



A “perfect storm of opportunity”

Fitness is a way of life for this item development consultant. He calls his exercise regimen “energizing.”

Greg Winkler of Wisconsin has been a triathlete for many years, a fact well-known to the ASWB Exam Committee members on the Clinical exam subcommittee that he has served on for five years and chaired for the last three. When his service as committee member and again as committee chair ended, the other members of the committee gave him “parting gifts” fit for an athlete: running socks, a headlamp for night runs, T-shirts, and other fitness-related items. Such is the tradition of the Exam Committee awards program. In addition to being honored for their service by ASWB, those ending their terms receive mementos from the other members of their respective committees. After spending countless hours in darkened rooms four weekends a year to review items—as exam questions are called—committee members get to know each other quite well.

For Winkler, fitness is a way of life, not only providing stress relief as he navigates a self-admitted “intentionally” full schedule but helping him become efficient at juggling priorities. Thanks, he says, to a



Greg Winkler

flexible work schedule and an understanding and supportive boss, Winkler finds time to bike, run, and swim to keep in shape for those triathlons as well as serve as field liaison to 12 students at George Williams College. In his work life, the one with the understanding boss, Winkler is manager

of the Behavioral Health Division at Rock County Human Services Department, where he oversees a staff of 140 and 16 programs that rely largely on public funding and incorporate multiple levels of regulations. These programs include crisis intervention, several intensive case management programs, substance abuse treatment courts, and outpatient mental health clinics. In addition to his full-time job and his part-time field liaison position, Winkler also serves on the Wisconsin licensing board, which he chaired this year and will serve on until July 2019.

Metaphorically, “fitness” also factors into Winkler’s evolving role in ASWB’s exam development program. As committee member and chair, he was responsible for reviewing items for their fitness to be pretested on the Clinical exam.

As an item development consultant, he will be responsible for overseeing the work of item writers assigned to the Clinical exam and mentoring them to compose items fit for review by the Exam Committee.

Winkler first joined ASWB as an item writer in 2000. Due to unexpected challenges in his job at the time, he left the program after a year. His interest continued, however, and he reapplied to the program in 2009. He was selected again and worked as an item writer until 2012, when he was appointed to the Exam Committee. He enjoyed being an item writer and says that his experience working with his item development consultant will be helpful as he prepares to fill that role.

“I love the writing process and trying to find ways to tell stories that make sense and are interesting to readers,” Winkler says. In fact, he worked as a freelance writer submitting travel and human interest stories to the summer edition of a local newspaper in Wisconsin for 17 years. With his writing and teaching experience, he says, he hopes the feedback he gives as a consultant and coach will help the people he works with become stronger writers.

Winkler says, “When I got involved with the Exam Committee, a whole world I didn’t know existed opened up to me.” The world Winkler is referring to is the world of social work regulation. He was appointed by the governor in 2014 to fill an unexpired term as the clinical social work representative on the Wisconsin regulatory board for social workers, marriage and family therapists, and professional counselors. With

that responsibility came more involvement with ASWB. He has attended ASWB’s education meetings and business meetings for the last three years. Over that time, he says, he has developed “an appreciation of the benefits of regulation and a passion for its thoughtful application.”

It was at the 2016 Association Education Meeting that he first thought about service on an ASWB committee outside the Exam Committee, in large part because of the outreach done by the members of the Nominating Committee. He says: “Barb Whitenect [Nominating Committee chair] gave a talk at the Welcome Reception about leadership opportunities. Then Anwar Najor-Durack [Nominating Committee member] talked with me during a session break. That made all the difference.” As a result of these contacts, Winkler was slated to run for a two-year seat on the 2017 Nominating Committee. He was elected at the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly to fill one of the five committee seats.

“I am fortunate to have a full-time job that is flexible enough to take time off to do these things,” says Winkler. “I know about ASWB meetings far in advance. Everything seems to work together. I don’t have young children, so I don’t have those family obligations. It’s a perfect storm of opportunity.”

Winkler begins his tenure as Clinical exam item development consultant in January 2017. His addition was preceded by the retirement of consultant David Aiken of Florida in 2016. The other Clinical exam item development consultant is Bynia Reed of Maryland. Of

his new role, Winkler says: “I’m delighted. The Exam Committee has been a great part of my life for the last five years and I’m glad I found a way to keep it going.”

Winkler, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, has been in the social work field for nearly 30 years, acquiring experience in both public and private agencies with both adults and children. He has been in his current position at Rock County Human Services Department in Janesville, Wis., for three years. He received his MSSW and a bachelor’s degree in social welfare from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.