



Diverse, Dedicated,
Determined

AFTerthoughts

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

VOLUME 53 • ISSUE 4 • FEBRUARY/MARCH 2023



Inside This Issue:

Page 2

Scholarships,
Golden Apple Scholars

Page 3

Presidents' Message,
Repeal WEP and GPO -
H.R.82,
Union Plus

Page 4

Legislative update,
AFT endorsement for
Chicago Mayor,
Pritzker's Budget
Proposal, Dan's Desk,
School Board Elections,
Teaching for Change,
NewsGuard

Page 5

TEACH Conference,
TEACH PD, ULI,
AFT "Share My Lesson"
Highlights,
ISBE

Page 6

Fannie May
Gift Card Sale,
Retiree Corner,
AFT Team

General George Patton School Students Send a Big Shout Out and Thank You for Donations to Library



General George Patton School students share messages of appreciation

In January, Patton Federation of Teachers Council 133 was presented with several donations for the General George Patton School Library. Thanks to efforts lead by former Local 943 IFT Field Service Director, Deb Takehara, heartfelt and generous donations were made by their fellow "Union Siblings" totaling over \$3,000. Personal donations totally \$1,500 were made by the Illinois Federation of Teachers staff union members and administrators. North Suburban Teachers Union Local 1274 members donated \$1,000 along with a donation of a collection of brand new books for their library. Finally, our Local 943 also made a contribution of \$500.

As you may recall, this council was involved in a courageous strike in 2022 which rewarded union and community members with new district and school board leadership. This new leadership has made it a priority to restore and support programs for their students. Council 133 president, Sabrina Hawthorne, was also returned to her previous position as the school librarian. Earlier this year she took on the herculean task of restoring their school library's physical space from a storage/warehouse space to a welcoming, student-friendly library space for students and teachers.

The heart of our union is HUGE!

We appreciate its solidarity and support for such a worthy cause.

Mark Your Calendar:

2023

February

Black History Month

American Heart Month

February 14th

Valentine's Day

February 20th

Presidents' Day

March

Women's History Month

"Celebrating Women

Who Tell Our Stories"

March 7th

Pulaski Day

March 8th

Int'l. Women's Day

March 12th

Daylight Savings Begins

March 14th

National Pi Day

March 17th

St.Patrick's Day

March 19th

St.Joseph's Day

March 20th

First Day of Spring



AFT PSRP CONFERENCE 2023

This Is How We Do It

SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STAFF TAKING CENTER STAGE TO SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS AND COMMUNITIES

SAVE THE DATE: APRIL 14-16, 2023 | HILTON INNER HARBOR | BALTIMORE, MD



Registration is now open for the
**45th AFT Paraprofessionals and School-
Related Personnel (PSRP) Conference,**

April 14-16, at the Hilton Inner Harbor in Baltimore MD.

The registration fee is \$100.

AFT's Paraprofessional and School-Related Personnel (PSRP) conference brings together school and college support staff from across the country for skill-building, professional development, continuing education, camaraderie and fun.

Register [HERE](#) & apply for Local 943 reimbursement [HERE](#)



Attention Members with High School Seniors!

Friendly Reminder to Start Planning Scholarship Applications!



- **Carl J. Megel Special Education Scholarship** - Honoring AFT President Emeritus IFT educators have a unique opportunity to help special education students pursue higher education or career training by sponsoring them for this Special Education Scholarship.

The IFT will award one \$20,000 Megel scholarship (\$5,000 each year for four years) to a deserving high school senior who is enrolled in a special education school, class, or program for students with disabilities. Applicants must be high school seniors who will graduate in 2023.

IFT members who work directly with (or previously worked with) an eligible student must provide a letter of sponsorship for the applicant. (Children of IFT members may also apply)

Click [HERE](#) to download the application
Application deadline is March 3, 2023

- **Robert G. Porter Scholarship** - Honoring late AFT Secretary-Treasurer

The IFT shall provide annually two \$20,000 scholarship awards (\$5,000 each year for four years) to current high school seniors with no less than a cumulative "B" grade average.

An applicant must be the son or daughter of a currently employed, active member in good standing of the Illinois Federation of Teachers, of IFT retirees chapter, or of a deceased member in good standing with the Illinois Federation of Teachers at the time of death.

Click [HERE](#) to download the application
Application deadline is March 3, 2023

- **AFT Robert G. Porter Scholars Program** -

This AFT Program offers four 4-year, \$8,000 post-secondary scholarships to students who are dependents of AFT members, as well as 10 one-time \$1,000 grants to AFT members to assist with their continuing education and/or fund their proposed ideas to strengthen and grow their union.

Click [HERE](#) for updated information and 2023 APPLICATION
Application deadline is March 31.

All scholarship winners will be notified by June 30



Each year the Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 943, awards two scholarships in the amount of two-thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) 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 graduation class and enrolling in a public college or university (including community colleges).

Selection will be made on the basis of five criteria listed below:

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

Deadline to apply for the 2022-2023 scholarship is March 23, 2023
Click [HERE](#) for updated information and the 2023 APPLICATION

Already in College & need a Scholarship? Click here ----->
Deadline to apply for the 2023 IRTAF Scholarships is March 7, 2023



As always, links to all available Union scholarships are posted on AFT943.org "Members Only" page.

Golden Apple Scholars

The Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois program is a teacher preparation and tuition assistance program for high school seniors and freshman and sophomore Illinois college students who have the determination and drive to be highly effective teachers in Illinois schools-of-need. We prepare aspiring teachers for immediate and lasting success in the most challenging teaching environments. Apply [HERE](#)





President's Message



[View the IFT latest issue of Union Link](#)

By: Elaine Barlos, AFT Local 943 President

Please join me in congratulating the following AFT Local 943 Officers for being elected, by acclamation, to serve our local for a three year term. The officers were inducted at the 2023 February Senate Meeting and they all expressed their appreciation and gratitude for the honor of being able to continue to serve support all of you!

- President: Elaine Barlos**
- Treasurer: Alfreida Jamison**
- Secretary: Catrina Niven**
- Vice Presidents: Andrew Weber - Political Activities/COPE**
- Brian Jurinek - Educational and Professional Issues/TEACH**
- Bob Goldsbury - Communication/Public Relations**

I'd also like to thank everyone for your assistance with the ratification of the amended Local 943 Constitution on 12/15/22. It was a long, arduous task, but we were thrilled that EVERY council was represented and returned their ballots! The overwhelming ratification results from our member were as follows: YES Votes = 1229; NO Votes = 455.

The officers of Local 943 worked in conjunction with IFT and AFT attorneys to ensure that our new constitutional language and format was in compliance and up-to-date with best practices. Prior to voting, a copy of the revised constitution and a [summary document](#) explaining the new language was provided to all members. Members were also afforded the opportunity to reach out to Local 943 officers with their questions and for an explanation of rationale for the changes before casting their votes. One of the newest additions to the amended constitution was the addition of language regarding the Local 943 Retiree Council. The previous contract had no mention and no provisions for this group. The amended constitution can be found on the AFT Local 943 website: [HERE](#)

Elaine Barlos



Stop Penalizing Our Teachers and Public Employees! Repeal WEP and GPO - H.R.82 Social Security \Fairness Act of 2023

Everyone deserves a secure retirement, especially those who have devoted their career to public service. The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) threaten that security by substantially reducing or eliminating the EARNED social security benefits of the millions of retired teachers and public employees who contributed to Social Security through other employment. Thousands more are penalized every year as they retire from public service because their state, municipality, or school district does not participate in the Social Security system.

This unfair penalty also contributes to the current teacher and educator shortages, as it serves as a disincentive for those looking to join the ranks of teachers as a second career when they learn that the WEP-GPO penalty will jeopardize their earned Social Security benefits if they enter the classroom.

HR 82 has been reintroduced in the 118th Congress by Rep. Abigail Spanberger and Rep. Garret Graves. Representatives will need to sign on again to support this bill in the 118th Congress. So far Illinois has eleven legislative cosponsors, ten democrats and one republican, who support this repeal.

We'd like to send our appreciation to representatives Sean Casten, Kelly Robin, Mike Bost, Lauren Underwood, Janice Schakowsky, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Nikki Budzinski, Bill Foster, Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, Eric Sorensen, and Delia Ramirez for their support as cosponsors of the WEP/GPO repeal.

Get Involved!

- [Call your Representative](#) and urge them to support and/or cosponsor HR 82: The Social Security Fairness Act of 2023
- [Sign up for Member to Member phone-banks](#) in targeted districts to generate more calls to Congress in support of WEP & GPO Repeal



Share Your Joy!

Is there something exciting happening at your school/district?
We would love to hear from you!
Email Local 943 @ kodea@ift-aft.org

Legislative Update

By Andrew Weber

April 4th marks the date of the Consolidated Elections in Illinois. Candidates running for offices have filed, questionnaires have been sent out by Union PACs, and endorsements are underway. School Board races are important and will be hotly contested in school districts throughout our Local. Our Union has a voice in these elections! Please consider reaching out to your council and local leadership to find out when you can attend forums and support candidates that best represent your members and your students.

At our Local 943 Senate meeting, a motion was made and voted in favor of approving the endorsement of Brandon Johnson for the Office of Mayor for the city of Chicago. Brandon is endorsed by the AFT, IFT, CTU Local 1, SEIU, and Cook County Teachers Unions, Local 571 and Local 1211. He has served as a teacher Union leader for CTU, serves on the Cook County Board of Commissioners, and is a proud Executive Board Vice President for the Illinois Federation of Teachers. Local 943 currently has over 300 members who reside within the city limits and many of our councils share borders with Chicago. A better Chicago is a better Chicagoland for all!



[Full February Legislative Update](#)
[Click Here](#)

[Governor Pritzker's Budget Proposal](#)



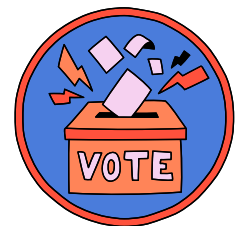
Check out our website!
www.aft943.org

Election for Mayor of Chicago

[Chicago Members Details to Vote Early!](#)

Citywide early voting is now open!

[School Board Election Timeline](#)
April 4, 2023 ELECTON DAY!



"THE LIFE I WANT FOR MY FAMILY AND NEIGHBORS IS WHAT I WANT FOR ALL CHICAGOANS"

Click [HERE](#) to see where Brandon Johnson stands on the issues and how to get involved.

DIVERSITY EQUITY INCLUSION! RACIAL JUSTICE

 **NewsGuard** 
Free to all of our Union Members
[Click Here](#) to sign up for your free account



TEACHING FOR CHANGE
Building Social Justice Starting in the Classroom



Welcome Union members. Limited time offer!
SAVE 30% on all bouquets!

Initial Teachers Evaluation Training

IFT is offering this virtual course as part of our Union Leadership Institute program to support unions as they implement a locally bargained appeals process. Participants who successfully complete this two-day course are designated in ELIS as qualified evaluators of teachers. Check [HERE](#) for detailed information.

Virtual [Training dates](#) are available in March .
Deadline to [register](#), March 9, 2023

AFT's 2023 Together Educating America's Children (TEACH) Conference

July 21-23 in Washington, D.C.

AFT TEACH provides an unforgettable experience filled with inspiration and ideas to bring back to school for the year ahead. Each professional development workshop is custom-developed for TEACH by AFT members and other experts to directly focus on tools and strategies to support educators and their efforts to help kids and communities succeed.

Why do attendees love AFT TEACH?

Because the conference offers:

- Engaging and energizing sessions to inspire for the year to come;
- New strategies to improve teaching and learning; and
- Time to meet and collaborate with educators from across the country.

Registration opens in March.

Conference Information [HERE](#) &

application for Local 943 reimbursement [HERE](#)

*Possible TEACH Session Presenters from Local 943 include:
Pia Conte and Brian Jurinek - Good Luck!



www.isbe.net
for current ISBE updates



Local 943 TEACH

Professional Development Calendar of Events

Courses are FREE to AFT Local 943 members!

Wednesday, February 22,

4:30pm to 6:30pm - Pia Conte

Beginning Reading (Remote) -

PD Hours: 2

DEADLINE to register: Monday, February 20th

Wednesday, March 8,

4:30pm to 6:30pm - Brian Jurinek

Reclaiming Assessment (Remote) -

PD Hours: 2

DEADLINE to register: Monday, March 6th

Wednesday, April 12,

4:30pm to 6:30pm - Shannon Mural

Improving Comprehension of Expository Text
(Remote) - PD Hours 2

DEADLINE to register: Monday, April 10th



For more information and to [register for classes](#) email Brian Jurinek at brianjurinek@gmail.com Be sure to include your IEIN or Certificate Number and the name of the class/classes you wish to take.



Please check the [IFT Professional Development page](#) regularly for updated course descriptions and registration information.



FANNIE MAY SPRING CANDY GIFT CARD SALE

Fannie May Order Form

25% DISCOUNT OFFERED TO YOU BY AFT LOCAL 943

Local 943's Spring Fannie May® Candy Gift Card Sale is here!

Members receive a savings of 25%.

The gift cards are available in the retail value of \$5, \$10, \$20, or \$50 and may be redeemed either at a Fannie May retail or outlet store or on the web at www.fanniemay.com.

This allows you or your gift recipient to choose your/their own selection.

In order to receive the cards by Easter, order forms are due in the union office no later than 5 p.m. on Thursday, March 23rd.

Return your order form...with payment...to the Local 943 union office to the attention of: Judy Spirakes, 15521 S. 70th Court, Orland Park, IL 60462. (708-633-0943)
Make checks payable to Local 943.

We will notify you as soon as the cards arrive.

Gift cards must be picked up at the union office. We cannot mail gift cards!

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	= \$ _____	
--------------------------	-----------------	------------	--

\$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

Orders due: Thursday, March 23, 2023



Retiree's Corner Protest of Orland Retiree Insurance Discontinuation

Until about 2018, when certified and support staff retired from Orland District 135, they were offered insurance from the district if the staff paid the premiums. They were told they could continue in the plan until they died or did not pay the premiums. In December 2022, they each received a letter discontinuing the life insurance as of December 2022. These retirees with the help of Local 943 staff and IFT legal assistance are protesting this action. A group of more than 90 retired support and certified staff and administrators attended the January school board meeting and spoke to the agreement that is being broken by the district. As of February 1, they continue to wait for a response from the school board and the district.

New Senators

The new AFT Local 943 constitution requires the Local 943 Retirees Council to have only three senators. Council president Kathy Setlak, vice president Sue Mirabella, and Donna Rehm will continue as senators. Many thanks to Nancy Tauchman, Laura Creighton, and Maureen Fournier for agreeing to step down and for their service and dedication to the union.

Please be sure to update your address and email information. Most correspondence from Local 943 and the retirees council will be by email. Send updates to Kathy Setlak at RetireeCouncil943@yahoo.com

AFTerthoughts

Official Publication of the Southwest Suburban Federation of Teachers AFT Local 943

Executive Board

Elaine Barlos, President
Alfreida Jamison, Treasurer
Catrina Niven, Secretary
Bob Goldsbury, VP of Communications/Public Relations
Andrew Weber, VP of Political Activities/COPE
Brian Jurinek, VP of Educational and Professional Issues/TEACH Coordinator

IFT PreK-12 Constituency Council

TBA

IFT Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel (PSRP) Constituency Council

TBA

IFT Next Generation Constituency Council

TBA

IFT Retirees Constituency Council

TBA

Local 943 Defense Committee

Alfreida Jamison, Chairperson
Elaine Barlos, Sue Benigni, Tina Thauer, and Elaine Bernal

Staff Members

Charles Harper, IFT Field Service Director
Spencer Saal, IFT Field Service Director
Karen O'Dea, IFT Support Staff
Judy Spirakes, Webmaster and Member Services
Sandra Quero, Staff Writer

Contact Us:

Phone: 708.633.0943 | Fax: 708.633.0944
15521 S. 70th Court, Orland Park, IL 60462-5105

President: ebarlos@sbcglobal.net

Treasurer: treasurer4local943@gmail.com

Benefits Services: jspirakes@ift-aft.org

Member Information: kodea@ift-aft.org



FOLLOW US ON:

• **FACEBOOK:** [Southwest-Suburban-Federation-of-Teachers-Local-943](#)

• **TWITTER:** [#AFTLocal943](#)

