

explore

Oneonta

VOL 1 NO. 1
FREE TO A GOOD HOME

**Spotlight on
Oneonta Nutrition**

**Flags of Honor Salute:
Carey Lee Johns
& Forrest Sibley**

**Hendrickson Soldiers
On as Tireless Volunteer**

Swing into the Fling

**Mural Trail
Draws Tourists
& Grows**

Cover: Artist Emma Knowles



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THIS ISSUE OF EXPLORE ONEONTA
PUBLISHED FIRST QUARTER 2021

**ONEONTA
BUSINESS
ASSOCIATION**

a non-profit 501(c)(6) organization

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FROM PRESIDENT GREGORY BROWN

Welcome to the first issue of *Explore Oneonta*, the new magazine produced by the Oneonta Business Association (OBA). It is our mission to advance all local Oneonta businesses and their promotion through marketing, events, tourism, economic development, and leadership.

Over the past year, the OBA has achieved that goal through programs and events such as Paint the Town, Light the Town, municipal candidate forums, Festival of Lights/Christmas Staycation, and Cruise & Croon. We also last year began quarterly OBA Mingle membership events and the Flags of Honor project. The OBA is also very thankful to the City of Oneonta for an office in the 110 Building that now serves as our base of operations.

Our plans for 2021 include this publication which is a board collaboration of interesting articles about people and places in our community, timely and relative columns, and news on upcoming events and happenings. Our initial order of 1,000 copies will be available free from designated merchants and can also be viewed on our website and social media. Starting with our next issue, we will offer a variety of affordable advertising options. Supply your own art or allow our design team to create an ad for you.

Thank you for your continued support of the OBA. We look forward to making this our most successful year-to-date! I encourage you to get actively involved with the OBA. Jump in, roll up your sleeves, and let's take this exciting journey together.

Greg Brown
OBA President

Ready. Set. Mingle.

OBA Membership Mingle
Thursday, March 18 • 5:30 pm
Cypress Room @ SwampTails

Designed for OBA members and others to have a free after-hours networking event at an area business. Bring business cards to share. Complimentary appetizers will be provided by the OBA.



Murals have long been on the radar of the OBA and that dream became a reality with the establishment of the Paint the Town project, chaired by Bill Hendrickson. In addition to the angel wings and welcome murals, the OBA Art Walk has 16 murals created by 15 local artists who contributed over 1,450 hours while enduring the summer heat and social distancing in the pandemic. National recommendations value volunteer work at \$24.14 per hour which equals over \$35,196 from these artists. The Benjamin Moore Paint Company also donated paint valued at \$5,000.

The OBA often receives reports of tourists exploring the Art Walk. Just last week during our cover photo shoot a group from Morgan County was enjoying an afternoon stroll through the colorful corridor.

The Mayor's newly appointed Artistic Design Review Committee recently approved two new projects. Business owners V.J. and Bain Brown commissioned the OBA to paint a flag mural on the side of 906 2nd Avenue South (Hwy 75), the former Baty TV building. The showroom and offices of United Flagpole will relocate there. Tara

Murphree will serve as supervising artist for the mural.

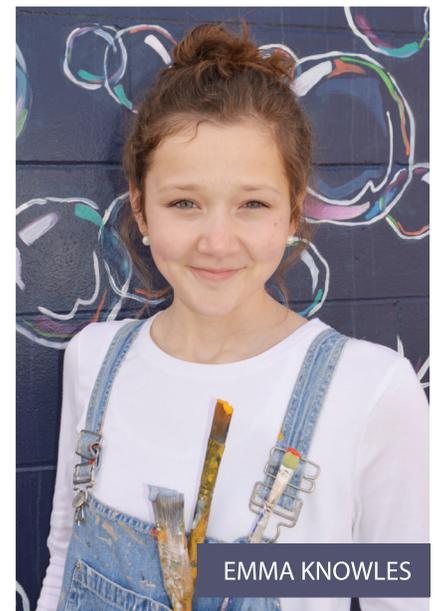
The Committee also gave the green light to a mural of cattle on a wall behind Miller's Soda Shoppe. History references the walkway once being used as a chute to unload and load cattle. The OBA Art Walk Plaza will also have three picnic tables, sail shades, lights, and music. Shoppers can enjoy peaceful respite there while they explore Oneonta.

A search is currently on for a seasoned artist to design and execute a mural as a lasting tribute to first responders and essential workers. This project is sponsored in part by St. Vincent's Blount and others are invited to contribute.

The University of Alabama Center for Economic Development is vetting murals for inclusion in the Alabama Murals Trail to attract tourists to Alabama towns. With the completion of these projects, the OBA will have 21 murals on the Trail. Using public art to add pride of place to a community increases foot traffic and economic impact, and provides a level of safety in an otherwise forgotten area of a community like the Art Walk.

Meet the Artists

Each issue of *Explore Oneonta* will feature local artists, starting with Laurie and Emma Knowles (pictured above with each other's murals). When asked about their decision to participate in the Art Walk, Laurie shared, "Emma and I thought it would be a fun project to



EMMA KNOWLES

work on together, especially during the pandemic when so many of our normal activities were canceled." Emma agreed, "How could I pass up a chance to grow my artistic

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horizons and have the time of my life in the process? I didn't expect to be chosen, but I did not let that stop me from applying. I am so thankful I did and will be forever grateful to the OBA for this amazing learning experience!"

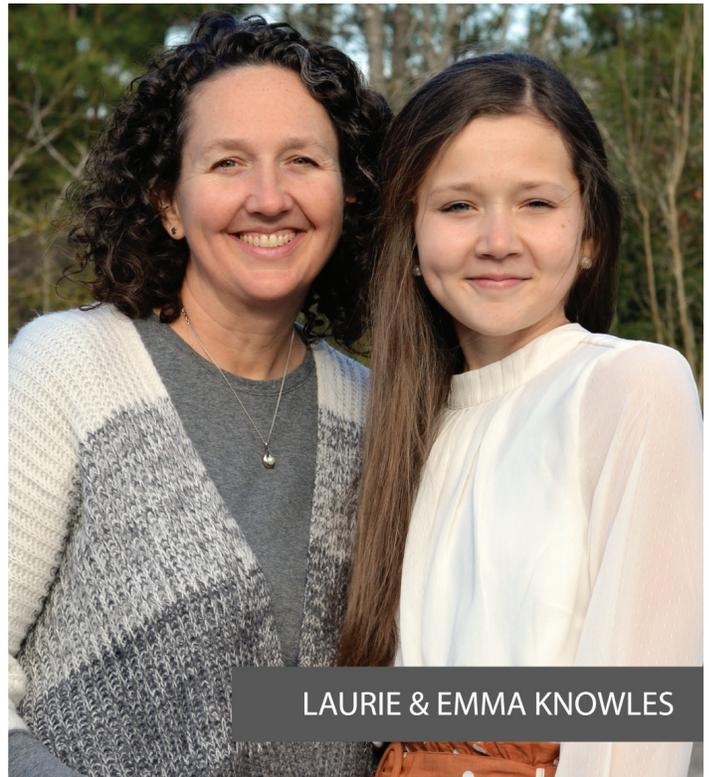
Mother Laurie comes from a very artistic family. "I had a great art teacher at Eastside High School in Greenville, SC, who helped further my love of art. Although I did not study art in college, I continued to use my gifts in my everyday life, especially as an elementary teacher and later as a homeschool teacher. For the past 11 years, I have taught many students in our homeschool community, combining my love for art with my love for teaching."

"I have been surrounded by art supplies from a very early age," shared daughter Emma. "Having a mom who is also an artist is the best thing ever! Both my parents have always encouraged creativity." In addition to her mother, Emma has also received instruction from some Birmingham area artists.

For the Oneonta project, they were assigned adjoining spaces. Emma expressed, "Painting next to my mom was incredible. This project was so big and a little intimidating so having her by my side helped boost my confidence, making so many great memories that I will treasure forever."

Laurie's mural is based on Psalm 100:3 and features a large sheep. "I love the image of the Lord being our Shepherd, watching over and protecting us, His sheep." Emma responded, "I was honored to be chosen to paint two murals! Sunflowers are my favorite and were one of my first subjects when I began painting. Why not paint larger than life sunflowers? The inspiration behind my bubble mural was that I wanted something interactive. It's so rewarding to see people admiring the bubbles, only to discover they can be part of the picture!" John 3:8 in flowing cursive completes the mural.

The Knowles make their home in rural Blount County but love Oneonta. Laurie shared, "All four of our children have participated in the Lighthouse Warriors homeschool football or cheer team, and the youngest is on the Mount Pleasant Christian School basketball team. Our family also enjoys the many events and activities in Oneonta, including the June Fling where my husband



LAURIE & EMMA KNOWLES

won second place in the Singing Showdown and my other daughter competed." Emma added, "Oneonta is a charming, peaceful downtown area. It was my privilege to invest my time and ability to create a unique attraction as Oneonta feels like our second home."

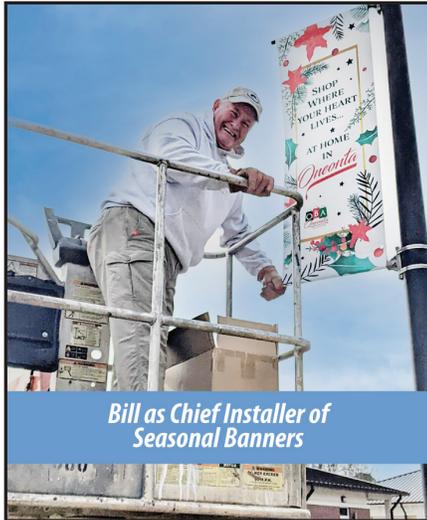
When she's not busy painting in Oneonta, Laurie serves as Children's Director at Community Bible Study NE, teaching art at Agape Academy, gardening, reading, drawing, crafting, and photography. Emma's hobbies include painting and finding new hobbies. "Whether it's spelunking, hiking, disc-golfing, baking, singing, or playing the piano, I'm always finding new projects to begin. My dream job is to have a family and work as an artist in a home-based studio."

All Art Walk artists are invited to have booths at the 19th Annual June Fling on Saturday, June 12, where you can see more of their work and have the opportunity to purchase your favorites. In addition, Laurie and Emma will join fellow Art Walk artist and friend, Mandy Smith, in creating the cattle mural in the weeks to come.

By Patti Moss Williams
OBA Board Member

Volunteer SPOT LIGHT

Bill Hendrickson



Bill as Chief Installer of Seasonal Banners

How did the son of an industrial teacher at the University of Wisconsin at Stout State become the Chief of Staff for two squadrons of nuclear warhead laden submarines, ten in all, off the coast of Georgia? Not by chance.

The Navy had plans for Bill Hendrickson from the time he reported for draft indoctrination into the Army in 1970. He caught the eye of a naval Chief Petty Officer who learned Bill was earning a chemistry degree from the University of Wisconsin. He convinced Bill to join the Navy instead of remaining with the Army.

From an early point in life, Bill adopted a quote from Jack Jacobs, Medal of Honor winner: "If not me, who; if not now, when?" This has served as Bill's personal motto throughout his life. The Navy did not fail to see the potential this enlisted man offered. An aptitude test sent Bill

to Auburn University for a chemical engineering degree through the Navy Enlisted Scientific Education Program. This set the stage for one promotion after another up and down the east coast.

Two separate interviews with the "Father of the Nuclear Navy," Admiral Hyman Rickover, were required during Bill's long career. He reports there was one question per interview and never any visible or audible response from Rickover. Both interviews resulted in career advancements. Constant training and proving himself followed Bill throughout his naval career.

In 2004, Bill chose not to accept an even more demanding and dangerous career advancement, choosing to spend his last three years at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, teaching in the Air War College.

Bill's Auburn degree inspired his son to also attend the university where he earned a building science degree. Bill and wife Cheri asked their son to build their forever home in Limestone Springs. Oneonta has



Bill Rolls the First Primer on The Welcome Mural Wall

been a more welcoming place since the Hendrickson's move-in day.

As golf is near and dear to him, Bill spearheaded the Tom Bell Memorial High School Golf Tournament, held each spring at Limestone Springs Golf Club. Up to 20 high school teams statewide are invited to participate each year. The Covered Bridge Players have also gladly included Bill in many set designs and prop creations.

A few years ago, Bill began volunteering for the OBA as a member of the local American Legion. Patti Williams quickly realized that Bill was a willing worker with many skills and quickly asked him to join. Since that time, he has been "hands-on," serving on the Board of Directors and chairing the Light the Town and Paint the Town committees. He also shares an abundance of time and skill with the Festival of Lights and Flags of Honor projects. For the past year, Bill has served on the Executive Committee as the OBA Treasurer. Chuckling, Bill said, "My wife will not allow me to touch the family checkbook."

Why does Bill heavily involve himself in volunteer work when he could be golfing every day? His reply, "I like walking down the street and knowing everybody."

By Deb Talley
OBA Board Member



LCPL Carey Lee Johns

SSGT Forrest Brent Sibley

In 2020, the Flags of Honor program was developed and provides for a tribute banner for an active duty or veteran of the military to be displayed on the lampposts in downtown Oneonta. The \$250 sponsorship includes three other seasonal banners for other times of the year. The military banners will be exhibited during the weeks surrounding Memorial Day and Veterans Day. This and future issues of *Explore Oneonta* will feature our Flag of Honor heroes, starting with those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The son of the late Vernon Lee Johns and Rhoda Pearl Bowerman Johns Robinson, **Lance Corporal Carey Lee Johns** was a 1965 graduate of Oneonta High School. He is described as a born leader who was known for his dedication and commitment to excellence in all areas of life.

Carey Lee served with honor in the U. S. Marine Corps and began his tour in the Vietnam War in August 1967. He was attached to the 3rd Marine Division, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, HS Company. Carey Lee lost his life after being hit with an explosive on June 18, 1968, in the Quang Tri province of South Vietnam.

A mortar specialist, Carey Lee was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart, National Defense Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, and a multitude of other medals and citations. He was the older brother of Danny and David Robinson.

In a letter to Mrs. Robinson in 1968, classmate Johnny Evans wrote, "Mother told me the heroic thing Carey Lee has done for me,

you, God, and everybody. There is no greater deed than to give of one's life for another fellowman to live...but you know why he was over there so lots of other guys like him and me could grow up happy, playing, and joking. 'Tis better to have loved and lost than never have loved at all.' What I mean is, it's great that you loved him the way you did rather than to have lost him after never loving him. He knew this."

At Oneonta High School, the Carey Lee Johns 110% Award was established in 1972 to honor his life and his football jersey number 60 was retired. The award has been given every year since to the player who demonstrates mental toughness, leadership by example, and who never quits during practice or games. Carey Lee is buried in Oneonta's Oak Hill Cemetery.



Air Force Staff Sergeant Forrest Sibley was sponsored by his Appalachian High School Class of 2002. Autumn Smith Lowres explained, "Our class was small

and we were very close. We loved Forrest and wanted to honor him." His best friend, Chris Baldus, added, "Forrest was proud of everything he had accomplished and everything he attempted."

Forrest loved the outdoors and enjoyed fishing, hunting, hiking, and target-shooting with his family and friends. His father Brent Sibley shared, "Forrest was always smiling." Autumn agreed, "He was hilarious, fun to be around, put others first, and a leader." Forrest is remembered for his kind heart and zest for life. He unwaveringly strove to support his brothers on the battlefield despite the ever-impending danger.

After basic training in 2008 at Lackland AFB in Texas, Forrest served with the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron of Hurlburt Field in Florida. Afterwards, he was a Combat Controller with the 24th Special Tactics Squadron at Pope Field, North Carolina. His deployments included Afghanistan, Africa, and other sensitive areas around the world.

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During his service, Forrest received many awards including three bronze stars, one with a “V” for heroism in combat, and a Purple Heart for injuries sustained in combat. His father was not aware of his medals until after his son’s passing.

On August 26, 2015, Forrest was fatally wounded during an ambush at a vehicle checkpoint at Camp Antonik, Afghanistan. He had been assigned to the 21st Special Tactics Squadron USAF and on his fourth deployment. His mission was air-to-ground precision guided munitions for Special Operations Close Air Support for which he volunteered.

Forrest is buried at Barrancas National Cemetery on Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Florida. His father shared, “He loved his country and I am proud to be his Dad. I am humbled that the OBA is featuring him.”



Have an active military or veteran you’d like to salute with a Flag of Honor? Complete the form at oneontabusinessassociation.com/honor.

Questions? Call 205-813-7194. If no one answers, please leave a message and someone will contact you as soon as possible.

By Pat Clanton
OBA Board Member



UPON Events

MARCH

- 4 June Fling Committee, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm
- 16 OBA Board Meeting, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm
- 18 OBA Membership Mingle, Cypress Room, Swamptails, 5:30 pm

APRIL

- 1 June Fling Committee, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm
- 20 OBA Board Meeting, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm

MAY

- 6 June Fling Committee, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm
- 18 OBA Board Meeting, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm
- 29 Cruise & Croon, Downtown Oneonta, 5-8 pm
- 31 Memorial Day Holiday

JUNE

- 11 Swing into the Fling, Downtown Oneonta, 6 pm
- 12 19th Annual June Fling, Downtown Oneonta, 9 am - 4 pm
- 15 OBA Board Meeting, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm

JULY

- 4 Independence Day Holiday
- 8 Christmas Committee, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm
- 15 OBA Membership Mingle, Site TBA, 5:30 pm
- 20 OBA Board Meeting, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm
- 31 Cruise & Croon, Downtown Oneonta, 5-8 pm

AUGUST

- 5 Christmas Committee, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm
- 17 OBA Board Meeting, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm

SEPTEMBER

- 2 Christmas Committee, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm
- 6 Labor Day Holiday
- 21 OBA Board Meeting, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm

OCTOBER

- 7 Christmas Committee, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm
- 14 OBA Annual Awards Dinner, Limestone Springs, 6 pm
- 19 OBA Board Meeting, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm
- 21 OBA Membership Mingle, Site TBA, 5:30 pm
- 30 Cruise & Croon, Downtown Oneonta, 5-8 pm

NOVEMBER

- 4 Christmas Committee, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm
- 11 Veterans Day Holiday
- 16 OBA Board Meeting, Board Room, St. Vincent’s Blount, 6 pm
- 21-25 Festival of Lights: Groups Decorate Christmas Trees
- 25 Thanksgiving Holiday
- 26 Community Christmas Tree Lighting & Celebration, 6 pm

DECEMBER

- 1 Festival of Lights: Deadline to Decorate for Stores & Home Tour
- 3-4 Festival of Lights: Live Nativity Experience, Angel Wings Mural, 6-8 pm
- 7 Blount County Christmas Parade, Downtown Oneonta, 7 pm
- 17 Festival of Lights Awards, 7 pm
- 17-18 Festival of Lights: Live Nativity Experience, Angel Wings Mural, 6-8 pm
- 21 OBA Board Meeting & Christmas Dinner, Site TBA, 6 pm
- 25 Christmas Day Holiday
- 26-31 Festival of Lights: Christmas Tree Decoration Take-Down Days

Meetings are open to those interested in the OBA and its events and projects. Please check our website and Facebook page for updated information on OBA events. You may also call the OBA at 205-813-7194 to verify dates and events as this calendar is subject to change.

FOCUS ON



NEW BUSINESS

Oneonta Nutrition is a smoothie and juice bar, featuring healthy drinks, a variety of shakes, loaded teas, and specialty drinks. Owners Ashley and Kevin Watson are from Red Bay in Franklin County. Why did they locate their business in Oneonta? Ashley explained, “Kevin has family who live in the area and I feel safe driving my commute and working in Oneonta.” They considered several locations and decided on our city, based on its peaceful and safe environment. Ashley said, “Oneonta is now my home away from home.”

When asked about their experience in opening a new business during a worldwide pandemic, Ashley shared, “We signed the lease on our building in March 2020 when the COVID-19 virus was just beginning to ramp up, but we elected to place our faith in God and persevere with the support of our family. Additionally, after meeting and feeling so welcomed by Oneonta residents and OBA members Tara Murphree and Bill Hendrickson, I knew that we were doing the right thing in the right town because they both made us feel so welcome.” They also assisted the Watsons by helping them to get the building remodeled in time for their July opening. The Watsons also commissioned Tara to paint a colorful butterfly mural on an interior wall of the building. Ashley continued, “We are very blessed



Kevin & Ashley Watson

and our business is thriving. We are so thankful for the support of Oneonta and we do not regret opening during 2020.”

Oneonta Nutrition is located at 213 First Avenue East. Business hours are 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, and closed on Sunday. Phone is 205-237-9696.

By Tara Murphree
OBA Board Member



Cruise & Croon 2021



*Family Fun in Beautiful
Downtown Oneonta!*

**SAT
MAY 29
5-8 PM**

**SAT
JUL 31
5-8 PM**

**SAT
OCT 30
5-8 PM**



OUTSTANDING SHOWCASE OF CARS, TRUCKS, MOTORCYCLES, ATVs, & OTR VEHICLES | ALL MAKES & MODELS | NO ENTRY FEE DINING | SHOPPING | LIVE MUSIC | FAMILY FUN FOR ALL AGES

FOR MORE INFO, VISIT ONEONTABUSINESSASSOCIATION.COM OR CALL 205.813.7194

The Chapter V band returns to the first 5th Saturday cruise-in of 2021 on May 29 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. Their mix of oldies but goodies complement the vast array of classic and new vehicles their proud owners display at this event. No longer just for classic cars, the OBA also welcomes participation by owners of sports cars, trucks, motorcycles, ATVs, and off-road vehicles. There is no charge to participate. Patrons will have the opportunity to dine and shop at the stores who extend their hours to accommodate the crowd. See you at the Cruise!



THE CHAPTER V BAND

Volunteer

**19TH ANNUAL
JUNE
FLING**

**SAT,
JUNE 12**

Sign-Up at 205.813-7194 or online at oneontabusinessassociation.com/volunteer



FEATURING THE
SHEPHERD-BECKER QUINTET
DINNER & DANCING
UNDER THE STARS

FRIDAY, JUNE 11, 2021

6-9 PM

DOWNTOWN

ONEONTA, ALABAMA

A PRELUDE TO THE
19TH ANNUAL JUNE FLING

VIP TICKETS GO ON SALE APRIL 2021

19TH ANNUAL
**JUNE
FLING**

06.12.21
9 AM-4 PM

DOWNTOWN
ONEONTA
ALABAMA

THE SUMMERTIME FESTIVAL OF FUN

FOOD • MUSIC • CRUISE-IN • KIDZ FUN ZONE
BOOTHES FOR FINE ART, CRAFTS, NON-PROFITS, & BUSINESSES



Scan the code on the left or visit
oneontabusinessassociation.com/fling.html
for more info and to register your booth.



One of the most applauded achievements of the OBA in recent years is the *Light the Town* project that places LED lighting on the rooftop perimeter of buildings in the downtown district. Over 25 years ago, Glenn Glaze, then manager of Wittmeier Ace Hardware, donated incandescent lights for this purpose. By 2018, the City removed them due to deterioration and the overall maintenance costs.

The OBA's campaign to replace the lights kicked off in June 2019 and, with the expert volunteer assistance of Mike Gordon and Mark Gargus, the lights were installed in Phase 1 just in time for Christmas. The initial expenditure totaled \$17,309.20 and spanned



10,560 ft. with over 5,800 lights. Help was also provided by OTELCO, Xcel Masonry, United Rentals, and West One Holdings. Operating hydraulic lifts, OTELCO's Mike Cobb and Keith Benefield even helped with installation on three weekends. Other volunteers were Pat Clanton, Daniel Clem, Rachel Gargus, Bill Hendrickson, Tara Murphree, Jimmy and Lisa Wester, and Patti Williams.

Outside the Phase 1 area, the Blount County Courthouse, Blount County Board of Education, The Huie Group, Sixth Street Station, The Olive Home, OTELCO, and Magnolia House each contributed \$2/ft to add lights to their buildings.

The lights were originally planned for just the Christmas holiday season. However, when the pandemic struck in 2020, the OBA board decided that the year-round illumination would help to spread cheer and hope in our community. Since that time, lights have been added to the OBA Art Walk, Charlie B's, The Little Brick Church, and the Community Arts Council. The OBA also plans to add lights to the rooftop perimeter of the flag mural in the Art Walk and other areas as funds permit.

We're often asked, "Well, how much does it cost?" A string of suspended black commercial grade sockets is 330' long and costs \$220.50 each. A box of warm white S14 LED medium base e26 bulbs is \$39.85. There are also additional expenses for shipping, as well as sockets and plugs.

Power is another expense though only a fraction of the cost that incandescent required. Calculations for powering Phase 1 per night is 25¢ per entire square city block.

The City of Oneonta and many individuals contributed toward this project. Those who helped "light the town" are listed at www.oneontabusinessassociation.com/light. Everyone is invited to join the group of generous and caring individuals who helped to "light the town."

For more info, contact Bill Hendrickson (project chairman) at 205-532-6464.

By Patti Williams
OBA Board Member

