

**A Message from the President - Brian Mroczek**

On December 16, the OTA ratified a tentative agreement with the District. Two days later, the Board of Education agreed to the terms as well. The successor agreement is a 4 year deal dating back to July 1, 2014. Compensation comes at 3%, 3%, 3.5%, and 3.5% for the 4 years. Those percentages will be applied to everything except LSI's and Graduate hours. There will be a slight change in the cost of insurance. OTA members have always been charged \$1 per year. The new language will show that individual members will now pay 3% of the total premium and those with family coverage will now pay 13% of the total premium. That will mean an increase for every one of about \$250 starting this year. Next year, the individual percent goes to 4%. Nurses will also be compensated for taking Undergraduate courses at a rate of \$50 per undergraduate hour. There are a few other minor changes that you will find in the document included in this newsletter. We would like to take the opportunity to proof read the entire contract prior to its publication. We will be looking for cooperation on that task after this break. It should give you a great chance to familiarize yourself with Articles of the contract you may not know.

The District, in conjunction with BOCES, has begun the hiring process for the next Superintendent of Schools. Jackie Starks is spearheading the search efforts and is in the process of forming the committees that will begin the search. The District is anticipating a decision by the end of May, with a possible start date in August.

The State handed out a holiday gift in the form of better APPR language. The new regulations eliminate the use of 3-8 testing in APPR until 2019-2020. The growth model will not apply to evaluations during this time and group measures based on these state tests will also be eliminated for this time period. Back up SLO's using other tests will replace the growth model, but it is still unclear how that will work in the current year. Locally developed group measures using regents results can continue to be used.

I hope everyone enjoys the upcoming Holiday Season and break from school....Merry Christmas.



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## **UPCOMING MEETINGS:**

### **OTA Representative Meeting (ALL ARE WELCOME!)**

Next Meeting: Jan 7th	3:30pm	Rm. 126 High School
Feb 4th	3:30 pm	Rm. 126 High School
Mar 4th	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**

**January 13th Seneca Street**

**February 9th,**

**March 8th,**

**April 6th, (Public Forum)**

**April 19th,**

## **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***



**Thanks to everyone who has contributed to our Casual Fridays this past academic year.**

**Whether you have participated in your schools own "charities" or participated with other buildings, your donations have gone a long way in showing your support of our**

**Community.  
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.

NYSUT maintains an important and extremely active organization for retirees, which is split into geographic groups called Retiree Councils. OREA is part of the RC 8 group, whose current president is Ken Drake, Oneida resident and VVS retiree. OREA has a reputation in the group for having a very large number of members...other school systems seem to struggle with this and often ask how we are able to get retirees to join our group. It seems to speak well of Oneida...so many teachers have been involved in the OTA, and interest in the union carries right into retirement. OREA members are grateful for our excellent healthcare benefits that are a result of hard work in our teaching years and your hard work now...we continue to work for them locally and to keep a close watch on retirement benefits at a state level.

In a recent issue of the RC 8 newsletter, Ken Drake included a paragraph regarding the history of the AFT that may be of interest to OTA members.

“The AFT was always a grass-roots teachers’ organization. It was formed in 1897 as the Chicago Teachers Federation with the explicit aim of improving teachers’ salaries and pensions. Catherine Goggin and Margaret Haley allied the CTF with the labor movement, going so far as to join the American Federation of Labor---an act that horrified everyone who wanted to see teaching as genteel, white-collar employment. At the same time, the union conceived its work in terms of broader social improvement, bettering the lives of the poor and the alienated. By 1916 several local unions had come together to form the AFT. In the 1940s, the AFT began collective bargaining with local school boards, which again horrified some people.”

Ken states that this information comes from a PBS account of the origin of the AFT and the role women played in its formation. In the early years, I’m sure some of the horror people felt about teachers becoming involved in the labor movement stemmed from the fact that most of the teachers were indeed women.

In trying to localize this a bit, I tried to think of any horrifying behavior that women were accused of since I began my career in 1973. The only thing I could really think of was dress! At that time, male teachers were expected to wear dress pants and ties at all times, and women wore dresses or skirts. Then along came the pantsuit...those were allowed, albeit grudgingly. Teachers’ dress seemed to be controlled by individual building policies, and was printed in each building’s teacher handbook. I wouldn’t swear to this, but I believe as the OTA was formed and took root, women began to feel more confident about wearing slacks to work and breaking out of the dresses/pantsuit mold. Society was changing as well, but with the unionizing of teachers some of the “fear of administrators” definitely dissipated.

No matter what you wear to school these days, keep up the good work and know the OREA supports you.

Pat Albaugh, 2007 Retiree, Oneida Castle School

## Welcome our New members to the OTA

### **New Member Meeting**

Some of our new members attended an informal meeting at the Dupree's on October 14th. At the meeting, they were given information about the OTA, NY-SUT, our Sick Bank, Vote Cope and many other pieces to help them survive their first year teaching. The next two pages are the Bio's they presented to the OTA. Be sure to say hello to our newest members!



***Tyler Steenburg— 7th and 8th  
Grade Science  
Otto Shortell Middle School***

My name is Tyler Steenburg and I am glad to be the newest member of the Science Department here at Oneida City School District. I am teaching 7th and 8th grade science at Otto Shortell Middle School. I attended The College of Saint Rose and am certified in Biology 7-12. I previously taught in the Poland Central School District. I received my Master's Degree from Utica College in Adolescence Education. While not in the classroom, I enjoy the great outdoors, playing guitar and spending time with my family and friends.

Newest OTA Members (from left to right): Elizabeth Schilling, Emily Faniglula, Tyler Steenburg, Lana Stewart and Mindy Niles.

***Emily Faniglula - Special Education  
Otto Shortell Middle School***

Hello, my name is Emily Faniglula and I am a new teacher at Otto Shortell Middle School. I am currently teaching in 15:1 ELA classes for the 6th – 8th grade as well as Home & Careers. I received my undergraduate degree from Utica College certified in Children with Disabilities 1st - 9th and General Education 1st - 6th. I then attended Touro College in New York City where I received my Masters in Children with Disabilities 1st -6th . Prior to joining the Oneida City School District, I was a Special Education Teacher at Madison Oneida BOCES for 9 years. When I am not working at OSMS, I enjoy spending time with my family.

## Welcome our New members to the OTA

### ***Elizabeth Schilling— 5th Grade Seneca Street Elementary***

Hey there, my name is Elizabeth Schilling. I am a 5th grade teacher at Seneca Street Elementary. I am certified in Childhood Education Grades 1-6 and received my degree from SUNY Cortland. After completing my undergraduate degree I spent some time substitute teaching within the local school districts. I began graduate school and accepted a position as a Behavioral Specialist Assistant for a little over a year at Wettel Elementary in Vernon. I then was fortunate to begin two long term substitute positions in first and fifth grade at Willard Prior for the duration of the 2014-2015 school year.

Outside of work, I enjoy being active outside with family and friends throughout the year. I have a very exciting year ahead of me full of new experiences. I will be focusing on my first year teaching full time, becoming an aunt to a little girl, and getting married this summer. Yay!

I am very excited to be at Seneca Street Elementary full time. I have really enjoyed getting to know the staff and students as we jump into the new school year. I am thrilled to be here and look forward to a great year!

### ***Mindy Niles — 5th Grade Seneca Street Elementary***

I've returned "home." As a 1995 graduate of Oneida High School, I'm honored to be serving the community that helped form the person I am today. Since graduating with my Master's Degree in Special Education from St. John Fisher College, I've been a K-12 Special Education Teacher working predominantly for Sherburne-Earlville and North Syracuse Central Schools. In addition, many of my summers over the past 9 years have been spent working with students attending the OCM BOCES Summer School Program. The 2014-2015 school year carries with it added excitement for me. I've recently returned to Oneida to raise my own family, and now I can also demonstrate my devotion to Oneida through my work here. I'm glad to be back and look forward to the years ahead.

### ***Lana Stewart—Nurse Seneca Street Elementary/St. Patrick's***

Hello, my name is Lana Stewart. I am the new school nurse at Seneca Street and St. Patrick's school. I grew up in Oneida. I attended Seneca Street Elementary school, Middle school and high school in Oneida. Who would

have thought.....? I landed right back where I started!

I attended the LPN Nursing program at Madison-Oneida BOCES while in High school and achieved my Associates in Science degree from Cazenovia College. I worked at Oneida Healthcare Center for a total of 16 years in and out of many different departments. My last department was the Endoscopy unit where I worked for 9 years.

I have two children in college. Eddie attends the University of Buffalo majoring in Business and Emily attends Florida Atlantic University also majoring in business. Life never prepares you for the "empty nest stage". I look forward to them coming home on breaks as much as I look forward to the next semester to begin. (Ha ha)

I enjoy spending time with friends and family, cooking, taking tap class, playing with my dogs, traveling and always planning for that next adventure. Life is too short to turn any invitation down.

I am thankful for the great staff between Seneca Street and St. Patrick's School. I have felt nothing but warmth and kindness from all. I look forward to my future with Oneida City School District. Being a school nurse is both challenging and rewarding. As I settle in, I want to thank all of the District nurses for putting up with all my questions. You have all been great!!

## Happenings in and around the OTA

### *Annual Fall Fling*

The Fall Fling is held annually around the same time each year. In the past, we have also held the event at Dibbles Inn and Rusty Rail.

This years OTA Fall Fling was held on Thursday November 12th at The Marble Hill Inn in Sherrill.

A raucous crowd of about 90 people made it to this years gathering. Members of the OTA, OSEU and OREA mixed and mingled with one another. There was food and spirits made available to everyone that attended. The evening culmination came as the raffle numbers were drawn and some lucky guests picked up their prizes.

This is the perfect opportunity for our members to socialize with one another in an environment outside the school building. Everyone should try to attend this fun event in the late fall.



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.



"Peace on Earth, good will toward men?  
There's an app for that!"

### Thinking About Retirement?

**Paul Farfaglia**, a former teacher and current member of the **NYSTRS Board of Directors**, held a retirement workshop here at Oneida High School on Thursday December 17th. A group of 27 people participated in the workshop. The group included both those people who are really close to retirement as well as some people who still have 10-15 years to go.



Be sure to review your yearly NYSTRS Report which you s

## Happenings in and around your Union

### Law and Order!

Three sources are confirming that US Attorney Preet Bharara intends to indict Governor Andrew Cuomo on January 2nd — along with a half dozen associates and former staffers — on public corruption, racketeering, conspiracy, and honest services fraud. Emboldened, sources say, following the conviction of former Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver — on all of seven corruption charges. Such is the public's appetite for corrupt politicians, observers say.



### 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.**

VOTE-COPE: your Political Action arm in action.

What is VOTE-Cope?

VOTE-COPE is NYSUT's non-partisan political action arm. No Union dues are used for VOTE-COPE.

Want to get a heads up on what's happening in Albany?

NYSUT has Political Action members who are more than willing to “share” information with you. Both people listed below are Political Action Coordinators for NYSUT. Contact them to keep current with Educational events.

Phil Cleary (NS Kindergarten teacher) - [pcleary@nscsd.org](mailto:pcleary@nscsd.org) (ask to join his morning news feed)

Shelly Chizzonite (ESM Guidance counselor) - [Schizzonite@esmschools.org](mailto:Schizzonite@esmschools.org)

What is MAC:

NYSUT's Member Action Center (MAC) is a way to keep informed about what is going on in Albany and Education. You can sign up to get text, tweets, and e-mail alerts. Visit NYSUT web page and sign up. [mac.nysut.org](http://mac.nysut.org)



**December 21st—National Bah Humbug Day  
Take a day to relax from the hectic holiday season !**

# 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.



## Are you ready to answer these questions?

What would happen if you suddenly died? Have you ever considered what would happen to your spouse and/or children? Take a few moments and answer these questions now:

- 1) *Would your loved ones be able to afford their current home?*
- 2) *Could your loved ones continue to pay regular bills and maintain their medical coverage?*
- 3) *Would your loved ones be able to plan for your final funeral expenses?*

If your answer to the above questions is “No” or “I don’t know,” consider enrolling in the NYSUT Member Benefits Trust-endorsed Term Life or Level Term Life Insurance Plans. Both of these plans allow you to select the plan and benefit amount that best meets your specific needs.

Visit the NYSUT Member Benefits website at [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) or call 800-626-8101 for specific details about these plans.

The issuance of a Certificate of Insurance or payment of benefits will depend upon the answers given in the application and the truthfulness of those answers. Additional underwriting requirements may be needed.

Member Benefits has an endorsement arrangement with its endorsed insurance provider of 7.61% of earned premiums for these programs. All such payments to Member Benefits are used solely to defray the costs of administering its various programs and, where appropriate, to enhance them. The Insurer pools the premiums of Member Benefits participants who are insured for the purposes of determining premium rates and accounting. Coverage outside of these plans may have rates and terms that are not the same as those obtainable through Member Benefits. The Insurer or Member Benefits may hold premium reserves that may be used to offset rate increases and/or fund such other expenses related to the plan as determined appropriate by Member Benefits. Member Benefits acts as your advocate; please contact Member Benefits at 800-626-8101 if you experience a problem with any endorsed program.



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.