



# Oneida Teachers' ASSOCIATION

*Partners for a Better Community*

**March/April  
Newsletter**

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

## **A Message from our President - Brian Mroczek**

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....

BETSY CARNEVALE (DV)  
JENNIFER KNIGHT (OHS)  
GEORGE MOON (NB)  
GINNY PENDLETON (DV)  
KAREN TRUSH (OHS)

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 all wish them the very best in retirement...Relax and enjoy!

The District has informed the Elementary buildings that the last week of school will consist of full days, with students. This is a change from past scheduling. The full days are in line with other districts in the area and are caused by the use of snow days and required teaching minutes set forth by the State. The November ballot will include the proposition for a Constitutional Convention. Defeating this proposition needs to be one of the most important things we do this summer. A Convention could open the door for changes to many of the things we deem important, such as TRS requirements, tenure laws, and bargaining rights. Please make an effort to chat with friends and family and encourage them to vote "NO" on the Constitutional Convention. And, please do not forget to vote yourself.

The OTA contract consists of several extra duty stipends. Each of these positions is a yearly appointment. Having said that, expect the District to distribute postings for each of these duties in the coming days, with interviews to follow. While we may not be used to this, it is within the District's rights to do so. Additionally, the District may require holders of those positions to submit updates consisting of hours worked and/or details of activities performed during your appointment.

Thank you to everyone who nominated a student for an OTA Scholarship. We had 26 different students nominated, which is the most in some time. The names will be passed along to the Guidance department and, with help from a small committee, the four finalists will be decided soon.



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## UPCOMING MEETINGS:

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

Next Meeting: April 11th 3:30 pm Rm. 126 High School  
May 9th 3:30 pm Rm. 126 High School  
June 13th 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)

April 4th Public Forum, Costello Transportation Center 5:00-8:00  
April 25th Costello Transportation Center 6:00-8:30  
May 9th Budget meeting Costello Transportation Center  
May 16th Budget Vote / B of Ed Meeting DO  
June 13th Board of Education meeting Costello Transportation Center

## Get out to Vote!!



May 16th is the Oneida City School District Budget vote. Make sure that you are supporting your District by supporting your budget.

Most polls open at 9 am.

## Donations and Contributions



Thanks to everyone who has contributed to our Casual Fridays so far this academic year. OHS, OSMS, DV, WP and SS have joined forces since October and raised almost \$4000.

**THANK YOU!**

## 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.

We have been busy! Many of us are very involved in “watching out” for good public education at the State and Federal level. Healthcare and the environment are among the many other issues to which we are channeling our energy and enthusiasm by keeping informed, disseminating information, attending marches and demonstrations, and contacting our legislators. We Will Persist!!

April 4, 2017, was “Equal Pay Day”. All day I kept thinking how “lucky” we were/are to have a strong union that takes that issue right off our table. We all know it wasn’t luck, it was the determination and hard work of those who founded the OTA and those who have worked to keep it strong that have ensured that NO ONE in the OCSD has to worry about anything less than equal pay.

To remind everyone of the situation BEFORE the OTA, however, I have dusted off Virginia Seminaroti’s tale from the early days of this column. Virginia taught English at OSMS and retired in 1991. Her tale is a real eye opener and well worth an occasional re-read:

“My most vivid, and maybe “most livid” memory of the pre-NYSUT days in Oneida occurred in the early 60s when the Board of Education asked the teachers to agree to accept for one year a \$50 raise across the board because that was all that it could afford. The teachers agreed to that amount, only to learn later that the District had received that year an additional \$20,000 in State Aid earmarked solely for raising teacher salaries.

How could this have happened? First of all, we had no union contract and no real collective bargaining unit. The agreement between the OTA and the District was the establishment of steps on a pay scale based on years of service. Then each teacher negotiated his/her own salary agreement and accepted the benefit of a basic hospital plan.

In my first years with the District I soon became aware of how inequitable this system was. I learned that not every first year teacher started on the same bottom step. Often the men with families to support were jumpstarted up the scale while women remained on the bottom steps. And it was appalling to note that some “high steppers” on the pay scale lacked professional abilities.

When the OTA joined NYSUT and became a union in the mid-70s, teachers finally gained bargaining powers not only on salary benefits, but on professional rights and securities. With a union contract a plethora of other unfair practices were eradicated. A whole new system of bargaining was implemented. The OTA finally acquired the assistance of a knowledgeable and resourceful union.

You should know that I wonder to this day about what it would have been like without a union to stabilize and make teacher salaries negotiable and equitable. I think back to my first year’s teaching salary in 1958; it was \$3800 plus hospital benefit and a retirement contribution of eight percent. The pay scale increments were \$200 each year. Hypothetically on that plan, my final average salary in 1991 could have been \$10,400! Realistically, better increments would have kicked in over the years, but enough?? Would that system of salary agreement have worked for me? For others? For you? “

Patricia Albaugh...6th Grade, Oneida Castle...retired 2007

## Happenings in and around the OTA



**Betsy Carnavale**  
**Librarian**  
**Durhamville Elementary**

It hardly seems possible that 23 years have gone by so quickly and retirement is almost here! I have loved being the librarian at Durhamville for all my years of teaching. I have worked with some of the most amazing people and taught some of the most wonderful children. When former students come back to visit or see me around town (or their children are now my students!) I am filled with joy that I have had the privilege to know them and watch them grow and succeed. I will miss my beloved Durhamville family so much, but I am looking forward to having time to devote to my many hobbies and spending more time relaxing with my friends and family. I wish you all continued happiness and success, professionally and personally, and hope to see you again when I sub in our district libraries, as I promised my department I would!



**Karen Trush**  
**Art Instructor**  
**Oneida High School**

I'm grateful for the opportunity to have been part of the Oneida City School District for the past 22 years. When I was first hired I taught 4 years at the elementary level with a split position between Willard Prior and Durhamville. The unrelenting enthusiasm and energy at this level, both by my colleagues and students, was an experience I will always cherish. The remainder of my career has been at the high school teaching the studio art program at the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level. It has given me great pleasure to witness the growth of so many students throughout their years here, as well as having worked with so many devoted staff members and administrators.

My decision to retire was based on wanting to spend more time with my family. I have three beautiful grandsons I look forward to "teaching" so many things. Relaxation and travel are also on the agenda.

As I approach my new journey, I know I will miss so many that I have traveled with in the past. It has been a privilege to be part of such a dedicated "family" over the years.

Karen Trush  
Art Instructor  
Oneida High School

**George Moon**  
**Physical Education Teacher**  
**North Broad Elementary**

George has been a active member of the Oneida City School District. As well as being a PE Teacher he has also been a coach for various sports teams. We all wish George a happy retirement. Congratulations!



## Happenings in and around the OTA



**Virginia Pendleton**  
Reading Teacher  
Durhamville Elementary

*Thanks to you, the OTA, fellow staff members, and our community for your strong teamwork! It has been an honor to work with you. Each day's positives, challenges, and changes gave opportunities to stretch and learn. This journey has danced along, full circle, from working with deaf-blind students in Batavia, to students with hearing loss and special needs in Rome, to landing back "home" in Oneida. Gratitude overflows for my 16 years with remarkable, blooming readers and the dedicated, talented staff at Durhamville Elementary. Our family has been blessed to move and be where we needed to be within the bigger picture and Master plan.*

*Keep supporting our students, their families, and each other as you strive for success with daily living and future stories. I hope to see you as a substitute in the coming years in special areas and at school events. Thanks again for all your support, shared laughter and wisdom!*



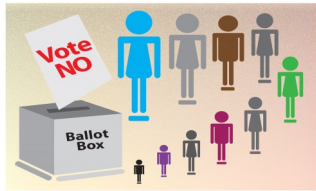
**Jennifer Knight**  
Guidance Counselor  
Oneida High School

One of my favorite things in my office is an old mimeographed copy of "Dress and Behavior Meeting" minutes from 1968. Not only is it entertaining to see how things have changed, but it is meaningful because things *have* changed. I sometimes yearn for a time when schools had the time to meet and discuss subjects such as ... "Miniskirts should be 2 to 2 ½ inches above the knee - - no shorter." "Sandals – Should they be worn at all?" "On the length of boys' hair...no more than half way down the forehead and no more than ¼ inch in back." It saddens me that we must focus on more sinister issues. We now have safety drills – not so much because of a threat from *outside* the school like a nuclear bomb – but because of the possibility of a threat from *within*. Several years ago, my daughter, overwhelmed with internet, phone, television, and all things fast and demanding, said to me: "Mom, don't you miss the 80's?" I do miss the eighties, and the seventies, and the sixties, ... I wish the world were simpler like it was then - - not so complicated and fast, fast, gotta have it now, both for me and for the kids. Although I am nostalgic, I do have hope for the future, in part because I've seen students do great things. Throughout my years at OHS I have seen so many accomplishments, so many strong souls who have pulled themselves out of difficult situations and done well, so many kids determined to make themselves the best they can be. These kids give me faith that we will somehow hold fast to that which is good. I've seen a lot, heard a lot, learned a lot in 31 years at OHS. I'm grateful for knowing students who have enriched my life and given me fresh perspective and insight

## Happenings in and around the OTA

The slate of officers is set for the Oneida Teachers' Association. With no contested positions, a vote on positions will be held at the May OTA executive meeting.

### Constitutional Convention



**Protect your Future interests!**  
**NYSUT is asking you to vote "NO" on November 7, 2017 on the NY Constitutional Convention. Find more information on their website and at [NoNewYorkConvention.org](http://NoNewYorkConvention.org) .**

At [NoNewYorkConvention.org](http://NoNewYorkConvention.org), you will find information, news, resources and tools to get you ready to fight back against the political insiders and corporate special interests who want to rewrite New York's constitution for their own benefit.

### OTA Scholarships!!

Names have been submitted and the final process of selected the 4 candidates for the OTA Scholarship is under way. The names will be forwarded to guidance and a select committee will choose the final four scholarship award winners.

### 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

### Retirement Parties!!

**Please be aware that each building usually will host a Retirement Party for the individuals in their building. Check for flyers or other notices.**

*Oneida High School* is having a party on June 16th at the Creekside Inn.

*Seneca Street* is having a party on June 16th at The Marble Hill Inn



# Simplifying your life insurance options

As an educated consumer, you realize the earlier in life that you purchase life insurance, the cheaper the premiums will likely be. You're also aware that life insurance offers financial protection for your dependents upon your death, helping to cover the costs of funeral and burial expenses; assistance to help with your children's education; and offering financial assistance with paying debts and other expenses.

It can be overwhelming, though, trying to determine the best type of life insurance policy. Let's take a look at some of the different types of life insurance options available.

## #1: Whole Life Insurance

– This type of insurance is usually the most costly since policies are guaranteed to remain in force as long as premiums are paid. Whole life insurance offers permanent protection with premiums that never increase and builds cash

value you can borrow against while you are living (like a loan). **Important:** Understand that you will reduce your death benefit if you don't repay loans with interest and will no longer have coverage if you surrender the policy.

**#2: Term Life Insurance** – This type of insurance pays a benefit in the event of the death of the insured during a specified term, offering a fixed rate of payments during that time period. Once that period ends, coverage at the previous premium rate is not guaranteed and the insured would need to get

further coverage. Term life insurance (and its level term life cousin) is designed only to protect your dependents if you were to die prematurely -- offering NO cash value.

**#3: Level Term Life Insurance** – Like term life insurance, level term life insurance pays a benefit in the event of the death of the insured during a specific time period. Premiums may not be

increased during the time period due to change in your age or health status.

## #4: Universal Life Insurance

– This type of insurance offers a way to protect your dependents while building tax-deferred cash value. While the cost of a universal life plan needs to be covered so the policy remains in force, the policyholder has the option to adjust how much he or she will pay in premiums each year. Policyholders can also access a portion of the balance without affecting the

guaranteed death benefit as the cash value accumulates over time.

Keep in mind that NYSUT members & their spouses/certified domestic partners can help protect their dependents from life's uncertainties with a variety of NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed life insurance plans. Many of these plans offer group rates not available to the general public along with additional convenience and savings opportunities.

“Term life and level term life policies are often popular options for those individuals with young families since there is a greater need for life insurance protection. They also tend to be much less expensive than their whole life counterparts. If you are considering a term or level term life policy, make sure to consider how long you would need the coverage.”

For more information about these plans, visit the Member Benefits website at [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://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.