

# THE

The Newspaper of Local 1776  
The Association of Catholic Teachers

# SPIRIT

# OF '76

50 Years Strong  
1966-2016

1700 SANSOM STREET – SUITE 903 – PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103 – 215-568-4175 – VOLUME XXXVIII-NO.1  
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## *From the President's Desk*

### A TALE OF TWO CONTRACTS

Two contracts expiring on the same day; two General Membership Meetings occurring on the same day at the same time; two negotiations that were more than problematic from day one. Sounds like the perfect storm.

Happily, God smiled on His teachers in the Archdiocesan high schools and at Holy Cross Academy. He also smiled on their Union.

When you have contracts that are both strong and well-written, quite a large time segment of any negotiations is spent protecting the articles and sections that protect you, the teachers. This year, that was the job of the Negotiating Teams on both sides of the river. Whether it was maintaining supplemental medical benefits for retirees at Holy Cross Academy or preventing the gutting of the Labor-Management relationship clause in the Philadelphia contract, the Union prevailed.

(Continued on Page 2)

My thanks to two intrepid Negotiating Teams:

**Philadelphia:** Glen Galeone, Tom Imburgia, Theresa Lazorko, Irene Tori and Lou Valenti.

**Holy Cross:** Dan Dockery, Joe Dvorak, Jen Kelly, Jim Nolan, Walt Walsh (chief negotiator), and Randy Wilkinson  
Irene took first chair for ACT. We are non-voting advisors at Holy Cross.

Holy Cross teachers agreed to a one-year contract, a Salary Freeze and a severance package in the event that, at some point in the future, the school should close.

Philadelphia Archdiocesan high school teachers also agreed to a one-year contract, a \$1,200 increase in salary and no increase in medical contributions, co-pays or deductibles.

Several of the other Philadelphia contract clauses were incorrectly listed in both the Secretary for Catholic Education's letter to Parents and the press release from the Archdiocesan Communications Office.

- 1) There are no "additional after school professional development days." A half-hour can be added to two more faculty or department meetings but only if Act 48 credit is offered.
- 2) There is only one additional professional development day prior to Labor Day and that is in the 2018-2019 school year. Again, Act 48 credits are to be involved, whenever possible.
- 3) It is incorrect when the Secretary for Catholic Education characterizes salary and medical as not being areas of contention during this round of negotiations. The System's proposals that were presented to the Association at the opening session contained quite a number of anti-teacher and anti-union proposals that they hoped to buy for \$300. I believe that definitely made salary and medical areas of contention.
- 4) The teacher's work day is not being extended. The school day is still not to exceed 7 hours. Teachers will be asked to stay an additional 15 minutes after the last bell, but that does not kick in until the 2018-2019 school year, and there is no "work" connected to the 15 minutes. Most of our teachers are already at school before it starts and after it ends.

For the record, ACT had proposed adding these 15 minutes to the instructional time in the classroom, but this was not acceptable to the System.

ACT also tried for a two year contract in regard to the language, with a salary and medical reopener. Unfortunately, the System was not willing to do this without ACT agreeing to additional anti-teacher proposals.

Also, for the record, the name of our Union since 1966 has been, and remains, the Association of Catholic Teachers. It was referred to incorrectly by the Secretary for Catholic Education.

I want to thank the Association membership both in the Philadelphia Archdiocese and at Holy Cross Academy. It was perfect attendance at the Knights of Columbus and just about perfect attendance at Penns Landing Caterers. I thank all of you for your tremendous support throughout the summer.

I wish all ACT members a happy and productive school year. In the spring of 2018, I know we will be able to count on your support, once again, as we begin negotiations on successor contracts.

*Rita*

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS**

**N A C S T   C O N V E N T I O N**

**OCTOBER 6th - 8th**

**CLEVELAND, OH**

ACT Members interested in serving as Convention Delegates  
should contact the ACT Office by [Monday, September 18th, 2017.](#)

# **VERY IMPORTANT!**

## **Representation May Be Crucial**

Article III, Section 2 of the Labor-Management Agreement is short but extremely important. Please pay particularly close attention to what it has to say.

No teacher may be asked to attend a meeting with the school or diocesan administration without a representative of the Association being present if the teacher reasonably feels the meeting could result in disciplinary action against him/her.

Disciplinary action cannot be taken against any teacher unless the teacher has been apprised in writing of his/her right to union representation.

Should you “reasonably feel” the meeting could turn into one that involves you in disciplinary action, immediately get to your Senior Delegate for advice or call the ACT Office if you choose. Don’t let a relatively minor situation turn into a major one because you decided you could “handle” it yourself.

# Education Grant Application Due

Teachers who wish to apply for an Education/Study Grant under the Labor-Management Agreement (XIII, Sec.7) must do so by **October 15<sup>th</sup>**. The grant offers 50 percent tuition reimbursement up to a maximum of \$2000 per year for undergraduate coursework, \$2500 for Master's Degree coursework, and \$3000 for Doctoral Coursework. **The grant can also be used as reimbursement for successfully passing the Praxis Series exams in a teacher's area of certification.** Teachers who have received a study grant for two (2) consecutive years are not eligible to receive for the following year.

Grants are awarded on the basis of system seniority and are available to any teacher with at least one year of teaching in the System.

You should apply for the grant if you are taking courses in the fall of 2017, or anticipate taking courses in the spring or summer of 2018.

Forms to apply for an Education/Study Grant are posted at the local school.

## Additional Credits?

If you have received an advanced degree or additional credits over the summer which qualifies you for payment under a different column of the salary scale, notify your school accountant immediately.

You must also send proof (an original transcript) of the degree/credit to Mr. James Molnar at the Office of Catholic Education so that the change in degree/credits can be verified.

For your records, it is highly recommended that all documents be sent via certified mail, return receipt requested.

### The five lanes of salary scale are

- Bachelor's Degree
- Bachelor's +18 or Certification
- Master's or 30 Graduate Credits
- Double Master's
- Doctorate

## TEACHERS IN THE NEWS

**Congratulations** to Little Flower Theology teacher, **Maureen Gillespie**. Maureen was one of 10 winners to receive the National Liberty Museum's "**Teacher as Hero**" Award. The Award, sponsored by State Farm Insurance, is given to educators who "make every young person feel welcome and valued." *Way to go, Maureen!*

**Congratulations** to Archbishop Ryan's Mathematics teacher, **John Farrington**, for receiving the *Pennsylvania Council of Teachers of Mathematics Master of Mathematics High School Level Award*. John was nominated for this Award by his Department Chair, Vicky Gradel.

**Congratulations** to **William Finnegan** (Abp. Ryan) on the birth of his son, William Finnegan, III. *Best Wishes to Mom, Dad and Baby Finn!*

## RETIREES' ROUNDTABLE

**On May 17, 2017**, ACT held its first luncheon for retired ACT members at Randi's Restaurant in Northeast Philadelphia. The event was a success! Sixty-one retirees attended the luncheon, representing every high school past and present. It was great to see so many of our retirees. We hope you had a great time and we look forward to seeing you and others at a retirees' luncheon in the future. **Pictures are posted on the ACT Webpage at [www.act1776.com](http://www.act1776.com).** *Thank you for coming!*

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**Congratulations** to **Maureen Keppard-Pedlow**, (retired, Father Judge, 2016), who became a **Golden Girl** at Hallahan's recent "**Fifty and Beyond**" celebration in June, 2017. Maureen is a 1967 graduate of John W. Hallahan High School.

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**Congratulations** to the following teachers on their retirement from the Secondary School System: **John Amorim** (Abp. Ryan), **Ray Anger** (Msgr. Bonner – Abp. Prendergast), **Mary Berner** (Little Flower), **Edmond Brodbine** (Abp. Wood), **Marianne Burpulis** (St. Hubert), **Patricia Cebula**, (Pope John Paul II,) **Allen Emmons** (Conwell-Egan), **Francis Fedele** (Father Judge), **Charmaine Gates** (Abp. Carroll), **William Hauber** (Abp. Carroll), **David Kelly** (Cardinal O'Hara), **Gino LoMaistro** (Sts. John Neumann & Maria Goretti), **Kathleen McDermott** (Pope John Paul II), **Alexander McGrath** (Cardinal O'Hara), **Constance Meyer** (Abp. Ryan), **John Morris** (Abp. Carroll), **Robert Murray** (Abp. Ryan), **Joseph Sette** (Abp. Wood), **Josephine Stonbraker** (Abp. Ryan), **Nadina Umile** (Abp. Carroll), and **Joseph Zarreke** (Father Judge).

*Best Wishes for a Happy and Healthy Retirement!*

# Lancer's Local

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

**Union Dues for 2017-2018 are \$534.10  
(53.41 per month)**

***Congratulations** to the following teachers  
on their retirement from  
**Holy Cross Academy***

*Rob Donald, Michael Fynan, Colette New, and Penny O'Neill*

*Best wishes for a Happy and Healthy Retirement!*

## ACT UNION DUES FOR 2017-2018

The Union Dues for the 2017-2018 School Year are \$557.20. (\$27.20 Per pay, beginning with the pay of September 29, 2017, and ending with the pay of June 22, 2018.)

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**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. **It is also important that we have a PERSONAL email address for you.**

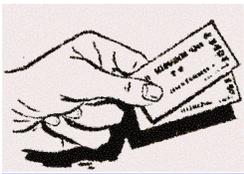
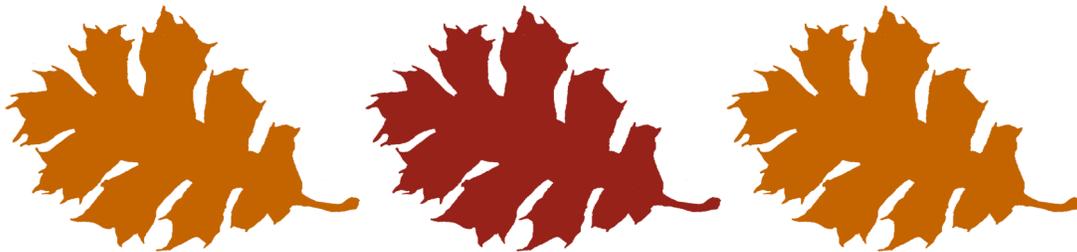
**ACT POCKET CALENDARS** – Due to the rising cost of the pocket calendars as well as the popularity of electronic devices with built-in calendars, the ACT Executive Board has voted to discontinue the purchase of the annual pocket calendar. The calendar that was distributed last school year is a 16-month calendar, which will take you through December 31, 2017.

# ADVENTURE AQUARIUM

## Camden, NJ



ACT members can now save 20% when purchasing tickets for Adventure Aquarium in Camden, NJ. Simply logon to [adventureaquarium.com](http://adventureaquarium.com) and use the special promo code for ACT. With the promo code, you will be able to purchase adult tickets at \$18. A child's ticket is \$14.50. **If you need the code, please email Ginny at [gabby@act1776.com](mailto:gabby@act1776.com) and she will send it to you.**



## MOVIE TICKETS

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 \$10.50 per ticket. Regal Tickets are now \$8.75 per ticket.** If you are interested in purchasing tickets, please send a check payable to the Association of Catholic Teachers with your request. If you will be ordering large quantities, please call Ginny in advance to make sure your request can be filled in a timely manner. Please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope with your request.

# IN MEMORIAM

Geraldine “Gerri” Garofalo

(April 6, 1950 – June 21, 2017)



*“Gerri had numerous facets that made her a very special person. In fact, Gerri had a very unique way of predicting the storms. Her scientific approach consisted of passing (or rather attempting to pass) a comb through her thick and curly hair prior to the storm’s arrival. The number of teeth of the comb that snapped off indicated the number of inches of snow that was to be had. Never failed. She will always be my all-time favorite (and accurate) meteorologist.”*

*Mike Mason  
Archbishop Wood High School*

*“When I was requested to compose a “short remembrance” in tribute to my friend and colleague, Gerri Garofalo, I felt sincerely daunted by the task, for there were so many things to say about this great and truly indefatigable woman. While her life was short by today’s measures, her legacy is long.*

*First and foremost, Gerri was a teacher. This was her calling, her passion, her life. She touched her students profoundly. Hers was a way of guiding so that she might ignite the minds of her students. She challenged them as individuals and recognized their integrity. This teacher loved her students and impacted their lives during the most important of times – their very fragile youth.*

*As a friend, Gerri never faltered, even during her most difficult days. She was the person who could make anyone feel better. She was the person who could get along with people from a variety of stripes. She was the person who loved storytelling. She was the one with the dry, quick wit. She was the woman who while not always a dog lover, became the consummate companion of “man’s best friend.” This woman was the one who taught us all a lot more about faith in our God. Gerri was the most giving, loyal, honest and trusted friend one could ever be given.*

*For all who knew and loved Gerri, the loss of her runs deep. We miss her now, and I suspect she will be missed for as long as we all have the ability to remember. When I mentioned Gerri’s passing to a friend I hadn’t see in a while, she said, “She was the coolest teacher I ever had; I knew it from our first day of class.” And so, we say farewell, dear friend and beloved friend. You were he “coolest,” and you were “first class” in all that you gave. We love you, and we’ll miss you, Gerri.”*

*Sharon T. Blastic  
Archbishop Wood High School*

What can you say about a person who was larger than life, a friend to all, and a gifted teacher? She was my friend for 45 years, having begun her career at Wood in the early 70’s. Her teaching was not the only connection to the school. She graduated from Wood in 1968, an accomplished athlete, came back to student teach, and then became a full time teacher in Social Studies, Psychology, and Sociology ... She coached the softball team, moderated Student Council, produced and directed the yearly talent shows and the father-daughter dinner dances, and ran the semi-annual Red Cross blood drive. For all of her accomplishments she was inducted into Wood’s Hall of Fame and was honored by the National Liberty Museum with the Teachers as Heroes Award.

*The best word I can think of to describe Gerri is “genuine”. She would probably have said that she never met a person she didn’t like, and I know the feeling was mutual ... Her generosity extended from doting on her nephews to her role as “Aunt Ger” to many of her former students’ children. She touched many lives with her love and kindness, but was so humble about it, most people were not aware of all that she did for others. I, too, was on the receiving end of her kindness and generosity many times, most notably when my husband was ill and in a nursing home ... She was truly one of my “angels on earth” during that difficult time.*

*When Gerri was diagnosed with cancer, the whole school prayed daily for her. She was very grateful for the prayers, and in large part attributed her cure to those prayers. ...We were all thrilled when she told us the scans showed that the cancer was gone. We never expected that it would be her heart that would take her from us, that heart that gave so much to so many people ... We are all better people for having known her, and although we miss her terribly, we now have an angel watching over us. Rest in peace, Dear Friend!*

*Nancy Smith  
Archbishop Wood High School*

## IN MEMORIAM

Jane Marie Barbera  
(August 31, 2017)



Jane who was a graduate of Cabrini College, first taught at St. Maria Goretti High School in South Philadelphia and later transferred to Archbishop Prendergast High School in Drexel Hill, where she taught Social Studies for over thirty years. She was a long time member of the Archdiocesan Social Studies Curriculum Committee, where she was instrumental in implementing change and progression in curriculum requirements. Jane served on several committees at Prendie, but her primary contribution was to the instruction of her students. She arrived at school very early and stayed well beyond the close of the day to prepare her lessons and to decorate her classroom to be a welcoming atmosphere for all. After her retirement, for three years, she returned to school four days a week to work in the library and to help with substitutions in the Academic Affairs Office. Jane worked tirelessly to support her two favorite charities of St. John’s Hospice and the Upper Darby Food Cupboard. Although she did not drive, she relied on the support of her husband to shop for these two charities up to and including the week of her death. Both her garage and basement were consistently stocked with men’s clothing items and food. Her loyal and generous charity work earned her a plaque of recognition from the Senate of Pennsylvania in 2010. In life, Jane was a loyal and generous member of her parish St Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Drexel Hill. Her former colleagues and friends will always remember her as a “small lady with a tremendously big heart

*Written by,  
Maxine Dickerson, retired  
Msgr. Bonner-Abp. Prendergast High School*



## IN MEMORIAM

### Gregory Paul Weckel

(February 12, 1949 – July 8, 2017)

#### ***R.I.P. Greg Weckel: Teacher, Coach, Friend, Legend, written by Doug Dunn, JPII***

It always seems a risk to use the term legend when remembering someone. It can seem like hyperbole and cliché. However, a few years ago I met a man who had not only taught with Greg at Bishop Egan High School, he had also been taught by him. When he found out I taught at Pope John Paul, he asked, "So you know Greg Weckel?" When I replied that I considered him a good friend, he told me, "There is a legendary story about Greg at Conwell-Egan." He relayed the following: Years ago at Bishop Egan High School, Greg Weckel was in the physics lab teaching. Suddenly there was an explosion across the hall in the chemistry lab, significant enough to require emergency responders at the school. Greg was known for being a no-nonsense, tough teacher. When he heard the commotion of students in the hallway evacuating the chemistry lab, and not realizing the situation, he yelled at the students for making all the noise. According to the story, some of the students were so intimidated by him they ran back into the burning lab! That evening I called Greg to confirm the story. He told me that, while the explosion happened, and he did come out yelling to investigate the commotion, the story had been exaggerated over the years. Either way, a legend was born.

Greg Weckel gave 46 years to Catholic education, teaching physics or mathematics at the following: Roman Catholic, Bishop Egan (now Conwell-Egan), Holy Name (now Berks Catholic), St. Pius X, and lastly Pope John Paul II. With his strong presence and booming voice, the running joke was that when he taught with his door open, the entire wing, not just his class, learned physics. I can only speak about his impact at St. Pius X and Pope John Paul, but I'm sure the following was true for all his students. Once they got past the tough surface, they knew they were dealing with a kind, compassionate man who really cared about their success. Students loved to pick up on his quirky sayings: "Quick like a bunny", "I'm not running a dating service here", "I'm just a ray of sunshine", and perhaps the most common, "Onward and upward!" As word of his passing spread to the PJP community, an impromptu memorial sprung up in the PJP parking lot made of 6-foot chalk letters of that last saying, allowing students to add their own tributes.

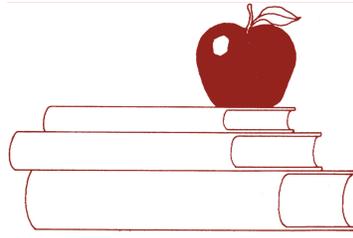
Greg did not limit his impact to the classroom. He spent 35 years coaching students in his favorite passion, football. He gave this his all, not just during the season, but also throughout the year. At the end of this past football season at PJP, he decided to retire from coaching. I can only speculate on the positive impact he had on so many young men. When able, he enjoyed watching Widener football, (where he had played), with old friends.

As a friend, Greg brought cheer to all. He had the most joyful laugh, which he loved to share. He was always a day brightener. Lunch with Greg had one rule, "No school talk. Let's just relax and have fun." At the same time, he instinctively knew when a student or colleague needed a listening ear, or a supportive presence. I say this from personal witness and experience.

Greg was an avid exercise and fitness fan, who worked out every day. This is partly why his sudden passing was so shocking to the PJP community. There is now a groundswell of support from the student body and alumni of PJP to name the fitness center after him.

Greg leaves behind his wife, son and daughter in law, stepdaughter, granddaughter, and step granddaughter. (The latter who had him wrapped around her little finger!) He also leaves behind a student body, and many colleagues and friends who mourn his passing and miss him so much already. The PJP community, as well as the entire system, lost a great educator, great man, and a great friend.

**WELCOME  
BACK!**



**WE LOOK  
FORWARD TO  
SEEING YOU AT  
OUR SCHOOL  
VISITS.**