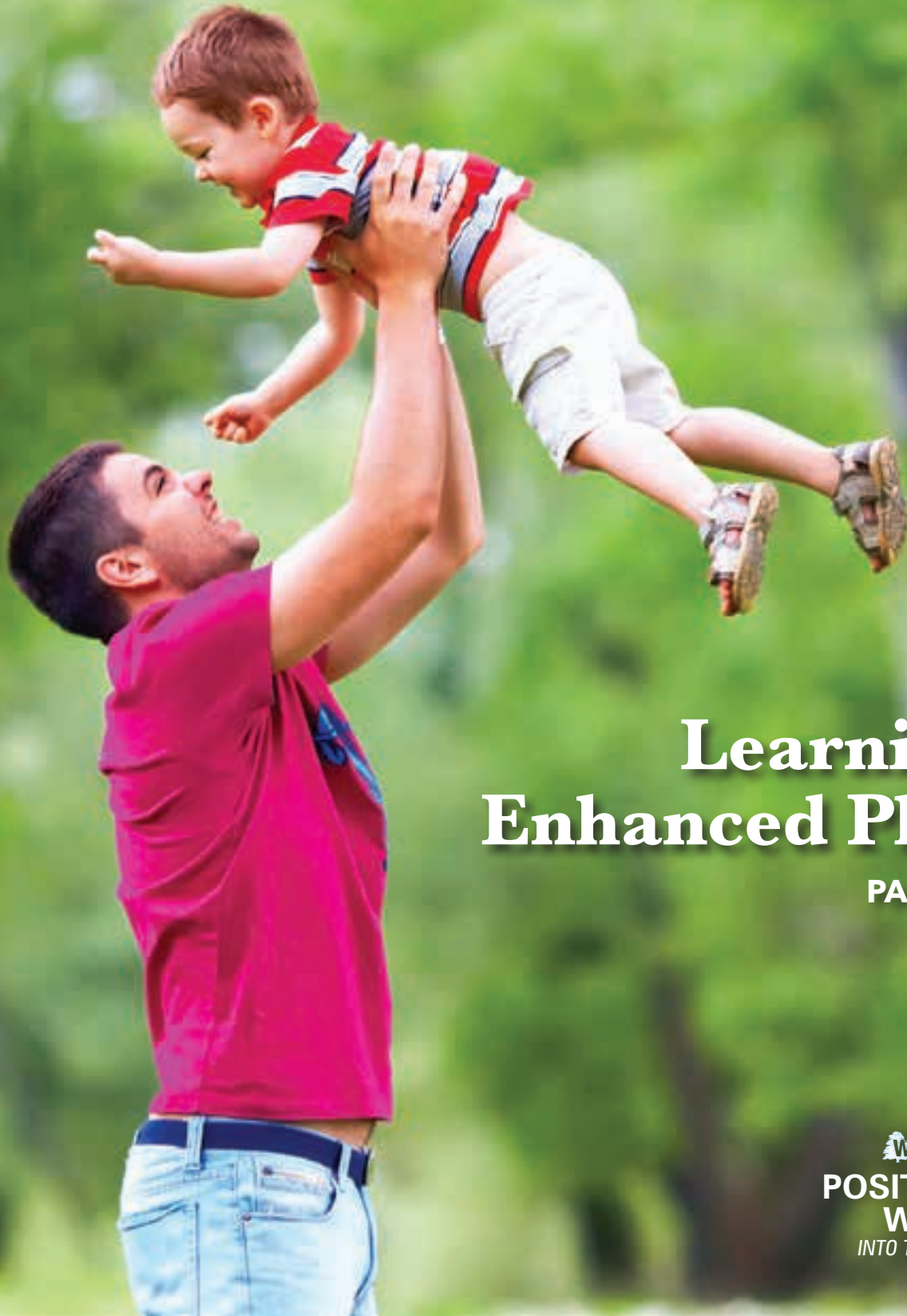


Summer 2017

IMPACT

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN PARK & RECREATION ASSOCIATION



Learning Enhanced Play

PAGE 18



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Steven J. Thompson,
CPRP, CEO
Managing Editor

Make the Most of Your Membership

I believe the number one characteristic of a good association is its ability to identify emerging trends that will impact its membership. That's our job. We spend time and resources reviewing and conducting research to provide us with answers. In WPRA's case, we not only take into account our state and national platform, but we also look at member data. In addition, we monitor public polls to see how our issues resonate with the public. We want to know what members of the public think is important and what they are willing to support.

And here is one thing we have learned: Many people believe and expect that parks are protecting their communities' natural resources and wildlife — and they are willing to pay for it.

An early analysis of local election results from 2017 showed that even though we are still facing some uncertainties, voters strongly approved ballot measures and bond initiatives for investments in parks, recreation and conservation at the local and state level.

But to identify trends is not enough. A good association must also provide its members with the tools necessary to act on trends that are impacting its membership — tools that will allow members to thrive in ever-changing environments. Among the new tools and information WPRA is providing to members are the following:

- **Professional staff training and development** – Receive intensive training by top-flight professionals and invaluable peer-to-peer networking at the Leadership Academy, the Annual Conference & Trade Show, aquatic seminars and workshops, the Spring Aquatic, Park & Recreation Workshop, and through WPRA's many website educational resources.
- **Analysis and interpretation of trends** – Stay up to date with hard-hitting and topical analysis of current issues affecting parks and recreation and ongoing discussions of state and national policy, state and federal legislation, and breaking news through WPRA's many professional resources.
- **Best-practice information** – Have access to the most up-to-date, cutting-edge information on how others around the state and country are innovating, meeting challenges and solving problems. Best-practice models are found in NRPA's magazine, website, blog, and online education resources. You can check out the NRPA Knowledge Center to get an idea of

the many online resources available to members: www.nrpa.org/knowledgecenter.

- **Premier membership** – WPRA's relatively new premier agency membership category gives every full-time employee in your agency access to vital data, industry information, online learning resources, member discounts, and the full digital edition of the *IMPACT* magazine and the *PRMonthly* newsletter. Premier agency members are eligible for member rates at conference and all WPRA section-related workshops.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association is to increase the effectiveness of professionals in parks, recreation, therapeutic recreation and related leisure services through a variety of forums which encourage and enhance professional education and networking among the leisure industry, and to advocate and promote the benefits of parks and leisure services to the general public. The Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association does not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, national origin, creed, sexual orientation or ability in its education programs and activities or employment practices.

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Job Postings

Please visit the WPRP website, www.wpraweb.org, for job advertisements. If you have a position to post, please use the online form ... it’s as easy as 1-2-3!

Listserv

Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association will be using LinkedIn for all communications. There is an overall Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association group, a Board of Directors group and individual groups for the various sections and regions. There will be no other avenue used to send emails. This will eliminate the mass amounts of emails that members receive. So register today at www.linkedin.com to stay connected. If you have any questions, contact Steve Thompson at sthompson@wpraweb.org.

Ethics Policy

The *IMPACT* Committee reserves the right to edit and/or reject any proposed or submitted magazine materials (stories, features, photos, etc.) based on ethical principles or other criteria established by the committee that are in the best interest of the association and generally reflect WPRP membership values. Said ethical principles include, but are not limited to:

1. Magazine authors/contributors:
 - a. Must cite sources unless submittals represent original work.
 - b. May not realize any direct financial gain.
2. Materials will not be accepted:
 - a. If they promote items inconsistent with the values and benefits of parks and recreation (i.e. smoking, drugs, alcohol, poor behavior/language, etc.)
 - b. If considered to be slanderous and/or negatively personal in nature.

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES AND PHOTOGRAPHS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- November 1, Publication date: January 1
- February 1, Publication date: April 1
- April 1, Publication date: June 1
- August 1, Publication date: October 1

REQUIREMENTS FOR PHOTOS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

High-resolution photographs at 300dpi; Photos should be at least 4x6; No images pulled from websites. Please submit all articles (1,000-word maximum), photos and news releases for publication in *IMPACT* to Steve Thompson at sthompson@wpraweb.org.

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by Tom Flick,
CPRP, President

The Value of Membership in WPRA

The value of a WPRA individual professional membership: \$150 = x. Just as we sometimes have a problem communicating the value of park and recreation services to our agencies and communities, WPRA has a hard time communicating the value of membership. It doesn't just present itself on a platter. We need to think it through. But it is extremely important that we attempt to communicate the value, particularly the personal investment as we recognize that agency budgets and personal budgets are being stretched.

To really figure out the value of membership, we have to ask the very pointed question: What can WPRA do for me? One way to answer that question is to relate what membership has meant to previous leaders in our industry.

Previous seasoned WPRA members have indicated that *networking* is the name of the game today. Statistics show that as many as 80 percent of all jobs are filled through networking. You cannot just send a résumé or an application and hope for the best these days. You must know people or, at the very least, know people who know people. Can you network without WPRA? Sure you can. However, it is easy to argue that it is a lot easier to network at WPRA regional meetings, WPRA workshops, the WPRA Annual Conference & Trade Show, and other WPRA functions. So, what is the value of networking?

You need to be networking on your own behalf, and the WPRA office has received numerous stories from members that there was not a job interview they have had within our field that they did not get because of WPRA networking. What is the value in that? A career consultant can cost as much as \$500. A professional résumé writer can charge up to \$400. Let's just say that each job interview you land is worth \$200. Then, in the 15 years a WPRA member has been in the field, he or she has had five solid interviews, which would then have a value at \$1,000. Therefore, $x = \$1,000$.

So, the \$1,500 dollars you would spend on 10 years' worth of membership can easily produce 10 times that amount for you personally, your agency and your community.

Finally, and perhaps most critically, how do we address the perception that membership is too expensive. Dues payments of \$80, \$150 or \$190 a year are not pocket change. And yes, there are some professionals who may not be able to swing it. However, more than anything else, it comes down to priorities. Of those who say they cannot afford it, how many are out buying the newest TV when it hits the shelf? How many must have the newest phone, computer or gadget each time one comes out?

If your agency no longer pays for your membership, and you are facing the decision right now of whether or not to pay



out of pocket to retain your membership, or if you are considering joining for the first time, I would encourage you to make it happen. Being an active member in WPRA is the right step in advancing as a professional and attaining career goals. I cannot promise you that being a WPRA member is going to get you that next promotion or that new job you are seeking, but I can assure you the math is in your favor!

WPRA services include, but are not limited to:

- High-quality, useful and timely educational materials, such as the nation's best parks and recreation association magazine, the nation's most useful state association website, and the nation's most in-depth and challenging educational seminars and annual conference and trade show
- The state's most successful citizen advocacy initiatives that direct and draw on the power of our individual members to educate policymakers on issues of vital importance to the mission of park, recreation and conservation agencies
- Technical assistance that helps member agencies increase their efficiency, meet their goals and acquire more funding
- More opportunities for member agencies to save costs when using WPRA commercial vendors

The WPRA will continue to achieve these results in a fiscally responsible manner that assures the association's viability and makes membership a cost-effective necessity to all Wisconsin agencies.

Other benefits of WPRA membership include:

Continues to page 24

Miller & Associates Introduces Playground Grass™

Miller & Associates is proud to introduce the new generation of playground surfaces, Playground Grass™. Playground Grass™ by ForeverLawn® is lush, beautiful synthetic grass that is safe for kids to play on, soft to fall on and cost-effective. This revolutionary playground surface is ASTM 1292 safety rated to fall heights up to 13 feet, is Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible and has antimicrobial protection available for a cleaner, safer environment. This is what kids were meant to play on! Contact Miller & Associates to learn more about Playground Grass™ for your next playground project.

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ultraviolet (UV)-stable, and the equipment is durable enough to withstand heavy use and harsh weather.

To learn more, contact Gerber Leisure Products at (800)-236-7758 or gerberleisure.com.

MSA Unveils City of Wisconsin Rapids Aquatic Center and Park

The city of Wisconsin Rapids recently shared its plans for a new aquatic center and park. MSA Professional Services' multidisciplinary design team prepared the park master plan and will provide architecture, landscape architecture, civil, stormwater and electrical engineering for the project.

The city of Wisconsin Rapids serves a region of small cities, towns and villages encompassing approximately 63,000 residents. The city was forced to close its last remaining public pool due to poor physical condition, however, wanted to continue providing public park and aquatic services to its residents. The city ultimately performed a study, which resulted in the design and construction of new facilities — approximately an \$11 million project. The city will be providing some of the funds, with additional coming from fundraising efforts.

The park will provide an ice skating ribbon/drop-off with a central plaza, an ice hockey rink, an accessible playground, an illuminated splashpad, rentable shelters, tennis courts, multi-purpose fields, enhanced landscaping and use of local, thematic



materials. In addition, the pool will entail a concessions area, a bathhouse and a pump house with rentable cabanas, sun berms and shade structures. A zero-depth tot pool with slides and a lazy river have been designed uniquely for Wisconsin Rapids.

Trail Designed in Dodge County

The Gold Star Memorial Trail – Phase 1 is proposed as a paved, 10-foot-wide, nonmotorized path for biking, hiking and walking that will connect Mayville and the Horicon Marsh State Education Center, and ultimately the cities of Horicon and Beaver Dam. It was named to honor Wisconsin’s fallen heroes who received their Gold Star when they were killed in action.

The naming of the trail started with the idea of recognizing the five local service members killed since 2001. However, there has been growing interest in the trail from all over the state since it is within two hours of 80 percent of Wisconsin’s population. The trail will now honor military service members from all of Wisconsin who lost their lives while in the service from all American wars. In addition to service members killed in action, the trail will honor those killed in accidents and by suicide.

The second and final public informational took place on April 24, with permitting and bidding underway and construction starting later this year. ■



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Tom Flick, CPRP

Deputy Director, Appleton Parks, Recreation and Facilities Management



What led you to your career in parks and recreation?

I was aware very early on in college that park and recreation services could have a significant impact on the quality of life. That was something that intrigued me and led me toward seeking a degree that would enable me to work in this profession. Growing up across the street from a Wood County Park lake and campground and riding my bike to work at a ball diamond complex with six fields is what I would consider my roots to the profession.

What skills, experience and qualifications are needed for you to do your job effectively?

I think in the parks and recreation industry, we should take our job seriously without taking our life seriously. I could say education, certification and experience in the field, of course, are all necessary to do my job, but to be honest, just a desire to serve is all you need — a desire to make an impact on the lives of the community residents your agency serves. It could be with parks, open space, recreation programming or special events, but if you are doing it to serve the residents, they will take notice and appreciate the effort.

What challenges do you face in your position?

I think the political part of the job is something we all face, also balancing what your customer base is asking for versus what they actually need. Those can be two things that can make this job challenging at times.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your career?

We enjoy impacting our customer's lives. It could be providing safe, fun after-school or summer day camp options that allows the parents peace of mind while they are at work, or even the field trip that helps a senior meet new people their age in the community. Being given the opportunities to build new parks, amenities, sport complexes, etc. is extremely rewarding, knowing you are making an impact for current and future generations.

What advice do you have for job seekers interested in your position?

It's definitely not an 8-to-5 job, especially early in your career, and it's not a brick-and-mortar business you can pass down to your children. This job is public service, and even though you aren't voted into your position, you will find yourself answering to the public over time. Also, if you have the opportunity, take the time to learn about the diverse areas this field provides. Do your job, but also learn about the aquatics side or the operational side. Take a senior session at the next workshop or conference you go to. It will make you a well-rounded leader when the opportunity presents itself.

How has WPRA helped you in your career?

WPRA has allowed me as both a young and now seasoned professional in the field to have a voice in our industry. WPRA has provided opportunities to learn about industry trends, set up networking between myself and other members, and has put me in contact with commercial vendors that are waiting to assist me in getting the job done. WPRA has been invaluable to me.

Michael Kading, CPRP

Director of Parks and Recreation

What led you to your career in parks and recreation?

I had an older sister who was born with Down syndrome, and I would go to the park with her and volunteer with the special populations programs that met at various parks throughout Green Bay. That led to a summer job working in the special populations program. I also had the pleasure of working at the pools as a lifeguard and swim instructor, wading pool attendant, scorekeeper, which led to studying therapeutic recreation at UW-La Crosse, which has led to 25-plus great years of playing.

What skills, experience and qualification are needed for you to do your job effectively?

One, a willingness to embrace with passion this field called parks and recreation. It is not for the faint of heart. Two, a lifelong love of helping people enjoying themselves.

What challenges do you face in your position?

The diversity of thought — many do not believe we are needed within the municipality setting. Everyone has a touch point with park and recreation. You just need to keep asking questions and leading folks to that point where they themselves realize the impact we have each day in a community.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your career?

My satisfaction comes at the end of a project when I can sit on a park bench and watch the diversity of how a newly developed or redeveloped park is used. Recently, a person was sharing how wonderful a park was and how it was their family's favorite park to go to now that it was redeveloped. This person did not know that I was part of the redevelopment of the park. My daughter could not hold it in any longer and blurt out, "That was one of my dad's favorite projects." It was totally cool to see how proud my daughter was of the project and me, and to listen to the person tell his story. I would have been content to walk away without telling him of my involvement. The reward was knowing that he and his family now enjoy the park.

What advice do you have for job seekers interested in your position?

Do the little things. Be willing to clean the bathrooms, pick up garbage, be the first to volunteer for that extra shift at the swimming pool even after an extremely long hot day. Work your way up. Don't expect a director's job right out of college nor take one. Learn from the 25-year veteran park employee who knows

the park system inside and out, who knows every tree (even when they don't have leaves on). Be a lifelong learner. Ask questions. Seek out a mentor who can provide solid life experiences and suggestions. Be willing to fail and admit your mistakes, even when it costs your department some big money.

How has WPRA helped you in your career?

The professional network is invaluable. There is a wealth of knowledge within this body. Use it. Be part of it!

Matt Amundson, CPRP

Director of Public Lands, Recreation and Forestry, City of Middleton



What led you to your career in parks and recreation?

At age 14, I started working Saturday morning basketball instruction, and from age 16 to 21, worked for my hometown coaching baseball and softball for ages 5 to 17, maintaining fields, putting schedules together, coordinating transportation, and working with neighboring communities in managing the various leagues. After working in my hometown, I worked for my uncle who was the parks and recreation director in a neighboring community, and worked in park maintenance for a summer. It was a career for me that allowed me to be involved in sports and the outdoors.

What skills, experience and qualifications are needed for you to do your job effectively?

I think my past experience of doing everything in a small community has helped me have an understanding of the overall responsibilities of the staff I now supervise. My organization and communication skills have helped me achieve success as a direc-

tor. I strongly believe that experience trumps education in our field, but a quality combination of both is valuable.

What challenges do you face in your position?

The biggest challenge I currently face is that I recently started in Middleton. The key to success in my past community was the partnerships that were developed to grow programs and facilities and that I'm still learning and developing those partnerships in Middleton. Middleton has an amazing system of park land, conservancy areas and an expansive trail network. Our challenge moving forward is how to maintain and support the existing system while continuing to grow and add new amenities, while introducing sustainable practices.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your career?

The favorite part of my job is seeing people enjoy the programs and places we work to provide.

What advice do you have for job seekers interested in your position?

If you currently are working in the field, go to meetings, say yes and be willing to learn new things. I was fortunate to work as a recreation programmer in Coralville, Iowa, and Appleton. Both departments provided me with opportunities to gain experience outside of the typical recreation setting that helped me develop skills and gain experience that led to director roles. If you have not yet landed that role, keep the faith, work the nights and weekends to gain needed experience, and be willing to be outside of your comfort zone.

How has WPRA helped you in your career?

WPRA has been an important resource throughout my career both in providing educational and networking opportunities. I've met countless dedicated people that have inspired me and provided a sounding board for ideas and solutions to problems. ■



“We Are Working Hard for You!”

The Wisconsin Park & Recreation Foundation Board of Directors is a group of current and retired park and recreation professionals and commercial members just like yourself. We work hard to ensure the parks and recreation profession remains a relevant and essential part of our Wisconsin communities.



Funds generated by the foundation have supported hundreds of professionals attending vital educational training, schools and workshops. The foundation takes pride in assisting large groups of students who attend the WPRA Annual Conference. In addition to these grants and scholarships, the foundation provides funding for annual conference speakers, the Leadership Academy and Foundation Ambassadors Club workshops.

How do we accomplish our goals? By teaming up with professionals like you. The generous donations of our commercial and professional members are the only way we can continue to accomplish all these great things.

There are several ways to team up with the WPRA Foundation:

1. *Join the Foundation Ambassadors Club* – Make a one-time donation or a recurring donation. Different levels of giving mean you can get different kinds of “FAC swag” along with exclusive networking and education opportunities. Go to the WPRA website, hover over the “Foundation” tab and then click “Donate Today.” **Join today!**

2. *Participate* – Be an active participant in the annual Foundation Scholarship Golf Outing by playing, sponsoring or volunteering.
3. *Stop by and enjoy the fun* – Our trade show booth at the WPRA Annual Conference is the most fun you will have at conference. Meet fellow professionals, play some games, win cool prizes and give a few bucks to the foundation. It’s a great way to get involved and give back!

No matter what option of giving you choose, I guarantee you will feel pride in knowing you are helping to keep the profession of parks and recreation thriving in Wisconsin! Thank you to all who have felt that pride.

I look forward to sharing the WPRA Foundation *Giving Experience* with all of you in the future. ■

Yours truly in parks and recreation,

Kelly Valentino, CPRP
WPRA Foundation Board President

2017 WPRA Leadership Academy

“Real Leaders Shine” Wrap-Up

by WPRA Professional Development School (PDS) Committee



The 10th annual WPRA Leadership Academy — “Real Leaders Shine” — was held February 1-3, 2017, at the Heidel House in Green Lake, Wisconsin. The WPRA Professional Development School Committee would like to take this opportunity to once again thank and congratulate the 31 professionals who made the commitment and completed first- and second-year (graduate) and alumni graduate programs.

The 2017 Academy faculty featured nationally known presenters, including **Chip Lutz**, “Uncommon Sense for the Unconventional Leader”; **Guila Muir**, “Persuasive Presentations: Key to Credibility”; **Alonzo Kelly**, “The Five Leadership Styles”; **Matt Booth**, “Chase Your Dreams”; and **Paul Wesselmann**, “Extending Your Influence” and “Fresh & Fierce: Unleashing Your Best Self.”

Core to the curriculum were sessions that centered on leadership and management skill development using real-life examples and practical methods to sustain excellence. Further, faculty shared powerful insights, ideas and techniques that could be implemented immediately back on the job. The small-group setting fostered numerous networking opportunities to share information, tips and shortcuts with other professionals.

The Academy concluded with a graduation ceremony recognizing first-year participants, second-year program graduates (106 since program inception) and alumni graduates. Special recognition (a free Academy registration) was given to Guy Smith, Milwaukee County Parks, for earning the distinction as the 100th Academy graduate!

We would like to extend a special thank-you to the **WPRA Foundation** for its ongoing commitment and support as the **educational program sponsor** and to **Boland Recreation** for its continued supporting sponsorship toward program materials.

The PDS Committee is very excited and dedicated to continue to build upon the success of the Academy experience and invites you to strongly consider taking the leadership challenge and join us for the

2018 Leadership Academy, February 7-9 (Wednesday to Friday).

Class of 2017

- Marcus Aumann, Clark County
- Linda Cadotte, city of Superior
- Justin Calvert, Shorewood School District
- Chad Dallman, city of Oshkosh
- Jeremy Koslowski, Polk County
- Daniel Murray, Waukesha County
- Heather Ryan, city of Oak Creek
- Guy Smith, Milwaukee County
- Erin Turner, city of Altoona
- Andrew Weinkauff, Waukesha County
- Jason Wilke, Waukesha County ■

For additional information, please contact Ron Grall, PDS Committee chair, at (262) 524-3734 or rgrall@waukesha-wi.gov.

Thank You WPRFA Foundation for Helping to Make the 2017 Leadership Academy a Success!

2017 Academy Participants

Graduates

1. Marcus Aumann, Clark County
2. Linda Cadotte, city of Superior
3. Justin Calvert, Shorewood School District
4. Chad Dallman, city of Oshkosh
5. Jeremy Koslowski, Polk County
6. Daniel Murray, Waukesha County
7. Heather Ryan, city of Oak Creek
8. Guy Smith, Milwaukee County
9. Erin Turner, city of Altoona
10. Andrew Weinkauf, Waukesha County
11. Jason Wilke, Waukesha County

Year-One Participants

1. Erik Aleson, Door County
2. Elizabeth Breitenfeldt, West Allis-West Milwaukee School District

3. Travis Fountaine, St. Croix County
4. Jenny Hammes, city of De Pere
5. Patti Heinen, city of Germantown
6. Nicholas Lemke, city of West Bend
7. Laura Milkie, city of Greenfield
8. Ann Moeller, city of Green Bay
9. Jill Organ, Milwaukee County
10. Isaac Palmer, city of Waukesha
11. Jon Radtke, Waukesha County
12. Dave Rauterberg, city of Waukesha
13. Kiley Schulte, city of Port Washington
14. Karin Sevener, city of Grafton
15. Nick Spence, Milwaukee Public Schools
16. Dan Washatko, city of Antigo
17. Adam Waszak, village of Bellevue

Alumni Graduates

1. Kristine Butteris, Fond du Lac School District
2. Amanda Schwichtenberg, West Allis-West Milwaukee School District
3. Andrew Whitman, city of Waupaca

WPRFA Professional Development School Committee

- Ron Grall (chair)
- Chris Fandre
- Scott Jaquish
- Don Melichar
- Wendy Meyer
- Shelly Strasser
- Lori Williams

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Village of North Fond du Lac, WI

WPRA 52nd Annual Conference & Trade Show

Social Overview



Tuesday, November 7

Stop whining and start *wineing*. Join President Tom Flick for an off-site President's All Conference Reception adventure at Fawn Creek Winery! Nestled in the midst of a maple, oak and pine grove in Wisconsin Dells, Fawn Creek Winery invites you to enjoy a glass of fine wine while savoring the peace and quiet of the woods. Complimentary wine tastings will be available, and beer will be served. Thanks to a generous sponsorship by MSA Professional Services, two complimentary beverage tokens will be provided to all who attend. Music, food and fun will greet you at the first bridge building event of the conference. Come join President Tom Flick and create connections at Fawn Creek Winery!

Where: Fawn Creek Winery, 3619 13th Ave., Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965

When: 7-11 p.m.

First shuttle departs Kalahari lobby at 6:45 p.m. and will make round trips every 45 minutes until 11 p.m. (approximate times)

Wednesday, November 8

Make your way upstairs to the bowling alley on Wednesday for a night of fun and competition! This social incorporates a '90s theme and includes multiple entertainment options at no

cost. Activities like bowling, a golf simulator, darts, hockey and more will be available with free competitions set up around each activity and prizes being awarded to the winners. Following the gaming activities, Juke Box Bandstand will jump-start the crowd at 8 p.m. and play music until midnight. There will be something for everyone — do not miss it! Don't forget your '90s attire!

Where: Kalahari, upstairs bowling alley

When: 7-9 p.m., free games and entertainment; 8 p.m.-midnight, Juke Box Bandstand plays

Thursday, November 9

Activities will be on your own! A shuttle bus will make round trips between the Kalahari and downtown Wisconsin Dells beginning at 8 p.m. The last bus will leave downtown Dells just before midnight. Grab your friends and take a ride downtown for fun at restaurants, novelty shops, taverns and more!

Where: Downtown Wisconsin Dells

When: 8 p.m.-midnight

First shuttle departs Kalahari lobby at 8 p.m. and will make round trips every 30 minutes until midnight. (approximate times)



2017 WPRF Foundation Scholarship Golf Outing Sponsorship Opportunities

Friday, September 8, 2017
Washington County Golf Course
Hartford, WI



The Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association Foundation requests sponsorships for the 19th Annual WPRF Scholarship Golf Outing. Funds from this outing directly help the Foundation award student scholarships and professional grants.

In order to provide this financial support to park and recreation professionals and students, the Foundation needs **your** help. Please consider supporting this event by signing up for one of the Sponsorship opportunities listed below. *There may be multiple sponsors per category.*



COME PLAY WITH US, WE WOULD LOVE to see you on the course with a team from your organization!!!!

Please check the areas of Sponsorship interest:

Green Golf Partners - Title Sponsor: \$1,500.00, 2017

- Naming rights of the event
- Name and logo on all print advertising
- Recognition displayed at event
- Name listed in Golf Outing Program, Impact article, and website

Favor Sponsor: \$500.00

- Name / logo on favor
- Name in Golf Outing Program, Impact re-cap article, and website
- Sign on the sponsored hole

Boland Recreation - Dinner Sponsor: \$750.00

- Name recognition on each dinner table
- Name in Golf Outing Program, Impact re-cap article, and website
- Sign on the sponsored hole

Awards Sponsor: \$500.00

- Opportunity to speak during awards ceremony
- Name in Golf Outing Program, Impact re-cap article, and website
- Sign on the sponsored hole

Social Sponsor: \$250.00

- Recognition sign in social area
- Name in Golf Outing Program, Impact re-cap article, and website
- Sign on the sponsored hole

Golf Hole Sponsor: \$150.00

- Name in Golf Outing Program, Impact re-cap article, and website
- Sign on the sponsored hole

Course Refreshment Sponsor: \$250.00

- Recognition on golf beverage carts
- Name in Golf Outing Program, Impact re-cap article, and website
- Sign on the sponsored hole

PLEASE Contribute Door Prize(s) for the Golf Outing:
Please Specify: _____

Enclosed Donation to WPRF Foundation: \$ _____

Please complete organization information: **Please respond by July 28, 2017 to guarantee your sponsor request and recognition! Thank You!**

**To pay for sponsorships with a credit card or online,
please see Player Entry Form and complete Credit Card Authorization.**

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ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ **ZIP:** _____

EMAIL: _____ **PHONE:()** _____

Please make **check** payable to
WPRF FOUNDATION and send to:
WPRF – Foundation Golf Outing
C/O: Kelly Valentino, JACC
N165 W20330 Hickory Lane
Jackson, WI 53037

Learning-Enhanced Play

by David P. Burch, PLA, President, The Park Foundation of Waukesha, Inc.

We play for a variety of reasons. It brings us together socially, helps us develop our skills in sports and kinetic movement, relieves tension and stress, and provides opportunities to learn about the spaces in which we play. For the purposes of this article, we look at the ways we learn about the places in which we play. These places may be our backyards, neighborhood parks, regional parks, local trails and places around the world that we visit. More particularly, this article will look at some great examples of interpretive signage and the different messages that they convey to the park user. The benefits of play are well-documented from the physical and emotional aspects of our human life. However, play also can lead to intellectual stimulation and learning about our environment. And learning about our environment can lead to appreciation of, support for and stewardship of these places.

Agencies around the country have continued to improve the educational outreach to park visitors, hoping to impart a variety of messages. At one time in history, this information was usually conveyed via brochures in parks. Educational outreach can now take on many forms, all of which have their place in informing park users about the uniqueness of each place. I have had the good fortune to experience all of the following forms of educational outreach at parks throughout our country. They all have their targeted audiences and levels of effectiveness. They all require some level of annual cost, regular updating and maintenance to keep the messages fresh and interesting.

Some of these methods include: brochures and handouts, classes and workshops, QR codes and website links, video and audio messages, animatronics and interpretive signs.

I appreciate interpretive signs since they offer information at the point of interest and many times take less than 30 seconds read. Examples of effective interpretive signs exist in many places. A few examples that I have observed and enjoyed are the interpretive education opportunities at Retzer Nature Center in Waukesha County; the Maxwell Creek Linear Park and Preserve in Murphy, Texas; and the Heard Natural Science Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary in McKinney, Texas.

Retzer Nature Center, located on the west side of the city of Waukesha in primarily the towns of Genesee and Waukesha, with the financial support of the Friends of Retzer Nature Center, helped to finance the design and installation of 28 new interpretive signs. These signs, each unique and incorporating beautiful artistic shape into the signs framework, offer educational information about the history of the land, geography, Retzer family, flora and fauna of this almost 500-acre nature center.

Larry Kascht, supervisor at Retzer Nature Center and lead teaching naturalist at Waukesha County Parks, offered his comments on the importance and today's relevance of environmental education: "The

Environmental Education Program at the Retzer Nature Center strives to give people a good, direct, hands-on experience with the natural land, and offer an experience of fun, discovery, beauty and education that engages their enjoyment and learning. Kascht offered this John Burroughs' quotation: "Knowledge without love will not stick."

At Retzer, the educational, hands-on experience is important for two reasons:

1. Good experiences of nature elevate people's quality of life. Everyone knows that the more time you get to spend out in nature, the better your life experience will be. People will come to want good experiences of nature to be a regular part of their life experience. The places where they can have good experiences of nature will become important to them.
2. Good experiences of nature as part of one's regular life experience plant the seed of a value for natural land and nature in people's hearts and minds. They will bring this value to the decisions they make, the things they support and the people they choose to represent them. They will want to be part of efforts to save natural land, before it's gone.

The educational experience at the 42-acre Maxwell Creek Linear Park and Preserve in Murphy, Texas, was planned and designed into the park experience. It is a place that I frequent, hike and bike, and play with my





grandsons Alex and Ben. The signs offer information on the history of the land and the community, environmental resources, geology, flora, fauna and the people who helped to shape this park. The interpretive signage has several design characteristics that make it an effective educational experience. These characteristics are:

1. Simple message, graphics and photos
2. Informative and distinctive to a specific place
3. Accessible
4. Easy to read and understand
5. Attractive and durable materials
6. Maintained regularly



The Heard Natural Science Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary in McKinney, Texas, offers 289 acres of a variety of plant communities in northern Texas, great hiking and walking trails, an outdoor amphitheater, a learning center,

and traveling exhibits. The center focuses primarily on educating children about the environment. The animatronics dinosaur trail exhibit was there when I visited in February 2017. The popular natural play areas offer children physical activity beyond walking and hiking.

Enjoy the opportunity to play in the great parks, nature centers, greenways and preserves this year. The opportunities for people to become and stay physically healthy are there, and so are the many opportunities to learn about these special places and appreciate and support these lands for future generations. One of my favorite inspirational phrases is from the late 18th- and early 19th-century Spanish artist and painter Francisco Goya (1746-1828). His phrase and drawing titled “Aun aprendo” captured his thoughts and emotions late in his life that he was, in fact, “still learning.” The piece (whose title translates to “I am still learning”) is meant to develop a lifelong habit of learning for whatever we have a passion, whether it be the land, parks, healthy people or a sense of value in the pursuit of improving parks and recreation opportunities and benefits for our communities.

Aun aprendemos, comprendemos y apreciamos la tierra, los parques y jugar. Still, we learn, understand and appreciate the land, the parks and play. ■

David P. Burch, PLA, is president of The Park Foundation of Waukesha, Inc. and retired from professional practice as manager, project manager, client services leader and landscape architect, with 38 years of service in public park agencies and private consulting. He can be reached at burdavn@gmail.com.

References, Photographs and Credits

1. Retzer Nature Center interpretive signs, courtesy of Waukesha County Department of Parks and Land Use, Larry Kascht and Ginny Bocek, www.waukeshacounty.gov.
2. Maxwell Creek Linear Park and Preserve interpretive signs, courtesy of David P. Burch, www.murphytx.org.
3. Heard Natural Science Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary signs and images, courtesy of David P. Burch, www.heardmuseum.org.



Advocacy Guidelines

for Public Employees

Public employees are subject to regulations concerning contact with members of Congress or Wisconsin legislators. Fortunately, this does not translate to a blanket prohibition on lobbying your legislators, i.e., conducting activities for the purpose of influencing a member of Congress or state legislature to favor or oppose legislation or appropriations.

The First Amendment protects your right to lobby members of Congress and congressional staff and committees as well as state legislators.

However, statements you make must not be construed as official pronouncements of federal or state policy. Therefore, you must explicitly separate yourself from your federal or state capacity when lobbying members of Congress or state legislators. That is, identify yourself as a concerned citizen presenting your personal views.

Even so, there is no need to conceal your government employment. You are welcome to identify your official local, state or federal capacity and to discuss your professional activities as long as you make it clear that you are speaking on behalf of yourself or a nongovernmental organization (i.e. a local or state organization, or the Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association) and the views expressed are your own.

Appropriated federal or state funds may not be used, directly or indirectly, to pay for lobbying activities.

This means that anything paid for by the government, including your salary, telephone, copier, paper, postage, etc., may not be used to support your lobbying activities. However, personal funds or funds provided by nongovernmental organizations may be used to support lobbying activities.



These two simple precepts should not discourage you from lobbying your legislators, but rather are meant to inform you on your responsibilities as a government employee. Your participation in the democratic process can be personally satisfying and is critical to the success of our nation's parks and recreation programs. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact your local ethics official. ■

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Schreiber Laid Groundwork for Loftier

David Schreiber's dedication to raising the professional status of landscape architects through licensure is one of many accomplishments that recently made him the worthy posthumous recipient of the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects' 2017 Lifetime Achievement Award. The story of this tireless professional — who died in 2016 while pursuing another passion, horseback riding — is one of dedication to raising the stature of his profession, advocating for clients and boosting the effectiveness of dozens that he mentored along the way.



Tim Anderson, who partnered with Schreiber in 1984 to form Schreiber Anderson Associates (SAA), said Schreiber placed a high value on raising the standing and

integrity of landscape architects and setting standards for the proper execution of their craft. "He was very instrumental in getting the legislation passed for licensure," Anderson said of Schreiber's efforts to establish professional landscape architect licensure in Wisconsin. That legislation passed in 1995, and Schreiber was among the first to be licensed that same year.

Ultimately, Schreiber raised the profession to the point where landscape architects within the firm were entrusted with leading a multidiscipline team that included civil engineers and planners, said Blake Theisen, landscape architect with Ayres Associates, which acquired SAA Design Group

in 2015. Schreiber understood that their unique training allows professional landscape architects to be excellent start-to-finish project managers who visualize the big picture from the beginning and see it through to the final details at the end.

In a 2014 interview with the Wisconsin State Journal, Schreiber was quoted as saying, "My goal was to put the landscape architect in control of these projects. I started approaching landscape architecture with the view that I and my employees could tackle everything outside the building, and (clients) could really just work with us to get their whole site designed."

Schreiber wanted his staff to be fully licensed, Anderson noted, and he did what he could to make sure the firm supported and assisted staff members in pursuing licensure. He also spent many hours sharing his wisdom and expertise with many of the 140-plus employees who worked with him over the years. "Mentorship was a big deal with him," Anderson said.

"David always proceeded with great passion and excitement," said Theisen, who was mentored by Schreiber and was among those who nominated him for the award. "I was sometimes reminded of the enthusiasm of a little kid when he really got talking. He spent his entire career as a landscape architect and business entrepreneur promoting landscape architecture-led projects and contributing to responsible environmental planning and design in the upper Midwest."

Clients Benefited from Schreiber's Vision

Ultimately, SAA Design Group was recognized for the quality of its work and its effective approach to waterfront planning and downtown revitalization, Anderson said, noting that Schreiber helped raise clients' expectations of landscape architecture firms from ones that did plantings to ones that did planning and civil engineering. Another hallmark Schreiber helped usher in was sustainable design. "That was really embedded in the culture of the firm," Anderson said. Preserving a site's natural areas was a high priority with Schreiber, Theisen echoed.

Clients appreciated the long-term relationships Schreiber forged with them, and perhaps none more typifies that than Beloit 2020 development corporation, which the firm started serving in 1989.

Jeff Adams, executive director of Beloit 2020, valued Schreiber's dedication to Beloit, South Beloit and the private sector planning organization in which Adams has provided leadership for decades. Adams worked with Schreiber from 1990 until shortly before his death in 2016. Much of Beloit 2020's success is owed to the fact that Schreiber did such a good job of holding



Vision of Landscape Architecture

the group's hand, Adams said, noting that he was good at connecting the dots, looking forward and foreseeing things that needed to be done. So many conversations included Schreiber pointing to a potential issue and saying, "You really need to start thinking about this," Adams said.

A great example was Schreiber's invaluable advice to take advantage of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's plans to reconstruct U.S. 51 through the heart of the area that Beloit 2020 was developing along the banks of the Rock River. The highway closely parallels the river near its east bank. Schreiber figured WisDOT expected to hold a poorly attended public meeting where it laid out its plans for some fresh concrete, and that would be that, Adams said.

Because Schreiber got out in front of the opportunity, representatives of Beloit 2020 were at the meeting. When WisDOT said the community would need to show a plan, it already had one. A \$16,000 planning effort the group had engaged in with Schreiber's team ultimately paid huge dividends as the highway project was leveraged to provide a handsome boulevard that visually extends the linear park space along the river. "When you enter the city center, suddenly you see this is different, this is cool," Adams said. The highway project also brought traffic calming to the corridor, and extensive parking was established along the green space in coordination with the highway project.

A Pioneer in Downtown Revitalization and Waterfront Planning

"He saw water as a tremendous driver of economic activity," said Adams, a professor emeritus of economics at Beloit College, of Schreiber. He had the technical expertise to properly deal with the issues that come with waterfront projects. Schreiber's vision also allowed him to identify compact, dense, pedestrian-friendly urban centers as desirable and effective — long before this became widely fashionable, Adams said.

Besides Beloit, notable downtown revitalization and waterfront planning projects included Monona Terrace in Madison and



Phoenix Park in Eau Claire. The transformation of Madison Area Technical College was another key project, but Schreiber's influence was felt through numerous projects from Antigo to the Quad Cities to points around the Midwest.

Schreiber was not afraid to approach cities and corporations and talk to them about what landscape architects could do for their community, and he did not shy away from taking risks on new things. "From health care facilities, waterfront redevelopment, park development, corporate campuses, zoo master plans to major urban renewal projects, nothing was out of bounds," Theisen said.

And Schreiber's ability to work with people produced a lot of meaningful results. "Through his strengths as listener, designer and communicator combined with his ability to sort through all he was hearing, he could come up with a great design and preserve the participant's feelings of involvement, better ensuring long-term stewardship of the completed project," Theisen said, reflecting on conversations with others who worked with Schreiber.

Schreiber's enthusiasm came through in his community involvements as well. He was active on several committees of Madison's Downtown Rotary, including being the design committee leader for the implementation of the Rotary Centennial Plaza in downtown Madison. Schreiber

worked on horseback riding trails at Dane County's Donald Park, and he was president of the park's friends group from 2005 to 2009. Under his leadership, the 120-member group pursued strategic planning and project grants and recruited project partners. The group participated in park improvement projects, such as master plan updates, multiuse trails, site archaeological research, historic landscape restorations and a site interpretive plan.

Schreiber's relationship with the Beloit area is still nurtured today as Jacob Blue, hired by SAA and now with Ayres Associates, manages the Nature at the Confluence project, which will reclaim a 34.4-acre area of South Beloit as a park and preserve dedicated to connecting people of all ages and abilities with the unique ecology and historical significance resulting from the confluence of Turtle Creek and the Rock River. The park will combine hands-on learning in ecology and science with recreational hiking, biking, boating and agility in the form of a ropes course. Ayres has provided a seamless transition under Blue's leadership, so in some sense Blue's hiring was another gift Schreiber gave to the community, Adams said.

The gifts of Schreiber's well-planned, well designed, well-executed projects continue to bear new growth each spring and new fruit each day all around the Midwest. ■

- **Technical assistance:** WPRA provides technical assistance to communities on guidelines, standards, job announcements and other pertinent information upon request. WPRA's nationally recognized website provides an extensive amount of information that is practical and timely.
- **Participation:** WPRA offers an opportunity for members to participate in a state association with a reputation for energy, vision and commitment in the park and leisure services industry.
- **Impact:** WPRA maintains a strong working relationship with key government agencies and other groups whose policies affect your organization and career.
- **Publications:** WPRA's *PRMonthly* online newsletter and quarterly magazine, *IMPACT*, will keep you informed on issues that affect your day-to-day operations. The annual online Membership Directory and Buyer's Guide provides you with all the park and recreation agency personnel and contact information, a listing of commercial vendors, and a directory of product service categories to assist you in the purchasing process.
- **Annual Conference & Trade Show:** This gathering is an excellent opportunity to network with industry peers and customers.

- **Meetings and seminars:** At various times throughout the year, WPRA membership sections and committees offer timely educational opportunities to keep you up to date on park and leisure industry topics. In addition, WPRA Board, section and committee meetings provide a forum to strategize effective methods to improve the delivery of park and recreation services and operations.
- **Legislative monitoring:** WPRA's Legislative Committee and state office provide legislative monitoring and support on important park, recreation and health care issues.
- **Foundation:** WPRA's Foundation awards grants and scholarship assistance to students and professionals, as well as promoting park and leisure projects and programs.
- **Professional certification:** WPRA administers the National Certification Plan of the National Recreation and Park Association for the certified park and recreation professional, certified aquatic facility operator and certified national playground safety inspector.

So, is it worth the investment to be a member of WPRA? Perhaps it would be best to now ask the question, how can you afford not to? ■



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2017 WPRA Keynote Speaker *Inquoris "Inky" Johnson*

Who Is Inky Johnson?



September 9, 2006. It started as a normal college football game in Neyland Stadium. If anything, the event was an afterthought, dropped into the schedule at the last minute.

For Inky Johnson, though, the game changed everything. A routine tackle turned into a life-threatening injury, and nothing has been normal for Johnson ever since. Not with a paralyzed right arm. Not with daily pain. Not with constant physical challenges.

His dream had always been to play professional sports. You might think his injury would have destroyed his motivation and crushed his spirit. But that's only because you don't know him.

Who is Inquoris "Inky" Johnson? He could be described as the survivor of an underprivileged past. He could be described as a refugee of poverty and violence. He could be described as a success



His inspiration affects people from within,
giving them the ability to accomplish what
would otherwise be impossible.



story stained by tragedy. But if you look deeper, you'll discover something else.

You'll see a man who looks in the face of defeat and says, "Am I really failing, or is God prevailing?" You'll see a man gripped by the promise that God has purposes and plans far beyond our own. And you'll be inspired by his relentless determination, which he loves to impart to others through his dramatic story.

Johnson has a master's degree in sports psychology from the University of Tennessee. He devotes much of his time to mentoring athletes and underprivileged youth. He and his amazing wife, Allison, live in Atlanta, Georgia, with their beautiful children, Jada and Inky Jr.

Motivation or Inspiration?

Motivation is often nothing more than forcing people to do something they don't really want to do. In contrast, inspiration affects people from within, giving them the ability to accomplish what would otherwise be impossible. Through his walk and his talk, Johnson embodies and imparts a truly inspirational message.

Not that Johnson's injury turned him into an inspiration. It just showed the world the inspirational life he's been living all along. Executives, sports teams, church members and young people all benefit from the raw energy of his charismatic speaking. Whether the topic is leadership, teamwork or perseverance, Johnson inspires his audiences to embrace the challenges of life. ■



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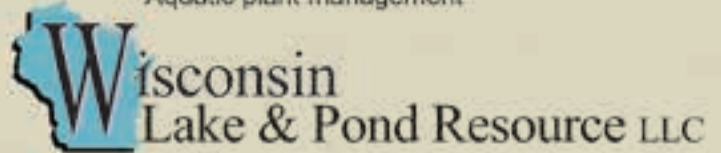
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WPRA Young Professional Network

We Want You!

by John McDonald, AFO, LG, LGI, Recreation Specialist, City of Sparta,
and Laura Milkie, CPRP, Recreation Program Coordinator, City of Greenfield

The WPRA is proud to officially start its first Young Professional Network (YPN) group. The mission of the WPRA Young Professional Network is to inspire and engage members of WPRA who are under the age of 35 to become active members of professional associations, grow and maintain a professional network, and discover the benefits of professional development.

Who Can Participate in the WPRA YPN?

YPN is an inclusive group open to all. The YPN leadership committee is seeking distinguished professionals who want to share their knowledge, be in touch with the up-and-coming leaders in our state, and seek mentoring opportunities; young professionals who want to network and grow; and college students who want to get their foot in the door for their first internship or other opportunities across the state.

How Was the Current WPRA YPN Leadership Determined, and Who Are They?

The current WPRA YPN leadership committee was established by volunteers throughout the state. Leading the network are co-chairs Anthony Iracki and Derek Donlevy, Milwaukee Public Schools Department of Recreation & Community Services, Region 1 representative John McDonald, city of Sparta; Region 2 representative Adam Breest, village of Little Chute; Region 3 representative Brandon Milner, village of Marshall; Region 4 representative Laura Milkie, city of Greenfield; and Secretary/Social Media Manger Katie Rodger, Germantown Park & Recreation, with the student representative position still open.

What Is the Intent of the YPN Moving Forward?

The intent of the YPN moving forward is to gain members and continue to share ideas and create opportunities for professionals in the field. Our goals would include hosting events throughout the year within the state and hosting sessions at the yearly WPRA Conference.

How Will Universities Be Contacted to Determine Student Interest in Participating?

The YPN will work together with universities throughout the state to get students involved within the network and share opportunities for them to gain knowledge and insight within the profession. The YPN strives to speak in college classrooms, reach out to recreation management clubs and meet with university faculty to gain student involvement.

How Can Members Participate in the Monthly Conference Calls?

Once you join the Young Professional Network, your email and contact information will be added to our directory. Each month,

the leadership committee members will email all members notifying them when conference calls will take place. Members will be notified of events and happenings through email and through the WPRA YPN Facebook group.

What Will the Conference Call Session Consist of That the YPN Wants to Provide?

Professional Q&A, guest speakers, roundtable discussions and more will be included in the monthly conference calls. Ideas will come from previous sessions, emails, current trends, or topics and suggestions from members, either through email to a committee member or posted on the YPN Facebook page. The YPN is open to all suggestions and topics.

As a Distinguished Professional, How Can I Be Involved and Give Back and Provide Advice to Young Professionals?

The YPN strives to get many seasoned professionals involved in YPN through mentoring experiences, Facebook live interviews, guest speakers on conference calls and more. This is a great way for professionals who have been in the field 10 years or more to give advice to students or young professionals about their background, experiences and general knowledge of the field.

How Do I Join?

There are several ways to connect. You can contact our co-chairs, join our Facebook page, use Facebook live and jump on our conference calls. This year's co-chairs can be reached via email: Anthony Iracki, irackiat@milwaukee.k12.wi.us, or Derek Donlevy, donlevdj@milwaukee.k12.wi.us. Our Facebook group is WPRA Young Professional Network. There will be a monthly conference calls that you can connect on, then listen in on ideas and share ideas and thoughts.

Here are three reasons why should you join:

- 1. Connect with other young professionals** – Many young professionals have similar experiences when it comes to work-life balance, career path, professional development, getting a job, interviewing and more. Sharing these experiences with others in the same boat will create a network of support and advice. As the saying goes, it's not what you know, it's who you know. Though that is not always the case, knowing more people in the recreation field can get you through the door or provide quality references for you.
- 2. Grow professionally with learning experiences** – You can never learn enough! As we build the WPRA YPN, more educational experiences will be available for those looking to learn about other professionals in the field, including seasoned professionals, and keep up to date on what's going on in the parks and recreation field in general. The YPN plans to do this through Facebook Live, face-to-face events, mentoring opportunities and conference calls.
- 3. Be involved** – This is an opportunity to be involved in WPRA and the parks and recreation field. We encourage all to join in on all of the conference calls, but the commitment is up to you. The WPRA YPN Facebook group also allows you to connect at your own leisure. Posts are being made weekly on up-to-date YPN news, parks and recreation field news, and WPRA news. ■

2017 WPRA Endnote Speaker *Brian Udermann*



“Improve Your Health – Improve Your Balance”

Topic Expertise

- Life balance issues
- Health benefits of laughter
- Positive cultures
- Personal health and wellness

Brian Udermann is an inspiring communicator, author and professor who challenges individuals to take responsibility for their own health. This includes incorporating regular physical activity into their routine, getting adequate sleep and making healthy nutritional choices. This is easy to say but not always easy to do! This session will focus on how improving overall health-related behaviors can help restore a healthy life balance.

You've likely heard people say that laughter is the best medicine, but is it really true? Will laughing more and having a good sense of humor help you be healthier and even live longer? This informative and entertaining session will give you permission to laugh more and help you improve your overall health.

Be sure to mark your calendars now to attend the 2017 WPRA Conference — “Building Bridges – Creating Connections” — at Kalahari Resort & Convention Center! ■

About

Brian Udermann is the director of online education at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and has over 20 years of experience in higher education. He frequently works with colleges and universities to help them grow their online programming while ensuring the quality of such offerings. Udermann is a sought-after speaker and workshop facilitator and has presented at conferences such as the Online Learning Consortium's International Conference on Online Learning, as well as national conferences of the United States Distance Teaching and Learning Association, the International Higher Education Teaching and Learning Association, the annual Conference on Distance Teaching and Learning, the North American Association of Summer Sessions and the National University Technology Network.

Udermann has been married to his wife, Cari, for 21 years, and they have three active boys who keep them extremely busy. He loves beef jerky, Bit-O-Honey, Diet Mountain Dew, ice cream, pizza, stuffing and peanut M&M's. Udermann is passionate about online education and welcomes every opportunity to share best practices related to online teaching as well as administering online education programs, whether that is with individual faculty members, administrators, or with larger groups at universitywide presentations or at professional conferences.

Wisconsin Park Boards: Roles, Responsibilities and Rulemaking

by Daniel M. Olson, Assistant Legal Counsel, League of Wisconsin Municipalities



The spotlight and attention in Wisconsin city and village government is most often focused on city councils, village boards, planning commissions, community development authorities and similar governmental bodies with the legal authority to make splashy decisions. However, the quiet and less visible local government entities are equally critical to developing and sustaining a desirable community despite the lack of public and media attention.

City and village park boards, which include for purposes of this article statutory Chapter 27 park commissions as well as the large variety of locally created park boards, committees and commissions, are one of those quiet but critical city and village government entities. City and village parks and their value to a community are substantial. It is important then for park board members and other city and village officials to understand park board local governance roles, member responsibilities and rulemaking limitations.

The Role of a Park Board in City and Village Governance

Wisconsin Statute Section 27.08(2)(a) enumerates a short but significant list of Chapter 27 park commission functions: “To govern, manage, control, improve and care for all public parks, parkways, boulevards and pleasure drives located within, or partly within and partly without, the corporate limits of the city, and secure the quiet, orderly and suitable use and enjoyment thereof by the people; also to adopt rules and regulations to promote those purposes.” Other subsections of Chapter 27 give Chapter 27 park commissions a role in the acquisition of park land by a variety of methods, including condemnation, Wisconsin Statute Section 27.08(2)(b), and purchase, Wisconsin Statute Section 27.08(2)(c).

Local ordinances establishing a nonstatutory park board, commission or committee are often patterned after the provisions in Chapter 27 of the Wisconsin

Statutes. Accordingly, these locally defined bodies will be involved and participate in the governance, management, improvement, care and acquisition of city or village park property like Chapter 27 park commissions.

However, the role of statutory and nonstatutory park boards in Wisconsin is defined by the lack of independent authority to raise revenue to perform or execute the enumerated statutory functions for a Chapter 27 park commission. And given that taxing authority is vested in city councils and village boards, such authority is also not held by locally created park boards.

Without authority to generate its own revenues for park services, park boards are unable to purchase land for parks, employ staff to manage parks, buy park benches or other park improvements, or execute a contract without securing the prior approval of the city council

or village board. In effect, like most subunits of city and village government, Wisconsin park boards and their members serve in an advisory role in city and village government.

Understanding the advisory role of Wisconsin park boards is important for park board members. The park board is not the final authority for park funding, use, location, maintenance or any other park policy. So, a park board member should be ready and able to accept and perform delegated tasks with an open mind, provide thoughtful and sound policy suggestions based on facts rather than feelings or a single-minded focus on a pet issue, recognize that his or her park policy recommendation will not always be adopted, and maintain a clear and distinct line between his or her role on the park board and the role of a governing body member or municipal staff.



Park Board Member Responsibilities

The advisory role of Wisconsin park boards created by state or local law establishes important responsibility boundaries for park boards and their members. However, there are other critical legal responsibilities that every park board member in Wisconsin must adhere to.

A city or village park board that is empowered by state law or local ordinance to govern, manage, control, improve, care for or acquire land for public parks is a “governmental body” for purposes of the Wisconsin open meetings law. See Wisconsin Statute Section 19.82(1). So, a park board must comply with all of the open meetings law requirements.

Park boards may tend to be informal in their processes and discussions of agenda items, which could lead to a broader discussion of something not specifically noted on the agenda. This is not legally permissible.

The Wisconsin open meetings law requires reasonable notice of the “subject matter” of a governmental body meeting. Wisconsin Statute Section 19.84(2). If there is nothing on an agenda informing the public that a matter will be discussed, there is no notice, and the matter cannot be discussed without violating the “subject matter” notice requirement.

Reasonable subject matter notice also creates a specificity requirement. Vague or open-ended agenda items do not reasonably apprise the public of subject matter. Accordingly, they cannot be used to satisfy the open meetings law notice requirements.

The scope of a listed agenda item also cannot be expanded to try and cover a policy discussion it does not reasonably relate to, especially a discussion about a matter of heightened public interest. In general, the greater the public interest in a topic, the more specific the notice must be to comply with the open meetings law.

Park board members are also subject to the state ethics code for local government officials and may be included in local ethics ordinances. So, even though most park policies are unlikely to secure an individual benefit for a park board member or a member of his or her immediate family and create an ethics concern under state or local law, a park board member

who does not review these limitations on conduct does so at his or her own peril.

In some instances, a park board member may be appointed or selected as a representative of an organization, such as the chamber of commerce or a community organization. Setting aside the important general policy question of whether specific organizations in a community should be entitled to a seat on a park board, these appointments create additional ethics concerns for the appointees because the state ethics code and local ordinances modeled after it prohibit, in certain circumstances, a local official, such as a park board member, from voting on a matter or using his or her office to affect a matter involving an organization with which the board member is “associated.” Wisconsin Statute Section 19.59(1)(c).



Understanding the advisory role of Wisconsin park boards is important for park board members.



If the chamber of commerce or community organization representative on a park board is simply a member of the chamber or community organization, it is still possible but highly unlikely that person is legally “associated” with the chamber or organization under state or local law, although local law might be more restrictive. So, the chamber or community organization member is less likely to be subject to the “associated” with ethics restriction.

The executive director of the chamber or an officer of the community organization are, however, clearly “associated” with their respective organizations under the state ethics code and, probably, a local ethics code. Wisconsin Statute Section 19.42(2). Thus, the executive director of the chamber or organization officer cannot vote as a park board member to secure a substantial financial benefit for his or her organization or use his

or her park board membership to obtain a substantial benefit, financial or nonfinancial, direct or indirect, for his or her organization without violating the state ethics code for local government officials. In effect, the reason for that person’s membership on a park board, affiliation with a specific organization, exposes him or her to much greater risk of violating state or local ethics restrictions and violation punishment, related to park board matters involving his or her organization.

Legal Limits on Park Board Rulemaking

A Chapter 27 park board is specifically authorized to engage in rulemaking for public parks. Locally created park boards patterned after a Chapter 27 park board are likely to have similar authority. While the rules adopted by an advisory park board are subject to further review of the city or village attorney and discussion and approval of the city council or village board, park board members and other local officials should be mindful of key limitations on the exercise of local government authority generally, that also apply to park boards and park board members.

Our federal and state constitutions are restraints on the exercise of governmental power. They provide the legal boundaries in which our state and federal governments may constitutionally operate. They also limit the exercise of local government authorities, including park boards.

The federal and state constitutional provisions enumerating free speech rights and, in turn, creating limits on government authority are one important example. The use of park space by the public to exercise free speech rights has a very long history, which creates important legal rights to use public parks for that purpose that a park board cannot ignore. A full comment on the scope of free speech rights in public parks is far beyond the scope of this article. But park board members, as managers of public spaces and public officers authorized to exercise government power, must be constantly aware of the fact that the federal and state constitutions impose limits on them that don’t apply in their private sector roles or organizations.

Federal statutes may also apply to local governments and park boards. Thus,

federal statutes can be another constraint on the rulemaking function of city and village park boards.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is one example. Among other things, the ADA imposes certain reasonable accommodation requirements on government authorities. This accommodation requirement does include an obligation to consider relief from rules or regulations.

A park board may wish to establish certain rules regarding animals in city or village parks. However, these rules will need to be consistent with the legal rights established by the ADA of disabled persons to utilize animals for personal assistance. Failure to recognize this federal law limitation can expose the city or village to a lawsuit.

State laws also apply to local governments and park boards. So, statutory law may also limit park board rulemaking authority. One example is the Wisconsin concealed carry legislation enacted in 2011. Municipalities are barred, by Wisconsin Statute Section 66.0409(2),



from adopting ordinances or resolutions regulating concealed carry more stringently than does the concealed carry law. Notably, the applicable state statute states that firearms may not be prohibited on municipal property and grounds (such as parks) or in parking facilities. Therefore, a park board regulation attempting to prohibit firearms in city or village parks would conflict with state law.

Conclusion

Public and media attention on city and village park boards is pretty uncommon.

However, park boards occupy a unique and important advisory role in city and village government and community health, economic and noneconomic. So, it is important for park board members to understand their limited advisory role, be extremely faithful to their public service legal responsibilities to sustain and improve the public trust, and know that their regulatory authority is often constrained by higher law. If they do, they can help create great parks for everyone and, in turn, great communities. ■

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Tina Myers Attains Wetland Delineation

R.A. Smith National's ecologist Tina Myers is now recognized as an assured wetland delineator with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). The firm has two of 16 total assured wetland delineators recognized by the WDNR. Myers is a professional wetland scientist (PWS) with the Society of Wetland Scientists. She has more than 18 years of extensive experience in multidisciplinary ecological work, including wetland determinations and delineations; vegetation surveys, including rare species surveys, plant community mapping and assessments; wetland functional assessments; environmental corridor mapping; wetland and waterway permit applications; and habitat restoration. She has worked with a wide variety of clients for commercial, governmental, industrial and municipal projects, as well as for private landowners. Kenosha County's Sustainable Living Educational Park, locally known as KD Park and located between the towns of Randall and Wheatland, is one of Myers' projects to which she provided wetland delineation.



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