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The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers

3070 BRISTOL PIKE, BLDG. 2, SUITE 101, BENSALEM, PA 19020- 215-568-4175 - VOLUME XXXXII-NO.4
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From the President's Desk

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS



With Christmas being only a few days away, I am taking a few moments to reflect on the many blessings God has given to me, both personally and as President of ACT.

I am blessed to have a husband and children who love me and have supported me during my first year as ACT President. I can't thank them enough for always being there for me, cheering me on during good times and lifting me up on those days that are more difficult. I really appreciate their patience and understanding during those times when the work-life balance got out of whack. I am trying to remedy that.

Professionally, I am thinking about what a blessing a negotiated Labor-Management Agreement is. Many times, it is really difficult to explain to teachers who have come into the System under the protection and benefits of a negotiated contract just what it was like to work during a time when female teachers were paid less than their male counterparts, when subbing meant always giving up your preparation period,

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when there was no grievance procedure, no tenure, no job security, no limit on class size, no ceiling on the number of preparations, and, most of all, no union representation. Teachers were on their own, employees-at-will, with the possibility of being terminated for any reason or no reason at all. For more than 50 years, the Labor-Management Agreement negotiated between the Association of Catholic Teachers and the Secondary School System has changed all of that.

Unfortunately, and not surprisingly, there are some, not among the teaching ranks, who see our Labor-Management Agreement as no longer relevant or necessary. As far as I am concerned, a negotiated, binding Agreement that establishes the rules and regulations for equitable treatment of teachers and defines reasonable work rules will always be relevant and necessary.

Other blessings during 2021 include ACT Vice President, Katie Toenniessen-Innes, who has helped me retain my sanity, as problems seem to grow exponentially while the time to solve them appears to shrink each day.

The members of the ACT Executive Board, several of whom are also completing their first year of leadership in the Association, are another blessing. All of them give freely of their time and energy, helping me with the important, sometimes unpopular, decisions that need to be made to ensure that our Labor-Management Agreement is followed and our Union is respected.

The hard-working Senior Delegates and Alternate Delegates in the 15 Archdiocesan high schools are another blessing to all of us. The Senior Delegates and Alternate Delegates are the Association's lifeline and communication link in each of the high schools. These men and women make sure that the contract is enforced at the local level. When you see your Senior Delegate and Alternate Delegate, please thank them for all they do for you.

I continue to be blessed and thankful for all that President Emeritus, Rita Schwartz, gave of herself to ensure that teachers' rights under the contract are always protected. Rita was the best mentor I could have ever asked for. ACT remains the strong Union that it has always been because of Rita's guidance and leadership during her many years as ACT President.

There are really no words to describe what a blessing Ginny is. Ginny makes my world run so much smoother. Nothing I ask of Ginny is ever too much.

The members of the Association of Catholic Teachers are the greatest blessing. You constantly make me proud. In the classroom and beyond, you always do much more than what is asked of you. That is especially true in the last 1-½ years as you taught and continue to teach while a pandemic rages on around you. You have put your lives on the line every day to do what you love to do—teach the students who attend the 15 Archdiocesan high schools.

Now it is time for you to relax and rejuvenate. You have earned it. Take a few moments to count the blessings in your life. You may be amazed at how many there are.

Christmas Blessings to you and your family and best wishes for a very Happy and Healthy New Year.

Irene

ACT NEGOTIATING TEAM

Anyone wishing to be on the 2022 ACT Negotiating Team should submit his or her name to the ACT Office by Wednesday, December 22, 2021.



CONTRACT SURVEY REMINDER

Contract surveys were emailed to teachers on December 9, 2021. Please return your completed survey by December 22, 2021, if possible. If not, please fill it out over the Christmas break. Your input is extremely important and valuable to the Negotiating Team as they will be working on your behalf.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



The following Legislative Report was submitted by ACT Legislative Representative, David Sommers, at the ACT November Executive Board Meeting held via zoom on December 16, 2021.

- I. [HB1041: Furthering Home Education Program](#)**
The bill would provide home-schooled students to take up to four academic courses/classes during the school day at their local public school. Also would allow for participation in co-curricular activities.
Last action: Second consideration (Senate) on Nov. 10, 2021.
- II. [HB2045: Reading Support](#)**
Providing for teacher support in the Science of Reading Program.
Last action: Laid on the House table, Nov. 15, 2021.
- III. [HB 1660: Temporary Emergency Provisions](#)**
When five consecutive school days (or more) will be missed due to unforeseen emergency situations, temporary provisions may be put into place for a maximum time limit of sixty days.
Last action: Second consideration in the Senate, Nov. 10, 2021.
- IV. [HB 951: Statutes of Limitations for Sexual Abuse Victims w/ A00786 \(Amendment\)](#) *providing for language changes*
*-No change in status from last report information***

ACT WEBSITE

All teachers are asked to logon to the ACT Website (www.act1776.com) and verify your personal information. It is critical that we have your current information and that it is accurate. It is important that we have a **PERSONAL** email address for you, since Executive Board Minutes, Newsletters, and other pertinent information will be sent via email. We cannot and will not send email to a school email address.

Every teacher was provided with a username and password for the ACT Website. (New teachers will receive their logon information in an email.) If you do not have this information, please contact Ginny at the ACT Office at 215-568-4175 or email her at ginny@act1776.com and she can provide this information to you. To update your personal information, logon to the ACT Website and, in the upper right-hand corner of the homepage, click on member login. Type in your username and password and then verify the information on file. Any changes made will be sent to the ACT Office automatically.

INSURANCE INFORMATION

Dental Plan: As of January 1, 2022, you and each of your family members have \$1,000 in dental benefits to use for covered services in calendar year 2022. A list of your dental benefits is listed on the ACT Website at www.act1776.com.

Medical Plan: A reminder that you will need to meet your annual \$100 individual deductible and/or \$200 family deductible for calendar year 2022. You may begin receiving bills for services requiring that a deductible be met before payment can be made. **These services include the following:** Outpatient laboratory and pathology, home health care and/or hospice, skilled nursing, chemotherapy, radiation, dialysis, outpatient Private Duty Nursing, and physician/surgeon charges that require a deductible.

Voluntary Vision Plan: Open enrollment for the Voluntary Vision Plan has come to an end. If you were on the plan last year, you should use the same Vision Card that you were issued. New members to the plan will receive their Vision card in the mail. **Vision benefits will go into effect on January 1, 2022.** If you do not have a Vision Card, please email Ginny at ginny@act1776.com.

FSA REMINDER

If you were a participant in the 2021 FSA Program, please remember that all monies in your account should be exhausted by December 31, 2021. Any funds that remain in your account after December 31, 2021 will be lost. However, this does not mean that all your eligible expenses have to be submitted by December 31, 2021. You have 90 days after the close of the calendar year in which to submit eligible expenses for 2021. All eligible expenses for 2021 must be submitted by March 30, 2022.

*The Association of Catholic Teachers
Wishes you and your family*



*A Blessed Christmas
and a
Happy and Safe New Year.*

Merry Christmas