

Keeping in Touch



Supreme Court? Consider Linda Clifford...

Most of us understand that the Wisconsin Supreme Court wields a great deal of power and influence. But what does this really mean for WEAC members and public education?

Consider this – In the last 10 years, the following issues have been before the court:

- The constitutionality of Wisconsin's school aid formula.
- The union's right to bargain and protect contractual benefits.
- Public employee privacy rights.
- Family medical leave rights.

Through the candidate screening process, WEAC has recommended **Linda Clifford**. She has over 30 years' experience, has bipartisan support and has earned the respect of her colleagues for her integrity and ethics.

Linda is the only candidate who has argued a case before the Supreme Court. She will stand up for the rights of consumers, and her support of public education is demonstrated in the following:

"I believe a child's right to a sound, basic education is a fundamental right. The Wisconsin Supreme Court should uphold this right and make sure all children are given the education they need to be successful." — Linda Clifford

**Please remember to vote for Linda Clifford for Justice on April 3.
It means a great deal to the future of our great schools.**



WEAC-Retired Board Highlights from the March 9th meeting

Business/Discussion Items:

Intergenerational Mentorship projects – Update from Milwaukee and TUC-Retired

Fundraising for NEA delegates – Presentation by Gail Gonzales

Wisconsin Association of Retired Americans changed its IRS status to allow for more political activity.

Unified literature concept – Discussion of emphasis on Chapter membership – a committee will study our current promotional materials.

WREA – Help prospective members be aware that our organization is the only affiliate through UniServ and Local meetings.

Annual Meeting – Baskets and Door Prizes – Chapters will provide items for the giveaway to raise money for the NEA Children's Fund.

Action Items:

Full time dedicated staff person – Moved by Smits, seconded by Henning to rescind the new business item from the January meeting for a full time staff person. Motion carried. Moved by Bents, seconded by Nemeth to allow the committee to meet with the WEAC president and give the committee the authority to proceed with a new business item if the meeting is not successful. Motion carried

WEAC-Retired Distinguished Service Award – The nominees were Jim Billmann, Lev DeBack and Florence Hyatt. Florence Hyatt was selected to be Wisconsin's entry. (More in the Summer issue of *Keeping in Touch*)

Keeping in Touch – Email or snail mail? Postage is expensive, and we need to control costs. West will work on it.

WEAC RA delegate certification and expense reimbursement – Moved by Smits, seconded by Henning to approve the WEAC-Retired delegates as certified by the Elections Committee including the recommendation that delegates must attend all sessions to receive expense reimbursement. Motion carried.

Outreach to Teach Needs Our Help!

April 14 & 15; Student WEA members from across the state will be working to brighten up three schools in Fond du Lac – Roberts Elementary, Evans Elementary and Theisen Middle.

Approximately 200 Student WEA volunteers, parents and WEAC-Retired volunteers will be refreshing playground areas, designing and painting classroom and hallway murals, clearing brush and sprucing up the Theisen Nature Center, as well as working on a portable concession stand for the high school sports field.

They could really use help from those of you living in the eastern and south-eastern part of the state.

**For details, please call Kelly Perna at WEAC.
(800-362-8034 Ext. 272)**

Your Delegates to the WEAC-RA

The following individuals were elected to represent you at the WEAC Representative Assembly in Madison:

George Alafouzos	Jim Jensen
Karen Anderson	Skip Jewett
Bonnie Bastian	Darold Knoble
Jim Blank	Allen Knop
Mary Burke	Kay Krause
Greg Davis	Richard LeClair
Lev DeBack	Gerry Martin
Reg Delwiche	Joyce Matthews
Karen Dixon	Tim McCormick
John Durham	Anna McNeil
Marie Fatzinger	Carmen Periquet
Dick Feldhausen	Pat Porter
Ken Flood	Gerry Potter
Bob Fullmer	Mary Snyder
Ila Gillis	Rochelle Stillman
Linda Hein	Barry Thompson
Florence Hyatt	Joanne Williams

Ginger Stuvetraa, the WEAC-Retired representative to the WEAC Board, is an at-large delegate.

Vision Screening will be available **FREE** at the Annual General Membership meeting on May 11th in Appleton (see insert). Wisconsin Vision, the union-friendly company, will be with us again.

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REPORTS

President – ETF has announced annuity increases will be 10.3% for Variable and 3% for Core annuitants. • David Travis is introducing a bill to exempt all retirement income from Wisconsin tax, but it carries a 3 million dollar price tag so its chances of passage are bleak. As of January 2008, Social Security will be tax-free in Wisconsin.

Treasurer's – Moved by Lowder, seconded by Struvetraa to accept the treasures report. Motion carried.

WEAC Board of Directors – PR has a new brochure “Bridging the Achievement Gap” that is available to be placed around your community such as banks, doctors offices, etc. The brochure is free.

Meeting adjourned.

This letter was recently received by Jean Haase, a WEAC-Retired member from Council-10 – Retired. Since many of our members participate in the SeniorCare program, we're sharing the message with you. We've excerpted the letter and added the underlined emphasis. — Editor

Dear Friends:

I am writing to give you an update on the status of the Wisconsin SeniorCare program and my ongoing fight to save it.

SeniorCare saved our seniors \$200 million in prescription drug costs in 2006, and research found that it was a **better choice** than the Medicare Part D drug benefit **for about 95 percent of those participating**. Unfortunately, **the program will expire on June 30, 2007**, unless the federal government approves Wisconsin's petition to have the program extended until 2010.

The stated goal of the federal government in implementing Medicare Part D was to provide help in paying for the high cost of prescription drugs. For the federal government to now end the superior SeniorCare would be a blow to the thousands of Wisconsin seniors for whom SeniorCare is literally a life-saving program.

We to make sure that the federal government sees very clearly the human face of SeniorCare before they decide whether or not to end the program in Wisconsin.

They need to know about Darline from Madison who couldn't afford to take the right amount of medicine until enrolling in SeniorCare. They also need to know about Barbara from Milwaukee who “researched more than a dozen drug programs” and found that SeniorCare was best for her.

In 2004, in response to the federal government's action to force seniors to make a choice between SeniorCare and Medicare Part D, I made sure that seniors had all the facts they needed to make the right decision.

In 2005, I personally negotiated an agreement with the federal government to allow SeniorCare to continue through June 30, 2007. In 2006, I petitioned the federal government to let us extend the program until 2010, and that brings us to where we are today – still awaiting word on our petition while the future of SeniorCare depends on their decision.

I hope the Bush Administration will allow us to keep the program. After all, there is simply no dispute that SeniorCare is the better program. AARP, the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups (CWAG), and senior providers and seniors groups all across Wisconsin agree on that.

Please join me in urging the federal government to continue SeniorCare. If you would like to do so, you may write to: Secretary Mike Leavitt, US Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20201. You may also write to President Bush at The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington DC 20500.

I will keep you updated on any new developments as they become available. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Jim Doyle
Governor

Travel Tips



Many people are question the necessity of having travel agents when one can simply go on line, make reservations and not have to pay an agent a fee. It's a fair question, but consider the following.

When taking a cruise, there is normally no extra cost for booking the reservation. The cost is the same whether it is booked directly with the cruise company or through a travel agent. The difference is that the travel agent who books your cruise becomes your personal representative and is someone who can resolve problems that an individual traveler cannot. For instance, in order to save money, one set of honeymooners I know booked a cruise and their flight to the departure port online. Another set of honeymooners booked the same cruise but went through a travel agent. Both paid the same price. When bad weather hit, the online honeymooners had no one to look out for their interests. The other set of honeymooners contacted their travel agent who changed the arrangements so they could successfully make their cruise.

Some of you will remember Friday, December 1st as the 100-year snowstorm - especially if you live in the Milwaukee area. I had booked a Disney Cruise, through a travel agent, which was to depart at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday. I reasoned that this time period marked the end of the hurricane season, and I knew that we never got much snow on December 1st. Well, I was right on the hurricane season issue but dead wrong on the snowstorm. Friday became an eventful day in my life as I attempted to fly out of Milwaukee.

It started to snow at 3:00 a.m., and I left the Milwaukee Sheraton 4 Points at 5:30 a.m. We boarded our Midwest Express flight to Orlando on time, but two hours later we were still at the gate and eventually had to deplane as the flight was cancelled. The real fun began with the Midwest gate agents trying to rebook everyone. While waiting in a really long line, I called my travel agent from my cell phone, and we discussed all of my options. By the time I was at the front of the line to rebook, my travel agent had already reserved three seats (ahead of the people in line who had booked online or without a travel agent) for us to leave at 2:35 p.m. as the storm was scheduled to clear. We actually left Milwaukee at 6:35 p.m. and arrived in Orlando at 10:30 p.m. Having a travel agent definitely was a key in saving our vacation cruise. The story gets better. My travel agent gave me both her cell phone number and home phone number in case there were further problems that needed to be resolved after the normal 5:00 p.m. agency closing time. When the travel agency official closed that evening she could still make arrangements on my behalf from her home computer.

If you have allergies or medical problems, a travel agent may be the key to ensuring a successful vacation. I have the computer knowledge and savvy to do all of my own bookings. Do I? No! I have a valued partner in my vacation planning – who happens to be my travel agent.

Once you determine you want to travel abroad, you have to make the decision on whether you should do it on your own or book a tour. Obviously there are pros and cons with both options. Some believe that seasoned travelers would never book a tour. Not so! In fact, if this will be your first trip to a destination you may want to consider taking a tour the first time. After learning the ropes, you may be in a position to go it alone.

If you're older or have medical concerns, a tour and/or a cruise is the best way to go. If you don't want to worry about theft, exchanging money, figuring out where to stay and what to do, a cruise is the only way to go. Obviously renting a car and driving abroad is not for everyone. I've noticed that I actually see more on tours because I'm not the one doing the driving. Many individuals choose to do a combination. Travelers who like adventure, are up for a challenge and are willing to accept the unavoidable surprises by going on their own should not take a tour. Last year I drove out to San Francisco to take a round-trip Alaska inside passage cruise. I drove to the west coast to have the freedom to explore the Badlands, Disneyland, Yellowstone and Mt. Rushmore. I truly loved the freedom we had while driving, but I also appreciated the worry free 12-day cruise that followed.

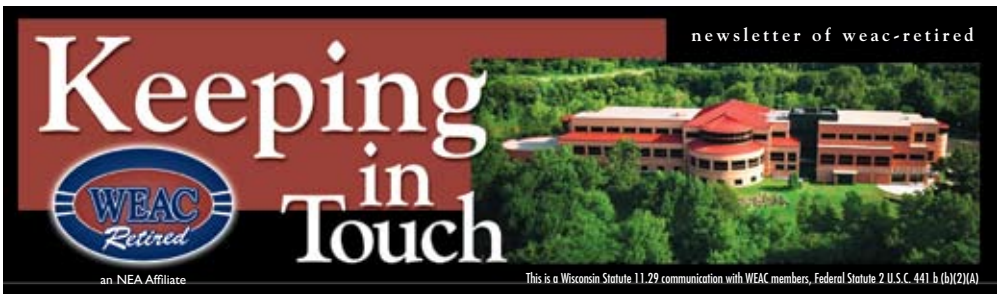
— **Thomas Kreif**, WEAC-Fox Valley Retired Member and Traveler
—<http://my.athenet.net/~mesh/>

(Travel trips for this issue come from experience, Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel, and traveling friends.)

Member Benefits Committee Byte

Best bet for travelers – use your Access Card – aka “WEAC membership card” or “Saver’s Club card”.

For information on great deals, available ONLY to WEAC members, go to the Members Only site at OnWEAC.org. Click on the Saver's Club logo to find over 350 merchants offering local and national discounts exclusively available to our members.



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WEAC-Retired Calendar of Events	
March 31	NEA-Retired Eastern Regional meeting – Portland, ME
April 1	NEA-Retired Eastern Regional meeting – Portland, ME
20 – 22	WEAC RA – Madison
May 9	WEAC-Retired Member Benefits Committee meeting – WEAC office
10	WEAC-Retired Board of Directors – WEAC office
11	WEAC-Retired General Annual Membership Meeting – Appleton, Paper Valley Hotel

Chapter Events

The events listed below are sponsored by a Chapter but are open to anyone. If you would like to participate, just call or email the contact person listed for each event.

April 26
CWUC Spring General membership meeting – CWUC office

June 1
SWEA Annual Meeting – Mining Museum in Platteville

NEXT ISSUE:
Highlights from the WEAC and NEA RAs



Cyber Connections:

Allen Knop, WEAC-Retired President	ajknop@yahoo.com
Karen West, WEAC-Retired Affiliate Coordinator	westk@weac.org
WEAC-Retired	http://www.weac.org/constit/retired
WEAC Home Page	http://www.weac.org
WEA Credit Union	http://www.weacu.com
WEA Trust	http://www.weac.org/Constit/weainsure
NEA-Retired	http://www.nea.org
NEA Member Benefits	http://www.neamb.com
Social Security Administration	http://www.ssa.gov
State of Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds	http://badger.state.wi.us/agencieself
State of Wisconsin Investment Board	http://www.swib.state.wi.us
State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction	http://www.dpi.state.wi.us
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare	http://www.ncpssm.org