

BARNEY'S ARK

the alumni newsletter of

Camp Barney Medintz

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Alumni Day 2014

Ah, the summer of 1977. The world had just learned about "The Force," *Laverne & Shirley* just edged out *Happy Days* as the best show in the land, and this new idea of video gaming would attach the rears of youngsters to chairs forever thanks to Atari. It was also the first time I went to Camp Barney Medintz. I was a second session kid; part of what seemed to be a ginormous contingency of Atlanta campers that were all born to parents from the Space Age who cruised down Buford Highway, ate at The Majestic, and jammed to "Car Wash," "Rich Girl," and "I'm Your Boogie Man." This would be the first of seven wonderful summers.

I took my wife Lori and my daughters Laila and Sofia to this year's alumni day. It is the second trip up for my wife and Laila (now seven); the first for Sofia (now two and future camper). Laila was a bit too young to remember the first alumni day five or so years ago. This time would be different though; this time she knew where she was going and was REALLY interested! After all, this was one of those places that daddy talks about with a smile. Upon arrival, she was immediately exposed to the special love that campers have for each other as I, and so many others, walked up to one another and hugged. Next she witnessed the time honored tradition of "give me the last 30 years in 30 seconds." As you finish bending time and space, you introduce your families to each other and, while staring at your children with a smile, you utter those special words. You know the ones I am talking about: Either "I can't wait for my kids to come here," or "my kids are already here and love it."

Our day began in the Dining Hall where I continued to be reunited with people I knew long ago. I explained to Laila and Lori that this was the epicenter of ruach and village competition. Glasses and chairs banging as village by village proclaimed that they in fact "run the camp." It's a lot bigger now thanks to recent renovations. Welcome changes for a very important place. As we left the dining hall, you couldn't help but notice the new infirmary and dance studio. Dance studio? Yes indeed. Next came the new Halpern Pool. With the shallow sitting area and waterslides, I knew it would be a hit on this warm day. And, just like the other pool, the water was ice cold.

But the best part of the day was our walk around camp. Down the road past the new staff quarters, my girls got a little trip in the way-back machine, as I shared stories about walking to milk line, community showers and Lover's Leap. As we made our way to Village One, I took Laila to my very first cabin. I figured out that I hadn't been in that cabin in some 37 years. And there she was... standing there, looking around and thinking what it would be like to be here on her own. Naturally, as a girl, she checked out what was important: the bathroom. Walking back into the main cabin, she had a noticeable sense of excitement with a dollop of apprehension. I remember having that same feeling so long ago in this very place. She seemed braver than me as she smiled and said, "I've decided. I want to stay in this cabin just like you did. And I want to sleep on the top bunk over there." She happily ran down the stairs to my wife, leaving me alone in the cabin for a brief

moment. I looked back and saw myself standing there, unpacking my footlocker and duffel bag, wondering what would happen during the next four weeks. If I only knew how my life would change. My eyes welled up as a smile pushed its way through. One of the best dad moments had just happened.

We continued our walk, up through Village Three, across the Junior Ball Field, down to arts and crafts for a quick tie dye adventure and ended up on the waterfront. We played in the lake, climbed the iceberg and watched the zip-liners descend from the chapel down into the water. I pointed off in the distance and explained that as campers get older, they move into tents in wooded villages beyond the chapel. My claim to CBM fame, I told her, was that my JIT year was the first group to live in that new village, so many years ago.

I was really struck by the many changes all around. Those entrusted with the stewardship of the camp truly love it. They have remained committed to keeping it relevant, alive, and healthy. Yet, they haven't lost the "soul" or "feel" of the camp I used to know. CBM is a living thing that continues to evolve with each generation of children. To me, this is one of the greatest gifts the camp can give. See, my children will have THEIR Camp Barney and not MY Camp Barney. No rinse and reuse here. Their memories, their traditions, their summers. But I did take the time to tell Laila more about how it used to be. I told her stories about Barney's Ark and the plaques that used to hang there. I told her about Kaleidoscope and Shabbat. I told her about Bennie Caudell. I told her about bug juice. And while I was unsure if some of those old traditions still held true, I assured her there were plenty of new ones that were equally fun.

The day ended with a quick photo of Laila and me in front of the Alumni Day sign. It was happy and sad all at the same time. Before leaving, I walked a bit down the road to the Zaban Chapel, looking at the bricks along the wall. Brick by brick, family after family. I grew up with so many of these people. Right here at camp. And then what happened? Well, they became my friends. Good friends in fact. Friends that went to Hebrew school with me. Friends at my bar mitzvah and at college. Even friends with children in the same day school as mine. (continued on page 2)



Rick and Laila Harber

LIFE·CYCLE EVENTS

engagements / marriages



Shelly Horovitz (camper 1996-1999, staff 2001-2005) married Evan Eisenstadt on April 27th, 2014 at Villa Christina in Atlanta. They currently live in Sandy Springs with their dog Lily.

FUTURE CAMPERS



Madalyn Clara Greene

Katie Levitt Greene (camper 1992-1997, staff 1999-2001) and her husband Daniel Greene welcomed Madalyn Clara Greene into the world on August 6, 2014 at 3:35 pm. Madalyn weighed 6 lbs 2 oz and was 19.25 inches long.

TODAY RABAH

to the following people for their recent donations to the CBM Alumni Clock Fund:

Robert and Judy Benowitz
Madelyne & Jay Daneman



NEW CBM SPECIALTY CAMP COMING IN 2015!

Camp Barney Medintz has created an incredibly awesome new Specialty Camp "Session" for 2015, designed for campers who love MUSIC & THEATER!

CBM LIVE!

CBM LIVE! will take place at Camp Barney from Sunday, June 21-Thursday, July 2 (the second 2-weeks of First Session). Boys and girls ages 11-15 can choose one of two primary "tracks" offered.

- ☆ **The MUSIC track** ☆
is perfect for kids who play a musical instrument or sing vocal.
- ☆ **The THEATER track** ☆
is perfect for kids who love to perform on stage.

All new or returning campers, ages 11-15, from "everywhere" are eligible. New campers may be eligible for One Happy Camper or P.J. Library incentive grants.

There is a limited enrollment for CBM LIVE!



NEW CAMP BARNEY WEB SITE... FINALLY!

Yes, it's true—we've been innovative in every aspect of our operation and CBM experience, since 1963, from our staff to our facility to our programming. Finally our new web site has launched! It is pretty awesome, user friendly, and captures some of the essence of what we do at Camp Barney each summer. Hundreds of campers and staff from this past summer helped us put it all together. Please let us know if you have any thoughts or suggestions. www.campbarney.org

Alumni Day 2014

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As we made our way to the car, I tried to explain to my family that whether you believe in magic or not, CBM is a magical place in the sense that no one ever leaves the same way they arrived. It is impossible to resist the transformation that takes place here. For some, it is the first night in that Village One cabin...far away from your family. Or your first camp out, deep in the woods behind what used to be the Beetle Field. Perhaps it's that first letter from home or the day you conquered Mount Yonah. Maybe it's the friendships that endure for a lifetime. It's different for everyone, yet very much the same. Each year, there was a gathering of the tribes, from all over the South. Together we were part of this coming of age ritual that had been shared by so many people these last 50 years. And from that point onward, no matter where I've gone, or the path I have travelled, some part of CBM has always been there with me. That undeniable feeling of warmth, belonging, and happiness, deep in my heart. Something for which I am forever grateful.

Thanks to the staff and people at CBM. It was great to come home again, even if just for a short while.

Rick Harber (1977 - 1983)

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Bex Taylor-Klaus

There are Camp Barney Medintz alumni all over the globe doing all kinds of interesting things with their lives. In this issue, we are featuring another camp alumnus who has taken the creative route.

Bex Taylor-Klaus attended Camp Barney Medintz from 2003 to 2008 and even had her Bat Mitzvah at camp. She started acting classes when she was 8 years old, but realized it was really her passion while attending an acting class when she was 16. The teacher lost her temper because the students weren't paying attention, and she told them that if they didn't want to do this, they should go home and tell their parents to get a refund. That was a wakeup call for Bex, who realized at that point that acting was the one thing she wanted to do.

The results of her realization are evident on Netflix. She had a Lead role in season 3 of AMC's *The Killing*, and had recurring roles in *Arrow* and *House of Lies*. She's been a guest star on *Longmire* and will be a guest in the upcoming new series *The Librarians*.

Bex tells us that she never thought of acting as a career choice before that class. But the groundwork for her acting success was laid out at an early age. She says, "If you ask my parents, they'll tell you I came out of the womb acting. Then, when I was around 2 years old, I became Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*." After that, her parents enrolled her in many theatre programs around Atlanta, including Atlanta Workshop Players, a sleep-away camp where one of her counselors was Daniel Platzman, currently the drummer for Imagine Dragons.

Thanks to her parents taking a leap of faith, Bex moved to Los Angeles in 2012 on her 18th birthday, while she was still in high school. Seven months later, she was working as an intern with CGTV and going on auditions. Then she got the call: she would be playing Bullet, a tough-as-nails lesbian teen who serves as a watchful guardian for her fellow homeless on the streets of Seattle in *The Killing*. Bullet touched a chord with young people all over the globe, becoming an icon for gender acceptance.

Bex's mother, Elaine Taylor-Klaus (camper/staff 1973-1984) believes that her daughter's depiction of Bullet was received so strongly in part because Bex has been an advocate of LGBT for years. She got involved with the issue around the time of her Bat Mitzvah, which was held at Camp Barney Medintz. Her sister Syd also grew up at CBM and her brother Josh will be in the Alufim unit in 2015.

Bex says she found it easy to inhabit the character of Bullet. "Bullet was not me. We have things in common, but we are not the same person. She is her own character. I just got the chance to bring her to life." Her portrayal was extremely popular with the show's audience. She was given sixth billing in the credits and was added to an additional episode. Her characters on *Arrow* and *House of Lies* were also in multiple episodes.

Despite being thousands of miles from her family and the only Jewish community she has ever known, Bex makes it clear that there is plenty of room for Judaism in her life. "On Fridays, I can be with my family by Skype or FaceTime for Shabbat. I have my siddur on my desk, my tallis on my shelf, and on the High Holidays, I go to be with friends of the family."

Bex graduated from her Los Angeles high school in the spring of 2013 and is really enjoying her blossoming acting career. "Acting is putting your heart into something, putting of yourself into someone to breathe life into them. I'm proud of what I've done, but I'm not done. I want to keep going."



SHARING MEMORIES

I always look forward to any chance to come back to CBM.

When I turn down the gravel road fourteen summers of memories come flooding back. It's like I never left and I always suddenly feel younger. This year was different though. Although we have taken our children to several alumni days, this was the first year my oldest daughter Hailey was coming with me not as a little girl begging us to let her spend the summer at camp, but rather as a Barney Alumni herself.

I was so excited to share all my memories of camp with my daughter. I did not know which to tell her first... maybe sunbathing with our beach balls and lounge chairs by the poo pond Saturday while the campers were coming back from Chapel. Perhaps the tale of an ill timed sneak out to the dining hall when staff was having an activity there that night or maybe a retelling of the great wolverine invasion campfire story that a sadistic nature staffer told me when I was 10. I finally settled on telling her about Bennie Claudell.

Before I could get my first words out about that big man, she said daddy here is where we... and I realized she didn't need my stories; she already had her own. We walked past what used to be Barney's Ark towards her village and I listened to her tell me about her first color war as I

remembered mine. She showed me where she slept in her cabin and my memories got sharp. For the first time in so many years I thought back to my first cabin in 1976, Rick's Rocks of the Mountain, and remembered my bunk and cubby as she showed me hers. Every story she told triggered yet another happy memory.

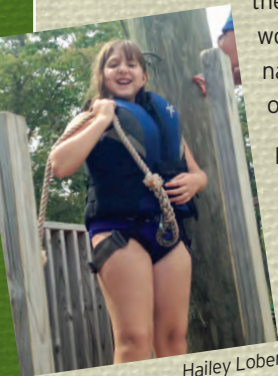
Slowly hiking back to the dining hall she proudly told every person I introduced her to that she had been a camper. Sharing that Barney bond with your child brings an amazing feeling and I can't wait until her little sister joins her at camp.

Just before we left, as Hailey was taking one last turn at the zip line, I was looking out over Lake Wendy remembering my waterfront staff days on that lake framed by the hills and forest. An old camp friend came up to me and asked if I liked all the changes. I think he expected me to say that I liked it better without the fancy new pool, the water slides, and everything else. I did not say much other than a lot has changed, but as we drove home I realized that for all that was different, so little of what was important changed... Camp Barney will always be our summer place.

Mike Lober (1975-1988)



Mike Lober



Hailey Lober

DO YOU GET TOGETHER WITH CAMP ALUMNI IN YOUR AREA? PLEASE TELL US ABOUT IT!
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