

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

Union Messenger

"A Union of Professionals"

January /February Calendar

1/9—Ex.Bd Mtg. (5:30 p.m.—Westmont)
 2/4-5—IFT ULI (Westmont)
 2/6—HOR Mtg. (5:30 p.m.—Westmont)

Union Messenger

Kyle Stern, President
 Dr. Jaqueline Payne, Vice-President
 Sandra Erickson, Treasurer
 Cathleen Pope, Secretary
 Eugene Poull, Financial Secretary
 Brett Blair, Legal Defense Secretary
 Shavonne Henry, COPE/PAC
 Chairperson
 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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FOR MY FRIEND AND MENTOR

Dear Union Siblings,

Before I knew the likes of Jane Russell, Mike Linder, Tom Smith, Arnavaz Mistry-Mujthaba, Dan Montgomery, Randi Weingarten, and other power-houses in the union movement, I knew Paula Panfil. When I first started teaching in 2001, I was anti-union. I thought all the union cared about was money and not the students. I fully intended to not join the union. At the



Argo Teachers Council new teacher breakfast, I fully intended to let the union know I had no interest in joining. That is where I met Paula Panfil, an executive board member with the council. She explained fair share to me, and I agreed with her logic that if I had to pay fair share I might as well join the union and receive the liability insurance. I still thought, though, my administration was caring and had my best interest at heart.

During my first year teaching I went to district held new teachers' meetings before school. I mentioned it to Paula one day and she asked if we were getting paid to go to these meetings. I said no and she got upset and said the union would fix that. Wouldn't you know, shortly thereafter I started getting paid for attending those meetings and for the meetings I already attended. During my first few years at Argo, the administration started making less and less sense to me, but Paula and other union leaders completely understood things and where I was coming from. I started going to Paula more and more for advice and she always had my back. As a person who dealt with severe bullying growing up, it was nice to know Paula was there to support me.

Paula and another union officer convinced me in my fifth year of teaching at Argo to run for the Argo Union Executive Board and I did. In 2006 I joined the Argo Union Executive Board and negotiating team. I watched Paula and how she strongly dealt with the administration without any fear. I was in such awe. When she was elected council president, she would tease me and introduce me to other teachers as the next council president. I would just nervously smile as I knew I could never be as good, calm, or smart as Paula. I was just happy to be her vice president. It is still the greatest union job I ever had.

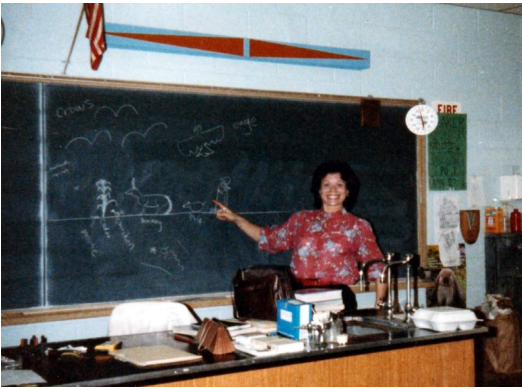
Up until her retirement in 2015, I enjoyed every minute I spent with Paula. I would soak in her wisdom and strength. I saw her battle breast cancer and win. In 2012, we had a rough negotiation and Paula was able to get a 100 percent strike vote. She got members to canvass the community and as a result we got everything for which we were fighting without having to strike.

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FOR MY FRIEND AND MENTOR

I took over as council president in 2015 and would call Paula frequently for advice. She was so gracious with her time. She once again had my back when I thought our principal might be grooming students. She had my back in 2019 when my superintendent tried to non-renew me as tennis coach. She rallied retirees to come to the board meeting to defend me. When I told her about mental health issues, I was dealing with she told me she was proud of me for dealing with it. She always made me feel so strong and confident.



Paula Panfil



Paula Panfil

When I found out during Covid she had a type of leukemia, I was convinced she would win. She told me it was a good kind, and she was getting the good type of chemo. I told her I did not think there was a good type of chemo, she would just laugh and then ask me about my "kiddos". When she was in the hospital this past spring for a long treatment to fight the cancer, she told me it was just what she had to do, and she would buy me lunch when she got out. When I last spoke to her in August, she said we would talk again soon. Unfortunately, she passed away in October just before I planned to call her. While I know I will not talk to her again soon, I have faith I will talk to her again. Until then, I will miss her incredibly. She was the best and she still owes me lunch. We will have it eventually. I'll miss you, Paula! Thank you.

In Unity,

Kyle Stern

You voted and your voice was heard !



Legislative Report

Grace Drobny and Monique Manuel
571 Legislative Directors

The Workers' Rights Amendment was passed giving the right to collective bargaining in Illinois.

Northbrook School District 28 teachers and certified staff file to form a union

Bills Passed:

Mental Health in the School Setting

This expands the scope of the Children's Mental Health Partnership to include making recommendations for ensuring all Illinois youth receive mental health education and have access to mental health care in the school setting. It requires consultation with educators and school support personnel

[House Bill 2569](#) extends the provision allowing retired teachers to return to teaching without penalty until June 30, 2024. It also requires schools to post vacancies on the district's website and in an online database.

[House Bill 376](#) requires public schools to include in their curriculum a unit of instruction studying the events of Asian American history.

[Senate Bill 654](#) requires all public schools to provide 30 minutes of supervised, unstructured, child-directed play each day for students K-5. Play time does not count as physical education and can be divided into periods of at least fifteen consecutive minutes. The bill prohibits the withholding of play time as a disciplinary or punitive action unless a student's participation poses an immediate threat to his/her safety or the safety of other students. It passed both chambers.

[House Bill 3202](#) adds e-cigarettes and other vapor devices as an education area under Comprehensive Health Education Program. This passed both chambers.

[House Bill 24](#) requires sex education course material for grades 6-12 to include an age-appropriate discussion on sexting

[House Bill 3097](#) requires school driver education course instruction to include procedures for interacting with law enforcement during traffic stops

Lastly, thank you, Jane Russell for all your help in our new roles as Legislative Directors. We will never fill your shoes or your wealth of knowledge, but we will continue to strive to advocate for public education.



Jane Russell



Tom Smith



I have been very blessed to have worked with Tom, Jane, Arnavaz, and Mike Linder during my time on the Argo Teachers Council Executive Board.

Tom, you bailed me out many of times. It seemed that whenever Arnavaz would go on vacation, something would go wrong, and you were always there for me. I will always be indebted to Arnavaz and you for your help with my tennis situation. I appreciate your help and guidance when I took over as Local President in June as well. I wish you all the best and enjoy retirement for me. I hope it is fantastic! You will be missed.

Jane, I am beyond humbled to be President of Local 571. Your leadership has been inspirational, and I know I have big shoes to fill. I hope to build on your many successes. I know when you took over as Local 571 President, DuPage was a solid red county. With your hard work and dedication, you have managed to convert DuPage to a county where IFT Endorsements matter. I appreciate all your counsel and wisdom. Enjoy retirement. You will be missed.

Kyle Stern

Jane, You are an amazing woman and the Argo Teachers' Council is grateful for your dedication to Union work and your energy! Tom, You helped me and the Argo Teachers' Council out of many jams. Your earnest defense of workers' rights is greatly appreciated!

Heather Siegel-Hickman

Jane - You are a wonderful teacher, union leader, and friend. I will always be grateful to you for your support and kindness and will miss our conversations about school funding, elections and candidates, legislation, and education policy (to name a few). It would be impossible to count all the ways you've helped me in my career but also the ways you have influenced me as a wife, mother and human being. THANK YOU. A leader will always be a leader, even in retirement. I wish you the best as you begin this new chapter of your life.

Tom - I will miss most your guidance and humor. And I'm guessing you DON'T and WON'T miss my endless emails about politics, policy and the like. I do hope you'll give me a shout next time you find yourself in central Illinois and I'll do the same when up your way. So much fun lies ahead, and I hope you get to relish every moment of it.

Thank you.
Cynthia Riseman Lund

It's all Jane and Tom's fault. I "blame" my 33 year career as a teacher and Union leader on the two of them.

Jane was the Science department chair who hired me at West Leyden, and if it weren't for her guidance, patience, and leadership, I would not have made it past my first few years. She was the consummate professional and allowed all of us to be innovative, fail, pick up the pieces, and try again. She was also the Leyden Council President and involved at Local 571, so of course we would be Union members. And in typical Jane "arm-twisting" fashion, we would get involved. The Science Department Presidential "dynasty" lasted for ~20+ years through Jane, Arnavaz, and me. And when the newly created Financial Secretary position opened up, the arm twisting continued, and I became an officer of 571. Jane was an incredible leader who knew when to lead and, more importantly, knew when to listen - she didn't complain (too much) when I continually questioned expenditures and asked for shorter meetings. She was tireless in her dedication and inspired us to strive to do better for the membership. It was a privilege to continue to serve under her leadership and to maintain our friendship through the years.

Tom was a more stealthy (hard to believe) influence - at first. He taught at East Leyden for my first six years, but since he wasn't in Science, we didn't always associate with those who taught the "fluffy" subjects - just kidding. I got to know him through ULI, his long-winded ramblings at the 571 meetings, his friendship with Chris Schulz, various conventions, and of course, having drinks at an assortment of bars. Tom became my friend and mentor when he served on Leyden's negotiations team during my second year as President. Our negotiations were "ugly" (spanned 3 calendar years, involved bowling shirts with a "strike" logo, etc.), but they might not have gone on so long, if Tom didn't find many of the issues we were fighting over so "interesting" - arguing with our Board President was somewhat of a sport for him. Combine that with far too many personnel meetings and our Leyden nicknames of Batman and Robin soon spread - Tom argued that he looked better in tights, but I let him "win" on that one. Becoming friends with his son Brad and having Tom and Sue move around the corner has only added to our connection. For years, I've been fortunate to value his counsel, calm presence, thoughtfulness, and sense of humor.

Jane and Tom, I thank you both for your leadership at Leyden and Local 571. I thank you more for believing in me professionally and personally. You truly allowed me to live my best life at Leyden and through the Union.

Jon Pazol - Leyden Council Retiree, former Leyden Council President, and Local 571 Financial Secretary

30 years ago, I sat at a lunch table with Tom Smith, Jane Russell, and another union leader at Leyden. Conversations usually revolved around Union issues or reminiscing about past Union events. Listening to this for a year, lead me to get more involved in the Union. I have had the fortune of working with Tom and Jane at both East Leyden and the Local. Their institutional knowledge has been invaluable. Contract language they negotiated still remains in Leyden's contract. I have many fond memories from conventions, ULI, and other events. Thank you for introducing me to the Union, encouraging me to get involved, and providing decades of support.

Chris Schulz



Legislative Breakfast



On October 1 at the Hilton Chicago Oak Brook Hills-Resort, Local 571 hosted its 17th annual Legislative Breakfast. The power packed line up included State Representative Delia Ramirez, Congressman Sean Casten, Illinois Speaker of the House Chris Welch, Senate President Don Harmon, Senator Laura Murphy, Justice Mary Kay O'Brien, Chair of the Democratic Party of Illinois Lisa Hernandez, Cook County Commissioner and IFT Member Brandon Johnson, IFT President Dan Montgomery, and Governor JB Pritzker. Governor Pritzker was presented with the IFT endorsement as well as the Jane Russell Defender of Public Education award.

With over 130 people in attendance, this impressive lineup reminded our members the importance of democracy, voting, canvassing, talking to neighbors, phone banking, writing postcards, and fighting for our rights. As Director of the IFT Department of Political Activities Michelle Paul will say, "You may not like politics, but politics is how we elect people who make good policy." As Union members we must remain vigilant about protecting our rights because all our rights have been fought for and we will need to continue to fight to retain them. Nothing comes easy.

In addition to a great breakfast and speakers, Local 571 held its annual raffles with prizes that included a free night at the Hilton, lottery tickets, and gift cards. We thank every council who donated to this raffle, Alice Kautsky, Jacki Payne, Patty Clancy, Monique Manuel, Grace Drobny, Amy Excell, Cynthia Riseman Lund, and all members of the Legislative Breakfast committee. We encourage all our members to consider attending next year's breakfast.



Legislative Breakfast



On a lovely Saturday this first day in October - 10/1/22, we welcomed the theme, "TOGETHER we win!" As teachers, we always try to educate ourselves on the issues of the world and be life-long learners. Problems and conflict are never ending, especially when it comes to contrasting political views. It is important to know who our friends are in life, especially in politics, to be able to be a **CONFIDENT VOTER** every election.

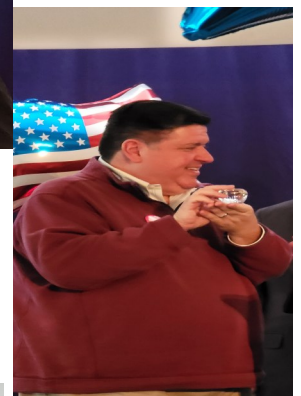
As Laura Murphy, our IL State Senator, reminded us at this event, society is **SUCCESSFUL** because of A **TEACHER!!** Many educator friends and friends of educators spent the morning together at this wonderful annual event called the WSTU Local 571 Legislative Breakfast. Thank you to my union for asking the hard questions to find out which candidates

on the ballot will continue to defend public education issues and continue funding in education. These candidates appear to value teachers and appreciate our worth along with supporting teaching professionals when things get tough in the world with the ongoing struggles we face in education! Thank you to Cicero Council and our Local 571 for helping organize such a prominent and educational event for its members to meet many faces up close and personal, like JB Pritzker who took pictures with many Cicero Council Members and Retirees. 🍎

Submitted by Nicole Gamez,
Cicero Council Member



Hugs from Jane Russell for another friend of education, Brandon Johnson, who was a teacher in the Cabrini Green Area of Chicago and now a politician for change. Brandon Johnson is a great speaker and CTU is backing him for mayor too!



Left to Right Top Row: Cicero Council Members Maria Rivera, Nicole Gamez, Governor JB Pritzker, Nicole DenHamer — Bottom Row Left to Right: Cicero Council Member Olga Vasquez and Cicero Council Retiree Ciria Vargas

Left to Right: Cicero Council Members of Lincoln School in D99, Nicole Gamez and Jenny Wilder-Gawat were all smiles at the event.



Illinois Governor JB Pritzker seemed very honored to receive the Jane Russell Public Defender of Education Award!



Delia Ramirez is running for Congress and is an **EXCELLENT** speaker on today's issues.



One of the COPE raffle prizes was \$50 worth of lottery tickets to potentially WIN BIG!!!

Keith Charvat, Cicero Council member who teaches at Lincoln, is excited about his BIG raffle win that proceeds goes towards the COPE scholarship fund.

IFT Convention—St. Louis

WSTU members Lola Estrada, Rob Bartlett, Alice Kautsky, Margaret Wunschel, Jacki Payne, Kyle Stern, Sandy Erickson, Jon Monique Manuel, Jane Russell, and Cathy Pope traveled down to St. Louis October 21-23 for the IFT Convention. These delegates attended several workshops including ones about Antiracism, Public Loan Forgiveness, School Board Elections, School Safety, and Improv Insights for Unifying Teams. The delegates helped pass twenty-one resolutions and several IFT constitutional amendments. One resolution, Preventing Mass Violence by Increasing Student Services in School, was written by Local 571.

Jane Russell was awarded the Margaret Blackshere Women in Union Leadership Award. In her acceptance speech, she reminded IFT members to treat others as you would like to be treated, put your family first, and build relationships with your local politicians as "Our work is tied to politics and government." At Local 571 we cannot thank Jane enough for her 25 years as Local 571 President and her years as IFT Secretary-Treasurer. She told the delegates that it is okay to fail and make mistakes, but you need to dust yourself off and get back up and continue to fight.

In addition to Jane Russell's big day, Local 571 Councils received several awards. The Proviso Teachers Union Council received the Solidarity Award for its successful strike. District 88 Teachers Council, Indian Springs Custodian Council, Riverside Teachers, Rosemont Teachers Council, Proviso H.S. PSRP Council, and Bloomingdale Teachers all received the 100% membership award. Furthermore, Local 571 Vice President Jacki Payne, 571 Legislative Director Jon Monique Manuel, and 571 President Kyle Stern were all elected as IFT Vice Presidents. This is the first time we will have three IFT Vice Presidents from our Local.

Our Delegates also listened to compelling speeches by the Mayor of St. Louis, March for Our Lives Board Member Trevon Bosley, AFT President Randi Weingarten, Speaker of the Illinois House Chris Welch, as well as Cook County Commissioner and IFT Vice President Brandon Johnson, who will hopefully be the next Mayor of Chicago. The convention closed with Old Town School of Folk members singing "Solidarity Forever," where all delegates were reminded, "Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one, but the Union makes us strong." We ask all our members to consider attending the next IFT Convention in 2025. A great time was had by all our delegates.



IFT Convention—St. Louis



Argo High School Teachers' Council Contract Update



Argo High School Teachers' Council secured a new five-year contract which will take effect July 1, 2023 and run through June 30, 2028. Teachers will see an average 25% increase over five years. These increases bring back a salary schedule, which was eliminated in the 2020-2023 contract. A BCBS PPO option was also returned to this new contract after being eliminated in the 2020-2023 contract. In addition, coaches and activity sponsors will see yearly increases after several years of frozen stipends. Tenured teachers with ten years or less experience earn an extra sick day each year, and all will now be able to take up to four personal days.

The union also codified the past practice which allows teachers to take the full 12 weeks of FMLA leave as paid leave for the birth and first-year care of a child provided that they have the sick leave days available -- this practice has been threatened in the last two years in the District. The Union also secured strong progressive discipline language that favors teachers. Finally, those teachers nearing retirement can avail themselves of an additional 181 days of sick leave in their fifth year before retirement provided they submit a notice to retire for when they are first eligible. Additional elements of the retirement incentive include 6% increases in each of the final four years and the potential to earn more, which would be paid in a post-retirement payout of up to \$50,000. The council executive board would like to give a huge thanks to Renee Wagner, Field Service Director, for helping guide us through the negotiation process and coming in to help close the deal at the end.

Submitted by Heather Siegel-Hickman

Members Engaged

At a get out the vote rally in Rosemont, Kyle Stern met with Congressman Sean Casten, Senator Dick Durbin, Congresswomen Lauren Underwood and Jan Schakowsky, and President Joe Biden.



Kyle Stern canvassing for Sean Casten.

As Illinois Attorney General, Kwame Raoul has defended against federal attacks on access to affordable healthcare, voting rights, the environment, civil rights, and more. Jane Russell, IFT Secretary Treasurer supported the IFT endorsement of Attorney General for another term.



Jane Russell phone banked with Congressmen Sean Casten, Raja Krishnamoorthi, and Bill Foster.



At a get out the vote rally at Second City, Kyle Stern heard from Vice President Kamala Harris, Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi and comedian Aasif Mandvi.

Karen Lewis Way, the street outside of CTU Local 1 headquarters, was dedicated prior to the annual CTU LEAD dinner, September 30, 2022, for Local 1's dynamic and courageous leader, Karen Lewis.



Kyle Stern and Jane Russell met with IFT Executive Board members including Stacy Davis Gates and Jackson Potter at a dinner in September.



Kyle Stern, his daughters, and Monique Manuel (not pictured) met with Senator Duckworth, State Senator Laura Ellman, and State Representative candidate Matt Hanson at a breakfast in October.



[D209 teachers not fired but tensions still hot - Forest Park Review](#)

Chicago Teachers Union President Stacy Davis Gates speaks to reporters during a press conference on November 15th in support of four D209 teachers of color whose jobs were on the line.

Credit: Paul Guyette/ Photographer

Members Engaged

At the October House of Representatives meeting Local 571 honored Tom Smith for his years of service as an IFT Field Service Director with Local 571. The Local dedicated the Labor Library in Tom's name and a dedication ceremony will happen at the December House of Representatives meeting. After the October meeting a celebration was held in Tom's honor at Grill 89.



Local 571 Meet and Greet for Jennifer Ladisch Douglass

On October 12th, members of WSTU 571 hosted a meet and greet for State Representative candidate Jennifer Ladisch Douglass. Jenn ran for State Rep of the new 45th District and won. As a former Philadelphia resident, Jenn moved to the Chicago area in 2004 where she worked at a large law firm. In 2011, she started her own firm, working on cases including commercial litigation, bankruptcy, guardianships, and transactional real estate. Jenn recently worked to draft legislation and advocate for affordable medications and healthcare. Jenn has been living with type 1 diabetes and is a cancer survivor so access to affordable healthcare and medications is extremely important for her.



Members of WSTU 571 mingled with community members while talking about important political issues. Jenn addressed the attendees and discussed how it is so important for her that every child in the district and across the state should have access to a high-quality public education that supports kids in general and special education. She also wants to ensure that students have access to a robust athletic system, as well as vocational training.

-Jacqueline Payne, Ph.D.

Official Elections Notice—2022 Nominations are open to all Local 571 Union members



Local 571 Officers' Election

Nominations are now being accepted for the following Local 571 Officers: a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Legal Defense Secretary, and a Financial Secretary. The term of office is two (2) years beginning July 1, 2023, and by virtue of their election, they shall be elected also as delegates to the AFT and IFT Conventions. Nominations (name and council) must be printed or typed and can be emailed to Patty Clancy @ pclancy@ift-aft.org. They must be received in the Local 571 office on or before March 13, 2023 by 5:00 p.m.

Nominees will receive a written or electronic acknowledgment of receipt. Voting will take place via secret ballot. Council leaders will notify members of the date that voting will take place. If an electronic secret ballot is used, members without an email on file with the Union will receive a ballot via U.S. Postal Service. Interested individuals may request further information about the duties of the office by contacting Local 571.



West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571 Scholarship Opportunities



- ◇ **Mary Wheeler Scholarship**—Six \$3,200 one-time awards will be given to high school seniors graduating in 2023 whose parents or guardians are members in good standing of the WSTU, Local 571. Applicants must plan to continue their education full time in the Fall of 2023. Applications will be available at www.wstu571.org, Local 571's Facebook page, or by calling 630-468-4098. *All application materials must be postmarked on or before February 15, 2023.*
- ◇ **Jo Ann Horowitz Scholarship**—Two \$1,600 one-time awards will be given in 2023 to current PSRPs who are members in good standing of the WSTU, Local 571 and pursuing a BA/BS or MA/MS in an education-related field. Applications will be available at www.wstu571.org, Local 571's Facebook page, or by calling 630-468-4098. *All application materials must be postmarked on or before February 15, 2023*
- ◇ **Julienne Phillips Scholarship**—Two \$1,600 one-time awards will be given in 2023 to current licensed, practicing educators (teacher, social worker, counselor, psychologist, speech pathologist, librarian, nurse, or instructional coach) who are members in good standing of the WSTU, Local 571, and pursuing a masters degree in an education-related field. Applications will be available at www.wstu571.org, Local 571's Facebook page, or by calling 630-468-4098. *All application materials must be postmarked on or before February 15, 2023.*
- ◇ **Maryann Karlovsky Scholarship**—Two \$1,600 one-time awards will be given in 2023 to current licensed, practicing educators (teacher, social worker, counselor, psychologist, speech pathologist, librarian, nurse, or instructional coach) who are members in good standing of the WSTU, Local 571 and pursuing a certificate or endorsement in an education-related field. Applications will be available at www.wstu571.org, Local 571's Facebook page, or by calling 630-468-4098. *All application materials must be postmarked on or before February 15, 2023.*



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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