

Friends of Eagle Island, Inc.

Eagle Island - Where History Meets The Future

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Legal Update

Ordinarily, as the summer comes to an end, everyone is getting back to his or her routines of work, school and family obligations. And for those with summer homes on lakes and shores, so much is to be done to close for the season. In years past, Eagle Island, too, would be buttoning down for the fall and winter. Unfortunately, Eagle Island is no longer doing the ordinary. One more summer has passed since Eagle Island has heard the voices of children. One more year has passed with the GSHNJ having failed in its obligation to utilize Eagle Island for the purpose for which it was gifted. Well, The Friends of Eagle Island is not buttoning down for the winter. We continue to be patient and are continuing our fight to save this incredible property and to restore it to its rightful purpose. Although our lawsuit is in process, it is still in the early procedural stages, and so we have no substantive information to report at this time. Over the summer, GSHNJ (through its attorneys) requested several extensions to reply to our claims, which our attorneys respectfully and graciously granted. Less than two weeks ago we received GSHNJ's responsive pleading, which consisted of responses to the assertions in our complaint as well as a number of affirmative defenses, nothing that was unexpected or out of the ordinary. The litigation will now move to the discovery phase, although it is likely that an initial conference will be held with the judge to discuss how the case will proceed before discovery demands are exchanged. Such a conference could take place before the end of September, but no date has yet been set. Patience and diligence are important in these matters. As things progress we will keep you informed.

Reunion at Rollins Pond

by Michele Racioppi



It started with a Facebook invitation sent out by Erika Merrell to have a camp reunion. My schedule was busy but EIC was "calling me back" and I had to go. It was an amazing time, and getting together with old (and new!) camp friends always reminds me of why we are fighting so hard to save our camp.

I rode up with Tammy. It was great to catch up with her. Upon arriving we headed to the Fish Creek beach and met up with Erika, Joanna, Maddie, Anna, Ellen, Liz, Emily, Sarah, and Sinead. Even though some of us hadn't seen each other in years, it felt like no time had passed, and we were just enjoying a staff day off. From there we headed to the Rollins Pond campsite. There was some confusion over which campsites we were assigned to but we sorted it out in a Girl Scout-like manner. I was happy to see that the Maintenance Staff contingent (Ben, John, Alan) were also there.

Over the next couple hours we caught up and enjoyed each other's company. A fire was started. Ben cooked some hot dogs and burgers and even tried his hand at

cooking the veggie burgers (with no prior experience.) Tammy and I put together the classic pizza fondue, which she was adamant about making during the trip. Around this time, Pete and Beth Benson, along with Flame (from Camp Madeline Mulford), and Buz Graves, arrived. There were hellos, hugs, and introductions before we eagerly settled around Pete and his guitar to sing camp songs. As the sun was setting and we started singing I couldn't help but tear up-- and I don't think I was alone. We got in a number of great songs including Piney Wood Hills, Thirsty Boots, Catch the Wind, On the Loose, and more before a park ranger told us to stop singing because after 10pm was 'quiet hours.' That wouldn't happen at camp!

Eventually we said goodbye to Pete, Beth and Buz. There was some lingering under the moon and stars before going off to bed. Sadly, the next morning it was time to pack up and go. It was wonderful seeing everyone and I am hopeful that one day we will all meet again at Eagle Island.



Buz Graves was moved by the experience of meeting some of us "younger" campers and sharing in the camp songs. He sent the following letter :

Dear Friends - of Eagle Island

Last summer Chris Hildebrand invited me to a luncheon to meet some of the first campers, counselors and directors of Eagle Island. What a great experience to meet them and hear their stories and memories of the beginning of such a rich history.

Just the other day, 6/30/12, Joanna, Michelle and Prika, four maintenance men plus a dozen or so former campers and counselors invited me to join them, come hang out, at their campsite at Rollins Pond. What a nice time I had meeting such a wonderful, warm and caring group. Upon arrival I was made to feel at home. Burgers and vegiburgers plus other munchies and refreshments were consumed. Later a killer tomato^{sauce}, cheese + bread for dipping combo delighted many. ~~Later~~ ^{then} we went to the lake shore for pictures. My camera's battery died after one shot and another filled in. We returned to the fire to have a ten two hour sing along of "camp" songs with Pete Benson, on guitar, his lovely wife animating the songs and friend FLAME.

The singing went past 10 p.m.. There were times I was glad it was dark because my eyes would well up thinking that all of this is absent from Eagle Island. I met and talked with so many warm hearted, rich spirited people that night. I couldn't have gone anywhere else in the world and had such a glorious experience. To see the magic of the hands and arms holding each other; the closeness of friends united in song that I have seen in all the alumni →

of Eagle Island is so heart warming. One young lady said "... The words are in our hearts forever."
The island needs to come alive again with all the activity (wed. S.A.M. swim), song and laughter that made it such a paradise for seventy plus years. So "thanks ever so much" to each of you for enriching my life, younger and older Alumni. We've got to reopen Eagle Island.
All my heartfelt "thanks!"
Henry Jackson Graves, Jr. (AKA Boz)

Pete Benson promoted to Director of Saranac Lake Library

Congratulations are in order for Pete Benson! After working as the evening librarian at Saranac Library for the past 3 years, he was recently promoted to Director. Pete was the devoted caretaker, property manager, and camp administrator of Eagle Island for nearly 30 years before retiring in 2008. He met his wife Beth (Star) there and they raised their children on the island. He organized the popular fall and spring work weekends where volunteers would help with the set up and break down of camp. He led spirited evening sing-along on his guitar (see photo from Rollins Pond reunion) and, above all, took care of Eagle Island and the campers, staff, and guests who visited. Thank you, Pete, for all your past work. Congrats and good luck in your new job!

Lake Update

by Carol Jackman, EIC staff/alumna

As a lucky homeowner on Upper Saranac Lake, I have had a wonderful long summer here on the lake. It is still sad though to boat past Eagle Island and not see the campers. With the unusually warm weather, swimming started early. I was in on June 15th for 45 minutes. The water temperature felt more like it does in August. It must also have felt good to the scuba divers who return, beginning every May, to keep milfoil out of the lake. Regular USLA meetings were held at the Wild Center. The wooden boat parade helped launch 4th of July celebrations and loons were counted (numbers seem to be staying constant). Unfortunately, the weekly sailboat races are history. Since Eagle Island closed, there are not enough sailboats to hold a race.

Some new activities this year included a chance for members to learn about and identify milfoil, and a guided paddle on Middle Saranac to Weller Pond starting from Bartlett Bay. A delicious lunch was prepared by the Fish Creek campground store. Farther afield, I've hiked and paddled to new Adirondack areas with a group called the Tupper Lake Irregulars. In Saranac Lake there were also new places to visit, such as the new Community Store and the Adirondack Carousel. I rode on the loon during my first visit to the carousel, on the otter my second. My granddaughters rode 4 animals each. Hot and unusually dry weather helped cause a fire at a campsite near Buck Island. Two days before, the campers had not completely put out their fire. (They must not have been educated about fires as Eagle Island campers used to be.) Buck Island campers called the fire department. The SLK fire fighters (their fire boat moored at Saranac Inn launch site) and nearby homeowners got it under control. I hope other members of FEI will soon have a chance to visit the lake too.



Why Girls Love Camp

by: Rose Foody, a high school junior, camper/sailor and member of FEI Advisory Committee

“We shall return there, some lucky day. Our hearts will guide us, they know the way.
People in cities don’t understand, falling in love with the land.”

~Moon on the Meadow

When asked “Why do you love camp?” I honestly cannot answer with one sentence. It may seem like a simple question, but anyone who has attended camp understands. Camp isn’t just a few weeks vacation from your parents-- it’s a unique experience. When you arrive for your first day of camp, your life changes forever, although you might not even realize it until years later.

Thinking of camp, I remember countless fond memories of sailing, swimming, campfires, and much more. These activities and their meanings changed as I got older. First, setting foot in a sailboat was so exhilarating, the excitement and adventure of it all lured me back for years to follow. Next came the sense of freedom and responsibility. Being away from my parents for two weeks allowed me to grow and develop my own unique personality. Without having mom and dad to remind me to clean my tent and brush my teeth, I soon learned how to take care of my needs on my own, and managed not to get sunburned. These were no longer objects of praise but expectations.

This independence carried from camp to home to school, helping me to blossom into a social young woman, eager to enjoy new experiences, even if that meant being surrounded by strangers as opposed to my usual clique. As I learned new skills at camp, I gained the confidence that further developed me as an individual. Being able to light a fire or sail a boat made me feel energized and proud. This sense of accomplishment brought me back, year after year, to a place I soon called home. If that wasn’t enough, the friendships I formed made me more than eager to return to camp.

At camp, everyone is completely themselves--no facades necessary. This honesty seals friendships that last long after the final campfire of summer. Finally, the leadership one develops at camp is comparable to nothing else. From keeping the cleanest tent, becoming an example for others to look up to, to teaching younger girls the magic of sailing and passing on the traditions of camp, I can say with sincerity that camp has made me a leader. I’ve learned to cooperate with different personalities, teach different types of learners, and be understanding even when it’s a challenge. All of these qualities have empowered me, and I know for a fact that I will use these skills in the years to come.

Simply put, girls love camp because it’s an amazing experience that is both enjoyable and full of lifelong lessons. It allows you to become an individual as you help others find their true selves. You take so much from camp that can’t even be put into words, yet somehow, you can’t stop talking about all that happens there. So, like the lyrics of “Moon on the Meadow,” one of my favorite camp songs, if you’ve never been to camp, you may not understand the crazy experience so many girls love. But it’s never too late to share in the laughter, tears and love, as camp is, and always will be, a home for everyone. If you’d like to read more on why kids love camp, and the impact it has on their lives, check out these articles:

<http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/17/what-parents-dont-get-about-camp/>

<http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/06/in-praise-of-summer-camp/257336/>

Come One, Come All! Eagle Island Reunion

Plans are well underway for our Eagle Island Reunion, scheduled for Saturday, October 27, 2012, from 1:30 to 4:00 PM at Morrow Church, Maplewood, NJ. For those who’d like to spend more time in convivial fellowship, festivities will continue at Coda, a nearby bistro. The afternoon promises to be a full one. Our attorneys will update us on the status of our lawsuit, and we’ll be joined by honored guest Henry D. (“Buz”) Graves, Jr., great-grandson of our generous donors, Henry and Florence Graves, and enthusiastic champion of our cause. Former campers from across the decades and across the map – from Marina del Rey, CA to Florence, Italy, and from all points along the East Coast – have marked their calendars as they look forward (as we hope you will also!) to an afternoon of socializing, singing, and participating in a fabulous Silent Auction, among whose many outstanding offerings are a strikingly beautiful handmade quilt, a framed poster of Upper Saranac Lake, and hand-wrought sterling seagull and sailboat pins from Temming Silver Studio of Saranac Lake. We hope to see you on October 27th as we connect with friends, old and new, and lift our voices in celebration and support of the Friends of Eagle Island, Inc. To RSVP, [click here](#). For more information regarding travel arrangements, e-mail childebrand@friendsofeagleisland.org.

*“You can’t control the wind -- you can only adjust your sails”
...Well, we have adjusted ours...please help by joining today!*

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