



THE

The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers

SPIRIT

OF

'76

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From The President's Desk

HOUSE BILL 26: THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

Happy New Year to Everyone.

With the new calendar year comes the new session of the State legislature. The members of the State House of Representatives were sworn in on January 6th and began their actual session a week later.

Last session's House Bill 2626 no longer exists; therefore, it will be reintroduced, this time as House Bill 26. It will amend the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Act to allow lay teachers and other lay employees of religiously-affiliated schools to collectively bargain, as well as provide for the oversight of the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board. The Bill protects the Church's religious doctrine issues unless the employee can show that the employer is using the doctrine as an excuse to engage in unfair labor practices (such as preventing employees from exercising rights granted by the act).

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FROM THE PRESIDENT. . .

Now is the time for our teachers and their friends and families to contact their State Representatives and ask for them not only to support HB 26 but to sign on as co-sponsors as well.

Rep. Eddie Day Pashinski expects the Bill to move quickly through the House Labor Relations Committee and onto the House floor. State Senator Michael Stack is set to introduce the legislation in the Senate. The test will be here. As soon as the Bill passes the House, the Association will be asking you, the members, to contact your State Senator asking for his/her support and co-sponsorship.

It is vital that the legislation become law as quickly as possible to enable teachers throughout Pennsylvania, most especially those stripped of their right to union representation by the Bishop of Scranton, to have the protections enjoyed by all other workers in the Commonwealth.

Speaking of Scranton, Michael Milz, President of the Scranton Diocese Association of Catholic Teachers, fired last June for his union activity, was chosen by the readers of "The Citizens' Voice" newspaper as their 2008 Person of the Year. Mike was singled out from among 10 nominees. Mike was humbled by the award and called it a vote not for him, but for the teachers, parents and students who continue to fight for social justice in the schools of Scranton-Wilkes Barre.



CHAMPION OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION DIES

Our Catholic schools lost one of their strongest champions on January 9, 2009, when Paul Henkels, Chairman of Henkels & McCoy, died after a long illness. Paul was always searching for ways to keep our schools financially viable. He co-founded the REACH Alliance and helped enact the Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC).

I would think fondly of Paul each time I passed one of those signs in front of so many of our Catholic schools, signs that put in black and white how much money the school was saving PA taxpayers. Not only were those signs Paul's brainchild, they were also erected and paid for by him.

The Association of Catholic Teachers extends its sympathy to Paul's wife and family. His passing is a tremendous loss for all of us.

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 three 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 1st.

MONTHLY GROUP MEDICAL RATES FOR RETIREES AGE 65+ (Effective January 1, 2009)

SECURITY 65 PLAN C with Major Medical:

Employee Only:	\$435.82
Employee & Spouse:	\$871.64

PERSONAL CHOICE 65:

Employee Only:	\$589.70
Employee & Spouse:	\$1179.40

KEYSTONE 65 HMO:

Employee Only:	\$506.70
Employee & Spouse:	\$1013.40

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.**

Kids and Exams

The following e-mail was received in the ACT Office. We thought you would appreciate it.

If you need a laugh, then read through these children's answers on a Science exam.

Q: Name the four seasons.

A: Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q: Explain one of the processes by which water can be made safe to drink.

A: Filtration makes water safe to drink because it removes large pollutants like grit, sand, dead sheep and canoeists.

Q: How is dew formed?

A: The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire.

Q: How can you delay milk turning sour?

A: Keep it in the cow.

Q: What causes the tides in the oceans?

A: The tides are a fight between the Earth and the Moon. All water tends to flow towards the Moon, because there is no water on the Moon and nature hates a vacuum. I forget where the sun joins in this fight.

Q: What are steroids?

A: Things for keeping carpets still on the stairs.

Q: What happens to your body as you age?

A: When you get old, so do your bowels and you get intercontinental.

Q: Name a major disease associated with cigarettes.

A: Premature death.

Q: How are the main parts of the body categorized? (e.g., abdomen)

A: The brainium contains the brain; the borax contains the heart and lungs and the abdominal cavity contains the five bowels A, E, I, O and U.

Q: What is the fibula?

A: A small lie.

Q: What does "varicose" mean?

A: Nearby.

Q: Give the meaning of the term "Caesarean Section."

A: The Caesarean Section is a district in Rome.

Q: What does the word "benign" mean?

A: Benign is what you will be after you be eight.

In Celebration of the Uncelebrated

(Patricia Benner, newly retired teacher, offers some reflections on teaching in the Secondary School System.)

Nostalgia is a hallmark of the aged. On this occasion of my retirement from the secondary system, I reflect on those people who have enlightened, inspired and influenced me over a forty year career. This is no self-serving essay on my accomplishments, for they have been *de rigueur*. I am one of many classroom teachers who enter a classroom each day, prepare interesting, sometimes dynamic lessons which our students find underwhelming, and fulfill duties and expectations our administrations demand. We anticipate no awards or accolades except an occasional letter from a graduate or a chance meeting at a P.T.A. from a former student who has become a parent and smiles in recognition. We are Auden's "unknown citizens" neither distinguished nor infamous, merely performing our job as teacher every period, every day.

I first walked into a classroom in September of 1968 at the age of 21 years. I returned to the high school from which I graduated four years previously, and some of my teachers thought I was still a student. There were very few "lay" teachers in the secondary schools when I was a student, but by the late '60's a large number of eager, enthusiastic neophytes entered the respected, yet low paying, teaching profession. My salary was in the range of \$3000; the women made less than the men.

There were over 200 students in my load and a class size of 75 in dramatic arts. Cardinal Dougherty was co-institutional with almost 7000 students. Each teacher cleaned and decorated his/her classroom and was assigned an extra-curricular activity. Additionally, despite my protestations, I was appointed [sic] the Bowling Coach. I knew nothing about the sport! I procured books on bowling, tried to give tips to my bowlers, and generally just became the head cheerleader for my team. They won their division title that year, and didn't know that their coach couldn't bowl until the Faculty/student bowling game. My score of 28 was a miserable embarrassment for my team. I was happy to have knocked down any of the pins, and used my dismal performance to demonstrate to my team that believing in yourself and maintaining a good team spirit were the reason for their success--certainly not my "coaching" skills! Over the years at C.D., my extra-curriculars expanded to numerous clubs, drama director, and even one experience as a drill master with the color guard of our championship band (another skill I did not possess.)

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In Celebration
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In addition to teaching and coaching, I became a delegate to the Association of Catholic Teachers very early in my career, and served in that capacity for 25 years. A respect for my colleagues and a belief in the power of the teaching profession made advocacy for teachers a natural concomitant. Also, participating in two negotiating teams really served as an eye-opener to the workings of the system. I became acquainted with issues concerning other teachers working in various high schools, and developed a respect for the conscientious union officials as well as those in the Office of Catholic Education. In many ways, the strides we have made in regard to finances and working conditions have certainly exceeded our humble beginnings as a teacher organization.

Transferring schools in my 27th year due to constriction wasn't as devastating as my friends thought. I was ready for a change. After seeing my beloved alma mater's enrollment shrink to around one thousand, I stopped believing in my own contribution to the school. There is a saying which paraphrased exclaims: Lead, Follow or Get out of the way. I chose a transfer to a school which I believed offered opportunities for growth. A different challenge presented itself in the appointment to a department chairmanship. Hiring new teachers, maintaining a budget and developing new curriculum strategies invigorated me. At Archbishop Ryan, I encountered a zealous, experienced faculty of all ages and talents. The second phase of my teaching career in a new school has been a blessing, and I am so fortunate to leave teaching surrounded by such open-hearted colleagues.

Some constants remain: teaching is a difficult job. Forty years later, I am more convinced of that fact. When friends of mine proclaim, "I think I'll retire and go into teaching," I am bemused and amazed. To become a teacher requires an unwavering faith that you might affect possibilities in your students. Teachers reinvent the wheel every class attempting to reach a new group of students. We strive to communicate in creative ways that vary with each generation. We walk a fine line between mentoring and guidance, careful to strike the proper balance between authority and friendship. Most of our victories are private. Our students, our friends and families bear our defeats and **celebrate** our accomplishments - that is enough for many of us as we close our classroom door.

(Editor's Note: Thank you, Pat, for sharing your wisdom with your students and with the Association over these last forty years. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement. We will miss you! Keep in touch!)

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 your decision to possibly apply.
Forms for application will be posted in each school in February.

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 2008 is as follows: Individual Coverage = \$235.86, 2-Person or Family Coverage = \$601.14.

VISION BENEFITS: If you participated in the Voluntary Vision Program in 2008, the amount you paid for this benefit is as follows: Individual Coverage = \$72.24, 2-Person Coverage = \$144.48 and Family Coverage = \$216.96.

Archdiocesan High Schools

TAX INFORMATION

2008 DUES

\$447.51

(12 pays x \$23.31 + 7 pays x \$23.97)

Lancer's Local

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

The contract language is almost finalized. The contract should be printed very soon.

**Tax Information: Union Dues for the Year 2008 are
\$474.60.**

FLU SHOT REIMBURSEMENT: If you already have a flu shot reimbursement form, do not use the Camp Hill addresses listed on the form since those addresses have changed. The correct addresses are listed below.

Keystone Health Plan East: Keystone Health Plan East
P O Box 69353
Harrisburg, PA 17106-9353

Keystone 65: Keystone 65
P O Box 69353
Harrisburg, PA 17106-9353

Personal Choice: Personal Choice
P O Box 69352
Harrisburg, PA 17106-9352

Personal Choice 65: Personal Choice 65
P O Box 69352
Harrisburg, PA 17106-9352

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INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Did you know that you can logon to Independence Blue Cross website at www.ibxpress.com and get all kinds of information at your fingertips? You can make that sure all your family members are active on your policy, you can order identification cards for them and/or print temporary ID cards, you can check recent and past claims, find a provider, view the details of your benefits, and so much more.

In the same way, you can logon to the United Concordia website at www.ucci.com and check the status of dental claims, find a provider, order a dental card, etc.

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DENTAL BENEFITS

As of January 1, 2009, each teacher and their family members will have a \$1,000 in dental benefits available to them for the 2009 calendar year.