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The Union Bug

Published for the members of the United Staff Union

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USU MEETING SCHEDULE

Friday, 1/20/06, 6:00 p.m.
Concourse, Madison
Friday, 3/17/06, 6:00 p.m.
Concourse, Madison
Friday, 4/28/06, 6:00 p.m.
Sheraton, Madison
Saturday, 4/29/06, Annual Mtg,
11:00 a.m. Sheraton, Madison

CONSTITUTION, BYLAW AND POLICY CHANGES

According to the Constitution and Bylaws, anyone wanting the membership to consider any changes or additions to those documents at the Annual Meeting needs to submit them, in writing, to the President no later than sixty (60) days prior to the Annual Meeting. This year's Annual Meeting will be held at the Sheraton in Madison on Saturday, April 29, 2006. Sixty days prior to that will be February 28th. The Board will then consider them at their March 17th meeting and make a recommendation on each to accompany the proposal to the Annual Meeting.

The proposals and the accompanying recommendation must then be in the hands of the membership thirty (30) days before the Annual Meeting. The plan will be to distribute them on March 29th.

There is no timeline for policy changes and the Board can consider them at any time. Policies are reviewed by the Policy Committee and then can be enacted by the Board at any time during the year. To become official and added to the Policy handbook they must be acted upon at the following Annual Meeting. If anyone wants a policy addition or change considered at the Annual Meeting, they should submit them to Shorty Ott, Chair of the Policy Committee, at the Brookfield Office so the Committee will have time to consider it beforehand. To avoid any delays in consideration, policy changes should follow the timeline above for the Constitution and Bylaws and again be submitted directly to Shorty.

At the Annual Meeting constitutional changes require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members present and voting while bylaws and policies require a simple majority.

The fight is never about grapes or lettuce. It is always about people.

Cesar Chavez

**START YOUR ACCOUNT NOW
IN THE USU DIRECT GIVERS PROGRAM**

The USU established the Direct Givers Program (USU DGP) to allow USU members, former members, WEAC management, WEA Trust management, and their families to contribute personally to political candidates, committees or parties at the state and local level. Currently we have 51 USU members along with 5 others participating in the USU DGP through payroll deductions, for a total of 56 participants. The breakdown is as follows:

WEAC/UniServ Professional	47
WEAC/UniServ Associate	4
WEA Trust Professional	0
WEA Trust Associate	0
WEAC Management	3
WEA Trust Management	0
Urban Director	1
Leaders/Spouses	<u>1</u>
	56

“Our labor unions are not narrow, self-seeking groups. They have raised wages, shortened hours, and provided supplemental benefits. Through collective bargaining and grievance procedures, they have brought justice and democracy to the shop floor.”

John F. Kennedy, 1962

Since the start of the USU Direct Givers Program in January 1993, the USU DGP has contributed \$151,417 to candidates, campaigns, committees and parties. Participation in this program is totally voluntary and you are under no obligation to make deposits or contributions if you do not want to. You may from time to time get suggestions that you make personal contributions to specific candidates, committees or parties; but no contribution will be made unless you authorize such a contribution in writing. You need not give any contribution to the recommended candidates, committees or parties and you may give to those candidates, committees or parties who are not recommended. You may also, at any time, request that some or all of your USU DGP money deposited in your account be returned to you.



If you would like to participate, you may make regular payments of at least \$2.00 per paycheck through your payroll deductions by requesting a payroll deduction form from Jim Blank, the account administrator. The money you deposit each pay period will be credited in your name to a separate and segregated account managed by the USU DGP account administrator. Periodically, or upon request, you will be notified of the amount of money you have deposited, the amount you have already donated, and the amount still available for your use. You may also participate by making occasional direct deposits by check to the USU DGP through the account administrator.

If, at any time, you wish to make a contribution for any political purpose, simply fill out an authorization form which will be provided to you by the USU DGP or e-mail Jim Blank at blankj@weac.org the amount you want to contribute and to what candidate, committee or party the money should be sent. A check will then be mailed or delivered directly to the candidate, committee or party of your choice with information identifying you and your contribution.

If you have any questions regarding this program and/or are interested in participating through payroll deductions, please call Jim Blank at 1-800-472-5582.

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PERSONALLY GETTING INVOLVED

When we talk about equal pay for equal work, women in the workplace are beginning to catch up. If we keep going at this current rate, we will achieve full equality in about 475 years. I don't know about you, but I can't wait that long.

Lya Sorano



In the previous article the monetary contributions through the USU Direct Givers Program were highlighted. The associate staff in both WEA Trust and WEAC/UniServ and the WEA Trust professional staff are all encouraged to become more involved in this effort. If politicians continue to tighten the financial screws of the school districts, our ability to work for WEAC members will greatly diminish. Our collective future, whether you work for WEAC or the Trust, could easily be determined by the politicians we elect.

However, there is another way to contribute to the political process. Politicians are always looking for volunteers to help get their message and name out to the public. Whether it is through working on a phone bank, walking in a parade or distributing literature, your personal investment of time could have a tremendous effect on a person being elected. Some activities are done better with personal involvement than simply donating money.

As in the past the USU would like to acknowledge this investment of personal time, much like we do with the financial contributions. But to do that we need to know about it. Please take the time to record your time and efforts and send it to the USU President either via e-mail, telephone or regular mail. You may send it as you volunteer or keep a running total and report it at the end. Either way it will be totaled and after the 2006 fall election, an article will be prepared detailing the efforts of USU members in both time and money.

Let's make 2006 the year of the truly pro-education candidates.

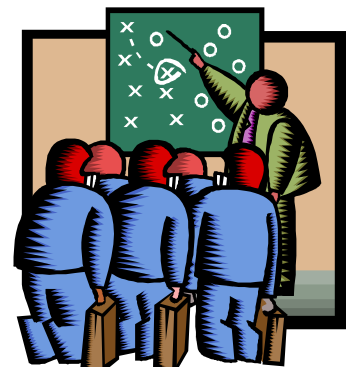
Only a fool would try to deprive working men and working women of their right to join the union of their choice.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

WEAC PRESIDENT ADDRESSES USU BOARD

WEAC President Stan Johnson recently accepted our invitation to address the group at our December Board meeting. He was asked to share his vision for the future of WEAC and its affiliates. He expanded that to also include the future of the WEA Trust.

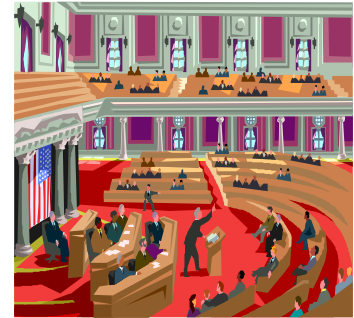
President Johnson outlined the strategic planning that has taken place and spoke about the upcoming committee on Structure and UniServ Guidelines. He emphasized that some changes might have to be approved at the WEAC RA. President Johnson laid the foundation for considering these changes as a reaction to the political landscape and pressures placed upon the WEAC members.



WEAC President Addresses Board continued

Regarding the future of the WEA Trust, President Johnson pointed to several pieces of legislation that could seriously change the future of the Trust. He encouraged people to become more involved in the political process to ensure a more positive result. He also noted the efforts of the Trust leadership to adapt and to combat these potential changes.

Finally, President Johnson outlined what WEAC has been doing to take more charge of their destiny. He pointed to efforts to reelect Governor Doyle and getting ahead of the school funding issue by supporting a plan for funding schools.



It is safe to say that the USU Board found President Johnson's presentation informative, interesting and it was well received.

USU SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR 2006



The USU has a scholarship fund and over the last nine years has awarded close to \$27,000 in scholarships. The rules of the fund state that: "The Selection Committee shall select up to six (6) applicants to receive the USU scholarship, and the amount of the scholarship will be determined by the Committee." The USU scholarship fund is designed to provide opportunities for USU members, or dependant children of eligible members, to finance further education/training.

You can't do it
unless you organize.

Samuel Gompers

Applications for 2006 scholarships must be filed by April 1, 2006. Forms are available from Diana Buchholz, buchholzd@weac.org, at WEAC, Dave Sundet, sonnyde4@aol.com, at the Trust, Shorty Ott, otts@weac.org, at the Brookfield office, or off the USU web page www.usu-wisconsin.org.

Completed applications should be sent to Dave Sundet, Chair-USU Scholarship Committee, 1301 Dale Avenue, Madison, WI 53705. The Committee will announce selections at the Annual USU Meeting on April 29, 2006.

MEDICARE PART D TROUBLESOME FOR RETIREES

With the implementation of the Federal Government's Medicare Drug Plan and the WEA Trust's decision not to cover prescription drugs in their Medicare plans, USU retirees have been disadvantaged. As a short term fix though, the USU has asked the employers to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that would temporarily include prescription drugs. However, as this issue unfolds, it continues to become more complicated.

The MOU only covers retirees that have the employer involved with paying the premium even if it is from an accumulated bank of money. In other words, for those retirees that pay the premium themselves, it is the Trust's position that the MOU does not apply and prescription drugs are not covered.

However, even the MOU has a significant issue to it. If the Trust continues to cover prescription drugs, it is more expensive to the retiree than to have the non-drug Trust plan supplemented with the Medicare plan. And, if the Trust doesn't cover drugs and the retiree has to use the Medicare plan, some would have to pay more out of pocket expenses.

As the USU continues to unravel this multitude of problems associated with this issue, more information will become available.

NSO RA DELEGATE ELECTIONS

The NSO Representative Assembly is scheduled for June 9 and 10, in San Jose, California. Approximately half of our delegation is elected each year because a delegate serves a two-year term. The number of delegates from each Caucus is determined by size of the membership with the USU President being an automatic delegate. Alternates in each Caucus are determined by the next closest vote getters and serve a one-year term only.

If you are interested in serving as a USU delegate to the NSO RA, submit your name to Shorty Ott at the Brookfield Office by February 3, 2006. She will prepare a ballot and distribute it with the voting taking place by the customary double set of return envelopes.

The following people are serving the second year of their two year terms:

Trust Associate Staff Caucus

Karen Weiss	Dave Sundet
Dale Bruheim	Deb Lewis
Pam Born	

WEAC/UniServ Associate Staff Caucus

Shorty Ott	Louise Uphoff
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WEAC/UniServ Professional Staff Caucus

Eugene Dunk	Dennis Eisenberg
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Nominations are being sought for the following two year terms:

Trust Associate Staff Caucus

7 positions available

WEAC/UniServ Associate Staff Caucus

2 positions available

WEAC/UniServ Professional Staff Caucus

2 positions available