



A nonprofit corporation

# THE BIRCH BARK

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

## THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER OF BIRCH ROCK CAMP

### BRIAN FARLEY HAS THE RIGHT STUFF

*By Francie Campbell, P '00s, T '00s*

This summer, Brian Farley, Program Director and die-hard Birch Rocker will proudly don a Decade Club vest! Brian marvels at how quickly the ten years have whizzed by at camp. As he anticipates the bestowing of the coveted vest and his rousing Birch Rock Cheer, Brian has been contemplating the fortunate twists of fate that brought him to camp.

Brian is Maine born and bred, and a proud graduate of St. Joseph's College of Maine on Sebago Lake. After completing a master's degree in Secondary School Counseling from the University of Southern Maine, Brian was looking for a summer gig before starting his first high school counseling job in Freeport. Birch Rock's office manager at the time was Bonnie Robbins, a high school counselor Brian had interned with while finishing his degree. Bonnie raved about Brian to Directors Mike Mattson and Rich Deering, who needed a Maine Wilderness Adventure trip leader. Brian remembers what seems in retrospect an uncharacteristically formal interview for the job. But MWA is, of course, a serious undertaking; the 3-week trip is designed as a capstone challenge for senior campers, complete with heavy-duty backpacking, whitewater rafting and rock climbing.

Brian was naturally questioned about his camping experience in this interview. He assured Mike and Rich that he'd grown up camping in Maine and had all the necessary skills. Brian said he'd heard amazing things about Birch Rock and was eager to work for the camp.

What Brian didn't precisely articulate on that particular day was that he'd done few trips in the Birch Rock style. Brian had grown up camping with his mom and dad and brother, but that meant driving their camper van up to a popular camp site in Naples, Maine for a couple weeks in the summer. Endurance challenges like MWA weren't exactly in Brian's wheelhouse.



That would quickly change as hiring mavens Mike and Rich clearly saw that Brian had the right stuff. He was signed on to co-lead MWA in 2014. As Head Counselor Nick "Musc" Musciano explains, "It's what Birch Rock does so well — camp pushes people to grow into their jobs." Musc says BRC has had a number of hugely talented trip leaders, and Brian is definitely one of them. He possesses all the critical skills to lead at BRC. As Mike Mattson explains, "Brian has a remarkable confidence. And you can trust that he'll always do the right thing." Rich Deering agrees: "Brian is the real deal. He leads with purpose. He's a difference maker and we are incredibly lucky to have him at camp."

Brian, it turns out, has an enduring passion for wilderness trips so after leading MWA for five years he took over our in-house Trip Program. Brian will always champion wilderness adventures for our campers, carrying on the great tradition from Birch Rock's earliest days. In fact, in his free time off-season, Brian is working toward climbing all 48 of the 4000-footers in New Hampshire. He's already bagged 39 of the peaks, many with Erik Joelsson, and is especially keen to climb Mount Isolation which involves a 10-mile hike just to reach its base.

Brian is an exceptionally hard worker, with no time off between the end of the school year and the beginning of camp, and then back to school right away. He loves his job as a high school counselor at York High School, with a case load of 130 students — a good percentage of them at-risk youth.

At camp, in his role as Program Director, Brian is up before the bell to meet with Head Counselor "Musc" to run through the day's activity periods and to plan events for the week and Sunday games. His day is full of radio calls from various activities that need his attention and various "fires" that need putting out. The afternoon is his time to prepare the following day's program and assemble sign-up sheets for after dinner. Brian and Musc live in Semanas; Musc says his cabin mate is super clean, always vacuuming and washing dishes. Campers know Cabin Inspection is going to be extra demanding when Brian takes over from Musc from time to time.

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## TWO McWAIN HILL LEGENDS PASS AWAY

### DAVID SANDERSON (1943-2023)

David Sanderson, Birch Rock's next-door neighbor, died last November in an accident while taking down a dead tree. David had been living full-time at the family farm since his retirement in the early 2000s. His grandfather Burton Sanderson sold the parcel that would become Birch Rock Camp to Chief and Onie Brewster back in 1926. The Sanderson family continues to graciously lease their expansive pasture to Birch Rock as our western playing field.

David was a proud New Englander with Swedish ancestry and a keen interest in local Maine history. Raised in Rhode Island, he and Cathy, his now deceased wife, met at Indiana University and moved back east to Newburyport, MA where they raised their son Stephen (Steve and his wife Betsy founded RiverWalk Brewery in his hometown). David enjoyed a varied working life, including jobs in marketing, lobbying for the recreational vehicle industry, and managing the New England Trail Riders Association. He co-founded an early software startup and finally worked as an Oracle database developer.

David was an avid musician and amateur musicologist, and played the guitar, banjo and fiddle. His lifelong passion was for preserving the house and barn that his ancestors built in the 1860s.

Birch Rock Board of Trustees Chair Seth Brewster offered this statement: "The relationship between David's family and Camp started almost a century ago, between Chief and Onie Brewster and David's grandfather. David was a loyal neighbor and former member of our Board of Trustees. We are tremendously grateful for his contributions to Camp."

*BRIAN FARLEY...*

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As a professional educator, Brian knows how to be firm with kids when necessary, but kindness is what he's all about. At York High School he's a big supporter of "Wellness Wednesdays" that happen once a month. Brian created his own offering for the program — "Taylor Swift, Coffee & Bagels" for the first lucky dozen students to sign up! Campers on an MWA trip one summer called Brian "Mom" because he was so warmhearted and empathic.

No profile of Brian is complete without highlighting his canine sidekick, the gorgeous golden-doodle Rozzie. Rozzie is a 9 year old who pretends to be a puppy. She enjoys living in North Berwick during the off-season, but like her fellow camp dogs she lives to romp at Birch Rock. Rozzie's favorite activities are lunch in the Grove, kayaking and rest period at Semanas with Brian.

### ARTHUR BARTLETT (BART) HAGUE JR. (1927-2023)

Arthur Bartlett (Bart) Hague Jr., our esteemed neighbor on McWain Hill Road, died in December at the age of 96. Bart devoted his long life to environmental protection and conservation. His keen interest began right here on McWain Hill when as a boy in the 1930s he visited his Aunt Mary (in a house he later inherited at the age of 16).

Bart's public service career spanned more than four decades, including twenty years as a charter member in the new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He served on water quality teams cleaning up the Potomac River, Boston Harbor and Maine's Androscoggin River. He also helped create the National Trails System within the National Parks Service.

After retiring from the EPA in 1996, Bart was named President Emeritus of Maine Lakes. He pushed for a regional effort to conserve the Crooked River and Sebago Lake watershed, which became the Sebago Clean Waters collaborative. In 2022 Bart was honored with a Natural Resources Council of Maine Clean Water Heroes Award.

Bart and Mary Ann, his wife of 61 years, placed 475 acres under conservation easement, including on McWain Hill, the former Camp Waganaki, a cove on McWain Pond, and a mile on both banks of the Crooked River.

## CALL TO ACTION

**YOU are our best ambassadors! BRC has room for more campers of all ages this summer. Please spread the word to prospective boys and their families ~**

**Staff ranks need to be filled with more cabin counselors, an assistant nurse/EMT, and kitchen workers. Reach out to Rich or Mike with any prospects!**





## *DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT* FOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH AT BIRCH ROCK CAMP FOR BOYS

It can be tough raising boys. Everyone gets worn down by the usual parent/kid flashpoints: too much time on computers and phones, foot-dragging over cleanup and chores, reluctance to play outdoors, incivility toward family members. What's a loving, concerned parent to do? How about what parents have done for a century in this country — find your son an old-fashioned sleepaway camp like Birch Rock for the summer!

Birch Rock Camp in the Maine woods is the perfect place for your boy to *disconnect to reconnect* for emotional health. Our campers don't miss technology for a minute as they experience thrilling outdoor adventures on our campus and on wilderness trips. Birch Rock was founded nearly one hundred years ago by educators determined to foster character and well-being in campers. Now more than ever, boys need the nurturing yet challenging environment of Birch Rock. Since the COVID pandemic, kids continue to struggle with serious mental health issues. Our fervent belief and our mission have never changed: let the Maine woods work its magic on boys. Our campers pack clothes and some basic gear at home, and leave behind computers, phones, watches, and other devices. Everyone needs a break from electronics! Everything about Birch Rock is a welcome break from the real world and its pressures and anxieties.

Birch Rock believes in old-fashioned, back-to-basics boyhood, with campfires and canoeing and Capture the Flag. Plenty of fresh air, refreshing swims in pristine Lake McWain, and exuberant games are restorative. We believe youngsters (and their parents) benefit when kids get a taste of independence from their parents while at camp, and return home more self-reliant and confident.

We're all well aware that educators and mental health professionals are deeply concerned about anxiety and depression in our young people. Fortunately some basic strategies are known to support emotional well-being. Birch Rock offers them all. First, we *disconnect to reconnect* to the wondrous natural world, and to constant face-to-



face contact with people of all ages (Birch Rockers from preschoolers to octogenarians are here during the season). We help campers make friends with other boys through small cabin groups, family-style meals and non-competitive activities. We give boys rest periods to relax and make sure they get plenty of sleep. We put engrossing books into their hands (and card games and chess pieces) to show how wonderful that can be. Birch Rock even has its own historic library!

Kids benefit tremendously from cultivating friendships, playing with abandon, and experiencing gratitude for the simple pleasures in life. At Birch Rock we emphasize simplicity, civility and mutual support. It's our goal to help build strong character, so your son will return home a bit more resilient, capable and ready to cope with everyday challenges.

Birch Rock campers learn that the best stories are lived, not posted. Their most memorable experiences are invariably wilderness trips that fire their imagination, test their endurance and turbocharge their self-esteem. Authentic thrills beat out virtual ones every time!

On Sundays the campers participate in a beautiful, bygone activity — letter writing. What a joy it is to be Birch Rock parents and receive actual snail mail from our sons with tales of their adventures! These adventures and the rare opportunity to *disconnect to reconnect* for emotional health are a priceless gift you can give your son this summer.

*By Francie Campbell, P '00s, T '00s*

# BIRCH ROCK CAMP

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## BIRCH ROCK CAMP PROGRAMS

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

### Boys Residential Camp 2024

<i>Session</i>	<i>Tuition</i>	<i>Start Date</i>	<i>End Date</i>	<i>Length of Stay</i>
Full Session	\$11,500	June 26	August 13	49 days
First Session	\$8,600	June 26	July 20	24 days
Second Session	\$8,600	July 21	August 13	24 days
Leadership (age 14-17)	\$6,500	July 19	August 13	26 days

### Cubs Camp program for new campers ages 7 - 11

Cubs Camp I	\$5,000	June 26	July 6	10 days
Cubs Camp II	\$5,000	July 7	July 20	13 days
Cubs Camp III	\$5,000	July 21	August 3	13 days

Family Camp 2024 - Revised Dates August 15 -19, 2024

By popular demand, BRC's Family Camp gives busy families the chance to have fun in the Maine woods on McWain Pond. It's a perfect getaway 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 BRC's talented staff. This program is offered with flexible days of attendance.

For more information on these programs, please visit our website:  
**[www.birchrock.org](http://www.birchrock.org)** or contact us at **(207) 583-4478**.

