

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

WSTU/ Jan-Feb Calendar

1/6—Ex.Bd Mtg. (5:30 p.m.—Westmont)
 2/3—HOR Mtg. (5:30 p.m. —Westmont)
 2/3—Deadline for AFT Convention delegate nominations
 2/8-9—IFT ULI (Westmont)

Union Messenger

Jane Russell, President
 Rachel Esposito, 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
 Julie Masterton, Membership Secretary
 Patty Clancy, Office Secretary
 Andrew Bendelow,
 571 Web Administrator
 Robin Hancock,
 571 *Union Messenger* Editor



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Our Union Our Future—2019 IFT Convention

On the weekend of October 18-20, 2019, in Rosemont, twenty-six WSTU delegates attended committee meetings and workshops,



voted on changes in the IFT Constitution and By-Laws, and approved 31 resolutions that are the basis for the IFT legislative platform. From the Friday evening delegate reception to the 571 delegate breakfast, COPE reception, awards and speakers, the delegates participated fully. Retiree members had the opportunity to participate in the pre-convention IFT Retiree Conference which was a new addition to the convention program.

The Local 571 delegates present were:

Jane Russell, Ranking Delegate

Frank Diebold, Leyden HS

Sandra Erickson, Retiree

Rachel Esposito, Cicero

Lola Estrada, Cicero

Kathy Fierke, Indian Springs PSRP

Angela Higgins, Proviso PSRP

Emily Ishida, Elmhurst PSRP

Alice Kautsky, Retiree

Karen Klafeta, Morton

Tony LaCivita, Morton

Carlin Martinez, Cicero

Julie McShane, Lyons

Phyllis Meade, Retiree

Mary Ellen Nawara, Indian Springs PSRP

Jon Pazol, Leyden HS

Cathy Pope, Rosemont

Dee Pospishil, Retirees

Ed Raddatz, Retirees

Maggie Riley, Proviso HS Teachers

Max Schoenberg, Elmhurst Teachers

Chris Schulz, Leyden HS

Pam Sifuentes, Retirees

Lee Stephens, Retirees

Kyle Stern, Argo HS Teachers

Marge Wunschel, Retirees

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West Suburban Teachers Union 14th Annual Legislative Breakfast By Bonnie Saracco



West Suburban Teachers Union President and IFT Secretary-Treasurer Jane Russell welcomed a packed house to our 14th annual Legislative Breakfast. Keynote speeches were given by IFT President Dan Montgomery and CTU Vice-President Stacy Davis-Gates.



IFT President Dan Montgomery in his discourse, captured the positive work of the Illinois General Assembly as well as future work that needs to be accomplished on behalf of our members and the students we teach.

Montgomery gave an overview of the legislative progress which has been achieved since Governor Pritzker took office, and of our agenda going forward. He presented a scathing appraisal of the damage done by former governor Bruce Rauner, stating that if Rauner had the support of an Illinois Republican House and Senate, he would have “made Scott Walker look like FDR”, and added that IFT worked hard to minimize his damage.

He also reported that under Governor Pritzker the General Assembly has passed gambling extensions and the legalization of marijuana, both of which will bring in increased revenue, and that it has also achieved a balanced budget with a full pension payment, a phased-in \$40,000 minimum teacher salary, and paraprofessional recall rights matching those of teachers.



President Jane Russell at the podium opened the breakfast and introduced Vice President and Legislative Breakfast Chair, Rachel Esposito.



CTU Local 1 Vice President, Stacy Davis-Gates, passionately explained what teachers and support staff wanted for their students and community and why a strike was the only way to obtain those needs.

Montgomery stressed that our most crucial goal now is the enactment of a Fair Tax for Illinois, which will be on the 2020 ballot. Because any proposed change in tax structure makes many people nervous, it is important for us to talk about the Fair Tax along the lines of fairness and Illinois’ fiscal needs. Illinois has fifteen billion dollars of unpaid bills, and a graduated income tax will allow us to pay them. A graduated income tax would also fund education and social services by having the wealthy pay their fair share.

Especially critical, is the need for increased money for higher education because its decreased funding has damaged the future of our state.



Always a fun part of the event was the bag raffle including a Fair Tax entry composed of lottery tickets. The proceeds from the sale of raffle tickets go to 571 scholarships and COPE.

In anticipation of the Chicago Teacher Union strike, Montgomery talked about the pressing needs in the Chicago Public Schools for smaller class sizes and nurses and librarians in every school. He closed by thanking us for the positive changes that our hard work has brought about in our schools and local communities.

Stacy Davis-Gates expressed appreciation for Jane Russell’s leadership, and then gave an overview of the main issues which the Chicago Teachers Union fought for in their strike. The poor conditions in the Chicago Public Schools resulted in a 94% majority vote to strike.

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West Suburban Teachers Union 14th Annual Legislative Breakfast *(cont.d from page 2)*



The members were clear about their issues, including curtailing their unpaid labor, decreasing class sizes, and putting a nurse, social worker, and librarian in every Chicago school. Davis-Gates said that, “The folks in Chicago are looking at spreadsheets and balance sheets, but not at children.” She concluded, “We have to fight to make our country and school communities better. Justice is not given. It is something we win.”

Bryen Johnson, IFT State Affiliate Political Organizer (SAPO) Director, then moderated a Congressional panel. Representative Sean Casten (D-6th District) and Representative Chuy Garcia (D-4th District) participated.

Representative Casten began by saying that we can thank Trump for two things – the “me too” movement and an increase in public engagement. He said that the present freshman class in Congress is the largest and most diverse in history. He explained that although he represents a relatively affluent district, many of his constituents have shared with him that they are “one student loan or bad doctor visit from bankruptcy.” He stated that his district is actually to the left of the Democratic party’s position on guns. He concluded that his priorities in Congress are campaign finance reform and climate change, and that he is for universal healthcare and sees several ways to accomplish it.

Representative Garcia said that their freshman class has brought about an historic sense of purpose, hope, and diversity. He talked about the impeachment investigation, and said that “Trump has attacked everyone in this room.” He is working on the Dream and Promise Act, which would allow a path to citizenship for 2.5 million of the undocumented. He is also working for a \$15 an hour federal minimum wage and legislation to allow the cannabis economy to thrive in transparency. He also talked about requiring HUD to distribute carbon-monoxide detectors to the needy, and to making transit and housing greener. He has been dedicated to healthcare for all since he worked with Dr. Quentin Young, and he supports the program proposed by Bernie Sanders.

The General Assembly panel followed moderated by IFT Director of Political Activities, Cynthia Lund. Illinois State Senator Laura Ellman (D-21) and Illinois State Representative Terra Costa-Howard (D-48) participated in this panel. Senator Ellman and Representative Costa-Howard agreed that being in the General Assembly involves long hours and is both exhausting and exhilarating. Ellman said that her main accomplishments are all that the General Assembly has been able to accomplish with Governor Pritzker, including education-based funding with more dollars for early childhood and higher education. Costa-Howard agreed, and added that there will be more progress ahead.

This year’s Legislative Breakfast was once again an informative and inspirational morning. As always, over \$1100 was raised for the Local 571 scholarship and COPE funds. Plans are already being made for our 15th Legislative Breakfast in 2020.



Bryen Johnson, (center), questioned freshmen Congressmen Jesus “Chuy” Garcia (left) and Sean Casten (right) about the last several months’ work in Congress.



State Senator Laura Ellman (left) and State Representative Terra Costa Howard, answered questions posed by Cynthia Lund (center) and those in the audience.



Over 150 Local 571 members and guests enjoyed breakfast and comradery, as well as an opportunity to meet with legislators during breakfast.

Our Union Our Future—2019 IFT Convention (cont'd from page 1)

Local 571 delegates with IFT President Dan Montgomery (back row right), IFT Secretary-Treasurer Jane Russell (front row second from right) and Rachel Esposito, IFT Vice-president (front row, right).

West Suburban Teachers Union was the convention host Local, and had the opportunity to welcome all the delegates and guests to Rosemont. Delegates reelected by acclamation were IFT President Dan Montgomery and Secretary-Treasurer Jane Russell. Stacy Davis-Gates was elected Executive Vice President by acclamation. Forty IFT vice presidents were also elected which includes Rachel Esposito as the newest Executive Board Vice President to represent Local 571. Nine Local 571 councils were awarded for their 100% membership.

In unity,

Local 571 President



American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Convention Delegates

Nominations are being accepted for delegates to the AFT Convention in Houston, Texas on July 27-30, 2020. **All Local 571 members are eligible to be nominated.**

Nominations must be printed or typed (name and Council) and received in the Local 571 office on or before February 3, 2020.

Contact Julie Masterton, jmasterton@ift-aft.org. You will be sent an acknowledgement receipt of your written nomination.

Voting for delegates will take place in the Councils in spring. For further information, refer to the August 2019 *Union Messenger* which can be found on the Local 571 website www.wstu571.org.

YOUR CHANCE TO MEET THE CANDIDATES



Regional PAC Meetings

Interviews and potential endorsement of candidates running for state legislative offices in both Cook and DuPage counties will be conducted at the Regional PAC Area G & H meetings held on Thursday, January 9, 2020 at the Robert M. Healey Conference Center, 500 Oakmont Lane, Westmont, IL 60559 (entrance D or E).

A light dinner will be served at 4:30 p.m. with the two meetings to follow.

Be part of the IFT endorsement process to meet, question and learn about the candidates for state office. In order to participate, contact Patty Clancy, pclancy@ift-aft.org or 630-468-4098 by January 7, 2020.

Union Activism Revisited

Tom White, Union Activism Revisited Coordinator



Morton East Strikers from Math Department—
Front Row (l→r): April Dawn Merrell, Ralph
Borowiak's widow, Sue, Fran Pettersen, Joe
Hanzlik, Bob Parker
Back row: Tom White, Don Ciner

Oh, what a night! On Friday, September 20, 2019, approximately 120 West Suburban Teachers Union (WSTU) members and supporters gathered to celebrate the 22-day 1969 Morton Council Teachers Union (MCTU) strike, which had taken place exactly 50 years earlier.

The event had been envisioned 5 years earlier, with comprehensive preparations taking place over the 9 months prior to the event. The highlight of the event was a 30-minute video, which included welcomes from the following union presidents: Dan Montgomery, IFT; Jane Russell, WSTU; and Tony LaCivita, Morton Council. The video was professionally filmed and edited by Robert Moriarty, with the assistance of Morton retirees Robert Bartlett and Penny Heiligenstein. Robert Moriarty, Morton Visual Arts Instructor, was recently honored as the "2019 Illinois Art Education Association Secondary Art Teacher of the Year."

The video features clips of interviews of 18 actual strike participants including the strike president, negotiators, executive board members, down to the rank and file. Everything from the actual strike vote, picketing, negotiations, returning to the classroom, courtroom drama (resulting in jail sentences and fines), through the years following the strike is relived in detail.

At the event, 37 strike participants and/or their families were presented with individualized framed copies of a resolution adopted by the IFT, WSTU and MCTU, which expressed "respect and appreciation to all of the 1969 Morton Teachers and their families who risked their livelihood 50 years ago, so that School District #201 teachers could maintain their dignity and have a collective voice in the governance of their school."



Vince LaPaglia (Morton Retiree) Norm Simone
(Strike President), Tony LaCivita (MCU President)
and Rachel Esposito (571 VP) with Dan Montgomery
(IFT President) presenting the Resolution
Certificate to Bob Steinhaus (Morton 65)



Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation to
IBEW Local 134 President, Tim Fitzgibbons
(center), who addressed the event attendees. Tim
is surrounded by Dave Verdeyen and Bob Giles
(strike negotiators), Tony LaCivita and Norm
Simone (Strike President)

In that the MCTU received strike assistance from a number of other unions, Certificates of Appreciation were presented to the following unions: IFT President Dan Montgomery; and IFT Executive Board Vice President Alice Kautsky; WSTU Vice President Rachel Esposito, accepting for Jane Russell; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 134 President Tim Fitzgibbons; Cook County College Teachers Union Local 1600 President Tony Johnston; Morton College Faculty Union, Grievance Chair Janet Crocket, accepting for Chapter Chair Michele Mohr.

The unions recognized, provided monetary support, office space as a picketing staging area, encouraged their members to join our picket lines (some even taking personal days), public relations assistance, and in the case of the Morton College Union, significant leadership guidance before, during and after the strike.

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Union Activism Revisited *(continued from page 5)*

Additionally, all of the above unions encouraged their members to attend the Morton Public School Board meeting which culminated in the School Board finally relenting to a mediated settlement; meeting attendance exceeded 1,000.

The Union Activism Revisited event would not have been possible without the assistance of the following:

IFT – Coordinated use of the Robert M. Healey Center - Dan, Vivian, Michelle, Debbie and Yolanda, et al.

WSTU* – Jane Russell, Sandy Erickson, Patty Clancy and Julie Masterton

Cicero Council of Teachers* – Rachael Esposito

Morton Council Union* – Tony LaCivita Event Planning Committee: Robert Bartlett, Gayle Benes, Sandy Erickson, Margaret Gorman, Penny Heiligenstein, Gus Jackson, Sharon Kman, Mary Rita Mitchell, Robert Moriarty, Geri Parker, Marianne Perry, Norman Simone, Tom Szot and the late Tom Rusnak.

*Additionally providing financial assistance

The Planning Committee was inspired by all of the Morton teachers past and present, and especially by the late Jerry Johnson, MCTU President Emeritus, and Tom Rusnak, departed planning committee member and Morton retiree.



Local 571 Professional Development Course—Winter 2020



Reading Comprehension Instruction *(Newly Updated)* All eight (8) sessions are on Thursdays

Dates and Times—8 sessions: February 6, 13, 20, 27; March 5, 12, 19, 26

Dinner: 4:30 p.m.—5:00 p.m. **Sessions:** 5:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.

Workshop Credit: 30 Professional Development Units

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Friday January 17, 2020

Location: Robert M. Healey Conference Center
500 Oakmont Lane
Westmont, IL 60559 (entrance D or E)

Cost: \$50 per course for members; \$100 for non-members (includes materials and a light supper)

The course description and registration form can be found on the Local 571 website

www.wstu571.org or by calling the Local 571 office (630-468-4098).

This course is for teachers and support staff. Participants earn 30 professional development units. For an additional cost of \$876.00 participants can earn two (2) Governors State University graduate credit hours or \$358.00 for two (2) Prairie State Community College undergraduate credit hours. Participants may enroll and pay for university or college credit hours at the first class session.



AFT and IFT News Releases

AFT President Randi Weingarten on House Passage of the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act

Thursday, November 21, 2019

WASHINGTON—AFT President Randi Weingarten issued the following statement on the House of Representatives' passage of the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act (*H.R. 1309*):

"Every single worker in this country should have the right to a safe and welcoming workplace, no matter what job they do. They should know their employers have done everything possible to keep them safe from violence or harm. Yet our nurses, healthcare professionals and social service workers—the people who take care of us when we need them, who have devoted their careers to looking after the aging, the sick and the injured—have no specific federal protections at work. As such, these workers face potential violence every day without adequate remedy.

"Today, the House of Representatives passed a bill to change that. The representatives sent a strong message that violence on the job is not inevitable or acceptable for the millions of healthcare professionals who provide care in our communities but increasingly find themselves subject to workplace attacks.

"In order to stop these attacks from happening, this bill would require employers to develop violence prevention plans to mitigate risk factors in healthcare facilities. The bill also creates whistleblower protections for the people who work in front-line care jobs, so they don't have to fear retaliation for speaking out against what they see in the workplace.

"I applaud Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.) for his tireless efforts to move the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act to passage. As this bipartisan legislation moves to the Senate, I strongly urge legislators to recognize that workplace safety is not a partisan issue but rather a human right."

The AFT represents 1.7 million pre-K through 12th-grade teachers; paraprofessionals and other school-related personnel; higher education faculty and professional staff; federal, state and local government employees; nurses and healthcare workers; and early childhood educators.

IFT responds to the Tribune's and ProPublica's investigative report on the use of isolated seclusion

11/20/2019

IFT President Dan Montgomery's statement responding to the Chicago Tribune's and ProPublica's investigative report on the use of isolated seclusion and ISBE's response:

"The Illinois Federation of Teachers does not support the use of isolation as a form of school discipline, and as a parent and former teacher, I was disturbed to read yesterday's report. We agree with ISBE's decision to end the practice but that in itself does not solve the problem. The IFT would like to see a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to this issue and a broader discussion about how schools can sensitively address discipline and behavior issues."

"Schools in every part of Illinois are in desperate need of supports for students such as counselors and mental health services, as well as training for teachers, staff, and school leaders who care for students each and every day. The IFT looks forward to working with ISBE and other partners to equitably address school discipline issues."

The Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) represents 103,000 teachers and paraprofessionals in PreK-12 school districts throughout Illinois, faculty and staff at Illinois' community colleges and universities, public employees under every statewide elected constitutional officer, and retirees.

NEW AFT BENEFIT: Google for Education

The AFT and Google have partnered to offer a deep discount for **AFT members only** on the cost of the **Google Certified Educator Exam**. This discount is available in a pilot program through February 2020.

Google's Tools for Educators include training on how to achieve a paperless classroom, bring meetings online, organize activities, teach online skills to students, build interactive lessons, and more!

Have you completed Google's free on-line education for using Google tools in the classroom and just want to take the exam to get certified?

AFT members only discount:

60% off \$10.00 for level 1 – your cost is \$4.00

75% off \$25.00 for level 2 – your cost is \$6.25

Visit the **AFT Members Only** site to access the discount codes when registering for the exam.

<https://www.aft.org/member-benefits>

Haven't taken the training yet? Visit the Google Teacher Center site to learn more.

Google Teacher Center: <https://teachercenter.withgoogle.com/>

Google Teacher Center Training: <https://teachercenter.withgoogle.com/training>

Things to Keep in Your Car During Winter



Ice Scraper / Snow Brush



Shovel



Gloves and Other Warm Clothing



Blanket



Flashlight



Reflector or Flares



Rock Salt, Sand, or Kitty Litter



First Aid Kit



Extra Windshield Washer Fluid



Chain or Rope



Cell Phone & Car Charger



Basic Tool Kit



Water and Non-Perishable Snacks



Sunglasses (to reduce sun glare)



Jumper Cables



Half Full Tank of Gas



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 Want To Hear From You



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

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