

THE ONEIDA



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❖ ONEIDA INDIAN NATION NEWS ❖

THE ONEIDA ❖ ISSUE 4 VOLUME 21 ❖ DECEMBER, 2019

Oneida Indian Nation Honors Veterans at 19th Annual Recognition Ceremony



On Friday, November 8, the Oneida Indian Nation welcomed more than 400 veterans, active-duty service members and their guests to Turning Stone Resort Casino for its 19th annual Veterans Recognition Ceremony and Breakfast. This cherished yearly event is one of the largest of its kind in upstate New York.

Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter served as a presenting speaker. In his remarks, he addressed the Nation's military history, its role as First Allies to American colonists during the Revolutionary War and its support of the military ever since.

"Our bond was forged nearly 250 years ago during the Revolutionary War when our nation, the Oneida Indian Nation, fought alongside the rebel colonists," he said. "The Oneida people played a key role in the battles of Oriskany, Fort Stanwix and Saratoga, which were crucial to winning the war and ushering in the birth of America."

Halbritter recognized Oneida Member veterans – and all veterans and active-duty service members – for their service. He also highlighted the great programs the Nation offers to assist veterans, including a partnership with PGA Hope

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Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter talks with Maj. Gen. Brian J. Mennes, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum Commander, during the Fort's Native American Heritage Month celebration.

Nation Representative Visits Fort Drum for Native American Heritage Month Celebration

Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter traveled to Fort Drum to serve as guest speaker at the National American Indian Heritage Month observance held at the base on November 20. Much like his remarks at the November 20 Veterans Day ceremony, Halbritter spoke of the Nation's little-known role as America's First Allies in the Revolutionary War and the legacy of service among Nation Members in every armed conflict since.

American Indians have a proud history of military service in the US. Today, there

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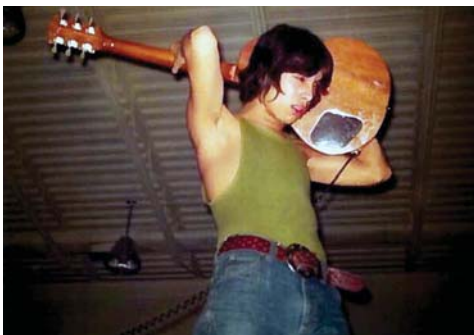
www.OneidaIndianNation.com

For Oneida Member Irv Lyons Jr., Music is Everything

Above Armory Square in downtown Syracuse is where Irv Lyons Jr. (Turtle Clan) spends his week days. The popular singer-songwriter and guitarist works at the Museum of Science and Technology as its chief development officer, a new role that he took on last December. Education is a deeply personal issue for Irv, particularly because of its role in the lives of American Indians, who have historically been disenfranchised and forgotten in the public school system.

That is what drew Irv to music at a very young age. School wasn't easy for him, but that didn't stop him from learning.

"Music was my education," he said. "I picked up my first guitar at four years old. My uncle had a nice guitar and my mother had a great record collection. She really got me interested in music and it became something I was drawn to. I played all of their 45s and 33s – from Chubby Checker, The Platters and Ray Charles. She loved R&B."



A teenage Irv playing his guitar behind his back. (submitted photo)

At twelve years old, Irv got his first record: "Abraxas" by the Latin rock band Santana. It was a seminal moment for Irv because that's when music became more than a hobby. He taught himself to play by ear, and by the time he was a teenager, he knew he was "pretty good."

"I went to bed with my guitar," Irv said. "When you're passionate about something, the learning process is no barrier. I was like a sponge. I learned chords by learning a song – and eventually you meet other kids and musicians, and you pick up ideas."

Irv remembers some of his first-ever gigs playing local clubs and school dances. The band he was in, The 13th Hour, played the classic rock hits of the day, such as Grand Funk Railroad, Free, Edgar Winter and others. He said it was a thrill putting all of that music together.

"When you're done with your set and everyone says they love it – you get caught up in that excitement," he recalled. "A former band mate actually sent me an old photo of me grandstanding a bit [laughs]. It brought back some great memories."



Irv Lyons Jr. with his beloved guitar in his office at the MOST.

Irv graduated from West Genesee High School in 1976. Through countless gigs during his high school days, the influences in his playing style became clear. His Carlos Santana-esque sound is instantly recognizable, but made all his own due to his inimitable technique. Irv is left handed but learned to play on a right-handed guitar, which means the strings run high to low instead of low to high.

His signature guitar – a baby blue Fender Stratocaster he's had for more

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TOLL-FREE MEMBER PHONE LINE

1.800.685.6115

Nation Council Meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month at 10:30 a.m., Nation Council House, Oneida Territory via Route 46 South, Oneida, NY
For further information contact: The Oneida Indian Nation, P.O. Box 1, Vernon, NY 13476, or visit us on the web: www.OneidaIndianNation.com

DOING BUSINESS ON NATION LAND

The Oneida Indian Nation has developed a website for use by any business who does business on Nation lands and collects Oneida Indian Nation Sales Tax to remit the taxes to the Nation online. If you have a business on Nation land or are thinking about starting one up, contact the Nation's Department of Taxation at 315-366-9393 for assistance. They can help answer any questions and provide training on the website's use.

than ten years – was custom-built by guitar guru Chuck Dean and features a left-handed body (volume and tone knobs would be on top if you played right handed). But instead of stringing it so he can play traditionally (low to high), he keeps it strung so a right hander can play it.

“There’s nothing like a Stratocaster,” he said. “It’s so versatile.”

Irv has been a staple of the Syracuse-area music scene for years. He and his cousin, Rex Lyons (Onondaga), formed the Ripcords in the early 2000s – a five-piece band playing primarily Americana roots, rockabilly and blues music influenced by New Orleans.

“Playing with Rex has been great,” Irv said. “He’s native and I’m native, which is something you can’t take away. It was an instant connection – and when you’re making music with other people, something ethereal happens.”

The band prides itself on its musical independence and variety, as well as its strong original numbers. About five years ago, the band added a horn section that infused some additional power to the bluesy quintet. They continue to add obscure covers to their sets to keep things fresh and fun, both for the crowd and themselves.

“We don’t like to play the music that everybody else is doing,”

Irv said of the iconic local band. “Lots of people would call us the Jr. Mavericks, which I take as a huge compliment.”

The Mavericks built a successful career throughout the 1990s playing a combination of neo-traditional country and rockabilly styles.



Irv from his days in the US Army.

The Ripcords were somewhat of a reintroduction to the music scene for Irv, who spent twenty years prior to the band’s formation serving in the United States Army. Irv put the guitar down for a while

to focus on his family and, ultimately, retired from the service in 2000.

The music of the Ripcords also led to his own songwriting. In late 2018, Irv released his latest solo album "Brothers and Sisters" to critical acclaim. It features the single “Lookin’ For The Light,” which was nominated for Song of the Year at the 2019 Native American Music Awards, held at the Seneca Niagara Resort. The album itself was also nominated for Best Rock Recording.

“You’d be amazed how many Native Americans are making great music,” he said.

“From 2001 to 2011, the GRAMMYs featured a Native American award, but it was dissolved, which was an insult to me. So the Native American Music Awards has become big and its production is world class – like any awards show you’d see on television.”

When he recorded the album at Subcat Studios in Syracuse, he also signed to its record label that will help produce and push out his future releases. Irv also signed to a national management agency to position himself for the best opportunities in the coming months.

“The record is really a compilation of different styles because I wanted to

showcase my songwriting,” he said. “I wanted to position myself in a different light.”

Recording and mixing the entire album took six months and was full of his signature Stratocaster sound. The classic tone and sonic color of the Stratocaster is all over the best rock albums, regardless of time period. Its versatility continues to be an asset valued by many musicians.

Irv is already in the final mixing process of his new single, which features singer Melanie Cramer. He’s got a library of around fifty to sixty other songs that he’s hoping to either put to tape or sell to publishers.

“I’ve got something for everyone on this album,” he said. “It’s got more jazz and Latin elements than the Ripcords material, but some straight up rock and roll too. I really wanted to show all I can do.”

Now, looking out of his corner office at the MOST, Irv wants to instill that similar work ethic in kids interested in science and technology. He says that the mission at the MOST is not far off from the traditional Haudenosaunee proverb—that in every deliberation we must consider the impact on the seventh generation.

“The future really is in STEM fields. A lot of

jobs here can’t be filled because kids aren’t qualified in science, technology, engineering or mathematics,” he said. “When the kids visit, you can see the look of discovery on their faces when they’re interacting with the exhibits. It’s great that we’re able to spark that interest.”

Music has led Irv on a tremendous journey, and it’s one that he’s excited to continue. Still, he recalls the intense drive he needed to become a successful musician.

“I still practice two to three hours a day,” he said. “You have to do it. I’m always trying to get better.” ♦



(submitted photo)

Nation Honors Veterans

Continued from Page 1

and Clear Path for Veterans, which provides golf instruction to disabled veterans.

Nation Member Mary Blau (Turtle Clan) recited the Thanksgiving Address in the Oneida language before breakfast was served, and the Nation also announced a \$1,000 donation to Feed Our Vets Utica Pantry, a long-time participant at the event.

US Representative Anthony Brindisi, a life-long Utica resident, served as the event's keynote speaker. The Congressman emphasized the progress he's made in ensuring veterans get the services they've earned. His bipartisan leadership in Washington has brought the entire Mohawk Valley region – home to more than 50,000 veterans – closer together. His remarks touched upon the idea that we are all Americans first and that the country is forever in the debt of our dedicated service men and women.



Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter presented Rep. Anthony Brindisi with a replica Two Row wampum belt in the spirit of friendship and respect.

"Whether it's access to healthcare at the VA, whether it's job training, whether its access to housing or food, it's important that year round we do all that is within in our power to pay tribute to our veterans who sacrificed for us," Brindisi said in his address.

A long-time advocate for veterans, Congressman Brindisi recently had his first bill signed into law, which preserves critical VA housing and travel programs for veterans and their families. ♦



Oneida Member Mary Blau recited the Thanksgiving Address in the Oneida language to the more than 400 guests at the annual Veterans Recognition Ceremony and Breakfast on Nov. 8.



Col. Jeffery P. Lucas, Fort Drum Garrison Commander (above, center) was a special guest at the Veterans Recognition Ceremony. Members of the Rome VFW Post 2246 provided color guard duties as well as a remembrance of prisoners of war and those missing in action.



Oneida Member Chip Isaacs (Turtle Clan) US Army, attended the annual event. Chip served two tours of duty, from 1966 – 1969 in Viet Nam as a staff sergeant in the Army. For more about the Oneida Indian Nation's legacy of military service visit: www.oneidaindiannation.com/oneidas-legacy-to-freedom/





Quality Health Services

Providing top medical, dental and behavioral health care for all generations is the number one priority for Oneida Indian Nation Health Services, which serves nearly 3,500 clients. Health Services specializes in areas of medical care specifically needed in the American Indian population, including pre-diabetic and diabetic care. The program also provides preventative healthcare services. Appointments are preferred.

The Oneida Indian Nation Health Services is located at 2057 Dream Catcher Plaza in Oneida. The telephone number for all medical, dental and Behavioral Health Services calls is (315) 829-8700 or 1-800-663-4324.

Hours: Monday 8:30 a.m. – 7 p.m., Tues. – Fri. 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. by appointment. ❖

After-Hours Medical Call Center

All Health Services patients can call the Health Center after hours to talk to our medical call center. Your call will be triaged and patients will be appropriately directed based upon their concern. All calls are forwarded to the patient's providers for follow up if required.

The Medical Call Center is not to be used for medical emergencies, prescription refills or to make or cancel appointments. For more information, contact Lisa Winn, Patient Access Manager, at (315) 829-8715 or 1-800-663-4324. ❖

Annual Winter Blood Drive Planned

Oneida Indian Nation Enterprises and American Red Cross Blood Services are sponsoring a blood drive on Wednesday, Dec. 18 at the Chautauqua/Canandaigua rooms of Turning Stone Resort Casino from 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. The drive is open to the public.

Donor appointments are preferred, but walk-ins will also be accepted. To schedule an appointment to donate, contact Pat Catalano at (315) 829-8215 or visit www.redcrossblood.org. ❖

Seasonal Flu Shots Available

The medical providers at Oneida Indian Nation Health Services recommend the flu vaccine for all persons ages 6 months and older and for those who are at the greatest risk of complications, including pregnant women, children and elders who are at risk for flu-related complications. The flu can cause certain health conditions

to become worse, including diabetes, asthma, and heart and lung disease. A flu shot is needed each year because influenza viruses are always changing and immunity wanes over time.

To schedule an appointment for a flu shot, call Health Services at (315) 829-8700 or 1-800-663-4324. ❖

Health Services Policy Reminders

Health Services would like to remind their patients/clients about the following policies.

Paperwork and Forms

Paperwork that is needed for school, such as exam forms, medication release or immunization records, requires 7-10 business days to be processed.

When asking Health Services to fax paperwork or forms to a school, the correct fax number must be provided.

Any records needed for personal use, such as immunization records or lab results, will require a Release of Information to be completed by the patient/client prior to release of records.

Children's Physicals

Annual physicals for children ages 2-18 are scheduled 1 year and one day (366 days) apart. Only the child's parent is authorized to bring them to the physical appointment. The only exception is if someone other than the parent is the child's legal guardian (grandparent, foster parent, or court-appointed guardian with proper paperwork).

For more information about the policies, contact Lisa Winn, patient access manager, at (315) 829-8700 or 1-800-663-4324.

Recreation & Youth Development Department Programs

Winter Recess Program

Youth in grades 3-8 are invited to the winter recess program at the Rec Center on Jan. 2 and Jan. 3 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Winter recess is limited to the first 15 students who return their registration packet and \$10 payment by Dec. 20.

On Jan. 2, the youth will participate in morning recreation activities, games and outdoor play (weather permitting). In the afternoon they will attend a performance of Beauty and the Beast at Syracuse Stage. On Jan. 3 they will travel to the MOST (Museum of Science and Technology) to watch Superpower Dogs and view the exhibits.

Each day they attend, youth must bring a bagged lunch, wear/bring sneakers and winter attire.

December and January Fitness Programs

A variety of fitness classes will be held Mondays-Thursdays, Dec. 2 – Dec. 23. The following classes are held at noon: Monday: 6-pack abs, Tuesday: cardio blast, Wednesday: 30 minute AMRAP (As Many Reps As Possible), Thursday: Core, Stability and Flexibility. On Tuesdays cardio circuit classes will be held at 5 p.m. and on Thursdays is a FIT (Frequency Intensity Time) Challenge at 5 p.m.

January classes begin Jan. 7 and end Jan. 31, 2020. Classes held at noon include: Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training), Tuesdays/Thursdays AMRAP workout. On Mondays and Tuesdays boxing will be held at 5 p.m., and on Thursdays, Cardio Circuit is held at 5:30 p.m.

All classes are open to ages 13 and older, including employees. Participants age 13-17 must attend classes with their parent or guardian.

ESPN+ Boxing at Event Center

On Saturday, Jan. 18, 2020 the Recreation Dept. is sponsoring an evening of ESPN+ Boxing at the Event Center as Eleider Alvarez and Michael Seals go head-to-head in a 10-round light heavyweight bout. Participants will meet at the Event Center at 5 p.m.

Tickets are \$10 per person. Registration must be completed in person, with payment, by Jan. 6. All ages are welcome; participants younger than age 18 must attend with their parent or guardian.

Open Basketball

The gym will be available on Saturdays from 1-3 p.m. for pick up games of basketball until April 25, 2020. Open to ages 13 and older, and employees. Minors (ages 13-17) must be accompanied by their parent or guardian and have their signature on the waiver. All participants must show a valid ID each time they come to the gym and follow all facility regulations.

Sunday Football at the Rec

Come to the Rec Center every Sunday from 1-6 p.m. to watch pro football games on the big screen TV right up to the big game on Feb. 2, 2020. During half-time, flag football will be played, either outside or in the gym. Participants are welcome to bring a dish to pass.

Coed Volleyball League

Coed volleyball league games are played at 6 p.m., 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. every Monday through Feb. 17, 2020 in the Nation gym. Proper footwear and clothing must be worn at all times in the gym.

Youth Ambassador Program (YAP)

The YAP and Jr. YAP will be busy in December with community service and holiday crafts workshops. Students who participate in the required number of workshops will be eligible for off-site Fun Events.

On Friday, Dec. 20, the YAP youth will attend a Fun Event at PiNZ at Sangertown Square from 5-8:30 p.m. The Jr. YAP Fun Event is on Monday, Dec. 23 from 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. as the youth travel to Billy Beez at Sangertown Square in the morning, then to the C&E Center in the afternoon to join the Elders for Bingo.

The YAP is open to students in grades 7-12 and Jr. YAP is for students in grades 3-6.

After School Program (ASP)

The ASP is held at the Rec Center Monday-Friday from 3-5 p.m. for grades 3-12. Registration is limited to 30 participants. The ASP is held only when school is in session.

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Eligibility: Oneida Indian Nation Members, Children of Enrolled Oneidas, Oneida Indian Nation Health Services clients and where noted, employees or the general public. All grounds and buildings of the Recreation facility are alcohol, smoke and drug free, as are all on-site and off-site events for participants of all ages. All program participants must sign a waiver; participants ages 17 and younger must also have their parent/guardian sign the waiver. Proper athletic clothing and footwear must be worn in the gym and Fitness Room. Recreation activities will not be held when the building is closed for a holiday.

For more information about Recreation Dept. programs, call (315) 829-8484 or 1-800-685-6115.



Oneida Indian Nation
P.O. Box 1
Vernon NY 13476

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More information about the Oneida Indian Nation programs and services can be found at **OneidaIndianNation.com**

Remember to like and follow the Oneida Indian Nation on Facebook and Twitter.

 @OneidaIndianNationNY

 @OneidaNatnNews

SAVE THE DATES ...

**Friday, Dec. 20
Deadline to Sign Up for
Winter Recess @ Rec**

Info: 315-829-8486 or 829-8217
or 1-800-685-6115

**Tuesday, Dec. 31
New Year's Eve Potluck
and Social**

9 p.m. at the Cookhouse/Council House
Info: 315-829-8801 or 1-800-685-6115

**Tuesday, Dec. 31
Elders Potluck and
New Year's Eve Party**

5 p.m. at the C & E Center
Info: 315-829-8133 or 1-800-685-6115

Fort Drum

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are more than 31,000 American Indian and Alaskan Native members of the Armed Forces. Nation Members continue to serve today.

**American Indians serve
in the armed forces at a
higher rate than any
other demographic.**

**Since 9/11, nearly
19 percent of Native
Americans have served in
the armed forces, compared
to an average of 14 percent
of all other ethnicities.**

(militarytimes.com)

The special event highlighted the need to develop STEM education, particularly in the American Indian community.

“The Armed Forces has consistently provided access to specialized training

and job opportunities that has been historically closed to Native Americans elsewhere,” Halbritter said. “The education gap is particularly acute in the STEM fields. Our young people are worthy of so much more, and the military provides important stepping stones for our people.”

Halbritter also highlighted Defense Department initiatives like the Army Educational Outreach Program, which supports STEM education and the expansion of the GI Bill to help transitioning service members receive STEM training.

“The US military has treated us as equals and leaders, not as relics and punchlines,” he said in closing. “As the



Oneida Indian Nation Representative Ray Halbritter delivered the keynote address during the Fort Drum Native American Heritage Month celebration Nov. 20.

United States’ most diverse organization – one that values higher education and offers limitless training – the military serves as one of the best chances in which Native Americans have to take hold of their future.” ♦