



**Kettle Moraine  
UniServ Council**

**N7778 Rangeline Road  
Sheboygan, WI 53083  
Phone: 920-565-2913  
800-834-7076  
Fax: 920-565-3630**

*KMUC is affiliated with  
WEAC and NEA*

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*This is an 11.29  
communication with  
WEAC members, Federal  
Statute CFR 100.8 (b) (4)*

Representing Teachers and Support Professionals in Chilton, Elkhart Lake, Howards Grove, Kiel, Kohler, Lakeshore Technical College, Manitowoc, New Holstein, Plymouth, Sheboygan, Sheboygan Falls, Two Rivers, and KMUC Retired

# KMUC

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## It's Not Really About Us

**By Linda Helf,  
KMUC Board President**

I suspect you aren't surprised that I am writing a political article for this edition of the newsletter. I actually am surprised because I think that there is just so much that a member can read before they cast a vote in November. And, I think that my writing an article could be viewed as more of the same. But, sometimes, the importance of an issue or an election outweighs the chance that I am repeating things you have already heard.

Politics is one of those things that many of you think we should ignore. We could do that — if it would ignore us. If we didn't fight for school funding through political means, if we didn't give tests each year because of political decisions, if we didn't have to make decisions about getting a salary increase or keeping health insurance, we could close our doors and ignore politics. But, our life as teachers, support personnel, and school district employees is governed by the world of politics — and we can't ignore that with good conscience.

Somehow it is easier for our members to see the importance of being political with the levels of government close to us. It is easy to see the relationship of the school board to our lives because we bargain a contract with them. It is understandable that we are connected to the state legislature and officials because they decide the funding for our schools and make decisions about our programming. It is a bigger reach to understand why the presidential

election is related to our education lives. But, for this election, it is imperative that we see how it matters.

I have heard many of you say that there are so many issues in this campaign for President. I agree!! And, all of those issues have supporters and advocates — the health care issue has the pharmaceutical companies and insurance lobbyists, the oil cost issue has large oil companies and their lobbyists, and the war supporters have military lobbyists. We are educators and education is our issue and we are its lobbyists. If we don't make this the most important issue in this election, no one else will.

Usually, you see the arguments for salary increases, health care costs, and funding for schools as the reasons to support a candidate. Those are our issues. Without fighting for them, we do not live the kind of life that we should be able to expect since we are working with America's future. Without fighting for them, we do not get the kind of medical care that is affordable and accessible. Without fighting for them, we don't have supplies, staff, and programs for the students we teach. Those are all important — but for the most part, they are about us.

This is not what this article is about. This article is about this presidential race and the students that I teach. I work with students in the lowest economic area in town. We have the highest poverty rate based on free and reduced milk participants. We have minority students and special ed. students. I want to make sure

that whoever is elected President knows that these children exist. That's it — just understand that there is a whole segment of the population — a large and growing segment — that does not have an easy life. I want the next President to fight for health care for these students so they can have health insurance that allows them to take the medication they need to help them learn. I want the next President to understand that students who do not have parents at home with them because they have to work too many jobs at a low rate of pay to spend any time with their child and homework should not be penalized by having their school funding reduced based on a single test score. I want the next President to understand that we have a changing ethnic demographic and the new immigrants to our country can become valuable — much in the same way our ancestors did when they were immigrants during an earlier period in history. I want a President who has lived a life that is similar to ours — not a privileged life. I believe you can try to understand how other people live but unless you have experienced that kind of life, you cannot feel it.

For me, this election is about the students I teach. It is about the world they are going to live in, the jobs they will be able to have, and their ability to survive in a country that will be theirs. It is for them that I am writing this article and it is for them that I am voting in November.

## WEAC Board Report, September 12—13, 2008

Diane Sixel, Lei Lund and Phil Knier

Elections are just around the corner, and we can't state strongly enough how important it is for our members to vote. With over 98,000 members, WEAC makes up over 2.5 percent of Wisconsin's voting population. In close races where margins of victory may be just a few hundred or a few thousand votes, our votes can ensure that pre-education candidates are elected. Information about WEAC's recommended candidates in both the national and state elections is available on the Members Only link at

[www.weac.org](http://www.weac.org).

The process to advance WEAC's 2008-2010 strategic priorities as endorsed by the Representative Assembly last April is moving forward, beginning with the issues of school funding reform and health care reform. Work teams are currently gathering information and building awareness of these issues, and a resolution to continue working with the School Finance Network on school funding reform will be on the table at the October board meeting.

The Dues Restructuring Committee has been examining options and getting input from various groups. One of the options it is considering is a structure tied to income or "ability to pay" but also with a minimum and maximum dues assessment. In order to pursue this option further, the committee will need salary data. WEAC has data on teachers' salaries but not on those of ESP members, so the committee may be contacting ESP locals to get this information from them.

## KMUC Board Report

### 1. Solidarity

Board members were encouraged to spread the word about the Solidarity Event, September 17, 2008 at Club Bilmar, Manitowoc. Music by Keith Abler & Son, food and beverages begin at 4:30.

### 2. Dues Discussion

WEAC is investigating

alternatives to the establishment of the dues structure. Stacy Gloede from Sheboygan and KMUC Vice President serves on this committee and will keep us updated.

### 3. Communication

Members were asked to go back to their local and review how communication is gotten to mem-

bers. It is vital that important information is gotten to members in a timely manner.



## WEAC Convention, October 30-31, 2008, Alliant Center—Madison

The WEAC Convention has been set for Thursday and Friday, October 30-31, 2008 at the Alliant Center in Madison. For more details, visit the WEAC website at [www.weac.org](http://www.weac.org); look for "Events" in the upper left hand corner of the page, and then click on "2008 WEAC Convention." Pre-registration is recommended to avoid long lines at the convention.

The Convention Keynote Speaker is Dr. Adolph Brown, III. Dr. Brown is a world-renowned professional motivational speaker, keynote speaker, and seminar leader.

Continuing this year is a special incentive for new members. Members who are in their first three years in the profession who attend both days of the Convention will receive a \$50 stipend from WEAC. Attendance forms will be available each day at the WEAC Membership Booth. Please note that this stipend is for first time attendees of the WEAC Convention (1-3 years in the profession). You can only earn this stipend one time.

## Fall Elections to Shape the Health Care Debate

The issue of health care is on the minds of voters. Nationwide rising health care costs are straining family budgets and 45 million Americans do not have health insurance. In Wisconsin, educators have given up salary increases at the bargaining table to maintain their health care and many education support professionals are without health insurance. In our schools, educators know how hard it is for children to learn when they have a tooth ache or are sick and their families lack health insurance or are under insured.

On November 4, who you elect to be the next president of the United States will frame the national debate on how to best address our broken health care system. You will have a choice between presidential candidates with starkly contrasting views on health

care affordability and accessibility.

Senator Barack Obama has a plan to cover every American. If you already have health insurance, the only change under his plan is the amount you spend on premiums. That will be less. If you don't have health insurance, you will have it after the plan becomes law. No one will be turned away because of a pre-existing condition or illness.<sup>1</sup>

By contrast, Senator John McCain has proposed a new tax on people who receive health insurance from their employers, which would cause many school employees to pay more in taxes each year.<sup>2</sup>

Obama voted in favor of reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which funds Badgercare Plus to

expand health care coverage to all the state's children and many uninsured adults.<sup>3</sup> McCain voted against SCHIP's reauthorization.<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, the health care issue is likely to play a major role in state legislative races. Votes will want to know where the candidates stand on health care reform. In addition, voters in up to 13 municipalities and six counties will have an opportunity to answer the advisory referendum question of whether the 2009 Legislature should, by December 31, 2009, guarantee affordable health care coverage substantially similar to that provided to legislators.

So when you step into the voting booth on November 4, your vote will help decide the future of health care reform in our country and our state.

***“John McCain has proposed a new tax on people who receive health insurance from their employer.”***

1 barackobama.com

2 The Boston Globe, 4/3/08; The Wall Street Journal, 10/11/07

3 H.R. 976, Senate Roll Call Vote 307, 8/2/07

4 H.R. 976, Senate Roll Call Vote, 307, 8/2/07

## ESP Workshop—Discipline Strategies Class

Date: November 8, 2008

Location: KMUC Office Conference Room (downstairs)

Time: 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Instructors: Bob and Adrienne Nerad

Lunch will be included

If interested in attending, please contact Sarah at 920-565-2913, 800-834-7076 or by email at [berths@weac.org](mailto:berths@weac.org) to register. We are limited to 35 people.

**We're on the web!**  
[www.weac.org/kmuc](http://www.weac.org/kmuc)

## Solidarity Kickoff

The Solidarity Kickoff Event was attended by 140 members representing: Chilton EA, Elkhart Lake EA, Howards Grove EA, Kiel EA, Kohler EA, Manitowoc EA, Manitowoc EP, New Holstein EA, Plymouth EA, Sheboygan EA, Sheboygan Falls FA, Two Rivers and KMUC-Retired. The evening began with a social including music provided by Keith Abler and Son. Mike Dellger, a teacher from Kohler also joined them for a few songs.



Elkhart Lake EA working

Members were given time to work together on designing their campaign plan and then reported out their plan.

The evening concluded by Bob Burke-WEAC Government Relations Director speaking about What's at Stake in this election. Here are some powerful statistics about the WEAC membership in elections:

- ◆ The statewide turnout in November 2007 presidential election was high—74.95% (2.9 million votes). Statewide November 2004 turnout among WEAC members was even higher—83.08%.
- ◆ WEAC members made up 2.53% of the total electorate. (John Kerry won in Wisconsin by 11,384 votes—a victory margin of just 0.39%)

**Your vote can make a difference.**

Many campaign activities will take place during the next number of weeks.

- Member education pieces will be handed out weekly. Check with your building rep each week.
- Work Nights will take place October 22 and 23 at the KMUC office.

If you want to participate in any of these activities, please contact your local president, legislative chair, or Sarah at the KMUC office—800-834-7076 or 920-565-2913.



Matt Gula, Regional Field Director of the Obama Campaign addressed members. Terry Van Akkeren, Assembly District 26 and WEAC recommended also addressed members for their support. WEAC was represented by Betsy Kippers-Secretary-Treasurer, Bob Burke-Government Relations, and Jennifer Garner-Government Relations Program Specialist-Northeast Re-



Sheboygan Falls FA working

## KMUC Calendar

October 8, 2008	October 20, 2008	October 30-31, 2008	November 8, 2008	November 10, 2008
<b>CBC/President's Meeting</b> KMUC Office 6:00 p.m.	<b>Executive Committee Meeting</b> KMUC Office 4:30 p.m.	<b>WEAC Convention</b> Alliant Center Madison	<b>ESP Workshop Discipline Strategies Class</b> KMUC Office 9:00—3:00	<b>KMUC Board Meeting</b> Lakeshore Technical College 5:30 p.m.