

Winter 2016

# IMPACT

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN PARK & RECREATION ASSOCIATION



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Steven J. Thompson,  
CPRP, CEO  
Managing Editor

# Making 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 answers. In WPRA's case, we not only take into account our state platform, but we also look at member data. In addition, we attempt to monitor public polls to see how our issues resonate with the public. We want to know what the public thinks is important and what they are willing to support in Wisconsin.

And here is one thing we have learned: The public believes and expects that parks are protecting their communities' natural resources and wildlife — and they are willing to pay for it.

Analysis of local results from previous elections showed that, even though we are not out of the woods from the worst recession since the Great Depression, 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. The following are among the new tools and information WPRA is providing to members:

## Website

WPRA's ever-growing database of comparative information on parks and recreation on the newly designed website contains valuable resources that members can access and download, pertaining to standards, human resource formats, salary surveys, and numerous others specific to aquatics, parks and recreation services, and facilities.

## Professional Staff Training and Development

Receive intensive training by topflight professionals and invaluable peer-to-peer networking at the innovative Leadership Academy, the Spring Park & Recreation Workshop, the Aquatic Seminar, the Annual Conference & Trade Show, and WPRA's many online educational resources.

## Analysis and Interpretation of Trends

Stay up to date with hard-hitting, topical analysis of current issues affecting parks and recreation and ongoing discussions of state and national policy, federal legislation and breaking news through WPRA's online newsletter, regional email blasts and professional resources.

## Best-Practice Information

Have access to the most up-to-date, cutting-edge information on how others around the state are innovating, meeting challenges and solving problems. Best-practice models are found in WPRA's magazine, website, blog, regional meetings and online education resources.

## Premiere Membership

WPRA's innovative 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 on a quarterly basis. Premiere agency members are eligible for member rates at conference and section workshops, have full access to the website membership resources, and can participate in all the WPRA online member networks.

We are providing you with the tools to deliver what the public wants — take advantage of them now!

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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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# Contents

Editor's Letter.....	3
President's Message.....	7
President-Elect's Message.....	8
Commercial Corner.....	10
Board Focus.....	14
WPR Recognizes the Best of the Best at the 2015 Annual Awards Banquet.....	16
50th WPR Anniversary Conference.....	18
WPR 50 Years of Making a Difference.....	21
Where Did the First 50 Years Go?.....	22
Happy 50th Birthday, WPR.....	24
Summer Park Tour 1984.....	28
Reinvigorating the WPR Network.....	29
WPR Most Memorable Conference Reflections.....	30
IMPACT Over the Years.....	30
Understanding Our Future, Recognizing Our Past.....	31
WPR Main Award Winners, 1969-2015.....	32
Emeritus Memorial Recognition.....	33
Why We Play – A Forward Approach in Wisconsin.....	40
Now Playing Everywhere.....	43
Leadership Academy.....	44
WPR Foundation 17th Annual Scholarship Golf Outing.....	46

## Job Postings

Please visit the WPR website, [www.wprweb.org](http://www.wprweb.org), for job advertisements. If you have a position to post, please use the online form ... it's as easy as 1-2-3!

## List Serve

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](http://www.linkedin.com) to stay connected. If you have any questions, contact Steve Thompson at [sthompson@wprweb.org](mailto:sthompson@wprweb.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 WPR 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@wprweb.org](mailto:sthompson@wprweb.org).

For more information about advertising in *IMPACT*, contact 844.423.7272 or [advertise@innovativepublishing.com](mailto:advertise@innovativepublishing.com).



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Craig Hoeppner, CPRP

## This Is Why We Do This – Thank You, Lucille Taylor!

Hello WPRA! It is a great honor to be serving as your president for the next 12 months. I want to thank Sue McDade and the entire WPRA Board and staff for a great 2015. Thank you for your continued dedication and commitment to making WPRA a very vibrant and successful member association.

As I was looking for the inspiration for my first president message for *IMPACT* magazine, I told myself to wait until the 50th WPRA Conference at the Kalahari and something inspirational would come along. It truly was a GREAT conference with excellent education sessions, very deserving award winners, reconnections with young and old friends, and a little bit of fun mixed in.

My inspirational moment came along at the Awards Banquet on Thursday night. Ms. Lucille Taylor and her very supportive friends from Middleton provided the moment.

Many times we ask ourselves “Why are we still in this crazy municipal park and rec business?” “Why do we subject ourselves to the whims of elected officials and administration or the crazy customer calls or the budget cuts and do more with less demands or piles of TPS reports or more scrutiny from anonymous social media bloggers or...?”

Lucille Taylor is the answer!

Eighty-four-year-old Lucille grew up on her family farm among rolling hills and forested areas in Middleton. She met her husband-to-be, Harvey John, at the age of 16, and they began their lifelong adventure. They spent the majority of their life



Penni Klein with Lucille Taylor

together in the Middleton community. Harvey John passed away in 2005, and Lucille began her volunteer involvement with the Middleton Senior Center, COA Community Gardens and other service organizations.

Lucille and Harvey John's generous gift to the city included an initial donation of \$100,000 to fund the large custom playground, park entry signs and park Master Plan design. The remainder of the park elements will be funded out of their estate totaling more than \$1 million. Their gift to the city of Middleton and their legacy for future generations is the creation of Harvey John and Lucille Taylor Memorial Park on the family farm where Lucille grew up.

Thank you, Lucille, for reminding me and the rest of us in the room that night, with tears in our eyes, why we do what we do each day and why this is the greatest profession in the world!





# Looking Ahead

by Tom Flick, CPRP, 2016 President-Elect and 2017 President

**Happy New Year! May 2016 be a year of good health, prosperity and joy for you and our state association!**

I am honored that you have elected me as your president-elect for the coming year. To begin, I want to extend many thanks to the wonderful team that served in 2015 and say that it is a privilege to be serving with your 2016 president, Craig Hoeppner, in our 51st year as the premier park and recreation membership agency in both the state and the nation.

I have three initial goals for 2017, when my presidency will begin. ***First, I want to heighten the awareness among the park and recreation professionals throughout Wisconsin of the tremendous value that comes from being a WPRA member.*** Reaching out will take many forms with a primary focus on changes to our website for higher attraction and interaction. The vision is that our site should be a “go-to” place for great and helpful information. With the incredible talent that lies within our membership, we should be able to offer enticing content with benefits to be enjoyed by both the reader and the contributor.

I've always been of the opinion that our members are what make WPRA as strong and great as it is. When I look back over my own life and professional path, I see the faces of so many of my mentors who have helped instruct and inspire me right here in our WPRA family. I cannot begin to imagine where I would be today had I attempted to do it all on my own without the personal and professional interaction and intervention.

***My second goal will be to model professional behavior and continued growth practices*** with ongoing education and resource development and sharing. It is my hope that this will encourage and assist others in their journey to professionalism and success.



With certifications, degrees and education, I'm proud to be a Certified Park and Recreation Professional. While many park and recreation professionals still struggle with the significance of obtaining this credential, it is critical that we embrace this national recognition that provides an important means of displaying professionalism within our state association to our elected officials and to our community. The CPRP credential also serves as an important factor in having continuing education approved in our respective budgets to ensure we obtain enough continuing education units to remain certified and up to date on the trends in our profession.

***My third and ultimate goal will be giving back some of what's been so graciously given to me.*** I hope this forward momentum will spread and continue. We can achieve more together by sharing our

knowledge and skills than by working alone. We can shine brighter in the professional world of parks and recreation as many candles burning in unison than as single wicks in the dark.

My term as president-elect is certainly going to be an exciting year, and I can't wait to get started. With that, I'd like to offer you some food for thought as we kick off this new year. In this changing, cyclical industry, our outlook is a personal choice. We can choose to adapt and continue to grow, or refuse to change or even to take a new direction. Remember, there will always be a place for skilled and properly trained professionals in parks and recreation!

Thank you — each of you — for devoting yourselves to the important work we do as members and as representatives of our communities. ■



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**High-quality craftsmanship and employee safety are the principles that drive Duane and Tom Dunsirn, the father and son team who own Sunset Hill Stoneware in Neenah,**

**Wisconsin.** What started as an abstract idea almost 20 years ago has turned into a powerhouse production pottery shop. The company employs artisans who permanently press custom artworks into three-dimensional clay medallions and place them on hand thrown Signature Stoneware™ mugs and steins. What sets the company apart is the owners have conscientiously elected to do things the right way for the safety of its employees and the protection of the environment. National and state parks, historical landmarks, corporations, and mom-and-pop shops across the country care deeply about America. It is that appreciation that drove Duane and Tom's desire to make "green" an integral part of their daily operation. "When we relocated our operations to Neenah, our goal was to incorporate employee safety throughout the facility, along with driving environmental initiatives," Dunsirn stated. "My dad's engineering background around lean processes, productivity and safety reinforced our strategy for safety and green excellence. People can see the external beauty of our hand-produced stoneware; now we can tell them the story of how it is ethically made. That's important to our customer base. National and state parks, along with many other organizations want to partner with vendors who provide a safe and clean employee environment."

In May 2015, an independent environmental consulting firm was employed to conduct on-site monitoring for respirable dust and crystalline silica at the production facility. While harmful airborne particulates can be a manufacturing hazard, Sunset Hill Stoneware's indoor air quality tested well below both the current and proposed OSHA standards! The story of craftsmanship, employee safety and environmental initiatives makes Sunset Hill Stoneware products attractive to use and resell throughout America.



**President Thomas Pulse, PE, announced that Bruce Ommen, PE, has been named executive vice president at Ayres Associates.** He joins Pulse and Executive Vice Presidents Jan Zander and Richard Schoenthaler to form the engineering/architectural consulting firm's executive committee.

Ommen will continue to serve as vice president of the firm's Wisconsin and Arizona transportation operations, in addition to overseeing the architecture and Wisconsin engineering services divisions. The transportation division provides transportation engineering, structural engineering, construction observation and related services. The engineering services division provides municipal, water resources and survey services. "Bruce brings valuable experience to our executive lead-

ership team, gained from directing our statewide transportation division as well as handling national transportation issues," Pulse said. "His staff development skills coupled with his thorough understanding of our company and our business will add to our firm's success." Ommen joined Ayres Associates in 1990, initially designing bridges and performing construction observation for the transportation structures division. He later moved to the highways group and served as vice president of Midwest transportation operations. Ommen, who is a stockholder in the firm, has a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Minnesota and is a registered professional engineer in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Colorado, Oklahoma, Georgia and Florida. He has been involved in the American Council of Engineering Companies and the Eau Claire County Safety Commission. Ayres Associates is an engineering/architectural firm incorporated in 1959. The firm has 11 offices in five states: Wisconsin, Florida, Colorado, Wyoming and Arizona. Nationwide the firm provides engineering services in transportation, civil, structural, wastewater, river and water resources disciplines. Ayres also provides consulting services in architecture, planning, landscape architecture, environmental science, survey, photogrammetry and geographic information systems. For more information about Ayres Associates, visit [www.AyresAssociates.com](http://www.AyresAssociates.com).



**Reese Recreation solves shelter problem for Two Rivers.**

A flatbed wagon, rented stage or tents. This is what Neshotah Beach Park had to come up with

each time an event was scheduled, adding expense and manpower to put up and break down "stages" for any events being held. Judy Goodchild from Two Rivers noted that having a pavilion be the centerpiece of Neshotah Park was a dream that was realized with the help of several contributors including Two Rivers Rotary, which pledged \$25,000 to get the project started. She also noted, "The structure is really a community project with the rest of the donations coming in from over 110 different individuals, businesses and organizations." John Finn with Reese Recreation Products submitted a plan showcasing a beautiful, permanent and landscaped structure. A 50-foot-by-40-foot fabric shade shelter manufactured by Polygon Shelters was installed. The public works staff did all of the concrete work, and the Two Rivers electric department staff worked on all the power to light up the structure for stunning evening events. The soft opening was held over Labor Day at Kites Over Lake Michigan. The official ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held in the summer of 2016.



Goose problems? Whether you're a waterfront owner or city municipality, nothing discourages guests from enjoying your grounds more than the unsightly droppings left behind by geese. **Commercial Recreation Specialists (CRS)**

**now offers a Geese Deterrent System, an innovative, humane and proven solution for dealing with geese problems.** "We're



excited about this new, effective product,” Andy Berens, product sales manager for CRS, said. “Our Geese Deterrent System provides a humane way to get rid of geese without annoying your guests. It’s a guaranteed system for dealing with large populations of geese and the potentially dangerous mess they leave behind.” The Geese Deterrent System is a series of solar-powered lights that automatically flash every two seconds from dusk until dawn and recharge themselves throughout the day. The effectiveness of this system is based on the simple concept that at night geese congregate only in areas where they feel secure. As the amber light of the geese deterrent units flash, it makes geese feel unsafe and disturbs them enough to encourage seeking a habitat elsewhere without harming them in any way. The geese deterrent units come in a variety of styles — land, water, dock and roof — to accommodate any landscape where the units need to be installed. Each unit has a 75-yard radius to effectively protect up to a 3.5-acre area. Each geese deterrent unit has a durable, maintenance-free ABS plastic base that withstands all weather conditions, which means there is no need to remove units in the winter. For more details on the Geese Deterrent System or to request a free site assessment, call (877) 896-8442 or visit [www.crs4rec.com](http://www.crs4rec.com).



**The Reed Street Yards was recognized for design excellence in the 18th annual City of Milwaukee Mayor’s 2015 Design Awards.** Recipients are acknowledged for adding value to their

neighborhoods by restoring, constructing or enhancing their properties in a way that respects the urban fabric and contributes to the character of their surroundings. **Gerard Rewolinski, a landscape architect in Stantec’s Mequon office was responsible for the award-winning design of the outdoor plaza.** Situated along the Menomonee Canal, the 17-acre former brownfield is now home to international water-based technology businesses. The public plaza and associated water feature boasts a state-of-the-art water-filtration demonstration project. The water feature pumps dirty canal water through a filtration system designed by Watertronics, Inc. Water is pumped up to a 5,000-gallon storage cistern at the top of the Great Lakes Entry Plaza and then time-released to mimic a “storm event” through the water course over a series of pools and streams. At the bottom, the event overflows the Delta Plaza where it is released back into the canal. The system cleans 15,000 gallons of canal water per day. Stormwater management features, like porous pavement and street-side bio-swales, capture stormwater to filter out impurities before discharging into the city storm system. Reed Street Yards serves the larger community as a recreational extension of the Hank Aaron Trail along the Menomonee Canal and through the neighborhood, including a canoe/kayak launch. Native plantings provide wildlife habitat, specifically for the threatened black-crowned night heron.

**Miller & Associates – Sauk Prairie has been selected as the exclusive representative for RCP Shelters, Inc. for the state of Wisconsin.** RCP Shelters was founded in 1957 by James

Ritter, a young mechanical engineer. His vision was to provide superior-quality construction materials at competitive prices. RCP continues this tradition today as a small, third-generation, family-owned business. Today, RCP is the industry’s most diverse shelter manufacturer. It offers a variety of pre-engineered structures available in laminated wood, tube steel and fabric. The RCP product line includes gazebos, pavilions and shelters; amphitheaters and band shells; trellis, arbor and pergola designs; and enclosed, concession and restroom shelters.

Each project is individually designed based on the client’s vision. All structures are designed to be 100 percent compliant with the Wisconsin Building Code. Whether your next shelter project is small or large, the experienced staff at RCP Shelters and Miller & Associates – Sauk Prairie looks forward to providing a design that will best meet the vision of its clients.



**The Village of Shorewood, Wisconsin, and Northland Recreation representing Little Tikes Commercial Playgrounds teamed up to renew the Atwater Park playground.** This

playground is located on a bluff at the end of Capitol Drive overlooking Lake Michigan. The village asked for a design that was different and spoke of its community. Before the start of the design process, the staff at Northland Recreation researched and found something very unique. Approximately 500 feet off the shoreline of Atwater Beach lay the shipwreck *Appomattox*, the second largest wooden steamer to journey across the Great Lakes. Today, she still lays in 15- to 20-foot-deep waters. The design behind the new playground was based on this piece of history. The existing oval footprint was challenging to accommodate, but with determination and experience, playground designers Bill Johnson and Cindy Mayo came up with a winning design. The ramped structure is accessible for all children. There is a Rock n’ Ship wheelchair-accessible glider with ample room at 70 square feet to accommodate wheelchairs plus several more shipmates, allowing children to let their imaginations run wild. The second challenge while designing this playground was not to block the spectacular views of Lake Michigan, which was successfully accomplished. There are many play activities for all, from the play that promotes make-believe to the traditional slides and climbers. A Mayo, Wisconsin sales representative, asked how and when the village committee knew it had chosen a winning design. Leeann Butschlick answered, “Everyone in the room smiled when I put the board up — I knew immediately it was the winner.”

**The city of Neenah is working with Ayres Associates (SAA Design Group) to complete a park master planning process for centrally located Washington Park.** The park is uniquely situated on a major arterial street with frontage on the Neenah slough and access to little Lake Butte Des Mortes. The existing park has been well-loved by the community but no longer addresses the changing needs of the community. The planning process included engagement with adjacent neighborhoods, sports user groups and city staff to develop a meaningful long-

term redevelopment plan. The new park will boast an enhanced playground, splash pad, ball diamond, winter sports area (skating and sledding) and expanded pathway network.

**The city of West Allis retained Ayres Associates (SAA Design Group) to complete a comprehensive park and outdoor recreation plan (CORP).** The process included discussions with multiple user groups, the school district, Milwaukee County Parks and city departmental staff. The public outreach program extended well-beyond typical “town hall” meetings and yielded insightful input from a diverse group of community residents and stakeholders. The highly urban nature of the community and long-standing relationship with the school recreation department presented interesting challenges for future recommendations. Ayres presented the city with a series of broad policy-based changes as well as in-depth site-specific goals.

**Ayres Associates (SAA Design Group) is happy to be assisting the Vilas County Department of Forestry with the development of a new campground facility outside of Eagle River.** The project includes a new restroom/shower house, an RV dump station, utility improvements and several RV/tent campsites loops.



**CORRE, Inc. has started design work with Waukesha County and WisDOT on a four-mile trail connecting the city of Waukesha to the city of Brookfield.** The southern half of the

project will be constructed along a busy county road, and then the northern half will be constructed within the county-owned abandoned rail corridor. The project has a multitude of challenges in design with adjacent wetlands, a proposed new at-grade pedestrian railroad crossing (under I-94), multiple river crossings, five railroad bridge rehabilitations, and potential utility conflicts. In addition, strong NIMBY (not in my backyard) feelings are anticipated for a number of neighborhoods whose backyards abut the county-owned corridor. CORRE, Inc. is responsible for all services, which include trail design, public involvement, wetland delineation, structure rehabilitation, survey, permitting, WisDOT grant administration and railroad coordination.



**CORRE, Inc. assisted Chippewa County in funding proposals/applications for its Pine Point Park waterfront renovation project.** The county applied for various WisDNR stewardship grants and an Xcel Energy grant, and thus far has secured two of the three grants. As funding allows, the overall project will encompass beach relocation,

installation of a multi-slip dock and shoreline stabilization at the old beach location, and the construction of new ADA-accessible fishing pier. All improvements will be ADA accessible and will provide amenities not currently in the park system, or

amenities that are in need of safety improvements. These projects were planned within the recently completed park master plan for the county, which was completed by CORRE, Inc. as well.

**Minnesota/Wisconsin Playground has hired Jim Pease as its new sales representative in southern Wisconsin.** Pease has over 15 years experience in physical education and coaching and 10 years in business-to-business sales. Pease looks forward to helping schools and communities continue the initiative of improving children’s health through active play.

**Random Lake High School recently completed construction of new facilities for soccer and baseball. It chose Keeper Goals and Beacon Athletics to provide the equipment for these new athletic facilities.** Equipment purchased by Random Lake includes soccer goals, back-up netting and team shelters for the soccer field, and a tension batting cage, foul poles, dugout rails and dugout benches, and a custom backstop wall for the baseball facility. The custom backstop wall is an innovative new product. It is designed to be a cost-effective, simple-to-install, modular backstop wall system. It is a lower-cost option than a concrete or brick backstop wall. The wall can be finished with printed banners and color matching. “The facilities Random Lake High School built are first-rate facilities. We at Keeper Goals, along with the folks at Beacon Athletics, are pleased we’re able to supply equipment for them,” said John Moynihan, president and CEO of Keeper Goals.

**MSA Professional Services is working with the city of West Bend on a conceptual plan for a river walk along the Milwaukee River.** The city received a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to improve the area behind its historic downtown and in front of the Museum of Wisconsin Art. MSA began this project by providing the city with a master plan vision for both the east and west sides of the river that will attract people to the river’s edge, improve the appearance and function of businesses fronting the river, and enhance the river walk’s overall appearance. The conceptual plan provides a generous, accessible walking path; key overlook areas; improved green space; and enhanced landscaping. The plan also preserves and enhances views to and from the river corridor, provides spaces for public art, and allows patrons to access the water’s edge. The river’s steep banks and existing conditions provide a unique challenge for access but also an opportunity to create a unique amphitheater feature that will serve as a kayak launch, a fishing area, a general overlook and a programmable gathering space. The goal is to provide the city with an attractive, cost-effective, low-maintenance and flood-resistant solution to enhance and reactivate the river corridor. MSA is currently working on design development and will be heading into construction documentation for the east side portion of the river walk. Construction of this community asset is slated for 2016.

**MSA Professional Services recently completed phase one of the Haskins Park redevelopment project, located along the Baraboo River, for the village of West Baraboo.** This phase included a concrete, nonmotorized boat launch, shoreline fishing pads/restoration and a canoe/kayak launch that is accessible to individuals with disabilities and seniors. The Baraboo River is





recognized as the country's longest mainstream stretch of river restored to free-flowing stream by dam removal. MSA helped the village obtain a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

(WDNR) Urban Rivers Program that paid for one-half of the cost of the boat landing. A challenging aspect of the project was obtaining proper permits from the WDNR for the shoreline restoration and boat launch. Haskins Park is the community's main park and is situated at a prime location at the start of the Baraboo Rapids. Prior to construction of the first phase, access to the river was difficult because of a steep slope at the park. The previous distance between boat landings was nearly 15 miles. The new boat launch allows paddlers to complete a shorter 4.25-mile trip through Class



I rapids to the STH 133 landing. Now with the improvements, and more to come, the park has the potential to become a regional attraction for paddlers and fishermen with the added benefit of encouraging local economic development.



Young kindergarten to 12th grade students walking to school along high-speed traffic was a reality and concern for the city of Crandon. Pedestrians and bicyclists were using

U.S. 8 to get to neighborhoods, the retail district and school.

**The Becher Hoppe team worked with the city of Crandon and Wisconsin Department of Transportation to plan, design, bid and construct a multiuse trail for the community.** Challenges encountered and conquered included complex geometry to fit the trail in the space provided, retaining wall and stabilized slopes to minimize grading, elevated boardwalks for wetland protection, and extensive coordination with community members throughout the project. The project resulted in a beautiful, safe trail connecting the people of Crandon to their community and enhancing their quality of life. ■

*To be included in "Commercial Corner," please submit items of interest about your company (new projects, awards, accomplishments, new personnel, etc.) to Vicky Redlin via email [vredlin@co.winnebago.wi.us](mailto:vredlin@co.winnebago.wi.us).*

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# Are You Considering Board Service During the Next 50 Years?

by Steven J. Thompson, CPRP, Executive Director/CEO



Over the past 30 years, I have had the opportunity to work with more than 200 parks and recreation Board and commission members. Rarely did I encounter a weak Board member. There were, however, a few challenging ones. Then again, I'm certain that some of these Board members felt that it was a challenge working with me as well. The one factor that became evident in a very short period of time is that Board members are a critical ingredient to the growth of any organization.

So, are you seriously considering taking the plunge and submitting your name to serve on one of the WPRA Section Boards or perhaps the state association Board of Directors?

In order to assist members who are considering enhanced service to their state association, I felt it would be pertinent to ask your current WPRA Board of Directors to respond to the following question: What one piece of advice would you give someone considering Board service?

Here are the responses.

*Serving on a Board is much more than networking and improving your résumé. It's also about civic responsibility. Perhaps Teddy Roosevelt said it best: "Every man owes part of his time and money to the business or industry to which he is engaged. No man has a moral right to withhold his support from an organization that is striving to improve conditions within his sphere." I have lived my life and career by this motto, and I am a firm believer that every WPRA member should view serving on a Board as a true privilege and means to give back to our wonderful profession.*

— Roger Kist, CPRP, past president

*Serving in a volunteer role within the WPRA not only furthers the goals and objective of the organization and our profession as a whole,*

*but also provides many personal benefits to those who take on the challenge. Many years ago, as a new professional in the area, service to the WPRA gave me the opportunity to meet new friends and colleagues in our industry. Over the course of time, those connections have grown in importance to me both personally and professionally. I met the people that I know I can count on for advice, inspiration and guidance in my professional career and are also treasured as friends in my personal life. As time passes and my years of service grow, I now see service as a way of giving back, opening doors and providing these same types of opportunities to the young people just entering our field.*

*The single most influential organization in my career has been the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association.*

— Susan E. S. McDade, community services director, Village of Waunakee

As you can see from these comments and viewpoints, getting involved in your state association can be a win-win situation for you personally, as well as for our organization. The next time you receive an email or flyer requesting a call for nominations to serve on a Section Board or the overall WPRA Board of Directors, seriously consider throwing your hat into the ring. You won't regret your involvement! ■



## Reese MacAskill, Recreation Supervisor, Village of Cottage Grove

### **How would you describe your involvement in WPRA over the years?**

I first got involved with WPRA when I was a student in the recreation management program at Madison College. As a student, I was very grateful to be able to interact and learn from professionals in the field. I often remember leaving WPRA functions with notebooks filled with ideas or people I wanted to contact. Now as a young professional, WPRA helps me keep current with parks and recreation trends, network with other professionals, and grow professionally.

### **Did you ever expect to become a Board member?**

I had hoped to become a Board member one day but never expected it to be this early in my career. It is an honor to be able to serve as a WPRA Board member, and I recommend others to get involved. ■

## Sean Brusegar, Director, Cottage Grove Parks, Recreation & Forestry



### **What are you most proud of during your tenure with WPRA?**

As I thought back over the past 15 years, I found it hard to narrow it down to one thing I'm most proud of. Would it be that I was on two conference committees? Would it be that I attended and completed two tracks of the Great Lakes Leadership Academy? Would it be that I took my work experience and transitioned it into a position as the director of parks, recreation and forestry for the village of Cottage Grove? Or would it be that I am the secretary/treasurer for the WPRA Board of Directors? Those are just a few of the things that immediately come to mind. But the more I thought about it, all of those things had one thing in common: the people. I remember attending my very first PARR 3 meeting back in the early '90s. I was nervous. I didn't know anyone or what to expect. I sat down at a table by myself figuring I would just try and blend in. Shortly thereafter, my table started to fill up. After having to stand up and do the dreaded "introduction," we all have to do at nearly every meeting, I quickly no longer felt like an outsider. The friendships I have made and the knowledge I have gained because of the WPRA is something that cannot be created in a classroom. I have the job I have because I was encouraged to take a chance by professionals in this industry who I have the utmost respect for. I am most proud of the people I have met and the relationships we have created because of the WPRA.

### **What advice do you have for young people considering volunteering at any level of involvement in WPRA?**

Take the chance, and put yourself out there. Get on a conference committee. Attend the Great Lakes Leadership Academy. Get to know as many people as you can in your region and especially out of your region. Take advantage of the opportunities the WPRA provides. Learn how this great organization works. You will be surprised how much effort goes into the things we all have probably taken for granted. There is a reason why people spend decades in our field. I start out every staff meeting we have with "we are having fun." After all, isn't that what we are about? ■

# WPRA Recognizes the Best of the Best at the 2015 Annual Awards Banquet

The 50th Annual Awards Banquet of WPRA proved to be a highly emotional and special program for the more than 300 delegates and guests in attendance. The night was full of special surprises, including the unveiling of the WPRA handprint behind the head tables, which symbolized all of the impressions and special touches that our park and recreation professionals have on the lives of the citizens they serve in their communities. And of course, Karnac's predictions, aka Bill Faherty, will long be remembered.

The Professional Award of Merit, the state association's highest award bestowed upon a park and recreation professional by the state association was given to Kathy Gruentzel, the natural resources property supervisor for the DNR Governor Dodge Work Unit. Her extensive service to WPRA, serving as the State Park Subsection chair and Park Section Board's DNR state representative since 1999, along with numerous committee assignments was duly recognized.

The prestigious Dr. George Wilson Service Award was presented to Dawn Comte, recreation superintendent for the City of Eau Claire Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. Dawn was recognized for serving WPRA in numerous capacities, including as the chair for the Conference Committee, the chair of the Recreation Section and also her service as a Board member.

The 2015 WPRA Partnership Award, bestowed on an agency or organization by the state association in recognition of an outstanding contribution to Parks and Recreation in Wisconsin, was presented to the Madison College Recreation Management Program for its extensive and exemplary service and impact on the recreation and leisure services profession and for its unique partnering and fostering of relationships with four-year universities and colleges that now provide students the opportunity to complete their associate degrees at Madison College and seamlessly transition to a four-year degree recreation program.

And perhaps the most emotionally charged moment of the banquet came when Lucille Taylor was recognized with the WPRA Fellowship Award in recognition of a layperson who has provided exemplary service to her community in promoting parks and recreation services. Lucille's acceptance speech was an incredible tribute to the support that she and her late husband, Harvey John, had provided and continued to provide to the city of Middleton, with the vision and financial support to provide a new community park focused on encouraging active lifestyles for the neighborhood youth.

Kenosha County Executive Jim Kreuser was given the 2015 WPRA Elected Offi-



cial Award in recognition of his incredible leadership and support of parkland acquisition, programs and capital improvements/development projects. For the past 15 years, the county executive supported and recommended improvement projects to park areas and infrastructures that have directly enhanced the recreational opportunities now available to the citizens of Kenosha County and beyond.

There was also special recognition given to Dave Burch, PLA manager for the Waukesha County Department of Parks & Land Use, as he was selected for the *IMPACT* Magazine Article Award in recognition of his "Give the Best of Yourself in 2015" article that will continue to have relevance and impact on readers well into the future.

In addition, an unprecedented five professionals were given Lifetime Awards. These longtime members of WPRA, who have now begun or announced their retirements, have all left an incredible impact on their respective communities through their leadership and exemplary service to the provision of quality park and recreation services. Ed Englehart, Marshfield Parks & Recreation; Brian Feest, Outagamie County Parks; Bill Lecker, Appleton Parks, Recreation & Facilities Management; Dan Kaemmerer, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources; and Eileen McCoy, Neenah Parks & Recreation, were all recognized for their outstanding careers and support of our profession. ■

*Virtual Image Photography, Inc., the Official Photographer of WPRA*











# 50th WPRA Anniversary Conference WOW



This conference took a team of exceptional professionals to make this year's conference truly "historical". What else can be said about the 50th Anniversary Conference – besides, WOW?? The goal of the committee was to create "WOW" on multiple levels. Our "WOW" checklist:

Pre Conference & Educational Sessions = WOW  
Keynote, General Assembly & Endnote = WOW  
Trade Show = WOW  
Awards Banquet = WOW  
Socials & Prize Patrol = WOW



As stated by Cyndi Keller, Chairperson of the 2015 Conference Committee, I was honored to help bring the "You ain't seen nothing yet" conference along with BCI Burke. She continues to say, "Our team worked very hard to provide a memorable experience filled with top notch education sessions, world class speakers, a packed trade show and lots of social activities as well as some surprise elements. We could not have achieved such success without the additional support from our Commercial Members."



Committee member Marty Kosobucki has this to say about our featured general sessions. "Our Keynote speaker was vibrant, funny, and high octane....just what the Captain ordered for our opening Keynote session. I think it set the tone for a very fun and high energy conference. Our Endnote speaker, made possible by Lee Recreation, turned out a very unique and informative Endnote that turned a lot of heads to the KaBOOM movement."



In regard to the trade show, here's what Al Schaefer had to say. "The 50th Annual WPRA Conference Trade Show was a tremendous success with over 130 Exhibitor booths, excellent set up and support from Valley Expo, and great traffic and interaction between the vendors and conference delegates. In addition, to the normal door prize drawings, the 50th Anniversary GOLD TICKET activity generated increased traffic and enthusiasm; plus kept delegates in the Exhibit area until the end. The Trade Show feedback drew praise and appreciation from vendors and conference attendees alike. The 50th Anniversary WPRA Trade Show contributed to a great annual conference."





"BUZZZZZZZ – Prize Patrol"! According to Denise Larson, Prize Patrol Coordinator, "I would like to give a GREAT BIG THANK YOU to the ticket vendors who participated. They include Milwaukee Zoo, Pirate's Cove Adventure Golf, Country Springs and the Ducks Tours. Also, a big THANKS to the speakers from all sections for allowing us to interrupt and spread some Joy & WOW! Thanks to the WI Brew Pub and Club Marley's for making the Tuesday and Thursday evening socials a great success."

The Wednesday Night social will be talked about for years to come! Thanks to the beer and band sponsorship by Carrico Aquatics, the jammin' tunes of Vic Ferari got the crowd dancing. The social games, Cash Cube and Auction certainly added to the fun and was made possible by Clowning Around. The Wednesday social prizes and Endnote Speaker would not have been possible without the generosity of Lee Recreation. A HUGE thanks to The Party Company who provided lighting for the social as well as the entire conference, the laser show, fog, black light effects for the WPRA – hands sign, music, and AV needs! WHAT A NIGHT!

On behalf of the 2015 Conference Committee and the WPRA, a sincere THANKS and APPRECIATION to all of the sponsors and delegates of the 50th Annual Conference & Trade Show" that took place at the Kalahari Convention Center in the Wisconsin Dells from November 3-6, 2015. The conference was attended by 389 delegates with perhaps the best ever conference and trade show in our history!

**The following is a list of all the Sponsors that made this special year a "WOW" conference!**

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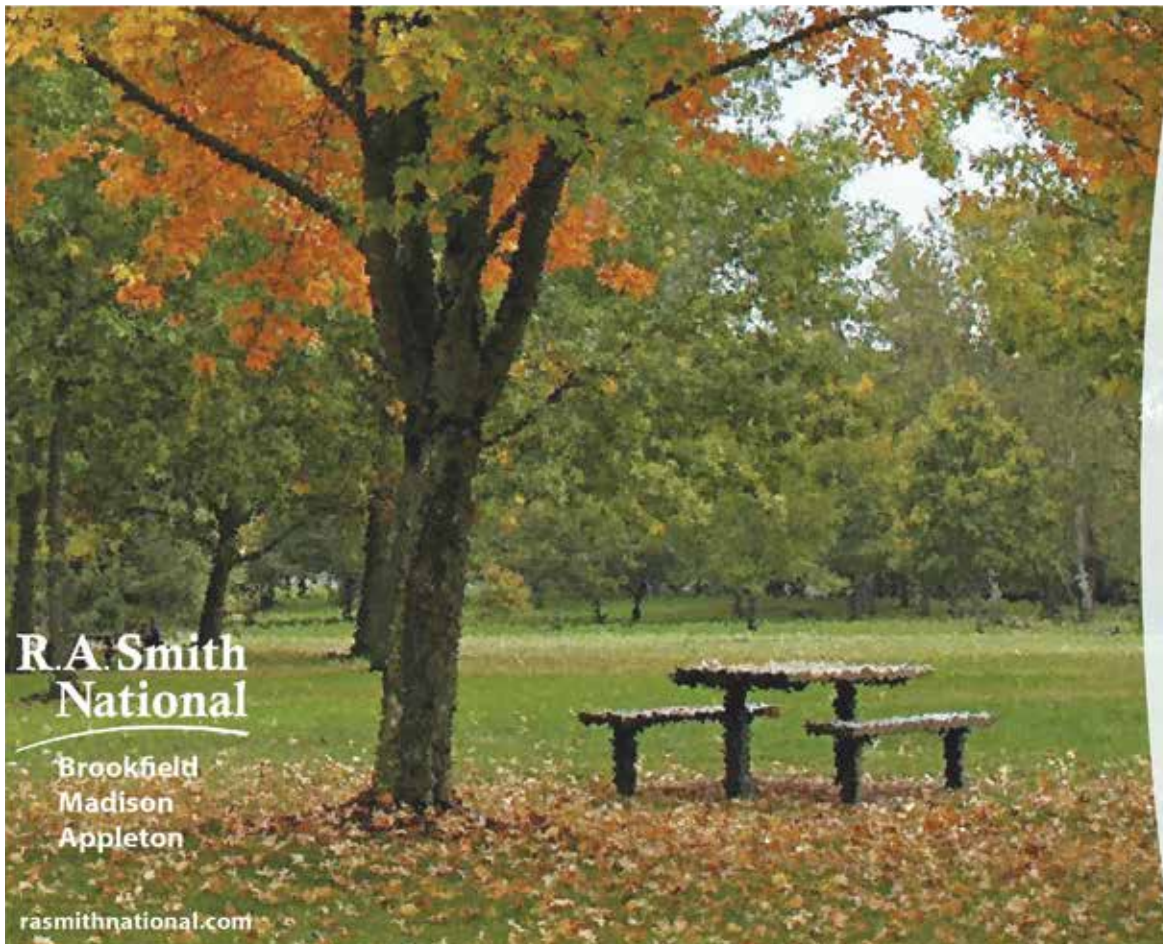
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## Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association

# 50 YEARS

*of Making  
a Difference*

### **Making a Difference: 1965-2015**

Whether you're a concerned citizen in a small suburban community or a park and recreation professional in a large urban environment, membership in WPRA for the past 50 years has ensured access to full benefits and services. From education to networking, advocacy to publications, and so much more, WPRA has supported professionals so they could better support their community.

### **Advancing Public Policy**

WPRA is the recognized voice for parks and recreation in Wisconsin, so you can count on a proven advocacy team that knows how to get things done — and how to mobilize hundreds of people to influence important national, state and local bills and legislature.

### **Expanding Knowledge and Skills**

For the past 50 years, membership in WPRA has opened a world of valuable information, personal development and professional growth. From timely publications and a diversified online research database to education courses, certification programs and conferences, WPRA has been a resource provider for both citizens and professionals since its inception in 1965.

### **Leveraging State Partnerships and Programs**

WPRA works tirelessly to foster strategic partnerships with leading state and national organizations to bring greater visibility, grant opportunities and technical assistance to help enrich peoples' lives, improve health and activate communities. ■

# Where Did the First 50 Years Go? *A Portal to Our Past*

by Steven J. Thompson, CPRP, CEO

It is truly amazing that WPRA celebrated its 50th anniversary as a state association in 2015. Where did the first 50 years go? The following is a brief historical overview of what took place during the last five decades of WPRA.

## Significant Events of the 1960s

Lyndon B. Johnson was president. Gas prices averaged 31 cents per gallon, and a stamp cost a mere five cents. The Voting Rights Act and Medicare were signed into law.

## WPRA 1960s

- » The merger of the Wisconsin Recreation Association and the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society created the current Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association.
- » In its first year of operation, WPRA had a membership of 310.
- » The new WPRA Board of Directors met for the first time on January 18, 1966.
- » The Administrators' and Institutional sections that were already in existence when the merger was consummated made up the initial WPRA sections for the membership.
- » A decision to divide the state into six districts for the purpose of better facilitating the services of WPRA took

place, with the six district representatives becoming part of the Board in 1967.

- » The Rehabilitative (formerly Institutional) Section was officially accepted on June 27, 1966.
- » The Student Section was established on January 10, 1968.
- » The first organizational newsletter was published in March 1967.
- » The first membership directory was published in 1968.
- » Fred Lengfeld serves as WPRA's executive secretary, with headquarters based in Madison.

## Significant Events of the 1970s

Novelist Tom Wolfe coined the term "Me' Decade." The Vietnam War came to a close. U.S. President Nixon resigned as president.

## WPRA 1970s

- » The WPRA Board officially accepted the bylaws of the Park and Recreation sections on October 8, 1970. As a

result of this acceptance, the Administrators' Section was dissolved.

- » The first Summer Park Tour took place in 1971 in Waukesha County.
- » The Rehabilitative Section underwent a name change to the Therapeutic Section in 1974.
- » In 1972, a Boards and Commission Section was created.
- » The Older Adult Section was approved at the 1975 annual conference held in Oconomowoc.
- » Approximately 160 members were certified in the WPRA voluntary certification program in 1977.
- » The newsletter is replaced by a quarterly magazine called *IMPACT* in 1974.
- » Chris Mirasola is hired as an administrative assistant in 1979.

## Significant Events of the 1980s

Walter Cronkite signed off as the CBS news anchor. A record 122 million viewers tuned in to watch the teary farewell episode of *M\*A\*S\*H*. *Friday the 13th* was the big movie gross box office hit.



### WPRA 1980s

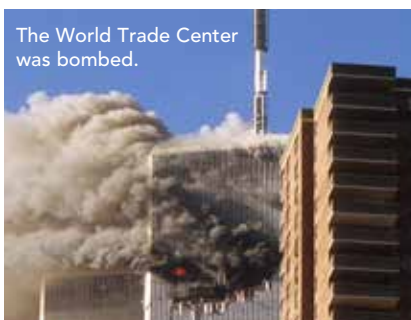
- » Monica Wiczorek was hired as an administrative assistant in 1980.
- » The regional representative position on the WPRA Board was enhanced to include membership, legislation, fundraising, job mart and publicity in 1980.
- » A Screening and Selection Task Force was created to analyze and develop the criteria for an executive director position.
- » Jane Hipps was hired as WPRA's first full-time executive director in 1982.
- » The WPRA Board approved the formation of the WPRA Foundation in 1984.
- » Trisha Pugal was hired as a part-time executive director starting in 1985.

### Significant Events of the 1990s

Germany was united as a country. Use of the Internet grew exponentially. The World Trade Center was bombed. Princess Diana died in a car crash.

### WPRA 1990s

- » The silver anniversary of the state association was celebrated in Stevens Point. A record 356 delegates were in attendance, and the trade show also had a new record 80 vendors.
- » Steve Thompson was hired as a full-time executive director in 1994.
- » WPRA hosted the NRPA Great Lakes Regional Council Summer Meeting at the Country Inn Hotel & Convention Center in Waukesha.
- » WPRA officially entered into cyberspace with its own home page in 1997.
- » A new logo was created and approved for WPRA in 1998 to update the branding and image of the state association.



- » The *IMPACT* magazine was rated as the top quarterly publication of the NRPA state affiliates in 1999.
- » WPRA agreed to provide a \$5,000 silver-level sponsorship to the Wisconsin State Park's Centennial Program in 1999.

### Significant Events of the 2000s

Barack Obama was sworn in as the 40th president of the United States. The Mars exploration rover successfully reached the surface of Mars. The wireless Internet became prominent.

### WPRA 2000s

- » The WPRA office coordinated the First Annual Groundhog Job Shadow Day on February 2, 2000. Approximately 50 students and professionals participated in this job mentoring day to expose students to park, recreation and therapeutic recreation settings and job responsibilities.
- » Discover Wisconsin agreed to become the state association's first major sponsor for the Annual Conference & Trade Show by providing a \$5,000 contribution.
- » The Discover Wisconsin television series on the benefits of parks and recreation in Wisconsin was premiered on March 10, 2001.
- » The first Student Internship & Employment Fair took place on November 6, 2002, in Green Bay.
- » The first discussion group/listserv was added to the WPRA website to allow WPRA members to interact with other WPRA members regarding concerns, issues and general announcements.
- » The WPRA Board approved the contribution of \$1,000 to the NRPA Annual Fund and \$1,000 to the NRPA Citizen Advocacy Fund.
- » The Aquatics Section conducted its first meeting in Baraboo on February 19, 2003.
- » "The Economic Benefits of Parks and Recreation" DVD was designed in collaboration with Discover Wisconsin Productions.
- » WPRA approved the hiring of the first deputy director on January 1, 2005.



- » A new newsletter was designed for WPRA Board & Commission members: ABCD = A Board & Commission Dialogue.
- » WPRA was selected as the NRPA Best Benefits Award winner for the Discover Wisconsin videotape and television series.
- » The executive director was elected as the professional trustee representative of the Great Lakes Regional Council for NRPA.
- » The WPRA Board approved the creation of a new standing committee to discuss methods to enhance student involvement in WPRA – College and University Relations Committee.
- » The first online *PRMonthly* took place in January 2004.
- » The first WPRA Leadership Academy took place in 2006 at the George Williams College in Williams Bay, Wisconsin.
- » The bylaws were approved by the membership in 2008, which reduced the Board by two positions in 2009; student advisor and emeritus chair no longer served on the Board.
- » The WPRA Executive Committee and Board of Directors decided to vacate the deputy director position and to contract with an association management company, SAMI to provide administrative services, i.e., online registrations and payments, website development and postings, marketing and technological support in 2013. ■

*Excerpts for this document, especially the 1960s and 1970s, were taken from "The Evolution and Growth of the Park/ Recreation Organizational Movement in Wisconsin" paper written by August F. Revoy, which was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science in recreation resource management at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Other information was taken from the IMPACT magazine, Leisure Line newsletter and WPRA Board of Directors meeting minutes.*

## A Step Back in History, Revisited

# Happy 50th Birthday, WPRA

by Augie Revoy, CLP, Retired

Have 50 years passed already? Back in 1966, like many of you today, I was in the early years of my career in the leisure field, two years to be exact, and I never gave it any thought that I would still be involved with the Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association (WPRA) 50 years later. In fact, I wasn't sure I would still be alive. After two years in Michigan, I moved back to Wisconsin in 1966 to assume the new director's position in Fort Atkinson, and it didn't take me long to get involved in WPRA activities, something I never regretted. For you younger members in WPRA, you are probably not at all familiar with the history of this great organization and how it became what it is today. For those interested, just read on as I will try to enlighten you.

To begin with, I may have to take you back briefly some 80 years, but I want to make something very clear. I realize as one of the oldest members, if not the oldest member, still involved in WPRA, I did not personally experience most of what I will be reporting. Back in 1970, I submitted a proposal for my master's thesis entitled "Evolution and Growth of the Park – Recreation Organizational Movement in Wisconsin." The title alone took up the first two pages. Six years of research, including six taped personal interviews with some who did experience those earlier years, gave me some insight as to what transpired prior to 1966.

To be specific, the birthdate of the WPRA is January 1, 1966, and it wasn't the first organization serving leisure service professionals in Wisconsin. Prior to 1966, we had the Wisconsin Park & Recreation Society (WPRS) and the Wisconsin Recreation Association (WRA), each, in many ways, with its own philosophies. Actually, the organization movement in Wisconsin goes as far back as 1932, which was prior to my birthday, but not by much.

First, there was the WPRS. These were the park guys, whose main focus was

on facilities, including trees, turf, pools, beaches, shelters, buildings and everything that fell under the category of natural resources. This organization had its start back to 1932, when it was a section of the Wisconsin League of Municipalities, similar to our section system in WPRA today. WPRS members held their first meeting in Menasha in early spring with a membership of about 20. On April 1, 1943, with an increased membership, they met in Appleton to draw up a constitution and bylaws to form an independent organization with its own officers, Board members and dues structure. Jerome Dretzka was elected its first president. Membership consisted of department directors, com-

- ❖ WPRA was founded on January 1, 1966.
- ❖ Elected in 1943, Jerome Dretzka was the first president of the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society (WPRS) — the original organization.
- ❖ Wisconsin Recreation Association (WRA) was founded in 1939 by leisure professionals of all levels.

mission members or higher supervisory positions in park departments. One only has to drive around Milwaukee County to see many of the parks named after individuals, many of whom at one time were members of this organization. They were what one might call an elite group, or at least they thought they were.

The second organization was the WRA, an organization made up of leisure professionals on all levels, whose focus was on people and programs for people. These were the fun-and-games professionals. Because some of these were combined park/recreation departments, some of the directors held joint membership in both WPRS and WRS. This organization had

its start in 1939, when a committee met at the Republican Hotel, now the site of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* building, to draw up a constitution and establish principles. On June 15, 1940, the WRS held its first meeting at the Schroeder Hotel on 5th Street in Milwaukee, which is still there under the Hilton name. Many, if not most, of the early recreation professionals and WRA members came out of the school system as many of the larger departments in the state were school-sponsored, including all in Milwaukee County.

These two organizations operated separately on the state level for about 20 years in the same manner as the American Recreation Society and the American Institute of Park Executives did on the national level. Talks began in the early '60s, and committees were formed to discuss the merger of these two major organizations. On May 23, 1965, the merger on the national level was completed, and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) was founded. The same movement was going on in every state, but unlike the attitude of general agreement on the national level, the feeling was not the same with the two Wisconsin organizations. More specifically, a couple of WPRS members who held high positions on the Board were not in favor of the merger. It took five years of negotiations, some very heated, before these two organizations could come up with some merger agreement. At one of these meetings in Sheboygan in 1961, one WPRS member was quoted as saying, "merger is not good and if I have my choice, it will occur only over my dead body." The fact that it did happen that way had nothing to do with the merger coming to fruition. What did happen was that his statement eventually reached his boss, who was director of parks in Milwaukee County and a strong supporter of the merger on the national level. A meeting was held between boss and employee, at which time the employee was



given the option of a change of attitude or a change of employment. During ensuing meetings, the attitude on the part of both organizations changed, and the merger talks became more agreeable. In the spring of 1965, ballots on the merger were sent out to members of both organizations. The results were that 66 percent were in favor of the merger. Membership for WPRP was 310 that first year.

Although the merger in general was agreed upon, on the Board of Directors and on the dues structure, there were several issues that had yet to be settled. Back in the early '90s, when I was writing my "Step Back in History" series for the *IMPACT* magazine, the one issue I presented was how we decided when our annual conferences would be held. WPRS, as previously stated, was made up of park people, and they felt the months of January through March were a good time because it was slow time of the year for them, thus they felt a good time for their annual conference around the state. WRA, on the other hand, held its conference the first week in November in conjunction with the Wisconsin State Teachers Convention, when there was only one teachers union. The reason for this, as stated earlier, was that all departments in Milwaukee County were affiliated with the local school systems, as well as many of the larger departments in Wisconsin such as Kenosha, Menomonee Falls, Fond du Lac, Sheboygan, Madison, Oshkosh and Janesville. The WRA conferences were all held in Milwaukee, except for the two in 1959 and 1960, when they were held in Green Lake and Shorewood.

Because of the shortness of time, plus the fact WPRS members had already planned their spring conference prior to the merger vote in 1965, WPRP held two state conferences in 1966. The first was held in Eau Claire from March 23-25. Well, despite the fact this was a few days into spring, in Wisconsin this doesn't mean a thing. A large snowstorm blew in, and some delegates were stranded in the city for a day or two, while others left early to beat the storm only to get stranded off the road or in small communities on the way home. To say the least, this turned out to be a not-too-successful conference. In November, WRA, now WPRP, held

its fall conference in Milwaukee. At its December meeting, the Board of Directors voted unanimously to conduct only one annual conference a year in November, but as a compromise, not in Milwaukee. In 1967, the Pioneer Inn in Oshkosh was chosen, and many of us who are still around will never forget the infamous wieners, pork and beans, and potato salad as the main banquet meal.

Even though the first issue took only one year to be resolved, the second issue was a little more controversial and even intense at times in that it left and then came back. I am speaking of the practice of paying for members' meals in conjunction with monthly Board meetings. I learned a few things about this practice in one of my personal interviews with a member who experienced them personally. It seems that this practice of paying for Board members' meals started in the early 1940s in the WPRS. The Board only consisted of five members and a couple of directors, so the feeling was that they were entitled to a free meal inasmuch as they were away from their regular jobs for a whole day. As this old-timer told me, picture these guys in long dark coats, black fedoras and dressed in three-piece suits having a couple of drinks and an expensive lunch in a classy restaurant after a tiring meeting. Was it any wonder that some carryover WPRS members now serving on the WPRP Board wanted to continue this practice? Well, it lasted for two years, but with the Board membership increasing with the addition of sections and regional representatives, plus the fact WPRP was experiencing financial problems, Board member lunches were discontinued.

A third issue had to do with the opportunity of involvement or representation on the Board by all members of WPRP. As I indicated earlier, only directors or commission members could be members of WPRS. With the WRA, only department directors or upper supervisors in large departments could serve on the Board, but membership itself was open to leisure professionals on all levels. In 1966, WPRP had two sections, the Administrators Section, which was a carryover from the WRA and the Rehab Section. The latter was also a carryover section from the WRA, which was then called the Institu-

tional Section for employees in hospitals and health care institutions. John Lorimer served as the first section chair in 1966. In 1968, a Student Section was added with Steve Pischke as the chair. One had to be a member of the Administrators' Section to serve on the WPRP Board. This practice was discontinued in 1971, when the Administrator Section was dissolved and replaced by the Park Section, chaired by Ferd Zimdars, and the Recreation Section, chaired by this writer.

Well, if you are still with me and reading this report, I realize I have spent considerable space in pointing out what transpired prior to the merger and some of the issues that were resolved in the first couple of years following the merger. I will point out some of the accomplishments WPRP made during the past 50 years. The fact that many of our members have been in WPRP 10, 15 and even 25 years, you have already been part of some of those accomplishments; therefore, I will place more emphasis on the first half.

One of the first things a subcommittee of the Merger Committee of the Whole suggested was an affiliation with both the NRPA and the University of Wisconsin Extension Division (UWEX) in Madison. The affiliation with the latter organization resulted in WPRP hiring our first executive secretary, later to be renamed executive director, in the name of Fred Lengfeld. This turned out to be a bargain in that Lengfeld was still an employee of the university, so WPRP only had to pay for office expenses and services at \$1 per member to the university. Lengfeld became a stabilizing force in this organization. Because he was not affiliated with either the park or recreation branches, he was able to keep matters calm during some of those early-year Board meetings. Lengfeld remained in this position until 1977 when the university was experiencing program cuts, so he had to disengage himself from the WPRP. 1977 was the year I served as WPRP president, which made it an interesting year without an executive director and with my office serving as the WPRP headquarters. The first committee I formed as president was made up of the next three presidents — Tony Bruno, Bill Houtz and Gene Park — to look for a headquarters site in Mil-

waukee for WPRA after I left office. The first of several sites was on 84th and Blue-mound, with Chris Mirasola hired as our first part-time administrative assistant.

Prior to Lengfeld's departure, WPRA lost its newsletter editor in 1972 when Ora Berry from Lengfeld's office retired. President Ruth James came to the rescue when she introduced Phyllis Ovans to the WPRA Board, and in 1974, she became the first editor of the magazine we now know as *IMPACT*. There was a "name the magazine" contest, and with 110 total entries, 11 members submitted the same name. I believe I was one of those 11, but as usual, in a blind draw, my name was not drawn. Robert Paterson, a University of Wisconsin-La Crosse student, was declared the winner. I would make up for this disappointment by winning a couple of drawings later in my career. *IMPACT* magazine is still recognized today as one of the leading state magazines in the leisure field. After Ovans retired as editor in 1979, she was awarded the WPRA Honorary Fellowship Award for her contributions to the park/recreation field on both the state and national levels.

As I look back, I would have to say that the decade of the '70s was certainly the most interesting and, without a doubt, the most hectic in my life. Prior to my being elected to the Recreation Section chair position, I was already on a newly created WPRA Certification Committee, which we hoped would put a little more legitimacy in our profession in the eyes of the public. It wasn't necessarily accepted by all members, especially for some of the old-timers who had quite a few years under their belt and security in their jobs. Over time, as we tied it in as a requirement to win certain awards or to hold a position on the Board, some even resigned from the WPRA rather than go through the certification process. It wasn't until we were able to recruit some staff members from the University of Wisconsin Madison and Milwaukee campuses to serve on this committee in later years and dress it up so that we were finally able to put real meaning in it. Eventually, tying it in with the NRPA program helped. Now it's great to see our members running around at conferences registering for CEUs for their certification requirement.

As Recreation Section chair in 1971, my Board consisting of Chair-elect Bill Anderst of Beaver Dam, Caroline Pipke of Hartford, Bill Gould of Shorewood and Tom Leidel of Milwaukee, came up with an idea for a service recognition pin and certificate for members who served in the WPRA for 10, 15, 20 and 25 years. To qualify, an individual had to be certified and be a member of the Recreation Section. The pin included a green emerald for the first three years and a diamond for the 25th year. We received so much pressure from the entire membership to make this available to all WPRA members that we eventually turned this project over to the Awards Committee about three years later. Since then, the pin design has changed, the eligible years are different, and I don't think certification is required. The irony of this project was one member of my committee, Tom Leidel, never did get certified.

It was about this time that my personal life took a change in that my thesis proposal was approved and I began my research along with my class requirements, while still being involved with my job and WPRA. Three years after I completed my WPRA Board assignment as Recreation Section chair, I was nominated and elected WPRA president, which was a four-year term: vice president, president-elect, president and past president. I will never forget my president-elect year, when I took a leave from my regular job to become a full-time student in Madison for one semester, which was required in order to receive a master's degree from Madison. I spent a whole day cleaning out Lengfeld's office to move the material into mine, and I still needed one class and a thesis evaluation meeting before graduation in the spring of 1977. In the late '60s and early '70s, Great Lakes Regional Conferences were more popular than nationals, as they were just getting their act together. In March 1970, I started my job with the Waukesha County Extension Office, and the following month, I found myself on the Great Lakes Conference Committee in Milwaukee with my partner Gerald Smith. By the time it was concluded, I somehow realized I volunteered to coordinate a new NRPA program called "Pitch, Hit and Run" for youngsters, similar to the football PPK program. Fortunately, it only lasted

two years, but, nevertheless, it took some of my time.

Aside from the fact that a first-class magazine was created and that our certification program was still in its infant stages in the '70s, WPRA experienced the formation of two new sections. In 1972, a Boards/Commission Section was established to accommodate lay members of the WPRA. John Clay, a councilmember in Beaver Dam, serving on the city park/recreation Board served as this section's first chairperson. This was also the year the WPRA Board was restructured in that it decreased its membership by two when it replaced the six previous districts with the four regions we still have today. In 1975, the WPRA Board accepted the bylaws of the Older Adult Section, chaired by Don Brick, UWEX recreation agent in Elkhorn. There were some other attempts to form sections for industrial recreation professionals and for outdoor education professionals, but both failed to have the minimum 15 members to get started. That brought the number of sections to six, all of whom were given a place on the WPRA Board. With my master's degree behind me and now in my final year of my presidential requirement, I assumed the position of state director of the new Hershey's Youth Track & Field program in 1978, a position I would hold for 18 years.

The late '70s and the '80s brought on some major changes, some of which strengthened this organization. Not that my presidency had anything to do with it, but the 1977 conference for the first time left us with a nice profit of nearly \$20,000. That was the first year we held our conference at the Playboy Club in Lake Geneva, and it attracted not only more curious members but also more exhibitor members. Prior to that year, annual conference sites were determined by bids from member departments, and generally they financed it by including something in their annual budget or they sometimes managed to get sponsors, like the local chamber to contribute financially. If you were to look back at some of the sites in the late '60s and early '70s, they were small, not well-attended, and we didn't have the exhibitors we now have, which resulted in very limited revenue. When we were able to generate that kind of income from a conference as we did in 1977, a site-selection



committee was formed to investigate possible sites throughout the state that could generate that kind of revenue. By building up a reserve over the next couple of years, the next thought was to hire another executive director. One item you may never find in the WPRA record book was the fact that, to accommodate some departments, special receipts were made up so that members would not have the Playboy name or logo on them.

In 1983, five years after the departure of Fred Lengfeld, Jane Hipps (later Adams) was hired. She was a great social organizer, and the contacts she made gave the WPRA more public exposure. She encountered challenges as a fundraiser, and we were not able to generate much more revenue other than the annual conference, membership dues and a few fundraisers held annually. Adams left after two years to take a position with NRPA on the West Coast.

Adams was replaced by Trisha Pugal in 1985 with the title of executive manager. It goes without saying that she did an outstanding job in instituting the ticket program with statewide amusement parks, which still exists today, stabilizing WPRA financially. Although it wasn't a major event, I had my third crack on the WPRA Board in 1981-1982 as Region 4 representative. The fourth would be when I was appointed past president by President Bob Rundle to fill the vacancy, when Don Campbell left for a job in Iowa in 1989. I think it is very important to clarify that a past president was not just serving in a lame-duck position. The past president served as a nominating chair, who was responsible for finding qualified candidates for two regions and the presidency. At least that was the case when I served in this position, twice. It was also about this time when we lost two sections, the Boards & Commissions and the Older Adult sections, both for lack of membership. This would be a common occurrence as two more would suffer the same fate later in this report.

As we approached the '90s, and the last 25 years of this organization, my position in WPRA became more as a spectator rather than a participant upon my retirement in 1993. I did manage to join the Emeritus Committee, founded by George Wilson and Dick Cooper in the late '80s for retired WPRA members. In the early

'90s, this became a very active group of more than 50 members with its own officers and Board members. They managed to raise over \$500 annually from their membership for the foundation's building block (later George Wilson) education fund. The committee convinced the WPRA Board to give them section status with a position on the WPRA Board, when they presented them with a set of bylaws. The year I served as section chair, Lisa Sprung of the Recreation Section approached me with the idea of the Emeritus Section members serving as judges of their Silver Star Award project. We did this for about 15 years, and then they returned to the old method of judging their own entries. Shortly after the Emeritus Section was asked to do this, the Park Section Board also approached them with the same request for their Park Design Award project, and even though the Emeritus Section no longer exists, several emeritus members continue to do this.

- ❖ Initial merger was not welcomed. In 1961, one WPRS member was quoted as saying, "merger is not good and if I have my choice, it will occur only over my dead body."
- ❖ 1966 membership for WPRA totaled 310.
- ❖ Our first executive secretary, later to be renamed executive director, was Fred Lengfeld.

As I had my fifth and final fling on the WPRA Board as Emeritus Section chair, I observed the young people around me representing various aspects of the leisure field, many of whom were young enough to be my grandkids. What I noticed was how the atmosphere had changed in comparison to my first experience on this Board in 1971. Back then, there was so much turf-defending, and you almost had to approach each meeting with the attitude that there would be some conflict. In the '90s, there were differences of opinion on certain issues, but there was unity when it came to what was best for the parent organization, WPRA.

We experienced some changes in the '90s, some of which many of you were part of. We had a change of leadership

when the position of executive director, in 1994, was assumed by Steve Thompson, now CEO, a position he still holds. This was an excellent move in that, after 10 years, we had a person who understood the leisure service field. We lost the services of Monica Wieczorek, executive assistant, who retired after more than 25 years of service. Wieczorek was the cement that held our organization together all those years. It is amazing when you consider she had to filter more than 500 members' requests and complaints all those years. I will never forget that constant smile of hers, as she worked behind that registration counter at annual conferences.

After Wieczorek left, we were privileged to have the services of Juliene Hefter, who was hired as the deputy director and served as editorial manager amongst other duties for a short period until she left for another position. If I followed her career correctly, I first met her when she served as one of my district directors for the Hershey's Track & Field program while she was in West Bend. From there, she went to Fond du Lac, Horicon and then Germantown, before she joined the WPRA office.

With decreased membership and interest to serve on the Board, the Emeritus Section was dropped from the WPRA Board after some five years. As pointed out earlier, the Student Section would be the second section dropped from the Board in 2014. After the turn of the century, the Aquatics Section was formed, presently chaired by Ann Moeller.

As I reviewed what I just wrote about some of the highlights of the WPRA over the past 50 years, I realize now why those years went by so quickly. I'm sure I may have missed some accomplishments and the people who were involved with them because so many members on all levels were involved. No longer was this an organization made up of department directors. Before I get the urge to add another page to this report, I just want to say that I feel privileged that I could be part of this organization and meet so many great people. I can honestly say that I may have had some disagreements with some people, but I never met a WPRA member I didn't like. ■

# Summer Park Tour 1984

## Great Memories from Waukesha County

by David P. Burch, PLA Manager, Waukesha County Department of Parks and Land Use

As we look back in time at the last 50 years of Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association history, I remember fondly the Summer Park Tour of 1984 in Waukesha County 31 years ago. Waukesha County had previously hosted a WPRA Summer Tour in August 1971 titled “Parks on Parade.” The focus was on the family and included tours of city, county and state facilities. A total of 193 exhibitors, delegates, spouses and children attended. A Milwaukee Brewers-Baltimore Orioles baseball game was one of the social activities on August 20, 1971, with ticket prices of \$2.25 to \$3.25 per person.

For the 1984 Summer Tour, we began planning in the fall of 1983 and, at the time, had several projects in design and under construction. We were scrambling to finish the project at the Bugline Trail — a surfacing, signs, gates and bridges project valued at \$120,000. The new Naga Waukee War Memorial Golf Course clubhouse had just been completed in 1983 at a cost of \$596,192. The original construction costs of the 18-hole golf course in 1963 to 1965 were \$297,512.

Our Planning Committee included the following members:

- Augie Revoy – county recreation agent
- Jim Kavemeier – meals and refreshments (I believe that Jim was serving, or had just served, as WPRA president)
- Milt Baas – exhibitors
- Joe Weitzer and Mary Chilson – registration
- Beth Schluter and Jim Ciha – tour guides
- Tom Belton – city of Brookfield, Wirth Park arrangements
- Larry Lenox – Milwaukee Recreation Division/farm arrangements
- Ron Novack – Kettle Moraine State Forest
- Dave Burch – tour planning, booklet and guide



The theme for the tour was “Parks ... Great Places for People!” The exhibitor display was the largest ever presented in the 14-year history of WPRA Summer Park Tours. The tour included visits to Naga Waukee Park and Golf Course (celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2016), Southern Unit Kettle Moraine State Forest, Oakridge Farm, County Exposition Grounds, Bugline Recreation Trail, Menomonee Park, Lied’s Nursery and Wirth Park.

Since our office was not yet equipped with computers, the tour booklet map drawings were all hand-drawn, with a few black and white photographs added for interest. The staffs involved from the various agencies were great to work with, and new friendships were made. As with anyone who has ever hosted a Summer Park Tour event, I suspect special events are the things that may divide us temporarily but in the end forge stronger bonds and working relationships.

I was only five years into my career as a landscape architect with Waukesha County Parks. The Summer Park Tour

was a great experience for me and helped me to understand the planning and detail that is involved with an event and tour. It also demonstrated to me the teamwork and extra effort by the committee and field staff to help put our best foot forward in the summer of 1984, and the comradery and friendships bonded by the common threads of our industry. ■

### About the Author

David P. Burch is responsible for a multidisciplinary parks division design team that provides master planning, design, budgeting, project planning and design, and grant funding and leads the golf course enterprise group, public relations and marketing team, and concession operations. He leads the county’s Active Communities Environment team, an initiative to promote healthy and livable communities; assists with the county ADA strategy and implementation projects; and assists with the implementation of the sustainability program to improve energy efficiency for county facilities. He serves as president of The Park Foundation of Waukesha, Inc., a director on the YMCA of Greater Waukesha Board, and committee member of the state of Wisconsin Stewardship Advisory Board, the Waukesha Bicycle Alliance, and the Wisconsin Bicycle Federation Share and Be Aware Committee of Waukesha County, and chair of the Downtown Waukesha Master Plan Gateway and Memorable Pathway Committee.



# Reinvigorating the WPRA Network

by Roger Kist, CPRP, Past (Past-Past) President

Steve Thompson, CEO and executive director of WPRA, recently talked with Roger Kist about his 45-plus-year career with the organization. Elected president of WPRA three times, he shared his thoughts about that transformation, the challenges of managing a statewide network and the promising role of such networks in the future of social change. Here are the highlights from the conversation with Kist.

## Recapturing WPRA's Early Passion

We had a strong need to combine two organizations (Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society and the Wisconsin Recreation Association) that provided membership-related services to both park and recreation professionals in the 1960s, and a strong movement to strengthen and solidify this need resulted in the merger of what became WPRA in 1965. **And as time went on, the organization did what most — not most, all — movements do to survive. It morphed into what I would today consider an institution.**

When you think about universities, hospitals, nonprofits and other institutions, they invariably get to a place where their highest priority, whether they're willing to admit it or not, is protecting the institution. That was us. But we felt that if we could take the heft of our two associations to make significant change in becoming a leading organization serving those employed in park, recreation and therapeutic recreation, **that change would come if we could get everyone moving in the same direction and if we could recapture the passion — the sense of being part of a movement — that the organization had when it was founded.**

## Making the Mission Real

Going into this effort, our cause was “we need to strengthen our profession,” and we had several focus areas: the development of membership sections to meet the particular

interests of the combined membership, the creation of districts for the purpose of better meeting the needs of professionals working in designated geographical areas of the state, and the need to develop meaningful publications. But in those areas, what did we want to be known for? What would galvanize our association? **We want to be part of creating a meaningful professional organization for the future.**

## Challenges of Transformation

The first would be just the **basic inertia** that's present in a large organization that is paying its bills and getting along just fine, thank you very much. If we hadn't asked the questions, we could have been comfortable, but that's all. Making ourselves uncomfortable was what was necessary. **Self-interest** is another challenge. Within staff and volunteer leadership, we are encouraging WPRA to consolidate its services and to be more efficient. We have to get leadership to look at how it can increase impact versus protect a comfortable structure. *Let form follow function.*

## Justifying a New Structure

We then went through the whole governance process change where we made numerous constitutional changes that gave WPRA a much needed boost by better serving the membership through a smaller governance structure and providing more autonomy to our membership sections and regions.

## Letting the Work Get Done

Once you've come to agreement on what you're trying to get done, then it's time to step back and let people do their jobs. There are multiple ways to accomplish a task. But ask yourself: If you're going to make everybody do it your way, then why aren't you the only one on the staff? Being able to talk with people in person also is important. Building relationships across the organization is important. Our regional organizations are truly the backbone of WPRA and do a wonderful job providing needed networking and resource-sharing for park and recreation professionals in one of our four designated geographic areas around the state. Our section workshops and seminars, enhanced professional development through our acclaimed Leadership Academy, in-service training at our regional meetings, and, of course, our annual conference and trade show all provide fantastic networking opportunities and avenues for professional and personal growth.

## Changing Lives

There's one thought that I always hope is there when people participate in WPRA, that somewhere 20-plus years out, they'll come to this realization: “You know, it was a good decision that I joined the WPRA. It's made a real difference in my life.” ■

# WPRA Most Memorable Conference Reflections

by Bob Holling, WPRA Past President, 1998

With this year marking the 50th anniversary of WPRA and the WPRA Annual Conference & Trade Show, I wanted to express a few thoughts regarding what I feel were some of the most memorable or outstanding highlights of some past conferences.

Having joined WPRA as a student member in 1973 and now continuing my membership in WPRA as a retired emeritus member, I have been a member for 42 years. So I should have a few highlights to reflect on.

There were many memorable highlights for me during past WPRA conferences, the first one I attended in 1973. Following are a few of those highlights that really stand out for me:

- City of Sun Prairie Mayor JoAnn Orfan being presented with the Elected Official of the Year Award at the 2004 conference. It truly was a deserved honor. Mayor Orfan was one of the strongest supporters in my professional career.
- Having my former Indiana University graduate school faculty come to a couple of conferences and also workshops as speakers. Dean Tony Mobley, Jim Peterson and Ted Deppe were icons in the parks and recreation field. They always were willing to assist anyone when asked. They were truly three of my most influential mentors.
- My appearance at the 1997 conference in Madison only 10 days after brain surgery. Upon entering the room for the annual meeting, a huge, 8-foot-by-8-foot get-well card signed by over 200 conference attendees/friends greeted me! I gave my five-minute speech as incoming WPRA president and then had to leave upon doctor's orders. (I was allowed 30 minutes to be there total.)
- Serving as president during 1998 and through the WPRA conference. I really discovered that year what an outstanding professional we had as our executive in Steve Thompson. He was always there, and I consider him still a good friend.
- Being presented the Professional Award of Merit at the 1999 conference in front of my family, co-workers, PRF Commission chairperson and our mayor. A most memorable night!
- Finally, receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2011 conference, two weeks prior to my actual retirement date of November 18, 2011. The numerous congratulations I received from my WPRA family are something that I will never forget. ■

## IMPACT *over the years*

The first *IMPACT* was published in January 1974. The name was derived from a contest that the WPRA Publication Committee held. It was a student from UW La Crosse who submitted the winning magazine title/name.





# Understanding Our Future, Recognizing Our Past

## WPRA Past Presidents, 1966-2015

1966 Bill Anderson  
 1967 Bob Espeseth  
 1968 Don Brick  
 1969 Chet Miller  
 1970 Wayne LaBorde  
 1971 George Wilson  
 1972 Charles Drayna  
 1973 Ruth James  
 1974 Alan Domer  
 1975 Forrest Bradley  
 1976 Larry Lenox  
 1977 August Revoy  
 1978 Tony Bruno  
 1979 Bill Houtz  
 1980 Gene Park  
 1981 Gary Anderson  
 1982 Fred Zimdars  
 1983 Steve Stauber  
 1984 Jim Kavemeier  
 1985 Stan Dorff  
 1986 Charles Newby



1987 Steve Thompson  
 1988 Don Campbell/  
 Bob Rundle  
 1989 Bob Rundle  
 1990 Jackie Schweitzer  
 1991 Ken Van Es  
 1992 Bill Landvatter  
 1993 Bob Lang  
 1994 Cindy Busch

1995 Bill Anderst  
 1996 Bill Faherty  
 1997 Marianne Pigeon  
 1998 Bob Holling  
 1999 Paul Leuthold  
 2000 Ken LePine  
 2001 Roger Kist  
 2002 Al Schaefer  
 2003 Rick Beattie  
 2004 Kelly Valentino  
 2005 Ron Grall  
 2006 Cyndi Keller  
 2007 Roger Kist  
 2008 Joe McLafferty  
 2009 Marty Kosobucki  
 2010 Bill Lecker  
 2011 Ed Englehart  
 2012 Dan Fiorenza  
 2013 Joel Gregozeski  
 2014 Roger Kist  
 2015 Sue McDade



# WPRA Main Award Winners, 1969-2015

## The "Best of the Best" Professional Award of Merit

2015	Kathy Gruentzel
2014	Kelly Valentino
2013	Ray Maurer
2012	Bill Lecker
2011	Marty Kosobucki
2010	Sue McDade
2009	Joe McLafferty
2008	Cyndi Keller
2007	Marianne Pigeon
2006	Ron Grall
2005	Steve Scharrer
2004	Juliene Hefter
2003	Al Schaefer
2002	Rick Beattie
2001	Bill Landvatter
2000	Bill Faherty
1999	Robert Holling
1998	Jacqueline Schweitzer
1997	Thomas Blotz
1996	Robert Rundle
1995	Fred Jungers
1994	Mike Williams
1993	Ken Van Es
1992	Roger Kist
1991	Steve Thompson
1990	Stan Dorff
1989	Tony Bruno
1989	Doraine Schindler
1988	Betty Dick
1988	Robert Tank
1987	Gary Anderson
1986	Caroline Pipke
1985	Gene Park
1984	Charles Drayna
1983	Melvin Wade
1982	William Houtz
1981	Donald Brick
1981	Chester Miller
1981	August Revoy
1980	Alan Domer
1979	Larry Denyes
1978	Ernest Goranson
1978	Joseph Leszczynski
1977	Richard Cooper
1976	Dr. George Wilson
1975	Ruth James
1974	Alice DeBower
1974	Bill Anderson

1973	Gerald M. Smith
1973	John Lorimer
1972	Dr. H. Clifton Hutchins
1971	Clarence Emigh
1970	Phyllis Lee
1969	Pat Dawson

## George Wilson Service Award

2015	Dawn Comte
2014	Ed Englehart
2013	Laurie Olson
2011	Scott Jaquish
2010	Pat Grulke
2009	Denise Larson
2008	Mike Hermann
2007	Deb Stolz
2006	Kelly Valentino

## Partnership Award (Agency)

2015	Madison College-Recreation Management
2014	Waunakee Rotary Club
2014	Slinger/Allenton Rotary Club
2013	The Friends of Beckman Mills
2012	Fox Cities Visitors & Convention Bureau
2011	Oshkosh Community Foundation
2010	Neenah Rotary
2009	Johnson Control
2008	Rock River Coalition
2007	Oshkosh Community Foundation
2006	Y.E.A: Youth Enrichment Association of La Crosse

## Honorary Fellowship Award (Individual)

2015	Lucille Taylor
2014	None
2013	None
2012	None
2011	None
2010	William "Bill" Barker
2009	Roger VandenLandenberg
2008	Jim Guy Jr., Cottage Grove
2007	Jim Smrz
2006	Floyd and Pat Hamus
2005	None



## Elected Official Award

2015	Jim Kreuser, Kenosha County Executive
2014	Daniel Vrakas, Waukesha County Executive
2013	Mayor Walsh, City of De Pere
2012	None
2011	None
2010	None
2009	Sharon Jaeger, Village of Weston
2008	Gary Herzberg, Village of Waunakee Trustee
2007	Tammy Baldwin, U.S. Representative
2006	Kenneth Miller, Washington County Board
2005	None

## Commercial Member of the Year

2015	BCI Burke (five-time award winner)
2014	BCI Burke (four-time award winner)
2013	BCI Burke (three-time award winner)
2012	Precision Retirement Group
2011	Noah's Ark
2010	BCI Burke (two-time award winner)
2009	BCI Burke
2008	Mt. Olympus Water and Theme Park
2007	American Litho
2006	Water Technology, Inc.
2005	Carrico Aquatics



# Emeritus Memorial Recognition

Understanding Our Future  
by Recognizing Our Past

The following individuals have distinguished themselves and the profession. Although they have passed on, they will always be remembered for their accomplishments and commitment in furthering the parks and leisure services arena and their leadership in the WPRA or the preceding organizations that led to the development of our state association in 1965.

## **William Anderson**

Stadium manager and director of the Milwaukee County Park and Recreation Department, president of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1962) and the WPRA (1966), recipient of the WPRA Professional Award of Merit (1974)

## **William "Bill" Anderst**

Director of parks and recreation for the cities of Beaver Dam (five years) and Manitowoc (over 25 years); WPRA Recreation Section chair (1972) and president (1995); active in the regional organization (NEW-PRO); serving as chair and on many committees; host for the WPRA Park Summer Tour (1994)

## **Robert Baker**

Director of parks and recreation for the city of Oshkosh (1975-1976), chairman for the Oshkosh Park and Recreation Board & Commission, member of the WPRA

## **David Balmer**

Director of parks and recreation for the town of Pewaukee (1980-1994), football coach and athletic director at Arrowhead High School (1961-1990), president of the Wisconsin Athletic Directors Association

## **John Barth**

Former recreation director for the city of Cedarburg (1955-1994); physical education teacher at Sheboygan Central High School (1943-1951) and Cedarburg High School (1954-1983), where he was also track and football coach

## **Warner Bartram**

Supervisor of aquatics for the Milwaukee County Parks Department, executive secretary of the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society (1945-1965)

## **Ken Beers**

Outdoor education pioneer and lecturer in the outdoor education programs for the

Milwaukee Public Schools, member of the Wisconsin Recreation Association Board (1951-1953)

## **Thomas Belton**

Born in Michigan and served in the park/recreation field in Michigan, Minnesota and Illinois prior to assuming the director's position in Brookfield, Wisconsin (1979-1994); active in the Southeast Park and Recreation Council; served as co-host of the 1984 Park Section Summer Tour

## **Harold O. Berg**

First director of the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division, secretary/treasurer (1955-1957) and vice president (1965) of the Wisconsin Recreation Association

## **Edward Berry**

First senior program director for the Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation & Culture (1967-1993); donor for

the Edward J. Berry Student Endowment Fund, which benefited hundreds of students enrolled in recreation and therapeutic recreation university programs in Wisconsin

#### **Kermit E. “Kert” Bliss**

Staff member and director of the Madison Community Center for over 40 years (1946-1986), active in the PARR3 regional organization, served as a judge for the Recreation Section Silver Star Awards

#### **Jack Bub**

Member (1972-1997) and chair (1978-1997) of the Oconomowoc Park and Recreation Board, served on the WPRP Legislative Committee, served as the delegate to National Recreation and Park Association – Citizen Board Member Branch

#### **Erwin Burg**

Recreation supervisor for the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division, secretary/treasurer (1955-1957) and vice president (1965) of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1949-1950)

#### **Howard Buth**

Chairman of the Washington County Park Commission, served over 25 years, a strong supporter of parks

#### **William Case**

Director of the Two Rivers Park and Recreation Department, president of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1949-1950)

#### **Sharon Chojnacki**

Program supervisor for the Milwaukee County Park Department in the area of senior citizen programming, served on the WPRP Board of Directors as Older Adult Section Chair (1981-1982)

#### **Richard Cooper**

Director of the Whitefish Bay Recreation and Community Services Department, member of the WPRP Board (1967), recipient of the WPRP Professional Award of Merit (1977)

#### **Duane L. Corbin**

Director of parks for the city of Wausau and Marathon County Parks System; served as district and Region I representa-



tive on the WPRP Board, served as WPRP Park Section chair, doubled the acreage of the Wausau Park System and the number of Marathon County parks in his 21 years of service

#### **Charles “Chuck” Coulthart**

Recreation director for the city of White-water (1969-1976); coach and athletic director for Whitewater High School; served on the City Council for four years, the last two as president

#### **Leroy Czerwinski**

Program director for the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division, charter member of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1939), served on several state conference planning committees held in Milwaukee (1939-1966)

#### **Pat Dawson**

Director of the Janesville Recreation Department, president of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1947-1948), member of the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society (WPRS) Board (1949-1950), and WPRS president (1951), recipient of the WPRP Professional Award of Merit (1969)

#### **Alice DeBower**

Professor at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse for 28 years in the Recreation Department, founder of the WPRP Stu-

dent Section, recipient of the WPRP Professional Award of Merit (1974)

#### **James Decko**

Director of the Sheboygan School Recreation Department, treasurer of the WPRP (1969)

#### **Larry Denyes**

President of the Kenosha Youth Foundation, Wisconsin Recreation Association secretary (1964-1965), recipient of the WPRP Professional Award of Merit (1979)

#### **Elizabeth Dick**

Program director for the Milwaukee County Park and Recreation Department, member of the WPRP Board (1974), recipient of the WPRP Professional Award of Merit (1988)

#### **Gary Dobbs**

Area administrator in the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division, active in the state Hershey’s Track & Field program, chairperson of the Urban Affairs Committee

#### **Al Domer**

Director for city of Racine Parks & Recreation Department, president of the WPRP (1974), recipient of the WPRP Professional Award of Merit (1980)



### **Ernie Dorow**

Director of West Allis/West Milwaukee Recreation Department, member of the Wisconsin Recreation Association Board (1956-1958), founder of the Milwaukee Muni Dartball Leagues

### **Charles “Chuck” Drayna**

Director of recreation for the Oshkosh Recreation Department, president of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (WRA) (1965), president of the WPRA (1972), served on several WRA and WPRA committees and Board positions, recipient of the WPRA Professional Award of Merit (1984)

### **Sylvester Dretzka**

Secretary of the Milwaukee County Park Commission, pioneer in the development of the Milwaukee County Park System

### **Don Dyer**

Director of the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division, first secretary/treasurer of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1940-1946); initiated the merger movement of the Wisconsin Recreation Association and the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society (1961-1965)

### **C. H. Emigh**

Director of the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division, first president of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1941-1942), member of the Wisconsin Recreation Association Board (1953-1955), recipient of the WPRA Professional Award of Merit (1969)

### **Dorothy Enderis**

Director of the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division (1920-1948), internationally known as “The Lady of the Lighted School House,” recipient of the first Honorary Life Membership Award from the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1948)

### **Helen Foley**

Recreation coordinator for the Racine Park and Recreation Department, active on several WPRA committees and the Older Adult Section

### **George Geldreich**

Area director for the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division, member of the Wisconsin Recreation Association Board of Directors (1947-1948)

### **Ernest Goranson**

Recreation consultant for the State Department of Public Welfare, vice president of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1963), recipient of the WPRA Professional Award of Merit (1978)

### **William C. Gould**

Director of recreation for the city of Shorewood (1969-1996); active member and former chair of the Greater Milwaukee Park and Recreation Association Directors group; served on the first Board of the Recreation Section, which established the service recognition pin and certificate

### **Tom Greenwell**

Founder and first director of recreation for the Wauwatosa Recreation Department, secretary of the Wisconsin Recreation Administrators Association and the Milwaukee Metro “Big 11,” president of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1954-1955)

### **Howard Gregg**

General manager of the Milwaukee County Parks, associate executive director of the National Recreation and Park Association, pioneer park administrator and strong supporter of the merger of parks and recreation in the United States

### **Betty Lou (Mercer) Grundahl**

Director of recreation in Mt. Horeb (1985-2005), who conducted several fundraising activities to enlarge the family aquatic center and remodel the bathhouse; served on the WPRA Legislative Health & Fitness Committee for several years; an avid tennis player and a winner of gold medals in both the Badger State Games and Wisconsin Senior Olympics

### **Stuart B. “Stu” Hardtke**

Recreation supervisor for the Madison School Community Recreation Department for over 30 years; active on many committees for the WPRA as well as the Emeritus Committee, where he served as a judge for the Silver Star Awards for several years

### **C. L. Harrington**

Director of parks with the Wisconsin Conservation Department, active on several Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society committees

### **Rodger V. Harrington**

Area supervisor in the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division, active on several committees and member of the Board of Directors for the Wisconsin Recreation Association

### **Ernest Hartmann**

Professor in the Leisure Service Department and student adviser on the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse campus, active in the WPRA as District 1 representative on the Board of Directors, the Conference Committee coordinator (1974), and served on several other WPRA committees

### **Robert Hazard**

Recreation supervisor for the Waukesha Park/Recreation Department, served on the committee to merge the Recreation Association and Park Society in Wisconsin, treasurer for the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1963-1964), director of parks and recreation in the cities of Two Rivers and Brookfield

### **Joan J. Henderson**

Program director for the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division for over 25 years, active in the Recreation Section with the Hershey’s Track & Field program, served as chair of the Emeritus Section (2002) and secretary (2004) upon retirement

### **Charles Heyer**

Director of the Waukesha Park and Recreation Department, president of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1961)

### **Fred Hofherr**

Assistant director of the Muni Athletic Department of the Milwaukee Recreation Division, secretary of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1957-1964)

### **Dr. Cliff Hutchins**

Professor in the Department of Community and Vocational Education and founder of the recreation program at the

University of Wisconsin-Madison, vice president of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1960), recipient of the WPRA Professional Award of Merit (1972) and Honorary Fellowship Award (1976)

#### **Ruth James**

Area program director for the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division, president of the WPRA (1973), recipient of the WPRA Professional Award of Merit (1975)

#### **Jay Jansen**

Director of parks and recreation for the city of Port Washington (1996-2007); active in the WPRA, serving on many committees as well as chair of the Park Section; coordinated the park design awards program; served on the WPRA Foundation, Inc. Golf Fundraising Committee

#### **Will Kiel**

Director of the Two Rivers Park and Recreation Department, member of the Wisconsin Recreation Association Board of Directors (1941-1942)

#### **F. G. Kiesler**

Director of the Fond du Lac Recreation Department, served on several Wisconsin Recreation Association committees

#### **Eugene J. Krahn**

First park director in the city of New Berlin, a position he held for 23 years, retiring in 1993; valued member of WPRA,

SEPRC and the Emeritus Section, serving on several committees; active member in his community; recipient of the New Berlin Patriotic Citizen Award

#### **Ver Krieser**

Director of the Green Bay Park and Recreation Department, president of the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society, recipient of the WPRA Professional Award of Merit (1978)

#### **Ludwig Kottnauer**

Member of the original Recreation Professional Team with the Milwaukee Public Schools (1912-1920), assistant director of the Recreation Division (1920-1921), charter member of the Wisconsin Recreation Association

#### **Pete LaBorde**

Director of the Fond du Lac Recreation Department for over 25 years, elected chairperson of the Administrative Section (1968), president of the WPRA (1970), active member of the Emeritus Section, served on several committees of WPRA prior to retirement

#### **Frank Langsdorf**

Commission member for the Milwaukee County Park System, active on several committees for the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society

#### **Phyliss Lee**

Recreation program coordinator for the Madison School and Community Recreation Department, recipient of the WPRA Professional Award of Merit (1970)

#### **Larry Lenox**

Supervisor with the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division for 22 years, becoming director in 1989 and, in 1990, promoted to director of school and community services, where he finished his career in 2001; served on the WPRA Board of Directors (1974-1977) and as president (1976)

#### **Joseph R. Leonard**

Worked for the Brookfield Park & Recreation Department for 38 years, the last 19 as a park supervisor; active in the WPRA

Park Section, serving on the Section Board; upon retirement in 1998, became a member of the Emeritus Section and coordinated the judging of the Park Section Park Award project for several years

#### **Joseph Leszynski**

Director of the Marinette and Superior park and recreation departments, president of the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society (1958), recipient of the WPRA Professional Award of Merit (1978)

#### **Jess Lyon**

Coordinator for the Madison Department of Health, Recreation, Physical Education and Safety (1950s through 1970s), retiring in 1976; supervised numerous programs and established the department's first comprehensive shop and storeroom operations

#### **James G. Marshall**

Superintendent of the Madison Park Department (1937-1969), chairman of the Wisconsin Park/Recreation Section of the League of Municipalities (1939-1940), president of the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society (1950), recipient of the Society's Special Award (1960)

#### **R. C. Miller**

Director of the Oshkosh Recreation Department, president (1945-1946) and Board member (1949-1951) of the Wisconsin Recreation Association

#### **William Miller**

Director of the Neenah Park and Recreation Department, member of the Wisconsin Recreation Association Board of Directors (1951-1953)

#### **Harold Morgan**

Director of municipal athletics, Milwaukee Public Recreation Division; member of the Wisconsin Recreation Association Board of Directors (1947-1949)

#### **George Nash**

Supervisor in the Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation Division, served on several WPRA committees and as Region IV representative, sang the invocation at many WPRA conference banquets





### Edgar Nell

Director of the Algoma Park and Recreation Department, founded the city Boys Club, worked with the Department of Natural Resources in restoring sports fishing in Lake Michigan

### Charles H. "Chuck" Odegaard

Director of Marinette Park/Recreation Department (1952-1956); recreation agent in Waukesha County (1957-1958); president of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1956-57); president of the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society (1958); representative for the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) for the western district (1958-1963); director of Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (1963-1979); regional director for NRPA both in the Midwest and Pacific Northwest (1979), until retirement in 1997; past president of the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, the National Association of State Park Directors, the National Society for Park Resources and the American Youth Hostel

### Gerald Phalen

Director of the Kenosha School Recreation Department, president of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1942-1943), president of the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society (1947)

### George Pinney

Director of the Door County Parks Department (1994-2012); served on the Park Section as the chairperson and other leadership positions, including serving as the chair and host for the annual Summer Park Tour; served on the Grounds Committee at the Sturgeon Bay Moravian Church; and founder of the Friends of the Door County Parks group

### Caroline Pipke

Director of recreation for the city of Hartford for over 25 years; recipient of the WPRA Professional Award of Merit (1986); served on the WPRA Board as district representative (1972) and secretary (1974-1977); active on many WPRA committees, including chair of the first Policy Manual Committee, the Education



Committee and the Educational Grants Committee; served nine years on the WPRA Foundation Board

### Warren B. Poland

Director of parks and recreation for the city of Beaver Dam (1969-1996), active in the PARR3 regional organization and in the WPRA as a regional representative, active as a district coordinator in the Hershey's Track & Field program

### Richard "Dick" Presny

Dane County park director and assistant horticultural agent for the University of Wisconsin Extension Office in Dane County; active on several WPRA committees, including Board member of the WPRA Park Section

### Glenn Presser

Director of parks and recreation for the Glendale River Hills School District, served as chairperson for the Greater Milwaukee Park & Recreation Association, active on several committees of the WPRA

### Howard Rich

Director of the Sheboygan School Recreation Department, president of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1950-1951), president of the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society (1956)

### William D. "Bill" Savage

Recreation supervisor for the Milwaukee Public School System, active in the Greater Milwaukee Park & Recreation Association, active on several committees for the WPRA

### Al Schara

Director of the Manitowoc Park and Recreation Department, president of the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society (1961)

### Mae Schellinger

Program supervisor for the Racine Park and Recreation Department for over 25 years; charter member of the Emeritus Committee/Section, where she served as secretary for 10 years

### Richard J. Schild

Associate professor at University of Wisconsin-Madison (UWM) and lead professor in the area of adapted physical education, instrumental in development of the therapeutic recreation program at UWM, member of the WPRA Therapeutic Society, active member of the WPRA Certification Committee, provided leadership in the Greater Milwaukee Area Special Olympics program until retirement

### James G. "Jim" Schoebeck

Supervisor and director for the Whitefish Bay Recreation Department for 25 years;



active in the WPRA, where he was a charter member of the foundation (1984-1991), serving as vice president and president (1987-1989); active in the Greater Milwaukee Recreation and Park Association, serving as chair on several occasions

#### **William Seidlitz**

Director of playground maintenance for the Milwaukee Public Schools, president of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1955-1956), secretary of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1948-1953)

#### **Earl Simonis**

Assistant superintendent of Milwaukee County Park System for 35 years (1950-1985), served on several committees of the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society

#### **Bush Solbraa**

Director of the Racine Recreation Department, president of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1953-1954)

#### **Thomas John Stephany**

Director of parks for over 25 years, first in the city of Baraboo and then in the city of Oshkosh (1995-2009), served on the

WPRA Board of Directors as Region III representative (1987-1988) and Park Section chair (1992), served as Park Section Summer Tour Host (1988) and WPRA student advisor (1996)

#### **Robert H. "Bob" Tank**

First director of recreation for the village of Menomonee Falls, serving over 30 years (1949-1979), recipient of the WPRA Professional Award of Merit (1988), served on both the WPRA Board and Foundation Board, chair of the SEPRC and WPRA Conference Committee (1974), treasurer of the Emeritus Section, served on many WPRA committees

#### **Harry Thompson**

Madison's first recreation director, appointed in 1926 and serving until 1940, when he returned to teach physical education; graduate of La Crosse Normal School; led collaboration with the city parks department

#### **Joseph "Joe" Thomson**

Supervisor of recreation for the West Allis Recreation Department for over 40 years, recipient of the Lloyd Larson Award

(1998) for his work in promoting youth sports in West Allis, served on the WPRA Dartball Committee (1960s and 1970s)

#### **Andy Thon**

President of the Metro Industrial Recreation Council for over 40 years, Board member of the Wisconsin Senior Olympics, affiliate member of Wisconsin Recreation Association and the WPRA, donated original emeritus memorial plaque

#### **Edward Trecker**

Park supervisor of the Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest, recipient of the State Park and Recreation Program Distinguished Service Award (1985), recipient of an Exceptional Performance Award (1988) for his role in acquiring key recreational properties in the Southeast District

#### **Peter Vlisides**

Recreation management program director for over 30 years for the Madison Area Technical College, Board member for the WPRA Foundation, committee member for the WPRA Community Relations Committee

#### **Melvin "Mel" Wade**

Director of recreation and adult education at Nicolet High School (1956-1990)

#### **Helen Webster**

Director of the Milwaukee Public Schools' Municipal Athletic Program for women and girls (1958-1971), member of the WPRA

#### **Patricia H. "Pat" Weisberg**

Assistant professor at University of Wisconsin-Madison in the Department of Physical Education, Recreation and Health Education (changed to Human Kinetics in 1977), where her primary areas were teaching recreation program courses and student supervision; lifetime member of the Wisconsin Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (WAHPERD), now Wisconsin Health and Physical Education (WHPE); major contributor to the WPRA Foundation Student Education Fund



### **Guy Wertz**

Director of the Waukesha Park and Recreation Department, president of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1952-53)

### **Charles Whitnall**

Commissioner for the Milwaukee County Park System, active on several committees for the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society

### **Dr. George T. Wilson**

Assistant superintendent of Milwaukee Public Schools Division of Municipal Recreation and Adult Education; president of the Wisconsin Recreation Association (1948) and the WPRA (1971); recipient of the WPRA Professional Award of Merit (1976), the Honorary Fellowship Award (1988) and the George T. Wilson Service Award (1997), which was named in his honor

### **Ida Witt**

Director of recreation for the Milwaukee Public Schools (1932-1965), Golden Age Program director (1950-1965)

### **Robert Witt**

Member of the original Recreation Professional Team in the development of the Milwaukee Public Recreation Division (1912-1932)

### **Fred Zimdars**

Park supervisor for the Racine Park/Recreation Department for over 25 years; served as WPRA Park Section chair (1971), Region 4 representative (1976-1977) and president (1982); hosted the WPRA Park Summer Tour (1986)

### **Fred Zirkel**

Director of the West Allis/West Milwaukee Recreation Department, charter member of the Wisconsin Recreation Association Board of Directors (1940-1941)

If you are aware of other worthy professionals who have passed on and have distinguished the profession through their active involvement with the Wisconsin Recreation Association, the Wisconsin Park and Recreation Society, and/or the WPRA, please forward this information to:

**WPRA Emeritus Memorial Committee**  
6737 West Washington Street,  
Suite 1300  
Milwaukee, WI 53214  
(414) 423-1210 • (414) 423-1296 Fax

**Email Steve Thompson:**  
[sthompson@wpraweb.org](mailto:sthompson@wpraweb.org) ■

*Special Thanks to Augie Revoy for his research and dedication in compiling the background material for this publication.*

*Updated October 2015*

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# WHY WE PLAY – A Forward Approach in Wisconsin

## Our Role in Building Healthy and Livable Communities

by David P. Burch, PLA Manager, Waukesha County Department of Parks and Land Use

Is your community considered a leader in providing active places to play and ranked high as a healthy place? Waukesha County has ranked high as a healthy place to live, work and play for several years and offers a great balance of communities, businesses, parks and open space, and resources. We are continually trying to improve and, in recent years, have focused on increasing access and awareness of the many ways for people to stay active and improve their health. The last five words of our county Department of Parks and Land Use's mission statement are "the health of its citizens."

### Planning and Design ... a Healthy Team Approach

Creating healthy places to live, work and play includes comprehensive planning and design. This occurs at several levels of our county and local municipalities, and utilizes the skills and knowledge of our staff of landscape architects and planners. Our efforts, coordinated with state agencies such as the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, allow for synergetic discussion, priorities and solutions. Comprehensive park and open space plans and site-specific master plans developed by our staff and teams work towards short- and long-term solutions that promote:

- Improved access to active opportunities and healthy choices
- Active living and play benefits awareness through multiple partnerships
- LEAN and efficient operations, with focus on sustainability and enhanced revenue opportunities
- Consideration of health factors using a healthy development checklist

### 2012 to 2015 Initiatives

Collecting data, creating benchmarks and documenting progress are important elements of aligning agencies with potential funding sources. Waukesha County

regularly updates its National Public Health Performance Standards Program (NPHSP) and Local Public Health System Performance Assessment. This data allows us to understand opportunities for improvement and partnerships offering new avenues to educate and promote healthy and active living. Partnerships between health agencies and park and recreation agencies offer a great opportunity for improving long-term health solutions.

In 2015, the top-three ranked counties in Wisconsin were Ozaukee, Pepin and Calumet. In 2014, Waukesha County ranked 16th overall out of 72 counties in Wisconsin. In 2015, Waukesha County ranked 14th out of 72 counties in Wisconsin. The rankings are based upon scoring in the categories of health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment. For example, Waukesha County is ranked second out of 72 counties in the state for overall health but ranks 46th in physical environment. *County Health Rankings* ranks the health of nearly every county in the nation and show that much of what affects health occurs outside of the doctor's office. *County Health Rankings* confirms the critical role that factors such as education, jobs, income and environment have on our health. Published by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Rankings includes data based upon research conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics (Amy Bernstein, Sc.D., chief, Analytic Studies Branch, Office of Analysis and Epidemiology), and the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice. The Take Action Road Map offers a guideline for multidisciplinary groups to work together in a process to improve community health.



### The Take Action Road Map (UWPHI)

Our marketing theme for 2012 at Waukesha County Parks was **"Just Beyond Your Backyard,"** playing on the NRPA theme of "America's Backyard." Outreach and education to our citizens all year focused on communicating the close proximity and accessibility of our parks and facilities to the public, improving our outreach to volunteers and youth, and connecting to area businesses.

At the December 2012 Workshop for Active Communities in the State of Wisconsin, agency teams attended and discussed strategies on building places, programs and partnerships towards more healthy and livable communities in Wisconsin.

For 2013, we launched **13 Great Ways to Better Health**, promoting our park system and 13 key activities:

1. Find and explore two new parks each season
2. Walk a new trail each month
3. Bike a trail twice a month
4. Swim at every one of the six beaches
5. Picnic at each of the eight major parks



6. Enjoy a nature or bird watching hike at the Retzer Nature Center
7. Play with your dog at one of the dog exercise areas
8. Try the new mountain bike trails at Minooka Park (2014 host of the inaugural State of Wisconsin High School Mountain Bike Series, and 2015 host to a WHSMB Race and Wisconsin Off-Road Series Race)
9. Volunteer for an event/workday in the parks
10. Run or snowshoe on a trail twice a week
11. Go camping
12. Go sledding
13. Discover ice skating at one of the ice arenas

In 2014 and 2015, we launched “**How We Play, Where We Play, and Why We Play**” to promote the park system and active play opportunities. This promotion was a take-off on the Wisconsin Bike Federation’s theme at the one of the annual bike summits of “**How We Ride, Where We Ride, and Why We Ride.**” We are continuing to offer a large community garden space at Expo/Northview Park, and we expanded the Community Gardens for vegetables and produce at Eble Park, working alongside the University of Wisconsin Extension Master Gardeners Program, to produce healthy vegetables



and food for families and local agencies in need. At the Retzer Nature Center, we expanded the exhibit garden space with raised gardens to showcase healthy native flowers and produce. The city of Waukesha launched its **Waukesha Walks** Program, offering local ambassadors to lead neighborhood walks for fitness and historical interest. Waukesha County promotes break-time and lunchtime walks on several “walk routes” in and near our government campus. As a way to offer improved healthy benefit choices, Waukesha County partnered with the city of Waukesha and Waukesha School District to offer its employees and families on a trial basis a cooperative health and wellness clinic to improve access and affordability to health care. At Moor Downs Golf, a nine-hole golf course celebrating 100 years in 2015, we have added FootGolf. This activity, a fun blend of golf and soccer, benefits children starting early in coordination with soccer, as well as adults looking to try something new and active outside.

#### Economic Benefits

The economic benefits of parks and open space are well documented. Studies over the past 15 years have reinforced the fact that, according to the American Planning Association, “Parks provide intrinsic environmental, aesthetic, and recreation benefits to our cities. They are also a source of positive economic benefits. They enhance property values, increase municipal revenue, bring in homebuyers and workers, and attract retirees. At the bottom line, parks are a good financial investment for a community. Understanding the economic impacts of parks can help decision-makers better evaluate the creation and maintenance of urban parks.”

#### Health Benefits

The Trust for Public Land and the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association indicate that “parks decrease health costs and support productivity, both through encouraging exercise and reducing air pollution. A park’s plants absorb air pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone and some particulates, reducing the impacts they have on people’s cardiovascular and respiratory systems. Parks provide low or no-cost recreation and encourage exercise. They bring people into nature, make outdoor recreation more accessible, and provide



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safe and attractive places for individuals and families to exercise and play.” We have provided diverse play experiences to the public to get active with eight regional parks, three golf courses, five lake-access and boat-launch sites, a nature center and environmental education learning center, two indoor ice arenas, one exposition center, and three regional multiuse trails.

### What’s New and the Next Steps?

The state of Wisconsin has been leading a statewide initiative called Active Communities Environment. Waukesha County formed our Active Communities team in 2012 and has participated in planning sessions for the networking, improvement and implementation of the strategies. The state Division of Health has been a leader in creating this program. The formation of the Wisconsin Obesity Prevention Network (WOPN) was one of the key conveners of the active community stakeholder group. Over the past two years, they have been using collective impact to facilitate diverse stakeholders in multiple settings to address healthy community environments. In October 2015 the new name and brand of **HealthTIDE** was launched to the stakeholder group and then coordinated a wider launch to the public. The program is housed within the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Family Medicine. Jen Gilchrist Walker serves as the Active Communities coordinator. The HealthTIDE program is comprised of the following teams: Active Communities, Healthy Food, Healthy Schools, Early Childhood, Healthcare and Leadership Council.

As we build our Active Communities team here at Waukesha County, we have researched methods and partners that will help us achieve a healthier and livable Waukesha County by 2025. The role of park and recreation professionals, their agencies and staff have been evolving as we help our communities and state achieve positive results in fighting obesity by improving opportunities for places for physical activity and nutritional food habits. The process of coordinating this effort among related professions and agencies is important from a viewpoint of roles and responsibilities and overall funding collaboration. This subject has grown immensely in the last five years and has become a key topic at professional association conferences. We are seeing this subject emerge at seminars, workshops and conferences among planners; park, recreation and therapeutic professionals; landscape architects; architects; engineers; mayors; city administrators; health care providers; economic development agencies; public health professionals; and educators.

Communities and agencies across the country are building teams to address the national crisis of obesity. Providing a wide variety of choices for places with easy access for people to enjoy indoor and outdoor recreation is paramount to achieving success. Getting out and doing things — and moving away from the electronic, indoor, thumb-based playgrounds that we have created for our children — will help to improve the chance of social interaction, play, recreation and enjoyment of nature’s beauty.

For 2016, we are continuing to promote the **Get Out and Get Active**

campaign. Getting and staying active, along with eating healthy and nutritious foods, will go a long way in helping set the stage for a healthy individual, family and community. We are making plans this year to help our citizens and visitors get out and get active, and in 2016 to help to elevate the role of parks and recreation in the journey of building more healthy and livable communities.

This effort is connected to our strategic goals of improving quality-of-life opportunities and setting the right stage for economic vitality in Waukesha County.

**You and I are helping to move our profession from the old-school governmental agency term of “nonessential service” to “park, recreation and forestry services, which play a critical role in people’s daily health and wellness.” ■**

*If you are interested in learning more about healthy and livable communities, check out these references and resources:*

- *HealthTIDE:* [healthtide.org](http://healthtide.org)
- *Health index of your state and county:* [www.countyhealthrankings.org/rankings/data](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/rankings/data)
- *National Recreation and Park Association:* [www.nrpa.org/Grants-and-Partners/Health-and-Livability](http://www.nrpa.org/Grants-and-Partners/Health-and-Livability)
- *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation:* [www.RWJF.org](http://www.RWJF.org)
- *State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services – Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Program:* [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity/index.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity/index.htm)
- *University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute:* [uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu](http://uwphi.pophealth.wisc.edu)
- *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:* [www.cdc.gov/HealthyLiving](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyLiving)
- *American Planning Association – The City Parks Forum – City Parks Briefing Papers*
- *The Trust for Public Land:* [www.tpl.org/economic-health-benefits](http://www.tpl.org/economic-health-benefits)
- *Waukesha County:* [www.waukeshacounty.gov](http://www.waukeshacounty.gov)

### About the Author

David P. Burch is responsible for a multidisciplinary parks division design team that provides master planning, design, budgeting, project planning and design, and grant funding, and leads the golf course enterprise group, public relations and marketing team, and concession operations. He leads the county’s Active Communities Environment team, an initiative to promote healthy and livable communities; assists with the county ADA strategy and implementation projects; and assists with the implementation of the sustainability program to improve energy efficiency for county facilities. He serves as president of The Park Foundation of Waukesha, Inc., a director on the YMCA of Greater Waukesha Board, and committee member of the state of Wisconsin Stewardship Advisory Board, the Waukesha Bicycle Alliance, and the Wisconsin Bicycle Federation Share and Be Aware Committee of Waukesha County, and chair of the Downtown Waukesha Master Plan Gateway and Memorable Pathway Committee.





## NOW PLAYING EVERYWHERE A Marketing Campaign to Promote Free Summer Playgrounds in Milwaukee

In 2014, the Milwaukee Public Schools Department of Recreation and Community Services (Milwaukee Recreation) launched a full-scale marketing campaign to promote free summer playgrounds. Inspired by the film industry, they used the tagline “Now Playing Everywhere” to create a campaign that included a 30-second “movie trailer” public service announcement, movie tickets and movie posters. The campaign received statewide and national recognition with WPRA’s 2014 Silver



Star Marketing Award and NRPA’s 2015 Kudos Marketing Award. For more information, contact Brian Hoffer, Milwaukee Recreation’s marketing supervisor, at (414) 475-8938 or Brian@MilwaukeeRecreation.net. ■

## 2016 Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association Annual Conference & Trade Show Chula Vista Resort and Wisconsin Convention Center



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# Leadership Academy

February 3-5, 2016 • Heidel House, Green Lake, Wisconsin

## Raising the Bar

by Kristin Serpe, Recreation Programmer for City of Waukesha Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department and Member of the WPRA Professional Development School Committee

## Mark Your Calendar

When: Wednesday, February 3-Friday, February 5, 2016

Where: Heidel House, Green Lake, Wisconsin

Deadline to Register: Friday, January 8, 2016

As a member of WPRA, you probably already know that it takes a commitment to personal and professional growth in order to continuously achieve success within the field of parks and recreation. This commitment is one of the most important facets of our jobs because it is the only way for us to raise the metaphorical bar within our field. As parks and recreation professionals, we owe it to our communities; they expect a lot from their parks and recreation departments and rightfully so. We cannot forget that we came into our positions with a passion and dedication to serve and make a difference. Oftentimes, it is easy to lose sight of this with the various challenges that can bog us down.

For me, personally, the WPRA Leadership Academy for Park and Recreation Professionals has played a huge role in pushing me to grow and inspiring me to be a better leader for my community. Not only have I walked away with actual takeaways that I've been able to implement as soon as I'm back at the office, but I have also made lasting friendships and left feeling refreshed. I always leave the Leadership Academy with an overwhelming excitement to be working in this field and with the feeling that I can "move mountains" within my community. It's a feeling that is hard to describe in words, but you leave changed. You leave a better professional and leader than when you arrived, and

you remember without a doubt that parks and recreation is your vocation. You leave confident in the fact that you will make positive changes and that you will **RAISE THE BAR** for yourself and for those around you.

The 2016 Leadership Academy is focused on the concept of "raising the bar." As community leaders, we must continually aim higher, push further and raise the metaphorical bar for ourselves and for our communities. So what exactly does that mean? It is a phrase we hear so often that it is easy to overlook the true meaning. To get a better idea of this concept and why the WPRA Professional Development School Committee chose this for the theme of the 2016 Leadership Academy, let's take a step back and think about what it truly means to raise the bar and what that means for us as professionals.

The phrase comes from the track and field sports of pole vaulting and high jumping when the athletes jump over a bar and move on to subsequent rounds where the height is increased. As the challenge becomes greater, fewer move on to the next round, until finally there is just one athlete left who has been able to clear the bar at a setting higher than the rest. When this occurs, the *individual* who wins the event celebrates his or her accomplishment as the *entire team's* victory; like in all individual Olympic sports, when one person wins, the entire team and the entire country win.

Keep in mind that raising the bar for you and your team is not an end goal but rather a continuous process of professional development and growth. For example,





the world-record holder in men's pole vaulting, Renaud Lavillenie, did not simply achieve his record of 6.16 meters on his first attempt. Over the past eight years, he has been able to raise the literal bar from 5.3 meters all the way to 6.16 meters. In his first few years in competition, he finished between 10th and 13th place but made a commitment to continuous improvement, which ultimately led him to hold the current world record. In his earlier days of competition, he may not have known that he would accomplish this feat, but he certainly did not let his setbacks or his failures stop him from trying. In fact, he was just one jump away from failing to break the world record, as he missed the 6.15 meter mark twice in a row prior to barely clearing it on his third and last allowed attempt. However, he persevered and went on to become a world champion, an Olympic gold medalist and a world-record holder.

We cannot forget that the concept of raising the bar is a continuous process and that sometimes we may not "clear" the bar we set for ourselves. Sometimes we may fail, and that is OK. Failure creates learning experiences. Failure creates perseverance and grit. Failure ultimately pushes committed professionals to be better. Each time we experience a success or a failure, whether it is small or large, we cannot become stagnant. In the sport of high jumping, for example, the bar is constantly being raised in terms of world records. Since 1912, the record has been set 40 different times. There is constant forward progression within this sport as science, technology and training methods progress. We should view the field of parks and recreation with the same lens. As a result of raised standards and expectations, our staff and colleagues become better, and ultimately our communities reap the benefits.

Raising the bar, becoming better and more efficient, and growing professionally does not necessarily mean taking on more work or pushing resources to exhaustion. It simply means that we utilize our talents and strengths to their full potential and tap into our team's talents and strengths. It means that we must be aware of our weaknesses and seize opportunities to grow in those areas. It means that we need to push ourselves outside of our comfort zone in order to progress. Just



like high jumping and pole vaulting, your individual personal growth equates to the team's growth. The 2016 Leadership Academy has been tailored to provide you with tools, knowledge and inspiration needed to raise the bar for you, your team, your department and the community that you serve.

This dynamic lineup of topics and speakers include: "What's the Value of Your Attitude" (Matt Booth), "Difference Between Managing and Leading" (Alonzo Kelly), "Present Like a Pro! Platform Skills for Leaders" (Guila Muir), "Fingerprints of Leadership: What's Your Legacy?" (Patti Hendrickson), and "Creating and Keeping the Customer Experience" and "Survival and the Speed of Life" (John Kennedy). More information on the 2016 Leadership Academy can be found on the WPRA website. Register today!

**What do other Wisconsin park and recreation professionals, who attended the 2015 Leadership Academy, have to say about the Leadership Academy?**

*"From my personal experience, I felt that the presenters were top notch! I also felt that the active participation of all the attendees throughout the two and a half days was awesome! I came away from the Leadership Academy with new ideas and a renewed excitement to return to the office and the field."*

— Guy Smith, CPRP, chief of operations, Milwaukee County Parks

*"This being my first opportunity to attend the Leadership Academy, I wasn't real sure what to expect. I was thinking it was going to be all those 'nerds' from conference who were fighting over the Golden Ticket and*

*raising their hands to every answer. Well, I wasn't far off, and I loved it! Being in an environment with my peers that encourages participation and professional development really inspired my motivation to be a leader in my field. I took away some great tidbits for interacting with and training my staff and developed personal relationships with those around Wisconsin that have a similar drive to better themselves professionally. I will definitely be requesting to attend again this year!"*

— Renee Sinacola, CPRP, program coordinator, Wauwatosa School District – Recreation Department

*"The Academy for Leadership Advancement was educational, entertaining, inspirational, motivating, and the list can go on and on. Each speaker had their own set of expertise and knowledge achieved through years of experience in the park and recreation field that was shared in their in-depth discussions. It was truly one of the best professional development experiences I've had the chance to attend."*

— Dave Hoffman, community coordinator, Rock County Parks

### **Will You Be the 100th Graduate?**

It is anticipated that the WPRA Leadership Academy will have its 100th program graduate in 2016! It will be revealed at the graduation ceremony to be held on February 5, 2016, who the 100th graduate will be! This lucky person will receive a 2017 Leadership Academy gift certificate for \$389 that is good for the winner or anybody in his or her department! (*The 100th graduate will be determined by timestamp via registration*). ■

On behalf of the  
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