

Fall
2016

Camp Robin Hood

The Woodchuck

THE OFFICIAL ALUMNI NEWSLETTER OF CAMP ROBIN HOOD

Hello Fellow Alumni!

We hope this newsletter finds you happy and doing well wherever you call home these days. Let's take some time to talk about the home we all share in Freedom, New Hampshire. Although we have updated the physical space by building new cabins, adding showers and bathrooms, and re-opening the senior waterfront as our new water park, the core ideals of Robin Hood haven't changed since Andy Friedman founded camp in 1927.

Robin Hood still maintains a fun and safe environment for children to grow and prosper far from the stresses of everyday life. Fields full of happy running campers, all camp renditions of the Goodnight Song, and breath taking sunsets are still staples of The Realm. The same summer highlights continue to shine summer after summer: the July 4th carnival, Parents Visiting Day, Green and White, Andy's birthday celebration on August 3rd, and excursions all across New England. We cherish these traditions.

As Robin Hood gears up for its 90th summer, a little update is in order. Last summer we welcomed 428 campers to the Realm with over 150 experiencing their first summer. Camp enables children to part with technology and experience the best parts of New England summer. No TV show can beat swimming in the lake, playing outside with friends or hiking the White Mountains. Over the course of last summer, we had a record 72 campers climb Mount Washington! Children at Robin Hood make amazing social strides, interacting with each other and their staff members from wake up to bed time. While it may take our teenage campers a few days to get readjusted to this way of life, we can assure you that they somehow make it through the seven weeks without phones or screens.

For us, the highlights of every summer are the alumni visits. Last summer we welcomed former campers, group leaders and life-long friends. We celebrated upcoming nuptials and got such joy from watching new moms and dads introduce their babies to the lake. We even had a former camper from 1934 visit out of the blue. As always, we ask these giants to speak to our campers during mealtime, and you can always hear a pin drop as they regale the same thing: cherish every second you can at camp, understand that camp friends are different, and stay as long as you can. Our campers and staff take that to heart - last summer our 16 Group Leaders had over 160 years of combined CRH experience.

So please come visit us at camp, stay in touch, and let us know what's going on in your life. Most importantly, remember: this is your camp we are just the current caretakers. Every day we think of Andy and hope we have made him proud.

- DC, SOL & WOODY



A Letter from Brian Ratner

My first summer at Robin Hood was in 1982 when I was 8 years old. I ended up spending 13 summers at the Realm, capped by my counselor captain year (Great White Sharks) in 1995 (where I beat Matt Baumel – sorry, had to say that), and came back for several summers thereafter as a Green & White MH Judge. During my time at RH, Woody was my Archer group leader and DC was my Forester group leader, and I developed deep and personal bonds with both of them (as well as with Chuck, Dick and Michelle) that have lasted until today. The Realm is the place where I grew up, found my independence and confidence, and developed my strongest friendships. To this day, I am closer with my camp friends than any other friends, even though they all live in different cities.

My wife Jamie also had a terrific camp experience outside the DC area, where we live. She too maintains wonderful friendships with her camp friends and even served on the Board at her camp. So when we first started considering overnight camp for our son Noah, it was not a foregone conclusion that RH would be the choice. But then Matt Baumel convinced us to join my cousin Greg Lippard's family, as well as Todd Dery's family, for 9th week in 2015. Well – after that, we were hooked. Not because of the facilities (which are vastly improved since I was there), or the food (which was amazing), or the sleeping arrangements (it was tough for my wife to not want to go to a hotel during those 3 days, though kids of course didn't care), or how much fun I had reminiscing and re-living my youth . . . but because we didn't see my son Noah for the whole time we were there. He was literally gone – off exploring, fearlessly trying everything, and making friends with the other kids (ie my camp friends' kids). As we were leaving, Noah said "I'm going to Robin Hood next summer for 7 weeks." And that was it.

It wasn't easy sending a 9 year old away for such a long time, especially one that can barely get from point A to point B in one piece. But Noah had an amazing first year experience. And here's the key: it was "his" experience. Yes, it is extra special for both us to have this shared experience – to have sung the same songs, slept in the same bunk next to my camp friends' kids, done the same activities, been part of the same traditions, and even been called by the same

nickname ("Rat")! But it was his experience and he sees it that way. In my view, DC and Woody have struck a delicate and important balance between keeping the traditions we all remember and loved, while making appropriate improvements and changes that make sense for the time. I see this in the expanded activities, improved facilities, diverse program and overall energy and structure of the place. From a parent's perspective, as opposed to an alumni one, other than biting my tongue every day for the first two weeks because Noah was wearing pajamas in every picture, my kid figured it all out for himself and came home saying he loved the kids and loved the place. As he put it, "it was just all fun." He also said that, on the last morning, everyone in their group was crying and he was too because he was going to miss seeing all his friends. And now . . . my daughter Lila, who will be 8 years old next summer, will be joining her brother at the Realm in 2017. Friends . . . Friends . . . Friends . . .

If anyone wants to discuss our experience, please don't hesitate to email me at baratner_10@yahoo.com.

Hope to see some of you next summer at Visiting Day!



A Letter from Emily Rempell

On October 9, 2016, hypotheticals from Scribe summer came to fruition: I was a bridesmaid in my camp friend's wedding.

My friendship with Carolyn Siegel budded as Jesters of 1999, first meeting in Newark airport before boarding the plane to camp. We rose through the Robin Hood ranks together through 2009 when we were Group Leaders, our staff careers almost entirely spent in Junior Camp.

So what is it about camp friends? Carolyn's wedding weekend in Manchester, Vermont made everything clear: Robin Hood taught us how to live in close quarters and make the most of each other's company. We know each other's sleeping habits (Dana Berschler must get into a made bed), pajama preferences (Molly Herlihy will only sleep in shorts), and entertainment likes (in college, Molly, Lauren Tuck and I met Carolyn in Providence, RI to see the midnight showing of High School Musical 3). After nearly two decades of meals together, we have finally constructed the ideal menu which we can all agree upon: something with cheese, something else with cheese, and a salad to make us feel like we're offsetting the first two choices.

Carolyn's wedding weekend felt like another weekend with my camp friends (but with long gowns in lieu of Soffe shorts). We kicked boyfriends out of hotel rooms so we could hang out just us, and on the day of the wedding, we got ready to a playlist of Green and White songs. Standing next to the Chuppah while Carolyn and Corey became Mr. and Mrs., Molly, Dana, and I all expressed a deep connection to Carolyn's joy.

My camp friends and I are at an exciting part of our lives when all of these hypothetical dreams of camper days are finally coming true: we lived together after college, we've been in each other's weddings, and we've vacationed together. Even in our adult lives, we've conjured some hypotheticals for the future: we will all live on the same street in a Boston suburb, raising our kids and continuing our lives together. I'm eager to see if that last one pans out. In the meantime, we'll continue working our busy summer schedules around our annual trip up to Robin Hood together.



Alumni News



Most Honorable Robin Hood couple Samantha Kadis (Scribe '06) and Jake Szabo (Saxon '07) got engaged on September 18th

Staff Alumni and Deputy Judges Rhodri Davies and Emma-Louise Smith tied the knot at Robin Hood this June



Emily Stecher (Scribe '03) and husband Steve Rosenthal welcomed baby Mason in March and they managed to come up to camp for a visit last summer



Missy Friedman (Scribe '06) got engaged to Gabe Werner atop a mountain last month

Jill Kozloff (Scribe '07) got engaged to fellow Andover alumnus Trey Meyer in April



Keep Us Informed

Have a memory or story you would like to share? Would you like to come visit camp? Email woody@camprobinhood.com or dc@camprobinhood.com.

Alumni Ambassadors

We are looking for representatives of years past to help us update our alumni database. Are you in touch with your best friends from camp? Do you have a master list from your Saxon and Scribe summers? Contact woody@camprobinhood.com to find out how you can help strengthen alumni relations at Robin Hood. All ambassadors willing to take on this responsibility will be gifted with a piece of Robin Hood gear.



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