

# The Oneida Lake Bulletin

Spring 2017

[www.oneidalakeassociation.org](http://www.oneidalakeassociation.org)

## Got Nuisance Geese?



*Geese on the shores of Sylvan Beach.*

The Oneida Lake Association (OLA) recognizes the beauty of Canada geese filling the sky over Oneida Lake with long V-formations and their popularity as a game bird. However, conflicts between resident geese and both private and public property owners around Oneida Lake have increased dramatically in the last decade. OLA has received numerous complaints from these property owners of messy accumulations of feces, degraded lawns, the potential for disease transmission, and turf damage, all associated with increasing numbers of resident Canada geese. That is precisely why the OLA held an informational meeting on Resident Goose problems and solutions for Oneida Lake property owners on Saturday, March 25 at Paul V. Moore High School in Central Square. Approximately 100 people attended the meeting that was co-sponsored by the USDA Wildlife Services, Cornell University, NYSDEC and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Attendees learned about Canada goose biology and behavior, the legal framework, the role of the federal and state government in resident goose management, and options for homeowners and managers. There was also a dog demonstration by Dan Liedka of Manlius, NY for the purpose of managing goose problems.

## White Birds

*By Scott Shupe*

Besides the snow geese seen in late winter, the big white birds are a mixture of native whistling (tundra) swans and non-native mute swans. All are protected birds. Considerable NYC lobbying of Albany legislative leadership has precluded NYSDEC from implementing a comprehensive mute swan management program. Science is trumped by politics, and the invasive mute swan numbers continue to grow. Mute swans are a concern to many wildlife managers because they are aggressive during nesting season, driving native waterfowl away from wetland nesting sites.

In the last 40 years the estimated eastern tundra swan population January index has increased about 30% to 113,600 birds. Trumpeter swans are a western bird, not frequenting our area at any life stage. Vegetarian trumpeters are the world's largest waterfowl species weighing in at more than 20 pounds-- twice that of a Canada goose. Distinguishing trumpeter swans from smaller tundra swans can be challenging. Trumpeters have longer, straighter bills than tundra swans, and they employ a deep brassy call. The tundra swan's call is somewhat like a muted Canada goose. Mutes – hence the name – rarely make a low grunt. Distinguishing tundra swans from mute swans is easier. Like geese and dabbling ducks, swans feed by tipping up and grazing on rooted vegetation. Obviously short-necked ducks tend to feed closer to shore than do white birds with longer necks. It is the neck shape that differentiates identification of tundra and

*(Continued on page 3)*

# President's Message

Members,

On behalf of your Board, I thank longtime members for renewing, and welcome our newest Association members. As you prepare to do your lawn work, and buy fertilizer with a low middle number, remember that partnerships cannot be mixed like a commercial fertilizer. Partnerships must be more fertile mixtures. By incorporating more than 3 numbers, our projects benefit from added nutrition.

OLA pays dues to the NYS Conservation Council and the NYS Federation of Lakes. Our July water chestnut pulls have included members and partners such as Cornell, Sea Grant, Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District, Onondaga County Cooperative Extension, and the Finger Lakes Institute. OLA supports other partnering ventures with the Finger Lakes and Eastern Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence chapters of The Nature Conservancy. We participated in events with the North Syracuse and Central Square school districts, attended three sports shows to meet with you, and met with a number of your local administrators and legislators. The March 25 Nuisance Goose Workshop is another example. Responding to members' call for action, your Board enlisted a variety of experts to present options.

As both the U.S. and Empire State thrash out proposed budgets, we sincerely hope that Congress and the Legislature effectively and fairly represent balance in their respective negotiations. On issues important to Oneida Lake, your Board will communicate by letter and in person as warranted. If an issue is important to you individually, rather than griping in social media or talking about a protest march, I urge you to compose a reasoned letter. Sit on it for a day or so, then recompose that letter with an outline of your proposed solution, and post it – snail mail - to your elected representatives.

In May I will be stepping down as President and returning to a Vice President level to help incoming President Warren Darby. Warren, Bill Girvan, and Ed Mills have been a great help to me during my tenure, as was Jim Novak. After seven years Jim decided he needed a break as Secretary, and Ryan Asmus agreed to advance into the service. Ed Mills remains a Director, stepping down as an officer, having served as President and Vice President for six years. We are truly blessed to have Lance Vella again on the slate as Treasurer. I am pleased to say that the Board is at full strength, with 24 Directors available to respond to Member inquiries.

Enjoy this issue, our future electronic newsletters, and explore our website's resources. If you can make it, I am sure that you will enjoy this year's Annual Meeting guest speaker as much or more than last year's! As you enjoy the lake this season, post some happy escapades to Facebook. Be safe.

Sincerely,

Scott Shupe  
President, [www.OneidaLakeAssociation.org](http://www.OneidaLakeAssociation.org)  
[president@oneidalakeassociation.org](mailto:president@oneidalakeassociation.org)  
[info@oneidalakeassociation.org](mailto:info@oneidalakeassociation.org)

## The Oneida Lake Association, Inc.

Founded in 1945

*The Bulletin* is published by the Oneida Lake Association, Inc., so that its members may be informed regarding the activities of the association. The Oneida Lake Association, Inc., was organized in 1945 to restore and preserve the natural resources of Oneida Lake and its environs.

### Officers

President..... Scott Shupe  
Vice President .....William Girvan  
Vice President .....Dr. Edward Mills  
Vice President .....Warren Darby  
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Secretary .....Ryan Asmus

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## White Birds

(Continued from page 1)

mute swans.

Mute swans swim with necks in a graceful S-curve, bills angled down. Tundra swans have a straight neck and level bill. The adult mute has an orange bill with a large black knob between its eyes. Adult tundra swans often have a yellow spot on the lore (the areas between the back of the bill and eyes). Immature dark birds of both species lack some of these distinguishing features. Only the tip of the immature tundra swan bill is dusky pink, while the entire bill of the juvenile mute is a rose color up to its black base.

On the morning of February 7 a small flock of snow geese traversed the lake, heading toward the turf farm located south of Lakeport. The day before 200+ Canada geese landed in Lyon's cornfield west of Bridgeport. Spring is coming! While the latter could very well be part of our resident population, the snows are most likely the first of the migrants pushing north. Lake residents will see these white (with black wing tips) geese in seemingly awkward flight barely a wingbeat high over the ice. Flocks may be interspersed with a blue phase, and occasionally a stray Canada. Some measure of energy conservation is in play as the migrating birds move from overnight resting places on the mid-lake ice to feeding fields. Air beneath their wings provides some reinforced lift, reducing the effort of local flight. Later in the afternoon and evening aggregated flocks climb to higher elevations to catch the winds aloft that favor northern migration. If at night you hear a high flock that sounds like a gagged Canada goose, you are hearing snows

In March 15, 2000, I pulled over near State Bridge on Rt 31 to watch about 6,000 snows resting in a cut corn field (that field is now abandoned Oneida Nation land, reverted to a young ash and maple forest feeding beavers). I recorded numbers of several birds sporting yellow neck bands. Contacting the late Wes Stiles at Cortland DEC, I learned through his



*The mute swan is NOT a native bird in the America's. This European invader has an S-shaped neck when swimming, and its wings are not neatly resting on its back. The beak is yellow-orange, with a bulb.*

Canadian counterpart that the birds were banded on a small island at about 85 degrees latitude; we are 43 degrees; 2900 miles away. These birds probably spend the winter in rice fields at latitudes near 32 degrees, another 800 miles south.

The snow goose population has grown exponentially for about 30 years. Waterfowlers on Cayuga Lake in January commonly see virtual clouds over the lake shortly after sunrise. The clouds are flocks of upwards of 10,000 snows moving off the lake to graze inter-lake agricultural fields. With available food to glean from farms from Texas to CNY, the mid-west snow geese leave each spring well fed. Generally unstressed, except for some diseases associated with overcrowding, the snow goose flocks are fit for flights to breeding grounds 3,500 miles to the north. There the flocks are

concentrated in a fragile local ecosystem. Geese do not nibble. They pull up vegetation by the roots. This denies other birds from vegetation feeding. Canada Geese nip off the tops of plants while the "light geese" feed by a method called grubbing which is pulling the whole plant out of the ground roots and all. Arctic soils experiencing repeated perturbation by huge populations of snow geese are turning salty, further curtailing regeneration of stabilizing grasses to the disadvantage of a host of arctic native wildlife.

The rate of light (snow and Ross) goose population increase has slowed slightly. American efforts to manage light goose populations for two decades have been inconsequential. While there is a spring hunting season, harvest numbers are diminutive. Only an average of about 8,000 snows are taken in NY. The Eastern population is on the order of 13 Million. [www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/surveys-and-data/Population-status/Waterfowl/WaterfowlPopulationStatus-Report16.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/surveys-and-data/Population-status/Waterfowl/WaterfowlPopulationStatus-Report16.pdf)

In today's climate we can expect to see more white birds on Oneida Lake in the future whether they are passing snows and tundra swans or mute swans that decide to take up residence. Resident populations are very close at Fair Haven, Sodus Bay, and Watertown area marshes.



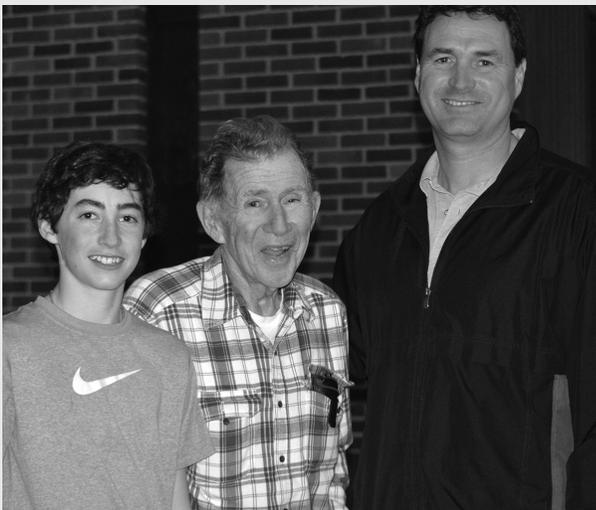
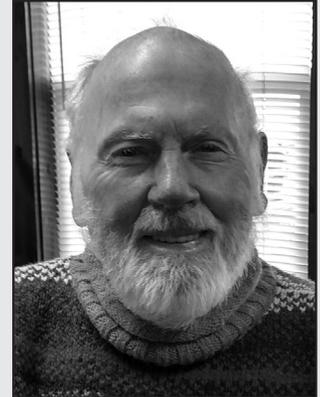
*Native tundra (whistling) swan. They hold their black bill level when swimming (birds on left and center) and their wings are smooth against the back. (Photos by Scott Shupe)*

## Gone But Not Forgotten

### William “ Bill” Schriever

William “ Bill” Schriever, 85, of West Monroe passed on October 5, 2016

Bill was an outstanding Director for the OLA and served for many years in various capacities. He loved Oneida Lake, residing on the North Shore. Bill taught hunter safety for 25 years and was an avid hunter and fisherman. Bill was the first person to discover that water chestnuts had invaded Oneida Lake near Brewerton. He also served as a director for the Oneida Lake Ducks Unlimited Chapter, volunteered as a hatchery guide in Constantia and was recognized by the Post Standard as a Conservationist of the Year in 2013. He is survived by his wife Freda, son William and daughter Susan. Bill will be dearly missed for all his contributions to the Oneida Lake Association and to the community in which he served.



Ames Family - Three generations of Oneida Lake Anglers.  
L-R: Quinn, Charles, and Eric Ames.

### Charles L. Ames, Jr.

Charles L. Ames, Jr. of Constantia passed on January 14, 2017

Charlie Ames, Jr., was an avid outdoorsman and especially, a fisherman who actively pursued this passion his entire life. Charlie's desire and ability to fish with his son and grandson were never extinguished. Charlie was fervently involved in the Lake Ontario fishery and was one of the founding members of the Eastern Lake Ontario Salmon and Trout Association and served as President, Vice President and Director for over 30 years. With his son Eric assisting as First Mate, he operated Charlie's Charters on Lake Ontario for over 20 years until 2002. Captain Charlie determined that a bad day of fishing is always better than a good day at work! Throughout his life, and especially in his later years, Charlie enjoyed his passion for fishing on Oneida Lake where he resided.

## Oneida Lake Association at Sportsman Show Syracuse Fairgrounds: January 27-29

Members of the OLA Board of Directors and willing volunteers staffed the exhibit booth at the State Fair. This three day show was great exposure for the organization, where many people joined and renewed their memberships. We hope to see you at an upcoming show soon!

L-R: OLA Board Members Patricia Cerro-Reehil, Jim Novak and Gina Duggleby



## **OLA Shares its Concern Regarding Law Enforcement During the Winter Months on Oneida Lake**

Over the last 30 years, there have been environmental changes (gobies, zebra mussels) that have occurred in Oneida Lake and affected our fisheries in negative ways.

Currently, both the walleye and yellow perch populations in the lake are low and either stable or decreasing. Anglers and the NYSDEC can work together to help protect walleye by abiding by current laws and where necessary, treating caught fish in an ethical manner. Foul hooked walleye are those caught by hooks in the body or the head – not the mouth. According to NYSDEC regulation, these fish must be returned to the water unharmed. Anglers using flashy spoons and or blade baits, such as the kitchen sink lure with a single weighted hook, can attract walleyes because of their aggressive, jigging type of presentation. Under these circumstances, many walleye are actually snagged when they are not hooked in the mouth. These fish must be returned to the water! It is illegal and unethical to keep these fish. In addition, the act of aggressively jigging these types of lures is simply asking to foul hook fish and should be discouraged.

Snagging and keeping foul hooked walleye on Oneida Lake has been on-going for some time. It is time for this practice to change and only YOU, our member can help! Oneida lake anglers need to keep a watchful eye and inform NYSDEC police of potential snagging and foul hooking violations. Together, we can change this practice and allow the ethical harvest of walleye that are actually hooked in the mouth as they attempt to ingest bait. To report suspected ECL violations, call: 1-800-844-DEC-ECOS (1-800-844-332-3267).

## **ANNUAL MEETING Same Date... NEW Location! Wednesday, May 3 • Gillette Road Middle School**

Join the Oneida Lake Association Board of Directors and OLA members for our annual meeting, held again on the Wednesday before the walleye opener. We have moved across Cicero to **Gillette Road Middle School** this year, and will meet Wednesday, May 3 with doors opening at 5:30 p.m. and the business meeting starting at 6:30 p.m. sharp.

This year marks the return of the OLA annual meeting to the middle school, which is at 6150 South Bay Road, Cicero NY, 13039. The event is free and open to the public.

Our keynote presentation this year will be from Capt. Tim Caza, founder of **sonarguy.com** and local underwater imaging and diving expert, on his exploration of more than 50 shipwrecks and historical underwater artifacts on Oneida Lake. For more than 40 years Caza and his colleagues have discovered and documented dozens of historical wrecks including a one-of-a-kind craft from the early American era. Caza will unveil some of his historically significant finds and share amazing underwater photos or footage.

Other presentations will be on patrolling, preserving, and protecting the lake from environmental harm, and the annual update from Cornell University on the state of the lake's fishery. OLA memberships will be available; and as usual, local tackle shops will provide door prizes and drawings for a pair of Go-Pro cameras.

Join us on May 3 at Gillette Road!

## **The Oneida Lake Association Moves Into the 21st Century**

As you many have noticed, on your membership application, you have the option to get the Bulletins electronically instead of being mailed. This saves the organization in printing, postage and mailing costs! To communicate more routinely we started an e-newsletter that is emailed out periodically. We have noticed however, that many of you don't "open" the file to read the newsletter sent from Constant Contact – Please be sure this email doesn't land in your Spam folder! We want to communicate with you our members, easily and efficiently – email is a great way to do that! ~ Thank you!

## **Volunteers Needed!**

Volunteers are needed for the 2017 **Bartell Road I-81 Clean-up on April 22** and the **Water Chestnut Weed Pull on July 14**. If you are available either morning and wish to help, please drop us a note at [info@OneidaLakeAssociation.org](mailto:info@OneidaLakeAssociation.org).

# Cornell's Walleye Dermal Sarcoma Project

*Paraphrased by Gina Duggleby*

Perhaps you have observed gray-white or pinkish color warty growths on your walleye catches as is pictured. These grape cluster-like skin lesions have been observed for a number of years by the staff of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Oneida Lake Fish Hatchery in Constantia during the spring spawning activities at the hatchery. The sport fishing public has also observed these skin tumors on walleyes during winter ice fishing, and during early spring. Few, if any skin tumors have been observed on Oneida Lake walleye during late spring, summer, or early fall.

A laboratory group at Cornell University starting in the late 1980's became very interested in what appeared to be a viral disease that had a tumor system that developed and regressed seasonally. Initial efforts of the group were to first confirm the seasonal nature of these growths with a seasonal prevalence study on Oneida Lake. The next effort was to develop a lab based model to study the biological mechanisms of this disease under controlled conditions. Most recently the group has used this model to investigate the mechanisms that result in the unique seasonal development and regression of the lesions. The long term objective of this research group is to use this disease in walleye as a model to more clearly understand the biological mechanisms of other retroviral diseases in other vertebrates. An understanding of how this virus behaves in fish may shed light on how they may be controlled in other host species, including man.

From tremendous research over the years, it is now known that these tumors are caused by a retrovirus, WDSV (Walleye Dermal Sarcoma Virus). The seasonal progression and regression of these dermal sarcoma tumors is a result of the reproductive cycle of this virus within the walleye skin cells. WDSV is composed of single stranded RNA rather than double stranded DNA along with an enzyme that

gives them the unique ability to transcribe their RNA into double stranded DNA upon entering the walleye skin cell. This retroviral DNA can then integrate into the chromosomal DNA of the fish skin cells to be expressed there to ultimately make more copies of the virus to infect even more host cells. Upon infection, the viral genome is transcribed and incorporated into the walleye genome and the virus enters a latent or resting phase of its life cycle as low levels of the virus are detected at this time of year within the walleye skin cells. However, during the late summer and early fall the walleye

throughout the summer and early fall.

Physical contact during spawning is likely the most efficient means of the transfer of virus from an infected fish to a previously uninfected one. The formation of walleye dermal sarcomas is the only known symptom of infection; and curiously, the sarcoma tumors are not a terminal condition for the fish. In addition, these tumors have not been observed to recur in previously infected individuals. WDSV infections occur at variable frequencies in different native walleye populations in Canada and the eastern United States. Oneida Lake however,



*Photo:  
Paul Bowser, Cornell University.*

*These skin tumors, walleye dermal sarcoma, appear in the fall and die in the spring.*

skin cells begin to express two integrated viral genes that causes these cells to grow rapidly ultimately forming the observed tumors. This is known as the progression stage of the disease as the tumors become visible and remain throughout the winter months and early spring. The tumor regression stage of the disease is marked by the expression of two different incorporated viral genes that in essence accomplish two tasks, #1 wake up the viruses to make more copies increasing the viral numbers extensively and #2 causes the tumor cells to break open and regress releasing the vast numbers of viruses into the environment. Incidentally, this stage of the viral life cycle coincides with the walleye spawning in early spring which increases the likelihood of further infectious transfer to previously uninfected fish. By late spring these tumors have regressed and few if any are observed

has the highest recorded incidence of this disease where as many as 30% of the sampled population have the observed tumors. Other sampled populations from surrounding areas reveal the prevalence of the disease to be in the order of 1%.

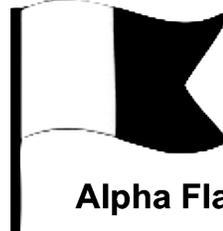
The value in studying WDSV is the analysis of this retroviral genome and the pathology of the disease in walleye. This ultimately enhances our current understanding of the regulation of the cell cycle in both normal fish skin cells and those infected with this virus. Understanding the regulation of the cell cycle and the malfunctions is valuable to the study of all cancers, even those found in other vertebrates including humans.

For more information on this topic in addition to a complete reference list please visit the following website: <http://vet.cornell.edu/microbiology/fishdisease/aquaticprog/walleye.cfm>

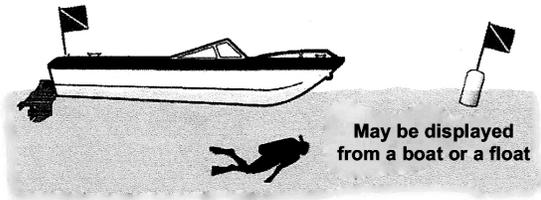
# Dive Flag Awareness



Dive Flag



Alpha Flag



May be displayed from a boat or a float

The red and white diver down and white and blue Alpha flags are used when divers are on or below the surface.

**Not knowing these flags can change many lives.**

## Boaters

100 feet  
300feet



If you are in a river, channel or inlet and see a dive flag, keep your boat at least 100 feet from the dive flag. If you are in open water and see a dive flag, keep your boat at least 300 feet from the dive flag.

## Divers

Flag  
Etiquette  
100 feet



Remember to place your dive flag before submerging and be sure to remove the flag when all divers exit. Be sure to always surface within 100 feet of your dive flag.

This summer safely share the water with your fellow boaters and scuba divers.

# Be alert - be safe - and have fun!

*Thank you to all of the Fire Departments that serve Oneida Lake!*

## **Featuring: Cleveland Fire Department**

The Oneida Lake Bulletin will feature the seven fire departments that serve Oneida Lake. In this issue, we feature the Cleveland Volunteer Fire Department.

A 26' Seaswirl for Oneida Lake Water Rescue, that is capable of responding anywhere on the lake. The vessel has GPS navigation and a chart plotter on board. If the need arises they can muster divers, fire suppression, and EMT's. They carry full medical supplies including back boards. They also carry multiple handheld fire extinguishers and a large capacity extinguisher. When the need is there they carry a portable drafting pump to draw water from the lake along with 1 3/4 inch hose and nozzles. They practice water rescue from the boat and in the water.

North Bay supports Cleveland with a Jet Ski for rapid response. Cleveland Fire Department also has a 16' boat with a 9 hp motor for smaller surrounding bodies of water and tributaries.



*Cleveland's 26' Seaswirl.*

### **Water Rescue Fire Departments That Serve Oneida Lake**

We are fortunate to have seven Water Rescue Fire Departments that serve Oneida Lake. They are:

Brewerton Fire Department  
Bridgeport Fire Department  
Cleveland Fire Department  
Constantia Fire Department

South Bay Fire Department  
Sylvan Beach Fire Department  
West Monroe Fire Department

### **New "Devil Ducks" Video Reminds New Yorkers to Use Zero Phosphorus Lawn Fertilizer**

A new video has been posted to DEC's YouTube channel reminding New Yorkers to "Look for the Zero". Before buying lawn fertilizer, check the bag for a set of three numbers showing the percentage of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Buy a bag with a "0" in the middle to protect our waters from harmful runoff.

Remember – it is also against NYS law to apply lawn fertilizer before April 1. Visit DEC's Lawn Fertilizer webpage [www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/74885.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/74885.html) for more information.



**For an unequalled e-voyage, visit [www.oneidalakeassociation.org](http://www.oneidalakeassociation.org)**

### **Volunteers Wanted!**

Your Oneida Lake Association's outreach program involves staffing exhibition booths at regional sport shows. Directors' commitments occasionally conflict with scheduling, leaving difficult gaps in coverage. We invite all association members to volunteer to fill these gaps. Working these shows creates a unique opportunity to promote the OLA and share great fellowship with scores of dedicated, fascinating outdoorspersons.

Any interested members should contact the board through our website - [www.oneidalakeassociation.org](http://www.oneidalakeassociation.org).

## Recycling Electronics

As the snow falls and melts, we see mini-glaciers advance and retreat around our roadsides and lakesides. With each snow melt, however, we also see all kinds of debris revealed. Some of this debris is natural – unraked leaves and twigs, dying vegetation, and rocks and dirt scattered about by the snowplows. All too often, however, melting snow reveals discarded electronics – TVs, obsolete VHS recorders, old laptops, computer monitors, tablets, and many other cast-offs. Public lands – like the roads to our boat launches and Wildlife Management Areas – are not dumps! {See the last note of this newsletter.}

As we all know, it has become increasingly more difficult to properly dispose of these unwanted items. Far too often, folks take the lazy way out, tossing them into a convenient snowbank, as if the spring thaw would eventually melt them away. Unfortunately, in addition to presenting an eyesore, many of these items contain toxins and other dangers to our soil and water.

The OLA is committed to keeping these discarded electronics from contributing to the waste which too often surrounds our beautiful shores. And it's the law! The 2010 Electronic

Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act makes it illegal for consumers to throw these items into the trash. There are options, however, for discarding these electronics properly. Fortunately, the law also requires many manufacturers and retailers to take back these items, once sold.

Below are some local retailers which participate in this take-back program:

- Best Buy – Call ahead for details and possible fees.
- Staples – Most computer related items, but no TVs.
- Walmart– See Customer Service for details. Consumers might be eligible for a trade-in discount.
- Battery World– Accepts large TVs, but charges 26 cents per pound for CRTs; free for flat screens.

For more info, visit [www.ocrra.org](http://www.ocrra.org) (Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency). They have plenty of help information on their website. Or look at a list that DEC maintains of sites that take back e-waste for free or low cost: [www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/73670.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/73670.html)

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**39<sup>th</sup> Annual. Walleye Fishing Derby on Oneida Lake**

**May 6 – 7, 2017**

Entry Ticket: \$15.00

DERBY HEADQUARTERS – Oneida Shores County Park  
9400 Bartell Rd, Brewerton, NY

Tickets on sale until midnight Friday, May 5.

CONTACTS: Carol (315) 699-3187 INQUIRIES: [info@lionswalleyederby.org](mailto:info@lionswalleyederby.org)

Tickets also available online: [lionswalleyederby.org](http://lionswalleyederby.org)

TICKET SELLER SALES: April 1 – May 5, 2017 • ONLINE SALES: March 15 – May 5, 2017 • MAIL-IN SALES: April 1 – April 29, 2017

[www.Lionswalleyederby.org](http://www.Lionswalleyederby.org)

3 Tagged Fish \$1000, \$500, \$250

AWARDS AND CLOSING ACTIVITIES  
Oneida Shores County Park  
Sunday, May 7 • 3:00 p.m.

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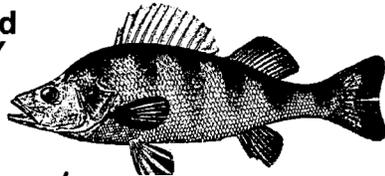
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