

THE

SPIRIT

OF

'76

The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers

50 Years Strong
1966-2016

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

NOT A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS

On December 13, the Diocese of Trenton announced that after 60 years of “providing a quality Catholic education to families in Burlington County and beyond,” Holy Cross Academy will close as a diocesan high school June 30, 2018.

In the same announcement, the Bishop let it be known that he “has given permission for a group of interested alumni to implement a plan that would re-open Holy Cross as a new independent Catholic high school on July 1, 2018.” One of the interested

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NO EARLY BIRD THIS YEAR

On December 11, ACT received a letter from the Secondary School System about the Association’s proposal for an Early Bird. We actually had received an email earlier from the Secretary for Secondary Education that I, somehow, missed seeing. He said in that October 26 email that “I have received your letter and will review it with the team.”

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NOT A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS

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Alumni stated in “The Burlington County Times” that “the school is in fact not closing.” “The school is transitioning.” Thus far, there is no information as to how this will happen.

On Friday, December 15, ACT Staff met with the President/Principal of Holy Cross to discuss with him how the provisions of the current Labor-Management Agreement, most especially, the newly negotiated Severance Package, will be implemented.

The Teachers at Holy Cross, unlike their colleagues in the Philadelphia Archdiocese, have no right to a position in another Diocese of Trenton high school. There is no ability to be placed into an opening or to bump into one either. There is also no state unemployment insurance; there is only twelve weeks of a reduced amount of unemployment from the diocese.

The Association of Catholic Teachers has been the recognized collective bargaining representative of the teachers at Holy Cross for close to 50 of the 60 years of the school’s existence. ACT will be working closely with the current Holy Cross administration as well as reaching out to the alumni group to ascertain how the school’s transition will involve the current faculty as well as the Association.

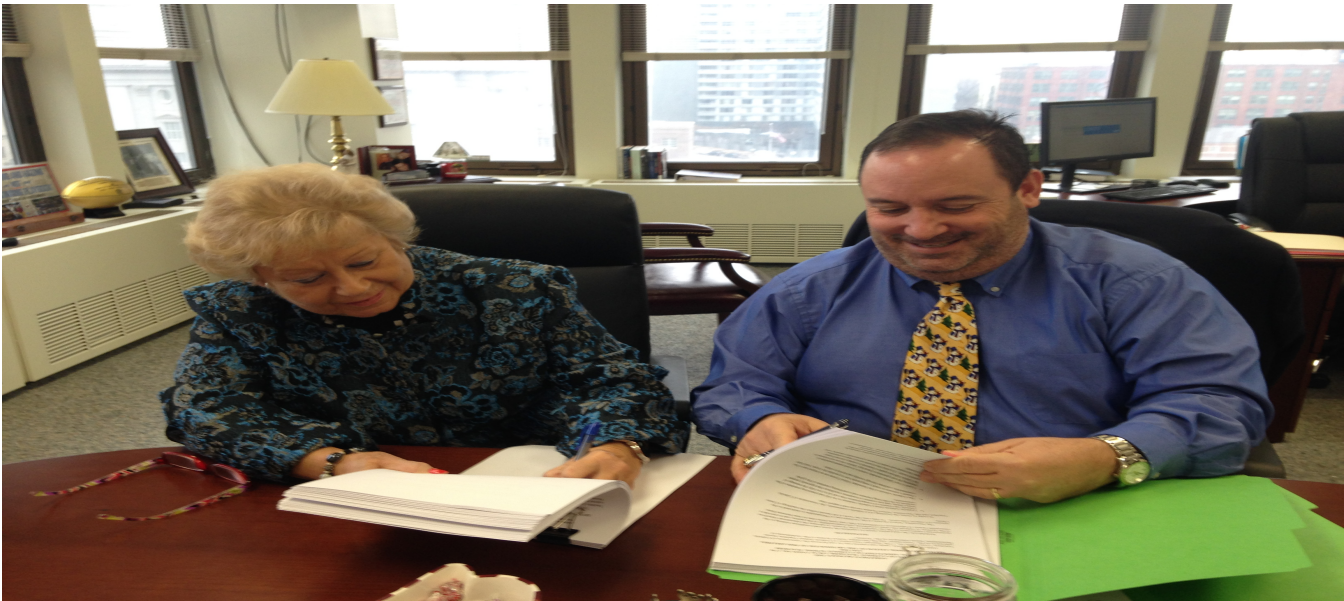
NO EARLY BIRD THIS YEAR

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In his most recent letter, the Secretary wrote that “the senior leadership team agree that an early settlement is always in the best interest of our families and our teachers. Therefore, we are committed to working with you and your team to complete an early settlement.” However, the System wants “to utilize a format other than your suggested one in which essentially salaries and benefits have been traditionally the topics discussed.” Instead, the System wants to have “a comprehensive conversation” around a “series of important issues” that will “promote teaching and learning in the 21st century.”

ACT will now begin the process of selecting a Negotiating Team and surveying the ACT membership to ascertain what they would like to see in the new Labor-Management Agreement.

Speaking of Labor-Management Agreements, as you will see from the photos on Page 3, the 2017-2018 Agreement was signed on Wednesday, December 20. Each teacher will be emailed a digital copy right after the Christmas holidays.



On Wednesday, December 20, 2017, ACT President, Rita Schwartz and Secretary for Secondary Education, Christopher Momey, signed the 2017-2018 Labor-Management Agreement.



**The ACT Office will be closed from December 25th through January 1st.
The office will reopen on Tuesday, January 2, 2018.
Have a Merry and Blessed Christmas and a Happy, Healthy, and Safe New Year.**

Merry Christmas

MONTHLY GROUP MEDICAL RATES

FOR RETIREES AGE 65+

(Effective January 1, 2018)

PERSONAL CHOICE 65: Single Coverage: \$954.00

KEYSTONE 65 HMO: Single Coverage: \$697.00

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 considered Medicare Part D plans, and you may not be enrolled in two Medicare Part D plans at the same time.

FSA REMINDER

If you were a participant in the 2017 FSA Program, please remember that all monies in your account should be exhausted by December 31, 2017. Any funds that remain in your account after December 31, 2017 will be lost. However, this does not mean that all your eligible expenses have to be submitted by December 31, 2017. You have 90 days after the close of the calendar year in which to submit eligible expenses for 2017. All eligible expenses for 2017 must be submitted by March 30, 2018.

INSURANCE INFORMATION

Voluntary Vision Plan: The open enrollment for the Voluntary Vision Plan has ended. If you were on the plan last year, you should use the same Vision Card that you were issued. New members to the plan should have received their Vision card in the mail. Your benefits will go into effect on January 1, 2018. If you do not have a Vision Card, please contact Ginny at 215-568-4175 or email her at ginny@act1776.com.

You may also contact Ginny, if you are in need of a new medical and/or dental card.

Lancer's Local

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



On Friday, December 15, 2017, Dennis Guida, Principal of Holy Cross Academy and Holy Cross Academy's Senior Delegate, Walt Walsh signed the 2017-2018 Labor-Management Agreement .

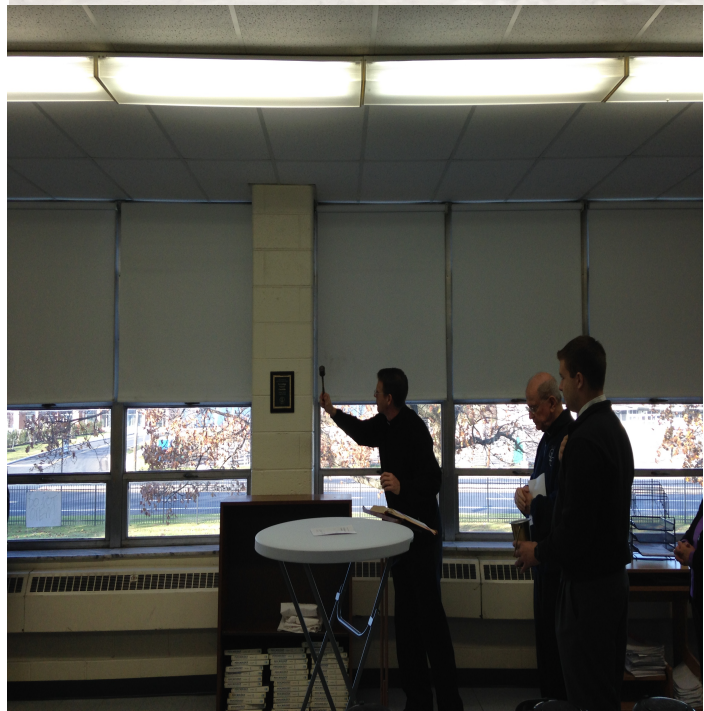


On November 21, 2017, Archbishop Wood held their Annual Mass of Thanksgiving. During the mass, Gerri Garofalo, former teacher, coach, and mentor was remembered for her many years of service and dedication to the Archbishop Wood community.

(As you probably know from a previous newsletter, Gerri passed away over the summer.)

Gerri's family attended the Thanksgiving celebration, which was followed by the dedication of Gerri's classroom.

GERALDINE GAROFALO
**YOU WILL BE FOREVER
REMEMBERED IN THE
HEARTS OF THOSE
WHOM YOU HAVE
TOUCHED.**



Wishing you and your family



*A Blessed Christmas
and
Happy and Healthy New Year.*

Rita, Irene, and Ginny