

THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATIONISTS

Meeting of February 1, 2017 held at Babe's, 5614 Schroeder Road, Madison

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

50 people were in attendance. The choices offered and cost (with the number ordered) were: burger with fries \$15 (14); cod sandwich with fries \$15 (22); grilled chicken breast sandwich with fries \$15 (4); Asian chicken salad \$17 (10).

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

Opening balance on February 1 for Savings is \$223.77 and Checking is \$577.99.
Activity on Savings account - dividend \$.02.

Activity on Checking account:

DEPOSITS: \$795.00 total includes lunch payments, \$19 donations, and \$5 dues for new member.

EXPENDITURES: \$652.60 to Babe's for meals, tax, gratuity; \$75 to Natural Resources Foundation as memorial for Dale Allen Zaug.

Balance on March 1 for Savings is \$223.79 and Checking is \$645.39.

Guests/New Members

Dixie Maier and Maureen Connors were attending their second meeting.

- *Dixie Maier* was introduced by Sheree Vande Brink. Dixie started working for DNR in 1980 as a word processing specialist. Later she moved to a program assistant position in Finance, and then transferred to Customer Service in 1996. After working in the Central Office for 30 years, Dixie transferred to the SCR Headquarters Fitchburg where she remained for the last 6 years of her 36+ years of service. Dixie retired in January 2017.
- *Maureen Connors* was introduced by Candy Schrank. Maureen worked for DNR for 37 years. She started her career working for Finance, then moved into word processing working with I & E and Legal Services. Maureen's next move was into the Water Division, working in the Office of Great Lakes. As a Program Assistant she worked with grants and helped maintain the Great Lakes and Water Division websites. Maureen retired in June 2015.

Dixie and Maureen were unanimously approved for membership, welcome!

Guests attending their first meeting:

- *Scot Stewart* – introduced by Mike Staggs. Scot retired in September 2015 with 33 years of service. He started his career as a fisheries biologist in Baldwin, moved to Madison for a position as an area fish manager and was the Southern District (the combined SCR and SER counties) Supervisor at the time of his retirement.
- *Martin Henert* – introduced by Bruce Braun. Martin started his employment with DNR in the Budget Office mid 1970's. He worked in Management Services until 2003 when he took a position in the office of the Secretary at DATCP. Martin retired in January 2011 and keeps busy as a member and current chair of the NRF Board.

"Frank-n-Miller Report"

Ed Frank said that the Variable fund finished strong and retirees can expect 4-8%. Core is projected for around a 1.5% increase.

Bob Schaefer represent Engineers in COA. He talked about a couple of legislative bills that would affect current employees. SB 328 changes the calculation on pay from 3 highest years to the 5 highest years, SB 329 increases retirement age from 55 to 57 (protective would be 50 to 52.) That only would affect those workers under age 40. Note that with new legislative session these bill numbers may be different, and Assembly numbers are not known at this time. Bob mentioned that what happens at the national level can have an impact on state retirement rules.

The Group Insurance Board will soon decide on the health insurance options. Meeting set for February 8, Bob will provide information on Board meeting time and location for posting on ARC website. Anyone may attend the meeting, but can't ask questions or speak to provide opinion during the meeting.

Old Business

Per discussion at January meeting, Laurel Steffes drafted a letter from ARC stating our opposition to the DNR split proposed by some legislators. A good confluence of events, made the news cycle along with a letter from past DNR Secretaries, and op-ed pieces by Ron Semmann and Lyman Wible. Ed Frank commended Laurel for her fine writing effort. Laurel acknowledged Bob Manwell, Diane Brinson and Bruce Chevis for their input, feedback and editing assistance. All of the various letters are posted to the News Now section of the ARC website.

New Business

The first meeting of an organization of former DNR employees will take place on February 25 at Kemp Biological Station near Woodruff. A tentative working title for the group who can be called upon to answer legislative and press questions is Green Fire.

Conservation Day at the Capitol is March 29. See Roger Larson or Tom Thoresen if you are interested in participating in this event organized by the League of Conservation Voters.

The southern branch of ARC (the smart people) are having their annual luncheon on February 27 at the Olive Garden in Estero, Florida. Contact Jim Huntoon if you want to attend!

Deaths and Illnesses

Dale Zaug passed away on January 18. Dale was a member of ARC, worked for the state for 38 years as a forester and systems analyst. Moved to Tigerton when he retired.

Dorothy Blabaum, widow of Carl Blabaum, passed away on January 13.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Chuck Pils and Janet Kernan celebrated birthdays.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Following the meeting, Chuck Pils showed a selection of slides from one of his many trips to Cuba. He said that he first traveled to Cuba in 1999 as part of the sister city delegation to Camaguey, and is going to be back there with a group in March, touring the eastern end of the island nation. (Note that average March temps are in the 80's so should be a great visit.) The photos were accompanied by music of the Buena Vista Social Club.