



Oneida Teachers' ASSOCIATION

Partners for a Better Community

March/April Newsletter

Volume 44 - Issue #4

A Message from the President - Brian Mroczek

Congratulations to each of the following on their retirement from OCSD. Their over 200 years of experience, combined with hard work and tireless commitment to the children of Oneida has made our community stronger. Many thanks go out to each of them as they enter retirement. Relax and enjoy!!

Chris Cavanagh	MaryJo Donaldson	Maria Erdo
Deb Fiore	Scott Fletcher	Mary James
Roselle Lynch	Noreen Morris	Donna Thompson

Mary-Margaret Zehr was recently appointed as the incoming Superintendent of Oneida City Schools. She will begin her work with the District on July 1. I look forward to meeting with her over the summer to begin creating a strong working relationship with her. She intends on moving her family to Oneida and making it her home; a strong indication that she is committed to a lasting tenure here. I would encourage everyone to approach her when she's in the buildings and welcome her to Oneida.

Vince Condro, retired Assistant Superintendent from New Hartford will be our interim AS beginning June 1. He is slated to take over responsibilities previously handled by Brian Kavanagh.

Our APPR plan for the 2016-17 school year has been settled and sent to the State for approval. We are currently waiting for their response. Once we have final approval, we will schedule a date in the fall for an informational meeting to present the plan. Many thanks go out to Steve Paz, Dave Dampf, Adam Litwak, Dawn Paz, and Matt Arthur for their efforts in creating a plan that is advantageous to teachers, while remaining within the parameters set by NYS.

There is one Board of Education seat up this year. There are multiple people running for the vacancy; Ralph Kohler, Dave Vacarro, Jen Parker, and Martin Kelly are names that have been mentioned. The OTA does not typically endorse BOE candidates, but has occasionally interviewed them through our retiree group. We are looking into the possibility of that process taking shape.

The District has sent us an electric copy of the contract. We will be reaching out to buildings for proof-readers. Please consider it...it will offer you an opportunity to get to know your contract. Once proof reading is complete, we will look to get the document printed.

Retro checks for the first part of the 2016-17 school year will be distributed in June.

The OTA has purchased 40 tickets to Funny Bone Comedy Club. Look for information coming soon on a date and time. The tickets will be first come/first serve via email.

Table of Cotents:
Page 1 .. A word from our President
Page 2 .. Meeting dates/Special Events
Page 3 .. Tales from the Crypt
Page 4 .. Happenings in the OTA
Page 5.. OTA Retirees
Page 6.. OTA Retirees
Page 7.. OTA Retirees
Page 8.. NYSUT members benefit

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

OTA Representative Meeting (ALL ARE WELCOME!)

Next Meeting: May 10th 3:30 pm Rm. 126 High School
June 14th 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) Check District Calendar for locations. Most meetings will start at 7 pm.

April 19th Meet and Greet new Superintendent
May 10th Annual Budget Hearing
May 17, 2016
June 14, 20

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 the District Office and begin at 7 pm.

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 ***Remembering Robert Grozl Fundraiser***

Sponsored by the Class of 2018

A special Tie dye t-shirt is being sold by the Class of 2018

T-shirts can be bought through May 15th for \$15 a piece

Everyone should wear their t-shirts on Thursday May 26th, 2016

ALL PROCEEDS WILL BE DONATED TO THE FAMILY OF ROBERT GROZL.

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

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.



Each year the OREA awards \$100 grants to student teachers in the OCSD. These competitive grants are given to local students who are pursuing careers in education and are in the student teaching phase of their training. This spring the OREA awarded grants to three college students: Amber Bennett from Westmoreland, who is student teaching in 5th grade at North Broad; Adam Chandler from Vernon, a music student doing his student teaching at North Broad, Durhamville and OHS; and Jennafer Zimmer from Cazenovia, currently at Seneca Street. Student teaching is a valuable part of a teacher's education, and should also include knowledge and experience with professional organizations and teachers' unions. There is so much to learn! Make sure the student teachers are learning something about the importance of benefits such as job protection, acceptable working conditions, and health insurance that are made possible year after year by belonging to and supporting a strong teachers' union.

At the other end of the spectrum, the OREA salutes the OCSD employees who are crossing the line into retirement! We are waiting to welcome you to the OREA and look forward to seeing you at the Back to School But Not For Us Breakfast in September. To everyone else: keep up your excellent work!

Pat Albaugh...2007 Retiree...Sixth Grade, Oneida Castle

Happenings in and around the OTA



**Superintendent
Mary-Margaret Zehr**

Oneida City School District has hired a new Superintendent as of April 6th 2016. **Mary-Margaret Zehr** comes to Oneida from Watertown City School District. She was the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction there and had previously been the Superintendent of Copenhagen School District.

Mary-Margaret started her career as a Social Studies Teacher and, after 7 years, moved to an Administrative position as the Principal of Beaver River Central School. Several other Principal positions eventually lead to the Asst. Superintendent at Watertown.

The District will be hosting a meet and greet at the Costello Transportation Center on April 19th at 5:00 pm.



North Broad Street Elementary Falcons are holding a raffle!

North Broad is selling raffle tickets for a hot air balloon ride for two from Airborne Adventures. It's a \$550 value. Tickets are \$5.00 each. If interested, contact anyone at NB to make arrangements. The winner will be drawn May 11th at our Health and Wellness Fair. You do not have to be present to win.

Educators and Opting-Out



As an educator you have the ability to discuss with parents and community members the facts related to State testing and the Opt-out issue. Visit EngageNY to get current information on State Testing.

As a parent and community member, you can discuss your **thoughts and opinions** outside of the school day.

Let me know what is going on in your building!

Send me an e-mail about the things that you are doing in your building that

We can share with the rest

Of our OTA members.

Remember, people don't know what is going on unless you take the time to inform them.

Be vigilant!

I know that it has been a rather quiet fall, but we still need to be aware of what is happening in Albany.

Many new laws and reforms will be presented and lumped together with other laws.

We have to make sure that we are still in contact with our elected officials.

Visit the OTA website for names of elected officials that you can contact.

Our 2015-16 Oneida Teachers' Association Retirees



**Scott Fletcher - Guidance Councilor
Oneida High School**

“Dr. Tamburro called me 15 years ago to say he was creating a Director position and heard that I may be interested in moving on in my career. At first I was flattered by the call. Upon reflection I thought, ‘why would I give up a position halfway through my career where I was comfortable with staff, families, community and all related services. There was also a chance the job would not work out and then what?.. Now I can say it was the best decision I ever made. It was a pleasure to work with such generous, professional people who made the transition a very easy one. Thank you for all of your kindness and cooperation.”



**Noreen Morris - 2nd Grade Teacher
North Broad Street Elementary**

I have been so blessed to have had the pleasure of educating children in Oneida for 12 years, for 13 years with Madison Oneida BOCES at the Pre-k level and prior to that at Cleary School for the Deaf on Long Island. All of the above experiences have been wonderful learning and teaching opportunities for me, that have brought me to Sylvan Beach, Seneca Street, Oneida Castle and most recently to North Broad Street School. I have met many wonderful friends in my travels here and I have treasured each and every relationship.

I feel as though I have had many more children than my own four and I take such pride in seeing them grow, learn, graduate and eventually become wonderful additions to society. There are so many exciting opportunities for them now, at least we can hope that we have provided the basic principles they will need to succeed.

It has been a wonderful career in Oneida and I will be forever grateful! Now, I am on to some new adventures and the chance to spend more time with my husband, Tim, my children and our eight grandchildren. Thank you so much to so many of you, who have made the ride so enjoyable!

Our 2015-16 Oneida Teachers' Association Retirees



**Mary Jo Donaldson—Health
Otto Shortell Middle School**

After 33 years of teaching, 26 in Oneida, I am proud of my chosen profession. Throughout my journey as an educator, I have had the pleasure of working with many talented and dedicated teachers, administrators, and staff members. However, my greatest joy as a teacher was making connections with my students as they learned the importance of making good decisions with their health.

Lastly, my teaching career has certainly benefitted from a strong teachers' union, and I encourage all teachers to become involved with and support our union. Although, I have very much enjoyed being an educator, I look forward to retiring as I can now spend more time with my family, a very important part of my life.



**Maria Erdo - Social Studies Teacher
Oneida High School**

It has been a great privilege to be able to come back to Oneida to spend my career teaching in this district, and at times, with the very teachers that helped me and pushed me to do my best as a student and later a colleague. I want to thank everyone who helped me along the way, most especially our union representatives, who tirelessly work behind the scenes to help maintain a respect for this profession that all too often gets caught up in the political mood of the day. The OTA officers and reps take time away from their families to protect for all of us what everyone wants to take away and believe we don't deserve. It confounds me to see so few people at the so few meetings they ask all of us to attend when reporting on the progress of negotiations or APPR changes, etc... If they give so much of their time it would seem we could give so little. There is strength in numbers. But if you don't show up and leave your leadership out there hanging in the wind everything they've worked to protect for you will just blow away. When you show up in droves it means something. Please take the time to show up. I know I wouldn't be where I am today without their work and I can never fully express my appreciation. Thank you.

Our 2015-16 Oneida Teachers' Association Retirees

**Chris Cavanagh - Special Education Teacher
Oneida High School**

I came to Oneida High School in September of 1986 after teaching three years in Canton, New York. I was hired to develop the first Resource program at the high school level. My career in Oneida has spanned three superintendents, three principals, quite a few vice principals, and only two union presidents.

I also was blessed to meet and marry the love of my life while teaching at Oneida High School. Jim was instrumental in showing me how important the union is to our profession. The people that serve our OTA work tirelessly for us and they need our support. I thank all of them for the time they spend away from their families and working when we are all on vacation!

I urge all of you to attend the very few meetings that your representatives schedule. The people that are negotiating for your future are only as strong as the people standing behind them. The privileges you enjoy today such as: getting extra pay for graduate/in-service classes, various duties, health/dental/vision insurance, pay raises, and many, many other compensations are there because of past union leaders who knew that the members were united. There is strength in numbers!

I have enjoyed my years at Oneida. I have loved having the opportunity to help young people and watch them develop their skills to achieve their dreams. I am still amazed that my teaching career is coming to a close – the years may be 33, but it seems like 33 weeks.

Best wishes to all of you and please support the OTA!

Retirement Parties!!

Please be aware that each building usually will host a Retirement Party for the individuals in their building.

If you are interested in attending one of the social gatherings, contact the Building Rep at that building and they should be able to direct you to the person in charge.

Oneida High School is looking at June 17th for their Retirement Dinner



The Value of NYSUT Membership

You may not be aware that your NYSUT membership allows you to enjoy the benefits of the more than 40 programs & services endorsed by NYSUT Member Benefits, including a variety of quality, competitive insurance plans.

Member Benefits strives to provide the highest-quality programs for NYSUT members and closely scrutinizes all proposals from reputable vendors before any endorsements are given.

While we work continuously to maintain quality benefit programs at competitive prices, you are encouraged to shop and compare before making any purchasing decisions.

MetLife Auto & Home®



Call MetLife Auto & Home to learn about the special savings and discounts you may be eligible for.

1-866-NYSUT-22

If you are looking for potential savings on your auto or homeowners insurance, consider enrolling in the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed MetLife Auto & Home Insurance Program.

This program offers special group rates on personal property and liability coverage not available to individual MetLife policyholders. NYSUT members can choose from a variety of coverages that include auto, homeowners, boat, renter's, and much more.

Policyholders can earn extra discounts for good driving, multiple policies and anti-theft devices. MetLife Auto & Home recently raised the multi-policy discount on its homeowners insurance with auto from 7% to 15%. The multi-policy/multi-product discount on auto insurance with home remains at 8%.

Visit the NYSUT Member Benefits website at memberbenefits.nysut.org or call **800-626-8101** for specific details about this program or other Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services.

MetLife Auto & Home is a NYSUT Member Benefits Trust (Member Benefits)-endorsed program. Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement of 5.5% of total premiums for this program. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering its various programs and, where appropriate, to enhance them. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 if you experience a problem with any endorsed program.

Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.



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.