Diamond Lake Teachers’ Association Ratifies Four Year Deal with Board of Education

by Matt Beverly, IFT Field Service Representative

The Diamond Lake Teachers’ Association (DLTA) voted to ratify its new 2015-2019 contract November 29, 2016, which officially ended contract negotiations that began in the spring of 2015. The board of education approved the deal November 28, 2016. The negotiations entailed changes to multiple aspects of the new contract, including some clean-up provisions, but changes also includes new language that will improve teacher working conditions, and the teaching and learning environment of the District. Some highlights include:

- Contractual language that will allow teachers to address class size, middle school preps, and substitute shortage issues
- An entirely new teacher evaluation Article, with an appeals process that allows for a new evaluator
- Increased union release time
- The enhancement of preparation time language
- A reduction of required contractual after school meetings from weekly to monthly
- Stronger teacher prep period language
- Enhanced sick, bereavement and parental leave language, including increased personal leave days
- Increased tuition reimbursement per-credit amounts
- The preservation of the retirement benefit with eligibility requirement changes—a huge and hard-fought teacher win

Veteran middle school history teacher and Diamond Lake Teachers’ Association President Dr. Christine Berrong said, “After a very long bargaining process, we are pleased with the final result, which is a contract that not only addresses hiring and retaining high-quality, dedicated District 76 teachers, but also processes that will allow teachers to advocate for our students and work with administration to continue to improve our entire school community.”

In addition to many other changes to the contract, the 4-year deal also includes a new salary schedule with equal step and lane percentage differentials. Teachers will receive an average 3.5% raise, inclusive of step, in 2015-16; a 4.95% raise in 2016-17; a 3.4% raise in 2017-18; and, a raise that will be no less than 3.4% and no more than 6.5% in 2018-19, depending on CPI; the last two years of the contract are based on a newly bargained formula that preserves the newly negotiated salary schedule while also taking into account the CPI for base increases. Longevity raises will equal 91.5% of the average schedule raises, which is 3.2% in 2015-16: 4.5% in 2016-17; 3.1% in 2017-18, and a raise that will be no less than 3.1% and no more than 5.9% in 2018-19, depending on CPI. Insurance benefits for both single and dependent coverage were also increased across the board; significantly, the dependent stipends almost doubled, and the board annual cap on those dependent stipends almost doubled as well. Extra duty amounts were frozen in year one, but will see 3% increases each year thereafter. All financial agreements are retroactive to the beginning of the 2015-16 school year.
Election Results

Most of us are relieved that this long national election is finally over. As a Union leader, I am leery that the new administration will devise an atmosphere which will not support public education let alone our public school Union employees, in general. None-the-less I remain committed to finding common ground on educational and Union issues with a Trump administration whenever and wherever possible. As we move forward I believe that we must be “hyper” vigilant to attempts to attack and undermine all Union workers’ rights.

As of today I see the most lasting, damaging effect of this past election as the obfuscation of truth. Over these past months I have found myself repeatedly astounded by the misperception of reality and a seeming withdrawal from the act of acknowledging the factual data among folks whose opinions I respect. Even more troubling, I have observed the lack of any demonstrated curiosity by so many individuals about any opinion other than their own. Last night I watched an interview of journalist, Bill Moyer, who asserted that in today’s information world that rumors are “spread around the world before facts ever get up and get their shoes tied.” It seems that facts are not as exciting as the fiction many of us may choose to believe.

While facts may not be in vogue, one that is difficult to dispute is that our LCFT PAC committee accomplished exceptional results with their endorsed candidates. Our endorsed candidates have demonstrated a commitment to laws that benefit educators, children and our profession. Each of these legislators have proven their desire to work with us on concerns related to improving education for all of us. Among those returning for another term include longtime LCFT member and former Council President, State Senator Melinda Bush. Other LCFT PAC endorsed winners include U.S. Representative Brad Schneider, State Senator Julie Morrison, State Representatives Sam Yingling, Carol Sente, Scott Drury and Rita Mayfield.

I have never been more proud of our staff’s dedication and execution of a campaign plan. The entire Local 504 staff, including IFT staff assigned to our Local, dedicated thousands of hours conducting canvassing by campaigning door-to-door and phone banking. The Local also placed full-time staff in three legislative races to work and supervise in door-to-door activities. Council leaders and volunteers sent out member-to-member postcards urging support of candidates and the PAC produced and delivered over 40,000 direct mail pieces on behalf of the Yingling and Sente campaigns.

The election process is ongoing for the LCFT PAC. From candidate recruitment, interviewing, campaign support and maintaining candidate liaisons, the PAC has many overlapping seasons with various elections from School Board to Legislative races. While we may bemoan the national election results, we look forward to continuing our political work closer to home.

The effectiveness of any political action can only be realized by laws and rules established to support our professions. Time will tell.

In unity,

Mike McGue
Local Press Release

Forrestal Elementary School’s Gurnee Mills Art Project (“GMAP”) - “Forrestal ArtScapades” – made its debut at Gurnee Mills mall in front of the space formerly occupied by Sports Authority. Stacy L. Thomas, currently an art teacher at Forrestal School in North Chicago, reached out to the corporate office of Simon Gurnee Mills with an idea. Noting that the North Chicago school district not only houses many children of military families, but also some of the best local talent on the North Shore, she shared that, in addition to studying math and English, North Chicago students were also familiar with the works of Picasso, Kandinsky and Khalo. She suggested that it would be a great marketing strategy for Gurnee Mills to promote the art of their own local talent, i.e. North Chicago elementary students, to bring their parents, friends and supporters to the mall.

A few weeks ago, Thomas met with Elizabeth Striegel, Simon-Gurnee Mill’s Director of Marketing and Business Development, and out of their meeting Forrestal ArtScapades was born. It features the artistic renderings of winter scenes by Forrestal students, from Kindergarten through 2nd grade, created under the tutelage of art teachers Thomas and Julie Port. The works will be on display just inside Entrance A in the Gurnee Mills mall through January 31, 2017. The public is invited to come out and support these talented young artists, whose motto is “Reaching our artistic potential one stroke at a time”.

Retirees Council Election Results

President: Carolyn Scaccia
Vice-President: Pat Termini
Secretary/Treasurer: Lin Waggener

LCFT Delegates:
John Carobine
Linda Davis
Bill Standridge
Lin Waggener

Officers will serve from January, 2017 until December, 2018.
by Kelly Regnier,  
504 Word Editor

In mid-October, LCFT’s delegation ventured to St. Louis to take part in the IFT Convention, which is held once every three years. Members would arrive in St. Louis at various times, some taking the drive to visit the grave of labor leader Mother Jones in Mount Olive (see page 8), others flying in and out quickly, but all were present on October 14-16 in order to be involved in shaping the future of our Union.

The theme of the convention, ShIFT into Action, asked members to do exactly this. Members were asked to take a variety of actions from taking a photo to encourage others to vote, to attending a variety of informational workshops, earning points for each action. A drawing was held late in the convention to reward those who participated.

The convention began with workshops and committee meetings. Workshops offered ranged in topic from “The Path to a Stronger, Deeper Union,” to “Advice from Young Workers on Organized Labor.” There was a reception for all of the delegates of the convention on Friday night. This was a great opportunity to speak with IFT members from around the state on any number of topics.

The convention delegates also had official business to address. Changes to the by-laws were approved on Saturday, and resolutions were discussed and adopted to guide the organizations policy making for the next three years. LCFT members such as Ken Wolin, rose to speak in favor of several different resolutions. In addition to...
this, LCFT delegates were also tasked with the responsibility of electing the leaders who will guide the organization. IFT president Dan Montgomery, IFT Executive Vice-President Karen GJ Lewis, and IFT Secretary/Treasurer Jane Russell were elected by acclamation, while Corinne McGue, Kathy Schwarz, Kelly Regnier were re-elected to represent LCFT on the IFT Executive Board by a balloted vote.

A line up of many familiar speakers addressed the delegates. With the election coming up close, the message from many speakers was similar: get out and vote, and encourage others to do so as well. Candidates such as Tammy Duckworth, Susana Mendoza and other state officials reminded delegates of the importance of the election as well.

Labor leaders including AFT president Randi Weingarten and AFL-CIO Illinois president Michael Carrington were also invited to address the convention.

Despite there being no governor’s race in 2016, IFT President Dan Montgomery didn’t let Governor Bruce Rauner off the hook, saying, “Our beliefs matter most when we translate them into action… Governor Rauner may not be on the ballot, but his allies are… He is trying to divide us. Shame on him.”

The convention wrapped up on Sunday with more workshop opportunities and more speakers. The newly elected IFT Executive Board met briefly to begin their new terms, and the LCFT delegates headed back to Lake County with a renewed sense of what it means to be a part of a strong and vital labor union.

The next IFT Convention will be held in October of 2019, and should be held in Chicago or a suburb close to it.
REGISTRATION FORM
LCFT LOCAL 504 – 2016 – 2017 Winter
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

(Please Print Clearly)
Name: * _____________________________________  Home Phone: * ____________________

Home Address: * ___________________________________________________________________

City: _________________________________________  State: _____  Zip: ______________

Personal E-mail: * __________________________ (School District): * ________________

Grade Level: __________________  * Required information

Select courses you will attend:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>DAILY ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Foundations for Effective Teaching</td>
<td>☐ English Language Learners 101</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesdays &amp; Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) January 17- February 16</td>
<td>Tuesdays &amp; Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) February 21- March 7 (15 hrs.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Thinking Mathematics 3-5 W/Common Core</td>
<td>☐ Managing Antisocial Behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesdays &amp; Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) March 9 – April 18</td>
<td>Tuesdays &amp; Thursdays (4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.) April 20 - May 23</td>
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Number of courses selected: x Cost per course: $50 = $ ____________

CHECKS AND REGISTRATION FORM MUST BE IN THE UNION HALL TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE START OF THE CLASS. PLEASE DON’T JEOPARDIZE THE CLASS BY Registering Late. ALL CLASSES ARE HELD IN THE UNION HALL.

Enclose check or money order (no cash) made payable to: AFT Local 504

Return form with non-refundable payment to: Lake County Federation of Teachers, Local 504
248 Ambrogio Drive
Gurnee, IL  60031
ER&D Report

by Andrea Herbster,
ER&D Coordinator for LCFT

As usual, ER&D classes have been moving along quite smoothly. After a very successful fall with two very full classes, we will continue into the winter with the first class beginning on January 17 to February 16. This class has been advertised and is filling up – it’s Foundations. There will be three remaining classes that go into the spring. Check the sign-up pages to see what is being offered and sign up as early as possible to be assured that the class will go and that you will have a place in it. Classes for the summer will be in the next 504 as they are currently in the planning stages. We always try to have something for everyone.

Things to remember about our classes:

1) sign up for the class as early as possible;

2) fees (of $50) are non-refundable if you change your mind at the last minute;

3) if the class is cancelled for lack of participants, your fee will be refunded;

4) classes earn you 30 CPDUs for a 30 hour class and 15 CPDUs for a 15 hour class for recertification;

5) if you are in one of the councils that awards graduate credits, you are entitled to two hours of graduate credit for a 30 hour class and one hour of graduate credit for a 15 hour class for lane movement;

6) for others, graduate credits are available from Governor’s State for an additional fee; undergraduate credits are available from Prairie State Community College for an additional fee.

Questions can be answered by the union office staff or contact me through the union office. Any of us will be happy to help you.

Take advantage of these opportunities to take reasonable classes that provide you with the opportunity to boost your salary and your educational needs.

ER&D Classes for Late Winter & Spring
January 17 – February 16 - Foundations for Effective Teaching:

February 21 – March 7 - English Language Learners 101:

March 9 – April 18 - Thinking Mathematics 3-5 Intermediate Grades (with common core):

April 20 – May 23 – Managing Antisocial Behavior
Mary Harris “Mother” Jones is widely known among those who study the history of labor. She worked as both a teacher and a dressmaker until her dress shop was destroyed by the Great Chicago Fire, when she began her work as an organizer for the Knights of Labor and the United Mine Workers Union. At one time she was known as “the most dangerous women in America.” She was instrumental in the “Children’s Crusade,” and she fought against child labor for much of her life.

When she passed on, she was buried in the Union Miners Cemetery in Mount Olive, Illinois.

On the journey to the IFT Convention in October, several members decided to stop and pay their respects to this labor legend.