We Are One!

Around noon on April 9, two-hundred members of Local 1600 gathered at its headquarters, 208 W. Kinzie St., for a march to the “We Are One” Rally at Daley Center hosted by the Chicago Federation of Labor and the Illinois AFL-CIO. CFL President Jorge Ramirez promised 10,000 members and supporters at the rally, and he kept his word. CCCTU President Perry Buckley estimated 150 members would march before the rally, and he achieved 200.

In the union basement, Buckley was creating a picket sign saying: “The Weekend: Brought to You by the Labor Movement,” a reference to the establishing of the five-day work week by union members in the early 20th century. The upstairs office was filled with spouses and children, many draped in their blue “We Are One” TV shirts, courtesy of the Illinois Federation of Teachers.

“We Are One” in Illinois was a series of events in the week of Apr. 4-9 in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who was assassinated on Apr. 4, 1968, while helping the AFSCME sanitation workers in Memphis, TN. Rallies were held through the week in Illinois at Bloomington, Carbondale, Champaign, Collinsville, Decatur, Gurnee, Kankakee, Ottawa, Peoria, Rock Island, Rockford and Springfield, culminating in Chicago’s Daley Center Rally on Saturday, Apr. 9.

Truman’s Tony Johnston, with bullhorn in hand, led members in chants, including “What’s Disgusting? Union Busting!” as they began their trek to the Daley Center. The march merged with the marches of other unions into the plaza, including SEIU, Chicago Stagehands, AFT 1708, CTU, Letter Carriers, Chicago Firefighters, IBEW, and even one sign from the past and present, the IWW—One Big Union.

There were at least a dozen speakers. Bill Lucy, who worked with Dr. King and the Memphis workers, feels that King will always be with him. King gave his life not only for the civil rights struggle but also for the right of working people to live a middle class existence.

Wisconsin State Senator Chris Larson, who has been in the Chicago area for weeks to block the legal passage of anti-union, anti-collective bargaining legislation, spoke. He sees Illinois as another targeted state by the billionaire-funded groups who want to pay fewer taxes than the little they pay now, and bust unions.

When the event was over, the Local 1600 members trooped back to the office. Some used the facilities and left; others raised a glass next door. But all were moved by the experience of getting together and publically sharing their beliefs.

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Visit the CCCTU website: www.cctu.com  College Union Voice
Under Attack!

Since when did teachers, educational employees, and Unions become the enemy of the people? When I attended St. John the Baptist grade school in the 1960’s, the teacher was respected and revered as an important part of the social fabric of our neighborhood. Many of you who grew up in similar circumstances may well have decided to enter the education profession because of a teacher who made a significant impression on you. So when, I ask, did we, educators and Unions, become the bad guy in this unfolding unpleasant drama?

Unions were founded on the principal of “evening up” the odds between workers and the bosses and giving the people, who made the company run, some say in how the company was run or, at least, in how it treated those workers. Having a seat at the table, instead of being on the menu, is what collective bargaining is all about. I ask you, how could anyone be against two parties sitting down and coming to a mutual agreement?

It is important to think about how we all have arrived here at this time and place. The importance of history is the road map it leaves for all of us to follow. The lessons of the opportunities missed or the mistakes made help us to understand the place in which we now live. In my mind, there is no question the world’s economic circumstances are more to blame than all the Union’s activities combined. This world recession has allowed our traditional antagonists to creep back out of the shadows and to inflict some damaging blows to Unions.

The recession in which the world has found itself has caused the public to panic. That panic of losing your job, taking a pay cut, losing your health benefits or pension, has resulted in a reshuffling of political priorities by our elected officials. Our legislative allies are now running for cover. The public, which should be fighting for many of the things we have won at the bargaining table, has instead become jealous of the success we have achieved at the bargaining table.

Rather than work for equality at their places of employment, they have been convinced by their employers that we are the cause of their economic woes! The same bankers, stock brokers and real estate moguls that caused this worldwide depression by their irresponsible financial speculations are trying to shift the blame on to Unions.

Ironic, isn’t it? The same people that have led us to this brink are now pointing at us for the public’s economic problems. It’s a little like the young man who kills his parents, but asks the court for mercy for being an orphan.

The media has jumped into the fray with both feet. They have embraced so-called “education reform” on the basis of fighting the old corrupt union bosses with their gold-plated pensions, the fat benefits they allegedly receive and their untouchable job security. In our case, it is tenure, the right to strike and eliminating collective bargaining all together. The media, you must remember, is a big business based on making a profit. The Chicago Sun-Times and Chicago Tribune have already eliminated most of the benefits that their unions have won. So they don’t have a great deal of sympathy for our rights.

So, what’s the answer? Where do we go from here? What is the Union going to do about it? Let’s start to answer those questions by asking some questions of you. First, do you think that Collective Bargaining is an important element of the working conditions at your campus? Are you willing to fight for it? Are you willing to repeat the struggles of those who came before us that fought those battles of recognition for working people? Do you think that our nation is better off by allowing both sides of a conflict to sit down and negotiate a settlement that is mutually beneficial? Or do you think that the government or its business allies ought to make that decision all by themselves?

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UPC Sweeps All Officer Positions, Delegates

On Mar. 14 at the Cook County College Teachers Union office, Election Chair Andy Kidwell from Harper College directed the counting of the votes by a crew that was about 90% or better college students, who were paid for their time. Kidwell was precise and, when in doubt about one chapter’s results, insisted on having a recount on the spot.

For the only contested Local 1600 office, V. P. Classified, both candidates were present throughout the count—the victor, Rose Marie Sakanis of Moraine Valley—and the former V. P. Classified—Jillian Verstrate. The vote was 447-161 in Sakanis’ favor. In Verstate’s challenge to be a delegate for the IFT Convention—the votes were 1037-155—and for the AFT Convention—the votes were 1289-193. [Ed.’s note: The official vote count was certified by the Union House Delegate meeting at Moraine Valley on Friday, March 18.]

In addition to our in-house Legal Counsel Brenda Pryor, AFT Attorney Jennifer Poltrock was present throughout the event. Also, an IFT representative from Champaign-Urbana, Amy Livingston, observed the count.

The newly elected officers, who will serve a three-year term, are:

- President: Perry Buckley (Wright College)
- V. P. CCC: Rochelle Robinson-Dukes (Olive-Harvey)
- V. P. Suburban Faculty: David Richmond (Harper)
- V. P. Sub. Class. & Support: Rose Marie Sakanis (Moraine Valley)
- Secretary: Debra Baker (Triton)
- Grievance Chair: Charles Mustari (Wright)
- Treasurer: Donald Radtke (Daley, retired)
- Legislative Chair: William Naegele (South Suburban)

### Official Results for CCCTU Classified VP

| Campus          | Sakanis | Verstrate | %  
|-----------------|--------|-----------|-----
| Oakton          | 86     | 90        | 48.8
| Moraine         | 149    | 17        | 89.7
| Morton          | 43     | 10        | 81.1
| South Suburban  | 66     | 14        | 82.5
| Prairie State   | 37     | 7         | 88.1
| Triton          | 65     | 23        | 73.8
| Retiree         | 12     | 0         | 100

**Totals**: 458 / 161

*Numbers and percentages do not include 34 “spoiled” ballots.*
Local 1600 Rallies to Support Wisconsin Workers

Jennifer Alexander, Early Childhood Education professor at Daley College, and the Daley Chapter Social Chair-elect, participated in the February 26th rally in Madison.

I have been a certified elementary and early childhood teacher and union member for fifteen years and, like most of my colleagues, I chose this profession because I wanted to make a positive contribution to our society by helping people. I never in a million years thought my profession would be attacked!

Yet here we are in the year 2011, with laws being proposed to end collective bargaining, with some politicians going so far as to imply that as teachers, we are somehow getting rich and causing state budget crises! I am hurt, furious, and most importantly, MOTIVATED by these lies.

After following the news about the union–and–citizen–led protests in Wisconsin for about two weeks, I felt I could no longer sit on my hands, watching from the sidelines. I decided to go to Madison and join the rallies in support of collective bargaining rights. I was moved to tears by the sheer enormity of the people and the common goals shared between us.

If there is one takeaway message from my experience that day, then it is this: union members need to stand together, regardless of professional or geographic boundaries. It is my sincere hope to see more Local 1600 members not merely participating in “stand with” movements, but actively engaged at every level of union activity, since these tumultuous times demand nothing less.
Local 1600 Rallies (continued)

Sean Noonan, Harper Sociology Faculty, reflects on the rally in Madison.

Sean Noonan (right) joins former Harper student and current UW Madison student Dan Cox at the rally. Cox is also a former recipient of the Norman G. Swenson Scholarship.

John Mintier, one of our CCCTU retirees, comments on the Madison, Wisconsin, protest at the State House, which he joined on Feb. 19 & 23.

The news on the union-killing bill proposed in Madison, Wisconsin, is depressing because they have enough votes to pass it when they can get a quorum. The anti-depressant is to protest with like-minded unionists in Madison, as I did on Saturday, Feb. 19, and this last Wednesday, Feb. 23.

United with 76,000 souls on Saturday and 14,000 on Wednesday, I was reminded of our CCCTU strikes when things also got depressing with little hope of winning coupled with the fear of being fired. I remember how the City Colleges of Chicago five-week strike of 1971 was a long, cold strike in January and February.

Later, in the 1975 strike, the CCCTU President Norm Swenson was jailed for breaking the law or disregarding a court injunction, and that united us as never before. Then-Chancellor Oscar Shabat’s tactic cast him as such an ogre that victory was assured by Norm’s courage and our new-found resolve.

That same “you can’t treat us this way” attitude will preserve unionism and the Democratic Party in Wisconsin and across the land.

The rally on Feb. 19 was a real turning point. What was in the air was a sense of not being intimidated, and what was in the air was a sense of unionists back in control.

The Voice put it this way: “It’s About Freedom!” That’s all I have to say about that.

John Mintier at the Madison protest on Feb. 23.
“I’m a teacher and I pay more taxes than G.E.!”
—Susan Grace, Wright College
WE ARE ONE RALLY

On February 26th, mass rallies were called for around the country to support the workers in Wisconsin. Here in Chicago, despite cold temperatures and light snow, a large crowd turned out at the State of Illinois Building (Thompson Center) to hear Sen. Dick Durbin (D, IL) and others exhort the demonstrators to fight for workers rights. A number of Local 1600 members attended.

Former Triton College Faculty Association Chair Maggie Hahn-Wade marches with TCFA Chair-elect Stu Sikora.

Former CCCTU Grievance Chair John Wenger carries a sign that reads, “Chicago Jobs with Justice.”

A large crowd turned out for a rally to support the Wisconsin protesters on Saturday, February 26th at the Thompson Center.
Conflict Resolution in the Workplace

By Brenda D. Pryor, Esq.

Dear Union Brothers & Sisters,

I am writing to you today to discuss an issue of great importance — conflict resolution. Due to the economic stresses that our colleges continue to face requiring many of you to do more with less, coupled with the rising antipathy for unionized public employees, the Union gets reports about workplace conflicts almost every day. Here are some strategies that I hope will help you navigate this thorny subject matter.

Conflict with your Supervisor

Understandably, addressing conflict with your direct supervisor can be difficult, because it can seem like that individual holds all the power. The key to getting a conflict successfully resolved is to avoid making it personal. In other words, focus on the problem (i.e. the actions/behaviors that are causing the problem) rather than making generalized judgments about the person's character. Your boss may be “evil” but how does it help you to call him or her that (or worse) to his or her face? Here are three tips to utilize when trying to defuse a situation with your superior successfully:

1) Focus on your underlying common interest on the project/situation at issue in the conflict.
2) Approach your supervisor with curiosity on how to best resolve the issue, not upset that there is an issue.
3) Respond with facts, even if that means you have to reply at a later time or date, rather than reacting emotionally in the moment.

If you continue to have problems with a person and/or the conflicts seem to be escalating to the point that you feel that your job may be in jeopardy, you should contact the Union for assistance.

Conflict with your Co-Worker(s)

Conflict with a co-worker is never an easy thing, especially if you were friends or thought you were friends with the person involved. But you need to be aware that conflicts will occasionally emerge in the course of a relationship. Don’t fear or deny conflict; instead, learn to spot symptoms of co-worker conflict early and use that as an opportunity for growth. You should avoid further antagonizing the person, avoidance, or the simplistic view that your co-worker is a “bad person.”

Some suggestions for addressing conflict with a co-worker: do not accuse — instead ask for the person’s input about the negative communication between yourselves. Attempt to assess your roles and duties, as well as the needs and available resources for doing your jobs. Then work collaboratively to seek solutions to identified problems and follow up to insure that progress is made. If this isn’t successful, you can seek Union assistance in mediating — preferably before going to the College to complain.

Conflict with your Subordinates

Many supervisors are hesitant to share their true feelings — either positive or negative — with subordinates. Subordinates, in turn, are apt to feel unduly judged by their supervisors and frustrated with their jobs. As a supervisor, you can use conflict as an avenue to open discussions with your subordinates about goals, interests, and problem-solving as well as solicit advice.

Some ways for you as a supervisor to minimize conflict: regularly review job descriptions and get your employees input on them; work to harmonize job descriptions to ensure that your employees’ job roles don’t conflict; and regularly hold management/team meetings to communicate new initiatives and the status of current programs. When problems arise, discuss rather than confront. Do your best to encourage good behavior with praise. It’s easy to criticize your subordinates, but criticisms often lead towards resentment and hostile feelings.

In conclusion, most people have to deal with workplace conflict at some point in their lives. You may not be able to always correct others’ behavior, but you should never have to live in fear and let a difficult supervisor, co-worker, or subordinate control your life. As always, please feel free to contact your Union representatives for assistance.

SAVE THE DATE:

June 17: Executive Board
July 15: House Meeting
August 26: Executive Board

Visit the CCCTU website: www.ccctu.com  College Union Voice
Wright Chapter’s 39th Scholarship Luncheon Brings Youth and Maturity Together

Past Wright chapter chairs Perry Buckley, Andy Nicosia and Pat Dyra and current chapter chair Linda Murphy at the luncheon.

Wright Chapter Chair Linda Murphy hosted a record-breaking 39th Annual Scholarship Luncheon (over 100 guests) on April 1 at LaVilla Restaurant. President Perry Buckley, V. P. CCC Rochelle Robinson-Dukes, Legislative Chair Bill Naegele, Grievance Chair-elect Chuck Mustari and Jennifer Visk attended from the Union office.

Eight students were honored with chapter scholarships. Allyson Gadowski received the Hamilton Pitt Award; Alexis Rosendiz was honored with the Jeremy Marks’ Scholarship. Each student was introduced by a faculty member who was familiar with his or her career; each student gave her or his thanks to the audience. The Scholarship Committee included Susan Calabrese, Secretary Norma Lugo-

Guylas, Mike Petersen and Grievance Chair Henry Herzog, who was the presenter.

Before the event began, Past Chapter Chair Andy Nicosia (who founded the luncheon in 1972) posed for a photo with his successor, Pat Dyra, and his successor, Perry Buckley, and the current chair Linda Murphy for a total of 39 years of Wright College Chapter Union leadership.

At the end of the luncheon, Nicosia, a bit overwhelmed with emotion, gave a few short remarks, noting he still met and interacted with former students who have gone on to great success in the Chicagoland community.

For the full story, visit www.cctu.com.

Truman Scholarship Luncheon

When Truman Chapter Chair Tony Johnston began the introduction to the Awards Ceremony in the bright and colorful O’Rourke Theatre lobby on April 14, he stated that this year’s Scholarship Committee (Elizabeth Iehl, Johnston, Richard Keitel, Minh Ngoc Nguyen, Franklin Reynolds, Harold Santamaria, Cathy Schwab, Riaz Siddiqi and LaSandra Skinner) “had one of the toughest years since I’ve been involved. The quality of the applications was outstanding and those students here truly were deserving of the honor.”

All twenty winners attended the light luncheon to receive their scholarships: 15 Truman Book Scholarships, 2 Stein Scholarships and one each for the Agnes Vidovic, Leon Novar and Leonard Altabelli Scholarships. The widow of Norman Stein was present to give the awards to two deserving students. Attending on behalf of Local 1600 was President Perry Buckley and Secretary Pat Wenthold.

President Perry Buckley reminds the scholarship winners, “This is only the beginning of your successes. We expect you to go out and do great things. Congratulations!”

Professors Bill Settles and Eliz López are proud of their student, Annie Jung.

College Union Voice Visit the CCCTU website: www.cctu.com
Triton Classified Plays it Green

On the eve of St. Patrick’s Day, the Triton College Classified Association, under the leadership of Chapter Chair Missy Cabrera, held its annual In-Service Meeting on campus on Wednesday, March 16.

Wrapped around various topics of interest to the membership, Cabrera’s co-leaders emphasized collegiality. A series of fun events included raffle prizes and extra raffle tickets for people wearing green. A game combining Wheel of Fortune and Jeopardy regarding Triton College history was well received. Participants received souvenirs for their answers.

Also with a bag of gifts was Local 1600’s Legal Counsel Brenda Pryor. Admittedly tired from the Triton College Board of Trustees meeting the night before, Pryor was in fine form using quick wit to demonstrate the “what-not-to-do” in the workplace. Pryor stressed “protecting your job by doing your job” and offered some other advice:

• “Arrive on time, come back from break on time and don’t surf the net on company time.”
• “While performing your job description, document duties assigned to you that are above and beyond what your duties call for.”
• “Under ‘other duties as assigned,’ if you are given work that is in the job description of someone else, this is grievable or at least deserves a reclassification.”

Pryor stressed knowing one’s Weingarten Rights using the TV shows “Law and Order” and “The Closer” as examples: “Whatever you say WILL be used against you.”

Pryor fielded questions from the audience on a variety of topics, some gripes and some grievances. If it is a discussion with a supervisor, she stresses documenting what is said, when it is said, and following up with an email on what was just discussed.

Buckley and Pryor Update Triton Mid-Managers at Annual In-Service

President Perry Buckley and Legal Counsel Brenda Pryor pose with the leaders of Triton College’s Mid-Managers Association: Kay Frey, John Cadero, Rosa Preston and Elvis Ortega.

While the faculty was on Spring Break, the Mid-Managers Association of Triton College hosted its annual In-Service Day on Friday, Mar.18, which allowed the members a break from their daily duties to come together and share ideas. Chapter Chair John Cadero and his officers developed the agenda to include Geoff Atkins’ Bubble Wonders Show, the awarding of Service Pins, and an update from Local 1600.

CCCTU President Perry Buckley discussed a variety of topics affecting educational related personnel in the state of Illinois. Locally, Buckley discussed the recent election of CCCTU officers including Triton’s Deb Baker as Secretary.

Local 1600 Legal Counsel Brenda Pryor summarized some of the issues that she has faced in her three years with CCCTU with a handout of what is expected in the workplace:

• “Continually asking a co-worker out on a date can be considered sexual harassment and possibly stalking. That is what E-Harmony is for.”
• Selling goods on campus during work hours is unacceptable behavior. “You have a fiduciary duty to the college while on the clock.”
• Though checking your email while on break may be acceptable, downloading from or uploading to the internet is not. “Remember that the boss owns the computer and pays for the internet service. All surfing goes through the college server.”

Cadero introduced recently elected grievance chair Elvis Ortega and commended outgoing grievance chair and school nurse Jackie Marx for her diligence and dedication. Rosa Preston presented “Nurse Jackie” with flowers.
The Joe Hill Heartlanders’ “Down On the Line”
Inspired by Wisconsin Protests

Mike Konopka is a musician as well as an audio engineer with a history of working with big name musicians—The Kinks, The Rolling Stones, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, and Wilco. His Thundertone Audio is a going concern, and, also, now his heart is going to the folks at Madison, Wisconsin. Konopka’s feelings are no surprise as the love of his life, Patricia Ramsey, teaches English as a Second Language at Harper College and is a member of the CCCTU. As he says, “I never realized how much work you take home as a teacher, but, since Pat and I were married six years ago, I learned how hard you have to work to do it well.”

Konopka says he really wasn’t very surprised at the long hours correcting papers as he had experience working with union and non-union crews when recording musical acts. “You worry less about the union jobs. You know the crew will have more input in the production, and they will do it right. The non-union crews come through as well; I just have to worry a bit there.”

So now, The Joe Hill Heartlanders have a song about Madison, “Down On the Line” (see the download and YouTube links below). Konopka wrote the song and shares lead singing with Diane Carter-Zubko, a Pro/Tech Chapter member at Harper. Ramsey plays percussion and sings background vocals. Mike Kay is a singer/guitarist. Dan Swanson is a drummer whose wife teaches in a high school. Jill Blair, an office worker, does background vocals, too.

From the President’s Desk (continued)

Do you think we should cut back on the pensions that both you and I carefully, and dutifully, have paid into for our whole career, with the promise that our golden years would be secure? Or do you think that all Americans should have an opportunity to a safe and secure retirement income? Do you think that your health benefits are extravagant? Are they gold-plated? Do you think that all of our nation’s inhabitant should be able to access affordable health care for themselves and their families?

These questions, of course, are all rhetorical; you and I already know the answer. We must organize and fight for the right to a decent wage and benefits with good and safe working conditions at our place of employment. We should not let the powers that be roll back the last fifty years of Labor victories without a good fight! It is too important to sit on the sidelines of this struggle. We must join with all of the workers of this country to ensure equity to our nation’s workplaces.

When Unions stand and fight, they are standing up for all workers! Every American wins when we win. So let us step up to the challenge, like all of those heroes who have stood up before for the working men and women of the nation. Now is our turn to shout, “We will not be denied!”

Remember, you are the Union.
Retirees Talk “Union” at Lunch & Laugh at “Monty Python’s Spamalot” Afterward

Chapter Chair Norm Swenson led the CCCTU Retirees Chapter in seeing “Monty Python’s Spamalot” on Mar. 2 at Drury Lane Theatre, Oakbrook Terrace, IL. Previous Retirees Chapter Chair Pat Dyra attended. VP Suburban Jim O’Malley, Secretary Patricia Wenthold, Treasurer Don Radtke and six other tables filled with retirees were there. Their table talk was about political issues: the actions of the union members in Madison, WI; the right-wing news slant of Fox News; the laughable Sunday morning CBS-NBC-ABC talk shows on Madison, only one of which had a union representative, the President of the AFL-CIO Richard Trumke, but all the shows had groups of Republican officeholders.

After a good lunch, they all trooped in to see “Spamalot.” If you didn’t like the old “Monty Python” 30 minute TV shows, you probably won’t like “Spamalot.” It is an expansion of the movie “Monty Python and the Holy Grail” with Las Vegas chorus numbers. The dance numbers were lively.

The jokes were funny and updated. Most importantly, the audience laughed a lot, the actors were often hot and everyone liked Lancelot.

left: Marie Eibl, Norm Swenson, Pat Wenthold and Nora Jacob (Pat’s daughter) enjoyed “Spamalot.”