

AFTerthoughts



A Union of
Professionals



AFTCA
Award Winner

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A publication of the Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers. AFT Local 943 AFL-CIO

Local 943

Election of Officers and Constitutional Amendments Vote February 6, 2007

On February 6, 2007, all Local 943 members will vote for Local officers for the 2007-2009 term, delegates to the 2007 Illinois Federation of Teachers Convention, and changes to the Local 943 constitution. The nominations for the Local 943 officer and delegate election closed December 12, 2006. In January, members will receive a listing and short biography of each candidate for office.

For quite awhile, the officers and the Senate of Local 943 have been involved in updating the Local constitution. The last time the constitution was updated was December of 1985. Due to the time constraints in the current constitution, a

special Senate meeting will be held on January 23, 2007 to approve the amendments that need to go to the membership within ten days and voted on ten days later. When you receive the changes, you will see that they update the language and improve the grammar in many cases. Some sections, such as council responsibility, have had requirements added to ensure that the council is accountable to its membership and to the local.

Please be sure to vote. The ballot will be long, but we hope to be able to develop a scantron ballot. Voting will take place in your building. For details, see your building representative.

Join a Legislative Committee—Training session on January 30th *Be an Activist for Congressional Education (ACE)*

Local 943 is looking for volunteers to serve on legislative committees. Its goal is to have two to three people from a state senate and/or congressional district meet with legislators at their local offices. The Local will provide talking points and all the information necessary to set up and conduct these meetings. It is imperative that legislators hear from our members about the important issues we face. It's a small commitment for a potentially big benefit for our members.

For those interested in joining a committee, an informational training session will be held at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 30th at the Local 943 office. If interested or for more information, please email (deneenpajeau@sbcglobal.net) or leave a message for Deneen Pajeau at (815) 474-7533 with the following information; your name, state senate and congressional district, House of Representatives district, phone number and email address.

Local 943 scholarship application now available

A \$500 scholarship will be awarded to a child of a currently employed Local 943 member. The child must be a member of a 2007 high school graduating class and enrolling in a public college or university. >> See page 2 for details.





From the President's Desk...

Make the Election Matter

Thank you to all who voted in the November Elections.

The newly elected members in Congress and the Illinois Legislature have a strong commitment to education and labor issues. The next two years should see progress made in these and other areas:

- Educational funding,
- Raising the minimum wage (Could you live on \$1,000 a month besides raising a family?),
- Correcting the mistakes and problems of “No Child Left Behind”,
- The myriad of healthcare issues such as the high cost of prescriptions, and
- Keeping jobs here in the United States.

This is a wide ranging agenda that needs to be addressed and to do this we need your help. Remember that the halls of Congress and the Illinois legislature are filled with lobbyists with agendas that do not coincide with ours. That is why it is very important for you to take just a small amount of your time to help our Illinois Federation of Teachers and

American Federation of Teachers lobbyists convince legislators that our positions are the ones that they should support.

What you can do:

- Sign up to be an E-Activist. Go to the Local 943 website www.aft943.org. Click on the icon in the lower left corner and follow the instructions. When an issue becomes urgent, you will receive an email with all the information you need to contact legislators.
- Join the ACE (Activist for Congressional Education) program to lobby your state and federal legislators. Please read the article on page 1 for details.
- Donate to our Local 943 COPE) fund. This is a voluntary donation. It is used to send our members to Springfield to lobby and to support state legislators who vote favorably on education and labor issues.

Let me finish by repeating a theme you will continue to hear all year: COUNT ME IN!

Kathy Setlak

AFT Local 943 scholarship application now available

The Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 943, will award one scholarship in the amount of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) to a child of a currently employed union member who is in good standing. The child must be a member of a high school graduation class of 2007 and enrolling in a public college or university. Selection will be made on the basis of these five criteria:

1. official scores on the ACT/SAT entrance examinations,
2. class rank, and GPA (third quarter),
3. record of extra-curricular activities/community service,
4. two references by members of the staff of the student's high school where he/she is currently enrolled, and
5. a 100 word essay which details future aspirations.

These components will be examined by the Scholarship Committee whose decision will be final. The scholarship is unrestricted as to race, religion, political affiliation, financial status or course of study.

Applications may be requested from your Council President or can be found online at the 943 website, www.aft943.org. Applicants should fill out the entire application and submit all required official transcripts, test scores, written recommendations and, if applicable, an extra-curricular activities record. Failure to include any of these will be cause for rejection of the application. This information must be submitted in its entirety to the Scholarship Committee:

M. Stockwell, Chairperson
Southwest Suburban Fed. of Teachers, Local 943
4544 W. 103rd Street, Oak Lawn, IL 60453
(708) 424-4142 Fax: (708)424-8189
E-mail address: slcmry@sbcglobal.net

All required information and the application must be received by the end of the school day on May 1, 2007. The scholarship will be awarded as soon as possible after the selection.



Educational Research and Dissemination

AFT LOCAL 943's Winter ER&D Courses

Managing Anti-Social Behavior

The anti-social actions of a small but powerful number of students in school not only put their own academic success at risk, but threaten the learning environment for everyone. This course presents research on emotional and behavioral problems of students who consistently act out. Participants will learn strategies to reduce and/or prevent the occurrence of disruptive or dangerous outbreaks.

Starting Date: **Thursday, February 15, 2007**

Time: 4:00—7:30 p.m.

Meets on the following WEDNESDAYS
Feb 21, 28, March 7, 14, 21, April 11, 18, 25, May 2

Presenters: Mary Stockwell and Carol Kopacz

Where: Lincoln School, 410 W 157th St.,
Calumet City (708.862.6620)

Thinking Math

This course focuses on research about how children learn mathematics and how these findings can be applied in the classroom. Ten principles capture practices that lead to a better understanding of math for all students and are applicable at all levels. In this course, they are exemplified through the research on counting, addition and subtraction. The course takes a broader look at the importance of patterns.

Starting Date: **Monday, February 5, 2007**

Time: 4:00—6:45 p.m.

Meets on the following MONDAYS
Feb 19, 26, Mar 12, 19, 26, Apr 16, 23, 30, May 7, 14

Presenters: Marie Chavosky and Todd Gierman

Where: Local 943 office, 4544 W. 103rd St.,
Oak Lawn (708.423.0766)

REGISTRATION

The cost of each course is \$50.00 payable to Local 943 at the time of registration. To register you can log on to the Local 943 website (www.aft943.org) or complete the registration form below. Courses meet one day per week. If you have any questions, please call Local 943 at 708.423.0766.

COURSE CREDIT

Each course offers both teachers and paraprofessionals 30 hours credit. TEACHERS will receive 30 CPDU's and can apply for two hours of graduate credit from Governors State University (cost is \$372.00). PARAPROFESSIONALS can obtain two hours of undergraduate credit from Prairie State Community College towards their certificate (cost is \$164.00). Participants register for college credit at the first class meeting.

Registration Form -----

Please return this form and a \$50 (per course) check or money order made payable to Local 943 (708.423.0766) to: Mary Stockwell, c/o Simmons Middle School, 6450 W. 95th St., Oak Lawn, IL 60453

_____ Managing Anti-social Behavior _____ Thinking Math 1

NAME (please print): _____

Home Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Home Email: _____

School Name & District Number: _____

School Phone: _____ School Email: _____

Weingarten Rights

If a union steward could teach just one thing to his or her members, it would have to be about their “Weingarten rights” — the right of unionized workers to have a steward or someone else from the union present if they find themselves in situations where they may be disciplined.

Many workers crumble in the face of questioning by their supervisor or other management type. They get rattled and start explaining and making excuses and apologizing and often end up giving the employer ammunition to do whatever he wants. They often become like the suspects you see in cop shows on television: they ‘fess up to things that maybe never even happened or say things in such a way that they worsen the problem rather than talk their way out of it.

With few exceptions, workers across North America enjoy the legal right to have a steward or other union representative present if they find themselves in *any* situation with management — a conversation, a discussion, an interrogation — that could lead to disciplinary action. For private sector and federal government workers in the U.S., this protection is called Weingarten Rights, named after a 1975 Supreme Court decision. Most state workers and workers throughout Canada enjoy pretty much the same guarantees.

But unlike Miranda rights, which police are supposed to tell criminal suspects about (“You have the right to remain silent, anything you say may be used against you...”), employers do *not* have to tell employees about their Weingarten rights. Workers have to *ask* for them. And the only way they’re going to know they have that right, odds are, is if *you* tell them.

These are the basic guidelines covering the use of Weingarten:

■ The employee must make a clear request for union representation before or during the interview. The worker can’t be punished for making such a request.

■ The employer must either grant the request and delay questioning until the union person arrives; deny the request, but end the interview at once; or give the worker the choice of going ahead without representation *or* ending the interview immediately.

■ An employer who denies the worker’s request for representation and continues to ask questions is committing an unfair labor practice.

The worker can legally refuse to answer questions in such circumstances.

If the employer obeys the law and waits to continue until the union’s representative arrives, the following rules apply:

■ Once the steward arrives, the supervisor must inform him or her about the subject matter of the interview — the type of misconduct under discussion.

■ The steward and the worker should be allowed to talk privately before the questioning begins.

■ The steward can speak during the interview and, if necessary, ask that questions be clarified. The steward cannot bargain over the purpose of the interview.

■ The steward can advise the worker on how to answer any or all questions, can object to improper questioning, and has the right, once the questioning is ended, to provide additional information. The steward cannot tell workers not to answer questions, or to give false answers.

Be careful that you don’t give

Weingarten more power than it has. The rights do not extend to meetings where no questioning is involved, but rather just to one-way communication from the supervisor to the worker, or a discussion — without threat of discipline — about job performance.

At the same time, remember that workers *do* have the right to call their Weingarten rights into play if they have

any reasonable expectation that a disciplinary action may result from the meeting. The key word here is *may*. If there’s the slightest concern that the session could bring about discipline, the worker has the right to ask for union help even though the supervisor who calls the employee in may not be intending to take such action. If other workers have been disciplined for similar alleged situations, or if the

worker being called in has had a previous discussion with the supervisor about discipline, or is working under the threat of

a performance warning letter...any of these things can cause a worker to think that discipline may be an outcome of the meeting.

One final thing: along with being there to support the worker, you can be really helpful by taking complete notes of what goes on during the interview. If the case becomes serious, your notes can be invaluable in documenting who said what.

— David Prosten. The writer is editor of Steward Update.

Weingarten Rights

If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated or have any effect on my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union steward, representative or officer be present at this meeting. Without union representation, I choose not to participate in this discussion.



TO BE or NOT TO BE... Am I Highly Qualified?

Many teachers are asking themselves: "How do I proceed in finding out my "highly qualified status?" As a state, we must demonstrate that a large percentage of our teachers are "highly qualified" to teach in the positions they are currently filling and school districts are required to file plans for teachers who do not meet the "highly qualified" status.

How does a teacher demonstrate their Highly Qualified Status?

1. Pass a state content test in the subject, or
2. Have a major indicated by a college or university team, or
3. Have 32 semesters in the subject, or
4. Have a masters degrees or higher in the subject, or
5. Have a state masters certificate in the subject.

If you have qualified through one of the above methods and ISBE (Illinois State Board of Education) has your official transcripts and/or test results, ECS (Educator's

Certification System) will automatically record you as being highly qualified in the pertinent content area.

If you do not qualify through one of the above methods, you will need to use the High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluations (HOUSSE) method. It is a mechanism provided in NCLB (No Child Left Behind) as a means for veteran teachers (those who have at least one full year of teaching experience) to demonstrate that they are highly qualified in a core content area. IFT worksheets are available on the agency's website for the purpose of completing the process at www.isbe.net/certification/default.htm.

For teachers found to be not highly qualified for a core content area, school districts are encouraged to collaborate with the teacher to become highly qualified in the core area to which he/she is assigned within a two-year period. The district must provide resources and support teachers in their efforts to become highly qualified.

Important reminder for instructional school support personnel

>> Beginning July 1st, PSRP's must have state approval

Paraprofessionals employed on or before June 30, 2005, who provide instructional support in a special education program which is NOT funded with Title I, Part A money must obtain state approval **by July 1, 2007**. "Instructional support" is defined as one-on-one tutoring for eligible students, if the tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher; assisting in classroom management; assisting in computer instruction; providing support in a library or media center; or providing instructional support services under the direct supervision of a teacher.

Beginning July 1, 2007, all paraprofessionals must have a letter of approval from the state. There are four options available to obtain state approval. Paraprofessionals must meet one of these options:

1. Completed 30 semester hours of college credit from a regionally accredited institution of higher education.
 - ◆ Evidence is an official transcript.
2. Completed a paraprofessional training program approved by the Illinois State Board of Education or the Illinois Community College Board.
 - ◆ Evidence is an Illinois Community College Board transcript or certificate of completion.
3. Passed the ETS Parapro Assessment, with 460 as the minimum passing score.
 - ◆ Evidence is an official score report.
4. Acceptable Score on ACT WorkKeys assessments (Applied Mathematics-4, Reading for Information-4, Business Writing-3, AND Acceptable on the Instructional Support Inventory which requires observation of an applicant in a classroom setting)
 - ◆ Evidence is the ACT WorkKeys Proficiency Certificate for Teacher Assistants.

This timeline for state approval does not change the federal No Child Left Behind timeline for paraprofessionals providing instructional support in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds. That deadline was June 30, 2006.

For addition information and ISBE paraprofessional approval forms, visit the Illinois State Board of Education website at www.isbe.net/certification/html/paraprofessional.htm. Individuals who do non-instructional work in food services, cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care services, non-instructional computer assistance and similar positions do not have to meet the requirement.

>> NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE <<

Alsip Teachers: The Union's negotiating team is in the process of forming committees, reviewing membership surveys, and developing proposals.

Hazel Crest: The Union's negotiating team is in the process of forming committees, reviewing membership surveys, and developing proposals.



Membership Benefits ...

Be sure to check the Local's website (www.aft943.org) regularly for the latest news of the Local, IFT, and AFT and links to your legislators, the AFT e-Activist network, and important topics and forms such as scholarship applications, plus much, much more. Also find out about all the benefits that are available to you as a member. All benefits are listed with a direct link for each one. Just click the "About Local 943" button to access the Benefits button. If you have any questions concerning any of the above, please contact me and I will find the answers for you. You can either call or email me — 708-423-0766 x. 11 or jspirakes@ift-aft.org.

The Fannie May candy sale was once again a success with gift cards in the amount of \$9,435.00 retail cost being sold with a savings of \$2,358.75 for our members. There are a limited amount of gift cards available in \$5, \$10, and \$20 amounts for sale in the union office on a first-come, first-served basis. The cards can be purchased at a 25% savings to members. Please call 708-423-0766. Happy Holidays to all. — *Judy Spirakes, Membership Services Specialist*

Attention Retirees: Check out this website for Medicare information and assistance: www.medicarerights.org

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR QuEST 2007

Join more than 3,000 preK-12 educators and union leaders from around the country July 12-15, 2007, at the Hilton Washington, Washington, D.C., for AFT's QuEST 2007, the union's conference on teaching and learning. More information will become available in March.

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Attention New Union Members

If you have not yet received your union membership card, please contact Laura Kies at 708-423-0766 ext 10 or lkies@ift-aft.org. Please leave the following information: your name, address, phone number, and school district.

AFT Local 943 Senate Meeting Schedule

Meetings begin at 4:45 p.m.
(Light dinner served at 4:30 p.m.)

Second Tuesday of the Month

SPECIAL MEETING
January 23, 2007

February 13, 2007
April 17, 2007 *new date
May 8, 2007

The AFT Local 943 senate is the governing body of the local. The latest, most relevant information on matters such as union policies, professional concerns, negotiations, recertification, legislative issues and politics are discussed, reviewed and disseminated.

Each Council president is an automatic senator to AFT Local 943. Councils are then allowed additional senators according to the number of members.

ALL COUNCILS ARE EXPECTED TO BE REPRESENTED. In the event a council president/senator cannot attend a meeting, another representative should be in attendance. Any member is welcome to attend but only those duly appointed or elected senators will be eligible to vote.

If you are interested in representing your council at the local level, please contact your council president.

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