

# Nominate a Star!



## Laurel's Night Awards

Nomination forms for all awards have been sent to the schools or can be obtained by calling the OEA at 346-0400. All nominations must be submitted by active OEA members.

Rookie of the Year: Nominations due February 29, 2008. Any OEA member can nominate candidates. To recognize a first year teacher who is an OEA member, submit no more than 200 words explaining the nominee's qualifications.

Media Award: To honor an individual or organization for outstanding contributions to the students and/or teachers of OPS through the use of the local media. The award can encourage greater coverage of educational topics by the media, while honoring those who have covered an education story in the past. The award should be for a broad scope of work, rather than for a single effort.

School Bell Award: Individuals or groups who have made outstanding contributions to education, with the exception of active staff members of OPS, are eligible to receive this award.

Human Relations Award: Any Omaha area individual, group or organization that has made a significant contribution to human relations can be nominated.

The deadline for the last 3 awards is the last Friday in March.

**Laurels Night is April 30, 2008.  
At the DC Centre; 11830 Stonegate Circle  
More information in our next issue.**



**"We're Lucky  
to be Teachers!"**

**Any and all OEA and OEA-R  
members are invited to  
march in the  
St. Patrick's Day Parade.  
Saturday morning,  
March 15th,  
Downtown Omaha  
exact time and location TBA  
contact:  
Maria Elizabeth Walinski  
[maria.walinski@ops.org](mailto:maria.walinski@ops.org)**



## Abraham Lincoln Fellowship

Horace Mann and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (ALPLM) have teamed up to offer 50 teachers a Fellowship to study the life and legacy of our 16th president.

The Fellowship is open to any full-time teacher of Kindergarten through 12th grade students of any discipline in the U.S. The Fellowship features a five-day Institute on June 22-28 and July 6-12 2008 at the ALPLM in Springfield, Illinois and it includes round-trip transportation, lodging and most meals.

This Fellowship is an outstanding opportunity to take part in a once in a lifetime experiential learning adventure with exceptional educators from across the country. The application process for the Fellowship closes **February 22, 2008**. Teachers must submit their application online at [www.horacemann.com](http://www.horacemann.com).

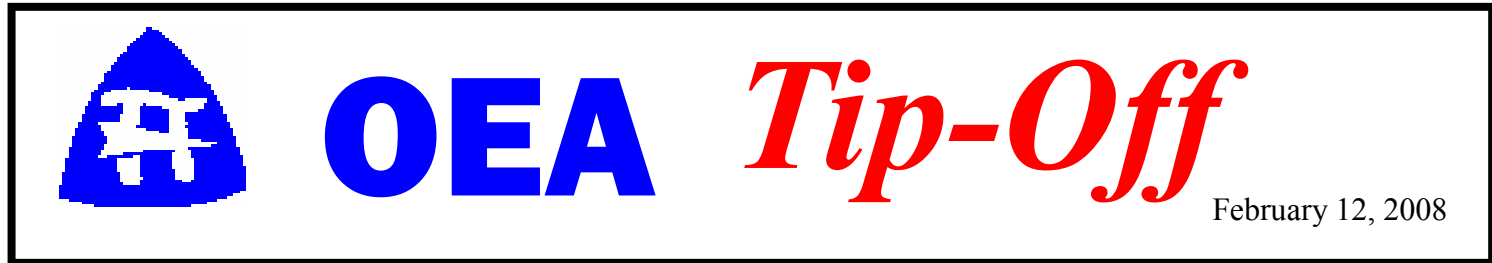
## Attention 25 year employees!!

Are you completing your 25<sup>th</sup> year with OPS at the end of this year? As is our tradition, OEA will honor its members celebrating their 25-year milestone at Laurels Night. We must rely on the information from the district to identify 25-year employees. If you believe you deserve to be honored at this year's Laurels Night, please contact Human Resources to verify that OPS has your number of years credited. Last year we know a few teachers missed out on their 25-year award and we don't want that to happen again!

### OEA Tip-Off

The OEA *Tip-Off* is a bi-monthly publication printed for members of the Omaha Education Association.

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## MYSFACE OR MY INTEGRITY, FACEBOOK OR SAVING FACE...

BY ROSITA FORCE, FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY

As social websites such as Myspace or Facebook become more prevalent, some cautions are warranted to insure your professional integrity. These social sites have a direct impact on our ability to maintain the ethical requirements necessary to be effective as teachers.

The purpose of a site on Myspace or Facebook generally is social and personal. A few tips to keep these sites from becoming professionally compromising:



- When setting up your site, **set it as private.**
- Make sure when you are adding photos you select the option **"do not share photos."** This option disallows others from dragging and dropping your personal photos from your site to their sites or documents.
- **Be selective when adding friends.** Having a multitude of friends is easy to achieve but are you sure that the content on their pages is always appropriate?
- **Check the content of friends' pages regularly.**
- **Be sure to delete any "off-color" comments** made by your friends. Keep in mind that you are putting your words into print and at anytime those comments could come back to haunt you.
- **Make sure that you do not "tag" your photos with your name or the names of others.** Tagging photos means listing the people in the photos by name, either full or partial.
- **Google yourself.** If you are not sure just how easy it is to come up on the internet, find out. Google your name, be in the know about how visible your name is on the World Wide Web. Once you see what comes up on the website, click on the "Images" to make sure the photos (if any) are what you want shared.
- **We strongly discourage allowing students access to your site.** Allowing students this kind of access to your personal life is risky. If you are contacting students on their Myspace and allowing them to contact you, this could be perceived as crossing the line of professionalism.
- **Be internet smart.** As with any internet activity, don't give out your personal information. For example, use only a first or last name but not both. Don't list the city and state of your residence.
- **Keep blogging work friendly.** Don't use first names of co-workers, bosses, or students in a rant about a bad day at school.

At a conference recently, stories were shared about new teachers being targeted by their local news station by having photos from their Myspace and Facebook pages copied and shown on the evening news, not just for one night but for a week long series. These new teachers were forced to start their careers amidst a cloud of doubt, not just about their teaching abilities, but about their morality.

Be aware, once you post something to these sorts of websites, it is there forever. You may not see it, but it has been archived. Any employers can access these archived sites. As with any decision with teaching, do the research and make a decision that best suits you. Teaching isn't the only profession that social websites will impact. All professions are finding out just how hazardous something put in print can be on a career. Employers are running checks on the Internet just as commonly as they are running background checks and credit checks.

## Classroom Management Workshop “I Can Do It”

New teachers are required to attend 7 hours of training each semester. OEA has reached agreement with the district that “I Can Do It” and “New Teacher Training II” meet this requirement. “I Can Do It” is excellent training in classroom management; “New Teacher Training II” will build on the skills learned in the first course and go deeper into understanding your role as not only a classroom teacher, but as a professional educator.

If you are a new teacher and attend the training outside of school hours, you will be paid \$150; if you attend training during the school day, a substitute will be provided and you will not receive a stipend. Meals will be provided during the training.

If you attended “I Can Do It” in the first semester, you can attend “New Teacher Training II” in the second semester. If you did not attend “I Can Do It” in the first semester, you can attend both trainings in the second semester.

First priority will be given to new teachers, but all OEA members are welcome to attend at no cost.

Here is how you can register for either class:

1. Select the class you are interested in taking.

### I Can Do It

**Class A** - Wed. Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> - 8:30 - 4:00

(a substitute will be provided for new teachers but you will not receive the stipend)

**Class B** - Wed. and Thurs. Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> - 4:00 - 7:30

**Class C** - Sat. March 8<sup>th</sup> - 8:30 - 3:30

### New Teacher Training II (a follow up to I Can Do It)

**Elementary Teachers** March 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> 4p - 7:30p

**Secondary** March 19<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> 3:15-6:45



2. Go to: <http://www.ops.org/elementary/ashlandparkrobbins/HOME/TrainingRegistration/tabid/379/Default.aspx>

3. To register for a class, you must be a registered user of the OPS Website.

- a) if you are not registered, click on “register” at the bottom left side of the page.
- b) if you are a registered user, click on “login” at the bottom right side of the page.

4. Find the class you are interested in on the calendar.

5. Click on the date you are interested in attending. If the class is two nights, just register for the first class.

-If you are logged in, you will see an “Enroll for this Event” link.

-Click on the link and enroll for the class.

-You will receive an email once your enrollment has been confirmed.

If you have ANY QUESTIONS, PROBLEMS OR CONCERNS email Diana Casey at [diana.casey@ops.org](mailto:diana.casey@ops.org)

### **Building Bright Futures Town Hall Meeting for Teachers**

**Tuesday, Feb. 19, 2008**  
**Scott Conference Center, UNO South Campus**  
**6450 Pine Street**  
**6:00 to 8:00 pm**

A light meal and child care will be provided  
starting at 5:30.

Please RSVP to  
402-715-4148  
or [contactus@buildingbrightfutures.net](mailto:contactus@buildingbrightfutures.net)

## Transfer Process Q & A

Every year we receive numerous calls concerning the transfer process. Below are answers to the most common questions:

Q. Who can apply and receive a transfer?

A. Teachers in their 4<sup>th</sup> year are considered tenured and eligible to be considered for the transfer process. Human Resources (HR) will attempt to assign these teachers one or two interviews.

Q. “Who gets to interview first? Last year before I even interviewed, most of the open positions were taken.”

A. Two groups of teachers are considered before transfer requests are considered. Teachers whose positions are being eliminated through decreasing enrollment or the elimination of a program and returning from a leave of absence are placed before transfer requests are considered.

Q. “If the enrollment drops in our building, do I have to transfer?”

A. Possibly. You are guaranteed a position in OPS that you are qualified to teach. OPS has the authority to assign you to meet the needs of the school district. If there is to be a mandatory transfer out of a building, HR will meet with all affected staff. A short survey will help in determining who should be transferred.

Q. “If I apply for a transfer, am I guaranteed a transfer?”

A. The simple answer is “No.” Many factors go into granting a transfer. First, is the timely and accurate completion of the transfer packet; second, you must be willing to transfer to a school where a vacancy actually exists; and third, you have to successfully interview at the school where you have been granted an interview. In some instances, the district must consider the impact of a transfer on the profile of the staff at the school you move to and the building you would leave.

Q. “I have applied for a transfer every year; I haven’t even received an interview, why?”

A. There are several possibilities. One, there may not be any available openings in the grade level or subject area you are interested in. Two, there may not be any openings in the schools or Zone you have indicated you are willing to consider. Third, you may not fit the “profile” as the district tries to balance years of experience and advanced degrees. Fourth, OPS may have to transfer a teacher because of a decrease in class size or elimination of a program and they may be placed in the positions for which you were applying.

Q. “If I interview and I am offered a transfer, do I have to accept the position?”

A. No. The interview process is as much about the school finding the right “fit” for their needs as it is about you finding the right school. If you are not comfortable with the building you interview with, you may decline the offer.

Q. “How many interviews am I guaranteed?”

A. None. However, HR tries to assign at least one interview to each transfer applicant. Depending on the need, available positions, and qualifications, some individuals may receive several interview opportunities.

Q. “If I decide to turn down an offer after interviewing, will I be sent out on additional interviews?”

A. Maybe, maybe not. HR tries to get all staff assigned as soon as possible. They do their best to get everyone who applies out to a school for interviews. While you are interviewing and deciding if the school is the best fit for you, others are interviewing and accepting positions around the district. The available vacancies shrink quickly.

Q. “Do I have to tell my principal I am applying for a transfer?”

A. Professionally, it is the correct thing to do. However, your building principal does not approve or deny transfer requests. This process is handled through HR. Your building principal will be notified. Each spring, each building principal meets with HR to determine staffing needs for the coming year. They discuss retirees, resignations and transfers.

Q. “Should I tell my principal?”

A. Professionally, it is the correct thing to do. If you are apprehensive, try putting a positive spin on your news. Always focus on what you’re looking for, the next challenge, a chance to grow in new ways. Do not focus on what you feel is wrong or not working out for you. After all, you may not receive a transfer.

Q. “Can a building principal “block” my transfer?”

A. Absolutely, positively, unequivocally “No!” Dr. Hodges, Assistant Superintendent, HR, has repeatedly told us if a principal wishes to keep a teacher in their building, they must talk to the teacher and request that they stay. If the teacher does not wish to remain, the building principal cannot “block” their application for a transfer.

Q. “I have been on a program of assistance (formal or informal) all year, I just want to get out of this building, can I apply for a transfer?”

A. You must successfully complete the assistance plan before you will be considered in the transfer process.

Q. “How can I increase my chances of being transferred?”

A. Complete and return all forms to HR before deadlines. Be open to the widest possible selection of schools. Don’t limit yourself to one “zone” or building. Prepare your resume. Update your resume and include all current education, training, and in-service. Include in your resume all the roles and responsibilities you have taken in your current building. In your resume include letters of recommendation from those who best know your abilities. Do your research. Learn about the school before you interview. What is their focus, what are they trying to do? Share with them the strengths you can bring to further the goals of their building. Bring examples of your work and demonstrate how it will help their program. Prove to them you are the best candidate for the available position.

Q. “I know there is an opening in a building, should I contact the principal?”

A. No. All transfer interviews are set up through Human Resources. The building principal has the authority to hire a new staff member in their building, however the available pool of prospective teachers are selected by HR. The principal decides which candidate is best suited for the position from the candidates sent to them by HR.