



THE

SPIRIT  
OF '76

The Newspaper of Local 1776  
The Association of Catholic Teachers

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### From The President's Desk

## NEGOTIATIONS OPEN IN PHILADELPHIA & NEW JERSEY

Negotiations for new Labor-Management Agreements have officially opened for the Archdiocesan high schools in Philadelphia and at Holy Cross High School in Delran, New Jersey.

The Philadelphia financial proposals that had been presented to the ACT membership at a meeting on February 11th were exchanged with the Secondary School System on February 25th. ACT members at Holy Cross met on March 6th to approve the proposal that would be presented to the School administration on March 7th.

The Association began the session in Philadelphia with an Opening Statement. The Association told the System's Negotiating Team that the ACT Executive Board and membership were happy that the Secretary for

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**FROM THE PRESIDENT. . .**

Catholic Education had proposed the financial negotiations format. We informed the System that during our school visits this year, the ACT Staff has received much positive feedback from the teachers about these negotiations. Everyone expressed the hope that there would be an early settlement.

The ACT Team stressed that no one wants to relive the ugliness that was so much a part of the 2006 contract talks. Yet, we know that negotiations will not be without problem areas, especially when dealing with medical insurance, where the renewal rates are of paramount concern to both Teams. The Association's proposals focus on the topics listed in the Memorandum of Understanding, and as long as both Teams stay on point, we remain confident that we can get the job done within the next three months. ACT's Team is ready to roll up its sleeves and start to work.

Negotiating sessions in Philly have been scheduled throughout March, April and May. Under the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Secretary for Catholic Education and the President of the Association, negotiations must be completed and a contract ratified prior to June, 2008. Therefore, a General Membership Meeting to vote on the financial package will be held on Wednesday, May 28, 2008 at 4:30 P.M. at Penns Landing Caterers (Sheetmetal Workers Hall).

The ACT members in Philadelphia and New Jersey have the commitment of both ACT Teams that we will do all that we can to bring back to you a contract that you can approve. We will keep you updated as we work throughout the spring.



**Archdiocesan High Schools**

**TAX INFORMATION**

**2007 DUES**

**\$403.17**

**(12 pays x \$20 + 7 pays x \$23.31)**

## UNION BUSTING IN SCRANTON

The crisis in the Catholic schools of the Scranton-Wilkes Barre Diocese continues. The problems began when their Ordinary, Bishop Joseph Martino, former Philadelphia auxiliary bishop, broke his word to his teachers. He adamantly refuses to allow the teachers to freely select representatives of their own choosing, a right strongly championed by the Catholic Church for all workers.



The Scranton Diocese Association of Catholic Teachers has faithfully represented teachers in the majority of the diocese's schools for thirty years. Now, under the diocesan reorganization plan, the Bishop has decreed that there will be a company union through which the diocese will be making all the decisions on salary, benefits, working conditions, due process and job security.

The teachers' union wrote to the Bishop seeking dialogue. They asked the Bishop to allow the teachers to decide whether they wanted the teachers' union or the Bishop's company union to represent them.

The Bishop will not meet with representatives of the SDACT. He has told a reporter from "The Citizens Voice," that **there indeed had been a dialogue, in terms of a letter from the teachers requesting the union, and the rejection letter in response.** The Bishop may want to check out the definition of "dialogue." My dictionary defines it as "an oral exchange of information or ideas."

On February 10, 2008, about 75 teachers from Catholic Teacher Unions in Philadelphia, Camden, NJ and Scranton-Wilkes Barre held a Rally at St. Charles Seminary (Bishop Martino often spends weekends at St. Charles).

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## UNION BUSTING...

(The March NACST Newsletter contains a full report of the Rally for Social Justice).

On February 28, 2008, the faculty at Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes Barre conducted a sick out, closing the school that day. On Friday morning, before the start of school, teachers set up informational picketing in front of most of the regions' schools. They were joined on the picket line by a number of parents and AFL-CIO union members. When the faculty at Holy Redeemer ended their demonstration and entered the school building to teach their classes, a large group of students walked out in support of their teachers. Further sick outs and demonstrations are planned and parents have scheduled a Diocesan Town Meeting on March 9th.

For the latest details on the Scranton Catholic teachers' fight to make the Church in Scranton-Wilkes Barre practice what it preaches, check the SDACT blog ([www.SDACT.com/blog](http://www.SDACT.com/blog)).

Our thoughts and prayers are with our brothers and sisters in Scranton, especially as we begin contract negotiations. Their fight is our fight. Let us not ever forget that.

*Pat*





**The Association Of Catholic Teachers**

congratulates its members who are celebrating their  
25th year of service to the Secondary School System  
of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Mary Jane Ansley  
Grace Kane  
Michael Sheehan

Suzanne Davenport  
Michael Mason  
Lucille Traynor



**The Association Of Catholic Teachers**

congratulates its members who are celebrating their  
25th year of service to Holy Cross High School  
of the Diocese of Trenton.

Walter Walsh

## LOOKING BACK ON 25 YEARS

Do you remember typing tests before the days of word processors? Did you make corrections using correction tape? Do you remember running off tests on a mimeograph machine and getting purple ink on your clothes? It doesn't seem like these things happened 25 years ago. Time flies when you're having fun!

On Sunday, February 24th, the Archdiocese honored those of us who have taught in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for 25 years, and, yes, six teachers who have actually taught for 50 years. The Mass and dinner reception took place at St. Charles Seminary. We were each invited to bring a guest, and the administration of each honoree's school was also invited. Cardinal Justin Rigali presided over the Mass.

Upon arrival, we were welcomed and given corsages. The event was impressive, with many priests, several of them being presidents or pastors, on the altar. There were teachers from both the elementary and secondary schools. The Mass was inspiring. The St. Denis Children's Choir provided beautiful music. In his homily, the Cardinal thanked us many times for our dedication to Catholic education. Each teacher was called to the altar and given a plaque showing his/her service to the Archdiocese.

Following the Mass, we were escorted through the impressive, long, marble halls of the Seminary with the lovely art on the walls to a grand reception hall. It was reminiscent of a wedding reception. We were given printed menus and exquisite table arrangements. Appetizers were served, along with beverages. Two students from the high schools played the piano. Secretary for Catholic Education, Dr. Richard McCarron, again thanked all of us for our dedication to Catholic education. Dinner followed.

What a nice way for the Archdiocese to thank the teachers who have worked so long and hard!

*Sue Davenport & Lucille Traynor  
Bishop McDevitt High School*

## 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 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."

### **NOTICE**

#### **Voluntary Transfer**

**Applications for voluntary transfers must be submitted no later than April 1st.**

(Forms will be posted by March 1st.)

### **Lancer's Local**

**Issues or contractual items of interest to Holy Cross H. S. (Delran N.J.)**

Negotiations opened on March 7, 2008. The faculty is looking forward to a ratified contract before the close of school.

The faculty congratulates Walt Walsh on his 25 years of dedicated service to Holy Cross.

**Tax Information: Union Dues for 2007 are \$403.17.**

## **FLEXIBLE SPENDING PROGRAM CHANGES FOR 2008**

The following changes are effective for FSA expenses incurred on or after January 1, 2008. Any teacher who joined the FSA program for 2008 will be reimbursed for the following expenses without the need for a physician's statement:

- Orthotics, insoles, and arch supports (Dr. Scholls)
- Sunscreen and sun block (Hawaiian Tropic, Bullfrog)
- Tints and coatings for prescription eyeglasses, regardless of whether the documentation itemizes the cost (Grizal, polarization)
- Earwax removal products (Cerumenex, Murine)

Additionally, Lamaze and similar birthing classes will be reimbursed at their full cost, instead of half.



# GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2008**

**PENNS LANDING CATERERS  
1301 S. COLUMBUS BOULEVARD**

**4:30 P. M.**

## AGENDA

### **CONTRACT RATIFICATION**