

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

WSTU October Calendar

- 10/1—ISTW Prof. Develop. Workshop - 4:30 p.m.
- 10/1—Home Mortgage Workshop - Westmont - 4:30 p.m.
- 10/2—Deadline for registering for the 571 Building Rep. Workshop
- 10/2—Deadline for registering for the CCSS & Support Grieving Students Workshops
- 10/7—571 Building Rep. Wkshp. - Westmont - 4:30 p.m.
- 10/8—Common Core State Standards Wkshp. Language Arts/Literacy - Westmont
- 10/14—Deadline for registering for the Nuts & Bolts of Council Leadership Workshop
- 10/15—Deadline for filing IRS forms for Councils that closed their books in May
- 10/15—Supporting Grieving Students Workshop - Westmont - 4:30 p.m.
- 10/19—571 Nuts & Bolts of Council Leadership Workshop -Westmont - 4:30 p.m.
- 10/19—571 HOR Mtg. - Westmont - 6:30 p.m.
- 10/19—Deadline for submitting names for the 571 Legislative Breakfast
- 10/23-24—IFT PSRP/Public Employees Conference

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
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- Judy Jennings, Office Manager
- Julie Masterton, Office Secretary
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- Robin Hancock,
571 Union Messenger Editor



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Why Union?

by
Jane Russell



My twins are 29 years old this year and have learned much about the Union through me. In their twin stroller at the age of 3 or 4 years old, we marched and strolled together with the airline attendants' union at O'Hare Airport who had a solid disagreement with airline management at the time. We walked beside Margaret Blackshere, the IFT Legislative Director, who eventually became the President of the Illinois AFL-CIO. Fast forward a few years and my son played his trombone along with his college roommate who played the saxophone in their rendition of the Star Spangled Banner when the IFT/Local 571 Westmont offices were dedicated 10 years ago. My daughter joined us on that

occasion and others as well. Although neither had held a union job, until recently, both were well aware of the unions where they worked. My daughter worked in reservations at a small hotel in downtown Chicago where the hospitality staff were all members of UNITE-HERE. She loved working with the staff, knew them all by name and appreciated their good work. Last spring my son took a position as a special education teacher's aide and he is now an IEA member. We reviewed his first collective bargaining agreement together.

As a new teacher I was not very knowledgeable about unions as my dad was a manager at a steel fabricating plant in Chicago who employed non-union workers. I think my dad was a fair manager, but those above him seemed to move workers in and out of the plant jobs fairly frequently. Even though there were safety locks on all of the machinery, workers were hurt, including my dad who lost a finger in a machine accident.

I guess I wasn't sure what to expect when I was asked to join the Union. I did feel, however, that I had a voice, even though I could have been overlooked as a new, female chemistry teacher. Members of the science department, all union members, mentored and nurtured me and helped me through my first semester of teaching. I never felt silenced or that my voice was unimportant.

My first real "run-in" with a misrepresentation of the union/board contract was when my principal denied my reimbursement for tuition of a college course I had taken over the summer. This was a benefit in the collective bargaining agreement at that time. It was rectified without filing a grievance with a quick call to the Union President who enlightened the principal that course reimbursement was part of the contract. Joining the union was a good decision after all.

My children have known about the Union because they knew my story, and our family benefitted from me being in the Union. My children have embraced the mission of union workers as the Union has been good for them and our family.

What Really Matters in College and How Teachers Really View their Careers

by
Bonnie Saracco

Brandon Busteed, Executive Director, Education and Workforce Development, Gallup, presented *What Makes Students Successful: The Right Focus of School Improvement* at AFT TEACH 2015. His presentation concluded with the Gallup findings about what is most important in a college education and how U.S. teachers view their careers.

Gallup's research focused on five components of well-being, which apply to both of these topics. The components are **a sense of purpose, meaningful social relationships, financial security, physical health, and being part of a community.**

Satisfaction with these well-being indicators can be seen as the ultimate goal of an effective college education. By these criteria, Gallup found **NO** difference between highly-selective and less-selective colleges or between public and private colleges.

Gallup also uncovered six **"really essential elements"** of an effective college education. Three of these are about emotional support, and three are about experiential and deep learning.

The emotional support factors are having at least one professor who made the student excited about learning, at least one professor who cared about the student **"as a person,"** and at least one mentor who encouraged the student's hopes and dreams. It is striking that each category only required one such person to make the difference.

The most important experiential and deep learning factors are a long-term project which took a semester or more to complete, a job or internship which applied what was learned in the classroom, and involvement in extra-curricular activities.



What Gallup discovered about how U.S. teachers view their careers is both heartening and troubling. Teaching is still experienced as a great job. In terms of sense of purpose and well-being, only physicians report higher life satisfaction than teachers. And if you remove the factor of financial security (physicians' incomes average three times that of teachers), teachers' life satisfaction ranks highest of all careers. But Gallup points out that we don't know if this is because teaching causes well-being, or if people with high well-being choose to become teachers.

There is also some really bad news regarding teachers' reporting of stress and lack of respect. In response to the question **"Did you experience stress during a lot of the day yesterday?"** **46% of teachers answered yes, sharing the unenviable top spot with nurses.** And Gallup reports that teachers rank "dead last" in agreeing with the statement "My opinions are valued at work."

The 2015 Gallup and Phi Delta Kappa Poll results have just been released. We'll look at them next month.

Announcing Local 571's Tenth Legislative Breakfast

Join us for the West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571 Tenth Legislative Breakfast at the Hilton Oak Brook Hills Resort and Conference Center, 3500 Midwest Road, Oak Brook, Illinois, on Saturday, November 7, 2015.

- Legislators from federal, state, and local offices are invited.
- A plated breakfast will be served.
- A gift-card raffle will take place. (Proceeds will go to WSTU scholarships and COPE.)



- **Interested individuals should contact their council presidents by October 8 in order to attend. Seating is limited.**

HOME MORTGAGE WORKSHOP



Home financing benefits designed with union families in mind

- Special benefits for union members, their parents and children
- A wide range of financing options from Wells Fargo Home Mortgage

Home Mortgage Workshop

Thursday October 1, 2015 – 4:30 p.m.

Robert M. Healy Conference Center
500 Oakmont Lane
Oakmont, IL 60559

Light refreshments will be served

RSVP by September 23, if you plan to attend.
Call Judy Jennings at **630-468-4098** or email jennings@ift-aft.org



James M Jefferson
Branch Manager
847-542-4273
jim.jefferson@wellsfargo.com
NMLSR ID: 703014



Lana Paloumpis
Home Mortgage Consultant
630-730-6452
lan.a.paloumpis@wellsfargo.com
NMLSR ID: 972833

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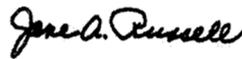
Why Union? (cont. d)

A briefing paper from the Women's Policy Research Institute released prior to Labor Day this year showed that women represented by a U.S. union earn \$212/week more than women in non-union jobs. What does that mean to a family like mine? We could pay the bills, live in a middle class suburban community, have a home in that community, and even have an opportunity to take a few family vacations together. Both children went to public schools and participated in school and community activities. Both attended the university of their choice with their higher education paid for by a college savings plan that began when they were born. We had family health insurance, and eventually I had a pension that still allows me to help my children with their bills. The \$212/week made a difference for our family.

Recently I met with some Local 571 members who were unhappy with their working conditions. I was told that they no longer trusted the Union, pointing the finger at me and IFT staff. I understand their deep disapproval for some of their work conditions, but I alone cannot help them; I am only one person. We are the Union. A union by definition is an organized association of workers formed to protect and further their rights and interests. Together they can work to change the things that they do not like. Sometimes change, even with the help of the Union, does not come quickly, but change will come. I have seen the Union be a positive influence for members, for our families, and especially the students with whom we work.

I will continue to work for better working conditions and benefits for all workers, women and men alike. But I cannot do this alone. **Without each other we are not a Union.** Let's continue to organize and fight to bring the union advantage to more workers, to help strengthen our communities, and for fairness and opportunity for all.

In unity,



Local 571 President

Retiree News

The annual **Local 571 Retirees Council** luncheon in Westmont on September 9, 2015, hosted 80 attendees including 18 newly retired members. The business meeting was chaired by President Phyllis Meade and Secretary Treasurer Dee Pospishil. There was an opportunity to catch up with old friends and make new ones before the program which featured IFT Director of Political Activities Toby Trimmer. Trimmer discussed the lengthened 2014-15 legislative session and the apparent impasse to pass a 2016 state budget. He said it was acceptable to discuss the "P" word (**pensions**) in mixed company for all of the reasons that we



Former retirees from Indian Springs, Dist. 103, greet and welcome the newly retired Local 571 Retiree Council members.

L->R: Nancy Keller, Beverly Fortney, Kathy Drenth (new retiree), Marge Sipla (new retiree) and Barb O'Connor.

know and understand which was backed up by the Illinois Supreme Court decision in late spring. Toby also gave well-deserved kudos to his staff from the IFT Department of Political Activities who follow well over 400 education bills during the legislative session and find critical information about exposing some of the choices the Governor has made. Case in point was the new Illinois Superintendent for the Illinois State Board of Education who received an extra "stipend" to help make up the difference when he was able to receive his Tier II pension. Trimmer remarked that all Tier II members should have the same opportunity provided them as was the new school superintendent.



Toby Trimmer expresses concern about the prolonged legislative session.

GO GREEN

By
Phyllis Meade, Local 571 Retirees Council President

In our effort to help Local 571 "go green," we would like all retiree members to consider whether you would rather receive your copy of the *Union Messenger* via email or continue to have it mailed to you.

Considering that we have over 700 members in our Retirees Council, emailing would definitely be a big cost savings for our Local. If you are willing to receive future copies of the *Union Messenger* via email, please email **Judy Jennings at jjennings@ift-aft.org**.

Thank you.

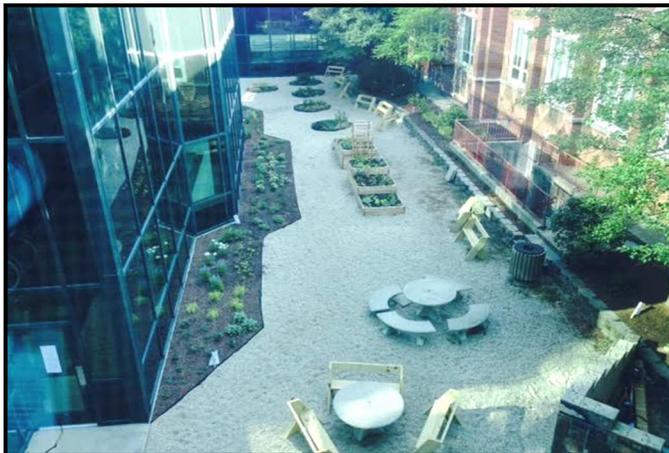
Elmhurst and York Community High School Garden Clubs Transform Unused Space

Every summer, Local 571 members continue the community-building work that occupies them during the school year. They roll up their sleeves, put on bug-spray, and join their neighbors to make the world a little better. Whether outside the U.S. on mission trips, or in the deep woods helping summer camps run, our members demonstrate how being an educational professional is a 12-month a year job.

This summer, teachers from the Elmhurst Teachers' Council partnered with PT Holdings of Addison, The National Gardening Association, and the Elmhurst and York Community High School Garden Clubs to renew existing gardens and transform unused spaces into garden classrooms and growing spaces. ETC members Lauren Yun and Andrew Bendelow, who sponsor York's Garden Club, were happy to devote their time and energy to a project that, according to Bendelow, "will yield on-going learning opportunities, season after growing season."



This is what the York's courtyard looked like before the project.



The resulting Courtyard Garden Learning Space includes drought-and-disease-resistant native species, and 12 Aldo Leopold benches for classroom use.

(Photos courtesy of the York Community High School Garden Club)



Workers from Addison-based PT Holdings join with community group members to build the raised beds and Aldo Leopold benches that helped transform an under-used space into a flourishing place for learning.

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 Smartest Kids in the World and How They Got That Way by Amanda Ripley



In pressure-cooker South Korea, students sleep at their desks on the small pillows they have brought to school. This is because they have been up all night at *hagwons*, cram schools that South Korean police raid to try to enforce a 10 p.m. study curfew.

In Poland, when 95% of a math class fails an exam, there is not one complaint about the teaching or the test. Students simply believe that they have not worked hard enough and buckle down to do better next time.

In Finland, students learn in classrooms without smart boards, iPads, or computers. Their classrooms still have desks nailed in rows and blackboards. The astonishing success of Finnish students is due to the professionalization of their teachers, who love their jobs and who enjoy the same esteem as physicians.

Amanda Ripley's *The Smartest Kids in the World and How They Got That Way* contains a wealth of fascinating insights about high school education in the world's highest-performing countries. To get an accurate view, she followed three American students as they each spent a year of high school in a high-performing country.

Ripley is honest about the drawbacks of these systems, but she states that historically, except for top-performers, American wealth has "made rigor optional." In fact, a quarter of U.S. students don't finish high school. She concludes that in an "automated, global economy, kids need to be driven." This is a provocative and eye-opening book.

Reviewer : Bonnie Saracco

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>
10/19/15	Nuts & Bolts of Council Leadership	10/14/2015
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

Union Leadership Institute

Union Leadership Institute (ULI) courses are held at the IFT Robert M. Healey Center in Westmont, IL. Most courses are held over three weekend-long sessions, and participants must attend all three sessions in order to complete the course. This year, in addition to core ULI courses, they are also offering a one-weekend session on "Childhood Health and Wellbeing: Supporting Grieving Children." *Complete 2015-16 ULI Course Descriptions are available on the IFT website (www.ift-aft.org).*

The 2015-16 ULI North training sessions will be held on the following dates:

- Fall Session: November 7-8, 2015
- Winter Session: February 6-7, 2016
- Spring Session: April 23-24, 2016

In order to register, Local 571 members must have the signature of his/her Council President on the registration form.



Here's one more thing union families can share.

Everyday savings add up with Union Plus programs. Union Plus offers exclusive discounts on a long list of home, travel, and health care products and services, available only for union members and their families. Including three credit card options from Capital One. Check our site for the card that best fits your family—and for details on the exceptional collection of discounts from Union Plus.

Learn more at UnionPlus.org/AFT



What's Missing from the Messenger?



Email your news and thoughts to Robin Hancock at: 571editor@gmail.com



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