

AFT PSRP Conference Reflections

@tending the PSRP Professional Issues Conference is really an experience that is unlike any other professional educational opportunity. In the course of two and a half days, you can choose from sixty different workshops covering a huge range of interests and current events. Where else in the course of a weekend's time could you attend a workshop on using social media, learn more about fiscal analysis, discover the latest in green cleaning ideas, and attend a discussion and update on health care reform? It's not only the opportunity to learn something new, but to hear from others across the country who share some of the same concerns and difficulties we have in our schools. The Autism workshop gave attendees practical ideas while a sense of renewed enthusiasm for issue based organizing was the take away from the Legal Issues workshop. Keynote speakers added yet another dimension to the conference. Where else could you hear the Executive Director of the Democratic National Committee speak about the Obama campaign and first term in the White House followed by a chance to participate in an open-mike question/answer session with someone involved with the political process and policy making on a national level. If you've heard AFT President Randi Weingarten speak, you know what an inspiring and incredible leader she is for the AFT in these challenging and changing times. But the conference isn't all about work, it's about spending time with your fellow union members, getting to know them, sharing ideas and coming away from the weekend knowing a few more friendly faces from Local 571. It's about sharing moments in the elevator, coming and going from a workshop or in line for a coffee and discovering that we have something in common through our ties with the AFT. Thank you for allowing us this unique and wonderful weekend!!! - **Cindy Rohlfling**



Angela Caravetta at the Autism workshop. Angela was a discussion group leader and offered many practical suggestions and was a major participant in this workshop.



The 571 group dinner included: Debby Marquardt (Elmhurst PSRP), Lee Stephens and Ida Chester (Proviso PSRP), Rose Janas (Leyden), Olga Vazquez, Cindy Rohlfling, Miriam Anleu, Michele Hashimoto, and Angela Caravetta (Cicero), and Diane Janisch (Indian Springs PSRP).

I have attended several AFT PSRP Conferences. The workshops had many choices to consider and covered many areas of interest, but the difference in this Conference was AFT staff and AFT/PSRP members were walking the picket line with UNITE ONE Local 25 Hotel Employees. With AFT/PSRP conferees presence and interaction, hotel management begin negotiations again with the Union during our stay.

On Sunday morning, as we began to make our departures, AFT conferees rallied in the hotel lobby singing "WE WILL NOT BE MOVED" expressing our solidarity to the brothers and sisters of Local 25. It was truly a delightful and rewarding conference. I hope in the future more PSRP'S from our Local will attend these conferences and realize that WE ARE TRULY ONE.
-**Lee Stephens**

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BIGGER DISCOUNTS

**GOOD THINGS
COME IN PAIRS**



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MEMBERS FLOCKED TO WSTU SPONSORED WORKSHOPS

by Jane Russell

@ seminar attendees, when surveyed, commented that “(the presenter) was very helpful and spoke in layman’s terms. I think the best (workshop) I’ve been to.” Another member suggested “I would recommend others to the program.”

During the spring months, nearly 200 members increased their knowledge by attending popular workshops hosted by West Suburban Teachers Union and presented by staff from the Social Security Administration and Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF). Due to legislation, several changes have occurred since the last workshops were held. In particular, IMRF now has two benefit plans called Tier 1 and Tier 2. Any new hires after January 1, 2011, are in the Tier 2 Plan.

Tom Keough, Social Security Benefits Specialist, presented an interesting seminar on March 6, 2012, that discussed the history of Social Security and Medicare programs. Social security is one of the foundations along with your pension that can be used to plan for your future retirement. Today’s workers and employers pay for today’s beneficiaries. In 2009, the funds for the Social Security Trust Fund came from payroll tax (83%), interest (15%), and taxation of benefits (3%). The program contains yearly cost-of-living adjustments. Simultaneously, Americans are growing older with a greater life expectancy while birthrates are expected to remain nearly unchanged through 2020. This means that the number of workers per beneficiary is decreasing and social security could be affected.



571 support staff members were fully engaged in the IMRF Workshop.

Applying for retirement benefits can be done online at www.socialsecurity.gov and then click on “retirement Medicare”.



Bill Pettry from IMRF Workshop.

Those retirees 65 and older may apply for Medicare. The coverage may include hospital (Part A) and medical (Part B) insurance as well as a prescription drug plan (Part D). There are specific enrollment periods for Medicare Part B. For additional information, go to www.medicare.gov or call (800) 633-4227.

Retiring support staff members receive their pension from IMRF, one of the five state funded pensions and the second largest public pension system in Illinois. As of January 1, 2012, IMRF was over 80% funded, providing some level of reassurance to those who plan to retire in the future. Bill Pettry, IMRF manager for member and field services, shared information at the workshop on April 17, 2012, about pension reforms, funding, contributors to IMRF, earnings, benefits, and social security coordination.

IMRF contributions are made both by employers and employees. The average employer rate for 2012, is 10.48% while an employee contributes 4 ½ % of salary. These contributions are tax deferred. In retirement and after being vested in IMRF, a member may receive a monthly pension for the rest of his/her life. There is no reduction in social security benefits with IMRF pensions. For further information, sign up for a member access account by registering online at imrf.org.

IMRF, Social Security, and TRS workshops hosted by West Suburban Teachers Union are being scheduled for the 2012-2013 school year. We hope you will consider attending one or more of these popular workshops.

Farewell Retirees

Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to retirees at the final House of Representatives meeting of the year on May 21, 2012. Congratulations to Anita Byrne and Penny Loulousis who have served as delegates for their councils and will be retiring from their districts. Anita taught at Brodnicki School in the Indian Springs District. Penny was the librarian at Hauser School in Riverside as well as the Chair of the Local 571 Scholarship Committee. We hope as a retiree that you will continue your union involvement as a member of the Local 571 Retiree Council. Best wishes and thank you for your years of service.



MEMBERS DESERVE VACATION DISCOUNTS WORLDWIDE



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Hotel Discounts

Save 20 percent off the best available rate at more than 6,400 participating hotels worldwide. This offer is available at participating locations for these brands: Wyndham Hotels and Resorts, Days Inn, Super 8, Ramada Worldwide, Wingate by Wyndham, Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham, Baymont Inns and Suites, Microtel Inns and Suites, Howard Johnson, Travelodge and Knights Inn.

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Job Opening in Local 571 for *Union Messenger* Editor

The West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, has a job opening for the position of editor of the *Union Messenger*. Excellent writing skills as well as communications skills are essential. Knowledge of Microsoft Office Publisher or similar desk top publishing program is preferred. The editor also chairs the WSTU Local 571 Communications Committee, works along with the WSTU Local 571 President and 571 web administrator, and attends regular local meetings and events. A Local 571 member will be given preference in hiring.

Compensation is in the form of a yearly stipend. A resume and writing sample(s)/layout(s) are due no later than June 21, 2012, to WSTU Local 571. Applicants may be interviewed the weeks of July 2, 2012 or July 9, 2012. For further information, contact Local 571 President, Jane Russell, 630-468-4043 or jrussell@ift-aft.org.



Summer Tips to Save Money on Auto Costs

Taking a road trip this summer?
Here are some tips to save on car costs.



A Union of Professionals

Union Leadership Institute

NOTE and SAVE THE DATE

GREAT LAKES ULI...June 18-22, 2012, at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Illinois.

Great Lakes ULI is a four-day training and leadership development program. It is co-sponsored by the Illinois Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers. The courses are designed to enhance local capacity for all AFT constituency groups (AFT Healthcare, AFT PSRP Public Employees, AFT Higher Education, and AFT Teachers). Its purpose is to provide hands-on learning of union skills, to acquaint you with the AFT and its issues, and to give you a chance to exchange information with your union brothers and sisters in a relaxed, casual setting with wonderful resort amenities. The program is open to any AFT member but is designed with the needs of the Great Lakes region in mind.

2012 COURSE OFFERINGS

- UNION LEADERSHIP SKILLS
 - EFFECTIVE GRIEVANCE ADMINISTRATION II
-
- INTRODUCTION TO NEGOTIATIONS
 - BUILDING A POLITICAL POWERHOUSE
 - MOBILIZING FOR POWER
 - ISSUES & STRATEGIES:
Teacher Evaluation/Common Core

The program is designed with the needs of the Great Lakes region in mind therefore members from the Great Lakes region will be given priority in registering for courses.

REGISTRATION FEES

Registration rates cover lodging, a reception on Sunday, two dinners, four breakfasts, four lunches, and coffee breaks throughout the week.

For additional information, contact the Union Leadership Institute at 1-800-238-1133, ext. 4497 or go to the IFT website, www.ift-aft.org.

1. Slow down to save on gas - The way you drive can be your best tool to save money at the gas pump.

- *Stay within posted speed limits.* The faster you drive, the more fuel you use.
- *Avoid unnecessary idling.* Turn off the engine if you anticipate a lengthy wait.
- *Combine errands.* Several short trips taken from a cold start can use twice as much fuel as one trip covering the same distance when the engine is warm.
- *Remove excess weight from the trunk.* Avoid carrying unneeded items, especially heavy ones.

2. Consider buying a fuel efficient vehicle - Visit fuelconomy.gov and use their tool to compare fuel-efficient vehicles and determine if you would benefit from getting one. Thanks to Union Plus, you have an opportunity to obtain your next fuel efficient car at a great price and backed by the peace of mind of Union Plus union member advocacy. Visit UnionPlus.org/autobuying to get pricing from dealers in your area and get rebates on purchases of new union-made EPA Green cars.

3. Maintain your car - Regular auto maintenance and new tire purchases help stretch the longevity and value of your vehicle.

- *Keep your engine tuned.* Follow the recommended maintenance schedule in your owner's manual; you save fuel and your car will run better and last longer.
- *Keep your tires properly inflated and aligned.* Underinflated tires cause fuel consumption to increase by 6%. Need new tires? With the Union Plus Goodyear Discounts, you can help keep your car in good shape, save money, and support fellow union members.

4. Be prepared and save more - Take advantage of other benefits available to our union members such as affordable insurance through the Union Plus Auto Insurance Program. Visit UnionPlus.org/insurance/auto-insurance to learn more. Save an average of \$525.80 on car insurance.

- \$250 grant to cover DMV-certified safety courses including defensive driving courses, and 55 Alive classes
- 24-Hour Roadside Assistance
- Emergency Travel & Medical Assistance Coverage for motorcycles, mobile homes, boats, ATV's, and other specialty vehicles.

Visit www.UnionPlus/Auto to see how your Union Plus benefits can help you drive away with savings.



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