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UNION TEACHER

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Teaching Social Justice

Gage Park's Victor Harbison harnesses a "teachable moment" in community history.

Plus: Kelvyn Park High School Community Fights Back

TIFs, Teachers, and Budget Holes

- IFT Convention
- First 100 Days
- Teacher Evaluation
- much more...

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President's Message



Dear Brothers and Sisters:

We are in a battle to protect our tenure rights. The Board's wholesale and capricious firings this past summer were a clear attack on tenure. We took our case to the courts and won. In spite of that win, Springfield and Washington, D.C. seem to be lining up to continue that assault.

You and I know what tenure is and isn't, but we need your help in this public opinion battle. Please tell everyone you know that Chicago teachers have a three year probationary period during which either the district or principal can fire a teacher at any time, no questions asked. Compared to the business standard of three to six months probation, educators are held to a higher standard. In the fourth year, the school district, not the Union, may grant teacher tenure, but it's not required. The probationary period can be extended. Once a teacher receives tenure, the district or a principal may still recommend termination but the reasons for termination must be documented. Then the teacher is given 90 days to correct any deficiencies. The hope is that this remediation period is successful, but if not, the teacher may be fired.

Tenure does not grant teachers a job for life. That is the biggest fallacy repeated *ad nauseum* by media and pundits.

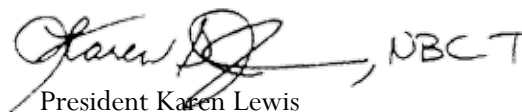
Why do effective teachers need tenure? First, the teacher evaluation system is broken. The CTU and CPS are working on a new system that will end drive-by observations and put the "opinion of the principal" in its place. Second, teacher tenure rights protect children. One of the easiest ways to run afoul of an administration is to advocate for students who have little voice. Tenure strengthens teachers' ability to fight overcrowded and ill-equipped classrooms, unsound curricula and excessive testing mandates, unfair discipline practices, teaching assignments that do not complement a teacher's strengths – the list goes on – without fear of dismissal.

In short, tenure protects academic quality.

Please, talk about tenure to everyone you know. Write letters to the editor, speak with your LSC members, talk to your doctor and neighbors. Let's take every chance we can to help others understand that without tenure, students are at greater risk.

We can win this public opinion battle together.

Sincerely,

NBC T
President Karen Lewis

Legislative Update

by Xian Barrett, CTU
Political Activities Coordinator

Weeks ago, a gubernatorial candidate who wanted to cut nearly 20,000 teaching jobs was leading in the polls. A group aiming to destroy our tenure rights and our ability to strike poured nearly half a million dollars into state races. It seemed as though making any progress in Springfield was an insurmountable task.

We as a Union stepped up to this challenge. Our Political Action and Legislative Committees compiled a strong slate of candidates to support. Our Executive Board and House of Delegates approved it overwhelmingly. Members volunteered, placing tens of thousands of calls and walking hundreds of blocks to support our candidates.

On Friday, October 29th, more than one thousand members joined over 40 candidates and elected officials to represent the Union proudly and boisterously at our 2010 Legislators Educators Appreciation Dinner (LEAD). We recognized Rep. Cynthia Soto, Rep. Al Riley and Alderman Scott Waguespack who received awards for their education advocacy. We mingled with candidates for all major

state offices and witnessed speeches by Gov. Pat Quinn, Secretary of State Jesse White, Rep. David Miller, and Rep. Will Davis.

Together, we made a difference!

Governor Quinn regained his seat as Governor and thirty-four of our other endorsed candidates won in forty races. Two of our candidates, Sen. Michael Noland and Representative-elect Michelle Mussman, each won by just a few hundred votes despite their opponents receiving hundreds of thousands of dollars from an Oregon-based anti-teacher group.

To maintain our success, we must continue our political activity. We will need hundreds of volunteers for the mayoral race in February. To make this possible, we need to build our CTU Political Action Fund. If you have not already, fill out a card to approve automatic PAC dues deduction. Let's elect a mayor and city council who will support great neighborhood schools.

Together, we will build a better city for our students and ourselves. ■



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www.hopefair.org

Teaching Social Justice

COVER STORY

by Kenzo Shibata, Editor

Victor Harbison harnessed a “teachable moment” to bring valuable history alive for his students and their community while integrating technology, civic advocacy, and interviewing skills.

There is no better feeling for a teacher than finding that “teachable moment,” an opportunity where student engagement is at its peak and students are ready to take their newfound knowledge to the next level. Two years ago, Gage Park High School social studies teacher Victor Harbison encountered a teachable moment that moved a community to look at its history and come to terms with it.

“I had a student [in my civics class] who refused to believe that Dr. King marched down Marquette Park. There was history in his back yard and we went back and forth about whether or not this event had happened. This was something that would have taken us seconds to find on Google, but my students saw this as an opportunity.”

The students decided that they could use this as a “teachable moment” for the entire community. They created an interactive memorial kiosk to the historic marches that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. led through Marquette Park in the summer of 1966. The kiosk allows users to view pictures, read narratives, and hear oral histories recounting the bravery of the marchers and the violence and racism that plagued the community.

“Do you think there’s a child in Atlanta, Memphis or Montgomery, who doesn’t know about King’s legacy in their communities? My students didn’t know that Dr. King had marched in theirs and they were determined to learn about it and teach others,” explained Harbison.

Harbison’s class utilized the MIKVA Issues-to-Action curriculum, a dynamic program that guides students in assessing problems in their community through research, establishing relationships with powerbrokers, and direct action. The students researched Dr. King’s Chicago Freedom Movement for integrated housing and wanted creative ways to educate young people about it and remind older residents how far the community has come. MIKVA sent representatives to the school a few times to energize the students.

“[This project] let students dream outside of the box towards a big goal. There were so many pieces that the students took leadership on, Victor organized those pieces,” explained Jelani McEwen, Senior Program Director of MIKVA’s Issues to Action program.

The class partnered with the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) to design the kiosk. IIT turned the project into a yearlong engineering course where the Gage Park students supplied content from their research, and the engineering students designed the blueprint for the technology.

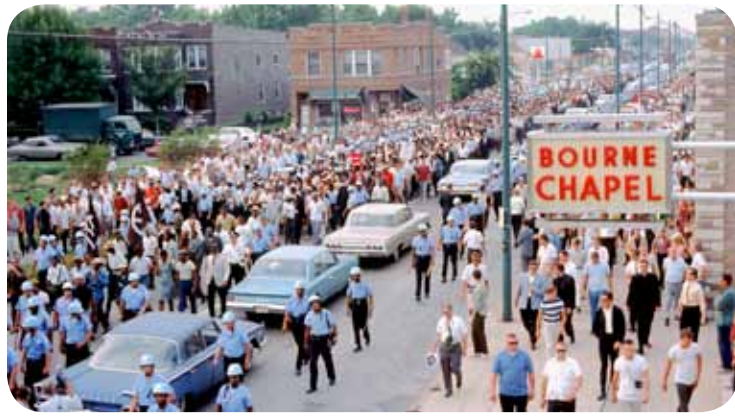
Harbison’s students didn’t just look to books and the internet for their research, they interviewed local citizens who lived through the racism of the past and the summer where Dr. King organized local residents. The students produced short videos of the interviews, which can be viewed at the kiosk as oral histories.

The students had support from their teacher, the school, and the MIKVA program. Although these were the easy people to convince, they knew they had to lobby local politicians to give a home to the memorial.

After much lobbying by the students, Alderman Lona Lane became one of the project’s biggest supporters. She convinced a local technology company to manufacture and install the kiosk using the IIT blueprint. The kiosk is currently housed in the Marquette Park Field House at 6734 S. Kedzie Ave. It is open to the public.

Latrice Jones – Gage Park class of 2010 and a member of the student team – reflected on the experience, “After working on the MLK Memorial project for two years, I have changed dramatically in my social and leadership skills. This project taught me the steps to change any community. I feel that everyone in my community will benefit from the MLK memorial project.” ■





Dr. King and allies march for housing in Marquette Park in 1966. © Photograph by Bernard J. Kleina.

10th Annual Social Justice Curriculum Fair

“Another Education is Possible, Another World is Necessary”

by Allison Epstein
Teacher, Whittier Elementary School

Teachers for Social Justice (TSJ) is hosting its 10th annual curriculum fair on November 20th at Orozco School. The curriculum fair is much like a science fair where teachers exhibit social justice curriculum for every subject and grade level. The curriculum fair is a buzz of conversation, exhibits, workshops, culture, and a delicious lunch where teachers, community educators, youth, and parents network and exchange ideas.

This is TSJ’s 10th Annual Curriculum Fair. The theme is “Another Education is Possible, Another World is Necessary.” This year, TSJ will host exhibits and workshops on teaching about sustainable healthy local food, environmental justice, racial justice, and using hip-hop in the classroom.

Ten years ago TSJ organized the first Teaching for Social Justice Curriculum Fair at Inter-American school. Our theme was “Teaching for Social Justice after 9/11.” Approximately 120 people attended. Since then, the curriculum fair has grown and broadened. Last year 700 teachers, parents, youth, and educators of all types participated. TSJ is anticipating another highly-attended fair this year.

Teachers for Social Justice is a 12-year old organization of teachers, administrators, pre-service teachers, and other educators in the Chicago area who have come together based on a commitment to education for social justice. Members work toward classrooms and schools that are anti-racist, multicultural/multilingual, and grounded in the experiences of our students.

TSJ believes all children should have an academically rigorous education that is both caring and critical, an education that helps students pose critical questions about society and “talk back” to the world. Members share ideas and curriculum, support each other in our work, hold forums and film showings to discuss educational issues. TSJ is also an activist organization that works closely in coalition with community and youth organizations, parents, and the Chicago Teachers Union. ■

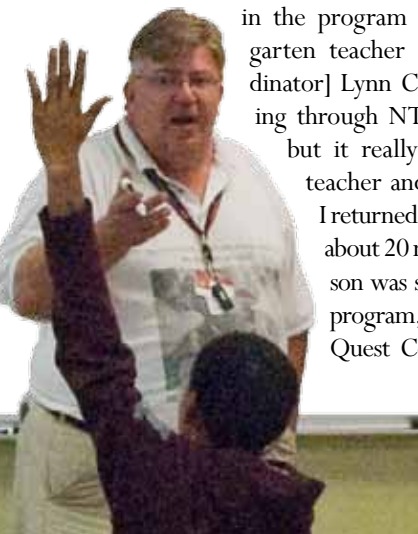
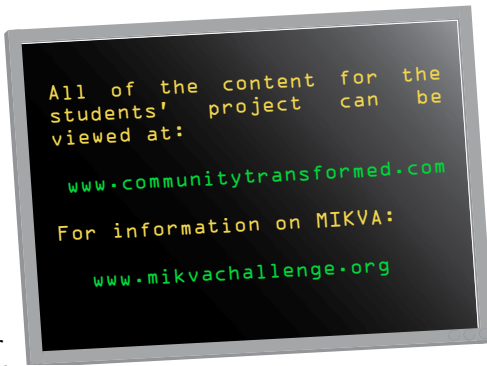
To pre-register or learn more visit teachersforjustice.org.

Victor Harbison received an “Oppy” award from the Oppenheimer Family Foundation soon after the completion of the kiosk project. Ted Oppenheimer explained, “The way [Harbison] works with students is very impressive, his students really respect him because he is so caring and they know it. He was an obvious choice for this year’s award.”

After college, Harbison put teaching on hold to work in politics in Washington D.C. He decided to return to his original career path during a conversation he had with a coworker on Capitol Hill. “I thought, ‘Wow, that would make a great classroom discussion.’ I switched gears and started teaching in D.C.,” recounts Harbison, “Politics is much more fun from the outside, anyway.”

Harbison is a strong believer in teaching through action. “The most powerful learning experiences I remember had to do with what I did in school, not the things I studied for,” Harbison explained. “You can give a test on the issues in the community, or you can knock on a door and give the pitch...it’s a much higher level of learning than just studying.” Many of his former students have taken on careers in politics.

Harbison credits the CTU Quest Center for much of his learning as a teacher. He earned his National Board Certification through the Quest Center’s Nurturing Teacher Leadership(NTL) program. “My mentor in the program was former kindergarten teacher [CTU Quest Coordinator] Lynn Cherkasky-Davis. Going through NTL was really tough, but it really made me a better teacher and after the program, I returned to the classroom with about 20 new strategies.” Harbison was so impressed with the program, he returned to the Quest Center for his masters degree from the Jackie Vaughn Graduate School. ■



100 Days: A CTU Progress Report

by Jesse Sharkey, Vice President

Karen Lewis, Michael Brunson, Kristine Mayle, and I took the helm at the Chicago Teachers Union 100 days ago. We've made changes in the way we deal with the Board of Education (BOE) and how we interact with membership. It's time to take stock and look at an early assessment—a progress report—of the new CTU leadership.

In the past few months, we've experienced a budget crisis, layoffs, and a continued attack on public education in the media. Our goals have been to bring back a sense of urgency into our Union, build participation, increase morale, and defend public schools. What follows is a short synopsis of our major activities over the first 100 days.

Standing Against Concessions

Our work this summer was dominated by the BOE's attempt to get the union to grant \$100 million in givebacks from our contract. Our biggest concern was that the BOE's repeated argument for concessions would split the union and turn the public against us.

We organized a 40-member bargaining team to function as a representative body of members, doing their best to represent the interest of all members at the table. To get the public on our side of the fight, we worked directly in the communities, holding numerous meetings and a community summit to garner support from community groups.

Fighting Cuts in Our Classrooms

Despite \$104 million of federal 'Education Jobs' money that was announced in August, the BOE laid off hundreds of teachers and PSRPs late in the summer, often out of seniority and in violation of the contract.

We have taken on a different approaches simultaneously to fight these cuts. We started by filing over 500 grievances on contract violations in regard to layoffs. At the same time, we filed a lawsuit against the layoffs which we brought in early August and won a significant victory when Judge David Coar ruled that CPS' layoffs were illegal—a violation of teachers' due process rights.

The BOE has appealed this decision, and the effects of the decision are now on hold while the appeal moves through court.

However, we are not counting on this lawsuit by itself. Rather, we hope that the lawsuit, in addition to grievances and direct action, will bring the board to the table to negotiate seniority-based recall rights and enforcement of the contract.

Enforcing the Contract

The summer was also a busy time for strengthening the contract-enforcement at CTU. We increased the number of full-time

Along with the new look of the Chicago Union Teacher we're redesigning the CTU web site and publishing a weekly e-newsletter. Join the e-mail list at CTU.net.com.

employees of the union who enforce union work-rules by 20% and we paid for the additional staff by decreasing the exorbitant benefits of new CTU office staff. We are also committed to getting members better service over

the phone, and have started the process of converting to a computerized grievance tracking system to streamline the workflow in the office.

Improving Our Public Image and Communications

We have done a lot of work in this area. We are halfway through a website redesign, we changed the look of Chicago Union Teacher which is now member-focused and streamlined to cut costs. We are supplementing the *Chicago Union Teacher* with weekly e-mail newsletters and daily website updates. In the first three and a half months, the website has featured 57 new articles. In terms of the press, we have conducted editorial board meetings with the Sun-Times and Chicago Tribune, spoken at numerous public forums, garnered attention with our

own study of the layoffs, and revitalized the CTU public relations committee which is creating a CTU call-in show on CAN-TV, and planning other initiatives.

Enriching Research and Professional Development

The Quest Center started our new direction with a Needs Assessment to inform our professional development offerings. We're continuing the Nurturing Teacher Leadership National Board Certification program. Two new staff members will soon join us - a research facilitator, and a professional development facilitator. In our fight for a fair, research-based teacher evaluation process, members have provided crucial guidance. We are developing an exciting and innovative Lesson Study initiative and planning an event at which Diane Ravitch will speak on March 12th.

Invigorating Our Membership

Our ultimate goal is to reenergize CTU members throughout the city, members who look out for one another, and who bring the Union in the schools. The CTU delegates are playing an active part in this—and we are always looking for new people to step up in their buildings. We have planned additional delegate training in December. We have worked to create a positive tone in the House of Delegates meetings. Another area in which we are trying to encourage participation is through CTU committees—which we are trying to broaden and make more active.

It's hard to believe it's only been 100 days. We have so many more challenges to come—but it's clear that there is a renewed energy at CTU and new ideas coming from the staff and membership that are being heard for the first time in years. ■



TSJ PRESENTS... CO-SPONSORED BY RETHINKING SCHOOLS

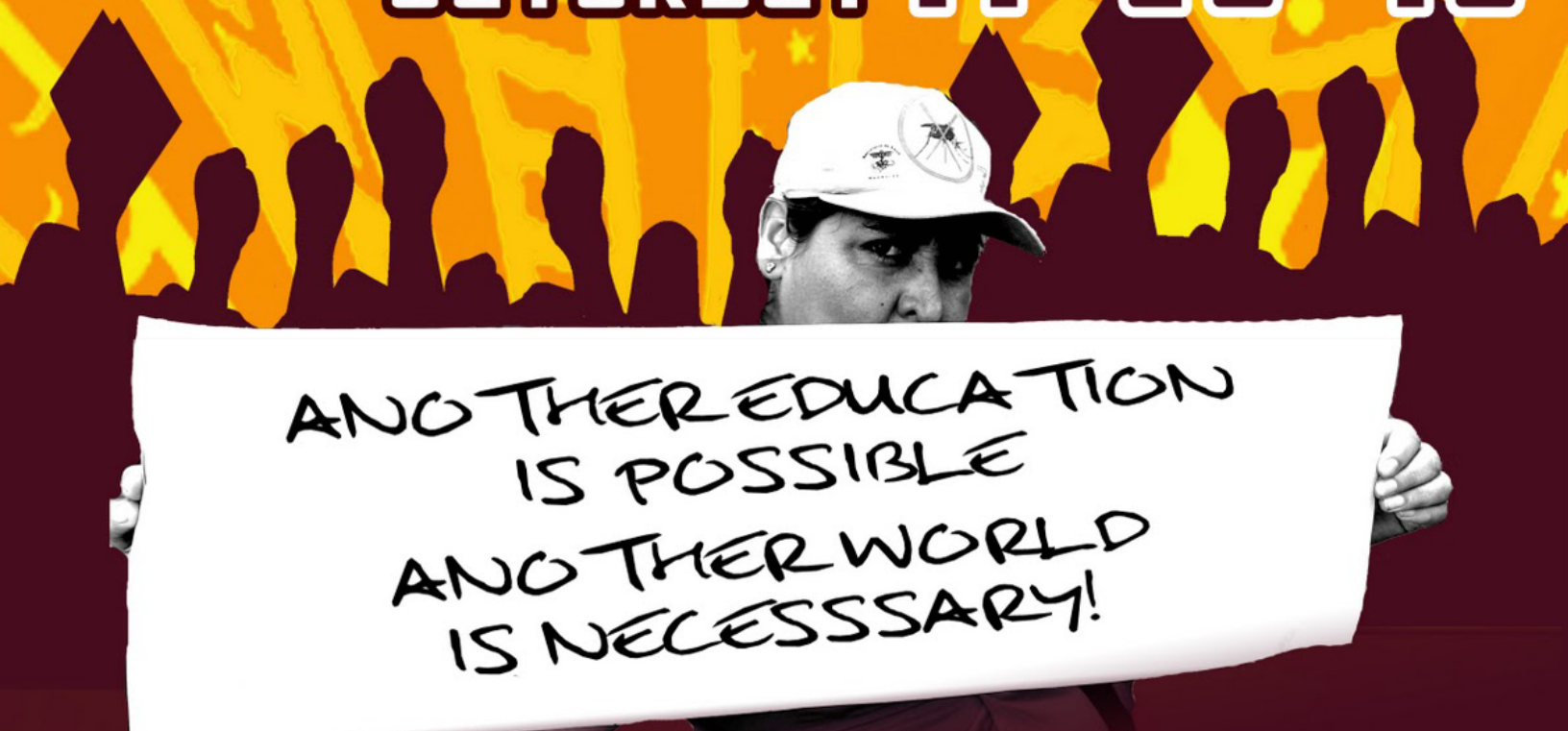
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ANOTHER WORLD
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FIRST IN A SERIES

Don't Mourn...

Organize!

by Kenzo Shibata, Editor

Kelvyn Park High School's Professional Problems Committee (PPC) was key to bringing the entire faculty together and confronting the serious issues their new principal was causing. By standing together and listening to every voice, they overcame a climate of fear and forged schoolwide solidarity.

Pictured below from left to right, they are: Kai Heineken, Reinaldo Quiles, Associate Delegate Eric Wagner, Jamie Yuhas, and Delegate Jerry Skinner.

Jerry Skinner never planned to be an activist. For 15 years, he taught English and coached wrestling at Kelvyn Park High School (KPHS). He taught his students to be outspoken and confident, but did not realize how much he would need these traits in his own job.

He first realized that he had to stand up during a Local School Council (LSC) meeting in March of 2010. Several teachers addressed the LSC about their issues with the leadership at the school. He was aware of some of these problems, but others were completely new to him. It became clear to him that “every teacher had something to say, everyone had a unique issue that only they could speak to.”

He had only been the school's delegate one month at that point and realized that the staff had to get organized if they wanted to get anything done at his school, which he described as having a “very obvious drop in morale” due to the actions and policies of the new principal, Isabel Téllez.

Skinner decided to run for delegate after several months when the school did not have one.

According to the newly elected associate delegate, Eric Wagner, this was a difficult position to fill after the staff witnessed the new principal's poor treatment of the previous delegate.

Skinner knew that the school had a multitude of problems by his own observations and by teachers' lunchroom conversations, but he needed a way to see the big picture. He started with a staff survey. He used a

paper survey that he distributed widely. He then worked with the professional problems committee (PPC) to pull the top three issues and make them the cornerstone of the staff's activism. The issues were: discipline policy, unfilled teacher positions, and lack of educational resources.

The PPC took these three issues and described them in detail in a document that they turned into a petition. The PPC worked with teachers constructing a document on which all teachers could agree. Ninety-five percent of tenured teachers in the building signed the document, which was presented to their Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Col. Rick Mills. The signees requested Col. Mills' advice and assistance.

Initially, the staff intended to present the petition to Mills in a meeting. Mills requested that no meeting take place, so Skinner faxed the petition, with all signatures to the area office. Mills sent Chief High School Officer David Gilligan to meet with staff. The night before the meeting, Gilligan called Wagner, informing him that the principal wanted to be in the meeting.

“We made it clear—if the principal showed up, there would be no meeting,” describes Wagner. “If she wants to be in a meeting with staff, that is what the PPC is for.” The principal did not show up, but sixty-five teachers, tenured and probationary, did and they had a lot to say. The staff pulled no punches in describing what they saw as a decline in the neighborhood school.



When teachers got involved in their LSC, they began to win natural allies, like LSC President Hector Basave (right) and student activist Elizabeth Medina.



The staff used every venue they had to put the principal on notice. Teachers began flooding the Local School Council (LSC) meetings in spring of 2010. Skinner described how it took some time to get the LSC on the side of the teachers. This was the first time a large group of teachers attended the meetings. “When the LSC teacher representatives started seeing their fellow teachers at the meetings, they felt supported, and became more proactive,” recalled Skinner.

“When I started seeing teachers show up to the LSC meetings, I knew that teachers were very interested in getting students to learn,” said LSC President and parent of two students at KPHS, Hector Basave. “The teachers showed leadership, now the principal needs to show some leadership and work with the teachers.”

LSC meetings became a hotbed of activity for students as well. Last year’s senior class vice president Elizabeth Medina attended an LSC meeting where she testified to the problems she saw at the school. Medina said that the entire time she spoke, the principal interrupted her. “We knew something had to be done,” said Medina, who organized students to look at other options.

The students took a note from history and organized a walkout in May of 2010. Over one hundred fifty students walked

out to protest the lack of teachers and other resources at KPHS. During the demonstration, students chanted, “We need teachers!”

Medina chained herself to a fence during the protest. She said that the students felt empowered by the action that they organized by themselves. She was sent to the principal’s office where she met with the principal for several hours. “The principal accused the teachers of putting the students up to the protest,” recalls Medina. “I was completely insulted, we worked so hard to make the protest happen, and it was an insult to us that she would think that we couldn’t think for ourselves.”

A School cannot service students under a climate of fear. It is often the inclination of teachers, when suffering in isolation, to switch schools when working conditions become difficult. Skinner saw that teachers at KPHS were suffering in silence and found ways to give them voice and organized his teachers to collaborate. School communities need to use all vehicles they have to work together toward school improvement. KPHS now has a unified staff aiming in a single direction, along with students and parents. Their story is still developing. ■

How They Began...

Kelvyn Park’s Professional Problems Committee faced so many issues; they didn’t know where to start. So, they focused on the three biggest, according to their staff survey. Each of these issues demonstrates how teaching conditions affect learning conditions.

Discipline Issues

On the morning of May 28, 2010, Wagner noticed papers drifting in the wind outside his classroom window. When he had a free moment, he walked out to investigate the issue.

“I was able to recognize them immediately, they were discipline forms. All three copies were intact, the white, the yellow, and the pink. These forms must have never been entered or filed,” said Wagner, whose classroom is one floor below the discipline office.

“I couldn’t believe that the forms were just on the ground,” recounted former student Medina. The principal claimed that discipline problems declined, but there was a fight almost every period last year.”

Skinner filed a grievance last school year over the fact that the principal required staff to use an internal document for discipline referrals, and not the form agreed upon by the Board and the Union. “We honestly didn’t care which form was used, as long as it was used effectively. What we found out during the grievance process was that the very forms used as evidence, dated months back, were never even entered into the system. These were “lost cases” that never entered into the data.

Unfilled Teacher Positions

According to Wagner, five freshmen biology classes were taught by substitutes last year. “[Ms. Tellez] said that it was hard to find the right teacher and she needed to hire a first or second-year teacher, or else she would have to bump someone.”

For the first ten weeks of last school year, three sections of social studies had no teacher. A history teacher left the school in February of 2010. Instead of hiring a new teacher, ten teachers’ schedules were reshuffled. This happened on the 22nd week of the school year and affected 300 students who suddenly found a new teacher in their classroom.

“We brought these issues up in the PPC, but the principal claimed that there was simply no money,” recounted Wagner.

Lack of Resources

In one PPC meeting, Wagner told the principal that her limitations on copies conflicted with the locally prescribed instructional model. “Teaching history requires a lot of reproducibles, it’s not just worksheets and seat-work, but a great deal of copies need to be made. As a history teacher, I use a lot of primary documents that are not available in textbooks. I wanted to provide everything my students need to succeed. In the meeting, the principal told me that we don’t need to make so many copies because she ‘wanted to promote individual learning,’ which she said meant students bringing notebooks to class. When I made the case for the very model that we were told to use by the area office, she said ‘we’ll just have to agree to disagree.’” ■



In Memoriam

March 2010

13th Mary A. Williamson Simeon HS

May 2010

4th Wyssie E. Lenard Lovett
 4th Sarah Strayer Levin Von Humboldt
 9th Beulah King Hinton
 20th Richard Leiby Clemente HS
 22nd Thelma W. Lewis Colman
 23rd Gordon E. Crandall Hubbard HS
 23rd Sadako A. Kajiwara District 31
 23rd Barbara A. Pope Gresham
 23rd Thelma L. Walls Copernicus
 24th Oksana A. Marrese Budlong
 28th Andrew J. Penn Cook
 29th Ronald G. Ross Courtenay
 30th George Zemtseff Budlong
 31st Charles D. Levy Calhoun North

June 2010

3rd Carol A. Bradley Spaulding
 4th Barbara A. Gunderson Mason
 4th Mary E. O'Connor Birney
 6th Thelma L. Jones Farren
 6th Theodore R. Russell Skinner
 6th Mary D. Schlentz Fenger HS
 7th Adrienne M. Hanus Taft HS
 9th Josephine Loving Crane HS
 9th Antoinette Pareti Von Humboldt
 10th Guy Joseph Paradiso Tilden HS
 11th Bonnie S. Chelin Disney
 11th Anne Markey Clemente HS
 11th Charles E. Stine Schurz HS
 12th Walter Leibfritz Lane Tech HS
 13th Gloria M. Cantieri Foreman HS
 13th John M. Cronin Fenger HS
 14th Marilyn Elaine. Fay Ericson
 15th Ruth O. Secord Hurley
 18th Helen E. Lyons Nobel
 18th Suzanne McWethy Smyth
 22nd Rose Ng Lee Schurz HS
 23rd Marian M. Parker Bell

July 2010

25th Ruth Prale Haugan

August 2010

14th Otmara J. Villa Chase
 16th Gloria W. Wallace John Whistler
 17th Jeanne McGown Mason
 18th Socorro F. Voloria Prescott
 20th Mildred Armstrong Woodson South
 23rd Richard Lysakowski Foreman HS
 23rd Camille R. Taglia Grant
 25th Eddie Thomas May
 28th Edna A. Bryant Skinner
 28th Mary Bryskier Marshall HS
 28th Joyce N. Wdowik Brennemann
 29th Eleanor H. Drew Stockton
 30th Orlando A. Orpen Owen
 30th Naomi L. Winslow Wm. Brown
 31st Mary Anne Bell Dodge

September 2010

2nd Lois Rochford Spaulding
 4th Arlene P. Anderson Washington HS
 5th Margaret Zale Sayre
 6th Metta Davis Disney Magnet
 6th Patricia J. Ryan Twain
 8th Marie D. Cantwell Amundsen HS
 8th David L. Johnson Hartigan
 9th Ruth Jacobs Cather
 9th Ella B. Watkins Burke
 10th Beulah L. Bell Taft HS
 11th John Jackson Wentworth
 12th Virginia M. Gibson Beale
 12th Joseph Clifton Risby E.F. Young
 13th Shirley Temple Sims L. Ward
 17th Lois Mutchler Reavis
 19th Sharon M. Daly Kennedy HS
 19th Mary E. Dillingham Harlan HS
 21st Richard G. Dokus Tonti
 21st Charles E. Johnson Barton
 21st Ellen Koen Central Offices
 22nd Clyde B. French Ft. Dearborn
 22nd Vivian Topping Garvy
 22nd Ida J. Washington Manierre
 23rd Beola J. Bowsky Stevenson
 23rd Jean L. Ervin Hope Middle
 23rd Joyce G. Schwartz Emmet
 25th Delano Spencer Smyth
 26th Betty L. Plate Norwood Park
 26th Lois Mutchler Steinmetz HS
 27th Frances K. Leist Hearst
 28th Margaret F. Hogan Edgebrook
 28th Valorie Susan Kuehlman Brunson
 29th Vern L. Aldridge Dunbar HS
 29th Mary A. Miles Calumet HS
 30th Aurelia T. Boston Reavis



October 2010

1st Dena M. Faires Herzl
 3rd John P. Zvetina Marshall HS
 4th Mayme D. Pietrzak Schubert
 5th Sarah L. Austin Bethune
 5th Shoshana Chady Frazier
 5th Albert J. Kucharczyk Prosser HS
 6th Lillie Nunnery Twain
 11th Basil S. Karras Brentano
 12th Margaret Goggin-Bourgeois Central Office
 12th Loretta M. Kemmer Eberhart
 12th James R. Moore Linne
 13th Robert C. Todd Gillespie
 13th Rose E. Vlcek McKay
 18th Edward J. Tobin Henderson
 18th Alfred Wiesmeyer Disney Magnet
 19th Wilbert Ruben Theodore Lenart
 21st Laura Bowman Drake
 23rd Harriett Cotharn O'Keefe
 26th Margaret E. Liddy Howe

Editor's Note: Lists of deceased members of the Chicago Teachers Union are provided to the Chicago Union Teacher by the office of the Chicago Teachers' Pension Fund and are printed as received. If you notice an error or omission, please contact the editor at 312-329-6252 so a correction may be made in a subsequent edition.

TIFs, Teachers and Budget Holes

by Michael Brunson, Recording Secretary and Latanya Lane, SOUL (Southsiders Organized for Unity and Liberation)

Teachers have been talking a lot about Tax Increment Financing (TIF) this year. According to the Chicago Board of Education (BOE), the Chicago Public School (CPS) is facing monumental shortfalls that will be even worse next year. CPS Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ron Huberman claimed that the only way he could operate schools this year was through a combination of postponing pension payments, increasing high school class sizes, emptying the school system's financial reserves and laying off over a thousand teachers and PSRPs. One thing that he did not put on the table was requesting TIF money be taken out of the mayor's personal slush fund and put back into schools. It is clear that budgeting through stalls and cuts is unsustainable. Although the schools opened on time, it is clear to all stakeholders that these cuts hurt kids.

While the administration has been trying to cut their way out of this hole, the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) has made it a priority to spotlight TIFs as a major culprit in school budgeting shortfalls. Current law allows the City of Chicago to designate an area as "blighted" and therefore, eli-

gible for TIF districting. The idea is that there will be no development in the "blighted" area without some kind of intervention.

Once the "blighted" area is designated as a TIF district, the property taxes in the district are frozen at the level they were at when the area was identified as a TIF. While the land is still assessed and the taxes continue to increase, the additional money is diverted into a specific fund rather than being collected by the taxing bodies that normally receive them. Those taxing bodies include CPS, as well as the Park District and emergency services.

This presents definite problems for school districts in Illinois because traditionally school districts depend on property taxes for the majority of their revenue – Illinois is 49th for state funding of education. Given that the Chicago Public School system funds more than half of the TIFs in the city, it is clear that TIFs are severely depleting the budget for CPS.

With money being actively siphoned away from schools, it is clear why CPS faces unprecedented budget shortfalls. It would seem as though CEO Huberman would have a vested interest in TIF reform. He wouldn't have to go through an endless cycle of annual doomsday budgets if all money collected was allocated to schools. However, after the passage of the 1995 Amendatory Act, the CEO serves at the pleasure of the Mayor and if the Mayor has development high on his agenda, it becomes the agenda of all of his appointees. This year, in Mayor Daley's proposed budget, he plans to return \$90 million in TIF surplus to schools. This is money we could have used last summer to stave off the massive number of cuts to staff and resources. Perhaps the problem has a broader solution—end mayoral control and return the schools to the residents of Chicago. ■



While the administration has been trying to cut their way out of this hole, the Chicago Teachers Union has made it a priority to spotlight TIFs as a major culprit in school budgeting shortfalls.

SOUL (Southsiders Organized for Unity and Liberation)

is a not-for-profit, grassroots, independent, multi-issue, power organization that addresses community issues on Chicago's south side and south suburbs. SOUL's mission is to empower the Southside of Chicago and the south suburbs to fight for social justice and address issues and concerns within the community. SOUL serves as an organizing vehicle that:

- Provides a methodology for people to act effectively together;
- Trains people to become leaders and build powerful public lives;
- Establishes a set of ongoing structured relationships so that people can work together on a variety of issues over time;
- Provides a democratic structure for decision making;
- Brings together resources: relationships, talents, constituencies and interests that cannot be garnered by any one individual, congregation, neighborhood or single issue group;
- Provides, through its affiliations with other networks and coalitions, a racially, economically and geographically diverse base of people to greatly expand everyone's power and impact. ■

Local 1 Takes 2010 IFT Convention by Storm

by Kenzo Shibata, Editor

The recently-elected Chicago Teachers Union Convention Delegates descended upon St. Louis over the weekend of October 15th to participate in the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) 2010 Convention. Every three years, the IFT hosts this meeting of statewide delegates where members participate in workshops, meet with leaders, amend the IFT Constitution, and pass official resolutions. Local 1 used this opportunity to dialogue, debate, and lobby with other statewide delegates over the issues in the city, the state, and the nation.

Delegates engaged in workshops to collect information to bring back to their respective schools. CTU delegates were in high attendance at these workshops and deliberated how to use the information to further our goals of the Union. One notable workshop facilitated by American Federation of Teachers (AFT) was on opposition research, which is collecting public information on a political or organizational opponent that exposes their contradictions, vulnerabilities, and in some cases malfeasance. Although it was a long weekend, a large contingent of CTU delegates showed their dedication to the Union by attending this workshop, which was held at 7:30 in the morning on the last day of the convention. Immediately after the workshop, members held an impromptu strategy

session where they discussed how they could use these tactics in their struggles with the Chicago Board of Education.

Speakers from throughout the state and nation addressed the delegates during the general sessions. Speakers included: IFT President Ed Geppert, AFT President Randi Weingarten, Michael Carrigan, Illinois AFL-CIO President, and state elected officials and endorsed candidates.

CTU President Karen Lewis was elected the new Executive Vice President of the IFT by acclamation, along with IFT President Dan Montgomery, and Secretary-Treasurer Marcia Boone. President Lewis taught chemistry in the Chicago Public Schools for 23 years and was a longtime CTU Delegate. Dan Montgomery, president of North Suburban Teachers Union, taught at Niles North High School as well as in the City Colleges of Chicago and at Northwestern University. Marcia Boone was an accounting specialist at Southwestern Illinois College in Belleville.

Along with the three officers, delegates elected IFT Vice Presidents. Ten of the newly-elected Vice Presidents represent Local 1. They were: Xian Barrett, Michael Brunson, Carol Caref, June Davis, Nathaniel Dickson, Mary Edmonds, Kristine Mayle, Linda Newsome, Annette Rizzo, and Jesse Sharkey. ■



Taking on School Closings

by Katherine Hogan, Social Justice High School

I spoke on the floor of the convention in support of CTU resolution 5: "Call for a Moratorium on School Closures" Here is a summary of my remarks:

The IFT passed every resolution submitted by the CTU.



Hello my name is Katie Hogan, and I am from Local 1. I rise in strong support for resolution 5 that calls for a moratorium on school closures. I would ask my brothers and sisters to look at the statistics [provided in the resolution - Illinois ranks 3rd nationally with 117,541 students] in Tier 1 or Tier 2 schools of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) list that schedules schools for closure under four turn-around models. I would tie this disproportion into our lack of funding for education in our state.

I call for this moratorium for *both* what the epidemic of school closures have done, and what they have not done. A literature review of the results of school closures unanimously presents data that demonstrates no improvement in student outcomes or learning from school closures. The only thing that changes when a school closes, according to documented data, is a severe disruption in social supports, community relationships, and lost unionized jobs. The only schools that have shown success have been schools that don't re-open with the same students

that previously attended prior to closure. Schools are increasingly being closed across this state – mostly in poor neighborhoods – and re-opened under privatized, non-union management firms that then *select in* the students they want, and *select out* the students they don't want. They then market this restructuring as "progress." The only improvements have been to the bank accounts of these for-profit firms and the hedge fund investors betting on this rigged game. In the end union members lose, communities lose, and most tragically, young people lose the opportunity for a quality education. Enough of the lies, enough of the propaganda, we must stand united in opposition to school closures by passing this moratorium.

This resolution was passed without one voiced objection at the conference.

Also passed at the convention were other resolutions from the CTU, Local 1:

- Call for an elected school board for Chicago
- Ending charter school proliferation
- Opposition to "Race to the Top"
- Pushing for a more just version of the D.R.E.A.M. Act
- Repeal of Illinois Senate Bill 1946 ("Pension Robbery" Bill)
- Repeal the 1995 Amendatory Act (Mayoral Control of CPS)

The IFT passed every resolution submitted by the CTU. ■

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 and Social Studies-History (ages 14-18)



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For further information, or to register, call
Lynn Cherkasky-Davis at 312-329-6274
 or e-mail LynnCherkasky-Davis@ctulocal1.com

More information can also be found at www.ctunet.com/questcenter_ntl

What's Happening with Teacher Evaluation?

by Carol Caref, Quest Center Coordinator

This year, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is unveiling a new “instructional framework,” an outline that shows what good teaching looks like. The current proposed framework is highly flawed and will be a component of teacher evaluations. That is why several teacher focus groups recommended that the proposed framework be scrapped. However, CPS continues to refine and pilot it.

A major problem with the framework is its gauge for “student growth.” The favored method of measurement is called “value added.” This is the difference in students’ test scores from the beginning to the end of the school year. By comparing how much “value” was added to a particular teacher’s students relative to other teachers in the district, CPS can determine the student growth portion of teacher ratings. Recent research has determined that “value added” is wrong at least 35% of the time.

“Student growth” has been added to teacher evaluations to be in compliance with the “Performance Evaluation Reform Act” passed in January 2010 by the Illinois General Assembly. The purpose of this Act was to change Illinois Law to meet the requirements of Race to the Top (RttT). RttT

is an initiative of Secretary of Education Arne Duncan that awards federal money to states with the goal of persuading their legislatures to adopt education policies that comply with the agenda of his Department of Education. Illinois didn’t get the money but still has this law on the books requiring that “student growth” be a significant part of teacher evaluation.

CTU has been a strong voice in fighting for needs-based, teacher-led professional development as the backdrop to any teacher evaluation system. We are opposed to any evaluation system without an appeals process and any system that unfairly penalizes teachers for situations beyond their control. Right now, no mutually agreed upon teacher evaluation system exists. CAOs and principals seem to have immense latitude in that area. At some point, CPS and CTU will, as required by law, sit down to discuss what will become the standard teacher evaluation system. The Performance Evaluation Reform Act allows us 90 days to come to an agreement. If we don’t agree, the last CPS proposal is the one implemented.

Members interested in working on this issue should contact me at CarolCaref@ctuLocal1.com. ■



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January Health Cost Changes

CTU members are working under a 5-year contract negotiated by the previous CTU administration that secures wages, but not the cost of benefits for the duration of the contract. That is why members may see a larger portion of their paycheck go to healthcare starting January 1st, 2011. Understandably, members are concerned about the changes. In these uncertain economic times, it is important to be able to have a spending plan that takes into account take-home wages. We have compiled some of the most common questions. If you have any further questions, contact Health and Benefits Coordinator Annette Rizzo at AnnetteRizzo@ctuLocal1.com. ■

Frequently Asked Questions

How was my coverage cost computed prior to January 1st, 2011?

If you were at the top step in your lane and had worked for the Board for 13 years or more, the amount taken from your gross pay for medical insurance was frozen over the last 3 years. If you were not in that category, that amount changed as you moved from one step to another or from one lane to another. The amount was calculated as a percentage (based on the coverage you chose) of your lane and step's base pay. However, the base salary used for calculating the payment in each lane and step remained at the 2006-07 level, even though the actual salary received went up based on our annual raises.

What will happen to my coverage after January 1st, 2011?

Because our health-care costs have increased beyond 5 percent within the last year, our contract, negotiated under the old administration, allows the Board to base our health care costs on the same percentage but now on our current salary schedule. The cost will now rise with our rate of pay. See the chart in Appendix B (page 198) of the Contract and refer to examples in our union PowerPoint (under Member Resource on the right side of the page at CTU.net.com).

Is there anything that the union can do about this additional expense?

We are bound by the terms of our Collective Bargaining Agreement. The agreement was negotiated by the previous leadership and explicitly allowed the Board to increase the cost to our members if costs increased by over 5%. According to an independent health accounting firm, The Segal Group (www.segalco.com), CPS health costs have gone up from 5.7% to 5.9% in the last year.

How will these changes impact open enrollment and my overall coverage?

The money CPS takes from your gross pay for medical insurance will increase by an amount between 20% and 23% depending on your lane, your step, and the type of plan that you have. The insurance coverage options that CPS offers us will not be affected by this contract provision.

How will Obama's health reform impact our benefits?

Our plans will now be required to provide coverage for adult dependent children up to age 26 if the child is not offered coverage by an employer. The Board/insurance companies will no longer be able to cancel coverage after someone has submitted legitimate medical claims. Additionally, health-care reform will eliminate lifetime maximum limits on essential benefits and eliminate annual limits on other forms of coverage. As a result of "Cadillac taxes" on high cost plans, any costs that rise above \$10,200.00 a year would be taxed at a 40% rate, an amount that we could exceed by the time of our next contract negotiation. We need to strategize solutions together soon.

What happens next?

The CTU will continue to fight for high quality, low cost health care for our members. However, the continued inflation in health care for Americans presents serious challenges to our union. Therefore, CTU will create a rank and file committee dedicated to deep investigations of our health care costs in anticipation of the 2012 contract negotiations. Please consider joining and help make our union stronger in the face of these considerable challenges. ■



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Nurse's Note

SEIZURES: DOS AND DON'TS FOR THE CLASSROOM

by Helen Ramirez-Odell RN
Illinois Certified School Nurse

There is a good chance that at some point in your teaching career, a student will have a seizure in your classroom. It's important to be aware of the common condition that brings on these seizures – epilepsy.

November is National Epilepsy Awareness Month. More than 2 million Americans have epilepsy – about 1 in every 150. It is a neurological condition in which abnormal electrical discharges occur in the brain resulting in a seizure. There are many different kinds of seizures. Not all are noticeable. Loss of consciousness occurs in some *but not all* types of seizures.

Two common types of seizures are absence and tonic-clonic. Absence seizures are unconscious staring episodes ranging from a few seconds to several minutes. When they occur, the student needs to have repeated what he or she missed during the seizure because it was as if they were “absent” for that time.

Tonic-clonic are more extreme. The person loses consciousness and falls during one of these seizures. The whole body stiffens and the body jerks rhythmically. It usually lasts one to two minutes.

Seeing a seizure for the first time can be frightening, but it need not be. Tell the class that the child is having a seizure and to remain calm. There is nothing you can do to stop a seizure except to help prevent injury.

For first aid, cushion the person's head with a jacket or whatever is available. Remove eyeglasses and loosen tight clothing. Turn the person on their side so they will not choke on their own fluids. Never put anything in their mouth. Never hold the person down. Move sharp or dangerous objects away from them. Time the seizure with a watch or clock. Provide a place for the person to rest when the seizure ends. Notify the school nurse and the child's parents.

It is not necessary to call an ambulance unless it is the child's first seizure, the seizure lasts more than 5 minutes, or the student has repeated seizures.

Seizures can be prevented or controlled with daily medication called Diastat, which is administered rectally with a special syringe. Effectiveness varies and so do side effects. Unlicensed persons such as teachers and teaching assistants are *not* required to administer medication per the Illinois Nurse Practice Act. ■

Restoring Chicago's Labor Legacy

by Larry Spivack, Illinois Labor History Society President

CTU members who have signed Union cards after 1987 may not fully understand the power of the strike. Our ultimate leverage against the boss is our ability to unite as one and withhold labor until an agreement is made. Striking is a great sacrifice for all stakeholders and without these past sacrifices, we would not have the rights we have today.

In the 19th century, many had to sacrifice their lives for their Union. One example of this was the “Haymarket Massacre” of 1886. Workers gathered in Chicago's Haymarket Square to meet and discuss police brutality in strike situations. An unknown person threw a bomb at the police who had ordered the masses to disperse. A group of activists, many immigrants with ties to the labor movement were convicted without any evidence to prove their guilt. The prosecution merely argued that the men did nothing to discourage the bombing. Seven of the eight men were sentenced to execution.



Seven years later, a reported 8,000 people were in attendance in 1893 as the Martyrs Monument, a tribute to the eight men, was unveiled at Waldheim Cemetery. This was the same event at which Governor John Peter Altgeld announced his pardon of those surviving martyrs who were in Joliet State Prison.

In 1971, the Illinois Labor History Society became the owner of the Monument and in 1997 was named its official “Steward.” Every year, the Monument is visited by many from around the world who come to pay tribute to the Martyrs and to recognize the historic and artistic significance of the site.

After almost 120 years, however, this beautiful work of art is now in desperate need of proper cleaning, preservation, and ongoing upkeep. We need your help. We hope to raise nearly \$100,000 to keep the Haymarket legacy alive for many years to come. Please give generously. Your name will be listed in connection with the rededication ceremony planned for May 1, 2011, the 125th anniversary of the Haymarket Tragedy. ■

YES, I want to help restore the Haymarket Martyrs Monument.

Please accept my contribution in the amount of:

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