

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

# Union Messenger

## "A Union of Professionals"

### WSTU November Calendar

**11/4**— Election Day  
**11/12**—Deadline for registration for 571's PARCC Testing Workshop  
**11/15**—Deadline for filing IRS forms for Councils that closed their books in June  
**11/15-16**—IFT ULI— Westmont  
**11/17**—PARCC Testing Workshop-4:30 pm. Westmont  
**11/17**—571 EB Mtg.-Westmont-6:30 p.m.

### Union Messenger

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 Alice Kautsky, Vice President  
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 571 Union Messenger Editor



### Inside This Issue:

Now It's Time to Vote

Legislative Breakfast 2-3

Legislative Breakfast 4

Pictures

Vote Early and Win! 5

Retirees Corner 6

## Now It's Time to Vote



First, a big thank you to all of the West Suburban Teachers Union members and their family members who have supported the IFT endorsed candidates by calling from a Westmont phone bank or joining labor walks on the weekends.

Phone banking began in late August and walks for candidates began in early September. Throughout the state, thousands of IFT members have joined together to provide voter registration, absentee mail-in ballot information, canvassing and candidate literature drops and eventually get-out-the vote.

If you haven't already requested and received your absentee mail-in ballot, then visit an early voting location where you can vote from Monday, October 20 through Saturday, November 1, 2014. Most early voting locations are open at 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.

or later. Early voting locations can be accessed through your county's election authority or village/city hall. If you are not yet registered to vote, you can still register and vote on Election Day, November 4.

Again, your **Local Election Authority** has information about all of the above. It is easier now than ever to vote in Illinois for this important election. Take advantage of the opportunity. You can even access a sample ballot from your local election authority. In elections throughout history, we have seen how close a final vote count can be. Your vote definitely counts.

At the top of the ballot are five referenda and proposed changes in the IL Constitution. The IL Secretary of State has sent a blue booklet to everyone describing the ballot initiatives. Review the information and be ready to vote for each of these.

With members and their families voting, we can succeed in getting the right candidates elected. Vote!

*Jane A. Russell*

Please vote for the following IFT and Local 571 endorsed candidates:

#### U.S. Senate

Richard Durbin

#### U.S House of Representatives

Bobby Rush CD 1  
 Luis Gutierrez CD 4  
 Mike Quigley CD 5  
 Tammy Duckworth CD 8  
 Jan Schakowsky CD 9  
 Bill Foster CD 11

#### State of Illinois

Governor Pat Quinn/Lt. Gov. Paul Vallas  
 Attorney General Lisa Madigan  
 IL Secretary of State Jesse White  
 IL Comptroller Judy Barr Topinka  
 IL Treasurer Mike Frerichs

#### Illinois Senate

Steven Landek SD 12  
 Bill Cunningham SD 18  
 Suzanne Glowiak SD 24  
 Don Harmon SD 39

#### Illinois House of Representatives

Chris Welch D 7  
 LaShawn Ford D 8  
 Lisa Hernandez D 24  
 Kelly Burke D 36  
 Jenny Burke D 45  
 Debra Conroy D 46  
 Camille Lilly D 78

## Ninth Annual Legislative Breakfast

by Bonnie Saracco

The West Suburban Teachers Union held its Ninth Annual Legislative Breakfast on September 27, at the Doubletree Hotel in Oak Brook. A packed house heard from Governor Pat Quinn, Congressman Mike Quigley, state legislators, and labor leaders.

Local 571 President Jane Russell began the morning by stating that IFT members are a force in Illinois elections because we work to support IFT-endorsed candidates and, most importantly, we come out and vote for them.

Toby Trimmer, IFT Director of Political Activities, introduced keynote speaker Governor Pat Quinn by pointing out that this election is a choice between Wall Street and Main Street, and that Quinn inherited an ethically-challenged state, which also is the nation's fifth largest economy. This election is a choice between "billionaires who want to ruin our communities and a guy who really does wear a \$17 watch."

Governor Quinn started with a reference to the inspirational Jackie Robinson West's Little League World Series Championship. He said that just as their coaches worked tirelessly for the love of the game and the development of young people, teachers also work tirelessly for the love of education and the development of students. He reminded us that his opponent does not appreciate us and wants to take away our collective bargaining rights. Rauner has even stated that teachers are 20% overpaid!

Quinn stated his core beliefs. He said everyone deserves decent health care, people who work forty hours a week should not live in poverty, we need to invest in early childhood education because it pays dividends for a lifetime, we must tax at adequate levels, and democracy requires lifelong learning in the citizenry.

Quinn has a long history of political activism, starting with his work with the Citizens Utility Board, which he began with the help of teachers. His Illinois MAP Scholarships have helped 140,000 Illinois students go on to higher education. These recipients do well and stay in Illinois. He proposes the "millionaire tax" to put revenue directly into education. He concluded, "We need to make our country more like Finland, which honors the vocation of teachers." Marcia Campbell, IFT Secretary/Treasurer, spoke next,

saying that on the day after the election each one of us needs to be able to say, "I did everything in my power to make sure it is not Governor Rauner. If we don't, we will spend the rest of our professional lives trying to undo the damage."

Chicago Federation of Labor Secretary/Treasurer Robert Reiter, Jr. reminded us that Rauner clouted his daughter into Walter Payton College Prep but wants to rob Illinois children of the quality education that will give them access to the middle class. He said that Rauner's phony wearing of work clothes in his ads is offensive to men and women who do the work which keeps our state livable.

*Breakfast*

The participants in our first legislative panel were IL Senator Tom Cullerton (D) District 23, IL Representative LaShawn Ford (D) District 8, and IL Representative Dennis Reboletti (R) District 45. They answered Toby Trimmer's questions about schooling choices

for their own children, the SB16 proposed changes to the school funding formula, an elected school board for Chicago, pensions, and where they would make investments in our state.

The pension conversation was especially interesting. The legislators were asked what is the next step if, as is expected, the judiciary rules that the present "reform" is unconstitutional.

Ford said that we have to safeguard retirees' benefits and increase revenues through more jobs. Cullerton said that labor-backed SB2404 would have passed and that a fair tax would also help. Reboletti said that 100% funding is not necessary and that 85% is more realistic, and proposed using obligation bonds which will not allow funds to be misappropriated.

Aviva Bowen, IFT Director of Communications, said defeating Rauner is both critical and doable. She introduced her former boss, Congressman Mike Quigley, who once told her "Public service is the rent we pay for a room on Earth."

Continued on next page

## Ninth Annual Legislative Breakfast contd.

by Bonnie Saracco

### Breakfast

Congressman Quigley talked about his priorities and the dysfunction in Congress. He related the challenge of dealing with the mindset of many Congressional Republicans, including Speaker Boehner, who actually do not believe in climate change or evolution. He said that in the current Republican Party "It's not the tail of the dog wagging the dog, it's the tip of the tail that doesn't like government at all." He tells these members to remember to thank the government for their safety every time they fly or eat.

As the only Illinois Congressman on the Appropriations Committee, Quigley has a major goal to make Illinois less of a donor state. He said that Congress needs to pass and execute budgets rather than operate by continuing resolutions, to shift away from needless expenditures such as rehabbing bombs that the military does not even want, and to increase funds for education. He concluded by stating that government should not be making a profit on student loans, and that their crushing costs must be addressed. He emphasized that the loans taken on by students at for-profit universities should be especially scrutinized because they often "boomerang back home" to students who are left without degrees or marketable skills.

Our second legislative panel consisted of IL Representative Kelly Burke (D) 36<sup>th</sup> District, IL Senator Don Harmon (D) 39<sup>th</sup> District, IL Senator Dan Kotowski (D) 28<sup>th</sup> District, and IL Senator Kimberly Lightford (D) 4<sup>th</sup> District. The topics of Toby Trimmer's questions to this panel included pensions and the fair tax.

Regarding pensions, Harmon apologized for the delay in dealing with the problem, "which has played politics with your peace of mind." He said that SB2404 is a compromise that would have brought substantial savings. Kotowski said that he had wanted to move the question forward, that we can cut costs, and if we sold bonds for the pension we could yield \$1.2 billion. Lightford voted against SB1 because it would hurt teachers and retirees. She said she would not vote for any bill for which teachers were not at the table. She also said that we must generate more revenue and do a better job of inclusion. Burke said that we must ensure benefits for each person and can cut spending elsewhere.

All four legislators support a progressive income tax. Harmon was its sponsor when the bill was introduced in the IL Senate, Kotowski reminded us that we have fewer state workers per capita than any other state and that the IL budget is already "cut to the bone." Lightford reminded us to vote for the progressive tax in the upcoming referendum and to shift the system away from hitting the poor the hardest. Burke said we should earmark the increased dollars from a progressive tax to education, and to lower the sales tax.

The panel responded to a final question about what is positive in our state. Harmon said that our financial house is getting better and that we are now paying for current obligations out of current revenues. Kotowski said that he is proud of programs such as the MAP Scholarship and that we need to attack our backlog of bills and bring them to a reasonable level. Lightford said that although gridlock has disrupted the work of the General Assembly, it is cooperating better and making progress. She believes that fairer education funding and an increased minimum wage are priorities, and is proud of our excellent state school report card system. Burke said that the legislature is working together better now, cited the strength to our economy of Illinois agriculture, and said it is good that the graduates of Illinois' excellent state colleges want to stay in Illinois.

The success of our Legislative Breakfast is due to the hard work and talent of our Legislative Breakfast Committee. We are already planning and looking forward to our 2015 Tenth Annual Legislative Breakfast.



Indian Springs retirees, Nancy Calkins (l) and Phyllis Meade (r) had an opportunity to talk to Governor Pat Quinn as he greeted other members of the Indian Springs Council.



## Ninth Annual Legislative Breakfast



Both retired and current Rosemont Council members (l>r), Bonnie Saracco, Cathy Pope and Mary Houston enjoyed the 9th Legislative Breakfast.



WSTU President Jane Russell strongly encourages the breakfast attendees to vote early in the November 4, 2014 general election.



Retirees (l>r) Al Popowitz and Bob Kozlowski, discuss the upcoming gubernatorial election with other Leyden Council members Bill Mitchell and his wife, Kathy Mitchell from McHenry Local 1642, and Council President, Steve Marten



The legislators answer a question posed by moderator Toby Trimmer who asked where their children attend school and why the choice was made to attend that school.



The second legislative panel posed for a picture after the question/answer session. Present were (l>r) Senator Dan Kotowski, Representative Kelly Burke, Senator Kimberly Lightford and Senator Don Harmon.



Franklin Park Custodian Council President, Craig Miller, was able to spend a few moments with Governor Pat Quinn.



IFT's Toby Trimmer, breakfast Master of Ceremonies, warmly greets the governor as he approaches the stage.



Over 170 Local 571 members and guests listened carefully to questions being asked and the responses of the legislative panel members



Governor Pat Quinn extols the virtues of teachers and other education workers, thanking them for their work and dedication to Illinois children and students.

Photo credit belongs to IFT Communications Aviva Bowen and Amy Excell

## Vote Early and Win! Walk or Call and Win!

Local 571 is announcing a plan to provide a bonus to some members who engage in the political process by voting early, participating in labor walks, and working in the phone banks. The officers and staff of Local 571 are going to provide a limited number of gift certificates and bottles of adult beverages to some of the members who engage in the aforementioned activities. This is how it will work:

- Early voting starts on October 20. When you vote early, take the “I voted” sticker and place it on the tear-off form at the bottom of this page. Complete the information on the form, and send it to the Local, or give it to your Council President to bring to the Local by November 3, 2014. Names will be placed in a container and winners will be selected at random after the election.
- If you vote by mail complete the form below, and return it with verification that you voted via mail by November 3, 2014.
- One of the gifts referenced above will be given to the 571 member who completes the most hours on the phone bank, and one is for the 571 member who compiles the greatest number of hours in labor walks. The winners will be determined after the election.

This election is crucial. The “educational world” as we know it could be radically altered by the results of this election. Member participation at all levels is essential to prevent “Wisconsin type” attacks on schools, education workers, and their unions. If you walk, if you talk, and if you vote early in this electoral process, the Local wants to say “thanks” in a small way, enabling a few of you to receive gift certificates to Barnes and Noble or chocolate covered bottles of wine.

Detach and send to Local 571

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### **VERIFICATION OF EARLY VOTING:**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS (Street and

City): \_\_\_\_\_

COUNCIL: \_\_\_\_\_ BUILDING: \_\_\_\_\_

\*VERIFICATION OF VOTING BY MAIL IS ATTACHED.

**By November 3, return to:**

West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571

500 Oakmont Lane

Westmont, IL 60559

Affix proof of  
early voting sticker

## Retirees Corner



A crowded room filled with WSTU retirees posed several questions for the IFT President and Administrators

WSTU Retiree Council members welcomed 15 newly retired members on September 9 in Westmont to the annual luncheon attended by over 80 retiree members. A short business meeting was conducted by Retiree Council President Phyllis Meade and Secretary-Treasurer Dee Pospishil. An enthusiastic discussion followed a presentation by IFT President Dan Montgomery and Aviva Bowen, IFT Director of Communications and Lorenzo McDonald, IFT Director for Organizing and Community Engagement. The IFT officers and Administrators spoke of the importance of voting for Governor Pat Quinn in the upcoming election.


On September 10, the IL Alliance for Retired Americans held its annual 2014 Senior Power Lunch in Des Plaines. Retired members from several unions and community organizations and their guests rounded out the crowd of nearly 120. Candidates for state comptroller Judy Barr Topinka and Sheila Simon both discussed the importance of the senior vote in this election. Joe Costigan, Director of the Illinois Department of Labor, introduced his good friend Katie Jordon who was given the Jerry Prete Award for her continued work in the labor movement. Jordan is the President of Workers United International Association of Retirees, the President of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, Chicago Chapter, and Treasurer for the IL Alliance for Retired Americans.

Right: IARA Senior Power lunch attendees, (l>r) Bonnie Saracco, Dee Pospishil, Phyllis Meade and Julie Phillips, showed appreciation for the speakers with a round of applause.




IFT President Dan Montgomery, seated between 571 Retiree Council officers Phyllis Meade (left) and Dee Pospishil (right) outlines the efforts of the IFT work for the Governor's race.





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 **Through November 3, 2014, enter to win a \$1,500 stipend to attend an annual meeting of the NCSAS, NCTE, NSTA, and NCTM at ShareMyLesson! The website at which to enter is <http://biy.ly/ICyTBPG>.**



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- Term Life Insurance from MetLife\*
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- Pet Insurance



Learn more at [UnionPlus.org/AFTInsurance](http://UnionPlus.org/AFTInsurance)

\*Not available in all areas. See your local Union Plus office for more information about these plans.

### What's Missing from the Messenger?



E-mail your thoughts to Kyra Lopez at [kyra\\_lopez@hotmail.com](mailto:kyra_lopez@hotmail.com).

**We're on the Web!!!**  
[www.wstu571.org](http://www.wstu571.org)

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