

# The Oneida Lake Bulletin

Summer 2011

www.oneidalakeassociation.org

## Congresswoman Ann Marie Buerkle Scores Big for Oneida Lake Secures House Approval for Cormorant Control

by Matt Snyder

In the most significant legislative breakthrough for Oneida Lake in more than a decade, the House of Representatives has passed a bill that should bring federal cormorant control crews back to the lake next spring. By approving the Agriculture Appropriations Bill (H.R. 2112) on June 16, Congresswoman Ann Marie Buerkle and her colleagues have taken a welcome, long-awaited step for protecting our lake from the depredations of a cormorant re-invasion.

Passage of the House bill is the most important and potentially difficult hurdle toward restoring the cormorant control program, which was lost two years ago by a previous Congress that blatantly ignored the interests of Oneida Lake. When OLA supporters went to the polls in November 2010, they voted for representatives who would fight to protect the lake's invaluable assets. True to her word, after promising OLA members she would tackle the cormorant problem, Congresswoman Buerkle went right to work.

When the Congresswoman addressed OLA members at our annual meeting in April, she committed to strongly advocate for Oneida Lake's cause in Washington. The many members of the OLA, plus the Eastern Lake Ontario Salmon and Trout Association and other Central New York conservationists, welcomed the Congresswoman's words. Buerkle's genuine interest in Oneida Lake issues markedly contrasted with the attitudes of her predecessor in the House, whom



**“Congresswoman Ann Marie Buerkle’s efforts have shown the OLA how government at its finest can perform.”**

she narrowly defeated last November.

This summer, the Congresswoman personally kept OLA directors informed of her progress as she delivered the cormorant funding request to the Agriculture Subcommittee's Chairman, Congressman Jack Kingston of Georgia. Buerkle educated Kingston and other leaders about the program's economic benefits, and she was well prepared to face an eleventh hour challenge from animal-rights activists intent on letting noxious, unwanted wildlife like cormorants erode our region's

economy. In the end, the House successfully warded off an amendment that would have stripped funding for wildlife control from the bill, with both Buerkle and neighboring Congressman Richard Hanna (R-24) voting for Oneida Lake's well being.

The House bill makes USDA wildlife control activities a priority, including cormorant management in several regions of the United States, such as the Oneida Lake area. It makes cormorant restraint a part of USDA's budget rather than an earmark. USDA cormorant control in New York costs less than \$1 million per year. From 2004-09, the USDA program generated more than \$50 million in total economic benefits for the counties around Oneida Lake by restoring walleye and yellow perch angling, and revitalizing the jobs and commerce that radiate from those fisheries.

We don't know whether the Senate will act on the budget bill by the time you read this article, but it is immediately certain that Congresswoman Buerkle and other thoughtful members of the House, from both parties, have taken decisive legislative action - *real* action - that elevates Oneida Lake's issues above politics. Congresswoman Ann Marie Buerkle's efforts have shown the OLA how government at its finest can perform.

After two long years, Oneida Lake and its people have finally found an effective voice in Washington.

# President's Message

## To the OLA Membership:

As a lifelong resident of the Oneida Lake watershed who enjoyed a career dedicated to the lake at Cornell University's Shackelton Point Field Station, I am honored to be your next president. Outgoing President Matt Snyder's energetic, effective service to this organization will be a hard act to follow. Thank you, Matt! Now, I am ready to lead with a commitment to excellence in protecting, restoring, and preserving our invaluable natural resource.

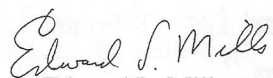
The Oneida Lake Association boasts two attributes that make it one of the strongest environmental organizations in central New York and the nation: a strong, active membership and a devoted board of directors. One of our strengths lies in our numbers - over 3000 members. With your help, we can do better! As our board of directors wrestles with issues like cormorant control, "people power" makes a huge difference. I challenge every OLA member to recruit just one new member, thereby strengthening our Oneida Lake lobbying advocacy. You can enroll a new member by going to our website: [oneidalakeassociation.org](http://oneidalakeassociation.org) or by calling (315) 675-3103.

We can be proud of our board of directors - they are second to none in their dedication to Oneida Lake's well being. Our board includes persons from diversified professions such as business, environmental stewardship, fishing, education, real estate, accounting, engineering, and law.

Our job as Oneida Lake's environmental guardians never ceases and, partnered with other stakeholders and government officials, we can make a difference. The cormorant issue exemplifies this point. The letters and emails from our members, the support of state and local officials, and the enduring vigilance of our board of directors presented a united front that swayed public policy. A case in point - by the time you receive this *Bulletin*, the U.S. Senate may have passed a budget bill, already approved by the House of Representatives, that reinstates USDA funding for cormorant control on Oneida Lake. OLA pressure contributed mightily to these legislative actions.

Finally, let me re-emphasize the importance of OLA membership and its "people power" pressure on decision-makers. Remember to sign up one new member - it's a sound investment in Oneida Lake's future.

I am honored to be your president and look forward to representing you. Together, we can make things happen.



Edward L. Mills

President, Oneida Lake Association

## 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.

### Officers

President.....Dr. Edward Mills  
Vice President ..... Richard Colesante  
Vice President ..... Matthew Snyder  
Vice President ..... Lance Vella  
Treasurer ..... James N. D'Imperio  
Secretary ..... Jim Novak

### Board of Directors

#### Terms Expiring April 30, 2012

Arnold Armani	Robert Gang III
Anthony Buffa	Bill Girvan
Richard Colesante	Jack Henke
Robert Cote	Jim Novak

#### Terms Expiring April 30, 2013

James N. D'Imperio	William Schriever
Thomas Giufre	Kurt Snyder
Thomas Pierce	Matthew Snyder
Patricia Cerro-Reehil	Lance Vella

#### Terms Expiring April 30, 2014

Marco Marzocchi	Bruce Schantz
Paul Metot	Scott Shupe
Edward Mills	Parker J. Stone
Richard Percival	Tony Van De Valk
George Reck	

## Summer's Fishing Yields Mixed Results

After a saturated, slow May, fishing for all major species exploded around Oneida Lake during June and early July. Your *Bulletin* writers heard (and used) the phrase "fishing - as good as it gets" more often than in recent memory.

Lead-line and downrigger trollers regularly took limit catches of walleyes in the lake's navigational channel from Buoys 109 west to 123. Many trollers found that bottom bouncers with spinners/worms attached were deadly for pike. Casters, using black/purple bucktail jigs, Heddon Sonars,

and assorted crankbaits also did very well.

Jack and white perch were very active. While yellow perch wasn't as wild as in fall, catches of twelve to twenty-five fish were common. Exciting white perch angling was the rule, and coolers filled with scores of these feisty striped bass cousins weighted down many a boat.

One of Captain Ray Brown's charter patrons landed, and promptly released, a forty-pound lake sturgeon in early July. Female sturgeon should be reaching sexual maturity shortly and the OLA joins the

scientific community in hoping for successful reproduction of these "dinosaurs from the depths."

Around July 12, summer's heat enveloped Oneida Lake and "the bite" chilled considerably. Anglers who fished at night, or during late evening/early morning, did best.

But the lake will cool in August, warming the fishing considerably. Savvy fishers will check out deeper weed beds (especially their edges) and rock reefs, habitats

*(Continued on page 3)*

# Oneida Lake's Bowfin

by Dr. Randy Jackson, Cornell Field Station

As regular readers of *The Bulletin* realize, Oneida Lake's fisheries have a rich and fascinating history. Less known, even to some of the lake's avid anglers, is that Oneida is home to a true "relict" (an isolated representative of a once widespread group) – the bowfin.

Sometimes referred to as a "living fossil," the bowfin is the last surviving representative of an early group of fishes that date back to the Jurassic, an era more commonly associated with dinosaurs. Today's bowfin is little changed from fossils dating back sixty-five million years; when you look at one, you are truly getting a glimpse of the past.

The bowfin, found only in eastern North America, is native to Oneida Lake, where it was documented in the earliest investigations of the lake's fishery. For most of the lake's history, the bowfin has been considered uncommon, but Cornell surveys over the last twenty years suggest that their numbers are increasing.

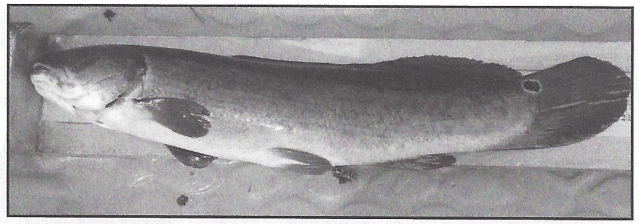
Biological changes in the lake explain why this occurred. Heavily vegetated habitats favored by bowfin have expanded since zebra mussels became established, and summer water temperatures have been rising; both changes benefit the bowfin population.

With common nicknames such as "grindle," "dogfish," "lawyer," and "ling," bowfin suffer from a bad reputation. In addition to their very Jurassic appear-

ance, misconceptions that these fish consume more popular species or compete for scarce food supplies probably account for the prejudice. However, research has shown that bowfin do not threaten other sport fish. While they are voracious predators, they have a particular fondness for crayfish, and otherwise feed on readily available prey with which they share the weed beds. Indeed, bowfin likely help Oneida Lake by feeding on over-abundant forage.

And if you want a game fish, bowfin are strong and feisty opponents! On light tackle, they rival any fish in the lake for sport. Unfortunately, bowfin flesh is soft and considered unpalatable by most, so this worthy fish belongs to the "catch and release" angler. Methods and locations commonly used for largemouth bass should connect you with bowfin.

For the last three summers, Cornell researchers have been studying the behavior of bowfin by using radio telemetry. We surgically implanted transmitters in forty fish in 2009 and have tracked their movements during the summers. If you've seen a small boat with a large antenna mounted on the front, going places where no sane boater would go, or poling around Big



An Oneida Lake bowfin.

Bay – that's us!

Most people view bowfin as lethargic, but our findings show otherwise. In spring, many of the bowfin in the lake gather in Big Bay, where ideal spawning habitat exists. Much like bass, male bowfin build and guard nests and newly hatched bowfin fry, and remain in Big Bay through early summer.

After the spawning and guarding season, bowfin disperse around the lake, taking up summer residences as much as twelve miles from their spawning grounds. While some bowfin remain in pretty small areas in the summer others, often females, range freely through the lake, occasionally moving as much as eight to ten miles between our weekly sightings.

Bowfin are neat fish, creatures with "personality" so to speak, and they make up an integral part of the lake's ecosystem. We at Cornell hope that people who encounter these ancient fish will appreciate their uniqueness within Oneida Lake's heritage.

## Summer's Fishing Yields

(Continued from page 2)

favored by big jack perch, smallmouths, and many walleyes. If gizzard shad experience a "good hatch," wise anglers work lures underneath the shad schools for suspended bass and pike (silver Kastmasters imitate small shad very accurately). White bass often mix with other large fish and, when they chase shad to the surface, the resulting melee can provoke the ultimate Oneida Lake adrenaline rush.

## Mark Babenzien Named "Conservationist of the Year"

OLA President Matt Snyder proudly named Mark Babenzien, Director of the Oneida Fish Cultural Center, as "conservationist of the year" at the OLA's annual meeting in April.

A 1976 graduate of Cobleskill College with a degree in fish and wildlife management, Mark has worked for the DEC for over thirty-five years. He began at the Oneida Hatchery as a fish and wildlife technician and, in the early 1980s, accepted a promotion to assistant hatchery manager at the state's Bath facility. In 1992, he transferred back to Oneida as hatchery manager, where he partnered with Director Richard Colesante to vitalize the newly constructed facility.

Mark's expertise also includes lake sturgeon, paddlefish, and round whitefish propagation. Since he returned to Constantia, he has overseen the incubation of over *five billion* walleye eggs and the stocking of over *two billion* walleye fry into Oneida Lake! We can all thank Mark when we land a "keeper."

The OLA congratulates and lauds Mark Babenzien for his untiring efforts to enhance our lake's fishery.

## New Directors Join OLA Board

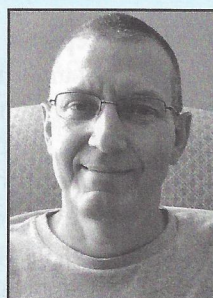
Recently, the OLA welcomed two directors to its governing body.

Marco Marzocchi, a Syracuse attorney, is General Counsel for Retail Development for the Widewaters Group, a real estate corporation, and brings an impressive knowledge of environmental law to the board. In his position, Marco engages with local, state, and federal agencies (such as the DEC, Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife) for approvals and permits. He is an avid Oneida Lake angler and hunter.

George Reck, a three-decade OLA member, has summered on Maple Bay for over forty years. George has volunteered in Cornell Cooperative Extension's water chestnut removal program and in last year's OLA cormorant harassment project. He works as a registered nurse at St. Joseph's Hospital, Syracuse.



Director  
Marco Marzocchi



Director  
George Reck

## Few Contaminants in Oneida Lake Fish

OLA members - you can schedule that walleye fry tonight - and invite the neighbors, too!

David Lemon, Region 7 Fisheries Manager for the DEC, recently reported to *The Bulletin* that Oneida Lake walleyes harbor very few contaminants. Last year, the Cornell Field Station provided Lemon with thirty-seven walleyes for evaluation. Biologists filleted each fish and analyzed the flesh. The walleyes contained "extremely low/undetectable" levels of PCBs, DDT, and chlordane. Mercury deposits in the fish registered only about a third of the lowest "actionable level" established by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

That's tremendous news. Our lake remains a bountiful source of clean, nourishing fish.

Manager Lemon announced that the DEC plans to test yellow perch and walleyes this year.

## Check Out the OLA On-Line

Visit the OLA's website ([www.oneidalakeassociation.org](http://www.oneidalakeassociation.org)) for the most comprehensive, updated information about current issues affecting the lake and its environs. You can read old *Bulletins*, share pertinent photos, and even ask questions at this excellent site. An OLA director will answer your inquiries or channel you in the right direction to research any lake-oriented curiosity.

## Blooms Sink Beach Swimming

Confronted by heavy blooms of blue-green algae, Sylvan Beach village officials closed their beach in early July; New York State also quarantined Verona Beach. Oneida County Health Department inspectors recommended the closing after the algae tested positive for cyanobacteria toxin. The latter substance can produce skin, eye, and throat problems, as well as nausea. Both beaches reopened after about a week.

Dr. Randy Jackson of the Cornell Field Station reported to *The Bulletin* that the algae was likely fed by May's heavy rains, which washed fertilizers and other chemicals from croplands that border Fish,

Oneida, and Chittenango Creeks. These substances remained in the lake and nourished rich, often bothersome algal blooms when summer temperatures warmed the water.

Algal blooms have characterized Oneida Lake for centuries, but biological changes since 1990 have affected these outbreaks. The OLA Board of Directors expressed concern about the situation at their July meeting and initiated further investigation.



**STORAGE  
for  
BOATS,  
CARS,  
& RV's**

**(315) 699-7643**

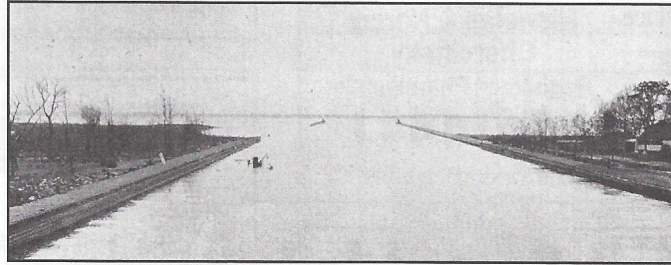
**ADT Security All Sizes**

**O.F.K. WOOD**

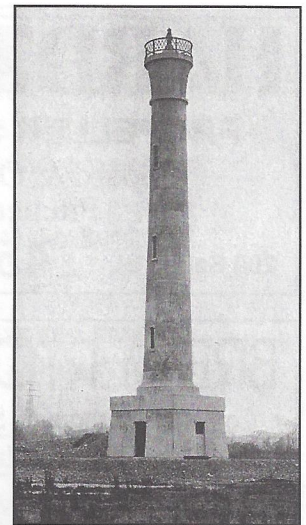
## Oneida Lake Photo History Quiz



1. This photo captures a “barn raising” that occurred on the North Shore in the 20th century. Two questions arise:
- Who owned the barn?
  - What restaurant occupied the building in the 1970s?



2. This print shows Sylvan Beach harbor in the fall of 1922. Rather deserted, isn't it? “The Beach” experienced a devastating fire on June 22 of that year. What caused the fire?

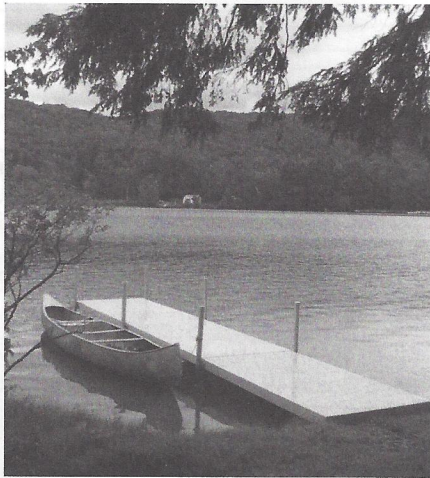


3. Oneida Lake's three lighthouses were all constructed as a part of the Barge Canal project around 1918. The lighthouses stand today. Where is this one located?

– Answers Below –

## U-Dock-It™

[www.u-dock-it.com](http://www.u-dock-it.com)



- Lightweight
- Wood-grain Finish
- Holds shape under snow load

**(877) 387-0320**

### History Quiz Answers

- Rosamund Gifford, Dellamorte's (also operated as The Country Manor).
- Three DuPont Corporation barges, loaded with gunpowder, were moored along the Barge Canal. An explosion occurred. The fireball ignited buildings on both sides of the canal. You can read a *New York Times* account of the conflagration by googling “NY Times Sylvan Beach Dupont Barge Explosion” and clicking on the resulting hit.
- At Brewerton, just west of the Ft. Brewerton Historical Society/Museum.



## Bluewater Nautical Dvds & Videos

[www.marinevideos.com](http://www.marinevideos.com)

**315-699-5517**

Navigation, GPS, Radar  
Fishfinder Instruction DVDs

For both new & experienced Skippers

1405 NYS Rt 49 • CLEVELAND, NY 13042 USA

SINCE  
1952

JACK  
COLEMANS

[WWW.JACKCOLEMAN.COM](http://WWW.JACKCOLEMAN.COM)

**BODY SHOP, INC.**

AUTOBODY • COLLISION • TOWING • RECOVERY • SAND BLASTING • DETAILING • GLASS  
WITH OVER 50 YEARS OF EXCELLENT REPUTATION, WE ARE YOUR COLLISION DECISION

OFFICE: 315-675-8652

FAX: 315-675-3756

# HARDTER WELDING SUPPLY

## PROPELLER SERVICE & REPAIR

Inboard & Outboard / Repaired,  
Pitched & Balanced

204 Salina St. **457-3181** Liverpool, NY

# BREWERTON PHARMACY

- Complete Prescription Service
- Hospital & Home Healthcare Sales & Rentals
- Hallmark Cards
- Gift Shop

**Nicholas & Nancy Chervinsky**  
Registered Pharmacists  
**676-4441**

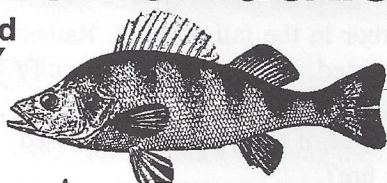
9679 Main Street • Brewerton, NY

# Mickey's Bait & Tackle

715 South Bay Road  
North Syracuse, NY

**458-7998**

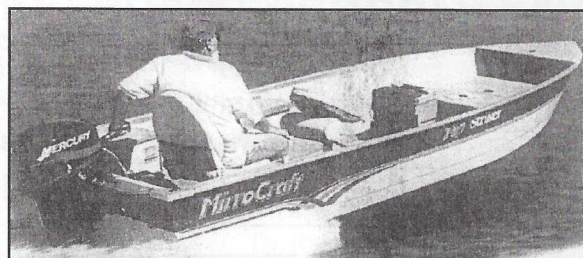
*An Oneida Lake Tradition for over 50 years!*



[www.fishingcny.com](http://www.fishingcny.com)

# Going Fishing?

**We Have What You Need to CAST OFF!**



- **Mirrocraft Aluminum Fishing Boats**
- **Nissan & Mercury Outboards**
- Marine Hardware & Accessories • Repairs
- Maintenance • Complete Ship Store
- Safety Equipment
- FULL SERVICE at DISCOUNT PRICES



230 Bridge St., East Syracuse  
**BOAT WORKS LTD.**  
[www.boatworks-ltd.com](http://www.boatworks-ltd.com)

Can't find it? **Call 438-8915**

# FishWish



MARGARET RATHJE  
(315) 298-4588  
MRSFISHWISH@AOL.COM  
WWW.FISHWISHCO.COM  
15 HOTCHKISS DRIVE  
PULASKI, NY 13142



## TAXIDERMISTRY SERVICE

*The Finest Studio in the Area*

OUR AWARD-WINNING TAXIDERMIST WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH A QUALITY MOUNT AND FAST, COURTEOUS SERVICE

812 State Rt. 49  
PO Box 143  
Cleveland, NY 13042

**(315) 675-3662**

**A**NGLERS'

CLEAN 1-2 BEDROOM COTTAGES,  
with cable television.

**B**AY

Equipped kitchens, decks - lake views.

**C**OTTAGES

BOAT RENTALS - Bait & Tackle  
Boat Launching & Docking - Gas & Ice

On the North Shore of Oneida Lake • [www.fishoneida.com](http://www.fishoneida.com)

[www.northshoreproperties.us](http://www.northshoreproperties.us)

(315) 668-9572  
Fax 668-3121

# NORTH SHORE PROPERTIES

**JANIS SUSSEY**

Licensed Real Estate Broker  
2845 Route 49 • West Monroe, NY 13167



# BORIO'S RESTAURANT

*"Overlooking Beautiful Oneida Lake"*

6 Minutes from Route 81 (Exit 30 - Cicero)

Off Lakeshore Road

- Lunches ■ Dinners
  - Receptions ■ Banquets
- CLOSED ON MONDAYS

**699-2249**

[www.borios.biz](http://www.borios.biz)

## REPORT TAGGED STURGEON

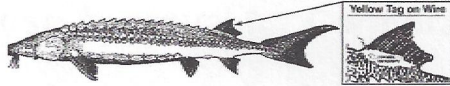


Cornell Field Station  
Bridgeport, NY 13030  
(315) 633-9243



New York State  
Department of Environmental  
Conservation

Sturgeon in Oneida Lake and nearby waters may be tagged. Biologists at Cornell University and NYSDEC need your help to track these fish. Yellow tags may be attached at the base of the dorsal fin. If you catch a tagged sturgeon, please write down the number on the tag and length of fish, release the fish immediately, and call Cornell University at (315) 633-9243 or contact NYSDEC at (315) 785-2262 as soon as possible.



**AEGIS**

Group of  
Central  
New York  
Incorporated

**EDWIN L. OLMSTEAD**

The Business & Personal  
Insurance Specialists

6250 South Bay Road  
PO Box 3580  
Syracuse, New York 13320  
**Phone 315 699-5195**  
**Fax 315 699-8357**

**Fremac**  
Marine

South Shore of Oneida Lake  
1801 Rt. 31 Bridgeport, NY 13030  
315-633-2661 • fax 315-633-8319  
fremacmarine.com

**Marianne Wheeler**

Vice President  
mair@fremacmarine.com

**Godfray**  
SPORTCRAFT

*Chris-Craft*

**YAMAHA**

*Northavenue*

**REGAL**

*Spirit*  
BOATS

**POLEA kraft**

**CROWLINE**

*FinCraft*

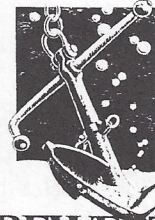
**STINGRAY.**

"YOUR COMPLETE MARINE SERVICE & PARTS FACILITY"

Service on all inboard & inboard/outboards  
Wood, Fiberglass & Metal Hull Repairs.  
Haulouts by Marine Railway to 24ft Wide

**Open Year Round**

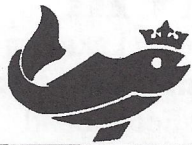
Wayne E. Carroll Helen M. Carroll  
5405 Bennett Street, P.O. Box 583  
Brewerton, New York 13029-0583  
**315-676-3762 • Fax: 315-668-6177**  
www.brewertonboatyard.com



**BREWERTON**  
BOATYARD, INC

Authorized Dealers For:

- Volvo Penta • Mercury/MerCruiser
- Onan Marine • Crusader • Chrysler
- OMC Cobra • Westerbeke
- Interlux Yacht Paint Center



**Captain  
Tony Buffa's**

**FISHING CHARTERS**

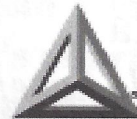


**Lake Ontario**

Noted for trophy size  
Trout & Salmon  
"The Bandito II"  
30-foot Sportcraft with a 10 ft.  
beam and a 6 passenger capacity  
**Port:** Oswego Marina,  
Oswego, New York

**Oneida Lake**

New York State's  
Finest Walleye Fishery  
"My Gal Cal II"  
28 Foot, OffShore with a  
6 Passenger capacity  
**Port:** Fremac's Marina,  
Lakeport, New York  
**(315) 633-2694**



**Alliance Bank**<sup>NA</sup>

**29 branches located throughout  
Cortland, Madison, Oneida,  
Onondaga and  
Oswego Counties**  
**475-2100**

**www.alliancebankna.com**

Member FDIC



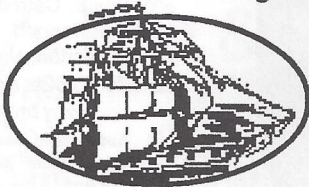
# OLA

ONEIDA LAKE ASSOCIATION, INC.  
PO BOX 3536  
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK 13220-3536

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
SYRACUSE, NY  
PERMIT NO. 999

## Like having BOSTON in *your* backyard!

Public  
Boat  
Launching!



Seasonal  
or per  
Launch

### JOHNNIE'S PIER 31

— Restaurant & Marina —

**OPEN YEAR-ROUND**

Seafood-Steaks-Pasta

Overlooking Beautiful *Oneida Lake!*

Just 10 minutes from the Turning Stone Casino  
Thruway Exit 34, Canastota, NY  
3/4 mile west of Route 13 on Route 31

**(315) 697-7007**  
[www.pier31.com](http://www.pier31.com)



*Captain*  
Ray Brown's

## FISHING CHARTER

**Expert Walleye & Perch Fishing  
on Oneida Lake**

Fish aboard the 24" Aquasport Center Console  
**OBSESSION III**

Conveniently Located at the Oneida Lake Marina  
**Fully Insured / USCG Licensed Captain**  
We use Daiwa Total Quality Equipment!

For Information & Reservations  
on our 6 and 3 Hour Trips, call:

**(315) 439-7236**

e-mail: [captray@roadrunner.com](mailto:captray@roadrunner.com)  
<http://www.fish4walleye.com>

### ONEIDA LAKE

ASSOCIATION MEMBER

**MEMBERSHIP \$5.00**

**It's Your Lake**

**Help to Preserve It**

Complete information,  
cut along dotted line and mail.

### Oneida Lake Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 3536 Syracuse, New York 13220-3536  
Membership valid through April 30, 2012

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

*Please Support Your Advertisers*