

Walt Lipka Profile

"I can teach you how to draw, but I can't teach you how to be an artist!" I remember those words as I sat in Mr. Lipka's art class my freshman year in the old high school. I struggled to get the idea behind the concept of converging lines making a two-dimensional drawing magically appear as a three-dimensional image fading into the distance. Needless to say, I wasn't his star pupil for my one and only CHS art course!

During the 1960s, the old CHS gymnasium was the scene of the annual spring art and music presentations. It was always well attended and was a highlight of the school year. Mr. Lipka always had student presentations on exhibit. I can remember being jealous of some of the works, especially the paintings of Harry Orlyk. I wished that I could be that talented! Incidentally, he is still painting and exhibiting locally from his home in Salem NY.

Mr. Lipka (I could never call him Walt, though he insisted) was always generous with his time for students, whether assisting in extracurricular activities or just being a good listener when students had a problem. His room in the new high school was a welcoming place.

He also loved his new art room (before the latest renovations) since it had a floor to ceiling window overlooking the original flagpole area and parking lots. He said he never tired of that view!

Here is a picture of the CHS Tiger he made for the Cohoes All American City parade in the late 1960s I can remember the art club working for weeks on this project... and he insisted that the Tiger should show pride!



Mr. Lipka was the advisor to the Art club during this time. It was an extremely popular after-school activity. He also volunteered many hours of afternoon and weekend time helping design, build, paint, and provide the artwork for many of the CHS student plays and exhibitions. He also drew advertisement cartoons for Joyce and John's Deli. If anyone has samples of those advertisements, the Alumni Association would love to have copies! All of these extra hours and activities were given without any compensation... he did it out of love for his students and the greater Cohoes community.

I became the director of the Cohoes Public Library in the late 1990s. Mr. Lipka was city historian and actively researching Cohoes history with an emphasis in uncovering the untold story of Cohoes native and major league baseball player George Stacey Davis. We had many discussions of Cohoes history during his research of the microfiche newspaper holdings of the New York State Library. He even uncovered clippings of my family dating back to the late 1800s. He had a particular fascination with 20th century Cohoes politics. I loved those discussions and I learned a lot from his insights and experiences. I also began to remember some of what he taught us way back in the mid-1960s in his basic Art I course. He taught us the importance of lighting and perspective in art. I told him I used his suggestions in the black and white photos I took back then. I guess I did pay attention and learned something after all! He got a big kick out of that.

After I left the library and began my own library teaching career, I sought out his advice on teaching methodology and union politics. His advice was invaluable and I now realize he did teach me.

Steve Lackmann Class of '69

REUNION NEWS

Class of 1976 CHS/KMA 50-Year Reunion

When: September 19, 2026
Time: 6:30 – 10:30 PM
Where: Cohoes/Waterford Elks
Address: North Mohawk Street, Cohoes, New York
Cost: \$50.00 per person, meal/entertainment,
Cash Bar
Music: Pepper Shakers with EJ Hopeck
Contact: Steve Rock (steve_rock_0961@yahoo.com)
Updates: Facebook page
(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/799722423480186/>).
Dress: Informal, dress for comfort

Class of 1986 CHS 40-Year Reunion

When: September 12, 2026
Time: 1:00-7:30 PM
Where: Moreau Lake State Park
Address: 605 Old Saratoga Road, Gansevoort, NY
The Fernwood Pavilion.
Cost: \$25.00 per person \$30.00 per couple
Covers Rental and DJ only
Music: Party Boys Entertainment (Greg Ethier)
Contact: Lisa (Paul) Trapp at brackL5@aim.com
Updates: Invitations sent one month before with all
information on cost of food and drinks plan,
updates on FB @Cohoes Class of 86-40th reunion
Payment Due: August 14, 2026
Dress: Informal, dress for comfort