

# The Oneida Lake Bulletin

Summer 2004

## Building Your “Dock of the Bay”

By Scott Shupe

Building your private “dock of the bay” along Oneida’s shoreline might seem like a simple task, but landowners should be advised that construction that alters the lake’s edges requires permits prior to any groundbreaking. Getting these documents isn’t hard, but several steps must be followed.

America’s interstate waterways are controlled by the Army Corps of Engineers. Oneida Lake is part of the Barge Canal system and, thus, falls under Corps jurisdiction. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) also regulates larger New York State waters like Oneida. Both agencies mandate that landowners obtain permits before building docks or seawalls along their shorelines.

How do you get approval? First, file applications with the Corps (contact their Buffalo office – 716-879-4433) and with the DEC (in Syracuse – 315-435-7438). Trained personnel will gladly send you all the forms required. They will answer any questions. Apply at least three months prior to construction. Processing often takes time.

Include drawings that illustrate the project with your application. Write detailed dimensions on these sketches. Describe the materials you wish to use, the volume of material you want to remove and refill, and the position of your project with regard to average water levels. In addition, state where you will dispose of excavated debris. Be very specific. Agency reviewers must be able to visualize your plans.

The DEC will review your application

and, if all is proper, issue a Water Quality Certification that makes you adhere to your plans. Random inspections by Conservation Officers also enforce compliance. The Buffalo District of the Corps has

“Sittin’ on a dock of the bay,  
Watchin’ the tide roll away,  
Sittin’ on a dock of the bay,  
Wastin’ time.”

*-Otis Redding*

issues permits for mooring buoys, temporary docks, and anchorage areas.

If your documents are in order, you might obtain permits within 45 to 50 days. Be patient – it’s a slow process.

Permits are required if you want to deepen the water at your dock or construct a protective seawall. These documents insure that your plans meet environmental protection standards. Your work in the water should be timed to avoid disturbing fish spawning areas. February provides the best and environmentally safest conditions for Oneida Lake alterations. Water levels are drawn to their lowest points and landowners can often work “in the dry” by

merely moving ice and snow.

Many shore owners prefer gabions for seawall protection. Gabions are heavy wire baskets that are filled with rocks. They are porous and absorb wave energy. In contrast, concrete seawalls reflect incoming waves and increase erosion. Bioengineered protections that use excelsior logs, jute mats, geotextiles, and vegetation plantings are fine for sheltered, low-energy bays. These schemes, however, will not withstand wave pounding generated by storms that travel across Oneida’s broad expanse.

Remember that much shoreline erosion and flooding stems from the removal of vegetation. Protect greenery when you have it, especially native plants. Resist the urge to cover your lot with solid surfaces that speed grease and oil runoff. The greatest threat to our waterways today is “non-point pollution” – the water runoff that carries undesirable substances into lakes and streams.

Plan any alteration to your lakeside property carefully. Get the right permits. Be ecologically conscious. We must protect our Oneida Lake treasure for future generations.



Millions have enjoyed Oneida Lake’s edges. Changing this shore requires permits, however. The photo shows Sylvan Beach, around 1920.

## President's Message

The fishing on Oneida Lake is fabulous! Old hands suggest that walleye angling is the best it's been in twenty or thirty years, and that the bass fishing may never have been this good.

One thing is different, though. You'd better have a big net close at hand, because these fish are tackle-busting critters that are a lot bigger than they ever were in the "good old days." Reports of walleyes exceeding twenty inches and bass over three pounds have been common.

I believe that the most magical part of the 2004 season is that the fishing is fun for everybody, even first-timers and children. Techniques such as drifting, trolling, still fishing, or casting from shore are very effective. Worms, crawfish, spinners, jigs, stickbaits, and crankbaits have yielded great catches. As it was in the "good old days," no matter how you approach Oneida Lake fishing, no matter what your level of experience, you should taste success. Everyone can have a great time on our lake this summer. Get out and enjoy it!

On a contrasting note – don't feed the geese. The summer goose population around Oneida is growing by leaps and bounds. Although it may be tempting to feed them, we should resist the urge. Wildlife experts caution that human intervention through feeding hampers waterfowl's development of foraging and migrating instincts. This increases the potential for spreading diseases within flocks and may change the birds' natural, healthy seasonal movement patterns.

Oneida Lake projects an extremely positive outlook this summer. A combination of enhanced cormorant control, excellent hatches of walleyes and perch, and a healthy adult fish population forecasts a rich future.

Have a great summer.



Kurt Snyder  
President – Oneida Lake Association

## OLA Announces GPS Winners

Winners of GPS Units were drawn at the OLA's annual meeting at Cicero - North Syracuse High School in April. This year's lucky OLA members are Don Bacik of Clay, Darren Roberts of Bridgeport, and Jeffrey Coffta of Akron. Congratulations and good fishing to all!

## When Did You Join the OLA?

The OLA was founded in 1945 and celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the annual meeting next April. The Association would like to honor members with longevity. If you or any of your friends have been with us for 30 years or more, please notify the *Bulletin* at P.O. Box 3536, Syracuse, New York, 13220. We will cite veteran members in the spring 2005 issue.

## The Oneida Lake Association Inc.

Founded in 1945

The Bulletin is published by the Oneida Lake Association, Inc. so that its members may be informed regarding the activities of the Association. The Oneida Lake Association, Inc., was organized in 1945 to restore and preserve the natural resources of Oneida Lake and its environs.

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# Update: Oneida Lake's Cormorant Hazing Program

by Rich Chipman

I am pleased to report a positive bottom line for our hazing program: we have been *very* successful in moving cormorants in 2004.

This year witnessed the first spring cormorant hazing on Oneida Lake. Strategies used were similar to the established techniques that characterized hazings that occurred during previous falls.

The first birds were spotted on Oneida on April 6 and hazing began on April 8. Nearly 10,000 individual cormorants were hazed during the spring program (individual birds were harassed multiple times). Four hundred thirty staff hours were devoted to this project. Cormorant populations ranged from 59 to a high of 404.

This was the first time that anybody has

implemented a spring hazing program of this scale and scope in the United States. Nesting cormorants were limited to Long Island and all nests were removed weekly, except for 20. These were left in place, but their eggs were oiled to prevent hatching.

Nine common terns were sighted on April 30 and hazing was stopped to allow these birds to nest. Summer hazing began in late June, after it was determined that the terns had settled down.

Our goal is to keep Oneida Lake's cormorant population at 100 birds. The latest population survey counted 53 cormorants on the lake, a far cry from the hundreds that lived there in previous summers.

Our program also involves extensive research. Biologists have placed platform

terminal transmitters (devices similar to radio collars) on 40 double-crested cormorants at 5 locations – Oneida Lake (20 transmitters), Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, Lake Ontario, and the St. Lawrence River (5 transmitters at each location). These instruments use global positioning system and satellite technologies to monitor cormorant locations hourly. These studies explore bird movements within breeding seasons and can reveal potential locations for new cormorant colonies. We have already recorded movements of hazed birds from Oneida Lake to Lake Champlain. Cormorants have traveled 22 miles an hour to complete that journey!

## History Lives Along Oneida's Shores

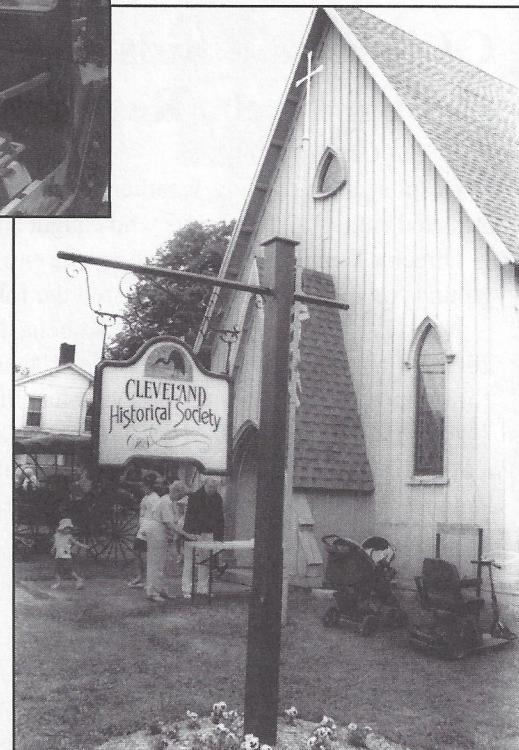
by Jack Henke

The Cleveland Historical Society held a dedication service at their new home, St. James Episcopal Church, on Sunday June 13. The church, whose design is based on plans by noted 19<sup>th</sup> century architect Richard Upjohn, was completed in 1869. The building was named an official New York State historical site in 1979. The congregation dwindled over the years and the Syracuse Episcopal diocese recently deeded the church to the society. Preservation and restoration work have rescued this North Shore landmark for posterity.

Brewerton's historical society sponsored a World War II "Remembrance Days" celebration at the society's Oliver Stevens Blockhouse Museum headquarters on July 3. Exhibits of military vehicles and displays of memorabilia from twenty area World War II veterans highlighted the commemoration. Several hundred visitors attended and all left with a deeper appreciation of the sacrifices made by what author Tom Brocaw called "our greatest generation."



Visitors admire a World War II jeep at the Fort Brewerton Historical Society.



St. James Church –  
the new headquarters of the  
Cleveland Historical Society.

# The OLA Fishing Corner

What a difference a year makes! Oneida Lake's walleye angling is the best in recent memory. Many fish and many big fish have highlighted this year's catches.

Captain Ray Brown, based out of the Oneida Lake Marina in Upper South Bay, reported that he had one charter that landed 101 walleyes! These anglers creel their limit of 15, while releasing 86! Captain Ray's "keeper percentage" runs around 18%, his highest since 1994.

What's Ray's secret? The veteran guide reports that bouncing bottom with black and purple jigs, tipped with 1/2 a night crawler, has produced the lion's share of the walleyes. Ray recommends 5/8-ounce jigs for deep water and 1/2-ounce jigs for shallower areas. He stresses that the lures *must* bounce bottom, the area where walleyes commonly feed.

At this writing, Captain Ray's best luck

has occurred in the Messenger's Reef area, west of Lewis Point. Many other spots will produce this summer. Ray advises that anglers locate fish by using electronics and then apply slow, methodical jigging techniques to that area.

Dr. Edward Mills, Director of the Cornell Field Station at Shackleton Point, reports that this year's hatches of walleye and yellow perch fry (young fish) have been outstanding. The walleye hatch was the largest recorded since Cornell began tabulating in 1956. While this is extremely encouraging, Mills qualified the data by noting that Field Station staff did not record a fry estimate every year. The biologist characterized the yellow perch hatch as "above average," a positive note since perch provide important forage for walleyes.

It's easy to ignore Oneida Lake's "other species" amidst all the talk about walleyes. Omission does the lake's superb angling no justice, however. Bass fishing for both largemouths and smallmouths has been nothing less than magnificent. Try rock reefs and shoals for smallies and use crawfish and small worms. Largemouths congregate in the weedy shallows. Rotund sunfish, white perch, and bluegills have delighted bay-oriented fishers, while northern pike, some exceeding 40 inches, have excited those who prefer plugging around weed beds. August is a great month for pursuing all of these species.

Many anglers mistakenly limit their yellow perch fishing to fall and early winter. Oneida's "jack perch," however, begin to bite in July and continue through August. The edges of weedy areas are extremely productive. Use bait or small twister jigs for best results. Deep water, lead-core line trollers often land large perch while working flutter spoons. It's not the most sporting form of fishing, but it's effective.

## OLA Annual Kids' Fishing Derby Results

By Bill Girvan

Despite chilly, windy weather, the annual OLA Kids' Fishing Derby attracted enthusiastic entrants who caught some beautiful fish.

Director Tom Pierce and I manned the entry station at Tag-Ga-Soke Campgrounds on Fish Creek. We measured the following winning fish:

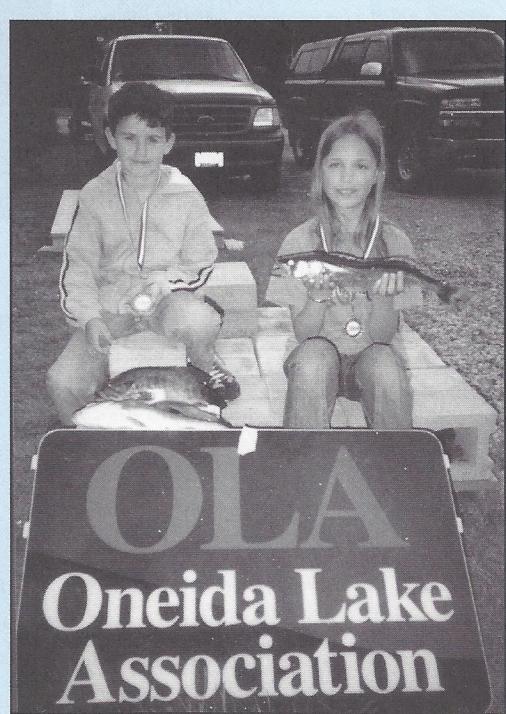
Ages 7 – 9 division: Melanie Kobela, Mountain Top, Pennsylvania – 20-1/4 inch walleye. Matthew Cann, Canastota – 18-3/4 inch sheephead, 15-3/4 inch smallmouth bass, 9 inch bluegill.

Ages 10 – 12 division: Erin Worden, Canastota – 22-1/2 inch walleye. Kevin Unser, Frankfort – 16-3/4 inch smallmouth. Mike Kurdziolek, Holland Patent – 18-3/4 inch largemouth, 16-3/4 inch smallmouth.

Ages 13 – 15 division: Kyle Worden, Canastota – 22 inch walleye, 17-1/4 inch smallmouth.

Congratulations to our winners!

Matthew Cann and Melanie Kobela proudly pose with their prize-winning fish.



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## Oneida Lake History Quiz

Here's some summer history fun. Answers on page 6.

1. What French explorer visited Oneida Lake in 1615?
2. What was the name of the British fortification built at Verona Beach in 1758?
3. Who forged the cannon located at Lewis Point, Bernhard's Bay, and the Constantia American Legion?
4. Name the owners of the only two estates built along Oneida's shores.
5. What name was given to Cleveland when it was first settled?
6. What place name of a point, bay, and shoals was an old expression for a "beer belly?"
7. What is the translation for "Ta-ga-soke," a Native American name for Fish Creek?
8. What are four former names for Sylvan Beach?
9. What railroad ran from Canastota to Verona Beach?
10. South Bay Road occupies the bed of what early 20<sup>th</sup> century rail line?

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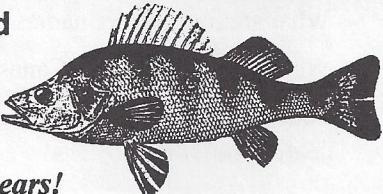
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### History Quiz Answers

1. Samuel de Champlain
2. Royal Blockhouse
3. Dr. Joel Justin
4. Charles Brown and John Chapman
5. Black Creek
6. Poddygut
7. forked like a spear
8. Beacon Beach, Spencer's Beach, Old Scow Place, Wood River
9. Lehigh Valley Railroad
10. Syracuse – South Bay Trolley

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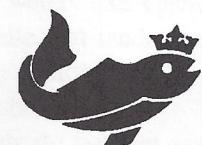
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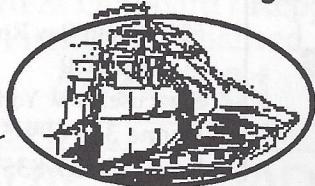
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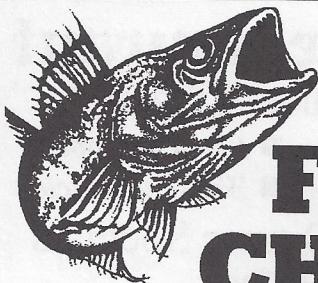
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