



THE

The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers

SPIRIT

OF '76

50 Years and Counting
1966-2016

1700 SANSOM STREET – SUITE 903 – PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103 – 215-568-4175 – VOLUME XXXVI-NO.4
Fax 215-568-8270 – email (act@act1776.com) - website (www.act1776.com) Jan. – Feb. 2016

From The President's Desk

A BUSY SPRING

On February 4, Irene and I sat in the auditorium at Archbishop Ryan as Archbishop Charles Chaput and H. Edward Hanway, Chairman of the Faith in the Future Foundation, announced a 5-year extension of the operational agreement signed by both of them in 2012. The Foundation will remain in effect until 2022. You may remember that in 2012, the Foundation came to the rescue of the four high schools slated for closing by the Blue Ribbon Commission. Today, the Foundation manages all 17 high schools and the 4 schools of special education.

It was a red-letter day for Catholic schools and fit well into the Catholic Schools Week celebration. The Association was recognized from the stage by the Board Chairman as he acknowledged supporters of Archdiocesan schools.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT . . .

When I first heard that Archbishop Chaput was going to extend the Foundation's management agreement for an additional 5 years, I wrote to H. Edward Hanway, Foundation Board Chairman, and asked for a meeting to discuss what plans Faith in the Future had for these next 5 years and 18 months. That meeting is scheduled for February 18.

Another meeting of importance will take place within the next few days. It is in response to my letter to the Secretary for Catholic Education asking for the opening of contract negotiations. ACT once again asked for an Early Bird format. However, we are strong in our desire for a multi-year agreement going forward, not the one-year stopgaps that we have gotten over the past two years. As soon as ACT and the System agree on the ground rules, I will email all of you with the particulars. We have scheduled a General Membership Meeting for Thursday, March 31 at which time ACT will vote their approval of the Union's proposal for negotiations.

At the same meeting, the ACT membership will be addressing some proposed changes to the Association's Constitution and By-Laws.

It will be 50 years this March that the Constitution and By-Laws were approved establishing the Association of Catholic Teachers. ACT was the first Catholic Teachers Union in the United States. ACT was the first to affiliate with organized labor and we were in the forefront when the National Association of Catholic School Teachers was formed. We can all feel extremely proud of our organization, whether we have been members for decades or have just signed up. Watch for information about how we are going to celebrate our 50 Year milestone.

As you can see, it is going to be a busy and challenging spring.

I look forward to seeing you at the March 31 ACT General Membership Meeting.

Rita

A Brief History of the Association

The Association of Catholic Teachers is the oldest Catholic Teachers' Union in the country. The Association's Constitution was ratified in March, 1966. The Union came into existence when lay teachers in the Secondary Schools of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia realized that unless they banded together, they would have little chance of improving their conditions of employment. The struggle to achieve recognition brought some hectic and trying times, including the first strike by Catholic School lay teachers in the United States.

In May, 1967, the Association of Catholic Teachers voted to affiliate with the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. On February 28, 1968, ACT won a representation election and was formally recognized by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia as the sole and exclusive bargaining agent for high school lay teachers.

In October, 1968, the teachers at Holy Cross Academy in Delran, New Jersey voted, overwhelmingly, to affiliate with ACT as a separate bargaining unit. The relationship has been a healthy and productive one resulting in strong negotiated contracts.

In June, 1978, ACT disaffiliated from the American Federation of Teachers. The first Catholic Teachers' Union in the country to affiliate with AFT became the first to disaffiliate. The reason given was a history of insensitivity to the problems of Catholic School teachers. Also cited was AFT's all-out campaign against Tuition Tax Credits.

In October, 1978, the Association of Catholic Teachers formally affiliated with the National Association of Catholic School Teachers, an organization which ACT helped found. Rita C. Schwartz, ACT's President, also serves as President of NACST.

The Association of Catholic Teachers still considers itself part of the labor movement and maintains very close ties with the Philadelphia Council AFL-CIO.

The Association currently represents more than 600 lay teachers employed in the 17 Archdiocesan high schools and Holy Cross Academy in Delran, New Jersey.

The Association is now 50 years old. In addition to contract negotiations, grievance handling and problem resolution, the union annually sponsors Critical Issues Seminars for juniors and seniors in high school, as well as a Scholarship Contest for ninth graders.

One of the Association's other important activities is lobbying for educational vouchers for students attending Catholic schools.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION LOSES A CHAMPION

On January 16, we lost a long-time champion and tireless advocate of Catholic education. The Most Reverend Francis B. Schulte, Archbishop emeritus of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, was, for decades, in the forefront of all that was good in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

In 1970, Monsignor Francis Schulte became Superintendent of Schools. That was two years after the Association of Catholic Teachers, Local 1776, became the recognized collective bargaining representative for high school lay teachers. In the ensuing ten years, there were four negotiated contracts, one of which came after a week-long strike in 1976. In addition to raises in salary and various improvements in medical benefits, the contracts produced lunch at no cost to teachers, the Political Action Seminars, the Alternative Funding Committee from which BLOCS was born, and the appointment of the Association's representative to the Archdiocesan Pension Board of Trustees.

During one of our conversations, then Auxiliary Bishop Francis Schulte shared with me his belief that the Association was a positive influence in our schools; in fact, the Association had helped to make the schools more professional. That was high praise gratefully accepted from a man we all highly respected.

Our final conversation occurred last spring when I visited Archbishop Schulte at Villa St. Joseph. He had asked to see me and I was thrilled to go. We talked about our time together working for Catholic schools. He spoke lovingly of his years in education in our Archdiocese.

One thing was very obvious to those of us who worked with him: Archbishop Francis Bible Schulte was a man dedicated to justice and was truly committed to our schools, our teachers and our students.

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord.

Rita



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 11th.

Archdiocesan High Schools

TAX INFORMATION

2015 DUES

\$546.30

(13 pays x \$25.90 + 8 pays x \$26.20)

2016 Tax Reporting

Under the Affordable Care Act, most U.S. citizens and legal residents must have health care coverage. This is known as the "Individual Mandate".

To prove that you and any dependents had the required health care coverage in 2015, you will need to include IRS Form 1095 with your tax returns.

You will receive a 1095 if you purchased insurance for yourself and your family or if you are enrolled in a group health plan provided by your employer or union.

The forms will mail by the end of January 2016. For more information about how new IRS reporting requirements under the ACA affect you, please consult with your tax advisor.

(The Office of Educational Financial Services is working on the forms. They should be provided to teachers very soon.)

Lancer's Local

Issues or contractual items of interest to
Holy Cross Academy (Delran, NJ)

Holy Cross 2015 Union Dues
\$532.42

(6 months at \$53.13 plus 4 months at \$53.41)

*Immaculata University Hosts
National Endowment for the Humanities
Summer Institute*

6th – 12th grade teachers are encouraged to apply.

Dates: July 11-29, 2016

Topic: *Duffy's Cut: Investigating Immigration, Industrialization and
Illness in 19th Century America: "A Perfect Storm"*

NEH Scholars Receive:

- \$2,700 stipend and option of on-campus housing
- Continuing education certificate
- Opportunity for three graduate credit hours from Immaculata University's College of Graduate Studies (\$200 per credit)
- Professional Development

For more information or to receive the application, please visit
<http://neh.immaculata.edu>.

All applications are due by Tuesday, March 1, 2016.

Applications should be sent to Immaculata University, Office of Sponsored Research, VM234, Vivian Beideman, NEH Summer Institute, 1145 King Road, Immaculata, PA 19345-0688 or by email to NEHInstitute@immaculata.edu.

If you have any questions, please contact 484-323-3037 or
NEHInstitute@immaculata.edu.

NOTICE

It's time to start thinking sabbatical!

Applications for sabbatical leave must be submitted no later than **March 1st**.

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

INSURANCE INFORMATION

VOLUNTARY VISION PLAN – The open enrollment for the Voluntary Vision Plan through Davis Vision has ended. Teachers who signed up for the plan, should have already received their Vision Card in the mail. Benefits went into effect on January 1, 2016. If you were on the Vision Plan in 2015 and renewed for 2016, you will keep the same card you had last year. The card should begin with the prefix YXF. If you do not have a Vision Card, please contact Ginny at 215-568-5175 or ginny@act1776.com.

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.

DENTAL CARDS – If you are in need of a new dental card, call the ACT Office or email your request to ginny@act1776.com.

MONTHLY GROUP MEDICAL RATES FOR RETIREES AGE 65+ (Effective January 1, 2016)

PERSONAL CHOICE 65:

Single Coverage: \$793.90

KEYSTONE 65 HMO:

Single Coverage: \$688.70

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 2015 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 2015, 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 2015 FSA Program, please remember that all monies in your account should be exhausted by December 31, 2015. Any funds that remain in your account after December 31, 2015 will be lost. However, this does not mean that all your eligible expenses have to be submitted by December 31, 2015. You have 90 days after the close of the calendar year in which to submit eligible expenses for 2015. All eligible expenses for 2015 must be submitted by March 30, 2016.

IMPORTANT UPDATES

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

IF YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS HAS CHANGED, PLEASE NOTIFY THE ACT OFFICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

FREEDOM CREDIT UNION – The Freedom Credit Union offers teachers and their families a wide range of financial opportunities. For more information visit the credit union's website at www.freedomcu.org. The phone number for the Freedom Credit Union is 215-612-5900.

MOVIE TICKETS – The ACT Office keeps a limited supply of movie tickets on hand for teachers to purchase at a discounted rate. We have REGAL/UNITED ARTISTS and AMC Tickets Available. **AMC Tickets are now \$9.00 per ticket. Regal Tickets are currently \$8.50 per ticket.** If you are interested in purchasing tickets, please send a check payable to the Association of Catholic Teachers with your request. Please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope with your request.

CONTACT US AT

ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC TEACHERS, 1700 SANSOM STREET – SUITE 903,
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103, 215-568-4175
act@act1776.com or nacst.nacst@verizon.net

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**THURSDAY
MARCH 31, 2016**

4:00 P. M.

**Crown Plaza
Philadelphia Main Line**

AGENDA
Contract Proposals
New Business