

# The Union Bug

Published for the members of the United Staff Union

May 2005

## Consensus Committee Moves Forward

A year or two ago WEAC did some long range strategic planning focused on the year 2010. The next phase of this plan is for a group, the Consensus Committee, to make suggestions for implementation of thirteen basic goals. As reported in an earlier Union Bug six USU members serve on this twenty four person committee. They are **Mallory Keener, Louise Uphoff, Kathy Spannbauer, Greg Spring, Ron Jetty and Fred Andrist.**

The committee is working on consensus and everyone in the room must support the final work product when all the discussion is said and done. The work has been planned around three weekends, March 4-6, April 15-17 and May 13-15. As you can see, only one weekend remains.

The thirteen goals, in no particular order are:

- The Union needs to emphasize organizing to a greater extent.
- We will act in unity to achieve a stated direction once consensus emerges or the appropriate governing body votes.
- Provide for the full time release for the WEAC President, Vice President and Secretary Treasurer.
- Develop a comprehensive plan to identify new leaders and to provide quality training for all governance.
- Implement a study of current WEAC structure that leads to the development of effective

WEAC/UniServ guidelines that allow for the alignment of the Union's priorities.

- Establish a system of program monitoring to measure and evaluate program effectiveness.
- Establish a uniform system of employee performance assessment for use throughout the Union.
- Provide for a biannual program and outcome based budget system.
- Provide training and materials that will improve awareness and understanding of skill and knowledge based compensation systems.
- Develop a screening method for use by UniServs to identify school districts that may be candidates for consolidation, reorganization or administrative unit consolidation in order to meet proactively affiliate and member interests.
- Develop effective, multi-directional communication and engagement throughout the Union that supports participation and shared responsibility.



- Use our ability to collectively bargain to ensure better member participation and control in licensure and professional development activities.
- Use our ability to bargain collectively to create available release time for UniServ Presidents and other local governance.

## Another successful USU Booth at WEAC RA

Many thanks to the following people who helped set up and worked the USU booth at the WEAC RA on Saturday, April 23, 2005:

Val Gabriel	Carol Bauer
Richard Kern	Ellen MacFarlane
Ellen La Luzerne	Shorty Ott
Clyde Clauson	Gene Degner
Rich Engel	Anne Boley
Louise Uphoff	Robbyn Marcinkevic Corbin
Brett Pickerign	Steve Holzhausen
Tom Fineran	Fred Andrist
Kathy Rohde	Phil Dorr

Also, thanks go to all the rest of you who stopped in to check on the booth and the people staffing it. Several people reported that the booth prompted good conversations with WEAC members about the role of the United Staff Union within our employers.

There have also already been a few suggestions on what to do differently next year so be prepared to say *yes* when asked to staff the booth next year!!!

## Training conference was time well spent

Submitted By **Renee Ison, Chair**  
*New Member/Training Committee*

The USU hosted a training conference on Saturday, March 12th, at The Concourse in Madison. The topics covered were strikes, grievances, solidarity and bargaining.

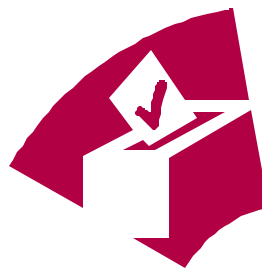
There was a great cross-section of USU members in attendance representing all three Caucuses and all five contracts: the WEA Trust Associate, the UniServ/WEAC Associate, the UniServ/WEAC Professional, the WEA Trust Professional and the Property and Casualty. From the evaluations, the participants felt this was time well spent and they would encourage others to come out and take part in this type of forum in the future.

A **BIG** thank you goes to all of the trainers: **Steve Pieroni, Fred Andrist, Joyce Bos, Kathy Spannbauer, Eugene Dunk, Paul Anjeski and Gene Degner**; and also to **Dianne Hellenbrand** for the setup. Your knowledge and skills are invaluable.

## Spring Elections

The term for all steward positions ends August 31, 2005. Therefore the USU will hold the customary election in June via mail ballots.

Nominations are due to **Terry Smith** or **Pete Gust** no later than June 1st. Terry and Pete can be reached at South Central Education Association (SCEA) via phone, mail or e-mail (Terry - [smithtl@weac.org](mailto:smithtl@weac.org) or Pete - [gustp@weac.org](mailto:gustp@weac.org)).



If you have any questions about the requirements for filling this office you may either contact **Fred Andrist** or talk to Terry or Pete.

## USU seeking Volunteer(s)

With the ever increasing number of non-union positions within WEAC and the WEA Trust, the USU is looking for one or two individuals to identify the positions and look into the process needed to make them union positions. With all the contracts now settled, this would be a good time to undertake this important task.

If you are interested in helping hard working employees in becoming union brothers or sisters, please contact Fred Andrist at the WCEA Office in Menomonie (1-800-472-6801). If more than one person volunteers, though costs will be reimbursed, we will attempt to spread out the work. If no one volunteers the USU will be forced to look at more expensive ways of accomplishing this fundamental work of the Union. Please consider stepping forward and help these people out.

## New Policy on Meal Reimbursement

The Annual Meeting adopted a policy change on the amount of allowable meal reimbursements. For in-state meetings, Breakfast will be capped at \$15, Lunch at \$20 and Dinner at \$40. For out-of-state meetings, there will be a daily allowance of \$80. This policy is effective immediately.

## New USU Policy on Car Rentals

At the Annual Meeting on May 7, a new policy for car rental reimbursement when traveling on USU business was adopted. The new policy reads as follows:

The cost of a rental car is reimbursable provided it is used to replace the cost of other ground transportation or if it can be demonstrated that there is a significant savings in air travel by flying into a different city (e.g., Los Angeles vs.. San Diego or Tampa vs.. Sarasota). If feasible, a rental car should be shared. Reimbursement for a rental car shall not exceed the number of days plus one for which hotel is provided.

Here are some examples of how it would work.

1. You are attending the WAR College in Sarasota and fly into Sarasota. The ground transportation to the hotel is roughly \$5.00 each way. You would be reimbursed up to \$10 towards a car rental.
2. You are attending the WAR College in Sarasota and fly into Sarasota with another USU member. You both rent a car together. You would be reimbursed up to \$20 towards the car rental.
3. You are attending the WAR College in Sarasota and fly into Tampa. By doing this you can demonstrate that you can save \$100 on the airfare. You would be reimbursed up to \$100 for the car rental.

Remember, the limit for the reimbursement is for the number of days that you are away on USU business (reimbursed hotel nights plus one). You will be reimbursed for the actual car rental cost only; gasoline is on your own.

If you have any question as to what will be reimbursed, please contact Louise Uphoff BEFORE you leave.

## Solidarity

(Speech given by USU President Fred Andrist at the USU Annual meeting)

What does that term mean to you particularly on the part of a union? To me it means everyone working at improving things such as wages, hours and working conditions from a common perspective. The common perspective is that we are all in the USU together. What happens to one happens to all of us. A union minded person supports their fellow union members and works together in a collective behavior for the betterment of all.

A shining example of this is the fact that all five contracts within the USU were bargained at different points during this past year. Kudos go to the Trust Associate staff who, with the assistance from Al Manson, Craig Leedham, Greg Spring and many others, settled their contract after undertaking several job actions. And though it took nearly two years to conclude the bargain, I believe they led the way for the rest of us and we are a better union for it. We will see the benefits of the efforts made in the Trust Associate staff bargain for years to come.

We all owe them our gratitude and our continued support.

Some people join a union because they believe there is strength in numbers. However a union is only as strong as each individual member. Just like a chain, a union is only as strong as the least union minded individual. Phrases like "Divide and conquer" come to mind. Kind of ironic, isn't it? One could argue that the strength of a union is really determined by each individual's dedication to the union rather than the size of the group. A large group of lackluster unionists would not make a very strong union, or how about a group with only 10% of the membership active and dedicated to the union? These do not sound very strong to me.

Therefore we must all pull together. Unions in general, and the USU in particular, are facing tensions from both the outside and from within.

An example of an external tension can be found in a recent article in the Union Bug about the restructuring that is taking place in all of the organizations for which we work. Allow me to use the WEAC and the UniSerts as an example. A

Consensus Committee exists that is discussing thirteen specific issues ranging from a full time release Vice President and Treasurer to examining how the WEAC and UniServes interact with each other.

On May 13th to May 15th, six of your colleagues will debate that relationship and how the issue will proceed out of that committee of twenty-four. Should they approach that discussion with the attitude of “what is in it for me?” Or should they perhaps have the approach “as long as it doesn’t affect me?” Or better yet, they could simply take the position that they don’t care how their union brothers and sisters are affected.

Well, we all recognize that those three approaches do not demonstrate a good union mentality. One would hope that these six colleagues, who, by the way, I am one of, see it from a larger perspective, namely the good of the group. They will need to ask themselves how this will affect other union brothers and sisters.

This leads to the internal stress that this restructuring will place upon us as a union. All of our jobs have changed over the past year and will continue to change as this restructuring goes on and as technology advances. As the decisions on restructuring are made and the technology does advance, it will start to put pressures upon each of us individually. Certainly more will be demanded of us.

As those pressures build the easier it will be to adopt one of those “bad” union approaches stated earlier, you know, “what is in it for me,” “as long as it doesn’t affect me” or “I don’t care how my union brothers and sisters are affected.” It will be easy to turn against one another and to not support each other.

I see this coming into play all across our Caucuses. Again allow me to use the Professional Staff Caucus and the Associate Staff Caucus within WEAC and the UniServes as an example. I understand that we each have different roles and are in fact governed by a different contract. But we must act collectively to do our jobs effectively. Reality tells me there will be times that a Professional staff will question the job performance of an Associate staff and just as likely that an Associate staff will question the job performance of a Professional

staff person. But if you are ever tempted to do something like that, do it from a union perspective. We must not set our union principles aside and go after each other. We must deal with these issues as a union.

Which is why we have a mechanism for dealing with member to member disputes in our Policies. Please familiarize yourself with it should you need to turn to it or maybe steer other people to it if the need arises. Certainly as the external and internal tensions build upon us, we must look even more from within our Union for assistance in these matters.

And so, to begin the process of looking within our Union I would like to have the following people stand.

If are on the USU Board, please stand;

If you served on any committee either internally or externally as a representative of the USU, please stand;

If you served as an advocate for a fellow USU member, please stand;

If you attended at least one USU sanctioned meeting such as a Caucus meeting or the Annual meeting, please stand and remain standing.

Look around you. Standing along side you are your fellow union brothers and sisters. Your pledge to each other is to be an active and engaged member of the USU. This is what will put meaning into that term Solidarity.

Thank you!

**Reminder!**  
**Steward nominations**  
**are due June 1**  
**to Pete [gustp@weac.org](mailto:gustp@weac.org)**  
**and**  
**Terry [smithtl@weac.org](mailto:smithtl@weac.org)**

