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The Newspaper of Local 1776  
The Association of Catholic Teachers

# SPIRIT OF '76

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No. 8 - Fax 215-568-8270 - e-mail (nacst.nacst@verizon.net) - web site(www.act1776.com) - July 2011



## From the President's Desk

### NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

We can all understand the financial problems of the System. That is why back in November of 2010, the Association approached the System with a proposal for an Early Bird contract. The recession, declining enrollment, teacher constriction, closing elementary schools and the Blue Ribbon Commission figured in our reasons for proposing the Early Bird.

Instead of the Early Bird, the System drew up a contract proposal which, literally, lists a change of some kind on every one of the 70 pages of our Labor-Management Agreement. There are hundreds of anti-teacher and anti union clauses. Sadly, the System does not look at the document as a two-party effort, a Labor-Management Agreement. The System mutually agreed to what is contained in our contract. Unfortunately, now, all they want to do is gut the document of meaningful protections, equitable and just working conditions and hard-won benefits. They also want to seriously limit the Association's ability to work in the best interest of its members.

Our Labor-Management Agreement has evolved over 43 years. It's amazing that it got so bad so quickly. One thing we will not become is a mirror image of the non-unionized elementary teachers with no rights and no protection.

Let's look at some of the System's proposals and see how they "are essential steps toward the sustainability of the System."

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FROM THE PRESIDENT. . .

1) Teachers whose schools close or who are constricted because of declining enrollment, whether with a few years of service or with 20, 25, 30 years of service, would be laid off and have no right to continued employment. If there is any opening, they can apply for that position and be interviewed. Teachers recently displaced because of the closing of Cardinal Dougherty and North Catholic might want to consider where this proposal would have put them this year.

2) Teachers with 10, 20, 30 years of seniority could have their tenure repealed as determined by the principal, and this would not be grievable. That would make them able to be non-renewed at the end of the school year, again without recourse to the grievance procedure.

3) Class size would be increased, study halls (100-1) and cafeteria (175-1) could have up to 20 students added. Teachers could be rostered for 3 preparations and teach 4, 5 or 6 classes in a row if "the needs of the school dictate." Hour and a half department and faculty meetings could be scheduled whenever the principal determines.

4) Part-time teachers could be hired to replace full-time teachers

On May 25, 2011, the ACT Membership gave the ACT Executive Board a clear mandate which was unanimously approved: "The membership of the Association hereby authorizes the Negotiating Team to resoundingly reject the unjust and demeaning proposals currently presented by the System, and, furthermore, authorizes the Executive Board to call for a strike when needed."

As of today, there has been no change in any of the proposals the System has placed on the table (See the ACT Website for a listing of these proposals). In fact, it wasn't until June 23rd that the Association finally received the System's proposals regarding "disciplinary matters and protocols" (Article III, Section 9a) and proposals regarding "discharge and non-renewal" (Article IV, Section 5).

The System still wants to reopen any article and section of the contract that "is impacted by the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission as approved by the Ordinary." This means that come October, significant changes could occur in the contract.

Negotiating sessions are scheduled for July 12, 14, 22 and 26. August dates are also on the calendar.

The ACT Team will work extremely hard to secure a fair and just contract that the membership will be able to ratify. While being cognizant of the problems of the System, however, the Association will need to see a much less anti-teacher and anti-union attitude on the part of the System toward the legitimate rights of its teachers.





## ACT MEMBER SERVICE PROGRAM

The following tickets are available to purchase from the ACT Office.

Franklin Institute Tickets	----	\$13.00
AMC Movie Tickets	----	\$ 6.00
Régal/United Artists	----	\$ 6.50
National Constitution Center	----	\$ 9.00
Philadelphia Zoo	----	\$13.00
Morey's Piers, Wildwood		
Waterpark Tickets	----	\$27.00
Amusement Park Tickets	----	\$43.00

To request tickets, send a check made payable to the Association of Catholic Teachers with a note indicating what tickets are being ordered and in what quantity.

## FREEDOM CREDIT UNION

The Freedom Credit Union offers teachers and their families a wide range of financial opportunities. Savings accounts, checking accounts, loans, MAC, IRAs, to name a few, are available to members of the credit union.

The Freedom Credit Union has four Philadelphia locations, as well as an office in Abington, Lansdale and Warminster. For more information visit the credit union's website at [www.freedomcu.org](http://www.freedomcu.org). You may also call the ACT Office at 215-568-4175 or the Freedom Credit Union at 215-612-5900 .

## RETIREMENT INFORMATION

The ACT Office has put together some medical information (rates, comparison sheets and contract provisions) for teachers who are considering retirement in the near future. If you are considering an early retirement or if you will be reaching the age for normal retirement, call the ACT Office at 215-568-4175 for your retirement packet. You may also email your request to [nacst.nacst@verizon.net](mailto:nacst.nacst@verizon.net).

## REMINDERS

**ACT OFFICE HOURS** – During the summer months, 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 update your records and keep you informed of openings as they occur.

**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](mailto:nacst.nacst@verizon.net).

**MEDICAL CARDS** – If you are in need of additional medical cards, please call the Office of Catholic Education at 215-587-3689 or contact the ACT Office.

## ACT HAS GONE GREEN

Since January, the ACT has been sending most of its communications such as Executive Board Minutes, Negotiation updates, and other pertinent information to teachers via email. There are still many teachers who have not provided us with a personal email address and, therefore, have not received these mailings. Some teachers have provided us with email addresses, but the email comes back to us as a bad address or with a note saying that our email address has been rejected by the server.

It is extremely important that we have an email address for each teacher and that you list our email address as an accepted email address, so that you receive up-to-date information on extremely important matters.

If you have not received any emails from the ACT Office in the last two months, please send us an email and let us know. Once you email us, we will have your correct email address (it cannot be a school email address) and we will send you a copy of anything that was sent out in recent months.