



A nonprofit corporation

THE BIRCH BARK

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Rich Deering '73, Alumni & Community Director • Michael Mattson '83, Camp Director

THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER OF BIRCH ROCK CAMP

REFLECTIONS FROM THE ROCK

By Rich Deering

Alumni & Community Director '73 –

It's October and it still feels like summer here on Lake McWain! Yes, the docks have been pulled out; the boats are now stored away; the cabin mattresses have been stacked up; the gardens have been edged and cut back for the season. Although the power has been temporarily turned off on campus, the spirited energy of the 2017 season continues as we transition to 2018.

In this edition of *The Birch Bark*, we share Seth Brewster's heartfelt tribute to our beloved camp caretaker **Donald Munn**. His poignant testimonial speaks to Don's profound commitment and love for Birch Rock. BRC correspondent Russ "Coach" Wilson profiles distinguished alumnus Chris Carney '67, now celebrating fifty years of connection to camp! Chris regaled Coach with plenty of rollicking stories about the 60's and 70's on the Hillside.

We've got wonderful accomplishments from 2017 for this edition, and thrilling news about the littlest Birch Rocker. On September 8th, Camp Director Mike Mattson and his wife Becca joyfully welcomed **Simon James Mattson**, weighing in at 9 lbs. 3 oz. Mike reports that Simon is an absolute delight. But both new parents are looking forward to the first time the whole family sleeps through the night!



Simon James Mattson

Because of your dedication to our singular camp, we thrive and endure — and anticipate a phenomenal 92nd season. We can take great pride as generations of Birch Rockers continue to "Help the Other Fellow," a compassionate response to others that is sorely needed in our turbulent world.

With gratitude,



ALUMNUS PROFILE:

F. CHRISTOPHER CARNEY '60s,'T80s

By Russ (Coach) Wilson

When ten-year-old Chris Carney came down the driveway for the first time in the summer of 1967, he, like any first-year camper, was apprehensive. It wasn't his first time in Maine, but Birch Rock was a long way from his family's summer cottage in the coastal town of Harpswell, and four weeks in an unknown place with new people seemed like an eternity.

But he was in good hands, his parents assured him. His father knew Chief and Onie Brewster from his time at Kimball-Union Academy, even working in the kitchen there with Albert during the Korean War. He was welcomed into Cabin 3 by counselor Richie Monroe,

who was eager to get the parents gone so Chris and his cabinmates, one of whom was Pete Haas, could jump into the Birch Rock experience without further delay. Little did Chris know that it was the first step on a journey that would help define who he was to become over the next half-century.

For six summers he spread his wings and made the most of his time as a camper. There were the trips with Mike Denault, including the adventure down the full length of

the Crooked River during which the rapids mangled a canoe and they spent the night in a field in awestruck fear of a wicked lightning storm. There were sailing lessons with Peter Herzig. The mini golf course in Cabin 8. The nature trail behind Buzzards Roost. Rest periods sprawled on his bed with Hardy Boys novels and counselors reading to them at night. The independence and character building of those summers, he now says, were "irreplaceable."

Eager to extend his camper experience to those coming up behind him, he graduated to CIT in the summer of '72 and then joined the staff for the next two summers. Those were the



Karen and Chris Carney

days of canvas canoes, wooden rowboats, and leaky Turnabouts with which he had to teach sailing, not to mention the precariously leaning boathouse, but "spirit was high and we made do

with what we had," he says. He recalls hot movie nights watching reels that came in the mail, playing bingo with beans, and always scrubbing with gold Dial soap because Chief insisted on it to prevent infections of the myriad cuts and scrapes boys got around camp. He distinctly remembers the arrival of first-year camper Rich Deering in Hilton B and having to tell his mother to stop assembling his bed. "We're all going to learn to make our beds together," he told her.

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*Alumnus Profile: ...
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There was also adversity in his days on staff. When Chief passed away early in the summer of '73, they rallied together to keep the wheels turning however they could, taking care of their campers as well as Onie. And, the following summer, when the new director split early, Chris and the rest of the staff were left to shut camp down for the season on their own.

Chris was lucky enough to land the plum assignment of being Onie's personal driver in the summer of '74, chauffeuring her into town in a gold-and-black Pontiac sedan to get her hair done and go to the bank. Like everyone, he also loved working in the kitchen with Albert, and they had many a political conversation about the ongoing Watergate saga. And there were, of course, the less glamorous responsibilities; back then, being on Patrol meant sitting in the old, smelly Upper Washhouse alone with a bug light until midnight so boys could do their business safely if nature called. All part of helping the other fellow.

Meanwhile, Chris had finished at the Holderness School in New Hampshire and enrolled in the famed hotel school at Cornell University, and, as his life began to arc in the direction of that profession, his summers at Birch Rock came to a close. Or so he thought. In the summer of '76, his job at a lobster shack in Harpswell fell through unexpectedly, leaving him in the lurch. Although camp had already started, he called Mike Denault and asked him if he needed any help. He did. Chris's



Chris on Ski Patrol at Sunday River

parents were in Europe at the time and there was no way to contact them, so he packed up the car, took their golden retriever named Ginger, and left a note on the cottage door saying he was at Birch Rock.

It would be the last of his nine summers on the hillside, but he stayed involved as a board member in the 80s and has always been a friend of Birch Rock. He went on to great success in the hospitality industry with Ritz-Carlton and Sheraton hotels, then transitioned into the real estate side of the business and worked for Fidelity for fourteen years. He retired in 2008 and moved from Boston to Maine the following year with his wife, Karen, and now dedicates much of his time to volunteering and philanthropy in addition to his private real estate investing. He and Karen are blessed with two daughters, Liz and Annie, who attended Camp Runoia, Birch Rock's sister camp.

For all the successes he has achieved, Chris credits Birch Rock with providing a strong foundation based on education, character development, and lifelong

friendships. And it all began when his parents dropped him off on that summer day in 1967.

"It will change your life and be with you your whole life," he says. "The things you learn there, whether deliberately or through osmosis, will set you in a better way apart from others."

And, of course, he still uses gold Dial soap.

DECADE CLUB ADDS THREE MORE

The Birch Rock Community was proud to honor **Gage Wheeler, Noah Keates** and **Gordon Hargraves** for 10 years at Birch Rock Camp. Director Rich Deering honored each one of these dedicated gentlemen with his own day of tributes and testimonials, followed by bestowing the coveted BRC Decade Club vest.



Gage Wheeler, Noah Keates & Gordon Hargraves

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BIRCH ROCK CHEERS TO OUR NEWEST WHALES!!!

Nine Birch Rockers conquered the challenge of the five-mile swim around the lake this summer. The Whales started early in the summer and kept on coming. Completing this tremendous feat this summer were: **Noah Birch, Seth Brewster, Andrew Chingos, David Colasin, Jack Flynn, RJ Hewins, Hugh Jacks, Matt Schwind and Matt Straut.**



The 2017 Whales

TRUSTEE EMERITI: BOB CLEAVES, GEOFFREY & LINDSAY ALEXANDER

Recognized for their distinguished duty after serving multiple three-year terms as board members of Birch Rock Camp, **Bob Cleaves** '60s, S'70s, P'00s of South Portland, ME and **Geoffrey and Lindsay Alexander** P'00s of Cape Elizabeth, ME have been elected to the inaugural class of Trustee Emeriti. We applaud their lifetime dedication to our camp community.

MISSION STATEMENT

Birch Rock Camp is dedicated to giving boys an adventurous summer experience that builds self-confidence, broadens accomplishments and strengthens character. Our back-to-basics program emphasizes enjoyment and stewardship of nature, and mastery of traditional camping skills. We model lives of simplicity, creativity and enduring friendship. With our motto, "Help the Other Fellow," we encourage boys to grow in generosity, integrity and mutual support.



FOURTEEN CAMPERS ACCEPT CHALLENGE OF THE ANNUAL TRIATHLON

The Triathlon field was highly competitive this summer. It included Jack Flynn, Seth Brewster, Hugh Jacks, David Colasin, Matthew Schwind, Matt Straut, Andrew Chingos, Cooper Durcan, Gus Tringale, Sam Rotman, James Neville, Jonah Keates and Jeffrey Napier-Kane. Training alongside the upper campers was an relay team of lower campers, including Sam King for the swim, Jackson Mercier for the bike, and Lukas Fernandes for the run. The race was the tightest in BRC Triathlon history. There were sprints down the driveway between runners as they tried to edge out the competition, and the end results were spectacular! **Andrew Chingos** claimed first place in a stunning show of endurance, while **Cooper Durcan** held on to second. **Matt Schwind** beat past Lukas Fernandes in a thrilling last-second sprint on the driveway to capture third. What a race!

EIGHT OUTSTANDING BIRCH ROCKERS COMPLETE COUNSELOR-IN-TRAINING PROGRAM

Under the direction of Zach Lashley, eight fine young gentlemen completed the BRC leadership program. We salute their hard work and determination this summer. Congrats to **Stu Whittier, Chris Klein, Asa Kaplan, Brad Schlauder, Cole Madden, Kyle Perkins, RJ Hewins, and Josh Cooke.** All eight CITs also completed American Red Cross Lifeguard training.



WHAT A DAY FOR A HIKE!

By Erik Joellson

The Birch Rock Outing Club was launched on September 16th with an inaugural hike in the White Mountains. This hike drew an impressive cross-section of the Birch Rock Community, including campers and Family campers, counselors, current and former trip directors, staff (including medical staff), parents, alumni, trustees, friends, and canine companions. There were 17 of us in all and four dogs!

We were blessed with an unusually warm September day, perfect for our first outing. We set out to conquer the beautiful Welch-Dickey loop trail. A gently sloping wooded trail opened up to a beautiful lookout point over the White Mountain National Forest. From the lookout point it was a steeper push up to the first peak. While scrambling up open rock faces it was easy to see how New Hampshire gets its nickname, the Granite State. As we approached the summit of Welch Mountain, the views kept getting better and better. After a short jaunt up to Dickey Mountain it was time for a lunch break on the open rock face peak. Birch Rockers soaked up the sun and enjoyed the warm company.

After lunch it was time for our final descent with a few more lookout points along the way. A great view of the hike we had just conquered and a few sheer cliffs awaited us. After the hike

we finished the day off with a wonderful Salty Snacks spread supplied by the Rotman family. It was a fantastic end to a fantastic day. A good time was most certainly had by all.

Thank you to everyone who joined in the kick-off event. If you couldn't hike with us this time, worry not! Another BRC Outing Club event will be coming soon. Watch for an announcement via email, on our Birch Rock website, Facebook and Instagram (birch_rock_camp).



Outing Club Group Photo

BIRCH ROCK CAMP TRUSTEES

Lisa Bozzelli, P'10s, Arlington, VA
Ryck Birch, '70s, S'80s, P'10s, Natick, MA
Toby Brewster, '60s, S'80s, P'10s, Concord, NH
Becca Brewster, S'90s, P'10s, Concord, NH
Seth Brewster, '60s, S'80s, P'00s, South Portland, ME
Francie Campbell, P'00s, New York, NY
Michael Castelli, P'10s, Arlington, VA
Nancy Dreyer, P'00s, Newton, MA
JoJo Herzig, P'10s, New York, NY
Peter Herzig, '70s, S'80s, New York, NY
Michael Herzig, '70s, S'80s, P'10s, New York, NY
Fred Howard, '70s, P'00s, Scarborough, ME
Hoddy Klein, P'10s, Skillman, NJ
Julie McLaughlin, P'00s, Princeton, NJ

Mark McLaughlin, P'00s, Princeton, NJ
Jennifer Rotman, P;10s, Westborough, MA
Richard Rotman, P'10s, Westborough, MA
Bob Stone, '60s, P'90s, Winchester, MA
Beverly Stone, P'90s, Winchester, MA
Maria Tringale, P'10s, Medford, MA
Paul Tringale, P'10s, Medford, MA
Bob Tuffy, P'00s, Hanover, MA
David Weeks, S'70s, P'00s, Ellicott City, MD
Arlene Whichard, P'10s, Waterford, ME
Bruce Whichard, P'10s, Waterford, ME
Libby Whittier, P'10s, Cape Elizabeth, ME
Steve Whittier, P'10s, Cape Elizabeth, ME

TRUSTEES EMERITI

Geoffrey Alexander, P'00s, Cape Elizabeth, ME
Lindsay Alexander, P'00s, Cape Elizabeth, ME
Bob Cleaves, '60s, S'70s, P'00s, South Portland, ME

IN GRATITUDE FOR THE LIFE OF DON MUNN

JUNE 18, 2017

By Seth W. Brewster

It was my brother Ben who first mentioned his name to me. It was the summer of 1984, and I had just abandoned New York City and my city-slicker job so I could be at the Center of the Universe — otherwise known as Birch Rock Camp — for the summer. I arrived at Camp one week into the season, and I was put to work on a wide variety of projects, from putting into place a new manual accounting system to leading a trip on the Grand Lakes. (Unless there are any doubts, I much preferred the Grand Lakes Trip).

Ben said to me, “I really want you to meet Don Munn, down at Springer’s Store. I think that he may be able to help out around here.”

“I think that he may be able to help out around here.”

“I think that he may be able to help out around here.”

That introduction ranks right up there in the pantheon of understatements, along with “electricity may help out around here.”

At that time, Ben did have Don start doing a few things on campus, along with his other responsibilities at Springer’s and his dairy farm.

In order for you to have a picture of Birch Rock in 1984, imagine this: other than Pete’s Palace which was built in 1982, the last new building on campus was Hilton which was built in, I believe, 1969. Birch Rock’s first caretaker, Omar Moxcy, who had built many of the cabins on campus, had been retired for a few years. There was no capital fund, and the money we did have was barely enough to pay the program expenses, food, insurance, taxes, and payroll. Just say that our largest surplus was in deferred maintenance. We had plenty and plenty of deferred maintenance.

The physical plant of Birch Rock was being held together by “spit and baling wire.” Literally. In fact, I think that we invented that phrase.

Donald was faced with a nearly sixty-year old summer camp with maintenance problems galore and virtually no money to fix them. He also had plenty of other things to do. Simply put, there was no rational or logical reason that Don would have anything to do with us.

Yet the point where rational thought ends is where love begins.

And in those early years, particularly 1985 through 1995, Don was a walking, talking, fixing, driving, joking embodiment of love.

I am going to quote the world famous philosopher, Magic Johnson, who said: “When you face a crisis, you know who your true friends

are.” This is a fundamental truth of life. And Donald revealed himself as a True Friend almost immediately in our relationship.



Don Munn

Because in 1985, Birch Rock faced a crisis. With the death of my brother Ben and less than 30 campers signed up, there were more than a few meetings about whether the Camp could even open its doors. And yet Don was right there, with his good humor, his jokes, his skills, and his resourcefulness. He was not going anywhere. With respect to the campus, he figured out how to fix anything that was broken with virtually no money. He made us feel that no matter how difficult the problem, there was a solution and that we would get through it. Maybe, most importantly, with his stories and his good-

humored ribbing of me, he made me laugh, which is exactly what I needed. And we, Birch Rock, put one foot in front of the other through those years, with Don (and Janice) to lean on for support.

Every crisis, Don and Janice were there, boots on the ground. On a late evening in August of 1991, I had the camp director’s worst nightmare. I got a phone call that a van full of staff and boys was involved in a crash in Northern Maine, and virtually all of them had been taken to the hospital. Sweat was pouring out of my palms and my heart was racing. While I was on the phone, however, Don and Janice were on the road to the hospital to bring the boys back to Camp, and they did.

During this time, it was the Battle of the Alamo and Don made it clear that he was willing to fight down to the very last person to keep this flame of Birch Rock Camp from being extinguished.

When you have that kind of tenacity and good old-fashioned stubbornness, you can see how it can transform a Camp — and a campus. Since 1984, the list of new buildings under the Birch Rock Renaissance is a long one: the Lodge renovation, the Lower Washhouse, the Kennel, Denault’s Den, the Boathouse, Owl’s Perch, Chief’s, Brewster Lodge, the Staff Swim Tent, the Camper Swim Tent, the Waterfront itself, the Upper Washhouse, the renovated Hilton, and of course, we cannot forget Walker/Munn. We could not have done this without Don to love and care for this campus and for us.

After watching Don for over 30 years, I can safely say that he was the living, breathing version of our motto “Help the Other Fellow.” And I am blessed to have had him as my friend and a rock of this Camp.



Join us for **FAMILY CAMP 2018** • August 16 – 20, 2018

Want to relive your BRC experience as a camper? Are you a parent who wants to experience the BRC life? Have a family that you would like to introduce to BRC? Then come relax in the Maine woods on pristine Lake McWain and enjoy the best of Maine residential camping.

For more information contact birchrock@birchrock.org.



SEVEN COMPLETE MAINE WILDERNESS ADVENTURE PROGRAM

With two fantastic leaders in Brian Farley and Gordon Hargraves, the Maine Wilderness Adventure trip was an outstanding success. The three-week trip included hiking the Mahoosuc Range & Mt. Katahdin, canoeing on the St. Croix River, whitewater rafting the Kennebec River, sea kayaking off the coast of Maine in Jonesport and wrapping up with rock climbing in Acadia National Park. Congratulations to **Cole Davin, Duncan Green, James Long, Will Madden, Nathan Shatz, Eric Traub and Jake Zucker.**



Maine Wilderness Adventure Program

RECORD YEAR FOR THE JUNIOR MAINE GUIDE PROGRAM

This summer Birch Rock sent an unprecedented six candidates to the Junior Maine Guide testing camp at the Stephens Phillips Preserve in Oquossoc, Maine. **Stu Whittier, Jeffrey Napier-Kane, David Colasin, Hugh Jacks, Chris Klein and Hunter Grimes** spent five days undergoing testing on their axemanship, canoeing skills, shelter building and encampment skills, cooking and fire building skills (among many other tasks). Chris Klein passed for certification, this being his second attempt at the notoriously difficult and rigorous standards of the Junior Maine Guide program. Hunter Grimes was able to pass on his first attempt! Congrats on the big achievement to all!



Junior Maine Guide Program

WISH LIST

BRC appreciates your contributions to the camp community. Some items we wish for are:

Framed Backpacks (\$100 each)

Tennis & Baseballs (\$100)

Outdoor Basketballs (\$25 each)

Fiberglass Row Boat

3 to 4 Man Tents (\$250)

Kayak Paddles (\$50 per)

Swim Safety Buoys (\$500)

Bike Tools and Repair (\$200)

Art & Nature Supplies

Honda 4-Stroke Boat Engine

Used Pick-Up Truck

New 2-Way Radio (\$250 each)

Birch Rock Camp is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation. All donations received are tax-deductible.

Please contact us at birchrock@birchrock.org if you might be able to accommodate any of those wishes.

BIRCH ROCK CAMP ACCEPTS
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Thank you!