

The Professional Retiree

AFT-W Retiree Council

February 2014 Volume XIV, Issue 1

AFT-W 2014 Convention

Saturday, April 26

Radisson Hotel and KI Center, Green Bay, WI

CALL FOR DELEGATES

Delegates at the 2013 AFT-Wisconsin Convention voted to approve a vote on the question of merger with the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC). Therefore, AFT-W locals will send delegates to Green Bay for our annual state convention on April 26, 2014, to vigorously discuss and debate the proposed merger. This convention will culminate in a yes or no vote on whether to form a new, larger labor union with WEAC.

If you are interested in becoming one of the five retiree delegates or an alternate to the AFT-W Convention being held on April 26, contact Kathy Kreul by email at kreul@aft-wisconsin.org or call the office at 608-662-1444, extension 226, by March 1, 2014. Please specify if you wish to be a delegate or an alternate.

If we receive more than the available slots and an election is necessary, an election will take place by mail. Ballots will be returned to the AFT-W office by March 15, 2014. All delegates must be registered by April 1st.

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The Retiree Council will keep you updated on timely issues through email. Please forward your email address to the AFT-W office if you are not currently receiving email alerts from us.

MERGER INFORMATION

The AFT-Wisconsin/WEAC Unity Committee has developed a recommendation for a merged organization that reflects the values, mission and membership of both WEAC and AFT-W.

As part of its work, the committee was charged with selecting a name for the merged organization. After reviewing suggestions from members, the committee selected **Wisconsin Together**. Committee members pointed to the fact that the merged union will be an organization that represents a broad spectrum of professionals who are standing

together and standing strong for public education and public service.

In addition to the name, the committee approved a Constitution, Bylaws and Transition document that addresses issues raised by the national affiliates of both organizations.

It is important that you review the documents to see the overall effect of the merger. Please review the documents by going to the AFT-Wisconsin website at <http://www.aft-wisconsin.org>.

Click on "Merger Info Center" to view the following documents: Wisconsin Together Constitution, Wisconsin Together Bylaws and the Wisconsin Together Transition Document.

2014 AFT-W Executive Board

President: Kim Kohlhaas – Superior Federation of Teachers, Local 202

Executive Vice President: Joe Lowndes-Madison Area Technical College, Local 243

Secretary: Pam Campbell-Eau Claire Schools Classified Staff Federation, Local 4018

Treasurer: Vickie Boeder-Madison Area Technical College, Local 243

VP Graduate Employees: Adrienne Pagac-Teaching Assistants Association, Local 3220

Vice President Higher Education: Aaron Crandall-United Faculty and Academic Staff, Local 223

Vice President PK-12: Cheryl Myers-Menasha Teachers Union, Local 1166

Vice President PSRP: Cynthia Dallmann-Madison Area Technical College, Local 243

Vice President State Employees: Greg Georg-Wisconsin Professional Employees Council, Local 4848

Vice President WTCS: Michael Gradinjan-Moraine Park Technical College, Local 3338

Retiree Council: Kathy Monaghan

Vice President At Large (6)

Donalea Dinsmore-Wisconsin Science Professionals, Local 3732

Mark Evenson-The Assoc. of University of Wisconsin Professionals, Local 3535

Michael Rosen, MATC-Milwaukee, AFT Local 212

Luz Sosa, MATC-Milwaukee, AFT Local 212

Michelle Ann Theisen, Superior Federation of Teachers, Local 202

Cynthia Wynn, Wisconsin State Public Defenders Assoc., Local 4822



Wisconsin Together Timeline

Please contact the AFT-W office for exact locations and meeting time.

February 11 Town Hall meeting in Green Bay

February 12 Town Hall meeting, Ashland
Visitor Center

February 25 Tele-town hall meeting

February 26 AFT-W Call for convention

March 24 Tele-town hall meeting

March 25 Town Hall meeting in Madison

March 26 Town Hall meeting in Platteville

March 27 Town Hall meeting in Eau Claire

April 1 Deadline to register delegates for AFT-W Convention

April 2 Town Hall meeting in Milwaukee

April 3 Town Hall meeting in Menasha

April 10 Tele-town hall meeting

April 26 Merger vote at AFT-W Convention and WEAC Representative Assembly

If it is a Yes vote...

May-June

- Regions to hold elections of officers, former AFT-W and WEAC members eligible to run for regional office
- State Employees and Higher Ed shall meet and elect regional officers. WEAC locals chartered with AFT and affiliated with AFL-CIO.
- AFT-W locals chartered with NEA.
- AFT-W Retiree Council and WEAC-Retired will need to meet to develop Wisconsin Together-Retired

Sept 1 **Wisconsin Together** becomes official organization



**From your President,
Kathy Monaghan**

MERGER!!! This has been the issue that has consumed much time for the past two years. Now there are finally some documents available so everyone can form their own opinion based on facts. The new constitution, by-laws, and transition agreement are now available on our AFT-W website. I encourage everyone to read them and form your own opinion as to whether this merger will be an improvement or not. The final decision will be voted on at the Convention on April 26, 2014.

There are five other documents relating to questions about the merger that were released the week of January 27. The two most important for retirees are the questions and answers for retirees and the timeline for meetings around the state. Both are printed in this newsletter for those who do not have access to the website. I have been repeatedly asked questions about dues and representation. These issues are both addressed in the retiree questions.

Our dues are \$20 per year or \$200 for lifetime whereas WEAC dues are \$70 yearly or \$450 for lifetime membership. Should merger occur, our life members will be grandfathered into the newly formed organization. Therefore, I encourage members to join as life members now. If you have paid your 2014 membership dues, you can still pay an additional \$180 and become a life member prior to the merger.

If you are interested in becoming a delegate or an alternate to the April 26th Convention in Green Bay, you must notify Kathy Kreul in the AFT-W office prior to **March 1, 2014**. If necessary, an election will be held where all members will vote for delegate choices by March 15.



Few details are available for the convention program at this time. New questions are being answered every day regarding the merger. If you have an e-mail address, we send out information as soon as it is made available. Please **GIVE US YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS** so we can keep you up-to-date on current news. We look forward to your comments on merger and want to hear your opinions.



GOOD NEWS! The preliminary numbers are in for our Wisconsin Retirement System raises in May. The Core increase is expected to be between 4.4 and 4.8% while the variable is expected to be 20-25%.



BOB BEGLINGER



BUZZ DAVIS

AFT-W Retiree Council members, Buzz Davis and Bob Beglinger, represent you at the Wisconsin Coalition of Annuitants, the organization that keeps a watchful eye on our retirement system.

Keep safe and warm in this never ending winter!



Big News for Wisconsin Retirees

The State of Wisconsin Investment Board announced that investments in 2013 beat benchmarks and provided one of the best years in recent history.

In 2014, pension payments will improve for the first time in six years. This means that everyone who had previously retired and reached the "floor" will see a well-deserved increase. You suffered the downside of the risk. Next year you will see upside.

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- Contribution rates will decline for current employees next year.
- Taxpayers will pay a lower proportion to support the WRS.
- The WRS now holds about \$94 billion of assets. It remains the 9th largest public pension in the United States and improved to 28th in the world.

This is living proof of the long-term rewards that we can reap by maintaining a well thought-out pension plan.

Wisconsin one of Seven States Slashing School Spending

by Thomas C. Frohich and Michael Sauter

Wisconsin was among the top 10 states for state education spending before the recession, allocating nearly \$7,000 per student. By the upcoming fiscal year, however, each pupil's education will be worth less than \$6,000. Wisconsin was the only state other than Alabama to cut spending by more than \$1,000 per student. To balance the budget, school districts have been forced to close schools and lay off employees.

Percentage change per pupil spending : -15%
Decline in per-pupil spending: \$1,038 (2nd biggest decline)
Adults with bachelor's degree: 27.15 (22nd lowest)

WRS Update – The End of Cuts

by Bob Beglinger

Finally there is some good news for annuitants in the Wisconsin Retirement System. After five years of reductions in the CORE annuity, 2014 promises a reversal of that trend. Annuity adjustments this year will be positive; the catastrophic losses of 2008 have been fully realized and the future looks much brighter.

SWIB has released preliminary figures for 2013. The CORE fund gained 13.5% and the variable

29%, both beating their benchmarks. For annuities in the CORE fund SWIB is projecting a positive adjustment of somewhere around 4.4 – 4.8% in May and the Variable fund should see an increase in the 23 – 25% range. After several years of experiencing pension cuts, this certainly is good news for retirees.

Last fall several bills providing for changes to the WRS were introduced in the legislature. SB330 and its companion AB414 would allow participants to purchase credit for prior service. Because participants would be required to pay the full actuarial cost, it appears to have no adverse effects on the WRS and our members.

AB470 and AB471 were also introduced last fall. AB410 would increase the minimum retirement age of participants in the WRS by two years and AB471 would change the process for calculating final average salary from the three highest years to the five highest years. Currently these bills have been referred to the Joint Survey Committee and no hearings have been scheduled. We will be continuing to monitor these and have hopes they will languish in committee and die.

Though the pension cuts of the past few years have been difficult for many, annuitants should take great pride in their WRS. In addition to providing retirement security for participants, SWIB invests money in Wisconsin businesses helping them grow and annuitants contribute several billion dollars annually to the Wisconsin economy thereby creating tens of thousands jobs in the state. While the cuts of the past few years have been difficult, they are the price we pay to maintain the strongest public pension system in the nation, a retirement system that is fully funded and can continue to offer retirement security to participants without relying on taxpayer subsidies to fund benefits.

Did you know? Be aware of your status when admitted to the hospital. You should be an INPATIENT. Be very cautious/wary if you are admitted UNDER OBSERVATION, as Medicare does not have to pay for this status.

Frequently Asked Questions Wisconsin Together Retired

Will retiree issues still be a key priority for Wisconsin Together?

Retiree issues count - not just for seniors, but for all Wisconsin families. They will continue to count in the new Wisconsin Together. Just as AFT-W and WEAC have always done, Wisconsin Together will continue to fight for the priorities and policies that matter to retirees and to all of us: protecting retirement security and WRS...fighting for quality health care and public services for seniors...and investing in our communities, so that all of us can count on safe neighborhoods, clean air and water, abundant and accessible parks and natural resources, and a thriving state economy.

How will retirees be represented in Wisconsin Together?

In accordance with Wisconsin Together Transition Agreement: Procedures and Timelines, Paragraph 6: Following the merger vote, the *WEAC-Retired* and the *AFT-Wisconsin Retiree Chapter* shall merge their organizations into one *Wisconsin Together-Retired* group.

Wisconsin Together-Retired will develop a committee of members from WEAC-Retired and the AFT-W retiree Chapter. This committee will be tasked with developing the constitution and bylaws for Wisconsin Together-Retired. Just as with Wisconsin Together, Wisconsin Together-Retired will have a transition period in which the group will address membership dues and delegate representation, along with other member priorities and concerns.

Are retired members of WEAC and AFT-W considered members of Wisconsin Together?

Current dues-paying retired members (either annual or lifetime) of either AFT-W or WEAC will be considered members of Wisconsin Together. Upon merger, new retirees from former WEAC and AFT-W will be eligible members of Wisconsin Together-Retired once they become dues-paying members.

How many retirees are currently represented in WEAC and AFT-W?

The AFT-Wisconsin Retiree Chapter has approximately 250 members. WEAC-Retired has approximately 11,000 members.

What will the annual and lifetime dues be for retirees of Wisconsin Together?

Currently, AFT-W retiree dues are \$20 annual/\$200 lifetime; WEAC retiree dues are \$70 annual/\$450 lifetime. WEAC dues include NEA-Retired dues. If a retiree is a lifetime member of either AFT-W Retiree Chapter or WEAC-Retired, he or she will be grandfathered into Wisconsin Together-Retired. Wisconsin Together-Retired will make a determination on dues structure for all future retirees.

When will Wisconsin Together retiree dues go into effect?

As described in the question above, if you are a lifetime member of either AFT-W Retired or WEAC-Retired, your dues will be “grandfathered in” and remain the same. Wisconsin Together-Retired will decide on what dues will be for annual-dues payers, and when the new dues structure will take effect. Until then, the current dues structure will be maintained for AFT-W Retired and WEAC-Retired members who pay annual dues.

Are retirees responsible for regional dues?

No, regional dues are determined by, and affect, only active regional members. Regional dues will not be a part of the new Wisconsin Together dues structure, and will “drop off” all members’ dues once the transition is complete.

Will there be staff assigned to Wisconsin Together-Retired?

Wisconsin Together-Retired will have access to the services of Wisconsin Together state staff but will not have assigned regional staff.

How will delegates be chosen so both AFT-W and WEAC are represented at Representative Convention?

In accordance with Wisconsin Together Bylaws: Article II, Section 2, #2: *Retired Members-the Wisconsin Together-Retired organization shall be entitled to twenty (20) delegates to the Representative Convention.*

Wisconsin Together-Retired will decide on the process for electing delegates. As with the rest of Wisconsin Together, a key value in the merger process should be supporting the contributions that *each* of our representative organizations (AFT-W and WEAC) will make in creating a strong and hopeful future for Wisconsin Together. Thus the delegate election process should ensure fair representation from *both* former WEAC and AFT-W retiree memberships.

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MINUTES OF THE AFT-WI RETIREE COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

The AFT-WI Retirees had their Annual Meeting on Friday, October 25, 2013 at the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton, Wisconsin. The meeting was called to order by President Monaghan at 9:55am with 19 members and 3 guests in attendance. Present were: Joy Bashara, Kathy Monaghan, Ed Gallagher, Bob Beglinger, Bonnie Greasby, Elaine Schwoerer, Marilyn Bunnell, Buzz Davis, Wanda Gerard, Linda Oberstar, Jim Moore, Richard Amoriello, Roger Springman, Jill Hynum, Eugene Herubin, Ruth Ludwig, Kathy Empie, Kay Davis and Philip Anderson.

Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the last annual meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Gallagher reported on the budget of 2013, stating that the total assets were \$14,814.32. He then presented the new trimmer 2014 budget which has a proposed income of \$11,250 and expenses of a matching amount. A motion was made and seconded to accept the 2014 Budget.

Committee Reports

Marilyn Bunnell reported that we have 273 members and that effort, as always, are being made to increase that number.

Bonnie Greasby reported that there would be three newsletters next year. She commented that this was contingent on the merger status.

Buzz Davis reporting on the 2014 election reinforcing the importance of supporting Mary Berg for governor. He also reported that a former AFT-WI employee, Scott Specter, was now working for Wisconsin Progress, which is an organization that works with all kinds of specific community groups and organizations to find good candidates.

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President's Report

President Monaghan reported on the importance of careful consideration of the Constitutional Amendments that directly affect the voting strength of the AFT-WI in meetings with WEAC. Amendment 6, which deals with the combination of secretary and treasurer and the number of vice presidents allowed, is crucial. She also recommended voting for adoption of Amendment 11, which deals with the election of AFT-WI Retiree Council president and vice president. A motion was made by Roger Springman that when the merger is off the table we have a committee appointed to look at the organization of the AFT-WI Retiree Council. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Kathy reported that she had applied for a \$2,000 grant from AFT National. No word has been received.

Buzz Davis presented a ballot for the election of officers. All candidates were running unopposed so he asked the assembled group three times, if there were any further nominations. A lively discussion occurred when questions about the "insular" process which seems to only include those already officers. It was suggested that the process, duties and perks of being an officer be announced to all members, so they could make informed choices. It was suggested that this might get more people involved. The election was concluded after the discussion with the following members being elected for a two year term: President –Kathy Monaghan Vice President – Bob Beglinger Treasurer – Ed Gallagher Secretary – Joy Bashara. Their election was by unanimous ballot.

New Business

Elaine Schwoerer was given an honorary membership to AFT-WI Retirees and a plaque thanking her for all of her service to us over the years. Elaine worked in the AFT-W office and was assigned to working with the Retiree Council.



MARILYNN BUNNELL, ELAINE SCHWOERER, ED GALLAGHER,
KATHY MONAGHAN. PRESIDENT

Don Ganther was recognized for his years of support as a member and vice president for many years.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 am so that we could hear a comprehensive report on the Unity/ Merger Committee by Bob Beglinger. The presentation was well received with a lively Q&A segment.



The meeting for WEAC/AFT-WI will be April 26 in Green Bay. The following AFT-WI Retiree meetings will be via teleconferencing, and will be announced several weeks prior to the dates for your convenience.

Respectfully submitted,
Joy Bashara, Secretary

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<http://retirees.wi.aft.org>

Lifelong Unionism
Unity – Power – Experience - Strength

Be on the Lookout for \$9.84 Credit Charges

Credit card users beware: Charges of \$9.84 that appear on your account could be from scammers. The Better Business Bureau is warning consumers of the \$9.84 scam and alerting them to take a closer look at their statements. The scammers making the fraudulent charges believe few cardholders will review such a small amount, and that credit card companies won't actively investigate the charges. Scammers from Cyprus, India

This scam comes to light in the midst of Target's recent security breach that involved more than 100 million customers. Experts say the mass attention on the Target breach has brought about more awareness of other scams taking place. USA Today and the Online Trust Alliance report that more than 740 million credit cards and other records were exposed in 2013, making last year the worse year for data breaches recorded.

For more on this story, please visit USAToday.com.

2014 Retiree Council Officers

Kathy Monaghan, President
Bob Beglinger, V-President
Joy Bashara, Secretary

Ed Gallagher, Treasurer
Marilynn Bunnell, Membership
Bonnie Greasby, Newsletter