

J O Y F U L
Echoes

ISSUE 12

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Welcome!

Joyful Echoes is an Alumni Newsletter published by the Onondaga Central School Education Foundation for the purpose of keeping alumni and friends of OCS engaged with the Onondaga community and informed of current activities happening at OCS.

P1 Alumni Spotlight
 4&5 *by Dr. Mahan*

P2 OCSEF Update

P2 Happy 100th Birthday

P3 Forever in Our Memories

P3 Tigers on the Bookshelves

P6 Where Are They Now?
 &7 *by Dylan Price, Class of 2021*

P8 Request for Submissions & Info

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:
DR. JAMES MAHAN

C L A S S O F 1 9 4 6



Dr. Mahan wrote to *Joyful Echoes*: “Enclosed are some ‘look-backs.’ Perhaps they will be appropriate for an *Echoes* issue. Perhaps they cannot be used. The submission is long, I know. Cursive writing in pencil created by arthritic fingers is rarely read today. The important thing is that I reaped enjoyment by recording by hand these memories from the 1940’s. They were great years spent in a fine school.”

PRELUDE TO OCS

My Onondaga Central High experience actually began on a cold, wartime, December 1942 day. There was a four-mile walk from...

Continued on page 4

About the OCSEF The Onondaga Central School Education Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit, all-volunteer 501(c) charitable corporation whose purpose is to provide support to students, staff and academic programs at Onondaga Central through charitable donations. The OCSEF was founded in 1984 with a vision of growing an endowment over the years. Please visit our web page: <https://www.ocseducationfoundation.com/>



OCSEF UPDATE

ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

We are in the midst of the 5th annual OCSEF fund drive and have collected over \$21,000 in donations! A big THANK YOU goes to all who have contributed this year. Your donations will work to build the endowment and provide scholarships for many years to come.

VISIT THE OCSEF WEBSITE

WWW.OCSEEDUCATIONFOUNDATION.COM

GOLF TOURNAMENT

SAVE • THE • DATE

The annual Charles Molloy OCSEF Golf Tournament will be held on June 19, 2021, at Orchard Vali Golf Club. To reserve your spot or sponsor a hole, please contact the OCSEF: ocsalum1934@gmail.com.

TILE-BY-TILE PROGRAM

Supporting the OCSEF Tile-by-Tile Program is your opportunity to materially demonstrate support for education in the Onondaga Central School District. This program was established to allow recognition of individuals as well as raise dollars for scholarships. Purchase a tile to honor or remember a son, daughter, parent, relative, fellow OCS student, teacher, administrator, staff, volunteer, or community member – or to recognize a school club, team or organization.

HAPPY 100TH *Birthday*

Frances Pegula Matejek, Onondaga Class of 1939, celebrated her 100th birthday in March, 2021. While at OCS, Frances participated in archery, volleyball, and the school newspaper, *Central Speaks*. Highlighting the 1939 newspaper club activities were the purchase of a new typewriter and the awarding of a five-dollar scholarship. Happy Birthday, Frances!

Forever IN OUR MEMORIES

Patricia Oswald

Class of 1950
January 23, 2021

Bill Adsitt

Class of 1955
January 31, 2021

Marcella Young Przbuzski

Class of 1955
January 23, 2021

Marsha Auborn Bennet

Class of 1969
November 21, 2020

Betsy Luchsinger Czadzeck

Class of 1977
February 12, 2021

Angela Jordan Weeks

Class of 1982
January 23, 2021

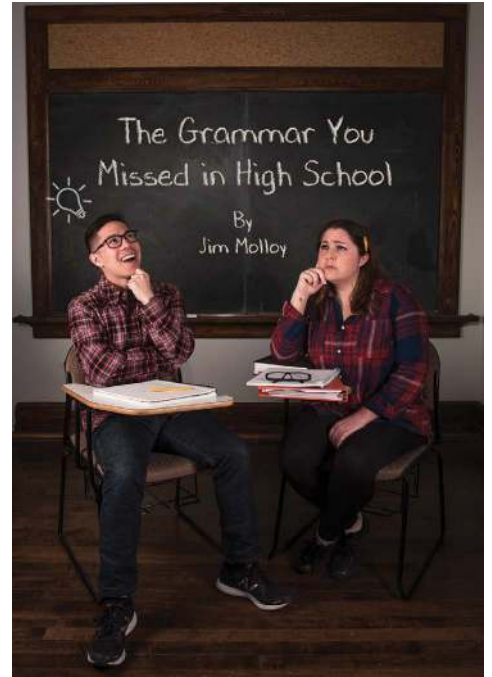
— TIGERS ON — THE BOOKSHELVES

JIM MOLLOY

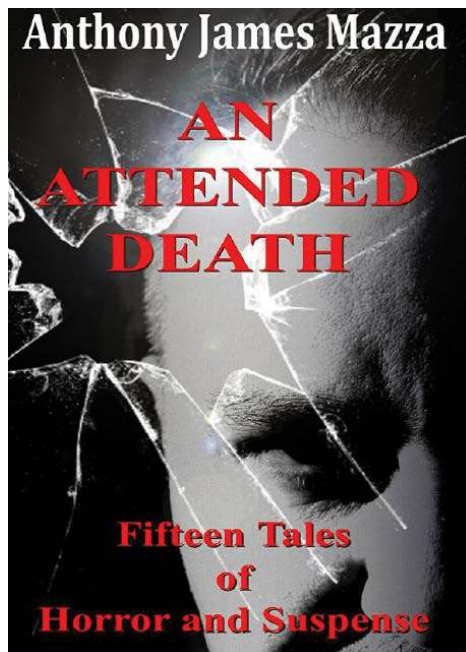
CLASS OF 1968

Jim Molloy ('68) has published a grammar book he uses with his students at Syracuse University's Newhouse School, but it's also a book that he thinks a wider audience might enjoy.

"I tried to make it conversational and funny," Molloy told *Joyful Echoes*, "and I think it provides a good refresher for anybody who feels he or she is a little rusty. Also, I think some of the examples of real mistakes from print and broadcast sources are hilarious," he added. The book has a chapter entitled "Snob English," illustrating when it's okay to break the rules. As for the grammar he *didn't* miss in high school, Molloy credits the late Jack Morse, his seventh-grade English teacher at OCS, for drilling the basics and Max Metcalf, his teacher junior and senior year, for demanding every student's best work.



The Grammar You Missed in High School is published by Outskirts Press and is available on Amazon and other websites.



TONY COTHRAN

CLASS OF 1984

Under the name Anthony James Mazza, Tony Cothran (84') published this collection of stories from the thrilling to the heartwarming.

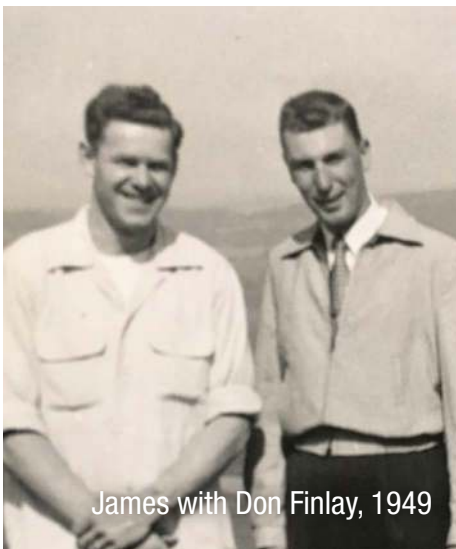
An Attended Death is available in Kindle, audiobook and paperback form.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: DR. JAMES MAHAN

CLASS OF 1946

Continued from page 1



James with Don Finlay, 1949

...our Griffin Road farm north of Cole Road to Onondaga Hill Elementary School to prematurely take and pass the New York State 8th Grade Regents Exam. Thus, I completed grade 8 in the one-room District 12 school located across Makyes Road from the Yost Yenny farm in a half-year. Walking back home, I remember waving farewell to the 1st through 7th graders who had been fellow pupils the day prior.

My dad had been told that he was required to have me back in a school right after New Year's. OCS (along with its school bus) was the only option.

OCS AND A TEACHER SHAPE A LIFE

Entering OCS in January, 1943, I enrolled in select 9th grade courses in which reading and remembering led to success as I avoided math, science, and foreign language courses. Work missed in semester one was "made up" at home. My grades were good, and the principal promoted me to grade 10 for September 1943. At graduation in 1946 (Editor's note: James was the class valedictorian at age 16), I still had taken very few college-prep courses. Being only 16 years old, I decided to post-graduate and confront math and science. Mr. Dennis Dole decided that

same September to teach at OCS. My life was significantly impacted by these two decisions. Dennis Dole was the best teacher I ever had. I took four courses under him every day all year long—Algebra II, geometry, trigonometry, and physics. His superb teaching and counseling enabled me to pass the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corp qualifying exam, attend and graduate from the U. of North Carolina, serve as a US Naval Officer, choose education as a professional career, and teach at all levels from elementary school through university professor.

Thank you, Mr. Dole, for influencing so many lives so positively for so long so memorably.

BEING ONLY 16, I DECIDED TO POST-GRADUATE AND CONFRONT MATH AND SCIENCE. MR. DENNIS DOLE DECIDED THAT SAME SEPTEMBER TO TEACH AT OCS. MY LIFE WAS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTED BY THESE TWO DECISIONS.

A RARE “ALMOST” THAT FEW REMEMBER

When sophomore year began, I had never owned or shot a basketball. However, I was selected as a J.V. team member because I was tall (for the 1940's) and I could rebound as an offset to my terrible shooting. Very low pupil enrollment in the 1940's also played a major role in my “making” the J.V. team.

In winter 1944, with lots of desire but little skill and minimal practice, we played a league rival—Elbridge? Camillus?—on our small home court. With less than 10 seconds left in the game, and the score Rival 42, OCS 0 (yes, zero), I was awarded

two foul shots—and the chance to be team high scorer. I bricked and clanked both shots. Ty Sayles rebounded my second miss, attempted a “put back”, and was fouled. He missed his first try (later said he misfired to increase crowd tension), then made the second attempt. The final whistle blew, and OCS J.V.'s lost 42-1. Fortunately, in the 76 years since that game, no OCS cagers have ever matched our nail-biting final 10 second “rally.”

Court growth and improvement did occur. I played in half of our varsity games as a

junior and became a full-time starter as a senior and as a post-graduate. During the 1945-46 season we defeated Elbridge and made the league playoffs. I was told both of these accomplishments had never happened before in the history of OCS. Many of us had been players on the Fall 1945 soccer team that beat Elbridge for the first time ever. Those of us who participated never forgot the three events mentioned. They were modest beginnings to the great OCS athletic achievements destined to come in the decades ahead.

Go Tigers! Win more!

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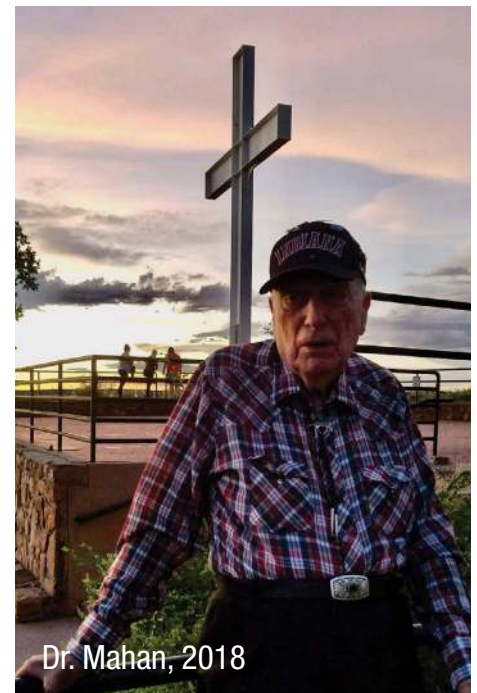
THE CRAPPER CAPER – STILL UNSOLVED!

On the morn following Halloween night, 1944, the Earl Griffin-piloted OCS bus rattled by Dr Gak's house, turned left onto the OCS high school's front drive, and provided riders a surprise view of four or five backhouses, often known as “outhouses,” illegally placed around the school's big front yard. Single seaters they were. Crescent moons graced a couple of the structures. Four Navarino crows enjoying their privy perch fluttered, corn stalks leaned against sagging doors, a few loose pages of a Sears catalog dotted the grass, and widely scattered pumpkins and ears of corn imparted fall color. All of us older students in the bus shouted, “The usual suspect struck last night.” You can bet the students grinned and speculated all day, thereby diluting the decorum in Mr. Coombs' study hall.

Mr. Wheeler, our no-nonsense principal, paced his redesigned lawn but found

no clue as to the perpetrator. Wheeler made strategic phone calls, and, to the regret of most pupils, had two men with a truck remove all the Halloween humor by 2:00 p.m. He admitted that outhouses definitely had a legitimate place and function, but not on the OCS lawn. We students kept discussing and admiring the presumed investigator of the caper. Back to Navarino flew the crows after a detour to Guptill and Abbott cornfields. Once in a while we thought we saw a triumphant smirk on the face of our alleged lawn beautification expert.

A good 45 years later I stopped to have some “old days talk” with South Hollow's still well-known “local character.” Toward the end of our conversation, I directly asked, “Did you place the second-hand backhouses on the OCS lawn in 1944?” The only answer I received (or will ever receive) from the probable perpetrator was a curt: “What goes on around outhouses always stays around outhouses!”



Dr. Mahan, 2018

“At my age of 91, these ancient and enjoyable OCS memories illuminate the teenager I once I was and the school as it once was. You possess great memories also. Share them with kids and grandkids before we too become ancient memories.”

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

NORRIS FAY

by Dylan Price, Class of 2021

Back in September of last year, I interviewed Mr. Norris Fay at his home. Mr. Fay was a beloved biology teacher at Onondaga Central from 1965 to 1993. In addition to teaching, Mr. Fay was advisor for the Science Club and was also involved with the National Honor Society. For a brief period, Mr. Fay was also a bus driver for OCS.

Mr. Fay grew up in Fairmount, where he currently resides. He attended Fairmount Elementary, located then at the current Camillus Town Hall before the West Genesee School District was established. When he was in the eighth grade, students had the option to attend either Camillus High School or Solvay High School. Most people chose Solvay High School, including Norris.

After high school at age 17, Mr. Fay joined the Naval Reserves for seven years, earning the rank 3rd Class Radioman. He recalls that he served on one of the last warships to sail into Havana Harbor in 1959 before the Castro revolution and remembers cannon aimed at the ship as it sailed in.

Mr. Fay attended college at Oswego State, driving up every day with a group of other students. To pay for college he worked as a custodian in the newly formed West Genesee school district.

Originally, Mr. Fay was teaching at West High in Rochester but was engaged to a woman who lived in Syracuse. He was friends with the science department chair at OCS, and that

connection helped Norris get the teaching job. The reason Mr. Fay chose to teach biology was that he did very well with the course in high school and he enjoyed it. In addition to biology, Mr. Fay taught physical science to ninth graders who struggled in school. Over his tenure at OCS, Mr. Fay estimates he taught approximately 3,000 students. He noted he treated his students as adults instead of children, which is how he kept classes under control. His teaching style was as a lecturer.

He smiled as he recalled that before Onondaga had a formal homecoming celebration, every club at OCS hosted its own dance. The Science Club's event was called the "Amoeba Crawl."



Science Teachers:
Mr. Denny
Mr. Christy
Miss Alexander
Mr. Fay

OVER HIS TENURE AT OCS, MR. FAY ESTIMATES HE TAUGHT APPROXIMATELY 3,000 STUDENTS. HE NOTED HE TREATED HIS STUDENTS AS ADULTS INSTEAD OF CHILDREN, WHICH IS HOW HE KEPT CLASSES UNDER CONTROL.

Students might remember Mr. Fay as one of the few teachers who took students on field trips. One field trip he particularly remembers was an excursion to New York City. The teachers chartered a plane to New York City because they were able to receive a deal from Mohawk Airlines, which back then was based in Central New York. There was one teacher per ten students, and they flew into La Guardia airport. They went to the Bronx Zoo and the Museum of Natural History. Teachers split into groups of ten with students and traveled the city on their own. His group took a ferry all the way to Staten Island but had to turn around because they were running short on time. Other field trips had Mr. Fay taking a group of students into the Adirondacks and to a science museum in Rochester. As a chaperone to a Spanish Club field trip, he went with students to the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico.

Mr. Fay also drove buses for OCS for three-to-four years after seeing a poster in the men's faculty room. (At that time, the men's faculty room was located in the boiler room because male and female teachers had separate faculty rooms.) The poster said, "Need Extra Money? Want to Buy a Fur Coat for Your Wife? Drive Bus." He told me it wasn't too hard to learn how to drive a bus, but he did have to obtain a CDL (commercial driver's license). Most of the kids were well behaved, but he remembered one rambunctious boy at Rockwell wouldn't stay in his seat, so Mr. Fay eventually picked him up and gently tapped his head on the roof of the bus to show him what could happen. Years later, the same boy, then in high school, reminisced and laughed about the incident. Another student—this one in Navarino—was bullying other kids, so Norris put him off the bus and told him to walk the rest of the way home. "That stuff wouldn't fly today," he laughed. "They'd have me in an orange jumpsuit."

Mr. Fay did advocate for his students. He recalled a faculty meeting at which students were being selected for advanced classes, but one deserving student was being left out. Mr. Fay would not allow the meeting to end until his opinion prevailed and the student was admitted into the advanced class. What

Mr. Fay found most fulfilling in his career was the significant impact that he had on students. He influenced dozens of students to be health care workers, nurses, and doctors. This includes Wayne Sturley, who is currently a doctor in London, and Jim Vossler, an assistant dean at Upstate Medical School. Mr. Fay also remembers teaching two other students who became doctors: Dr. Charles E. Moore, M.D. and Dr. Rebecca Smart, M.D., both of whom are on the Wall of Distinction at OCS.

Even to this day, Mr. Fay continues to run into students he taught who are nurses and health care workers. Outside of teaching at OCS, Mr. Fay is a founding member of WAVES (Western Area Volunteer Emergency Service).

Mr. Fay is married to Linda (formerly Linda Auburn), who is an OCS alumna ('68). Coincidentally, decades before they were married, Mr. Fay was Linda's teacher in his first year at OCS. The two re-connected at an OCS class reunion in 1988. The night before the class reunion, a group of alumni and some former teachers met at Dillon's, now the Marietta House. The next day the reunion continued at the house of Onondaga alumnus Tom McDonald in Skaneateles, at which Linda and Norris spent more time together. The two began dating and eventually married—almost as in a Hallmark movie—and have now been together for 32 years.

Mr. Fay notes that before, during and after his time at OCS, there have been many changes. Wheeler was newly built during his time. Before Wheeler existed, Rockwell Elementary was a K-6 building, and the current junior-senior high school was a K-12 building. By 1959, Rockwell and Wheeler were both K-6 schools, with Rockwell housing kids from Nedrow and Wheeler serving kids from South Onondaga and Navarino. (Linda remembers that there used to be dance before students entered the jr.-sr. high school so that Rockwell and Wheeler kids could get to know each other.) Now Rockwell is pre-k. to second grade and Wheeler teaches kids from third to sixth grade, meaning every student who starts school at OCS and goes on to graduate will attend all



Norris and Linda, 2021

three schools: Rockwell, Wheeler, and the "old" junior-senior high building.

Mr. Fay retired in 1993 but says he would have continued to teach longer if he hadn't begun to lose his hearing. Mr. John Miller, still at OCS, took over for him. What Mr. Fay says he misses the most about teaching is being able to interact with and talk to students.

If you attended Onondaga Central's 75th anniversary celebration in 2012, you may have seen Mr. Fay. He remains in touch with several former students, and his favorite thing to say when he reunites with a student is, "You don't look 16 anymore." In his retirement, Mr. Fay enjoys reading, taking care of his yard, and feeding and caring for animals, indoors and out. He and Linda have owned and fostered 17 cats. He has also traveled to family in El Paso, Texas; Florida; and Rockport, Massachusetts. Mr. Fay also enjoyed spending time in the Adirondacks.

Thank you, Mr. Fay, for your decades of dedication and service to OCS. Joyful Echoes wishes you the best.

REQUEST FOR SUBMISSIONS & INFO

This newsletter is a product resulting from submissions made by our alumni. Please send us your stories and news! Do you have a favorite memory? An interesting story idea? Or an alumni announcement - wedding, birth, obituary - you would like to share?

For submissions of news, ideas and/or stories, please contact us at ocsalum34@gmail.com or send to:

OCSEF Alumni Coordinator
3479 Cherry Valley Turnpike
Syracuse, NY 13215

The OCSEF has established an Alumni Database. It contains contact information of OCS alumni, community members and current and former staff members. If you know of someone who would like to receive future issues of Joyful Echoes and other alumni-related

communications, please forward the Alumni Data Form to him or her. You can find it on the OCSEF Web Page: www.ocseducationfoundation.com

O N O N D A G A

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