

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

WSTU March Calendar

3/9—Deadline for registering for the Creating/Using SLOs Workshop
 3/9—Local 571 Constitutional Convention
 3/14—Creating/Using SLOs Workshop - Westmont - 4:30 p.m.
 3/14—571 EB Mtg. - Westmont - 6:30 p.m.
 3/14—571 proposed budget presented to EB
 3/14—Deadline for 571 Area Trustees election nominations
 3/14—Deadline for IFT Convention delegate election nominations
 3/14—AFT Convention delegate election ballots ready for pickup
 3/15—Primary Election

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
 Arnava 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



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Local 571 Meets the Digital Age

By
Jane Russell



Wikipedia defines the following:

The **Information Age** (also known as the **Computer Age**, **Digital Age**, or **New Media Age**) is a period in human history characterized by the shift from traditional industry that the Industrial Revolution brought through industrialization, to an economy based on information computerization.

To help update the Local's records, most WSTU members will be asked to complete a new membership form. There are several reasons to do so. Membership forms like mine which I signed in 1972 were discarded in a regular seven year cycle to purge the Local's documents and records. Some forms that are seven years old have faded and are unreadable.

Many of the current membership forms on file have the 9-digit social security number listed. In the digital age, we can never be too careful with our personal information. These old forms will now be destroyed. For these reasons, you will be asked by a Council leader or building representative in February to complete and sign the newly updated membership form. Please be sure to provide a personal and not a work e-mail address. Completing the form should take only a few minutes of your time. The membership forms will then be returned to the local office and scanned in along with other membership records, thus meeting the new "digital age criteria."

Know that we never give out any member's information to outside entities. This has been and will continue to be the policy. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

As always, thank you for all that you do. Thank you in advance for helping the Local to update its membership records in this digital age criteria.

In unity,

Jane A. Russell
 Local 571 President

The State of Labor Education

By Bonnie Saracco

Frierichs vs. California Teachers Association, recently argued and pending Supreme Court decision, is a major threat to unions. The case is funded by the Center for Individual Rights, a right wing lobbying organization backed by the Koch brothers and other powerful activists. This elite attack seeks to reverse forty years of labor law and declare that the requirement of fair share contributions is unconstitutional.

This attempted assault on our rights underscores how crucially organized labor needs allies today, and makes it especially timely to look at the state of labor education. What our students learn about labor history in high school is largely what they will take into adulthood. Students should know that the result of social and political struggles largely depends on who is most organized, that unions provide the greatest chance for working people to live with dignity, and that workplace rights are the result of over a hundred and fifty years of union efforts in the political process. The eight-hour day, the weekend, health and safety legislation, and the right to organize and bargain collectively have been the result.

LABOR UNIONS:

THE FOLKS WHO BROUGHT YOU THE WEEKEND,
CHILD LABOR LAWS, OVERTIME,
MINIMUM WAGE, INJURY PROTECTION,
WORKMENS COMPENSATION INSURANCE,
PENSION SECURITY, RIGHT TO ORGANIZE . ETC.

The California Federation of Teachers presented a session at last summer's AFT TEACH on the state of labor education. They discussed the report *American Labor in U.S. History Textbooks*, published by the AFT-endowed Albert Shanker Institute.

Even with today's technology, textbooks remain the major source of historical information that our high school students learn. This study analyzed four major high school history textbooks and found that they largely downplay and distort labor history. These textbooks, *The American Vision*, *American Anthem*:

Modern American History, *United States History*, and *The Americans*, are sold by the leading publishers in our country and represent a significant percentage of the high school United States history textbooks in use today.

While these textbooks do cover many major events in labor history, the report concluded that the coverage is "narrow and sometimes seriously misleading," with not enough space devoted to peaceful union accomplishments. Instead, emphasis is often given to strikes, violence, and "labor unrest," a term often used in a biased way. This emphasis misleadingly implies that the labor movement has been inherently violent.

There are also glaring gaps. The texts downplay or ignore labor's important role in bringing about many of our most important protections, including Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Environmental Protection Agency, The Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and child labor laws. They also fail to cover the huge part played by labor in the Civil Rights movement. Also, little space is given to the union movement after 1950, or to the crucially significant rise of public sector unions.

American Labor History in U.S. Textbooks concludes with recommendations to improve labor educations. This column will cover them next month.

Cathy's Corner

Selected books about education and labor will be reviewed each month by various members. Cathy Pope, Rosemont Council President and Local 571 Secretary, would like your suggestions on what education/labor books you might be reading and want to share with others. Please send your suggestions to 571editor@gmail.com.



Teacher Man By Frank McCourt



If you loved *Angela's Ashes* or *Tis*, or if you just appreciate a great story told in a unique and irreverent voice, you will enjoy Frank McCourt's *Teacher Man*. After his self-described miserable childhood in Brooklyn and Limerick and before he became a publishing sensation and won a Pulitzer Prize at the age of sixty-six, McCourt spent thirty years as a high school English teacher in the New York City public schools. In *Teacher Man* he takes you with him through this career, from his years struggling to engage classrooms full of challenging students, to his final assignment at New York City's most prestigious Stuyvesant High School. About growing as a teacher, he wrote, "Doggedness is not as glamorous as ambition or talent or intellect or charm, but still the one thing that got me through the days and nights." Talking back to administrators, being fired, using very unconventional methods, and many failures and successes are told with right-on insights and truth on every page.

Reviewed by: Bonnie Saracco

Igniting Member Engagement

Nov. 16, 2015

Daniel J. Montgomery, President
Illinois Federation of Teachers
500 Oakmont Lane
PO Box 390
Westmont, IL 60559-5520

In 1969 65 Morton High School teachers faced 10 days in jail for defying Judge Covelli's injunction ordering them back to work during a bitter strike. The teachers were being punished for standing up against a school board intent upon breaking the union and a court order that in effect turned them into indentured servants. Their strike closely followed a strike by the City College teachers where Norm Swenson was jailed for months for ripping up an injunction against the teachers on TV. Previously, teachers had been jailed and fired during strikes in Kankakee and Chicago Heights.

These were just some of the dedicated people whose militancy forged the IFT into an effective political force that was able to establish the labor relations board that now makes it legal for teachers to bargain collectively. This right is not absolute, however. Teachers will have it only as long as they are willing to fight for it.

In fact currently teachers are in grave danger of losing their collective bargaining rights. I keep looking for the plans by the union leaders for a concerted solidarity action that will show the politicians that the unions are serious about keeping their power. Not just weak-kneed demonstrations in Springfield, ala Wisconsin, but state-wide concerted action, including a strike that will give the politicians as much angst and discomfort as the teachers will suffer.

Otherwise, those militant teachers who put it all on the line to establish teacher rights will be forced to watch those rights stripped and teachers sent back to the dark ages where they had no collective voice and no input on the education of their pupils. Am I in my dotage condemned to watch all that we accomplished through sweat, tears, and even blood wash down the drain to be forgotten forever? Or will the unions organize and fight back?

Sincerely,



Jerry W. Johnson,
President Emeritus
Morton Council Teachers Union, Local 571, IFT, Aft.

Cc: President Jane Russell, Local 571

Nominations must be printed or typed (name and school district) and received in the Local 571 office on or before March 14, 2016. The nominations may be sent via e-mail to Judy Jennings at jjennings@ift-aft.org, mailed via U.S. Postal Service to Local 571, P. O. Box 390, Westmont, Illinois 60559-0390, or sent via facsimile to 630-468-4088. Hand deliveries will also be accepted. Nominees will receive a written electronic 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) voting will take place. Retired members will receive their ballots via U.S. Postal Service.

Local 571 Area Trustees must:

- 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 Convention

Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) Convention Delegates

- The Convention will convene at the Renaissance Grand Hotel in St. Louis, Missouri, from October 14-16, 2016.
- Delegates will be reimbursed for expenses up to \$670.00.

Printed or typed nominations for WSTU delegates to the IFT Convention must be received in the Local 571 office on or before March 14. The nominations may be sent via e-mail to Judy Jennings at jjennings@ift-aft.org, mailed via U.S. Postal Service to Local 571, P. O. Box 390, Westmont, Illinois 60559-0390, or sent via facsimile to 630-468-4088. Hand deliveries will also be accepted. Nominees will receive a written electronic 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) voting will take place. Retired members will receive their ballots via U.S. Postal Service.

Nominations and Elections at Local 571



Local 571 is accepting nominations until March 14, 2016, for two elections that will be held in each Council in May 2016. Retired members will receive their ballots via U.S. Postal Service.

All Local 571 members are eligible to be nominated for these elections.

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 and 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, 2016.

Governor Rauner's Turn Around Agenda and Workers' Compensation By Dave Menchetti

Governor Rauner's "turn around" agenda proposes to reduce or eliminate compensation to injured workers in a number of ways:

- Eliminate coverage for pre-existing conditions
- Use arbitrary guidelines to reduce compensation for injured workers
- Eliminate coverage for employees who must travel for work
- Further reduce reimbursement rates to doctors and hospitals that provide medical treatment to injured workers



Negative Impact on Injured Workers?

Rauner's agenda undoubtedly will have a negative impact on injured workers, as some have said, driving injured workers onto the welfare rolls and in to the emergency rooms for medical treatment. The biggest negative impact will fall on the most vulnerable injured workers, including the elderly and workers who do heavy manual labor, on whom these proposals will have a disproportionate effect. The general impact will be to reduce the standard of living of injured workers, people who were playing by the rules, by definition working in order to be eligible for workers' compensation.

Solving the Budget Crisis?

Is there any indication that Rauner's agenda as it relates to workers' compensation reductions will help solve the budget crisis? The answer is a forceful "NO." It does not reduce government spending because workers' compensation is mostly a privately funded system. It does not increase revenue, certainly not in the short-term and probably not in long-term because there is no reliable indication the businesses come to or leave Illinois because of the cost of workers' compensation. In fact, workers' compensation reductions may actually increase government spending, because of cost shifting, putting injured workers on the welfare rolls and publicly funded medical programs like Medicare and Medicaid.

Ability to Reduce Costs?

There is no guarantee that even if passed, Rauner's agenda would work to reduce costs or reduce workers' compensation insurance premiums for Illinois employers. The only certain thing is that it would increase big insurance company profits. We have a lesson to learn from recent history, when workers' compensation costs went down, there was no evidence that premiums went down accordingly.

It is neither humane nor compassionate to reduce compensation to injured workers or to restrict or eliminate medical treatment for injured workers. These are the most vulnerable people. This is about working families. It is unconscionable to blame the budget mess of the State of Illinois on the backs, sometimes literally the broken backs, of injured workers.

**Information provided by : Cullen, Haskins, Nicholson & Menchetti, P.C.
Leading Lawyers in Workers' Compensation**

www.chnm-law.com

About Cullen, Haskins, Nicholson and Menchetti, P.C.

As an advocate for workers' compensation education, Cullen, Haskins, Nicholson & Menchetti P.C. lecture frequently on workers' compensation issues. At the request of the State Fed, our firm has served as technical advisor to the Illinois AFL-CIO. In this role we were involved in the day-to-day nuts and bolts negotiation and drafting of Public Act 94-277, which increased workers' compensation benefits for union members and preserved freedom in choosing medical providers in 2005.

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 1970's 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.

571 Members Make a Difference

Federico Garcia (Argo Teachers Council) - On October 2, 2015, the AFT, in conjunction with other education and community organizations, held its Civil, Human and Women's Rights Conference in New Orleans. This year's location was significant because it coincided with the ten-year anniversary of the destruction done by Hurricane Katrina, thus making it a focal point of the presentations and breakout sessions. Several presenters explained how Katrina provided an opportunity for private companies to come in and manage the local school system, as well as the reconstruction of the city.



Federico Garcia and Marcia Watson at the Civil Human and Women's Right Conference in New Orleans.

This process would become the blueprint for future endeavors that wished to eliminate public sector teaching and labor jobs. Another effect of the privatization process was the creation of animosity between immigrants that were brought in by private companies, with the aid of the federal government, and the black community that was being denied access to

teaching and public sector jobs. The division of these two communities allowed employers to force them to live in substandard homes and be paid below average wages for the type of work that was being done.

Though these events were quite tragic, there were several valuable lessons that were presented by the citizens of New Orleans. One of these lessons was the importance for labor and community organizations having strong working relationships. In order to prevent the elimination of the public sector, both parties need to educate and communicate with the citizens of a community about the importance of public education and public sector jobs. Another lesson called for the need for tolerance and acceptance of our immigrant and undocumented brothers and sisters. Those who look to maintain their power will always try to create conflict between the various minority groups of a society. Finally, it is clear that cultural connections within the classroom are extremely important. When teachers can connect on a cultural level with their students, teachers will have a greater impact on their students' lives. Our students of color need to see adults of color not only as their teachers, but as the leaders of their community.



Federico Garcia (Argo H.S. Teachers) and Marcia Watson (Proviso PSRP) shared their impressions at the December 7 Local 571 House of Representatives meeting, of the AFT Conference they attended.

Marcia Watson (Proviso PSRP) - Human Rights are inherent to all human beings including the human rights of minorities. My experience in attending the AFT Civil, Women and Human Rights Conference opened my eyes to real life issues that we are faced with daily. To be in the trenches with people who are impacted by being paid minimum wage to minorities not receiving an adequate education are just two reminders. The march for the "Fight for \$15.00" was to STAND with my fellow brothers and sisters. Our youth must be educated and challenged and not be told they are worthless with an odds on chance to end up in prison. I have been charged to stay focused, be consistent, determined, resilient and real in unification. Now I charge you to do the same.

The District 88 Teachers Council has chosen to institute "Teacher Appreciation Days" to show solidarity for Teachers across the District. Every member received a t-shirt to show support and cohesion among the membership.



Morton Council Teachers on the Biggest Loser

Two teachers from the Morton Council who also happen to be twins are currently on the TV show "Biggest Loser." Tune in to NBC to watch Luis and Roberto Hernandez working toward their weight loss goals. You can learn more about Luis and Roberto at <http://www.nbc.com/the-biggest-loser>. Luis and Roberto are under strict orders to refrain from sharing anything about the show until the season is over. Therefore, once the season is complete, Local 571 will provide a follow up article on their experiences during the show. Local 571 offers its congratulations to Luis and Roberto for all their hard work thus far!



Luis and Roberto Hernandez



Here's one more thing
union families can share.

When you send flowers, Union Plus sends back savings. Union Plus offers union families 20% off flowers, plants, wreaths and gift baskets from Teleflora. Order online with a Union Plus Credit Card and save 25%. Teleflora delivers through local florists, so freshness is assured. Sending flowers makes two people feel wonderful—your loved one and you!



A Union of Professionals
AFT+
Member Benefits

**Find out more at
UnionPlus.org/AFT**



February is Black History Month. For lesson plans, activities, handouts, games/puzzles for all ages, many with a review, go to www.sharemylesson.com. If you have not registered, do so to use the site. Registration is free.

Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by black Americans and a time for recognizing the central role of African Americans in U.S. history. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating black history.



Did You Know ?

February was chosen as the month to observe Black history because it is the birth month of abolitionist and writer Frederick Douglass (Feb. 14) and President Abraham Lincoln (Feb. 12).

President Barack Obama is also a Grammy award winner. His audio books, *Dreams from My Father* and *The Audacity of Hope*, won Best Spoken Word Album in 2008.

Herbie Hancock, twelve time Grammy Award Winner, Oscar Winner and Kennedy Center Honoree was born in Chicago. Herbie was a child piano prodigy who performed a Mozart piano concerto with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at age 11. In 2007, Hancock's *River: The Joni Letters* won the Grammy Award for Album of the Year, making Hancock the first jazz musician to receive this honor in 44 years.

Shonda Rhimes, producer and writer, was born in Chicago, lived in University Park and attended Marion Catholic High School in Chicago Heights, Illinois. Her credits include *Grey's Anatomy*, *Scandal*, *Private Practice*, *How to Get Away with Murder* and *Introducing Dorothy Dandridge*.

MONDAY— FEBRUARY 8—LUNAR NEW YEAR

A celebration of many Asian cultures, Lunar New Year is a time for special foods, gifts, rituals, and family gatherings.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9—MARDI GRAS

Mardi Gras, also known as Fat Tuesday or Shrove Tuesday, is the last day of feasting before Lent begins on Ash Wednesday.



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14—VALENTINE'S DAY

Celebrates the idea of romantic love.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15—PRESIDENTS' DAY

Honors all past presidents of the United States of America.

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



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