

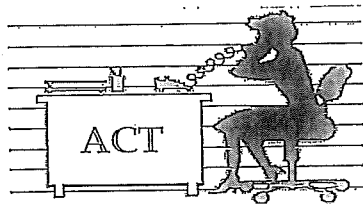
THE

The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers

SPIRIT '76

OF

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From The President's Desk

OUR SCHOOLS ARE SAVED - FOR NOW

So much has happened in the past 8 weeks. Four of our high schools were on the chopping block, then, miraculously, off the chopping block. Feeder parishes that were being regionalized or closed will, now, remain open. Benefactors came forward not at the eleventh hour but at 11:59 on February 24th and pledged millions of dollars to the survival of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

There are many people to thank for February 24th. First, we must thank Archbishop Chaput for his commitment to Catholic education. He is a risk taker, for sure. Coming from an Archdiocese with two archdiocesan high schools and 36 elementary schools, he, certainly, received a crash course in how Catholics in the Philadelphia area feel about their 17 high schools and 163 elementary schools.

Thanks to the overwhelming support from students, parents, alumni, alumnae, families and friends who got the wake-up call and rallied to save their schools.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

FROM THE PRESIDENT. . .

A simple thank-you just isn't sufficient to those who came through with the necessary funding. We pray that the **Faith in the Future Foundation** lives long and prospers.

We must all keep in mind, as we move forward, that all 17 of our high schools need saving. We can never let our guard down again. What is priceless to so many can cease to exist at any time.

Now that we have everyone's attention, especially state legislators, we need to come together as never before and make vouchers a reality for our parents and students. Only when parents can afford to send their children to the school of their choice will there be real freedom of choice in education.

Never forget, it's all about money and enrollment. Be very clear, enrollment means employment. If the students are not there to fill the desks, a teacher will not be needed for the classroom. All of us need to do everything that we can to recruit and retain.

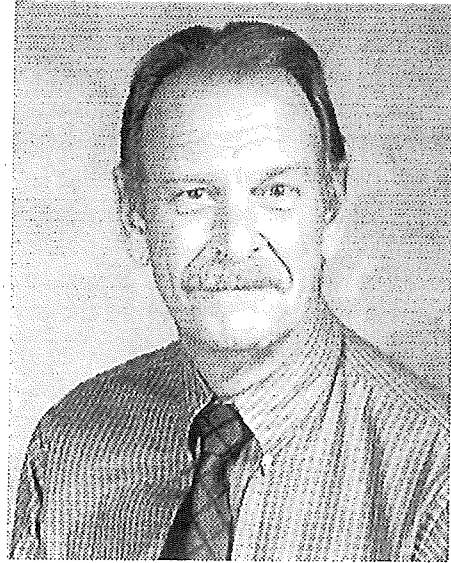
The passion and energy so visible in saving our schools must continue or the era of good feeling will quickly become our worst nightmare.



Archbishop Charles J. Chaput
and ACT President, Rita C. Schwartz,
during their meeting on February 6, 2012

A Master Teacher, a Colleague and a Friend

Where do I begin in honoring my friend, Bill Collins, a teacher at Archbishop Wood for 45 years? I first met Bill when I was a junior at Archbishop Wood High School for Girls in 1967. He was quite the topic of conversation among the students. Almost all of us had gone to Catholic elementary schools, and we had never had a male teacher. So, when we heard that we now had "Mr. Collins", we tried to figure out the best route to our classes, one that would also allow us to see "Mr. C" in his classroom but still get us to class on time. His reputation as a teacher and friend was about to begin.



When I returned to Wood to teach in 1973, Bill was my lead teacher and we taught next to each other for most of our careers. From the beginning, he was "The Master Teacher". His classroom interaction and his knowledge of history was unmatched. I learned early on that I had the best mentor. He knew the answer to any question, no matter what the topic—including non-academic topics. Today, I can say that before there was Google, there was Bill Collins.

Not only was Bill an outstanding mentor, he had an ability to bring wit to any occasion. For instance, a few years ago, a student said to me, "You taught my mom." I couldn't believe it! When I mentioned it to Bill, he said, "See, we've become part of the subject we teach—History." His dry sense of humor was part of every day.

Over the years of his career, Bill taught every Social Studies course offered at Wood. In addition to his diversified teaching ability, he wore many other hats—department chair, TV Studio moderator and World Affairs Club moderator.

He also taught as an adjunct professor at Holy Family College. His impact on his students is reflected in the tributes on his obituary page:

Mr. Collins was a great teacher and influenced each of our lives. Mr. Collins has touched and enriched so many lives with his years of dedicated teaching. His knowledge, compassion and dedication to his students are a few of the reasons why my children also went to Wood.

Archbishop Wood lost not only a great educator, but also a great man.

Mr. Collins made History something that I grew to enjoy.

Although Bill's career was a very important part of his life, it was second only to his role as a great husband, father and grandfather. The births of his son and two daughters made his face glow, and the blessings of grandchildren made the glow even brighter.

Bill, all of your family, friends and colleagues miss you. Rest in Peace, my friend.

Gerri Garofalo
Archbishop Wood High School

Our columnists' take on news events

INSIGHTS

Shaken by Catholic schools' 'wake-up call'

On Friday, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia announced that all four Catholic high schools slated for closing in the region would remain open. Rita Schwartz, president of the union representing lay teachers at archdiocesan Catholic high schools since 1984, spoke with staff writer Susan Snyder about the events of the last few weeks and looked ahead at the challenges still facing the schools.

Guest Columnist

diverse fund-raising effort? Do you think it was really a serious proposal?
 Schwartz: I think it was a very serious proposal. That's what made it so dangerous. There was too much emphasis on the bottom line. This is also the church, and we're supposed to be doing other things besides the bottom line.

Q: In retrospect, do you think the plan was viable and properly conceived?
 Schwartz: No. The fact that so many elementary schools and all four high schools were reversed and kept open — somebody didn't do their homework.

Q: What does the union plan to do to help keep these schools open in the future?
 Schwartz: We've been working toward getting voucher legislation in. We're going to step that up quite a bit now. We need to mobilize the parents of the students and all Catholics. If they want the schools to survive, we've got to become a lot more aggressive than we've been.

Q: How were so many of these schools able to mobilize such a strong fund-raising effort in



ALEJANDRO A. ALVAREZ / Staff Photographer
 Rita Schwartz, president of the teachers union, with teacher Michael Weizel. "We'll never totally exhale again," she said.

to positions that are going to be cut. I was looking at the potential of between 175 to 200 before. I still may be looking at 75 to 100. That doesn't mean that they're all going to be out of jobs. We're hoping that with retirements, people will be able to move into positions at another school.

Q: Elementary teachers are not unionized. Did you hear from them?
 Schwartz: As soon as this happened, I had e-mails and phone calls. I said, "I can help you going forward, but I can't do anything for you now."

They need representation. So the association's job right now is going to be to bring representation and justice to the elementary teachers.

Q: How would you characterize this moment in Catholic school history?
 Schwartz: It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. We now know we have to work even harder to keep Catholic education viable in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Q: How and why did the schools get to this crisis point?
 Schwartz: I don't think there's

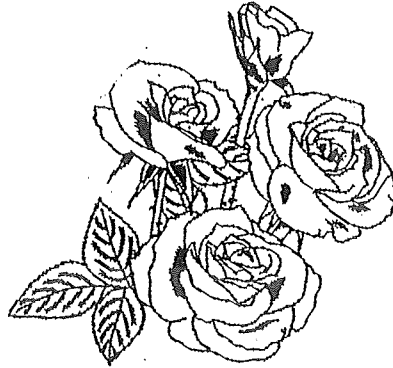
any one reason. There are not the vocations that there were before. When you have lay faculty, there are costs. I also worry that there's not the same commitment to the church and to Catholic education that there has been.

Q: What role did teachers and the union play in helping to raise the money and save the schools?
 Schwartz: A number of teachers are alumni. They don't want to see their alma mater close. The teachers were very good with fund-raising and getting the word out. They also did a lot to keep the spirits of the kids up.

Q: Anything else you would like to add?
 Schwartz: I'm hoping that this is a beginning. I don't want to see us have to go through this again any time soon. I'm exhaling, but I don't think we'll ever totally exhale again. We always have to be cognizant of the fact that these schools could go away, and we can't let that happen.

Contact Susan Snyder at 215-854-4699, ssnyder@phillynews.com, or @ssnyderinq on Twitter.

50 Years
of
Service



A
Silver
Celebration

THE ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC TEACHERS
congratulates its members who are celebrating their
50th year of service to the Secondary School System
of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Vincent Donohue
David Horn

25 Years of Service
A Silver Celebration

THE ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC TEACHERS
congratulates its members who are celebrating their
50th year of service to the Secondary School System
of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

<i>Alice Dowling</i>	<i>Patricia Hicks</i>
<i>Anthony Matz</i>	<i>Paula Parker</i>
<i>Maryann Rayer</i>	<i>Kevin Waters</i>
<i>Martin Watson</i>	

Lancer's Local

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

25 Years of Service A Silver Celebration

Congratulations to

Theresa Brenner Ritter

who is celebrating her
25th year of service to Holy Cross High School
of the Diocese of Trenton.



On behalf of the Association of Catholic Teachers, President Rita C. Schwartz presents Theresa Brenner Ritter with a plaque in appreciation of her 25 years of service to Holy Cross High School.

Holy Cross 2011 Union Dues \$520.10

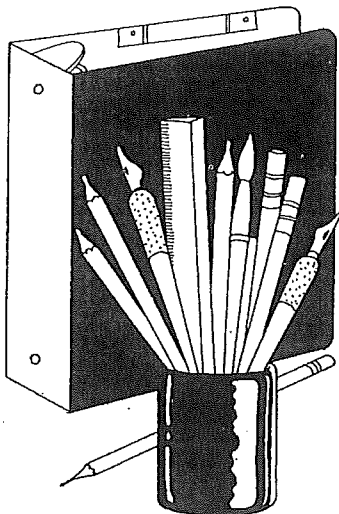
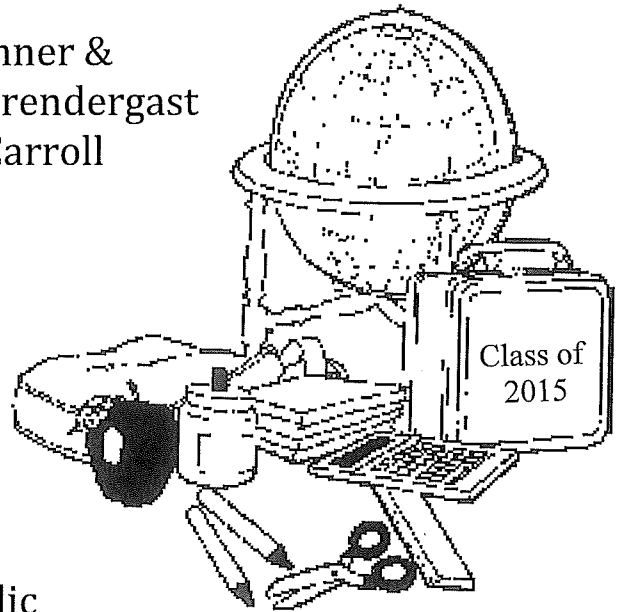
(6 months x \$51.24 + 3 months x \$52.78 + 1 month x \$54.32)

Negotiations opened on March 5, 2012. The Association and the School are working very hard to complete the "early bird" process so that a new contract will be in place by the end of this school year.

*2012 Association of Catholic Teachers
John J. Reilly
\$500.00 Scholarship Awards*

Our 9th Grade Scholars

Nicholas M. Lazer – Monsignor Bonner &
Archbishop Prendergast
Katherine G. Finley – Archbishop Carroll
Brian Carroll – Conwell-Egan
Robert Badman – Conwell-Egan
Sarah Bruzek – John W. Hallahan
Ryan Bodine - Holy Cross
Kevin Carroll - Holy Cross
Carolyn Eckerle - Holy Cross
Jamie Tomlinson – Saint Hubert
Joseph M. Amon – Father Judge
Courtney Del Po – Lansdale Catholic
Catherine Mc Ana – Little Flower



Hoang D. Pham – Bishop McDevitt
Gianna Varallo – Sts. John Neumann
& Maria Goretti
Colin J. Whelan – Cardinal O’Hara
Courtney P. Thompson – Pope John Paul II
William P. Schmidt – Roman Catholic
Alison M. Harris – Archbishop Ryan
Joseph Kelly – Bishop Shanahan
Shaneka Cooper – West Catholic
Patrick Kearney – Archbishop Wood

Archdiocesan High Schools

TAX INFORMATION

2011 DUES

\$496.47

(13 pays x \$25.59 + 6 pays x \$27.30)

Seniority Lists Posted

(for school only)

Article V, Section 1b states "On or before April 1 of each school year, the Secondary School System shall supply to the Association and shall post in each school a complete listing of all full-time teachers in that school including those on approved leaves of absence arranged according to school seniority."

"Teachers shall have until May 1 to call attention in writing to errors or file grievances with the local school administration concerning their positions on the seniority roster."

BJ'S WHOLESALE CLUB: BJ's Applications were **emailed** to teachers this week. Applications are due back to the ACT Office by April 16, 2012. If you did not receive this email, please contact the ACT Office. A BJ's Application will also be posted on the ACT Webpage.



Rita and Irene with Fr. Sinclair Oubre,
Catholic Labor Network Spiritual Moderator
(See related article on Page 9.)

Laboring in the Catholic Vineyard

Once again, the importance of the solidarity exhibited by the members of the Association of Catholic Teachers during the September strike was at the forefront of the labor movement. On February 11, Rita and I were invited to speak at the Annual Meeting of the Catholic Labor Network. The conference was entitled "Church and Labor in the Great Recession". Rita and I listened to several Catholic labor leaders--John Patrick from the Texas AFL-CIO, Richard Schmidt from the Teamsters Local 344 (Wisconsin) and Phil Tabbita from the American Postal Workers Union—discuss last year's attack on collective bargaining.

Rita and I were part of a panel entitled "Catholic Labor Relations in Difficult Economic Times". The gathering was very impressed by the strength and solidarity of our teachers throughout the 2011 Negotiations as well as the subsequent two-week strike, especially since we work inside the Church. All the other labor leaders, while being Catholic, work in the public sector.

As impressed as they were with our unity, these same union leaders were very disheartened when they learned that the System had rejected the use of early bird negotiations, especially after its tremendous success in 2008.

The labor leaders were shocked to hear that the System refused mediation with the guarantee that the teachers would return to work. This shock was heightened when we explained the System's reasons for rejecting the mediation request of Patrick Eiding, President of the Philadelphia AFL-CIO. They could not understand the System's decision to forego mediation and allow the strike to continue.

Before we did our presentation, Rita and I sat and listened to the various labor leaders discuss their struggles over the last year. We were, once again, very grateful for you, the members of the Association, for your constant strength and solidarity throughout the 2011 Negotiations and most especially during the strike in September. You made it possible for the ACT Negotiating Team to return with a contract that continues to provide job security while maintaining the dignity and respect that you deserve as dedicated teachers in the secondary schools of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Thank you!



Irene Tori

Vice President

Irene and Rita during the presentation to the Catholic Labor Network.



I See A Future Where, More Than Ever Before

... Teachers Need An Advocate

Do you have what it takes to be a Senior Delegate?

If Social Justice in action, teacher dignity and respect are issues that you find important, and, if you would like to work with these issues, then consider running for Senior Delegate at your school.

SENIOR DELEGATE ELECTIONS (MAY 15TH – JUNE 1ST)

Senior Delegates received a stipend of \$500 for the 2011-2012 school year.

Responsibilities Include:

1. Act as a liaison between your members and administration.
2. Provide representation for your members in situations where any member reasonably feels that disciplinary action may occur.
3. File grievances to settle issues of opposing interpretations of the contract.
4. Encourage members to become familiar with and support the contract.
5. Conduct meetings at the local level.
6. Attend all meetings to represent your school.
7. Encourage your members to attend all general membership meetings.
8. Keep the Executive Board informed of local issues.
9. Be responsible for conducting all union elections in the school.
10. Be responsible for the ACT Bulletin Board.
11. Distribute information from the ACT Office to the teachers.
12. Perform duties assigned to you by the Executive Board.
13. Be responsible for signing up new members and maintaining the good standing of present members.

This is a good time to, once again, thank all of the Senior Delegates who have served the Union and their own school members so well this year. The ACT Office and the Executive Board need and appreciate your work.