



Oneida Teachers' ASSOCIATION

Partners for a Better Community

November/December
Newsletter

Volume 50—Issue #2

www.oneidateacher.com

A Message from our President - David Wright

As we near the end of 2021, we should all feel proud of the work that we have done for our students, our community, and our profession. All teachers know that our workday does not end when the students go home. Oneida teachers put in many behind-the-scenes hours at night, on weekends, and even on vacations. We have attended countless workshops, trainings, and classes to further our skills and help more students. We've created new lesson plans that are designed to help our students meet the challenges of a changing work environment. The OTA prides itself on going above and beyond and that is what we continue to do for our students.

Through our dress down days, bell ringing, and building fundraisers, we have raised funds that go right back into our community. Teachers are generous people. Recently our membership raised funds to help Barry Zebley, a former OTA president. The OTA raised just over \$1,200 for Barry and his family. Barry's family is very appreciative of everyone's generosity.

As we look forward to vacation, I hope you take time to do something for yourself. Our newest members might want check out NYSUT new program named Next Generation NYSUT. This program is designed to help our newest members establish themselves in their careers and assure they have the necessary resources and support from their union to be successful. Visit the website at nextgennysut.org where you can find more information.

For both our new and more experienced members you might want to look to NYSUT Member Benefits program. With this program, a member can choose from a variety of insurance, financial, legal, shopping, travel, and personal programs designed with the NYSUT member in mind — including term life insurance, auto insurance, legal and financial services, car rentals, vacation packages and discount programs. Visit the website memberbenefits.nysut.org for more information.

On an additional note, if you are considering retirement at the end of this school year, please remember that you must have your letter in by the end of December to be eligible to receive the local retirement incentive. Page 39 of your contract has more information.

I hope that you have a wonderful holiday with friends and family. Enjoy your time off. As we return in January, know that your students, the OTA, and our community all value your hard work and dedication.



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UPCOMING MEETINGS:

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

Next Meeting:	December 14th	3:30 pm TBA (Google meet)
	January 11th	3:30 pm TBA (Google meet)
	February 8th	3:30 pm TBA (Google meet)
	March 8th	3:30 pm TBA (Google meet)

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

Board of Education Meeting (Second Tuesday of the month)

December 14th	6:00 pm Durhamville Elementary
January 11th	6:00 pm Seneca Street Elementary
February 8th	6:00 pm North Broad Elementary
March 8th	6:00 pm Oneida High School
April 19th	6:00 pm Costello transportation Center

Board of Education Meetings

The Oneida City School District Board of Education will meet on the second Wednesday 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 Welcome to our Casual Friday Updates!



The first Friday of the each month we try to have a District wide Casual Friday.

Sometimes we may alter it based on what is happening during the month.

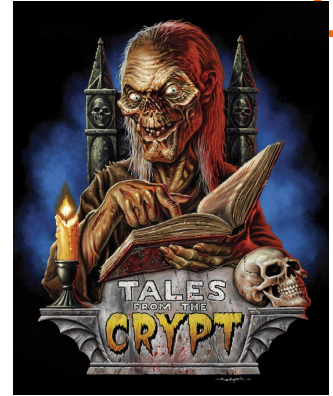
As always, we ask that all individuals dress appropriately to our Profession!

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

Holiday Edition

Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year from the members of the Oneida Retired Educators Association.

Most of our OREA members thoroughly enjoy being retired teachers. With good health we are able to enjoy a great life. Time to travel, get-togethers with colleagues, new adventures, second careers, hobbies, pastimes, time spent with family and grandkids and you name it, we do it. The negative part about being a retiree is we get closer to the time of dealing with illness and losing our friends and colleagues. Sadly, we have lost a few OREA members this year, most recently Leo Matzke.



Leo was truly one of a kind. He was older than the typical beginning teacher, having served in VISTA and the U.S. Army before completing his education degree and starting his career at Willard Prior. It seems to me that Leo taught fourth grade for a bit before switching to sixth, which he taught for about 30 years. Leo really spiced up our district-wide grade-level meetings, with a never-ending supply of stories to tell and new ideas to share. We used to tease him about some of his unique methods of classroom organization and management, and he would laugh along with us and give it right back. Leo was involved with OTA activities, acting as a building rep for many years and helping the young union develop and grow.

At the heart of everything that Leo did was just that...his heart. He was kind and thoughtful and loved his colleagues, but mostly it was all about the kids. His interest and concern for his students and their families went way beyond the academics. He believed in every child and did everything he could to ensure their well-being and build their self-esteem. Today there are hundreds of OCSD alumni who will tell you that their lives were changed for the better by "Mr. M."

As you head into a well-deserved break from your students, remember that the OREA members support you and all the things you do every day to improve the lives of your students. We wish you all the best as you begin 2022!

Patricia Albaugh...Oneida Castle School...Retired, 2007

Welcoming our new Members!



Hi, my name is **Hannah Cleveland** and I am an AIS Reading Teacher at Willard Prior Elementary. I completed my Bachelor's Degree in May of 2020 from SUNY Oneonta in Childhood Education 1-6 and Literacy B-5. I also obtained my Master's

Degree through SUNY Oneonta in May of 2021, with a Master's of Science in Education in Literacy B-5. During the 2020-21 school year I was teaching AIS Reading. I am a mom of two sweet boys! Maddox is 5 and Nixon is 3. We enjoy spending time together swimming, cooking, reading, and exploring the outdoors!



Marissa Cretaro is a new Kindergarten Teacher at Seneca Street Elementary



Alexandra Bromfield is teacher of English as a New Language at Seneca Street Elementary



Hi! My name is **Stephanie Thompson** and I am the new School Social Worker for Otto Shortell Middle School! I received my Bachelors Degree from SUNY Fredonia where I was a

double major in Psychology and Criminal Justice. I then went on to earn my Master or Social Work degree from Syracuse University.

Prior to coming here, I was a social worker at Madison County Mental Health where I worked with adults and children of all ages and all mental health diagnoses. From this role, I have experiences with diagnosing, assessing, providing individual, family, and group therapy.

In my free time, I love to play tennis, hike, and travel. I am always planning my next trip!

I look forward to my new role as a School Social Worker!

Here's a list of new hires that we are welcoming into the OTA Family!

Victoria Rebeor—Elementary Teacher at Seneca Street

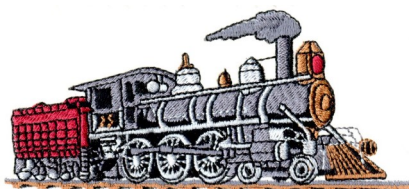
Mark Ritter—School Nurse at Willard Prior Elementary

Jennifer Lewis—School Nurse at Durhamville Elementary

Abigail Cornish—Speech Pathologist at Seneca Street Elementary

Madisyn Davis—Elementary Teacher at North Broad Elementary

Thomas Rose—elementary Teacher at Willard Prior Elementary



Chug, Chug, Chuggin' Along to a new School Year!

Happenings in and around the OTA

OTA and the Oneida City School District showing support while helping members of our community!



OHS Faculty and Staff supporting the Zebley Family



North Broad Elementary

Thank you to all who donated to Barry Zebley. It is GREAT to have such a caring and compassionate group to be a part of.

Karing Kitchen Donations

In November, we held one of our monthly Casual Fridays to raise funds for the Karing Kitchen. In all, we raised \$379 for the Karing Kitchen, with each dollar providing about 3 meals for those in need during the Holiday season.

In addition, with the help of National Honor Society, a second fundraiser was run during the month of December. During this fundraising event, the National Honor Society “sweetened” the pot by giving cookies to the building which raised the most money per faculty member. This year, Otto Shortell Middle School beat out Durhamville Elementary for the cookies.

A total of \$630 was raised for Karing Kitchen during the December fundraiser bringing our total donations to just over \$1000.

Awesome job everyone!



**MAKE
CHANGE
HAPPEN.**

Kristin Robinson initiated a Salvation Army Kettle Drive with the OTA and the OCSD. We had many volunteers ringing the bell for charity at Walmart, Price Chopper and Tops in Sherrill. Thank you everyone who volunteered your time.



John and Lisa Z.

Happenings in and around the OTA



NYSTRS Retirement Seminar

The OTA, under the capable hands of John Zamperetti, is trying to set up a local workshop for future Retirees. The workshop would be a virtual presentation put on by members of the NYS-TRS. A definitive time has not been set yet but we are looking to hold it here at Oneida High School in the Auditorium. As we gather more information, we will let everyone know, so, please stay tuned.

OTA Retirement Incentive

Just a reminder that any person who may be thinking of retiring in **June 2022** and meets the retirement criteria in the contract (page 39 of our current OTA contract) needs to submit your Letter of Resignation to the Superintendent by December 31, 2021 to be eligible for the incentive. The OTA officers are willing to look over your letter to ensure that the necessary information is included.



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



Check out all your union membership has to offer!

Legal Service Plan

Plan benefits include:

- Crucial estate planning documents (a Simple Will, Health Care Proxy, Living Will & Durable Power of Attorney)
- Free telephone consultations
- Guaranteed maximum fees for specific legal matters

Financial Counseling Program

Plan benefits include:

- Unbiased objective advice
- Free telephone and virtual consultations
- Assistance with retirement planning, 403(b) savings, college savings, tax planning and more

NYSUT Member Benefits

Every Dollar Counts!

These are just two of the dozens of endorsed programs & services available to union members and their families.

Whether it's insurance products, financial or legal services, or discounts, shopping or travel, NYSUT Member Benefits offers numerous programs that can help you save time and money while protecting those you care about most. Many of these programs can be purchased through payroll or pension deduction for greater convenience and savings opportunities.

Member Benefits also provides the advocacy role that is so important should an issue or concern arise. We encourage you to take the time to explore the Member Benefits website to find out how we can help you make every dollar count!



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.

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