



A Union of Professionals

AFTerthoughts

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

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Yes YOU Can! Paraprofessionals CAN and SHOULD lead

In years past, the Illinois Federation of Teachers encouraged the merging of paraprofessional and certificated units, with the belief that solidarity amongst employees was a vital part of the Union's longevity. A natural progression of merged units should be an increase of paraprofessional leadership within these wall-to-wall units.

AFT Local 943, with its numerous merged units and contracts, has and continues to encourage paraprofessionals to be active participants in the activities of the Local and within their respective Councils. As wall-to-wall units, there need not be a division among certificated and non-certificated personnel. There should be only empowerment of all members through the encouragement of activism and increased opportunities to increase knowledge base.

Currently, AFT Local 943 has two councils with paraprofessionals in leadership; the SWCCCASE (Southwest Cook County Cooperative Association for Special

Education) Council 2445 and the Hoover-Schrum Council, under the leadership of Rueben Prince and Laura Meyer respectively. Paraprofessional Sharon Conrad, just leaving her post as president of the Willow Springs Council, served for two terms. Local 943 itself has a PSRP on its executive board. Karen Kendall, book-keeper in Orland District 135, has served as Local vice president since 2008.

In October of 2010, the delegates to the 2010 IFT Convention elected Marcia (Boone) Campbell to the office of IFT Secretary-Treasurer. Campbell, a 25-year accounting specialist at Southwestern Illinois College in Belleville, IL is the first paraprofessional to hold this position and is also the first PSRP to hold a position within the state affiliate higher than executive board member. And just last month, the AFT advanced AFT executive vice president Lorretta Johnson, a former teacher's aide, to the position of Secretary-Treasurer of the American Federation of Teachers.

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Fannie May Gift Cards

Order for the
holidays!

See page 7

Teacher Aides, Custodians, Paraprofessionals, and Support Staff... Learn about your IMRF retirement

Tuesday, October 18, 2011 from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m.
Local 943 office; 15521 S. 70th Ct, Orland Park
(155th St., 2 blocks east of Harlem)

All members covered by IMRF (Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund) are invited to a workshop to learn more about retirement. Pizza will be served at 4:45 p.m.

Call today—708.633.0943 x 221—to reserve your spot.



From the president's desk...

Election 2012 is coming



Yes, it's true. Election 2012 is coming whether we like it or not. Illinois has pushed its primary back to March but Florida wants to move its primary to January so that Florida, a swing state, can have more influence in the primary selection of presidential candidates.

If you haven't watched the Republican Presidential Debates yet please take the time to watch at least one so that you can see the candidates in action and form your own opinion about them and not depend on the networks' opinions. This summer when I couldn't find anything on television but reruns, I watched one of the Republican debates. I found myself talking back to the television when I disagreed with the candidates—that was most of the time. But it was interesting to watch and learn their views on the issues.

I noticed the fact that most of the debaters when asked a question always cut short the answer to get back to talking about their own agenda. Watch the debates and I think you will see this. Watch other interviews and you will see this new technique. I am sure that this is because of sound bites being picked up by news programs. However, it prevents the public from getting the real background for the candidates' positions.

Republicans Accuse Obama of Starting Class Warfare to Take Support Away from JOBS PLAN

When President Obama went before a joint session of Congress to present his jobs plan, the biggest Republican reaction was that Obama was starting class warfare. How can they accuse him of that when even Warren Buffett, one of the country's richest persons, has supported what is now known as the "Buffett Rule," which would require the wealthiest Americans to pay a tax rate at least as high as the middle class.

Their ploy takes away from the important purpose of the **Jobs Plan** which would put our country back to work, improve our infrastructure—roads and schools, to name a few—and provide more money for education. As teachers and educational workers, we must speak out and support this program. You can help get the Jobs Plan

passed in Congress by letting your Senators and Representatives know that you want them to support the Jobs Plan. Go to our website (www.aft943.org) to send a message today.

Debate and Compromise

I am sure you followed the debate over raising the federal debt limit this summer. Remember the shutdown of the FAA and related services because a consensus could not be reached. People were put out of work—furloughed—and airport construction was delayed or stopped, and airline ticket taxes were not collected by the government. Another FAA shutdown was barely avoided in September.

Both sides, Republicans and Democrats, must remember that there is a time for debate and there is a time for compromise. One side—the Republicans—cannot continue to hold the country hostage so they can get their way. The Tea Party members have to respect the fact that there are other views and they need to compromise. Compromises do not mean sellouts. Compromise is what unions and others do when we negotiate contracts. One side doesn't and shouldn't take it all.

In unity,

Kathy Setlak

“...there is a time for debate and there is time for compromise.”



Senate Bill 7: key dates and a summary of new and vacant teaching positions

There are many aspects of the recently passed Senate Bill 7 (Public Act 97-0008/97-0007) that will need to be addressed in the upcoming months and years. Last month's *AFTerthoughts* reviewed the changes to layoffs and recalls. As a reminder to all, whether you have a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) that is grandfathered or not under the new law, please remember:

- 1) The joint committee for categorizing teachers into rating groups must meet by December 1, 2011. *If your CBA is grandfathered, you do not necessarily need to begin the process of grouping teachers, but at the very least you must meet to be in compliance.
- 2) Between **now** and September 1, 2012, the law requires that a 3 (excellent, satisfactory or unsatisfactory) or 4 (excellent, proficient, needs improvement or unsatisfactory) rating system be used for evaluations. On or after September 1, 2012, the law requires that the 4 rating system be used. Thus, for this year at the very least the summative evaluation must have 3 ratings. Next year, all districts will need the 4 ratings. *It is not necessary to change the evaluation tool used in your district. Hopefully, the current evaluation could be modified to provide the summative 3 or 4 rating system.

New and Vacant Teaching Positions

*Current CBAs with conflicting language are grandfathered until their expiration or mutual agreement to terminate! So don't panic when you read the following.

Prior to Senate Bill 7, there were no parameters in the statute regarding new and vacant teaching positions. This topic was addressed through the negotiations process in each district, and in many cases seniority has been bargained as a primary factor for filling positions.

Under the new statute, the District must base selection on certification, qualifications, merit and ability (including performance evaluations), and relevant experience. District-wide seniority will be considered only when the aforementioned factors are equal. The definitions of the factors may be negotiated in a CBA. However, district selection of a candidate may not be grieved, only violations of the CBA's procedural requirements for selection may be grieved.

IFT/Local 943 union reps will be working closely with your council's officers and negotiating team throughout this process.

WHAT'S AT STAKE?????

PERHAPS THE BETTER QUESTION IS... WHAT ISN'T?????????



Pensions?
Student Bill of Rights?
Funding?

Professional Development?

Performance Evaluations?

Collective Bargaining?
Reduction in Forces?
Recall Rights?
State Report Card?
Tenure?

Local 943 Voluntary COPE Contribution Form

Please send this form and your contribution, payable to Local 943 COPE and send to Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers – Local 943, 15521 S. 70th Court, Orland Park, IL 60462

Name _____ School District _____
 Address _____ City, State & Zip _____
 Preferred email address (will be used to send legislative updates) _____
 Phone Number (used to rally members on important issues) _____
 Signature _____ Date _____ Amount \$ _____



Paraprofessionals... Yes YOU Can!

-continued from page 1

From her humble beginnings as a teacher's aide at a Baltimore elementary school, where Mrs. Johnson earned a meager \$2.25 an hour and received no benefits, to her current position as Secretary-Treasurer of the AFT, Loretta Johnson has and continues to demonstrate that professional classification does not and should not have any bearing on a member's ability or qualification to lead an organization. Paramount to leadership is the possession of an understanding of the issues coupled with desire, and Secretary-Treasurer Johnson definitely has both.

As a paraprofessional in the Baltimore School System, Mrs. Johnson realized the need to improve the working conditions of paraprofessionals who, like she, were receiving minimal pay and benefits. Johnson organized those paraprofessionals into the Baltimore Teachers Union and in 1970 negotiated her first Union contract. Since 1970, Johnson has served as chief negotiator for teacher and paraprofessional contracts while serving as president of the Baltimore Teachers Union paraprofessional chapter; a position she held for 35 years.

Johnson's role in leadership is not limited to her position as Secretary-Treasurer of the AFT. Prior to her current office, Johnson served as AFT executive vice president from 2008 to 2011. She also held the position of president of AFT Maryland for 17 years and in addition to her current position with the AFT, Johnson also serves as a vice president to the AFL-CIO after winning an August 2011 election.

The successes of both Campbell and Johnson demonstrate that the only barrier to the ascension of paraprofessionals into leadership positions is the attitude of the general membership. As we look at the struggles of our Union Brothers and Sisters in neighboring states, it is apparent that solidarity amongst members is needed now more than ever. The "U" in Union refers to all members. From the Councils of Local 943 could be born another Campbell or Johnson. The opportunities exist. So why not take on the challenge?

Paraprofessionals...Yes YOU Can!!

Be sure your teaching certificate has not lapsed under new rules

Teachers should verify that their certificates are valid and registered under changes to the educator certification process contained in Public Act 97-607, which became effective on August 26, 2011.

Be aware that all certificates not renewed and registered shall lapse after a period of six months from the expiration of the last year of registration, as stated in Section 21B-45 of the law.

If you are a certificate holder, here's what this means to you:

- No individual may work in a position requiring certification without a valid, registered certificate.
- Certificates are considered "lapsed" if not renewed/registered within six months of expiration. For example, a certificate that expired on June 30, 2011 will be considered lapsed as of Dec. 31, 2011.

- To reinstate a certificate, holders must complete nine university hours in the appropriate content area(s), which is defined as one that most closely aligns with the educator's endorsement area(s). Previously, only five hours of coursework were required to reinstate a certificate.
- Certificate holders must still pay current and all back fees to reinstate.
- ISBE is creating a new form for reinstatement purposes. Do not use the previous 73-93 form.

For more information about changes to the certification process and implementation dates, contact IFT Educational Issues Director Carlene Lutz at clutz@ift-aft.org or 630/468-4054.

2011-12 Union Scholarship Programs

The AFT President Emeritus Carl J. Megel Special Education Scholarship

IFT sponsored scholarship awarded to a special education student in the amount of \$1,000. Applicant can be a dependent or student of an IFT/Local 943 member. Students applying for the scholarship must be presently enrolled in a special education school, class or program. Students who plan to teach in Special Education are not eligible for this scholarship. Deadline is Friday, December 2, 2011. Details and an application is available at www.ift-aft.org.

Robert Porter Scholarship

The IFT provides two \$6,000 scholarship awards (\$1,500 each year for four years) to current high schools seniors. Successful applicants must plan to attend full-time at an Illinois public university and maintain at least a "C" cumulative grade average after graduating from high school. Deadline is Friday, December 2, 2011. Details and an application is available at www.ift-aft.org.

Which college is right for you?

Call or email today
708.633.0943 x221— LKies@ift-aft.org
for a workbook designed by the AFT to help
you find the best college for your child.
Copies are limited.

Union Plus Scholarship

Scholarships are available to union members and their children to attend college, in amounts ranging from \$500 to \$4,000. Apply online at www.unionplus.org before January 31, 2012.

Local 943 Scholarship

This year, the Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 943, will award two scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each. The applicant must be the child of a currently employed, active member in good standing of Local 943; or the child of a member of Local 943's retiree chapter; or the child of a deceased member who was in good standing at the time of death. The applicant must be a member of a **public** high school 2012 graduation class and enrolling in a **public** college or university (including community colleges). Selection will be made on the basis of the following criteria: official scores on the ACT/SAT entrance examinations, class rank, and GPA (1st semester of senior year), record of extra-curricular activities and community service, two references by members of the staff of the student's high school where he/she is currently enrolled, and a 100 word essay which details future aspirations. Deadline is Friday, March 9, 2011. Further details and an application is available at www.aft943.org.

American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Robert G. Porter Scholars Program

The AFT Robert G. Porter Scholars Program offers four 4-year, \$8,000 post-secondary scholarships to graduating high school seniors who are dependents of AFT members, as well as 10 one-time \$1,000 grants to AFT members to assist with their continuing education. The application for the 2012 scholarships will be available soon at www.aft.org.

Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL) William A. Lee Memorial Scholarship

The CFL offers ten scholarship awards, each in the amount of \$2,000, to be awarded equally in two categories: academic competition and random drawing. Dependents of Local 943 members graduating from a Chicago or suburban area high school in 2012 are eligible. The application for the 2012 scholarships will be available soon at www.chicagolabor.org.



Daughter of Local 943 member wins \$6,000 scholarship

Carly Rocco was selected to receive one of two IFT Robert G. Porter Scholarships. Carly is a recent graduate of Lyons Township High School and is attending the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is the daughter of Barbara Rocco, a member of the Burbank Council of Local 943. IFT President Dan Montgomery presented Carly with the Union Scholarship.

IFT president Dan Montgomery, Barbara Rocco and Carly Rocco

FREE 3-hour graduate level science course online

- begins January 16; register by December 1

A free professional development course in science is being offered to Local 943 members by Susan Henke, a union member at Hoover Schrum District 157. The course, called DataStreme Atmosphere, is open to teachers for all grade levels (K-12) and subject areas. DataStreme Atmosphere is a teacher enhancement program of the American Meteorological Society and supported by the National Science Foundation.

This is a free 3-hour graduate level online course which begins January 16, 2012. If interested, please contact Susan Henke at skhenke@comcast.net by December 1, 2011. For more information, go to: www.ametsoc.org/amsedu/dstreme

Union Leadership Institute

Get the training to become more active in your Union!

- **Union Leadership Development**
- **Introduction to Collective Bargaining**
- **Building a Political Powerhouse**

**These courses are presented at the IFT offices in Westmont over three weekend sessions
Nov. 5-6, 2011; Feb. 4-5, 2012; and April 28-29, 2012**

All sessions will be held at the IFT offices in Westmont. Members interested in attending must attend all three weekends, and complete a Local 943 conference application available from our website www.aft943.org or your council president. Registration fee and mileage paid by Local 943.

Also available on November 5, 2011, is a one-day workshop explaining Public Act 97-0008 (Senate Bill 7) - Layoffs & Recall/PERA Overview -

Any questions, please call Local 943 at 708.633.0943.

You have the right to union representation

Here are some tips if you find yourself in a fact-finding investigatory meeting with your administration:

- Invoke your Weingarten Rights! You have the right to Union representation.

“If this discussion could, in any way, lead to my being disciplined or terminated or cause an effect on my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my Union representative be present at this meeting. Without representation present, I choose not to participate in this discussion.”

- Make sure your Union representative knows all pertinent background information so he/she can fully represent you.
- Make sure your Union representative takes notes during the meeting. It's difficult to remember everything that is said.
- The Union has the right to ask Administration for their evidence, but in many instances, Administration also has the right to ask you for your proof/evidence.
- If your district has video cameras in public areas (hallway, cafeteria, outside, etc.), it is likely the cameras are rolling all the time and will be recording all activity. This may be used by the district as evidence of misconduct.
- Take the time to think before you speak. Be thoughtful and honest in responses to questions asked.
- Any questions, call the Union.

Retiree Council News

The Retiree Council held their first official meeting on September 20, 2011. The council approved its new by-laws with some minor changes. The following officers were elected: Dawn Stanovich as president, Diane Leib as vice-president and Judy Spirakes as secretary. Senators to Local 943 were also elected: Nancy Tauchman, Sandy Kulak, Maureen Fournier, Chris Adamo, and Grace Malone.

The next meeting of the retirees council is at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 21, 2012 at the Local 943 office located at 15521 S. 70th Court in Orland Park. All retired members of Local 943 are encouraged to attend.

Teacher Retirement System informational meetings

October 18 **Western Springs 4:30 p.m.**
Lyons T.H.S.-South, Arts Center, 4900 S. Willow Springs

October 19 **Romeoville 4:30 p.m.**
Lukancic School Auditorium, 725 Normantown Rd.

October 26 **Naperville 4:30 p.m.**
Neuqua Valley H.S. , C202 Forum, 2360 95th St.

November 17 **Lemont 4:30 p.m.**
Lemont H.S., Performing Arts Center, 800 Porter St.

For more information, visit www.tris.org

Holiday Candy Gift Card Sale — FANNIE MAY — 25% Discount

Local 943 is once again sponsoring a Fannie May® Gift Card sale for our members at a savings of 25%. Gift cards may be redeemed at any Fannie May store or on the web at www.fanniemay.com. The cards may also be used for purchases at The Popcorn Factory (www.thepopcornfactory.com), Cheryl & Co. Cookies (www.cheryls.com), 1-800-FLOWERS (www.1800flowers.com), and 1-800-BASKETS (www.1800baskets.com).

The gift cards are available in the retail value amounts of \$5, \$10, \$20, \$25 or \$50. Order forms **must** be received in the union office by the following deadlines:
Thanksgiving----Orders due by 5 p.m. on **Thursday, November 3rd.**
Christmas-----Orders due by 5 p.m. on **Friday, December 2nd.**

Return your order form...**with payment**...to Local 943, att: Judy Spirakes, 15521 S 70th Court, Orland Park, IL 60462. **Make checks payable to Local 943.** To prevent cards from getting lost in the mail, all orders must be picked up at the union office. **We will call or email you when the cards arrive in the office.** If you have any questions, please call Local 943 at 708.633.0943.

_____ () _____
Name (Please print) School/Office/Retired Home/Cell Phone Number

_____ Email address

Card Retail Value	Quantity	Your Cost	Total
\$ 5.00 (Five Dollars)	_____ x	\$ 3.75 =	\$ _____
\$10.00 (Ten Dollars)	_____ x	\$ 7.50 =	\$ _____
\$20.00 (Twenty Dollars)	_____ x	\$15.00 =	\$ _____
\$25.00 (Twenty five Dollars)	_____ x	\$18.75 =	\$ _____
\$50.00 (Fifty Dollars)	_____ x	\$37.50 =	\$ _____
Number of cards ordered	_____	GRAND TOTAL	\$ _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO LOCAL 943
Attention: Judy Spirakes, Local 943, 15521 S 70th Court, Orland Park, IL 60462

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aft.org/members
The Community Advantage



A Union of Professionals

AFT +
Member Benefits

WINGATE HOTEL AFT Local 943 Corporate Rate \$89.99 + tax

Discounted rates may not be available on some weekends & holidays. Based on availability.

Discount available to all members, family and friends!

Ask for the **AFT Local 943 CORPORATION RATE**
18421 North Creek Drive,
Tinley Park, Illinois

Reservations: (708) 532.9300
Conveniently located off Interstate 80 @ Harlem Avenue and 183rd

Pink DifferentlySM with the American Cancer Society

It's not too late to Join **TEAM 943**

at the Making Strides
Against Breast Cancer Walk

SUNDAY OCTOBER 16
8 a.m.

Centennial Park Soccer Field
Orland Park

Team T-shirts are first come, first served.

DONATE to TEAM 943

by going to
www.makingstridessouthsuburban.com
and make a donation to SW Sub
Federation of Teachers Local 943.

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