



# Unatego Alumni Association

## Letter from the President

By Courtenay O'Hara

Happy fall!!! We're all very excited to see what this 2017-2018 academic year brings! We now officially have a Unatego Elementary School to join the ranks alongside the middle and high school.

As a teacher on the inside, I can honestly say that it's been a fairly simple transition; a lot of flexibility and changes occur daily, however it's great seeing all of the students together (K-5) and being able to celebrate and collaborate as an entire team. Our younger Spartans are now unified and will be stronger because of it!

We've got some exciting news included in this newsletter, as well as the announcement of Hall of Distinction recipients. It's evident that the halls of Unatego have produced some extraordinary citizens and we're all so proud of them.

We all look forward to the upcoming graduates, as well as this generation of what I'm sure will be no less than outstanding young adults. We appreciate your continued support. Let's keep building and maintaining the strong foundation that allows for these students to safely and confidently spread their wings.

"Give me a place to stand and I will move the Earth." - Archimedes

*The mission of the Unatego Alumni Association is to continue to engage in activities that will promote awareness, support and pride in the achievements of students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends of the Unatego Central School District. In pursuit of this mission, the association will seek, but not limit itself, to:*

- Encourage and support alumni activities.
- Recognize and reward student and faculty academic excellence and achievement through awards and/or scholarships.
- Enhance the student experience through educational, cultural and enrichment programs.
- Recognize alumni and faculty who have distinguished themselves in their careers and/or community.
- Maintain communication between alumni and the school system.

We are always looking for new ideas and we welcome your thoughts and suggestions. Please see the list of board members and do not hesitate to contact any of us. We meet the second Monday of each month in the high school cafeteria on.

Remember, this association and our school district are only as strong as our supporters.



## Upcoming Events

**January 19** – Hall of Distinction Induction Ceremony

**July 20** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual All-Class Reunion

## Unatego Alumni Association Scholarship News

Sincere thanks is extended to the Unadilla Alumni Association.

Betty Vale and Howard Lent, officers in the Unadilla Alumni Association, contacted the Unatego Alumni Association in April 2017. They made funds available through their association for scholarships.

We are grateful for their generous support and will continue cooperation and collaboration with their association.

## HALL OF DISTINCTION INDUCTEES

The Unatego Hall of Distinction Committee has selected two alumni to be honored as the 4th class of Hall of Distinction inductees. This year's inductees include a distinguished physician from the Unatego Class of 1976 and a prolific author, writer and public speaker who graduated in 1968. The Unatego Hall of Distinction honors graduates of Unatego, or from the previous districts of Unadilla Central and Otego Central, who have distinguished themselves through recognition, honor and impact made during their lives.

### **Dr. Peter Prendergast**

Dr. Prendergast, a 1976 graduate of Unatego, graduated from Clarkson University with a degree in electrical engineering followed by medical school at Syracuse University. After medical school, he spent more than 30 years as a successful physician and executive physician administrator. During his career as a physician, Prendergast received many awards, including multiple honors as Residency Teacher of the Year. Later in his career, he moved to North Carolina and was the vice president of inpatient care for Novent Health Systems, overseeing inpatient doctors at 15 hospitals. Prendergast is recently retired from the practice of medicine and has returned to his engineering roots by taking classes in astronomy and physics and has been nominated for a fellowship at the Deep Skies Observatory in New Mexico. He is currently a member of the astrophysics research team at the University of North Carolina.

### **Karen Moore Barbour**

Barbour, who graduated from Unatego in 1968, is a nationally known creative writer, speaker and consultant with more than 60 published books to her credit. Barbour, who taught reading and writing in public schools and at the collegiate level, graduated with a master of arts degree from Cleveland State University. In addition to her previously cited works, Ms. Barbour has created nearly 10,000 greeting cards and has been active in the publishing industry for more than 20 years. Beyond her written works, Barbour is also in high demand as a speaker. In 2015 she was the keynote speaker at the Tuscaloosa Southern Christian Writers Conference and has highlighted many other conferences as an invited speaker. She recently contracted with Zondervan Publishing for two new children's books with plans for the books to eventually become a movie and television series for children.



## Board Members

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## Class Captains - We STILL Need You!

If interested, email Betsy Shultis at [betsy.shultis@gmail.com](mailto:betsy.shultis@gmail.com).

### Alumni News

#### New Members:

David Downey (1997), John Downey (1999), Cara Downey (2004),  
Matthew Downey (2006)  
Patty Lorenz Golicki (1983), Nick Pitel (2003)

#### Renewals:

Mary Gross (1983), Stephanie Southard Frazier (1982)

#### Scholarship Donations:

Stephanie Southard Frazier  
\$30 from the reunion

### Did You Know...

The Unatego Central School District was organized in 1963. The first combined class yearbook, the Unategan, was published in 1964. The first Unatego class graduated in that same year. By 1968, when I graduated, the new school name, colors, and mascot had long been established and some of our very creative classmates designed our unique Spartan shield class ring. Sadly, I lost mine in the surf at a beach on Guam where I was stationed while serving in the US Air Force in 1972.

That said, let's move from the past and consider the future. Some really exciting events will be happening in 2018: Karen Moore, Class of '68, will be inducted into the Unatego Central School Hall of Distinction at a ceremony to be held at Unatego High School Friday, Jan. 19. This is great honor for Moore and a point of pride for all of us from the Class of '68. Also, 2018 will mark the Class of 1968's 50<sup>th</sup> reunion.

The Unatego All-Class Reunion Weekend will begin on Friday, July 20 with a meet-and-greet social event at the Long River Inn in Unadilla. On July 21 and 22, specific class reunions can be held, but individual classes are responsible for making arrangements. The reunion weekend will give the Class of '68 time to plan some unique 50<sup>th</sup> reunion events. I think it would be nice to make it a special event that our class can be a part of and celebrate in some way, especially for those who are a distance away. I plan to contact as many members of the Class of '68 as I can over the next several weeks, especially via Facebook or by email. And did you know: I am looking forward to connecting with each one of you.

Sincerely,  
Keith Bachman, Class of '68

### Alumni, we want to hear from YOU!

Did you recently graduate from college? Get married? Move? Get a promotion, own your own business, or retire? Become a parent or grandparent? Share your news with fellow alumni by emailing: [unategoalumniassociation@gmail.com](mailto:unategoalumniassociation@gmail.com).



Members of the Class of '97, pictured, celebrated their 20<sup>th</sup> reunion in style this past summer.

### SAVE THE DATE: July 20 is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual All- Class Reunion!

The All-Class Alumni Reunion Meet and Greet will be held on Friday, July 20 at Green's Long River Inn, starting at 6 p.m. Come and join us as we catch up with classmates of all classes and reminisce about the good 'ol days.

This year's planned Alumni Event will be Friday night only, in an effort to free up the weekend for individual class get-togethers, as many classes are celebrating milestone anniversaries this year!

For forthcoming details, find Unatego Alumni Association on Facebook.

**The next UAA Newsletter  
will be sent out March  
2018.**

**Deadline for submissions is  
Feb. 15.**

# Unatego Alumni Association Membership Form

Name (include maiden name): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be contacted to join a committee or be a class captain?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

## Annual MEMBERSHIP Fee/person

\$10.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Paid by Check \_\_\_\_\_ or Paid with Cash \_\_\_\_\_

Lifetime MEMBERSHIP Fee \$250.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Paid by Check \_\_\_\_\_ or Paid with Cash \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Donation for Scholarship Fund \_\_\_\_\_

Paid by Check \_\_\_\_\_ or Paid with Cash \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this completed form and your check made payable to **Unatego Alumni Association** to:

Betsy Shultis, 7 Diane Drive, Otego, NY 13825

# Spartans in the News

The following is from the June 29, 2017 edition of Tri-Town News.

Members of the bluegrass band, Dreamcatcher, including founder and Unatego graduate Aaron Foster, had Unatego students spanning grades K through 3rd dancing, clapping and hollering in their seats during a June 20 school day performance.

In a pre-performance release, Foster, originally from Wells Bridge, explained, “I will be discussing how [to] make a living out of playing music. We are following our dreams, and we think it’s important that these children do too.” Together with his four bandmates, all of whom Foster met while a student at East Tennessee State University, where he is senior, the 24-year-old shared with the roughly 360 children a bit of history—his own, that of the band’s instruments and a little on the bluegrass genre in general.

Foster, nicknamed “Frosty,” said he grew up loving music though fell into bluegrass specifically thanks to his grandparents, George and Etta Crawford of Otego, who frequently took him to bluegrass festivals. Today, he tours with band mates Ben Watlington, Jordan Roberson, Max Etling and Brady Wallen. Though the current Dreamcatcher line-up has only been in play since January 2017, Foster co-founded the band three years ago.

Playing bluegrass favorites alongside audience requests—which included Johnny Cash’s “Ring of Fire”—, Foster said he tried to give the kids a tiny piece of musical education paired with what he called much-needed exposure to bluegrass. The students soaked up the sound and the songs, peppering Foster and his bandmates with interested, enthusiastic questions. One young audience member raised his hand just to say, “You’re my favorite band!”

“This is important,” emphasized Foster, noting that, despite his grandparents’ influence, he wishes he could have been more immersed in bluegrass growing up. He added, “I’d like us to do more stuff like this” and said he will be teaching bluegrass and guitar skills to groups of children as part of several summer programs in Tennessee, where the band calls home. Asked how the return to his alma mater was for him, Foster said, he holds a lot of fond memories of Unatego. “I felt good when I walked in,” said Foster.

Standing post-performance receiving hugs from enthusiastic students and former teachers alike, he added, “The school hasn’t changed a lot since I was here. The halls look exactly the same, just a little smaller maybe.”

Foster graduated with the Class of 2010 and 2017 marked his first time playing bluegrass in particular on the Unatego stage. Foster, who said he counts a stint in the variety show alongside the dance team and time spent on the football field among his best-loved Unatego memories, said he hopes today’s Unatego students can be lucky enough to find their passion young, as he did.

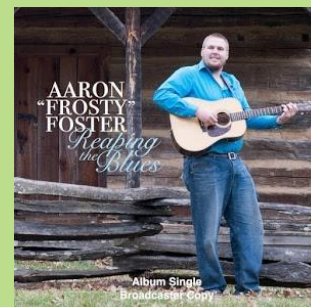
“I found something I really wanted to do,” said Foster. Noting that he felt “a lot of pressure” to continue with football and “do the normal thing,” Foster nevertheless affirmed, “If I had to do it over again, I’d do exactly what I did.”

In the future, Foster said, he hopes to continue right on doing what he’s doing. He added that he is also looking forward to recording a new record with the band.

Dreamcatcher’s debut album, “Opening Doors,” is currently available through iTunes, Amazon, GooglePlay and CDBaby. It is also available through Airplay.



Unatego Class of 2010 graduate Aaron Foster, center, plays with his bluegrass band Dreamcatcher during a June 20 performance at Unatego.



**Don't forget: Find us on Facebook at  
Unatego Alumni Association!**