

## WHAT'S UP IN RALEIGH

9/26 - 10/9

9/26

--Elissa Schappell with Blueprints for Building Better Girls, 7:30 p.m. at Quail Ridge Books  
--University Theater presents Dirty Rotten Soundrels, 7:30 p.m. at Stewart Theatre

9/27

--David Menconi with Ryan Adams: Losering, A Story of Whiskeytown, 7:30 p.m. at Quail Ridge Books

9/28

--Joe Rogan, 7:30 at Memorial Auditorium  
--N.C. Symphony performs The Music of Ray Charles, 8 p.m. at Meymandi Concert Hall  
--Clap Your Hands Say Yeah with Gray Young, 9 p.m. at Lincoln Theatre

9/29

--Marbles Kids Museum 5th Birthday Bash, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. at Marbles  
--100,000 Poets for Change, 4-7 p.m. at Quail Ridge Books  
--North Raleigh Arts and Creative Theatre present Little Shop of Horrors, 8 p.m.  
--N.C. Symphony performs The Music of Ray Charles, 8 p.m. at Meymandi Concert Hall  
--Carolina Ballet performs An Evening of Robert Weiss, 8 p.m. in Fletcher Opera Theater

10/1

--Minus the Bear with Cursive, 8 p.m. at Lincoln Theatre  
--Gotye with Missy Higgins, 7 p.m. at Raleigh Amphitheater

10/3

--Here We Go Magic with Lilac Shadows, 9:30 p.m. at Kings Barcade

10/4

--Romeo and Juliet, 7:30 p.m. at Koka Booth Amphitheatre

10/5

--First Friday, Downtown Raleigh  
--N.C. Symphony performs Bolero, 8 p.m. at Meymandi Concert Hall

10/6

--N.C. State Wolfpack v. Florida State, Carter Finley  
--N.C. Symphony performs Bolero, 8 p.m. at Meymandi Concert Hall

10/9

--MuteMath with Civil Twilight, 8 p.m. at Lincoln Theater

# Chicago Teachers Strike Raises Questions of Professional and Public Obligations

Tonette Thomas, staff writer

**News Analysis** -- The national average salary of teachers is between \$38,000 and \$49,000. From these figures, it is clear that there is no threat or promise of educators trotting among the wealthiest in America any time soon. A teacher's job is to engage students in academic subjects deemed essential by society and government to the best of their ability, but it is a well-known that educators in public school systems are hindered by overpopulated classrooms, increased bureaucracy, and lack of available resources like text books -- let alone access to recent educational technologies. That said, the recent strike in Chicago beckons observers and participants in the education system to ask if the teachers in Chicago are failing to do their job or justified in their argument that local work conditions are intolerable.

The Chicago Teachers Union began what became an eight-day strike on Sept. 10. Teachers felt as if they had no choice but to take action when Mayor Rahm Israel Emanuel vowed longer school days for students without additional pay for teachers. A source reported classrooms were infernos and instead of the reported 1:25 ratio, the reality was 1:40. Teachers complained

that there were not enough textbooks for every student and those available were tattered and outdated. Additionally, teaching materials were not available on the first day of class and teachers expected them to take weeks to arrive. Students in Chicago's inner city were receiving little or no time in courses such as art, music, home economics and physical education due to the layoffs. Educators argued that these conditions were the impetus of the strike -- not their subsidiary complaints of lack of wages.

Although parents and students supported teachers' assertions, the reality of the situation was that the strike kept over 350,000 students out of school in one of the most dangerous cities in America. A parent on the blog "Hipsqueak" expressed that the hardest part about the strike for her was finding childcare for her two children. During the strike, Chicago Public Schools provided daily activities for unoccupied students at local libraries, churches, schools, and parks, but most of the staff at these locations were community volunteers ill-trained in dealing with youth and a number of these locations couldn't even offer lunch for the children.

On Sept. 18 CTU delegates voted to suspend the strike. The announcement came as a relief to parents and students, and the 2012 school year formally began the following morning. But who prevailed in the strike's outcome? The CTU-CPS agreement proves favorable for all involved. As requested by Mayor Emanuel, teachers will be held more accountable for educating students as measured by student evaluations. In concession to the teachers' demands, the school board will provide a healthier learning environment for student and provide sufficient learning materials. CPS will lengthen the school day but will not require teachers to work longer hours. And last, but certainly not least, the teachers who dedicate long hours in and out of school to insuring students have the best possible education will be considered for rehire after lay-offs; they will receive annual raises and proper healthcare benefits. While the strike made the beginning of the school year hectic for students, parents, teachers and officials alike, it seems that the teachers were justified in their demands, leading to a better public school environment in Chicago.

## LOCAL BEAT

### International Festival

Christa Riley, staff writer

International Focus Inc. presents the 27th annual International Festival of Raleigh to be held on Sept. 28 through 30 at the Raleigh Convention Center. This event celebrates and displays different ethnic groups from the Triangle and helps highlight cultures and traditions from around the world. The theme of this year's festival is a Defining Moment in History.

The International Festival was started by Sister Cities Association of Raleigh in 1985 and has been growing in popularity ever since. This year's festival will feature 56 different ethnic groups. Barbara Muffoletto, the Program Coordinator of International Focus states, "According to current population statistics, more than 1 out of 8 people living in Wake County was born in another country. Unlike other International festivals, the International Festival of Raleigh utilizes the talent, knowledge and skills that are present within the community. Nearly all of our performers, vendors and artists live and work in the Triangle." Each group will have its own cultural exhibit, and Muffoletto mentions that "Cultural Exhibits make up a truly fascinating component of the event. Based on the annual festival theme, each culture decorates a booth to portray that theme through the prism of their culture." Since the theme this year is a Defining Moment in History, "the exhibits will teach and entertain visitors with stories and displays about

momentous events in each culture's history."

There are several events that will be going on all three days of the festival that include dances, music, cooking, kid's activities, and sidewalk cafes. The main stage will feature over 100 traditional and modern dance performances from around the world. There will also be a Dance Demonstration booth that allows audience members to try out the multicultural dances. In addition to the main stage, the Biergarten Stage will hold musical performances including styles and genres like tropical, blues, classical, reggae, Celtic, J-Pop and others.

Cooking Demonstrations allow attendees to learn how to make international delicacies to share with and impress their family and friends. A few lessons being offered include hummingbird cake, rice pilaf, hummus and pumpkin soup. In addition to the cooking demonstrations, twenty-six sidewalk cafes will be set up for tasting dishes from around the globe.

For kids, the International Festival has Sophia's Corner, which offers many activities including face painting, storytelling, balloon animal making and scavenger hunts. The festival will also feature the International Bazaar, which sells art, jewelry, clothing, and other items that are not native to the Triangle area.

A weekend pass costs \$19 and day passes are available. For full pricing, directions, parking, and other information, go online at [www.internationalfestival.org](http://www.internationalfestival.org).

### Irish Festival

Shanna Alley, staff writer

The Raleigh Irish Festival will be held Saturday Sept. 29 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. in Moore Square in downtown Raleigh. Admission is free and people of all ages are welcome.

Originally organized as an Irish picnic held in The Knights Hall, the event has grown to a festival boasting many events as a celebration of Irish heritage.

At this year's festival, local musicians from surrounding counties, as well as musicians from Emerald Isle, will perform Irish music throughout the day. The first performance begins at 11 a.m. and features pipes and drums, Irish bands and Irish dancers. Other entertainment includes demonstrations of Irish sports, as well as inflatables, rides and other activities for children. Per the festival website's claims, throughout Moore Square will be a "variety of people who will discuss Irish culture, musical instruments, poetry and literature."

Irish food and beverages will be for sale by Tir Na nOg Irish Pub, and other vendors will be selling Celtic treasures such as jewelry, art, crafts and musical instruments. Also for sale are \$2 raffle tickets for entry in a drawing to win a trip to Ireland. The festival website boasts that winner will receive nine days and nights in western Ireland with "good company, like minded folk, accommodation, a full Irish breakfast, hikes and sightseeing, pub stops and live music."