

Special Pull-Out Budget Section Inside: Pages 3-10

Owego Apalachin

BUDGET VOTE 2006-07

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NEWS

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The Owego Apalachin School District

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Owego Apalachin on-line: www.oacsd.org

OA: A passerby's perspective

Committed community, district headed in a positive direction

Let me take you on a journey through the Owego Apalachin Central School District, as seen through the eyes of someone who has been offered the opportunity to spend some quality time within its boundaries, meeting and working with its family and community

Superintendent's Message: Joseph C. Sever Jr.

members.

A high quality education starts, first and foremost, with parents and guardians, who are a child's first teachers and who play the most important roles in the education of their child. I have witnessed numerous occasions on which OA parents and guardians have

developed meaningful involvement in their children's schooling.

You have demonstrated your commitment to strengthening OA's academic and social programs, not only by your attendance at school-sponsored events, i.e. open houses, parent-teacher conferences, plays,

— See Perspective Page 4

Out Like A Lamb



Students at Owego Elementary School got a chance to get outside - without coats - for one of the first times in early April this spring. For more pictures of the OES kids enjoying this break on the playground, see Page 3.



Stephen P. Jensen photos



BOE taps Ithaca for new OA leader

Dr. William Russell expected to join district on July 1

While many in the Owego Apalachin community learned through area media reports the news of the district Board of Education's choice for the next superintendent, the board expects to officially appoint Dr. William Russell at an upcoming board meeting.



DR. RUSSELL

Dr. Russell is expected to be in place as OA superintendent on July 1, according to the OA board.

Dr. Russell will leave his position as assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction in the Ithaca district to join OA.

Dr. Russell will formally replace Dr. Mychael Willon, who accepted a position with the New York City district and left Owego last October.

Joseph C. Sever Jr. was named in mid-December, 2005, as interim superintendent after Bernard C. Dolan Jr. had been appointed to that post, but was forced to withdraw due to back surgery.

Mr. Dolan will continue as associate superintendent for the OA district.



A sun day

Students at Owego Elementary School got the opportunity to enjoy some unseasonably warm weather in early April, as they took to the playground. As the school year winds down, their thoughts will likely turn to more days like the one shown here.



Stephen P. Jensen photos





Owego Apalachin budget vote scheduled for May 16

Voters throughout the Owego Apalachin Central School District will have the opportunity to vote on the district's proposed 2006-07 budget on Tuesday, May 16, 2006.

Polls will open at 7 a.m. at two locations: Apalachin Elementary School gymnasium (District 1 - Pennsylvania Avenue, Apalachin) and Owego Elementary School gymnasium (District 2 - off George Street, Owego). Polls close at 8 p.m.

If you are uncertain which polling place you should report to, please call 687-6224 for assistance.

Three candidates competing for two board seats

Three Owego Apalachin district residents have declared their candidacy for the OA Board of Education. They are: David Barton, John Crosby and Jack Legg.

Two seats are open. One is currently occupied by Crosby, the other by Ruth Ann Smith, who chose not to seek re-election.

To learn more about this year's Board of Education candidates, see their biographies on Page 10.

Voter qualifications

You must be both qualified and registered if you wish to vote Tuesday, May 16, 2006. You are qualified if you:

- ◆Are a U.S. citizen.
- ◆Are at least 18 years old on the day of the vote.
- ◆Have been a resident of the OA district for at least 30 days prior to May 16, 2006.

You are registered to vote if you voted in any voting conducted by the OA district during the past four years or if you:

- ◆Voted in any federal, state, county, town or village voting conducted by the Tioga County Board of Elections during the past four years and, thus, your name appears on the voting register prepared by the Tioga County Board of Elections for the OA district.

Inside

See how the district continues to avoid heating and lighting costs - to the tune of nearly half a million dollars, to date. Page 5

6.5% tax increase proposed

Additions, cuts encompass a budget that looks to strike a solid balance

During the regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting of April 6, members of the Owego Apalachin Board of Education voted unanimously to adopt the district's 2006-2007 budget that proposes to increase the budget 7.21 percent.

The corresponding tax levy increase would be 6.52 percent.

Residents of the OA district will vote on the proposed budget Tuesday, May 16.

Over the course of the budget development process, district administrators worked side-by-side with members of the Owego Apalachin community

The 2006-07 proposed OA budget Page 7

who comprised the Budget Advisory Committee, constructing a budget that sees cuts and additions, but that also strikes a solid balance.

Before the OA board adopted its budget, it received recommendations from the Budget Advisory Committee, which included potential staff reduction through attrition.

"We had several retirements, and our enrollment numbers have decreased," said Bernard C. Dolan Jr. associate superintendent. "This afforded us

the opportunity to not fill certain positions.

"This wasn't a short-sighted decision," Dolan said. "It was done with the intent to best align the district with our current needs, as well as those we'll face in the future."

"We took a zero-based approach to the budget this year, which proved a worthwhile exercise," said Gene Cvik, Board of Education finance chairman,

— See Budget Page 5

The Community Swim Program: The Voters Will Decide



Stephen P. Jensen photos

Up for a vote

Owego Apalachin district voters will be asked to decide, with their May 16 vote, whether or not to support a Community Swim Program through the use of taxpayer dollars. To read more about this year's Proposition No. 3, what the proposed program would look like, and what it would cost the average taxpayer, see Page 9.



Perspective Continued from Page 1

sporting events, concerts and other events too numerous to mention, but also by volunteering in schools, conducting fund-raising activities through parent-teacher organizations, and serving on various school-community groups.

Never doubt that your participation and involvement make a difference.

I've also witnessed superb classroom instruction. When one starts with an end in mind, one has a clearer picture of the steps that need to be accomplished to reach the goal.

Teachers, K through 12, work tirelessly to "challenge students within a caring environment to become confident, competent, contributing citizens." Teachers demonstrate daily their commitment to student-centered instruction by using a variety of teaching methodologies to keep students actively engaged in the lesson.

One key indicator of an effective school is a safe and orderly environment. Each OA building administrator works diligently and cooperatively with his faculty not only to eliminate undesirable behaviors, but also to establish a sense of cooperation in an environment of high expectations and success for all students.

Students have shown a strong commitment to OA. They exhibit pride



The 2006-2007 school budget was prepared with the student and taxpayer in mind. Our goal is to maintain a first-class school district while, at the same time, being aware of the impact that the budget will have on the taxpayers.

- Joseph C. Sever Jr.

in their school district by working cooperatively with their teachers, by respecting their surroundings (we see limited vandalism and graffiti), by demonstrating prowess in athletic competitions and excellence on stage, and by maintaining academic excellence.

I have enjoyed working with the Board of Education. Each member brings a unique perspective to the table, which helps to broaden the range of choices that can be made. To a person, each board member is dedicated to maintaining a first-class school district within a fiscally-sound environment.

Lastly, let me not forget to cite the commendable performance of the transportation and maintenance departments and the district's support staff. Our buses are safe and well maintained, and one

will not find cleaner school buildings elsewhere.

The support staff efficiently completes the service and communication link between the district and students, parents and community.

The Board of Education, community members, district administrators, faculty and staff have worked diligently to create a budget that will keep our schools competitive, yet one that is fiscally sound.

This edition of *OA News* includes our annual financial data, which will help you make an informed decision on Tuesday, May 16.

Future newsletter items will continue to feature information about how our schools and students are performing, as we celebrate the wonderful things

that are happening in our schools by sharing some of them with you in this newsletter.

The budget presented in this issue is not an extension of previous years' budgets. It was created through a process called "zero-based budgeting."

A primary benefit to taxpayers of zero-based budgeting is that it forces preparers to start "from scratch," and to think through their operations in order to plan for the coming year, then to develop the budget.

The 2006-2007 school budget was prepared with the student and taxpayer in mind. Our goal is to maintain a first-class school district while, at the same time, being aware of the impact that the budget will have on the taxpayers.

It has not been the easiest task to manage, but I believe we have succeeded in meeting our goal.

If you are not thoroughly familiar with our school events and student accomplishments, I urge you to continue to read this newsletter to understand what we hope to preserve in the ensuing year.

Joseph Sever is interim superintendent of schools for the Owego Apalachin district. He can be reached at 687-6224, or via e-mail at severj@oacsd.org.



Stephen P. Jensen photos

Teaching technology

Members of the Owego Apalachin faculty and staff stay on the cutting edge by taking classes within the district, such as the digital video editing course shown here. Retired OA Director of Technology Carl Muldner, pictured above, right, taught this class in the new middle school library.

Glossary of Terms You may find some of the following terms in this edition of *OA News*

Appropriation: A legal authorization to incur obligations and to make expenditures for specific purposes.

Budget cap: The maximum percent budget increase permitted under state law if voters twice reject the budget submitted to the voters by the Board of Education.

Certified staff: School district employees licensed by the state (for example, teachers and administrators).

Contingent budget: The

budget that must be adopted by the Board of Education if voters reject a district's budget twice.

Contracted services: Services rendered by private firms, individuals or other government agencies.

Debt service: Expenditures for repayment of bonds, notes and other debt.

Equipment: Fixed assets having a set dollar value and having a useful economic life of more than one year.

Expenditures: Decreases in net financial resources.

Fiscal year: Begins July 1 and ends June 30.

Full-time equivalent (FTE): The amount of employed time required in a part-time position expressed in proportion to that required in a full-time position, with a 1.0 representing one full-time position.

Fund balance: The amount of unexpended funds at the end of the year.

Revenue: Money received by the district that is used to pay the expenditures incurred by the district.

STAR program: A state-funded exemption from school property taxes for owner-occupied primary residences. The STAR program has two components, those being the "enhanced" (for income-eligible senior citizens) and the "basic" (for all other primary residence property owners).

State aid: The main types of aid are comprehensive operating aid and categorical aid. Comprehensive aid is unrestricted aid that is spent according to a district's priorities as determined by the school board. Categorical aid is provided to districts for particular purposes and must be spent for the purpose specified by state legislation. Examples of categorical aid are BOCES, transportation and building aid, to name a few.

District energy savings approach \$450,000

OA relying heavily on maintenance crew, district staff to fuel continued cost avoidance

One year ago, the Owego Apalachin Central School District reported that approximately \$175,000 had been avoided in energy costs, thanks to a program that kicked off in May 2004.

A year later, the OA district has seen cost avoidance that exceeds \$450,000, according to Eric Kochis, the district's resource conservation specialist.

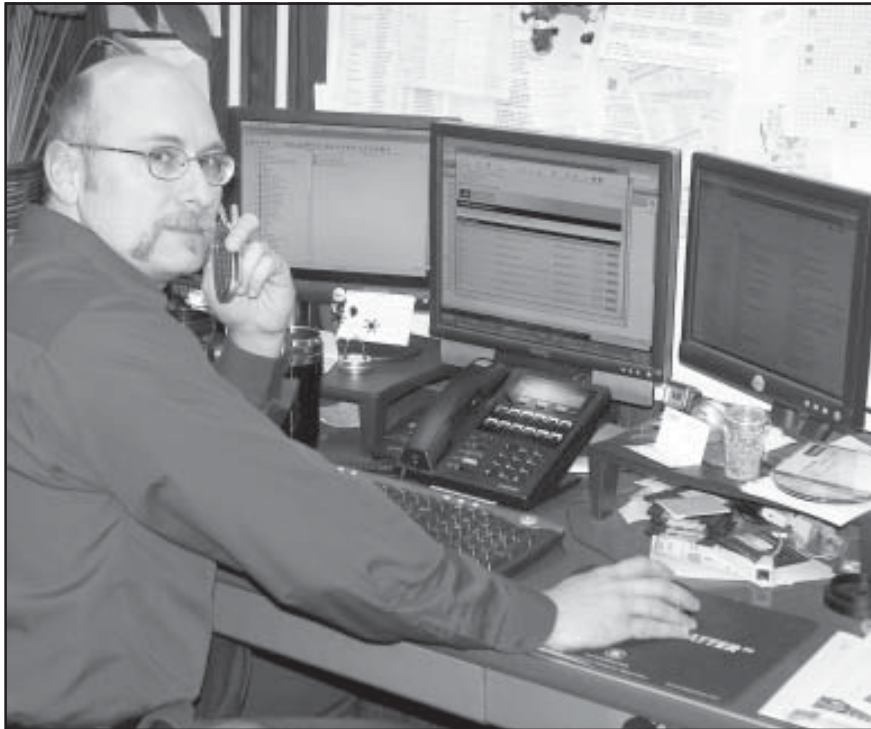
Kochis was hired by the district in mid-April of 2004 in this role. He has been employed by OA as its senior network specialist since 1993.

He said he expects these significant savings to continue.

"We really couldn't have asked for a better response in our first year than to have saved \$175,000," said Kochis.

"But we knew that as people working in the district became more acclimated to conservation methods, we had a pretty good chance of doing even better."

Kochis said that part of the appearance of a large spike in district "savings" is due to the fact that fuel and electricity rates have risen so dramatically.



Stephen P. Jensen photo

Eric Kochis pulls double-duty as Owego Apalachin's resource conservation specialist, keeping a watchful eye on where taxpayer dollars are spent to light and heat our buildings, but more important, how we can continue to lower those costs.

Electricity costs increased 40 percent and gas prices rose 64 percent, from 2004 to 2005. Kochis pointed to the fact that, with the skyrocketing fuel and electricity costs, the increased attention to conservation by district personnel is even more crucial.

"We're doing better in the second year than we did in the first," Kochis said, "and that's usually how it works."

"It's more critical than ever that we conserve our energy."

The program, originally offered by a company called Integrated Energy

Solutions, relies heavily on a company's, or in this case, a school district's buy-in. The district's contract with IES was for 18 months. Kochis now oversees the entire program.

"The OA maintenance team has been great to work with and their continued commitment to conservation is one of the biggest keys to our program's overall success," said Kochis.

The most immediate way the district can conserve energy is by controlling lighting, before and after the school day, as well as on weekends, according to Kochis, adding that additional savings are achieved by altering building temperatures during non-teaching hours.

"Basically, when students aren't in the buildings, keeping the lights in security mode, and adjusting building temperatures, just as we'd do at home, is a sure way to save money," he said.

"In such a large organization, this type of success is only possible with the support of all the staff, as well, each person doing his or her part," Kochis added.

Things that can conserve energy in the classroom (as well as at home): Turning lights off when leaving a room; keeping windows closed during heating season; and, shutting off computers, monitors, speakers, coffee makers, ceiling fans, etc., before leaving work each day.

Budget Continued from Page 3

as well as co-chairman of the Budget Advisory Committee.

"A year ago we fought to get our tax levy out of double digits, while still trying to maintain our excellent programs and staff at Owego Apalachin," he said.

"At that time, it was evident to the whole Board of Education that continuing with the annual 'rollover' budget concept would only lead us to the same problem this year, which is why we decided to go with a zero base."

"The OA administrators and supervisors were asked to justify their expenditures, line-by-line," said Laura Lindsley, district business official, "and they tackled the task head-on. This allowed us to build a budget, starting from scratch, leaving no stone unturned."

Unfortunately, the district's elementary foreign language program represented a cost that the Budget Advisory Committee and the Board of Education could no longer support, and has been removed from the 2006-07 budget.

"This wasn't an easy decision for the members of our board," said Joseph Sever, interim superintendent. "Removing any program is never a goal. But the board also has to be responsible to all taxpayers of the district. This was a difficult choice."

The driving factors for the increase in the 2006-07 proposed OA budget are salaries based on negotiated contracts, health insurance, retirement system increases, students with disabilities, as well as fuel and utilities, said Lindsley.

The proposed 2006-2007

Budget Advisory Committee

Beginning late last year, members of the community met, comprising the OA Budget Advisory Committee, for the purpose of dissecting the district's 2006-07 budget, then making recommendations to the OA Board of Education.

Gene Cvik, the board's finance chairman, co-chaired this year's BAC alongside Bill Eschler.

"While the group was small, it was extremely committed to the exercise," Cvik said of the BAC. "They gave up so much of their personal time every week for the last several months."

"I was very glad to volunteer and appreciated the opportunity to help," said BAC member Bill Paradies.

"I was new to the budget-creation process and en-

joyed the opportunity to ask a ton of questions about the district's operations.

"The BAC process needs improvement, however, in my opinion," Paradies added.

He recommended that the BAC process begin this summer, for the 2007-08 budget.

"I would like to be part of the 'BAC Process Improvement' exercise, and I recommend that we convene a BAC meeting soon, just to share ideas and establish a forward plan," Paradies said.

Members of this year's BAC were: Eschler, Paradies, Jack Legg, Doug Watson and Frank Allen.

If you're interested in serving on the next BAC, contact Marcy Hill, clerk of the board, at 687-6215.



Dave Boland photo

Mia Gatto is shown here performing on April 7 during the OFA Variety Show.

Gatto takes 1st place at OFA Variety Show

Mia Gatto took first place in the Owego Free Academy Variety Show, held April 7 in the new Owego Apalachin Middle School theater. Gatto is a sophomore.

Produced by Kristin Zaryski, the variety show featured 18 contestants competing as vocalists, musicians and dancers. Gatto won \$200 for her lyrical solo "Strong Enough."

Ian McPhail won \$100 for finishing second with his piano solo "Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6," while third place, and \$50, went to Kristen Donnelly and Kaylin Taggart for a comedy dance duet called "You Should Be Dancing."

Talent judges were Michelle Cascreale and Sean Conor Anderson. Audition judges were Lisa Russell and Tom Westcott.

budget includes the addition of three new academic intervention services (AIS) teachers, one for the middle school, one for Owego Elementary School, and another to serve both OES and Apalachin Elementary School.

AIS is an expenditure mandated at the state level, which requires every district to offer services to help students achieve the learning standards in English language arts and mathematics in grades K-12. and in social studies and science in grades 4-12.

Students eligible for AIS services include those who score below the state-designated performance levels (students who score at level 1 or 2 on a scale of 4) on elementary,

intermediate, and commencement-level state assessments in ELA, math, social studies, and science, and students who are at risk of not meeting state standards, as identified by district criteria.

With the introduction of state assessments in the 2005-2006 school year in ELA and mathematics for grades 3-8, more students will be identified and become eligible for AIS, hence the need to add AIS positions.

The middle school position will provide AIS to grade 6 students in mathematics. The OES position will provide AIS in literacy and math, the AES position will provide AIS to primary grade students in ELA and math.

How to reach OA



Administration

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

Joseph C. Sever Jr.
Interim Superintendent
Phone: 687-6224
E-mail: severj@oacsd.org

Bernard C. Dolan Jr.
Associate Superintendent
Phone: 687-6223
E-mail: dolanb@oacsd.org

Thomas Comerford III
Dir. Pupil Personnel Services
Phone: 687-6226
E-mail: comerfordt@oacsd.org

Laura Lindsley
Business Official
Phone: 687-6215
E-mail: lindsleyl@oacsd.org

Michael Melamed
Interim Coord. of Instruction
Phone: 687-6227
E-mail: melamedm@oacsd.org

Apalachin Elementary
405 Pennsylvania Ave.
Apalachin, N.Y. 13732

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

OA Middle School
3 Sheldon Guile Boulevard
Owego, N.Y. 13827

Robert Devan
Principal
Phone: 687-6248
E-mail: devanb@oacsd.org

Sheila Bertoni
Dean of Students
Phone: 687-6250
E-mail: bertonis@oacsd.org

Owego Elementary
1 Christa McAuliffe Lane
Owego, N.Y. 13827

George Thearle
Principal
Phone: 687-6261
E-mail: thearleg@oacsd.org

Owego Free Academy
1 Sheldon Guile Boulevard
Owego, N.Y. 13827

Ronald Pierce
Principal
Phone: 687-6230
E-mail: rpierce@oacsd.org

Dean of Students
Willard Davis
Phone: 687-6231
E-mail: davisw@oacsd.org

Tom Bryant
Athletic Director
Phone: 687-6232
E-mail: bryantr@oacsd.org

OA budget presented in three parts

All school districts must present their proposed budgets in three parts. They are: Administrative, Program and Capital.

Administrative Component

This segment includes:

- ◆Office and central administrative expenses
- ◆Travel expenses
- ◆Salaries and benefits for all certified administrators and supervisors
- ◆Expenditures associated with the operation of a school board
- ◆Office of the Superintendent
- ◆General administration
- ◆School business office
- ◆Any consulting costs not directly related to direct services and programs
- ◆All other administrative activities

Program Component

This segment includes:

- ◆Salaries and benefits of teachers in all educational programs, including programs for students with disabilities
- ◆Occupational education
- ◆Teaching-special schools
- ◆School library and audio-visual
- ◆Educational television
- ◆Computer-assisted instruction
- ◆Guidance services
- ◆Health services
- ◆Psychological services
- ◆Social work services
- ◆Pupil personnel services
- ◆Co-curricular activities
- ◆Interscholastic athletics
- ◆All transportation operating expenses

Capital Component

This segment includes:

- ◆All transportation capital
- ◆Debt service, lease expenditures

- ◆Costs resulting from judgments in tax certiorari proceedings or awards from court judgments
- ◆Administrative orders or settled or compromised claims
- ◆All facilities costs of the district, including facilities lease expenditures
- ◆Annual debt service and total debt for all facilities financed by bonds and notes of the district
- ◆Costs of construction, acquisition, reconstruction, rehabilitation or improvement of school buildings, provided that the budget include a rental, operations and maintenance section that includes base rent costs, operations and maintenance charges
- ◆All expenditures associated with custodial salaries and benefits, service contracts, supplies, utilities, and maintenance and repair of school facilities.

PROPOSITION No. 2



Stephen P. Jensen photos

District proposes purchasing 4 new buses

How the OA district is responding to its transportation needs

The OA district plans to purchase four new 66-passenger buses, replacing three 60-passenger vehicles and one 66-passenger bus, by using Bond Anticipation Notes (BANS).

The needed funds would be borrowed at an approximate interest rate of 3.65 percent.

The estimated cost of the four buses is not to exceed \$350,000.

But assuming the full five years are required to pay off the loan, the total estimated amount of state aid would be \$307,913.

Therefore, the total estimated net cost to the district would be \$94,587, making the average cost per bus \$23,647.

The district attempts to replace buses on a 10-year cycle, or at a time when maintenance fails to become cost-effective.



The OA district is proposing to purchase four new buses this year, similar to the bus pictured in the two photos above.

Below is the list of the 4 buses the OA district is proposing to replace.

Bus	Year	Make	Seats	Miles
1	1995	International	66	102,695
2	1997	International	60	132,158
3	1998	International	60	132,291
4	1998	International	60	147,440

OWEGO APALACHIN PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2006-07

Section	Description	ACTUAL 2005-06 BUDGET			PROPOSED 2006-07 BUDGET			
		Admin.	Program	Capital	Admin.	Program	Capital	Change
	Budget & Planned Balance	\$3,890,460	\$22,955,205	\$7,537,391	\$3,841,930	\$25,686,942	\$7,332,215	\$2,478,031
	Planned Balance	\$0			\$0			
	Total Budget	\$3,890,460	\$22,955,205	\$7,537,391	\$3,841,930	\$25,686,942	\$7,332,215	7.21%
	Percent of Budget	11.32%	66.76%	21.92%	10.42%	69.69%	19.89%	
1	BOARD of EDUCATION	\$33,615	\$0	\$0	\$32,217	\$0	\$0	-\$1,398
	A1010 Board of Education	\$18,890			\$21,317			
	A1040 District Clerk	\$6,200			\$5,400			-4.16%
	A1060 District Meeting	\$8,525			\$5,500			
2	CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION	\$187,300	\$0	\$0	\$197,277	\$0	\$0	\$9,977
	A1240 Chief Admin. Office	\$187,300			\$197,277			5.33%
3	FINANCIAL	\$363,105	\$0	\$0	\$489,689	\$0	\$0	\$126,584
	A1310 Business Admin. Office	\$315,055			\$427,517			
	A1320 Auditing	\$14,700			\$35,560			
	A1325 District Treasurer	\$8,600			\$0			34.86%
	A1330 Tax Collector	\$24,750			\$26,612			
4	STAFF	\$192,610	\$26,200	\$0	\$243,478	\$20,500	\$0	\$45,168
	A1420 Legal	\$17,000	\$26,200		\$20,500	\$20,500		
	A1430 Personnel	\$107,660			\$138,756			20.64%
	A1480 Public Information	\$67,950			\$84,222			
5	CENTRAL SERVICES	\$521,380	\$0	\$2,856,510	\$685,441	\$0	\$3,227,775	\$535,326
	A1620 Plant Operation	\$0		\$2,558,510	\$0		\$2,876,970	
	A1621 Maintenance			\$298,000			\$350,805	15.85%
	A1670 Central Printing/Mailing	\$62,200			\$49,063			
	A1680 Central Data Processing	\$459,180			\$636,378			
6	SPECIAL ITEMS	\$307,105	\$0	\$67,000	\$313,229	\$0	\$108,931	\$48,055
	A1910 Unallocated Items	\$133,200			\$145,488			
	A1920 School Assoc. Dues	\$21,400			\$19,330			
	A1964 Refund Real Prop. Tax			\$0			\$0	12.85%
	A1981 BOCES Admin. Charges	\$152,505			\$148,411			
	A1983 BOCES Capital Expenses			\$67,000			\$108,931	
7	TRANSPORTATION	\$0	\$1,640,491	\$0	\$0	\$1,893,739	\$0	\$253,248
	A5510 Pupil Transportation	\$0	\$1,546,251		\$0	\$1,776,170		
	A5530 Transportation Building		\$94,240			\$117,569		15.44%
	A5581 BOCES Transportation		\$0			\$0		
8	COMMUNITY SERVICES		\$67,940			\$70,322		\$2,382
	A8060 Civic Activities		\$2,000			\$0		
	A8070 Census		\$65,940			\$70,322		3.51%
9	BENEFITS (Undistributed)	\$740,634	\$6,171,947	\$1,316,681	\$845,400	\$7,830,143	\$594,190	\$1,040,471
		\$740,634	\$6,171,947	\$1,316,681	\$845,400	\$7,830,143	\$594,190	12.64%
10a	DEBT SERVICE (Undistributed)			\$3,277,200			\$3,381,319	\$104,119
	A9711 Bonds Capital Projects			\$2,675,470			\$2,678,768	
	A9732 BANS Buses			\$143,470			\$224,300	
	A9770 RANS			\$5,000			\$0	3.18%
	A9785 Installment Purchase			\$0			\$0	
	A9789 Performance Energy			\$453,260			\$478,251	
10b	INTRAFUND TRANSFER (Undistributed)	\$0	\$12,000	\$20,000	\$0	\$12,000	\$20,000	\$0
	A9901 Food Service Fund Trans.			\$20,000			\$20,000	
	A9901 Special Aid Fund Trans.		\$12,000			\$12,000		0%
	A9902 Risk Retention		\$0			\$0		
	A9950 Capital Construction			\$0			\$0	
	INSTRUCTION (A2010-A2855)	\$1,544,711	\$15,036,627	\$0	\$1,035,199	\$15,860,238	\$0	\$314,099
11	Owego Free Academy	\$283,987	\$4,798,798		\$328,155	\$5,194,205		
12	OA Middle School	\$289,867	\$2,875,253		\$242,863	\$2,973,793		
13	Owego Elementary School	\$167,792	\$2,333,381		\$168,101	\$2,517,783		1.89%
14	Apalachin Elementary School	\$140,885	\$1,884,298		\$148,895	\$2,116,085		
15	Districtwide	\$662,180	\$3,144,897		\$147,185	\$3,058,372		
		TOTAL BUDGET 2005-06: \$34,383,056			TOTAL BUDGET 2006-07: \$36,861,087			
		TOTAL BUDGET INCREASE						\$2,478,031

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:

William Riddleberger
President
E-mail: riddlebergerb@oacsd.org

Gene Cvik
Vice President
E-mail: cvikg@oacsd.org

John Crosby
E-mail: crosbyj@oacsd.org

Lee Dunham
E-mail: dunhaml@oacsd.org

John Gatto
E-mail: gattoj@oacsd.org

Rebecca Goodrich
E-mail: goodrichb@oacsd.org

Ruth Ann Smith
E-mail: smithra@oacsd.org

Joseph Sever
Interim Superintendent
E-mail: severj@oacsd.org

Marcy Hill
Clerk of the Board
E-mail: hillm@oacsd.org

Peter Franz
Student Representative
E-mail: franzp@oacsd.org

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

<http://oacsd/BOE/Index.htm>

Estimated Revenues

Revenue Area	Projected
State Aid	\$14,558,552
State Building Aid	\$2,308,601
Tioga Opp. Inc. - Pool Project	\$95,395
Local Revenue	\$1,317,978
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$2,400,000
Local Property Tax Levy	\$16,180,561

Estimated Total Revenues \$36,861,087

Total Budgeted BOCES Expense

For each dollar (\$1) the Owego Apalachin Central School District spends on BOCES aidable expenses, the district's estimated refund in state aid is 70.9 cents.

2005-06: \$3,785,185

2006-07: \$4,313,202



Have a news item for us? Here's who to contact in our schools:

At OFA
Stephanie Mills
millss@oacsd.org

At OAMS
Christina Bangel
bangelc@oacsd.org

At AES
Erin Ripic
ripice@oacsd.org

At OES
Reathea Woodburn
woodburnr@oacsd.org

At the District Office
Stephen P. Jensen, Editor
jensens@oacsd.org
Phone: 687-7124

At the District Office
Barb Dornblaser, Associate Editor
dornblaserb@oacsd.org
Phone: 687-6224

Important Dates on the OA Calendar

MAY 6 SATs OFA – 7:45 a.m.	MAY 24 Early Release Day – District Wide	MAY 31 Spring Sports Banquet OFA – 6 p.m.	JUNE 10 OFA Band Apalachin Field Days 6 p.m.
MAY 8 Southern Tier Band Concert OAMS Theatre – 7:30 p.m.	MAY 24 Awards Night OFA – 7 p.m.	JUNE 1 OES Spring Concert OAMS Theater – 7 p.m.	JUNE 12 OAMS Recital/Dessert Concert OAMS Theater – 7 p.m.
MAY 11 Board of Education meeting District Office – 7 p.m.	MAY 25 Board of Education meeting District Office – 7 p.m.	JUNE 1-2 Kindergarten Screening OES – 8:10 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.	JUNE 15-23 Regents Exams OFA
MAY 16 OA BUDGET VOTE	MAY 26 AES Kindergarten Orientation	JUNE 3 SATs, OFA – 8 a.m.	JUNE 17 OFA Band Strawberry Festival 10 a.m.
MAY 16 Spring Concert AES – 7 p.m.	MAY 26 OFA Senior Prom – 9 p.m.	JUNE 6 OFA Jazz Band Hickories Park – 7 p.m.	JUNE 22 Graduation Practice OFA – 10 a.m.
MAY 17 Dessert Concert OES – 7 p.m.	MAY 27 OFA Post Prom Party – 2 a.m.	JUNE 7 OAMS Awards Night OAMS Theater – 6:30 p.m.	JUNE 22 Board of Education meeting District Office – 7 p.m.
MAY 18 OFA Spring Choral Concert OAMS Theatre – 7:30 p.m.	MAY 29 OFA Band Memorial Day Parade – 11 a.m.	JUNE 8 Board of Education meeting District Office – 7 p.m.	JUNE 24 OFA Graduation 10 a.m. OFA Stadium
MAY 22 OAMS Choral Concert OAMS Theater – 7:30 p.m.	MAY 30-31 Kindergarten Screening AES – 8:10 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.	JUNE 9 OFA Student Voice Recital OAMS Theater – 7 p.m.	

PROPOSITION No. 3



The wall of bricks outside the OA Pool exemplifies the level of community support that was behind the facility's construction.

Stephen P. Jensen photo

Voters asked to make decision on funding for Community Swim

Pending approval of the 2006-07 proposed OA budget, the Board of Education would, with a favorable vote on the swim program, be authorized to expend a sum not to exceed \$20,000 for the cost of the community's use of the pool.

According to the resolution appearing on the May 16 ballot, that sum of \$20,000 would be derived from taxable property, which would in turn represent a 0.13 percent increase on the estimated tax levy.

If the measure is passed by the voters, shown below is how the program would be offered:

- ◆ **Weekday morning swim:** 6 to 7 a.m. September 11 through June 22, when school is in session.
- ◆ **Weekday evening swim:** 2 hours, twice weekly for 40 weeks, when school is in session.
- ◆ **Saturday swim:** 2 hours for 40 weeks, with 2 lifeguards, during school weeks.
- ◆ **Summer swim:** 3 hours for 25 days, from July 3 to August 4.

If the proposal for the Community Swim Program were to pass, how much would it cost the average taxpayer next year?

- ◆ If your home is assessed at \$100,000, your taxes would increase by \$2.83.
- ◆ If your home is assessed at \$60,000, your taxes would increase by \$1.70.

Do you have questions about STAR program?

Some basic info you should know

1. What is the STAR Program? STAR is a state-funded exemption from school property taxes for owner-occupied primary residences. The STAR program has two components: "Enhanced," for income-eligible senior citizens, and "Basic," for all other primary residence property owners.

2. How do I sign up for STAR? All owners of the property who primarily reside at the address must jointly file an application for exemption with your town assessor. For the "Basic" STAR program, you only need to file the application once. For "Enhanced" STAR, you must file an application by March 1 each year.

Enhanced STAR

3. What is the "Enhanced" STAR program? To be eligible, one of the property owners must be at least 65 years old and the combined annual income (adjusted gross income as reported for federal income tax purposes) of all property owners residing in the premises must not exceed \$64,650.

For August 2005, the following assessment exemptions applied for each town: \$5,000 in Candor, \$45,130 for Newark Valley, \$15,680 for Nichols, \$53,700 for Owego and \$5,000 for Tioga.

4. If I was eligible for "Enhanced" STAR and my property was assessed at the dollar amount listed in No. 3 or less than that amount for the town where I live, what was my school tax bill last year? \$0

5. What about my September 2006 tax bill? If the state does not change the "Enhanced" STAR exemption numbers, your tax bill would

still be paid by the STAR program and your school tax bill would be \$0.

6. What if my property was assessed at a number larger than was listed? Would I pay any school taxes? Yes, but for part of your assessed value. For example, if you lived in the Town of Tioga and had an assessment of \$6,000, the "Enhanced" STAR would allow an exemption of \$5,000. You'd then pay school taxes on the remaining assessment of \$1,000.

Basic STAR

7. What is the "Basic" STAR program? It applies to all primary-residence homeowners, regardless of age or income.

For August 2005, the following assessment exemptions applied: \$3,000 for Candor, \$27,080 for Newark Valley, \$9,410 for Nichols, \$32,180 for Owego and \$3,000 for Tioga.

8. If I was eligible for "Basic" STAR and my property was assessed at a dollar amount listed above or less, what was my school tax bill last year? \$0

9. What about my September 2006 tax bill? Same full answer as Question No. 5.

10. What if my property was assessed at a number larger than was listed? Would I pay any school taxes? Yes, but for part of your assessed value. For example, if you lived in the Town of Tioga and had an assessment of \$6,000, the "Basic" STAR would allow an exemption of \$3,000. You'd then pay school taxes on the remaining assessment of \$3,000.

(Typical questions) Tax levy and budget increase

- 1. What is the school tax levy?** It's the total amount of taxes paid by all the property owners in the school district.
- 2. What's meant by the "percent increase" in the tax levy?** It represents the percent change in the levy compared to the prior year. For example, if the tax levy one year was \$100 and the tax levy the next was \$110, the increase would be 10 percent.
- 3. Is this the same as the "budget increase" or the "percent budget increase?"** No. The "budget increase" represents the total increase in spending compared to the prior year. The "percent budget increase" represents the percent change in the budget compared to the prior year.
- 4. Why are the percent increase in the levy and the percent increase in the budget different?** The percent change in the levy represents the change in revenue, while the percent change in the budget represents a change in expenditures.
- 5. What's meant by the "appropriated fund balance?"** This is the money left over at the end of one school year used to pay bills in the next school year.

Property tax report card

School districts must provide a report that contains amount of total spending, estimated tax levy, percent increase or decrease in spending, percent increase or decrease of the tax levy, projected enrollment change and the consumer price index.

	(A) Budgeted 2005-2006	(B) Budgeted 2006-2007	(C) Percent Change
Total Spending	\$34,383,056	\$36,861,087	7.21%
Total Estimated School Tax Levy	\$15,190,706	\$16,180,561	6.52%
Public School Enrollment	2,352	2,317	-1.49%

Consumer Price Index = 3.40%

Meet the Candidates

In addition to voting on the Owego Apalachin Central School District's three propositions (seen at right) on Tuesday, May 16, 2006, residents will be asked to select two candidates vying for three-year terms to serve on the OA Board of Education.

Board seats up for election this year are currently occupied by John Crosby and Ruth Ann Smith. Crosby is seeking re-election, while Smith is not.

David Barton

I've been a resident of the school district since 2004 and have ties to the Owego community dating back a number of years. My wife Kristin and I are happy to live in the Town of Owego with our children, David and Victoria, who are both middle school students.

Kristin and I are both from the area. She is a 1986 OFA graduate, while I graduated from Northeast Bradford High School in 1984. With the exception of four years spent in the U.S. Air Force, I have lived in Bradford and Tioga counties my entire life, so I understand the aspects of living in a rural community.

After returning home in 1992, I attended Broome Community College where I earned an associate degree. I am em-

ployed by Lockheed Martin and am proud to maintain my military affiliation by continuing to serve in the Air National Guard.

Over the last few years, we faced several challenges in maintaining the principles and values of education we would all like to offer to our children. As a parent and taxpayer in the district, I am motivated to lend a hand in helping provide solutions to the challenges of the future. I believe that the Board of Education is the key link between the community, the school administration and



the teaching staff.

My foremost goal is to ensure that OACSD is positioned to provide our teachers and children with the best academic environment we can, but I also understand that funding is a finite resource. That is why the Board of Education must see that every tax dollar is used efficiently.

I also think that our students need to have adequate extracurricular activities, such as the arts and sports, to enable them to become well rounded for their lives and careers in adulthood.

I appreciate that any school district should reflect the character of its community, and I feel that we have the capacity to strengthen the connection between the two.

John Crosby

I have had the privilege of serving on the board for the last four years. My primary committee assignments have been overseeing the new middle school construction and the rewrite of the district's policy manual. I have also served with the last two Budget Advisory Committees.

In addition to my work for the school district, I am chairman of the Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities sub-committee of the Tioga County Community Services Board, I serve on the Franziska Racker Centers Board of Directors, and have been a member of our BOCES Consolidation Advisory Committee the last two years.

I have been a Special Olympics coach for the last 23 years and area coordinator of

Special Olympics in Broome and Tioga counties for 14 years. I am a 36-year member of the Apalachin Lions service club, and I was recently elected to my first term as trustee of our

BOCES district. I retired from Lockheed Martin in 1999 as director of quality after 36 years at the Owego site, the last 27 in management.

I believe that to remain strong, a school district must find the compromises necessary to satisfy three often conflicting desires: 1) Students and their parents want a robust educational experience. 2) District



staff want competitive salaries and benefits. 3) Taxpayers want zero-to-minimal tax increases.

Focus on one of these desires while neglecting the others will begin to tear at the fabric of our district.

I believe that I have the dedicated track record of commitment to education and the best interest of all our kids, and the management experience to find and implement the necessary compromises to keep our three constituencies satisfied, and our district on the path of excellence.

I live in Owego with my wife Gae and our dogs and cats. We put three kids through college, the youngest of whom grew up in the Owego Apalachin School District. In my spare time, I play tennis every chance I get.

Jack Legg

Before I explain my desire to be a Board of Education member of the Owego Apalachin School District, I would like to introduce myself to those residents of the district who may not know me.

I live on Marshland Road in Apalachin with my wife Susan and my son Brian, who is in seventh grade at the middle school. I work at the Links at Hiawatha Landing Golf Course, as well as being a tax preparer at H&R Block in Owego during the tax season.

I serve on the Town of Owego Zoning Board of Appeals, and I run the Owego Men's Softball League.

There are several reasons why I would be a very valuable member to serve on the Board of Education:

- ♦I have the ability to objectively look at issues and help

make viable solutions.

- ♦I have a passion to ensure that our children have the necessary programs available to become well educated, and other participatory activities that further enhance life skills.

- ♦With my accounting background, and having served on the Budget Advisory Committee for the last two years, I am able to bring forth a reasonable budget that is acceptable to the taxpayers, students and staff.

- ♦I have an open-door policy and I will listen to all parties and their concerns.

- ♦I am able to interface with all government entities and



would make sure that there are no surprises affecting said entities.

- ♦I would work to have better communication with the public and to make sure that they are well informed on issues.

- ♦And I insist on having accountability to the public, both fiscally and academically.

These are some of my main reasons, and naturally there are others, but I feel that there is a need to have someone like myself who can deal with all issues and work with the other board members as a team.

We all know that these are trying economic times, and it will take someone to make hard, but necessary decisions. I am that person that can make those decisions and take any heat that may arise from said decisions.

Propositions

The voters of the Owego Apalachin Central School District will vote on three propositions when they enter the voting booths Tuesday, May 16, 2006. The following are descriptions of those propositions:

PROPOSITION No. 1

2006-07 School Budget

RESOLVED: That the Board of Education of the Owego Apalachin Central School District is hereby authorized to expend the amount of \$36,861,087 as shown in the statement of expenditures for the 2006-07 school year by said Board of Education and to levy the necessary taxes therefore.

PROPOSITION No. 2

Purchase of School Buses

RESOLVED:

(1) That the Board of Education of the Owego Apalachin Central School District is hereby authorized to purchase four (4) school buses and expend therefore a sum not exceeding \$350,000 as follows: 4 school buses at a cost not exceeding \$350,000; for a total maximum cost not to exceed \$350,000 or so much therefore as may be necessary.

(2) That the sum of \$350,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary shall be raised by the levy of a tax upon the taxable property of the school district, such tax to be levied by and collected in installments in such years and in such amounts as may be determined by the Board of Education.

(3) That, in anticipation of the collection of said tax, obligations of the school district are hereby authorized to be issued in a principal amount not to exceed \$350,000 and that a tax is hereby voted for the payment of the interest on said obligations as the same shall become due and payable, said tax to be levied by and collected in installments in such years and in such amounts as may be determined by the Board of Education.

PROPOSITION No. 3

Community Swim Program

RESOLVED:

(1) Pending approval of Proposition No. 1, that the Board of Education of the Owego Apalachin Central School District is hereby authorized to expend therefore a sum not exceeding \$20,000 as follows: Cost for community use of pool; for a total maximum cost not to exceed \$20,000 or so much therefore as may be necessary.

(2) That the sum of \$20,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary shall be raised by the levy of a tax upon the taxable property of the school district.

Families: Call OFA to report info changes

The Owego Apalachin district is requesting that parents and guardians of all students throughout the district's four schools be sure that all contact information is up-to-date. To help streamline this important process, one point of contact for the district is recommended.

Laura Davis, census taker for OA, provides that contact point. Davis, who is located in the attendance office at Owego Free Academy, said with ever-

Reporting changes

Contact Laura Davis, OA census taker, in the OFA attendance office, by calling 687-6281 between the hours of 7:15 a.m. and 3:45 p.m., Monday through Friday.

changing telephone numbers, OA's district-wide records can quickly become obsolete. It's important for parents and guardians to keep the school

district apprised of any changes, she said.

"With all the home phone service upgrades available, as well as digital and cell service

changes, we're making it easier for people to get their updates to us," Davis said. "By contacting me, it's a one-stop shopping situation."

Davis said the district needs updated contact information – including home addresses and home telephone numbers, parent and guardian work phones, and cell phone numbers, as well as emergency contact info – for a variety of situations that may arise throughout

a school day.

"For people to call me directly saves a lot of time by avoiding e-mail, or them trying to figure out who they should call at the individual schools," Davis said. "The important thing is accuracy throughout the district database."

Anyone wishing to update contact records should call Davis at 687-6281 between 7:15 a.m. and 3:45 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Friday evening swim times added, beginning May 11

The Owego Apalachin Community Swim Program will expand beginning May 11 with the addition of a two-hour open swim on Fridays from 5 to 7 p.m. The cost for the Friday evening swims will be \$2 per person, according to Joseph Sever, OA interim superintendent.

An additional change to current swim times will take effect May 10, as the Wednesday night swim will change hours to 7 to 9 p.m. However, while previous Wednesday swims have been limited to two lanes, beginning May 10 all eight lanes will be available to the public. Fee for Wednesdays is also \$2.

Tuesday and Thursday 6 to 7 a.m. swims will continue. That fee is \$1.

Wall of Fame events postponed until fall

The next Owego Apalachin Wall of Fame dinner and induction ceremony has been postponed until the fall of 2006.

The event had previously been scheduled for May 26.

Check *OA News* for announcements regarding the specific rescheduling of the Wall of Fame activities.



Pancake breakfast

The AES parent group teamed with the Apalachin Lions Club for their annual pancake breakfast on April 2 at the school. Shown here are scenes from the event. The AES parents and the Lions wish to thank everyone who volunteered, and those who attended, for making the event a success.

Photos provided



Photos provided

Art winners

The Tioga County United Way and Council on the Arts sponsored their annual spring art exhibit, with students from six county school districts displaying their work. The pieces, created in various media, are judged by professional artists.

This year, several OAMS students received honors. Six middle school artists received "Best in Show." They were, pictured above, left to right (front row), Jennifer Schlee and Austin Kahabka, (back row) Molly Fuller, Hannah Manning and Eric Chang. Not pictured: Anna Jantz.

"Merit Award" winners from OAMS were, pictured, top, left to right (front row) Josh Colvin, Katie Weidman, Ellen Franz, Brianna Schumacher and Mariah Bestle, (back row) Garrett Madison, Jimmy Peacock, Aubree Spatola and Jake Pickett. Not pictured: Marina Fagnoli.

Parents, please note important changes in state health requirements

Changes to take effect at OA in 2006-07 school year

New York state has recently changed several of its regulations pertaining to school health services. One change is the grade level in which students are required to have physical examinations.

The new requirements state that students in kindergarten, grade 2, grade 4, grade 7 and grade 10 are required to have physical exams.

New entrants to the district, as well as students being evaluated by the Committee on Special Education for the first time or those students who will be having their triennial review by the Committee on Special Education are also required to have physical examinations.

The Owego Apalachin Central School District will implement these changes in the 2006-07 school year.

Another important change that will be instituted in the 2006-07 school year regarding physical examinations is that the physical can be accepted if it has been done not more than 12 months prior

to the beginning of the school year.

Owego Apalachin officials will send physical forms home at the end of the year for those students who will be needing physicals for the 2006-2007 school year.

If your child will have a physical before this summer and you need a form, please let the nurse in your child's school know, or you can log in to the school's Blackboard Program and go into Student Health Services and print out the form for elementary or secondary physical exam, depending on the grade of your child.

A reminder to parents of fifth-graders: All students born on or after Jan. 1, 1994, must be immunized for varicella (chicken pox) or have a written note from a health care provider that they have had chicken pox before entering sixth grade.

Letters have been mailed home to parents of fifth-graders who have not yet met this requirement.

OA notification: No reported pesticide applications

New York State Education Law section 409-H, effective July 1, 2001, requires all public and non-public elementary and secondary schools to provide written notification to all persons in parental relation, faculty, and staff regarding the potential use of pesticides periodically throughout the school year.

No reportable pesticide applications took place from January 1, 2006 to April 18, 2006.

As a reminder, the Owego Apalachin Central School District is required to maintain a list of persons in parental relation, faculty, and staff who wish to receive 48-hour prior notification of certain pesticide applications. The following pesticide applications are not subject to prior notification requirements:

- ♦ A school remains unoccupied for 72 straight hours following an application;
- ♦ Anti-microbial products;
- ♦ Non-volatile rodenticides in tamper resistant bait stations in areas inaccessible to children;
- ♦ Non-volatile insecticidal baits in tamper resistant bait stations in areas inaccessible to children;
- ♦ Silica gels and other nonvolatile ready-to-use pastes, foams, or gels in

- ♦ Boric acid and disodium octaborate tetrahydrate;
- ♦ The application of EPA designated biopesticides;
- ♦ The application of EPA designated exempt materials under 40CFR152.25;

The use of aerosol products with a directed spray in containers of 18 fluid ounces or less when used to protect individuals from an imminent threat from stinging and biting insects including venomous spiders, bees, wasps, and hornets.

In the event of an emergency application necessary to protect against an

imminent threat to human health, a good faith effort will be made to supply written notification to those on the 48-hour prior notification list.

If you have not yet registered to receive 48-hour notification of pesticide applications that are scheduled to occur in your school, please contact Tony Clark, the Owego Apalachin Central School District pesticide representative, to receive a form to submit.

Clark can be reached at 75 Elm Street Owego N.Y. 13827, or by telephone at 687-3044.

His fax number is 687-0190. His e-mail address is clarkt@oacsd.org.

Varsity Sports Calendar

MAY 4

- Boys Lacrosse
@ M-E, 4:30 p.m.

MAY 5

- Baseball @ U-E, 4:30 p.m.
- Girls Lacrosse
@ Corning East, 7 p.m.
- Softball @ Windsor, 4:30 p.m.
- Tennis vs. Oneonta, 4 p.m.
- Track @ Ithaca, 4 p.m.

MAY 6

- Baseball @ CF, 1 p.m.
- Girls Lacrosse
vs. Vestal, 4:30 p.m.

MAY 8

- Baseball vs. JC, 4:30 p.m.
- Girls Lacrosse
vs. Horseheads, 4:30 p.m.
- Softball vs. CF, 4:30 p.m.
- Tennis @ JC, 4 p.m.

MAY 9

- Boys Lacrosse @ CV, 4:30 p.m.
- Tennis vs. SV, 4 p.m.
- Track vs. JC, 4:15 p.m.

MAY 10

- Baseball @ ME, 4:30 p.m.
- Softball vs. SV, 4:30 p.m.

MAY 11

- Boys Lacrosse
@ Elmira ND, 7 p.m.
- Girls Lacrosse
@ Vestal, 6 p.m.
- Tennis @ Binghamton,
Recreation Park, 4 p.m.

MAY 12

- Baseball
vs. Binghamton, 4:30 p.m.
- Softball vs. CV, 4:30 p.m.
- Tennis STAC Semi-Finals,
TBA, 4:30 p.m.
- Girls Track Rotary Meet,
@ M-E, 4 p.m.

MAY 13

- Softball @ Binghamton,
BAGSAI, 10 a.m.
- Boys Track
Parkhurst Meet,
@ U-E, 4 p.m.



Photo provided

THREE-TIME NEW YORK STATE CHAMPS - The Owego Apalachin boys swim team, shown here, recently completed its sixth year by celebrating a third consecutive New York state small-school championship, and a fourth straight Class B Section 4 championship. Jason Westervelt, pictured at right in this photo, completed his second season as head coach.

MAY 15

- Baseball @ Vestal, 4:30 p.m.
- Girls Lacrosse
vs. Ithaca, 4:30 p.m.
- Softball @ Oneonta, 4:30 p.m.
- Tennis STAC Finals,
TBA, 4:30 p.m.

MAY 16

- Boys Lacrosse @ CF, 4:30 p.m.

MAY 17

- Baseball STAC Tiebreaker,
TBA, 4:30 p.m.
- Girls Lacrosse @ JC, 4:30 p.m.
- Softball STAC Tiebreaker,
TBA, 4:30 p.m.

MAY 18

- Boys Lacrosse vs. JC, 4:30 p.m.
- Tennis, Section IV
Championships, OFA, 9 a.m.

MAY 19

- Softball STAC Semifinals,

BAGSAI, 4:30 p.m.

- Track STAC Championships,
@ U-E, 4 p.m.

MAY 20

- Baseball STAC Semifinals and
Finals, Conlon Field, TBA
- Tennis Sect IV Championships,
OFA, 9 a.m.
- Track rain date, 11:00 a.m.

MAY 22

- Girls Lacrosse Section IV
Quarterfinals, TBA, 4:30 p.m.
- Track Sect IV Steeplechase,
TBA, 4 p.m.

MAY 23

- Boys Lacrosse Section IV
Quarterfinals, TBA, 4:30 p.m.
- Softball STAC Finals,
BAGSAI, 4:30 p.m.
- Track Section IV
Steeplechase Rain Date,
TBA, 4 p.m.

MAY 24

- Girls Lacrosse Section IV
Semifinals, TBA, 4:30 p.m.

MAY 25

- Track Section IV
Class Championships,
TBA, 4:00 p.m.

MAY 26

- Baseball Sectionals, TBA
- Girls Lacrosse
Section IV Finals,
TBA, 4:30 p.m.
- Softball Sectionals, TBA
- Tennis Section IV
State Qualifier, TBA

MAY 27

- Tennis Section IV
State Qualifier, TBA

MAY 31

- Boys Lacrosse Section IV
Semifinals, TBA