



## Waunakee Rotary Club

Feb. 4, 2010  
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Jim Ableidinger, a longtime teacher and Realtor, gave his classification talk at the Feb. 4 Rotary meeting.

Jim was born in 1944 on a dairy farm, one of five children. His father is now 103 and still plays euchre. On the farm, Jim said he developed a strong work ethic. His wife, Kathy, says he is a workaholic.

In 1962, Jim enrolled at UW-Eau Claire where he majored in math and physics. He graduated in 1967 and got married, and the couple started out as teachers. At the time, teachers' salaries in Wisconsin were \$5,000, but they were \$6,200 in Michigan, so that's where the couple went. Jim taught physical science, chemistry and physics.

Back in the late 1960s, gasoline was 27.9 cents per gallon, a new car cost around \$2,800 and homes cost around \$13,000, Jim said.

He and his wife returned to Wisconsin in 1970 and Jim interviewed at several schools, including Waunakee and Eau Claire. During that time in Waunakee, Jack Reed was the high school principal, and Marvin Berg was school superintendent. The high school had 350 students in grades 9-12, and the district was about to build a new high school.

Jim said when he was interviewing at the Eau Claire high school, he received a call from Marvin Berg.

"He offered me the job while I'm sitting there at Eau Claire," Jim said.

Jim then met Jim Schmitz, now his fellow Rotarian, at the Bank of Waunakee where the banker proceeded to fill him in about the various people in the community.

Jim and Kathy raised four children, and the oldest, Trudi, was born on his first day of teaching at Waunakee High School. He was a half hour late to the class.

Maybe that's why Trudi has become a teacher herself; she teaches

fourth grade at Prairie Elementary school. Their son (and fellow Rotarian) Mike is an attorney in Waunakee. Beth teaches music at the Brodhead School District, and Ann is a cardiac nurse at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. Jim said he is very proud.

During his 31 years as a high school teacher, Jim taught algebra, geometry and physics. He taught physics, his favorite subject, every year. Jim said he remembers both the excellent students and the troublemakers in his classes, many of whom are Rotarians today. He listed Rotarians who fell into both categories. Jim seemed surprised that some of his former students are leaders in the Waunakee club.

Jim particularly enjoyed working with space travel and NASA during his years as a teacher.

Jim decided to pursue real estate sales in the 1970s to supplement his teacher's salary when Kathy had become a stay-at-home mom.

In 1977, he passed his broker's exam and joined First Realty, which later became First Weber Realtors. In 2001, he opened his office on W. Main Street. He retired from teaching at the age of 57.

Jim said he wanted to join Rotary because "there are a lot of good people here.

"I've been here (in Waunakee) 39, almost 40 years, and it's good to give back," Jim added.

#### Other items:

•Joy McMerty reported that Lauren Jahnke, the club's exchange student, has sent pictures and a thank you note to the club from Brazil. She's feeling a little less homesick.

•Lori Derauf said salads and desserts are needed for the Rotary Winter Weekend exchange student potluck planned for Feb. 6 at the Village Center. Help is also needed to

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#### Calendar of Events:

- Feb. 5-7, Winter weekend for Rotary Exchange students
- Feb. 7, Super Bowl
- Feb. 20, Hypnotist show benefit for Waunakee Community Foundation
- May 17, Jachin Jordan Golf Outing a Bishop's Bay

meet and greet the students Feb. 5 at the Village Center. And volunteers are needed for the skating and skiing outings Feb. 6.

Guests: Ray Kuehl, guest of Rex Endres.

Visiting Rotarians: None.

Birthdays: None.

Anniversaries: Feb. 9, Ed and Elizabeth Kruchten.

Prayers: Feb. 4, Pat Durden; Feb. 11, Susan Vergeront; Feb. 18, Leonard Allen.

Programs: Feb. 4, club assembly.

Greeters: Feb. 4, Drew Lawrence and Mike Lawrence; Feb. 11, Robert Lenz and Jim Leonard; Feb. 18, Joyce Maly and David May; Feb. 25, Joy McMerty and Gordon Meicher.

### Make up meetings online

It's easy to make up a meeting on the Internet. The site is [www.rotaryclubone.org](http://www.rotaryclubone.org). Print out the form and give it to Phil Willems, the club secretary.