

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

# Union Messenger

*“A Union of Professionals”*

## June/July Calendar

- 6/3—ExBd Mtg. (5:30 p.m.—Westmont)
- 6/3—Registration deadline for Social Security Webinar
- 6/6—Social Security Webinar (10:00 a.m. VIRTUAL)
- 7/1— Councils’ election reports due to 571
- 7/15—Councils’ year-end financial statement and audit forms due to 571
- 7/15—Registration deadline for Social Security Webinar
- 7/15 Ex Bd Mtg (5:00 start -Tentative Zoom)
- 7/18—Social Security Webinar (1:00 p.m. VIRTUAL)
- 7/22-25 —AFT Convention (Houston, TX)
- 7/31-8/1—IL AFL-CIO Convention

## Union Messenger

- Kyle Stern, President
- April Giannosa, Vice-President
- Sandra Erickson, Treasurer
- Cathleen Pope, Secretary
- Eugene Poull, Financial Secretary
- Brett Blair, Legal Defense Secretary
- Emily Moore, Cope Chair
- John Wardisiani, Cope Treasurer
- 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



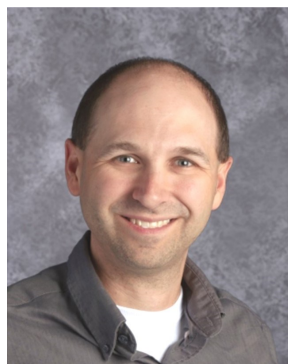
### Inside This Issue:

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| IMRF/Social Security Seminars<br>Legislative Breakfast– New Location  | 3   |
| When Should I Get Medical Treatment?                                  | 4   |
| Local 571 Constitutional Convention                                   | 5   |
| Members in Action/ New Area Trustees/Retiree Council Needs Volunteers | 6   |
| Meet-a-Member   | 7   |
| 2024 WSTU Scholarship Winners   | 8-9 |
| Asian American Pacific Heritage Month                                 | 10  |

## Regrets

Dear Union Siblings,

As we near the end of another school year, I like to sit and reflect about what I’ve learned, what I did well, what I need to improve upon, and yes, what I regret. I was talking with our Financial Secretary, Gene Poull, when he asked me if I had heard the new Billy Joel song, [“Turn the Lights Back On.”](#) I said I had not, but I’d give it a listen. The chorus sings and questions, “I’m late but I’m here right now...Did I wait too long to turn the lights back on?” The song got me thinking about regret.



Regret is an emotion that lingers in the corridors of our minds, whispering about missed opportunities, choices unmade, and roads not taken. As educators and support staff our decisions impact not only our lives but also those of our students and colleagues.

Regret is a feeling that gnaws at our souls. Imagine standing at the crossroads, looking back at the divergent paths—the “what-ifs” haunting our thoughts. Regret is the stomach-churning realization that the present could be brighter had we chosen differently in the past. But here’s the twist: regret, when harnessed correctly, can be transformative.

In a groundbreaking study, renowned author Daniel Pink and his team embarked on the World Regret Project discussed in the book, “The Power of Regret.” They collected over 18,000 regrets from individuals across 109 countries. Let’s explore the four core regrets:

*Continued from page 1*

## Regrets

1. **Foundation Regrets:** These seemingly small decisions made early in life compound over time. Think of the gradual erosion caused by not saving money or neglecting essential groundwork. As Hemingway's character lamented, bankruptcy occurs "gradually and suddenly." The regret echoes, "If only I'd done the work."
2. **Boldness Regrets:** These regrets stem from missed chances—the opportunities not seized. In our professional lives, these regrets often manifest as unexplored paths. "If only I'd taken the chance," we muse, realizing that boldness fuels growth.
3. **Moral Regrets:** At critical junctures, we face ethical choices. Some choose the wrong path, and almost universally, they regret it. The inner battle between right and wrong echoes, "If only I had done the right thing."
4. **Connection Regrets:** Relationships—our lifelines—sometimes fray. We drift apart from family, friends, and colleagues. The regret whispers, "If only I had reached out." Connection, after all, is the heartbeat of our existence.

Those 18,000 voices painted a photographic negative of the good life. Their regrets revealed their deepest values: stability, growth, goodness, and love. Regret, when understood, becomes a compass—a guide to recalibrate our choices.

In his book, Pink emphasizes that regret can sharpen leaders' decisions, accelerate learning, and enhance team performance. Acknowledging regret doesn't weaken us; it empowers us to evolve.

As educators and support staff, we use regret in our organizational culture:

5. **Normalize Regret:** Encourage open conversations about regrets. Share your own experiences. Let regret be a catalyst for growth, not a burden.
6. **Learn from Foundation Regrets:** Address small decisions early. Invest in professional development, financial literacy, and personal well-being.
7. **Embrace Boldness:** Seize opportunities. Take calculated risks. Boldness fuels progress. Have a bias towards action, as Stanford Professors Dave Evans and Bill Burnett would say.
8. **Prioritize Connections:** Reach out. Nurture relationships. Tomorrow isn't promised to anyone. Remember that our impact extends beyond the classroom.

Regret, when harnessed wisely, becomes a bridge—a passage from what was to what can be. As we turn the page and embrace fresh beginnings, let's honor our regrets as signposts on the journey toward excellence.

Regret is not a dead end; it's a crossroads. Choose growth. Choose transformation. Choose happiness. And remember, even Frank Sinatra had regrets and he did it his way. Happy Summer all!

In Unity,

Kyle Stern

P.S. I'd like to give a shout out to Robin Hancock for running the Union Messenger since 2015. She has done a fantastic job and will be missed.

# I.M.R.F. SEMINAR

**Retirement Information for  
Local 571 Support Staff  
Union Members**



*A speaker from the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) will present information and answer questions for PSRP (support staff) Union members of the West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571.*

- WHEN:** Tuesday, May 14, 2024
- TIME:** 5:00 p.m.-Light Dinner  
5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.-Presentation
- WHERE:** Robert M. Healey Conference Center  
500 Oakmont Lane  
Westmont, IL 60559  
(Entrance D or E)
- R.S.V.P.:** If you plan to attend, contact Patty Clancy via e-mail at [pclancy@ift-aft.org](mailto:pclancy@ift-aft.org) or by phone at 630-468-4083 by Friday May 10, 2024

**Anyone who signs up to attend this seminar and finds that they cannot attend must notify the local 571 office by 5:00 on May 10th, or they may be charged \$15 for the cost of the dinner.**



# A Social Security Webinar for Local 571 Members

*Sponsored by the West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571*

*Webinar will be VIRTUAL for both June and July*

**Identical** Social Security Webinars will be presented and questions will be answered by a representative of the Social Security Administration.

**WHEN:** Thursday, June 6, 2024  
10:00 a.m.—Noon

OR

Thursday, July 18, 2024  
1:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m.

**FOR:** Local 571 members

**WHERE:** A VIRTUAL webinar

**R.S.V.P.:** If you plan to attend the June 6 Webinar, contact Patty Clancy by June 3rd at [pclancy@ift-aft.org](mailto:pclancy@ift-aft.org) and you will be sent a link to register for the webinar.

If you plan to attend the July 18 Webinar, contact Patty Clancy by July 15th at [pclancy@ift-aft.org](mailto:pclancy@ift-aft.org) and you will be sent a link to register for the webinar.



## 19th Annual Legislative Breakfast

\*\*\*\*\*

Saturday, September 28, 2024

NEW LOCATION  
Pinstripes in Oak Brook

Registration 8:00 a.m.  
9:00 to Noon Program  
Noon to 1:30 p.m. Bowling & Bocce

## WHEN SHOULD I GET MEDICAL TREATMENT?

By Attorney James B. Hardy, Partner  
Taxman, Pollock, Murray & Bekkerman, LLC

---

The first edition of our quarterly legal newsletter outlined the importance of giving notice to a supervisor as soon as possible after a work injury. As discussed, this is an important first step in securing your rights as an injured worker under the Illinois Workers' Compensation Act. After giving notice of the work-related injury, the next essential step is seeking medical treatment. Injured workers frequently ask, "when should I seek medical treatment?" The answer is: as soon as possible and certainly, sooner rather than later. Even if you think your injury is minor or "it will go away" it is always better to get checked out. You can go to your GP if you can get in immediately or go to an immediate care clinic or emergency room. If the injury turns out to be nothing, that's fine, at least you protected yourself by documenting the work injury in the doctor's notes. The problem is that if the injury does get worse and you decide to finally get checked out days or weeks after the date of injury, you give the work comp insurance the opportunity to deny or dispute your claim for work comp benefits. They would say "if they really got hurt at work when they say they did, then why did they wait so long to get medical treatment?" or "how do we know they really got hurt on Friday and not at home over the weekend if they did not get checked out till Monday?" For repetitive trauma injuries, like carpal tunnel syndrome, it is important to get treatment as soon as possible after symptoms occur and to let the medical provider know if you perform any repetitive activities as part of your work duties with the specific body part, i.e., wrist or elbow that has become symptomatic. The medical record or "chart note" from that first appointment is an essential piece of evidence in a work comp claim. Work comp adjusters, insurance company attorneys, and the Judge at the Work Comp Commission will always review that first chart note to see what the medical provider wrote down or what history the injured worker gave them. Therefore, you must be detailed and precise about exactly how and where you got injured and what body parts you hurt. Avoid saying something like "I think I maybe got hurt at work a couple days ago and I have been sore since then." Rather you should say "On Monday, January 29th at about 8:45 in the morning I felt a sharp pain in my right shoulder as I was lifting a 50-pound box of gears overhead and up onto a shelf in the City Fleet garage on Pershing Road." The more detail the better, especially about exactly how you got hurt which is referred to as the "mechanism of injury." If a doctor or surgeon has to testify in the case, you need them to be able to say "Absolutely the mechanism of injury as described by Mr. Smith in his initial office visit could have caused the rotator cuff tear in his left shoulder that is seen on the MRI, in fact I am surprised he didn't tear his right side too lifting 50 pounds overhead onto a shelf." You don't want them to have to guess and testify "Well, I suppose it could have caused the rotator cuff tear, he said he was lifting something, he did not say what or how heavy, but I know that lifting can be a cause of rotator cuff tears." This second example would be torn to shreds on cross-examination by an insurance company lawyer, jeopardizing your case. As you can see by these examples, what you do and say in the early stages of a work comp claim can make or break your case. That is why it is important to seek legal advice immediately after a work accident to avoid common pitfalls which can harm you and your family by giving the opportunity for the insurance company to deny your case.



---

Taxman, Pollock, Murray & Bekkerman is one of the largest and fastest growing Plaintiffs personal injury and workers compensation law firms in Illinois. Our twenty-one dedicated and hard-working lawyers have represented union members for over 100 combined years of practice. We are proud to help union members navigate the challenges that come with workplace injuries and families of labor with all their personal injury and medical malpractice questions. Consultations are always free.

**312 586-1700**  
[www.tpmblegal.com](http://www.tpmblegal.com)

---

## Local 571 Constitutional Convention

On April 16, 2024 at the Robert Healey Center in Westmont, West Suburban Teachers Union, Local 571 held its first constitutional convention since March 2021. Thirty-four delegates were present along with Field Service Directors Max Schoenberg and Rachel Esposito, Parliamentarian Tyler Redd, and guest Marge Wunschel.

### Here is a summary of major changes made at Local 571 Constitutional Convention:

1. **At-Large Membership** – Members who leave their Councils for reasons other than retirement may continue their Local 571 membership as at-large members (paying the quarter dues rate).
2. **Laid Off Members** – Members who are laid off or terminated will continue to be considered members as long as the layoff or termination is being challenged, even though dues are not being collected.
3. **Unpaid Leaves** – Members who are on unpaid leave will continue to be considered members, even though dues are not being collected.
4. **Committee Chairs** – Chairpersons of committees that are not attached to specific Officer positions will be appointed to serve one-year terms.
5. **Terms of Office** – Starting 2025 for Officers, and starting 2026 for Area Trustees, these positions will be elected every three years (instead of every two years).
6. **Dues for Officers** – Any member serving as an Officer of Local 571 must pay the quarter dues rate (if not normally required to pay a higher rate already), and any member serving as President of Local 571 must pay the full dues rate.
7. **Strike Fund** – Strike fund resources will not be available to non-members.
8. **Non-Discrimination** – Added policy to align with AFT Constitution.

Once the document is finalized and formatted it will be sent out to Council Presidents.

Thank you to all the delegates who participated.

|                      |                          |                        |                      |
|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Martha Baumgarten    | Mannheim Teachers        | Jon Monique Manuel     | Elmhurst PSRP        |
| Brett Blair          | District #88 Teachers    | Rachel Marroquin       | Argo-Summit Teachers |
| Mary Jo Brown        | Argo HS Teachers         | Alison Millett         | Argo-Summit Teachers |
| Ida Chester          | Proviso HS PSRP          | Cathleen Pope          | Rosemont Teachers    |
| Theresa Ciupinski    | Mannheim Teachers        | Eugene Poull           | Argo HS Teachers     |
| Courtney Eacker      | Mannheim Teachers        | Luz Rangel Raymond     | Argo-Summit Teachers |
| Elizabeth Eckert     | Mannheim Teachers        | Jane Russell           | Retirees Council     |
| Sandra Erickson      | Retirees Council         | Christine Schulz       | Leyden Teachers/PSRP |
| Joseph Gagliardi     | Leyden Teachers/PSRP     | Kathy Shaevel          | Lyons Teachers       |
| Eric Garay           | Leyden Teachers/PSRP     | Heather Siegel-Hickman | Argo HS Teachers     |
| April Giannosa       | Franklin Park Teachers   | Christy Smith          | Argo-Summit Teachers |
| Michelle Guerino     | Elmhurst PSRP            | Micaela Soto           | Proviso HS Teachers  |
| Kelly Higgins-Turner | Mannheim Teachers        | Lee Stephens           | Retirees Council     |
| Ruth Jennings        | Cicero Teachers/PSRP/Sec | Kyle Stern             | Argo HS Teachers     |
| Alice Kautsky        | Retirees Council         | Michael Tazic          | Leyden Teachers/PSRP |
| Mary Jo Levin        | Elmhurst PSRP            | Jennifer Vaughn        | Mannheim Teachers    |
| Vanessa Majchrowicz  | Leyden Teachers/PSRP     | John Wardisiani        | Proviso HS Teachers  |

# Members in Action

WSTU members dressed in IFT Blue for Tier 2 Week of Action.



Argo teachers wearing their Argo Council, Local 571 t-shirts in solidarity of Tier 2 reform.



**Congratulations** to the WSTU Local 571 Area Trustees who start their two -year term on July 1, 2024!

The Area Trustees are:  
Ruth Jennings - Cicero (PSRP),  
Christina Rodriguez - Cicero,  
Heather Siegel-Hickman - Argo HS Teachers, and Eric Garay-Leyden

## 571 Retiree Council Members Looking for Volunteers

1. Be a member of the "Planning Committee" which develops the Council activities for the coming year
2. Create flyers for our Council events
3. Write "Retiree Articles" for the Messenger
4. If interested, please contact Alice Kautsky, Local 571 Retirees Council President @ [akautsky@comcast.net](mailto:akautsky@comcast.net)



## Meet-a-Member

Local 571 is a 5900+ member union of teachers, paraprofessionals, school-related personnel (PSRPs) and retirees, employed (currently or formerly) in school districts in western Cook and DuPage Counties. We have many interesting and talented members among us! This column spotlights our members and gives a glimpse into what makes us exceptional. This month, I'd like you to meet...Gene Poull, Social Science teacher at Argo High School and Financial Secretary for Local 571!

Q: What is your favorite part about your current teaching position?

*A: My favorite part about teaching is when students finally have that “ahhhhhh” moment and you can audibly hear them understanding the concept. When a student takes a real world event and then comes in asking if it is an example of something we covered in class, that really makes me excited that the class work is having a positive effect.*

*I also think that my students are really funny and have such interesting personalities. Sometimes I can't help but laugh at some of their antics. A Michael Myers (from Halloween) shirt one of my students was wearing was the most recent thing that made me literally laugh out loud.*



Q: If you could pass on any wisdom to your students, what would you share?

*A. Study abroad. Go somewhere where you are truly out of place. Immerse yourself in a foreign culture and have fun along the way. I keep thinking back to the Billy Joel song Scenes from an Italian Restaurant where he sings about how Brenda and Eddie went back to the green but you can never go back there again. There's no going back to each stage of life so you need to enjoy it when you're there.*

Q: What has been the hardest thing about being a teacher?

*A: Each year there seems to be more roles and responsibilities put on my plate. This isn't a job where you get comfortable, and the work becomes easier year after year. Cell phones have become a big part of classroom management. I don't think high school me would be happy with how much time I spend telling kids to put their phones and headphones away.*

Q: Who is someone in your building who you reach out to when you need a hand and why?

*A: I often talk to Kyle Stern; he's a great listener. We have been through a lot together and it's nice to have a friend like Kyle in the building. Tommy Jankowicz was my cooperating teacher when I student taught, and I still consider him a mentor and a friend. He is an alum of the school district, a former department member, and a former executive board member. He has a lot of helpful perspectives and insights. Both of them have done so much for the teachers at Argo and as I work for the great teachers at Argo in the executive board it is nice to know that I can call on the experience of the previous leaders of our council.*

Q: What's a happy memory you have from when you were in school?

*A: I had some really great teachers in high school and their influence is a huge part of why I am in education. I was very fortunate to have many teachers that I could trust and get great advice from. I met my wife in high school. We often sat next to each other because our last names were close together alphabetically. In our freshmen year biology class, we were partnered together for an activity on dominant and recessive traits and we “had a baby together” in that assignment. We named the fake baby Pear and because we lack drawing ability, Pear was terrifying to behold. Luckily, we are now blessed with three beautiful daughters (who are much better at drawing than their parents).*

If you would like to nominate yourself, or another member you know, to be interviewed for the Meet-a-Member column, reach out to April at [agiannosa@wstu571.org](mailto:agiannosa@wstu571.org)



## 2024 WSTU Scholarship Winners

The West Suburban Teachers Union (WSTU) Local 571, proudly awarded more than \$29,000 in scholarships to outstanding students, educators, and support staff in March.

**The Mary Wheeler Scholarship** is for college-bound high school seniors. They are judged based upon academic excellence, involvement in extracurricular activities, and community service participation. Students are the dependents of Local 571 members. Applications were reviewed and scored by members of the Union's Scholarship Committee and Chair Chris Schulz, a counselor at East Leyden High School in Franklin Park.

Six scholarships of \$3,300 each were awarded to:

**Sofia Belgin** of Riverside Brookfield High School. Her mother, **Gina Canerday**, is a social worker at Washington Middle School in Lyons School District 103.

**Forrest (Jerome) Bordelon** of Carl Sandburg High School. His parent is **Kathleen Bordelon**, a psychologist at Lyle Elementary School and Player Early Childhood Center in Indian Springs District 109.

**Natalie Piemonte** of Bartlett High School. Her mother is **Jessica Piemonte**, a social studies teacher at Proviso East High School in District 209.

**Tegan Wilen** of South Elgin High School. Her mother is **Natalie Stach Wilen**, a teacher at Addison Trail High School in DuPage District 88.

**Eleanor Wolski** of Oak Park River Forest High School. Her mother is **Katie Moroney**, a librarian at Hauser Junior High School in Riverside District 96.

**Jorge Zapata** of IC Catholic Prep. His mother, **Melissa Zapata**, is a teacher from East Leyden High School in District 212.

The union awarded the following members a \$1,650 **Julienne Phillips Scholarship**. The award is given to a current licensed educator pursuing an additional degree through graduate work. The recipients are:

**Courtney Lowell**, a Learning Support Specialist Coordinator at Lyle Elementary School in Indian Springs District 109.

**Lena Mackley**, a teacher at Hauser Junior High School in Riverside District 96.

**Johannah Tomita Martin**, a teacher at Proviso East High School in District 209.

Scholarships named for **Maryann Karlovsky**, given to current educators pursuing a certificate or endorsement, in the amount of \$1,650 were awarded to:

**Kylee Murray**, a teacher at Argo Community High School, District 217.

**Allison Ruggiero**, a teacher at Proviso West High School in District 209.

The final 2024 awardee received a \$1,650 scholarship named for **Jo Ann Horowitz**. This award is given to current Paraprofessionals and School Related Personnel who are pursuing a BA/BS or MA/MS in education. It was awarded to **Angela Higgins**, a teacher's assistant at Proviso East High School in District 209.





### Mary Wheeler Scholarships



Sofia Belgin and her mother Gina Canerday



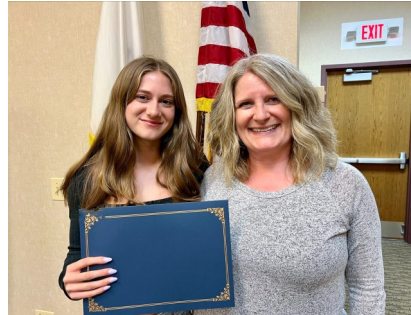
Forrest (Jerome) Bordelon and his mother Kathleen



Natalie Piemonte with her parents Jessica and Nick and her sister Gianna



Tegan Wilen with her parents Natalie and Jason and her brother Adler



Eleanor Wolski with her mother Katie Moroney



Jorge Zapata with his parents Jorge and Melissa

### Julienne Phillips Scholarships



Courtney Lowell



Lena Mackley with her husband David

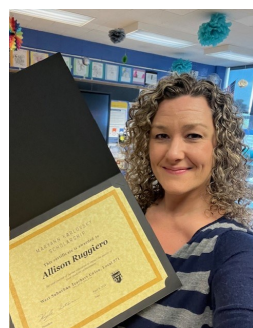


Johannah Tomita Martin

### Maryann Karlovsky Scholarships



Kylee Murray



Allison Ruggiero

### Jo Ann Horowitz Scholarship



Angela Higgins



## Tammy Duckworth

Illinois' Tammy Duckworth became the first disabled female veteran to earn election to the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate, as well as the second female Asian American senator.



### Quotes:

I had my legs blown off in Iraq, and because I had my legs blown off in Iraq, people are listening to me. I'm not going to get my legs back, and that's fine, but if that gives me a platform to talk about the things that are important to me, like education and jobs, that's great.

I can't avoid the interest in the fact that I'm an injured female soldier. Understand that I'm going to use this as a platform.

I think women bring a slightly different perspective. The women, I think, are going to reach across the aisle a lot more. We're a lot more pragmatic, but we do come from all different backgrounds.

Our troops do an incredible job every single day, but our policy makers have not lived up to the sacrifices that our troops make every day.

TrueCar | UNIONPLUS  
<https://unionplus.truecar.com/>  
 Auto Buying  
 Spring into your next car  
 Shop Now



### 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: [rhancock@wstu571.org](mailto:rhancock@wstu571.org)



West Suburban Teachers Union Local 571  
 500 Oakmont Lane  
 P.O. Box 390  
 Westmont, IL 60559-0390  
 Phone: 630-468-4098  
 Fax: 630-468-4088  
 Twitter account: [@kstern571](https://twitter.com/kstern571)  
 E-mail: [kstern@wstu571.org](mailto:kstern@wstu571.org)  
<https://www.instagram.com/wstu571/>

[www.wstu571.org](http://www.wstu571.org)  
<https://www.facebook.com/WSTU571/>