

THE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED CONSERVATIONISTS

Meeting of March 1, 2017 held at Great Dane, Fitchburg

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

34 people were in attendance. The choices offered for \$15 which included tax, gratuity and a contribution to the Treasury were: 1) Inner Warmth Peanut Stew - butternut squash, tomatoes, onions, garlic, ginger, hot peppers and cilantro with peanut sauce served over cilantro rice with a pretzel roll. (8)
2) Irish Road Rueben - shaved-house cured pastrami, melted Swiss cheese, sauerkraut, and Thousand Island dressing stacked on thick-cut grilled marble rye, includes fries. (10)
3) Pub Burger – 7 oz of choice broiled beef, topped with lettuce, tomato, pickles, onions and cheddar cheese, includes fries. (8)
4) Webster Street Chicken Salad – roasted chicken strips, granny smith apples, sun-dried cranberries, walnuts and gorgonzola cheese tossed in a honey citrus dressing on top of a bed of mixed greens and tomatoes. (8)

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 February minutes were read and approved.

Financial Report for March

Opening balance on March 1 for Savings is \$223.79 and Checking is \$645.39.
Activity on Savings account - dividend \$.02.

Activity on Checking account:

DEPOSITS: \$512.00 - total includes lunch payments, \$12 donations, and \$5 dues for new member.

EXPENDITURES: \$433.92 to Great Dane for meals, tax, gratuity

Balance on April 1 for Savings is \$223.81 and Checking is \$723.47.

John Hagen took care of filing our annual statement with IRS. He said a recent rule change will now require the filing to be done only once in a five year period. Thanks, John.

Guests/New Members

Scot Stewart was attending his second meeting and was unanimously approved for membership. Welcome, Scot!

Mark Guthmiller attended his first meeting and was introduced by Dave Hall. Mark just retired in January after 26 years of state service. He worked in the Division of Forestry as a Forest Health Specialist, starting with a position as a regional Gypsy Moth suppression coordinator, then later covering all aspects of forest insect and disease concerns, working with municipalities, woodland owners and DNR Land Managers.

"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. Final adjustment should be announced in late March.

The Group Insurance Board met in February and has gone with the self-insurance for health insurance with a regionalized system option. Ed said that a letter has gone from COA to Joint Finance Committee objecting to the change, making these points:

1. Bad timing for this decision given that Affordable Care Act is promised to be retracted under new federal administration.

2. Relates more to Governor's budget than a real need for a change, there are other ways to achieve savings on health care costs.
3. Contracts need to include cost.

Some questions from members – what are proposed changes to spousal coverage? Ed said there will be changes to new “significant other” coverage, he's not aware of any changes for married spouses. Someone asked about impact in Dane County to group health organizations. Ed said most of the HMO's will be part of the system as far as he has heard.

Ed called attention to a survey of all US retirement systems, produced by the Wisconsin Leg Council. Link to survey will be posted on ARC website, can also find on COA website.

Old Business

As reported last month, a group of former DNR employees met on February 25 at Kemp Biological Station. Tom Thoresen was not able to attend, but related what he had heard from several people who were there. The group is strongly committed to be a resource for media and legislature on matters of science since it is hard to get through to DNR scientists. No formal structure has been established, but the plan is to manage a website with information, a steering committee is being formed.

Conservation Day at the Capitol is March 29. The focus will be water (CAFO effects and lead contamination in drinking water) and state park funding. Contact Roger Larson, Tom Thoresen or go direct with WLCV if you are interested in participating in this event organized by the League of Conservation Voters.

New Business

Laurel Steffes said that she is part of a group working to save the Natural Resources Magazine, which is slated for elimination as part of the next budget. There are many misconceptions about funding the magazine and how much Patron License holders contribute. The subscriptions have been way up since the announcement about ending the magazine.

Trips

Laurel and Dick Steffes just returned from New Orleans, and Bob Manwell was recently in Belize.

Bill Horns shared a joke. Cheerio, Bill!

Meeting adjourned at 1:20 pm.