



# THE LION'S ROAR

Winter 2021



## COVID-19 Response and Summer Plans

Camp O-AT-KA is so excited to reopen our doors for Summer 2021. As we can see by the robust list of campers (see page 6), we know our families are excited too!

There is a lot of discussion surrounding the upcoming season with many great questions about how O-AT-KA will operate safely. Know that the number one priority is the health and well-being of our camp community and we are fortunate to have many resources available to help us develop a plan.

Our staff, campers and their families are anxious to hear about the summer and our safety procedures that will be in place. We are anxious to deliver this information to you and we will be keeping our families informed along the way.

O-AT-KA, along with the rest of the Maine summer camps, is working closely with the Maine CDC and

American Camping Association (ACA) to compile procedures to have a safe, fun and successful summer.

Along with Maine camp leaders meeting frequently, O-AT-KA has already hired an amazing Infirmiry staff for Summer 2021. Two of our experienced RN's are also serving as our "COVID Coordinators" to guide the camp and serve as a resource to our staff and families. The COVID team have been meeting with camp leadership and will continue to serve in this role until camp ends in August.

Families should expect that we will start to send out regular communications starting in March that will help us all navigate a great summer. We will need 100% reinforcement from the families and staff and we thank those in advance for their support.

*(continued next page)*



Below are a few frequently asked questions, along with our latest answers and information:

**1. Will campers need a vaccine to attend camp?**

No. Vaccines are generally not available for those under 18. We are anticipating that campers will be asked to quarantine and self-report; as well as provide a negative test for COVID-19 upon their arrival. If a camper has had a vaccination, we will ask for proof of that as well.

**2. Will staff be vaccinated?**

In early February, the CDC's Essential Workers Team of the Vaccine Implementation Task Force confirmed with the American Camping Association (ACA) that out-of-school time workers had been included in the Essential Workers category. We are awaiting more information but are thrilled that staff should have access to the vaccination; when available in their regional areas during the essential workers designated phase.

**3. Will masks be mandated at camp?**

Masks will be on the packing list and we anticipate our community will be asked to wear them at certain times (exact guidelines pending). Some examples might be: campers and staff will wear a mask when in an arts studio but will not wear a mask on the waterfront. Campers will not be expected to wear a mask in their cabins.

**4. Will you have a quarantine spot at camp for anyone showing COVID symptoms and waiting for test results and/or anyone that tests positive?**

Yes, this is a requirement of the CDC. We will have a designated building, staffing and alternative activities for individuals in these situations.

**5. Will campers be able to leave camp once they arrive? What about wilderness trips?**

We do not know the final answer to this question yet. It will depend on the CDC and Maine state guidelines. But we do anticipate leaving camp will be limited this summer for activities such as the Sea Dogs games. Our wilderness trip program may also be impacted and we plan to utilize our own camp property to its fullest potential as it relates to outdoor wilderness skills and adventures.

**6. Will we be able to visit camp?**

At this point we do want families to prepare that we may not be able to host visitors at camp. This would include visiting days and things such as in-person attendance at award ceremonies. Drop off and pick up days may also look different, as our goal is to keep the camp as safe as possible. If visiting days are removed from the schedule we are looking at alternative ways for campers to connect with their families (private Zoom meetings or a phone call to check in). For alumni and friends, this may also mean not being able to visit O-AT-KA when camp is in session. As hard as this may seem, our goal is to be able to offer the best and safest experience for the boys.

**7. Is registration refundable?**

We want to remind our families that summer 2021 registrations are risk and worry free. If a family decides, at any time, that they aren't comfortable with sending their camper to O-AT-KA this summer, full refunds are an option. We will work together to make this summer as safe and comfortable for all involved.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to us at (207) 787-3401, or you can e-mail us at [info@campoatka.com](mailto:info@campoatka.com).





## Diversity & Inclusivity at Camp

---

Along with the American Camping Association (ACA), we believe that it is important to restate that we stand in solidarity with the millions of people who are angry, hurt and grieving from racially motivated violence. Camp O-AT-KA is committed to putting in the work to help put an end to systemic racism. We aim to explore, respect and celebrate diversity.

Since November 2019, Our Diversity and Inclusivity Committee has been meeting on a regular basis to discuss and plan implementation of ethnic, racial and socioeconomic diversity within our board, staff, and camper communities. In addition to that, the committee is focusing on education for each of those groups.

There has been a lot of attention to this topic at the national level, and the American Camping Association (ACA) has really ramped up their

efforts in providing educational opportunities, resources and discussions within the camp community. O-AT-KA leadership and the D&I Committee have jumped at every opportunity to join in on these meetings and real discussions, to listen and to learn. Now and in the future, we are committed to recruiting a diverse community of staff and campers as well as developing our summer programs with diversity, equity, inclusivity, immersion and of course safety top-of-mind.

If you haven't already read our public statement that we published on our website back in March of 2020, please take a moment to read it now at: [campoatka.org/camp/diversity-inclusivity/](https://campoatka.org/camp/diversity-inclusivity/).



## The Order of Sir Galahad

by Roy L. Heller, O-AT-KA Chaplain

In the mid-1890's, E. J. Dennen was the priest of St. Stephen's in South Boston. Boston in the 1890's was, as one might imagine, not a particularly good or healthy place to grow up. The ravages brought on by the Industrial Revolution had had an irreparable effect on the families within Dennen's small church. Alcoholism, abuse, despair and rampant crime were never far away from the daily work of St. Stephen's. How to affect real change in such depressing and devastating circumstances? Where to even start?

E. J. Dennen began with the boys of the church, those youths whose future seemed particularly dismal. There was little that Dennen could do to counteract the inevitable outward facts of those boys' lives. They undoubtedly, follow in the steps of their fathers: work in the factories and sweat shops. In fact, with no child labor laws in place, many of the boys in Dennen's probably were already there, standing in assembly for ten or twelve or fourteen hours a day. No, there was little that could be done, at least immediately.

## Waterfront

E. J. Dennen spotted the site for O-AT-KA while boating on Sebago Lake. He was drawn to the expansive beach with fields behind it. Over the years the waterfront, with the Great Hall behind it, has become a hub for camp activities. Campers participate in the American Red Cross swimming program, which focuses on improving technique, increasing confidence in the water, and developing water safety skills. Experienced swimmers can become Lifeguards with First Aid and CPR certifications through the American Red Cross.

Boating has evolved from canoes and kayaking and paddle boarding. Campers enjoy trips on Sebago, starting with the first boat, the Ramona, to Big Ben, and up to the current ski and pontoon boats the camp uses for water skiing, excursions and as a fishing platform.

The sailing program has also been a key component of camp with O-AT-KA competing and hosting many regattas.



## O-AT-KA: An Enduring Legacy

Have you heard about our latest publication? We are thrilled to bring you the 2020 "Oak Leaves" that is a pictorial and historical adventure of Camp O-AT-KA from its beginnings in 1906 until the unprecedented summer of 2020. While we did not hold camp in 2020, we didn't want your bookshelves to have an empty space where the Oak Leaves would be!

This book is a labor of love by many and contains over 60 pages of photos, alumni stories, camp time lines, and a personal look into the founders of O-AT-KA, their vision and why the mission of O-AT-KA is still going strong today.

This keepsake is a must for alumni, families and friends that hold a special place in their hearts for O-AT-KA. We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we did creating it.

The cost per book is \$25 to cover the price of production and shipping. We appreciate your support in helping make this piece a part of camp history. Purchase your copy today at: [campoatka.org/oatka-an-enduring-legacy/](http://campoatka.org/oatka-an-enduring-legacy/).



## Remembering Frank Johnston

(May 28, 1929 – December 31, 2020)

The Rev. Frank Johnston began his sermon to his parish in Foxboro, Massachusetts on Sunday, March 28, 1965 with these words: "When life confronts us with a treasured experience, when we see a thing of beauty, or grasp some previously masked truth, or know a great love, we want to share this experience."

It is quite special to begin a remembrance of an old and dear friend with his own words.

Every summer, from 1962 to 1980, Frank left his parish, first in Foxboro and then in Manhasset, New York, to serve as Junior Unit head at O-AT-KA. Coincidentally, these words fit equally with Frank's experience at camp as much as they did with his participation in the last leg of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama with four members of his parish in Massachusetts.

Frank, along with his wife Bits, and children Peter, Julie, Scott, Tom and Jill, jumped into O-AT-KA with energy, dedication and devotion. For many of those years, the Junior Unit head lived in Bliss and oversaw a very full unit with all bunks filled. The key to the success of "The Golden Unit" for the campers was winning inspection each week. The key to the teamwork of the counselors was an open door at Bliss after the cabin lights were out. Every night there was a big bowl of buttered popcorn ready and a gathering of counselors ahead of a run to the D.D. for frappes. Frank

always chose "mocha, thick, please!" It seems very simple and it was. It was all about building relationships in a slow and steady way and it worked. Frank was an excellent unit head and because he often preached on Sunday morning's in the Chapel, we saw another side of him that underscored everything we discovered over frappes and popcorn in Bliss.

The Unit Heads in those days were all outstanding athletes. Frank, along with Bob Colburn (Middle Unit) and Neil Keller (Senior Unit) excelled on the tennis court during Siesta and the golf course on days off. There was a rivalry and a gritty competition that was not only good for them, but for the camp as well. Along with the then director, Bill Berndt, Sr., that energy flowed to the volleyball net as well as water polo on Sunday afternoons.

While O-AT-KA weathered the Vietnam war and the assassinations of the 1960's and beyond, the key to a sense of well-being for campers, counselors and parents had to be the longevity and skill of the Berndts (Bill and Bee) as well as Frank and Bob and Neil and so many other members of the staff through the decades they served. And to be sure, Frank Johnston, contributed so much to keep the flame from the Candlelight Service burning until the first day of camp the following summer.

BY: John Van Sicle

# Check out who's coming to camp this summer!

Wally Ackerman  
Judd Adams  
Cooper Aitken  
Rafael Alvarez de Rosenzweig  
Alec Anderson  
Whit Armstrong  
James Armstrong  
Lars Axelson  
Justice Bean  
Theodore Beaven  
Conrad Bennett  
Duncan Bennett  
Fred Bennett  
Warren Bennett  
Tony Benwell  
Hayes Bjarke  
Marcus Bjarke  
James Blecksmith-Walters  
Cyrus Boak  
Graham Boak  
Juan Bohigas  
Jameson Bradbury  
Spencer Bradbury  
Grayson Brady  
Polo Brice

Malcolm Buie  
Timothy Burrows  
Jacob Bussiere  
Julian Cabarrus  
Sebastian Cabarrus  
Thoma Carson  
Crance Castle  
Tristan Caudill  
Aidan Chase  
Eric Chase  
Bradford Christoforetti  
Luke Chrzanowski  
Chris Connelly  
William Connelly  
Jack Connelly  
Roman Copeland  
Nolan Cressey  
Connor Curtin  
Blake DaCosta  
Alexander Davis  
Charlie Dawson  
John Derrough-Salas  
Joseph Derrough-Salas  
Enrique Diaz Rubin  
Teoman Dogan  
Davis Earthrowl  
Connor Erdman  
William Fortin  
Chris Foster  
Jameson Foster  
Henry Goldman  
Jacobo Gonzalez Mateos  
James Gordon  
Henry Governali

James Governali  
Brayden Graham  
George Graham  
Hugo Graham  
Tyler Grover  
Gordie Gund  
Thomas Haenle  
Reid Haffenreffer  
Seth Hagan  
Nicky Harris  
Andrew Heinichen  
Anders Hesson  
Alejandro Horton  
Brian Insley  
Teddy Jones  
Andrew Kaczmarek  
Finian Keeler  
Connor Kelley  
Zealand Libby  
Brady Livas  
Kevin Maguire  
Connor Maguire  
Daniel Maher  
Teddy Marischen  
Charlie Marischen  
Hugo Marquis  
Samuel Marr  
Adrian Mazurenko  
Vincent Mazurenko  
Ambrose McCullough  
Ethan McCullough  
Jude McCullough  
Griffin Nedelka  
Rodrigo Nieto

Caspian Phillips  
Simon Piggott  
Nate Plati  
William Price  
Jack Redding  
Andrew Robertson  
Gabriel Robertson  
Noah Robertson  
Jack Robertson  
Johnny Robinson  
Jack Romano  
Tavo Rostowsky  
Henry Roth  
Ivan Sainz  
Jack Schoenbaum  
Luke Schoenbaum  
Jack Shadden  
Bryson Shaub  
Drew Shepherd  
Malin Sorensen  
Garrett Stevens  
Ashten Tanner  
Silas Tritico  
Zander Turner  
William Wadland  
Hunter Waechter  
Thomas Watson  
Matthew Weiss

**Haven't registered yet?  
There's still time.  
Get on the list today at  
[camboatka.org/enroll-2/](https://www.camboatka.org/enroll-2/)**

## Help us Recruit

If there is one good thing to come as a result of COVID-19 and having to close camp for summer 2020, it's that folks are reminded of their love, loss and the importance of camp. We are excited to welcome boys (both returning and new) back home. Even during a global pandemic, please help us continue to spread the good word of camp and send us your referrals!

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 us at (207) 787-3401 or better yet, use the Refer a Camper form on our website at: [www.camboatka.org/refer](https://www.camboatka.org/refer).

**Reminder: Summer 2021 registration is 100% risk and worry free!**



## Let's play some Tennis

---

There have been a lot of updates to the facilities at O-AT-KA since our campers were on Sebago Lake in 2019! One of the highlights has been the creation of our new tennis center. Built in memory of O-AT-KA alum and Hero Curt Tong and with thanks to the many donors that supported this initiative; the Curtis W. Tong Tennis Center is a multi-purpose recreational space for tennis, pickle ball, four square and basketball. This state of the art space will elevate the O-AT-KA tennis program and provide space for recreational games, free play, and unit activities.

To complement our new facility, we are thrilled to be welcoming an outstanding addition to the camp staff – Pedro de Paula.

Pedro joins us from Brazil, where he currently lives. Having spent many years in the United States for high school and college, Coach Pedro is well decorated in the tennis world with such honors as NCAA Division II MVP in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007; four-year collegiate team captain, and ranked in the Top 30 (ITF) in Brazil. Pedro played for and graduated from Southern New Hampshire University with a degree in Economics & Finance and will be returning to SNHU in September to pursue his graduate degree. Pedro has continued his love of coaching at organizations in Brazil, New Hampshire, and Maine. We are honored that he will be joining O-AT-KA for Summer 2021. For our campers out there, THIS is your year to try tennis!

### Get to know Coach Pedro:

#### Tell us a little about your background

Greeting from Brazil! I am married and have a 2 year old daughter named Sarah. I started playing tennis when I was 6 years old and it has been a huge part of my life since then. When I was 17 years old, I attended Conval High School in Peterborough New Hampshire as an Exchange Student. During this time I was offered a full Scholarship to play tennis for Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester, NH; where I graduated in Economics.

Professionally, I became an Import and Export Analyst and worked for around 10 years with chemical products. But I have never stopped playing tennis!

#### What will your role at camp be and why did you want to be in this role?

My job will be as a Head of the Tennis program. I chose that role because I have a passion for this sport and I enjoy leading activities with campers that want to improve their skills as well as have some fun.

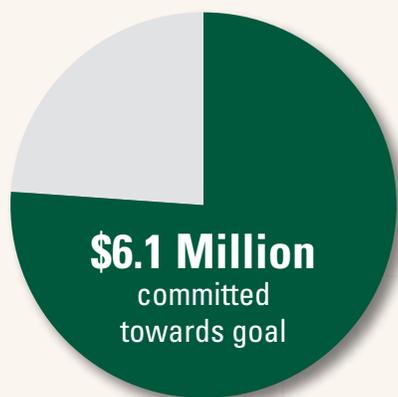
#### Why are you excited to be at Camp O-AT-KA?

Last year there was no camp activities due to Covid so I am extra excited for 2021. I believe it will be a special summer for campers, counselors and coaches. Camp O-AT-KA has a great atmosphere, and is a great place to spend a summer.

## Greetings from Campaign Corner!

---

In September of 2020, O-AT-KA publicly announced an \$8,000,000 campaign, "The Campaign for Camp O-AT-KA: Building Better Boys for a New Century." During recent months, an inspirational silver-lining to a global crisis has been the enduring support from O-AT-KA's alumni, families and friends. We are thrilled to share that, as of February 1, \$6.1 million is committed and philanthropic momentum is at an all-time high!



From the beginning of the campaign, the camp leadership was committed to preserve the camp's essential appearance, character, and programs. This was built into the pillars of the campaign. Little did we know that an unforeseen challenge would be a global pandemic that resulted in camp suspending operations for Summer 2020. The priorities of the campaign shifted gears as leadership understood that the fund to address any urgent camp needs was essential. Donors responded with tremendous support and \$500,000 was raised, through individual gifts and a generous anonymous match, for the Preservation Fund.

This work has been a labor of love for a group of volunteer leaders that make up our campaign cabinet. These individuals have worked tirelessly for over three years and will continue to lead O-AT-KA to the finish line. We thank all of them for their efforts and their dedication to camp.

Moving forward, we are well-poised to hit the target of \$8,000,000 in the three pillars of the campaign:

- 1. Preserve our Future (Camper Endowments, Staff Development, Preservation Fund)**
- 2. Sustain & Expand Programs (Increase Camperships, Marketing & Recruiting, Annual Support)**
- 3. Improve Place (Preserve, Maintain and Improve Facilities & Grounds)**

In each Lion's Roar, we will give you a brief update of the campaign's success and are always available to answer your questions and discuss your priorities for O-AT-KA. Thank for you for your continued support as we continue to work towards our campaign goals.

## Lion's Roar has gone GREEN *(nothing against GREY)*

---

Over the past few years, O-AT-KA has increased its communication with those closest to us and the Lion's Roar is a tradition that dates back for decades as a source of camp news for our community.

The leadership of O-AT-KA is committed to environmentally friendly practices, using camp funds sensibly, and getting news in your inboxes in a timely and frequent manner. The Lion's Roar will now be sent out every 3 months electronically and posted on the camp's website.

We hope this format will be convenient for you. Please make sure we have an e-mail address on file so you don't miss out on any news, updates, and camp announcements!

Please note: if you would prefer to receive a hard copy of the Lion's Roar, we are happy to print in our office and send one to you. Just let us know. Happy Reading!

## Stay Connected

---

Follow & Like us on:



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



Instagram  
**@camboatka**



Camp website  
**camboatka.org**