



Union Messenger

August-September 2010

Job Opening: Local 571 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 program is preferred. The editor also chairs the Local 571 Communications Committee, works with the Local 571 web administrator, and attends regular Local meetings and events. Compensation is in the form of a quarterly stipend.

A resume is due no later than October, 11, 2010, to WSTU Local 571. Applicants may be interviewed the week of October 18, 2010. For further information, contact Local 571 President Jane Russell, 630-468-4043 or jrussell@ift-aft.org.

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Summer Around the WSTU, Local 571

Even though things are a little more casual during the summer, events, seminars, courses and workshops continue for WSTU members.



Nancy Bensfield with Thinking Math "students"

Forty 571 members went to school in July and August by participating in the ER&D classes: Instructional Strategies, and Managing Anti-social Behavior, both taught by Maureen Kaufman, or Thinking Math—Journey to Algebra, taught by Nancy Bensfield. Nancy currently teaches in Elmhurst District 205, and Maureen is a retired teacher from Dist. 205 who continues to teach at the college level helping students to become educators.

The Instructional Strategies course provides practical applications of instructional strategies using a research base of effective instruction which has been proven to support student learning. The very popular Managing Anti-social Behavior course presents research on emotional and behavioral problems of students who consistently act out and provides strategies to reduce and/or prevent the disruptive behavior. The newest course, Journey to Algebra, provides lots of hands-on practice to help students struggling with algebra to improve their number sense and mental math skills as well as multiple strategies for solving problems.

Coursework, however, was not the only summer activity for Local 571 members. If you went to any parades this summer, you probably noticed the political candidates shaking hands and handing out literature. Following the IFT grassroots endorsement process, several local candidates were endorsed and thus supported by WSTU. Joy Joyce, District 88 retiree, and her husband opened their home for a coffee with Maria Owens, IL House 95th District Representative candidate along with Sheila Simon, IL Lieutenant Governor candidate.



Joy Joyce, with candidates Sheila Simon and Maria Owens

(Continued on page 3)

Is the Glass Half Full or Half Empty?

from your president

The highlight of the summer was attending the AFT Convention in Seattle, WA. The lovely weather helped the spirits of the delegates to refine the AFT platform on such societal issues as labor and the economy, political action/legislation, international relations and women's rights. To this end, the AFT has made a commitment to form coalitions with organizations that share and advocate for public education. AFT members will join with a broad range of civil rights, labor, faith, youth, immigrant rights and other progressive groups in the One Nation March in Washington, D.C. on October 2, 2010. If you, family members or other community members wish to attend, call 202.533.2578 or email onenationteam@onenationworkingtogether.org.

Back in Illinois, the weather was hot and the issues that were smoldering when we left for Seattle were now at fire alarm stage. Two bills passed by the IL legislature were sitting on the governor's desk to be signed. HB6065—Care of Students Diabetes Act and HB 5154—An Act Concerning Employment (dealing with Freedom of Information Act or FOIA) were both vetoed by the governor. In both cases, the amendatory veto was not favorable to those of us in education. IFT Department of Political Activities as well as Professional Issues and Education Issues staffs are working to change the language in the bills to be more favorable to school personnel. For additional, detailed information, consult www.ilga.gov/legislation and type in the bill number.

School funding took a big hit because of Illinois' poor economy and debt. Many school districts have not been paid funds from the 2009-10 school year. Enter the newly passed federal Education Jobs Fund bill which provides badly needed funds for Illinois school districts. The funds could be used to "hire back" staff that were dismissed in the spring because school districts were in deficit spending. While the school district funds are badly needed, and despite President Obama, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and the Congress' best efforts, for many districts, the money will arrive too late to reinstate lost programs and jobs. School superintendents were informed the amount of General State Aid that will be coming to the districts soon.

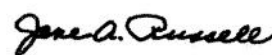
Retirees are not off the hook either. A law affecting how many days retired educators may teach in a year will revert back to reduced provisions as of July 30, 2011. Once again the IFT will be working with coalitions introducing legislation to keep the provision as it is now.

And what about the Two Tier Pension system that begins with new hires as of January, 2011? The IFT has taken a stand to make it a legislative priority to return pension benefits in affected retirement systems to levels existing prior to January 1, 2010. This resolution will be introduced and voted on at the October 15—17, 2010 IFT Convention in St. Louis.

So is there anyone that believes that what we do as education workers, as advocates for our students, as believers in public education, are not affected by politicians, legislators and the media who feel they have all the answers and the knowledge to make the current education system better? Remember that VOTE may be a four letter word, but we owe it to our students, our families, our schools and communities to research the facts and vote in the November 2, 2010 election. For that reason, WSTU is hosting a Member Forum on Saturday, September 25, 2010, in Westmont to discuss many of the issues touched on above. This is an opportunity for you to get the facts before the VOTE. The invitation for the member forum should have reached you. For additional information, go to the WSTU Local 571 website, www.wstu571.org.

I remain the eternal optimist, collaborating with others to keep the water from spilling out of the half full glass. I hope you will join me in speaking to legislators, working on school committees, reaching out to potential or new union members, registering members, friends and family members to vote, and by going to the polls in the fall election. Best wishes for a productive and fulfilling school year.

In unity,



Local 571 President



ER&D Keynote Speaker Criticizes the De-Skilling of Teaching

by Bonnie Saracco

Professor Saul Rubenstein of the Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations delivered a thought-provoking keynote address at this summer's ER&D Annual Network Conference, *Building Blocks for Student Learning*, which preceded the 2010 AFT Convention in Seattle. Dr. Rubenstein derided the "de-skilling" of teaching that is occurring today in many schools as a result of NCLB.

Rubenstein outlined the ideas of Frederick Taylor, who invented modern business management practices 100 years ago in his 1911 book, *Principles of Scientific Management*. These practices, known as Taylorism, de-skilled work by breaking it into very small pieces, and emphasized the role of the supervisor to ensure compliance. In other words, management does the thinking, and labor does the doing.

Although both management and labor unions embraced Taylorism during the 20th century, today's technological global economy has made it inappropriate for many work organizations. The result is "a broken social contract."

Unfortunately, NCLB's immense pressure for accountability has been accompanied by an increase in management practices that break teachers' jobs into small, highly-managed pieces. Rubenstein contended that a post-industrial model based on the shared expertise and common interests of labor and management would be a far more effective way to run schools.

He also talked about three kinds of input into decision-making, characterizing them as "full input, partial input, and pseudo input." He said that we cannot have effective educational reform without true, full input from teachers. He noted the positive development that there are now laws in several states that mandate the joint structures which support such systems.



Finally, Rubenstein presented the findings of a research partnership by MIT, Harvard, and Rutgers that looked at sixty organizations and studied the ways that successful organizations are managed. The study concluded that many successful organizations profit from seeing management as a shared task, rather than as a class of employees.

New research has also looked at AFT locals which have long-term successful relationships with management. These relationships share certain characteristics, including trust, strong leadership, collaborative structures at all levels, dense communication networks, and regular participation in decision-making by a large number of employees.

Rubenstein concluded that development of highly-skilled professionals is a necessary antidote to the current "wedding to an antiquated industrial model in education," and added that educational reform should be supported by the sort of high quality professional development that we are fortunate to have in the collaborative and research-driven training available to us in AFT's ER&D program.

(continued from Page 1)

The WSTU Retirees Council led by new council president, Phyllis Meade, greeted and welcomed new retirees at the annual recruitment luncheon on July 23 in Westmont. Nick Yelverton from the IFT Department of Political Activities provided a legislative and political overview on pension benefits, pension funding, retiree health insurance and statewide elections.

Still other 571 members helped Attorney General Lisa Madigan, who is running

for re-election, celebrate her 43rd birthday along with a hundred or so of her "closest" friends.

The Back to School Fair, another very well attended event sponsored in part by the DuPage Regional Office of Education, was held at the DuPage County Fairgrounds on August 4. Volunteers from Local 571, as well as members of the North Central Illinois Labor Council (of which 571 is a member organization) handed out over 2200 backpacks and school supplies to low-income families residing in DuPage County.

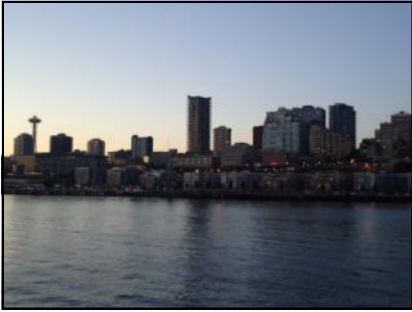


Julie Phillips (Franklin Park Teachers) admires a donated backpack and school supply packet

Summer has gone and school has started, but the WSTU will continue to sponsor events, seminars, workshops and

Sleepless in Seattle? Notes on the 2010 AFT Convention

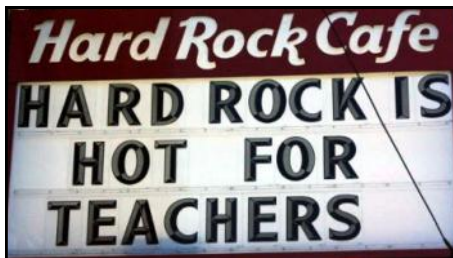
The most beautiful weather, sunshine and temperatures in the low 80's, greeted the thirty-five West Suburban Teachers Union delegates to the 81st American Federation of Teachers Convention in Seattle, Washington, July 8-11, 2010.



Like other AFT conventions held biennially, this one did not disappoint. And sleeplessness was a possibility for many delegates who participated in the pre-convention, convention, social activities and sightseeing in Seattle.

Flying into Seattle over the prominent Space Needle, we were prepared for a busy week. Pre-convention activities and workshops included an AFT Education Research and Dissemination conference attended by Local 571 ER&D Coordinators.

Congratulations were voiced at the Pride of the Union reception by AFT President Randi Weingarten because **all councils, as well as the West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571, received the award.** The Pride of the Union award was first launched at the 1988 AFT Convention to recognize locals with membership levels of 90% or more or an increase of membership of at least 25% or a net increase of 100 members in the two years prior to the convention.



Retirees from Local 571 attended the Retiree Conference. AFT called on retirees to, "share knowledge and remain active." Retirees are one of the greatest assets in protecting Medicare, social security and pensions. Indeed it is a responsibility to continue to fight for these important programs. AFT retirees were instrumental in getting the federal health-care legislation passed, and this continued political activism will help in the implementation of the legislation.

Representatives of the WSTU, Nancy Calkins and Mary Kay Weir (Indian Springs Teachers Council), participated in the

pre-convention forum about community schools. Leaders and international guests talked about the benefits of bridging the school-community gap. The panel addressed the central theme of the convention, "Building Futures Together."

All Illinois Federation of Teachers delegates headed to the Hard Rock Café on Wednesday evening before the convention started. Old acquaintances were renewed as well as new friendships begun. There was an eager anticipation to the beginning of the convention on Thursday morning.

On Friday morning, Edna Rogers (Proviso Teachers Council) and Julie Phillips (Franklin Park Teachers Council) had an opportunity to exchange information and ideas with Henry



Henry Hendricks, Edna Rogers, Julie Phillips

Hendricks, the Executive Director of the National Professional Teachers' Organization of South Africa. Hendricks was one of the international guests from 14 different countries attending the AFT Convention. At other breakfasts, delegates discussed proposed constitution and by-law changes as well as resolutions to be presented.

AFT President, Randi Weingarten, in her opening remarks, detailed a positive vision for public services. She suggested that members have made changes in practices when we needed to do so. However, there are loud and continuous attacks on public employees, teachers and the unions that represent them. Weingarten went on to lament that "We are caught in the vortex, with recessionary forces, socioeconomic forces and global economic forces swirling around—



yet the blame-the-teacher crowd says, 'if only there were fewer bad teachers, all would be right in the world.'" She went on to outline three foundations for school improvement: great curriculum and

conditions to promote learning, systemic focus on good teaching and shared responsibility and mutual accountability. Weingarten concluded, "Times such as these remind us of who we are, and of what we can and must accomplish. Your work is vital, your cause is great and your honor is unbowed. I am proud to stand with you."

Following the IFT breakfast each day, Local 571 delegates were on the convention floor listening, discussing, participating and voting on convention business. But there was also some time in the evenings to enjoy the Seattle sights and attend the AFT social events. Because of the local members involvement in the AFT PIPE program, several 571 members received special invitations to the AFT Committee on Political Education (COPE) reception. WSTU delegates spent Thursday evening viewing the Seattle skyline from the Argosy on a boat/dinner cruise.

AFT membership topped 1.5 million members. This announcement came amid fanfare, fireworks, music and dancing on the convention floor. So it wasn't all work. There were also some lighter moments when President Weingarten skillfully used parliamentary procedure to quell some overly exuberant convention delegates when Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, came to speak. Gates has provided considerable donations to the AFT Innovation Fund. This fund provides grants to AFT affiliates to develop bold education initiatives in public schools.



On the final day of the convention, many 571 delegates attended the Women's Rights breakfast to honor four WSTU members for their years of service and dedication to women's rights. At the convention assembled, the three newly reelected AFT officers and 43 AFT Vice-presidents were introduced. IFT President Ed Geppert and Chicago Teachers Union President Karen Lewis are the representatives elected from Illinois to serve on the AFT Executive Council.

So the 571 delegates left Seattle, possibly a little tired, but with renewed enthusiasm for a strongly supported American Federation of Teachers, an organization that is leading the fight to strengthen the institution of public education in America.

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♀ Living the Legacy Award

The American Federation of Teachers *Living the Legacy Award* was presented at the Women's Rights Breakfast on July 11 in Seattle, Washington. IFT President Ed Geppert joined the delegation from Illinois and West Suburban Teachers Union to honor the 30 year award winners, Nancy Calkins (Indian Springs Teachers Council), Marge Wunschel (Cicero Council) and Phyllis Meade (Retiree). Alice Kautsky (Cicero Council and WSTU Vice-president) was presented with the award for 40 years of leadership in the union, on women's right issues in her community and her school district. All award winners received a plaque and certificate.



Back row: Kathy Greenawalt, Julie Phillips, Mary Kay Weir, Nancy Calkins (award winner), Ed Geppert, Marge Wunschel (award winner) Kelly Walters, Cindy Rohlfing
 Front row Patty Vendegna, Marie Dwyer, Rose Janas, Sandy Erickson, Jane Russell

2010-11 Union Leadership Institute Information

Union Leadership Institute (ULI) 2010-11 course information is now available

Course schedules, class descriptions and registration forms for the upcoming session of ULI, the IFT's union leadership and professional development training program, are now available online. All the information you need to sign up members from your local or council is posted for your use. Questions about the ULI program should be directed to Sue Walter or Benita Twillie by calling the IFT Westmont office at 630/468-4080.

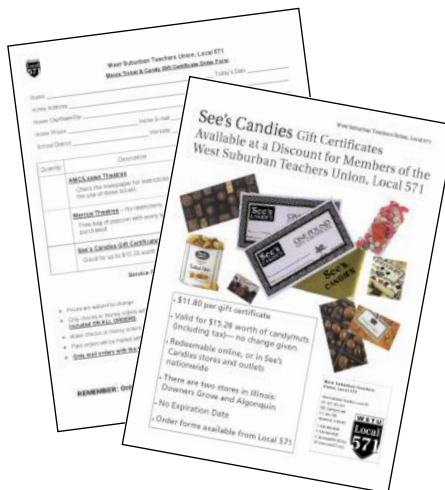
www.ift-aft.org

Discounted Marcus or AMC/Loews movie tickets and certificates for See's Candies are available again from the WSTU office. Order forms can be downloaded and printed from www.wstu571.org or requested from your Council president.

Unrestricted Marcus tickets are \$7.00 each. AMC/Loews tickets are \$6.00 and subject to limited restrictions. See the order form for additional details.

A See's candy certificate costs \$11.80 and buys up to \$15.26 in candies.

For additional information contact Julie Masterton, jmasterton@ift-aft.org, or phone the WSTU office at 630-468-4098.



A message from Lindsey Lurie (Cicero Council) a first-time AFT Convention delegate who contributed many of the convention photos in this issue: "I wanted to thank Jane Russell and the Executive Board for making me feel so welcome in Seattle, and a part of the 571 crew. The convention opened my eyes as to the many facets of what AFT stands for."



WSTU Calendar September

- 9/13—571 EB Meeting - Westmont - 5:30 p.m.
- 9/13—571 HOR Meeting - Westmont - 6:45 p.m.
- 9/20—571 Building Representatives Workshop Westmont
- 9/25—571 ER&D classes conclude - Westmont
- 9/25—571 Member Forum - Westmont

October

- 10/15-17—IFT Convention - St. Louis
- 10/18—571 EB Meeting - Westmont - 5:30 p.m.
- 10/18—571 HOR Meeting - Westmont - 6:45 p.m.
- 10/19—Legal Limits for New Teachers Workshop Westmont

November

- 11/6-7—IFT/ULI - Westmont
- 11/15—571 EB Meeting - Westmont - 5:30 p.m.
- 11/15—571 HOR Meeting - Westmont - 6:45 p.m.

WSTU OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00 AM—5:00 PM
THE LOCAL 571 OFFICE MAY BE CLOSED
ON SCHOOL HOLIDAYS, PLEASE CALL
AHEAD.

Reminders...

Legal Limits for New Teachers
Names due by October 8

571 Member Forum
Names due by September 17

Union Messenger

Jane Russell, President
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
Andrew Bendelow, 571 Web Administrator



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