An appreciation: Bob Heinsler

Sagamore marked a milestone in 2017 when Bob Heinsler our longtime Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds retired. Bob watched over Sagamore through 32 years of busy summers with grandparents and grandchildren and 32 long winters when temperatures reached 40 degrees below zero for days at a time. Every new season brought its challenges from frozen pipes to landscaping and trail work in the summer.

Amongst Bob’s many accomplishments are managing many restoration projects that have helped stabilize and preserve Sagamore for enjoyment by future generations. Some of the work is visible to all, such as new roofs and rustic work; others are less so, such as the project to upgrade Sagamore’s water system. This unseen part of camp includes piping and valves over 100 years old and obsolete fire hydrants that were in dire need of replacement.

Bob’s most public legacy is the innovative volunteer program. He built it into an important part of our yearly operations. Over 100 people are part of the volunteer pool and they come from all walks of life. They come to spend three weekends each year working on maintenance and restoration projects as varied as building docks and furniture to putting up and taking down storm windows each season.

Seasonal interns

Sagamore’s internship program is the experience of a lifetime for young people who lead guided tours, run programs and organize events. In July of this past year a group of interns returned to Sagamore for a thirtieth-fifth anniversary reunion. These adults came to reunite and experience some of the same camp magic that they shared when they were working and exploring the Adirondack wilds for the first time in 1982. Just as we welcome back all folks connected with Sagamore through the years including staff, volunteers, board members and program participants, we also are happy to have bits of Sagamore’s history return home. In this case the interns brought back a piece of folk art made by Roger Vernam at Sagamore in 1982. Vernam was a noted artist who spent his childhood summers at Sagamore in the early years of the 20th century with his grandfather Bucky Ryan, the electrician. When Roger returned to camp in the 1980s he left a drawing of Sagamore’s boathouse on a piece of shelf fungus (a true piece of Adirondacks) for the interns who have now returned it home after all these years.

Sagamore as a family destination

Each year Sagamore attracts families from across the country to spend time at our intergenerational and family camp weeks. These programs are run both by Sagamore and in collaboration with our partner organization Road Scholar. This year we hosted a bumper crop of “intergens” at Sagamore with more than 200 grandparents and grandchildren participating. The groups paddled Sagamore Lake and made crafts in the Hen House with Nancy Sue Foltz as well as spending time with each other.

One grandmother’s review:

I attended with my six-year old grandson. He had never been away from home without his parents so I wondered how he would do. We were so busy every single day and the relationship with the staff and campers was so intimate that he (and I) didn’t have time to miss anything. My daughter was surprised that everything I had to say was positive—and it was. I would not change anything about the program. It was nice having older and younger children and having such small groups for the kids and the grandparents to get to know. We can’t wait to go back next year. This experience is genuinely TOP NOTCH.

A thriving history and community

Sagamore appreciates the support and help of all the people who donate time and resources to preserve the historic buildings and continue the wonderful traditions of camp. We really could not do it without you.
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We have tried to be accurate, but welcome your additions/ corrections. Thank you.
Each summer for more than twenty years, Great Camp Sagamore has hosted a variety of traditional folk artisans from throughout the North Country to demonstrate the arts and crafts that make Sagamore a unique place. In 2017 we hosted the following demonstrations supported by New York State Council on the Arts:

- **Bill Smith** Rustic Carvings
- **Helen Condon** Rug Braider
- **David Woodward** Blacksmith
- **Chris Hubbard** Chair Caning
- **Jane Desotelle** Herbalist
- **Pat Smith** Cedar Canvas Canoe Builder
- **Chris Woodward** Guide Boat Builder

**Preservation Notes**

Sagamore’s multi-phased waterworks replacement and upgrading project that started in 2015 moved toward its completion with phases three and four accomplished by the end of 2017. This critical project encompasses the entirety of the water system to ensure that Sagamore’s water supply remains clean and fresh for our visitor’s use in all of our buildings. The water is sourced from a 450 foot deep well near the Wigwam building. It flows at a rate of 70 gallons a minute and is tested by the New York State Department of Health monthly during our season and always get a clean bill of health.

This year the water and septic service into Sagamore’s kitchen and Dining Hall were completely upgraded. There is now a new, high capacity service line supplying water to the building, which needed to be completed prior to the planned kitchen renovation. There are now separate drain lines for the domestic use and the dishwashing facility. This work was done with local contractors and Sagamore staff just prior to the annual freezing of the grounds in late fall.

For many years the staff has monitored the condition of the Main Lodge’s foundation and particularly, the subsidence of the cellar floor. In 2017 Sagamore hired the Plumley Engineering firm from Baldwinsville, NY, to investigate the cause and possible cures for this issue. The consulting engineers completed a one-year study of the current conditions and the structural state of this iconic building. They concluded that the cellar floor issues were caused by the seasonal changes in the Sagamore Lake water level and that the changes in flooring levels was not a structural problem. Recommendations for resurfacing the floor with gravel to accommodate variations in ground water depth will resolve the problem.

**Bequests**
To ensure the future of Sagamore, please remember us in your will and trusts. Speak to your attorney or accountant for more information on planned giving that benefits you and Sagamore.

**2017 Work Weekend Hosts:**
Bryan and Chick Rubenau

**A Comment Posted to Trip Advisor:**

“My wife and I have had a total of 5 separate stays at Sagamore over the past 10 years and each time we don’t want to leave. The place pulls you in— the history, the architecture, the location, the wind in the trees, sitting on a porch overlooking the lake, the community meals where you meet people from all walks of life. Although it was the height of millionaire mountain living in the early 1900s, it is rustic by today’s standards. But that is the allure, it really takes you back. The large fireplaces, the rooms where you can gather to socialize or just read. There is such variety in all the rooms and the buildings.

Staying in the Main Lodge or one of the other out buildings provides a real sense of being back in history. We found that life slowed down. The lake is fun to explore and there are plenty of hiking opportunities. This is a place to relax, reconnect, and get in touch with the rhythms of nature and also have hearty meals served up for you.

The staff has always been very helpful but it is important to keep in mind that given the age of the buildings and the fact that it is a “living museum” there are some rules you would not necessarily find in a modern hotel, and the staff are stewards of the place. The idea is to really experience the place for what it is—a unique and special landmark that can transport you deeply into the Adirondack Great Camp experience.”

**Introduce friends and family members to Great Camp Sagamore—**
**Guided Tours throughout the season**

Summer Tours • 10:00 am & 1:30 pm
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2018 Annual August Benefit
Honoring Bill Smith
Storyteller/Artisan

Bill Smith is familiar to generations of Sagamore’s guests through his storytelling which brought north country traditions to life. His Adirondack packbaskets and walking sticks are in many treasured collections. Come for great food, this year from L.M. Townsend Catering of Cooperstown, and a wonderful auction including vacation stays, antiques, and other great items. Meet some of the most interesting people in the Adirondacks and enjoy the music of Hot Club of Saratoga. Weekend packages available.

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Laura Smith
Samantha Strzepek
Loren Windier
Heidi Woodward  Kitchen Assistant

Sagamore Institute of the Adirondacks is the steward of Great Camp Sagamore and is dedicated to its use for education and interpretation. Our mission is to foster understanding, care, and respect for nature, people and their critical interdependence.