



THE

The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers

SPIRIT OF '76

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From the President's Desk

NEGOTIATIONS 2006: NOT A SUMMER FESTIVAL

At the end of each school year, I take a look back over all that happened and try to evaluate what kind of year it was. This year was a very busy one, primarily because we were preparing for contract negotiations. It was the first year for the evaluation of tenured teachers and twenty-one teachers participated in the Constriction lottery.

I am happy to report that all constricted teachers have selected new positions and there are a number of openings still to be filled.

The evaluation of teachers, both tenured and non-tenured, did not run as smoothly as we would have liked. It was necessary to file grievances because the procedures were not uniform throughout the System. Hopefully, next school year, grievances will not be needed because the schools will follow the contract.

The most important item on ACT's Agenda at the moment is to bring back a contract that our teachers will find acceptable. Negotiations have been moving very slowly. There has been a lot to discuss since the greater majority of the System's proposals are far from teacher friendly.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT. . .

If they become part of the Labor-Management Agreement, this will create problems for teachers both in-school and out. For this reason, it will be extremely difficult for the ACT Negotiating Team to agree to much of the language the System has proposed.

One major point of contention is the System's proposal to delete the early retirement benefit. This is a significant stumbling block to any contract ratification. Any teachers who are considering early retirement in the near future should keep in touch with the ACT Office, especially toward the end of August.

And then, there is the "Zipper Clause." Accepting this language will destroy any and all past practices, both in the local schools and System-wide. Three years ago, this same clause was on the table. The Association told the System that we had no problem making a list of practices; however, we wanted the list to remain open, in case other past practices came to light. The System agreed to work with ACT to create such a list. That's as far as it went. The Association never heard another thing about a listing of past practices. ACT continues to be amenable to working on a list, but not to zipping up the contract. We have been extremely open with the System that there can be no agreement on the contract with the Zipper Clause on the table.

As we prepare for the final weeks of contract talks, I am really encouraged by the strength and ability of the ACT Negotiating Team. We are all working very well together. Meetings with the System's Team are scheduled through July. We will keep you updated as we try to hammer out an agreement. Please keep both Teams in your prayers.

Just a reminder; the General Membership Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 5, 2006, at 12 Noon, at Penn's Landing Caterers.



BLUECARD WORLDWIDE

HOW TO OBTAIN MEDICAL CARE WHEN OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

Personal Choice & Keystone Health Plan

1. If an emergency, go to the nearest hospital.
2. If not an emergency, call the BlueCard Access line at 1-800-810-2583 or call collect at 804-673-1177 to arrange for urgent care services with a BlueCard Worldwide hospital or physician. The Voice Response Unit (VRU) prompt will ask if you are seeking care outside the United States. Calls are then routed to World Access.
3. Obtain Personal Choice Pre-certification by calling 1-800-332-2566. For Keystone Pre-certification, call 1-800-227-3116.
4. For urgent inpatient care arranged through World Access, you will not have to pay up front for the services or file a claim. You only pay the usual out-of-pocket expenses such as deductible, co-payment or co-insurance.
5. For urgent outpatient and physician services, pay the provider up front. Get an itemized bill translated into English. Later, complete an international claim form and send it to the BlueCard worldwide Service Center. This claim is available at <http://www.bcbs.com>

COVERAGE FOR MEDICATIONS NOT ON THE FORMULARY

Providers may request formulary coverage of a non-formulary medication when all formulary alternatives have been exhausted or there are contraindications to using the formulary alternatives. The provider should complete the non-formulary appeal form providing detail to support use of the non-formulary medication and fax the request to 215-241-3073 or 888-671-5285. If the non-formulary request is approved, the drug will be paid at the appropriate formulary benefit level. If the request is denied, the member and provider will receive a denial letter with the appropriate appeal language. The member may still receive benefits for the covered non-formulary drug at the non-formulary co-pay or non-formulary co-insurance.

SUMMER NOTES

ACT OFFICE HOURS -- During the summer the Office will be open between the hours of 9:30 AM and 3:30 PM.

ADDRESS CHANGES -- If you are in the process of moving or have already moved to a new address, don't forget to call the ACT Office with your new address and phone number. It is extremely important that we have your current address so we can keep you informed of openings as well as the status of negotiations.

DENTAL AND VISION CARDS -- If you are in need of additional dental and/or vision cards, please call the ACT Office at 215-568-4175 or e-mail your request to nacst.nacst@verizon.net.

MEDICAL CARDS -- If you are in need of additional medical cards, please call Pat Salera at 215-587-3689 or e-mail her at psalera@adphila.org

STUDENT VERIFICATION FORMS FOR MEDICAL AND DENTAL

DENTAL PLAN: Included in this mailing is a Student Verification Form for your Dental Plan. Please complete this form as soon as possible and return it to the Association of Catholic Teachers. If you have a copy of your child's roster for the 2006-2007 school year, please include that as well. If not, please return the form now and mail a copy of the roster or other proof of full-time status (12 credits) at a later date.

MEDICAL PLAN: You will soon be receiving a Student Verification Form from Independence Blue Cross to update your college-aged children for medical and prescription benefits. It is important that you complete the form and return it as soon as possible so that your son's or daughter's coverage won't be interrupted or terminated on November 1, 2006. Please send a copy of your completed verification form to the ACT Office.

ACT MEMBER SERVICE PROGRAM

Franklin Institute Tickets	-----	\$11.00
AMC Movie Tickets	-----	\$ 5.50
Regal/United Artists	-----	\$ 6.00
Morey's Piers		
- Combination Waterpark/Amusement		\$33.00
- Waterpark Ticket Only	-----	\$20.00
National Constitution Center	-----	\$ 5.50
Philadelphia Zoo	-----	\$11.00

Discount coupons are available for Dorney Park, Great Adventure & Hersheypark.