They will first send you a questionnaire, then analyze all of the federally available Medicare plans, and recommend the best plan for you. Contact the Wisconsin Board on Aging at 855-677-2783 or longtermcare.wi.gov. Some senior citizen centers and AARP chapters provide the same service.

If you have lots of prescription drug costs, then WRS plans are good for you because there is an annual cap. A caution about leaving WRS – if you drop out of that plan, can only get back in during October IYC. If you are the main annuitant, and die while you are out of WRS, your spouse or covered individual can NOT get back in.

Ed Frank (with Jim Miller as alternate) was approved to remain our representative to Coalition of Annuitants. \$50 annual dues is split with other DNR retiree groups, so \$10 payment was made to Ed for ARC share. Ed reported that his main contact at COA, Bill Cox, has retired.

Old Business:

Correction to the picnic date: we originally posted it as July 6 – correct date is **July 13**. Website has been changed, but the print copies handed out at the Holiday Party had July 6.

New Business:

Sally Kefer is interested in anyone who knows about investment clubs. See directory for Sally's contact information.

Legislative update:

Hearing on AB600 and SB464 was held January 5. Tom Thoresen said that a lot of conservation group representatives showed up. These bills would remove many lake bed protections and local control affecting mines and CAFO siting, and impact what regulations local government could enact. Dan Fields attended the hearing as well. He said that legislators sponsoring these bills characterized environmentalists as "alarmists" that are holding us back from having a great economy. They said that the rules just clean up "a few technicalities." EPA says changes are significant. Legislators admit they didn't get input from environmental groups. For more information, go to Clean Wisconsin or Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters. WLCV's Kerry Schumann gave a TV Interview regarding the two bills. She provides lots of concise information. Here's the [link](#) if you want to view it.

Jim Leverence read a letter that was sent to EPA in November 2015, signed by 45 former DNR employees. The retiree letter supports a petition that seeks corrective measures for Wisconsin deficiencies under the Clean Water Act. The letter, prepared by Bob Martini, is a way for former DNR employees to support and add credibility to the effort and more generally highlight what is wrong in Wisconsin government right now. There are concerns about treating water as a commodity, and they point out many examples of political influence in the DNR since the Secretary became an appointed position. The [letter](#) and [Executive Summary](#) are posted on the ARC website. Jim brought copies if ARC members wanted to sign.

Birthdays and Anniversaries:

Wedding Anniversaries: Ron and Phila Poff celebrated their 58th, Ed and Deane Frank have been married 62 years and Ed celebrates birthday #83 this month!

Dave Gjestson checks out the ARC news and stays in touch from California. He just turned 76 in December, and he and Laura and celebrated their 49th anniversary on December 22.

Trips:

Tom Thoresen recently visited Washington, D.C.

Elections – Bruce Chevis was approved as President, Laurel Steffes as Vice President, Barbara Wolf as Secretary/Treasurer.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.