

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

WSTU November Calendar

11/7—571 Legislative Breakfast - Oak Brook
 11/7-8—IFT ULI— Westmont.
 11/11—Deadline for registering for 571's Working with the Medically Fragile Child Workshop
 11/13—Deadline for registering for the MyIFT Training Workshop
 11/15—Deadline for filing IRS forms for Councils that closed their books in June
 11/16—Working with the Medically Fragile Child Workshop - Westmont - 4:30 p.m.
 11/16—571 EB Meeting - Westmont - 6:30 p.m.
 11/19—MyIFT Training workshop - Westmont - 4:30 p.m.

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



Inside This Issue:

Attitudes Towards Public Schools	2
10th Annual Legislative Breakfast	3
Retiree News	4
Cathy's Corner	4
2016 AFT PSRP Conference	5
WSTU Pre-Meeting Workshops	5
PSRP Day	6

Igniting Member Engagement

by
Jane Russell



You are a Union member, as am I. How can we endure in these troubled times when the governor of Illinois, as well as many others with deep purses, are trying to reduce and diminish our strength? Simple, just light the flame and do your part to be engaged.

Being engaged in our Union means there are many opportunities for which you and your Union sisters and brothers can take advantage, both to become a stronger Union member as well as building your Council. Most of these opportunities require a small amount of your time. Consider the following:

- (1) Participate in your Council**—Attend meetings and/or social events, participate on a Union committee or be a Union mentor to a new hire.
- (2) Run for office**—either as a council officer or building representative, on your local school board or city council. This opportunity is challenging, and there is a definite time commitment. The IFT can offer training on how to be a successful candidate. However, you can provide your perspective, especially about being a Union worker.
- (3) Be politically active**—Call or e-mail your Illinois Senator or Representative often. There is much at stake without a State budget at this time for which you have valuable insight because you see and work with kids and their families every day that are being hurt by the lack of funding. Calling or e-mailing takes only a few minutes of time. For those more interested in having a longer conversation, call the local legislative office and make an appointment to talk with your Senator or Representative. Generally the legislators are welcoming and are equally interested in what you have to say. Ask a few of your colleagues to join you. We understand the issues and can talk from first-hand experience.
- (4) Be a convention delegate**—There are three Union conventions in 2016 for which you can add your name as a nominee. In March, Local 571 will have its convention in Westmont. In July, the AFT convention will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and in October, the IFT will hold its triennial convention in St. Louis, Missouri. You will come away with a better appreciation of our Union, locally, statewide and nationally.
- (5) Join a campaign**--for local legislators and/or Congress people running for office in 2016. The time devoted could be as little as an hour in a month. You can make some phone calls, help with a mailer, have a coffee at your home, or walk the precincts on a beautiful fall day to gather signatures on petitions. It's fun to walk with a partner or friend and you meet nice people in your local area.

The 2015 PDK/Gallup Poll Report on Attitudes Toward Public Schools by Bonnie Saracco

Last May the PDK/Gallup Poll surveyed a representative sample of Americans over age 18, receiving replies from 3,499 people online and 1,001 by phone. The phone survey included questions which have been tracked for many years, while the web survey included new topics of interest. The web survey also allowed the data to be disaggregated by ethnic group and political affiliation, and found that these groups agree more than they disagree.

Americans, especially public school parents, are closely following the debate about education and have reached strong, nuanced conclusions. **The poll shows a real disconnect between what we want for our schools and what the “reformers” are giving us. AFT President Randi Weingarten summed it up, “In no uncertain terms, the public is saying end the fixation on and misuse of testing. Americans are fed up with the overemphasis and high-stakes consequences of standardized tests.”**

We still want high standards and accountability, but believe that grades, examples of student work, graduation rates, and observations written by teachers are better indicators of progress than are standardized test scores. The majority of the public opposes the use of standardized test scores in teacher evaluations. But there is still a split on whether parents should have the right to excuse their children from taking standardized tests, and most public school parents would not do so. Whether this is due to perceived negative consequences for the child was not determined.



High-stakes testing has also damaged support for the Common Core State Standards. Despite the great potential of a system of rigorous, organized, world-class standards, the CCSS are now tied in the public's mind to the punitive consequences of unfair tests. And although the CCSS is an initiative by the states, they are seen as a

federal program. This is unfortunate because only 20% of Americans want the federal government to hold schools accountable or to decide the amount of testing in schools.

Austerity and inequity are seen as the biggest problems facing our schools. The conviction that there is not enough financial support for schools has had staying power. For the tenth year in a row, the public has said that we need to make a larger investment in our schools and give students the resources they need to be successful. Every ethnic group agrees that less than half of public school students are getting a high-quality education. Weingarten summed this up also, **“Parents and the public get that what’s needed for kids to have a great education: less testing, more funding, strong curriculum, good teaching in small class sizes.”**

Igniting Member Engagement (cont.d)

- (6) **Attend a Local 571 professional development training**—We offer excellent classes and workshops now almost monthly, one to two evenings per class, most for PD hours and often graduate or undergraduate credit. These classes or workshops are either no cost to members or at minimal cost. And yes, we always have meals or refreshments! This is a great way to work on licensure renewal, get up-to-date information and share with other local members who are also interested in helping our students to gain success in their schooling. You can also request a course or class be taught and we will locate the instructors so the information delivered will be both helpful and worthwhile to enhance your job skills. For example, a group of Local 571 support staff requested additional training about working with medically fragile children in their district. The AFT instructor is a PSRP himself and has been involved in this critical area of education for many years. Watch for our workshop offerings, either in the *Union Messenger* or through your council officers disseminating that information.
- (7) **Host a community event**—which can have a significant effect with the parents and families, community members and businesses by participating with your district students, staff and administration. In the last couple of years, council members have marched in local parades, helped build a garden, collected food and/or clothing, donated to the local food pantry, held a Do-It-Yourself Event, provided books for their students through First Book, handed out school supplies or backpacks in the fall and the list goes on. The experience is often fun and rewarding, and you can see both immediate and long term results with community work.
- (8) **Join us socially**—This is the 10th year of the annual Local 571 Legislative Breakfast which is being held on November 7, 2015, in Oak Brook. This event is always free to members. (See the list of invited legislators in the article below.) Legislators will serve on one of two panels and asked the difficult questions for which we all want answers.

We hope to see each of you take advantage of an opportunity to strengthen OUR UNION. Be engaged. Join us wherever and whenever you can.

In unity,

Joan A. Russell

Local 571 President

10th Annual Legislative Breakfast

The following Illinois legislators have been invited to participate in the 10th Annual WSTU Legislative Breakfast on Saturday, November 7, 2015, at the Chicago Oak Brook Hills Resort & Conference Center. The legislators will take part in one of two panel discussions.

Illinois Senate

<u>Name</u>	<u>Party/ District</u>
Kimberly Lightford	D/4
Martin Sandoval	D/11
Steven Landek	D/12
Bill Cunningham	D/18
Mike Connelly	R/21
Tom Cullerton	D/23
Chris Nybo	R/24
Laura Murphy	D/28
Don Harmon	D/39
Christine Radogno	R/41



Photo: 9th Legislative Breakfast—2014

Illinois House of Representatives

<u>Name</u>	<u>Party/ District</u>
Chris Welch	D/7
LaShawn Ford	D/8
Mike Zalewski	D/23
Elizabeth Hernandez	D/24
Kelly Burke	D/36
Christine Winger	R/45
Debra Conroy	D/46
Patty Bellock	R/47
Camille Lily	D/78

2015-2016 Scholarship Opportunities for Local 571 Union Members and/or their Children or Legal Dependents



- **AFT (American Federation of Teachers) Robert G. Porter Scholars Program**

- ◊ Four-year, \$8,000 post-secondary **scholarship** (\$2,000 per year) to students who are dependents of AFT members
- ◊ One-time \$1,000 **grant** to AFT members to assist with their continuing education

2015-16 applications will be available mid-December on the AFT website at <http://www.aft.org/about/member-benefits/scholarships>; or by e-mailing porterscholars@aft.org; or by mailing a post card to: Porter Scholars; 555 New Jersey Ave., NW; Washington, DC 20001 (Requests must specify whether applicants are seeking the one-time grant for AFT members or the scholarship for their child.) Complete eligibility information can be found at <http://www.aft.org/about/member-benefits/scholarships/eligibility>.

- **IFT (Illinois Federation of Teachers) Scholarships** - applications for the 2016 scholarship awards will be available soon. For an application, go to <http://www.ift-aft.org/your-benefits/scholarships>.

- ◊ **IFT Carl J. Megel Special Education Scholarship** - one-time award in the amount of \$1,000 - open to children of currently employed, active members in good standing or deceased members who were in good standing at the time of death - children must be high school seniors who will graduate in 2016 - children must presently be enrolled in a special education school, class, or program - not open to students who plan to teach in special education
- ◊ **IFT Robert G. Porter Scholarship** - two \$6,000 awards (\$1,500 each year for four years) provided student is enrolled full-time at an Illinois public university and maintains a "C" cumulative average - An applicant must be the son or daughter of a currently employed, active member in good standing of the Illinois Federation of Teachers, the son or daughter of a member of an IFT retirees chapter, or the son or daughter of a deceased member who was in good standing with the Illinois Federation of Teachers at the time of death - applicants must be high school seniors with a cumulative "B" average

- **CFL (Chicago Federation of Labor) William A. Lee Scholarship Program** - ten (10) \$2,000 one-time cash awards, five random drawing and five academic - open to high school seniors who will graduate in 2016 from Chicago-area high schools whose parents are union members in good standing (THOSE INTERESTED MAY APPLY FOR ONLY ONE TYPE OF AWARD AND WILL BE DISQUALIFIED IF THEY APPLY FOR BOTH.) Send **written** request for application to William A. Lee Scholarship Committee after January 1; Chicago Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO; 130 E. Randolph St., Suite 2600; Chicago, IL 60601 (When writing for the application, indicate whether you want to participate in the academic competition or the random drawing.) **After January 1, you may also obtain the application at www.chicagolabor.org. Application deadline is March 1, 2016. Note: On the application form, the Union Affiliation is the WSTU, Local 571, IFT/AFT.**

Continued on reverse side

- **West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571**, applications for the 2016 Mary Wheeler, Jo Ann Horowitz, Maryann Karlovsky, and Julienne Phillips Memorial Scholarship for Current Educators scholarship awards will be available on the Local 571 website and Facebook. They may also be obtained by calling the Local 571 office at 630/468-4098.
 - ◇ **Mary Wheeler Scholarship** - Six \$2,500 one-time awards will be given to high school seniors graduating in 2016 whose parents or guardians are members in good standing of Local 571. Applicants must plan to continue their education in the Fall of 2016. Applications will be available at www.wstu571.org, Local 571's Facebook, or call 630-468-4098. *All application materials must be postmarked on or before March 1, 2016.*
 - ◇ **Jo Ann Horowitz Scholarship** - One \$2,500 one-time award will be given in 2016 to a current undergraduate college/university student pursuing a career in teaching or in Women's Studies. Eligible recipients include any member in good standing or the child/grandchild of a member in good standing of the WSTU, Local 571. Applications will be available at www.wstu571.org, Local 571's Facebook, or call 630-468-4098. *All application materials must be postmarked on or before March 1, 2016.*
 - ◇ **Maryann Karlovsky Scholarship** - One \$2,500 one-time award will be given to a current undergraduate college/university student pursuing a career in elementary (K-8) teacher education. Applicant must have passed the Basic Skills Test or Test of Academic Proficiency. Eligible recipients include any member in good standing or the child/children of a member in good standing of the WSTU, Local 571. Applications will be available at www.wstu571.org, Local 571's Facebook, or call 630-468-4098. *All application materials must be postmarked on or before March 1, 2016.*
 - ◇ **Julienne Phillips Memorial Scholarship for Current Educators** - One \$2,500 one-time award will be given to a current licensed educator (teacher, social worker, counselor, psychologist, speech pathologist, librarian, or nurse) who is a member in good standing of the WSTU, Local 571, and pursuing a degree, endorsement, or certificate through graduate coursework. Applications will be available at www.wstu571.org, Local 571's Facebook, or call 630-468-4098. *All application materials must be postmarked on or before March 1, 2016.*
- **AFT Union Plus Scholarship Program** - Amounts range from \$500 to \$4,000. These one-time cash awards are for study beginning in the Fall each year. Students may re-apply each year. It is open to AFT members, spouses, and dependent children. Apply online at <http://www.unionplus.org/college-education-financing/union-plus-scholarship>. **Applications must be postmarked by January 31, 2016.**



West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571

IFT, AFT, AFL-CIO
500 Oakmont Lane
P.O. Box 390
Westmont, IL 60559

Phone: 630-468-4098 Fax: 630-468-4088 E-mail: jmasterton@ift-aft.org Web: www.wstu571.org

Retiree News

The Illinois Alliance for Retired Americans, IARA, is a statewide organization with 145,000 members working together to make their voices heard in the laws, policies, politics and institutions that shape our lives. On September 15, the IARA held its annual 2015 Senior Power Lunch in Des Plaines. Retired members from unions such as AFSCME, IFT, SEIU Healthcare, UAW Region 4, CTU, United Steelworkers (SOAR), Workers United and community organizations and their guests rounded out the crowd of nearly 120.

Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, CD9, reviewed a list of senior programs that Congress would like to either reduce or dismantle. Congresswoman Schakowsky also introduced one of her Congressional colleagues and candidate for the U.S. Senate from Illinois, Tammy Duckworth. Congresswoman Duckworth was given the Jerry Prete Award for her work on not only veteran's but family and senior issues. The program would not be complete without an outstanding speaker who always excites the crowd, William McNary, Co-Director of Citizen Action/Illinois.

Local 571 Retiree Council members had an opportunity to discuss issues prior to the luncheon.



Pictured (l->r): Lee Stephens, Dee Pospishil (Retirees Council Secretary), Phyllis Meade (Retirees Council President), Nancy Calkins and Field Service Director Tom Smith.

Cathy's Corner

This is a new addition to the newsletter. 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.



The Language Police by Diane Ravitch



Have you ever seen a student pick up a basal reader to read just for fun? Neither have I. Other than as picture books, why are so many of these mind-numbingly dull?

Diane Ravitch answers this question in *The Language Police: How Pressure Groups Restrict What Students Learn*. Ravitch is a top education historian, Brookings Institution Nonresident Senior Fellow, and was Assistant Secretary of Education for George H.W. Bush. She has made numerous presentations at AFT conferences and conventions, and has authored eleven books.

Ravitch explains that publishers self-censor because textbooks must be adopted by big states to be most profitable. With Texas on the right, and California on the left, there is a long list of topics, words, and phrases that must be avoided. Excerpts from longer texts must also be scrubbed of them. Whole-grains breads are okay, sweet rolls are out. Landlord is sexist, owner is acceptable. Ravitch lists the forbidden material for 31 disturbingly hilarious pages.

My favorite part of the book is *The Atkinson-Ravitch Sampler of Classic Literature*, which suggests engaging classics that don't fit these guidelines. From *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (Peter gets away with it) to *The Great Gatsby* (too much partying), these are worth teaching, unabridged.

Reviewer: Bonnie Saracco

2016 AFT Paraprofessionals & School Related Personnel and Higher Education Conference

**March 31—April 3, 2016
Bally's Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada**

Local 571 PSRP (Support Staff) Union members interested in attending the conference should understand and abide by the following.

- ✓ The Local has budgeted to send up to ten (10) Union members to the 2016 AFT PSRP/Higher Education Conference at Bally's Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, which will convene March 31—April 3, 2016.
- ✓ Attendees will be reimbursed a total of up to \$1,275 (with receipts).
- ✓ A PSRP Council member wishing to attend should complete the **application***, and make sure it is in the Local 571 office by **4:00 p.m., December 7, 2015**. Applications received after that will not be considered. There is a section on the application which the Council President has to complete.
- ✓ Selection of attendees will be made by the Local 571 PSRP Committee on December 7, and attendees will be announced at the 571 House of Representatives meeting on that day.
- ✓ Attendees will be selected using the following criteria:
 - Level of participation in their Council,
 - Recommendation of their Council President, and
 - Level of participation in Local, State, and/or National PSRP committee (s).
- ✓ After attending the conference, attendees will be asked to write an article about the conference for an issue of the *Union Messenger* or make a report to the Local 571 House of Representatives.

*** The Local 571 application for the conference can be found on our website (www.wstu571.org), from your Council leaders, or at the Local 571 office. Call 630/468-4098 or e-mail Judy Jennings at jjennings@ift-aft.org for an application.**

West Suburban Teachers Union Pre-Meeting Workshops

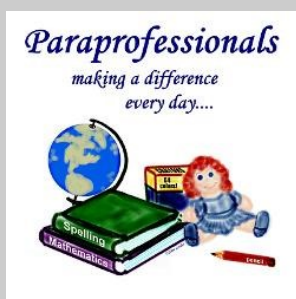
The following pre-meeting workshops were requested by our members and are open to all Local 571 members. Each one will begin at 4:30 p.m. and end at 6:00 p.m. There is no charge, and a light dinner will be served. Some of the workshops award professional development units.

Please contact Judy Jennings by phone at 630-468-4098 or e-mail at jjennings@ift-aft.org by the deadline dates listed in the table.

<i>Date of Workshop</i>	<i>Workshop</i>	<i>Deadline for Reservations</i>
11/16/2015	Working with the Medically Fragile Child	11/11/2015
12/7/2015	Using Social Media In and Out of the Classroom	12/2/2015
TBA	Watch future issues of the <i>Union Messenger</i> and the Local 571 website (wstu571.org) for 2016 pre-meeting workshops.	TBA

Wednesday– November 18th is PSRP Day

The third Wednesday in November is "PSRP Day in Illinois." On this day we recognize the more than 100,000 dedicated paraprofessionals and school related personnel, (PSRP) who provide essential services in classrooms, offices, cafeterias and school buses.



A big thank you to our teacher aides, security staff, secretaries, clerks, bus drivers, lunch-room monitors, IT personnel and other dedicated support staff.



Here's one more thing union families can share.

Plan ahead with a mortgage from Union Plus. The Union Plus Mortgage program with financing provided by Wells Fargo Home Mortgage is one of some 40 benefits available to help union members. The program is exclusively for union members, their parents and children, with benefits that include mortgage hardship assistance. A Union Plus Mortgage is long-term protection for everything your home means to you.



A Union of Professionals
AFT +
Member Benefits

Learn more at
UnionPlus.org/AFTMortgage

Wells Fargo Home Mortgage is a division of Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. © 2015 Wells Fargo Bank N.A. All rights reserved. NMLSR ID 399801

Celebrate Halloween–Saturday–October 31

Carving pumpkins into jack-o'-lanterns is a popular Halloween tradition that originated hundreds of years ago in Ireland. Back then, however, jack-o'-lanterns were made out of turnips or potatoes; it wasn't until Irish immigrants arrived in America and discovered the pumpkin that a new Halloween ritual was born.

According to the University of Illinois, 90 percent of the pumpkins grown in the United States are raised within a 90-mile radius of Peoria, Illinois.



What's Missing from the Messenger?



Email your news and thoughts 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