

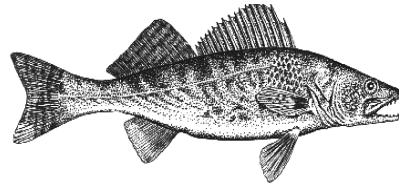
The Oneida Lake Bulletin

Spring 2021

www.oneidalakeassociation.org

Still One Million Walleyes

by John Harmon, OLA Vice-President



In our Fall 2020 *OLA Bulletin*, we shared with our readers the terrific news that Oneida Lake once again can boast one million adult walleyes in its waters. This news prompted the NYS DEC to explore the possibility of raising the daily bag limit from three to five, a change that is still being researched at this date.

Social media reports, personal anecdotes, and the ever-abundant fish tales indicate that ice anglers enjoyed a productive season for walleyes this season.

The OLA Board felt that it was important to follow-up last fall's encouraging news by looking into any up-to-date information on the Oneida Lake fishery. Cornell researcher, Randy Jackson, gave us an update. He stated: "All indications are that the adult walleye population remained above a million fish in 2020 and may have increased. Our catch of adult walleye in standard nets was up from 2019, likely reflecting recruitment of a good 2016 year class into the fishery. We have observed slower growth and declining condition (skinnier fish) of adult walleye over the past few years, both indications that the walleye population may have gotten larger than available forage can fully support. Covid-19 protocols prevented us from conducting a creel survey in 2020, so we don't know how the current conditions may have affected angler success and harvest. We plan to conduct the creel survey in 2021 and hope to get insights there."

We also reached out to another one of our informative resources at DEC. Steve Hurst, Chief of the Bureau of Fisheries in the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine

Resources, provided us with valuable data and insights. Please see his comments below:

"1 Million Walleye: According to our scientist at Shackleton Point, the walleye population in 2020 remained above one million fish and may have increased due to the relatively large 2016 year class that recruited into the fishery. The data also suggest that the condition of adults has decreased now for three consecutive years. There are a lot of fish out there, which is great from a catch rate perspective, but we really don't want to see the condition factor decrease any further. Future creel studies will provide us with better data.

Oneida Lake Walleye Regulations: The managers and I feel that an increase in the daily harvest limit is warranted, especially now that the relative weight of adult walleyes has declined somewhat over the past three years. DEC will more than likely issue a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking later this spring. The harvest limit for walleye will be increased from 3 fish/day to 5 fish/day in January 2022 if the proposal is approved.

Crappie and Sunfish Management Plan: DEC received 180 comments on the plan during the 30-day open comment period that ended on February 16, 2021. Once the comments are assessed we will make a decision on statewide regulations for crappie and sunfish and also determine if we will move forward with the experimental Big Panfish Initiative on select waters.

2021 Double Crested Cormorant (DCC) Management on Oneida Lake:

From spring through the end of August, existing DCC management as it related to impacts to habitat and other bird species (e.g., egg oiling, nest removal, culled birds for research purposes, hazing) has successfully controlled the resident DCC population on Oneida Lake to a level similar to that observed prior to 2016; therefore, DEC will not request any additional take as related to impacts to fish before fall. During the fall season, however, the number of DCC observed during the fall migration has increased an average of two-fold since prior to 2016. We will submit a permit application to USFWS requesting continued hazing and an additional DCC take during the fall migration to address concerns about impacts to fish populations in Oneida Lake. The requested take would be in addition to the take of birds that is permitted for the purposes of research (i.e., diet analysis).

DEC Boat launch site at Cove Road: DEC staff continue to work towards development of a boat launch to be constructed at Cove Road. The Permit Set of Plans is complete. DEC will submit the Joint Application soon. Once we receive the permits, the project will go out to bid.

Oneida Lake Egg Take and Oneida Lake Fry Stocking: As of right now, DEC is planning on taking enough eggs to raise approximately 150 million fry for stocking in Oneida Lake."

The Board of Directors thanks Randy Jackson and Steve Hurst for sharing their knowledge and insights. We look forward to working with them both as we maintain our commitment to the high quality of our Oneida fishery.

President's Message

Whether you are out on the lake fishing, riding in your boat, sailing, snowmobiling, or walking along the shore of Oneida Lake, if the conditions change you need to quickly make adjustments. Many times the weather changes very quickly so you need to respond. Think about your safety and also stay positive. Such has been the case for all of us since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, including our OLA Board of Directors. Under the tough conditions everyone was faced with, we kept a positive attitude and always addressed safety first. We were not able to safely hold our 75th Annual OLA Annual Meeting last April, or at any time in 2020, but we didn't panic. Last year, and moving into 2021, our 22 dedicated directors pulled together as a team continuing the mission of the OLA for our membership. Even without our in-person annual meeting we were able to get our positive message out in a variety of ways.

Thanks to John Harmon our 2020 Spring and Fall OLA *Bulletin* were full of educational articles, plus he also took over the lead of our OLA E-Newsletter, keeping you updated on what was happening. He also had a great article about our rich 75-year history in the *NYS Conservationist* magazine, as well as *Boat U.S.* magazine. We were featured in the *Accent* magazine, by outdoor writer John Pitarresi, as well as articles in the *New York Outdoor News & Target Walleye*, featuring our only two time OLA Conservationist of the Year Dr. John Forney.

We also received three special awards in 2020. Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenchon awarded us with a "75 Years of Community Service Proclamation." We also received a NYS Legislative Resolution & NYS Senate Proclamation "Commemorating The 75th Anniversary of the OLA." They will all be on display in the lobby of the Oneida Lake Fish Hatchery.

Director Matt Snyder accomplished so much behind the scenes for the OLA during the past two years. We would have been totally lost without him. Thanks to him we were able to set up and run OLA virtual meetings through Zoom, allowing us to continue to safely keep our Directors actively involved, completing a very high volume of very important work. He also lined up a number of conference calls with DEC Fisheries staff, including Steve Hurst, Chief Bureau of Fisheries.

In my role as OLA President, I have tapped into every one of our Directors for their advice, either by phone or with e-mails, plus I even contacted a couple of our past Presidents who are no longer on our Board. All of that important advice was greatly appreciated. One of our greatest accomplishments over the past fourteen months was the continued great support we received from our OLA Membership during the pandemic. Our membership topped 2000 for the first time in years, and financially we are in good shape. Also, our great Oneida Lake was a life saver in so many ways during the pandemic. Whenever our members utilized Oneida Lake they were able to forget about those tough times the world had been experiencing. We have also been able to continue to build on our mutual, strong relationships with the many agencies our OLA Directors interact with, representing our membership's concerns and wishes. I truly trust and respect every one of them. My worries have been focused on the health and safety of our members and their families during this pandemic and all the other medical and emotional challenges, such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental health, etc.

I want to thank everyone for the opportunity to serve as your President over the past two years, full of highlights. I welcome our new President, John Harmon, who will take over as our leader on May 10. Gina Duggleby will be become our Secretary / First Vice President as she continues to get on-the-job training as she gets ready to be our first female President two years later. As always, we will continue to have great, dedicated leadership in the OLA. Our next four years of the OLA will be fantastic.

Please continue to support us by renewing your OLA membership by mail and include your e-mail address so we can keep you updated with our monthly e-Newsletters,

and try to sign up a new member or two or more! Also, everyone please tune into our very first OLA Annual Zoom-Virtual Meeting on Wednesday April 28, at 7pm. I guarantee it will be packed with all those great reports you have enjoyed in previous years plus all your OLA Directors will be wearing a Special Pink Cap which I will tell you all about that night. Good fishing, stay safe, and enjoy your 2021 season on Oneida Lake.

William A. Girvan

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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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Vice President	Warren Darby
Vice President	Gina Duggleby
Treasurer	Lance Vella
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Richard Colesante	Robert Cote
Carl Ford	Matt Kazmierski
Greg Keener	Bob Walczyk

Terms Expiring April 30, 2022

Patricia Cerro-Reehil	William Lints, Jr.
Warren Darby	Kurt Snyder
Tom Guifre	Matt Snyder
John Harmon	Lance Vella

Terms Expiring April 30, 2023

Ryan Asmus	Dr. Edward Mills
Mike Barretta	George Reck
Gina Duggleby	Bruce Schantz



Abu Garica, the famed fishing gear company, celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. To mark that milestone, the staff developed a list of The Top 100 Multi-species Fisheries in the United States. The Oneida Lake Association is pleased to announce that we are in the top half of that prestigious list, placing at number 47. We were singled out for our walleye and perch fishery, with special mention of our many other species, as well. An award like this lets us know that OLA's unswerving commitment to the quality of our water and our fishery does not go unnoticed.



To submit questions or comments about *The Bulletin*, contact editor John Harmon at jpharmon1@gmail.com



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Kayaking is Fun - But... Be Safe!

There is no doubt that kayaks represent one of the hottest features on the angling scene today. More and more fisherman and fisherwomen have recognized that kayaks are a fun and affordable way to cruise the lakes for that trophy catch. As shore access becomes more restricted, and the price of boats continues to rise, kayaks present a terrific alternative. An



Great catch!

angler with a full set of tackle only needs a kayak, a paddle, and a trustworthy PFD to get started. There is no fuel to worry about—except for maybe a peanut butter and jelly sandwich—and no yearly registration to keep track of. Many vehicles now come equipped with sturdy roof racks that easily accommodate a kayak or two, and most hardware stores provide an unlimited set of options for stowing the kayak out of the way in the garage. All of these features have contributed to the rise in popularity of this human powered angling conveyance. In a recent article on kayak fishing, one interviewee stated that one of the large differences “between a boat and kayak is having to pay attention to weather conditions a lot more with a kayak and not being able to go as far out.” The trade-off is the ability “to go into shallow places boats can’t, and to find fish just about anywhere.”

This ease of accessibility also comes with an increased risk, especially on a large and unpredictable lake such as Oneida. For example, Captain Tony Buffa, a renowned charter captain on Oneida Lake, spoke about his experience with “yakers.” He and his trusty craft, *My Gal Cal II*, can often be found on Oneida’s waters throughout the open seasons. Although he supports the current interest in kayaks, he does have some safety concerns, most of which center on visibility. For example, he writes that “You definitely need a flag at least four feet in height. Some yaks have colors that blend with the water depending on the light and visibility. Their low profile and size make them difficult to see from a distance. If I were a *yaker* I would especially be concerned for my own safety given the number of go-fast vessels that use the lakes.” Although he scans the horizon whenever *Cal* is on the move, spotting kayakers can sometimes be a challenge. For a daylight outing he recommends “Something bright orange whether it be clothing or perhaps a bow mount of some type to further enhance visibility.”

Like most boaters on Oneida Lake, kayakers often try to squeeze every bit of sunlight out of a day on the water. These dusky or low-light conditions, however, can cause a problem for kayakers. Buffa states that “Even though lights are not required on non-motorized vessels. I would highly recommend installation of battery-operated bow and stern lights. Again, for safety during low light, fog, inclement weather, etc.” Finally, a “handheld sound-blaster” would be a great tool to ward off oncoming vessels.

Tony Van de Valk, a researcher at the Cornell Field Station at Shackleton Point, writes that “I’ve noticed the past several years an increasing popularity of fishing from kayaks, to the point where I’m surrounded by 1-3 kayaks more often than not when I’m night fishing from shore for walleye, as well as night electro fishing. What concerns me is I have yet to see a kayak that uses any lights, and I’m concerned for their safety. I’ve asked around and there seems to be some confusion as to what they are required

(Continued on page 4)

Kayaking

(Continued from page 3)

to have; from nothing because they are not motorized to a white light visible from 360 degrees.” He suggests further clarifications of these regulations.

The New York State Boating manual states that “Manually propelled boats may exhibit side and stern lights, or carry a white light to show in time to prevent collision.” This statement is not much help because it only suggests what kayakers “may” do. Once again, Captain Buffa and Van de Valk would strongly suggest some sort of light for evening conditions.

In order to meet the needs of this growing number of kayakers, Oneida Lake is fortunate to have a newly established business that caters to the sport. South Bay Kayak and Sails opened its doors in May of 2019. Located in the same marina as 43 North (on the west end of the lake), this store provides a diversity of products for both sailing and kayaking, specializing in the Hobie brand. Owner Rob Jerry explained his recent entry into the business. Although Rob comes primarily from a sailing background (He is nationally known as a premiere racer on Hobie Cats), he recognized the burgeoning popularity of kayaking while he was working at Boat Works in East Syracuse. He brought this experience with him when he opened his business on Oneida Lake. He explained that his kayak customers are about evenly divided between recreational users and those that are primarily anglers. He did point out, however, that Hobie has a line of kayaks, such as the Hurricane, that are considered crossovers, well suited for both leisurely paddling and hard-core fishing. In fact, South Bay Kayak and Sails is pleased to sponsor a local kayak fishing team.

As sales have increased, Rob has learned that many of his intuitions about kayaking have been confirmed. For example, he knows that, like all boating experiences, many people can't just hop in and begin paddling. To help newcomers, he provides on-the-water-demos right

there in the marina harbor.

Rob also explained that kayak designers have responded to the rise in popularity by providing truly state-of-the-art kayaks. For example, many of the boats in the Hobie line come equipped with pedal power. This addition is very attractive to anglers because it allows both hands to be on the gear, while still providing forward propulsion.

The conversation with Rob then turned to kayak safety. Rob is well aware of both the fun and the hazards of paddling on the lake. He stated that he sells masts that are three to four feet high, with flags mounted at the top. He encourages all new boats to leave the harbor with a mast. He also sells flashing lights to enhance visibility. Rob did explain that most of his customers reveal that they primarily plan to “stick fairly close to shore” when they are out on Oneida. Not many kayakers report that they plan to head out into the channel for a day of paddling or fishing.

This rise in popularity of kayaks has engendered many clubs and Facebook groups which have sprung up in the past few years. For example, Kayak Anglers of Central New York is an active club of about 25 members. Brent Blackburn, Tournament Director for the club, explained that although membership in his organization has leveled off, overall group membership has grown as more and more clubs and groups pop up. When asked why kayak angling has become so popular, Blackburn answered in two words, “The cost!” Once again, he noted that there is no expensive maintenance, as on a power boat, no fuel (and no pollution), no registration, and no concerns about a trailer. Most kayakers transport their boat in the back of a truck or on top of a roof rack. Although many kayak clubs are purely recreational, Kayak Anglers of CNY is more tournament oriented. One of their tournament sites, of course, is Oneida Lake, an event held in early June. The target fish for them is Black Bass, both smallmouth and large-mouth. Blackburn explained that for this tournament the entire lake is fair game,



Kayaks have gone to the dogs.

but, of course, he has a few favorite spots, such as [editorial deletion!]. Blackburn was pleased to share that his club has a charity that they support – Griffins Guardians, a group that provides support and financial assistance to children battling cancer in Central New York. All tournament entry fees and club dues contribute a percentage to this worthy cause.

Blackburn also spoke about the safety issues that surround kayaking. He said that for every tournament they stress safety. Participants must wear Coast Guard approved PFDs at all times on the water, no exceptions. The kayaks also carry a mast with a fluorescent-colored flag. He stated that they encourage kayakers to follow all of the Federal and NYS boating regulations, including carrying a whistle and white light for low visibility situations.

This emphasis on safety is also reflected on the website of the CNY Kayak Club. They post the following list of safety equipment:

- Required – Coast Guard Approved PFD, Whistle, Appropriate Clothing and Footwear for Weather Conditions
- Recommended – Personal ID, Sunscreen, Sun Glasses, Insect Repellent, Drinking Water, Snacks, Bilge Pump and/or Sponge
- Additional Equipment (Optional) – Spray Skirt, Paddle Leash, Extra Paddle (If Paddling Alone), Paddle Float (For Self-Rescue), and a Personal First Aid Kit

The Oneida Lake Association welcomes this newly popular sport. Whether you are paddling to catch fish or to catch some rays, we urge you to enjoy the marvels of our lake, but stay safe, stay alert, and stay visible!

75th +1 Annual Meeting for 2021

April 28, 2021

The OLA Board of Directors is pleased to announce that they will host our Annual Meeting this spring, despite the challenges of the covid pandemic. Our plan is to host a Virtual Meeting, using a Zoom platform, as well as a YouTube channel. Once we develop the log-in sequence, we will alert our membership through Facebook, our website, and our e-newsletters. We promise to make it as easy for you to participate as possible.

You can see that the evening is power-packed with a number of experts in their field. You won't want to miss it! In the meantime, **mark your calendars for April 28 at 7:00 pm.** We hope to see you there for a fun and informative evening.

Agenda

7:00 **Welcome**

7:05 **Business Meeting**

Treasurer's report	Lance Vella
Membership report	Bruce Schantz
President's report	Bill Girvan

Q&A WILL FOLLOW AT THE END OF EACH PRESENTATION

7:20 **Oneida Fish Cultural Station Update**

Manager – Bill Evans

7:35 **Oneida Fisheries Report**

Cornell Senior Research Associate – Dr. Randy Jackson

7:50 **Law Enforcement on Oneida Lake**

DEC Division of Law Enforcement Region 7 – Capt. Jim Boylan

8:05 **Current Status of Federally funded Cormorant Control**

Chief of the DEC Bureau of Wildlife – Jim Farquhar

8:20 **Oneida Lake proposed Fishery Regulation changes**

Chief of the DEC Bureau of Fisheries – Steve Hurst

8:45 **OLA 76th Conservationist of the Year Award** – Matt Snyder

9:00 **Drawing for Kayak and Go Pro**

One from Zoom attendance, other from membership at-large

ANNUAL MEETING COMMITTEE

Tony Buffa MC, John Harmon, Rip Colesante, Ed Mills, Warren Darby, and Matt Snyder

A note on Board of Directors elections: Your Board of Directors has done our best to adapt to virtual meetings. We have been able to conduct most of our business as usual online, but not our usual election procedures for directors. OLA bylaws require an in-person, show-of-hands election at the annual meeting, which is not possible during a period of limitations on public gatherings.

The Oneida Lake Business Profile

43° North Marina

The Oneida Lake Business Profile is a regular feature in the Oneida Lake Bulletin to showcase businesses that serve Oneida Lake Association members. For this issue, Bulletin staff interviewed the owner of 43° North Marina, Kevin Walma. Thanks to OLA Director Matt Snyder for this article.

What does your business do, and whom do you serve?

43° North Marina is a full-service marina on the West End of Oneida Lake. 43° North Marina provides new, used, and brokerage boat sales, service, slips and storage to boaters using Oneida Lake. The marina can support local customers' needs, cater to transient loopers that make their way through the canal system, and serve customers from places like Massachusetts and Pennsylvania who choose to spend weekends on their boat here.

43° North Marina offers 174 deep-water slips, 230 racks, and more than 14 acres of land for trailerable boats. Slips include power, water, and Wifi. The marina's campus-like setting offers picnic areas plus a covered pavilion for private parties. There are more than 40,000 square feet of heated storage, as well as covered and outdoor winter storage.

Haul-out facilities include two 35-ton marine travel Lifts, two 30-ton forklifts, a hydraulic trailer, and a ramp. Fuel offerings include non-ethanol premium gas and diesel fuel, and the gas dock offers pump-out and ice.

The service department provides full service including everything from winterizations, shrink wrapping, detailing, to engine and drive work. Technicians are certified in Mercury/Mercruiser and Rotax engines and provide manufacturer warranty work for the Scarab, Lowe, Stingray, and Seapro brands.

43° North Marina is the region's premier dealer for Scarab, Lowe, Stingray, and Seapro boats as well as Mercury outboards, Rotax Jet propulsion systems, and Venture trailers. The marina just built a brand-new showroom and storage facility that will host a grand opening



43° NORTH
M A R I N A

and in-water boat show on June 5, following social distancing and safety guidelines. The new facility includes a customer lounge and five new restrooms and showers with 24-7 access for slip holders.

Sharing the 43° North campus are several partners: Fast Forward Marine, a premier fiberglass shop; and South Bay Sails and Kayak, a store that sells and rents sailboats, paddleboards, and kayaks. Also, Magee Canvas is right across the street.

What is your main connection to Oneida Lake?

43° North is the marina closest to I-81 and provides easy access to both the river and the lake. The slips have a great view down the lake and allow quick entry to the lake or if it's too choppy, they can access the river's amenities.

Oneida Lake is also a very popular destination fishing spot, and we want to be part of the framework to encourage and enhance the responsible fishing of its waters. This includes helping support the fisheries maintain an abundance of species for anglers to pursue.

Tell us about the history of your business.

We [Kevin and Melissa Walma] built our house on Oneida Lake to raise our four children. I came from a boating family, and we wanted to make being on the water a part of how the kids were raised. When the opportunity came up

43° North Marina

Address: 8 Weber Road
Central Square, NY 13036

Phone: 315-676-3531

Email: admin@43northmarina.com

Online: www.43northmarina.com

Opened: 2019

Employees: 10 year-round, plus 6 seasonal

Founders/Proprietors: Kevin and Melissa Walma



to purchase the former Trade-a-Yacht marina, I jumped at the opportunity to transition from the corporate world for this lifestyle. As a family, we have enjoyed boating trips in other areas around the world – like the Chesapeake, Florida, and the Caribbean – and wanted to bring some of the marina amenities from these areas to boaters on Oneida Lake. We embarked on a journey to transform the property into a destination full-service facility.

Are you seeing any changes, trends, or issues on Oneida Lake?

An important issue is New York State's management of the canal and water levels. The Erie Canal has transformed from a commercial thoroughfare to a recreational waterway. It needs state and local resources to ensure its continued management, as well as enhance its impact and opportunities as part of the region's economy. The canal has tremendous cultural and historical significance and can continue to be a part of future of the area.

OLA extends its thanks to Kevin Walma and 43° North Marina for participating in the Oneida Lake Business Profile. Do you have an idea for a business to feature? Let us know by e-mailing snyder.matthew.r@gmail.com.

Who You Gonna Call?

Here in Central New York, there are three certainties: death, taxes, and somebody going through the ice on Oneida Lake. Fortunately for those in the last category, we have Triple T Towing and Recovery, a rescue and retrieval company that serves our lake. Started in 2015, this business specializes in water retrievals, including those who go through the ice. Although they serve the entire state, owner Derek Field and his crew spend plenty of time on Oneida Lake.

Derek explained that working for a towing company gave him the important experience that he needed before he ventured off to start his own business. He is also a certified scuba diver, so the transition to underwater rescue seemed natural to him. Working with a rescue team in Eaton also gave him much needed experience. After saving up enough money to buy the necessary equipment, he launched his own company, Triple T Towing. This equipment includes cold water diving gear, plenty of air tanks, and an entire trailer dedicated to water recoveries.

For ice rescues, he hauls his trailers to a nearby location. Then uses a snowmobile to get out to the rescue site. Fortunately, most of Derek's rescues involve vehicles, not people, although he did recount with a sigh, the few times that he has participated in bringing up drowning victims so that families can gain some closure on these tragic deaths. Derek stated that he does about 15 or so retrievals on Oneida Lake each year, with about half of those through the ice. This year, for example, he explained that every one of his retrievals



Preparing for a recovery.

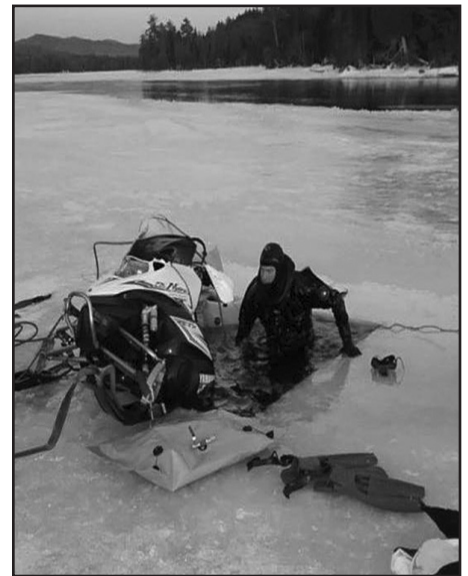
has involved an ATV, rather than snowmobiles.

In order to stay safe, Derek always follows a three-part process: Assess-Plan-Execute. His first task upon arrival at the scene is to locate the vehicle and assess the situation. Frantic callers often forget or misremember the exact location of the sunken object. Derek sometimes uses a drone camera to find the entry spot. He'll mark the location using GPS before heading out. Once on site, he uses high resolution, side scanning sonar to locate the sunken object. Clearly, technology provides great tools for the company. Then, he and a partner dive into the frigid waters to "bag up" the lost equipment. After attaching the air bags, the top side crew starts pumping air and the ATV is floated to the surface where it can be retrieved. Sometimes, because the ice is still too thin for the ATV, he has to cut a channel through the ice to float the vehicle back to shore.

Derek is well aware that these retrievals and rescues are exciting adventures. As part of the process, he uses a Go Pro camera to livestream and document each retrieval. Eager fans often watch the action live as it is happening. Derek will then edit the footage and post it on his Facebook site for later viewing (search for Triple T Towing on Facebook.)

When asked about the causes for these rescues, Derek sites a number of factors. In the winter it's often the rider's misjudgment on how thick the ice is. He explained that there are often soft spots, cracks, and gas pockets, all of which create treacherous situations. He summed it up by saying, "There is no such thing as safe ice." In the summer, it is the fickle nature of the lake, with storms and rough seas blowing in over a very short period of time. Night time travel also puts boaters at risk.

When asked about his most dangerous retrieval, Derek thought for a moment and then explained that he hasn't really



Derek Field working the ice.

had one, because of the careful preparation that he does. He never puts himself or his crew in danger. This planning often results in a safe and speedy retrieval, sometimes in 30 minutes or so. Other, more challenging situations require a couple of days. In either case, he explains, "It's expensive." He strongly urges snowmobiler and ATV users to carefully consider their insurance options. "Full, comprehensive coverage" is his strongest recommendation. "A few hundred dollars can save you the recovery cost in the thousands of dollars," he warned.

Derek and his talents have developed a strong reputation. He is on the first-call list for Tow Boat U.S. He is also well known by DEC, who reaches out to him when they need such services. Derek continues to volunteer with the Wampsville Fire Department and the Eaton Dive Team. He is also partnered with the Mutual Aid team of Sylvan Beach.

Although it is assuring to know that we can rely on Triple T Towing during these calamities, it's always best to stay safe in the first place. Stay cautious out on the ice and keep your insurance coverage robust and up-to-date.

Triple T Towing and Underwater Recovery 315-420-3652

Onondaga County Sheriff's Office Navigation Unit

The OLA is pleased to continue to showcase the law enforcement agencies that serve Oneida Lake and its surroundings. This article features the Onondaga County Sheriff's Navigation Unit. We thank them for providing this article. We also thank OLA Director Warren Darby for his contributions to this article.

Last season we added a brand new 26-foot Metal Shark center console patrol vessel, powered by twin Yamaha 250 outboards, to our fleet. This incredible patrol boat complements our three other boats: a 25 foot Parker, a cabin style boat being repowered with twin Yamaha 250s, a 24 foot McKee Craft center console powered by twin Mercury 200s, and finally a 21 foot Boston Whaler center console powered by a mercury 225hp.

Within our agency we train for missions on Oneida Lake with AIR 1 and our Dive Team. We have recently been doing work utilizing drones to assist with search and rescue and we acquired an underwater drone to assist with underwater search and recoveries. We also train with the local Fire Departments and are part of the Oneida Lake Task Force.

Our Navigation unit has a large presence on the NYS Canal System including Oneida Lake, which we patrol on a daily basis. Some notable incidents our Navigation Unit handled on Oneida Lake last season include the following:

Onondaga County Navigation Units responded and investigated a Jet-Ski vs Boat accident on Oneida Lake. There was significant damage but no injuries.

Onondaga County Navigation Unit investigated a hit and run boat accident. An unknown vessel struck and damaged the victim's retaining wall and dock causing significant damage, estimated over \$10,000. Navigation Units were able to identify the suspect boat and later identified the driver who was arrested for leaving the scene of an accident, reckless operation, and unregistered vessel.

Onondaga County Navigation Units were on patrol and responded to a boat vs boat accident. The investigation revealed that the operator of the at-fault boat was intoxicated and was arrested for boating while intoxicated with a .15% Blood

Alcohol Concentration (BAC). No injuries, property damage only.

Onondaga County Navigation Units were patrolling Oneida Lake and responded to a boat taking on water due to mechanical failure. Navigation Units arrived first on scene and took five people off of the sinking boat and transported them to Oneida Shores. Fire department

boats arrived on scene and were able to use their equipment to pump out the sinking boat and get it safely to shore.

Onondaga County Navigation Units stopped a boat for registration violations which ultimately turned into the discovery and seizure of 12 grams of marijuana, scales, and other paraphernalia. Operator was arrested on drug charges.

Onondaga County Navigation Units were patrolling in rough water conditions and observed a boat in distress later determined to be out of gas on Oneida Lake, Navigation Units were able to get to the vessel just before they were going to crash into a shoal and were able to tow them to Oneida Shores. While towing them to safety, Navigation Units located a disabled Jet Ski who also needed assistance in the rough water. Units were also able to tow them to Oneida Shores.

Onondaga County Navigation Units were on patrol when they stopped two boats for lighting violations. Investigation revealed the operators of both boats were intoxicated. Both were arrested for Boating While Intoxicated and has BAC's of .14% and .20%.

Onondaga County Sheriff's Office Aviation Unit

The Air One Crew was requested to assist the Sylvan Beach Fire Department with a search of Oneida Lake following



The Sheriff's Fleet in V formation.

a report of a possible boating accident in the area. Upon arrival the Air Crew utilized the FLIR, Night Sun, and NVG goggles and conducted a thorough search of the area, however no vessel was located. Water rescue crews upon scene checked the area as well and found no evidence of a boating accident. With no further information the Air Crew cleared.

While on Patrol, the Air One Crew was requested to respond to the area of Frenchman's Island concerning a reported boating accident. While en route, the Air Crew was advised that a cabin cruiser struck rocks north of Long Point in the area of Frenchman's Island. Upon arrival the Air Crew located the vessel and illuminated its location for responding Rescue Crews, who subsequently towed the vessel to shore.

The AIR 1 Crew was requested to assist the US Coast Guard with a possible mayday call on Oneida Lake. The Air Crew responded and conducted a sweep of Oneida Lake utilizing the FLIR, NVG goggles, and Night Sun, however nothing was located. The Air Crew furthermore broadcast over Marine Channel 16 to any vessel in distress that the Crew was available to assist, however no one responded. With no further information and the possibility of a boat in storage possibly causing an alarm, the Air Crew cleared.

Oneida Lake Sailing Club Pays It Forward

Each summer the NYS Sheriffs' Institute holds a summer camp "for economically challenged children who can benefit from positive interaction with deputy sheriffs." Located on Keuka Lake, the camp includes many of the great activities that we all associate with summer getaways: flag raising, sports, water activities, campfires, and plenty of outdoor fun.

The Sheriffs' Camp is special in that it also includes sailing aboard one of the fastest recreational sport boats—Hobie Cats. According to the Sheriffs' Institute website, "Sailing is one of the most exciting activities the kids experience each summer at the camp." However, many of the boats are in ill-repair, some with mismatched hulls and weather-worn sails. In order to keep to keep their fleet of second- and third-hand Hobie Cats afloat, the camp counselors rely on donations.

Five years ago, Hobie Cat Fleet 204, located on Oneida Lake, was approached at the CNY Boat Show by some enthusiastic counselors and camp supporters. The Fleet then decided that they wanted to help out. For the past few years, this sailing club, which typically launches out of Therre's on the south shore, has continued to donate time and equipment to keep the camp's sailing program alive and well.

Fleet 204 members have donated gear, sailing equipment, and cash to keep the camp boats safe and in good condition. Rob Jerry, of South Bay Sails and Kayaks, donated a generous grant so that the camp could buy parts at cost. The club has even donated completely rigged boats.



Rigging sailboats.

Perhaps more importantly, the fleet members donate their time to the counselors, teaching them proper rigging techniques, as well as their many go-fast sailing tips. After all, Fleet 204 has many truly elite, nationally known sailors who finish in the trophy category at National and World regattas. During their annual spring trek to Keuka Lake, Fleet 204 members help the counselors pull boats from storage and get them set up on shore.

Fleet members have also given lessons on repairing fiberglass, gel coating, rudder repair, and sail set up, as well as tips on rigging and sailing. The counselors themselves have done an incredible job getting a wide variety of older Hobie sailboats on the water by mixing and matching their donated boats and parts. What the counselors haven't overcome with the latest equipment, they have overcome with a positive can-do attitude and the enormous satisfaction that they are providing an opportunity for hundreds of kids from across the state to experience sailing for the first time.

This past summer, when there was no camp due to Covid, Fleet 204 still offered to travel out to Keuka to continue their training with the counselors. Instead, the camp counselors requested a visit to Fleet 204's headquarters, right here on Oneida Lake. They expressed an interest in sailing on Hobie Cats that were finely tuned, race-ready rigged, and "worked like they were supposed to," the counselors said with a smile. The Fleet obliged, reporting that "The counselors were so very appreciative." Each one of them made a personal connection to the 204 sailors, each eager to learn a specific skill. Fleet 204 shared many of the go-fast tricks and tips that make Hobie sailing so much fun. The diverse group of men and women skippers of Fleet 204 also provided a great inspiration to the equally diverse group of male and female counselors.

The Sheriffs' Institute website states that "The staff gained outstanding skills and knowledge which they put into



Camp counselors enjoying the outing.

practice by fixing the camp's fleet of sailboats." Fleet members stated that "we gave them new outlooks and, more importantly, new aspirations that they can bring back to the kids at the camp, many of whom who have never been on a boat before in their lives."

This year's get-together on Keuka Lake featured a very moving moment. Even though there were no campers due to Covid, Fleet 204 showed up to help pull and set up boats for counselor use and training. Long time and very beloved Fleet 204 member, Bruce Krupke, recently passed away. In his memory, his wife, Pattie, donated to the camp his nearly new, meticulously maintained, race-ready boat, Betty II. In a touching ceremony, Pattie stated, "The only thing Bruce loved more than sailing Hobie Cats was getting others involved in sailing Hobie Cats." The Fleet knows that the boat is in good hands and now serves a higher purpose. In a truly grateful gesture, the counselors presented Fleet 204 with a commemorative boat rudder, adorned with the signatures of the many counselors who spent time with the generous members of the Fleet.

Fleet 204 has demonstrated that they remain true to their mission "To teach the love of sailing that keeps us all coming back for more." Long time Fleet 204 member, Pat Caster, summed it up by saying, "Pay it forward."

Special thanks Fleet 204 member, Bob Longo, for his contributions to this article.



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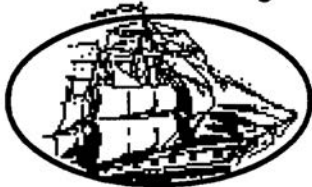
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