President’s Message

This has been a very busy summer for OCCA. It began with the third annual Lake Festival and ended with the annual Household Hazardous Waste Day. In between there were local nature walks on trails, most of which are featured in OCCA’s publication “Otsego Walks and Paddles.” There were good collaborative efforts with other organizations. OCCA worked with the Otsego Lake Association (OLA) on OLA’s “Smart Steps” publication for lake property owners and partnered with the Town of Hartwick on a hydrology study for the Susquehanna River Valley. OCCA works with and provides funding for programs central to the implementation of the Otsego Lake Management Plan. These include the septic system management plan (overseen by the Watershed Supervisory Committee), boat inspections for invasive species prevention (carried out by the Village of Cooperstown), and environmental water quality programs on farms (in partnership with the USDA and local farmers). OCCA also works with a number of town planning boards to assist with land-use planning issues. The key word in all this is collaboration. Working in a collaborative manner with other groups is the most effective way to protect and enhance the environment in Otsego County.

Win McIntyre

Zebra mussels invade Otsego Lake

Prevention efforts ongoing since 2004 were sadly frustrated when the presence of zebra mussels (Dreissena polymorpha) was confirmed in Otsego Lake in June. The mussels are small, bivalve mollusks occurring naturally in the Black, Caspian, and Aral seas of Eurasia. On this continent, they were first discovered in Lake St. Claire in 1986, having been introduced by ballast water from ships entering the Great Lakes via the St. Lawrence Seaway. From there, they rapidly spread south through the Mississippi River drainage system. More locally, they have been in Cazenovia Lake for a number of years, in Eaton Brook Reservoir at the headwaters of the Chenango River, and in Canadarago and Goodyear Lakes.

Mature female mussels can produce 30,000 to 50,000 eggs, thus quickly occupying the body of water they invade. The mussels cause a number of negative impacts to lake ecosystems, including changes to the lake’s food web, which can lead to diminished sports fish populations and fouling of docks, boats, water intakes, and other physical structures. The increased water clarity resulting from their presence is deceptive; rather than reflecting healthy waters, the clear conditions enhance growth of nuisance vegetation such as Eurasian watermilfoil. Other undesirable effects of the zebra mussel are sharp shells from dead and living mussels, which can cause bodily injury, and odor emanating from dead mussels and their shells.

Story continues on page 5
Member nominates OCCA for Better World Award

In March, OCCA member Mary Howes, via a letter to the editor in the local press, nominated OCCA for entry into the “Better World” contest organized by ReZoom, a website dedicated to transforming the “me” generation to the “we” generation. The contest sought to recognize non-profit organizations that inspire others to get involved in charitable causes. It identified 20 regions for which 10 charities receiving the most votes and 5 charities selected at large would be reviewed by a panel of judges and awarded a $5000 prize. All of those award winners would then compete for a national prize of $100,000. Competing against all non-profits in New York State, including New York City, OCCA unfortunately did not make the cut. However, Mary Howes’ letter was worth a lot to us. We thank her for taking the initiative and reprint her letter below.

To the editor:

When I first came to this area years ago, I looked down from the small plane that would bring me to Oneonta, and was caught by the beauty of what I saw. I was looking at miles of green life. I have been grateful ever since to live in a place that could match anywhere in the world for its earth and sky.

I am aware that the physical land about us can deteriorate, and be polluted, and that it needs goodwill and care to maintain the structure that I am privileged to enjoy. For this reason I have appreciated, for many years, the dedicated work performed by OCCA, and hope to support the organization in whatever way I can. I am not protecting the environment. But they are.

For this reason I have nominated OCCA (Otsego County Conservation Association) for the Better World Award. To read the nominating essay, please check www.rezoom.com, click on the Better World site, then on the New York state map, which will produce a list of non-profits that have been nominated.

This is not the place to list everything that OCCA does, but one example involves paying the 25% farmer portion of a federal program which employs simple, effective techniques to divert dairy operation run-off from streams and lakes. This translates into 40 farms, $400,000 raised by OCCA, and $1.6 million leveraged in federal funds. OCCA is a small, grassroots organization. Yet its effectiveness in protecting the local environment has been outstanding.

With regard to the Better World Award, the nonprofit organization with the most votes in a region will win $5000. Many far larger organizations will be competing, so this is an appeal to readers… please actively support the people who are working for us. Please log-in and vote for OCCA!

Mary Howes
Milford

Save the date for OCCA annual dinner!

The OCCA annual dinner and meeting will be held on October 25 at The Otesaga beginning at 6 p.m. Details on the evening’s program will be issued at a later date. This event is a good opportunity to mingle with others in the Cooperstown area and throughout the county who are concerned about local environmental issues. A congenial spirit combined with information concisely presented always characterize this occasion. We hope to see many, many members and friends of OCCA at our dinner this year!

OCCA Board of Directors

James Bernegger
Martha Clarvoe, Secretary
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Flood of 2006 brings about emergency preparedness plan

The opinion piece below appeared in the July 6 edition of “The Freeman’s Journal.”

On June 27 of last year, heavy rains fell incessantly, resulting in major widespread flooding throughout Otsego County and surrounding areas. A state of emergency was declared while emergency services dealt with mudslides, breached dams, bridge and highway collapses, severely flooded communities, damaged water and sewer infrastructure and, tragically, the loss of human life. Many area residents were forced to seek relief in emergency shelters. Others were without utilities. Many local businesses were closed.

Around Otsego Lake water rose four and one-half feet above its desired level. Damage was extensive. Some septic systems flooded, yet information on the advisability of drinking water drawn from the lake, or pursuing recreational activities such as swimming or boating, was not readily available to the general public. Having received inquiries regarding water quality and the general state of the lake, yet feeling information was lacking in this emergency situation, OCCA attended the July meeting of the Village of Cooperstown’s Watershed Supervisory Committee to find out what protocols were in place to keep the public informed in emergency situations. We learned, as the minutes of this meeting note, that the New York State Department of Health admitted it was overwhelmed with more serious flooding in other areas and that Otsego Lake was “pretty much on its own.”

As a result of the June flooding, the WSC took steps to put procedures in place for the future. It assumed responsibility for notifying the Village of Cooperstown and the remaining Otsego County lake municipalities of Middlefield, Otsego and Springfield regarding the potability of the lake’s water, as well as conditions for swimming or boating. The SUNY-Oneonta Biological Field Station agreed to collect duplicate samples from thirteen sites around the lake, send one sample to a certified laboratory for fecal coliform testing, and test the other on site for more immediate reporting to the WSC. (The BFS has the expertise to do this type of testing; however, due to costs involved, it is not a certified laboratory.) The WSC will report findings to the Otsego County Department of Health.

The guideline to be used for swimming in Otsego Lake is 30 colonies per 100 milliliters. This is the same as for the U.S. EPA’s guideline for safe drinking water prior to treatment and also pertains to water being drawn from the lake for household use. Three days after the flood, the BFS samples showed fecal coliform levels ranging from 9 to 720 colonies per 100 milliliters. One week later, all but one, the Hayden Creek site, were well under the EPA standard. At Hayden Creek, the measure was 34 colonies per 100 milliliters.

Even before the flood, the Cooperstown emergency preparedness plan was in revision, with the latest of about five drafts presented to the village board the night before the flood. To revise the plan, the WSC also worked with Bonnie Kaido, a Cooperstown resident and volunteer with the Cooperstown Fire Department Emergency Squad. She is also Director of Emergency Preparedness at Bassett Healthcare.

The plan is based on federal and state guidelines and incorporates compliance with the National Incident Management System as mandated by the President of the United States. It sets procedures for declaring and operating under a state of emergency and delineates the duties of an 18-member emergency operations team, which includes among others, the mayor, an incident commander, law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services, the Village’s Department of Public Works, American Red Cross, Otsego County Office of Emergency Services, and utilities.

The plan follows the Incident Command System and establishes an emergency response center which will be staffed 24 hours a day while the emergency is in effect. A disaster response team will evaluate the extent of the emergency and make recommendations to the mayor as to the need to declare a formal disaster. It lists methods for public warning and prescribes evacuation procedures, which include where to go, how to get there, what and what not to take, and what to do before leaving.

The bulk of the plan deals with administrative lines of control and coordination for emergency response; however, the section on evacuation preparedness applies to local residents. OCCA suggests that Otsego Lake watershed residents familiarize themselves with this section. Copies are available through the village office (547-2411) or at OCCA (547-4488). In addition, we suggest that readers visit these websites for concise and helpful checklists on emergency kits, plans, and information: www.ready.gov or www.redcross.org.

Erik Miller, OCCA Executive Director
OCCA helps with water chestnut removal in two locations

On several occasions this summer, volunteers recruited by OCCA have joined members of the Goodyear Lake Association, as they did last year, to pull water chestnut plants from Goodyear Lake. OCCA hopes this invasive plant will be eliminated through hand-pulling rather than herbicide application.

“Hand-pulling is the best method of removing the plant, especially if you get to it early in the season when its spikes have not yet formed,” said OCCA executive director, Erik Miller.

Water chestnuts form a mat on Goodyear Lake removal in a private wetland in western Oneonta. OCCA is assisting with hand-eradication, as a follow up to earlier herbicide application by the state Department of Environmental Conservation to approximately 10 acres of the affected area.

“Their association is hard work, but the sense of mission and camaraderie in this effort keeps us going.”

Dreams Park in trouble again over sewage near Susquehanna

OCCA thanks “The Freeman’s Journal” for permission to reprint the following article, which appeared in the August 10 edition of the newspaper.

HARTWICK SEMINARY – Is raw sewage seeping from Cooperstown Dreams Park into the Susquehanna River? And if it is, is it seeping out of one of the half-dozen septic fields that the mega-venue for youth baseball tournaments allegedly installed without permits?

Those questions and the possible connection are being investigated by the state Department of Environmental Conservation which, responding to a report from Otsego County Conservation Association, sent an inspector to have a look on Monday, Aug. 6. He was joined by another from the state Department of Health’s office.

The report, forwarded by Carl Good, Otsego Lake Association director, to Otsego 2000 Executive Director Martha Frey, then to OCCA Executive Director Erik Miller, had it that raw sewage was visible coming out of the ground near the Susquehanna River. By the time inspectors got there, according to DOH Regional Director Robert Pierce, there was “some seepage, but no obvious discharge.”

By then, Dreams Park crews had fenced off the area and treated it with lime, Pierce said, so that the aroma of sewage wasn’t evident, although there was “some liquid that seemed to be coming through the side of the embankment.” However, the DOH official said, this is “more than a broken pipe” and may suggest a flaw in the septic fields.

A year ago May, DOH inspectors doing a pre-opening review of Dreams Park discovered six “unpermitted” waste-water systems had been installed, and tipped off DEC to possible violation. DOH is responsible for sewage systems that process less than 10,000 gallons a day; bigger ones are the responsibility of DEC. Dreams Park is producing 67,000 gallons of sewage daily.

Over at DEC, acting regional director Rich Ostrov said the investigation resulting from that first incident is still under way 15 months later, but the new allegation has raised the matter to a higher level of intensity. “I’m hoping within the week to have everything we need to present Dreams Park and their attorney what we would need to resolve the problem,” he said.

DEC can levy fines of up to $37,000 a day – that would amount to $17 million since the waste-water systems were discovered – but Ostrov said that rarely occurs. Instead, most of these kinds of situations cause DEC to issue a “consent order,” with the offending part agreeing to a “schedule of compliance.”

For his part, Miller was unimpressed, saying he’s perceived a pattern of “a lot of state agencies that are succumbing to the wishes of a large developer.” Dreams Park has expanded over the past decade to where it now accommodates 60,000 young ball players over the summer, along with an average of 3.5 family members per player. “That’s what I’m seeing over and over again here,” Miller said.

When the Town of Hartwick approved the last expansion in 2005, Dreams Park agreed to put in a turn lane and traffic light at its main entrance on Route 28, Miller said. It didn’t happen in 2006, and it surfaced this spring that it wouldn’t happen this summer either. DOT’s latest deadline is Oct. 31.

“If they shut the park down until the problem is fixed,” Miller said, “they would have had a perfect system within two days. Unless you hit Dreams Park in the back pocket, I don’t think they’re going to change the way they do business.”
Otsego County Environmental Issues

Two Cooperstown spill sites cause concern
In June, the Village of Cooperstown retained attorney Douglas Zamelis to investigate two sites previously officially closed by the state Department of Environmental Conservation — the former Mobil gas station at 29 Chestnut Street and the former site of Smith Ford at 10 Chestnut Street. The DEC closed the Mobil site in April 2006 even though the ground below was still contaminated with gasoline components, including benzene. This site is 0.3 miles from Otsego Lake, the drinking water source for the Village of Cooperstown. The toxic plumes were detected through the monitoring of wells.

Win McIntyre, Otsego Lake watershed coordinator and OCCA president, has expressed serious concern about the spills at these sites, believing that the sites were closed prematurely. He also takes issue with Zamelis’s report.

“The conclusion of the report is that BTEX levels in the parts per billion (ppb) are not a problem. The report tends to dismiss ppb levels, which is not a scientific point of view because these levels are significant, particularly in the case of toxic compounds,” according to McIntyre.

“A non-toxic example where ppb levels are very significant is with phosphorous. A mesotrophic lake like Otsego, at 12-14 ppb of phosphorous, can become eutrophic (ecologically imbalanced) with only a small increase in ppb’s,” McIntyre explained.

OCCA must question the oversight of the DEC in this and other recent instances — concerns about raw septage being released from Cooperstown Dreams Park into the Susquehanna River being another. Some of the statements from DEC officials resemble Orwellian “doublespeak.” In regard to the Mobil spill site, Allan Geisendorfer, DEC Region 4 director of spill response, stated, “Standards are objectives. Rarely do we achieve standards.” About the same situation, Richard Georgeson, another DEC official, surmised, “No one is drinking the ground water.” And Dennis Farrar, DEC Office of Environmental Remediation allowed, “The DEC often closes operations that don’t meet standards when officials believe an acceptable job has been done.”

We do agree that the DEC is understaffed, especially in regard to its ability to respond effectively to environmental concerns of a more local nature rather than major catastrophes. However, we feel it is the duty of ranking DEC officials to make a case to the governor and state legislature for a funding increase which would allow this crucial state agency to do its job effectively. Bottom line, we do not feel the DEC acted responsibly in the case of these two spills.

Zebra mussels invade Otsego Lake

With predictions of the mussel’s inevitability now a reality, what should be done now? We hope OCCA board member and director of the SUNY-Oneonta Biological Field Station Dr, Willard Harman is correct in his assessment that zebra mussels are not likely to make a significant difference in Otsego Lake because its waters are not shallow like those of Canadarago and Oneida lakes. Beyond that, it behooves us to explore appropriate biological controls.

SUNY-Oneonta’s director of environmental sciences, Dr. Thomas Horvath, is a world-renown zebra mussel expert. According to Horvath, people will begin noticing the effects of the mussels in about two years’ time. Horvath opines that the best option is to continue monitoring the mussel population.

According to Horvath, zebra mussels have been eradicated from a quarry in Virginia by dousing the waters with potassium compound; however, Horvath stated that Otsego Lake is too big for this solution to work. Crayfish, pumpkinseeds and perch — all present in Otsego Lake — and some species of birds are natural predators of the zebra mussel, but their predation is not at a level sufficient to eradicate or control this mollusk.

Despite the discovery of the zebra mussel, a much-dreaded invasive species for any freshwater body, in Otsego Lake in June, boat inspections will continue. Continued inspections will not only serve to fend off increased populations of mussels, they will also be a frontline against other invasive species, such as water chestnut (present in Goodyear Lake), spiny tail water flea, fish hood water flea, round gobi, and Hydrilla. Ecological damage from these species is similar to those of the zebra mussel — competition with and potential elimination of native species, alteration of water chemistry and oxygen levels, and negative impacts on recreational swimming, fishing, and boating.

OCCA will continue its substantial support of the Village of Cooperstown’s boat inspection program. To date, OCCA has contributed $30,000 to this program, or $10,000 a year since 2004, and plans to continue to contribute at that level for years to come.
OCCA provides $30,000 grant in support of Otsego Lake septic management plan

Otsego County Conservation Association has made a grant of $30,000 to the Village of Cooperstown in support of the septic system management program, overseen by the Watershed Supervisory Committee. The WSC is a branch of village government consisting of members from the towns of Middlefield, Otsego, and Springfield as well as Cooperstown. Its role is to ensure enforcement of Public Health Law 1100, which empowers municipalities with public drinking water supplies to regulate water sources. In regard to drinking water, the WSC’s authority applies to the entire watershed.

In 2004, the village passed a law requiring regular and thorough inspections of all 337 wastewater treatment systems within 500 ft. of the lake. This legislation enabled the Otsego Lake septic system management program to get underway. Since passage of the law, 221 (66%) of these systems have been inspected. Of those, 93 (42%) passed and 128 (58%) were in failure. Of those failures, action has been taken on 110, with 56 having been replaced, designs are in progress for 32 systems and completed for 22 systems. The goal for 2007 is to inspect 50-60 systems.

“The WSC very much appreciates the $30,000 grant from OCCA. Without its contributions we simply could not carry out either the septic system management program or the zebra mussel control program,” said Paul Kuhn, WSC chairman.

Since 2004, OCCA has dedicated a total of $117,000 of the septic system management program, and since 2005, it has annually contributed $10,000 to the boat inspection program, bringing its total contribution to lake protection programs to just over 60% of total monies spent by the village. “Otsego Lake is a major natural resource in our county, a drinking water source for thousands of year-round and seasonal residents and tourists, and, as shown in our 2006 membership survey, of major concern for our membership. It’s fitting that OCCA support Otsego Lake programs to the extent possible,” said OCCA executive director Erik Miller.

Sun shines bright on Otsego Lake Festival’s third year

The weather was better than ever for the third annual Otsego Lake Festival, held July 14 in Cooperstown’s Lake Front Park. The festival is held annually under the aegis of the Otsego County Water Quality Coordinating Committee. The purpose of the festival is to inform and educate regarding water quality issues those who care about Otsego Lake. This year, Scottie Baker of the Otsego Lake Association, Martha Frey of Otsego 2000, and Erik Miller of OCCA oversaw organizational matters, with Darla M. Youngs of Otsego 2000 serving as liaison to the local media. As in 2006, Susan and Jeff O’Handley of Wildlife Learning Company (Hartwick) were hired as event planners.

Acoustical music, raffles and food added to the ambience of the festival, which featured numerous exhibits and activities, including an exhibit of Otsego Lake art by the Cooperstown Art Association, raptor demonstrations and education by Wildlife Learning Company, and a water quality lake excursion on the Biological Field Station’s barge. Children’s activities included songs by Skip West and fish painting and pressing. Thanks to the efforts of OCCA executive director Erik Miller, two hybrid automobiles – his own Toyota Prius and a Ford Escape SUV (compliments of Smith Cooperstown) were also on display as yet another example of lifestyle changes that can be made to protect the environment in general and the lake in particular.

“It was a great day, and a great turn out,” Miller said. “As always, attendees showed keen interest in issues affecting the lake . . . from septic systems to alternative vehicles. And, of course, there were a lot of questions about zebra mussels due to their recent discovery in Otsego Lake.”

OCCA had information available on exotic species control and prevention and environmental care for lake properties, as well as information on its specific lake programs: septic system management, agricultural water quality projects, riparian buffers, hydroadseeding, and boat inspections.

Lake Festival posers still available
The spectacular 2007 Otsego Lake Festival poster is still available. This year’s poster, designed by Scottie Baker and Peter Johngren, features a great blue heron taking off over the lake. Its purpose is to highlight the importance of pristine water resources as critical habitat for myriad wildlife species. Posters from the past two years are also still available. To purchase Otsego Lake Festival posters, contact Natura Productions at 547-5356 or e-mail scottieb@naturaprodictions.com.

Lake property owner’s guide published for Otsego Lake
The Otsego Lake Association has published “Smart Steps,” a property owners' guide for Otsego Lake. It is modeled after a Cayuga Lake Watershed Network publication. The guide includes general information on the Otsego Lake watershed as well as practical suggestions lake property owners can follow to help ensure the lake’s water quality. Home energy and chemical use are addressed, as are lawn, well, and drain maintenance. Ecological lakescaping and best practices for boat use are also discussed.
OCCA paid $1500 of the $6000 publication costs, and is working on a similar publication to be distributed to the Goodyear and Canadarago Lake Associations.
Copies of “Smart Steps” are available through OLA president Paul Lord at (607) 435-4989 or OCCA at 547-4488.

Local government training sessions held
Reprinted from Otsego County Planning Department newsletter, July 2007
A series of three evening training sessions were held in May and June for local government officials. On May 22, a staff planner and attorney from the NYS Department of State presented information on two topics – rental housing and property maintenance/enforcement of local laws. About 40 people attended this session.
On May 20, a guest speaker from Oneida County Soil and Water Conservation District discussed various aspects of storm water management. There were about 20 attendees.
The series concluded on June 4 with a session on the powers and duties of local planning boards and zoning boards of appeals. These sessions was presented to an audience of about 60 people by Erik Miller of the Otsego County Conservation Association.
Certificates of completion were distributed to those local officials who were meeting requirements under a new state law to receive a minimum of four hours of training per year in land use. Copies of hand out material used at the session are available by calling the Planning Department (547-4225).
The department plans to hold a series of local government workshops like these at least once per year. The sessions are held at The Meadows Office Building on County Route 33, free of charge.

THANK YOU, Household Hazardous Waste Day Volunteers!
Volunteer labor is an essential part of this annual event. The work simply could not be done without community support. Special thanks to Martha Clarvoe of OCCA for her recruitment efforts!

OCCA Board Members (5 of 10 current board members)
Win McIntyre, President
Martha Clarvoe, Secretary
Jim Bernegger
Andrée Conklin
Bill Ralston
OCCA members/recruits
Quinn Bernegger
Dick Kelly
Deb Dalton
Tom Gergel
Pauline Gergel
Sue LaBudde
Paul Mendelson

Solid Waste and Planning Department
Joy Bailey
Terry Bliss
Karen Sullivan
Psalm Wyckoff

County Board Members
Phil Durkin
Ron Feldstein
Marty Stayton
Rudy Laguna

SUNY-Oneonta Center for Social Responsibility and Community
Bandana Paudel
Bijaya Shrestha
Joy Kimberly
Carola Garcia
Rob Whitney

Otsego County Corrections Department
Three trustees (w. officer Dale Eager)
OCCA & Recycling

Otsego residents turn out in droves to dispose of toxic wastes on annual collection

Approximately 500 vehicles carrying toxic waste from 560 Otsego County households filed through lanes marked off at the state Department of Transportation work yard on State Route 7 in Oneonta Saturday, September 8. The turnout set a record for the annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day, which began in 1998. Traditionally lauded for the excellent job of moving so many cars through with so much stuff, this year’s event was no exception. Those exiting often made “thumbs up” comments.

“It was pleasant,” one participant called out when turning back onto Route 7.

“Very well organized!” shouted another upon departure.

Shaun McGrath of Oneonta agreed. “It looks very well-organized and user-friendly,” he said. McGrath’s delivery consisted mainly of items cleaned out from a house he had purchased in April.

Participants generally seemed grateful for the opportunity to dispose of items that are not supposed to be put out with routine trash – pesticides, lubricants, paint, cleaning chemicals, solvents, and more. Most of those showing up liked the idea of recycling.

“It’s great to be recycling like this,” said Helen Warncke of Oneonta. “It’s great to have a place to take this stuff.”

“I like it. It’s a wonderful thing to do once a year, to get this stuff out of the main stream of trash pick-up,” said Les Foster of Otsego, who also commented that something about the atmosphere reminded him of a scene from the movie “ET.”

“It’s a great idea,” echoed John Frankl of Oneonta, who brought in paints.

The paints are opened on site, stirred and poured into 55-gallon drums, then taken to Golden Artist Colors of Chenango County, where they are remixed for distribution free of charge to local non-profits.

According to county solid waste director Terry Bliss, some 1000 gallons of non-toxic latex paint were retrieved. Oil-based paint must be treated as toxic waste, but each year OCCA board member Andrée Conklin puts aside as much as she can and redistributes it independently.

Bliss also reported that approximately 150 automotive batteries were collected as well as 100 obsolete propane tank cylinders.

“The success of the day can be credited to a large turnout of dedicated volunteers who assisted with many aspects of the day’s duties, the efficiency of the Care Environmental staff, and cooperative weather,” Bliss said. Volunteers came from as near as Oneonta and as far as Nepal. Bandana Paudel and Bijaya Shrestha, Nepalese students of solid waste management at SUNY-Oneonta, worked at the paint recycling station for most of the day.

Martha Clarvoe of OCCA traditionally recruits volunteers for the event. Her efforts were boosted this year by Linda Drake of SUNY-Oneonta’s Center for Social Responsibility and Community, who sent eight recruits.

Political figures were not absent from the event. State Senator James Seward dutifully delivered his own household hazardous waste while Otsego County representatives Phil Durkin, Ron Feldstein, Rudy Laguna, and Marty Stayton worked as volunteers. New Lisbon Town Supervisor Robert Taylor also helped out.

“I don’t think I’ll have to do my work out after this,” Feldstein said, acknowledging the labor-intensive nature of the event.

The only known snafu of the day was when a car turned into the facility thinking a flea market was taking place.

“HHWD is held yearly on the first Saturday after Labor Day. For more information, call 547-4488.”
Recycling for progress through HHWD

Through the initiative of Martha Clarvoe, OCCA special projects manager, a new type of collection was added. Bicycles and sewing machine heads were collected in partnership with Pedals for Progress, a non-profit organization which delivers recycled bikes and sewing machines to third world countries, with the majority of bikes being shipped to Central or South America and West Africa. Fifteen intact bikes with minimum rust and in repairable condition were accepted for a $10 donation. Nine sewing machines were also received at no cost.

"It costs about $28 per bike to get it to its destination and fixed up," Clarvoe explained in regard to the $10 requested donation.

In the receiving country, training programs in bike mechanics are set up to fix the bikes, which are then sold at local market prices. The profit allows the organization setting up the training to pay the shipping cost on subsequent bikes. The program was founded by former Peace Corps Volunteer, Dave Schweidnback of High Bridge, NJ.

Each year, according to the Pedals For Progress website, Americans buy 22 million bicycles and throw away millions of old ones, while leaving many more unused in basements, sheds, and garages. These discarded or unused bikes can be put to good use throughout the third world for daily transportation, delivering goods to market, providing services to customers, and going to school or a job. Since its inception, Pedals For Progress has shipped 108,424 bikes, 793 sewing machines, and $10.8 million in new spare parts to partner charities in 28 countries, including Honduras, Moldova, Pakistan, Fiji, and Ghana.

"The collection got a big jump start from Kristin Jastremski and Graham Jones of Cooperstown Bicycle Works," Clarvoe said, who contacted the bike shop. "They donated 13 bicycles and two sewing machines."

Another huge boost will be provided by Dave Petri of Hartwick. Over many years Dave has collected more than 30 bicycles -- some as collectors’ items and others to save from being landfilled. Petri learned of OCCA’s efforts and decided to make a donation. With permission from Pedals for Progress, he will also be providing coaster wheel brakes for older bike repair.

“This addition will really make the trip to High Bridge, New Jersey worthwhile. Dave’s contribution doubles our donation of bicycles! It’s a very gratifying feeling to have unwanted items put to good use, both at home and abroad, even more so when it's a matter of providing non-polluting transportation," Clarvoe said.

In August, SportTech of Oneonta also held a collection for Pedals For Progress, collecting four bicycles.
Barb Smith collects trash in Cooperstown

Continued from previous page

be causing this confusion about proper disposal of recyclables.
I picked one of the hotter days this summer, 90 degrees and pretty hu-
mid, to ride with Barbie in the red and white garbage truck. The heart of the
matter in getting recyclables picked up properly is paying attention to the
schedule. For Smith’s customers, the day your recyclables are picked up is
determined by the day your garbage is picked up.
So if your garbage is picked up on Monday, the first Thursday of the
month is your recycling day. If your garbage is picked up on Tuesday, your
recycling day is the second Thursday. And so on. If you follow this sched-
ule, Barbie will use a white box truck to pick up recyclables, which are
taken to MOSA’s Northern Transfer Station in Fly Creek, to be sorted into
the roll-off containers.
Businesses which use Russ Smith’s services have their cardboard picked
up on Wednesday in a garbage truck. And, yes, a garbage truck is correct,
and this could be a reason why people think recyclables are treated as gar-
bage when they are not. Smith uses a garbage truck because cardboard can
be compacted without reducing its ability to be recycled, and the run to
the STS in Oneonta is much more efficient since compaction maximizes
the delivery amount. The garbage truck is also used because it can dump
the load of cardboard on the ground. Cardboard is reloaded into the roll-off
container for its trip to Bert Adams

Recycling in Binghamton. When the
planned retrofitting of the STS is com-
plete, Smith’s garbage truck will
dump directly into the roll-off con-
tainer.
The ride with Barbie was uneventful
for the first hour. Garbage cans full of
garbage, in clear or black plastic bags
(most in garbage cans), were dragged
over to the dump truck, and muscled
over the back of the dumping area.
Garbage cans must be lifted up high
enough for the garbage to fall out.
Then garbage cans and lids are re-
turned to customer’s property.
But all of this changes if a customer
puts out recyclables on the wrong day.
Since this was not a Thursday, it was
garbage day, not recycling day. But
yet an hour into the run, we pulled up
next to a trash can full of garbage with
a clear plastic bag of recyclables next
to it. There was also a stack of tied up
newspapers. What was Barbie to do?
We were using a garbage truck and
therefore had no other place to put
recyclables -- except under my feet.
So that’s what we did. And if I hadn’t
been riding along there would have
been that much more room for recy-
clables, left out on the wrong day. But
what if the extra space is full? Does
she throw recyclables in with the gar-
bage or leave them at the curb until
the correct day, disappointing her cus-
tomer?
I only lasted two hours riding with
Barbie. Climbing in and out of a gar-
bage truck that long was worse than
any work out I have done at the Clark
Sports Center. The floor of the truck
is at least 36” off the ground and the steps
are tucked underneath and in
front of the wheel -- not
really convenient for stepping down, so I had
to jump down. Needless
to say, after two hours of
hauling myself into the
truck and jumping out, I
was very tired, on the
verge of a crash landing!
So I thanked Barbie and,
told her how impressed I
was at her strength, en-
durance, and good service to her cus-
tomers. The most important lesson I
took from the experience is that recy-
clables must be put out on recycling
day. And if you see something that
looks like recyclables being dumped,
stop and ask, you may be surprised
that they aren’t.
Vet’s Sanitation uses a similar prac-
tice. They pick up recyclables with a
garbage truck, one category goes in the
compaction area and the other recy-
clable category (paper or contain-
ers) goes in a cage on the truck behind
the cab. This is why the schedule is so
important for haulers. Most can only
pick up garbage one day and recy-
clables on another day. Recyclables are
kept to two separations for the first
part of their trip to being recycled.
 Containers and paper must be kept
separate.

Tips for recycling and making
your hauler’s job easier:
• Check the schedule and put recy-
clables out on the correct day.
• Recyclables should be clean and
dry and in clear plastic bags.
• Keep the weight of bags, garbage or recyclables, under 50 lbs. If it’s
too heavy for you, it’s probably too heavy for the hauler.
• Label containers that you don’t
want thrown away or recycled.
• Remember! It’s less expensive to
recycle than to throw it away as gar-
bage.
Check the Otsego County Solid Waste
Department website
(www.otsegocounty.com) for a de-
scription of recyclables. Go to
“Department Directory”, “Directory”,
“Depts. S-Y”, “Solid Waste” and
choose “Recyclables”.
Otsego County Conservation Associa-
tion wishes to encourage everyone to
shop locally, purchase wisely, con-
serve when you can, and to recycle all
items possible. Remember, reducing
your waste saves you money, reduces
pollution and conserves resources.
OCCA News Briefs

OCCA encourages reusable bags, commends grocery stores for providing them in stores

The following letter appeared in the May 9 edition of the Oneonta “Daily Star.” We encourage all readers to buy and use these bags for reasons OCCA Special Projects Manager Martha Clarvoe has articulated below.

The Otsego County Conservation Association congratulates Price Chopper and Hannaford for offering reusable bags in their stores. As an incentive to purchase these bags, customers receive three to five cents credit each time they use them at check-out, thus eventually recuperating costs incurred. This provides positive reinforcement for “doing the right thing.” We encourage patrons of these stores to take advantage of this “earth-friendly” opportunity.

OCCA recognizes that it is as difficult to modify engrained practices as it is to establish new ones. Even as a strong believer in recycling, I still have difficulty remembering to bring my bags into the store even though I keep them in my car for this purpose! Many a time I have had to leave my cart full of groceries to retrieve bags from the car.

Here are a few suggestions that may help develop the habit of reusing bags:

- Keep reusable bags in the car – so you at least have a fighting chance!
- If use of your car allows, put the bags on the front seat or within view to increase your chances of grabbing them before entering the store.
- Tie a ribbon to the steering wheel to remind you to use the bags.
- Visualize yourself walking through the grocery store with bags in hand.

Some of the above may sound silly, but I don’t believe I am the only one who has trouble remembering to bring reusable bags into the store! OCCA welcomes suggestions from readers on how to remember to bring reusable bags to the store, as well as other recycling tips. We thank all who have purchased reusable bags or who reuse plastic or paper bags for shopping.

Martha Clarvoe, OCCA Special Projects Manager

Gift-Giving Opportunities...

Tax savings are an issue when considering your estate planning. However, the greatest incentive for you is the personal satisfaction of ensuring the environmental well-being of Otsego County for generations to come. To make long term plans which we can see to completion, OCCA needs a solid financial foundation. In view of this, have you considered the following possibilities?

Gifts of Cash
A cash gift has many advantages. It’s immediately available to assist us in carrying out our mission. Cash gifts are generally deductible in amounts of up to 50% of your adjusted gross income. (Any amount given in excess of this limitation may be carried over as a deduction for up to five years.)

Gifts of Appreciated Securities
If you have marketable securities that have grown substantially in value, then the IRS has made it possible for you to provide a gift to a charitable organization at low after-tax cost. Selling appreciated securities results in a tax on the full gain; however, if you give the appreciated securities to a charitable organization, there is no tax on the gain. The “profit” is counted as a part of your charitable deduction.

Gifts of Closely Held Stock
A closely held corporation can receive a substantial benefit from the company and not have to pay any tax while assisting OCCA. If Mr. “X” owns 90% of a corporation and decides to give OCCA shares of stock, valued at $10,000, the donation of the stock costs nothing and still leaves Mr. “X” in control of the corporation. Mr. “X” is entitled to a $10,000 charitable deduction and a $3600 tax savings, assuming a 36% tax bracket. OCCA turns in the stock to his corporation for redemption, receives $10,000 cash and the corporation retires the stock.

Gifts of Real Estate
Property such as farm land, investment property or undeveloped land may be turned over to OCCA. There is also an allowance for real estate gifts when donated for conservation purposes. The contribution to OCCA of a partial interest in real estate or for the contribution of the use of real estate would be tax deductible due to the nature of our organization.

Gifts of Life Insurance
Life insurance is also a means for making a donation. Perhaps your family has grown and you no longer need to retain that $50,000 policy. The cash value has grown to better than $20,000. You can make OCCA the owner and beneficiary by simply asking your agent to change the beneficiary and ownership designations and sending OCCA the policy.

Deferred Gifts
“Deferred” or “planned” gifts can provide you with an immediate income tax deduction, as well as life income, avoidance of capital gains tax, and even the continued usage of the property. Bequests, however, provide gift and estate tax savings. You may want to consider one or more of the following as you plan your estate.

Charitable Remainder Unitrust
An arrangement through which you irrevocably place property or money with a trustee while receiving a life income. At death, the “remainder” passes to the charitable organization of your choosing. Depending on your needs, you can: provide income for your family, avoid capital gains, defer income until retirement, avoid gift tax, reduce estate settlement costs.

Gifts by Will
A bequest is a significant way to assist OCCA and you retain full use of your property during your life. At your death, the property goes to OCCA. You can remember OCCA in a General Bequest by making a bequest of $15,000. Or, you may prefer a Percentage Bequest, stating that OCCA will receive a percentage of the estate. You can direct that property be transferred to OCCA through a Specific Bequest. A Residuary Bequest provides OCCA a designated percentage of everything remaining in your estate after all necessary costs or other bequests are satisfied.
Inside this edition...