

West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, IFT, AFT, AFL-CIO

Union Messenger

“A Union of Professionals”

WSTU March Calendar

3/6-571 Social Security Seminar-Westmont
 3/12-Deadline for AFT Convention ballots to be returned to Local 571 for tabulation
 3/19—571 EB Mtg. - Westmont - 5:30 p.m.
 3/19—571 proposed budget presented to EB
 3/19—571 HOR Mtg.-Westmont - 6:45 p.m.
 3/19—Deadline for nominations for 571 Area Trustees
 3/19—Deadline for proposed resolutions to be presented to the AFT Convention
 3/20—General Primary Election

Union Messenger

Jane Russell, President
 Alice Kautsky, Vice President
 Sandra Erickson, Treasurer
 Cathleen Pope, Secretary
 Jonathan Pazol, Financial Secretary
 Ed Hohman, Legal Defense Secretary & COPE Chairperson
 Tom Smith,
 IFT Field Service Director
 Arnavaz Mistry-Mujthaba,
 IFT Field Service Director
 Judy Jennings, Office Manager
 Julie Masterton, Office Secretary
 Andrew Bendelow,
 571 Web Administrator
 Angel Holmes,
 571 *Union Messenger* Editor



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Fighting Cyberbullying

by Bonnie Saracco

Cyberbullying is internet harassment. It includes the spreading of rumors, pictures, or videos of others without their permission. Cyberbullies also use social networks to set up fictitious profiles of other people, or to organize or contribute to a fan page designed to make fun of a student.

Cyberbullying is disturbingly common, with between 40% and 50% of students as victims. Teachers can take steps to help them.

Cyberbullies are difficult to identify because nearly 75% of them do not bully in person. They are empowered by the internet to hurt others whom they would have otherwise left alone. Additionally, cyberbullying can be done from anywhere at any time.

The victims themselves often do not know the identities of the perpetrators or the number of witnesses, and they can be reluctant to tell adults about the bullying because they fear that the result will be having their computer or phone access taken away.

This problem needs school-wide coordinated intervention. Cyberbullies must know that their behavior will not be tolerated, and that their actions have serious consequences. They must be made aware that anything they put online can be accessed now and in the future by school personnel, college admissions offices, and employers.

It is suggested that schools have students sign pledges not to engage in unethical internet behavior. Students should also be reminded of some of the tragic results of cyberbullying. A website that can help teachers raise this awareness is www.makeadifferenceforkids.org.

Victims should be urged not to respond to cyberbullies in chat rooms or on social websites. They should try to print evidence of the cyberbullying and then block the bully or stop visiting the website. Victims should contact school staff such as guidance counselors about the problem.

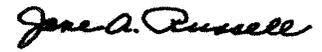
Parents can also be enlisted to help. Cyberbullying is often done from home without their knowledge. Parents should be suspicious when their children close or minimize screens when an adult walks by or when they avoid talking about what they are doing online. Even when parents feel that they do not have the technological skill to control all of their children’s computer and phone use, they can still be vigilant about keeping the conversation open and setting boundaries and consequences.

Information and resources for this and other pressing issues can be found at www.aft.org/TEACH. The *AFT School Tips* booklets are especially practical and helpful.

**WE
ARE
ONE**

The following was sent from the WE ARE ONE coalition to the Illinois General Assembly and its leaders. The unions reiterate their earnestness in finding a solution to the problem in funding the Illinois public pension systems.

In unity,



Local 571 President

Dear President Cullerton, Speaker Madigan, Leader Radogno and Leader Cross:

As we approach a new legislative session, we want to take the opportunity to restate our strong commitment to addressing the state's pension funding crisis and our willingness to work constructively with you to develop solutions that are fair to employees and constitutionally sound.

We can assure you that no one is more concerned about Illinois' pension funding than the teachers, firefighters, caregivers, and other public employees whose retirement security depends on the modest pensions they earn and who have always paid their share into the retirement systems faithfully and in full.

As the unions representing these employees, we bring to this discussion not only the clear and firm articulation of their interests and concerns, but also a wealth of knowledge and technical expertise about the complexities of the pension systems.

We have said repeatedly and for months that we stand ready to work with legislators to negotiate a fair and sustainable solution to the real problems that threaten Illinois public pension funds.

We find it disappointing and disturbing that the only solutions being considered thus far have been crafted entirely by the state's corporate elite and demonstrate scant concern for preserving the retirement security of public employees or for developing viable solutions to the pension funding crisis. We are prepared to do both.

Our unions have presented a pension solution framework guided by four core principles:

- (1) The solution must address the real problem, which is not the cost of benefits but the accumulated debt caused by inadequate employer contributions and the '08 stock market collapse.
- (2) The solution must be constitutional, not violating the clear language barring the diminishment or impairment of pension provisions for current plan participants.
- (3) The solution must be fair, not unduly punishing public employees – a group that has always paid its contributions and the vast majority of whom earn modest pensions.
- (4) The solutions must maintain the state's commitment to defined benefit pension plans as the most reliable and cost effective means to foster dignity and security in retirement for public employees.

Today we reiterate to you that we stand ready to discuss all issues that confront our pension systems and to work toward an agreed piece of legislation that fully addresses those issues.

We wish you all a happy holiday season and hope to work together with you to tackle one of our state's most pressing challenges when the New Year gets underway.

Sincerely,
Michael T. Carrigan, President
Illinois AFL-CIO on behalf of

AFSCME Council 31
Associated Fire Fighters of Illinois
Illinois Education Association
Illinois Federation of Teachers
Service Employees International Union
Laborers International Union of North American Midwest Region

cc: Illinois General Assembly Members

Local 571 Area Trustee Duties & Responsibilities

Local 571 Executive Board Area Trustees

Nominations are now being accepted for Local 571 Executive Board Area Trustees. The Executive Board of Local 571 shall consist of the Officers of Local 571, the Local 571 Council Presidents who serve as Trustees, plus four (4) Area Trustees, at least one of whom is a PSRP member.

All Local 571 members are eligible to be nominated as Local 571 Area Trustees. The term of office is two (2) years beginning July 1, 2012.

Nominations must be printed or typed (name and school district) and received in the Local 571 office on or before March 19, 2012. Nominees will receive a written or elec-

tronic acknowledgement of receipt. Voting will take place during the month of May in each Council of the West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, via secret ballot. Council leaders will notify members of the date(s) and location(s) that voting will take place.

Local 571 Area Trustee Duties & Responsibilities

- Attend monthly meetings of the Executive Board and House of Representatives
- Attend Officer/Staff meetings every other month and any other special meetings called by the President
- Serve on a committee or as a committee chair if appointed
- Serve as a delegate to the IFT and AFT Conventions

ANNOUNCING

A Social Security Seminar

Sponsored by the West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571

WHEN: Tuesday, March 6, 2012
5:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

FOR WHOM: Local 571 members

WHAT: Light dinner followed by a presentation by a representative of the Social Security Administration

WHERE: Robert M. Healey Conference Center
500 Oakmont Lane
Westmont, Illinois 60559

R.S.V.P.: If you plan to attend, contact Judy Jennings by February 28 at 630/468-4098 or jjennings@ift-aft.org



Seating is limited, so call today!

**West Suburban Teachers Union
Local 571
IFT, AFT, AFL-CIO**



500 Oakmont Lane; P. O. Box 390
Westmont, IL 60559
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The Highly Sought-After Political Endorsement

by Jane Russell

Three Congressional candidates delivered their education platforms to the Local 571 House of Representative delegates on January 9, 2012. Each told about their backgrounds and related stories about how education affected their lives.

Seeking the endorsements of both the IFT and WSTU were the following: Bill Foster is again running for Congress, this time in the new 11th Congressional district. He faces a primary with two other opponents. The 11th Congressional district covers Aurora, Naperville, Woodridge, Darien, Bolingbrook, and Joliet. Although a new district, Judy Biggert who is currently in the 13th District, will run in the 11th and has two opponents. For further information go to www.BillFoster.com.

In the redrawn 8th Congressional district, two candidates running against each other in the primary election are Tammy Duckworth and Raja Krishnamoorthi. Both are recognizable names as they have run in past elections. The 8th Congressional district covers parts of Elgin, Carpentersville, Roselle, Bloomingdale, Addison, and Lombard. Joe Walsh who finally decided to run in the 8th has two primary opponents.

For more information about these candidates, go to www.TammyDuckworth.com and www.rajaforcongress.com. Both races are considered Tier One, that is, Democrats wish to win those seats to increase their number in Congress, possibly to

gain the majority. Republicans want to win the seats to keep their current majority in the Congress.

Along with Congressional candidates, several Illinois House and Senate candidates and incumbents have approached Local 571 for endorsements. The IFT endorsement of candidates/incumbents is prized among the unions. It is obvious that Local 571 members reaching out to legislators have made a significant difference in their attitude toward unionized education workers. Remember that pesky pension bill, SB 512, is still being discussed as potential legislation. We need commitments from anyone endorsed by the IFT or local that they will:

- support the state making full pension payments each year,
- agree that future benefits for current members of public employee retirement systems cannot be reduced, and
- oppose efforts to convert Illinois pension systems from defined benefit plans to defined contribution 401(k) style plans.

Continue to educate yourself on all of the candidates in your district, and then vote in the primary election on March 20, 2012. Early voting runs from February 27-March 15. Your vote does make a difference. Let your voice be heard.

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH - Black History Month: February

Beginning in 1926, Black History Week was established during the second week of February, which coincided with the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. In 1976, the week was expanded to Black History Month.

According to U.S. Census data, nearly 40 million African-Americans live in the United States today -slightly more than 13 percent of the total U.S. population. By 2050, it is projected that the U.S. African-American population will grow to nearly 62 million.

The AFT has identified a variety of resources to help educators celebrate Black History Month in their classrooms. This site highlights key historical events, influential figures and the continuing contributions African-Americans are making to our nation and the world. For instance, did you know that African-Americans were largely responsible for developing our railway system? More than 40 different patents were awarded to African-Americans for inventions of machinery and parts vital to the function of trains, tracks, and passenger safety.

This website features a special focus on the landmark desegregation case Brown v. Board of Education, including profiles of its leaders, key events, recommended readings for Grades K-12, and links to primary documents and lesson plans. Go to www.aft.org/yourwork/tools4teachers/bhm/index.cfm

What's Missing from the Messenger?



E-mail your thoughts to
Angel Holmes at
angelholmes@sbcglobal.net

We're on the Web!!!
www.wstu571.org

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