



Union Messenger

May-June 2009

IFT President Responds to “Doomsday” Warning

Governor Quinn’s proposed “doomsday” would propel our state on a path to economic ruin. The 14,000 teacher layoffs that would be triggered in districts large and small would effectively destroy our system of public education, eliminating one of our state’s best tools – a strong system of public education from pre-Kindergarten to graduate schools – for fueling an economic recovery.

This budget cannot be an option for our state, and the General Assembly must reject it out of hand.

The people of Illinois may not be happy with a modest tax increase, but they will be outraged with cuts that decimate education and public services.

Lawmakers must do the right thing and raise the revenue this state desperately needs.

Our peek into the crystal ball at Illinois’ future with a doomsday budget in place is a future no Illinois citizen wants to see.

IFT President Ed Geppert, Jr.



West Suburban Teachers Union and American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) members and guests pack the Robert M. Healey Conference Center for the Legislative Forum on May 4. For details, see page 2.

Court Rules Student Test Questions May Be Subject to Parent Review

The Illinois First District Court of Appeals has reversed a lower court decision in a case asking if test questions are subject to the Illinois School Student Records Act (ISSRA).

At issue are tests where questions are on the same paper as a student’s name, calculations, and answers. The appellate court opinion is that the “overall scheme of (ISSRA) is to provide a broad right of access with narrow exceptions.”

The broader implication of *Garlick v. Oak Park and River Forest High School District #200* is that a student or parent may have a legal right to examine any test, quiz, homework item, or project which contains a student’s name, markings, etc., as a student record under ISSRA.

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Local 571 Officers Elected by Acclamation

Six incumbent Local 571 officers were affirmed elected by acclamation at the May Local 571 House of Representatives meeting. The two-year term starts July 1.

- President.....Jane Russell
- Vice President.....Alice Kautsky
- Secretary.....Cathleen Pope
- Legal Defense Secretary.....Edward Hohman
- Financial Secretary.....Jon Pazol
- Treasurer.....Sandra Erickson

None of the six offices were contested, no other nominations were made. Election of Area Trustees will take place next May.

CFL Scholarship Award

Daniel Scherer-Emunds, son of Proviso Teachers Council member Mary Scherer-Emunds is a recipient of the William A. Lee Memorial Scholarship presented by the Chicago Federation of Labor on May 20.

Each of ten scholarships awarded annually is a one-time \$2000 grant honoring Lee, CFL president for 38 years.

Children of Local 571 members are eligible to apply for this award because Local 571 is affiliated with the Chicago Federation of Labor.

Westmont Legislative Forum is Standing Room Only

from your president

Leiden High School Council English teacher John Rossi, in response to Governor Quinn's proposal to require TRS members to pay an additional 2% pension contribution effectively imposing a statewide pay cut, was to the point. "Make no mistake. Our desire to serve does not equal a willingness to bear the full weight of our state's economic burden."

Rossi was one of four panel members to testify before a crowd of more than 500 Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) and American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) members at the West Suburban Forum on May 4, in Westmont. The Forum was organized to discuss the Illinois budget crisis and proposed changes to health care and pension cost and benefits for active and retired educators, university employees, and state employees.

Rossi continued, pointing out that, "The 9% contribution of teachers and university faculty and staff is (already) one of the highest employee contributions in the nation."

Cicero Council school psychologist Gary Tolman followed with additional facts, remarking, "The state cannot balance the budget on the backs of educators. We must insist that the state do the right thing and stop using our pensions to balance the (Illinois) budget."

Eight legislative forums conducted around the state by the IFT and AFSCME have provided an opportunity for members to inform their local legislators about our opposition to most of the governor's proposal. Many members came to the forums hoping to hear directly from their state representatives.

Unfortunately, few legislators attended. Of 30 local legislators invited to the West Suburban Forum, only Dennis Reboletti (R-46, Addison) was present to listen and respond to concerns. Paul Froehlich (D-56, Schaumburg) and Daniel Burke (D-23, Chicago) indicated that they would attend but were not present. Twelve representatives responded that they could not attend.

Three AFSCME members who testified implored everyone to contact each legislator who did not attend, as well as the governor, to answer our most pressing questions and respond to our issues. Several solutions to the state's problems were suggested. Among these were:

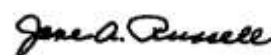
- Increase the personal income tax to 5%
- Increase the corporate income tax to 8%
- Carefully target tax credits to low-income and middle-class families
- Collect sales tax on services
- Increase user fees

As moderator, I reminded participants that, "A crisis is an opportunity. This is a time for bold leadership. We ask all of our legislators to help lead our state to fair solutions for a fair budget."

Go to the IFT website, www.ift-aft.org, for information and updates. Follow the "Fight for America's Future—it's Dollars and Sense" online campaign.

Keep up the pressure. The legislative session is due to end on May 31. Demand of your legislators that they raise enough revenues for a fair solution for a fair budget.

In unity,



Local 571 President

Legislators responding unable to attend the Forum:

Illinois State Senators

Kimberly Lightford (D-4)	Kirk Dillard (R-24)
Martin Sandoval (D-12)	Don Harmon (D-39)
Mike Noland (D-22)	Randy Hultgren (R-48)

Illinois State Representatives

Karen Yarbrough (D-7)	Keith Farnham (D-43)
Mike Zalewski (D-21)	Patti Bellock (R-47)
Sandra Pihos (R-42)	Mike Fortner (R-95)

Legislators not responding to the Forum invitation:

Illinois State Senators

Lou Viverito (D-11)	Carole Pankau (R-23)
Dan Cronin (R-21)	John Millner (R-28)

Illinois State Representatives

LaShawn Ford (D-8)	Michael Connelly (R-48)
Michael Madigan (D-22)	Randy Ramey (R-55)
Elizabeth Hernandez (D-24)	Angelo "Skip" Saviano (R-77)
Bob Biggins (R-41)	Deborah Graham (D-78)
Fred Crespo (D-44)	Darlene Senger (R-96)
Franco Coladipietro (R-45)	

Note: As the *Union Messenger* goes to press, the governor has reversed his proposal for current teachers and state workers to pay an additional 2% of salaries into the pension system.

The current concerns are amendments to House Bill 2643 creating a two-tier pension plan for all public pension systems, along with funding and health insurance reductions placed before the Illinois House of Representatives by State Representative Don Harmon.

Judicious Review

by Bonnie Saracco

This is the time of year when educators especially focus on review and wrap-up activities. Our ER&D classes refer to the kind of review enabling students to achieve lasting automatic mastery as “judicious review.”

Judicious review is adequate, distributed, cumulative, and varied. Teachers intuitively know that adequate review varies for individual students and provide additional review for slower learners. Adequate review is most crucial for these low performers, who will not achieve long-term retention without it.

The issue of massed vs. distributed practice is one of the most well researched topics in education. Research has consistently found that practice should first be massed and later distributed, with gradually increased periods of non-review between practice activities. This is the best review schedule for assuring long-term retention.

Cognitive scientist Daniel T. Willingham suggests practical ways to apply this research. This begins by determining the core content (what the students will need to know 20 years from now) and identifying this core as the key facts and concepts for distributed study. Once identified, these core concepts should be presented in a distributed schedule throughout the course.

Homework assignments should also distribute practice by including material taught earlier in the year. Cramming for tests can be discouraged by eliciting review as part of routine class activities and also by including a question or two from previous units on each test. This encourages students to continue paying attention to the core content.

These core big ideas should also be broken down into smaller pieces so that they can be more easily practiced

during routine “down times” and transitions throughout the day.

Students should be let in on the “secret” that an important part of learning is remembering, that they are more likely to remember if they review material repeatedly, and that they can spend less total time studying if they distribute their study over several sessions.

Cumulative review can help eliminate confusion. Similar but different facts, concepts, and strategies often confuse students. An example is that the addition and multiplication of fractions are processes that often appear similar to students, but are quite different. After both processes have been taught and mastered it is important to review them cumulatively within the same review session. This is also necessary because real world mathematics is mixed and cumulative.

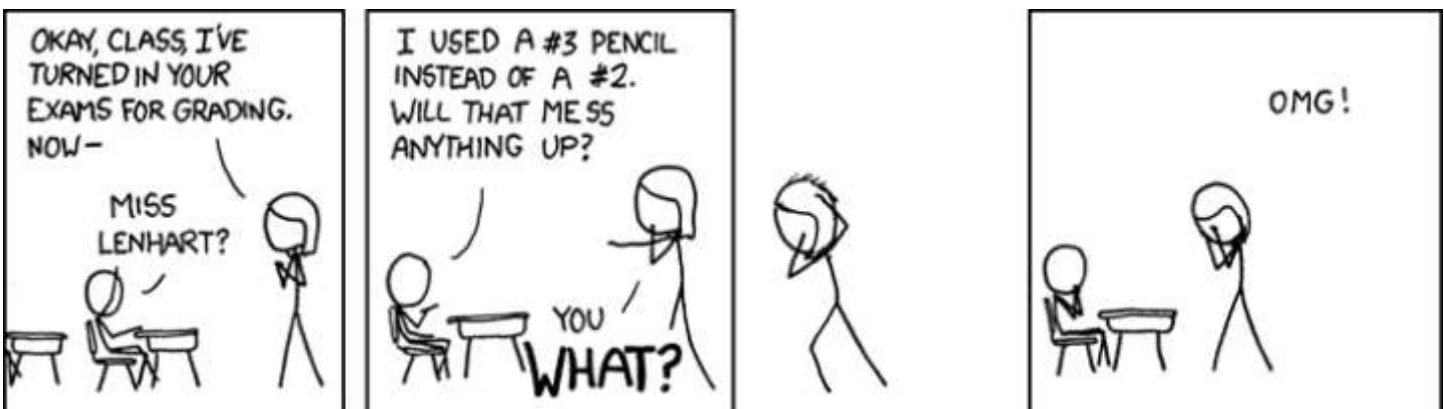


“KNOWLEDGE IS POWER”

Students need to be able to transfer learning into varied situations, and instruction is frequently criticized as not enabling students to do this. One way to work toward learning transfer is to make instruction as authentic as possible, and to then vary the reviews. Varying the practice contexts leads to better generalization.

Our *Instructional Strategies* course teaches an effective practice technique called Classwide Peer Tutoring (CWPT). CWPT was developed to increase academic engagement for Title 1 students. It is a highly structured activity that increases academic learning time and is especially effective for at-risk learners. Many studies have independently found this technique to be extremely effective.

We can use all of these techniques to help our students become experts by the end of a school year.



Courtesy of xkcd.com

Retiree News

Leaving the Local 571 executive board and house of representatives after years of service to their students, schools, Councils, and Local 571 are: retiring District 88 Teachers Council member **Kurt Haberl** and Rosemont Council member **Bonita Saracco**. Bonnie will continue as the Local 571 assistant professional development coordinator.

Although not retiring, Elmhurst PSRP Council president **Marilyn Borowski** is leaving Illinois for Michigan. The efforts and leadership of each of these members will be honored at the June house of representatives meeting. Congratulations on jobs well done!

Why Join the IFT Retiree Group?

As a long career draws to a close and new opportunities present themselves, one might ask why continue membership in professional organizations that no longer seem as relevant. Although AFT membership and benefits are essentially “for life,” IFT and Local 571 Retirees Council membership is a matter of choice—and nominal annual dues. Several reasons make the annual \$20 IFT dues a compelling retirement investment.

- A vibrant IFT Retirees Chapter assures that retiree pension and political interests are afforded a high priority along with the educational concerns most retirees continue to believe are important. Other retiree organizations do not have the same focus on Illinois, or on issues important to former public school employees. Assure that your interests are well represented.
- The IFT Retiree Chapter annually plans educational and social events that keep retired members connected with each other, providing opportunities to make new friendships. Seminars, workshops, dinner theatre, and book reading groups have been among recent activities. Local 571 Retirees Council members actively take part in the IFT Retirees Chapter’s events.
- For Local 571 retirees planning on returning to a school for a less than full time position, Retirees Council membership provides the option of professional liability insurance. The cost of 2009-2010 coverage is less than \$5.00, a bargain in these litigation prone times.
- Other benefits of IFT membership are extended to Local 571 retiree members, including scholarship eligibility, as described, for IFT and Local 571 scholarship programs. Retiring members with college-bound dependents may want to maintain membership to keep these opportunities open for their family members.

Information packets for each prospective retiree are mailed each May with membership forms and dues payment information included. Members who do not receive this mailing, or who have questions, may contact Judy Jennings at jjennings@ift-aft.org or 630-468-4098.

Recent articles on topics important to Local 571 retirees, can be found on the Retiree Council webpage at <http://www.wstu571.org>. Information about retiree resources can also be accessed from the Local 571 website:

Alliance for Retired Americans Friday Alerts — www.retiredamericans.org/join
AFT Retirees e-Newsletter — http://www.unionvoice.org/aft_retirement/join

For updates on the Illinois budget crisis and information about threats to pensions go to www.ift-aft.org and click the banner "Fight for America's Future."

TRS - CMS Retiree Seminar Addresses Retiree Needs



Leslie Booth of the Illinois Department of Central Management Systems reviews the Teachers' Retirement Insurance Program (TRIP) and Medicare for IFT Retiree Chapter members.

Seminar participants were reminded to update home address and phone numbers, if these have changed, as Teacher Retirement Insurance Plan rates are based on county of residence.

TRS members are encouraged to register for easy online access to the TRS website and their personal account information. New web security protocols may require re-registration.

AFT VOICES

Survey on Healthcare System Available Online

Congress is preparing for a major healthcare reform debate this summer. As lawmakers begin to draft reform legislation, it is critical that they hear about how the healthcare system works (or fails to work) from working families.

Make your voice heard by **completing the survey**, offered by the AFL-CIO. Tell your healthcare story and encouraging your friends, co-workers and family members to do so too. Survey results will be shared with national and state leaders and the media.

The 2009 survey can be found at: <http://www.aflcio.org/issues/healthcare> and should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

IFT Workload Survey Opens for PSRP Members

The Illinois Federation of Teachers is asking for workload issues information from paraprofessionals and school-related personnel. The IFT has received reports from PSRPs of paperwork increases, lack of training, failure to replace staff who have left or retired, outdated or malfunctioning equipment, and problems that impact the ability to do the job effectively.

The IFT needs to hear from members about how office workloads affect you and your colleagues. Take a few moments to complete the [online survey](#) available on the IFT and Local 571 websites.

Our responses will help the union develop contract language, new training, and other support to push for adequate staffing levels, up-to-date technology, and more manageable workloads.

Please complete this PSRP survey by **June 30, 2009**, so that the IFT can best help you and your local union address critical workload issues.

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Member benefits

AFT has an active recruitment and enrollment program for existing IFT members. For more information, please contact AFT Financial Services at 800/555-1133 ext. 4462, send an e-mail to disclosure@aft.org, or visit www.aftplus.org/disclosure

The AFT Great Lakes Union Leadership Institute (ULI) will be held August 2-6 at Lake Lawn Lodge in Delevan, Wisconsin. For details contact your Council president. For reimbursement registrations must be signed by your Council president and then submitted to the IFT by Friday, June 19.

The officers and staff of West Suburban Teachers Union wish our members a well deserved and restful summer break. We look forward to working with ALL of you again in the fall, and a hearty congratulations and best wishes to all of our retiring members.

Cicero Council Members Attend Baltimore PSRP Conference

The 32nd annual AFT PSRP Professional Issues Conference was held this year in Baltimore, Maryland, over the March 20-22 weekend. Attending from Local 571 were Cicero Council members Maria Rivera and Olga Vazquez.

Among the presentations attended were sessions on the effect of child nutrition in the classroom, strategies for boosting student achievement, and how to create positive learning environments.

Rivera, an LD program assistant, was impressed by a session which focused on supporting children with medically fragile needs. *"I realized how important it is for supervising adults to be informed about health and safety standards (that) apply to these students."*

Vazquez, who works at Goodwin Elementary School in Cicero, found the importance of effective communication skills to be a common emphasis of several presenters.

Green Schools Initiative Earth Day Presentation



A representative of the Healthy Schools Campaign uses a copy of *The Quick & Easy Guide to Green Cleaning in Schools* to make a point. Custodial and maintenance efforts to clean our schools are more about student and staff health than tidying up. The April 20 House of Representatives presentation noted that the AFT is among the campaign's founding organizations and that Illinois was the second state to require green cleaning. Council officers and representatives present at the meeting were provided a DVD explaining the program. Information about the Healthy Schools Campaign is also at www.greenschools.org.

The Employee Free Choice Act, Revisited

For members questioning the need for the Employee Free Choice Act, a new study by Cornell University professor Kate Bronfenbrenner provides a sobering and persuasive response. Her research shows that not only do some employers engage in punitive campaigns of intimidation, but tactics are getting worse.

In *No Holds Barred: The Intensification of Employer Opposition to Organizing*, Bronfenbrenner provides a comprehensive, independent analysis of employer behavior in union elections supervised by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) between 1999 and 2003.

According to the report, it is standard practice in NLRB election campaigns for workers to be subjected by threats, interrogation, harassment, surveillance and retaliation for union activity. *Inside AFT*

Links to a more detailed article and the complete study are on the Local 571 website.

Local 571 Scholarships Announced

Elmhurst College student **Katie Gilman**, daughter of Franklin Park Custodians Council member Mark Gilman will receive the 2009 **Jo Ann Horowitz Scholarship**.

Jo Ann Horowitz taught at Morton High School and was a vital force in Local 571, the IFT, and the AFT. Through Jo Ann's advocacy, equal pay for female extracurricular advisors, equal access to extra-pay jobs including summer school, and a greater awareness that women should not be discriminated against was achieved.

Jo Ann fought for teacher dignity and the best education for all students. This \$1,000 West Suburban Teachers Union scholarship is awarded annually to a current undergraduate sophomore or junior college/university student pursuing a teaching or women's studies career. Eligible recipients include active Local 571 members, or the child or grandchild of a member in good standing.

The **Mary Wheeler Scholarship** award honors Mary Wheeler, a Proviso High School teacher from 1924 to 1965. Wheeler was a highly respected educator who served many years as West Suburban Teachers Union president, as well as an IFT president and an AFT vice president. Mary was a founding member of the Proviso Council of Teachers (1938-1939) and helped organize several west suburban councils.

Six Mary Wheeler Scholarships of \$1,500 are awarded. Eligible recipients must be graduating high school seniors planning to continue their education in the fall of 2009 whose parents or guardians are Local 571 members in good standing. Mary Wheeler scholarships for 2009 will go to:

- **Caroline Bensfield** graduating from Westmont High School. daughter of Elmhurst Teachers Council member Nancy Bensfield
- **Sarah Gavac** graduating from Lyons Township High School, daughter of Cicero Council member Paul Gavac
- **Melissa Hochheimer** graduating from Addison Trail High School, daughter of District 88 PSRP Council member Patricia Hochheimer
- **Jaime Kelleher** graduating from Lyons Township High School, daughter of Lyons Council member Kathleen Kelleher
- **Bethany Rohl** graduating from Morton West High School, daughter of Cicero Council members Laurie Totino-Rohl and Michael Rohl
- **Daniel Scherer-Emunds** graduating from Oak Park & River Forest High School, son of Proviso Teachers Council member Mary Scherer-Emunds

AFT + Member Card/AFT Benefits

Union members who have had an **AFT + Credit Card or Mortgage** for one year facing out-of-pocket hospital expenses (after insurance) that are at least 10% of household income for a hospitalization of the union member, spouse or dependent within the last 12 months are eligible to apply for grants.

For more information, or to apply for a Hospital Care Grant, visit www.aft.org and go to the member benefits section.

The AFT + Grants are part of a new \$3 million safety net initiative introduced this year to assist union members facing financial hardship during the recession.

Union SAFE provides an array of benefits, including help with budgeting and financial counseling, disability assistance, and help aimed at fighting foreclosure.

Grants, which never need to be repaid, help union families get a handle on household bills and gain peace of mind.

WSTU Calendar

May

5/11—571 EB Meeting - Westmont - 5:30 p.m.
5/11—571 HOR Meeting - Westmont - 6:45 p.m.
(571 proposed budget presented to HOR)

June

6/8—571 EB Meeting - Westmont - 5:30 p.m.
6/8—571 HOR Meeting-Westmont - 6:45 p.m.
(Vote on 571 proposed budget)

July

7/20—571 EB Meeting - Westmont - 5:30 p.m.

August

8/17—571 EB Meeting - Westmont - 4:30 p.m.
8/17—Presidents & Treasurers Workshop
Westmont - 5:45 p.m.

September

9/14—571 EB Meeting - Westmont - 5:30 p.m.
9/14—571 HOR Meeting-Westmont - 6:45 p.m.

WSTU SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY-FRIDAY 10:00 AM—4:00 PM
THE LOCAL 571 OFFICE IS CLOSED ON
HOLIDAYS. PLEASE CALL AHEAD.

Reminders...

AFT Great Lakes Union Leadership Institute
Registration deadline **June 19** (See page 5)

Union Member Grand Slam Day
White Sox vs. Orioles - August 23

Union Messenger

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Alice Kautsky, Vice President
Sandra Erickson, Treasurer
Cathleen Pope, Secretary
Jonathan Pazol, Financial Secretary
Ed Hohman, Legal Defense Secretary &
COPE Chairperson
Tom Smith, IFT Field Service Director
Mike Linder, IFT Field Service Director
Judy Jennings, Office Manager
Julie Masterton, Office Secretary
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