



Oneida Teachers' ASSOCIATION

Partners for a Better Community

A Message from our President - David Wright

As each year comes to an end, so do the teaching careers of several members of the OTA. It's with great pleasure, as well as a bit of jealousy, that we congratulate this year's retirees....

Dewayne Cronk - OHS English

Dave Dampf - OSMS Social Studies

Lisa Mahon - OSMS Art

Holly Marshall - DV Special Education

Jacqueline Moyer - OSMS 6th Grade

Many thanks go out to each as they have dedicated many years and countless hours to the youth of Oneida and the betterment of the District. We wish them the very best in retirement...Relax and enjoy!

In the fall of 2023 the OTA will be offering building representative training in house. Often referred to as building reps, these individuals should be the first point of contact with union related questions and concerns. Those individuals that are currently building reps will be offered spots in the upcoming training first, then we will open it up to others on a first come first serve basis. If you are interested in getting involved in the OTA this would be a great starting point. Please send an email to President.OneidaTA@gmail.com if you are interested in attending. I will place you on a waitlist and as spots open up we will fill them.

It is expected that this training will be about $\frac{1}{2}$ day. We have already worked it out with the district for a $\frac{1}{2}$ day of release time per individual so that someone attending will not have to use any personal time for the meeting. We will have a Labor Relation Specialist from NYSUT that will conduct the training. This will be a great opportunity for building reps to ask questions not only related to our contract but also rights and protections that exist. Trainings like this are important to keep current and to hear the different issues that other districts in our area are facing. In order to keep the OTA strong we need individuals to step into these leadership roles.

**March/April 2023
Newsletter**
www.oneidateacher.com
OTA - Facebook Page
Volume 51—Issue #3



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UPCOMING MEETINGS:

OTA Representative Meeting (Second Tuesday of the month) ALL ARE WELCOME!

| | | |
|---------------|------------|----------------------------|
| Next Meeting: | March 14th | 3:30 pm Oneida High School |
| | April 18th | 3:30 pm TBA |
| | May 16th | 3:30 pm TBA |
| | June 13th | 3:30 pm TBA |

Any special meeting dates will be announced through e-mail.

Board of Education Meeting (Second Tuesday of the month)

| | |
|------------|--|
| March 14th | 6:00 pm Oneida High School |
| April 18th | 6:00 pm Costello Transportation Center |
| May 16th | 6:00 pm District Office |
| June 13th | 6:00 pm Costello Transportation Center |

Board of Education Meetings

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

The meetings are generally held at one of the buildings in the district and begin at 6 pm.

We all need to remember that it is our job, our livelihood, that is constantly scrutinized. 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

Thank you Everyone!

Just over \$4000 so far this year!
Donations have gone out to
Both Organizations
And Individuals in our
Community!



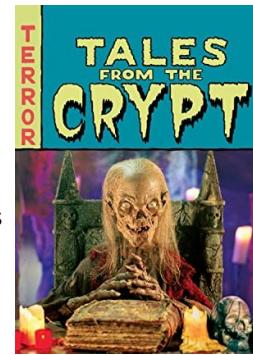
TALES FROM THE CRYPT

Spring Edition

The Oneida Retired Educators Association (OREA) wants you to know we continue to be interested in the education of our children, the situations, rights and benefits of current and retired educators, and the state and federal legislation that affects us all.

We know that currently the OTA is working under a multi-year contract and does not face any crises that department at the present time. However, the next round of negotiations will be due to begin before you know it, and there is every reason to hope it will be a smooth process!

This column first ran in April of 2015, and although it's an oldie now, it's still a goodie. Give this bit of OTA history another read!



QUESTION: Has the OTA been involved with difficult contract negotiations in the past?

ANSWER: Yes.

Negotiations for the 1984-1985 school year contract had come to a standstill, and a Fact-Finder was employed to help the OTA (negotiating team: Tony Burnett, Angela Costello, Barry Zebley) and the District (Supt.: Joe Girardi) come to an agreement. Helen Beale was the NYSUT Field Rep. The contentious issues were Salary for teachers and nurses, Class Size, Dental Plan, Retirement Incentive, Tuition Reimbursement, and Agency Fee.

The idea of Agency Fee was being adopted by neighboring school districts, but was new to Oneida...about 90% of the teachers belonged to the OTA and paid dues, while the non-members still got all the benefits the OTA worked hard to secure. With Agency Fee, non-members would still be charged "union dues" whether or not they chose to join the union.

Class Size: At that time, many elementary classes numbered close to or over 30 students. For a few years, the district had not lowered class size, but did pay teachers whose classes were over the "impact number" \$250 extra per quarter, or gave the option of having a full-time classroom aide in lieu of compensation. The 4-6 grade number was 30...a few less for K-3. These numbers did not include the special education children who were not regularly assigned to the classrooms but were mainstreamed for much of the day. The OTA asked for those students to be counted and for the quarterly compensation to be increased.

Salary: In 1983-84, the starting teacher's salary for Oneida was \$13,096 and the starting school nurse's salary was \$7,290.

The Fact-Finder's report was presented on August 1, 1984. There was no movement. As the days of summer slipped away, talk of picketing and striking by the OTA began. OTA members were given a 5-page handout of Picketing Guidelines, covering legality, behavior, dealing with the press, etc. Members met in groups to prepare signs and discuss strategy. An OTA meeting was set for August 29th at the Knights of Columbus in Oneida. It was an emotional time as members wrestled with the typical questions...to protest or not. On September 3, an offer was presented to the OTA. Just before the first day of school, members received word that an agreement had been reached. There was an OTA meeting at the... (I remember it being at the Elk's Club, others think it was at the Knights again) and a fair, 2-year contract was accepted. School started as usual.

The starting teacher salary was raised to \$13,614, and starting nurse salary to \$7576. Coaching salaries were increased by 8.2%. The class size compensation was increased to \$500 per quarter. There were improvements in insurance, and the retirement incentive was increased. Language concerning sick and personal leave was improved, and a few extra-curricular assignments were created or improved, e.g. additional yearbook advisor and bookstore supervisor. (I couldn't find in my research if Agency Fee was accepted.)

Now you know the story behind "the year we made the signs". Those signs became a symbol for the importance of the OTA...many of us kept them for years and years. Indeed, once in a while a student would search my drawer for some poster board for a project...pull one out, read it and say, "What the heck is this??" I would always look at that sign, remember that time, and think to myself, "THIS is what it means to be a proud member of the OTA." (All information taken from OTA files.)

Good luck as you begin to wrap up the '22-'23 school year!

Patricia Albaugh, OREA, retired 2007... Oneida Castle

OTA 2022-23 Retirees



Lisa Billington/Mahon 7/8th grade Art Teacher OSMS Art Director

I interviewed with Dr. Volp and David Gillmeister the summer of 1990 after graduating from SUNY College at Buffalo and have been in Oneida for the last 32 years. David G. had remembered seeing me play in a sectional final soccer game which led me to coaching soccer in Oneida for over 14 years. I waddled around the soccer field while pregnant for both my children when there weren't a lot of women coaches. I started at Willard Prior and

Durhamville

and added Seneca Street school where I helped pilot this new philosophy model called "inclusion". We didn't have google to view artwork so we bought and collected many hardcopies of various artwork to share with students. I read stories of artists in the log cabin in the front yard of DV. I went to breakfast on Fridays before school with Leo Matzke and Randy Phillips where they showed me the ropes while showing me the importance of having a sense of humor in this profession. No stipend mentor program, just helpful colleagues. I learned parenting tips and teaching tips from my peers while I shared the art/music room at WP while teaching art on the stage at Durhamville where I would scooter buckets of water to the stage because I was determined for them to paint. I made the switch to OSMS in 1994 where I have remained.

Many of my life events happened while in Oneida- marriage, the birth of two children as well as the loss of loved ones. It was the support of my colleagues that helped me through. Whether it was former art teachers coming out of retirement to sub for me, friends that came over to share my grief, or a welcome back decorated classroom filled with balloons to soften the blow, I thank you!

I have had the pleasure to make some amazing friendships and build connections with students and athletes who I am still in touch with today. You DO impact the lives of your students and you DO make a difference. Thank you to all who have served and supported the OTA throughout the years; stay active and be informed. I look forward to traveling, spending time with family and continuing to create and teach at my art studio, "The Painted Goose" located in Canastota. This profession is more difficult now than ever and it is important to be positive, have open honest difficult conversations, agree to disagree and always remember to support each other. Life is hard but so manageable when people support each other. Thank you Oneida for all the memories.

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



OTA 2022-23 Retirees



Jacqueline Moyer - OSMS - 6th Grade

For someone who entered college as an undeclared major, choosing a teaching career became one of the simplest and easiest decisions of my adult life. Great moments of pride for me were when I could say, "I'm a teacher." I based the entirety of my life on two great loves, my family and my career.

I've served (in nearly equal time) my teaching years at Durhamville Elementary, North Broad Street, and Otto Shortell Middle School. My colleagues became my inspiration, my friends and mentors, incredible collaborators, and above all else family. We shared the ups and downs of life together, supporting one another as we endeavored to serve our students and their families to the best of our ability.

Dr. Volp hired me in 1992, and he requested that I trade in my VVS red and white for Oneida's blue and orange. This joyful decision has been the foundation of my life spent in service and dedication. With humble gratitude I say goodbye to 31 incredible years as an educator.

Thank you, Oneida! You will have a place in my heart forever.



Holly Marshall - Durhamville - Special Education

I have worked for the Oneida City School District at Durhamville Elementary for the last 17 years in the primary 15:1 program. Prior to that I taught at Madison- Oneida BOCES for 15 years in the Middle School Community Based Program and the Autism program.

Throughout my career I have met and worked with so many wonderful families, educators and administrators. I have learned so much from these people and feel grateful to have had that opportunity.

I have thoroughly enjoyed teaching at Durhamville and will truly miss my co-workers and my students. Throughout all of the ups and downs of teaching they have consistently brightened each day.

After I retire, I am hoping to convince my husband we really need to travel and am looking forward to having the time to spend with family, look into new hobbies and maybe even a new part-time career.



Dewayne Cronk - OHS - English Teacher

Thank you to all the people I have worked with during the last 30 years. I feel fortunate to have spent my career in public education and to teach so many students from the Oneida community. I figure nearly 3,000 students passed under the "RM 100" sign for English class and that I had the pleasure of coaching another 300 plus student-athletes during the 33 athletic seasons that I coached. I am also pleased to have served the OTA for nearly 15 years including being part of five contract settlements. My last thank you is to Barry Zebley, Leo Maloney, Brian Mroczek, Dave Dampf and David Wright as well as all the other OTA members I worked with for their dedication and sacrifice in helping to make teaching such a wonderful profession.

OTA 2022-23 Retirees



Dave Dampf - OSMS - Social Studies

My second ever professional interview was with Dr. Walt Thomas and Barry Zebley – followed by another with Dr. Volp and Dr. Tamburro. I traveled hundreds of miles for that interview and had a job offer waiting on my answering machine by the time I had driven home. You can google “answering machine” if you’re on the younger side. That was way back in 1991 and it changed my life.

I come from a family of teachers. My parents began their teaching careers back in the 60’s and I heard dinner table stories of low wages and little respect. I helped grade science tests and set up the kindergarten classroom. I saw my parents walk morning picket lines. I heard all about their students. They loved teaching, and so have I.

It has been a privilege to have spent every day of my career teaching at OSMS. To be fair, it wasn’t such a bad ride. I taught a lot of really great kids and many of them have gone on to do really great things. True or not, I like to tell myself that I had some small hand in that.

I was fortunate to teach alongside some of the best people. They made sure I understood how lucky I was to teach in a teamed middle school and they taught me that teachers do far more than present content. I have done my best to represent them and pass their lessons on to the next generation of Oneida teachers.

Somehow, and usually against my will and better judgment, I advised clubs, participated on many committees, and served as a team leader and dean of students. Despite some inner turmoil, I grew into leadership positions that would have made my dad proud of me – as a building representative, Vice-President, and then President of the OTA during COVID.

Trust and support your union. You work under the terms and conditions of a very impressive and hard-fought contract. Those that came before you sacrificed for it, and you need to protect it for those that will come behind you.

This job consumes you and then asks for just a little bit more. My family sacrificed more than I had a right to ask of them. While I intend to spend some time dabbling in education, my big plan is to be more present with my family. It’s time. And I can’t wait.

As my mentor and colleague and friend would say, “Excelsior!”

Happenings in and around the OTA

OTA ELECTION RESULTS 2023

The OTA Executive Board elections were held at the end of March. Heather O'Connell set up a google form for voting and the results are in! The following members of the OTA will commence their terms on May 9th 2023.

President:

David Wright

V. President (3 positions):

Megan Kelly, Steve Paz and Jennifer Streeter

Treasurer:

Chrissy Sawner

Secretary:

Jennifer Armlin

Thank you to all members of the OTA for casting their votes and participating in the OTA Elections.

Special "Thanks" to those members who were elected and willing to give their commitment to the good of the OTA!

OTA SCHOLARSHIP 2023

The OTA will be awarding 5 scholarships to Oneida High School Seniors this year.

You can nominate any senior for a scholarship by clicking on the link below. Nominations are due by April 22nd.

To select a senior, you will need to click on the dropdown box for student one and pick a name. Repeat the process for your second choice and so forth.

It is possible to make **5 nominations** if you would like. **You will only be able to submit the form ONCE**, so make it count.



Hello, my name is **John Sheldrick** and I am the new **Elementary Special Education Teacher at Durhamville Elementary**.

I received my Bachelor's Degree from St. Joseph's University and am certified in General Education Birth – 6th and Special Education Birth – 6th. I am currently working on my Master's Degree at LeMoyne College.

Outside of the classroom I like to teach Martial arts and am currently taking Kickboxing classes. I am looking forward to teaching within the Oneida City School District.

Happenings in and around the OTA

Spring Fling

Becca Piccola has been planning the OTA's annual Spring Fling. Tentative information is as follows:

Where: Oneida Community Golf Course

When: June 13th, time to be determined

Who: Current OTA members and Retirees

More information on the specifics will be coming as Becca finalizes our Annual Spring Fling!



CHECK OUT ALL YOUR UNION MEMBERSHIP HAS TO OFFER!

When you're planning for the future, what's at the top of your list?

- A comfortable nest egg for retirement
- Providing for your family
- Purchasing a new home
- Home improvement
- Purchasing a new vehicle
- Travel and entertainment



NYSUT Member Benefits offers dozens of endorsed programs to help turn those dreams into reality.

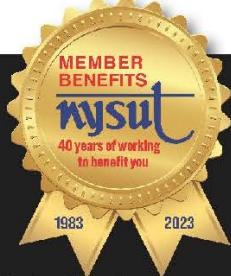
When it comes to saving you money, protecting your family and helping you plan for the future, NYSUT Member Benefits has a variety of programs and services to help with your goals. Whether you are just starting out on your journey, well into your career or enjoying a well-deserved retirement, there is a Member Benefits-endorsed plan that may be of assistance featuring value-added extras unavailable to the public.

Get started by first bookmarking the Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org. There, you will find numerous tools and resources available to you as a NYSUT member – including a **Financial Learning Center** with articles designed to help educate you on financial decisions and topics. Member Benefits also endorses important **legal and financial services** along with an **online savings program** featuring some of today's most competitive interest rates.

Next up would be looking in the “Shopping, Travel & Personal” section of our site for **MB Discounts & Deals**. This program utilizes the nation’s largest private discount network to provide NYSUT members with exclusive access to savings of up to 50% on restaurant dine-in or take out, groceries and food delivery, clothing and shoes, hotels and flights, car rentals, theme parks, vehicle maintenance, and much more.



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the left, visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org or calling 800-626-8101.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.

Mar-Apr 2023