



Oneida Teachers' ASSOCIATION

Partners for a Better Community

January/February Newsletter

Volume 45—Issue #3

www.oneidateacher.com

A Message from the President - Brian Mroczek

As I'm sure you're all aware, Betsy DeVos was sworn in as the 11th Secretary of Education. Known for her unfavorable views of public education, as well as her stance on vouchers and school choice, her confirmation was contentious from the start. After voting, the Senate was evenly split. This caused, for the first time ever, Vice President Pence to cast the deciding vote in favor of DeVos. Although the outcome was not what many of us in education had hoped for, it was exciting and encouraging to see the enthusiasm it created amongst members of NYSUT and the OTA.

There is another cause coming in November that we must all be aware of and this one may be even more dangerous. Appearing on the ballot this November will be a question asking if you believe there should be a revision of the State Constitution. We do not want this to happen. Any revisions to the Constitution could affect our retirement system, our right to negotiate, and everyone's right to a free and public school system. Other things such as libraries, State parks, and workers' compensation could come under attack as well. It will appear as a question...

Ballot Question: "Shall there be a convention to revise the constitution and amend same?"

Your Answer: "NO"

You will be receiving information in the coming months. Please feel free to share it with anyone. Let them know this is not only an educator's issue, but everyone's issue.

We have begun the process of awarding our annual OTA Scholarships. Any OTA member may nominate a current senior for consideration. A committee of HS teachers and counselors will make the final determination. A list of 2017 seniors can be found on the OTA website and all nominations can be made on the website. There is no need to write a recommendation. We will again present scholarships to four students at this year's Honors Convocation. If you have any questions, contact Dave Wright at OHS. All members are encouraged to nominate someone. The deadline for nominations is Feb. 28.

If you are considering taking advantage of the One-Time Salary Adjustment remember that the deadline for the request is April 1. Send an email to MMZ and cc Kathie Gerber. The amount is \$180 per year of service in Oneida and you must have worked in Oneida for at least 10 years to be eligible.

This is an election year for the OTA. If you are interested in running, please let Jen Armlin or Brian Mroczek know by Feb 28. The offices are President, 3 Vice Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer.

We are looking to plan a Spring Fling and Funny Bone trip. Look for more information on both soon...



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UPCOMING MEETINGS:

OTA Representative Meeting (First Wednesday of the month) ALL ARE WELCOME!

Next Meeting: Jan 10th 3:30pm Rm. 126 High School
Feb 14th 3:30 pm Rm. 126 High School
Mar 14th 3:30 pm Rm. 126 High School
April 11th 3:30 pm Rm. 126 High School
Any special meeting dates will be announced through e-mail.

Board of Education Meeting (Second Tuesday of the month)

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| January 10th | Seneca Street Elementary | 6:00-8:30 |
| February 14th | North Broad Elementary | 6:00-8:30 |
| March 14th | Oneida High School | 6:00-8:30 |
| April 4th | Public Forum, Costello Transportation Center | 5:00-8:00 |
| April 25th | Costello Transportation Center | 6:00-8:30 |

Board of Education Meetings

The Oneida City School District Board of Education will meet on the second Tuesday of every month.

We all need to remember that it is our job, our livelihood, that is constantly under attack. Make every effort to attend a meeting to show solidarity in the OTA. Remember, it is in your best interest to know what is going on in your district.

Donations and Contributions

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to our Casual Fridays so far this academic year. OHS, OSMS, DV, WP and SS joined forces since October and raised almost \$3000.

THANK YOU!



TALES FROM THE CRYPT

OREA MEMBERS MARCH

Many of our members took part in Women's Marches in various locations on January 21. Gloria Wilkins and Pat Albaugh were among those who took a NYSUT-sponsored bus from East Syracuse. Pat filed this report:

Signs, Signs, Everywhere there's signs...they caught our eyes as we walked and slithered and darted and sidestepped our way with the hundreds of thousands of Sisters and Brothers. Preserve Our Rights. Our Bodies, Our Minds, Our Power. Make America Integrate Again. Black Lives Matter. Real Men Support Gender Equality. Our Rights Are Not Up For Grabs, and Neither Are We. Todos Somos Immigrantes. Protect The Dreamers. This Is Just A Warm-up. There was cleverness galore: We Shall Overcomb. Super Callous Fascist Racist Extra Braggodocious. A little girl rode on her dad's shoulders carrying a sign she had obviously made: just a whole lot of Crayon scribbling. Very cute. We even spotted a Hi Mom.

Of course the real story is what those hundreds of thousands of signs were attached to. Everybody was there. Families, with Mom or Dad pushing the youngest in strollers. (I don't know how they did it...think State Fair on mega-steroids.) Actually there were many wheels trying to roll along. People in scooters and wheelchairs, several elderly women being pushed by younger, stronger women or men, perhaps their last chance to speak up for rights they may have been fighting for their whole lives. People with those scooters you use after having foot surgery or breaking an ankle.

People of all colors and races and ethnic groups. We thought the crowd was a bit "whiter" than we would have predicted, but there was plenty of diversity. I'm willing to bet that every state in the Union was represented. We talked to people from Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Vermont, New Hampshire, Georgia, and took a pic of a group with a sign Montana Women For Social Justice.

There were plenty of celebrities on hand, but we were so far adrift in the sea of connected humanity that we couldn't see a Jumbotron, let alone the speaker's stage. As we walked, we joined in the chants random groups were leading, so we felt that we expressed ourselves and had a chance to yell and clap over and over again.

Definitely one of the words of the day was politeness. We couldn't believe with all the people, all the careful pushing to get from one place to another, we were flooded with, "Excuse me," "Oh, I'm so sorry," "Yikes, I didn't mean to step on your foot," etc. etc. So impressive! We didn't notice much visible police presence inside the rally area, but as we left and started the walk to RFK Stadium and the buses, we saw plenty. So many people were greeting the officers, thanking them, wishing them well...and they were returning the smiles and thanking us for coming. Wonderful!

We stopped in a pub for a beer and some lunch and watched CNN for a while. We saw reports of the marches in Boston, New York, Hartford, LA, Chicago and Paris. We got text and FB reports from friends who marched in Seneca Falls and Plattsburgh and Sarasota. We looked at each other and kept saying, Wow...we were part of something really big.

As the bus left DC and started the long ride home, we took to our phones to see what was being said, how it was being reported, and to listen to the speakers that we couldn't hear in person. We checked with different groups and made plans to keep active, to stay involved, and not let this be a one-time event. So far we are following through.

Why did people march? So many reasons. The 27-year old niece of a friend said it very well: We are marching because our friends and neighbors may be deported, excluded from bathrooms, denied medical treatment, forced to bear children, barred from marrying, harmed by institutional racism, stripped of environmental protections, and denied access to a decent education. That pretty much covers most of it. As my favorite sign of the day said, with many arrows radiating to the end of the poster board: I'm With Her.

(Patricia Albaugh, Retired Oneida Castle teacher, rode a NYSUT-sponsored bus from East Syracuse to the Women's March in Washington, DC.)

Happenings in and around the OTA



Retirement Incentive

If you are an OTA Member who is thinking about retiring in June 2017 with the incentive, make sure you get your letter of resignation in to the District no later than December 31st. The Retirement Incentive is in your contract (Article XXIII) on page 38. Be sure to get in touch with Brian Mroczek to help you through the process.

OTA Retirees for 2017

Several members of the Oneida Teachers Association have rendered their Letter of Resignation to the Oneida City School District.

Make sure that you let them know how much they are going to be missed and wish them well on the next step in their journey through life.

Betsy Carnevale—Librarian at Durhamville

Jen Knight—Guidance Counselor at Oneida High School

George Moon—Physical education Teacher at North Broad Elementary

Virginia Pendleton—Reading teacher at Durhamville

Karen Trush—art Teacher at Oneida High School



Election of OTA Officers

All elected positions of the Oneida Teachers' Association will be up for re-election in April. If you are interested in running for any of the positions, or would like to nominate a person for a position, all names with desired position should be submitted to the Executive Board by February 28th, 2017.

A general election will be held in April for all contested positions.

Course work and the Contract

Please let either your Building Rep or Brian Mroczek know if you have had any online courses approved/denied since October, 2015. Please indicate the date you were approved/denied, the name of the course and the institution from which you are taking the class.

Happenings in and around the OTA

Service Salary Adjustment

As per our contract, Teachers with at least ten (10) years of service to the Oneida City School District shall be eligible for the service salary adjustment of \$180 per year of service to the Oneida City School District. They may apply for this adjustment at any point beyond the completion of the tenth (10th) year. Such amount shall be pro-rated for teachers working less than full time. Notice of the intent to elect such salary adjustment must be provided to the Superintendent ***not later than April 1st*** of a given year for such adjustment to become effective in the following year

OTA Scholarships!!



Please visit the OTA website, www.oneidateacher.com to nominate students for this year's OTA scholarship. The names of this year's graduation class will be on the site soon. The password to login is teacher. Please submit the names by February 28th. A write-up for your nominee is not required as in the past. John Markle, Bud Leo, and Sandy Davis will then select the scholarship winners early this spring.



Thinking About Retirement?

Whether you are 1, 3 or 5 years out, you want to check out NYSTRS. There is an abundance of information for you to collect, digest and use to your benefit. Don't forget to sign up for one of their retirement seminars. There's still time!!!

NYSUT Retirement Seminars - go on NYSTRS to sign up for one



You asked for it... and you got it!

Third Annual Member Appreciation Month set for February 2017



Don't miss out... join MAP!

NYSUT Member Benefits and our endorsed program providers will once again be teaming up for the Third Annual Member Appreciation Month set for February 2017 in recognition of all you do to make *NYSUT union strong*.

To be eligible for these drawings, you simply need to be a member of the voluntary MAP Alert email service or sign up before January 31, 2017.

MAP Alerts are a convenient way to learn about new endorsed programs; updates to current programs; and special offers unique to MAP Alert participants -- without being inundated with emails.

Prize drawings will be held each day, with the winners announced exclusively on the Member Benefits website throughout the month of February.



Win prizes such as Best Buy, Amazon or American Express gift cards; car rental certificates; wireless speakers; an i-Pad Mini; and many more.

Last's year Grand Prize winner received a free vacation to Orlando, FL!

We encourage you to spread the word to your colleagues about this special event. **So if you see a phone call or email from us, make sure you answer it!!!**

For more details about this exciting event, visit the Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org or call **800-626-8101**.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.