



THE

The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers

SPIRIT OF '76

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From The President's Desk

A NEW SCHOOL YEAR: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Welcome back. I wish I could add "to everyone," but, unfortunately, there are still nine teachers without a position. Six teachers are in hybrid positions which means that they have accepted long term sub positions until a permanent position opens. As permanent positions occur, the laid off teachers and those in substitute jobs, will fill them according to system seniority. By contract, "the System shall reimburse all laid-off teachers four (4) weeks salary by October 1." Laid-off teachers can also COBRA their medical benefits and are on the recall list for three semesters. Let's hope everyone is back to work before too long.

We are entering the second year of a three year contract. There will be some changes this year, most especially in the Medical Health Plan. The new plan year starts November 1st. Medical premium deductions will begin with the pay of November 13, 2009. The major changes are as follows:

The 20/30/70 Plan (\$20 for Doctors' visits, \$30 for Specialists and 70% covered out of network) will become the 25/35/70 Plan.

Prescription Drugs which presently cost \$10 for generic, \$20 for Formulary and \$35 for Non-Formulary will, come November 1st, increase to \$10, \$25, \$40.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

FROM THE PRESIDENT.

The teachers' medical contribution for Personal Choice remains at twelve and one-half percent (12.5%). Since the premium is expected to increase, the teachers' actual premium costs will also.

The contribution for Keystone Health Maintenance Organization Plan increases from 10.5% to 11%.

The Open Enrollment Period runs through October. ACT will be sending out plan comparisons as well as actual premium costs so that teachers can decide whether to stay with their current plan or not.

As you know from the opening day meetings, there is more and more emphasis on the use of technology not only in your classroom but in other areas of your work life as well. Let me say it one more time: **you need to use caution and common sense when you are using a computer or a cell phone.** Keep in mind that the school's computers are just that. Anything and everything you do on a school computer is accessible to the school administration.

Keep all correspondence with students and parents strictly education-related. Keep your opinions off any blogs, nings or tweets, especially if they deal with fellow employees, administration, students, or subjects of a sensitive nature.

If you have a Facebook or MySpace page, be very careful what you post and who has access to it. What you put on a computer or cell phone could, indeed, be job threatening. It certainly was this past year for teachers both non-tenured and veteran.

I wish you a happy and productive school year. If you have any questions or problems, please contact the ACT Office. Irene, Ginny and I will be glad to help you.



STUDENT VERIFICATION PROCESS FOR DEPENDENT CHILDREN IN COLLEGE

If your child is a full-time college student between the ages of 19 and 23, Blue Cross will verify their full-time status using a national college clearinghouse database. If your child cannot be found on that data base, Blue Cross will send you a letter asking you to contact them by phone to provide the needed information for verification. (This is an automated process and only takes a few minutes.) If they do not hear from you and cannot update your child's college enrollment/status, your child will be removed from the plan on December 31, 2009. If you have any questions or problems concerning student verification, please contact the ACT Office.

Representation May Be Crucial

Article III, Section 2 of the Labor-Management Agreement is short but extremely important. Please pay particularly close attention to what it has to say.

No teacher may be asked to attend a meeting with the school or diocesan administration without a representative of the Association being present if the teacher reasonably feels the meeting could result in disciplinary action against him/her.

Disciplinary action cannot be taken against any teacher unless the teacher has been apprised in writing of his/her right to union representation.

Should you "reasonably feel" the meeting could turn into one that involves you in disciplinary action, immediately get to your Senior Delegate for advice or call the ACT Office if you choose. Don't let a relatively minor situation turn into a major one because you decided you could "handle" it yourself.

Education Grant Application Due

Teachers who wish to apply for an Education/Study Grant under the Labor-Management Agreement (Art. XIII, Sec. 7) must do so by October 15th. The grant offers 50 percent tuition reimbursement up to a maximum of \$1800 per year.

Grants are awarded on the basis of system seniority and are available to any teacher with at least one year of teaching in the System.

Forms to apply for an Education/Study Grant are posted at the local school or can be obtained through your Senior Delegate or by calling the ACT Office at 215-368-4175.

Note: Teachers may apply for an Education/Study Grant if they intend to enroll in a three credit college course to meet the requirements of Continuing Professional Education Credit under Act 48.

Additional credits?

If you have received an advanced degree or additional credits over the summer which qualify you for payment under a different column of the salary scale, notify your school bookkeeper immediately.

You must also send proof (an original transcript) of the degree/credits to Mrs. Theresa Ryan-Szott at the Office of Catholic Education so that the change in degree/credits can be verified.

For your records, it is highly recommended that all documents be sent via certified mail, return receipt requested.

The five lanes of the salary scale are:

Bachelor's Degree
Bachelor's + 18 or certification
Master's or 30 graduate credits
Double Master's
Doctorate



More Notes 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 C. Schwartz:

Thank you for your generous donation of \$500.00. Your gift truly allows Cardinal Dougherty to determine the future for generations of young men and women.

The difference between a good institution and a great one is the support of its alumni and friends, including the families of our students. Your generosity makes it possible for Cardinal Dougherty to provide our students the values, skills, knowledge, and opportunities required to compete in an ever-changing world and an increasingly competitive work environment.

Your support makes a tremendous difference in the life of our current students who otherwise may not have been able to afford a Catholic education. You are helping to provide young men and women the opportunity for a Cardinal Dougherty education. This will lay the foundation for them to build upon the rest of their lives.

Thank you for making this all possible.

Sincerely,

Carl F. Janicki
President

Vernard Abrams
Director of Institutional Advancement

Thank you for your support.

Dear Rita,

Thank you very much for the check for \$500 to be applied toward Kathleen MacPeeters' tenth grade tuition. I'm sure her parents are most grateful for the scholarship awarded to their daughter and no doubt Kathleen will continue to achieve academically during her sophomore year.

It is because of generous contributions like yours that so many of our students are able to continue at St. Hubert. God bless you for your generosity.

Sincerely,

Sr. Mary E. Smith, IHM
President

Lancer's Local

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

UNION DUES

2009-2010

\$502.60

\$50.26 per month

Our Irish Blessing

The words "*When Irish eyes are smiling*" are not just the lyrics of a song, they are what we think of when we remember our colleague and dear friend, Joe McGovern, who passed away on July 2, 2009. We picture his big grin, sparkling blue eyes, and ready sense of humor which brought much happiness to his wife, Rita, daughter, Kate, family, friends, co-workers, and students.



Joe never allowed his health issues from Juvenile Diabetes to hinder his great love of life. His positive attitude, despite his many health problems, was inspirational to us all. The past two years have been particularly difficult for Joe and his family as he battled the crippling effects of his disease.

Despite being out on sick leave, he maintained his links with his friends at LC. He served as the long-time Alternate Senior Delegate for the union; he was also the Chairperson of the Business and Technology Department.

Joe loved a good prank and initiated many at school. He was always a good friend to colleagues and students, and his caring concern for others was very evident.

His death will create a void which will be difficult to fill. We miss his cheerful presence in the building and his generosity of spirit.

As the Irish blessing says, "*May God hold him in the palm of His hand until we meet again.*"



*Eileen Hildenbrand
Lansdale Catholic*

Thanks for the Memories

Barbara Jean Klus was a faithful art and world literature teacher for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for many years. She left teaching to watch after her elderly parents in South Jersey. Shortly thereafter, Barbara was diagnosed with stage IV colon cancer. Barbara passed away on June 19, 2009, after a year and a half battle. She fought hard until the end and passed peacefully and without pain in the arms of her four children.

Her daughter, Rebecca Lorden, writes:

Few people have the joys of having their mom as a teacher. Most people who do may not see it as a joy, an honor, and a privilege. But, in my opinion, I am forever lucky.

My mother was an art teacher at Saint Joachim Parish Elementary School while I was a student there. She was as beautiful an artist as she was a person. Every project she dreamt up, even if just using construction paper and markers, was a direct beam of creative light from her mind. She brought history and storytelling to life, stirring each art session into a simmering pot of knowledge and artistic power, which seemed to overflow beyond those classroom doors.

As a teenager, my mother taught world literature at my alma mater, Little Flower Catholic High School for Girls. This too was my mother's high school, and we shared a sisterhood that is unexplainable, and often unattainable, at most other educational institutions. Ask any LF girl and she will tell you that the power of that school is limitless.

She helped me to find my life path at Little Flower. If it were not for her, I would never be who I am today. Granted, she also helped me to find the path to the dean's office, as I was a smart-mouthed daughter who received pink slips as well.

Regardless, I cherish all of these memories. It is not often that you get to grow up with your best friend as your mom, your teacher -- and now, guardian angel.



Arnold Ronzoni
Little Flower

ALERT ON CHANGES IN STATUS

Have you informed both your school office and the ACT Office of any changes in your marital or family status? Most importantly, have you been sure to include any new dependents on your health and dental plans?

Don't wait until that person needs to use the plan. Please inform the ACT Office and the local school administrators of your changes.

Make sure when supplying the information to your school that you put the information in writing and put a date on it before signing. It could mean a considerable financial outlay on your part or a huge wait in time until the changes can be made if you don't take care of these things TODAY.

DENTAL CARDS - MEDICAL CARDS - VISION CARDS

Any teacher in need of additional dental cards for college-aged students away from home should send an email to Ginny at nacst.nacst@verizon.net.

Any teacher in need of additional medical cards for college-aged students away from home should email Ginny at nacst.nacst@verizon.net.

Any teacher in need of additional vision cards for college-aged students away from home should send an email to Ginny at nacst.nacst@verizon.net.

REMINDERS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS AWAY FROM HOME

1. Always carry your current Personal Choice ID Card.
2. In an emergency, go directly to the nearest hospital.
3. Call BlueCard Access at 800-810-BLUE (2583) or access the National BlueCard PPO online provider directly through www.ibxpress.com to find BlueCard PPO providers.
4. Always use a BlueCard PPO doctor or hospital to make sure you receive the highest level of benefits.
5. Call IBC for prior authorization, if necessary. Use the pre-authorization phone number on your ID card, since it is different from the BlueCard access number shown above. If in doubt whether a service is covered or requires pre-authorization, call the Member Services telephone number on your ID card.

UNION DUES - 2009-2010

\$494.90

\$24.75 for 20 Pays

(Starting October 2nd)

SERVICE FEE - 2009-2010

\$395.92

\$22.00 for 18 pays

(Starting October 30th)

BORDERS WALDENBOOKS

Educator Savings Days

September 29- October 7

30% off of list price of almost everything. (in-store only)

Current and retired educators save on purchases for personal or classroom use. Just bring proof of educator status.

JCREW

JCREW is offering teachers a 15% discount. Identification is needed to show teacher status and to take advantage of this offer.

(If you know of a store or an organization offering union members or teachers a discount, please let us know, so that we can publish this information in our newsletter and member services.)

Teacher in the News

The June 25, 2009 issue of *The Northeast Times* carried an article about Ryan Meyer, a teacher at Father Judge High School.

Ryan Meyer, who recently finished his first year of teaching at Father Judge High School, is participating in the Rock the Boat for Autism challenge this summer, where he is helping to row 1500 miles to raise money and awareness for autism.

"Any way that we can raise awareness and money and move things along for autism to help these people, we have to do it."

> Ryan Meyer



Northeast Philadelphia's Ryan Meyer has joined rowers Larry Morris, John Lase, James O'Donoghue and Dan McCann in a 17-foot Van Dyne Surf Boat on the Rock the Boat for Autism challenge.

INFORMATION ON VACCINES FOR PNEUMONIA, SEASONAL FLU, SWINE FLU, AND SHINGLES

The **Pneumonia Vaccine** is covered once every five years beginning at age 64.

Personal Choice will reimburse teachers up to \$25.00 for the **Seasonal Flu Shot**. You may get this shot at your doctor's office, or at an outside location, such as a school, pharmacy or supermarket.

Personal Choice will pay for the **Swine flu Vaccine** only when administered by a medical professional in a doctor's office.

The **Shingles Vaccine** is covered 100% for individuals over the age of 60. No precertification is needed.

PHYSICAL THERAPY BENEFIT

The benefit for physical therapy under your Personal Choice policy is **60 visits per calendar year**. Precertification is not needed. There is a \$20 copay for the first 30 visits. There is a \$30 co-pay for visits 31-60.

WWW.IBXPRESS.COM

Teachers who have questions about what their medical plan covers, specifically, can log onto www.ibxpress.com. Once there, you can register by setting up a user name and password which will give you access to your benefits (what is covered, not covered, limits, co-pays, etc.) The site allows you to check the status of your claims, and is also useful when tax time comes around, since it allows you to print your claims/expenses for the calendar year.

MEDICAL OPEN ENROLLMENT

Medical Open Enrollment will occur during the month of October with benefit changes going into effect November 1, 2009. By the second week of October, teachers should receive information (comparison sheet, rate sheet, payroll deduction, co-pay changes) on the two medical plans being offered -- Personal Choice or Keystone HMO.

ACT School Visit Schedule 2009-2010

NAME OF SCHOOL	ACT VISITOR	DATE	DAY
Bonner-Prendergast	Rita & Irene	October 27	Tuesday
Carroll	Irene	October 21	Wednesday
Conwell-Egan	Irene	December 16	Wednesday
Dougherty	Rita	November 17	Tuesday
Hallahan	Irene	January 13	Wednesday
Holy Cross	Irene	January 20	Wednesday
St. Hubert	Rita	February 2	Tuesday
Fr. Judge	Irene	February 24	Wednesday
Kennedy-Kenrick	Rita	October 20	Tuesday
Lansdale	Rita	November 3	Tuesday
Little Flower	Rita	January 19	Tuesday
McDevitt	Irene	December 2	Wednesday
Neumann-Goretti	Rita	December 15	Tuesday
North	Rita	January 12	Tuesday
O'Hara	Rita & Irene	November 10	Tuesday
St. Pius X	Irene	November 18	Wednesday
Roman	Irene	February 3	Wednesday
Ryan	Rita & Irene	February 9	Tuesday
Shanahan	Irene	November 4	Wednesday
West Catholic	Irene	February 17	Wednesday
Wood	Rita	December 1	Tuesday