

## *Bargaining Report*

### Dates set for 26 bargaining sessions

**W**PPEC and management bargaining teams have agreed to 26 meeting dates, between December 1 and February 28.

Meanwhile, the WPEC team and alternates have been meeting with the union's research and language writing committees to go over member survey results and develop our issues to be used in the "win-win" process. (See "win-win bargaining" in this issue.)

The WPEC plan is to start with negotiations over "non-economic" language, using the non-contentious "win-win" approach, to achieve agreement on the bulk of a new contract as soon as possible. This gives us more time to develop the research needed to support wage proposals.

Bargaining sessions are open to all WPEC members, and most will be held at the Quality Inn South in Madison. If you'd like to attend, call the union at (608) 277-7900 for a schedule of times, dates and places.

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### Teams train in 'win-win bargaining'

*Your ship goes down. You scramble aboard a life raft only to find the other occupant is the personnel manager of your agency.*

*Do you cooperate and start rowing for Tahiti? Or do you plot how to use each other for shark bait?*

**W**PPEC and management bargaining teams worked together at a two-day joint training session on "win-win bargaining" in early November.

The premise of "win-win" is that many issues in contract negotiations can be resolved without conflict, given the right process. Both sides need to identify goals and brainstorm solutions to problems. Then it's a matter of picking from among the possible solutions those that satisfy both parties' goals.

"Win-win" sounds simple and workable, in theory, and both bargaining teams are committed to using it.

But the process only works if both sides have goals that are not mutually exclusive. In the opinion of experienced bargainers it works best on bargaining non-economic language in a contract, such as work rules, training opportunities or grievance procedures. It's more difficult to reach consensus on purely economic issues, such as pay, where a gain for one side is usually seen as a loss for the other.

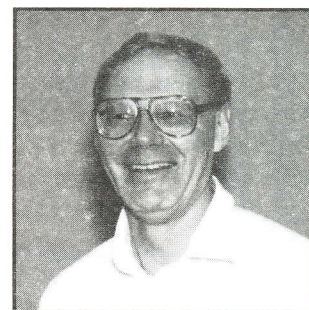
The "win-win" training was conducted by the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission, an independent state agency.



## The Prez Sez

**D**o you have a question about the Wisconsin Professional Employees Council? Are you unsure about something we've said or the collective bargaining process? If so, please write to us at the WPEC office. We'll either respond in the Newsletter or by letter to you.

I would like to address some of my concerns to members and non-members as follows:



### Members

An accompanying insert lists people that have volunteered to be Bargaining Reps. In order for us to be an effective group for YOU we need YOUR help to fill those positions. Great Britain's Winston Churchill once said, "Give us the tools and we will do the job." Well, in WPEC the "tools" include YOUR voluntary time. We still need volunteers to help as Stewards, Class Reps, or assist with other duties. Most will only require a couple hours a month. There's always room for volunteers to lighten the load on everyone. Help us help YOU!

### Non-Members

Take a good look at the names of the WPEC Executive Council and the Bargaining Team. Chances are that you'll find at least one name that is in your department or your job classification. That person could be your "direct pipeline" within the organization to address your needs and concerns. But you need to be on the INSIDE rather than on the "outside looking in". Jump on the WPEC bandwagon today! Fill out, sign, and submit the white membership card. If you need one just call the WPEC office at 277-7900 (from Madison) or toll-free 1-800-682-9855 (from anywhere else). Help make us stronger for YOU!

Gary L. Tveten  
President

### WPEC member challenges Governor's monitoring of letters to editor

If you're a state employee and wrote a letter to the editor recently, chances are you got a little call from someone in the Governor's office correcting any political errors you may have made.

"It's intimidation, pure and simple," according to the WPEC member Dan Roberts. "When our employer watches what we say in public, the message is clear. We'd better be careful not to be critical."

Dave Zweifel, editor of the Madison *Capital Times*, agreed and lambasted the practice in an editorial.

Roberts then tested the practice with a couple of sharp letters to the editor. But, so far no one has risen to the bait. He speculates that the Governor stopped the practice after the public criticism. However, Pat Simms, the reporter who first broke the story, said the Governor's staff expressed no regrets.

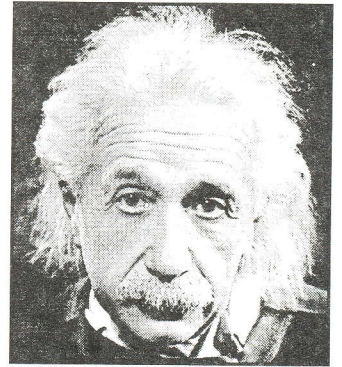
*If you have gotten a call from the Governor's office or your employer in response to a letter to the editor or other public statement, the union would like to hear from you. Call WPEC at (608) 277-7900.*



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## Ask Al

*A column of professional advice  
from a really smart guy.*



### Officer salaries

**Q.** *How much do the WPEC officers get paid?*

**A.** It's relentless, ya know. The most common question I get is a variation on "Who's getting rich off our union dues?"

Let me answer like this. Remember that last warm Saturday in October? The day you took the family out for a drive in the country?

Well, the WPEC officers and council were holed up all-day in a meeting room off the Beltline in Madison, going over committee reports and structure plans.

And last Friday night, when you went home, opened a brewski and watched Wall Street Week? They were sitting in a motel room in Eau Claire, going over budgets and membership drive plans.

They had to meet on Friday night, you see, so they'd be free to go to the all day training session on Saturday.

Then there were committee meetings a couple nights last month. Oh, and the weekend spent at the national FPE conference. Did I mention the vacation days at the WFT convention?

And, you know what they got paid for all that? *Not a dime!*

The WPEC does offer to reimburse people for gas, but most don't even put in a request. And, if a meeting goes through a meal period, the union usually springs for some cheap eats. If they're quick, Executive Council members usually get a choice between veggie and pepperoni.

Maybe it's our culture. I guess a lot of people just can't imagine somebody doing something unless there's a buck in it for them.

All Al can say is, if the WPEC officers and council members are trying to get rich off the union, they're not very good at it.

*Send questions about the union or the shape of the universe to: Ask Al, WPEC, 1334 Applegate Road, Madison, WI 53713.*

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## Professionals in unions – Part 1

### The broken promise of "professionalism"

by Ron Blascoe

*This is the first part of a two-part article on the opportunities and conflicts inherent when professionals organize into unions. WPEC members are encouraged to submit comments or responses to be published in an upcoming issue of the Insider.*

**W**hy does the law say our jobs are "professional" and other aren't? What is that "professional" label supposed to get us...and what happens when the promise is broken?

#### Professional roots

To know where we are, we should know a little about where we came from. Groups of employees started calling themselves "professionals" sometime around the first part of the twentieth century in the U.S., according to

*continued on next page*

## ***Professionals in unions continued***

historians Barbara and John Ehrenreich. The rapid growth in the proportion of people engaged in "intellectual work" intersected the ideology of the Progressive Era to create a self-conscious "professional-managerial class."

Politicians with a long view of history recognized the need for government regulations. And they also recognized that those doing the technical work had to be relatively autonomous from corporate powers and the political control of corrupt governments at all levels, according to the Ehrenreichs.

There also was a grudging recognition by those in control that some forms of creative work require the producer to have a degree of control over the work day if they are to be effective.

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*...specialized knowledge,  
professional standards  
& autonomy...*

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By 1920, most groups now recognized as professional – lawyers, social workers, doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers, to name a few – had developed organizations, journals and criteria for admission to the profession.

The growth in the regulatory and control functions of government during the Progressive Era and New Deal increased the proportion of professionals employed in the public sector.

### **Textbook meets reality**

In school we learned that a profession had three defining characteristics. To be a professional one had to have: a) a specialized body of knowledge, accessible only by lengthy training, b) a set of professional standards, including a commitment to public service and c) a measure of autonomy in the practice of the profession.

But that textbook definition doesn't always describe the workaday world of professionals in state government. For example:

- how do we apply our professional standards and a fairly wide vision of social responsibility in a state bureaucracy run by political appointees?
- is the "specialized knowledge" we picked up with out liberal arts degree worth a lot more than, say, four years of on-the-job training?
- how can we practice with autonomy if we have to be in the office from 8 to 5 and don't get compensated for overtime?

### **Form follows function**

One function of traditional professional organizations, like the National Association of Social Workers or the American Planning Association, is to address the kinds of job-related problems we are experiencing here in Wisconsin.

We can imagine that if we had strong statewide and worksite chapters of organizations for every profession, and if they came together to represent the interests of all professionals who worked for the state, they could be an effective voice for professional employees. Such an umbrella organization could push for stronger civil service laws and administrative rules to establish and protect professional standards, flexible work schedules, better pay and benefits.

Of course, this umbrella organization would also have to create a structure to monitor enforcement of those laws and rules once they were enacted.

While we can *imagine* such a structure made out of traditional professional organizations, it seems unrealistic to think it could happen.

But those functions and structure *can* be created under the law *by forming a union*.

*In Part 2 we consider some of the conflicts and the common ground professionals experience when they join the union movement..*



## WPEC goes to WFT & FPE Conventions

by Steve Hoffland

### Wisconsin Federation of Teachers (WFT) Convention

Several Executive Council members and other WPEC committee members attended the WFT annual convention in Stevens Point, October 28-29.

Since we don't yet have the ability to pay dues to WFT, we were there in guest status only – we couldn't vote for officers or resolutions. However, we were able to attend committee meetings and speak on and influence resolutions in those meetings.

Of particular interest to us was a resolution (which passed) directing WFT to explore the possibility of moving the main part of the convention to Friday and Saturday, rather than Thursday-Friday as presently is done, in recognition of the ever-greater number of WFT members who do not have Thursday and Friday off with pay. Because convention plans must be made considerably ahead of time, it may be too late to have this go into effect in 1994.

WPEC members attended a workshop on union strategies to prevent contracting out. Participants discussed variations on contract language and how to use administrative procedures to stop state jobs from going to the lowest bidder.

Another workshop explored ways to get professionals involved in their union. The facilitator proposed setting up intermediate bodies of active union members in work sites, as an alternative to the old style requirement that people come down to the union hall if they want to participate.

Next year WPEC gets to speak on the convention floor and vote, and we should be able to have a considerable presence.

### Federation of Public Employees (FPE) Conference

After a short work break, a contingent from WPEC, joined by the Science Professionals and State Attorneys, attended the second FPE conference in Louisville, KY, November 4-6. The FPE is one of five Councils of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and is made up of 140,000 state and municipal employees throughout the country.

Al Shanker, AFT president, gave the keynote address, followed by Eliot Sklar, a professor from Columbia University who spoke on privatization and why it often is not in the best interest of the customer, the employees *or* the government.

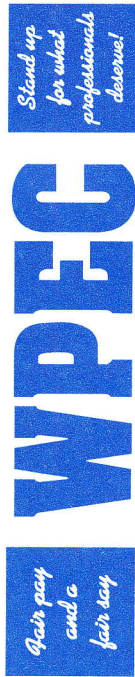
The rest of the conference was taken up with workshops on a variety of issues useful to WPEC, for example "The Union Response to Total Quality Management," "Public Relations for a Public Employees," "Recent Developments Under the Fair Labor Standards Act," "Bargaining in Tough Times," and 12 others.

WPEC members attempted to cover all workshops and brought back much good and immediately useful information.

The FPE conference is held every other year, on the year the AFT doesn't have a convention.

### Bargaining questions? We have the answers!

A system to relay information about collective bargaining has been set up. Members have volunteered to be a part of this system by acting as "bargaining reps". Their duties include answering questions and acting as a liaison between members and the bargaining team. If you have questions about bargaining please contact a rep. Their names and numbers are listed on the insert of this newsletter. **Please remember to contact them either before or after work, during lunch or a break**, so as not to interfere with work. These people have volunteered to assist in this process. They may not know all the answers but will attempt to find out.



**WISCONSIN PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES COUNCIL**

*Affiliated with the State Employees Council of the Wisconsin Federation of Teachers, A9-T A9-L-0210*  
1334 Applegate Rd., Madison, WI 53713 (608) 277-7900, (800) 682-9855



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## Inside the Insider

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