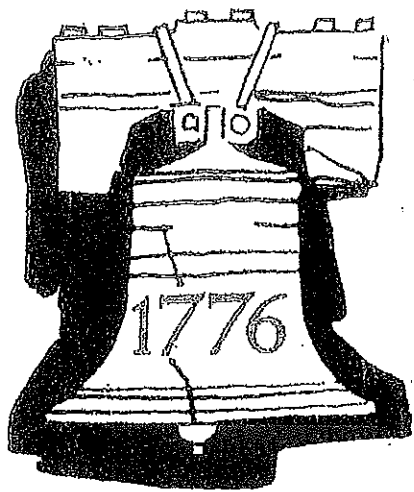


The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers



THE SPIRIT '76 OF

1700 SANSOM STREET - SUITE 903 - PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103 - 215-568-4175 - VOLUME XXXV- NO. 4
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From The President's Desk

NEGOTIATIONS 2015

Happy New Year to everyone.

The next few months will be busy ones for ACT. Preparations have already begun for the upcoming Early Bird negotiations. Contract Surveys have been mailed out to all ACT Members. They are due back to your Senior Delegate by Friday, February 6th.

The emphasis for the 2015 Early Bird, as with the one in 2014, is on salaries and benefits. It is important for us to know your thoughts.

Once the Negotiating Team has drawn up the proposals, they will be presented to you, the members, at a General Membership Meeting for your vote of approval.

Negotiations are scheduled to be completed by the end of May. A General Membership Meeting will be scheduled at that time so that a vote to accept or reject can be taken. The ACT Negotiating Team will keep you updated as negotiations progress.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Rick', located at the bottom right of the page.

TO TWEET OR NOT TO TWEET? THAT IS THE QUESTION

Based on some recent problems that our teachers have been experiencing, it might be a good time for me to address the issue of social media and the potentially job-threatening aspects for our teachers when it is not used appropriately.

The ACT Staff has accompanied teachers to meetings with both school and Archdiocesan administrators concerning the use of social media and the Internet both in school and at home.

Use of the Internet, email and social media at school bring with them their own set of caveats. Please keep in mind 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 Twitter or Facebook.

Outside of school, there is a separate area known as off-duty conduct, sometimes, misconduct. This is not about restricting your personal freedom. However, 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 Disneyworld photos on your Facebook page.

As you are reading this article, I am sure that many of you are saying to yourselves, "She has got to be kidding! Who doesn't know this?" My answer is, "More people than you could imagine." In fact, it might be a good time for all teachers to review their computer files both in school and at home and, please, don't hesitate to use the "delete" key.

Finally, if you should be asked to attend a meeting with school or Archdiocesan administrators and the meeting concerns the use of computers, the Internet and/or email/Facebook or Twitter, please make sure that your Senior Delegate or other Association representation is present. Your continued employment might very well depend upon it.



NEW PENNSYLVANIA LAW AND FUTURE EMPLOYMENT How Act 168 Affects Your Job

On December 22, 2014, Act 168 went into effect. It is vitally important that you know about this law and its possible impact on you as a teacher.

Should you apply for a teaching position within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, you will be asked to complete a SEXUAL MISCONDUCT/ABUSE DISCLOSURE RELEASE. You will be required to disclose if you have ever

Been the subject of an abuse or sexual misconduct investigation by any employer, state licensing agency, law enforcement agency or child protective services agency (unless the investigation resulted in a finding that the allegations were false)

Been disciplined, discharged, non-renewed, asked to resign from employment, resigned from or otherwise separated from employment while allegations of abuse or sexual misconduct were pending or under investigation or due to adjudication or findings of abuse or sexual misconduct

Had a license, professional license or certificate suspended, surrendered or revoked while allegations of abuse or sexual misconduct were pending or under investigation or due to an adjudication or findings of abuse or sexual misconduct

The Act 168 Form will be sent by your prospective employer to your current/former employer who will be required to complete it by answering these same bullets. Bottom line: *"A school entity or independent contractor may not hire an applicant who does not provide the required information for a position involving direct contact with children."*

A future job for you in education could be affected by what you do in your current teaching position. No longer will your clearances be enough. The provisions of Act 168 make it very clear that even an accusation will prevent you from being employed in a job where you have contact with children.

Please be careful.

Archdiocesan High Schools

TAX INFORMATION

2014 DUES

\$540.39

(13 pays x \$25.63 + 8 pays x \$25.90)

**National Association of Catholic School Teachers
John J. Reilly Memorial Scholarship**

The National Association of Catholic School Teachers established the John J. Reilly Memorial Scholarship to help defray the cost of a college education for outstanding children of NACST members. During their senior year of high school, \$4,000 awards are made to two students, \$1,000 in each of their four years of college study.

All sons, daughters and stepchildren of all active NACST members are eligible to participate in this scholarship provided they are in good standing in their senior year of high school. Application forms are available from the Senior Delegate of each high school. Deadline for submission of all applications is March 3rd.

NOTICE

It's time to start thinking sabbatical!

Applications for sabbatical leave must be submitted no later than **March 3rd**.

It's time to start thinking about whether or not you want to apply.

Lancer's Local

Issues or contractual items of interest to
Holy Cross H. S. (Delran, NJ)

**Holy Cross 2014 Union Dues
\$530.04**

(6 months at \$52.92 plus 4 months at \$53.13)

Thank You!

My name is Amy Lewis, and I am writing on behalf of Robert Lewis' family. We would like to publicly thank the faculty and staff at Archbishop Ryan High School for their kindness during his fight with cancer and following his death. My father taught with the Archdiocese for 42 years, the vast majority of which was at Ryan. Dad loved teaching; he said his students kept him young at heart, and he counted his colleagues amongst his closest friends. And, of course, any venue that allowed him to talk about history was right up his alley. Ryan was an integral part of his life, and, even after he retired, he looked forward to any opportunities to get in touch with his friends and colleagues.



Though we knew Dad was loved for (or in spite of) his jokes and off-beat humor, the extent to which he was loved only became clear to us when he was diagnosed with cancer in July of 2014. As soon as his family at Ryan learned of the news, we received a deluge of concerned calls, messages, and emails. When Dad began to undergo chemotherapy, his dear friend, George Deal, sat by his side for hours at a time to keep him company. While he was hospitalized, we received cards, fruit and flower baskets, and phone calls, and he was regularly visited by his Ryan friends. And, when he died, loving tributes came in the form of Facebook posts and comments from his former students, a mass presence of Ryan faculty, staff, and students at his funeral, and a multitude of touching eulogies that friends, including George Deal, John Amorim, Bill Finnegan, and Sr. Eileen Frances Cooke, paid him. So moving were these tributes that those who attended the funeral to support my mother, sister or me, but had not met my father, commented repeatedly that they felt like they knew him intimately because of how lovingly he was constructed through the memories of his friends. It was such a source of comfort at a time when we so badly needed it, and I am only sorry I lack the words to express just how deeply we appreciated those gestures, visits, and words.

As if the faculty and staff at Ryan had not done enough during his illness and funeral, we received word this week that they'd taken a collection for donations to the Wounded Warrior Project in my father's name. Despite January being a financially difficult month for many, the Ryan family collected \$425. Dad's time in Vietnam affected him profoundly both psychologically and physically. The fact that his suffering will at least lead to other veterans getting the help they need is one of the most touching tributes to his life, and it helps us feel that something positive came from the heartbreak of losing him.

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Rest in Peace, George!

It was September 1970. Mr. George Hallowell began his science teaching career at Northeast Catholic High School. It was June 2003, from Father Judge High School, he retired after some 33 years of witness, commitment and dedication to the faculty and students whom he served so well.

A great testament to his legacy can be found on the legacy.com website where many students and faculty wrote how his caring affected them and remained with them years later. Some quotes are as follows:

"Mr. H showed nothing but class."

"He left a definite imprint on me in my Freshman Year."

"He was the First teacher at North I met and became the greatest!"

"He went out of his way to help me plan for my Junior and Senior year classes."

"You will never know how much you will be missed by so many."

"He will be remembered as a dedicated mentor to his students."

George Hallowell was born on February 14, St. Valentine's Day, and died on Christmas Day. These two days represent Love and GIVING OF YOURSELF TO OTHERS. These virtues defined George's life.

Faculty and students at North Catholic and Father Judge were blessed to have known his wit, wisdom, and faith.

Our faith teaches us to be hopeful till we meet again! R.I.P.

Joseph DeAngelis
Father Judge High School



Kind, Compassionate, Generous and Loyal

When I came to O'Hara in 1981, I was excited and anxious. I worried that I would not make it in high school. I had taught for fourteen years in grade school but I have never envisioned myself teaching in high school. One of the teachers who went out of their way to make me feel comfortable and confident was Mary Kennedy.



Mary Kennedy had come to O'Hara in 1977 after she had been constricted from Archbishop Ryan High School. Mary taught the same subjects as I was to teach—World History I and United States History. She gave me many ideas about the subjects I was to teach while also helping with classroom management. High school was different than grade school in its expectations.

Mary loved teaching. She loved to interact with her students. She had many creative ideas in presenting her subject matter. She encouraged them to always do their best. One did not get a passing grade just because one came to class. Mary also had traveled extensively and she used these experiences to enrich her class presentations.

Coming to school in time for homeroom and leaving at the end of the day was not Mary's style. When I met Mary, she was the coach of both the boys' and girls' bowling teams. I volunteered to be the class mentor. When we were in competition, it was not unusual to participate in games two times a week in addition to practices. We would run out of 8th period, get on a bus so that we would be on time for the away games. She had competition nights between the students and teachers. In order to not embarrass myself, I had my nephew, Brett, come with me to bowl. He had won plenty of trophies and we made quite a team. Mary also had coached the forensics team and cheered on the swimming teams. She was involved in the school plays by making the costumes for the students.

Mary had a great love of family. Her sisters Margaret, Lorraine, Theresa and Rita and her brother, Frank, and their children were the heart of her life. Often she regaled us with stories of their latest adventures. Mary would often ask one of her nephews, who is the Philly Phanatic, to come to our fairs. Last year, Mary moved back to Lansdale so that she would be near her family. Her health had deteriorated so that it was necessary to be near them so that they could help monitor her. Through all the difficulties she endured, she never lost her sense of humor. She made every effort to attend family functions and to meet her friends for dinner. She

(Continued on Page 8)

Thank You

(Continued from Page 5)

To every person—some of whom had never even met my father before he retired and simply wanted to honor a fellow member of the Archbishop Ryan family—that contributed to this generous donation, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

To anyone outside of the Ryan community reading this, I hope you are proud of your colleagues at Ryan and that you have similarly close bonds within your schools. A phone call, card, donation, or kind word might not seem like much, but to those reeling from the death of a loved one, they mean the world.

To those within the Ryan community, thank you for keeping my father alive through your loving gestures and stories. He was so lucky to have had you in his life.

Sincerely,

The Lewis Family

*Kind, Compassionate,
Generous and Loyal*

(Continued from page 7)

organized a group of senior citizens to meet each day to say the rosary at Elms Terrace, an apartment complex where she lived. At a memorial service which they held in Mary's honor, they told her family that they had decided that they would continue to meet each day in Mary's memory. How happy Mary would be to see the effect she had on people.

Mary was kind, compassionate, generous and loyal. She went out of her way to make each experience special for her family, her friends, and her students. May we imitate Mary by being kind, compassionate, generous and loyal, too. She will not be forgotten. We know that, on January 1, 2015, the angels came to take Mary to her eternal reward where she would never suffer again.

Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon her.
Amen.

***Sr. Lucy Marie Schluth
Social Studies Department Head
Cardinal O'Hara High School***

IMPORTANT INFORMATION CONCERNING YOUR DENTAL PLAN AND PERIODONTAL COVERAGE

CONNECTING ORAL HEALTH TO OVERALL WELLNESS THE PERIODONTAL LINK

In 2012, United Concordia joined with Highmark Health Services to conduct the largest study of its kind to better understand the link between oral health and medical costs. They examined 1.7 million people over a three-year period and found that significant health care cost savings were possible when individuals with certain chronic conditions addressed their gum disease. For example, they found that there was a 33% drop in hospitalizations, a 13% drop in doctor visits and an overall savings of \$1,814 annually when gum disease was treated and managed in individuals with diabetes.

Periodontitis is an epidemic. Researchers know that those bacteria are able to travel the body's pathways through the bloodstream and respiratory system because they have found oral bacteria in other areas of the body, such as the arteries, lungs, and brain.

As a result of this three-year study, United Concordia Dental created **Smile for Health Wellness** to help close the gap between oral health and total body health. By preventing and treating periodontal disease, the cost relating to infection and inflammation was greatly reduced. And as a result, there was also a positive effect on the overall health for individuals with certain chronic diseases.

Under your dental coverage with United Concordia, periodontics is covered at 50%. However, teachers with any one of the following chronic diseases will have periodontics covered at 100%. These chronic conditions are as follows: Diabetes, Heart Disease, Cerebrovascular Disease (stroke), Rheumatoid Arthritis, Lupus, Organ Transplants, Head and Neck Radiation Therapy.

In order for you to receive 100% coverage on Periodontics, you will need to go to the United Concordia website at www.UnitedConcordia.com. Sign in or create a *My Dental Benefits* account. This is where you will sign up for the Smile for Health Wellness Program. Once your medical condition is verified, United Concordia will turn on the added periodontal coverage. You may also contact United Concordia at 1-800-236-9168 for additional information.

MONTHLY GROUP MEDICAL RATES FOR RETIREES AGE 65+
(Effective January 1, 2015)

PERSONAL CHOICE 65:

Single Coverage: \$718.90

KEYSTONE 65 HMO:

Single Coverage: \$626.10

Retired teachers who are enrolled in any of the above plans are automatically enrolled in Medicare Part D. **You DO NOT need to enroll in an individual Medicare Part D plan, if you are enrolled in one of the above medical plans with the Archdiocese.** In fact, if you do, you will lose your Archdiocese medical and prescription drug coverage because the Archdiocese plans are now considered Medicare Part D plans, and you may not be enrolled in two Medicare Part D plans at the same time.

FOR TAX PURPOSES and/or FSA REIMBURSEMENT

DENTAL BENEFITS: If you are retired and/or on an Extended Leave of Absence beyond three semesters and paid for your dental benefits, the amount paid in 2014 is as follows: Individual Coverage = \$258.36, 2-Person or Family Coverage = \$658.32.

VISION BENEFITS: If you participated in the Voluntary Vision Program in 2014, the amount you paid for this benefit is as follows: Individual Coverage = \$83.28
2-Person Coverage = \$166.80 and Family Coverage = \$250.20.

FSA REMINDER

If you were a participant in the 2014 FSA Program, please remember that all monies in your account should be exhausted by December 31, 2014. Any funds that remain in your account after December 31, 2014 will be lost. However, this does not mean that all your eligible expenses have to be submitted by December 31, 2014. You have 90 days after the close of the calendar year in which to submit eligible expenses for 2014. All eligible expenses for 2014 must be submitted by March 30, 2015.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ACT MEMBERS

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, since this is a contract year. It is important that we have a **PERSONAL** email address for you, since contract information and updates, Executive Board Minutes, 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. 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.

MEMBER SERVICE UPDATE

As you know, the ACT Office has movie tickets available to ACT members at a discounted rate. You can purchase tickets for either AMC Theaters or Regal Theaters. **ALL MOVIE TICKETS ARE NOW \$8.00.** There are no restrictions when using the tickets. If you would like to purchase tickets, please send a note indicating which tickets you would like to purchase and in what quantity. Please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope with your request.

ADDITIONAL REMINDERS

ADDRESS CHANGES -- If you are in the process of moving or have already moved to a new address, don't forget to call the ACT Office with your new address and phone number. You can also visit the ACT Webpage and log-on to your personal page and update your information.

VOLUNTARY VISION PLAN -- Benefits went into effect on January 1, 2015 for teachers who signed up for the Davis Vision Plan. You should have received your Vision Identification Card by now. A few teachers have contacted me because they received 2 vision cards with different identification numbers -- one card began with the prefix QCB and the other card began with the prefix YXF. **The correct vision card for the current plan year, January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015, begins with the prefix YXF.** If you have cards that begin with QCB, please destroy them.

MEDICAL CARDS – Teachers should have received new medical cards in November. If you did not receive a new card, or if you are in need of additional medical cards, please call Claudia Bonde at the Office of Catholic Education at 215-587-4520 or contact the ACT Office.

RETIREMENT INFORMATION -- The ACT Office has put together some medical information (rates, comparison sheets and contract provisions) for teachers who are considering retirement in the near future. If you are considering an early retirement or if you will be reaching the age for normal retirement, call the ACT Office at 215-568-4175 for your retirement packet. You may also email your request to ginny@act1776.com.

FREEDOM CREDIT UNION – The Freedom Credit Union offers teachers and their families a wide range of financial opportunities. Savings accounts, loans, MAC, IRAs, to name a few, are available to members of the credit union.

The Freedom Credit Union has four Philadelphia locations, as well as an office in Abington, Lansdale and Warminster. For more information visit the credit union's website at www.freedomcu.org. You may also call the ACT Office at 215-568-4175 or the Freedom Credit Union at 215-612-5900.

AT & T DISCOUNT OR ACT MEMBERS: ACT Members can receive a 15% discount on their AT & T monthly mobile phone bill. Proof of membership will be required (ACT Union Card).
You Must Mention Code 3508840.