



A nonprofit corporation

THE BIRCH BARK

Spring 2019

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

THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER OF BIRCH ROCK CAMP

HOME AT BIRCH ROCK

By David Nesher - '90s, Staff '00s, Trustee '10s

On a rainy day this past July, my wife Meghan and I dropped our older son Julien (then 7) off at Birch Rock Camp for the very first time. Greeting us in front of the Lodge, Camp Director Mike Mattson was quick to point out that despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, "It never rains at Birch Rock." I marveled as organized and engaging counselors had Julien and his trunk moved into his bunk, Hilton A, in minutes. Meghan and I met Julien's counselor Jack, chatted with other parents, and enjoyed a buffet lunch in the Lodge. Then we hugged our happy son, got back in the car, and drove home. Those are the objective facts of our drop-off day experience. In reality, the meaning of Julien starting as a camper at BRC runs far, far deeper.

You see, our family has been associated with Birch Rock since 1989 when my older brother CJ started as a camper in Cabin 1 with none other than Mike Mattson as his counselor. That summer a relationship began between the Neshers and Birch Rock that has spanned 30 years and three generations. My father Robert was never a camper, but he was a member of the Board of Trustees in the '90s. CJ and I have at one time or another been campers, counselors, and Trustees. We are also Family Campers along with our sister Liz and her family. This coming season, Summer 2019, marks the first time that my siblings and I will simultaneously fill what is without a doubt our most meaningful camp-related role – that of BRC parents. Julien and his cousins will be campers together, to everyone's delight.

In fact, Julien has been a Birch Rocker since long before that day last July. We have a video of him singing our camp song "Semper Fidelis" at two-and-a-half. So after all the build-up, what did Julien starting as a camper mean to me? It means that my job as a parent has gotten substantially easier because of the practical skills and emotional tools that he gained, and will build upon, as a Birch Rocker. It also means that he had the opportunity to disconnect from digital devices

in this increasingly connected world. I cannot overstate how comforting it was for Meghan and me to know that he was engaging with his surroundings and other Birch Rockers in ways that were completely outside the box for him, even though we live less than two hours from Lake McWain. Mostly, as us older Neshers have already done, it meant that he added a



Camper Julien and David Nesher

solid rock (wink) to his life's foundation.

I've already taken you through the bullet points of our drop-off day experience. But that is not the full story. As we drove up the hill on that rainy day last July, leaving our first-born behind, I felt numerous emotions. I felt a little sad knowing that we wouldn't see Julien for two weeks. I felt a little nervous that he would get homesick. I felt excited that he would get to experience morning echoes and cross-camp capture-the-flag. But most of all, as we drove off past the Birch Rock sign, heading away from camp and from Julien, I felt completely at ease. He was finally home at Birch Rock.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE ROCK

By Rich Deering - Alumni & Community Director '73

Over the years I've provided dozens and dozens of references and recommendations for former and current staff members who are pursuing new professional or educational opportunities. I'm always honored to help a Birch Rocker. And I'm thrilled to educate a sometimes skeptical employer on the other end of the phone; little do they know about what it REALLY means to be an overnight camp counselor.

Birch Rock counselors are the cream of the crop! They're hard-working, multi-talented, resilient, and independent individuals. Our counselors learn how to manage stress. These dedicated gentlemen work long days with admirable focus, patience, and commitment to our values and traditions. They learn adaptability by encountering people at camp from all sorts of backgrounds and cultures, from seven-year-olds to seniors. They work their magic with the campers as brilliant impromptu entertainers. When homesick boys need comforting, our counselors have the emotional intelligence to empathize and encourage. Most of all, they inspire campers to become true Birch Rockers, always ready to "Help the Other Fellow."

As a director, I know who is solving problems and making the daily difference. Birch Rock counselors work, live, and brainstorm as a team; their esprit de corps helps pull together the whole community. They are the heart and soul of the camp experience. Time spent as a Birch Rock counselor equips a young man with the mettle he needs to succeed at whatever he tackles in life. In this edition of The Birch Bark, we continue sharing essays from our rising stars – the camp counselors who will graduate from high school this spring. We pay tribute to Birch Rock Camp's centenarian Edward Stone who passed away this winter. I'd again like to thank everyone who donated to Birch Rock and helped us offer financial assistance to twenty percent of our campers this past summer. Phenomenal!

As ever, we ask that you please join us in giving boys exceptional experiences that build character and confidence. With your leads for prospective campers and gifts to our Birch Rock Fund, more boys can learn civility Birch Rock-style – "Shake a hand, make a friend."

**SAVE THE DATE
& GRAB A RAKE!!!**



MAY 18, 2019

CAMP CLEAN UP!

A SALUTE TO EDWARD STONE

December 19, 1918 – January 29, 2019



Bob, Robbie and Ed

Patriarch of a legendary BRC family, Edward H. Stone II died on January 29th at the age of 100. Ed was the first of three generations to have his name memorialized on a plaque in the Lodge – in 1928! A student at Kimball Union Academy in New Hampshire, Ed followed Headmaster Chief Brewster to the camp he and Onie had founded just two years earlier. Ed returned summer after summer, and rose to the counselor ranks.

Ed introduced his nephew George "Jody" Collins to Birch Rock in the late '40s. Then Ed and his wife Lois had their own boys to send to camp. Longtime Birch Rock Trustee Bob Stone and his brother Rick spent summers on the Hillside from 1960 to '62.

Bob and Bev Stone's son Robbie followed in his dad's and grandfather's footsteps, starting camp in 1989 and doing a CIT summer in '97. Rob is now a software engineer for OnyxPoint in Maryland.

Ed, one of the "Greatest Generation," graduated from Dartmouth College in 1941 and then served as a captain in the U.S. Army's 24th Quartermaster Regiment until the end of World War II.

Ed became a highly successful owner, trainer and breeder of Thoroughbreds, and he entered his race horses in circuits right up until the beginning of this year. His son Bob says his dad drove a Nissan Altima and did his own grocery shopping until the end of December, just a few weeks before his death. Ed's secret to long life (besides excellent genes): he never sat behind a desk for work. He loved the physical labor of caring for his horses, and he never stopped moving!

SWIM OF A LIFETIME

By Seth Brewster



Back in 1926, my great-grandfather William “Chief” Brewster came upon a large piece of land on the shores of Lake McWain, in Waterford, Maine. He and my great-grandmother Onie promptly founded Birch Rock Camp. The first official year I went to camp was 2010, for two

weeks. As a shy 9-year-old I didn’t really know what to expect, but I had only heard good things from my brothers. I had never spent two weeks away from home, away from my parents, and I was naturally homesick. But Birch Rock has a very welcoming community with the motto, “HELP THE OTHER FELLOW.” The next summer I decided to skip camp and I immediately regretted it. I chose Birch Rock the next year, and I have been attending camp ever since.

Birch Rock has a long history of the long-distance swims ranging from .5 miles to 5.5 miles. The Whale is a five and a half mile swim around the circumference of the lake.

It all started on one clear morning in late July. After a long and restless sleep I awoke to footsteps on the porch of the cabin. I popped out of bed to see who it was, and sure enough, it was my brother who came into our cabin and selected me and another cabin mate to go eat and prepare. The air was cool with no breeze, filled with a sense of excitement. The camp was as quiet as I have ever experienced it, no birds singing or crickets chirping. I had been anticipating this moment not only since the beginning of the camp season, but since I first swam across the lake back in 2012. As I stood on the edge of the dock, we were given a countdown, “5, 4, 3, 2, 1!” On 1, we were the first ripples through the glassy surface. Through the swim, I felt as if I was a part of the ecosystem of Lake McWain. There were fish that swam right under me as if I wasn’t a disturbance to them. Throughout the swim, my brother and another counselor rowed in front of me as a guide/safety boat. To amuse themselves they would guide me through shallow areas where the water was knee high, but I had to keep swimming. Sometimes they would put a little chocolate on the lifeguard buoy and float it out to me, or throw me an orange. The swim was long and grueling.

As I passed the neighbors’ boat docks, I looked ahead and realized I had almost completed the swim. With less than 15 meters to go I let out all that I had left in my tank. As I opened my eyes I saw a blurry dock in front of me and reached out my hand to grab it as if it were a million dollars, and as I did everyone went crazy. I was wrapped in a blanket and walked

down the catwalks and toward the swim tents under a bridge made of arms. As I arrived in the swim tent, many people walked by and cheerfully congratulated me.

Looking back, that was the proudest moment of my life and a dream truly coming true. But more importantly, I’ve come to understand the true community of Birch Rock and the everyday meaning of our motto “HELP THE OTHER FELLOW”. As I continue to grow as an individual, I will work hard as a counselor at Birch Rock and try to help campers feel the kind of pride and accomplishment that have meant so much to me.

Seth will be taking a gap year in the Fall of 2019.

EARNING MY WHALE PIN

By Matt Schwind

I see the Whale pin on the Birch Rock Camp banner over my bed, and I know I can accomplish anything. Located on the shores of Lake McWain, Birch Rock is a sleepaway camp in Maine that has pushed me out of my comfort zone and encouraged me to take the kind of risks that have helped me to develop into a resilient leader.



In my last year of eligibility as a camper, I was determined to place in the top three in the Birch Rock triathlon. I knew that I had to do some serious training because I was not ready for the swimming section: the farthest I had ever swum was the Duck (once across the lake) while some of my competitors had already completed the Whale, a five-mile perimeter swim that seemed beyond my abilities. I couldn’t pour all my energy into the swimming portion because I had to bike and then run after that. I felt more confident about the second and third stages, but I needed to exercise self-discipline to get into racing shape – physically and mentally. I worked hard every day to improve my swimming stamina. On the day of the race, twenty-one of us lined up on the dock, ready to cut through the water to the other side. When I finished sixth out of the lake, I knew I had a shot. I hopped on my bike and passed everybody in front of me! When three people caught me near the end of the running section, I dug down deep and sprinted past the person in front of me to finish on the podium. I had accomplished my goal. What was next?

The ultimate challenge at Birch Rock is swimming the Whale, that grueling five-mile swim around the lake. Before qualifying to swim the Whale, I would have to complete two other long-distance swims: the Loon (across the lake and back) and the Seal (the

Continued on Next Page

Earning My Whale Pin...
Continued from Previous Page

length of the lake, about a mile and a half). After barely achieving the Duck a few summers before, I had not attempted the other long-distance swims. The waterfront director, Curtis, saw me training for the triathlon and said, “YOU are going to swim your Whale.” At the time, I thought he was joking; but then I noticed that Curtis pushed me harder and harder during instructional swim. I surprised myself by easily swimming my Loon. A week later, I exceeded my own expectation by swimming my Seal. Then one evening, Curtis heaped an extra portion of pasta on my dinner plate. I knew something was up, but was I mentally and physically ready for it? He took me down to the water at five the next morning, told me to start swimming. The rest was a blur except the final stretch: my body was spent after three hours of swimming, but I could hear the entire camp cheering for me on the dock. I knew in my heart I had to pull through. And just like the triathlon, I found the inner strength to push to the finish. In celebration that afternoon, I devoured my victory Whale cake and pinned the Whale pin to my Birch Rock banner.

My years of camping at Birch Rock have prepared me for university life and beyond by building my mental readiness, determination and self-discipline. With the Whale pin as a daily reminder to keep going, I will continue to work hard and persevere, ready to take on any challenge in front of me.

Matt will attending Hobart & William Smith College, in Geneva, NY this Fall.

SWEATSHIRTS MAKE THE MAN

By Kyle Perkins



I rummage through the array of American Eagle tee shirts to the Baseball Coaches Academy shirt that didn't fit me eight years ago but fits now. I know I must get going if I want to leave my house by 6:35 a.m. in order to get to school at 6:50 and make the ten-minute walk

up from the nether regions of the back lots. As time runs out, I continuously find myself making the same decision: put on a random shirt, grab a sweatshirt and go. In the chaotic morning rush, I always find sanctum in my true solace and confidant — the sweatshirt.

Kyrie Irving, Boston Celtics, Patriots 5x Super Bowl Champs, New England vs Everyone, Birch Rock Camp, Red Sox, Boston College, Paris, Northeastern University, and Paris Saint-Germain.

This list may sound like a Parisian attempting to gain a little knowledge of the Eastern Seaboard, but in actuality, it is just my ever-growing assortment of sweatshirts. The collection comes from all walks of life. Some sweatshirts come from the gift shops of college campuses, a few from sporting events, a handful from travel, and too many from my brother once he outgrows them. No matter the manner in which these loose, long-sleeved shirts find their way into my closet, each one tells a story, or describes me, or comforts me.

The Paris sweatshirt brings back memories of the 2015 summer. As I slip into the woolen polo neck sweatshirt, I recall moments of the trip like when I successfully utilized “ma petite” knowledge of the French language to order a crêpe and laughed when the chef repeated my order back to me in fluent English. I wear that sweatshirt when I feel grounded and long for travel.

There's the old, sleeveless Birch Rock Camp sweatshirt that delivers a rush of nine summers. The sweatshirt has seen the plump, unhappy eight-year-old on Opening Day to the now seventeen-year-old with his first job at the camp. What happened to the sleeves you may ask? Well, I had to cut them off for the fear factor during a game of cross-camp capture the flag. I wear that (or what is left of it) when I miss the starry summer nights.

The Shawnee Peak Race Team sweatshirt has become a staple. The sweatshirt comes with the visions of shredding the slopes and long ski days culminating in a hot cup of cocoa. Also, the daunting image of my twenty-three foot plummet back to Earth off of a chair lift which, shockingly, only resulted in a broken arm. I wear that youth large sweatshirt when I thirst for speed and adrenaline.

Augmented by my appreciation for athletics, the cesspool of sporting sweatshirts extensively represents my city. From The Big Three to The Big Papi, Tom Brady to Tim Thomas, there is something magical in that dirty water. No matter the sporting event, I've got a sweatshirt for it. In the intermingling of seasons, as soon as the final buzzer sounds, a quick run up the stairs comes with a switch from Kyrie Irving to a moonlight-gray sweatshirt with the gold-and-black Bruins logo. I wear these sweatshirts because I love my teams.

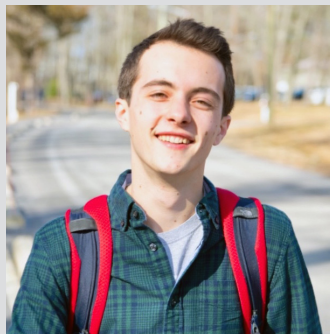
To some, sweatshirts are just an accessory. To me, sweatshirts are my companions and comforters. Sweatshirts have just become a commonplace of my daily attire and I feel naked when I'm not wearing one. My sweatshirts individually and holistically tell the story of my life from sporting events to teams to travel to family. My sweatshirts are who I am, what I've done, and, in terms of my various college sweatshirts, what I plan to do. I wear them to be me.

Kyle will be attending University of Massachusetts, in Amherst, MA in the fall.

BECOMING A JUNIOR MAINE GUIDE

By Chris Klein

“Show me a ‘J Stroke,’” said Brian, a certified Junior Maine Guide instructor sitting in my canoe. As I struggled to paddle up the river, the questions continued. “How would you fix a canoe after it hit a log?” “How would you load a canoe if you were going down rapids?” As Brian fired questions at me, my confidence in becoming a Junior Maine Guide began to fade.



As I docked the canoe, I had a gut feeling that I had failed even though I had spent hours that summer paddling around the lake practicing my canoeing skills. With my head hung low, I trekked back to our campsite to start preparing for the next test. After a week of additional tests including meal preparation, first aid, and shelter building, I returned to Birch Rock Camp. I had mixed feelings — relief that the stress of JMG Testing Camp was over, and anxiety wondering whether I had passed.

For seven years, I spent seven weeks of my summer at a small outdoor boys camp in Maine. On the shores of Lake McWain, Birch Rock Camp was a second home for me. Building fires, chopping wood, and sharpening knives were just part of an average day at Birch Rock. Each summer, I met many people who I admired, but the most impressive of them all were the small group of Junior Maine Guides. They were leaders, problem-solvers, and true outdoorsmen who had passed a rigorous week-long test in 21 essential outdoors skills. The summer of 2016, when I was sixteen years old, was finally my chance to put my knowledge and camping experience to the test and prove I had what it took to become a JMG.

The last week at Birch Rock that summer was difficult. Everyone felt the need to ask if I had passed just so I could tell them again and again that I didn’t know yet, but I did know I wanted to be a JMG more than anything. On Thursday, I saw Gabe, the JMG counselor at Birch Rock, walking to breakfast with a manila envelope. I sat at the table unable to eat, my mind and heart racing. Sliding my eggs to the other side of my plate for the hundredth time, I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was Gabe. I knew this was the moment I had been waiting for since I first learned about JMG as a young nine-year-old boy.

I could see Gabe’s lips moving, but I was lost in my thoughts. “Chris, you worked really hard...” Confused, I tore the envelope open. My eyes fell to the bottom of the letter: RETEST.

With what little energy I had, I thanked Gabe and then headed straight for my cabin. After my initial feelings of hopelessness

and failure faded, my thoughts turned to next summer. I knew that JMG Testing Camp hadn’t seen the last of me. I was going to come back for a second year and pass!

I spent the off-season reading the training manuals and when I had the chance, building fires in my home fireplace. I even practiced first aid on friends and family when needed. Before I knew it, the summer of 2017 had arrived; my chance to become a JMG returned. I moved through the same challenges with Gabe at my side, teasing me, as he cheered me on. In the blink of an eye, Testing Camp was over—but this time, I knew I had passed.

Back at camp, I was more anxious than ever. Finally, Gabe pulled me aside and, with a big smile on his face, handed me the envelope. With a feeling of déjà vu, I tore it open. After two years of hard work, a feeling of great accomplishment and joy came over me. There, printed in big blue ink: PASSED.

Chris will attend the college of his choice in the Fall of 2019.

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)
- Windsurfers
- 3 to 4 Man Tents (\$250)
- Kayaks (\$300 per)
- Bike Tools and Repair (\$200)
- Art & Nature Supplies
- Used Pick-Up Truck
- New 2-Way Radio (\$250 each)
- 2 Nova Rig Pack Windsurfers (\$800 each)
- 2 Techno 148 Windsurfers (\$1200 each)
- Generator for Lodge
- Powerheart AED (\$1500)

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
VISA/MASTERCARD**

Thank you!

SAVE THE DATE!



Outing Club at Sunday River Mountain – Newry, ME on March 10, 2019

BIRCH ROCK OUTING CLUB

Sunday, May 19, 2019

Pleasant Mountain – Bridgton, Maine

A Day Hike with Wilderness Director Brian Farley

The adventure and excitement of the outdoors and the camp community can be enjoyed year-round! Birch Rock's Outing Club draws a cross-section of campers, families, alumni and friends on various hikes, ski slopes and terrain throughout Northern New England.

Under the leadership of current and former camp trip leaders, the extended Birch Rock Family gathers a couple times each year to conquer some moderate trails in the White Mountain National Forest, enjoy the quality terrain of Maine-New Hampshire's finest ski slopes or just make time for a chilled outing on the Maine coast. Most of all, the Outing Club provides an opportunity to reinvigorate and re-engage with the Birch Rock Camp Community before and after the summer season.

Birch Rock's Outing Club's schedule of activities is organically organized each year and postings of specific events are found on www.birchrock.org, Facebook, and Instagram ([birch_rock_camp](https://www.instagram.com/birch_rock_camp)).



Percival Morgan Holderness Loop, Fall 2018



BIRCH ROCK PROGRAMS

Which exciting Birch Rock program might work for your son and his friends? Also, please let us know of a potential Birch Rocker in your area...

BOYS RESIDENTIAL CAMP 2019

Session	Tuition	Start Date	End Date	Length of Stay
Full Session	\$8,700	June 23	August 10	49 days
First Session	\$7,100	June 23	July 20	28 days
Second Session	\$5,900	July 21	August 10	21 days
MWA (age 14+)	\$5,900	July 21	August 10	21 days
C.I.T. (age 16)	\$2,500	June 19	August 10	53 days

Cubs Camp Programs for NEW campers ages 7-12

Cubs Camp I	\$4,000	June 23	July 6	14 days
Cubs Camp II	\$4,000	July 7	July 20	14 days
Cubs Camp III	\$4,000	July 21	August 3	14 days

FAMILY CAMP 2019



Birch Rock's Family Camp gives busy families the chance to have fun in the Maine woods on McWain Pond. This program can be a first exposure for a boy to Birch Rock, in preparation for attending the Boys Camp the following summer. It's also a time for parents to relive their fond experiences as campers, and rediscover their enthusiasm for lifelong learning. Most of all, Birch Rock Family Camp is a time to relax and enjoy!

Family Camp is perfect for all ages to enjoy old-fashioned camp life in group activities or just do one's own thing! Each family member may sign up for daily activities which are facilitated by Birch Rock's talented staff. This program is offered in **August 15 – 19th**, with flexible days of attendance.

For more information on these programs, please visit our website: www.birchrock.org or contact the winter office @ (207) 741-2930.

2018 Birch Rock Fund Donors

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!!!

Your generous contribution and support have helped us to enhance and sustain Birch Rock's incomparable summer camp experience. We gratefully acknowledge the following 2018 Capital, Endowment, Scholarship and In Kind gifts to the Birch Rock Camp Community!

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 Lindsay Alexander, P'00s, *Cape Elizabeth, ME*
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 Jojo Herzig, P'00s, *New York, NY*
 Fred Howard, '70s, P'00s, *Scarborough, ME*
 Julie McLaughlin, P'10s, *Princeton, NJ*
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BIRCH ROCK CAMP

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ACCREDITED
CAMP

American Camping Association®

Mark Your Calendars for 2019!



Clean & Pick Up Saturday	May 18
BRC Summer Office Opens	June 3
BRC Staff Orientation	June 14
C.I.T. Orientation	June 19
Opening - First Session / Cubs I	June 23
Cubs Camp I - End	July 6
Cubs Camp II	July 7
First Session & Cubs II - End	July 20
Opening 2nd Session	July 21
Maine Wilderness Adventure	
Cubs Camp III	
Cubs Camp III - End	August 3
BRC for Boys & MWA - End	August 10
BRC Family Camp	August 15
BRC Family Camp - End	August 19

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.

