ER&D Report

by Andrea Herbster
ER&D Coordinator for LCFT

As usual, ER&D classes always move along quite smoothly. The first winter class just ended and the next one which is Middle School Math began on February 13 and goes until March 15. If you aren’t in it, it’s too late. Sorry!

The next class starts on March 20 and it appears that it has enough participants. If you are interested check the sign up sheet for the class title and for last class of the spring as well. Participants seem to be signing up so it appears both classes will take place. Classes for the summer will be in the spring 504WORD as they are currently in the planning stages. We always try to have something for everyone. If there is a class that you would like to take and hasn’t been offered recently, please let me know as soon as possible so it can be scheduled for the summer sessions.

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 credits for a 30 hour class and 15 credits 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

March 20 - April 26
Managing Antisocial Behavior

May 1 – May 31
Foundations
Fair Share for Fair Services

The United States Supreme Court is about to rule on a case that may have a profound impact on the way we think of Unions. The case, commonly known as the Janus case, named for a man from Illinois who brought the suit, will determine if our Local and others throughout the country can continue to charge non-members a fair share fee for the right of Union representation. Currently, your Union represents all folks of a similar job type in the bargaining unit. Since each individual benefits from the gains made through collective bargaining, the Union and the Board have negotiated contracted language that requires the Board to deduct and submit fees equal to the cost of Union membership from every individual.

Because of “fair share” contract language you may have heard someone say “you have to pay whether you belong to the Union or not.”

The reason someone should pay a fee goes beyond the obvious benefits of contract gains, however. Sometimes an employee needs extraordinary help from the Union. An example would include needing the service of your Field Service Director or Business Agent for a disciplinary or dismissal case. The Union is legally required to provide this help as the exclusive representative of every employee in the unit. Perhaps such a case may require the need to retain an attorney at additional cost. Today those costs are paid for with the dues we all pay, or in the case of a non-member, the fair-share fees that they pay.

If the ruling in Janus allows non-members to no longer pay fees then they would be able to receive these kinds of defense services for free. Most of us pay for car insurance. One of the costs of this insurance is a fee to cover uninsured motorists. Imagine that in the future, the money that you pay for Union dues would also have to include additional funds to “carry” these “uninsured” non-members. I believe that you may feel like I do: these non-members would be little more than “freeloaders”.

“If people can receive Union benefits for free and choose to become a financial burden to each bargaining unit without contributing their fair share, then the backers of this suit are closer to their ultimate goal of dismantling Unions.”

--LOFT President Michael T. McGue

The justification for Janus is a complex argument involving rights to free speech, but the real motivation behind the high powered, well-financed, conservative backers of the suit is to weaken Unions. If people can receive Union benefits for free and choose to become a financial burden to each bargaining unit without contributing their fair share, then the backers of this suit are closer to their ultimate goal of dismantling Unions. By creating these unfair financial hardships to the group they have effectively begun the elimination of Unions as we know them. With that goes the threat to the single and stalwart bulwark to protecting middle class wages and working conditions. Imagine an employer who has fewer than a majority of workers maintaining membership in the Union: they could go so far as to object to the Union and void the contract!
Ultimately you could lose every benefit that you have earned over years and perhaps decades of collective bargaining. All of the rights you and so many others have fought so hard for could be lost and never retrieved.

One idea to combat the potential loss of the right to collect fair-share fees from freeloaders is a bill that will be introduced in the Illinois Senate by State Senator Melinda Bush. Recently, Local 504 Business Agent Matt LaPierre contacted me about an idea to charge freeloaders for services in defense cases. Matt, PAC Chair Corinne McGue, and I contacted Senator Bush about the idea and offered to propose similar legislation in Illinois. You may already know that Senator Bush is a former Local 504 Council President. She helped organize and was the first leader of the Grayslake PSRP Council, so as a Union leader she immediately saw the inherent fairness in such a piece of legislation.

Bush’s bill would allow public employee Unions to potentially mitigate the damages done by an adverse Janus decision by a conservative Supreme Court. Surprisingly however, this bill still faces an uphill fight from within our own ranks.

Not all Union officials seem to be convinced that advocating for this legislation, at this time, is the correct approach. Some, including those in IFT leadership, argue that moving this legislation could have an adverse impact on the Supreme Court decision. Some believe that a Governor Rauner veto is certain so therefore “what is the point?” But those arguments fail to address the needs of those of us actively pursuing Unionism at the grassroots level and do nothing to attempt to mitigate the potential fallout of a negative Janus decision.

The idea that legislation should be moved only when it’s least likely to be challenged is a weakness. Our Union movement has never shied away from a challenge if it meant protecting it’s mission. As Victor Hugo wrote: “stronger than all armies is an idea whose time has come.” It is counterintuitive, at best, to assume that a swing opinion on the Supreme Court would be best influenced by not advocating for our own cause. Why then argue against the Janus position at all? We cannot and should not allow cynicism to deter us from our cause.

Secondly, why would one cower to Governor Rauner by yielding to his hatred for Unions? We should address his malevolence with strength and conviction. We can hope and wait for a more friendly political environment or, we can secure passage of this reasonable and just law by passing it with a veto-proof majority. As it stands now, Unions would need to convince only two Republican House legislators of the correctness of “paying for services” to actually pass a “veto proof” bill. We should not be deterred by a fear that we could lose; that has never stopped us before. Now is the time to move pro-Union legislation forward to stop the damage before it can begin.

All that we have worked for over many years is truly at stake here. If you, as I strongly suspect you do, greatly value and appreciate all the gains our Unions have contributed to our working lives, please support fair share for fair returns to keep our Unions thriving and vital!

Thank you for all that you do to keep our Union strong!

In Unity,

Michael T. McGue,
LCFT President
Certain corporations, CEOs and the politicians who do their bidding have rigged the system to gain even more wealth and power at the expense of working people. Those same forces, with the support of Gov. Bruce Rauner and the Trump administration, brought a case before the Supreme Court called Janus v. AFSCME that threatens to strip Americans of our freedom to come together in strong unions and build the power in numbers we need to push back.

JOIN THE RALLY TO FIGHT BACK

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24
DALEY PLAZA - CHICAGO
50 W. WASHINGTON STREET
12 NOON

No court, no governor, no president and no corporate bully can stop us when enough of us unite for our freedoms, our healthcare, our communities and our futures.

Sponsored Locally By:

[Logos for Illinois Working Together, AFSCME, and Chicago Federation of Labor]

Actions will also be held in:
Los Angeles, CA • San Diego, CA • Washington, D.C. • Miami, FL • Detroit, MI
Saint Paul, MN • New York, NY • Columbus, OH • Philadelphia, PA • Memphis, TN
Evaluation Empowerment Training

WHAT
A course developed by members for members, this workshop is designed for pre K-12 teachers.

Participants will learn information and strategies for teachers so that they can take charge of the evaluation process and make it meaningful in their instructional practices.

Participants will be encouraged to:
• Be proactive: become educated about the evaluation tool, the law and the purpose of evaluations
• Be resourceful: use their local, councils and teaching community to understand and benefit from evaluations
• Become empowered: take control of their evaluations and conferences

WHEN
Wednesday, April 25, 2018
4:30-7:00

WHERE
Lake County Federation of Teachers
248 Ambrogio Drive
Gurnee

PRESENTED BY:
Diamond Lake Council President, Christine Berrong

PD CREDITS
Participants are eligible to receive PD hours upon completion of this training

FOOD
Pizza will be served

REGISTRATION
Please call the Union Hall at (847) 623-7725 to register.

Note: Space is limited and we expect the course to fill quickly, so please call early to register!

Join other LCFT members in learning how to take back the evaluation process and make it work for you!
Reason for Hope

by Corinne McGue,
LCFT COPE Chair

I believe that I am not alone in the enormity of foreboding I felt late into the evening on November 8th, 2016. While our last presidential election presented me, and many others like me, much cause for concern and anxiety for our future, I saw a glimmer of potential opportunity here. I remember taking small, but tangible comfort in some hopeful remarks President Obama made in response to the outcry of those who, like me, were disheartened with the results. He asked us to “pick up a clipboard” and run for office. His words reached out to many concerned citizens and, I believe, prolifically defined the future of the 2018 midterm elections.

The recent, astonishing election outcomes in Alabama, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey and Virginia reveal that the voters are not satisfied with the current direction our leaders are heading and have demonstrated their will to have their voices heard. Voter turnouts are up and that is always a healthy status with respect for democracy. But in order for these outcomes to occur we must have good, qualified candidates to inspire voters to show up to vote and that is where I’m going with this. Our LCFT PAC Committee has been working to interview new and talented individuals each hoping to make a difference in their various locales and we are enthusiastic, to say the least, about the potential of these invigorating “up and comers.”

Back in December our PAC met with several candidates and were overwhelmingly impressed with the responses from each individual. We furnished no questionnaire prior to our interviews so each hopeful was not allowed an opportunity to “study for the exam” prior to our sessions. The dialogue was genuine, passionate and unwavering in response to our queries regarding our causes for education and union rights. Our PAC team walked away both proud and excited to support these individuals as future legislators in Illinois.

While not everyone we support is running opposed we are asking each of you to support the following candidates in the upcoming primary on March 20th.

We proudly support:

**For House of Representatives:**
- District 57: Jonathon Carroll (Incumbent)
- District 58: Bob Morgan
- District 59: Dan Didech
- District 60: Rita Mayfield (Incumbent)
- District 61: Joyce Mason
- District 62: Sam Yingling (Incumbent)

**For Senate:**
- District 29: Senator Julie Morrison (Incumbent)
- District 30: Senator Terry Link (Incumbent)

Regarding the gubernatorial primary race, we need to do everything in our collective powers to stop the rampages against the middle class wreaked by Governor Bruce Rauner and his “right to work” agenda aimed at crippling education and working class families. We have an outstanding opportunity to elect a candidate who will support both the future of education and our rights to collective bargaining. The Democratic primary ballot consists of several contenders who share similar views to ours when it comes to our collective vision and, frankly, each would lead us into a far better place than the status quo. But along with the candidate’s rhetoric and commitment to our causes we need to pragmatically access our chances against Rauner (or a surrogate) in the fall. We have heard JB Pritzker’s concerns for the attacks the Governor has wielded at our collective bargaining rights and we believe he will stand firm with labor and education concerns. Our LCFT PAC and Board of Delegates believe JB Pritzker is, by far, our best choice to go head-to-head with the opposition in the fall and to lead our state into a better place for all of the working class. We support JB Pritzker because he supports us!

Some of us may not have voted last November and in other past elections but the polls tell us that many of us are highly dissatisfied with the direction we are heading nationally and closer to home. Please help us keep the impressive wave of “grass roots” energy moving forward and vote in the March 20th primary for JB Pritzker and the rest of our highly qualified and steadfast candidates. These individuals have committed to put their personal lives on hold because they see a serious threat to our future and will selflessly make many sacrifices toward changing the direction. Our part is easy: Vote!
LCFT Retirees Corner

by Carolyn Scaccia,
Retirees Council President

On December 7 the Retirees’ Council had its annual Taste of 504. We had the largest turnout of any event and a lot of wonderful food to eat. Each attendee went home with a set of recipes for all the great food that they sampled.

In addition to enjoying the day, everyone brought non-perishable food products to donate to a local food bank. We have been commended for our generosity in the amount of food donated.

Our next program will be presented by the Waukegan Historical Society on the History of Immigration in Waukegan. That will be held at the Union Hall on February 21 at 11:00 a.m.

We are looking for ideas for other programs for the Spring. We plan on going back to the Potawatomi Casino in May, the date has yet to be determined. If you have ideas of programs you’d like to see, please call the Union Hall and leave a message. As always, you are encouraged to bring a friend with you.

AFT Convention 2018

LCFT is looking for members who would like to attend the AFT Convention July 13-17, 2018 in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Delegates are responsible for shaping the direction of the AFT and its endeavors, and for electing officers to carry out those directives. If you are interested, please fill in the form below and return it to the LCFT office NO LATER than March 30. Delegates will be elected at our May 2018 LCFT Executive Board Meeting.

YES! I WANT TO BE A DELEGATE AT THE 2018 AFT CONVENTION!

| Name: | 
| Address: | 
| City: | State: | Zip Code: |
| Cell Phone: | 
| Non-school Email Address: | 
| Council (School District): | 

BE SURE TO RETURN THIS FORM TO THE LCFT OFFICE BY MARCH 30.
LCFT Primary Endorsements

JB Pritzker
Illinois Governor

Juliana Stratton
Illinois Lt. Governor

Terry Link
Illinois Senate
District 30

Julie Morrison
Illinois Senate
District 31

Jonathan Carroll
Illinois House
District 57

Bob Morgan
Illinois House
District 58

Dan Didech
Illinois House
District 59

Rita Mayfield
Illinois House
District 60

Joyce Mason
Illinois House
District 61

Sam Yingling
Illinois House
District 62

The 504 Word is devoted to the interests of the Education Workers’ Union movement and is published five times each year by the Lake County Federation of Teachers.