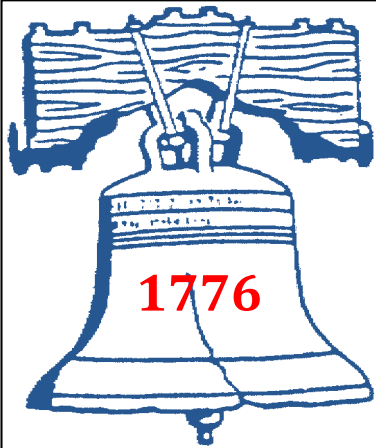


THE

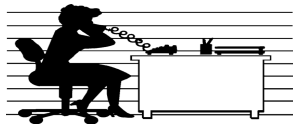
The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers



SPIRIT OF '76

55+ Years Strong
1966-2016

3070 BRISTOL PIKE, BLDG. 2, SUITE 101, BENSALEM, PA 19020- 215-568-4175 - VOLUME XXXIV-NO.5
Fax 215-568-8270 - email (act@act1776.com) - website (www.act1776.com) JANUARY 2024



From the President's Desk

SOME HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE NEW YEAR

For the past two years, my January Newsletter article has been centered on the upcoming contract negotiations.

This year, thankfully, none of us needs to worry about upcoming contract talks because, on August 31, 2023, you, the ACT Members, ratified a three-year contract.

The System and the Association are still reviewing the new language. When the contract language is finalized and the new Labor-Management Agreement has been signed, an electronic copy will be sent to all teachers.

This January, I am taking the opportunity of using *From the President* to bring to your attention some rather important issues dealing with your life both in the classroom and at home.

(Continued on Page 2)

During the school day, I caution you to know your audience when interacting with your students, colleagues, and any visitors with whom you might come into contact. There have been cases recently where one person made remarks that were intended to be friendly and humorous, but the receiver heard what was said in a totally different way, definitely not friendly and not humorous. This can be especially true when those who are new to your community are not familiar with the personality of those who have been working in the schools for many years.

In addition, use of the Internet, social media and email at school can bring with them their own set of caveats. Please remember that you are using your employer's computer and that workplace transactions can be monitored. If you are using email to give or check assignments, always make sure that the message is class and curriculum related. Do not use a "chat room" approach and never place students on your personal email or cell phone list. Never, never follow or be followed by students on X (Twitter), Facebook, etc.

Outside of school, there is a separate area known as off-duty conduct, sometimes, misconduct. This is not about restricting your personal freedom. However, we unfortunately live in a world where employers will not hesitate to search your personal email, especially if they want to build a case against you. Therefore, please remember who you are, what your occupation (vocation) is, and by whom you are employed. Be extremely careful about the words that you use, the comments that you make, and any photographs that you post.

When in doubt about any of the above, please think before you act. It might be helpful to ask a fellow teacher to look at what you intend to write, post, etc. Just a heads-up: Please do not call out sick while posting Disney World photos on your Facebook page.

You may be saying, "Irene has got to be kidding!" "Who doesn't know this?" Well, I am sorry to say, "More people than you might imagine." It may be a good time for all of you to review your computer files both in school and at home. Please don't hesitate to use the "delete" key.

One last word of advice that applies in all situations: If you should be asked to attend a meeting with school or Archdiocesan administrators, please ask what the meeting is about. Never go into a meeting if you do not know what will be discussed. Just wanting to have a conversation is not answering the question of what will be discussed. Please make sure that your Senior Delegate, Alternate Delegate, or other Association representative is present during the meeting. Your continued employment might very well depend on it.

Happy Catholic Schools Week, Everyone!

Have a great second semester!

Irene

PENSION REMINDER

RETIREES

This is a reminder that retirees who were retired for the full 2023 calendar year will receive two 1099R forms for 2023. As you may recall a letter was sent to all retired teachers last summer, informing them that, beginning August 1, 2023, all pension checks were to be issued by BNY Mellon rather than PrimePay. **Due to that change, retired teachers will receive two 1099-R tax forms for 2023**—one from PrimePay (January–July, 2023) and one from BNY Mellon (August–December, 2023).

ACTIVE TEACHERS

For all active teachers, if you have not already done so, it is extremely important to log on to the Retirement Focus website at www.RetirementFocus.com and create a username and password. Personal information must be verified, and a personal email address must be entered.

To log in to Retirement Focus, a teacher will enter his/her initial username (Social Security Number with no dashes) and initial password (birth date as MMDDYY) under Participant Login. Then, the teacher will create a permanent username and password. A secret Q & A will also be created in case login information would have to be reset.

The website enables a teacher to:

- Stay up-to-date on his/her account.
- Model retirement savings projections.
- Learn more about the Pension Plan.
- Elect to begin retirement benefits.

Retirement Focus phone line is available Monday through Friday, from 8:00 AM through 8:00 PM EST at 855-874-0356.

Under Retirement Focus, the beneficiary's information must be changed from the teacher (which is what appears on the screen) to someone designated as the beneficiary. Any beneficiary left as the teacher will result in any monies due to the teacher through the LERP to go into the teacher's estate. This will cause needless tax implications.

2024 ACT EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Irene Tori	President
Kathleen Toenniessen-Innes	Vice President
Thomas Imburgia	Executive Secretary
Adejola Garrett	Treasurer
John Corrigan	Legislative Representative
Bridget Mierzejewski	Area Vice President (Central)
Christine Hanley Maldonado	Area Vice President (Northeast)
Eric Wahl	Area Vice President (Northwest)
James Vernon	Area Vice President (Southwest)
Rosanne Betham	Member-at-Large
Michael Campellone	Member-at-Large
Ellen O'Hara	Member-at-Large

2023 TAX INFORMATION

Union Dues for 2023

January 2023 – June 2023 = \$384.54
(For those who resigned or retired as of June 2023)

January 2023 – December 2023 = \$621.18

2024 ACT SENIOR DELEGATES

James Vernon – Bonner/Prendergast	Tom Imburgia – Cardinal O'Hara
Anthony Polselli – Archbishop Carroll	Eric Wahl – Pope John Paul II
Christine Hanley Maldonado – Conwell-Egan	James Flannery – Roman Catholic
John Masluk – Saint Hubert	Glen Galeone – Archbishop Ryan
John Cramutolo – Father Judge	Joseph Aquilante – Bishop Shanahan
Michael Clymer – Little Flower	Bridget Mierzejewski – West Catholic
Melissa Hart – Lansdale Catholic	Joe Webb – Archbishop Wood
Marygrace Urmson Robinson – SS Neumann-Goretti	

INSURANCE INFORMATION

Dental Plan: As of January 1, 2024, you and each of your family members have \$1,000 in dental benefits to use for covered services in calendar year 2024. 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 2024. 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: For those who signed up for the Voluntary Vision Plan, your benefits became effective on January 1, 2024. You should have received a vision card in the mail. If you are in need of ID cards for the vision plan, please contact Ginny at ginny@act1776.com.

FSA REMINDER

If you were a participant in the 2023 FSA Program, please remember that all monies in your account should have been exhausted by December 31, 2023. You have 90 days after the close of the calendar year in which to submit eligible expenses for 2023.

RETIREMENT NEWS

The Association of Catholic Teachers wishes to congratulate

Edward Smith, Archbishop Wood High School

on the occasion of his retirement from the Secondary School System,

after 54 years of dedicated service!

Congratulations, Ed, and enjoy a well-deserved retirement!

IN MEMORIAM



WILLIAM “BILL” HOY

Bill Hoy was a true son of West Philadelphia. After completing grade school, he moved on to high school. He graduated from St. Thomas More High School in 1959 and from St. Joseph University in 1963. His high school days were celebrated and remembered by his victories on the court.

Bill was a gifted basketball player and loved the game. In high school, he won the Markward Award in 1959 as the Philadelphia Player of the Year. At St. Joseph’s University, Bill was a member of the 1961 team that made the Final Four appearance.

After graduation, he became a high school business teacher and coached basketball at St. Thomas More High School and West Catholic Boys’ High School.

In 1989, Bill and the faculties from West Boys’ and West Girls’ merged into one high school. This teacher was an integral part of this tradition since he brought so many practices from the Boys’ school to the attention of both the faculty and administration.

This beloved teacher inspired both his students and athletes. When Bill was teaching in the merged school, the girls’ basketball team won the Catholic League Championship. In his unassuming, laid-back manner, this former basketball star offered praise and approval to the members of the team. His manner was quiet, but his words were sincere.

Bill retired in 2018 from teaching after dedicating 56 years to the Archdiocesan schools. He is fondly remembered by faculty and students alike. His family and friends as well as the West Catholic Prep family mourn the passing of Bill Hoy.

Let the game continue in Paradise.

*Written by: Sr. Ave Armstrong, SSJ
English teacher
West Catholic Preparatory High School*

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen