

NIGHT EAGLE NEWS

A Primitive Camp for Boys Ages 10-14
www.nighteaglewilderness.com

Winter 2018-2019 (802) 446-6100
[Facebook.com/nighteaglewilderness](https://www.facebook.com/nighteaglewilderness)

From the Director

As I write this, Vermont is blanketed with fresh snow. We have already had five snow days at school, and it looks like we may have more. But as much as I dislike snow, I enjoy the opportunity to spend more time reading and preparing for the summer.

Last week I read an interview. I don't remember who was interviewing whom or where it took place, but I did copy a quote from the interview:

"Overindulgence is one of the most insidious forms of child abuse in parenting. It's not the worst, it's just insidious, because if you overindulge your children and do everything for them, you never let them observe themselves master their environment. You never let them step back and say, 'Wow, I did that. I built this. I overcame this. I handled this,' and so that's the same way we make our own self-image and level of self-worth.

We watch ourselves handle a test with information that intimidated us. We watch ourselves make it onto the little league baseball team and actually get a hit when we needed to. We watch ourselves make it onto the debate team and actually argue something successfully. ... I can hang. I can do this. I can rise to the occasion. ... I think that's how we form our level of self-esteem and our identity about who we are."

At Night Eagle every boy has many opportunities to do things for himself and build his self-image: making a fire with a bow drill or flint and steel, surviving a three-day hike in the rain, making it through a survival hike. All these things are real and help boys raise their self-esteem and their identity! And this coming summer they will have been doing them for 20 years!

Spring Work and Play

This year's Spring Work and Play Weekend will be on May 4-5 (weather permitting). We invite you all to be part of the fun as we prepare camp for the summer. This is an informal cooperative event that allows new and returning campers and their families to get to know one another while together we attack some of the many projects around camp.

Families and friends are invited to come for all or part of either day or to join us for the entire weekend. This is a great time to introduce your friends to Night Eagle. The majority of the work will take place on Saturday beginning around 9:00 a.m. (*Night Eagle* time).

Families that are staying can bring a tent or reserve some space for their sleeping bags in one of the tipis that we'll put up for the weekend. We can also recommend some nearby motels or inns if you're more inclined to a hot shower and a soft bed after a day's work.



Work projects at this year's gathering may include putting up a tipi or two, cutting and hauling in tipi poles, clearing the road of fallen trees, checking the Long Trail Shelter at Little Rock Pond, re-lashing Hocoka, painting the front gate, repairing the wood shelter, or any other projects we deem worthy of our attention. There is always plenty to do to prepare camp and there is always plenty of fun! We hope you can make it!

“To Be A Man”

A Rite of Passage for Boys 12-16

Several years ago Night Eagle offered a weeklong Rite of Passage program for campers (ages 12-16) that focused on *What It Meant to Become A Man* and culminated with a 24 hour Quest. At that time we called the program *Back to the Blanket* in honor of the American Indian movement in the early 1900's in which many Indians turned away from the ways of the white man, which were contrary to everything they believed, and returned to the religion and traditions of their people.

Most people will agree that today is not a good time to be a boy. In *The Demise of Guys: Why Boys Are Struggling and What We Can Do About It*, Dr. Philip Zimbardo wanted to find out the factors contributing to motivational and social problems in today's young men. Nearly 70% of the participants agreed that it was because of conflicting messages from media, institutions, parents, and peers about what is acceptable and desirable male behavior. In other words, boys aren't sure what it means to be a man and are having difficulty transitioning to adulthood.

Dr. George Burkitt adds that, “Today's teenage boys approach manhood with apprehension and uncertainty if not reluctance. Some would prefer to avoid ‘manhood’ altogether or at least the responsibility that it entails.” Today's average school-age boy spends thirty minutes a week in one-on-one conversation with his father and an average of forty-four hours a week in front of a television or computer screen.



According to Michael Gurian, the author of *The Wonder of Boys* and *The Good Son: Shaping the Moral Development of Boys and Young Men*, “Rites of passage are a lost art, yet our pubescent boys (9-14) hunger for them. For over two decades, anthropological studies have confirmed that males need rites in order to mark their passage into manhood.” The need for these rites correlates biologically to hunter/gatherer times. Although the majority of today's boys and men do not hunt prey with weapons, they do seek the challenge that the hunt implies.”

In Lakota society boys became adults through ritual, initiation, and meaningful tradition. This sacred rite of passage *Hemleciya* (Vision Quest) consisted of a boy spending one to four days and nights secluded in nature and provided him with time to communicate with the fundamental forces and spiritual energies of creation and understand his purpose in life. During this time of intense spiritual communication, he received profound insight into himself and the world and transitioned between childhood and full acceptance into society as an adult.

Although we cannot lead boys on Vision Quests, we can assist them as they make the difficult and confusing transition from childhood to adulthood and try to help them answer questions such as “Who am I?” “What do I have to offer?” “Why do I feel the way I do?”

We know that there comes a time in every boy's life when he must leave family and friends and go off alone. By participating in *To Be A Man* we hope that boys will learn what it means to become an adult, take responsibility for himself, and make a meaningful contribution to society.

Through community building, discussions, and reflection, the program will focus on *What It Means to Become a Man* and conclude with a twenty-four hour Quest that is not to be confused with the Vision Quest taken by Lakota. It is our aim to help Night Eagle campers make the transition from boyhood to mature adulthood in an environment in which they feel safe and among friends.

If you have any questions or would like to receive a Parents' Handbook and application for the program, please don't hesitate to contact us or visit our website <nightaglewilderness.com>. **NOTE: To offer the program, we need at least 6 campers. A unique T-shirt will be given to participants.**

Name These Campers!

These are faces that many of you know,
But some are from many years ago.



A _____



B _____



C _____



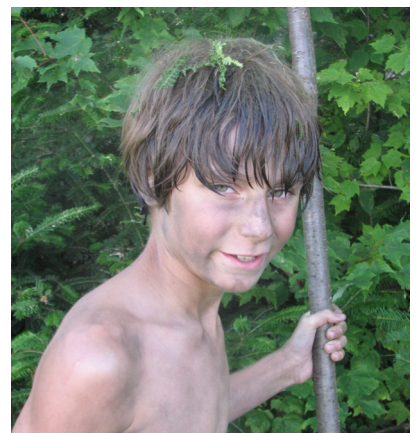
E _____



F _____



G _____





Summer Bear's great-great-grandfather as he posed for a picture during the Victorian Period.

So You Want to Be a Counselor

By the time you read this, it will be March. I have already been in contact with last year's staff (some of whom have already responded) and hope to have this summer's staff lined up by the end of the month. If you are interested in spending this coming summer at Night Eagle as a counselor, or know somebody who you think would be a great Night Eagle counselor, let me know so I can contact him.

So give is some thought, dust off your choker and join *Nurse Trudy*, *Arctic Arrow*, *Soft Path Teacher*, *Mustang Sun*, *Hummingbird Sings*, *Rainbow Medicine*, *Arctic Rain*, *Arctic Sun*, *Moon Quest*, and *Leaux the Wonder Dog!* as we celebrate Night Eagle's 20th Anniversary!

Let me hear from you!

What We Are Doing

Hummingbird Sings (camper 2010-11) recently completed hiking the Appalachian Trail. He began at Mt. Katahdin on July 4 and completed the hike in 189! Congratulations, Hummingbird Sings. I hope you can tell us all about it this summer!

Little Bear graduates from the University of Tampa on May 10 with a degree in Finance and has accepted a position at McKinsey and Company (a management consulting firm) in its St. Petersburg, FL, branch. Around the same time, *Snowy Owl* will be receiving his M.A. in Military History from Norwich University. Congratulations, sons, for jobs well done! Your parents are proud of you!

Mustang Sun (camper 2010-2015) is taking a break from college and is busy with a myriad of jobs. Right now he is the sound technician for Elizabeth Warren as she stumps in New England.

Calling All Campers! If You Have Not Already Enrolled, It's Time!

Inquiries have been coming in daily! As this is the beginning of the season for prospective camp families to inquire and begin to enroll, we'd like to remind returning camper families to get their application forms completed and mailed in so that you will have a space in the session of your choice. If you haven't already enrolled, it's probably because you're still on Night Eagle time and haven't realized that the summer enrollment season is here or because the extreme temperatures and snow have kept your mind on other things! In any case, Night Eagle won't be the same without YOU, so get those applications in the mail today!

New E-mail Address for Night Eagle

A few weeks ago we were notified by sover.net, our email provider, that they were eliminating their home email accounts and website hosting. Snowy Owl quickly found a new provider and website host.

From now on, our email address is:

bruce@nigteaglewilderness.com

The Give Away Ceremony

(Lakota Tradition)

One of the most important ceremonies in Native American teachings (and one that we hold frequently at *Night Eagle*) is the Give-Away Ceremony. In this ritual, the giving away of useful or loved possessions is a form of sharing with others. It is also a sign that the giver is willing to make a sacrifice and surrender a gift to another person without attachment or regret. The Sioux understanding of sacrifice originally meant “to make sacred.” To make any act or any gift sacred, one has to complete that action with a joyful heart and a humble attitude.

The purpose of the give-away is sharing. The lessons connected to this ceremony teach us how to release possessions and to let go the ideas of importance connected with those belongings. The more prized the possession and the greater the sense of ownership, the more powerful the lesson. The Give-Away Ceremony is never used to get rid of belongings that are no longer functional or badly in need of repair. Some gifts of the give-away may be made especially for the occasion. To give cast-off items is a disgrace to the giver and shows a lack of respect for the receiver.

In native tradition, a gift is never thought of as an obligation or used as a means of controlling the person who receives the gift. The obligatory giving concept came with the white people whose ideas were based in European thought, which was that if a person gave a gift, the giver expected something in return. When this manner of giving is experienced, there is no true give-away. The American Indian knows that giving is a way of releasing the people’s spirit from the attachment to the physical world. In releasing possessions we love dearly, we are able to open our lives for future abundance.

The concept of “Indian Giving” came from a misunderstanding when a white person received a give-away and the Indian who gave the gift later reclaimed it. This manner of taking back a

gift is done for a reason. If any item is given to someone who has no use for it, the giver has the right to reclaim the gift and give it to another who will use it.

If a clay pot sits on a shelf and is not used, the mission of that pot has not been honored as sacred, and therefore, should be passed to someone who will allow it to complete its mission of service. When anything is made by human hands, the medicine of that maker is a part of the object created. To wantonly destroy the object would be to dishonor the medicine of the maker along with that tool’s ability to be of use. If an object is carelessly broken by a human, the spirit of that object has been killed. To make fun of, criticize, or break anything that another has created is to dishonor one’s self.

Many other lessons are learned each time we have the opportunity to share and are faced with personal feelings that arise when a decision to give something away is made. As we free ourselves from the need to give with strings attached or the regret that sometimes follows, we are able to release our spirits and allow them to soar beyond the limited understanding of our former selves.

Those people not familiar with the *Night Eagle* community and its understanding of the Give-Away might have trouble understanding how a boy could work for weeks making a bow and then give it to a friend. In the past, I have seen handsome bull roarers, amazing beadwork pieces, arrows, hobblebush chokers, well-loved knives, special feathers, throwing hawks, and even favorite caps, blankets and t-shirts exchange hands at Give-Aways.

I’m sure that this summer I will see that same spirit exhibited by campers and staff alike as we hold our Give-Aways around the campfire in Hokoka.

Pilamaya!

Important Dates:	
June 23	Staff Week Begins
June 30	First Session (2, 3, 6 weeks) Opens
July 14	Four-Week Sessions Opens
	First One-Week Session Opens
July 21	Second Session (2 and 3 weeks) Opens
July 14	First One-Week Session Opens
Aug. 4	Second One-Week Session Opens
Aug. 11	“To Be A Man” Opens
As of March 1, our new email address is: bruce@nighteaglewilderness.com	

Night Eagle Wilderness Adventures
P.O. Box 479
Wallingford, VT 05773



Leaux after a particularly hard day at camp!