



The Inside Stories...

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Chicago UNION TEACHER

The Official Publication of the Chicago Teachers Union 



Photo by Jenny Celander

Financial secretary Mark Ochoa reviews documents for the upcoming referendum with members of the CTU's Rules and Elections Committee.

Important governance issues set forth in November referendum

By John Ostenburg, Editor Emeritus

Members of the Chicago Teachers Union will have the opportunity on November 20 to vote on three referendum issues designed to save the Union money and streamline the CTU governance process.

The three items would amend the Union's Constitution. They have been recommended by the CTU Executive Board, which authorized the referendum vote that will be held in the schools.

If passed, the amendments would be effective with the next

election of CTU officers in May of 2010.

ELECTION RETURNS

The first item listed on the referendum ballot would change the way in which election returns are distributed to the membership. Under the current constitutional provision, election returns must be printed in the next edition of the CHICAGO UNION TEACHER following the balloting. The returns must be provided by candidate, by caucus, and by school.

In 2004, an election which saw four slates of candidates

seeking office, the cost for the publication of the returns was approximately \$90,000. In the run-off election of that year, the returns were circulated by means of a compact disk (CD) inserted in the newspaper at a cost of approximately \$15,000.

In the 2007 election, the returns were posted on the Union's website with a notice in the newspaper directing mem-

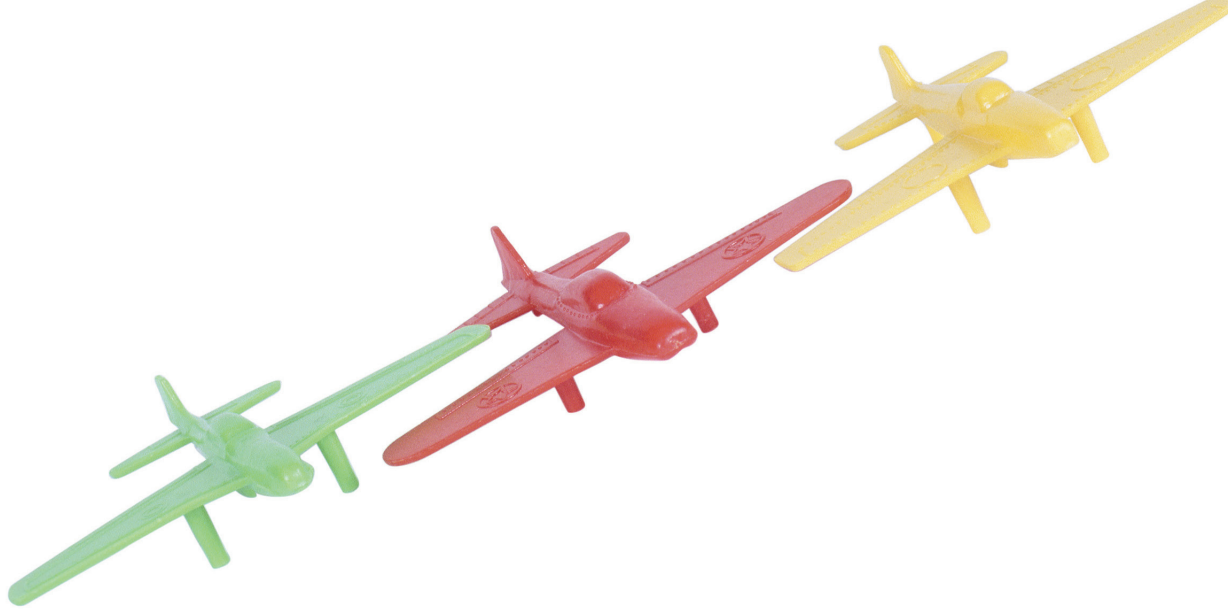
bers to that spot. While that was a significant cost-saving measure, some have maintained that it is not in concert with the constitutional language, which specifically states that the returns should be contained in the newspaper proper.

The referendum item regarding election returns states the following.

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HANDLING THE UNANTICIPATED

by Melani Davis, Editor

In a recent interview with Captain Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger, the pilot who safely landed a passenger jet on the Hudson river last January, John Stewart says, “The most amazing thing was the calm you exhibited in the cockpit. Was that training or something inherent in you?”

Sully replies that it was part training, part temperament. “I mean, decades of it. Tons and tons of hours preparing for whatever might come along.”

Later Mr. Stewart asks Sully why it is that pilots are not paid very well?

“It seems a crime for someone with that expertise, who has, literally people’s lives in their hands, to be paid in a manor that makes them have second jobs, third jobs — seems unreasonable,” Mr. Stewart observes.

Sully answers that nationwide, the general public is now experiencing what airline employees have been facing for eight years or more, since the September 2001 terrorist attacks.

“We’ve taken big pay cuts, a lot of us have had our pensions terminated. My message going forward is that

if we as a society don’t value this profession sufficiently, will we be able to attract the best and brightest — the people who can have the experience, judgment and the fundamental skills and in-depth knowledge you need to handle the unanticipated?”

Chilling advice when you think of current circumstances facing Chicago Public School teachers.

What if our emergency is youth violence and it takes nothing less than Captain Sully himself to guide our kids to a safe landing and keep them afloat?

What if we need the kind of calm and expertise of veteran teachers like Karen Stolzenberg, and the in-depth knowledge of school psychologists like Dr. Audrey Parsley, (featured in this month’s issue of CHICAGO UNION TEACHER) but they’re nowhere to be found.

What if the Board of Education continues its attempt to singlehandedly dismantle the teaching profession through the institution of dangerous policies like Ren2010, and its refusal to deal with abusive principals, underfunded pensions or faulty payroll systems? What if the

result of all this is that we are no longer able to keep and attract the “best and the brightest” to our field?

What happens when we no longer possess the “experience, judgment, fundamental skills and in-depth knowledge (needed) to handle the unanticipated?”

Experts like Ms. Stolzenberg and Dr. Parsley talk about the urgency of making human connections — learning who your students are, assessing their needs and guiding them to make better choices before rage claims their future.

Ms. Stolzenberg says that what make a students stop and think about their actions sometimes is knowing that they don’t want to disappoint somebody.

Could it be so simple that having a presence in a child’s life — being the teacher or staff member willing to take an extra 30 seconds — can literally mean the difference between life and death?

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by Marilyn Stewart, President

There's an old saying that denial is not just a river in Egypt. Over the last few weeks, that has been painfully obvious — denial runs deep here in Chicago.

The death of Derrion Albert, a 16-year-old student at Fenger High School, in late September was a tragic reminder of the violence affecting students in this city. Unfortunately, it wasn't the first incident of gang-related violence and it wasn't the last. A week later, blocks from the spot where Derrion was killed, another incident of violence occurred. Students around Fenger, as well as elsewhere in Chicago, are faced with this real threat on a regular, daily basis.

The closing, consolidation, phase-out, and turnaround of Chicago Public Schools under the Renaissance 2010 (Ren 2010) program has uprooted, disrupted, upset, and dislocated the students in this city.

After Carver High School was made a military academy, students lost a neighborhood school and were forced to cross gang lines to attend nearby Fenger. Derrion Albert's death is an example of the dangers of Ren 2010.

When asked about the incident, and about allowing students to transfer out of Fenger, Mayor Richard Daley told the media that we can't let the gangs call the shots.

"The day that the city of Chicago decides to divide schools by gang territory, that's the day we've given up the city," he said.

It's easy enough for Mayor Daley to make such a remark from the safety of his office at City Hall. But, gangs are a

problem in Chicago and for the students crossing from one neighborhood to another to get to the safety of their classrooms, the threat is scary and real. When you shuffle our students from one school to another there are bound to be problems, and by denying that reality you are putting our students in danger.

In mid-October, Senator James Meeks addressed an audience at Operation Push and told the crowd that Chicago does have a gang problem — the Chicago Teachers Union.

"Chicago Public Schools have a gang problem. The gang, however, is not the BDs, the gang is not the GDs, the gang is not the Vice Lords and the gang is not the Four Corner Hustlers. The gang is the Chicago Teachers Union."

Somehow, once again, teachers are being blamed for circumstances and events that take place outside of the classroom.

There is a disconnect between what the elected officials in this city believe to be true and what is happening on the streets and neighborhoods surrounding our schools.

Senator Meeks also told the crowd that whether a student's parents and family members are drug addicts, "hoes," or in jail, when they get to school they should be learning. He is in denial if he thinks that a home-life filled with drugs and violence can be left at the door when a student enters the classroom.

I have said many times that although our job as teachers and school staff in this city is

"Somehow, once again, teachers are being blamed for circumstances and events that take place outside of the classroom."

to educate, oftentimes we must also serve as mentors, nurses, social workers, counselors, psychologists, and parental figures.

The problems that our students face — dysfunctional home environments, violence, and drug abuse — is a heavy burden to carry. When we deny that truth, we do our students an injustice.

For as many hats as teachers wear in the classroom, one they should not have to assume is that of a police officer. The issues of gangs in this city, as well as the issues Senator Meeks spoke of in his speech, are not school problems — they are police and societal problems.

That being said, there is something CPS can do to lessen the burden for our students. *Stop closing their schools!*

The students in this city have enough on their plates. They should not be ripped from, sometimes, the only stable environment they have. They should not be treated as objects to be picked up and placed wherever is convenient. They should not have to worry about safety while walking to school.

We need to put an end to Renaissance 2010 — our students lives depend on it.



PRESIDENT'S DIARY

- From October 13 through October 16 President Stewart was in Washington D.C. for the American Federation of Teachers Executive Council meeting.
- On Monday October 19, President Stewart did an interview with Fox news about the violence at Fenger High School.
- On October 20, President Stewart attended a 403(b) meeting at CPS.
- On Friday, October 23 President Stewart was in Springfield for the Illinois Federation of Teachers president's conference.
- On October 27, President Stewart participated in a union rally for financial reform.
- Also on October 27, President Stewart addressed new delegates at the new delegates workshop held at the CTU office.
- On October 28, President Stewart spoke at the Chicago Board of Education meeting. She called for an end to Renaissance 2010.
- Also on October 28, President Stewart was in Springfield meeting with legislators in the closing hours of the fall veto session.
- On October 30, President Stewart attended the CTU's "Thriller" party.

Important governance issues set forth in November referendum

(Continued from page 1)

Shall Article XII, Section 7 of the Constitution be amended to allow all school-by-school election and referendum returns to be posted on the CTU official website in lieu of publication in the CHICAGO UNION TEACHER?

TREASURER'S POSITION

A second referendum item proposes reducing the number of elected CTU officers from five to four by elimination of the Treasurer's position.

The proposal came about as a result of a recommendation by the American Federation of Teachers that the CTU hire a full-time Director of Fiscal Operations to handle the Union's day-to-day financial matters.

the hiring of Michael Baldwin for the post. Mr. Baldwin now handles day-to-day financial matters that previously were handled by the Treasurer.

In the time since Mr. Baldwin's hiring, the Chicago Teachers Union has gone from a \$600,000 annual deficit to a nearly \$2 million surplus as a result of fiscal constraints that have been put in place. These have included both greater control of expenditures and a more watchful eye on Union resources. The current surplus has been generated in addition to the Union's successful payback on a loan – co-signed by the AFT – that allowed the CTU to meet its financial obligations at a time when its bank accounts were nearly entirely depleted.

By eliminating the position of Treasurer, the CTU is expected

The Executive Board also considered the fact that most major labor organizations do not have five, full-time, paid officer positions. The AFT has three full-time officers; the Illinois Federation of Teachers has two part-time officers; the Chicago Federation of Labor has two full-time officers; the national AFL-CIO has three full-time officers; and the Illinois AFL-CIO has two full-time officers.

The specific language for the referendum item is as follows.

Shall the Constitution (Article V, Section 1 and all references therein), be amended to remove the office of Treasurer as well as amending the By-laws to remove Section 1(e) of Article VI and all references therein, eliminating the office of Treasurer whose duties would be assumed by the Financial Secretary (Article VI, Sec. 1(d))?

REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

The third referendum item is a housekeeping matter that is designed to save the Union costly legal action in the event that an officer of the Union – including both those who serve in full-time paid positions and any who serve as trustees or functional vice presidents – ever again should be removed from membership in the CTU for bringing disrepute upon the organization.

As most members will recall, the former Vice President was removed from membership in the Union in the fall of 2008 because of a number of charges brought against him, including misuse of Union funds, providing special benefits to some members over others, and in appropriate behavior toward colleagues. The Executive Board took the action against him following a trial at which

evidence was presented and he and his legal counsel had the opportunity to present evidence and challenge the findings. The Constitution clearly gives the Executive Board the authority to act as it did.

However, following the conviction, the former Vice President went to court to challenge the Executive Board's action. A major complication resulted from the fact that the constitutional authority given to the Executive Board allows it to remove an individual from membership, but the Constitution is silent on removal of an officer from his or her elected position. Since the Constitution does state clearly that an individual must be a member in good standing to seek election to office, the Executive Board inferred, with the support of the Union's attorneys, that someone removed from membership could not continue to hold an office.

While the matter ultimately was resolved in support of the Executive Board's actions, an unnecessary amount of time and expense was expended in the legal battle that ran for several months. The Executive Board, therefore, is asking the membership to amend the Constitution so that it clearly states that anyone removed from membership in the Union by the legitimate process detailed in the Constitution & By Laws also is removed from any offices he or she may hold in the Union.

The specific language for this referendum item is as follows.

Shall the Constitution be amended by adding the following to Article V, Section 3: Removal from Office—If an officer is removed from membership in the Union under Article XIV of the By-laws, he or she shall be removed from his/her office automatically and immediately.

“In the time since Mr. Baldwin's hiring, the CTU has gone from a \$600,000 annual deficit to a nearly \$2 million surplus as a result of fiscal constraints that have been put in place.”

The AFT made the recommendation after the Union's auditors informed President Marilyn Stewart in 2007 that the CTU's fiscal condition was near bankruptcy.

In making its recommendation, the AFT agreed to fund the new Director of Financial Operations position for three years as a start-up period during which the CTU could get its financial house in order. It urged the Union to hire a professional certified public accountant (CPA) to staff the position and also assisted in the recruitment effort that eventually led to

to realize an annual savings of approximately \$250,000, given salary, benefits, and expenses associated with that position. The savings will more than adequately cover the expense of Mr. Baldwin's position when the CTU takes over funding it at the end of the three-year period of subsidy by the AFT. The remaining extra savings will be applied to other Union needs.

The oversight responsibilities now listed in the Constitution as assigned to the Treasurer will be transferred to the Financial Secretary as one of the regular duties of that position if the referendum passes.

CLARIFICATION

CTU legal counsel has explained that the constitutional amendments, if they are passed, do not affect any positions currently in place but only would be effective with the elections to be held in May 2010. Attorney Burton Odelson, an elections expert who also serves as one of the Union's attorneys, has pointed out that constitutional changes cannot be retroactive to decisions made prior to their approval.

Rumors, therefore, that the amendments are designed to remove current CTU Treasurer Linda Porter from her position are untrue. Some information has been circulated at some schools alleging that Ms. Porter's removal is the intent of the proposed amendments, but that information – while inflammatory – is inaccurate.

"The Executive Board is calling this referendum because it believes our Union needs to move forward in a way that allows for your dues money to be spent as wisely as possible," said President Marilyn Stewart.

"The members of the Executive Board – who are elected by the large constituency groups such as high school teachers, elementary teachers, PSRPs, and retirees – felt that it is not good policy to spend thousands of dollars on unneeded publications, or on duplicative offices, or on legal contests. That's why they are asking that you approve these changes."

The Executive Board is granted its authority to call for a membership referendum under Article XIII of the CTU Constitution.

CHICAGO TEACHERS UNION OFFICIAL BALLOT



(Mark an (X) or (✓) after YES or NO after each of these Constitution and/or By-law changes)

November 20, 2009

REFERENDUM QUESTION #1

Shall Article XII, Section 7 of the Constitution be amended to allow all school-by-school election and referendum returns to be posted on the CTU official website in lieu of publication in the Chicago Union Teacher?	YES	
	NO	

Rationale: In 2009 the publishing of election results from four slates of candidates cost about \$90,000. This cost could be avoided by publishing the results on our website.

REFERENDUM QUESTION #2

Shall the Constitution (Article V, Section 1 and all references therein), be amended to remove the office of Treasurer as well as amending the By-laws to remove Section 1(e) of Article VI and all references therein, eliminating the office of Treasurer whose duties would be assumed by the Financial Secretary (Article VI, Sec. 1(d))?	YES	
	NO	

Rationale: A number of unions operate with fewer officers; most of the responsibilities of the Treasurer are now carried out by the Director of Financial Operations, as required by the AFT; eliminating this position will represent an immediate savings of \$250,000 in salary, benefits, clerical assistance, etc.

REFERENDUM QUESTION #3

Shall the Constitution be amended by adding the following to Article V, Section 3: Removal from Office---If an officer is removed from membership in the Union under Article XIV of the By-laws, he or she shall be removed from his/her office automatically and immediately.	YES	
	NO	

Rationale: The Executive Board has rightful powers under the By-laws to remove an individual from membership in the Union. This language will codify that removal from membership also is removal from any office the removed member might hold, thus limiting the potential of costly litigation.

VOTE IN YOUR
SCHOOL ON FRIDAY
NOVEMBER 20, 2009





SB 2011 & the CTU

By Andrew Bodewes,
CTU Contract Lobbyist

In the recent veto session of the Illinois General Assembly, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) attempted to reduce its obligation to fund fully the Chicago Teachers Pension Fund (CTPF). Unlike efforts in the previous legislative year, which were for long-term reductions, CPS aimed for a one-year funding reduction of more than \$100 million for 2010.

The proposed language would have moved CPS' contribution from approximately \$307 million down to \$205 million for 2010, which would have simply put more pressure on pension funding the following year by exasperating the current underfunded condition. Furthermore, the pension funding reduction would have come at the worst possible time, because it would have been a funding reduction just as markets are starting to perform better — in essence forcing the pension fund to buy high and sell low.

Chicago Public Schools approached the Illinois House of Representative's Democratic leadership and asked for budget relief through a reduction in its statutory employer-funding at the same time that downstate and suburban municipalities were in negotiations with police and firefighter unions to provide a reduction in pension fund-

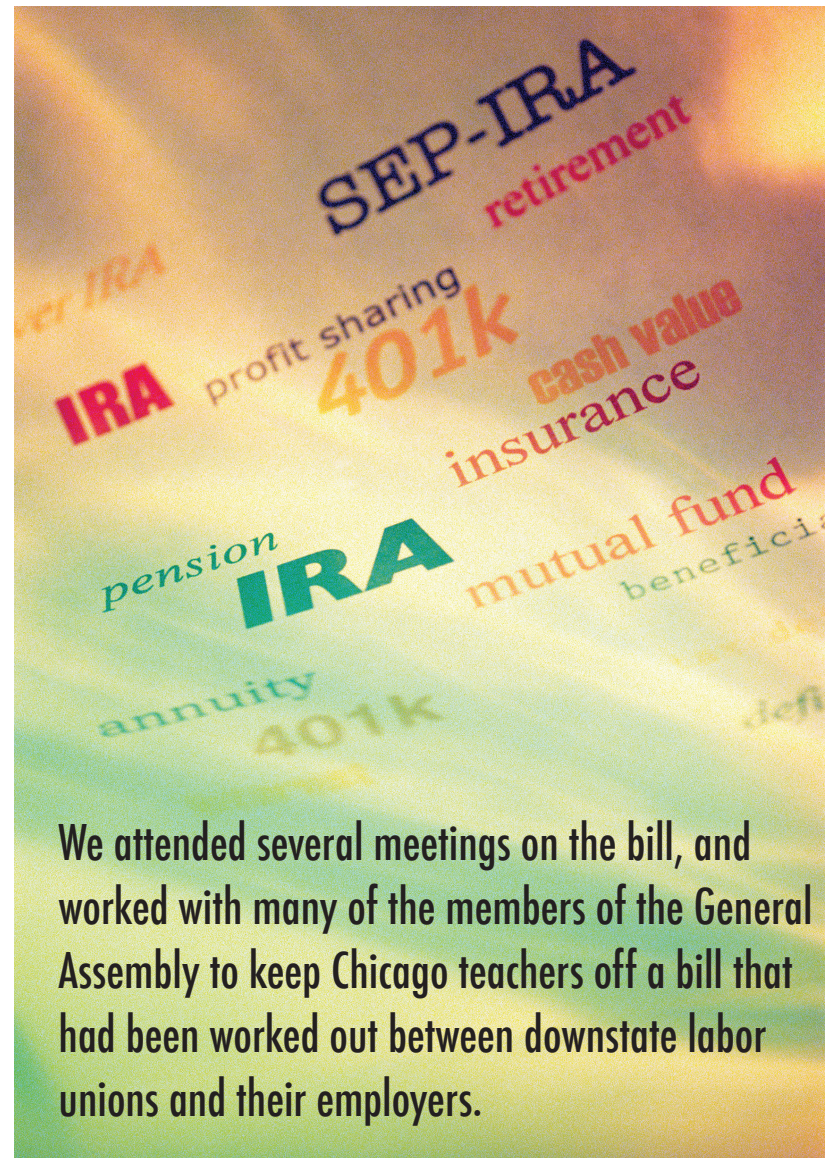
ing for their respective pension funds. Senate Bill 2011 was the vehicle for these discussions, and it had passed the Illinois Senate.

Although the original bill began as a new 40-year funding schedule for downstate funds, through discussions the employers and employees had narrowed the discussion down to only a reduction of only one or two years. Staff of the Illinois House of Representatives then indicated to the Chicago Teachers Union that SB 2011 would become the vehicle for a similar reduction of one or two years for CTPF.

Due to political considerations and parliamentary procedures in the Illinois General Assembly, it is common to combine legislation with other unrelated bills in order to help the bill pass, and this was what happened in this case. Staff indicated that the proposal was not drafted into language, and that many of the specifics of the proposal had not been determined, but the proposal would try to significantly limit the increase of pension contributions on certain municipal employers, including CPS.

Ultimately, the proposal emerged as a 10 percent cap on the increase in employer contributions for Fiscal Year 2010. This would mean that the 2009 contribution of \$187 million would be multiplied by 10 percent, which would then be added to the base, for a 2010 contribution of \$205 million.

CTU lobbyists immediately started working against the



We attended several meetings on the bill, and worked with many of the members of the General Assembly to keep Chicago teachers off a bill that had been worked out between downstate labor unions and their employers.

bill as soon as this information became known. We attended several meetings on the bill, and worked with many of the members of the General Assembly to keep Chicago teachers off a bill that had been worked out between downstate labor unions and their employers. Ultimately, in part because of CTU's efforts, the bill failed to progress.

The CTU was able to keep the proposal from even being filed on to SB 2011, and at this

point an amendment to underfund the pension fund does not even exist. The CTU will continue to fight to make sure that CPS lives up to its end of the bargain by funding pensions every month, just as the teachers do through their contributions.

CTU members may be assured that we will be vigilant on this and other important legislative issues when lawmakers return to Springfield in January for the next session.

CTU and CPS staff meet with officials from the Steans Family Foundation



Chicago Teachers Union President Marilyn Stewart and staff members of both the CTU and Chicago Public Schools met with officials from the Steans Family Foundation on October 21 at Chalmers Elementary. The meeting was held to highlight the success of the Fresh Start Program — a collaborative effort between CTU and CPS to improve struggling schools in Chicago.

Chalmers has had increasing test scores since becoming a Fresh Start School in 2005. The school is in the North Lawndale community where the Steans Family Foundation has been involved with schools in the area since 1996.

The foundation states that its goal is to foster positive change in the community through investment in a range of human and community development programs.

CTU members and guests attend Safe Schools brunch



On October 18, Chicago Teachers Union Recording Secretary Mary McGuire and CTU members and friends attended the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance "Back to School Brunch."

The Alliance works to promote safety, support and healthy development for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and questioning youth in Illinois schools.

What's wrong with being right? Pulaski community members fight school phase-out

This past August, Chicago Public Schools released its proposal to phase-out what is currently Casimir Pulaski Elementary Arts Academy and make a new Pulaski with an International Baccalaureate (IB) program. Under CPS's current arrangement, the teachers, school staff and principal at the school would be removed.

Pulaski School currently enrolls mostly low-income, Hispanic students and more than 80 percent of the school population lives outside of the Bucktown neighborhood where the school is located.

The proposed program would begin in September of 2010 with kindergarten and preschool and would gradually phase-out the arts academy. Two separate Pulaski schools would exist in the building until the current students graduate.

The issue has been met with an emotional outcry from members of the Pulaski Community who question whether the decision has racial undertones.

And, teachers at Pulaski say there is nothing wrong with the school as it is now. The Chicago Teachers Union Grievance Department has been holding meetings with staff at the school who explained they would even be willing to undergo the necessary training to implement an IB program into their current curriculum.

The Pulaski staff explained that they are very willing to embrace the new program. The school's teachers are 100 "highly qualified" according to

No Child Left Behind requirements and 26 percent of the staff have earned a master's degree.

"My question is, what's wrong with being right," asked CTU President Marilyn Stewart. "This is a great school. They have a staff that works together wonderfully and their students are learning and achieving. Why mess with something that works?"

The Union is arguing that these teachers should not have to reapply for their positions. IB programs have been implemented in a number of other schools in the city without starting from scratch.

According to the school's test scores, they have been making improvements. In 2008, 78 percent of students were reading at or above grade level. The scores were up from 62 percent in 2006. The school also has a gifted bilingual program that will not be phased out.

One teacher at the school said Pulaski has made gains every year and during the last eight years 17 students have been awarded scholarships to attend college preparatory schools. The preschool program at Pulaski has also just been accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

"These teachers and this staff are perfectly capable of implementing a new program. They have been doing wonderful things at the school," President Stewart said. "Why reinvent the wheel?"



Two new pension trustee members elected October 30

On October 30, Chicago Teachers Union members voted to elect two new Chicago Teachers Pension Fund trustee members. Jay Rehak and Lois Ashford were both elected to the positions in the late-October city-wide election.

The official results are listed below.

- Jay Rehak, 6,551 votes;
- Lois Ashford, 4,842 votes;
- Nancy Williams, 4,799 votes;
- Reina Otero, 4,115 votes;
- Rose Mary Finnegan, 3,037 votes;
- Aspasia Demeros, 2,137 votes;
- unexercised vote, 1,711;
- multiple mark, 428;
- totaling 27,620.

Pension candidates spoke to at the October Executive Board and House of delegates meetings. Both Nancy Williams and Reina Otero were endorsed by the Executive Board. At a subsequent House of Delegates meeting, all six candidates were endorsed for election by the House.

Union supports Healthy Schools Campaign

The Chicago Teachers Union and school nurses are working to encourage participation in the Healthy Schools Campaign, which advocates for policies and practices that ensure students, teachers, and school staff are learning and working in a healthy environment.

The campaign is holding new training on how to make wellness a central part of the school experience for students in all grades. Schools across Chicago are forming teams to make work towards creating environments that promote healthy eating and physical activity.

The training opportunity consists of two two-hour sessions with presentations from the Healthy School Campaign and other experts. The trainings will provide time-tested tools and techniques to motivate teachers to create a classroom environment that supports healthy lifestyles.

The sessions will include lessons on how to integrate

- physical activity, nutrition education and healthful practices into the classroom;
- classroom management strategies that promote healthy lifestyles;
- and modeling healthy behavior.

Participants will be eligible for professional development credit and will be given a resource packet, healthy recipes, and a certificate of completion.

The events are free of charge due to grants from the Oprah Angel Network. Sessions will be announced for dates in January February and March 2010. Official dates and locations are yet to be determined.

To learn more or apply, contact Radhika Sharma at rsharmagordon@healthyschoolscampaign.org or call her at 312-419-1810.

Charter teachers sign first union contract

On October 30, teachers and staff at three Chicago Civitas charter schools signed their first, historic union contract with the representation of the Alliance of Charter Teachers and Staff.

The three-year collective bargaining agreement at Civitas' Ralph Ellison Campus, Northtown Academy, and Wrightwood Campus came after the teachers' June 18 vote to form a union. The teachers said they wanted a voice in improving learning and working conditions at the school.

Emily Mueller, a high school Spanish teacher at Northtown Academy and chair of the negotiations said the contract, "puts students first, gives teachers a voice and a seat at the table, and makes parents and the community partners in education."

Ms. Mueller was interviewed for the CHICAGO UNION TEACHER last year after staff members at the three schools delivered their original intent to unionize. After the action was challenged an additional vote was held in June.

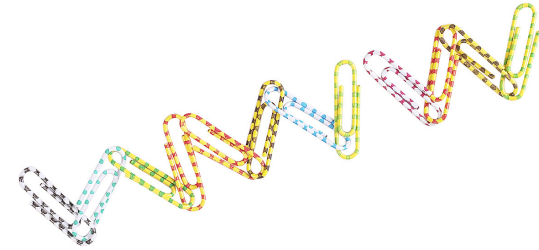
"The negotiations were conducted expeditiously and thoughtfully because there was respect between the parties," Ms. Mueller explained. "Because both sides acted in good faith, students and teachers came out the clear winners."

Chicago Teachers Union President Marilyn Stewart stood in solidarity with the teachers.

"I want to congratulate the teachers and staff at these schools. What they have done opens the door for other charter schools in the city to follow suit," said President Stewart. "What a great accomplishment."

The new contract levels some of the wide pay gaps between charter teachers and those at traditional public schools. It also limits class size and provides teachers with more of a say in curriculum and professional development.

CTU IN THE NEWS FOLLOW THESE LINKS...



- <http://www.ctunet.com/newsnotes.html>

Follow this link to read CTU President Marilyn Stewart response to Senator Meeks' remarks.

- <http://www.ed-week.org/ew/articles/2009/10/28/10chicago.h29.html?tkn=VWU-FyJKXyS9gONr42BqYn2VL-8czbYFVjPbMO>

Follow this link to read the Education Weekly article about the school closings study put out by the University of Chicago.

- <http://www.wbez.org/Content.aspx?audioID=37731>

Visit this link to listen to the Chicago Public Radio report about the school closing study and for a link to the actual document.

- http://www.chicagoacts.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=123

Follow the link above to read a full story and details about the newly signed charter school agreement.

Unions fire back after Senator Meeks' recent comments

On October 17, Senator James Meeks addressed audience members at the weekly Saturday morning forum held by Operation Push.

When he brought up issues concerning Chicago Public Schools, Senator Meeks told the crowd, "I would like to tell you what's wrong with CPS...Chicago Public Schools have a gang problem...The gang is the Chicago Teachers Union. That's the most well-funded, well-organized gang in the whole state...the fault of the Chicago Teachers Union is that it keeps figuring ways to protect bad teachers."

Just days after his initial comments, Senator Meeks wrote an op-ed published in the *Chicago Tribune* stating that the "Chicago Teachers Union has figured out a way for teachers to not be evaluated on obvious criteria, such as how well they perform in the classroom."

Now Union leaders of both the

Chicago Teachers Union and the Illinois Federation of Teachers are answering back.

"His accusations are blatantly false and completely inflammatory," said CTU President Marilyn Stewart. "I spoke to Senator Meeks minutes after his remarks at Operation Push and in a subsequent meeting the following week. I explained that he needed to be educated. He had his facts all wrong."

IFT President Ed Geppert responded to the accusations in a letter addressed to the Senator.

"As a union, it is our duty and legal obligation to protect the due process rights of our members.

To equate our union's legal and moral obligation with organized gang activity that includes illegal drug trafficking and murder is an insult to all teachers, their union and every member of organized labor," he wrote. "It is difficult to believe that any elected official, but especially someone we have consistently supported, would make such an outrageous comparison."

President Stewart also explained that hiring and firing teachers does not fall under the Union's responsibilities.

"I have never in my life hired a teacher," she explained. "To blame the Union for something that is completely out of our control is ridiculous."

The CTU is drafting a resolution to express the dismay teachers and union members have felt over the senators comments. President Stewart said the Union will not financially support his campaigns and is encouraging members to call and write Senator Meeks to express outrage.

President Geppert said the "IFT and CTU have long supported efforts at improving teacher quality and our public schools, and we will continue to do so."

NEW STUDY LOOKS AT THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL CLOSINGS

A new study released by the University of Chicago's Consortium on Chicago School Research, tracked more than 5,000 students displaced by the Chicago Public School's closings.

The report said a majority of Chicago students affected by school closings did not improve significantly academically because they were placed into schools performing just as low, or lower, as the ones they had left behind. Only six percent of displaced students ended up in significantly better schools.

Marisa de la Torre, co-author of the study, told Chicago Public Radio that, "the effects after, when they move to the receiving schools, it really depends on the characteristics of the receiving schools they go into."

She also explained that students' academic performance suffers temporarily when the kids find out their school is closing. Most of the Renaissance 2010 school closing announcements have come in January, six months before the end of the school year.

The author said she was unsure if only six percent of the students ended up in top schools because that was the space available for those students or because parents were uncomfortable sending their kids across the city.

The study did not look at the emotional and social effects of school closings. It also did not examine a connection between school violence and the closings.

Students analyzed were from 18 elementary schools with a total enrollment of 5,445 and were shut down between 2001 and 2006. The researchers compared students eight and older from the closing schools and students with similar charac-

teristics not impacted by school closings. They tracked those students' Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores for three years after their schools' closing.

Julia Gwynne, a senior research analyst with the consortium and the report's other author, told *Education Week* that when CPS closed schools for academic reasons the idea was to provide those displaced students with other educational prospects to improve their performance.

"Unfortunately, we didn't find that," she said.

The reason they did not see that improvement was because the majority of the students did not attend schools "substantially better than the ones that were closed."

The study also showed that school closings have an impact on student-mobility rates and participation in summer school programs. Students were more likely to transfer out of the new school during the summer after the first year or even during the school year. The study also said 6 and 8 grade students were less likely to attend summer school in the summer after their school had closed.

Groups opposed to the school closings have been protesting since Renaissance 2010 was implemented in Chicago in 2001. Mayor Richard Daley and former CPS CEO Arne Duncan have advocated for the program and since Arne Duncan's appointment as United States Secretary of Education he has been pushing a similar agenda in Washington.

"There has to be an end to school closings," Chicago Teachers Union President Marilyn Stewart said.

"If we've learned one thing from this study it is that closing schools in Chicago does not improve education for our students. It's time to come up with a better plan."





IFT president testifies on Race to the Top

Illinois Federation of Teachers President Ed Geppert Jr. testified in Springfield on October 28. He spoke to the Illinois House Elementary and Secondary Education committee about Illinois' application for federal "Race to the Top" funds and the IFT's position on education reform.

Mr. Geppert said the IFT supports the state's application for the funds but warned that the potential impact on every school in the state from a financial and educational standpoint should be examined.

He told the committee about the importance of funding programs that are already included in Illinois law.

"The IFT believes that Illinois should apply for Phase I Race to the Top funds. The State Board and Illinois' 870-plus school districts are in dire need of funding to support the state's many current, strong education reform initiatives, and there is a need for federal funds to fill the gaps until an equitable, sustainable source of state funding is available," he said.

"We must also recognize that the U.S. Department of Education has not issued final Race to the Top guidelines, so no one knows specifically what is required of Illinois' application to receive a potential \$300 million over a multi-year period.

"...Thanks to the work of the State Board of Education and the General Assembly, the state already has in place many innovative projects to satisfy the

assurance areas of the Race to the Top grant.

"All of these initiatives take both enough time to implement and sufficient resources to sustain them. Federal Race to the Top dollars would only provide a stop-gap source to help these initiatives grow and produce results. Unfortunately, Race to the Top dollars are not enough. Currently many of these initiatives are either unfunded or not fully funded."

He also spoke of the IFT's willingness to work on innovative educational reforms, including changes to teacher evaluation, like the ones recently approved by AFT members in

New Haven, Connecticut.

"The IFT has always been willing to come to the table to work on the challenging issues that arise when addressing education reform," President Geppert said.

"We have been a strong voice and have consistently advocated for research-based, effective reforms regarding such issues as longitudinal data systems, charter schools and the need for equitable, sustainable state funding."

To read President Geppert's remarks in full visit the IFT website at www.ift-aft.org and look under the "Recent News and Updates" section.

Scholarship applications available online

Parents of high school seniors preparing for college, it is time for you and your children to think about applying for the 2010 IFT scholarships. All IFT scholarship forms and application instructions can be printed directly from the IFT website at www.ift-aft.org.

IFT ROBERT G. PORTER SCHOLARSHIP

The IFT Robert G. Porter scholarship, named after the late AFT secretary-treasurer who began his teaching and union career in Illinois, will select two winners in 2010. Each recipient will receive \$6,000 (\$1,500 per year for four years) towards the cost of college education at a public university in Illinois. Applicants must be children of currently employed, active IFT members in good standing or of deceased members who were in good standing with the IFT at the time of their death. Applicants must also be high school seniors with a cumulative "B" average. Scholarship applications must be received in the IFT Westmont office by December 4, 2009. (Please note - the American Federation of Teachers also has a Robert Porter scholarship with a different deadline.)

CARL J. MEGEL SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

The Carl J. Megel Special Education Award is given to the son or daughter of an IFT member (current or deceased), or a student recommended by a teacher who is an IFT member. The winner receives a one-time award of \$1,000. Applicants must be high school seniors who will graduate in 2010 and are currently enrolled in a special education school, class or program. (Students who plan to teach Special Education are not eligible.) The application deadline for the Megel Award is also December 4, 2009.

One City One Food Drive

Help Us Reach Our Goal

Please help hungry families during the Chicago Teachers Union/ Chicago Public Schools food drive this holiday season by bringing to school from - **Tuesday, November 17** through **Friday, November 20** - foods that don't spoil.

The Greater Chicago Food Depository will distribute your donations to our hungry neighbors.

We need:

Peanut Butter

Pasta Rice Cereal

Chili Soup Tuna Beans

Canned Fruits

Canned Vegetables

Bring a Can to School

Please do not bring to school any glass or homemade items.

Working together, everyone can make a difference.

For more information visit our Web site at www.every1can.org

Chicago
TEACHERS
UNION

Chicago Public Schools

GREATER
CHICAGO
FOOD
DEPOSITORY

School Psychologist offers thoughts about escalating youth violence

By Melani Davis, Editor

Last November, CHICAGO UNION TEACHER had a conversation with school psychologist, Dr. Audrey Parsley about the breakdown in the Chicago Public Schools referral system and how children were falling through the cracks. She said then that she believed CPS had the right process in place but that it wasn't being implemented.

One year later, in light of the attention being focused on violence in and around Chicago schools, Dr. Parsley is back to share some of her observations on the issue.

“Everything is the same,” Dr. Parsley says. “Everything that I talked about in the CHICAGO UNION TEACHER article is just as evident now since the young man was killed. The emotions that you feel...I was just really concerned about something like that. Now it has national attention. Darion Alberts hasn't been the only one, it's just that it was publicized.”

She says the issues are the same: lack of preventive measures, a disconnect in the referral process, no interventions up front — and the larger picture — school closings.

“I mentioned last year the gang crossings — there's no consideration. Schools close down and kids go across. I was really worried about that.”

She says that gangs are not an illusion. They're real and can no longer be ignored.

“I think we need to seek the consultation of rehabilitated gang members. There have been a lot of rehabilitated gang members



that say, ‘we just didn't know.’”

No one was there to lend advice and counsel to these kids, she says. “They didn't know which way their lives were heading. They didn't know the path, didn't know anything else, didn't have a job. If there is no way out, if you don't have an income and gangs are offering one, then what do you do? These kids are living up to the expectations of everyone around them and lots of times they resort to gangs as a result.”

As for Mayor Richard M. Daley, she thinks he cannot continue to ignore the problem — gangs exist here in Chicago and we have to deal with them.

She believes that someone needs to be in school every day with whom students can connect. “I'm on the same page with President Stewart on that,” she says.

“There needs to be a better system of identifying the at-risk kids. The referral process is not working properly — this whole notion of school-based problem solving where you're supposed to see the child, the school works on the issues and brings the issues forth, and then they

are referred on — it's not working. So we need a better referral system and a better system of identifying the at-risk kids.”

She feels we can not ignore the fact that violence is increasing and there is a correlation with gentrification, school closings and the anger our children feel.

“One thing I want to say is that they are not objects. And as adults who are over their education, over their livelihoods, we must treat them as humans with feelings and emotions. These students and young people sense that they are living in a society that doesn't seem to care much for them.

“Now how would I feel if all around me I see my parents and others protesting school closings and being displaced from their neighborhoods. I see my peers marching to City Hall...we're all everywhere, but it seems no one is hearing, because the schools continue to close. I'm moved, I'm shifted around. And then I see people with a better income moving into my neighborhood.”

She says there just has to be a more considerate way of doing

things. CPS knows ahead of time which schools will be closed.

“It makes them seem like fools — the people that march and protest. You can have all the town hall meetings you want. But it brings about apathy and despair among the people that are already in despair because of poverty and certain situations. In a nutshell—they're just angry. They're just tired. There's an explosion.”

Unfortunately, there is not enough time for school psychologists or social workers to give what they should be giving, and with a freeze on hiring, the number of psychologists in the schools continues to decrease as responsibilities increase. One solution that has been touted by CPS is privatization. Dr. Parsley says that if we already know the importance of a child being able to connect with someone — ideally a mental health professional who understands the emotional and mental issues that the student may face — privatizing services won't do, in terms of consistency or expertise.

“Can you depend on someone from an agency to be there and be available? Do they fully understand what is going on in the school system? There's a difference between a school psychologist and a clinical psychologist. That's not the answer, privatizing services.”

One step we as adults can take now to solve the problem, she says, is to begin to view young people differently and in a positive manner, because their rage may be simmering inside and they need our help.

“Someone, somewhere didn't listen when the Columbine shooting occurred. Someone in the school had the knowledge and passed it on and it was lost. We need full knowledge of who we are dealing with. We need data and knowledge and time for our casemangers to make those phone calls.”

Everybody needs to get on board, become proactive and do something now — don't wait for the funerals.”

PASS IT ON

Kindergarten students learn to compare and contrast through stories of the gingerbread man

By Jenny Celandar,
Associate Editor

For students in Mary Orr's kindergarten class at Haugan Elementary, the story of the cookie that took on a life of its own lays groundwork for a unit that gets her kids off to a running start.

"Run, run as fast as you can. You can't catch me. I'm the gingerbread man!"

The famous refrain is called out by the little gingerbread cookie who jumped from the oven and took off for an exciting adventure in the gingerbread man story. Ms. Orr explained that now, there are more than a dozen spins on this tale and she uses as many as she can to teach her kindergarten's important skills.

"Our unit begins in mid No-

vember and goes through into December," she explained. "It usually lasts from three weeks to a month."

Mary said that because the project takes place in the first half of the semester it is the first big unit she does with her students. The project begins with the traditional story of the gingerbread man.

"It's really a study of stories," she said. "The gingerbread man, the gingerbread boy, the gingerbread cowboy, the gingerbread baby... We read a book the first day and then the next day we compare. Did he get eaten? Did he escape? Was there a fox, or was there a wolf?"

Ms. Orr said during her unit she does a number of individual

"The project is a way to teach them to compare and contrast and pick out similarities and differences."

activities surrounding the gingerbread stories. The students work on art projects, writing projects, team exercises. They even team up with a fifth grade special education classroom once a week to compare and contrast stories.

"It's a big theme and we do it as a unit and we send it home with the kids at the end. We're incorporating a lot of different things that our kids are capable of doing."

After the first few stories, Mary said her students are familiar enough with the main story to easily pick out similarities and differences. She said one particular activity involves a chart comparing and contrasting the story lines.

"Basically, they learn to compare two different books with similar titles, but that there are different authors and different illustrators.

"We look at the pictures because we're kindergarten. How do these look different? Okay, well this one's more sketchy, this





one's more cartoony. Different titles, different authors. You know, what the different authors words were."

Mary explained that when working with younger kids, it's important to recognize what skills are within their reach.

"You know upper grades could write about it — compare two stories. Our kids don't have that ability because they're little kids, so they can't do that, but they can listen to a story over and over again. And, they never get sick of it. You'd think by the 14th book they would be sick of it."

Ms. Orr also said her students look closely at other characters with in the stories. She explained that in one version there is a milkmaid.

"So, then they wanted to know 'What is a milkmaid.' So, we have to go back and do a little research and explain that a long time ago there would be one man or women in charge of milking the cows.

"Then they want to know the difference between a fox and a wolf...Just the different subtleties between characters in each of the stories."

Part of the unit then focuses on projects that link the characters from each version of the story.

"We take a character and put it across a clothesline. String certain characters together... tie characters from one story. 'And, who was in this book? Was it the fox or the wolf? Well, let's go back and check.' And, then we go back and open that book."

Mary also said the unit teach-

es her students to work together in groups. She said it is helpful because often kindergartners need a lot of guidance. But, the unit begins to teach them how to work together and help each other.

"The project is a way to teach them to compare and contrast and pick out similarities and differences," Ms. Orr explained.

"They can't write it, but they can sit and do pictures. They can draw team pictures and they can get up and share."

Mary said each student has an opportunity to share. It is a way to encourage quiet, shy children to begin to be comfortable speaking to the group. Because Haugan has a large Hispanic population, she said it's also a project that allows children who don't speak the language to contribute.

"They'll point and say 'boy' and there's a big applause for them because that's what they are capable of doing at that time. But, kids who can't write can draw and color and add to an activity without having to physically do it themselves."

At the end of the unit, students take home all of the projects they have completed. But, before the unit is over, Ms. Orr and her kindergartners make their own gingerbread men.

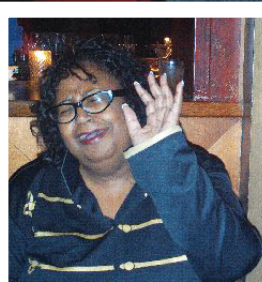
Mary said the unit can be adapted to fit other classroom needs. She said other teachers at the school do something similar with Cinderella stories and compare the way different countries and cultures tell the same story. With all the stories out there, the possibilities are endless.



"They can't write it, but they can sit and do pictures. They can draw team pictures and they can get up and share."

photo by Jenny Celander

CTU members attend 'thriller' Halloween party



Important Universal Breakfast Program information

The Chicago Teachers Union has been receiving many questions about the Universal Breakfast Program. The CTU Grievance Department wanted to make sure all members at schools with the program are aware of how it should work.

Teacher Field Staff Coordinator Colleen Dykas said Universal Breakfast should not interfere with the teachers 8:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. preparation period.

"We've heard from some teachers that principals have asked them to start the program before nine," she explained. "The program cannot interfere with the teachers' prep time. That is something guaranteed by the Union contract."

However, the teachers can approve an earlier start if they complete a formal waiver, by voting with 50 percent of the staff plus one vote to have the program start before nine. But Ms. Dykas assures that if the waiver does not pass, the teachers are not required to begin before nine four days per week as per article 4-9.

She also said, the engineering staff or lunchroom workers should be collecting the garbage every morning.

"Each school does it differently," Ms. Dykas explained. "Some of the students eat in the cafeteria. Some eat in the classrooms. But, the garbage should be cleaned up by the engineering or lunchroom staff."

Colleen said if members have any questions about how the program should be running, or any concerns about contract violations, please contact your field representative.

"The Union is not opposed to the program," she said. "We are in favor of children getting a nutritious breakfast. We just want to make sure that the Universal Breakfast Program, and all new CPS programs, are being implemented according to the Contract."

The Old Farmer's Almanac for Kids comes to CD

The Old Farmer's Almanac for Kids is now available on CD. Volume one of the series is out and can be purchased for \$9.95 at shop.almanac.com.

The original Farmer's for Kids, released in 2005, included articles, facts and folklore relating to the calendar, astronomy, farming, gardening, nature, history, food, health, sports, and more.

The almanac includes information on

- how to hypnotize a frog,
- how to be a genius,
- how to cure hiccups,
- how to painlessly remove a splinter,

- the mystery of the fainting goat,
- superstitions,
- and how to grow a crop of potatoes in a trash can.

The new version of the almanac comes with a full 192-page copy of the print edition as well as special features exclusively on the CD like bookmarks and search functions. Kids will also be able to print sections or full pages from the book.

The CD package also comes with an activity guide with more than 100 projects perfect for kids to do alone or with help from parents or teachers. The guide was created by an educator and contributor to the children's science magazine, *Odyssey*.

The activities corresponds with topics in the book and include

- how to design a healthy family menu,
- how to identify animal tracks,

learning about natural cures, and how to train a goldfish. Kids, parents, and teachers who want more information can visit almanac4kids.com for a regularly updated dose of the Old Farmer's Almanac for Kids. The CD version is compatible with PCs and Macs.

Monthly challenge allows student to practice writing

Reading Rockets and *AdLit.org* have launched a new monthly challenge that will provide students with a chance to practice writing skills and win prizes.

The organizations have created monthly writing prompts based on the 18 authors and illustrators participating in the Exquisite

Corpse Adventure – a new serial story on the Library of Congress website.

The Exquisite Prompt contest is designed for kindergarten through 12 grade students. Teachers can choose one challenge to focus on or they can try a new challenge each month.

The prompts, which are based on the works and lives of the participating authors and illustrators, can be used in conjunction with, or separate from, the Exquisite Corpse Adventure.

The contest runs through June 2010. Rules, details, and submission requirements can be found by visiting http://www.adlit.org/fun/writing_contests/exquisite_prompt_challenge and readingrockets.org.

You Can Help Improve Women's Health

Why are women two to three times more likely than men to suffer from depression? Why do women respond to drugs and treatment differently than men? Why do diseases such as heart disease appear differently in women compared to men? The Institute for Women's Health Research at Northwestern University is exploring questions like these. And you can help!

The Institute has developed a Women's Health Registry – a private, secure database of demographic and health-related information for Illinois women age 18 and over. Through a confidential questionnaire, the Registry asks



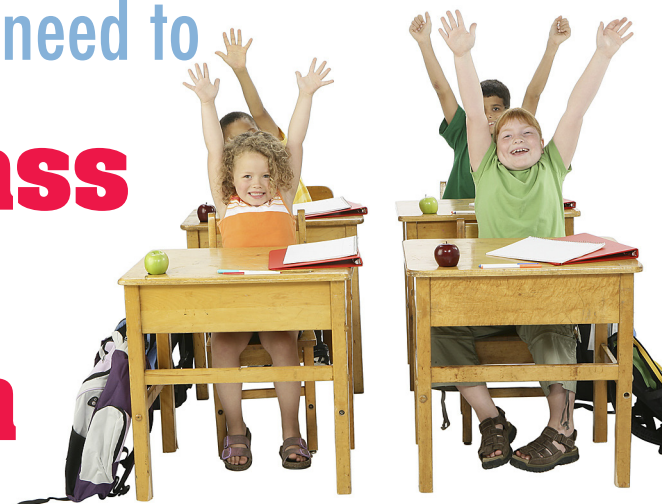
about a woman's environment, health-related behaviors, health symptoms, and any illnesses or conditions she has now or had in the past. As a Registry participant, you can help advance knowledge of gender differences in health and improve treatment of diseases in women.

You can also be considered for research studies, receive health lifestyle interventions and get information from leading health professionals through the Registry's newsletters and online blog.

To enroll, or to get more information about the Registry, please visit <https://whr.northwestern.edu> or call 800.984.IWHR to request a paper version.

If you're having this kind of success in the classroom you need to

Pass It On



This year, **CHICAGO UNION TEACHER** would like to introduce a new feature – **Pass It On!**

If you have an innovative classroom project that inspires student learning, we want you to share it.

If you know of a colleague who has come up with something that just works, we'd love to hear about it. We believe that success breeds success, so pass it on and help other teachers excel.

Please contact Jenny Celander, Associate Editor, Chicago Union Teacher, 312.329.6252 or email jennycelander@ctulocal1.com.

Teacher connects with students through art

by Melani Davis, Editor

NOTE: We visited Karen Stolzenberg's classroom the day before Halloween and she and her students were dressed in costume.

When Karen Stolzenberg's life took an unexpected turn 22 years ago that led to a career in teaching, Chicago Public School students became a little better off because of it. Her passion for teaching art — metalworking in particular — is evident, as is her patience with and interest in her students.

Ms. Stolzenberg graduated from college with a degree in ceramic and graphic arts, then married and had two children. While her children were still very young, her husband died suddenly and she was left questioning what to do with her life and how to support her children.

"I had always loved teaching and had in fact, taught adults. I thought — I really love teaching teenagers so I went back to the Art Institute of Chicago for my teaching certificate.

"I decided to look for a position in CPS because I wanted to work with city kids."

Karen began her career at Riley Elementary School and taught there until a position opened at George Washington High School three years later.

When that position was eliminated because of declining enrollment, she moved to Julian High School where she remained until offered her current position at Jones College Prep.

"They were starting the Magnet school here. I interviewed and I've been here ever since. I love it! I love the kids, I love what I do and I'm happy to get up each morning and come to work," she says.

Along the way Ms. Stolzenberg also got a master's degree in metalworking and enjoys sharing those skills with the students in her class.

"This class is my passion because it's what I do," she explains.

Karen says she likes to work alongside her students on her own pieces when time allows, in order to set a good work ethic for them. With a smaller class size this year than usual, she has been able to provide a lot of individualized attention. "I can really sit with them and work with them," she says.

"I think it's very important for teachers to make sure that they are constantly connecting each day, individually with each student. It's kind of like a mantra with me. I want to make sure that even if it's just, 'Oh, that's really great, what you're doing there.'

"I think sometimes when you

have big classes — and I do — my Art I classes are 31-32 students — its very easy to lose sight of the individual child.

"I like to let them know, 'there are 32 kids in the class but at this moment, I'm yours,'" she says.

"And for that moment you can ask me a question, you can ask me to draw something, you can vent, you can show me something else — you can just use that time to know that I really care about you.

"I think what's really important is that teachers not ever lose sight of that. It's very easy to do because we're all so rushed."

When it comes to school vio-

lence she says she thinks what makes a student stop and think about their actions is knowing that they don't want to disappoint somebody.

"I'm not faulting anybody," she says. "But I think when I was going through National Boards and as I've gone further on with my career, I just have the feeling that you really have to reach out to each and every kid."

She has high expectations for her students and wants to



Photos by Jenny Celander



"What makes students stop and think about their actions is knowing that they don't want to disappoint somebody."

Thoughts On Becoming a National Board Certified Teacher

don't think you can go through their process without having major 'aha' moments and reflections about your teaching. When I went through that process there were just so many things I felt I could change and become better at.

Everybody says they are lifelong learners but I am constantly going to classes and constantly going to workshops so that I can keep my program fresh and bring new ideas to my students because I think that it's important for a teacher to keep growing. National Board was a logical extension of growing and self-reflecting. I know that was just such a major year in my life – besides all the toil and work.

I have seven mentees this year in art. I'm very big on mentoring student teachers and mentoring National Board candidates because I think it's really important to give back and to make it possible for somebody else to carry on the tradition. Especially if you really love teaching, it's kind of important to pass that feeling to somebody else coming down the line.

–Karen Stolzenberg

see each of them achieve and grow as individuals and citizens. But to make that happen, she says, you have to let kids know that you are interested in what they're doing and how they're doing it, and you have to be available to them and really "put yourself out there."

"It's a great class because there is so much skill-building," she says. "One student in here has had a very rocky life in high school and the reason he comes to school is for his two art classes. So his art classes are scheduled at the front and the back of his day and now he stays all day. He's enjoying this and he's good at it, really good at it, so it's just made a big difference in his attitude this year."

According to Karen, her metalworking class is very specialized, one of only a handful in the city like it. It is an advanced class so students have to have taken Art I and done pretty well in it. But looking around the room, it seems her kids are up to the challenge.

Students hammer away at projects in various stages on the way to completion, while Ms. Stolzenberg practices what she preaches, leaning in to comment on each one.

Outside, in the hallway there is a display case with spectacular examples of previously finished work.

"Kids come back to visit all

the time," she says. "Around Thanksgiving, when the colleges let out it's a daily thing, kids popping in here. I love it. Because it's that connection, obviously that I made with them. They feel comfortable coming back and telling me what they're doing. So it's really fun and I look forward to that time around Christmas each year.

"In fact I had one girl who kept coming back regularly even though she had graduated. She was working on this art project that never got finished. It was a mosaic piece. I finally had to get rid of it – I couldn't look at it one more year."

Karen says she likes to share things with her kids. Not necessarily her deepest darkest thoughts but she thinks it's good for them to know that, she's a real person as well as a teacher. "I work and I do artwork," she says.

"High school kids sometimes ask you the most personal questions – I'm pretty good at avoiding them – but they're just curious. They want to know. And they notice everything, 'You have on new shoes?' Everything is fodder for the rumor mill, too. But here's the thing – I love that age group so talking to them is a lot of fun. It keeps you young, too. I have to be on top of my music and to know about their interests, so it keeps you young."



Chicago unions rally for fairness in U.S. financial system



On Tuesday, October 27, union and activist groups from around the city assembled at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers to demand change in the United States financial system. The rally was referred to as “Showdown in Chicago” and thousands of demonstrators attended the event.

Participants argued that the same financial institutions that cause the global economic crisis are back on their feet because the American people bailed them out.

Millions of people living in the United States are still struggling with home foreclosures and unemployment. The country continues to suffer from state budget cuts, shrinking pensions, predatory lending, outrageous overdraft fees and sky-high credit card interest rates.

The protestors stood outside the American Bankers Association convention to tell top financial officials that “enough is enough.”

The group demanded a financial system that helps rebuild communities and lives. They want common sense reforms that will increase transparency, accountability and stability.

Chicago Teachers Union President Marilyn Stewart marched in support of the rally. Chicago Federation of Labor President Dennis Gannon was also present and spoke to the crowd as well as newly elected AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka.

Reverend Jesse Jackson also marched with protestors and members of SEIU.



In Memoriam

May 2009

18 Funk, Jean F Bay

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10 Lewis, Lillian M Farren
 15 Wynne, David Lafayette
 16 Matthews, Elizabeth Ross
 23 Patterson, William Rudy Home
 26 Harrington, Vera R Reilly
 27 Solon, Robert Lyon
 27 Washington, Joyce A Westinghouse HS
 29 Ludmer, Dorothy Goethe
 31 Marks, Patricia J Schurz HS



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02 Collins, Nedra L Carter	14 Klopke, Donna L Curie HS
02 Hurley, James F College Teacher	14 Vandas, Don H Bowen HS
02 Tikalsky, George J Lindblom HS	15 Clayton, Betsy T Medill
02 Warren, Ronald Dyett	15 Dunn, Willie Mae Farady
03 Marshall, Shirley P Thorp	15 Garfield, Harriet Einstein
03 Mixon, Portia B Cooley HS	15 Nadvornik, June Tonti
03 Sumita, Miye Whitney Young HS	16 Monroe-Taylor, Patricia Arai Middle
05 Stewart, Roger G Young HS	18 Estevez, George T Taft HS
06 Bomer, Robert Central Office	18 Tracy, James A Graham
06 Peck, Adele South Shore HS	19 Fox, Quillen L Goethals
06 Walker, Cornelius R Oglesby	19 Gray, Margaret B Canty
08 Smith, Lula P Jackson	22 Barun, Jane C Cooper
09 Block, George S Darwin	24 Hopkins, A Lucille Corliss HS
10 Johnson, Barbara S College Teacher	24 Paulick, William G Mather HS
12 Vujanich, Lillian D Dawes	24 Tomcik, Vera A Schurz HS
12 Warnik, Eugene L Fulton	26 Burnett, Helen L Fenger HS
	27 Rivers, William B Thorp
	28 Tucker, Eileen F Sutherland

Editor's Note: Lists of deceased members of the Chicago Teachers Union are provided to the Chicago Union Teacher by the office of the Public School Teachers Pension & Retirement Fund of Chicago and are printed as received. If you notice an error or omission, please contact the editor at 312-329-6235 so a correction may be made in a subsequent edition.

Is Your Class Size Too Large to Teach Effectively?



If your class size is above the limit as defined in article 28-1 of the Chicago Teachers Union — Chicago Board of Education contract, please file a class size referral. Article 28 and the Class Size Referral Form can be found on www.ctunet.com

A class size monitoring panel, comprised of two retired teachers and one retired principal, will visit your school to assess the situation and develop a resolution.

If you have any questions, please contact [Erin Doubleday 312.329.6231](mailto:erindoubleday@ctulocal1.com) or erindoubleday@ctulocal1.com.

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“Here’s how to make college free... for any student... from any family... and even for Ivy League schools!”

By Scott Tucker, College Financial Planner

A whole lot of folks, most in fact, believe that their kids can’t qualify for college aid. There are several reasons why they believe this. Some think, “well, we’re not destitute...in fact we’re doing pretty well...so there’s no way our kid could get free money from the government to go to school.”

Others may think, “well my kid doesn’t have super top-notch grades...and so there’s no way he/she could ever qualify for free money from the government to go to school.” Another angle is, “my kid isn’t some kind of football star, or a ‘mad scientist’ or whatever...so why would the government throw free money at my kid to go to school?”

Well, the truth is that there is a whole lot of free money for just about any child to go to college!

They don’t have to join the military (not that there’s anything wrong with that...that’s what I did), they don’t need to bury themselves in student loans, and they don’t need to spend their first two years at a community college.

Oh, and they don’t have to work three jobs, while their parents take-out a mortgage and a 401(k) loan!

In fact, **all that’s necessary, is that they know which factors on the student aid application work against their kid, and which factors have absolutely no bearing when it comes to qualifying for and getting free student aid from the government!**

A friend of mine, using the very same Secrets I’ll share with you...**he just got his daughter \$38,000.00 in free money for her first year at USC!** Now, I don’t like the Trojans, but what a great school...especially when **they’ll pay your kid to go! :o)**

That \$38,000.00 is just for the first year. She will qualify for *even more free money* to go to USC each & every year! And no, my friend is not “destitute.” In fact, he does very, very well. He owns his own business, has a million-dollar home, you name it. It’s just that he now knows how to play the game. Knowledge is key.

No, his daughter didn’t “cheat” on the student aid application. No one ever had to lie. Rather, her dad used my Secrets to “move stuff around” so that she wouldn’t be discriminated against when it comes to getting free money to go to school.

I’m available to speak to you, and/or to speak at your high school, you name it. **In fact my Secrets work best for high schoolers whose families have not saved a dime for college.** But they work if you have saved too!

Anyhow, please call or e-mail me for more information. I’d love to help your children & your students!

Sincerely, your friend,

Scott Tucker

773-230-2682

Scott@NewCollegeAid.com

P.S.: I’m available to speak to you, and/or to speak at your high school, you name it. **In fact my Secrets work best for high schoolers whose families have not saved a dime for college.** But they work if you have saved too! Please call or e-mail me for more information. I’d love to help your children & your students!

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THINGS TO DO IN CHICAGO

Theatre School at DePaul University presents Louis Sachar's 'Holes'

Louis Sachar's prizewinning book *Holes*, has been written and adapted for the stage by Louis Sachar and directed by John Jenkins, and is the opening production of the 2009-2010 Chicago Playworks for Families and Young Audience Series at The Theatre School at DePaul University.

The production, sponsored by Illinois Tool Works Inc. runs

through December 5. Performances are held at DePaul's Merle Reskin Theatre on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10 a.m. and Saturdays at 2 p.m.

There will be no performances on November 26 or 28. Additional performances will be held on December 2 and 4.

In *Holes*, fourteen year-old Stanley Yelnats' bad luck lands him in Camp Green Lake where

every day he is forced to dig holes under the hot Texas sun. Stanley makes unexpected discoveries — local history, buried treasure, tall tales and true friendship.

The production is recommended for ages 9 and up.

Tickets are \$8. Subscriptions and group rates (15 or more people) are available at 312/922-0999. Tickets are available

online at <http://theatreschool.depaul.edu> or by calling the Box Office at 312/922-1999.

DePaul's Merle Ruskin Theatre is located at 60 E. Balbo Drive at Michigan, in Chicago. For information about parking, contact the Box Office.

For a free Teacher Guide highlighting curriculum connections visit <http://theatreschool.depaul.edu> or call 312/922-1999.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CTU Executive Board Room

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9

4:30 p.m.

House of Delegates

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14

4 p.m.

Human Relations Committee

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15

4 p.m.

Clinicians Steering Committee

Trustees

4:30 p.m.

Special Education Committee

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16

4 p.m.

Student Special Assistance Fund

4:15 p.m.

PAVE and High School Steering

OTHER DATES TO REMEMBER

THURSDAY/FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26 & 27

Thanksgiving Holiday

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12

Hanukkah Begins at Sundown

Lasts 8 Days

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18

Winter Break Begins

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25

Christmas Day

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26

Kwanza Begins, Lasts 7 Days

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31

New Year's Eve

CTU EVENTS

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23

4:15 p.m.

Social Committee

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24

4 p.m.

Trustees

4:30 p.m.

Special Education Committee

Women's Rights Committee

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2

Retired Members Holiday Luncheon

4 p.m.

Early Childhood Committee

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4

Staff Development Day

School Directed

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7

4:30 p.m.

Executive Board

CTU Executive Board Room

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8

4:30 p.m.

District Supervisors Meeting

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