



VOLUME 47, ISSUE 1

# VIBRATIONS

## NEWSLETTER

### Mark your Calendar - The 47th Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting and Board Elections will be held on Saturday, March 8th at 6 p.m. Central Time. We have listened to many members and we have decided to try a new/old venue and a more casual approach. The meeting will be held at the American Legion Hall at 15052 Archer Avenue in Lockport, IL. This is in an effort to keep the cost of attending affordable for all members young and seasoned!

We will have a catered meal. Soda, beer and wine are included in ticket price of \$40 per attendee. If you wish to have a mixed drink, you will have to pay your tab as mixed drinks are not included.

You must purchase tickets online or by mail, no later than Saturday, March 1st. **You must have a ticket to attend. There will be no walk-ins allowed!** Please note this is an 21 and over event. Raffle prizes, a silent auction and much more are in store for everyone.

We are currently looking for raffle prize donations as well as people will to sponsor gift baskets.

Looking for 100% of all our membership to be present!!! See you there

The agenda for the evening includes...

**\*Board Election results**

(you must vote no later than Friday, March 7th on line, March 8th in person)

**\*Board Meeting and New Officers announced**

**\*Raffle and Silent Auction Prizes**



**Buy tickets / renew  
your membership  
here!**

# 2025 OSA Board of Directors Candidates

Term Expires 2025	Term Expires 2026	Term Expires 2027
Michael Brus	Jennifer Kotwasinski **	Paul Kerchberger
Ryan Carlson	Pat Troy	Kevin Oster
Kevin Harper**	Edgar Wolff-Klammer	Chris Sanchez**

\*\*Two term limit goes into effect

## Jason Roepke

**Jason Roepke**, 35, lives with his wife, Dara, and their dog in Lombard, Illinois. He has worked in the marketing technology sector for the past decade after graduating from Monmouth College with a BS in Business Administration.



His journey with Owasippe began as a camper at Wolverine in 2002. Joining camp staff as a CIT in 2005 led to ten summers of staff service at Wolverine, primarily in shooting sports but also including roles as commissioner and ultimately Assistant Camp Director in 2016. He also managed quite a few of the Order of the Arrow events at camp. He fondly remembers the OSA social events like the bar crawls, pizza nights, and the Dinner Dance.

If elected to the board, Jason hopes to emphasize community building and environmental stewardship. His overarching hope is that Owasippe can continue to provide meaningful experiences while becoming a model for sustainable scout camping operations, and he is excited at the opportunity to help the OSA support Owasippe.

## Jeffrey Nowik

**Jeffrey Nowik**, 50, lives with his wife, Jaime, and son Hunter in the Garfield Ridge neighborhood of Chicago. Jeff works as an Account Payable/Accounts Receivable Supervisor for B.L. Duke, a scrap metal company in Forest View, Illinois.



He was introduced to Owasippe at Camp Blackhawk – Go! - as a camper in 1985. In 1986, his troop switched to Camp Wolverine – Zaxie! He began his staff years in 1996 and 1997 as a Commissioner at Blackhawk. In 1998 he was the Shooting Sports Director at Wolverine, taking over for Jerry Lutz as he became Assistant Camp Director. During his tenure in scouting, he was a Life Scout. From 2004 through 2010, Jeff was the Training Chairman of the Iroquois District. In 2010 Jeff was asked to take on the position of Advancement Chairman of the Iroquois District, a position he held until 2014 when he stepped up to the Assistant District Commissioner role.

Two years later, he moved up to the District Commissioner position. Jeff held this position until 2019. In 2020 Jeff was asked to take on the role as the Central Area Adviser of the Takone Lodge. In 2021 he was asked again to serve as District Commissioner of the Iroquois Trails and, after the merger of districts happened, the Iron Horse District. In 2024, Jeff became the District Chairman of the Iron Horse District, which he currently still serves. Jeff was also honored to receive his Vigil Honor in the Order of the Arrow in August 2024. Jeff is also a life member of the Owasippe Staff Association.

Jeff helped on the last Trade-O-Ree that the OSA had. Some of his favorite OSA events are the Trade-O-Ree, work weekends, and the Annual Meeting.

If elected to the OSA board, he would like to see the Counselor in Training (CIT) program back at Owasippe. He would also connect with leaders throughout the Pathway to Adventure Council to see what changes they would like at Owasippe.

# 2025 OSA Board of Directors Candidates

## Jacob Klein

**Jacob Klein**, 27, resides in Chicago, Illinois, with his basset hound, Hazel. He graduated from DePaul University with a Bachelor of Science in Physics and a Master of Science in Mathematics. Currently, he works as a flight instructor at Waukegan National Airport.



Jacob joined scouting in 2007 and began camping at Owasippe with his troop in 2009 at Blackhawk. In 2012, he joined the OSR staff and served for six consecutive years. During that time, he worked as a Scoutcraft Instructor and Aquatics Instructor at Blackhawk, as well as the Aquatics Director at Reneker. Throughout his scouting career, he achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, was awarded the Vigil Honor, and served as the Lodge Chief of Owasippe Lodge from 2014 to 2017.

Since the end of his time on staff, Jacob has continued to give service to Owasippe in any way he can by attending OSA Fix-It weekends and Order of the Arrow Owasippe Fellowships.

If elected to the Board of Directors, Jacob aims to help usher in the next generation of OSA members, fostering the shared bond that unites us all. By actively listening to the needs and suggestions of current staff members and campers, he hopes to provide the necessary resources to enhance the program and create an unforgettable experience for everyone who visits Owasippe.

## Ryan Carlson



**Ryan Carlson**, 25, lives in the Lagrange Highlands, Illinois. Ryan has spent the last two years as a member of the OSA Board after taking over the posting from a resigning board member. Ryan began camping at Owasippe in 2010 at Camp Blackhawk-GO! and did until he joined staff in 2015 as a volunteer. Since then, Ryan has staffed or volunteered every summer. Ryan is an Eagle Scout of troop 216 of the Lagrange Highlands, is a brotherhood member of the Order of the Arrow, and had achieved several religious awards the scouts offer. His wish is to continue to give back to the camp and give the scouts there the best program possible. To give them the same experience past staff gave him.

At home, Ryan Works as an EMT for Elite Ambulance out of their station in Hickory Hills. He is working his way through paramedic school at Christ hospital and is set soon to start at Ford Hights fire department as a firefighter/medic. He has always had a desire to help people in the community and see it prosper. He has always found himself to be a history buff and thoroughly enjoys reading about historical events and about American history. Since 2017 his family has been historical reenactors portraying the civil war era, bonding with and teaching the public about one of the most fascinating times in US history. This is also when he picked up the hobby of sport shooting. From shotgun sport to long range rifle competition to even musketry, sport shooting has become a fun and full time hobby. In 2019, Ryan became an instructor and Range officer and began assisting in shooting sports for the scouts at various klondikes, day camps, and as a shooting sports instructor at Owasippe, teaching proper technique, safety and understanding of a great hobby.

In this upcoming term, Ryan's goal is to continue focusing and working with current staff and scouts in order to start bringing in a new generation of member base into the OSA. Ryan is looking forward to working with the OSA to continue making the association and the camp the best they can be using all the resources he can bring from his experiences and time on staff. He also hopes to pay it forward for all staff and scouts who come to our wonderful camp, past, present and future

# 2025 OSA Board of Directors Candidates

## Randy Etapa

**Randy Etapa**, 46, is a resident of Chicago on the southwest side. He is a widower to the late Brooke Bielski-Etapa and a single dad to Matthew (Eagle Scout), Michael, and Amanda. He is a member of Local 1001 LiUNA Chicago Laborers Union. For the past 12 years, he has worked for the City of Chicago's Department of Streets & Sanitation Bureau of Forestry as a Certified Tree Inspector. When he is not working or doing Scouting stuff, Randy likes to coach baseball, hockey, and softball as well as volunteer at his daughter's elementary school.



Randy joined scouting as a Tiger Cub in Pack 3465 in 1984. In 1996 with Troop 465, he achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. Over the last 28 years, he has served in various adult leadership positions including Scoutmaster, Cubmaster, Troop Committee, Den Leader, District Member at Large, Roundtable Commissioner, and District Training Committee, and currently serves as the District Advancement Chairperson. He also served two years as the president of the Chicago Area University of Scouting. He is a Brotherhood member in the Order of the Arrow where he served as a Chapter Chief and performed call-out and pre-Ordeal ceremonies at camp as a youth member. In his 40+ years in scouting, Randy has earned some prestigious BSA awards such as the District Award of Merit, Silver Beaver, Distinguished Commissioner Award, and Doctorate in Commissioner Science.

Randy's first experience at Owasippe was as a Reneker camper in 1985. In 1989, he began camping with his troop at Wolverine. In the summer of 1993, he joined the camp staff as a CIT. He worked in aquatics on the Blackhawk waterfront from 1994 to 1997 serving as an instructor through Assistant Aquatic Director. In the summer of 1998, he served as Senior Commissioner/Program Director at Wolverine. He has spent the past 26 years camping at Wolverine as a leader and Reneker with his family. Randy joined the OSA in 1998 and became a Life Member in 2018.

If elected to the OSA Board of Directors, Randy's top priority is membership. He sees an urgent need to recruit new and younger members, as the current membership is dwindling. Other goals include OSA lead involvement in a CIT program, revamping the Bog Trail, continuing to preserve Owasippe history at the Goodman Museum, developing a volunteer corps for an Owasippe Trail Guide program, and seeking approval and funding for a permanent lodge or pavilion structure at Reneker.

## Mike Dorich



**Mike Dorich**, 64, lives with his wife, Kim, in Chicago and is currently a Buffalo Wild Wings Manager. Mike camped at Wolverine North and South as well as Robert Crown. He joined the camp staff as a CIT in 1976 and enjoyed it so much that he went on to fulfill several positions across the reservation. From 1977 to 1978, he worked at Camp Robert Crown where he worked in Aquatics and Scoutcraft. In 1979, he switched gears and worked as a trucker for the reservation. The next summer, Mike worked as a Wolverine Commissioner and rounded off his final summer on staff in 1980, working at Blackhawk Field Sports.

Mike has been an active member of the OSA, and you'll often find him in the kitchen fixing up meals for all the hungry workers during Fix-Its. If elected to the board, he would like to be involved with membership recruitment.

## **President's Perspective**

*By: Jen Kotwasinski*



Happy New Year to All! Here's to discovering new joys and revisiting old favorites in 2025. Annual Meeting tickets are currently on sale and the Spring Fix-It will be held on May 16 - 18, 2025. November saw another successful Pizza Night added to the books. It is always great seeing our members and catching up with friends! OSA members and guests will bring in the New Year attending a Chicago Wolves game Sunday January 19th, 2025. Our Annual Meeting will be held the SECOND Saturday of March ( March 8th, 2025). This year in order allow for lower ticket prices and encourage a higher attendance, we will be holding the meeting at at the American Legion in Lockport, IL. Remember that you must be a member in good standing to vote in the board election.

## **47th Anniversary Annual Meeting - Raffle**

The 2025 raffle website as well as the complete list of raffle prizes will be announced in the end of January. If you are interested in donating a raffle prize or donating money to sponsor a prize, please contact Jennifer Kotwasinski at (224) 223-3489.

## **OSA Board & Voting**

The OSA is managed by the nine members of the Board of Directors whom you elect. Since each term is staggered, three positions must be elected each year. Elections are held and announced during the annual meeting held the second Saturday in March. Each OSA member that is currently registered can vote for up to three candidates on one ballot.

It is highly encouraged to vote early online!

Join us at the March 46th Annual Meeting to see your new OSA board members!

**Online Voting will be open February 11th through March 7th**

**A separate email will be sent with the link to voting**

## Thank you to the following people for your financial donations in 2024.

Your generosity means everything to the OSA and to the projects we do at Owasippe.

- Rachel Abajian
- Jennifer Behnke
- Susan Blew
- Erwin Brinkman
- Norville Carter
- Steve Henclewski
- Teresa Hiatt
- Adam Keene
- Ellen Metrick
- James Nothnagel
- Philip Pappas
- Tim Peraino
- Ted Rotzoll
- Thom Seymour
- Suzy Smyth
- Sharon Tiberi
- Jeanine Shotas
- John Sterling
- William Sullivan
- William Vannerson
- Vernon Victorson
- Edgar Wolff-Klammer



**Thank you to everyone who volunteered and provided supplies and materials during 2024.**



### End of the Trail

It is with great sadness and a heavy heart that we pass the news that Steve F. and Irene M. Kantorski have passed away this past December. Our sympathy to the entire Kantorski family.

May the great Scoutmaster of all Scouts be with us until we meet again.”



Audrey Spyrnal, mother of former staff member Susan Spyrnal Oster and MIL of OSA board member Kevin Oster, passed away Monday December 16, 2024. Please keep them and their family in your thoughts and prayers





# Galloping Grape Vine



Congratulations to Major Chris Skopec and his wife Grace on the birth of Sloane Grace Skopec born on 12/11/2024



Allison Oster, daughter of proud parents Susan and Kevin Oster, received her doctorate in Physical Therapy this past May from the MAYO clinic.



Maggie Derby, Daughter of Ron and Susan Derby, passed her Eagle Scout board of review on January 4th and will receive Scouting's

highest rank at her court of honor sometime this coming spring. Maggie is registered with Troop 1048G in Whitehall, Michigan, and she is only the second girl in the Troop to reach the top. Maggie worked the last three summers at Camp Reneker, but took 4th period off this past summer to camp with her Troop at Blackhawk. Maggie is grateful for all the support she has received along the way, and she knows her friends and family are very proud of her. Next stop ... college and beyond!

## Upcoming OSA Dates

### January

19.....Wolves Game 3:00 CT  
20.....Board Meeting 7:00 CT

### February

24.....Board Meeting 7:00 CT

### March

08.....Annual Meeting 6:00 CT

### April

28.....Board Meeting 7:00 CT

### May

16-18.....Spring Fix-it  
26.....Board Meeting 7:00 CT

### June

23.....Board Meeting 7:00 CT

# Owasippe.com Gets An Overhaul

*By Ron Derby*

First off, let me start with some praise for a visionary. Vince Rychtanek deserves a great deal of credit for registering owasippe.net and building the original OSA website “way back” in the mid 90s. Vince handed the reins over to me in the late 90s, when I was working for a web development company on the North Shore of Chicago. Over the 30 years since then, the OSA managed to obtain the .com and .org web addresses, and the website itself had been through several iterations. The last version of the website went live back in 2014.

This past fall the OSA Board expressed interest in giving owasippe.com a complete overhaul. The website was ten years old, and was definitely due for some major updating. Web technology and best practices have come a long way in those ten years. And, like a house you've lived in for ten years, the site had accumulated an absolute TON of clutter. Some of it good, some of it trash, and some of it you don't even remember how it got there.

Anyway, long story short, the OSA website has been completely rebuilt. The new site does a much better job of supporting mobile functionality. A big chunk of the aforementioned clutter has been cleaned out. Numerous redundant pages have been cleaned up, re-organized, and in some cases, combined, to streamline the user experience. A Google Calendar has also been added to allow Board members and other key volunteers the ability to more-easily post and edit OSA events and deadlines.

A website is sort of a living, breathing thing. While the main work has been completed, it will never truly be “done.” As time permits, additional improvements and tweaks will be made. Some photos will be added down the line as well.

One of the main goals of all of this work has been to hopefully present the OSA's mission more clearly, and tell our story more effectively to prospective members and donors. I believe that goal has been reached, and I appreciate the Board entrusting me to do the work.

## **Welcome to our New Members**

Scott Carlson, Justin Schaaf, Robert Wiley

### **New Life Member**

Roman Henclewski

**We're excited to have you join the OSA!**



# Pizza Night Recap

By: Kevin Harper, OSA Board Member

The following Saturday after thanksgiving nearly sixty five OSA members and friends of Owasippe including a good number of current staff. Gathered at the European Chalet Banquets on Chicago's southside for the annual pizza night rendezvous. We enjoyed many beverages and snacks and the pizzas were from a new vendor Triano's! Door prizes were also donated and raffled off and Roman Henclewski was our split the pot winner putting his winnings towards lifetime membership. All in all with a slightly smaller crowd it was a successful event.



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**Editor:** OSA Board

The opinions stated by contributors to *Vibrations* are those of the authors and are not by fact of publication necessarily those of the Owasippe Staff Association or its Board of Directors. Publication does not imply endorsement. All materials are subject to editing.

Articles, tidbits, and photos are encouraged. Submissions can be made out to [osa.vibrations@gmail.com](mailto:osa.vibrations@gmail.com) or mailed to: OSA Vibrations Editor, P.O. Box 7097, Westchester, IL 60154. All materials which the author wants returned must be accompanied by a self addressed stamped envelope.

Deadlines for submitting materials for publication are as follows:

- |          |           |            |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| • Spring | (Issue 1) | January 15 |
| • Summer | (Issue 2) | April 1    |
| • Fall   | (Issue 3) | August 7   |
| • Winter | (Issue 4) | October 15 |

## Connect with us!

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The newsletter for the members of the Owasippe Staff Association