



Your Union Newsletter

**SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER, 2014**

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**President's Corner**

Submitted by Greg Georg

The AFT National Convention was held July 10 – 14<sup>th</sup> in Los Angeles. WPEC Vice President Ruth Ginzberg and I represented WPEC at the convention this year.

Much of the agenda of the convention deals with discussion of and votes on resolutions and constitutional amendments which have been submitted by local unions or by the AFT Executive Board. The proposed resolutions tend to cover a wide variety of issues dealing with both workplace and social issues. The resolutions that were passed at this year's convention can be found on the AFT website at [www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org) under the About AFT tab and Resolutions. Due to time limitations, a number of resolutions did not get discussed on the floor of the convention. These resolutions were referred to the AFT Executive Board and will be acted on by the Board at its next meeting which takes place in October.

Also at the convention, delegates elected the officers and board members who will lead AFT for the next two years. Incumbents President Randi Weingarten and Secretary-Treasurer Loretta Johnson were re-elected to another term and Mary Cathryn Ricker was elected to the position of Executive Vice President. Forty-three board members were also elected. A listing of the AFT Officers and Executive Board members can also be found on the AFT website along with a brief biography of each person.

Delegates to the AFT Convention also voted in favor of a dues increase. The amendment passed at the convention calls for a 45 cent increase in September 2014 and a 55 cent increase in September 2015. At its last meeting, the WPEC Executive Council voted not to increase the dues to members at this time, but will pay the increase to AFT out of WPEC's reserve funds until the next WPEC Convention. At the WPEC Convention next spring, the members attending will discuss and determine the amount of dues WPEC members will pay going forward.

## November 4<sup>th</sup> is Election Day

Submitted by Jill Hynum, WPEC Retiree

The fall 2014 general election will be on Tuesday, November 4, 2014. To find out where you vote and who will be on your ballot go to [MyVote.WI.gov](http://MyVote.WI.gov).

This is an important election. If you will be gone or you're concerned about making it to the polls, request an absentee ballot. According to the Government Accountability Board (GAB), any qualified elector who registers to vote may request an absentee ballot. (A qualified elector is a United States citizen, 18 years of age or older, who has resided in the district in which he or she intends to vote for at least 28 days.) You can find out who to contact for an absentee ballot if you look yourself up on [MyVote.WI.gov](http://MyVote.WI.gov).

If you have a child or children who are away at college, talk to them about where they plan to vote. If they want to vote from your address, they need to be registered at your address. After they're registered, they can request an absentee ballot. Registration can be done online at [MyVote.WI.gov](http://MyVote.WI.gov). Then they can look up their city clerk and send an email requesting an absentee ballot.

If you have loved ones or friends residing in a nursing home or other residential facility, go to <http://gab.wi.gov/node/2477> to read about their possible opportunity to vote at the facility. They can also request an absentee ballot. Either way, they must first be registered to vote at the address they intend to vote from and they must have resided at that address for at least 28 days.

There will be a statewide referendum on the fall ballot about the creation of a Transportation Fund. The referendum is the result of 2013 Enrolled Joint Resolution 1, which is attached below.

**“Creation of a Transportation Fund.** Shall section 9 (2) of article IV and section 11 of article VIII of the constitution be created to require that revenues generated by use of the state transportation system be deposited into a transportation fund administered by a department of transportation for the exclusive purpose of funding Wisconsin’s transportation systems and to prohibit any transfers or lapses from this fund?” [From the GAB website.]

## Wisconsin’s Voter ID Law to be in Place for November Election

Submitted by Sue Handrich-Herr

In a shocking turn of events, a federal appeals court reinstated Wisconsin’s Voter ID law on September 12, 2014, a mere 7 weeks before the November 4<sup>th</sup> election. The law had been on hold pending multiple cases being heard by both the WI Supreme Court and a federal appeals court.

In August, the WI Supreme Court ruled in the two cases before it, finding them both constitutional. Notable is the fact that in one of the cases, the majority of the court had a problem with the fact that while the ID might be free, the documents required to obtain the ID, such as a certified copy of a birth certificate or marriage license, might not be. So the majority modified WI Administrative Code to require the DMV to follow the law “in a constitutionally sufficient manner”, thereby making the law constitutional.

Attorney General JB Van Hollen was confident that the ruling and the change to WI Administrative Code would help their case before the federal appeals court. He obviously was correct.

The 3 judge panel heard an hour of arguments from both parties in the federal appeals case, and just hours later issued an order that the State of Wisconsin may enforce the photo ID requirement in this November’s elections. The 2-page order was issued despite the fact that the panel has not yet rendered its full decision.

In anticipation of the ruling the DMV has prepared a procedure to handle the situations where voters may not have the necessary documentation needed to obtain an ID. That procedure can be found at: <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/drivers/drivers/apply/petition-process.htm> (This site has been changed since checked yesterday. So check the requirements right before you go as they appear to still be in flux.)

Please note that the process is expected to take up to 7 days for the ID to be mailed. That could be longer if there are delays receiving verification of information from other states. Please also note that some DMV locations are only open 1 or 2 days a month. DMV locations and hours can be found at: <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/about/locate/dmv/index.htm> For a list of documents needed for a driver's license or ID card: <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/drivers/drivers/apply/doc/index.htm>

There are estimated to be approximately 300,000 voters in the State of Wisconsin that do not have the necessary ID to vote. You may know some of them. With so little time to prepare, it's important that everyone talk to people they know, particularly those that don't drive, to verify they have the necessary ID. If they don't, offer to drive them to the DMV. One of the biggest obstacles for these people may be transportation to the DMV, which in rural areas with no public transportation could mean having to travel to the next county.

For more information about what IDs are acceptable for voting see the Government Accountability Website: <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/photo-id>

Needless to say this change will cause massive confusion. Poll workers will need to be retrained, and the likelihood of them making mistakes on Election Day increases. Informational materials will need to be republished and redistributed. Yet to be answered is what to do about the more than 11,000 absentee ballots already mailed with instructions that do not require photo IDs.

This on again, off again, on again law may yet meet some legal challenges between now and November 4<sup>th</sup> that could change its status. But we can't allow ourselves to be caught unprepared. Everyone should make the effort to ensure everyone they know has an ID while there is still time to do something about it.

### **Working at the Polls Without Lost of Pay**

Submitted by Jill Hynum, WPEC Retiree

Did you know that as a state employee, you can work at the polls without any loss of pay or benefits? A statutory change made a few years ago gives you that right. You need to give at least seven (7) days' notice to your supervisor, although an agency/campus may waive that if they choose. You get the entire 24 hour period off with pay regardless of what shift you choose to work at the polls. For example, if you normally work from 7:45 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and you sign up to work at the polls from 1:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m., you do not have to go into work in the morning. (s. 7.33, Wis Stats, <http://docs.legis.wi.gov/statutes/statutes/7/1/33>)

Volunteering at the polls is pretty easy and most places are looking for people. You may have to attend a training session for an hour or two before the election, but most likely you'll be paid for attending. The work isn't that difficult. Common tasks are checking people off a list and signing blank ballots.. You may also be asked to handle new voter registrations which involves reviewing forms and checking for the appropriate identification. Each polling place will have a lead official who handles the more complicated stuff like dealing with equipment problems, printing out the results and turning in the appropriate paperwork.

You will have to refund to the State any pay you receive from your municipality for working at the polls. However, any pay you receive for training done on your own time is yours to keep. Unless your agency/campus has a special process, all you need to do is send a copy of your check from your local municipality to your payroll people along with a statement that you worked at the polls. Or, if your agency approves, you can just ask to forgo payment from your municipal clerk.

To volunteer to work as an election official, contact your municipal clerk. To find out the name and address for your municipal clerk, look yourself up at <https://myvote.wi.gov/> In Madison, the phone number is 608-266-4601 or you can apply online at <https://www.cityofmadison.com/election/pollWorkers/pollworker.cfm>.

In Milwaukee, see <http://city.milwaukee.gov/election/Helpmilwaukeevote.htm> Because of the new rules restricting early voting hours, Milwaukee is in dire need of additional help at the polls this November 4<sup>th</sup>. If you live in Milwaukee

County and are available on Election Day they need Flex Poll Workers. These people will be assigned to help in areas with particularly long lines. Their job will be to help people in line complete forms and have their information ready to make the lines move faster. If you can help, please contact James Balk at 414-218-5944 or the Milwaukee Election Commission at 414-286-3491.

For more information on election procedures, go to the Government Accountability Board's website at <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting>. To read an article about poll workers, see An "Army of Poll Workers" at <http://urbanmilwaukee.com/2013/10/02/an-army-of-poll-workers/>.

## **Walker/Burke Debates**

Submitted by Sue Handrich-Herr

Mark your calendars. Two debates with Gov. Scott Walker and challenger Mary Burke have been scheduled. The debates are sponsored by the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association. The first will be held October 10 and aired in the La Crosse/Eau Claire Market. The second will be held October 17 and aired in the Milwaukee market. The times and stations are yet to be determined. For more information: <http://www.wi-broadcasters.org/wba-foundation-to-sponsor-gubernatorial-debates/>

## **Move to Amend on the Ballot November 4th**

Submitted by Sue Handrich-Herr

Most of you are probably aware that for at least the past two years there have been groups springing up across the country fighting to overturn the US Supreme Court's decision Citizen's United vs. FEC with a Constitutional Amendment. Grassroots groups, such as Move to Amend, have been mobilizing around the country and in Wisconsin to get communities to adopt resolutions denouncing money in politics and demanding the Constitution be amended. Many communities have adopted the resolution, and many more are to come.

This November 4<sup>th</sup>, twelve communities in Wisconsin will vote on the resolution to call for a Constitutional Amendment.

\* Cities: Appleton, Fond du Lac, Green Bay, Menasha, Neenah, Ripon, Stoughton, and Wausau

\* Villages: Oregon, Park Ridge

\* Counties: Dunn County, Milwaukee County

If you live in these communities, or know people in these communities please encourage them to support the amendment. This resolution has been voted on in dozens of communities in Wisconsin already, and we have not lost one yet.

As strong as this non-partisan movement has become there is still one argument against overturning Citizen's United that seems to be persisting. That is the argument that if we overturn Citizen's United we will be limiting free speech. It's critical to the future of our political system that we dispel that fear.

Let's start with facts that I think we can all agree on. Everyone, from the CEO of a major corporation to the kid who flips burgers at a local fast food joint, as an individual, is endowed by the rights guaranteed in the First Amendment. The rights of free speech, freedom of religion, and free association belong to all of us through the Constitution. Can we agree on that?

Now let's say the fast food worker decides to exercise his right of free association and joins a union. Does that entitle him to more First Amendment rights? No, because he already has all the rights there are, endowed to him individually by the Constitution.

Now let's say the CEO of that corporation retires. Does that mean he loses his First Amendment rights? No, again, because his rights are endowed to him individually by the Constitution.

So what changed in 2010 with the Citizen's United decision? The court's decision extended those rights that we all already enjoy to artificial entities, like corporations and unions. Why do artificial entities need freedom of speech when their members already have it? I'll get to that in a minute.

That brings us to the second half of the Supreme Court's ruling. The justices ruled that since spending money is essential to disseminating speech, as established in [Buckley v. Valeo](#), limiting a corporation's ability to spend money is unconstitutional because it limits the ability of its members to associate effectively and to speak on political issues. Money is speech. If that's the case, then the more money you have the more speech you can buy. Taking the examples above, that fast food worker probably can't afford any speech, and that CEO can probably afford a whole lot of speech. But imagine how much speech your corporation or union could afford, with money collected from all of your shareholders or members. Your influence would be limited only by the size of your coffers.

Which brings us back to the earlier question. Why do artificial entities need freedom of speech? Without it they could not use their collective wealth to drown out the voices of the individual. With that ruling, the scales of power were tilted in favor of the special interests.

Now it has been argued repeatedly that overturning Citizen's United would be limiting our First Amendment rights. But as I explained earlier, all of us as individual's, are endowed with those rights and they cannot be abridged.

Some would like you to believe that if we strip these artificial entities of rights granted to them by the Supreme Court, not the Constitution, that our freedom as we know it will end. But I have to point out that the First Amendment was around long before the 2010 Citizen's United decision. And we seemed to manage just fine. In fact, the government was a lot more functional then.

If we want restore our political system to "We the people", rather than the special interests, and we want to level the field so all citizens are equally endowed, we need a Constitutional Amendment that declares 1) artificial entities do not share the same rights as people, and 2) money is not speech. An amendment without both of those parts will only do half of the job.

## **News From District 2**

Submitted by Gary Mertig

The last few months have been very busy in the Northland. The biggest news here is the ongoing battle with GTAC mining. The company wants to put an open pit mine in Ashland and Iron County. The 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the proposal is an area four and half miles long, 1500 feet deep and half mile wide. This is part of a 3 phases proposal that goes 21 miles long from east of Hurley to Clam lake (the area with the Elk herd). This goes across the most pristine areas of the north. The problem is the company continues to complain in the media about the treatment they are getting from Ashland County when I have never been in a meeting with the company people and I am on the Ashland County Board. They say Iron County wants the mine and Ashland County does not. I have never seen Iron County do a survey of their people either to prove it. Rather than complain about the reaction they are getting maybe they could man up and actually talk to someone face to face. The positive part of the process is the longer this issue takes the more the people here see what the company is like the less support they have. The company talks about all of the wetlands they have had to deal with and how it has slowed them down. They state they can fill one wetland and replace it with a man made one somewhere else which is totally false. A wetland in place is what filters water naturally and you cannot fill it in and figure that a new one somewhere else will take its place. Our biggest hope is that the EPA will grant the tribes the right to block this misguided pit before gets any further. The fact that the DNR now confirms that the rock contains asbestos and the company still denies it shows the company has no credibility. Maybe when we have a new Governor GTACS \$700,000.00 donation will be the last of the big buy outs.

On another note, I just started my 24<sup>th</sup> year on the Butternut School Board, my 3<sup>rd</sup> year on the Ashland County Board and my 14<sup>th</sup> year on the Agenda Town Board. My calendar seems quite full but I believe that only way to change things is

to get involved. I am excited as the people of the north help elect 3 more women to the State government, Mary Burke for Governor, Janet Bewley to the State Senate and Susan Happ as Attorney General.

Just to let everyone know I do relax as I bow hunt and gun hunt for deer with my wife and we turkey hunt in the spring. I always tell the story that if you can sit in a turkey blind for 11 hours sitting alongside your spouse- both with loaded guns and come out alive you are doing something right. My wife and I just celebrated our 39<sup>th</sup> year and our youngest son got married this summer so I look forward to 2015 as a year where I will go on sabbatical sometime in the March and retire in July. I will always continue to fight to keep the Union strong as I have been a Union member since I was 17 years old and worked in the A & P grocery store in High School. I believe what is going on with Public employees will eventually make people aware of why we need Unions strong.

## **We Did Not Fail**

Submitted by Ruth Ginzberg

I've been hearing implicit and even explicit suggestions that somehow Wisconsin failed. We had all those people at the Capitol after Act 10 was introduced, but that was followed by a failed recall effort which only emboldened Governor Walker. That was followed by the failure of most of our unions, WPEC included, to keep even a fraction of their pre-Act 10 membership. Then there was a seemingly endless string of failed legal challenges, and despite a mighty influx of help from the National organization, all we did was keep falling off the cliff. I hear some thinking, and even saying, that we failed.

Once was the time when the whole world was watching and many were supporting us. Now Wisconsin is only mentioned rarely, if ever, as an example of what not to let happen in other states.

It is no wonder that some of us are feeling discouraged.

But I disagree with this narrative.

Wisconsin's labor movement did not fail.

We were shot in the back, and despite our wounds we mounted a historic defense that shook the world and inspired others across the globe to stay strong and carry on. Other states which later won their battles looked to us for inspiration and support. The Occupy movement gained inspiration from the Wisconsin Uprising. The Labor movement built a national revival.

Make no mistake about it – there is a war on workers and Wisconsin unions were one of the first targets. Did we sustain life threatening wounds? Yes we did. But as in any other battle, sometimes even heroes are wounded. Sometimes in battle warriors become heroes despite, or because of, their wounds.

That is what we did. We had no roadmap. We had no playbook. We made it up as we went along – and we fought back mightily. We inspired others to stay strong and fight back, and those fights are still going on.

In the end, the People will win this war. Because People have heart and soul, and money doesn't.

No Progressive from Wisconsin should ever hang his or her head and think, "Yeah, we were the State that Failed." **EVER.**

We fought back heroically and inspired others to carry on while we are recovering from our mortal wounds. We survived and we will come back from this stronger than ever

Wisconsin shall rise again.



## What Can the Union Do for Us?

Submitted by Mark Kuechler

With Act 10 Governor Walker and the legislature stripped the union of virtually any bargaining power and many of the services your union was able to do. Given that, your union can still provide you with some important things.

Stewards provide representation in discipline under civil service rules as well as advocacy and advice in such matters as Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Fair Labor Standards, Disability benefits and workers compensation.

Membership does provide some direct benefits that include no-cost term life insurance, cost effective access to homeowners and auto insurance and mortgages. Some discounts on hotels, health clubs and cell phone plans.

Lists of the "stuff" is however just that lists of things. What a union actually provides is a framework for solidarity, precisely what Governor Walker and his allies want to destroy. Our economic system did not provide and has never provided a fair shake for the working class, unions and the progressive action that unions fought for did. By cutting of funds, by taking away what unions were able to provide to members and discouraging membership, state leaders have tried to strip us of our ability to voice our message to our fellow workers and the public at large.

Let's face it, workers including the professionals in state agencies are necessary for the functioning a modern society. Without us, the programs do not run and public services would devolve into chaos. Workers organizations, unions, can express this power while corporations and the "owners" use their money to try to tamp it down. Unions won the eight hour work day and weekends, and we can do it again. Listen to the rhetoric that the guys on the other side and we'd lose all that we have achieved.

We can learn something from unions that have never had bargaining rights. For example, the United Electrical Workers (UE) Local 150 has been representing public workers effectively in North Carolina for years- even though public sector unions are illegal.

Likewise the Communication Workers of America (CWA) has thousands of public sector union members in Mississippi and Texas- even though there is no collective bargaining legislation! The Texas State Employees Union (TSEU, a CWA affiliate) even forced the University of Texas at Austin to drop a contract with Accenture a few months back. Way to go!

We can do these amazing things for ourselves when we organize as a union. If you want to see they face of the union, it's not the officers, it's the face you see when you look in the mirror.

In Wisconsin, public employee unions were given legal recognition to foster labor peace. Perhaps it's time to not give them a moment of it.

## How to Get a Better Hotel Rate

Submitted by Ruth Ginzberg

Don't ask for the State rate if you're not traveling on State business. But here are some other tips for how to get low room rates without asking for the State rate.

One WPEC member who travels a lot has the following suggestions for getting motel deals:

Don't ask for the "best available rate." Often that is actually one of the more expensive rates. Ask for a AAA discount or AARP discount (usually 10%) if either of those applies. You will probably be asked to show your AAA card or your AARP card.

If you are over 50, ask if they offer a "senior" discount. Some hotels and motels will give a "senior" discount to anyone over 50, or 55, or 60, or 62, or 65 regardless of whether you have an AARP membership or not. If you are traveling off-season (e.g., now, between about Labor Day and mid-November) ask if they have any seasonal or off-peak discounts. Ask for an additional discount if you are staying more than one night.

If you like negotiating, ask for the "trucker" or "contractor" rate (applicable more at motels than hotels) but be prepared for some motel clerks to tell you "NO WAY! You're not a trucker!" or ask to see your CDL. (Hint: you can bargain with them if you're up for it - there is no law that says you have to have a CDL to get the "trucker" or "contractor" rate -- it is up to the discretion of the front desk clerk.) Another trick, particularly at inexpensive motels: most of them have a weekly rate. See if you can find their weekly rate on line and then divide that by 7 and ask to pay that per night. If you do get a good rate, TIP THE DESK CLERK who gave it to you, especially if you expect to go back there and ask for a low rate again relatively soon. You have a much better chance of negotiating a low rate if the hotel/motel is not very full. Also you have a better chance of negotiating a good rate if there isn't a line of people behind you waiting to check in. Most desk clerks don't want to negotiate a lower rate within the hearing of other customers who might get mad if they're paying more. Don't expect a very good rate on Friday or Saturday nights (those are always higher than weekdays) or during a heavy tourist season in that area or close to a traditional "heavy travel" holiday such as Thanksgiving.

Also, some motels have much better breakfast bars than others. You can often get a decent free breakfast (probably worth \$10 bucks just for the breakfast) at a motel that will charge you less than \$50 for the room. The better ones have cold or hot cereal, eggs & omelets, pancakes or waffles, as well as toast, muffins, yogurt, fresh fruit, etc. The crummy ones only have limp pastries wrapped in plastic, or maybe not even that. Most motel chains, including the really inexpensive ones, have a microwave and a small refrigerator in each room these days. So you can save money on meals by taking (or going to a grocery store and buying) food to prepare in the microwave rather than eating out.

Also different parts of the state are different. On a recent trip to Oshkosh I only paid \$35/night at a newly remodeled Motel 6, which, while not a mansion, definitely was clean, relaxing, and very sleepable for the night. But don't expect to find that low a rate in Madison or Milwaukee. That also included free WiFi, which brings up another tip: if they won't take any more off the price of the room negotiate for free WiFi (if they don't already offer it free to everybody), free passes to local attractions (lots of motels in tourist areas have those to give away) or free parking if they charge for parking. Oddly enough, the less expensive motels are more likely to offer free WiFi and free parking. Expensive hotels sometimes charge as much as \$10-\$15/night extra for WiFi.

Final tip: If you are going to negotiate, do it in good cheer. Don't be confrontational or "difficult" with the desk clerk. They are often low wage workers themselves, most likely not unionized, just trying to make a living and pay their own bills. They do have discretion regarding what rate they charge you for the room, but their boss probably discourages them from giving out too many discounted rooms, because that's less profit for the boss. Negotiate with them in good cheer, but if they're obviously not willing or able to give you a better deal, then just smile and make a decision on whether you're willing to pay the rate they're asking, or you want to move on and try a different motel.

## **Recent Wisconsin Supreme Court Decision on Act 10**

Submitted by Sue Handrich-Herr

In August the Wisconsin Supreme Court issued their ruling on the final court challenge to Act 10. The ruling was to uphold Act 10 in its entirety as Constitutional. The lawsuit was originally brought by the Madison Teachers Inc. and Public Employees Local 61, AFL-CIO arguing that it limited their First Amendment rights of free speech under the Constitution. It was the last of several lawsuits filed against Act 10 to be settled. Since all State employees, and most other public employees have been living under the terms of Act 10 for some time, there will be no immediate change for most. But it does signify an enormous step backward for Wisconsin workers and sets the precedent for future attacks on other unions.

Keep a watchful eye open for the ripples from this decision in the months to come.



## Shop Union

Submitted by Sue Handrich-Herr

A new fully-unionized grocery store opened in Madison. The store located at 6010 Cottage Grove Rd., has the unique feature of a grill in the middle of the store. The chef will grill whatever you need at no charge. If you live or work in the area, check it out and support your union brothers and sisters. Hours are 6:00am to 10:00pm.

<http://www.metromarket.net/>

## 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)*

September 30, 2014      GEF 1 Building Meeting, 11:45-12:30, GEF 1 Rm. H306

October 28, 2014      GEF 1 Building Meeting, 11:45-12:30, GEF 1 Rm. H306

November 4, 2014      ELECTION DAY, Everywhere

November 8, 2014      Executive Council Meeting 8:30am-12:30pm, AFT-W Building

*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).*