



# THE

The Newspaper of Local 1776  
The Association of Catholic Teachers

# SPIRIT OF '76

1700 SANSOM STREET • SUITE 903 • PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103 • 215-568-4175 • VOLUME XXX

No. 3 - Fax 215-568-8270 - e-mail (naest.nacst@verizon.net) - web site(www.act1776.com) - Nov.-Dec. 2009



From The  
President's Desk

## CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS

Although I am writing my Christmas article for the ACT Newsletter over Thanksgiving weekend, it seems appropriate since I am thinking about the many things for which we should be thankful during this holiday season.

Thinking as the President of both a local and a national Catholic Teachers' union, my mind naturally goes to blessings representational and contractual. For high school lay teachers throughout the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, the Labor-Management Agreement between the Association of Catholic Teachers and the Secondary School System goes back some 40 years. It came out of a time when women teachers were paid less than their male counterparts, when subbing meant always giving up your preparation period, when there was no grievance procedure, no tenure, no job security, no limit on class size, no ceiling on the number of preparations, and, most of all, no union representation. Teachers were on their own. Employees-at-will. They could be terminated for any reason or no reason at all.

We have come a long way. Many times, it is really difficult to explain to teachers who came into the System under the protection and benefits of a negotiated contract just what it was like to work under the above conditions.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

FROM THE PRESIDENT. . .

Unfortunately, thousands of Catholic school teachers across the country, including our own elementary teachers, remain employees-at-will. We must never become complacent that what we now enjoy will continue for years to come. One only needs to call to mind what happened to the teachers in the Archdiocese of Boston and the Diocese of Scranton. We must always be vigilant and remember that it is a privilege to have union representation and to be covered by a negotiated contract.

It is not surprising that there are those who see our Labor-Management Agreement as no longer relevant or necessary. To me, you can't get more relevant or necessary than a negotiated, binding Agreement that establishes the rules and regulations for equitable treatment of teachers and defines reasonable work rules.

This time next year, the Association will, once again, be preparing for the negotiating of our Labor-Management Agreement. During this year in-between, I urge you to read your Contract and, most importantly, observe how your work life has been positively affected by the Articles and Sections contained within. More to the point, what would your teaching life be like if you were an employee-at-will and there were no negotiated rules about seniority, tenure, rosters, due process and countless other issues?

Christmas Blessings to you and your family and best wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year.



## FSA REMINDER

If you are a participant in the 2009 FSA Program, please remember that all monies in your account must be exhausted by December 31, 2009. Any funds remaining in your account after December 31, 2009 will be lost to you. This, however, does not mean that all your eligible expenses must be submitted by December 31, 2009. You have 90 days after the close of the calendar year in which to submit eligible expenses for 2009.

# NACST Convention 2009

The 2009 National Association of Catholic School Teachers' (NACST) Convention took place in Cleveland, Ohio. As always, the convention began with a social gathering and the "Report of Locals" on Friday evening, October 9. Delegates from seven states representing fourteen locals reported. Several delegates who negotiated new contracts for the 2009-2010 school year told of the concessions that were asked of them during these difficult economic times.

On Saturday morning, October 10th, the delegates assembled for the Keynote Address delivered by William Droel of the National Center for the Laity, Chicago, IL. To understand Bill Droel's message to the delegates, let me first present a short history of the National Center for the Laity taken in part from their web site.

Sometime in the mid 1970s, Catholic activists in Chicago and elsewhere became troubled by the United States' lack of implementation of certain aspects of Vatican II, especially as it concerned the Council's document *Gaudium et Spes, The Church in the Modern World*.

About this same time, the Association of Chicago Priests was meeting to discuss the laity. It struck Monsignor Dan Cantwell that priests should not be holding meetings about the laity, in the absence of any laity, so Cantwell gathered a group of fifty people, religious and lay, together. The result of their discussions was the December 1977 document, *A Chicago Declaration of Christian Concern*. According to the *Declaration*, the central Vatican II message—that the people of God live their vocations in the everyday world of science, industry, commerce, politics, around the home, on the postal route, in the classroom, and in the emergency room—was not being implemented.

The reaction to the *Declaration* was electrifying. ... In order to handle all the mail being generated, an office, "The National Center for the Laity", was opened at Mundelein College, early in 1978.

Two of the ways in which The National Center keeps the message of Vatican II alive are through its witness to the principles of Catholic social teaching, especially when Church institutions are not practicing what they preach and through supporting those parish leaders and workday Christians who apply their faith to issues in the workplace and the community.

Bill Droel stated that he has been following the activities of NACST since 1983. He emphasized his respect for NACST as an organization as well as for its members, who, as teachers, have made superior contributions to education. He said that we bring a Catholic way of looking at social problems to all of our students. We introduce them to Catholic sensibility, namely faith and reason. Our work has resulted in low drop out rates, high college enrollments, exceeding national standards and high levels of parental involvement. Catholic schools, according to the research of The National Center, tend to stabilize neighborhoods, cities and towns.

Bill also stated that research shows that no other Catholic program has the lasting effect that Catholic schools have. The long-term durability of a person's value system is directly related to the number of years of Catholic schooling.

(Continued on Page 4)

Following Bill Droef's keynote address, Mike Miiz, president of the Scranton Diocese Association of Catholic Teachers, took us through the history of events in Scranton since last year's convention, including the impact of Bishop Martino's resignation as Ordinary on August 31st. The SDACT leadership is hoping to meet with the new Ordinary of the Diocese as soon as he has been appointed and installed.

Mike also addressed the attendees on the status of House Bill 26.

At the conclusion of Mike's presentation, Bill Droef praised Mike by saying, "What you did is historic!", comparing SDACT's social justice crusade to that of Cesar Chavez.

On Saturday afternoon, Rita gave her State of the Union address. She began with "The State of the Union has been affected adversely by the economy, the rising cost of health insurance and the Church's union busting/avoidance practices". She then proceeded to explain each of these points.

This year's convention concluded when Rita thanked everyone for attending, with special thanks going to the host local, CHALTA, for all their work in making the 2009 NACST Convention very successful.

*Joe Schuler  
Senior Delegate  
Conwell-Egan Catholic*



## *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."

## A BRIEF OUTLINE OF YOUR DENTAL BENEFITS

The dental plan provided by the Association of Catholic Teachers Health and Welfare Fund is a plan focused on preventive care. You are not required to contribute toward the cost of this benefit. It is completely separate from your medical health insurance. Therefore, you should have a separate dental card that says "Unitec Concorcia".

Your Maximum Benefit for the calendar year 2009 is \$1,000 per person and will renew again as of January 1, 2010. Therefore, you and each covered member of your family have \$1,000 to be used for covered services which include the following:

### PREVENTIVE & DIAGNOSTIC CARE (Plan pays 100% of UCR Charges)

- Routine exam (2 in a twelve month period)
- X-rays (subject to certain limits)
- Cleanings (2 in a twelve month period)
- Fluoride application (children under 19)
- Space maintainers (children under 19)

### MINOR RESTORATIONS (Plan pays 100% of UCR charges)

- Fillings (amalgam, silicate, acrylic, synthetic, porcelain, composite fillings restoration)
- Inpatient consultation

### GENERAL SERVICES (Plan pays 100% of UCR Charges)

- Repair of dentures (full or partial)
- Emergency treatment
- Simple extractions
- Endodontics
- Anesthesia

### PERIODONTICS - subject to certain limits (Plan pays 50% of UCR Charges)

- Diagnosis and treatment planning
- Non surgical therapy
- Surgical therapy
- Maintenance/preventive procedures

Please note that caps, crowns, braces, dentures, oral surgical services and any other services relating to the preparation or build-up for these services are not covered under the dental plan.



## SHINGLES VACCINE INFORMATION



As reported earlier, the shingles vaccine is covered under the medical plan for individuals age 60 or older. However, the process for getting the vaccine covered is not a smooth one. Because the vaccine is a frozen vaccine and must be stored at a specific temperature, doctors do not keep the vaccine on hand in their office. Patients are given a prescription to take to their pharmacy with instructions to return to the physicians office within a 1/2 hour of picking up the vaccine. The doctor then administers the vaccine.

The problem with this is that the prescription plan does not cover the cost of the shingles vaccine which is approximately \$250.00. The teacher must pay for this vaccine out of pocket and then submit a Personal Choice Out-of-Network claim form to be reimbursed for the cost. (This form can be downloaded from the ACT webpage).

The Out-of-Network claim for the vaccine will initially be denied. When the teacher receives the denial, they must contact Personal Choice and the claim will be reprocessed manually. Once Blue Cross sees the doctor's claim in the system, a manager's exception will be made and reimbursement for the vaccine cost will be sent to the member.



## SEASONAL 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 print a Reimbursement Form from the ACT Webpage.

**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.

## VOLUNTARY VISION PLAN

The deadline for enrollment in the Davis Vision Plan has been extended to Monday, December 14, 2009. The plan will go into effect on January 1, 2010. Teachers who are already on the plan, must also complete the enrollment form to continue on the plan for the 2010 calendar year.

CHECKS FOR THE VOLUNTARY VISION PLAN SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO THE ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC TEACHERS.



### ACT MEMBER SERVICE PROGRAM

Members of the Association of Catholic Teachers may purchase discounted tickets directly from the ACT Office for the following attractions:

Franklin Institute Tickets	-----	\$13.00
AMC Movie Tickets	-	\$6.00
Regal/United Artists	---	\$6.50
National Constitution Center		\$7.50
Philadelphia Zoo	-----	\$13.00

To purchase any of the tickets listed above, send a check payable to the Association of Catholic Teachers with a note indicating the ticket and the quantity being ordered.



**Merry  
Christmas**

**AND**

**Happy  
New  
Year**



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