



THE

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The Association of Catholic Teachers

SPIRIT OF '76

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From The
President's Desk

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

Once again, I am writing my Christmas article for the ACT Newsletter over Thanksgiving weekend, and I am thinking about the many things for which we should be thankful during this holiday season.

As the President of both a local and a national Catholic teachers' union, my thoughts focus on the many blessings offered by union recognition and a negotiated contract. The Labor-Management Agreement between the Association of Catholic Teachers and the Secondary School System goes back over 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. It is often 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.

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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 Diocese of Scranton. As I stressed in my recent State of the Union Address at the NACST Convention, 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.

As I write this article, the Association is preparing for the negotiating of our Labor-Management Agreement. Teachers are being sought to serve on the ACT Negotiating Team; ACT Members are being asked to complete Contract Surveys so that the Team can draw up proposals that reflect what our teachers want and need. As teachers reflect on what would make their teaching lives better, they need also to imagine what their teaching lives would be like if they were an employee-at-will and there were no negotiated rules about seniority, tenure, rosters, due process and countless other issues.

In a short time, the emphasis will be on the upcoming contract negotiations; however, for these next few weeks, let us concentrate on the coming of the Christ Child and on all that the Christmas season means for us and those we love.

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 2010 FSA Program, please remember that all monies in your account must be exhausted by December 31, 2010. Any funds remaining in your account after December 31, 2010 will be lost to you. This, however, does not mean that all your eligible expenses must be submitted by December 31, 2010. You have 90 days after the close of the calendar year in which to submit eligible expenses for 2010.

Give teachers dollars to go with ideals

I don't know what to think about public education these days except that everyone talks about what's wrong with it but few mention the green elephant in the classroom.

My daughter's Haddonfield elementary school is blessed with an attentive principal, engaging educators, and civilized class sizes.



Monica Yant Kinney

Unlike Gov. Christie, I don't think Jane's teachers are pampered or overpaid. I wish Christie would dial back the bile, but I agree that the New Jersey Education Association hasn't helped its members' cause by making seemingly unreasonable demands in trying times.

That's not to say I buy into the idea that teaching is such a noble job people should do it for free.

See **TEACHERS** on B4



Commentary By Monica Yant Kinney

Teachers can't live on ideals

TEACHERS from B1
I can think of no profession (besides religious orders) in which recruiters mythologize work with words like *calling* and *service*. School reformers insist they need the "best and brightest" to rescue American education. But they want these superstars cheap, or they're willing to pay well only those teachers whose students all ace standardized tests.

My father earned a \$52,000 salary after three decades of teaching government in the Midwest. After he retired in 1998, a friend dangled a parochial position, saying Dad would start at the top: \$32,000.

"You'd have to be pretty damn committed to take that," he recalled. "I wondered how they could make a living."

The green elephant

In the much-debated education-reform documentary *Waiting for "Superman,"* selfless urban charter school teachers are shown working miracles. But the movie doesn't say what they earn for all the 12-hour days and six-day weeks.

Desperately seeking fresh blood, the government staged a pro-teaching pep rally at Temple University last week, featuring U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, Phila-

delphia Superintendent Arlene Ackerman, and actor Tony Danza, who seemed sad at the poor ratings for his A&E series about playing school at Northeast High.

Ackerman gamely tried to sell the high school and college students in the audience on a career that could find them vilified by politicians, smacked by a student, or both.

"I call it being a servant," she preached. "This is God's work. There's nothing more satisfying."

As Ackerman talked, the Temple Spanish education major sitting next to me leaned over, concerned.

"What's the incentive?" whispered senior Paris Algeo. "Why should it be all about sacrifice? Why does teaching have to be less prestigious than everything else?"

Altruism expected

Richard Ingersoll taught high school until he got fed up, earned a Ph.D., and joined the Graduate School of Education faculty at the University of Pennsylvania.

"The pay, the respect, the working conditions, all of these things make this a better job," the professor mused. "It's really unfortunate. Because all I ever wanted to be was a high school history teacher."

Ingersoll studies teacher

quality, turnover, and pay and agrees educators are held to an unreal standard.

"If you are a professional athlete, wanting more money and having no loyalty to a team is fine," he pointed out. "But teachers are supposed to be so altruistic. If they want money, they look greedy."

With 3.9 million jobs, teaching is among the nation's largest occupations. Three-fourths of all teachers are women, a gender imbalance exacerbated by economics: Nationally, the median salary after 30 years is just \$65,000.

Algeo, a Huntingdon Valley native, remains undeterred. Her mother is an oncologist, her father a radiologist. They support her plans to teach but warn that "you're setting yourself up for a much lower standard of living than you're used to."

And as for the push to get more men in education? Algeo's boyfriend informed her that he didn't see himself standing at a chalkboard for long.

"He says, 'I'll be a history teacher if that's what it takes to become an administrator.'"

Reach me at myant@phillynews.com or 215-654-6670. Visit my Web page and connect on Facebook and Twitter at philly.com/kinney.

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 "United Concordia".

Your Maximum Benefit for the calendar year 2010 is \$1,000 per person and will renew again as of January 1, 2011. 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.

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
Regal/United Artists -----	\$ 6.50
National Constitution Center ---	\$ 9.00
Philadelphia Zoo -----	\$13.00

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.



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 and the H1N1 Flu Shot

Independence Blue Cross will reimburse members up to \$25 for the seasonal flu shot and/or the H1N1 flu vaccine if a member receives the vaccine at a nontraditional location like a worksite, grocery store or community center. A member may have to pay an up-front fee, but may file a reimbursement form to IBC. Reimbursement forms may be downloaded from the ACT website at www.act1776.com or you may call the ACT Office and one will be mailed to you.



**Merry
Christmas**

AND

**Happy
New
Year**



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