



FOREVER WILD



Newsletter of Friends of Baxter State Park

Fall 2017

Vol. 16 No. 4

Executive Director's Column

by Aaron Megquier

It is fascinating to me that the success of Baxter State Park – this deeply wild place where nature comes first – hinges on people. I'm thinking of Governor Baxter, of course, but also people like Park Director Jensen Bissell. Jensen can walk into a room full of people, speak from the heart for an hour with no notes, and by the time he's done, everyone in the room understands the unique mission, governance, and management philosophy of Baxter State Park. It's hard to overstate the importance of that gift.

I'm thinking of Kim Rosenbaum, who works at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's Visitor Center in Monson. With friendliness, professionalism, and rock-solid information, Kim spent every day this summer teaching AT thru-hikers how to finish well on Katahdin. I'm thinking of Barry and Lori Dana of the Penobscot Nation, who are teaching the next generation that the Park is not only special, it is sacred. I'm thinking of David Little, who shared the art of Katahdin with the world, and of Howard Whitcomb and John Neff, who have made the Park's unique history and legal underpinnings accessible to all. These people, and so many others, are carrying this wonderful thing we call Baxter State Park forward into the future.

Like pretty much everything in our deeply polarized society, Baxter State Park has its share of naysayers. When wilderness comes first, the implicit reality is that everything else comes second. Humans, as a species, REALLY don't like to come second. This manifests as all sorts of criticism, some rational and some that just doesn't make a whole lot of sense. Instead of tuning out this criticism, I have gradually learned to listen to it carefully, analyze it, and internalize it – and then make it part of my outreach efforts. Even the resident trolls on Baxter State Park's Facebook page have taught me how to communicate about the

Continued on pg. 2



Members of the 2017 Baxter Youth Conservation Corps on the Katahdin Lake Trail. (Back row, L to R): Austin Grant, Nick Brown, Dylan McLaughlin, Keegan Cogswell, Devon Powers, Dawson McKenney, Alora Walker. Front row, L to R: Crew Leader Paul Corrigan, Panteleimon Panakis, Crew Leader Greg Friel.
-Photo © Aaron Megquier

Friends launches new Baxter Youth Conservation Corps

by Aaron Megquier

Our new Baxter Youth Conservation Corps (BYCC), launched in July 2017, was a wonderful success in its first year. The BYCC is a new job training and service learning opportunity for youth from the Katahdin region of Maine. This program gives youth the opportunity to work with professional leaders on trail projects in Baxter State Park. Participants earned \$12 per hour and gained valuable training, job skills, and work experience in a spectacular wilderness setting.

This year's program started on July 10th and ran for two weeks. We hired two adult leaders and 10 outstanding youth crew members from around the Katahdin Region. Communities represented in this year's program included Millinocket, East Millinocket, Medway, Sherman, Stacyville, and Mount Chase. Each crew member signed on for a two-week, 80-hour term of service.

Our workplan developed with BSP staff focused on nine miles of trails in the Katahdin Lake area. We worked on the Katahdin Lake Trail, Martin Ponds Trail, and North Katahdin Lake trail, as well as all side trails to lean-tos, picnic areas, and canoe launches. During the first week of the program, participants repainted blazes and completed a very thorough job of corridor definition on all nine miles of trails.

Continued on pg. 3



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Friends of Baxter State Park is a 501(c)(3) organization working to preserve, support, and enhance the wilderness character of Baxter State Park in the spirit of its founder, Percival P. Baxter.

Park more effectively.

It's a curious paradox of our human-dominated world – for a wild place to exist, it must first exist in the minds of the people who care about it. Then it must be treasured, year after year, in an ever-changing set of human minds that can muster the will to keep it wild. Baxter State Park is a natural drama played out on a human stage – one conversation, one article, one photograph, and one amazing experience at a time.



In Memoriam Neil Rolde July 25, 1931 - May 15, 2017



Wilder Marastoni, Jill Ippoliti, Henry Beeuwkes, and FBSP President Dick Klain enjoying the Dolomites in September 2017. – Photo © Anne Huntington

Membership Matters

By Jill Ippoliti and Sarah Holland



Over the next few issues we'll be profiling some Friends members in this column. We're a diverse group with a common interest. In this issue we are profiling Wilder Marastoni, a resident of Italy and a member since 2013. He is an avid hiker and lover of lakes, rivers and remote areas. He has been to Maine many times, leading groups of Europeans, primarily for foliage tours. Wilder lives just north of Bologna in the town of Montecchio Emilia with his wife, a school psychologist, and their twin daughters. Wilder attended the University of Bologna where he studied political science. He has traveled throughout the world as a professional guide including visits to many National Parks in the US and several trips to India, the Canadian Rockies, South America, and even a trip to Russia with Luciano Pavarotti! On a personal trip with two friends his destination was Base Camp 2 on Everest. From this worldly perspective, he claims that Baxter State Park is a favorite. He refers to Katahdin as "The Patriarch".

At the end of one trip to Maine, Wilder stopped in our Belfast office wanting to learn more about our organization. On that office visit he offered to show members of FBSP "his mountains" in the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park. Aaron passed that gracious offer on to our board and eventually the idea took hold. In early September twelve Friends headed to Italy.

Wilder's passion in sharing the region gave the group a unique adventure including rich historic, cultural, and culinary experiences. We are fortunate that Wilder has a particular affinity for Maine and Baxter State Park. We hope to return that generosity of spirit on his next visit to Maine by introducing him to more Friends and our favorite places in Baxter State Park.

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Youth Conservation Corps... *Continued from pg.1*

Corridor definition involves cutting all brush and branches within a 4 ft. wide by 8 ft. tall trail corridor.

During the second week, we focused on installing step stones in three different wet areas on the trail that had been flagged by Park trails staff. After a half-day of training, we spent the next three and a half days working with very large stones. Each stone had to be located in the woods, dug out of the ground, and rolled to the trail – a process that often took up to an hour per stone. Meanwhile, other crew members dug a hole slightly larger than the stone in the appropriate location. Crew members then worked together to set the stone in place, and filled around it with “crush” (crushed rock fragments created on-site by another crew member working with a sledgehammer). We repeated this process 49 times, installing three sections of step stones on chronically wet areas in the Katahdin Lake Trail.

As we struggled to move some of the larger stones, we had fun figuring out how much they weighed. At roughly 175 pounds per cubic foot, we figured that most of the granite stones we installed weighed 400 to 800 pounds. Step stones require a huge amount of labor up front, but unlike bog bridging, which lasts about ten to fifteen years before it needs to be replaced, step stones should be there for a century or more.

Our crew leaders, Paul Corrigan and Greg Friel, did an outstanding job motivating, supervising, and mentoring our youth participants. We also worked extensively with BSP Trail Specialists Theresa Theriault and Alex Bradley. Theresa and Alex helped develop the workplan for the program, flagged the trail sections that needed work, provided all tools and materials, and provided a full day of skills training for participants. In our first year, we were able to donate 827 hours of trail services to Baxter State Park – replacing about 21 weeks of Park staff time – while contributing about \$10,000 in payroll to the economy of the Katahdin region.

The Maine Community Foundation, Davis Conservation Foundation, and LL Bean provided generous grant support in 2016 to develop this new program and prepare it for launch. The 2017 program itself was generously funded by the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation, Fisher Charitable Foundation, and the John Sage Foundation. Many thanks to these organizations for supporting Baxter State Park and the future of the Katahdin region!

We are currently seeking funding to expand the program in 2018. Our goal is to add a second crew in the north end of the Park, allowing us to double the number of youth we serve, and also double our donation of trail services to the Park.

Answer: Trivia Question in Summer Newsletter

In our summer newsletter, we posed this question: “What animal that lives in Baxter State Park is found nowhere else on earth?” The answer was the Katahdin arctic butterfly (*Oeneis polixenes katahdin*), which occurs only on the Tableland of Katahdin. Several people guessed Pamola, which is also a great answer – and he shares the same habitat with the Katahdin arctic.



Crew leaders Paul Corrigan and Greg Friel provided outstanding leadership for the Baxter Youth Conservation Corps in its first year. Both Greg and Paul are Registered Maine Guides, veteran outdoorsmen, and experienced high school teachers.

– Photo © Aaron Megquier

Park Director Jensen Bissell to retire

Jensen Bissell recently announced his retirement at the end of December, after thirty years at Baxter State Park. Please stay tuned for more in the winter issue of Forever Wild.



– Calendar cover photo © Ross Knowlton

2018 Baxter State Park Calendars

The 2018 Baxter State Park calendar is available for \$14 with tax and shipping included. Calendars feature stunning photography of the Park in all seasons, and make great gifts. You can order online at www.friendsofbaxter.org, mail a check to PO Box 322, Belfast, ME 04915, or call (207) 505-5779. All proceeds benefit Friends of Baxter State Park.

President's Column

by Dick Klain



Participants in our summer 2017 Walk in the Park to Martin Ponds and Katahdin Lake enjoyed a spectacular sunset.
– Photo © Marion Gray

Passing It On

Recently a friend of mine who visits the Park frequently to fish and hike was able to cajole his non-outdoorsy spouse into visiting Baxter State Park for a “family reunion.” The family included his wife, two sons, a daughter-in-law, and four grandchildren. His family is literally spread all over the U.S. and the world. They spent the better part of a week at Kidney Pond in two cabins. During that time they enjoyed what the park has to offer: hiking, fishing, swimming, canoeing, long summer sunsets, preparing meals together, enjoying the splendors of this magical place.

Pamola was looking down on this motley group and touched them all. The youngest grandson caught his first fish. While paddling in a canoe a granddaughter kindly castigated her grandfather for inappropriately criticizing her younger brother. Heartfelt family stories were swapped, shared and learned for another generation. The loons called. The stars came out surrounded by the Milky Way. The cell phones were off. The laptops stayed in the cars. They returned to the early 20th century and found that the values of their family still persisted.

Prior to going on this trip my buddy was nervous about what would happen. As is usually my way in our relationship I told him to relax and go with the flow – everything would be OK. After getting back he was bubbling with enthusiasm about the great time that everyone had had, about how his wife finally really relaxed while she was there, and how the bonds with his sons and grandchildren were strengthened. Everyone it seemed was enthusiastic to do it again next year.

Of a similar nature, Aislinn Sarnacki, the outdoors writer for the Bangor Daily News, wrote about her family's twentieth reunion at Baxter State Park in August. She told her readers about her husband taking their five year-old niece down the slide for the first time at Ledge Falls on Nesowadnehunk Stream. She talked about forgoing the annual hike of Katahdin for the less time-consuming hike up Sentinel to give her more time with her niece. She and her husband even chose to introduce “dinosaurs” to Baxter State Park among the thirty-nine family participants. These are the memories and

stories that will slip into family lore for a long time. She discussed the myriad joyful choices that we all have to make when we return to the Park.

By the time this goes to press our Walks In The Park program will have been completed. Our hiking weekend at South Branch Pond turned into a kayak/canoe adventure with a little hiking on the side. Another was a Walk In The Park through the eyes/mind of the artist of Marsden Hartley at the exhibition of his work at Colby College. Evelyn Dunphy, as noted elsewhere in this newsletter, did a wonderful job of relating Hartley's life and Maine roots to his art. In all of these cases Baxter State Park played a central role in the development of relationships among people. Even though Baxter expressly left the park for the animals of the forest first, he also noted the profound effect that the forests, waterways, and mountains could have on human visitors. For those of us who return year after year we sometimes take that profound effect for granted. Bringing new people to the park helps us pass it on, and it keeps it fresh in our minds.

Incidentally, that non-outdoorsy spouse specifically requested a return trip in September. Pamola's caress has caught another of us.



Sunrise at Kidney Pond.

– Photo © Donna Watson Lawson



Surprises await after an early evening thunderstorm.

–Photo © Earl Brechlin



Update from the Park

by Jensen Bissell, BSP Director

As fall weather and changing leaves settle in, we can reflect on what has been a busy summer season. Park use was strong through the summer season and reached a crescendo with a very busy Labor Day weekend. We will not tally our statistics until later this year, but in general, this season was happily uneventful and fairly normal.

A bright spot in the season was the release of the 8th edition of *Katahdin - A Guide to Baxter State Park*. With more than 225 miles of hiking trails, our trail system is subject to continuous change as we work to reduce impacts to trails from erosion and to manage the annual maintenance load our trails require. The last revision of the guide was in 2012, so a new edition was warranted. The cover design, worked up by Inter-

pretive Specialist Acadia Tripp, is stunning, and many of the interior photographs were provided by Park staff. The guide is packed with information and makes a great stocking stuffer for any hiker who is headed to the Park.

Earlier in the season, thanks to the tireless efforts of Resource Manager Eben Sypitkowski and our IT Advisors at Starfruit Solutions, we were able to launch a completely revamped website at <https://baxter-statepark.org>. The new website has received many compliments and offers a more seamless approach to learning about and planning for a trip to the Park.

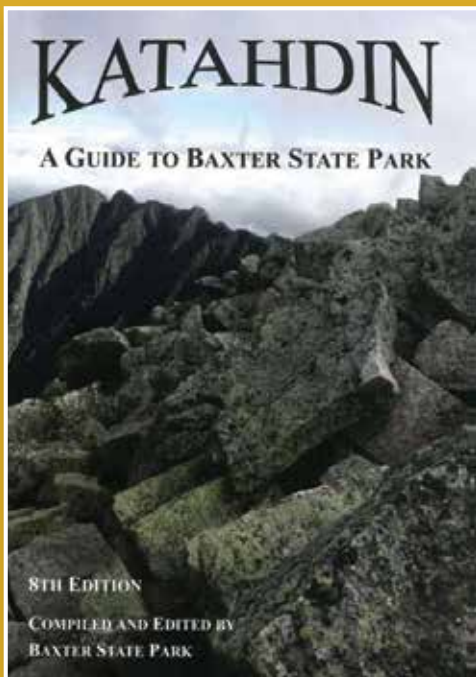
The Park also has some construction plans for new facilities that are underway. We recently took delivery of a pre-built camp for the SFMA. This camp will house the harvesting crews working on the portion of the SFMA north of Webster Stream. Baxter Park maintenance staff is currently working on finishing the interior so the camp can be utilized by a crew this winter. We also took delivery of a cabin kit that will eventually be assembled as a new Ranger office at Kidney



BSP staff are hard at work on building repair and replacement in several areas of the Park. – Photo courtesy of Baxter State Park

Pond. The existing ranger office and former ranger residence will be removed. This last facility work at Kidney Pond Campground will conclude what has been a lengthy and multi-step process for addressing housing and administrative upgrades at this campground.

As we dive into the beautiful Maine fall weather (perhaps the very best weather of the year...) we are reminded how fortunate we are to be able to work and play in this great Park and how astoundingly beautiful the Katahdin landscape can be in the transition from summer to winter in Maine.



The 8th edition of *Katahdin - A Guide to Baxter State Park* includes up-to-date information on all 225 miles of Park trails.

– Photo courtesy of Baxter State Park



Open, alpine landscapes greet hikers on Katahdin's vast tableland. – Photo courtesy of Baxter State Park

Friends Hosts Tours of Marsden Hartley Exhibit at the Colby College Museum of Art

Friends recently hosted three tours of an exhibit entitled Marsden Hartley's Maine at the Colby College Museum of Art - one tour on August 17 and two tours on October 25. All tours were led by Evelyn Dunphy, a FBSP member and award-winning watercolor painter who did an outstanding job explaining Hartley's life and work. The following is excerpted, with permission, from George Smith's blog post entitled "Marsden Hartley's art is inspiring and you can see it at Colby College for free!" published on August 29 in his Bangor Daily News blog. George and his wife Linda attended the first Friends tour on August 17.

Marsden Hartley's art – much of it depicting Maine's beautiful outdoors – has always been a favorite of mine. Linda and I recently enjoyed a guided tour of the Hartley exhibit at Colby, led by Maine artist Evelyn Dunphy and sponsored by Friends of Baxter State Park. I kept thinking, as we enjoyed Hartley's art, that the tour was a new trail through Baxter Park – and a stunning tour too.

Evelyn was a superb guide, giving us lots of information about Hartley and his art. Evelyn's art is stunning too. Please check out the website of Friends of Baxter State Park. If you enjoy the park, you should be a member of the Friends group. Check out their exciting raffle now going on. You could win some amazing trips.

Hartley was born in Lewiston in 1877 and died in 1943. He traveled the world, painting it all, but Maine was his focus.

As I stared at his painting Winter Blizzard, I could feel the wind and snow. Brrrr! Nearby was a painting of a beautiful waterfall. I could hear it flowing. And his many paintings of Mount Katahdin will put you right onto that mountain.

Hartley first visited that area for 8 days in October 1939. He stayed at Katahdin Lake Camps, which are now part of the park. Lots of artists have stayed there and painted those beautiful vistas – including Evelyn Dunphy.

I stood for a long time in front of the painting of a tinker mackerel below a separate painting of the sea. Been there. Caught that! Of the many works of art depicting Maine, one of my favorites was of a young hunter wearing a red jacket and holding a set of deer antlers, which I assumed he was going to use to rattle up a buck.

I was especially amused by Hartley's opinion of tourism, presented in one of the many poems he wrote. He deplored tourism's impacts on Maine. In his poem Vacationland, I read this: "The word shivers down the spine/ like lightening in among the spruces/ and the firs." Don't miss this wonderful exhibit!



Some of the participants in the FBSP Marsden Hartley Exhibition tour group at Colby College Museum of Art on August 17, 2017. From left: tour leader Evelyn Dunphy, Dorcas Miller, Laurie Hasty, Jill Ippoliti, Barbara Trentacosta, and Al Howlett. – Photo courtesy of Al Howlett

Updates from the 9th Annual Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program

Friends was thrilled to offer the Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program again this summer to an outstanding group of ten young leaders. This program has been cultivating Maine's emerging young leaders since 2009. As part of a six-month program, participants spend nine days in the Park studying writing, art, science, native culture, leadership skills, and much more with expert instructors. Our 90 alumni often describe the program as "life-changing" and "unforgettable."

Our fantastic art instructor, FBSP member Michael Vermette, sent this report about his full-day workshop at Katahdin Lake during the 2017 program:

The workshop with the students was a complete success. We were not able to see Katahdin's peak but I was able to teach and motivate the students to each paint two paintings. Although it clouded up for a certainty of rain, it never rained on the students. Not one drop, at least not during my workshop. They loved the umbrellas and going to Katahdin Lake Wilderness Camps to be completely spoiled by the staff there. The equipment went a long way to show them what it is like to be a professional artist. My workshop was entitled: "Beauty will save the world."

We rounded their experience off by giving them the history of this place being a destination for artists to express their creativity. We discussed how creativity is just as important in wilderness leadership as obtaining scientific facts and how the two go together. Painting on the same beaches as the famous artists painted at Katahdin Lake gave them all the time they needed to have a personal encounter with Katahdin. The clouds and undulating light were just amazing and so too were the paintings they created, many for the very first time. Thanks for the experience and the privilege to teach these kids.

- Michael Vermette



Participants in the 2017 Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership program painting on the shores of Katahdin Lake, August 12, 2017. – Photo © Michael Vermette

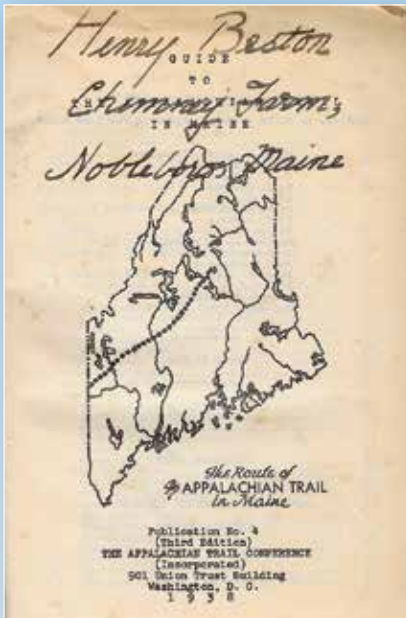
Baxter State Park Trivia

Near the beginning of the sixth edition of *Katahdin: A Guide to Baxter State Park and Katahdin*, author Stephen Clark invited users of the guide to join an organization. What organization was he supporting, and what was its goal?

Send Trivia answers to Sarah at admin@friendsofbaxter.org

Sleuthing about Baxter . . . The Bowdoin College Connection

By Howard R. Whitcomb, FBSP Historian



Henry Beston's copy of the *Guide to the Appalachian Trail in Maine*, 3rd Edition, showing his inscription on the inside cover.

— Photo courtesy of Gary Lawless

The recent discovery by Gary Lawless of Nobleboro, ME, of a copy of the third edition of *The Appalachian Trail Conference's Guide to the Appalachian Trail in Maine* (1938), reminds me of the deep connection between Bowdoin College, the Appalachian Trail and Baxter State Park.

The guide's editor, Myron H. Avery, Bowdoin, Class of 1920, and chair at the time of the Appalachian Trail Conference, had the previous year overseen construction of the last segment of the AT in western Maine, thereby completing the Georgia to Maine footpath. According to the University of Maine's David Field, "the trail might

have ended in New Hampshire" had it not been for Avery's tenacity.

The 1930s were heady times in the north Maine woods with the roughly simultaneous development to the trail and the creation of Baxter State Park. The northern terminus of the trail was within the boundary of the fledgling Baxter State Park's original 5,960-acre parcel. The park was the creation of former Governor Percival P. Baxter, Bowdoin, Class of 1898. In addition, during the 75th Congress (1937-38), there was a bill pending that would have created a national park at Katahdin, designed either to surround or subsume Baxter's newly created park. That legislation was introduced, at Avery's request, by then Congressman Ralph Owen Brewster, Bowdoin, Class of 1909. Baxter fought doggedly throughout 1937-38 to defend his "magnificent obsession" and defeat Brewster's congressional initiative. By the time of his death in 1969, Baxter had gifted 28 parcels, totaling 201,000 acres, to the State of Maine. Today, 14.7 miles of the AT from the Penobscot's West Branch at Abol Bridge to the summit, are within the boundary of Baxter State Park.

It is fair to say that these graduates of the Brunswick-based liberal arts college had a profound influence on both land preservation and recreation in Maine's north woods. But there is more to the guide book's Bowdoin story.

The trail guide's owner left a personal inscription: *Henry Beston, Chimney Farm, Nobleboro, Maine*. Beston, the noted author and naturalist* best known for his nature writing classic, *Outermost House: A Year of Life on The Great Beach of Cape Cod* (1928), received an honorary doctorate from Bowdoin in 1953. Gary Lawless plans to donate the trail guide to Bowdoin's Special Collections.

*Highly recommended reading: Daniel G. Payne, *Orion on the Dunes: A Biography of Henry Beston* (Jaffrey, NH: David R. Godine, 2016)

Looking Back...

by John W. Neff, Author of *Katahdin: An Historic Journey*

Lake Name Mystery

I am sometimes asked the origin of the names given to the two lakes located in the remote Northwest Basin on the Katahdin massif. The Northwest Basin Trail from the Russell Pond area skirts Lake Cowles on its way to Davis Pond and the lone shelter located there in the shadows of the magnificent basin cirque. The trail then climbs steeply up to the Northwest Plateau of the Katahdin Tableland before ending at the Saddle Trail. The names go back to 1902 when Dr. LeRoy Harris Harvey mounted a notable exploration of the basin. He was accompanied by twelve others, most of them distinguished botanists from Maine to the Midwest. Their goal was to thoroughly explore the basin which had not been entered since one of the final Monument Line survey crews finally crossed the basin area in 1833.

Dr. Harvey, Professor of Natural History at the University of Maine at the time, was joined on this expedition by Dr. Henry C. Cowles and Dr. Bradley M. Davis, both of the Department of Botany at the University of Chicago. We are not really sure why Harvey chose those two to receive such an honor, but it certainly was a singular recognition of the immense role played by botanists in the history of Baxter State Park. The Northwest Basin remains one of the most magical places in Baxter State Park.



Reflections in Davis Pond reveal the steep walls of the Northwest Basin, one of the more remote backcountry camping opportunities in Baxter State Park.

— Photo © Glenn LeBlanc

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Thank you!

Baxter State Park Sign Auction

Have you ever wanted to own a piece of Baxter State Park history? For the first time, Friends is partnering with Baxter State Park to auction off retired Park signs and other special items. A total of 15 signs are available in this year's auction, as well as the historic dinner bell from Kidney Pond Camps. Friends will donate 50% of the proceeds directly to Baxter State Park, and 50% will support our programs. Bidding opened at 9am on November 6th, and closes at midnight on December 6th. Please visit www.32auctions.com/fbsp to check out available items or place a bid.

