

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

# Union Messenger

*“A Union of Professionals”*

## May Calendar

5/6—HOR Mtg. (5:30 p.m.—  
Westmont)  
5/6—Vote on 571 proposed budget  
5/10—Registration deadline for IMRF  
Seminar  
5/14—IMRF Seminar (5:00 p.m.-  
Westmont)

## Union Messenger

Kyle Stern, President  
April Giannosa, Vice-President  
Sandra Erickson, Treasurer  
Cathleen Pope, Secretary  
Eugene Poull, Financial Secretary  
Brett Blair, Legal Defense Secretary  
Emily Moore, Cope Chair  
John Wardisiani, Cope Treasurer  
Rachel Esposito, IFT Field Service  
Director  
Max Schoenberg, IFT Field Service  
Director  
Renee Wagner, IFT Field Service  
Director  
Carolyn Wilson, Membership Support  
Staff  
Patty Clancy, Office Support Staff  
Andrew Bendelow,  
571 Web Administrator  
Robin Hancock,  
571 Union Messenger Editor



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## Getting Along

Dear Union Siblings,

In February’s Union Messenger, I wrote about the importance of setting boundaries. In this issue I hope to use the insights of Amy Gallo and Sarah Noll Wilson, two prominent voices in the world of interpersonal dynamics and communication, to share valuable insights on how to effectively deal with people with whom you disagree.



Amy Gallo, author of “Getting Along: How to Work with Anyone (Even Difficult People),” is an expert in conflict resolution and communication. According to Amy Gallo it is essential to identify the root cause of the problem and approach the situation with empathy and understanding. She suggests that one should try to understand the other person’s perspective and avoid making assumptions. According to Gallo, there are eight types of difficult coworkers:

1. **The Passive-Aggressive:** They appear to comply with the needs of others but passively resist following through.
2. **The Insecure Boss:** They might be a micromanager who drives you up a wall with incessant nitpicking or a paranoid meddler who makes you question your every move.
3. **The Pessimist:** They constantly point out all the ways something can fail and never seem to find anything positive to say.
4. **The Victim:** They feel like everyone is out to get them and don’t take accountability for their actions.
5. **The Know-It-All:** They’re convinced that they’re the smartest person in the room, hog airtime, and have no qualms about interrupting others.
6. **The Tormentor:** They’ve earned their way to the top, typically making sacrifices along the path, only to mistreat others below them.
7. **The Biased:** They knowingly or unknowingly commit microaggressions, and their behavior is inappropriate and harmful.
8. **The Political Operator:** They’re laser-focused on advancing their own career, often at the expense of others.

Spoiler alert, here is how she recommends dealing with each type of difficult coworker, you’ll see a pattern:

*Continued from page 1*

## Getting Along

1. **The Passive-Aggressive:** It is important to identify the root cause of their behavior and approach the situation with empathy and understanding. Try to understand their perspective and avoid making assumptions. Be clear and direct in your communication and avoid negative assumptions about the other person.
2. **The Insecure Boss:** Try to understand their perspective and provide them with the support they need to feel more secure. Be clear and direct in your communication and avoid negative assumptions about the other person. Focus on shared goals and try to find common ground.
3. **The Pessimist:** Try to reframe their critical viewpoint as a gift that helps them spot risks for the group. Encourage them to find positive aspects of the situation and focus on solutions rather than problems. Be clear and direct in your communication and avoid negative assumptions about the other person.
4. **The Victim:** Try to understand their perspective and provide them with the support they need to feel more empowered. Encourage them to take accountability for their actions and focus on solutions rather than problems. Be clear and direct in your communication and avoid negative assumptions about the other person.
5. **The Know-It-All:** Try to understand their perspective and provide them with the opportunity to share their knowledge. Encourage them to listen to others and be open to new ideas. Be clear and direct in your communication and avoid negative assumptions about the other person.
6. **The Tormentor:** Try to understand their perspective and provide them with the support they need to feel more secure. Be clear and direct in your communication and avoid negative assumptions about the other person. Focus on shared goals and try to find common ground.
7. **The Biased:** Try to understand their perspective and provide them with the opportunity to learn about different perspectives. Encourage them to listen to others and be open to new ideas. Be clear and direct in your communication and avoid negative assumptions about the other person.
8. **The Political Operator:** Try to understand their perspective and provide them with the opportunity to advance their career in a way that is aligned with the goals of the organization. Be clear and direct in your communication and avoid negative assumptions about the other person. Focus on shared goals and try to find common ground.

Sarah Noll Wilson, a renowned speaker and communication coach, and author of “Don’t Feed the Elephants,” focuses on the power of empathy. In a school setting, where individuals come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, empathy becomes a powerful tool for building bridges. Wilson encourages educators and support staff to put themselves in the shoes of their colleagues, understanding the emotions and motivations behind their viewpoints. This empathetic approach can create a more inclusive and understanding community within the school.

Both Gallo and Wilson highlight the significance of separating the person from the problem. In any disagreement, it's easy for emotions to run high, but addressing the issue at hand rather than attacking the individual fosters a more constructive dialogue. This approach aligns with the values of unity and collaboration that are central to a Teacher and Support Staff Union.

Gallo and Wilson advocate for finding common ground. Despite differences in opinions, there are often shared goals and values that can serve as a foundation for collaboration. Identifying these commonalities allows educators and support staff to work together towards a shared vision for the betterment of the school and its community. As I once heard the Rev. Jesse Jackson explain, even the mouse and elephant have commonalities. The important thing is to find out what we have in common.

The wisdom shared by Amy Gallo and Sarah Noll Wilson offers valuable guidance for navigating disagreements within the context of a Teacher and Support Staff Union. By actively listening, practicing empathy, separating the person from the problem, and finding common ground, educators and support staff can contribute to a more harmonious and collaborative educational environment. As members of a union dedicated to the well-being of both teachers and support staff, embracing these principles can lead to stronger professional relationships and a more unified educational community.

In Unity,

Kyle Stern

The Illinois Teachers Retirement System  
 (TRS) Seminar  
 Sponsored by the  
 West Suburban Teachers Union  
 Local 571

**\*\*REMINDER\*\***

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- WHEN:** Tuesday, April 23, 2024  
5:00 p.m.—6:30 p.m.
- FOR:** Local 571 members  
(**teachers**) close to retirement
- WHAT:** A presentation by a representative of the Illinois Teachers Retirement System
- WHERE:** Presentation will be virtual. Link will be provided via email
- R.S.V.P.:** If you plan to attend, please contact Patty Clancy **by Friday, April 19th** at 630-468-4083 or [pclancy@ift-aft.org](mailto:pclancy@ift-aft.org)
- OTHER:** Once you have signed up, if you are unable to attend, please contact Patty Clancy via email at [pclancy@ift-aft.org](mailto:pclancy@ift-aft.org)

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**I.M.R.F. SEMINAR**

*Retirement Information for Local 571 Support Staff Union Members*



*A speaker from the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) will present information and answer questions for **PSRP (support staff)** Union members of the West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571.*

- WHEN:** Tuesday, May 14, 2024
- TIME:** 5:00 p.m.-Light Dinner  
5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.-Presentation
- WHERE:** Robert M. Healey Conference Center  
500 Oakmont Lane  
Westmont, IL 60559  
(Entrance D or E)
- R.S.V.P.:** If you plan to attend, contact Patty Clancy via e-mail at [pclancy@ift-aft.org](mailto:pclancy@ift-aft.org) or by phone at 630-468-4083 by Friday May 10, 2024

**Anyone who signs up to attend this seminar and finds that they cannot attend must notify the local 571 office by 5:00 on May 10th, or they may be charged \$15 for the cost of the dinner.**

**A Social Security Webinar for Local 571 Members**

*Sponsored by the West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571*

*Webinar will be VIRTUAL for both June and July*

**Identical** Social Security Webinars will be presented and questions will be answered by a representative of the Social Security Administration.

**WHEN:** Thursday, June 6, 2024  
10:00 a.m.—Noon  
**OR**

Thursday, July 18, 2024  
1:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m.

- FOR:** Local 571 members
- WHERE:** A VIRTUAL webinar
- R.S.V.P.** If you plan to attend the **June 6** Webinar, contact Patty Clancy by June 3rd at [pclancy@ift-aft.org](mailto:pclancy@ift-aft.org) and you will be sent a link to register for the webinar.

If you plan to attend the **July 18** Webinar, contact Patty Clancy by July 15th at [pclancy@ift-aft.org](mailto:pclancy@ift-aft.org) and you will be sent a link to register for the webinar.

# PSRP

Do you recognize this acronym PSRP, and do you know what it stands for?

The acronym PSRP stands for **Paraprofessional and School Related Professionals**. This nationwide group of educators represent all the non-certified personal that help to service and educate students across the country.



The AFT and IFT acknowledge this group of service workers as educational assistants that work with teachers in the classroom, cafeteria staff who serve and provide nutritious meals to students, custodial staff who repair and keep the schools clean, nurses who service students medical needs during school hours, school bus drivers who transport students to and from school daily, and administrative assistants on all levels who work to serve the needs of students, staff and parents. These dedicated and loyal service workers and educators are often the most underpaid and underrecognized in the education system.

The AFT along with the IFT are working with Congress and Illinois state legislators to recognize the issues this group of educators face daily. “Under the leadership of AFT President Randi Weingarten, the AFT PSRP division is embracing innovation, standing firm against reckless school closings, promoting the sensible and effective implementation of standards-based instruction, and working within the community to reclaim the promise of American education—a promise of equity, access and opportunity that can only be realized by harnessing the collective voice of the profession” (American Federation of Teachers, 2023). The division of the AFT called the PSRP program and policy council, includes 34 leader members from around the country, 5 of which are from the IFT. This council works to provide guidance and advice on new programs and services for PSRP members.

This fall, the program and policy council lobbied on Capitol Hill in support of the Paraprofessional Bill of Rights introduced by Senator Ed Markey of MA. Please click on the [LINK](#) to read more information about the bill. When you click on the link, it will ask you for basic information. We encourage you to select the “Start Writing” tab! Feel free to write State Senator Tammy Duckworth, Senator Durbin or any of our state representatives. Here is a suggestion you can use when writing, feel free to edit it and make it your own or feel free to copy and paste. Remember we are asking the Representative or Senator to co-sponsor this bill.

## Example of insert

Dear **{Insert contact}**

I hope that you are doing well. It was great to be able to have a conversation about the Paraprofessional and Education Support Staff Bill of Rights that will hopefully lead to affordable, high-quality healthcare, paid FMLA, a living wage, and so much more for some of the hardest working people in our schools and colleges.

We hope that you consider being the **{Insert if House of Representatives}** House sponsor **or** **{Insert if Senate}** Senate Co-sponsor for this bill that will change the lives of millions of school and college support staff.

Getting involved and creating a movement

Jon Monique Manuel  
Legislative Director

## Meet-a-Member

Local 571 is a 5900+ member union of teachers, paraprofessionals, school-related personnel (PSRPs) and retirees, employed (currently or formerly) in school districts in western Cook and DuPage Counties. We have many interesting and talented members among us! This column spotlights our members and gives a glimpse into what makes us exceptional. This month, I'd like you to meet...Markeshia Jones; Council President for PAEC Teachers and Program Assistants!

**Q:** What is your favorite part about your current position?

*A: I would have to say my favorite part in my current position as a teacher is my classroom. Since I'm in a self-contained classroom, my students are with me all day, so our room is more like a family. Everyone picks up on how my class and I interact with each other.*

**Q:** What is the greatest strength that you bring to this role? How does this strength impact your students?

*A: I think my greatest strength is being able to relate to my students. Being able to be compassionate and understanding to not only their educational needs, but even their personal needs. The way it impacts my students is that they know everything that I do for them comes from a caring place. That fuels them to try to do their best because they can actually tell that.*

**Q:** What's a happy memory you have from when you were in school?

*A: When I was actually in school myself, one of my happiest memories in school not only was creating friendships but I love, love, love my favorite subject Science. Being able to have the experience of hands-on learning. For instance, I fell in love with forensics when my teacher used to create crime scenes that we had to process and recognize little nuggets that were left and what they meant. Almost like a game of clue.*

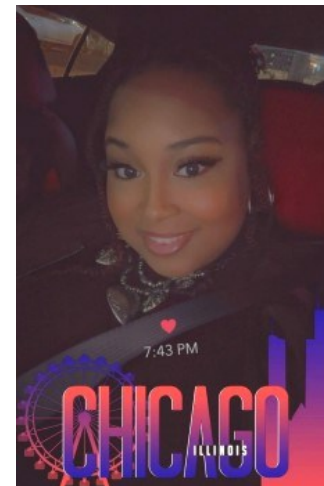
**Q:** What are three things you appreciate about the Union?

*A: (1) I appreciate the support I receive from the union. (2) The knowledge I receive from meeting new people and talking to them about their experiences and gaining information to use in my everyday life. (3) Interacting with new people from all over.*

**Q:** If you could take your students on a field trip to anywhere in the world, where would you take them?

*A: That's a good question. If I could take them anywhere in the world, I would probably take them to the Smithsonian Museum. I would like to show my students artifacts from history; an experience some may never get to experience.*

If you would like to nominate yourself, or another member you know, to be interviewed for the Meet-a-Member column, reach out to April at [agiannosa@wstu571.org](mailto:agiannosa@wstu571.org)



### Find WSTU on Facebook

Join us on Facebook to stay connected with the latest updates, events, and discussions from West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571! Connect with our online community where we share resources, advocate for educational excellence, and support each other in our shared mission. By following WSTU, you'll have direct access to important information, opportunities to engage with fellow educators, and a platform to voice your ideas and concerns. [Like us on Facebook](#) today and be part of the conversation!.



# Members in Action

## IFT Presidents' Conference

Over the weekend of March 15th, a distinguished group of council presidents from Local 571, including Kerry Palider (Lyons), Markeshia Jones (PAEC), John Wardisiani (Proviso Teachers), Heather Siegal-Hickman (Argo Teachers), Jen Burns (D88 Teachers), and April Giannosa (Franklin Park Teachers, IFT Vice President), convened at the IFT Presidents' Conference. The event, held in Springfield, saw a gathering of council and local presidents from across the state. Kyle Stern, alongside Field Service Directors Max Schoenberg, Renee Wagner, and Rachel Esposito, were also in attendance.

The conference kicked off on Saturday with a collaborative session where all attendees reviewed and provided insightful feedback on the IFT's draft of its new vision statement. The day progressed with informative sessions covering a range of topics, including the integration of Artificial Intelligence and how the Union can both use it and bargain its impact, strategies for transitioning member engagement from online platforms to in-person interactions, and cultivating the next generation of union leadership.

The weekend's activities culminated on Sunday with a series of affinity group panel discussions, providing a platform for diverse voices within the union. Highlighting the day was a keynote address by Congresswoman Nikki Budzinski, who spoke on the critical importance of the upcoming election. Emphasizing the imperfections shared by all, including President Biden and herself, she rallied the attendees with a call to action to uphold democratic values by participating in the electoral process.

## Elmhurst Unit District 205

State Superintendent Tony Sanders visited the Elmhurst Unit District 205, York High School and Fischer Elementary which hosts the district's dual language program.



Elmhurst Superintendent Dr. Keisha Campbell, Fischer Elementary Principal Dr. Efren Martinez, Elmhurst PSRP and Local 571 Legislative Director Monique Manuel, and State Superintendent Tony Sanders



# Members in Action



Kyle Stern and Congresswoman Lauren Underwood



State Representative Mary Gill and Kyle Stern



State Representative Matt Hanson and Kyle Stern



State Representative Maura Hirschauer and Kyle Stern



Kyle Stern and Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi



Kyle Stern, Comptroller Susana Mendoza and Grace Drobny



Kyle Stern, Representative Camille Lilly and Monique Manuel



Kyle Stern and Representative Delia Ramirez



Kyle Stern and Justice Celia Gamrath



Kyle Stern and State Representative Jenn Ladisch Douglass

# Members in Action



Representative Sonya Harper, Representative Kim du Buclet, Kyle Stern, Representative Abdelnasser Rashid , and Representative Edgar Gonzalez, Jr.



Representative Will Davis, Kyle Stern and Representative Carol Ammons



Monique Manuel, Chris Welch, DNC Chair Minyon Moore and Kyle Stern



Monique Manuel, Kyle Stern and CTU President Stacy Davis Gates



Kyle Stern and Justice Cynthia Cobbs



Monique Manuel and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle



Kyle Stern and State Senator Michael Hastings



# Next Gen. Trivia Night



*Come Join the West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, Next Generation Committee's (age 35 and under) trivia night. Learn about your local and what you can do to be a great Unionist. We will play a Kahoot, have free dinner and drinks, and socialize.*

*1st Place-\$500*

*2nd Place—\$250*

*3rd Place -\$100*

*4th & 5th Place-\$25/each*

**May 8, 2024, 5 to 7 p.m.**

500 Oakmont Lane Westmont, IL 60559 (West side doors- Entrance D/E)

RSVP to Kyle Stern at [kstern@wstu571.org](mailto:kstern@wstu571.org) by April 26.



## Job Opening in Local 571 for *Union Messenger* Editor



The West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571, has a job opening for the position of editor of the *Union Messenger*. Excellent writing skills as well as communications skills are essential. Knowledge of Microsoft Office Publisher or similar desktop publishing program is preferred. The editor works along with the WSTU Local 571 President and staff, and attends regular local meetings and events. A Local 571 member will be given preference in hiring. Compensation is in the form of a yearly stipend.

For further information, contact Local 571 President, Kyle Stern at [kstern@wstu571.org](mailto:kstern@wstu571.org)

## Job Opening

Are you interested in web design and social media? Would you like to help spread the word of our Union? If so, Local 571 is looking for a webmaster/communication director. The stipend is \$3197. If you are interested, please reach out to Kyle Stern, [kstern@wstu571.org](mailto:kstern@wstu571.org).



### West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571



#### Webmaster/Communications Director: Job Description

#### Job Qualifications

1. Must be a member of West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571.
2. Must be able to work with diverse groups of people and demonstrate a positive attitude.
3. Must be able to handle multiple tasks.
4. Must be able to work with minimal supervision.
5. Must demonstrate good speaking, writing, and computer skills.
6. Must be able to work with the Local President, COPE/PAC Chair, Legislative Directors, and other Officers of the Local.
7. Must be proactive.
8. Must have strong social media skills and knowledge of website management.

#### Duties and Responsibilities

1. Attend WSTU Major Events (strikes, membership meetings, social events, political activities, legislative breakfast)
2. Request to put in to attend conventions: IFT (every 3 years in October) & AFT (every 2 years in July) reporting throughout and photos to be used for newsletters and social media
3. Communicate effectively to all members
4. Advertise membership and political initiatives on website and social media
5. Communicate endorsements on website and social media
6. Archive WSTU history on website and social media
7. Collaborate with WSTU Officers, Field and Business Agent Staff, Office Staff,
8. Chair Communication Committee
9. Report successes/failures of website and social media platforms to engage members
10. Positively engage with members and public on social media and website
11. Attend Executive Board, House of Representatives, and Officer Staff Meetings
12. Take initiative to write articles as necessary or requested for both Union Messenger and WSTU Website
13. Respond promptly to emails and requests
14. Create and maintains WSTU website and social media platforms on a regular basis
15. Keep WSTU website up to date by adding and removing relevant content



April is recognized as National Stress Awareness Month  
 April is recognized as Autism Acceptance Month  
 Earth Day—Monday—April 22  
 Administrative Professionals Day—Wednesday—April 24  
 Arbor Day—Friday—April 26

#### 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: [rhancock@wstu571.org](mailto:rhancock@wstu571.org)



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