



THE LION'S ROAR

Winter 2026

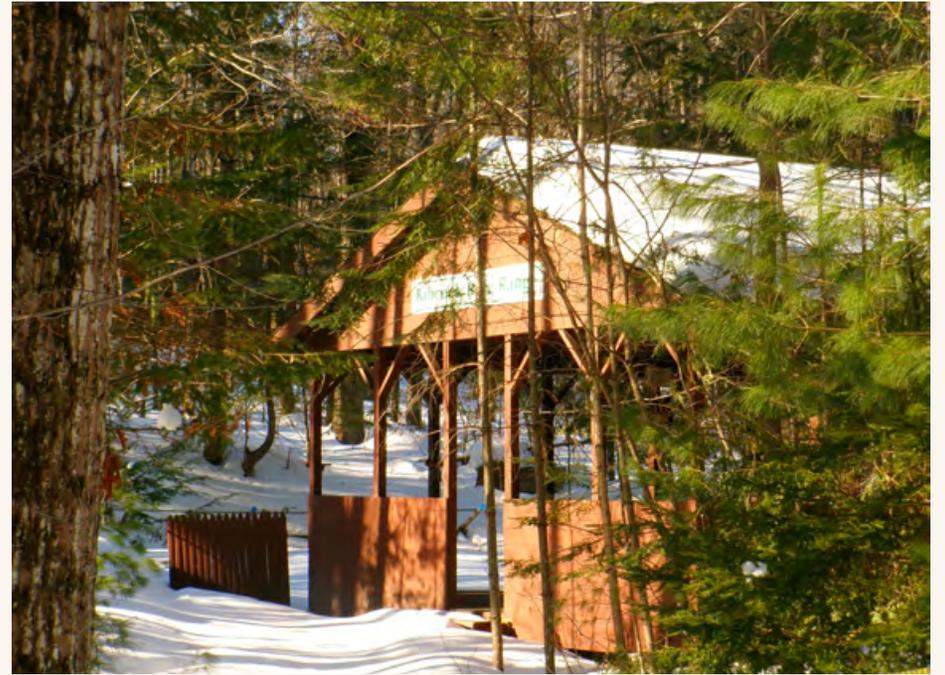


- May 15–17:** Work Weekend 2026
- June 15:** Staff Training Week Starts
- June 21:** Opening Day
- July 19:** Start of Second Session
- July 25:** Annual Corporation Meeting & Hero's Weekend
- August 7:** Last Day of Camp
- September 4–7:** Friends and Family Weekend

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For us in the Northeast this winter has been brutally cold and snowy, and right now O-AT-KA has about 3 feet of snow the ground throughout Camp; needless to say, Matt has spent a lot of time behind the plow clearing the Camp road. Despite the cold and snow, Camp Leadership been continuously focused on the 120th summer of O-AT-KA; enrollment is on a good pace, there

are very few staffing holes left to fill, program planning is in full swing, and staff training week is taking shape. We're reading for June! Please enjoy this latest edition of The Lion's Roar as we dream of the warm Maine summer sun and the refreshing plunges into beautiful Sebago Lake.







IN MEMORY OF AMY HELLER

Amy Heller was a cherished member of the Camp O-AT-KA community whose warmth, generosity, and steady guidance left a lasting imprint on generations of campers and staff. For many summers, she devoted her time and heart to creating a place where young people felt welcomed, supported, and inspired to grow. Whether Amy offered encouragement, shared wisdom, or simply listened with kindness, her presence helped shape the spirit of the camp. Her dedication, laughter, and deep care for others will be remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing her. Amy's legacy will continue to live on in the traditions, friendships, and memories formed at O-AT-KA

Written by Chris Kohl

I met Amy at the beginning of freshman year at Colgate, two Red Sox and Patriots diehards in a sea of Mets and Giants fans. We quickly became friends, and her friends became mine as well. That was how it worked with Amy - she listened intently, offered her perspective in the most modest way, and cultivated connections between disparate folks. She played rugby, memorably at 10 on Saturday mornings, loved to people watch in the dining hall, and dove headfirst into her studies in philosophy and religion. She was that student professors wanted - engaged and thoughtful, but also willing to challenge an assertion that rang hollow.

Perhaps she knew she would always be part of the academic world - her professors became lifelong friends, especially when she went to Yale for divinity school, meeting the love of her life, fellow seminarian Roy Heller. This was a true partnership - in life, in parenthood, and in faith. Decades in Texas did not diminish Amy's love of Maine, and last summer, as frail as she was, they traveled to Kennebunk one final time to enjoy the beach.

Amy first came to O-AT-KA in 1992, when we needed a photo and yearbook instructor, a task she embraced. She and Roy visited over the years, and in 2007, Heather and I invited them to return, Amy as Chaplain and Roy as fly tying instructor. After a few summers, they switched roles as only they could, and charted a new path together, with Amy's quiet counsel on the Bungalow Porch, Roy's inspiring HOTCS, their beloved pup Galahad, and especially Noah and Annie growing up surrounded by the camp family. Our lives and theirs are forever entwined with Camp. Godspeed, Amy.

Written by Bill Southwick

WINDS OF O-AT-KA

Sailing has always been an important and prominent part of summers at O-AT-KA.

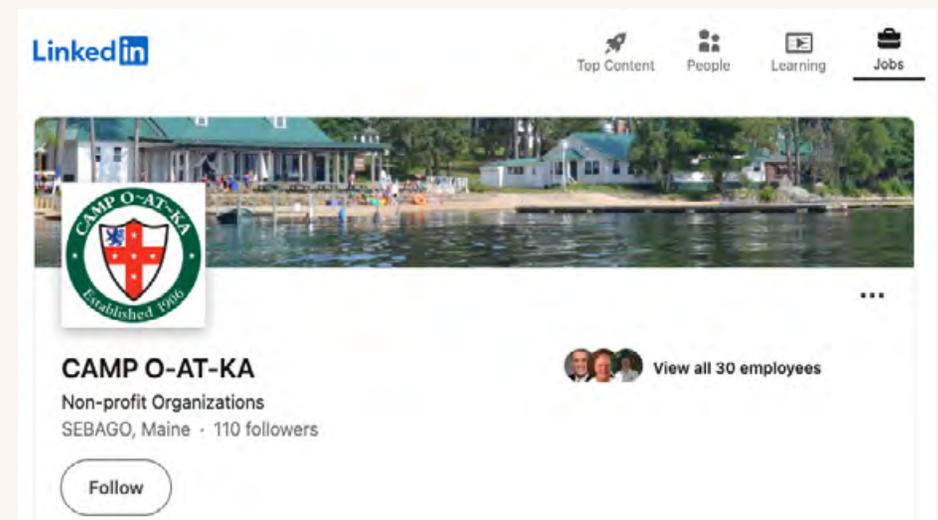
Our sailing program in summer 2025 had a lot of success: placing at least 3rd in four of the six regattas we raced in, including 1st at Winona (that one felt good). We look to carry that momentum into the summer of 2026 while doing so on the backs of our new sailing fleet. O-AT-KA is the midst of a campaign to raise funds to purchase a new fleet of seven boats from RS Sailing, specifically the RS Toura model. In addition to a durable hull and responsive handling, the RS Toura allows for larger crews (up to 7 people) which will create a better learning environment and expanded class sizes: getting more kids in more boats. If you're interested in contributing to this important campaign, please consider donating here:



Calling all O-AT-KA Alumni

Our alumni base gets larger after every summer at O-AT-KA, however more times than we want to admit, we lose contact with alumni as they age out of Camp or start their own careers. In an effort to maintain an active and engaged alumni group, we've created an alumni database to capture update-to-date contact information and help alumni stay involved and find other alumni. If you, or someone you know, wants to stay in touch with O-AT-KA and become part of our vibrant alumni base, **please register with our new Alumni Database**, which can be found [here](#).

In a similar breath, please be sure follow us on [LinkedIn](#) (find us HERE) so we can support our alumni after Camp. As the saying goes: it's not what you know, it's who you know. While you're at it, be sure to follow us on all social media platforms; word of mouth is our biggest recruitment tool and social media plays a huge hand in that.



Corporation Nominations

The continued growth of O-AT-KA is dependent on our strong and engaged Corporation members. It is important that we bring on individuals that care about O-AT-KA and want to have a hand in its continued success. If you or anyone you know has interest in being involved on the Corporation level, please send me an email at jholmes@campoatka.org.

BOB COURTNEY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

In memory of the late Bob Courtney, Camp O-AT-KA and the Courtney family have established the Robert "Bob" Courtney Scholarship, which is given annually to an O-AT-KA staff member that best exhibits and promotes the traditions, values, and mission of Camp O-AT-KA. We are happy to announce that Martin Gonzalez is the 2025, and inaugural, recipient of this \$1,500 scholarship. Martin routinely displays the attributes that Bob held in such high regard: Honesty, Obedience, Truth, Chivalry, and (especially) Service. Please join us in congratulating Martin on this honor.

If you'd like to contribute to the fund in help increase the scholarship amount, you may do so by sending a check to Camp at 593 Sebago Rd., PO Box 239, Sebago, ME 04029 or [via PayPal from Camp's website](#) with the designation to the Bob Courtney Scholarship Fund.



Camp Store

Get ready for camp and show your Camp O-AT-KA spirit! Visit the [Camp O-AT-KA Online Camp Store](#) to find everything you need for the season ahead. From classic camp apparel and hats to water bottles and other camp essentials, the store is the perfect place to gear up before arriving and to keep the camp memories going all year long. Whether you're a camper, parent, or alumni, take a moment to browse the collection and grab some O-AT-KA gear to celebrate your camp pride.

Don't wait to register

It is time to register for camp this summer!

INFO: For more information on session dates and rates: [Click Here](#)

REGISTER: To register: [Click Here](#)

QUESTIONS: Call us at 207-787-3401 or email info@campoatka.org.





O-AT-KA Around the world

The ultimate Green/Gray match-up

Two current O-AT-KA staff members, Brady Livas (left-Green) and Nolan Cressey (right-Gray) at the Coliseum recently on their school trip to Italy.

Camp Value LASTING FRIENDSHIPS

This past year Peter Livas, Peter Brannen, Mike Gibson and Jimmy Holmes (now camp's Executive Director) met for a mountain bike trip to Vermont's Northeast Kingdom. The group first meet in the Middle Unit almost 30 years ago as campers. They later went on to become CITs and Staff, with camp highlights such as a King, a JMG, waterfront head and amateur fly tyer.

The trip to Vermont included not only O-AT-KA alumni but also friends, family, children and soon-to-be next generation O-AT-KA campers.

The friendships you make at camp will always remain a constant. Despite distance, jobs, family and the hectic day-to-day, these four (and others not shown, sorry guys, you know who you are.) have remained close.

They are each dedicated to the enduring legacy of Camp. You may see them at the next pre-camp work weekend or an alumni event in the off season. But the great thing is that chances are you have your own enduring legacies from camp, reach out to them and come back soon.

Give to Camp O-AT-KA

Over 100 years ago, EJ Dennen created O-AT-KA so thousands of boys could grow and thrive. His mission of "providing every camper and staff member a caring community, close to nature, where the body, the heart, and the spirit are strengthened through experiences that are fun and challenging" is still as strong today as it was in 1906. To fulfill that mission camp needs the support of our family and friends. New family referrals, time, attention, and financial support will be crucial for the continued health and success of our beloved camp.

Did you know? Many employers will match their employees' charitable giving! Be sure to ask your employer about this and potentially double your gift to O-AT-KA!

[Please consider a gift today!](#)

Give Today

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Camp website
campoatka.org



Peter Livas, Jimmy Holmes, Mike Gibson

Peter Brannen getting ready to shred the trails, and Jimmy Holmes