



Unatego Alumni Association

Letter from the President

By Courtenay O'Hara

In the education field, students and teachers view springtime and daylight saving time as the first indicators that school is almost over for the summer.

For graduating seniors, the meaning is much deeper than that. It represents the final few months of their high school career: the last time they'll walk the halls of Unatego, be on the auditorium stage, the basketball court, the playing fields, or riding a school bus to school. It's the end of one chapter of their lives, yet the beginning of a completely new one; one they hopefully view with excitement and optimism.

The UAA thinks very highly of all Unatego students, but at this time of year, our hearts go out to the graduating seniors. We want them to remember that their teachers have worked very hard to arm them with the knowledge and test-taking skills that will enable their success in college or the work force. Their coaches have taught them to win and lose like champions, to remember to never quit or doubt their ability. And their parents have shown them unconditional love, raising them to become beautiful and dynamic young men and women.

The UAA wants nothing more than the very best for the entire Unatego graduating Class of 2018; for those who apply for an alumni scholarship, we wish you the very best of luck!

Most graduates have identified as a Spartan since kindergarten. Be proud of who you are and where you're coming from and remember to ALWAYS stay true to the Spartan ideal: "To know, to dare, to do." Go Spartans!

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." — Margaret Mead



Save the Date:

**July 20 – 3rd Annual
All-Class Reunion**

Unatego Alumni Association Scholarship News:

Scholarships Increase Thanks to
Unadilla Alumni

On July 20, 2017, the association received a generous contribution from the Unadilla Alumni Association for scholarships intended for Unatego students wishing to pursue higher education. In June 2017, we were able to award two scholarships for \$250 apiece.

Now, because of the generosity of the Unadilla Alumni Association, we will award two scholarships totaling \$500 each. We are deeply grateful for their support of Unatego student scholarships. Our association is honored to have a relationship with theirs and our heartfelt thanks is extended to Howard Lent, treasurer; Betty Vail, coordinator; and all members of the Unadilla Alumni Association.

HALL OF DISTINCTION INDUCTEES

The Unatego Alumni Association hosted its fourth annual Hall of Distinction induction ceremony Friday, Jan. 19, welcoming Dr. Peter Prendergast, Class of 1976, and author Karen Moore, Class of 1968.

Each year's HOD selections must be voted upon unanimously by UAA members.

Dr. Peter Prendergast, a recently retired, 30-year physician, has degrees in electrical engineering and medicine. Since enrolling in post-retirement physics and astronomy classes, he serves as a member of the astrophysics research team at the University of North Carolina. He resides with his wife and HOD nominator, Anita, in Winston-Salem.

Anita, who called Peter an "inspiration" and a "pioneer in the medical field," said: "For someone to go from engineer to physician to astronomer is intriguing and I wanted to tell his story." She added, "I know of his love of learning and how much he really wanted the opportunity to encourage kids at Unatego." Peter, 59, said he learned of his nomination as a birthday present on Jan. 30, 2017.

"I was grateful," he said, "and I thought it was very nice." Noting that his last time in the halls of Unatego was in the late '70s, he added, "I've got nothing but pleasant memories."

Peter said time spent with students proved a highlight of his induction visit. "It was very positive," he said. "I tried to keep the message to something they (could) digest, but help them realize that, as they go through life, to be flexible and ... if you get knocked down, get up."

Author Karen Moore, known for her 70-plus publications of prose, poems, Christian devotionals and inspirational greeting cards, was nominated by fellow Class of 1968 graduate and UAA board member, Keith Bachman. Moore's longtime friend and classmate Albert Clune presented her with the ceremonial HOD plaque.

Bachman, whose familiarity with Moore began in kindergarten, said he was moved to nominate the Nashville-based writer after discovering how successful she'd become.

"I always had a lot of respect for her and she's a very kind person and very smart," he said. "A couple of years ago, I thought about trying to reconnect ... and Karen was easy to find. I said, 'Oh, my gosh,' because I didn't realize ... she'd succeeded so well." Bachman added, "She has a way about her and a determination to get things accomplished."

Calling Moore "an inspiration to our students," Bachman said, "She really brings honor to our class and to Unatego."

Moore, who learned of her nomination via an email from Bachman, said it was "amazing" to discover, in October 2017, that she'd been accepted for induction.

"I am more than humbled and so proud to be included," she said. "It's just the joy of my heart to know I get to do this."

To learn more, visit unatego.org or find Unatego Alumni Association on Facebook. Additionally, find information on Moore at karenann-moore.com.



From left, Dr. Peter Prendergast, Anita Prendergast, Albert Clune and Karen Moore.

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Class Captains - We STILL Need You!
If interested, email Betsy Shultis at betsy.shultis@gmail.com.

2018 Membership Update

New Members: Daniel Zerbe (1985), Michele Sacco Wilson (1995), Eric Miller (1990), Kelli Niles Hafele (1995), Georgia Bell-Codington (1968), Patricia Green Kafchinski (1978)

Renewals: Genevieve Baulch-Bachman (1969), Keith Bachman (1968), Cara Downey (2004), Cathy Korenyik (1976), Kathy Sturgess Ouimet (1974), Donald Andre Ouimet (1974), Deborah Lambertson Ingalls (1978), Joe Ingalls (1978), David Downey (1997), John Downey (1999), Matthew Downey (2006), Courtenay O'Hara (1986), Jeff Shultis (1973)

Lifetime Members: Matthew Ouimet, Betsy Ingalls Shultis, Courtenay O'Hara, Daniel Zerbe, Michele Sacco Wilson



Save the Date!

July 20 is the 3rd 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, to free up the weekend for individual class get-togethers, as many classes are celebrating milestone anniversaries this year!

For details, find Unatego Alumni Association on Facebook.

Can You Help Save Our History?

Recently on the "You Know You Are From Unadilla, If You Remember" Facebook page, Kathy Sturgess Quimet, vice president of the Evergreen Hill Cemetery Association, posted a Tri-Town News article detailing repairs needed to maintain the cemetery's historic stone walls. The association is raising funds for those repairs.

The stones for the wall came from the old Unadilla Academy building and were moved to the cemetery in 1934, when that building was torn down.

Donations for the wall restoration can be made to: Evergreen Hill Cemetery Association, P.O. Box 764, Unadilla, NY, 13849.

This is just one amazing piece of our district's history that we can all be proud of. Relatedly, our alumni association board is looking for artifacts, memorabilia, news articles, photos and other items of historical significance about the Unadilla, Otego, and Unatego schools and alumni.

We plan to archive this history for posterity. If you have items of historical interest you would like placed in our archives, please contact us. Send a private message through the Unatego Alumni Association Facebook page, or email unategoalumniassociation@gmail.com. You can also bring historical items to the annual All-Class Reunion taking place Friday, July 20 at the Long River Inn in Unadilla.

You **can** help save our history. We hope to hear from you soon.

The next UAA Newsletter will be sent out June 2018.

Deadline for submissions is May 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

Committee Seeks to Repurpose, Preserve Otego Elementary

In the summer of 2015, facing declining enrollment and financial pressures, the Unatego Board of Education engaged educational consultants Dr. William Silky and Mr. Alan Pole to conduct a study of the district's infrastructure needs. Various stakeholders, including administrators, faculty, parents and community members, participated.

When the final report was issued in April 2016, the recommendation was to close the Otego Elementary School. The report further encouraged the board to plan an eventual closure of the Unadilla Elementary School, working toward a building project that would create enough space to accommodate all grade levels at the site of the junior-senior high school in the town of Otego.

The board discussed the facilities study recommendations throughout fall and winter of 2016. After holding a series of public hearings, circulating surveys and soliciting further public input, in February 2017, the board made the very difficult decision to close the Otego building, effective June of that year. Following that closure, all 370 district students in grades K-5 were newly housed in the Unadilla building, renamed Unatego Elementary.

The board was left to decide the fate of the now-vacant school in the village of Otego.

In the summer of 2017, a group of community members, primarily Otego residents, created the Otego Repurposing Committee, with the goal of investigating potential uses for the former school building that will prove beneficial to the members of that community.

Meeting monthly, the committee listened to area residents, conducted a survey soliciting community input and heard from a variety of sources about other communities' creative solutions regarding repurposed school buildings.

Board member and Otego resident Dick Downey spearheaded this effort, visiting multiple former school buildings across central New York and northeastern Pennsylvania, reporting back to the committee and board throughout.

Downey found that some schools have been successfully converted into housing units, others mixed public and private uses and some reused for commercial purposes.

Based on the results of the 307 responses to the Repurposing Committee's survey, a majority of Otego residents are in favor of seeing the school used for senior housing, educational or training purposes or as a community center. The uses most respondents opposed included manufacturing and office space.

Using this information, on March 12 of this year the committee presented the Unatego Board of Education with a recommendation to maintain as much of the land surrounding the school as possible for community use and suggested that uses such as those noted in the survey be taken under consideration, with emphasis on creating educational facilities or trade schools, senior housing (55+), medical or health care facilities, a community center or commercial office space.

To solicit as wide an array of potential developers as possible, the board will issue a request for proposals (RFP) for parties interested in repurposing the Otego Elementary School. The board hopes to have the RFP ready to go out to prospective developers by the end of this month, with at least four parties already indicating interest in the building.

It is the board's sincere mission to see this "fine old building" get a new lease on life and, after some renovations, remain an integral part of its community for many years.



Don't forget: Find us on Facebook at

Unatego Alumni Association!