

J O Y F U L
Echoes

ISSUE 18

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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.

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WHERE ARE THEY NOW?
ALAN D. HART

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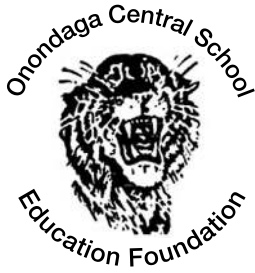
A Memoir by Alan D. Hart



Our previous issue of *Joyful Echoes* featured Dr. Richard Alexander, OCS Class of 1965. In this issue we are pleased to feature another member of that class, Alan D. Hart, an alumnus with an amazing resume: an athlete, author, lecturer, naturalist, illustrator and wildlife artist. We asked Alan to send us a summary for “Where are They Now”:

I grew up on Makyes Road in southern Onondaga County where I began a lifelong appreciation for animals and the outdoors. I attended Onondaga Central School with my brothers Charles (OCS’ 56) and Jerry (OCS ‘68). I lettered in varsity football, baseball and track at OCS. I was a starting left fielder on coach Wally Habel’s... *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

40 YEARS!

The OCS Education Foundation celebrates its 40th year of existence in 2024. The organization has come a long way, from a small group with a vision in 1984 to an endowment of \$534,000 forty years later.

2 • 0 • 2 • 4 ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

The 2024 OCSEF Fund Drive is underway, and we would like to exceed the outstanding response we had from our community in 2023. To make an impact on the future of OCS graduates and contribute to their education beyond Onondaga, please visit our website at: ocseducationfoundation.com.

GOLF TOURNAMENT

SAVE • THE • DATE

The annual OCSEF Charles Molloy Golf Tournament will be held on July 13, 2024 with a 10:00 start. If you would like to play or sponsor a hole, please contact Lisa Whitwell at ocsefgolf@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.

2024 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

As a result of the ongoing generosity of the OCS community over the years, the OCSEF is happy to announce that we will be awarding 24 scholarships to 2024 graduates totaling \$34,150. This number represents over 50% of the total number of students graduating this year.

VISIT THE OCSEF WEBSITE: WWW.OCSEEDUCATIONFOUNDATION.COM

JONNA & GLENN LEWANDOWSKI RETIRE FROM OCSEF

BOARD MEMBERS

by Bob Whitwell, OCSEF President

Jonna and Glenn Lewandowski retired from the OCSEF last spring, but only after the couple provided outstanding, long-term service to the organization.

Jonna (Parsons) Lewandowski (OCS '67) joined the Foundation in 1994 as one of its trustees. In 1997 she accepted the position of recording secretary and served the organization in that role until 2021: 24 years of continuous service! Her meticulous note-taking kept the trustees focused on our mission and helped make meetings move with dispatch. Jonna also served on the scholarship scoring and interview teams, helping to oversee the process whereby deserving graduates earned their awards. Over the years, she and Glenn frequently opened their home to host committee meetings, with dessert and coffee or popcorn and cold beer always available to trustees.

Though Glenn graduated from North Syracuse High School, that fact did not prevent him from being a true OCS Tiger. Glenn served as a trustee from 2001 to 2003; served three two-year terms as Vice-President; and starting in 2009 served ten years as OCSEF President. (He also accepted another term as vice-president from 2019-21.) His steady leadership helped the Foundation to increase its endowment and provide increasingly larger scholarship awards to OCS graduates.



The Lewandowskis gave more than just time and effort. For twenty years they personally funded an annual scholarship presented to a deserving graduate, a monetary gift separate from the awards presented through the OCSEF endowment fund. The Lewandowskis' annual award was designated for a student who chose a two-year school or a technical school for his or her post-high school education. Glenn and Jonna are reluctant to discuss their personal generosity, but a quick review of our records

revealed that the Lewandowski scholarships over the years exceeded \$15,000—not to mention the hundreds of dollars of merchandise Glenn has donated to the annual golf tournament for door prizes.

Joyful Echoes and the OCSEF wish Glenn and Jonna happiness and well-deserved rest. The Foundation, however, will not let them retire without acknowledging their valued service and generosity.

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baseball teams in 1964 and 1965. He was an exceptional motivator. Under him, our teams were two-time co-champions of the Southern Division and, for the first time in school history, were two-time Section Three baseball champs. Baseball state championships didn't exist then.

During the regular season we often played larger schools. In the third game of my senior season, we had to play Skaneateles High School at their home field. Skaneateles had outscored their first two opponents by a total of fifty-two runs to zero scored against them. Their pitchers had tossed one no-hitter and another one-hitter in those two lopsided wins. Nevertheless, we went to Skaneateles and shut them out 9-0. In 1965, I was selected to the Southern Division's first team All-County baseball squad. I was accepted to State University College at Buffalo where I continued playing baseball and started on State's freshman team. However, that season was my last in organized sports.

At Buffalo State, I was enrolled in Art Education and received a broad art background. I was being prepped to teach, however, and wasn't interested in teaching. I then transferred to the University of Hawaii (UH) in Honolulu in 1968.

Before I graduated from UH with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, I started my professional art career doing scientific illustrations in the entomology department at Honolulu's Bishop Museum. My work involved drawing insects



for this dire distinction include habitat destruction and a massive influx of exotic plants and animals from around the world. A high percentage of native Hawaiian species are endemic. Consequently, when one of these unique species becomes extinct, the world at large also loses more diversity because that species doesn't occur naturally anywhere else. I eventually joined a local group of scientists and conservationists who were fighting to save what remained of the state's unique native environment.

In 1974, I spent nearly ten months in Papua New Guinea as a research assistant, curator, and scientific illustrator at the Wau Ecology Institute. On my first expedition, Dr. J. L. Gressitt,

UH Environmental Center, the Wau Ecology Institute, the Waikiki Aquarium, the Smithsonian Institution's *Journal of Zoology*, *Natural History* magazine and *Science* magazine. My published articles include a twelve-page cover feature about rare Hawaiian tree snails in *Natural History* magazine and an illustrated article in *National Parks and Conservation* magazine about my field experience with the now extinct Kauai OO, a bird known as a honeyeater. In 1974, Dr. Gressitt and I co-authored a taxonomic paper on a genus of large Australian and New Guinean leaf beetles.

Returning to Hawaii in 1975, I wrote my first national magazine article on endangered Hawaiian land snails for an all-Hawaii issue of *Defender* magazine, the publication of *Defenders of Wildlife*. Hawaii's spectacular land and tree snails comprise a significant part of the state's native wildlife with 752 described species. From 1972 to 1978, I conducted an island-wide survey of Oahu's two rugged mountain ranges for surviving species of the endemic tree snail genus *Achatinella*. I found only 19 of 41 described species. In 1979, I petitioned the Federal Government to add these 19 surviving species of *Achatinella* to the Federal Endangered Species list. The entire genus, now called Oahu Tree Snails, was added to the list in 1981. It's the only entire genus of animals to be listed; usually, only a single species is listed.

SINCE 1987 I'VE BEEN A FULL-TIME WILDLIFE ARTIST. I'VE EXHIBITED AT GALLERIES AND SHOWS IN FOUR STATES...MY WORK ALSO RESIDES IN TWO FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

for the museum's publications. I also learned there that Hawaii's fragile native environment was in crisis and contained many rare and endangered plants and animals. Additionally, Hawaii's native biota has suffered so many extinctions that the state has been dubbed "the extinction capital of the world." Reasons

director of the institute, and I discovered four new species of large weevils. He honored me by naming one of the new species after me--- *Gymnopholus harti*.

In addition to the Bishop Museum's Pacific Insects Journals, I've done illustrations for the

In 1976, I volunteered to join a research project between California's Lawrence Livermore Lab, the Energy Research Development Agency, and UH. We took a military transport to Wake Island and then to Enewetak Atoll in the Marshall Islands. Enewetak was the site of atomic bomb tests in the 1940s and 50s and the first hydrogen bomb test in 1952. We spent nearly two weeks traveling to various islands conducting ecological studies to determine if the atoll was safe enough to allow its native people to return. I spent one memorable night taking measurements in a huge atomic bomb crater.

In 1975, I met Dr. Clyde Roper, a squid expert from the Smithsonian Institution while he was visiting Oahu and did several drawings for him. In 1978, Clyde contacted me about coming to the East Coast and doing illustrations for his research publications. I left Hawaii and moved to historic Chestertown, Maryland. From there I commuted to the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. until mid-1979.

I met a patron that summer who saw my work and wanted to go into business with me publishing waterfowl prints. We started



Accu-Art, a business name I still use. It was during that period that I visited Upstate New York and met my future wife, Kathleen Malloy. Kathleen was originally from South Dakota but spent most of her life in central New York.

During the summer of 1980 I visited central New York and developed a decades long

interest in the plight of the American chestnut tree. Once common in the east, billions of chestnut trees were killed in just 50 years by an introduced Asian fungus disease.

I returned to live in Syracuse in 1984. Later, I worked doing editorial illustrations for the *Herald-Journal* and *Post-Standard* newspapers. The highlight of my time there was illustrating the front cover and interior animals for the *Herald's* award-winning special edition on the opening of the new Burnett Park Zoo (now Rosamond Gifford Zoo) in 1986.

Since 1987 I've been a full-time wildlife artist. I've exhibited at galleries and shows in four states including the New York State Fair's former wildlife art exhibit. My work also resides in two foreign countries. In 1989, I met mall developer Robert Congel of the Pyramid Companies, who was also a wildlife art collector. A generous patron of local artists, he bought more than 50 of my original acrylic paintings at once.

In 1997 Kathleen and I went on safari to East Africa's Serengeti Plains. That experience left me with a new appreciation for our own Great Plains because of the parallels between the African savannahs and our Midwest grasslands. Two years later, after filming bison in South Dakota, I collaborated with long-time friend and visual effects editor Michael Gleason (OCS '66) who worked for famed film director George Lucas in San Raphael, California. We produced a short film entitled, "Buffalo Prairie" based on my Great Plains videos. The film is available on YouTube and was a finalist in the 2003 International Wildlife Film Festival in Missoula, Montana.

I've been a professional artist for 58 years. My studies have taken me to six continents so far. I continue to paint in my studio near Morrisville, New York.

ALAN D. HART, Q. AND A. by Sharon Brooks, for Joyful Echoes

Joyful Echoes: You mentioned coach Wally Habel in your bio. Do you remember any other teachers besides him?

AH: Yes. Four teachers come to mind. History teacher William Cook was always informative. Tenth-grade Biology teacher Donald Osborne was entertaining and occasionally bizarre. English teacher Max Metcalf impressed me. On occasion he would read enjoyable stories to our class and would spend time preparing us for life beyond high school. Things he said would eventually happen to us invariably did—even though some were hard for me to believe at the time. Last but not least was Art teacher Ann Dates, who influenced my decision to attend Buffalo State, her alma mater.

Joyful Echoes: What kind of music did you listen to back in the early to mid-1960s?

AH: Rock and Roll in its various forms. The 60s were rich in homegrown music by bands such as *The Beach Boys* and *The Four Seasons* but also heavily influenced by the British Invasion of 1963 and 64. *The Beatles*, *Rolling Stones* and *The Dave Clark Five* led the early wave. In 1961 I had a Hitachi transistor radio and recall "Johnny Angel" by Shelley Fabares as the big hit record then along with Del Shannon's "Runaway" and Gene Chandler's "Duke of Earl." One favorite song at our high school dances was Brenda Lee's "All Alone Am I."

Joyful Echoes: How would you describe your style of painting?

AH: Photo-realistic acrylics.

Joyful Echoes: Do you have any exhibits planned in the near future? If so, when and where?

AH: A one-man show in late June, 2025, at the Edgewood Art Gallery in Syracuse, New York.

Joyful Echoes: Do you have any hobbies or interests that aren't included in your bio?

AH: I collect some antiques and a variety of vintage collectables. I also enjoy building plastic and resin model kits.

HAPPENING NOW

VALEDICTORIAN



DEVIN KOBASA

is the valedictorian of the OCS class of 2024. The son of Robyn and Michael Kobasa, he is graduating with a weighted grade point average of 100.84 while taking five AP courses and earning 37 combined credits from Onondaga Community College and Tompkins Cortland Community College. Devin is the recipient of the University of Rochester Bausch & Lomb Honorary

Science Award. He was team captain on the varsity basketball and baseball teams, president of both the National Honor Society and the class of 2024, and treasurer of the OCS Robotics Club. Devin works at Gannon's Isle Ice Cream and is an umpire for the Syracuse Little League.

In the Fall, Devin will be studying physics at Clarkson University.

SALUTATORIAN



LINDSAY CLOS

is the salutatorian of the class of 2024. The daughter of Tanya and Andrew Clos, she earned a weighted and cumulative grade point average of 99.91 while at OCS while taking four AP courses and earning 45 combined credits from Onondaga Community College, Tompkins Cortland Community College and SUNY Oswego.

Lindsay was President of Varsity Club and participated in National Honor Society, German Club and basketball. Lindsay is employed at Green Hills Farms and is a talented musician.

Lindsay will study Chemical Engineering at LeMoyne College in the Fall.

Forever IN OUR MEMORIES

Esther Elsey LaClair
Kindergaten Teacher '59-'61

March 1, 2024

Jeffrey Oliver

Class of 1965

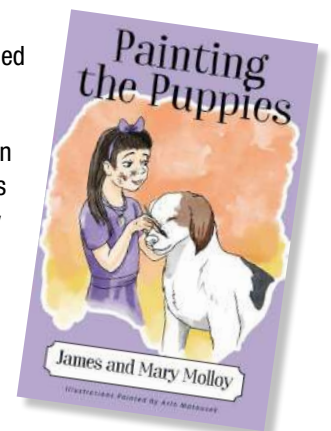
July 22, 2023

TIGERS ON THE BOOKSHELVES

Jim Molloy and Mary Russell Molloy (OCS '68 and '69) have published a children's book entitled *Painting the Puppies*.

The book's protagonist, ten-year-old Betsy, finds herself in Heaven where she is greeted by her grandma. Betsy, like all angels, needs a job, and hers is to paint puppies the way they will look when they become real dogs on Earth. But will God be pleased with the work of an inexperienced painter? Readers find out on Christmas Eve in this story of forgiveness, redemption, and love.

Painting the Puppies is available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble.



IN LOVING MEMORY OF DONNA RUSHO

by *Theresa Rusho*

For OCS graduates of a certain age, 2023 was a difficult year of passings: Mr. Fay, Mrs. Keller, Ms. Olson (preceded by the 2022 deaths of Mrs. Garvey, Mrs. Bishop, Mr. Bonnell, and my Class of 1992 advisor, Mr. Niles). For me, the greatest loss of an OCS teacher was one in whose classroom I never sat: Mrs. Rusho, or more simply, my mom.

When I started first grade with Mrs. Greabell in 1980, my mother quickly followed as a substitute teacher at Rockwell. This was her return to the classroom, having previously taught for 15 years at schools in Pennsylvania and Brooklyn, NY, as a Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary nun, as well as a year at Westhill upon leaving the convent. She soon landed just down the hall from me, filling in for the remainder of the school year as a long-term substitute for Mrs. Lane. When I advanced to second grade she moved on to third, again as a long-term sub; when I started fifth grade at Wheeler, she got hired full-time teaching kindergarten (where her penchant for stickers and snacks began). By the time she moved to Wheeler to teach third grade, I was already at the high school. Outside of a few class visits, our paths never crossed at OCS, and the bulk of her OCS career came in the years after I had moved from Syracuse.

This is not to say, however, that I did not know my mother's students.

Years before Facebook or Instagram, my mother took rolls of film photos and always



*My mother with writer George Saunders, who visited her classroom after she sent him photos of her bulletin board inspired by his book *The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip*.*

...SHE COULD STILL REMEMBER HER FORMER STUDENTS & FELLOW TEACHERS IN GREAT DETAIL: THE "JOYFUL ECHOES" OF HER TEACHING CAREER.

sent me copies: classroom parties, bulletin board designs, and of course, Halloween. After retiring, her encounters with a former student in Walmart or Wegmans would later be shared with me, whether I had any familiarity with the student or not (and if not, she would play six degrees of separation until I did). Even as her memory declined in her final months,

she could still remember her former students and fellow teachers in great detail: the "joyful echoes" of her teaching career. So while I can't speak to the impact Mrs. Rusho had on me as an OCS student, as her daughter, I can tell you my mother was forever impacted by OCS.

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

