

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

WSTU March

3/8—Registration Deadline for the Loan Forgiveness Workshop
 3/13—Loan Forgiveness Workshop—Westmont - 4:30 p.m.
 3/13—571 EB Mtg.—Westmont - 6:30 p.m.
 3/13—571 proposed budget presented to EB
 3/13—Deadline for 571 Officers' Election Nominations

Union Messenger

Jane Russell, President
 Katy Padberg, Vice President
 Sandra Erickson, Treasurer
 Cathleen Pope, Secretary
 Jonathan Pazol, Financial Secretary
 Brett Blair, Legal Defense Secretary
 Julie McShane, COPE/PAC 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
 Robin Hancock,
 571 Union Messenger Editor



Inside This Issue:

Not Without a Fight	2
Local 571 Scholarship Opportunities	3
Why be an IFT Retiree?	3
571 Officers' Election Nominations	4
Student Loan Debt Forgiveness Workshop	5
TRS Retirement Seminar	5
Your Weingarten Rights	6
Changes in AFT Benefits	7
Black History Month	8

Illinois Higher Education has been Lowered

By Jane Russell

From a report by the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability (CTBA) released on January 27, 2017, there is a comparison of the Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment, using



2014 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. We have seen this type of statistical information before. In not only the Chicago area, but in Illinois, the Midwest and nationally, for those with a college degree, the unemployment rate is lower, as compared to those who have not obtained a bachelor's degree. Moreover, college graduates earned 23.4% greater income than workers who had only a high school diploma.

For those individuals who come from a low-income background, higher education helps to move them out of lower socio-economic status into the middle class as discussed in a recent study from researchers at Brown University. The CTBA says, "The states having the greatest increase in productivity had the largest share of adults with a college degree."

What has happened with income and productivity in Illinois in more recent years as funding of higher education has plummeted? The economic impact of a college or university (either one or both located in nearly every county in Illinois), can be measured by using "economic multipliers." The CTBA report explains that "the economic multiplier measures the amount of private sector economic change that occurs when spending by government, organizations, businesses or institutions increase or decrease. If the institutions are hiring, those employees spend money locally for rent or clothing or car repair, generating more economic activity."

In another recent study by an economics professor using Bloomington, Illinois, (McLean County) which houses both Wesleyan University and Illinois State University, the economic multiplier was 1.3565 which means that for every dollar spent in the college or university community, the county receives \$1.35 in private sector economic activity. Similar

(continued on page 4)

Not Without a Fight By Bonnie Saracco

“Not without a fight” is AFT’s reaction to the attack on public education by President Donald Trump, beginning with his choice of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education. As AFT President Randi Weingarten put it, “In nominating DeVos, Trump makes it loud and clear that his educational policy will focus on privatizing, defunding, and destroying public education in America.”

Fighting for fairness is nothing new for AFT. We can look back to 1930’s Chicago for the beginning of this story. The Great Depression hit Chicago teachers especially hard. They used large parts of their salaries feeding and clothing their students, and were paid in scrip, which was typically rejected or only accepted at partial value. And for eleven months, Chicago teachers were not paid at all, with many becoming homeless.

In desperation, Chicago teachers marched to the five large Chicago banks which were receiving huge tax breaks. The teachers entered the banks, knocked over desks, threw paint at the walls, and demanded a meeting with the Board of Education. Chicago’s William Thompson finally relented and began to give them part of their back-pay. Contracts had previously been slim booklets telling teachers what to do, but we had clearly learned that they need to be a legally-enforceable documents about major working conditions.

The fight for a serious contract was also waged in New York in the 1960’s. Before then, New York teachers had belonged to a variety of unions which were regularly divided and conquered. In order to push for collective-bargaining rights, these unions joined together to form UFT, the United Federation of Teachers. Pushed to their limit in 1968, 5000 New York City teachers courageously participated in an illegal strike that threatened all of their jobs. As a result, their leadership finally sat across the table from the Board of Education as equals. UFT was able to negotiate a real contract, including provisions for class size, safe workplaces, and a grievance process.

This landmark victory inspired locals all over the country. Collective bargaining was soon won by AFT locals in Boston, Cleveland, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Washington D.C., Detroit, and Newark. The

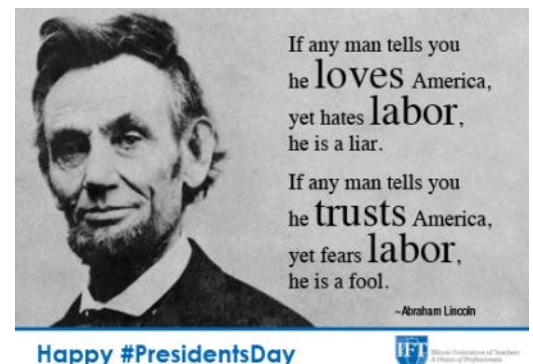
struggle turned especially ugly in Newark, where teachers chose to strike over Christmas break to avoid having their students miss time in school. The Newark teachers were handcuffed, put in paddy wagons, and spent Christmas in jail for doing what was required to win their rights.

Today, the conditions in the underfunded Detroit public schools are abominable. Detroit teachers have protested by publicizing them. For example, they distributed information about a school where the gym is unusable due to a gaping hole in the ceiling. The students dread physical education because they spend their classes in lines walking the halls instead of



having a proper class in a gym. Detroit teachers have also reported the schools’ rats, mold, broken fixtures, lack of supplies and, overcrowded classes.

Instead of working to properly fund the Detroit public schools, DeVos became the major force behind Michigan’s dismally-performing charter school initiative. It is the largest such program in the country, with a larger percentage of for-profit charters than anywhere else in the United States. Detroit students in these charters underperform the students in the Detroit public schools. Eighty percent of these charter school students fail the state test in Michigan. Appalled by the situation, the NAACP has called for a moratorium on establishing new charter schools in this country. DeVos then went on to donate millions of dollars to Republican legislators in Michigan in a failed effort to get them to amend their state constitution to allow vouchers to private schools. To do all this as a private citizen is bad enough, but to push this agenda as the head of the Department of Education calls for a renewed fight.



Local 571 Scholarship Opportunities

- **Mary Wheeler Scholarship** - Six (6) \$2,500 one-time awards will be given to high school seniors graduating in 2017 whose parents or guardians are members in good standing of Local 571. Applicants must plan to continue their education full time in the Fall of 2017. Applications are available at www.wstu571.org, Local 571's Facebook page, or by calling 630-468-4098.
All application materials must be postmarked on or before March 1, 2017.
- **Horowitz and Karlovsky Scholarship** - Two (2) \$2,500 one-time awards will be given in 2017 to current undergraduate college/university students pursuing a career in teaching (K-12) or in Women/Gender Studies. Applicants must be entering their junior or senior year and have been accepted into their program of study. Eligible recipients include any member in good standing or the child/grandchild of a member in good standing of the WSTU, Local 571. Applications are available at www.wstu571.org, Local 571's Facebook page, or by calling 630-468-4098.
All application materials must be postmarked on or before March 1, 2017.
- **Julienne Phillips Memorial Scholarship for Current Educators** - Two (2) \$1,250 one-time awards will be given to current licensed educators (teacher, social worker, counselor, psychologist, speech pathologist, librarian, or nurse) who are members in good standing of the WSTU, Local 571, and pursuing a degree, endorsement, or certificate through graduate coursework. Applications are available at www.wstu571.org, Local 571's Facebook page, or by calling 630-468-4098.
All application materials must be postmarked on or before March 1, 2017.

Retiree Corner

Why be an IFT Retiree? By Dee Pospishil

As a retiree I was asked why I continued as a member of the IFT, renewing my membership as a retiree member of Local 571 Retirees Council. My response was "Why not?"

While employed I was IFT. I retired, I remained IFT. IFT represented me throughout most of my career in education. I am vested in education. I care about those still working in education. They followed in my footsteps. I hear from some of my former students who teach. I can't help but think that I may have instilled the love of learning in some of them. I may have relinquished my classroom but my heart is still with those in education. Those actively teaching are educating our future.

IFT represents ACTIVE as well as RETIRED members in our professions. IFT does not leave anyone behind! Of course as retirees our dues are a bargain at \$20 per year.

The IFT joined with the "We Are One" coalition to protect the pensions and COLAs of the retirees, guaranteed by the Illinois Constitution. IFT has a Retirees Constituency Council, made up of members from retiree locals throughout the State that meet on a regular basis to discuss statewide and legislative issues that relate to IFT retirees. There is also a Northern Illinois Retiree Action Committee (NIRAC) that plans workshops and social events for retired members in Locals in the northern area.

I'm saying this because I recently received a call from another retiree organization "recruiting" me to join them. Dues for them are \$2.50 a month, \$30 a year. Their concern is RETIREES.

We have members that belong to both organizations. I respect their decisions.

To them I respond—What about those still teaching? They need us too! **And that's why I'm IFT!**

Dee Pospishil is a retired member from Argo-Summit Council of Local 571.

Illinois Higher Education has been Lowered *(cont'd from page 1)*

studies showed the same benefit in both Peoria and Champaign counties. Since the state has continued to cut higher education, the higher education institutions have had to cut their budgets which shows because of the economic multiplier the larger loss of economic funds. The CTBA report found that from 2000 to 2017, higher education appropriations, adjusted for inflation, were cut by a whopping 79.3%. Another chart shows the "Change in Per-Student Funding of Higher Education in the 15 largest states, 2008-15." Illinois, only one step ahead of Arizona which is at the bottom of the list, decreased per-student funding by 54%.

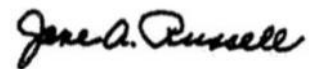
Of the nine public universities in Illinois, because of the radically reduced funding to these institutions including cuts to the student Monetary Assistance Program (MAP) grants, some are teetering on the brink of closure. The Illinois Board of Higher Education reviewed statistics that showed during the 2015-16 school year, 16,461 residents left Illinois to attend universities in other states. At the same time, only 2,117 residents of other states attended Illinois universities. Obviously there is a crisis in Illinois higher education.

Where do we start to turn this around and improve the state of higher education in Illinois? First of all, this is not a partisan discussion, it is a discussion about the

economic viability of the state. There is a need for considerable revenue, now. Conversation with legislators and others should include that the state would receive a 19% return to its economy by funding of higher education which is far greater than the percentage gains currently available through IRA's, money market accounts, or stocks.

Equally important is the building of coalitions between higher education, business, community and social justice organizations. When talking with legislators or others in the community, ask them to defend the state's disinvestment in higher education. If the underfunding cannot not be defended, then do something about it. The CTBA report states, "That sustained disinvestment in Higher Education is difficult to justify from either a good government or economic policy standpoint." John Miller, President of the University Professionals of IL, IFT Local 4100, put it this way: "This is a crisis by choice. It is time to no longer accept this."

In unity,



Local 571 President

NOMINATIONS OPEN!

Local 571 Officers' Election

Nominations are now being accepted for Local 571 Officers.

The Officers are a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Legal Defense Secretary, and a Financial Secretary. All Local 571 members are eligible to be nominated as Local 571 Officers.

The term of office is two (2) years beginning July 1, 2017. Nominations must be printed or typed (name and school district) and received in the Local 571 office on or before March 13, 2017.

Nominees will receive an acknowledgement of receipt. The elections will take place by secret ballot in all of our Councils. Retirees will vote by U. S. Postal service. Anyone interested in the Officers' duties and responsibilities should contact Judy at the Local 571 office via e-mail at jjennings@ift-aft.org or by phone at 630-468-4098.



West Suburban Teachers Union Pre-Meeting Workshop

The following pre-meeting workshop was requested by our members and is open to all Local 571 members. It will begin at 4:30 p.m. and end at 6:00 p.m. There is no charge for members, and a light dinner will be served. Please contact Judy Jennings by phone at 630-468-4098 or e-mail at jjennings@ift-aft.org by March 8, 2017.

<i>Date of Workshop</i>	<i>Workshop</i>	<i>Deadline for Reservations</i>
3/13/2017	Student Debt Loan Forgiveness	3/8/2017

Anyone who signs up to attend the workshop and finds that he/she cannot attend, must notify Judy by 5:00 p.m. on March 8, or he/she may be charged \$15 for the cost of the dinner.

Seating is limited, so call today!



The Illinois Teachers Retirement System (TRS) Seminar

Sponsored by the West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571

- WHEN:** Monday, April 11, 2017
5:00 p.m.—7:30 p.m.
- FOR:** Local 571 members (teachers) close to retirement
- WHAT:** Light dinner followed by a presentation by a representative of the Illinois Teachers Retirement System
- WHERE:** Robert M. Healey Conference Center
500 Oakmont Lane
Westmont, Illinois 60559 (*Entrance D or E*)
- R.S.V.P.:** If you plan to attend, please contact Judy Jennings by April 5 at 630/468-4098 or jjennings@ift-aft.org.
- OTHER:** Anyone who signs up to attend the seminar and finds that he/she cannot attend, must notify Judy by 5:00 p.m. on April 4, or he/she may be charged \$15 for the cost of the dinner.

Seating is limited, so call today!

KNOW YOUR WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

By Tom Smith and Arnavaz Mistry-Mujthaba

Periodically, employees may be required to meet with a representative of the Administration regarding disciplinary issues. Starting in the 1970s the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), Illinois Education Labor Relations Board (IELRB), and the U.S. Supreme Court have issued decisions supporting what is known as an employee's "Weingarten Rights." Any time you find yourself facing a meeting with any agent of the Administration and reasonably believe this meeting could result in disciplinary action against you, these rights apply. It is not necessary that the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) include these rights for you to be protected; however, the CBA may include broader rights than the statute provides, so it is important to know your CBA.

1. Any time you are called to a meeting with your Administration, you should know the nature of the meeting beforehand. If the person calling this meeting does not volunteer this information, ask.
2. If you reasonably believe the nature of the meeting is disciplinary, respectfully request that a Union representative be present. Interrupt this meeting, if necessary.
3. The Administration now faces three options:
 - a. Stop the questioning until the Union representative arrives,
 - b. Cancel the meeting, or
 - c. Give you the choice of ending the meeting or continuing without representation.
4. Do not continue the meeting without Union representation.
5. If the Administration insists that the meeting continue without representation, an unfair labor practice has been committed. You have the option of keeping silent or leaving the meeting. Inform the Union at once and memorialize in writing management's denial of your Weingarten rights.

When you meet with the Administration and the Union representative, the Administration must afford you certain privileges.

1. The Administration must inform the Union representative of the subject of the meeting.
2. The Union representative must be given adequate opportunity for the representative to take you aside for a consultation before the meeting.
3. During the meeting, the representative has the right to interrupt to clarify confusing questions or to end intimidation.
4. The Union may give you advice on how to answer any question.
5. The Union may add information at the end of the meeting to support your position.

The biggest mistake employees make is to meet without the Union being present. Your Union leadership will provide you with a Weingarten rights card. Please keep this card handy, take it with you into a meeting, refer to the back if necessary, and do not hesitate to contact a Union representative. Always remember that exercising these rights and securing appropriate Union representation rest solely with you. The Administration is under no obligation to read you your Weingarten Rights. You must initiate these rights to enjoy the protections which are yours by law.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A UNION MEMBER

As a Union member you are entitled to a number of benefits. One such benefit is the right to have Union representation and/or assistance in resolving disputes that arise out of the work place. This benefit is summarized below.

- You have the right to legal assistance in controversies that arise from incidents occurring in conjunction with your job. The Union determines the level of legal support that will be provided.
- You have the right to file a grievance over violations of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) by your employer.
- You have the right to Union assistance in processing and resolving any grievance over a violation of the CBA.
- You have the right to appeal any denial of Union assistance in exercising the aforementioned rights to the Local 571 Executive Board.
- You have the right to appeal a denial of assistance by the 571 Executive Board to the Local 571 House of Representatives.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding these rights or the implementation thereof, please call the Local 571 office at 630-468-4098.

Change/Additions to the AFT Plus Membership Benefits

Pet Insurance

There is no endorsed AFT Plus pet insurance at the moment. The company that provided your pet insurance was purchased by another company which decided to get out of the affinity marketplace.

Union Plus has solicited proposals for new pet insurance providers and expects to be able to launch a new program within the next six months. The AFT is truly sorry for the inconvenience, but this was an event no one could anticipate or control.



Rosetta Stone

www.aft.org/rosettastone



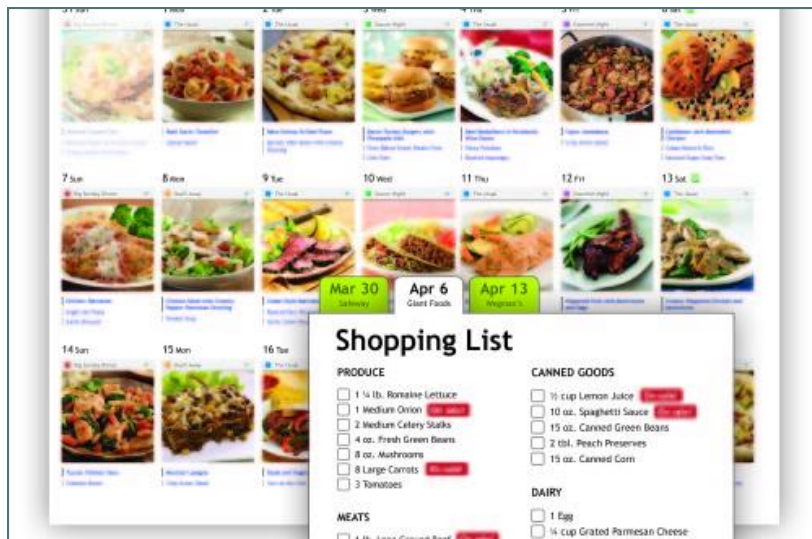
Rosetta Stone and the AFT have partnered to offer members the opportunity to learn another language while saving money. Pricing begins at only \$99 a year for online access to one of 30 different language training programs. \$139 gives members all of this access as well as interactive practice with a native-language speaker and other features. Learn on your schedule anytime using your computer, smartphone or tablet.

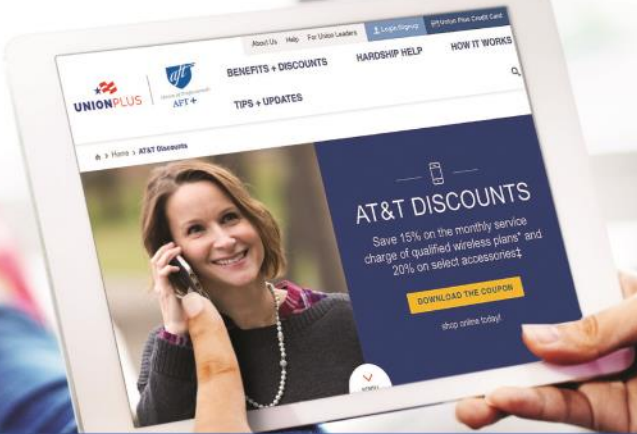
DinnerTime

www.aft.org/dinnertime

code: AFT (40 percent discount)

Save time and money. Enjoy delicious, healthy dinners made at home with grocery savings “baked” in. Plan and shop ahead with the highly personalized meal planning and sale-smart shopping web app. Customize your menu for prep time, budget, health concerns, allergies, family tastes and much more. The cost is discounted 40 percent for AFT members and is \$5.99 a month or \$59 for a full year subscription.





Save with Union Plus programs like car buying services, scholarships, travel & entertainment deals, three credit card choices, and much more!

*Certain restrictions, limitations, and qualifications apply to these grants. Additional information and eligibility criteria can be obtained at UnionPlus.org/Assistance. Credit approval required. Terms and conditions apply. The Union Plus Credit Cards are issued by Capital One, N.A., pursuant to a license from MasterCard International Incorporated. Capital One N.A. is not responsible for the contents of this message and/or any of the other third party products/services mentioned. The MasterCard Brand Mark is a registered trademark of MasterCard International Incorporated.

Visit unionplus.org

A Union of Professionals
AFT +
Scholarship Benefits

UNION PLUS

February is Black History Month



Did You Know?

The movie "Hidden Figures" is based on the true story of three brilliant African-American women at NASA -- Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson. The women were the mathematical brains behind one of the greatest operations in history: the launch of astronaut John Glenn into orbit, a stunning achievement that restored the nation's confidence, turned around the Space Race and galvanized the world.

Dr. Mae Jemison, a Chicagoan, was the first African-American woman to travel in space when she went into orbit aboard the Space Shuttle *Endeavor* in 1992.



As Americans, we believe that workers' rights are civil rights. That dignity and opportunity aren't just gifts to be handed down by a generous government or by a generous employer; they are rights given by God, as undeniable and worth protecting as the Grand Canyon or the Great Smoky Mountains.

~ President Barack Obama

February 19, 2015

What's Missing from the Messenger?



Is there something innovative or exciting happening at your school? If so, we want to hear from you! Email your news to Robin Hancock at: 571editor@gmail.com

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

West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571
500 Oakmont Lane
P.O. Box 390
Westmont, IL 60559-0390
Phone: 630-468-4098 Fax: 630-468-4088
E-mail: jjennings@ift-aft.org