ENDORSEMENTS

These are the candidates we urge you to support for the February 2, 2010 Primary Election:

Statewide offices
• U.S. Senate Alexander (Alexi) Giannoulias (D)
• Governor Dan Hynes (D)
• Lt. Governor Terry Link* (D) or Art Turner* (D)
• Attorney General Lisa Madigan (D)
• Secretary of State Jesse White (D)
• Comptroller David Miller (D)
• Treasurer Robin Kelly (D)

*both candidates found to be Friends of the IFT

Illinois House of Representatives
• 11 Ann Williams (D)
• 17 Daniel Biss (D)
• 18 Eamon Kelly (D)
• 29 Thaddeus Jones (D)

Judicial - Appellate Court
• 1st (South) Sebastian Patti

For a full list of IFT-endorsed candidates, visit http://www.ift-aft.org/
Hynes for Governor

Vote for Dan Hynes for governor because he doesn’t want to change your state pension system. He wants to remove inequities in funding education with a progressive income tax. And he is the only candidate who can give a fiscally responsible response to questions about the fiscal problems of Illinois government.

Legislative Chair Bill Naegele summed it up best: “Dan Hynes has demonstrated during his 12 years as Illinois Comptroller the leadership necessary to solve the fiscal crisis that Illinois is experiencing. No one knows the Illinois budget better than Dan Hynes. He has short- and long-term plans that will bring Illinois back from the brink of fiscal disaster.”

“Dan is a life-long supporter of organized labor and has always stood up for public school teachers,” Naegele continued. “He understands the vital role that community colleges play in the higher education system in Illinois and is committed to making sure that they are adequately funded. I am very proud of Local 1600’s and the IFT’s decision to endorse Hynes.”

“Now the hard work begins. We need to elect Dan Hynes governor of Illinois. Our futures and the futures of our students are at stake.”

—Legislative Chair
Bill Naegele

Vote for Dan Hynes on February 2. Photo courtesy of Rich Luchette, Press Assistant, Dan Hynes for Governor.

for governor in the Feb. 2 Democratic primary, met with his IFT supporters who endorsed him. He thanked those present and those working in the schools and colleges for their official endorsement of his candidacy.

Once the current fiscal problem is handled, Hynes proposed a method of dealing with “poor” school districts vs. “rich” school districts:
• Eliminate property taxes as the major source of income for education.
• Rather, establish a progressive state income tax, where the wealthy would pay a higher rate than the middle class and the working class. Hynes said: “It should go a long way toward solving the inequitable funding problems of education. Every child should have the opportunity for the best education and a bright future.” continued on page 19

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Dan Hynes for Governor of Illinois

As all our members know, Local 1600 has a long history of being intensely committed to political action. This commitment is rooted in the simple premise that our members’ lives are as much affected by Springfield as they are by the contracts we negotiate. Springfield has the power to drastically affect our professional and personal lives.

It is with that in mind that our endorsement of Dan Hynes for governor may be the most crucial endorsement we have made in our 45 year history.

Forget for the moment that Dan Hynes has a record of service, honesty, and integrity second to none. Forget for the moment that Dan Hynes has been a proven advocate for education and community colleges, for working men and women, for labor and Unions.

Dan Hynes is the only candidate for governor who will fight for our pensions. Every other candidate, including Pat Quinn, has an attack on our pensions and benefits as a key component of their "solution" for the financial mess the legislators have gotten us into. Every candidate, except Dan Hynes, wants your promised pension money to fix the state’s financial woes.

• Quinn is for a two tier pension plan. Hynes opposes such an injustice;
• Quinn proposes increasing active members contributions; Hynes will leave them alone;
• Quinn wants to increase the retirement age and lower cost of living adjustments for retirees; Hynes does not.

Instead, Hynes supports strengthening laws to mandate the state to pay its legal obligations. Remember well, the reason the pensions are in danger is that the state took "pension holidays" (when the state did not pay its required share of the pensions) to balance past budgets. We paid every penny of our obligations; the state did not.

Make no mistake about it; the attack against our promised pensions is an indisputable threat. We need every friend we can elect. Dan Hynes is such a friend. Vote Dan Hynes on February 2, 2010!

Local 1600 to Hit 5,000 Members

Sometime in January or February Local 1600 will admit its 5,000th member. While many Unions across the country are shrinking, we are steadily growing. Much of this is due to the excellent work our chapter chairs have been doing in seeking out potential members and getting them enrolled. The CCCTU is currently the fifth largest local in the IFT. We are going to recognize that 5,000th member and feature him or her in the next Voice issue.

Local 1600 Turns 45 This Year

The CCCTU was chartered by the AFT on December 1, 1965. Thus, this December we will celebrate our 45th year. Beginning with this year’s banquet (April 30th at Sox Park) we will celebrate our history and founding with special events. Of course a significant part of these events will be the celebration of President Emeritus Norm Swenson and other leaders who fought the fight so that we could exist. Our intention is to engage all members, veteran and new, by honoring and commemorating our history, our successes, as well as our future.

Classified & Support Staff Featured in the Voice

In this edition of the Voice you will find a feature article on the classified and support staff members of Local 1600. Over 1,000 of our soon-to-be 5,000 members belong to this division. Just as they are key to the colleges they serve, they are also key to the success and triumphs of our Union. The classified chapter chairs featured in this article are some of the most skilled and effective leaders the Union is blessed to have. We are a stronger and more effective force due to their contributions.

COOK COUNTY COLLEGE TEACHERS UNION, LOCAL 1600, AFL-CIO

Perry Buckley, President
Sonia Jean Powell, Vice President, City Colleges Division
Jim O’Malley, Vice President, Suburban Faculty
Jillian Verstrate, Vice President, Suburban Classified
Patricia Wenthold, Secretary
Donald Radtke, Treasurer
Bill Naegele, Legislative Representative
Tom Kodogeorgiou, Grievance Chairman
Randy Barnette, Special Assistant to the President
Todd Lakin, Editorial Chair
Bill O’Connell, Publicity Chair
Bob Blackwood, Special Contributor

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For news you can visit: www.ccctu.com
Member of AFT Communications Association and Midwest Labor Press Association

Visit the CCCTU website: www.ccctu.com
“Showdown in Chicago” to Bankers: “You’re Fired!”

Three thousand unionists, social activists and members of the religious community responded to AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka’s call for the “Showdown in Chicago” on October 27. The rally, which called for bank reform, was held outside of the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers where the American Bankers Association Convention was being held. As the protesters walked, they waved signs saying “Stop Bank Greed! Bank Reform Now.” Their favorite chant was: “The banks got bailed out; we got sold out.” Among them were CCCTU President Perry Buckley, CCC V.P. Sonia Jean Powell, Suburban V.P. Jim O’Malley, Asst. to the President Randy Barnette and retiree Mike Ruggeri from Harold Washington College.

The marchers were referring to the $17.8 trillion bailout of Wall Street financial institutions and American banks, which has not eased the bankers’ positions toward the many working people who have faced foreclosures on their homes. Nor have the banks increased the financing of small businesses, all of which need loans to survive and to continue to employ their workers.

In fact the ABA lobbied to stop legislation which would have restricted foreclosing on the homes of workers who were overwhelmed with economic problems. This proclivity to borrow public money and then push the members of the public to the wall was noted at the Showdown in Chicago’s rally.

Trumka said, “Call your members of Congress. They’re sure to hear from the banks. They need to hear from you, every day until they do something. Will you call them? Will you call them?” The answer from the crowd was a resounding “yes.”

Following the spokespersons from the union leadership, a number of working men and women, such as Maria Gara, who have suffered during the last year, gave testimony to their problems and how the banks have ignored them.

Large cardboard cutouts of Bank of America’s CEO Ken Lewis, Wells Fargo’s CEO John Stumpf and J. P. Morgan Chase’s CEO Jamie Dimon were ritually presented pink slips as the crowd cried, “You’re fired.”

When the Executive Director of Illinois Action Now, Denise Dixon, cried out, “No meaningful legislation is happening in Illinois. Who will say ‘no’ to the banks?” A voice in the crowd, State Representative Ken Dunkin (D-5), said: “I will.” The Reverend Jesse Jackson, another national figure like Trumka, moved many present by both his plea for help for the working people and his prayer for strength for the labor leaders. An emotional crowd had been raised to a high level of response. When they were thanked for coming, the folks left with hope in their hearts and some specific political goals to follow. And the union leaders went into the ABA Convention with their heads held high.

Afterwards, Buckley noted that the working people who told their stories of being snubbed by banks were the most moving speakers. He stated that though he was always trying to negotiate contracts with good pay and better working conditions, the bottom line of any union when the heat comes down is: “You have to protect peoples’ jobs; that’s our basic job as union leaders.”

Powell felt that the Showdown in Chicago was the first volley of the unions’ standing up to the economic elite of the corporate CEOs and the financiers of Wall Street. “We must keep registering our complaints, as the speakers said, and call our congressmen. This is not an easy dig-out; there is a lot more work to do,” she said.
State Rep. Fred Crespo Shows Support for Educators

State Representative Fred Crespo’s fundraiser at Carpenters Local 839 at 2500 W. Higgins, Hoffman Estates, on Nov. 19 was reminiscent of some of the primary fundraisers out of the past. The room was small and was offered at no charge to the campaign. The food was basic, but good. And the people either knew each other or had worked with the candidate before in previous elections.

Crespo (D, 44, Hoffman Estates) really means what he says on his website: "I am committed to remaining open and accessible to our community and working to improve schools, increase access to quality health care and expand transportation options."

Harper Faculty Chapter Chair Tom Dowd worked with Crespo on the search committee for the new Harper College president, Ken Ender. Dowd said: "I get together with Fred twice a year. Crespo is a wonderful liaison between state government and Harper College. I know some of our faculty walked precincts and handed out fliers for Fred when he ran three years ago. I’m glad they did."

Margie McGowan, Harper Pro-Tech Chapter Chair, knew Crespo before he was elected: "We were both members of Northwest Cook County Leaders, a group dedicated to open communities—in housing, in employment, in education. All the people there represented local groups. When Fred ran for office, some of our professionals went out and helped him. In return, he has helped Harper College. He is really concerned about our students’ needs," McGowan said.

At the close of his fundraiser, Crespo thanked all present, including the carpenters, the teachers, the staffers, the local elected officials and read out the numbers of all of the locals that supported him. Local 1600 was one of them. All the Local 1600 people there and everyone else felt at home.

For the full story, please visit the website: www.ccctu.com

Local 1600 Endorses David Miller for Comptroller

"Representative David Miller is a man of his word. He is the right man at the right time for Illinois." —President Perry Buckley

"It also helps," Buckley said, “that as a dentist, Miller knows what it means to be a small businessman in these economic times. He will be a capable custodian and guardian of the State of Illinois’ funds. His honesty, integrity and reliability are beyond reproach. Representative David Miller is a man of his word. He is the right man at the right time for Illinois.”

The CCCTU Political Action Committee unanimously endorsed State Representative David Miller (D, Dolton) in his race for Illinois Comptroller in the Feb. 2 Democratic Primary.

“Representative Miller is exactly what the State of Illinois needs in these dire economic times,” said President Perry Buckley. “He is a smart, honest, diligent public servant who clearly is head and shoulders above all other candidates in this race. We need David Miller as Comptroller.”

The Union cited Miller’s stellar record as a state representative since 2001. As chair of the House Higher Education Appropriations Committee, Miller fought for funding and support for all of Illinois’ community colleges and state universities.

Legislative Chair Bill Naegele, who is also a mathematics professor at South Suburban Community College, lauded Miller’s support for education and community colleges. “He is always the ‘go-to’ guy whenever we have needs and face challenges in our schools,” said Naegele. “Many legislators say they are for education, but David Miller proved it with his actions.”

Chairman David Miller (D, 29) of the House Higher Education Appropriations Committee breaks up Bill Naegele and Perry Buckley at the Higher Education Reception held on Feb. 27, 2008 in the State Library, Springfield.

On Nov. 4 at the IIT’s Chicago-Kent School of Law, in Chicago, the Illinois attorney general, Lisa Madigan, explained how the newly passed Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) will strengthen transparency on all levels of Illinois government. Her office had crafted a FOIA because of the inadequacy of the 1980s FOIA. Her audience at the FOIA Forum was heavy with journalists, as the forum is traditionally sponsored by such groups as The Headline Club and the International Press Club of Chicago, and was filled with lawyers, such as the CCCTU’s IFT Field Rep. Brenda Pryor, an attorney who frequently acts in a legal capacity for the union.

As Madigan noted: “When the FBI arrested (former governor Rod) Blagojevich, we saw the climate change for reform and for FOIA.” Her priorities in creating the new law are:

• To close as many loopholes as possible, specifically eliminating the per se privacy provisions by creating a narrow personal privacy exemption. “The FOIA must be enforceable.”
• The creation of a specific permanent position of Public Access Counselor (PAC) within the Attorney General’s Office.
• In January 2010 when the position is created, the PAC will have subpoena powers and the ability to issue rulings binding on the issuance of contested information.
• Madigan said the FOIA is “the most significant reform measure passed by the General Assembly and signed by the governor this year.”

Pryor, who had a brief conversation with Madigan before her address, was concerned that personnel files may now be open to the public. They are, but the administration has the option of citing “unwarranted invasion of privacy” to the requester of the file and to the Public Access Counselor, whereupon the PAC will rule on the validity of the objection.

Pryor noted not only will faculty and support staff files be opened upon justified request but also the administrators’ files. “If a series of complaints are evident in the administrator’s file, names of the complainants will be withheld but a pattern of abuse may seem evident. It could work out to our advantage in certain cases.” As Pryor stated, “We will see how these new changes in the FOIA play out in practice and how they may affect grievances.”
AROUND THE CCCTU

Buckley Named to the P-20 Council

When Perry Buckley took the podium to introduce himself to the new P-20 Council, a key advisory panel that will make recommendations to the governor about the educational system, he noted: "I am a teacher of English and Literature from Wilbur Wright College."

On Dec. 1, CCCTU President Perry Buckley was appointed to the P-20 Council, a key advisory panel that will make recommendations to the governor about educational reforms. The P-20 (pre-school through graduate school) Council will recommend educational reforms that may enable the State of Illinois to win approximately $400 million in federal "Race to the Top" discretionary funds.

The U.S. Department of Education “Race to the Top” is a $4.35 billion competitive grant process focused on innovative approaches to education. The discretionary funds are made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment ACT (ARRA).

At a press briefing in the Thompson Center, the governor noted that the appointment of 25 top-notch members to the P-20 Council will send a strong signal to Washington that education is a priority in Illinois. The 25 appointments include business leaders, teachers, parents, civic groups, university, community college and school officials.

When Buckley took the podium to introduce himself to the new P-20 Council, he noted: "I am the president of the Cook County College Teachers Union, and a vice-president of the Illinois Federation of Teachers, but, more importantly, I am a teacher of English and Literature from Wilbur Wright College."

Other labor representatives on the P-20 Council include Maggie Laslo, Director of Government and Public Affairs for SEIU, Healthcare, Illinois and Indiana and Illinois Education Association Executive Director Audrey Soglin.

There are four legislative members on the council—State Sen. Brad Burzynski (R, 35, Clare), State Sen. Deanna Demuzio (D, 49, Carlinville), State Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie (D, 25, Chicago) and State Rep. Jerry Mitchell (R, 90, Sterling). Demuzio and Mitchell both sponsored the bill which went into effect on January 1, 2008. Chicago City Clerk Miguel del Valle, a former state senator (D, 2, Chicago), will chair the P-20 Council.

Dr. Chris Koch, Illinois State Board of Education superintendent, noted that the first application will go to the “Race to the Top” program on January 19, 2010. The second phase of the application will be in June 2010. After the press briefing, Buckley and Illinois Community College Board President Geoffrey Obrzut discussed the implication of so much federal funding being available to the State of Illinois and other related issues.

At the IFT Community College Constituency Council on Friday, Nov. 13th, Dan Hynes, current Illinois Comptroller and Democratic candidate for governor, poses for a photo with CCCTU President Perry Buckley and Local 4100’s Elinor Sullivan. Hynes attended the council to discuss his concerns about higher education funding in Illinois. “We are making the dream of earning a higher education degree nearly unmanageable and unaffordable. Right now, we are providing less money for our higher education system than we were six years ago, and that doesn’t account for inflation. I will make education funding a priority,” Hynes said.

Visit the CCCTU website: www.ccctu.com College Union Voice
AROUND THE CCCTU

Radtke: Time for the Union to Move on to a New and Better Office

Over the past few years, a consensus has grown among members and officers of Local 1600 that our "mission" has outgrown our present facilities at 208 W. Kinzie, Chicago. With officers and staff sharing offices and capacity too small for the Executive Board, the Union House and even workshops for our members, our present facilities are not serving us well now and are hampering our future growth. Also, our location is no longer conveniently centered, since a majority of our members now live and work in the suburbs.

In addition, Local 1600 Treasurer Don Radtke has noted that our conservative investments are just not paying much interest in this economy. They might yield a better return if they were invested in a larger facility. As head of the Facilities Committee, Radtke is aware that real estate buyers are interested in buying space at 208 W. Kinzie St. The Merchandise Mart across the street is doing well and so are other Near North commercial properties, unlike residential properties throughout most of Chicago.

Local 1600 can sell our current Near North space (as President Perry Buckley noted we are always receiving offers) and use the money to buy another property that will increase in value more than money parked in conservative investments.

“It makes sense to buy now,” Radtke observes. “Furthermore, we’re spending $21,000 yearly in parking at our current location. We can buy parking space as part of a new office and use that $21,000 yearly to help pay for it.”

The Facilities Committee has met twice since the Nov. 2 Executive Board Meeting; both times they consulted with Ed Schwartz, our realtor from Bradford Allen. On Nov. 2, they discussed the local’s needs with architect Carl Dittburner from Harper College. He then produced a “space needs” report for a new office calling for about 8300 square feet.

For example, a good deal of the space we currently have is wasted in hallways, both upstairs and downstairs. We could use a large meeting room, so we wouldn’t have to rent one. We could also use conference rooms and office space as our union grows; we’ll be over 5,000 members in the spring semester. There is also a possibility that we could share space with another union.

The Facilities Committee has looked at properties and will be looking at more properties before the Jan. 22 House Meeting, where it will give a report. Currently, two areas, as determined by a survey of our members, are being investigated for possible relocation: the area just west of the Loop, near the Eisenhower Expressway; and the area from the Eisenhower to the Stevenson Expressway from Central Avenue to the Tri-State Tollway.

Radtke noted that the area west of the downtown area contains many other union offices. The area from Central Avenue to the Tri-State Expressway, on the other hand, is considerably cheaper in cost.

The members of the Facilities Committee are Sue Braasch, Sonia Jean Powell, Pat Wenthold, Todd Lakin, Richard Pawlak and Radtke. Buckley also attends meetings. Please forward any ideas to the committee members.
LOCAL 1600 LEADERSHIP

Classified and Support Staff Keep the Schools Running

“We don’t run the college; we just make sure the college runs.”
—Rose Sakanis

The Classified and Support Staff chapters are active participants in Paraprofessional and School-Related Personnel (PSRP) conferences state-wide and nationally. At the most recent IFT PSRP conference on October 9 and 10, 2009, Local 1600 was well represented. President Perry Buckley (back row, right) joined five chapter chairs and two delegates: La Genne Cole-Carter, Prairie State Security Chair, Helen Agresti, Moraine Valley delegate, Rose Sakanis, Moraine Valley Chair, Tim Visk, Morton Classified Chair, Patty Lucas, Oakton Chair, Buckley, Terri Quam, Oakton delegate and Sue Braasch, Prairie State Chair.

Every great college is a community, a community that exists because some people get up early and open it up in the morning; others spend the night making sure everything is OK for the new day. These people are our members from Local 1600’s classified and support chapters.

For 12 years, Rose Sakanis has chaired the Moraine Valley Support Chapter. When she walks down the college’s corridors in the morning, she takes pride in the gleaming floors and the polished metal. You can see the joy on her face. Her members are the first in the day to greet administrators, teachers and students. Without them, the college could not run.

The earliest classified chapter chair up some mornings is Patty Lucas at Oakton College. Once a month, she is up for a 6:15 AM meeting for the third shift, the night workers who clean up while everyone else is sleeping. Lucas and her officers deliver information, answer questions and drink coffee.

Some mornings, Lucas comes in at 5:00 AM to adjust the Main Distribution Frame of the Oakton telephone system. Lucas has to be there early to repair or replace the wiring so that the phones will work and the college will run.

Commenting on the vital need for these kinds of classified and support jobs, South Suburban Support Chapter Chair Berdy Kuiken says, “Most people do not realize how much is involved in keeping the school open. If there is a snowstorm on a Tuesday night and there are Wednesday classes, my guys are out plowing at 4:00 AM to make sure that students can get to classes and everyone can get to work.” If South Suburban Community College isn’t open in South Holland, probably only the police and fire departments are open.

How do our members who work in the offices, maintain the buildings, and service the students feel about their work? Sue Braasch of Prairie State Support Chapter says, “I think our members take pride in their work. And most will make a point of updating their skills.” The members know what has to be done, and they figure out the best way to do it.

South Suburban Support Staff Chapter Chair Berdy Kuiken has been leading her chapter for 25 years.
LOCAL 1600 LEADERSHIP

That is not to say that life is all peaches and cream for the classified and support staff. Morton Classified Chapter Chair Tim Visk observes, “One of our biggest issues is the lack of equal representation on college-wide committees. At times, we feel that we are second-class citizens compared to faculty and administration. It is frustrating because on any single day, the college cannot function without us.”

Who opens the doors in the morning? Who makes things run during the day?

To make the members aware of their value to the college, Chapter Chair Missy Cabrera of Triton Classified initiated a reception for new employees. Cabrera is working to make their yearly in-service more productive. Cabrera and her members are creating a chapter newsletter to get the good news out. Though only two years on the job, she is making a good start. As Cabrera says, “My goal is to work as the middle man between administration and my members to reach everyone’s goals.” Team spirit lives in every classified and support chapter.

President Perry Buckley says, simply, “Our classified and support members are as much a part of putting quality in any college’s system as every other union member and administrator at the college.”

When the sun is getting low and Sakanis goes home, she thinks about her job at Moraine Valley Community College. As she says, “I really like what I do. And it takes all of us—support staff, teachers, administrators—to make the college work effectively. We don’t run the college; we just make sure the college runs.”

“In a word, they are ‘indispensable.’”
—President Perry Buckley

Gail Wiot, from Moraine Valley, was the first Local 1600 classified vice president. In 2002 then-president Norm Swenson urged the creation of a third vice-president position to service the classified and support staff membership. The current Classified V.P. is Oakton’s Jillian Verstrate.

Triton Classified’s Missy Cabrera will begin negotiating a new contract this spring.

Receptionist Clarissa Henmueller responds to a question from Terri Quam at Oakton College.
The South Suburban Support Staff enjoyed a delicious buffet meal at the annual fall luncheon on Oct. 13.

President Perry Buckley addresses the Moraine Valley Faculty Association on Oct. 22. Buckley noted that “we, the state employees, have funded our pensions at 8.5% since the program began. However, the state has not met its obligation to match the funding. If it had, we wouldn’t be in the mess that we’re in.”

Every political donation is 100% voluntary COPE money. That’s why fair share dues are the exact same amount as a full share in the union.” — Suburban V.P. Jim O’Malley
Editor’s note: The members of the Cook County College Teachers Union certainly know how to throw a party. During this year’s holiday season, there were twelve holiday parties, beginning with Oakton’s annual pizza party on October 21 and ending with Prairie State’s holiday party on December 21. In between there were ten others, including five on December 4. Celebrating the holidays with parties were Daley (12/03), Triton Mid-Management (12/04), Olive-Harvey (12/04), Morton Classified (12/04), Kennedy-King (12/04), Moraine Valley Classified (12/04), Malcolm X (12/09), Triton Faculty (12/10), Harper Faculty (12/11), and South Suburban Support Staff (12/18).

Below are select photos from these parties. Mini-stories of each event are available on the website (www.ccctu.com) and, as always, photos are available on SmugMug. Just follow the link from the webpage and click on “Parties>Holiday parties 2009-2010.” Enjoy.
HOLIDAY PARTIES
HOLIDAY PARTIES
Labor History-
Working Conditions

By David Richmond, Harper College

I’d like to make a proposal to my fellow faculty: every paycheck we’ll each put a few dollars into an account. That way if any of us are killed on the job, we’ll be able to pay for the burial. Who wants in? Most of you are probably thinking that I’ve finally lost my mind, and you definitely saw it coming (the signs were all there). But my proposal is only ridiculous because of the work that unions have done. In fact, that was the way some of the first unions were formed.

Working conditions in many fields were so dangerous that the odds of being killed on the job were startlingly high. At the same time wages were so low that the families of workers who were killed often could not afford burial services. Therefore, workers came together in “mutual aid societies” to protect their families in case of the worst. In fact, one of the main issues in some of the earliest strikes in the United States was what was called “post mortem security”.

Eventually these mutual aid societies came to the realization that they should instead be fighting for “pre-mortem security”. The idea may sound simple, but it took an overwhelming effort and huge sacrifices from hundreds of thousands of unionized workers to change the burden of responsibility for workplace conditions. For many decades, employers had practically no obligation—legal or otherwise—to provide humane working conditions.

Not only were times dangerous and the hours long, but job security didn’t exist. If an employer found someone willing to do your job for less money, you were fired. So unions not only fought to make sure their workplaces were safe, they also struggled to ensure reasonable hours (8-hour day), adequate time off (weekends, holidays, and vacations), job security (seniority and anti-discrimination safeguards), health benefits (insurance), and retirement security (pensions and social security). Today’s improvements were made only by workers standing up together, and even then there were setbacks at times.

Sometimes there’s a temptation to think that all of the work’s been done. After all, we don’t work in a mine or an industrial factory where safety of life and limb is a major daily concern. There’s no doubt that we all benefit from the work done by those who came before.

But if you’re tempted to believe that it’s all ancient history, try talking to your peers in many of the “right to work” states of the South and West, where unions have not had the same influence as in Illinois, and Chicago in particular. Compare your contract to theirs (if they even have a contract.) Some of these states have practically no worker compensation laws. Many of the poorer schools in these states have working conditions that remind one of a Charles Dickens novel. I assure you it’s not an exaggeration. And unions still directly benefit our working conditions today. Unions have obtained and continue to protect our rights to tenure, academic freedom, leave time, insurance, seniority, time off, promotion, etc. These benefits were not given to teachers simply because society thinks we’re wonderful. If they were, these benefits would be enjoyed universally by teachers (and they’re not) and would not be so contentious at times (and they are).

Unions also enable us to collectively influence the political processes. Unions endorse issues that are important to workers and their families. Collectively we are able to support politicians who promote a working class/middle class agenda, and with our particular union, a pro-education agenda. All of this means that we enjoy working conditions that would have been undreamt of in the past. The part that is easily forgotten is that many non-unionized teachers also benefit from our work because they have to compete against Harper College in the hiring process. So when you’re working with the union, you’re not just helping yourself, you are actually helping teachers all over the country.

And as for my original proposal of forming our own mutual aid society, in the faculty contract you’re already guaranteed life insurance (and the AFT will kick in an extra $100,000 for your estate if you’re the victim of workplace violence). Illinois has some of the best worker compensation laws in the country. So I guess we’re already covered. Therefore, rather than simply contributing some money to an account, instead be an active part of the union protecting those “pre-mortem” issues.
LABOR HISTORY

Former President Norm Swenson’s Work Becomes History

By Bob Blackwood, CCCTU Webmaster

Before I left for the Oct. 27 “Showdown in Chicago” with the American Bankers Association, I was walking into the union office’s basement. There stood Norm Swenson and a pile of boxes loaded with documents. Swenson introduced me to Daniel Golodner, the AFT Archivist at the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. (Walter Reuther was the longtime head of the United Automobile Workers.) Golodner is one of several archivists, each of them representing a large national union.

Swenson explained he was donating most of his files and memorabilia to the AFT Archives at the Reuther Library. After Golodner had examined some of the information now available, he stated some graduate students might find a dissertation or two by working this treasure trove of Chicago labor history. As Swenson noted, “Not many labor leaders were able to take on the Daley organization successfully.”

The archives will be receiving the following data, which will be microfilmed and organized for historians’ use.

• A copy of each issue of the College Union Voice until the present day.
• Minutes of each Local 1600 executive board and Union House meeting.
• Copies of significant arbitration cases.
• Court cases—strikes and injunctions in particular—especially those that had to be appealed, such as Swenson’s two incarcerations for leading two strikes.
• Memorabilia, such as photos from strikes, newspaper articles on the union, etc.
• Last, but far from least, all of the CCC contracts dating back to our first contract in 1967 were transferred to the AFT archives. Our CCC contracts along with our first suburban contracts were some of the first public employee contracts negotiated in Illinois and the nation. And they contained breakthrough language on teaching load, lab-to-lecture ratios, departmental autonomy, and faculty and union rights.

From 1966 to 2004, Swenson led the Cook County College Teachers Union, AFT Local 1600. For two years before 1966, Swenson was the elected representative of the CCC and teachers colleges’ group with AFT Local 1. It is hard to imagine any other labor leader who maintained his independence in the face of the organized political efforts of a large metropolitan machine.

We’ll have to wait and see if Swenson writes an autobiography. But by early 2011, if you checkout www.reuther.wayne.edu, be sure to look at the AFT Archives for the Cook County College Teachers Union, Local 1600. It should be up on the website by that time. Who knows? If you do a search for your name, you might be there.
L A B O R  H I S T O R Y

Terry Bruce: The Man Who Gave Illinois Educators Collective Bargaining

People take a community college union’s right to bargain for a new contract for granted. In 1983, Illinois educational unions had no legal right to bargain for a contract. Sure, if the board of education was reasonable, the members would sit down with your union leadership and work out a deal.

But some boards were not reasonable. Ask former Local 1600 President Norm Swenson, for example, who served two terms in jail for leading strikes. Swenson became the foremost Chicago advocate for educational collective bargaining legislation.

Two men in the legislature created the legal structure for collective bargaining in 1983—the Illinois Education Labor Relations Act (IELRA): State Senator Terry Bruce (D) and State Representative Jim McPike (D). The IELRA was based on the National Labor Relations Act of the 1930s, but updated for the late 20th century.

Bruce went on from his downstate state senate seat to the U. S. Congress from 1985-1993. Today, Bruce has a leadership role among community college presidents as the CEO of Illinois Eastern Community Colleges—a four-college system. He is foremost in seeking funding for the community colleges from Springfield. Today, as he was in 1983, he is our ally in working for community colleges in Illinois.

Commenting on the IELRA legislation’s passage, Bruce said simply: “The IELRA would not have occurred without the active support of the Illinois Education Association and the Illinois Federation of Teachers. They came together and agreed on the legislation, so that Pike could pass it through the House. I worked on it in the Senate.”

Bruce noted the number of strikes went down dramatically after the law’s enactment on Jan. 1, 1984. As he said, “It was the smart way to resolve differences—people working out their issues at the negotiating table.” The legislation has stood for over 25 years with no dramatic changes. As Bruce said: “We did it right.”

Terry Bruce plans to join Perry Buckley and other Local 1600 members on Feb. 17 for a CAN-TV taping to be cablecast throughout Chicago in early March focusing upon funding for Illinois community colleges.

Defend Yourself Against a Tenure Attack

By Bill O’Connell, Voice suburban correspondent

Have you ever heard those uninformed views regarding tenure? "Tenure protects bad teachers.” Or "Tenure is a lifetime job.” Most recently the comedian Bill Maher on his HBO show attacked tenure as the fundamental reason for the failure of education.

Though there is no perfect system, tenure in education is a necessity. Tenure guarantees academic freedom. If an administrator, board member or community member questions your freedom of speech in the classroom, tenure will protect you. When you finally start making the money you deserve as a professional and a more cost-effective teacher with less experience enters the market, you are protected.

Regarding tenure protecting bad teachers, how did that “bad teacher” get tenure? Who was the bad administrator who granted tenure? Teachers have a three-year trial period in the community colleges during which they are reviewed, evaluated and scrutinized. Three years is more than enough to make a qualified personnel decision. There have been some very good non-tenured personnel dismissed because they were not politically correct according to the administration. Yet, another example of why tenure is necessary. Freedom of speech is guaranteed by the constitution. It, however, will not keep your job. Tenure will.

Teaching should be a lifetime job! We are dedicated professionals who strive daily to be the best we can be.

To help defend yourself against verbal attacks regarding tenure, read the AFT and NEA publication, “The Truth about Tenure in Higher Education.” Call the AFT Higher Ed. Department at 202-879-4400 and request item #611.

Visit the CCCTU website: www.ccctu.com
Olive-Harvey’s Rochelle Robinson-Dukes: Union in the Blood

Rochelle Robinson-Dukes has been the Olive-Harvey chapter since 2008. While Robinson-Dukes was never chapter chair before, she certainly was active in her union. There are reasons for that.

Her father was a union member and an engineer for ComEd. His experience with that union was a good one. Later, he went into management, and didn’t care for some of the aspects of that job. As Robinson-Dukes says about her own job, “I’m so glad that I have tenure.”

Nothing was handed to Robinson-Dukes on a silver platter, neither tenure nor anything else. She graduated from Whitney Young High School, attended Bradley University as an undergraduate, and she was awarded an M.A. in English Literature from DePaul University. Her last year of graduate school, she tutored at Daley. She taught part-time at Kennedy-King for two years, and then came to Olive-Harvey as a part-time teacher. Her students and colleagues got along with her; soon she was working full-time.

Robinson-Dukes liked the fact that OH was unionized. In her early teaching career, when she taught at DeVry University (where there is no such thing as tenure), she noticed that some people were not getting raises just because the appropriate administrator did not like some aspect of their personality. As she put it, “During my pre-tenure period, I saw situations where I felt I had to fight. If I do fight, it will always fight for the right.”

Her union gave her a post on the College Union Voice as a journalist/photojournalist. She gave five years to that position. Eventually, she found time to marry an engaging fellow named Marc Dukes, and Rochelle Robinson-Dukes was happening in every sense.

Now, as chapter chair, Robinson-Dukes notes that membership apathy is always a challenge. She deals with it and other union issues and problems via three methods: 1) Know the contract; 2) Know you’re right; and 3) Participate in committees.

Robinson-Dukes has produced an electronic newsletter to tell the chapter members the latest news. Developing and expanding the newsletter is her current project. When asked what she does with her vacation time, she is a perennial traveler. “I like to visit Africa and Europe. I’ve been to Egypt, Italy, France, Germany and Austria. I even took the ‘Sound of Music’ Tour in Austria.”

When she is not traveling or watching movies, she is working for her church, Augustana Lutheran Church of Hyde Park, playing tennis at her health club, or working on a committee for her sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

You’ll be seeing more of Rochelle Robinson-Dukes in the days to come. She is a comer.

Morton Delegate Richie Pawlak Rocks with Mudpie

Richie Pawlak (at right) from Morton Classified rocks with Mudpie on Dec. 12 at Sixteenth Street Bar.

What Union House representative listens to Vivaldi in the morning, House music in the afternoon, and Slayer, a thrash metal band, in the evening? It’s Richie Pawlak from Morton Classified.

Pawlak started playing piano at five years of age, guitar in his teens and bass in his early 20s. For the last two years, he has been with Mudpie, a classic rock and alternative rock band that is doing some gigs around town. Pawlak’s personal influences are Beethoven, Vivaldi, Collective Soul and Ritchie Blackmore. At the Sixteenth Street Bar’s holiday party in Berwyn, his chops and some of his influences were evident as he closed his eyes and rocked out on his bass, long hair flying in the air. Pawlak’s band, Mudpie, has Brian Perfect as singer and bass player, Ron Silay on drums (“I’m the really talented one,” Silay says, sounding just like a drummer), and Norman Leonard on guitar.

The band rolled through songs such as “Blue Cars,” “Heavy” and “Gel” before a heavy-set woman who was dancing in front of the crowd passed out and hit the floor. It took her a while to recover, which gave Pawlak a chance to say hello to some of his pals from Morton College. It was just another rock and roll memory, and the band played on.
You Snooze… You Lose!
Actively Protecting Your Rights in the Workplace

By Brenda D. Pryor, Esq.

Dear Union Brothers & Sisters,

How many times have you observed your supervisor or another administrator do something and thought: “that isn’t right” or “doesn’t that violate the contract?” If you didn’t speak up and tell your Union representative, this article is for you! While it would be easy to think that only Union officers have the job of protecting your rights under the contract; nothing can be further from the truth. You are the Union, too! Without your assistance, your officers would be in the dark about what’s going on in your department.

You might think, “I’m afraid of my boss’s reaction if I talk to the Union.” But you need to know that your role in getting information to the Union is key. Without knowing it, your action (or inaction) can help the College create or destroy a past practice. “Past practice” is a term that describes a way that unions, colleges and arbitrators look to interpret the contract when there is a disagreement – it’s the principle of looking to what a college and union have done in the past in similar situations. What you do can alter the way that the contract is interpreted in a given situation and impact all of your bargaining unit’s members… and usually not for the better!

Here’s what I’m asking you to do to not be a Rip Van Winkle in the workplace:

1. Read your contract and know the basics about your compensation, your benefits, and the grievance procedure.

2. Document what you observe – something might seem minor to you, but over time it can eat away at your contract.

3. TALK TO YOUR UNION REP! They are there to listen and assist; don’t be so afraid of your supervisor that you won’t go to them. Sometimes it is possible for your Union to work behind the scenes on a situation to protect the contract while also protecting your confidentiality.

While it is true that you and your union reps are busy people and no one is interested in creating unnecessary work disputes, arbitrators can and have ruled against Unions when the contract was violated and they didn’t raise an objection. In the end, it’s better not to let sleeping dogs lie… at some point down the road they can wake up to bite us all.

When IFT Field Rep. and attorney Brenda Pryor warned the Wright Chapter about the dangers of sexual harassment charges on Nov. 17, she was not just speaking to that chapter, not even to all the CCC chapters, but to every Local 1600 chapter—teachers, professionals, classified, security and adjunct teachers. Whether you are accused of harassment or are the victim of harassment, you should follow the specific advice she gives in this story. Wright Grievance Chair Chuck Mustari is standing with Pryor.

Have you moved? Please send us your new address:

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<th>City/State/ZIP</th>
<th>Home Phone:</th>
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Mail to:
College Union Voice • Cook County College Teachers Union
208 W. Kinzie St., Chicago, IL 60654 or,
e-mail your address to: tlakin@local1600.org

Visit the CCCTU website: www.ccctu.com
NOTICE OF ELECTION

2010 Election of Delegates
American Federation of Teachers Annual Convention
Seattle, Washington
July 7-11, 2010

The following rules are consistent with both the CCCTU Election Guidelines as well as past practice.

1. The membership will elect THIRTY (30) delegates and THIRTY (30) alternate delegates to the AFT 2010 National Convention; this is the number verified by the AFT as of November 18, 2009;
2. Nominations for delegates and alternate delegates will be called for at the January 22, 2010 House of Representatives meeting. Nominations will be accepted as a slate belonging to a political caucus or as an individual;
3. Only members of the House of Representatives, or alternate delegates acting as delegates at the January 2010 meeting, may make nominations;
4. For the nomination to be officially recognized, the nominated member must be present to accept the nomination or furnish to the Union Secretary on or before the meeting a signed affidavit declaring his/her consent to seek and accept the nomination as either delegate or alternate delegate;
5. A member in good standing of Local 1600 may present a petition to the Union Secretary with at least 50 signatures of CCCTU members nominating said member as either delegate or alternate delegate to the convention. This petition must be delivered to the Union office before the close of business on Tuesday, February 16, 2010. These petitions may be hand-delivered, in which case a signed receipt will be given, or by registered USPS mail where a signed confirmation is provided.
6. If at the deadline for nominations (2/16/10) there are only thirty (30) candidates for the thirty (30) delegate slots, the election will be held at the chapters on March 1, 2, 3, 2010. Chapter chairs must return the ballots, in the locked ballot boxes, to the Union office by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, March 12. The ballots will be counted at the Union office on Friday, March 12, 2010, as provided below;
7. If, however, there are more candidates than slots, the elections will be conducted by United States Postal Service (USPS) first class mail. All ballots will contain the official CCCTU embossed seal to prevent ballot duplication;
8. Ballots will be sent from the Union office on or before February 17, 2010, to all members;
9. All ballots must be received at the USPS lock box by Wednesday, March 10, 2010.

For the full list of rules, please visit www.ccctu.com.

Hynes for Governor (continued from Front Page)

• Hynes also had his mother, Judy Hynes, present, who had worked as a teacher and served as a union representative.

When one of the reporters asked about the validity of the two-tier retirement proposal that our current governor, Pat Quinn, has proposed, the IFT’s John Murphy said:
• The people proposing a two-tier program don’t realize that if you emulated private industry, you would have to give all state employees Social Security, which they don’t have now. That rate is 6.2%.
• Then, the State of Illinois would have to make a contribution to the employees’ IRA account. The total 10.2% for the proposed second tier of new state employees – would cost more than the roughly 8% being paid now.
• In addition, the $75 billion in unfunded debt to state pensions would still remain; there would be no reductions in that debt.

Finally, Naegle added the following comments:
• “Illinois state pensions are not ‘sweet.’ The average SERS pension, which community college faculty and staff receive, is $32,000. The average SERS pension, which state employees such as the Secretary of State’s clerks receive, is $18,000.

• “The governor’s own task force compared our state system to pension systems from other states; Illinois’ benefits are right in the middle. A few top administrators have six-figure pension payouts, but the average for most of our members is much lower.”
• If you want to contact Bill Naegle and help him elect the only candidate for governor who does not want to diminish your pension system, send him an email at billlocal1600@yahoo.com

Hynes’ official website is http://www.danhynes.com/

President Perry Buckley, Legislative Chair Bill Naegle and IFT Legislative Director Nick Yelverton confer at the IFT PAC session. Buckley and Naegle were instrumental in getting the IFT to unanimously endorse Dan Hynes for governor.