



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

CELEBRATING TWO DECADES OF NICK MUSCIANO

By Thomas Joyce, '90, '00's

I met Nick Musciano 23 summers ago, on Opening Day 1998, as he climbed out of his mom's car. He was brand new to Birch Rock, and it was my first day as Head Counselor. Since that fateful morning, I have come to rely on Musc as my living and breathing Birocapedia, as a barometer for the "pulse" of camp, and as a great friend. I could not have predicted any of these things. I remember Nick as a quiet and less than gregarious kid, who needed a phone call or two in those early years to convince him that he should return for another summer at the Rock.

It was in that first summer that I changed his name, from Nick Musciano, to Nicolas *the Italian Stallion* Musciano, during Morning Bell. He would often come bounding out of lower camp, preparing to battle any fictional foe in his pre-Flagpole shadow-boxing match. Since that first summer, it's been clear how much stock Musc puts in friendships. When the country entered our social lockdown this spring, Musc rallied our far-flung community to show strength, determination and mutual support. Before or after Birch Rock's virtual campfires, Musc would reach out to the staff and set up a zoom hang-out session. Musc, as ever, was the catalyst that brought together friends from the ages of 18 to 50+.

As Head Counselor on campus, Musc must both take the pulse of the camp and help

maintain a full day of positive energy. He does so by making every Birch Rocker feel like one of his oldest friends. When Erik, Mike, Brian, or Rich wonder if something will be a hit at camp, Musc is the first person consulted. He knows what will be popular and what tweaks are needed to make ideas

Catawba Trail Elementary School, in Elgin, South Carolina, Musc finished his MAT in Elementary Ed and now is able to teach full-time and still return to Birch Rock every summer. An added bonus for many staff members is that Musc grew up in Falmouth, Maine, where his parents still live. Frank and Dana have hosted countless counselors on days off, and many Birch Rockers consider the entire Musciano family an integral part of their Birch Rock experience.

In his time off from the classroom or Birch Rock, Musc is invariably outdoors, hiking, exploring local parks, and playing basketball, naturally. To keep himself sharp for rainy day activities during the summer, Musc is a total trivia nut, with particular expertise in sports, VHS movies, and Blink 182 trivia categories.

even better. He regularly stays up on the Hill after evening activity to play basketball with a rotating cast of upper campers. When anyone wants to play a game, Musc can be counted on to join in.

After completing his undergraduate degree in Biology from the University of South Carolina, Musc worked at a pediatrician's office - but only after the doctor agreed to give him time off during the summer so he could return to camp. Musc discovered his passion at camp and, like so many Birch Rockers, it's teaching. He is a born educator. Fortunately for all of us who know him through camp, and all of his students at



This summer, we celebrated "Musc Day" to honor his 20 tremendous summers at the Rock. The big day began with the reading of a Musc Proclamation and the tapping of the ceremonial sword on his shoulders. Throughout the day, we heard laudatory citations read by current campers and staff members that had been written by former campers, staff and his family. There were three consistent themes: number one, Musc's smile is infectious. His megawatt grin can instantly lift ANYBODY's flagging spirits. Second, Musc is one of the kindest people you will

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CELEBRATING TWO DECADES...

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ever meet. He personifies *Help the Other Fellow*. Finally, Birch Rockers are richer in friendships because of him. Musc wants all of us to be connected in one ever-widening circle of inclusion and friendship.

Although I saw him just a few short weeks ago, and we recently spoke on the phone, I am greatly looking forward to the next time I hear the Morning Bell and I get to bellow out “Nicolas, *the Italian Stallion, Musciano!*” I can picture Musc bounding out of lower camp (now Semanas cabin) with that incredible smile on his face, ready to take on the world.



WELCOME TO OUR NEW TRUSTEES

Board Chair **Seth Brewster** was pleased to announce that **Jim & Katelyn Chalmers** of Bridgton, ME and **Zach & Kimberly Rubin** of York, ME have been unanimously elected to the BRC Board of Trustees at our annual summer meeting.

Jim & Katie are the proud parents of camper Brady. Jim is the co-owner and principal with the Chalmers Agency, and has a long history of working with Maine Summer Camps and youth organizations. Katie is a teacher and has her own small design business in the Bridgton region.

Zach and Kim now live full time in Maine after many summers on Norway Lake. Kim is a Camp Arcadia alumna, and has worked in development for nonprofit organizations. Zach works in finance and is an active member of the Boys and Girls Club of Southern Maine. Their son Joshua just completed his eighth season and the MWA program.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE ROCK

By Rich Deering

Alumni & Community Director '73

We're well into autumn here in the Maine woods! The leaves are turning colorful hues, the night air is crisp, acorns are showering down and already two months have flown by since our 2020 season wrapped up. What an gorgeous summer Mother Nature bestowed on us. And what an unusual season we experienced here on McWain Hill.

We sorely missed the majority of our campers and staff who were not able to return to the Hill because of the mandatory COVID-19 protocols. But we felt extremely fortunate for the unique magic we created with the senior campers, ages 15 to 17, and handful of counselors who could safely be with us for a brief Leadership Camp program. These young gentlemen threw themselves into a few weeks of socially distanced fun, physical and mental challenges, and a heightened appreciation for community and civility.

I am forever grateful to all the Birch Rock families, staff, alumni, vendors and neighbors who supported and contributed to our community — even those who were not able to physically join in this summer. We listened to and learned from all of you. We worked tirelessly with our strategic camp partners, families and health officials in delivering a perfectly COVID-free camp program. There was no pandemic playbook. But every member of our community on the Hillside was committed to keeping the whole group safe from the virus.

As ever, we are deeply appreciative of your commitment to Birch Rock through thick and thin. With any luck, 2020 will be the one and only camping season disrupted by the virus. Begining in January '21 Birch Rock will spend the whole year marking a big milestone — 95 stupendous summers since our founding by Chief and Onie Brewster. We'll continue to organize virtual campfires and tree-talk hangouts, and find innovative platforms to connect our community.

Birch Rock Camp endures because we relish old-fashioned fun and games, and all of us cherish old-fashioned values like integrity, personal responsibility and kindness. We know how fortunate we are to be able to partner with families in parenting your sons. Mike and I hope you'll stay in touch to share comments and ideas, and mostly just to let us know how your campers are doing. We worry about the impact of COVID on children and teenagers, and want to help keep them hopeful, happy and connected to camp. Call or email us at birchrock@birchrock.org. And keep following us on Instagram and Facebook and at www.birchrock.org.

Good health to you and your family!

Rich

ELEVEN COMPETE IN THE MCWAIN - BIRCH ROCK CAMP TRIATHLON

Bravo to these outstanding Birch Rockers for their tenacity, endurance and sportsmanship. The Birch Rock Camp Triathlon is a half-mile swim across the lake, followed by a five-mile bike trek around to Fresh Eye Farm, concluded with a mile run back up McWain Hill to the camp's driveway

finish line. Congratulations to these eleven: **Issac Fenster, Kenny Duran, Josh Rubin, Jonah Keates, Theo Tringale, Jack Smart, Eyob Gill, Quinn Castelli, Sam King, Aidan Singer** and **Campbell Hall** repeats with the Gold!



TWO DYNAMIC COUNSELORS CELEBRATE TEN YEARS!

The BRC Decade Club celebrated with pride and accolades the additions of **John Reisert** and **Gus Tringale**. Director **Rich Deering** honored each individual separately with his own tribute and testimonials. John is from Waterville, ME and is a junior at Bard College in NY. Gus is from Medford, MA and is a freshman at Tufts University. Congratulations on your tenure and service!



John Reisert



Gus Tringale

SEVEN COMPLETE COUNSELOR-IN-TRAINING PROGRAM

Under the tutelage of Senior Counselor **Brian Farley**, seven campers completed the Birch Rock Leadership Program and American Red Cross Lifeguard & Water Safety Training.

Congratulations to **Sam Cluggish, Duncan Green, Joe Bison, Eitan Sengupta, Lleyton Powell, Joshua Cervantes, and Jackson Mercier**.



FROM THE TOP OF KATAHDIN TO THE ALLAGASH WE GO... MWA 2020

Our hats off to this year's Maine Wilderness Adventurers: **Campbell Hall, Sam King, Aidan Singer, Quinn Castelli, Issac Fenster and Campbell Hall**. Under the seasoned leadership of **Erik Joelsson and Thomas Joyce**, these

determined gentlemen hiked the Hundred-Mile Wilderness trail and summited Katahdin Mountain, paddled the Allagash Wilderness Waterway and finished up in Cobscook State Park in Lubec, Maine.



BIRCH ROCK CHEERS TO OUR NEWEST WHALES!

Eight young gentlemen conquered the challenging six-mile swim around Lake McWain this summer and trained and accomplished the feat in 20 days or less! Congratulations to

Jed Kenerson, Noah Protas, Owen Ebert, Theo Tringale, Julian Winstone, Jonah Keates, Kenny Duran and Alex Prasens.



MAINE WILDERNESS ADVENTURE 2021

Birch Rock is proud once again to offer intrepid campers our Maine Wilderness Adventure in 2021. Explore the beauty of the Maine woods, waterways and Acadia National Park during this once in a lifetime odyssey. MWA includes five days of backpacking in the western mountains; day-hiking Maine's tallest peak in Baxter State Park - Mt. Katahdin; whitewater rafting on the Penobscot River; five days of canoeing in remote northern Maine on the Allagash Waterways; and rock climbing in Acadia National Park. This three week expedition is for boys ages 15 and 16 who demonstrate leadership, teamwork and determination to surmount the physical and mental challenges ahead. Participants will spend the first session of camp getting into shape, prepping trip gear, and honing their wilderness skills.

For more than two decades, this program has transformed young men into independent and confident leaders. Many MWA alums have moved on to become esteemed staff members at Birch Rock.

Please call the camp office to reserve your spot or get more information about Maine Wilderness Adventure 2021.



FROM THE BIRCH ROCK CAMP KITCHEN

A CAMPER FAVORITE! ...AND DON'T FORGET THE WHIP CREAM!

Two-Layer Key Lime Pie

8 Servings

CRUST **

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup granola (with no raisins or other dried fruit)
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup graham cracker crumbs (about 6 whole graham crackers)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) unsalted butter, melted
3 tablespoons sugar

BAKED LAYER

1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh Key Lime juice or lime juice
3 large egg yolks

CHILLED LAYER

1 8-ounce package cream cheese, room temperature
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sweetened condensed milk
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh Key Lime juice or lime juice
2 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Sweetened whipped cream



FOR CRUST: Preheat oven to 350° F. Using on/off turns, blend granola in processor until coarsely ground. Transfer granola to medium bowl. Mix in graham cracker crumbs, melted butter and sugar. Press crumb mixture over bottom and up sides of 9-inch diameter deep dish glass pie dish. Bake until crust is golden brown, about 8 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 300° F. Remove crust from oven and cool completely.

FOR BAKED LAYER: Whisk condensed milk, lime juice, and egg yolks in medium bowl to blend. Pour into pie crust. Bake at 300° until custard is set, about 25 minutes. Cool to room temperature.

FOR CHILLED LAYER: Using electric mixer, beat cream cheese, condensed milk, lime juice, sugar and vanilla in large bowl. Pour over cooled baked layer, smooth top. Cover and chill until firm, at least 4 hours. (Can be made one day ahead. Keep refrigerated.)

Pipe sweetened whipped cream around edges of pie. Cut into wedges and serve.

BIRCH ROCK CAMP NEWSMAKER: NOAH KEATES



This spring, as quarantine started up and my senior year of college came to an abrupt end, I found myself with an odd opportunity to dig into one of the big writing projects that I had been continually putting off for the last couple years. I

had spent my sophomore summer writing a historical fiction screenplay, and immediately gravitated in a similar direction this spring, but after starting and quickly throwing out the scripts for a few different opening film scenes, I realized it might be a good time to try out something totally new. I had a vague idea for a Game of Thrones-esque fantasy TV show I had wanted to put down on paper for a while and decided it would be fun to see how it played as a novel instead. It was a little tricky to tap into a novel writing style, but with nowhere to go and nothing to do through the spring and first part of the summer, I had plenty of time to iron out the kinks and hammer out my first book, *Leviathan: Part I*.

Leviathan is meant to be a somewhat fresh take on the fantasy genre, a much quicker and to the point rendition of some of the epic novels and shows I have grown up with: Game of Thrones, Lord of the Rings, etc. I also made an effort to infuse the story with some sense of lightness and comedic relief that I think is missing from many full-on fantasy stories. It is meant to be a non-stop rollicking adventure with quick-wit dialogue, quick-moving politics, quick laughs, and enough plot twists to keep you on your toes from start to finish.

I am super excited to have *Leviathan: Part I* published and available to the world through Amazon now. In the last couple months, I have been working on a few documentary TV shows coming out next year and have dived into the final installment of the story, *Leviathan: Part II* which will hopefully be out by this winter!

Noah is a 2020 Bowdoin College Graduate with a major in History and a minor in Cinema Studies.



A RESOUNDING BIRCH ROCK CHEER FOR RICH DEERING

A resounding Birch Rock Cheer for Rich Deering, this year's winner of the highest award in Maine youth camping! On September 23rd, Rich's colleagues in the Maine camp community surprised him with the prestigious Halsey Gulick Award, established way back in 1982. We Birch Rockers know exactly why Rich won this prize — he lives to "Help the Other Fellow," be it another camp director needing advice, a nervous first-time parent, or a child starting his amazing journey as a camper. Rich's decades of hard work and exceptional leadership are summed up in a glowing citation presented to him by the Maine Youth Camping Foundation.



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THE 2020 HALSEY GULICK AWARD

Presented to
Rich Deering

This year's Halsey Gulick Award recipient receives praise for virtually every aspect of his role in Maine youth camping. He has made myriad contributions to Maine Summer Camps as a former president and ongoing board member. His commitment to connecting with and mentoring peers never wavers. He is a listener first, yet always contributes wise and insightful input. In all he does, he offers energy, enthusiasm, and the kind of care one colleague describes as "a warm hug wrapped in a wide smile."

Over the years this recipient has been steadfast in bringing all these qualities to both MSC and MYCA. As a former Board President his efforts included reorganizing MSC's committees, infusing new energy to the Education Committee as well as providing clearer purpose dormant committees, a colleague describes. Additionally, he has served on the Maine Tourism Council as well as ACA, New England's board of directors. Indeed, his advocacy for Maine camps, along with his unfailing support for colleagues and friends, are exemplary of the positive, collaborative nature of MSC. At the same time, he is a successful realtor, no doubt sharing these same qualities.

This is an individual who checks in with his colleagues, inquires with care as to how they are doing and offers genuine and ongoing support. A former board president adds that our recipient was the consummate cheerleader throughout her tenure, checking in, sharing feedback, and writing notes of gratitude and praise.

As one colleague says, he "is someone who always makes you feel like you are the most important person." His generosity extends to his committed mentorship of camp owners and directors, with a focus "on 'the soul' of a camp, and what one is trying to achieve through camping."

Our recipient has traveled a path from Birch Rock camper to now Birch Rock Camp's Executive Director. As another colleague points out, he has spent most of his summers on the shores of McWain Pond. This summer he stepped in as camp director, another act of collegiality and generosity.

Yet this individual's "life journey at Birch Rock Camp is a just a portion of his dedication to the camping movement," another colleague says. "He is there for others, always willing to discuss issues, support others, create ideas and he gives the credit to everyone except himself," she adds. "He lives the motto of BRC: 'help the other fellow' and shows us all how it can be done."

BIRCH ROCK CAMP

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Mark Your Calendars for 2021!



| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Clean & Pick Up Saturday | May 22 |
| BCR Summer Office Opens | June 1 |
| BCR Staff Orientation | June 18 |
| C.I.T. Orientation | June 23 |
| Opening - First Session / Cubs I | June 27 |
| Cubs Camp I - End | July 10 |
| Cubs Camp II | July 11 |
| First Session & Cubs II - End | July 24 |
| Opening 2nd Session | July 25 |
| Maine Wilderness Adventure | |
| Cubs Camp III | |
| Cubs Camp III - End | August 7 |
| BCR for Boys & MWA - End | August 14 |
| BCR Family Camp | August 19 |
| BCR Family Camp - End | August 23 |

It's Easy to Help BRC

- Send a tax-deductible donation to BRC.
- Promote BRC among friends, neighbors, family and colleagues.
- Refer a prospective camper to BRC by phone or email.
- Host a gathering of BRC alumni/prospects with Directors Deering and Mattson.
- Send us news to include in The Birch Bark's Alumni News Column.
- Ask us about our 'Wish List' before you have your spring yard sales.
- Update your contact information via www.birchrock.org.

