

**30th Annual NACST Convention**

The 30th annual NACST Convention was held October 10-12, 2008 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in St. Louis, MO.

Forty-one union leaders from thirteen locals served as convention delegates.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Charles Russo, Panzer Chair in Education & Adjunct Professor of Law, University of Dayton.

NACST President Rita Schwartz gave the annual State of the Union address.

SDACT President Mike Milz updated convention delegates on the situation in Scranton.

In addition to the annual Report of Locals, convention delegates elected new members to the National Executive Committee.

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***SDACT and the Scranton Situation***

**UPDATE ON PA HOUSE BILL 2626**

In the last edition of the *Newsworthy*, we reported on Pennsylvania House Bill 2626, the legislation that has been proposed in the Pennsylvania General Assembly that would amend the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Act to extend the Law's protection to the employees of religiously-affiliated schools.

At the NACST Convention in St. Louis, NACST Executive Vice President Mike Milz did a presentation on the history and status of HB 2626 for the delegates. Mike, who is also the President of the Scranton Diocese Association of Catholic Teachers, also gave an update on where the Bill is currently positioned since its introduction in the Legislature this past spring.

Mike reported that a second hearing on the Bill was held before the PA House Labor Relations Committee on September 18, 2008, in Wilkes-Barre. Keying in on issues that had come up during the first hearing on the bill (exactly one month before), representatives

*cont'd on p. 4*



NACST PA members at the Hearing on House Bill 2626 at the Capitol in Harrisburg, PA August 18, 2008:

- Bill Milz, Jim Lynch, Michele Kirk, Steve Lieb, Rita Schwartz, PA AFL-CIO President Bill George, Mike Milz, Mike Galante

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION

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The Delegates to the National Association's Convention have elected the organization's Officers for 2008 - 2011. Running unopposed were

PRESIDENT Rita C. Schwartz  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT Michael A. Milz  
SECRETARY-TREASURER William J. Blumenstein

There were six candidates for four VICE PRESIDENT AT LARGE positions. The candidates spoke to the Convention Delegates and sought their support. The candidates were Michael DeSantis (CHALTA - Cleveland), Michele Kirk (AJCSTA - Altoona), Jonathan Meagher (DELTA - Worcester), George Rudolph (FPDT - Pittsburgh), Patricia Spellman (SLATA - St. Louis) and Irene Tori (ACT - Philadelphia).

The four VICE PRESIDENTS AT LARGE elected by the Convention are:

Michael DeSantis  
Jonathan Meagher  
George Rudolph  
Patricia Spellman.

The Convention said goodbye to two long-time VICE PRESIDENTS AT LARGE, STEVE LIEB (Altoona) and SUE MANZELLA (Buffalo). Steve and Sue served for a number of years as Vice Presidents At Large. Both Steve and Sue have retired from teaching, although Sue remains President of DETA, the Buffalo elementary teacher union. We sincerely thank Steve and Sue. They have served our National and its members well. They will be missed.

A special thank-you to Paul Fitzpatrick (Hartford), Duane Lund (St. Louis) and Maureen Simzak (Camden). They served as the Nominations and Election Committee whose duty it is to monitor the election, count the ballots and certify the results.

Congratulations to the newly-elected National Executive Committee.



Newly elected NACST Executive Committee Jonathan Meagher, Michael DeSantis, Rita Schwartz, George Rudolph, Patricia Spellman, Michael Milz and William Blumenstein

*from the President...*

## STATE OF THE UNION 2008: CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF NACST

This year marks the 30th Anniversary of the National Association of Catholic School Teachers and our 30th Convention.

The National was created by a small group of Catholic teacher union leaders whose locals were originally part of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. These leaders would meet during the year, especially during the annual AFT Convention with the hope that Catholic school teachers could become more a part of the AFT, thereby tempering the AFT's public school persona. Unfortunately, as AFT was growing ever larger, the interests of Catholic schools teachers and Catholic schools became less and less a priority.

Things came to a head in the mid 1970's when vouchers became a major issue. It was then, especially, that Catholic school teacher union leaders knew it was time to break away from AFT. We had often talked about creating a Catholic AFT. The time was right. A small ad hoc committee spent the better part of a year writing a constitution and by-laws. Although the New York and Brooklyn unions were part of the ad hoc committee, their locals did not become members of the National Association of Catholic School Teachers when the individual locals ratified the Constitution and began procedures for disaffiliation from AFT. It was Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Youngstown that set out to organize Catholic elementary and high school teachers back in 1978. As you can see, as you look around the room, we have grown substantially.

The past few years have seen some of our local unions cease operation. Each year, I ask you to look at the people seated around you. It gets a little scary to see who is no longer part of us.

As you've heard and read from Mike Milz, the Scranton Diocese Association of

Catholic Teachers is fighting for its life. This time last year, Mike and NACST attorney, Bruce Endy, spoke about the diocesan reorganization. Shockingly, just a few months later, the sky fell. The teachers have fought back strongly with sick outs and walk outs. There is tremendous parent and student support. Still, one man with unlimited power continues to wreak havoc and call it social justice. His own bishops won't, possibly can't, rein him in. That is why Catholic teacher unions throughout Pennsylvania have turned to the legislature. We are pushing forward to enact House Bill 2626 because, unfortunately, we are all one bishop away from what happened in Scranton.

On a more positive note: the year has been a busy one with organizing and negotiating workshops in Columbus, Greensburg and Hartford. What a great experience in Hartford - I had the opportunity to spend the day with Paul Fitzpatrick at his school. I was warmly welcomed by faculty and staff. Paul had arranged a master class with three sections of seniors. It was a wonderful give and take with the faculty joining in. The afternoon was spent speaking with administrators about their upcoming contract negotiations.

Looking ahead to 2009, organizing will be on the top of our priorities list. Our National needs to grow. Hopefully, the Pennsylvania legislation will kick in and we can try to pass similar bills in other places. Catholic school teachers need a level playing field. We cannot organize teachers who are afraid that they'll lose their jobs.

Many dedicated local unions and local union leaders have nurtured the National Association of Catholic School Teachers over its first 30 years. As we start our next 30 years, let us all pledge to keep



## SDACT [from p.1]

### Affiliated Locals

**Altoona Johnstown Catholic School Teachers Association**  
(Diocese of Altoona Johnstown PA)

Richard Hatch

**Association of Catholic Teachers**  
(Archdiocese of Philadelphia PA)

[www.act1776.com](http://www.act1776.com)

Rita Schwartz

**Association of Catholic Teachers**  
(Diocese of Syracuse NY)

Bernadette Kapps

**Catholic Teachers Union - NJ**  
(Diocese of Camden NJ)

[www.ctunj.com](http://www.ctunj.com)

Bill Blumenstein

**Central Ohio Association of Catholic Educators**

(Diocese of Columbus OH)

[www.coace.com](http://www.coace.com)

Kathleen Mahoney

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

(Diocese of Cleveland OH)

Michael DeSantis

### DELTA

(Diocese of Worcester MA)

Jonathan Meagher

**Diocesan Elementary Teachers Association**

(Diocese of Buffalo NY)

Sue Manzella

**Federation of Pittsburgh Diocesan Teachers**

(Diocese of Pittsburgh PA)

Russ DelVecchio

**Greater Hartford Catholic Education Association**

(Archdiocese of Hartford CT)

Paul Fitzpatrick

**Greensburg Diocesan Teachers Association**

(Diocese of Greensburg PA)

Kreg Mendus

from 5 of Pennsylvania's unionized dioceses offered testimony to the Committee on the importance of their unions, to them personally, and to the future of Catholic education in their home dioceses.

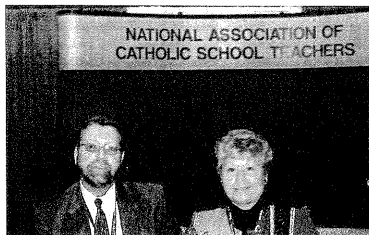
Also at the hearing, the Committee heard evidence to counter the position taken by Pennsylvania's eight bishops, who are in unison in their opposition to HB 2626. The bishops have charged that such a law would intrude into things of a religious nature, thus violating the constitutional principle of separation of Church and state. A number of legal scholars presented testimony saying that such a principle would not be at issue. Moreover, evidence was shown that in New York, where an almost identical law to HB 2626 has been operating for 40 years, the State has never been called upon to intervene between a church-affiliated employer and the union in any issue which was not your typical "bread and butter" type. Nothing at all of a religious nature has ever been submitted as a dispute to the NY Labor Board. There is reason to expect that this would hold true as well in PA when HB 2626 is voted into law.

The two hearings on HB 2626 left the Bill in an excellent position to pass in the full House. As a matter of fact, one Representative offered a comment during the second hearing that he believed that the Bill would pass "unanimously." Even with that said, those charting the strategy for the Bill's passage believed that there would not be sufficient time to move the Bill through the Senate during the current session of the legislature.

So, what comes next for HB 2626? The Bill will be reintroduced in the new session of the General Assembly in January, 2009. It will then quickly move toward a vote in the full House and then move on to the Senate. In the interim, the coalition of Catholic teacher unions, organized labor, parents and concerned citizens continues to drum up support for the Bill.

Finally, On November 16, 2008, HB 2626 became a national news story when the PBS show, *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*, aired a segment on the ongoing labor dispute in Scranton. You can watch that segment on-line at: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/episodes/episode-no-1211/cover-catholic-church-and-labor/1322/>

We'll keep you up to date on the Bill's progress in future editions of *Newsworthy*. Until then, additional information can be found on-line at [www.sdact.com/blog](http://www.sdact.com/blog).



Mike Milz and Rita Schwartz at the NACST Booth during the Archdiocese of Baltimore In-Service Day.



Mike Milz, Rita Schwartz and Dr. Charles Russo

SLATA President, Pat Spellman, welcoming delegates to the 30th Annual NACST Convention



NACST President Rita Schwartz and Keynote Speaker, Dr. Charles J. Russo



Nominations and Election Committee members Duane Lund, Maureen Simzak and Paul Fitzpatrick with NACST President Rita Schwartz as the election results are announced.

*Affiliated Locals*

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

**Queen of Peace H.S. Lay Teachers Association**  
(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)  
Kathy Kiszka

**St. Denis Teachers Association**  
(Diocese of Trenton NJ)  
Janne Darata

**St. Joseph's Teachers Association**  
(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)  
Darlene Fisher

**St. Louis Archdiocesan Teachers Association**  
(Archdiocese of St. Louis MO)  
Patricia Spellman

**St. Rose Teachers Association**  
(Diocese of Trenton NJ)  
Shelia Langon  
Jane Magovern

**St. Teresa Educators Association**  
(Diocese of Harrisburg PA)  
Deborah Foote

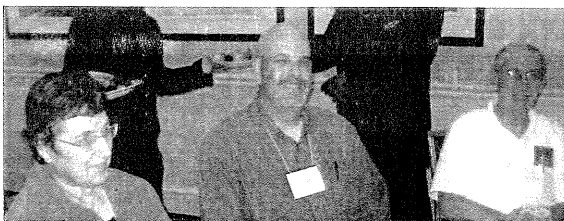
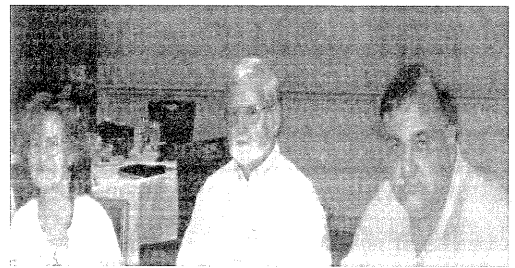
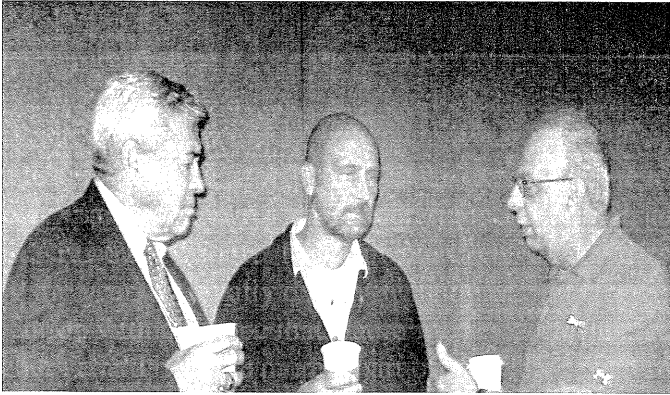
**Scranton Diocese Association of Catholic Teachers**  
(Diocese of Scranton PA)  
[www.sdact.com](http://www.sdact.com)  
Michael Milz

**Secondary Lay Teachers Association**  
(Diocese of Buffalo NY)  
Doug Bowers

**Union County Catholic Education Association**  
(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)  
Marc Berger

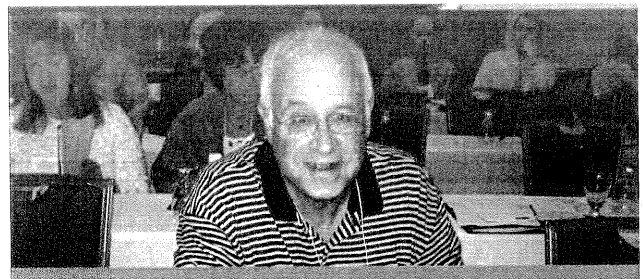
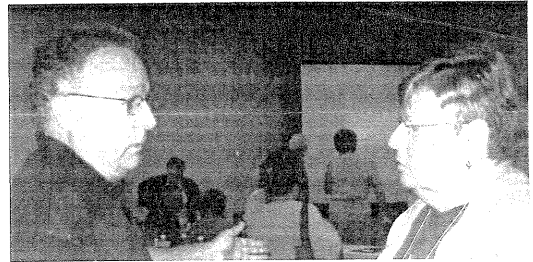
**Youngstown Confederation of Diocesan Teachers**  
(Diocese of Youngstown OH)  
Barbara Demesco

# Scenes from the 30th NACST Convention ...





# Scenes from the 30th NACST Convention ...



from the editor...

## Where Will Education be in the [New]National Agenda?

When campaigning for office, the recently elected President stated that improvement in American education is a priority in his political agenda. As a former Catholic school student, the new President ought to know that national goals for improvement will not be achieved if children in nonpublic schools are excluded.

When parents choose Catholic schools [and other nonpublic schools] they do not give up, or choose to walk away from, education benefits provided by the government, supported by their tax dollars.

As Catholic school educators, we agree that no child should be left behind in federally funded programs for educational improvement. Both teachers and school administrators must lobby for inclusion of Catholic school students in the education proposals currently under consideration.

Effective leadership in shaping national legislation must come from U.S. bishops, who do in fact have a significant voice in federal matters. Their leadership will be effective and credible when they engage in two specific actions.

First, *the bishops, even with their canonical autonomy, must commit each diocese to Catholic education by funding the schools with diocesan-wide development programs.*

Second, *the bishops must implement federal labor law in dealing with teachers and other employees.*

Both actions will give evidence of the Church's commitment to Catholic school students.

Why would anyone concerned with educational improvement give weight to the NCCB's education agenda if the employer Church is judged to be shortsighted and self-serving?

**No Catholic school child should be left behind in the nation's push for educational improvement.**



*30th Annual NACST Convention Delegates at Work*

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