

# Professionally Speaking

NEWSLETTER of the  
Wisconsin Science Professionals



Affiliated with American Federation of Teachers

AFT-Wisconsin, Wisconsin State AFL-CIO



DECEMBER 2006

## WSP's affiliation with the American Federation of Teachers

by John Burger, UW Hospital

At the spring 2006 WSP convention, a committee was formed to look into the affiliation of this great organization with the AFT. To be honest, I was not looking forward to the task ahead and cannot express to you the joy I felt when Matt Roach e-mailed me a week later with the news that he had done an affiliation review for the WSP in 2001-2002, and would I want a copy of his report? Great Caesar's Ghost! Matt I owe you!

Let's start this review by looking at the meat and potatoes services provided by AFT-Wisconsin (AFT-W), our state affiliate. These include contract bargaining and enforcement. AFT-W has provided the WSP with a bargaining specialist Doug Swanson and Mindy Taranto for contract enforcement. While Doug spent most of the last year working with the bargaining teams, Mindy was aiding WSP stewards with an increasing number of grievances, many of which have begun to escalate to the arbitration level for resolution.

Added to this, AFT-W provides additional services from Gabe Kirchner and Scott Spector. These two comprise AFT-W's government relations and political organizing team. While Doug and Mindy were working on contract and enforcement issues, Gabe and Scott were busy lobbying on our behalf during the budget process and organizing members from WSP, and other state locals like WPEC, to meet with their legislators for one-on-one discussions about how TABOR, contracting out, and no salary increases were not only hurting them as individuals, but also the overall state of Wisconsin.

AFT-W also provides the WSP with the internal and external communications skill of

Cathy Rought, the AFT-W public relations representative. Cathy keeps the issues and messages for the 50+ AFT-W local unions coherent and streamlined. When Cathy is involved with a WSP issue, she assures that the message coming from WSP leaders is heard by the groups needed to take that message to the airwaves and electronic or print media.

Other state employee groups like the State Engineers Association (SEA), who are not affiliated with a state or national union, suffered severe losses from their inability to mount an

effective political campaign against contracting out their work. Battles like contracting out and the upcoming fights to preserve our sick leave and pension benefits are examples of why affiliation with the AFT is right for WSP.

Finally, no affiliation review would be complete without an examination of dues, how they're spent, and if it's done wisely. To address this I suggest that the

reader look to the treasurer's article in this newsletter issue and the articles in the October edition of *The Professional* where AFT-W dues are broken down showing the how AFT-W spends the funds we provide it. There is also has a great article from the AFT-W Treasurer Deb Ausman with a budget review in the same edition. WSP could pay less like SEA, but then our ability to protect you, your rights, and your job would be reduced as well. As the services offered by AFT-W grow, so does AFT-W's ability to provide WSP members with new and powerful ways to get what our members want: better contracts, better language, better jobs!



### INSIDE ...

- 2 **President's Column**
- 3 **Cost of Membership; Essay Contest**
- 4 **Negotiated Benefits; Personal or Public Info?**
- 5 **Fighting TABOR; WSP Districts**
- 6 **New Contracting Law; Editor Says "Good-Bye"**

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

# WSP Officers & District Representatives

**PRESIDENT**

Gary Steffen  
4230 Warwick Way, Madison, WI 53711

**1ST VICE PRESIDENT**

Lisa Treffinger  
34324 Loland Drive, Waterford, WI 53185-2347  
(262) 514-2445; wk: (414) 382-7500

**2ND VICE PRESIDENT**

Ronald Grasshoff  
N1691 Fjord Road, Prairie du Sac, WI 53578-9517  
(608) 643-4528; wk: 275-3481

**MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

Sara Schreiber  
S44 W33030 Connemara Drive, Dousman, WI 53118  
wk: (414) 382-7500

**RECORDING SECRETARY**

Chiara Wuensch  
213 Southtowne Place AA212, So. Milwaukee, WI 53172  
(414) 559-5792; wk: 382-7500, ext. 270

**TREASURER**

Brooke Ludwig  
1420 Folsom Street, Eau Claire, WI 54703-2646  
(715) 559-1517; wk: 839-3766

**AFT-WISCONSIN VICE PRESIDENT**

John Burger  
2225 Eton Ridge, Madison, WI 53726  
(608) 239-0923; wk: 263-8366

**DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES**

- 1) Terri Ellinger  
W1360 Dunphy Road, Albany, WI 53502-9755  
(608) 843-3109; wk: 224-6261
- Alan Hopfensperger  
5507 Goucher Lane, Monona, WI 53716-3107  
(608) 221-2314; wk: 266-0562
- Matt Roach  
815 Sunnybrook Drive, DeForest, WI 53532  
(608) 846-9174; wk: 224-6273
- Elizabeth Temple  
725 Acker Parkway, DeForest, WI 53532  
(608) 846-2925; wk: 266-8018
- Constantine Tisoris  
4604 Waterman Way, Monona, WI 53716-2056  
(608) 226-0949; wk: 275-3299
- VACANT
- 2) Sue Beyler  
N9563 Hwy. 67, Eagle, WI 53119  
(262) 436-9563; wk: (262) 574-2152
- 3) VACANT
- 4) VACANT
- 5) Rick Thorbjornsen  
W6939 Bush Road, Park Falls, WI 54552  
(715) 762-5575; wk: 762-4684 ext. 114
- 6) Duane Popp  
wk: (715) 839-3758

7) VACANT

- 8) Dan Seibel  
4254 Doncaster Drive, Madison, WI 53711-3754  
(608) 278-1196; wk: 263-8815
- Dave Vandermeuse  
101 N. Blount Street Apt. 1414, Madison, WI 53703  
(608) 220-7866; wk: 263-1493

**AFT-WISCONSIN STAFF REPRESENTATIVES**

- Doug Swanson (bargaining only)  
(608) 662-1444 or (800) 362-7390, ext. 234
- Mindy Taranto  
(608) 212-8690 or (800) 362-7390, ext. 243

**WSP WEBSITE**

www.wspunion.org

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Marie Stewart  
wk: (608) 267-2465

**GRIEVANCE COORDINATOR**

Carol McCurry  
wk: (608) 267-2449

**NEWSLETTER LAYOUT**

Rhonda Dittberner, AFT-Wisconsin

**STATE EMPLOYEES COUNCIL/AFT-WISCONSIN — AFT LOCAL 3732**

6602 Normandy Lane, Madison, WI 53719, AFT-Wisconsin Phone: (608) 662-1444; toll free: (800) 362-7390

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Gary Steffen

### *The flawed plan to eliminate state health sanitarians*

The past several months have been busy ones. There have been meetings I attended with the Departments of Commerce, Natural Resources, Health & Family Services, and the UW. Some of the meetings were to discuss the budgets that the agencies (Commerce & DNR) would be submitting, others were about compensation for Science Professionals (at the UW), and one was about a flawed plan to move health inspections to the Counties (DH&FS). In all of these meetings I was accompanied by AFT-W staff. Easily the most frustrating meetings were with DH&FS. This agency has a culture of not listening to concerns from its employees, legislators, or anyone else.



They have embarked on a plan to move all health inspections to the counties and eliminate the state employees that do these inspections.

It does not matter to these people that the state employees are certified (their own administrative code requires it) and that the inspections in some counties are performed by non-certified people. They will tell you that they are just following the recommendations of the National Institute of Health. That sounds like a good thing until you find out the study that these recommendations came from is 20 years old and is based only on opinions with no research. Maybe when they read this article at DH&FS they will decide in 20 years that maybe they need to have public health inspections performed by state employees. Utilizing our state sanitarians will result in more uniform enforcement of policies and interpretations of laws and codes by employees who have uniform training. This is not likely to happen when these duties are turned over to individual counties. I

could go on with many other details of why this plan is bad for the state of Wisconsin but I want to save space for the other articles in the newsletter. The most egregious aspect of this plan is that DH&FS management feel they have to denigrate the state employees that do this job in order to get the counties to buy into it. The bottom line is that WSP and AFT-W will not rest until DH&FS stops pushing this flawed plan.

### **When are you going to retire?**

On another topic, this is a question that I hear state employees are being asked all the time. If you are over 40 and your supervisor asks you this question (on a serious basis), you need to be aware of the Federal Age Discrimination law. This is one question that you DO NOT have to answer. I would go even further and tell you that, in the current climate within state service, you should not tell anyone when you plan to retire until it is absolutely necessary. We have heard of state employees who have had their positions eliminated after releasing the information about their planned retirement date — even though they had planned to work a few more years. It's possible that the two actions were related. If you are asked this question, you should reply that you'll be retiring when you are ready and leave it at that.

# Dues, the cost of being a union member

by Brooke Ludwig, Treasurer

Members often ask us what their dues are going for and why they pay “so much.” In a way, you can think of dues as similar to social security or an insurance premium you pay. You may not get a dollar for dollar benefit, but when you need it, the support is there for you. In some ways we may actually get “more” than we pay for since our dues combine with dues from all of the other local unions we are affiliated with, to form more powerful state and national associations. These associations represent us from the State Capitol in Wisconsin, to other State Capitols around the country, to the Capitol in Washington DC. This is important when other states or the Feds propose changes to laws, or new laws, that could affect us as public employees in Wisconsin. A recent example would be the proposals around the country to create “taxpayers bills of rights” (see article about TABOR in this newsletter) in various states, including our own, or to “raid” public employee retirement funds to balance state budgets. What happens to one could happen to us all.

WSP currently collects \$2.65/member each month for WSP dues in districts other than District 1. In District 1 we pay additional funds to the South Central Federation of Labor (SCFL) for each member in District 1 and keep only \$2.10/member. WSP has not raised its own dues in more than seven years. You are probably thinking “No way!” I pay more than that AND they keep going up!” The reason is that WSP also collects “per caps” (dues per capita or per person) for payments that go to our state and national union affiliates.

## Affiliates

AFT-W monthly dues are currently \$21.25/member, AFT national dues are \$13.95, AFL-CIO dues are \$0.80, and SCFL dues are \$0.55 for District 1 of WSP. These are our affiliates.

There are many benefits to being affiliated with these groups. These affiliates employ staff that are trained in public relations, bargaining, and legislative processes that WSP does not have. WSP board members and officers are state employees that volunteer their time for our union and are not trained to provide the services that our affiliates give us.

One example of the work our affiliates have taken on was the “A Deal’s a Deal” campaign during our 2003-05 contract negotiations. This campaign cost over \$50,000 with AFT-W staff spending numerous hours attending meetings with press and legislators and creating brochures, flyers, and negotiation updates to our members and the media. The result: our contracts were finally settled when the legislature had wanted to renege on the tentative agreements reached by the unions at the bargaining table.

## Revised dues structure

<u>Union/Affiliate</u>	<u>Per Cap/Dues</u>	<u>Cumulative Total</u>
AFT	\$13.95	\$13.95
AFL-CIO	0.80	14.75
AFT-W	21.25	36.00
South Central Federation of Labor	0.55	36.55
<b>Total Dues Collected</b>		<b>\$40.00</b>
Dues kept by WSP for District 1		3.45
Dues kept by WSP for other Districts		4.00

WSP did not pass all of the recent per cap increases on to our members immediately. In January 2007, however, dues will increase to cover the per cap increases. WSP cannot sustain a budget and operations without passing on the increase. The WSP constitution also requires that our affiliate’s per capita increases be passed along to our members since once they are voted on at the annual AFT-W convention. WSP must pay any increases that were approved.

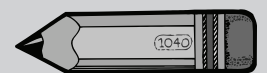
WSP has no additional dues increases planned and will continue serving our members as effectively as possible for the least cost to our members. When the new increases appear in the January paychecks, the total will be **\$20.00/paycheck (for 24 of the 26 pay periods) or \$40.00/month**. So, for less than the cost of a fast food breakfast, you will receive continuing support from the union to protect your contract, wages, work environment, job security, and all the other things a union does. Your support is greatly appreciated. Without its members, a union is unable to exist.

## High School Labor Essay Contest

The Wisconsin Labor History Society (affiliated with the Wisconsin Historical Society) is sponsoring a writing contest. The topic for the contest is “Unions have been important to my family and my community because...”. All high school students in grades 9 through 12 are eligible to participate. There are eight cash prizes to be awarded in May of 2007. First prize is \$500, second is \$300 and the third is \$200. There are also up to five awards of \$100 for honorable mention.

Essays should be approximately 750 words in length. They will be judged on understanding, evidence of original research, writing style, and significance. Essays must be typed, double-spaced, on white paper. Two copies must be submitted (one may be a photocopy). The following information is required on the cover sheet: Your name,

address, home telephone number, grade in school, name and address of your school, and if you were encouraged or assisted by a teacher, the teacher’s name. (Also list your family’s union membership if applicable – in our case it is Wisconsin Science Professionals, AFT Local 3732.)



If you have any questions contact Harvey Kaye (920-465-2355 or [kayeh@uwgb.edu](mailto:kayeh@uwgb.edu)). **Send completed essay to: Prof. Harvey Kaye, Center for History and Social Change, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Green Bay, WI 54311. Submissions must be postmarked on or before Feb. 14, 2007.**



# ***A few of the benefits achieved through bargaining by WSP over the years***

**1974** – Personal holidays increased from 2 days to 3 days

**1975** – Comp time for any directed work in excess of 40 hours is instituted. Standby pay for fire duty is instituted, \$5 per 8 hour shift for off site and \$16 per 8 hour shift on site. Professional Development is allowed for 3 days without pay.

**1977** – Payment of meals for employees while on state business starts. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are covered. In addition, the home packed lunch is reimbursed at the rate of \$2.50 for field work.

**1979** – State will reimburse employees for damaged clothing.

**1981** – Weekend differential pay for weekend work is initiated. Comp time is further defined to give employees a choice between hour for hour time off or cash.

**1984** – State pays entire 10% of employee's earnings for retirement. Prior to this employee paid 5% and state paid 5%. Professional development of 2 days with pay is bargained.

**1985** – Alternative work patterns are recognized and approved. A full day holiday is granted for Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Previously a half day was given to state employees for both days.

**1987** – Maximum and minimum pay rates can be negotiated for the first time. Professional development of 3 days with pay is bargained.

**1993** – Professional time is recognized and allowed.

**1996** – Catastrophic leave is recognized and allowed. Layoff assistance for employees whose positions are being eliminated benefits. Overtime pay is allowed (before this, state employees that were considered "professional" did not receive overtime pay). Sick leave "doubling" upon retirement is initiated. Professional development of 5 days with pay is bargained.

**1997** – State agrees to furnish protective clothing and equipment based upon standards set by the Dept. of Commerce. Personal holidays are increased to 3.5 days when Good Friday half day is removed as a legal holiday. Sick leave rate is increased to 26 hours/year. Night (from \$.30/hour to \$.45/hour) and weekend (\$.45/hour to \$.60/hour) differential rates are increased.

**2002** – Added language that allows the employer to pay all or part of travel expenses and/or program registration fees for training.

**2003** – Vacation time is increased by 40 hours/year for FLSA (Federal Fair Labor Standards Act) exempt employees ("professionals") with less than 25 years of state seniority. FLSA exempt employees with 25 years or more of seniority are given an extra 16 hours annual leave (formerly "maxed out at 200 hours).

New language allowing the employer to pay an hourly base pay "add-on" rate for approved licenses or certifications that the employee holds (at employers discretion).

**2004** – Personal holidays are increased from 3.5 to 4.5 days.

**2006** – Paid annual leave for the FLSA non-exempt employees is increased by three days.

## ***DOA and DNR versus the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and the Lakeland Times***

by Gary Steffen

**W**SP and AFT-W have recently been involved with a court case that resulted from open records requests made by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and the Lakeland Times newspapers. The reason WSP became involved is because both papers asked for all records regarding the salaries of all DNR personnel, at both the Rhinelander and Woodruff headquarters for the year(s) 2004 and 2005. The request was construed to include some items that WSP believes are confidential and personal such as: members' home address, phone number, and birth date. WSP has negotiated language in our contract that we believe precludes this information from being subject to the state open records law almost a decade ago.

In response to the requests, the DNR provided hourly rates for both years but edited out the names of the represented employees based on the WSP contract. When the agency did not provide the names, the two newspapers filed a lawsuit. The basis for the lawsuit was that the agreement between the state and the union did not supersede state law and that the information requested should be an open record. DNR made their decision to remove the names, on the list provided, based on state law and a concern for personal safety and institutional security.

Because the WSP contract does not allow the state to release our social security numbers, date of birth, home phone number, and address the AFT-W attorney filed an "Amicus" Brief ("friend of the court" brief by a party without legal standing in the case) asking the court to dismiss the lawsuit. Other state employee unions also filed briefs. On Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006, the judge issued his ruling that the state must provide the names and salary information to the two newspapers. In his ruling he stated that the state employee contracts, when ratified, did not follow the correct procedures for the agreements to supersede state laws. He also ruled that the state and the two newspapers should meet within 30 days to determine whether the birthdates, home addresses, and home phone numbers of state employees should also be given to the newspapers.

We are concerned that the release of these three personal information items could be inappropriately used for identity theft, which has ruined the credit history of thousands of people. Will the newspapers be able to protect this information properly once they have it? As state employees we are public servants, and apparently our personal information will be subject to the open records law — unlike private-sector employees. WSP does NOT believe that this information is critical to newspapers or the general public.

We will keep all WSP represented employees informed of further developments in this situation and of the actions that AFT-W and WSP will be pursuing to keep this personal information confidential for our members.

# The struggle against TABOR and its "Alter Ego," TPA

by Gary Steffen, President

In the last legislative session a bill was introduced that was referred to as the Taxpayer Bill of Rights or "TABOR." It originally was aimed at controlling local government (county, city, and town) tax increases. When these bodies of government rallied against TABOR, the legislature modified their plan. The Taxpayer Amendment (TPA) evolved out of this process and it targeted state government "cost control." The TPA would have meant position cuts across all of state government. A similar change to Colorado's constitution has wreaked havoc on state services there. To defeat the proposed amendment in Wisconsin, AFT-W mobilized its resources and successfully fought off this ill conceived scheme.

## What did AFT-W do? They:

- Organized a list of over 300 local elected officials against TPA.
- Organized lists of labor leaders and

environmental leaders opposed to TPA.

- Sent a mailing advocating for the defeat of TPA to local elected officials throughout the state. The mailing encouraged them to contact their Assembly and Senate representatives to tell them to vote no.
- Sent a mailing to AFT members in targeted districts in the state encouraging members to contact their legislators to vote no on TPA.
- Contributed \$40,000 to the Greater Wisconsin Radio Campaign Against TPA. At least one state Senator cited the pressure he received from the ads in his decision to vote "no" on the bill.
- Auto called members in targeted assembly districts telling members to contact their legislators against TPA (1,000 calls).
- Auto called members in targeted senate districts telling members to contact their legislators against TPA



(1,000 calls).

- Auto called local elected officials in targeted senate districts telling them to contact their legislators against TPA (6,000 calls).

- Collected and turned in over 100 postcards from state employees, against the bill, at the 2006 Professional Development Day and turned them over to their state Senators.

- Helped recruit an AFT/WSP member to testify in the Senate hearings on how the TPA would harm state employees.
- Made at least 750 contacts between AFT-W and the legislature, not including contacts driven by mailings and auto calls.

This is another example of the many things that AFT-W and WSP are doing to protect and represent the views of state employees.

# A proposal to redraw WSP district boundaries

by Percy Mather

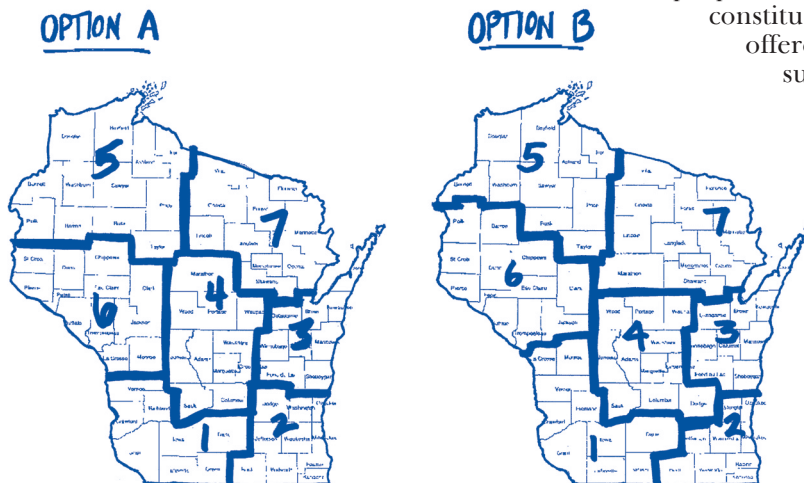
Based on concerns about distribution of our membership within the existing WSP District boundaries (current map available at our web site at: [www.wspunion.org](http://www.wspunion.org)), an Ad Hoc Committee has developed a plan for modifying the district boundaries. Members of the Ad Hoc Committee were Roger Springman, Terri Ellestad, John Burger, Rick Thorbjornsen, and Percy Mather. The goal of the proposed boundary modification is to have a better distribution of WSP member worksites per district in Districts 3 through 7 and to have the districts be more compact. More details of the plan were presented at the Council's December 1 meeting. The proposed restructuring can be adopted in stages and will take at least two years to take place. The total number of seats on the Council would remain at 15.

The first step is to revise the current

district boundaries to better distribute WSP membership in Districts 3 through 7. Two boundary options are shown on the state maps; **the Rep Council members want to hear from you and what your district boundary preferences are.** If the Rep Council acts to revise the boundaries at its next

meeting on February 10<sup>th</sup>, a proposal for additional modifications will be published in the next newsletter. During the first week of March 2007, nominations for District Representatives will take place for the districts that are in place at that time. At the annual convention on May 5<sup>th</sup>, a proposal for revising the constitution will be

offered if members support a change. If you want more details about the complete proposal, contact one of the Ad Hoc Committee members for more information.



# Act 89: Showing the real cost of contracting out

by Gary Steffen, President

In the last budget the legislature passed Act 89. This law was the product of several state unions working together with legislators from both parties. Act 89 requires that all agencies contracting for goods and services over \$25,000 must provide an explanation of what is being contracted, a rationale for the contracting and a cost benefit analysis. The cost benefit analysis will provide us with an evidentiary basis for contesting inappropriate contracting by the state.

The reason that we worked on getting this law passed was because the state was contracting out, or threatening to contract out, work that state employees

were doing, most notably for Information Technology services and Pharmacy services. The unions put out numerous press releases giving examples of actual contracts where the state was paying more for contractors than it would cost to hire state employees. These releases played an important part in getting this law passed and signed.


Governor Doyle signed the Act in January of 2006 and emergency rules went into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>. DOA is working on the final rule which will have a standardized format for all state agencies to use. WSP participated in the public comment hearing and provided input to strengthen protection for state employees.

WSP's position was not to make state

contracting more difficult but to make it more accountable. The previous administrative code for contracting by the state was not effective in ensuring that state taxpayer dollars were being spent wisely. There were numerous examples where state employees were being laid off and then replaced by contractors that were paid more than state employees.

This law is another example of how WSP has worked, and will continue to work, to protect and enhance the workplace for the state employees it represents. Within the past year and a half, WSP and AFT-W spent much time saving over 40 WSP-represented positions that were slated to be contracted out. This law will make it easier to protect the jobs we do as public servants.





# Events

2007	
Feb. 10 .....	WSP Rep Council Meeting, AFT-W, Madison
May 4 .....	Professional Development Day, Pyle Center, Madison
May 4 ( <i>tentative</i> ) .....	WSP Rep Council Meeting, Madison
May 5 .....	WSP Annual Convention, Madison

## Your editor bids you "adieu"

by Marie Stewart

Having spent the better part of the past 2 years dealing with the "fun and excitement" of being the WSP Newsletter Editor, I've decided that, as they say, "All good things must end." I will be handing over the Editor "reins" to someone new starting in 2007. I hope that I've been able to keep you informed, if not entertained, about issues and activities that affect you as a member of the Wisconsin Science Professionals. I sincerely appreciate the input of our membership in the creation of each issue and hope that it will continue to be informative (if not entertaining...) well into the future.



—Best regards, M.S.

### Wisconsin Science Professionals

AFT-Wisconsin, AFT, AFL-CIO  
6602 Normandy Lane  
Madison, WI 53719

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT 2874  
MADISON, WI