



THE LION'S ROAR

Spring 2024



Save the Dates

March 25 - April 8: Green & Grey Online Auction for Camperships

May 17-19: Work Weekend

May 22: New Parent Orientation

June 2: Camper to Camper panel

June 23: Opening Day

July 26: Corporation Meeting

July 27: 2024 Heroes Induction

August 1 - 3: Rookie Camp

August 9: Closing Day

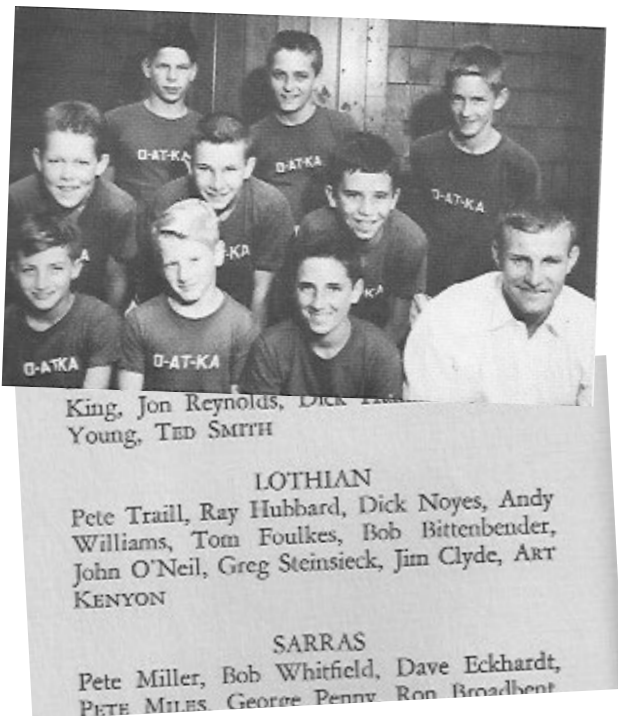
August 30 - Sept 2: Friends Weekend

CAMP CONNECTIONS

After two years spent at other summer camps, my parents, at the urging of friends, decided to send me to Camp O-AT-KA for the summer of 1958. When they mentioned that the camp was sponsored by the Episcopal Church, I let out an audible groan and asked why they were doing this to me. What did I do wrong? They assured me that everything would be fine, so I cautiously headed off to camp and after a short bout of homesickness, came around and thoroughly enjoyed my experiences as a member of Cabin Warwick. Incidentally, the camp was so crowded that summer

that they even had campers housed in the Castle above the Junior Unit!

In '59, accompanied by my good friend, Richard Noyes, I returned as a senior in Cabin Lothian with Arthur Carpenter Kenyon ("Lefty"), as our counselor and George Jones as our JC. "Lefty", a recent graduate of Boston University and a fitness enthusiast, was an exceptional councilor and a superb role model. During his daily isometrics routine, he would grunt and groan in the middle of the cabin floor as he lifted and pressed



an 8 oz. broomstick over his head. Unfortunately, one afternoon in his enthusiasm, he painfully threw his back out lifting that featherweight broomstick! Perhaps that may explain my lifelong aversion to sweeping?

"Lefty" was also a big fan of Bobby Darin and his recent hit "Dream Lover". So, on the night of the camp talent show, "Lefty" threw all caution aside, bravely stepped onto the Great Hall stage with microphone in hand and sang Dream Lover! He sang the entire song in tune and was a big hit!

The summer of '60 found me back at Cabin Lothian with "Lefty" and George and essentially the same great group of cabin mates as the year before. It was a fun-filled summer of sailing overnights (one through the Songo Locks to Long Lake), longboat rows to Frye's Leap (where George Jones took the jump, legs flailing

furiously as he hit the water), tennis matches at nearby camps and of course, campfires and bug juice at Green Ridge.

Perhaps ten years ago, I was curious as to what might have happened to "Lefty" and found through BU that he lived in Attleboro, MA. I called him and had a pleasant but short chat, but since he didn't seem to remember me (naturally), I didn't pursue it any further. However, a couple of months ago, I decided to try again and perhaps visit with my old counselor. His wife, Siv, was very cordial but naturally a little suspicious of a stranger calling for her husband. But I convinced her that I was really someone who had known "Lefty" at camp in the late 50's and would love to see him again. So, in late September, we agreed that I would drive down from my home in Essex and have a short visit. Siv had warned me that "Lefty's" cognitive abilities had diminished but I found him alert and amusing with no memory impairment at all!

Thanks to fellow camper and long-time friend John Hall, I had a photo of our '60 Lothian cabin on my iPhone along with the song "Dream Lover" ready to go on YouTube Music. When I walked in and saw "Lefty" (who had just turned 89!), sitting in his chair, I asked him: "Remember this?" and played "Dream Lover". He immediately lit up and started singing along! Then I showed him the photo and suggested that since I was sitting right next to him, I must have been his favorite camper (very dubious)? I had a wonderful hour and half visit with "Lefty", wife Siv (a native of Sweden), and his son, Tom, a retired CPA.

As I was leaving, I asked "Lefty" for an encore. I hit the button, and he sang "Dream Lover" in its entirety while standing at his walker! Incidentally, "Lefty's" career

centered around physical fitness (a topic alien to me), in the Attleboro school system where he was physical fitness director for several of the schools in the system as well as coach for baseball and football. Because of a minor childhood bout with polio that had affected his ankles and feet, he had focused on developing his upper body ... contemporary photos show him as a Mr. Universe!

"Lefty" was only one of the many singular people that I was privileged to meet during my three summers at O-AT-KA (Reverend Dave Fox stands out). And who could forget Reverend Berndt's booming, baritone voice at Sunday morning church services in the iconic Frederick Gentleman chapel?

My generation was so fortunate to have grown up in the 50's and 60's.... it was a wonderful time to be a kid and I would honestly consider my summers spent at O-AT-KA as the highlight of those years.

And, finally, even after all this time, whenever I read the Galahad Pledge or recall the poignant quotation over the Commons fireplace, I literally get chills and recall the unforgettable summers spent at Camp O-AT-KA and the dedicated men and women of that precious organization.

Written by: Jim Clyde

Jim was a camper from 1958-1960. He is the brother to camper/counselor Bill Clyde, father to campers Ian & Jeff Clyde, and great uncle to new 2024 camper Wyatt Chalot

MEET THE 2024 LEADERSHIP STAFF

For more information on our leadership staff, please visit: campoatka.org/camp/leadership/



Executive Director – Heather Plati



Assistant Director – Annie Bowe



Summer Director & Senior Unit Head – Chris Kohl



Middle Unit Head – Austin Joyce,
with his wife Kira



Junior Unit Head – Cole MacLead



Chaplain – Roy Heller, with his wife Amy



Program Director – Karina Carlsson

WHAT'S NEW FOR 2024?

So many great things have been happening at O-AT-KA, as we prepare for an amazing summer!

We're pumped up for O-AT-KA's first Conditioning & Fitness Building!

With a greater global interest in health and wellness, more of our campers would like to take conditioning as a craft, as well as be in a supervised fitness area during free time. Listening to these needs, a conditioning building with new workout equipment is being built. If your camper has specific workout needs for a preseason sport, our head of conditioning can assist in keeping them on track and documenting their progress. This is also a great space for our staff to be able to maintain good health and fitness during their free time.

New Privy and Renovations! The three privies in the Units are the most used buildings at camp (for obvious reasons)! The senior privy was torn down this Fall and a brand-new privy has taken its place for a fresh, clean new space. The middle unit's interior and floors have been painted and we have brand-new, heavy-duty curtains and dividers. The junior unit received new ventilation, as well as interior paint for walls and floor, new heavy-duty curtains and dividers, and new lighting with motion sensors.

Upgraded Boat! Our new boat for 2024 will be used for water skiing, tubing and... WAKEBOARDING! New water skis and a wakeboard will make for hours of fun on great big Lake Sebago.

New Activities! 2024 will bring the addition of Flag Football and an Acting Improv class that is available for our 2-weekers, as well as the full session/ season campers. The Improv class is in addition to the theater production.





WORK WEEKEND 2024

When we say, "all hands on deck, we REALLY mean it this year!" O-AT-KA had a tough winter with a December windstorm, downed trees and having to do a higher amount of building and ground repairs. We are blessed with wonderful contractors and partners that have repaired the bigger items, but the remnants remain.

Because of this, we need your help. Work weekend is our annual event to open up camp for the Spring by cleaning, raking, chipping branches, painting and other general grounds work. This weekend has always been a wonderful way for alumni, families, and friends to give back to camp and the assistance is invaluable to our small staff.

This year Work Weekend will be held Friday, May 17 – Sunday, May 19 and led by our Facilities Director, Ken Berndt. Stay at camp with friends for a weekend of service - with a little fun sprinkled in. Volunteers are welcome for the day (Saturday being the busiest) or the weekend.

Do those dates not work for you? That's ok!! We'd love to have some small groups come up at other times from now until when camp opens. Gather friends and plan to reunite at the Lake for a project or two. Stay at camp and enjoy time together, while helping O-AT-KA get ready to welcome the campers of 2024! E-mail hplati@camboatka.org.





O-AT-KA Events on the Road!

We have had a busy and fun winter on the road! We hosted two green and grey events in Boston and New York City as well as two camper reunions/new family meet and greets in Boston and Southern Maine. Thank you to everyone who joined us for the fun and fellowship at each of these events. We are getting really excited for Summer 2024!



WE'RE HIRING!

We have a few openings to round our amazing summer staff! Take a look and spread the word to anyone you think would be a great fit for our team. Seeking: Second Session Nurse, Wilderness Trips Leader, Head Chef and kitchen staff, and per diem drivers.

Check out the job descriptions at: camboatka.org/about/employment/

WILDERNESS TRIPS

A Q&A with our Director of Outdoor Education, Jay Schwartz

Jay's O-AT-KA journey started in 2013 as a junior camper. From there he moved his way through the three units and joined the staff as an assistant counselor in 2021. Jay was quickly recognized for his leadership abilities and asked to be the Assistant CIT Director in 2022 and then hired as the Director of Outdoor Education in 2023.

This position complements Jay's college aspirations perfectly, as he is sophomore at the University of Maine Farmington studying Outdoor Recreation Business Administration, and gives him the opportunity to really focus on specialized areas at camp including Junior Maine Guides (JMG), campcraft and wilderness trips.

This summer Jay will lead a department of motivated and experienced staff in all of these areas. He has worked tirelessly on curriculum, trips planning and ways to educate all campers in wilderness awareness and education.

1. You helped create and expand this role at O-AT-KA. Why do you think outdoor experiences are so beneficial for campers?

Bringing campers on outdoor adventures can really bring out their best attributes such as self-confidence and perseverance. There is immense growth seen in each camper as they tackle the physical and mental challenges of the outdoors. From the lakes to the mountains, campers will participate in one-of-a-kind activities that foster a deep appreciation of our natural environment.



2. Can you give us a sneak peek of some things that will be offered for Trips in 2024?

In 2024, we will have many exciting adventures. This summer we will be conquering the mighty White Mountains, the great rivers of Northern Maine and trying out some new biking adventures. In addition, we will be running a Junior Maine Guide preparatory trip on the Rangeley Lakes.

3. Looking back, what is one of your favorite trips you did as a camper?

During my many years as a camper, my favorite trip was the full day hike up Mt. Katahdin. The incredible view from the top was unmatched. A particularly

memorable moment was when a rainstorm rolled in during our descent, we scrambled down the wet rocks and made it to the van safely. This rewarding experience has taught me to love the outdoors and all the great opportunities it has to offer.

Bigger multi-day trip options will be sent out to families prior to camp so campers can think about what they may like to do, and pack accordingly. Additional trips will be promoted to campers when they arrive.



CALL FOR HERO NOMINATIONS 2024

As we look forward to the Summer, we also are looking ahead to the biennial celebration of O-AT-KA Heroes.

Since 2002, O-AT-KA has recognized individuals whose contributions have had a major impact in the life of Camp O-AT-KA and its ideals. The Hero award is the highest honor at Camp O-AT-KA. The Hero celebration takes place every other year. This year's celebration will be held on Sunday, July 28. We ask the O-AT-KA community to nominate individuals for the Hero award.

NOMINATIONS PROCEDURE:

- Names can be proposed by anyone in the O-AT-KA family by responding to a yearly call for nominations.
 - Candidates are reviewed and nominations are selected by the O-AT-KA Board of Directors.
 - In general, candidates will not be considered until their active participation in camp has lapsed for a period of at least five years.
 - There will be a limit of two nominations per year.
 - The Nominations director (Vice President of the Board of Directors) will present the names of the nominees to the O-AT-KA Board of Directors.
 - The O-AT-KA Board of Directors must approve any exceptions to the nomination procedures by at least a 90 percent affirmative vote.
 - Heroes of O-AT-KA recipients will be announced at the Annual Meeting of the Corporation. They will be officially honored as O-AT-KA Heroes at Sunday chapel the following day.
 - Names of all recipients will be placed on a commemorative plaque prominently displayed at camp.
- Please consider this the 2024 call for nominations and we ask that you submit your names by Friday, May 3. Submissions should include your name, the name of the person you are recommending, their relationship to O-AT-KA, a short paragraph about why you are nominating them, and your contact information.
- Information should be sent via e-mail to info@campokatka.org or to Camp O-AT-KA, RE: Hero Nomination, PO 239, Sebago, ME 04029.

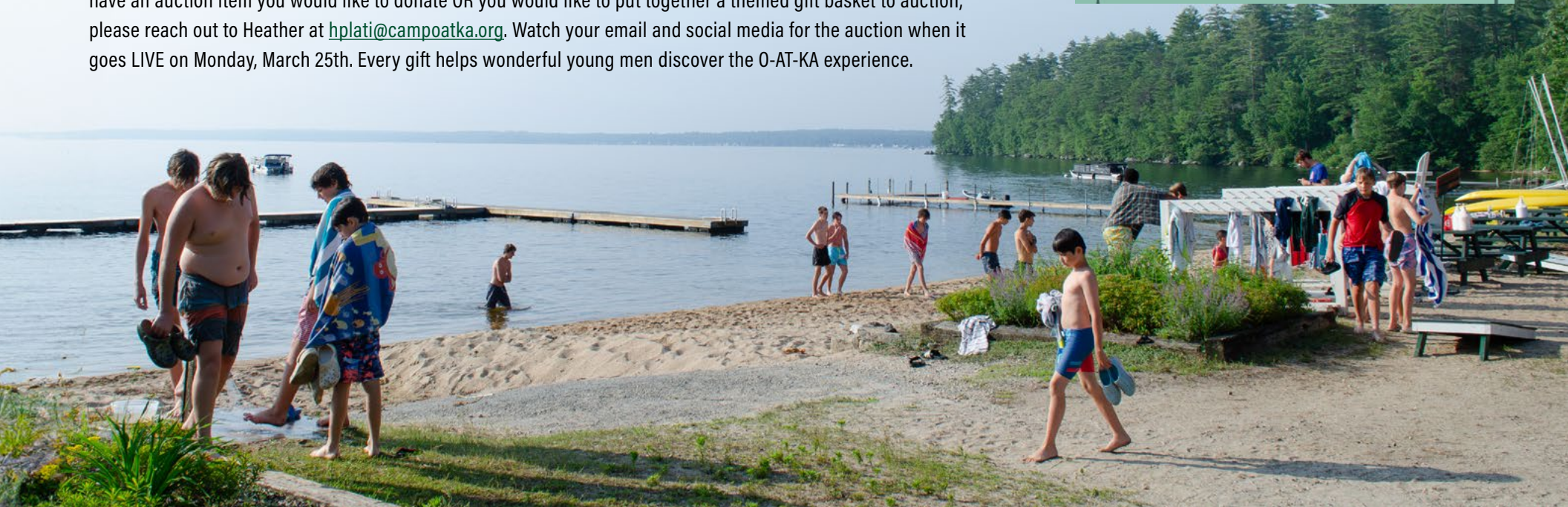
GREEN & GREY AUCTION 2024

Coming March 25th – April 8th, O-AT-KA's highly anticipated online auction to benefit camperships for deserving boys in 2024.

In past years the auction has been part of an in-person event and then more recently evolved into a hybrid of in-person and online. Our newly formed alumni committee had 2 amazing community events in the Fall in Boston and NYC to widen the net for the camp community to enjoy time with one another.

With this change of format, we want to make sure our camp friends also will be able to partake in the tradition of the auction, while raising much needed funds for camperships. Prizes are donated so 100% of the funds raised help deserving boys attend camp for this upcoming summer.

We've already confirmed some awesome items like sports tickets, experiences, O-AT-KA goodies and more. If you have an auction item you would like to donate OR you would like to put together a themed gift basket to auction, please reach out to Heather at hplati@campoatka.org. Watch your email and social media for the auction when it goes LIVE on Monday, March 25th. Every gift helps wonderful young men discover the O-AT-KA experience.



Stay Connected

Follow & Like us on:



Facebook
@Camp O-AT-KA,
boys summer camp



Instagram
@campoatka



Camp website
campoatka.org