



THE

The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers

SPIRIT

OF '76

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From The
President's Desk

GIVING THANKS

We have just navigated through the turkey and the sweet potatoes and we are moving all too quickly toward the tinsel and a red-nosed reindeer. Before we all get too caught up in the insanity of the season, I wanted to share a few thoughts with you.

Over the Thanksgiving holidays, I had time to look back on some things ACT and its members have to be thankful for this year. There were the successful early bird contract negotiations, which made the down-to-the-wire Labor Day weekend talks unnecessary; the placement of all constricted and laid-off teachers, many back at their original schools; a new high school under construction for a 2010 opening and another on board for 2012, and the resolution of all outstanding grievances (nearly 20) from the previous school year.

Wearing my other hat and reflecting upon life in other Catholic Teacher Union locals, I saw very clearly that this has not been the best of years for some of our colleagues in other parts of Pennsylvania. I have spent a sizable

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

FROM THE PRESIDENT . .

amount of my time as National President working with the teachers in Scranton-Wilkes Barre and Altoona-Johnstown, both of whom are fighting extremely hard to preserve their unions and their hard-won rights under their negotiated contracts. Since, at the present time, there is no protection under either National or State Labor Law for teachers at work in Catholic schools in states other than New Jersey, New York and Minnesota, recognition of unions and the honoring of collective bargaining agreements are fast becoming an endangered species.

Early in 2009, House Bill 2626 will be reintroduced in the PA House. It is unfortunate that justice and equity need to be sought from a government agency, but, especially in the Diocese of Scranton, this seems the only way to provide the protections to which Catholic teachers are entitled.

As all of us prepare for the Christmas holidays and for the New Year, let us give thanks for all that we have been able to achieve as members of the Association of Catholic Teachers. At the same time, we must never take what we have for granted. We only need to look two dioceses north and two dioceses west.

Best wishes to you and your families for a holy and happy Christmas from the Executive Board and Staff of ACT.

Rita



CHRISTMAS SHOPPING MADE EASY

ACT can make your Christmas shopping easy and affordable. The following tickets can be purchased directly from the ACT Office. To purchase any of the tickets mentioned below, send a check payable to the Association of Catholic Teachers with your ticket request.

MOVIE TICKETS

AMC Theatres ----- \$6.00

Regal/United Artists Theatres ----- \$6.00

FRANKLIN INSTITUTE TICKETS

(regular price \$19.25) ----- \$13.00

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER \$7.50

PHILADELPHIA ZOO TICKETS -- \$13.00

To purchase any of the above tickets, send a check payable to the Association of Catholic Teachers with your ticket request.

2008 ACT Negotiating Team



Front Row (Left to Right): Irene Tori, ACT Staff; Rita Schwartz, ACT Staff; Ellen Donato, Bonner-Prndergast

Back Row (Left to Right): Joe Schuler, Corwell-Egan; Mike Galante, Lansdale Catholic; John Zoccola, Archbishop Wood, Dave McQuisten, Bishop Shanahan



Another Note Of Thanks !

From: John J. Reilly Scholarship Award Winners

"Each year, the Association's Executive Board awards a \$500 Scholarship to the 9th grader in each Diocesan high school and at Holy Cross who has the highest general average as of the end of the first semester. If that student is already on scholarship, it is given to the highest student not receiving financial assistance. The \$500 Scholarship is sent to each school to be applied to the student's 10th grade tuition."

Dear Rita,

Please accept our appreciation for ACT's scholarship of \$500.00 for the 2008-09 Annual Fund. Your gift was applied to Shannon Gallen's 10th grade tuition. As the Lansdale Catholic High School community implements our strategic plan for the future, your financial and spiritual support allows our school to continue with its mission of truly being "A learning community, teaching values for life, through a formative Catholic education."

Lansdale Catholic High School did not provide you with any goods or services in whole or partial consideration for your contribution to the Annual Fund. In the words of our late Pope John Paul II, *"Few efforts are more important for the present and future well being of the Church and of the nation than efforts expended in the work of education."* May our Patroness, St. Therese of Lisieux, continue to intercede for us, as we do our very best to meet the needs of all our region's students.

James W. Casey
President

Mrs. Karen L. Maginnis '82
Director of Institutional Advancement
& Alumni Affairs

ACT New Senior Delegate Orientation August 27, 2008



Left (Front to Rear): John Zoccola, ACT Member-at-Large; Irene Tori, ACT Staff; Lucille Pritchard, Senior Delegate Lansdale Catholic; Theresa Marinucci, Senior Delegate Father Judge

Right (Front to Rear): Walt Belovitz, Senior Delegate Naumann-Goretti; Tom Imburgia, Senior Delegate Cardinal O'Hara; Rita Schwartz, ACT Staff; Julia Elliott, Senior Delegate West Catholic

The Church talks the talk but do they walk the walk? NACST Convention 2008

Rita, Irene and I arrived in St. Louis, MO, the site of this year's NACST Convention, and were surprised to see Cardinal Justin Rigali sitting in the gate area where we disembarked. Strange but true, Cardinal Rigali was waiting for our plane so that he could return to Philadelphia. Naturally, Rita greeted the Cardinal and they each seemed compelled to explain their presence in St. Louis.

After settling into our hotel and before the Convention events began, Irene and I walked to the famous "Arch" overlooking the Mississippi River. We made the mistake of getting into one of the confining trams that transport visitors to the top of the Arch, some 630 feet in the sky. It was a mistake in that the tram broke down within 10 feet of our destination. After a fifteen minute delay, we arrived at the top, took time to look out the windows, then descended using the tram on the opposite side of the Arch.

Friday evening found everyone gathered for the "Reports of the Locals". Once again, we counted our blessings for what we have in our local while at the same time giving encouragement to those who were experiencing struggles in their Dioceses.

Saturday morning, we gathered to listen to Dr. Charles J. Russo, M. Div., J. D., Ed. D., Panzer Chair in Education and adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Dayton (Ohio). The title of Dr. Russo's talk was "THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME: NLRB v. Chicago Bishop at Thirty Less One". The "NLRB v. Chicago Bishop" case (1979) was one of the early challenges for employees of religious schools to be covered under NLRB jurisdiction. Dr. Russo cited from numerous encyclicals and Church writings pointing out the obvious: "The Church talks the talk but I'm not so sure they are willing to walk the walk". Dr. Russo spoke at length on the American Church's failure to uniformly conform to the principles of *the rights of workers* inherent in the writings of Leo XIII (*Rerum Novarum*), Pius XI (*Quadragesimo Anno*), Paul VI (*Gaudium et Spes*), John Paul II (*Laborem Exercens* and *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*) and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (*Economic Justice for All* and *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*).

Dr. Russo pointed out several times (and by name) those Bishops who consistently choose not to subscribe to the rights of workers referenced in the preceding writings. More than once, Dr. Russo mentioned the scandal that the Bishops are bringing upon the Church, especially in the eyes of non-Catholics. Years ago, I, along with all children in the parochial schools in Philadelphia, were instructed not to create scandal to those around us. More importantly, never bring scandal upon the Church. So much for those days, obviously those lessons were for the followers, not the leaders.

Dr. Russo left us with two important tasks:
"Continue to disseminate information on Church teachings."
"Make it more uncomfortable for 'them' to lie to your face."

Dr. Russo's keynote address preceded a session that dealt with the Scranton scandal and the push for the passage of House Bill 2626.

Mike Milz, President of Scranton Diocese Association of Catholic Teachers (SDACT), brought us up to date on the dissolution of the Union in the Scranton Diocese. Last year, Mike had informed us of the intention of Bishop Martino to restructure the

(Continued on Page 6)

(Continued from Page 5)

schools. At that time, there was no mention of the possibility of doing away with the 30 year old established representative of the teachers and replacing it with a company union. However, between our last convention and this year's, this is exactly what happened. In addition to replacing SDACT, the Bishop manipulated the staffing in a way that caused Mike Milz to be constricted.

Mike told of the support of numerous area residents including parents, students and various labor unions. He told us of his continuing struggle to have a representative election for the teachers who are very dissatisfied with the Bishop's company union.

Mike's struggle centers around House Bill 2626 which would give important labor rights to teachers of religiously affiliated schools.

You are encouraged to follow the plight of the Scranton teachers on their web site <http://www.SDACT.com/blog>.

Rita followed with her State of the Union address. In addition to thanking the convention speakers, Rita made it clear that "all (of those present) are but one Bishop away" from not being present at future NACST conventions.

The election of NACST officers followed. Irene and I cast the ballots for ACT. Rita was re-elected to another 3 year term as President of NACST.

On Saturday evening, the Saint Louis Archdiocesan Teachers Association (SLATA) treated this year's participants to dinner on a paddle boat while traveling on the Mississippi River.

Everyone returned to their respective locals on Sunday, full of information presented at the various sessions. All are looking forward to next year's Convention in Cleveland, Ohio.

*Joseph F. Schuler
Member-at-Large
Association of Catholic
Teachers Executive Board*



FSA REMINDER

If you are a participant in the 2008 FSA Program, please remember that all monies in your account must be exhausted by December 31, 2008. Any funds remaining in your account after December 31, 2008 will be lost to you. This, however, does not mean that all your eligible expenses must be submitted by December 31, 2008. You have 90 days after the close of the calendar year in which to submit eligible expenses for 2008.

Seniority Lists Posted

Article V, Section 1a states "On or before October 31 of each school year, the Secondary School System shall supply to the Association and shall post in the individual schools a complete listing of all teachers in the Secondary School System including those on approved leaves of absence arranged according to system seniority and school seniority."

"Teachers shall have until December 15 to call attention in writing to errors or file grievances with the local school administration concerning their positions on the seniority roster."



IMPORTANT MEDICAL INFORMATION **CONCERNING FLU SHOTS**

GETTING A FLU SHOT AT THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Flu shots are covered under both the Personal Choice and Keystone Health Plans. The flu shot is covered at a 100%, however, the doctor may charge a co-pay for the office visit.

GETTING A FLU SHOT AT A LOCATION OTHER THAN THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

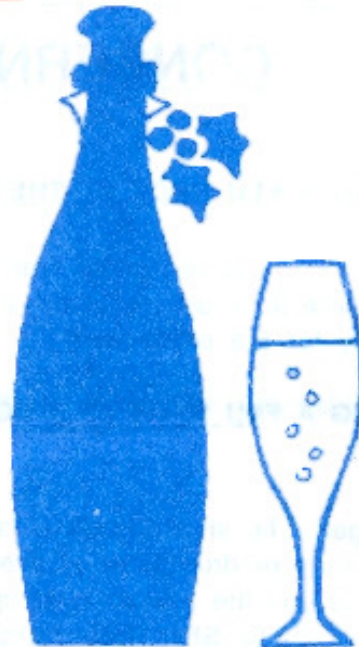
if you get a flu shot outside of a doctor's office, such as the local supermarket or drug store or even at an area school, Blue Cross will reimburse you the amount paid up to \$25. To get reimbursed, you will need to submit a **Flu Shot Reimbursement Form and include your receipt.** (keep a copy for your records) You can get a Reimbursement Form from your Senior Delegate or by calling the ACT Office.

Please note: When submitting a claim for reimbursement, you may get an Explanation of Benefits stating that they applied the \$25 allowance towards your out-of-network deductible. If this happens, you will need to follow up with Blue Cross and ask them to reprocess the claim correctly since flu shots are covered without having to meet any deductible obligation.



**Merry
Christmas**

**AND
Happy
New
Year**



**From
Rita, Irene, Ginny and Caitlin**