

# Halliday named state's top mechanic

*Veteran OA transportation tech honored by New York Association for Pupil Transportation*

Cliff Halliday, chief mechanic for the Owego Apalachin Central School District, was recently named School Bus Technician of the Year by the New York Association for Pupil Transportation at the group's annual conference in Albany.

The award was a complete surprise to the humbled Halliday.

Tony Quaranta, transportation supervisor for OA, told Halliday there were a few seminars at this summer's conference that might be of interest, so Halliday drove to the capitol to further his education and bring that knowledge back to his mechanics.

Ironically, this facet of Halliday's position is just one of the reasons NYAPT selected him for the 2007 honor.

According to the NYAPT web site, this award "was established to recognize a school bus technician who exemplifies the characteristics of excellence and quality and whose work results in safer school buses and school bus travel for our children."

At the awards banquet, "they listed off attributes for the recipient, such as continuing education and encouraging others around him to do the same," Halliday said.

"You needed to be ASE certified in several ar-



*Stephen P. Jensen photo*

*Cliff Halliday, chief mechanic for the Owego Apalachin Central School District, is shown in this photo outside the OA Transportation Facility recent. According to the NYAPT web site, this award "was established to recognize a school bus technician who exemplifies the characteristics of excellence and quality and whose work results in safer school buses and school bus travel for our children."*

eas of school bus repair and maintenance, staying abreast of current trends and technologies in the industry," he said, "and I believe it was mentioned that management skills were a factor, at the same time keeping a willingness to help our staff and keep an open line of communication with our mechanics and our drivers."

As the dinner banquet went on, Halliday said he still had no idea he'd be receiving the honor.

"They called off a list of accomplishments and then they

mentioned that this individual had served in the United States Marines," Halliday said. "I was looking around for another Marine. Then they called out my name. I was more than a little surprised."

Quaranta had further surprised Halliday by making arrangements for Halliday's wife Sharon and his son Chad to be present for the banquet.

"Cliff is a very straightforward guy, and we all appreciate that," Quaranta said. "He doesn't get excited. Nothing ruffles his feathers. We all know,

day to day, true to life, we'll have situations arise that can be stressful, but he never lets any of those situations get to him. He handles everything with the utmost professionalism.

"He believes strongly in continuing education, and encouraging other mechanics to do the same. Now, some of these training sessions and seminars aren't necessarily exciting," Quaranta added, "but they're crucial to keeping our safety and security at the highest levels possible.

"Cliff's always looking to

streamline our practices and find a way to do things better."

Halliday was nominated for the award by OA bus drivers, said Quaranta. In addition to his skills, his experience was lauded. He's been in his current position since 2004 and was an OA bus mechanic before that since 1995.

Prior to being with OA, Halliday was a mechanic and chief mechanic for 17 years for a school in Southern California. Before that, he worked for the Marine Corps transportation department.

"This is a great opportunity for the district itself to showcase its programs, because certainly without the encouragement of the district, I couldn't work at this level," Halliday said. "I've been afforded every opportunity to attend seminars on changing technologies, and Tony Quaranta, the superintendent (Dr. Bill Russell), Bernie Dolan (OA associate superintendent) and the Board of Education, through the budget process, have given me these opportunities.

"I believe it's gotten me, and us, to this point through a true team effort, working toward one goal. They've allowed me to shine and I'm very proud to be in this position. I represent some fine people."