

Proposed budget contains 45 cuts

Districts facing shift in public school funding, from state to local taxpayers

Dr. Bill Russell, Owego Apalachin superintendent, presented his 2011-2012 budget proposal to the OA Board of Education before about 200 teachers, administrators, students and members of the community March 14 at Owego Elementary School.

The proposed budget would eliminate 45 positions

Budget Proposal Online

Dr. Bill Russell, OA superintendent, presented the 2011-2012 budget proposal to the Board of Education on March 14. The budget presentation is available online at www.oacsd.org.

from school district staff, but recommends that no student

programs be completely re-

moved.

The budget is a reaction to deep cuts in state aid to the

Owego Apalachin schools, which in turn required an overall year-to-year budget decrease of nearly \$731,000.

This year the superintendent's proposal calls for just under a 2 percent tax levy increase, making it four straight years that Dr. Russell has proposed a tax levy increase of 2 percent or lower.

OA's proposed budget for next school year is \$40,981,790.

"We're faced with a daunting budget crisis, as are hundreds of school districts across New York state," Dr. Russell said. "For starters, the governor has proposed \$1.5 billion in state aid cuts to public schools."

— See Budget Page 3



Ed Boardman photo

OFA's Brittany Rando recently became the third girl in school history to score more than 1,000 points in a varsity basketball career. In this photo, Rando is shown taking the shot that put her into select company alongside OFA graduates Kyle Dougherty and Leah French.

OA's sharp-shooters

Rando scores 1,000; Thomas wins "hoop shoot"

Owego Free Academy senior basketball player Brittany Rando recently became the third 1,000-point scorer in the school's girls basketball program's history. By eclipsing the mark, she joined Kyle Dougherty and Leah French, and sits third in all-time scoring in the girls' program, behind those two.

Dougherty scored 1,726 points, playing from 2000 to 2005. French scored 1,283 playing from 2002 to 2006. Rando's 1,028 were scored from 2007 to 2011. Girls basketball has been a varsity sport at OFA since 1973.

"Brittany is one of the best pure shooters that our league has seen over the past 10 years," said Scott Snyder, OFA girls varsity basketball coach. "She's worked hard at the game over the past few years and it's really paid off for her. She did a little bit of everything for our team, and she does it all well.

"It's been an honor to have been her coach these past four years and I was so

— See Shooters Page 6

Universal Pre-K at OA now accepting applications

The Owego Apalachin Central School District offers a Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) program for families who reside in the district. The program is funded by New York state to provide 4-year-old children with a better foundation as they prepare to enter kindergarten.

To be eligible for the program, children must live in the district and turn 4 years of age on or before December 1 of the year in which they are enrolled in UPK.

Applications for the 2011-2012 school year are now being accepted and may be obtained in one of the following ways:

By visiting the OA Web site at www.oacsd.org

By calling 687-6226

By visiting either: the OA district office at 36 Talcott Street, Owego; Owego Elementary School, 1 Christa McAuliffe Lane, Owego; or, Apalachin Elementary School, 405 Pennsylvania Avenue, Apalachin.

More information: Call Thomas E. Comerford, III, director of pupil personnel services, at 687-6226, or e-mail him at comerfordt@oacsd.org.

UPK Letter

Dear parent/guardian:

The Owego Apalachin Central School District plans to continue its Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) Program, contingent on the receipt of grant funding from New York state. The state funds UPK programs to provide 4-year-old children with a better foundation as they prepare to enter kindergarten. Participants must be residents of the Owego Apalachin district who will be 4 on or before December 1 of the year in which they are enrolled in UPK.

Owego Apalachin's program anticipates openings at Owego Elemen-

— See UPK Page 2



Stephen Jensen photo

Grace Thomas recently won a statewide basketball shooting contest. She is a fourth-grader at Apalachin Elementary School. To read more about her accomplishment, see Page 6.

How to reach Owego Apalachin

Administration

36 Talcott St.
Owego, N.Y. 13827
(FAX 687-6313)

Dr. Bill Russell Superintendent of Schools

Phone: 687-6224
E-mail: russellw@oacsd.org

Bernie Dolan Associate Superintendent

Phone: 687-6223
E-mail: dolanb@oacsd.org

Bob Farrell Chief Information Officer

Phone: 687-6228
E-mail: farrellb@oacsd.org

Randy Pryor Business Official

Phone: 687-6228
E-mail: pryorr@oacsd.org

Tom Comerford Dir. Pupil Personnel Services

Phone: 687-6226
E-mail: comerfordt@oacsd.org

Apalachin Elementary

405 Pennsylvania Ave.
Apalachin, N.Y. 13732
(FAX 625-5811)

Joe DiCosimo Principal

Phone: 687-6289
E-mail: dicosimoj@oacsd.org

OA Middle School

3 Sheldon Guile Boulevard
Owego, N.Y. 13827
(FAX 687-6259)

Jill Bennedum Principal

Phone: 687-6248
E-mail: bennedumj@oacsd.org

Rhonda Bullard Assistant Principal

Phone: 687-6250
E-mail: bullardr@oacsd.org

Owego Elementary

1 Christa McAuliffe Lane
Owego, N.Y. 13827
(FAX 687-6268)

Laurie McKeveny Principal

Phone: 687-6261
E-mail: mckevenyl@oacsd.org

Owego Free Academy

1 Sheldon Guile Boulevard
Owego, N.Y. 13827
(FAX 687-6253)

Heath Georgia Principal

Phone: 687-6230
E-mail: georgiah@oacsd.org

Tom Beatty Assistant Principal

Phone: 687-6231
E-mail: beattyt@oacsd.org

Andrew Goodrich Athletic Director

Phone: 687-6232
E-mail: goodricha@oacsd.org

Eighth-graders participate in annual Career Day at OAMS

Eighth-grade students at Owego Apalachin Middle School had the opportunity to learn first-hand about a variety of occupations during the school's annual Career Day March 4.

The program began with all students attending an informative presentation arranged by Team 7 teachers on interviewing skills and strategies.

Forty-five students took tours of area businesses that day.

Some of the students learned about police work while visiting the Tioga County Jail, others got to experience broadcasting during the visit to the WEBO radio station, while other students visited the OA Transportation Building to become familiar with being a mechanic.

More students gained knowledge about graphic design when they toured Anything Artistic.

The rest of the eighth-graders remained at the middle school and each student was able to interact with two different speakers they selected. Each session last 35 minutes and the groups of participants were kept to around 15 students.

The career speakers addressed the students about educational requirements for their occupation, described a typical day at work, what motivated them to enter their field, and answered questions.

The career speakers were:

- ◆Erin Atkins, from Central New York Area Health Education Center, on health careers

- ◆Liz Schreiner and Donna Striley, from The Styling Corner, on cosmetology

- ◆Steven Hous, from *Ye Ole Country Florist* on floral arrangements

- ◆Bryan Hathaway, a published author of *David and Goliath*, spoke with students about careers in writing

- ◆Bryan Hathaway, from Peak Performance, on physical therapy

- ◆Mary Reeves, from Abide in the Vine Counseling Center, on social work

- ◆Sgt. Felix Santana and PFC Justin Irizarry, from the United States Marine Corps, on military careers

- ◆Laurie Praefke, from Broome-Tioga BOCES, on career & technical education

- ◆Dr. Megan Varner and Trisha Rehberg (a licensed veterinary technician), from *Day Hollow Animal Hospital*, on veterinary medicine

- ◆Valerie Gundrum, from *Lock Heed Martin*, on engineering careers

- ◆Julie Nucci, from *Cornell University*, on various careers in the area(s) of scientific research

- ◆Morgan Shute, from *Tioga County Jail*, on opportunities in the area of forensic psychology



Stephen Jensen photos

Several of the speakers during the OAMS Career Day are shown in these photos. At top, United States Marine Corps Sgt Felix Santana implores students as they perform pushups. In the center photo, Dr. Megan Varner (at right in photo) and Trisha Rehberg (a licensed veterinary technician, at left in photo) discussed veterinary medicine with the students. Above, Steven Hous was a guest speaker from *Ye Ole Country Florist*. And at left, Julie Nucci, of *Cornell University*, discussed careers in scientific research.

UPK Continued from Page 1

tary School (1 Christa McAuliffe Lane, Owego) and Apalachin Elementary School (405 Pennsylvania Avenue, Apalachin). Generally, the participants will attend the UPK program at the building where they will also attend kindergarten.

Each UPK session will be scheduled for two-and-a-half hours with each of the two sites having a morning session (approximately 9 to 11:30 a.m.) and an afternoon session (approximately 12:30 to 3 p.m.).

The OA district is only able to

provide transportation to the morning sessions, and home from the afternoon sessions, if the parent/guardian chooses. It will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to pick up their child after the morning session is over or transport their child to the afternoon session.

If you are interested in your child being considered for this program, please complete the application available on the district's Web site (www.oacsd.org) and return it to me at this address: 36 Talcott Street,

Owego, NY 13827 as soon as possible.

New York state requires that we use a random selection process, similar to a lottery system. We hope to have the selections completed by the spring, and we will be sending letters to parents who submitted applications.

If you have any questions, please call me at 687-6226.

Thomas Comerford
Director, Pupil Personnel Services



Photos provided

Odyssey Success

The Owego Free Academy Odyssey of the Mind team competed in the regional event at Broome-Tioga BOCES on February 26 and walked away with a very nice second place in their category of competition. Members of the O of the M team are shown in the two photos at left. At the far left, the entire team is shown just after their competition. The other photo shows a handful of the team members at the award ceremony later in the afternoon.

The OFA team consisted of Alexis Brink, Olivia de la Vega, Helen Hildebeitel, Grant Lindhorst, Alissa Marcello, Emily Pedersen, and Martha Wolfe. They presented a humorous performance of Don Quixote of La Mancha leading a group of Comic Con attendees on a tour of three locations, including a New York City dystopia where sporks were never invented.

The team scored 328 out of a possible 350, including first place finishes in both the Style and Spontaneous categories.

Owego Apalachin Board of Education

The Owego Apalachin Board of Education meets at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursdays each month, unless otherwise indicated. The meetings are held at the Administration Building, 36 Talcott St., Owego. For more information, call 687-6215.

The board is:

David Barton
President

E-mail: barton@oacsd.org

Gene Cvik
Vice President

E-mail: cvik@oacsd.org

Becky Goodrich

E-mail: goodrich@oacsd.org

John Crosby

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Lee Dunham

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Linda Frisbie

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Dr. Bill Russell
Superintendent of Schools

E-mail: russellw@oacsd.org

Marcy Hill
Clerk of the Board

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Keegan Evans
Student Representative

For more information regarding the OA Board of Education, check the Owego Apalachin web site at:

www.oacsd.org

Budget Continued from Page 1

Many costs are escalating dramatically, including pension costs, health care benefits and energy costs, he said.

“This year we are seeing a massive shift of the tax burden to support public schools from the state to our local property taxpayers,” Dr. Russell said.

Nearly three months ago, Dr. Russell said, the OA administrative team began with a handful of budget development goals.

Priority No. 1 was to protect the district’s high-quality programs and services for students. In doing so, though, it was critical to also protect local taxpayers from an excessive tax increase.

“We endeavored to restructure, wherever necessary, to deliver programs and services in the most cost-effective manner, and to be prudent in the use of our fund balance and reserves to balance the budget,” he said.

“With the current climate in New York state, we realize there are more rainy days ahead.”

Dr. Russell outlined a number of areas in which school districts have seen massive cuts in state aid:

Foundation Aid was held flat for the fourth straight year (\$12,183,267)

Gap Elimination Adjustment increased (-\$3,876,229)

ARRA federal stimulus

funds eliminated (-\$1,136,566)

Federal Ed Jobs funds added for 2011-2012 only (\$951,302)

In the 2011-2012 budget, the Gap Elimination Adjustment cut amounted to a whopping 9.3 percent of our current year’s budget.

While Federal Ed Jobs funds offset that loss somewhat, the overall cut to state aid is \$826,046 (or 4.6 percent).

But even with all that in mind, a significant property tax increase was still not an option, said Dr. Russell.

“We were left to look at cuts in expenditures, including layoffs, and having to use the district’s fund balance and reserves, and considering freezing pay and benefits to save jobs,” he said.

Given that more than 75 percent of the OA budget is staff wages, salaries and benefits, the district’s budget planners contemplated four approaches: offering retirement incentives; restructuring; layoffs and the pay freeze.

An enhanced retirement incentive for teachers, and a new retirement incentive for support staff yielded 19 employees who chose to opt for retirement this year.

They included six teachers and 13 support staff. Some of those positions will need to be refilled, such as an elementary

school art teacher. After replacements, though, the net savings to OA from the retirements will be \$799,538.

Several positions will be redefined, but as many as 25.4 layoffs are proposed. They are: five teachers; 12 aides; 1 maintenance mechanic; two teaching assistants; one nurse; four network assistants; and a 40 percent reduction to the position of public information coordinator.

At the time of publication for this newsletter, all OA employees and their unions had been approached regarding a freeze on wages and salaries for next year. If accepted, this would save \$625,829.

The superintendent and senior leadership team is also prepared to accept a pay freeze for 2011-2012, said Dr. Russell.

Athletics program cuts included in this budget proposal include: modified golf; junior varsity cheerleading; modified volleyball (two teams to one); and, four varsity sports assistant coaches.

The OA Board of Education has several weeks to consider the proposed budget, to hear public comment and to make any changes. The board must adopt a budget no later than April 21.

The OA budget, as well as the vote for board members, will be held this year on May 17.

Are you receiving all the latest updates from OA schools?

Be sure to sign up for the district’s free e-mail bulletin called **DATELINE OA**. It’s a quick and direct line of communication from OA to you, and keeps you up-to-date on the latest. To begin receiving **DATELINE OA** right away, e-mail Stephen Jensen, OA’s public information coordinator, at jensens@oacsd.org, or call 687-7124.



Stephen Jensen photos

In this series of photos, members of the Owego Free Academy Student Council recently volunteered time to visit kindergarten classes at Owego Elementary School to read and share stories with the younger students. The OFA Student Council also donated \$1,000 for the purchase of books to be used as part of the Family Reading Partnership of OA. To read more about the program and the high school students' involvement and support, see the story on Page 5.

Students boost FRP with their sweat, time

Toward the end of first semester, students in Mark Kmetz's wood technology classes participated in a service-learning project. Using materials that were purchased through donations from community members, the students built two Bright Red Book Display Cases for the Family Reading Partnership of Owego Apalachin.

Construction of the bookcases created the opportunity for students to change a material into a product that will be put to good use in the community. The students used the technical and academic skills they learned while participating in the wood technology course. Examples of these skills are precision measurement, controlling tolerances, communications, scheduling, production planning and material processing. These skills are considered flexible and are needed by our current and future work force as we compete in a global economy and strive to remain competitive.



The second semester classes will be working on two more Bright Red Book Display Cases. All the cases will be placed within the community by the Family Reading Partnership to provide free books to families to promote literacy in OA.

The Bright Red Book Shelves are where gently used books are placed on shelves, free for families to take and keep.

"When children have books at home, they are at home with books," said Kristin Barton, who directs the local Family Reading Partnership efforts. "Many people, such as Bernie Dolan (OA associate superintendent), Tom Beatty (OFA assistant principal), and Linda Frisbie (OA Board of Education member) suggested we get help from OFA students to make book shelves for the program, and the students were wonderful to help."

OFA Student Council also donated \$1,000 to purchase Welcome to School Books for the program.

"This is the second year they have supported Welcome to School Books," said Barton. "The book 'A Splendid Friend, Indeed,' by Suzanne Bloom will be handed out to each incoming kindergartner at orientation this spring. This special book will include an enclosure with a personalized message about the importance of reading aloud, a note to the reader-to-be from the author of the book, encouragement to use the library, and information about making books a part of everyday family fun during the summer before they start school."

Also recently, members of the high school Student Council visited Owego Elementary kindergartners to read with them (pictured throughout these two inside pages, to the left).

"The kindergarten students, teachers, principal (Laue McKeveny) and I thanked them for the gift of reading and providing the money to purchase the books," said Barton. "Student Council volunteers spent time listening to stories, helping kindergartner's write and share, and we appreciate that so much."



Eight OFA students took part in the project to build the additional Red Book Shelves for the Family Reading Partnership program. The five pictured above are: Josh Lord, Caleb Hellman, Anthony Mancini, Peter Metritikas and Derek Brace. Students who worked on the project but who are not pictured: Samuel Frauenhofer, Gage Soden and Lauren Gable. In the second picture, more book shelves are under way and will soon be ready for use in the schools, and in the community.

Winter sports: basketball, bowling wrap-up

Although the numbers don't show how good the OFA varsity boys bowling team did this season, they improved considerably from last year. Our team is very young, with only one senior this year, which means our future is promising. Some of the winning points were against our fiercest rivals and that always helped us going into the next match.

Our varsity team went 14-56, while the junior varsity bowlers won 42.5, lost 27.5 and tied once.

This crew of 15 bowlers was a great group for other teams to model after; their sportsmanship is exemplary. Other coaches continue to comment on their winning attitudes even though the scores may not have shown a winning team.

Many games left OFA just a pin or two away from success and that says a lot when you do it time and time again. They never gave up.

We will work hard over the months off and hope for better scores next year to go along with the great group of athletes who are all role models for other sports teams.

We only had one senior, Ethan Eschler, who ended the season with a 175 average, a high game of 225 and a high series of 577.

The remainder of the team is: juniors Sumin Beasley and Dave Dempski; sophomore Joe Davies and Jeremy Smith; freshmen Austin Campbell, Cameron Rabie-Stewart, Pat Rando, Dylan Short and Nate Strife; eighth-graders Sean King, Gavin Neigh and Tim Taft; and seventh-graders Elijah Cantella and Josh Kline.

- Pam Donovan, head coach

Girls Basketball

The Owego Free Academy girls varsity basketball team recently wrapped up a very successful season with an overall record of 14-6. The season featured several high points, including a victory over a No. 1-ranked team in the state, as well as an individual milestone.

The big victory came against neighboring Tioga, a team that was 19-1 at the time, and was state runner-up a season ago. In that game, OFA held Tioga nearly 20 points below its season average, as the Indians got a 2-point victory to win the Waverly Christmas Tourney.

The personal milestone occurred on December 22 when leading scorer Brittany Rando reached the 1,000-point plateau for her career.

OFA navigated through a difficult schedule this year that featured seven games against state-ranked teams. The combined record of the six teams OFA lost to this season was 94-20.

Four seniors wrapped up great careers. They are: Lexi Hilliker, Samantha Watson, Alanna Jenkins, and Rando. All of their hard work, countless hours of effort, and great personalities will be missed, and we wish them all well as they move on to collegiate careers in several sports.

- Scott Snyder, head coach

Boys Basketball

The OFA boys varsity basketball team finished the year with a 10-10 record. Although we were hoping for better, one of our goals at the start of the year was to reach double figures in total number of wins. We accomplished that particular goal, but the record should have been better.

We missed three great opportuni-



Stephen Jensen photos

Two signings at OFA

Two OFA seniors recently signed letters of intent to play sports at their colleges of choice. In the photo on top, Lilly Hines was joined by members of her family as she signed to play field hockey at Mansfield University, and pictured above, Camden Bushen was joined by his family as he signed to play soccer at LeMoyne College.

ties – two overtime games and one triple-overtime contest – to attain victories. In each of those games our leading scorer and rebounder (Mark Merritt) fouled out before the overtime period (or in the case of the triple overtime game, he fouled out prior to the final OT).

With a young and inexperienced bench, it was difficult to eke out some much-needed victories when one of our four more experienced players (Merritt, Robbie Black, Matt Warchocki and Stephen Yanchus) had foul difficulties or was hampered by injury. However, our newcomers gave us great energy and, at times, fantastic performances.

Steven Tatich had 6 points in our first victory against Elmira Southside. Aaron Francis hit a huge 3-pointer in our win at Susquehanna Valley and brought incredible energy to each practice. Taylor Woloch, never at a loss to keep his team loose, provided motivation and inspiration all season.

Scott Johnson, after taking a few years off, came back to the program, pro-

viding commitment, strength, and a passionate fire for competition. Devin Bensley hit a game-changing 3-pointer in our first victory over SV. D.J. Mest set screens, rebounded and did all we asked him to do – and he will continue to improve.

Jake Shelley improved perhaps more than anyone this season; his defense at times was impeccable.

Nick Larrabee had some big moments off the bench for us – his shooting and leadership skills will be invaluable next season.

Dylan Angulas always guarded the opposing team's low-post threat – and as the season progressed he became more assertive and much improved. Great things will be expected of him in the future.

Our four mainstays had fabulous seasons. Matt Warchocki may have been our best player for the final three weeks. He is an absolute terror on defense and his abilities as a point guard who must lead his team certainly improved. Matt

Shooters

Continued from Page 1

pleased for her when she reached her milestone on February 22," Snyder said.

Rando was named a STAC All-Division All-Star in 2009, and in 2010 and 2011, she was a STAC All-Conference All-Star selection.

The following are Rando's ranks in school history:

- ◆First in 3-point field goals made in a game
- ◆First in 3-point field goals made in a season
- ◆First in 3-point field goals made in a career
- ◆Third in free throws made
- ◆Third in free throw percentage
- ◆Third in points scored
- ◆Fourth in field goals made
- ◆Sixth in steals
- ◆Ninth in games played

Thomas wins state event

Grace Thomas, 10, a fourth-grade student at Apalachin Elementary School, on February 26 won the 39th annual New York State Hoop Shoot competition for her age group.

Thomas will now compete in the Regional Hoop Shoot, which was scheduled for March 26 in Wilkes-Barre. She was set to compete against state champions from New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Winners of that contest will advance to the national championships in Springfield, Mass., on April 30 to compete for the right to have their names inscribed in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

The February 26 contest was sponsored by the New York State Elks Association of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

Thomas is the daughter of Lloyd and Mickey Thomas of Apalachin.

has another motor, hidden somewhere in his sneakers; he never seems to tire. He will be one of the best guards in our league next season.

Stephen Yanchus was our second leading scorer (just behind Mark Merritt) and is a tough-minded, athletic guard who had a superb campaign. He will be counted on heavily next year to provide scoring and leadership. He will also be one of the top guards in our league next season.

Our two senior starters will be missed beyond measure. Mark Merritt was our leading scorer and rebounder – he was a three-year starter who finishes up his career at OFA ranked fifth on the school's all-time scorer's list. His uncanny ability to finish around the rim with either hand drove opposing players and coaches crazy. He will play college basketball and then move on to become a teacher and a coach.

Robbie Black was "Mr. Intangible" for us. He rebounded when we needed it, he passed when we needed it, he often defended the other team's best player when we needed it, and he certainly communicated with everyone – whether we needed it or not. His is a personality that we will sorely miss – he was a great leader and a fellow basketball junkie. I will miss him, and the other seniors, terribly.

We were able to get one sectional win (over ESS) but lost in the semi-finals to a tough Maine-Endwell squad that eventually was crowned sectional champion.

- Chris Evans, head coach

Swim lessons scheduled for June 6-10

Signups for swimming lessons for children ages 4 and older are now under way, with limited availability. The one-week session will start June 6 and run through June 10 from 5:15 to 6 p.m. at the Owego Free Academy swimming pool.

For one child, the price is \$52, while those enrolling more than one child will see a price of \$42 per child.

Registration deadline is May 27. There will be a limit of 30 students for the session – first come, first served. No late registrations will be accepted.

Registration forms are available on the Owego Apalachin district's Web site at www.oacsd.org. Those interested should print a registration form, fill it out and return it with a check or money order (made out to OACSD – Community Swim) to Jason Westervelt, 1 Sheldon Guile Blvd., Owego 13827.

Miles Ahead to host open Jazz Jam at OAMS



From the Miles Ahead Web site

The members of the group Miles Ahead are shown here. Tom Westcott, OFA guidance counselor, is pictured second from the left.

The jazz group Miles Ahead, in conjunction with the Owego Apalachin Music Department, will host a Jazz Jam Session from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 30, in the OA Middle School cafeteria.

Owego Free Academy guidance counselor Tom Westcott is a member of the band Miles Ahead.

“These jam sessions are designed to give Owego Apalachin students the experience of improvising using jazz standards of the past 70 years as the vehicle for their performance,” said Westcott.

“Students are encouraged to bring their instruments to the jam session and perform with the backing band, the Miles Ahead Jazz Quartet.”

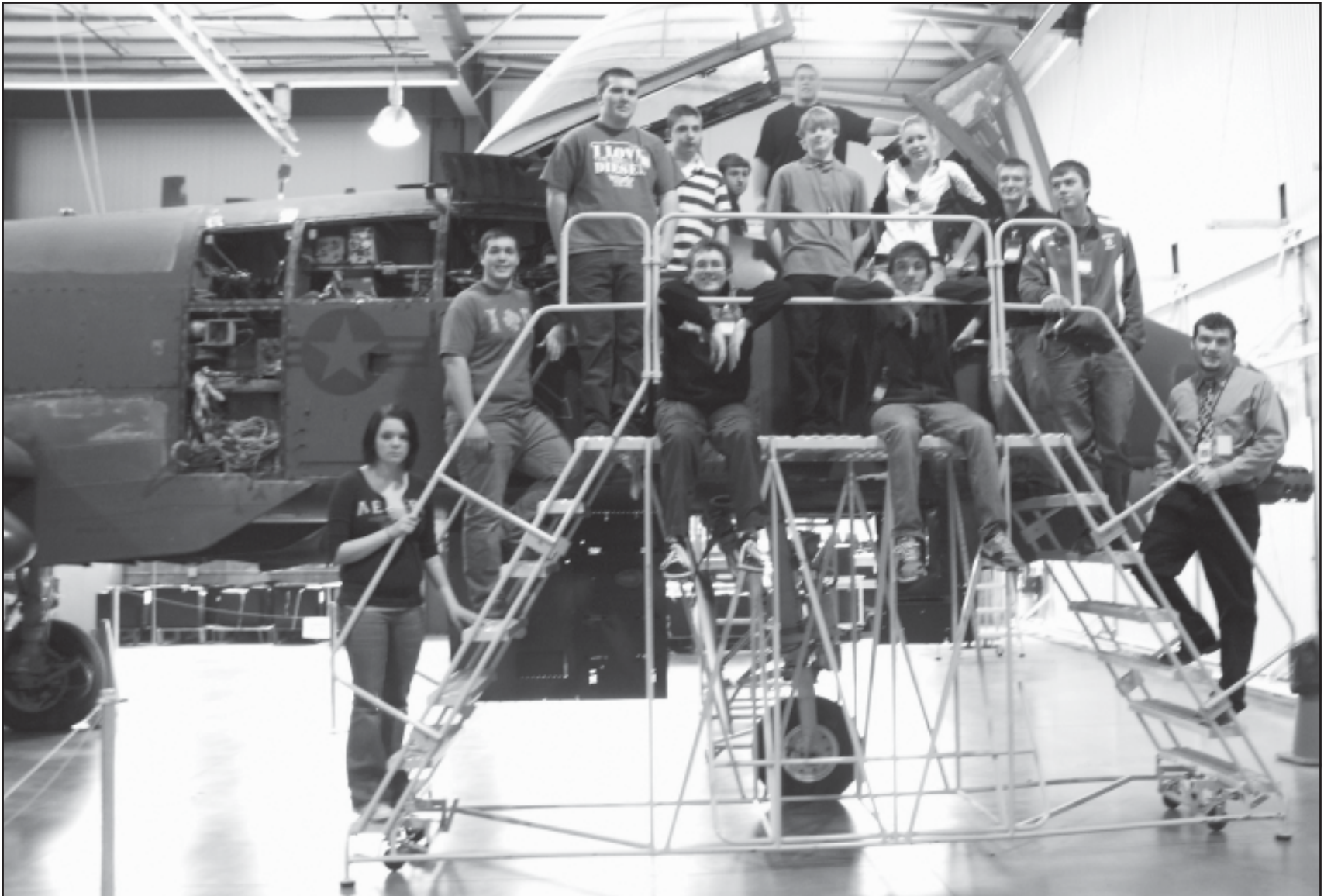
Miles Ahead has been hosting these types of jam sessions for well over a decade in the Binghamton area

and its members are delighted to share this experience with students here, said Westcott.

“Historically, jazz jam sessions started occurring in New York City during World War II,” he said. “These sessions would occur ‘after hours’ and many of the up-and-coming jazz artists at the time (Thelonious Monk, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie) would finish their performances to come to places like Minton’s Playhouse to hone their skills and establish themselves as musicians on the scene.

“Our local jam sessions are more educationally focused than the ‘cut sessions’ of the 1940s and 1950s,” said Westcott, “and encourage musicians of all ability levels to become part of the performance.”

Miles Ahead Web site: www.milesaheadjazz.net.



Visiting Lockheed Martin

Each year Owego Free Academy students visit the Owego Lockheed-Martin facility to receive tours and additional information about potential careers. The photos here show our OFA students during this winter’s visit during Engineering Day at L-M.

Photos provided

Wall of Fame Celebration

The Owego Apalachin Central School District will honor distinguished friends with an Owego Free Academy Wall of Fame celebration, including a dinner, and culminating with an induction ceremony on Wednesday, June 1.

The event begins at 5:30 p.m. in the OFA cafeteria. To be considered, nominations for the Wall of Fame must be submitted by Friday, April 8, to Janet Kline, Associate Superintendent’s Office, 36 Talcott Street, Owego, NY 13827.

Nominating criteria for the OFA Wall of Fame is included on the “Wall of Fame Application,” which is available on the Owego Apalachin School District Web site on the “Alumni” tab

at www.oacsd.org, as well as on the district’s main page.

OAMS Architecture Club participates in annual showcase

As part of the Tioga County Coalition for Better Schools, the Owego Apalachin Middle School's Architecture Club participated in the annual Architectural Awareness Activity's presentation on March 3.

This year's event was hoisted by Newark Valley.

"The middle school architecture club has been busy designing and building their proposed idea for the gaping hole on Front Street in Owego," said Don Shultz, who is an adviser for the group, alongside Sue Anderson.

"On July 1, 2000, there was a fire that destroyed the Cracker Barrel and several apartments," Shultz said. "Our young architects brainstormed a plan to fill the space with a structure that would benefit the community."

"The students agreed the need for more apartments in Owego. The name of the building would be Ahwaga Apartments and would contain eight dwellings."

Shultz said that Tioga County Historian Emma Sedore and architect James Bryden were additional influences who offered their resources to help this year's club with their project.



Stephen Jensen photos

Members of this year's club are, left to right: Austin Gorick, Sue Anderson (adviser), Samantha Knop, Maddy White, Trevor Hopley, Decker Ayers, Quintan Lindhorst, Don Shultz (adviser), Philip Stephens and Lauren Ames.

The club formed in 1996, said Shultz. The following is a list of projects members of the group have undertaken through the years.

- ◆2011 - Ahwaga Apartments (200 Front St.)
- ◆2010 - Lehigh Valley Train Station

- ◆2009 - 121 Front Street
- ◆2008 - Parkview Hotel
- ◆2007 - Presbyterian Church
- ◆2006 - Glenmary Inn
- ◆2005 - St. Patrick's School
- ◆2004 - St. Paul's Episcopal Church
- ◆2003 - St. Patrick's Church



- ◆2002 - Pumpelly House
- ◆2001 - Tioga Theater
- ◆2000 - Owego Fire Station
- ◆1999 - Hiawatha House
- ◆1998 - Owego Courthouse
- ◆1997 - Apalachin Train Station
- ◆1996 - Owego Jail



Stephen Jensen photo

Pictured here are, from left to right, Grover Peet of the BCT Federal Credit Union, Dr. Bill Russell, OA superintendent, Anita Slocum, and Andrew Goodrich, OFA director of athletics.

OA's Slocum honored as "employee of month"

Anita Slocum, secretary for the Owego Free Academy athletics department, was honored recently by being named BCT Federal Credit Union School District Employee of the Month for March.

Slocum has served the district as a typist for the athletic department for the last five years. Her career with Owego Apalachin in 1995 as a teacher aide at Owego Elementary School, then as a typist in the same building before transferring to athletics in 2005.

In his letter of recommendation, Bernie Dolan, OA associate superintendent, wrote, "Anita inspires everyone with her positive attitude and optimism, and always goes the extra mile for our students. Not only does (she) perform an excellent job juggling the ever-changing events in the athletic department, but she is also active in the New York State Athletic Administrators Association, having recently been selected the Judith A. Martens Secretarial Award winner."

"She has been an elected official in the Employees Association for more than 9 years, serving her co-workers tirelessly," Dolan wrote. "She makes our school better by being part of our team."

Slocum lives in Owego with her husband Paul, and she plans to retire at the end of this school year. She loves spending time with her four children and grandchild.

Slocum pursues a variety of arts and crafts, and is an avid Nintendo DS player.

"We are honored to have such a dedicated person on our staff who adds so much to the lives of our students, parents, teachers and community," said Dolan. "With her retirement, Anita will leave huge shoes to fill."

OFA senior, Sterling Payne, to attend All-East music festival

Owego Free Academy senior Sterling Payne will attend the All-Eastern Music Festival March 31 through April 3 in Baltimore.

In December, Payne represented OFA as a member of the New York Conference All-State Symphony Orchestra and was then notified that he was selected to move on to the MENC (Music Educators National Conference) All-Eastern Symphony Orchestra.

Outstanding musicians from 12 eastern states have been selected to perform in the All-Eastern Chorus, Jazz Band, Concert Band, and Orchestra, according to Dan Fabricius, OFA band director.

At OFA, Payne plays in the Concert Band, Jazz, Band, Pep Band and MTB. He's been selected for numerous Tioga All-County Band and NYSSMA Area All-State Festivals. This year he was also honored in January when he performed as the soloist on the *Concerto for Marimba* by Brazilian composer Ney Rosauero, with the Binghamton Youth Symphony.

Payne will attend the Ithaca College School of Music in the fall to major in Music Education and Percussion Performance.

Sterling Payne is the son of Gary and Susan Payne of Apalachin.



STERLING PAYNE

Photo provided