



Your Union Newsletter

**MARCH - APRIL, 2014**

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**President's Corner: Merger Vote Postponed**

Submitted by Greg Georg

On Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the WEAC Board of Directors voted to suspend the vote on merger scheduled to take place at the WEAC Representative Assembly (convention) on April 26<sup>th</sup>. AFT-W was also to have a vote on merger at an AFT-W Convention on the same date.

The reason given for the suspension of the vote was the different dues structures of AFT-W and WEAC. During the transition period of the merger, those members who had been part of AFT-W and those who had been part of WEAC would have continued with dues structures similar to those of the previous respective organizations. This would have resulted in different dues amounts paid by those from AFT-W and those from WEAC.

A committee was to have met during the transition period to develop a uniform dues structure for all members. The motion passed by the WEAC Executive Board states a dues equalization committee should be formed and bring forth a recommendation for an equalized dues structure. The motion also states the report of that committee should be made to the governing bodies of both AFT-W and WEAC no later than December 31, 2014.

This action by the WEAC Executive Board means the earliest there could be a vote on merger would be in spring of 2015. As a result, all of the town-hall meetings about merger scheduled around the state during March and April have been cancelled. AFT-W has also cancelled its convention scheduled for April 26<sup>th</sup> and will now hold its convention on November 13<sup>th</sup>- 15<sup>th</sup>.

**WPEC Convention Notice**

Submitted by Greg Georg

This year the WPEC Annual Convention will be held on Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Dane County United Way building, 2059 Atwood Avenue, Madison.

This is an election year and all officers and council positions will be up for election. Those positions are, President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, and six at-large representatives, and eight district

representatives. The district representatives are elected at district meetings held prior to the convention. Six of those represent the six geographic districts of the state, one represents the UW Hospital and Clinics, and one represents the Associate Members of WPEC. If you want to nominate yourself or another before the convention, a form and instructions will be posted at [www.wpec.org](http://www.wpec.org). Nominations for officers and at-large council members may also be made from the floor on the day of the convention.

In addition to the election of all of the executive council positions, among the items the business of the convention will include are:

- Election of delegates to the 83<sup>rd</sup> AFT-Wisconsin Convention which will be held November 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>. (Location of the AFT-W Convention is yet to be determined.)
- Election of delegate to the AFT Convention which will be held in Los Angeles, July 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>.
- Discuss and develop WPEC's goals for the upcoming year.
- Vote to approve/disapprove constitutional amendments and resolutions submitted by the Executive Council and members-at-large.
- Discuss and vote on other business matters.

The annual convention is the highest decision-making body in WPEC. During the convention, all attending members have an equal voice in steering the direction of the local over the next year. It is an excellent opportunity for members to begin being more active in our local, state, and national union. Attending members may be reimbursed for mileage and lodging if eligible, per WPEC policy, when traveling from outside the Madison area.

Any member in good standing is eligible to attend the convention. However, in order to have sufficient space, materials, and refreshments available, we will have a registration process for those who plan to attend the convention. We will have an online registration form available by early April. Make sure to check the WPEC website at [www.wpec.org](http://www.wpec.org) for more details. We will send out additional details in April or March.

## **District Meetings**

Submitted by Sue Handrich-Herr

Below is a list of the District meetings that have been scheduled:

- District 2, March 7, 2014, 7:00-8:00 PM, via teleconference, for more [click here](#).
- District 5, March 25, 2014, 5:30 PM, at Stubby's Pub & Grub, 2060 N. Humboldt Ave., Milwaukee, for more info email: [damtalldave@gmail.com](mailto:damtalldave@gmail.com)
- District 6, March 6, 2014, 6:00 pm at the AFT-Wisconsin office at 6602 Normandy Lane, Madison, WI.

## **Milwaukee Steward Training**

Submitted by Sue Handrich-Herr

The steward training session that had been scheduled for February 15, 2014 was cancelled. This training will be rescheduled in March or April. Please watch the WPEC website for details and how to register: [www.wpec.org](http://www.wpec.org)

## **Scholarship Opportunities**

Submitted by Jill Hynum

### AFT-Wisconsin

AFT-Wisconsin has a long tradition of offering educational scholarships to support dependents of members in good standing who wish to pursue a career in labor, education, health care or government service. Currently, AFT-Wisconsin offers one \$1,000 university scholarship and one \$500 technical school scholarship.

### **Eligibility for Scholarships:**

Applicant's parent, grandparent or guardian must be a current AFT-Wisconsin member or a retiree in good standing of

AFT-Wisconsin for more than one year. The individual must be accepted into an accredited college, university or technical college at the time the award is issued. Preference for the 2013-2014 scholarships will be given to applicants with an expected high school graduation date of June 2014. However, if scholarships are still available after these have been evaluated or if no current graduates apply, past graduates will be considered. Graduate students are not eligible.

**Evaluation criteria:**

Applicants for scholarships are evaluated according to graduation date, academic rank, extracurricular and school activities, leadership skills, family union activity, essay and recommendations.

**Funding:**

The Memorial Scholarships are funded by both contributions from AFT-Wisconsin and voluntary contributions.

**Timelines:**

Applications are due to AFT-Wisconsin by **March 15, 2014**. Recipients will be notified by May 1, 2014. Letters of Recommendation addressed to entities other than AFT-Wisconsin will not be considered. Winners will be notified by May 1, 2014. For more information, including an application form, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/AFTW-2014-Scholarships>

Porter Scholarships – AFT National

As part of the Robert G. Porter Scholars Program, the AFT offers \$8,000 scholarships to four high-achieving high school seniors who are the dependents of AFT members. And 10 grants of \$1,000 each are available to AFT members from all divisions who seek to implement ideas for their union about the role union members can play in collectively reclaiming the promise.

Robert G. Porter was a dedicated union activist from the time he joined his first AFT local in East St. Louis, Ill., until his death in 1991. For nearly four decades, the late AFT secretary-treasurer gave his all to championing the rights of working people, promoting civil rights, and ensuring that the union was a vehicle for helping members achieve justice. Since its inception in 1993, the Robert G. Porter Scholars Program has awarded more than \$500,000 to AFT members and their dependents to further their education and to help grow our union's capacity to achieve our goals.

This year's winners will be announced by June 30 and will be recognized at the AFT convention, July 11-14, in Los Angeles. The deadline for submitting the 2014 application to the AFT is **March 31**. For more information, go to: <http://www.aft.org/benefits/scholarships/eligibility.cfm>

South Central Federation of Labor

Four \$1,000 Scholarships will be awarded. You must be a member of a labor organization affiliated with the South Central Federation of Labor (WPEC is affiliated). You must also live or work in Dane, Sauk, Iowa, Dodge, Jefferson or Columbia County. Half of the amount (\$500) will be given at the beginning of the first semester, upon submission of proof of tuition paid, and the remaining half (\$500) at the beginning of the second semester, upon submission of proof of tuition paid.

In addition, the Dodge County Chapter of the South Central Federation of Labor will award two \$500 scholarships, \$250 for each semester.

Applications must be received or postmarked by **Fri., June 27, 2014** at the South Central Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, 1602 South Park Street, Room 228, Madison, WI 53715-2108. Results will be posted on [www.SCFL.org](http://www.SCFL.org) by July 9, 2014

For more information, including an application for, go to: <http://www.scfl.org/feature/2014-scfl-scholarship-information/>

## Building Committees as a Source of Worker Power

Submitted by Tony Reeves

In November of 2012, employees of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) were struck by a thunderbolt from management: new proposed work rules were published and scheduled to go into effect in December. The rules were both complicated and punitive. One provided that if Department employees had a vacation of more than fourteen days in length, including intervening weekends, they had to first complete a leave of absence form. Employees had to submit the form to their division administrators. Failure to do and obtain prior approval from the division administrator before leaving on vacation could be considered voluntary abandonment of one's job. This was even the case if the employee had sufficient paid leave, and the approval of his or her immediate work supervisor.

However, the most bitterly complained-of proposed rule declared that any employee who used more than 64 hours of leave over a one year period would be required to provide seventy-two hour's advanced notice to cover any subsequent health-related absence, whether or not sick leave was used. Failure to do so resulted in progressive discipline for sick leave abuse, starting with a permanent written reprimand on the employee's personnel file. What made matters worse for many employees, any use of sick leave could count against the initial 64 hour threshold. This included, for instance, a two hour medical appointment that the employee was willing and able to provide 72 or more hours of advanced notice of. Since all state employees were now being required to pay increased fees for evening and weekend use of medical facilities, this forced many employees trying to schedule health appointments to face a Hobson's Choice. They could pay a higher copay for an evening or weekend appointment (assuming they could find an approved clinic that would schedule them after hours). Or they could schedule the appointment during the work day, and risk getting that much closer to the 64 hour limit that punished employees for getting sick without providing 72 hours' notice.

The response among employee activists was immediate. We set up building meetings immediately at statewide DHS headquarters at 1 West Wilson Street in Madison. An informal building committee was set up, with fortnightly meetings during the crisis period. Members made a deliberate decision to hold meetings in conference rooms at 1 West Wilson, and to leaflet and protest publicly outside the building doors. We were, all of us, recommitted union members, and we knew that safety lay in visibility, not in concealment. The sooner we acted openly, presenting Department with organized, vocal opposition, the more difficult it would be for management to counter-attack against isolated individuals. We were, and are, confident in our ability to invoke our remaining rights as citizens and as workers engaging in their right to concerted action under Wisconsin law. Most importantly, meetings were not only open and openly advertised, they were all-inclusive. The co-sponsors of the meetings were officers of both AFSCME and AFT affiliated unions. And all non-management employees were invited to attend, whether or not they were union members.

We also organized a petition, expressing our lack of confidence in a Department leadership that would make it more difficult to call in sick at a time when, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), there was an acknowledged influenza emergency. In addition, we posted signs approved by the CDC prominently in employee break areas, signs that warned workers who experienced influenza symptoms to go home. Just to make certain that Department management could not ignore the petition, we made it known that we would submit the petition to sympathetic members of the legislature as well as the Department. We obtained over one hundred forty signatures on the petition.

And the rule governing sick leave "abuse" changed. As finally enacted, it gave employees the option of providing 72 hours advance notice that they would use sick leave for medical appointments. Where employees gave such notice, the sick leave used for the appointments would not count against the 64 hour limit. No one in Human Resources or Department Management acknowledged the impact of the building meetings. In a management environment in which, increasingly, saving face is the highest value, no one expected this. Still, the 1 West Wilson Building meetings are a continuing reality at statewide DHS headquarters, and they are not about to go away.

## Payroll Goes Green

Submitted by Sue Handrich-Herr

The State is making a concerted effort to achieve 100% electronic payroll. For most employees, that means direct deposit of their pay into their existing checking account. But there has always been a small percentage of people that, for various reasons, either don't have a checking account, or just prefer to receive a paper check.

Since August, 2013, the state has been migrating those employees away from paper checks. The preferred alternative is for the employee to have direct deposit to their checking account. But for those for whom that is not an option, the State is offering a prepaid debit card alternative.

The debit card, issued by US Bank, under the name Accelapay, functions much like the debit card from a checking account. The card is mailed to the employee and must be activated. The user selects a PIN. And subsequent payrolls are loaded to the same card.

Like any other debit card, there are fees associated with various transactions. You will not find these fees on the external Accelapay website [www.accelapay.com](http://www.accelapay.com). The card is used by many employers, and the fee schedule is negotiated with each. Your payroll department can provide you the current fee schedule charged to State employees. The notable fees are listed here, and are not out of line with industry standard.

Monthly Maintenance Fee	\$0
Monthly Inactivity Fee	\$0
Point of Sale Fee (at any retailer)	\$0
ATM Fee (at US Bank or MoneyPass ATM)	\$0
ATM Fee (at other ATMs)	\$2.00 (in addition to fee charged by ATM owner)
Teller Based Cash Withdrawal (any VISA bank)	One free per payroll, \$3.00 each thereafter
Live Customer Service Support	Three free calls per month, \$3.00 each thereafter
Online or Automated Phone Support	\$0, unlimited
Paper Statement, if requested	\$2.00
ATM Balance Inquiry Fee (US Bank or MoneyPass ATM)	\$.50
ATM Balance Inquiry Fee (at other ATMs)	\$1.00
ATM Decline (at other ATMs)	\$.50
Standard Card Replacement	\$5.00
Emergency Card Replacement	\$15.00

There will still be a few exceptions where paper checks will be required. All new employees, or employees switching their direct deposit to a new financial institution will still receive a paper check for at least one payroll while their banking information is processed. They will not be required to take the debit card during that time. Aside from that, payroll will be handled entirely electronically.

## On This Day in Labor History

Submitted by Diane Mandell

### March

March 1, 1961: President Kennedy establishes the Peace Corps by Executive order.

March 4, 1933: Franklin Delano Roosevelt is inaugurated as the 32nd president of the U.S. As president, most of his New Deal proposals were approved within his first 100 days in office. Criticized by many business interests, his progressive legislation is credited as improving America's economic climate and leading the U.S. through the Great Depression and WWII.

March 4, 1861: Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated as the 16th U.S. President.

March 4, 1789: The first session of Congress is held in NYC as the U.S. Constitution takes effect.

March 7, 1988: The Writer's Guild of America (WGA) begins its strike lasting five months. Estimated to have cost Hollywood over \$500 million, the strike made reality shows commonplace as networks scrambled to fill holes in their T.V. schedules.

March 10, 1876: The first discernible speech is transmitted over the telephone when Alexander Graham Bell asks his assistant, Mr. Watson, to call him from another room.

March 20, 1854: The Republican Party is founded in Ripon, WI by former Whig Party members opposed to the spread of slavery into western territories.

March 22, 1972: The Equal Rights Amendment is sent to the states for ratification but fails to achieve the required 38 states. Sexual equality is not protected by the U.S. Constitution except for when it regards the right to vote. At this time, all 50 states have passed some legislation protecting the legal rights of women.

March 28, 1979: The nuclear accident at Three Mile Island occurs when a pressure valve in a reactor fails to close. Allegedly, only plant workers were exposed to unhealthy radiation levels. No new nuclear power plants have been ordered in the U.S. since.

## **April**

April 4, 1968: Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated in Memphis.

April 10, 1933: The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) is created by FDR as one of the many New Deal programs designed to fight the Great Depression by employing thousands of young men to voluntarily work on useful public projects mainly in the under-populated western states. The program was abolished by Congress in 1942 after more than two million men had served, making the CCC one of the most successful government training and employment projects in U.S. history.

April 12, 1912: The RMS Titanic hits an iceberg in the North Atlantic and begins to sink, killing over 1500 passengers by drowning or hypothermia.

April 14, 1865: President Lincoln is shot and died the next morning at age 56, the first American president to be assassinated.

April 12, 1945: FDR, the longest serving president in U.S. history, dies of an aneurism three months into his fourth term at age 63 after leading the nation through WWII and the Great Depression.

April 12, 1961: Cosmonaut Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin becomes the first known person to travel in space at age 27.

April 26, 2009: Chrysler and the United Auto Workers (UAW) reach a tentative agreement reducing the amount of money Chrysler would pay toward retirees' healthcare in exchange for federal aid and permission to merge with Fiat.

## **Union Begins with "U" – Calendar of Events**

*Know of any labor friendly events in your community that you would like to share with other members? Please email the details and links to: [wpec-communication@aft-wisconsin.org](mailto:wpec-communication@aft-wisconsin.org)*

March 6, 2014            District 6 Meeting, for more info email: [markkuechler@frontier.com](mailto:markkuechler@frontier.com)

March 7, 2014            [District 2 Meeting 7:00-8:00 pm](#), Teleconference

March 20, 2014          [All Union Social 4:30-6:30 pm](#), TBD

March 25, 2014          District 5 Meeting, 5:30 PM, at Stubby's Pub & Grub, 2060 N. Humboldt Ave., Milwaukee, for more info email: [damtalldave@gmail.com](mailto:damtalldave@gmail.com)

March 25, 2014 [GEF 1 Building Meeting 11:45-12:30pm](#), GEF1, Room H306  
April 5, 2014 [Executive Council Meeting 8:30am-12:30pm](#), AFT-W Building  
April 5, 2014 [WPEC Communications Committee Meeting 1:00-3:00pm](#), AFT-Building Madison  
April 29, 2014 [GEF 1 Building Meeting 11:45-12:30](#), GEF-1 Room H306  
May 3, 2014 [WPEC Annual Convention 8:00-3:00](#), United Way, Madison

*Have an article or story of interest you'd like to see in the newsletter? We welcome submissions. Please review the [Standards and Guidelines](#) to ensure your submitted article meets those guidelines. Submissions can be made via email: [wpec-communication@aft-wisconsin.org](mailto:wpec-communication@aft-wisconsin.org). Deadline for the May-June issue is May 10, 2014.*