

## NACST Convention

The 39th annual NACST Convention was held October 6-8, 2017 at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Cleveland, OH.

Twenty-nine union officers from 9 NACST affiliated locals gathered for the meetings.

Attorney Ben Eisner addressed the convention delegates on the status of health care in the nation, highlighting the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and changes proposed to the legislation.

Among convention business: delegates elected Executive Committee members to 3 year terms; held the annual Report of Locals; and, participated in an extended Roundtable discussion of local issues and actions.

*Attorney Ben Eisner  
[Spear, Wilderman]*

*from the President ...*

## STATE OF THE UNION: 39 YEARS AND GOING STRONG

In October, the National Convention's Agenda was so filled with Workshops and national business, there was no time for a State of the Union Address. Therefore, I am going to use my space in the January Newsletter to talk a little about our Union, how we have fared this year and where we are headed.

It goes without saying that we, as teachers in Catholic schools, are unique individuals who are amazingly dedicated to our students and to our vocation. We, as unionized teachers, with recognition and mutually negotiated contracts have the security that allows us to teach without constantly looking over our shoulders. Three cheers for us and for the union leadership that works extremely hard every day to ensure that our rights are protected.

There was some very sad news this year. We lost another of our affiliated schools. Queen of Peace High School in North Arlington, New Jersey, home of the Queen of Peace High School Lay Teachers Association, closed its doors on June 30. The QPHSLTA had been affiliated with NACST for twenty years. It was a truly sorrowful and painful time for all of us. The Delegates to the 39th Annual NACST Convention unanimously approved the CONVENTION RESOLUTION that appears on page 6 of this Newsletter.



We welcomed two new members to the NACST Executive Committee: Brian Kilsavage, President of the Federation of Pittsburgh Diocesan Teachers and Chris Rusin, President of the Secondary Lay Teachers Association of Buffalo. Brian and Chris will serve three-year terms as Vice Presidents at Large.

We look ahead to convening a year from now for our 40th Anniversary as an organization. The National Association of Cath-

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## National Executive Committee

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## 2017-2020 Executive Committee

The following members were elected to serve 3 year terms on the NACST Executive Committee.



*front row, left to right: Barbara McVicker [Youngstown]; Rita Schwartz [ACT]; Patricia Spellman [SLATA]; Brian Kilsavage [FPDT]*

*back row, left to right: Michael DeSantis [CHALTA]; Paul Fitzpatrick [Hartford]; Chris Rusin [Buffalo]*

### At the Convention

*reflections by  
CTU President Mary Kay Rossi*

This was my second NACST convention and I thought it was great on both a professional and social level.

I found the round table discussion to be very helpful and informative. Hearing the challenges of the various locals and the solutions that were offered by the attendees gave me perspective on what was happening in my own local.

The afternoon session was equally informative.

The issues surrounding health care coverage today are so complex, but Ben Eisner was able to cover everything in terms that made sense.

Links to important sites and articles were provided and kept me busy reading for weeks after the convention.

Of course, it wasn't all work.

My husband took a trip to the NFL Hall of Fame on Saturday and Sunday we both went to the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame.

I'm looking forward to the 2018 convention.

*from the President ...*

olic School Teachers came into existence in 1978 when our Constitution and By-Laws were adopted by local unions, most of whom were affiliated at the time with the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. Because of AFT's strong opposition to vouchers and other types of financial aid for our students and our schools, it was imperative that Catholic School Unions form a national organization that would work exclusively for Catholic school teachers and Catholic schools.

It is crucial that our local unions stay strong and viable as we hope the school in which we teach will. We must continue to reach out to our colleagues across the country to help them form their own local unions so that their rights can be safeguarded.

I wish all of you and your families a happy and healthy New Year. See you at the celebration of our 40th Anniversay



### **Bill Blumenstein Retires from Executive Committee**

President Rita Schwartz and Executive Vice President Michael DeSantis presented an Appreciation Award to Bill Blumenstein., who served on the Committee for more than 20 years as an Area Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Executive Vice President. He retired from the Committee in October 2017.



**Affiliated Locals**

**Altoona Johnstown  
Catholic School  
Teachers Association**

(Diocese of  
Altoona Johnstown PA)  
Karen Blaisdell

**Association of  
Catholic Teachers**

(Archdiocese of  
Philadelphia PA)  
www.act1776.com  
Rita Schwartz

**Catholic Teachers  
Union - NJ**

(Diocese of Camden NJ)  
www.ctunj.com  
Mary Kay Rossi

**Cleveland High School  
and Academy Lay  
Teachers Association**

(Diocese of Cleveland OH)  
Michael DeSantis

**DELTA**

(Diocese of Worcester MA)  
Kate Harris

**Diocesan Elementary  
Teachers Association**

(Diocese of Buffalo NY)  
Joann Biggie

**Federation of Pittsburgh  
Diocesan Teachers**

(Diocese of Pittsburgh PA)  
Brian Klisavage

**Greater Hartford Catholic  
Education Association**

(Archdiocese of  
Hartford CT)  
Paul Fitzpatrick

**Reports of Locals**

**SLTA** [Buffalo NY secondary schools] - health insurance continues unchanged as teachers at Bishop Timon-St. Jude agreed to a wage freeze for three years - teachers will receive the step, but no further increase - teachers at St. Mary High School open negotiations this year

**CTU** [Camden NJ] - the union used the Interest Based Bargaining negotiation model to successfully conclude negotiations at 3 schools - the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service provided a mediator at no charge to facilitate negotiations - 1 school ratified a 4 year contract with salary increases of 4% for the first 3 years and 3.75% for the 4th year - health insurance premium contributions increase by 1% per year; 2 schools ratified 3 year contracts with a salary increase of 2% for the 1st year with no increase in premium contributions, these schools have a salary/benefit re-opener at the end of the 1st year

**ACT** [Philadelphia] - settled a 1 year contract with \$1200 salary increase, with no increase in medical premium contributions - all but three teachers of the 40 constricted positions from 2017 were placed by early October

**ACT** [Holy Cross Academy Delran NJ] - teachers ratified a 1 year contract with a salary freeze for the term of the agreement, with no increase in medical premium contributions - post-retirement benefits remain part of the contract and a severance package was negotiated

**SLATA** [St. Louis MO] - the union has made available to each school in which it represents teachers a grant of up to \$600 to assist the schools in fund raising efforts - the union has also disbursed a \$1000 grant to each school to help students with financial needs

**AJCSTA** [Altoona-Johnstown PA] - at one school in which salary and benefits are negotiable each year, teachers ratified a 3% salary increase with no increase in medical premium contributions

**Affiliated Locals**

**Greensburg Diocesan Teachers Association**

(Diocese of Greensburg PA)  
Will Merchant

**NACST**

**@ St. John Vianney**  
(Diocese of Trenton NJ)

Lisa Lenn

**St. Louis Archdiocesan Teachers Association**

(Archdiocese of St. Louis MO)  
Patricia Spellman

**St. Rose Teachers Association**

(Diocese of Trenton NJ)  
Colleen Reilly  
Laura Urspruch

**Secondary Lay Teachers Association**

(Diocese of Buffalo NY)  
Chris Rusin

**Union County Catholic Education Association**

(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)  
Jaclyn Church



*The following resolution was passed unanimously at the 39th NACST Convention.*

**RESOLUTION**  
**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS**  
**2017 CONVENTION**

WHEREAS, the National Association of Catholic School Teachers is an organization founded on the precepts of Justice and Dignity for Catholic School Teachers, and, in that capacity, strives, at all times, to foster among our affiliates the tenets that are contained within the Social Justice teachings of the Catholic Church; and

WHEREAS, the Queen of Peace high School Lay Teachers Association has been a strong and active affiliate of the National Association of Catholic School Teachers since 2000 when the teachers of Queen of Peace High School voted to affiliate with the National Association of Catholic School Teachers; and,

WHEREAS, for the next 17 years, the Queen of Peace High School Lay Teachers Association remained a strong and united voice for the rights of the teachers it represented; and

WHEREAS, the QPHSLTA Officers faithfully represented the members of the Queen of Peace High School Lay Teachers Association in an exemplary manner throughout the union's history; and

WHEREAS, the closing of Queen of Peace High School on June 30, 2017 is very much like a death in the family and the subsequent dissolution of the Queen of Peace High School Lay Teachers Association leaves a hole in the heart of the National Association of Catholic School Teachers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the National Association of Catholic School Teachers hereby stands in admiration of Queen of Peace High School Lay Teachers Association and the highest standards of Catholic School Unionism which it practiced throughout its existence; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Queen of Peace High School Lay Teachers Association will hold a special place in the history of the National Association of Catholic School Teachers as it exemplifies all that is best in all of us.

Newsworthy is published throughout the school year by the National Association of Catholic School Teachers, Suite 903, 1700 Sansom St. Philadelphia, PA 19103 phone (215) 665-0993 or (800) 99 - NACST fax (215) 568-8270 email [nacst.nacst@verizon.net](mailto:nacst.nacst@verizon.net). Direct comments, inquiries to Chris Ehrmann, Editor.