



# THE LION'S ROAR

Fall 2021



## Remembering a Hero: **Charles Donovan**

11.4.76 – 09.11.21

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On September 11, longtime Summer Director Charles Donovan passed away after a lengthy and courageous battle with cancer. Charles joined the O-AT-KA staff in 2001 as a junior unit cabin counselor, served in many camp roles, and was the Summer Director from 2016-2021. Charles was instrumental in the success of the robust O-AT-KA program we enjoy today and cared deeply about the staff, campers, and families.

When not on the lakes of Sebago, Charles was a dedicated science teacher at Loyola Blakefield High School in Baltimore, MD where he was also the director of their forensics program. His debate team won multiple district and state championships; and a national title in 2010. In 2015, Charles' peers at Loyola Blakefield honored him with the Marcus Ryu '91 Employee Recognition Award; the highest form of recognition given to a faculty member or staff member.

It was a true honor that Charles was able to fulfill his wish of spending his last summer at O-AT-KA, his spiritual home, surrounded by camp friends he considered family. On the final day of camp, Board President John Hall attended the closing staff banquet and surprised Charles with the greatest honor bestowed on a member of the O-AT-KA community: The Hero Award.



With the Hero award, Charles will be remembered amongst a distinguished list of people who dedicated their lives to the service of Camp O-AT-KA. Upon receiving the award, Charles shared, *“As a debate coach, I am never at a loss for words and today I am. I have spent years looking at the names on the Hero shields in the Bungalow and never would have considered that I would be included with this group of wonderful individuals.”* In the eyes of his peers, there was never anyone as deserving.

Charles final days were spent in Portland, Maine (his adopted city) with lifelong friend Ingrid Reeves, her husband Jon, and his beloved goddaughter, Taryn. Charles loved introducing her to the world of O-AT-KA with trips to camp and attendance at Friends & Family weekends.

A Mass of Christian Burial was offered for Charles on September 25 near his hometown of Bronxville, NY and he was laid to rest at the Woodlawn Cemetery.

A camp celebration for Charles will be held at O-AT-KA on Saturday, June 18, 2022. Volunteers are also developing a fund drive to endow a campership in Charles’ name to honor his legacy. Details will be forthcoming.

We will remember Charles for greeting countless campers as they arrived on opening day, giving his “don’t cross the road or go in the water” speech during the first meal, mesmerizing us with passionate passwords from the pulpit in the Chapel, mentoring counselors, bravely running the Four on the 4th road race after being in remission, being marveled by the hike up Douglas Mountain - whether it was his first trip or his last; and being proud to be part of something that is so much bigger than himself.

Charles’ legacy will live on within the generations of happy O-AT-KA campers and we will cherish his memory.

“May the lake, the trees, the wide spaces of the fields and all the nature sights and sounds of earth and air be unto us as gates whereby we may enter—and think quiet and compelling thoughts.

And grant that the friendships of the Camp, as we live in happy fellowship with one another may deepen our purpose to serve—by giving upreach and outreach to every good impulse of heart, mind, and will.”





## A message from the leadership

What a summer we had at Camp O-AT-KA! We are so proud of our community and all that we accomplished to get us through the summer months with fun and safety as our number one priority. It was a truly memorable 116th season with record enrollments (we had a wait list for session II), no COVID cases, and a full and dynamic staff. We successfully implemented our safety plans and kept our community healthy and safe throughout.

This fantastic summer was possible because of you. We couldn't have done this without the trust and support of our families, the tireless work of our staff, and the dedication from each of our campers, alumni and friends. Thank you.

We are already planning ahead to Summer 2022, and many of our current campers have taken advantage of early registration. We are going to have another full camp in summer 2022, and we cannot wait!

We hope you all take care, stay safe and enjoy your fall. Please reach out to us during the year. We love to hear from our families, alumni and friends! You can reach us at [info@campoatka.com](mailto:info@campoatka.com) or call us at (207) 787-3401.

Best wishes for a safe and successful year, and know your friends at O-AT-KA are always here!



## Send us your camper referrals!

We are excited to welcome boys (both returning and new) to O-AT-KA next summer. If you know a family that may be interested in learning more, please send us their information so we can introduce ourselves. You can call e-mail us at [info@campoatka.com](mailto:info@campoatka.com), call us at (207) 787-3401 or better yet, use the Refer a Camper form on our website at: [www.campoatka.org/refer](http://www.campoatka.org/refer).

# Password with King Peter Lowenstein

(given during Summer 2021's  
Candlelight service)

This summer has been unique to summers past at Camp O-AT-KA. We were given an additional hour of sleep (Thank you, Heather), there was outdoor seating at the Commons, and sixth period became evening activity. On the contrary, many traditions lived on.

Despite the numerous changes the world recently endured, we've retained camp culture. Green had two lopsided victories, we were enlightened by insightful passwords every morning, and you all wrote candy line letters. We got berated by spray bottles in the Commons, completed swim tests, many of you accomplished the polar bear challenge and everyone got to participate in council ring.

Almost everyone at camp, including myself, joined or moved up in the Order of Sir Galahad and a lot of you earned chevrons that prove proficiency in your crafts. As a community we've come together as a family and although we will soon depart, our memories will remain.

Throughout my years as a camper at O-AT-KA, I left camp for many short trips and excursions. Whether it was to go to another camp and beat them in baseball or hike Mount Washington we always wore our O-AT-KA t-shirts for everything. The reason wasn't for free advertising, it was so our counselors could easily spot us. However, by wearing our O-AT-KA shirts, we were representing our camp and the values taught to us. Because we were representing camp, we were what the counselors considered, "John Doe of Camp O-AT-KA."

A "John Doe of Camp O-AT-KA" is anyone of us that is representing the camp family – outside of camp. The idea is not to denounce your namesake for that of camp, but to represent all that we teach here through our actions.

When we wore our camp shirts at campers, we were "John Doe of Camp O-AT-KA" and we represented more than us as individuals.

When we all depart, you may choose to wear your O-AT-KA gear every day – or you may not. Regardless, your actions should speak to all that you've learned this summer. Through

Helpfulness, Obedience, Truth, Chivalry and Service; you can stand out as a "John Doe of Camp O-AT-KA" without even wearing your camp gear.

Don't let all that we've learned at camp stay at camp. Let others know what a community accomplishes through your actions. Share all the knowledge you've obtained. Whether it be how to race a sailboat, shoot an arrow, or make a pen; share what you learned this summer. In doing so, make sure you draw upon the vows many of you have taken and think of the unwritten lessons learned from being away from home. Living in cabins amongst one another, you have learned to be empathetic and understanding of those you just met. These are the life skills that can be applied at your home, church, school, athletic teams; or anywhere else you find yourself.

Make sure you stand out as a, "John Doe of Camp O-AT-KA" in your communities that you are going home to tomorrow.

**The password this evening is  
"John Doe of Camp O-AT-KA."**





Brad Boss relives his camper days with a visit to O-AT-KA in August 2021.

## “How Camp O-AT-KA saved my life - *literally*”

In 1942 during one of my early years at O-AT-KA, I realized that to be certified as a Sailboat Skipper, I had to pass certain Swimming challenges.

I was able to do this the following year at age 10. This was important because much of my early life involved sailing on Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island, I wanted to be even more proficient around and in the water.

In 1943, O-AT-KA offered the opportunity to achieve my “Junior Life Saving” certificate. My counselors in Cabin Tintagel encouraged this effort; as did those in charge of the waterfront.

Yes, it was challenging but ultimately successful. Little did I know at that time how important it would be in my future.

Upon returning home to Rhode Island in late Summer or possibly the year after in 1944, I took two friends (who said they knew how to swim) out sailing in my 12 foot Beetle Catboat.

After a while we decided to anchor in a cove and go for a swim. When jumping over the side, we could comfortably stand up with our heads above water. What I did not realize is that we were anchored on a little shelf and there was a pretty severe drop off.

One of my friends got off the shelf and panicked. I was nearby and he grabbed me around the neck and down we went under the water.

Fortunately, I remembered what to do in such a circumstance and had practiced it as a part of the O-AT-KA

Life Saving Course, I was able to grab my friends lower arm, bring it down, reverse myself to his back and side stroke with him under my other arm back to the surface and over to my boat!

We were both saved because of the careful but complete teaching and mentoring of the Camp O-AT-KA waterfront and swimming instructors.

Now the ripe old age of 88, all the details remain very vividly in my mind and memory bank.

Whenever my own children or grandchildren were (or are) off to their own summer camps, I try to remind them how important Life Saving Courses are. You may never know when a little more knowledge of what to do in the water may save your life or the life of someone else.

Brad Boss

Former O-AT-KA Camper (1941-1945)



## Have you started your holiday shopping yet?

We are so excited to re-launch our camp store online this year! The store offers an assortment of shirts and sweatshirts with vintage-inspired O-AT-KA designs that will make for perfect gifts for the whole family this holiday season!

**For a limited time, you can place your orders at:**

**<https://www.bonfire.com/store/camp-o-at-ka-store/>**



Highlights from  
Summer 2021



# Register for Summer 2022!

Registration for Summer 2022 is OPEN! In fact, we already have our first campers registered for next summer! We also have many new families that are eager to register for 2022, but we want to ensure our current campers have priority.

With this summer having record enrollment numbers, meeting our physical capacity, and having to start a wait list, we are anticipating our camp will quickly reach capacity for next summer. We want to make sure you have the opportunity to register your camper(s) before we start open registration on November 1. Even if you aren't fully certain on which sessions/dates, we encourage you to get your registration in. Those details can be finalized later this year or early next.

We are continuing with our risk and worry-free registration policy! A deposit is required at registration to secure your campers' spot, and tuition will be 100% refundable (again this year) if necessary. Families who are interested in a tuition payment plan will need to register no later than October 31, 2021. After this, registration will open up to our new families and inquiries!

Register for Summer 2022 today, and be sure that your campers' spot is secured: <https://oatka.campintouch.com/ui/forms/application/camper/App>  
For more details on session dates and rates and to access a PDF copy of the applications, please visit: <https://campoatka.org/dates-rates/>



## SAVE THE DATE!

The annual Green & Grey camp celebration will be held on **Saturday, March 19, 2022** at the Salem Country Club in Peabody, Massachusetts. We look forward to gathering the camp community for a night of celebration in the name of scholarship, fellowship and friendship. Details will be sent out after the first of the year.

## CAMPAIGN CORNER



The Building Better Boys for a New Century Campaign is well within reach of \$8M by year end.

We need your help to close the Campaign with resounding success by year end...

- **Endowment** - help us mitigate future unforeseen challenges.
- **Capital** - help us complete remaining campus upgrades to provide truly transformational opportunities for our boys.
- **Annual** - get a jump start on your next annual gift and have it counted toward the Campaign

Take advantage of possible future tax law changes by giving from IRA distributions, stock gifts, Donor Advised Funds, Irrevocable Bequests.

Our Campaign has been a remarkable undertaking to grow the Culture of Philanthropy for O-AT-KA.

Contact Heather Plati ([hplati@campoatka.com](mailto:hplati@campoatka.com) or 207-787-3401) if you'd like to consider a pledge to take advantage of the remaining tax years available to all donors (2021-2024).

Help us reach the finish line and make your donation today!

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boys summer camp



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Camp website  
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