



THE PONKY QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Number 1
Winter 2024

AMC Ponkapoag Camp

Randolph, MA 02368

QUESTIONS: If you have questions about the newsletter or would like to contribute to it, please contact Dianna Wilson who is managing the camp newsletter.

Email: <mailto:PonkapoagNewsletter@outdoors.org>.

DISTRIBUTION: If you want your email to be added or changed for the newsletter distribution please contact Laura Dowd, Ponkapoag Secretary.

Email: <mailto:Ponkapoagcamp@outdoors.org>.

Letter from the out-going Chair

Hello Ponkapoagers!

It has been an honor to serve as your Chair. I can't believe it's been four years; it seems like time flies and so much has happened.

Over the last four years there have been many changes Ponkapoag, including getting through Covid, doing more to support our volunteers, finding a new off-season Caretaker, and getting the documentation up to date.

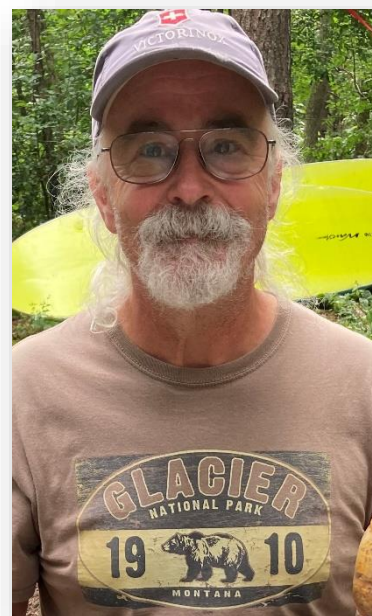
The Covid pandemic shut down Ponkapoag for the first time in the camp's 100 plus year history. Even with camp closed there was a lot of work keeping the cabins safe and secure, and maintaining camp, like repairing a cabin roof after a tree branch fell through it.

Our off-season caretaker, Trisha, who loves camp dearly, retired after 49 years. The search for a replacement was not easy as Trisha set the bar very high. We found a wonderful and enthusiastic new caretaker, Lauren. If you have not met Lauren, take a trip to camp for a day, or weekend, and you'll be warmly welcomed with true Ponk spirit!

We tried to focus on our volunteers by creating a catered appreciation event to recognize the work volunteers do. We also created the annual "Volunteer of the Year" award to recognize outstanding volunteers.

One of the unseen improvements for Ponkapoag is documentation. I know it doesn't seem to rank up there with the sunsets over the pond, but it is equally transformative. The camp has moved its documents to an online shared space, so the information related to the running of the camp is easily accessible to all Ponkapoag Committee members and managers. The documentation includes a newly created Manager's Manual, as well as job descriptions for committee members and managers. Ponkapoag also now has digital records for meetings and annual reports. Laura Gersch created an online document listing all maintenance work needed and completed.

While we have come a long way in the last four years, we can see there are challenges ahead, such as the ongoing need for the lodge and cabin repairs, improving camp occupancy, and as always, engaging new volunteers. We had a big party to celebrate Ponkapoag's centennial, and with those 100 years, Ponkapoag needs repairs. Some can be accomplished at work parties, while others work takes several days to several weeks to complete and requires a contractor. This is an ongoing challenge – identifying skilled volunteers or paid contractors to do the larger jobs. We also need to get cabin rentals back to pre-covid levels. The occupancy at camp this past summer was down compared to pre covid. The costs of running and maintaining the camp are easier to manage if we have more people renting Ponkapoag's cabins. I hear the summer reservations will be available early this year so check your calendars and start planning.



Dennis Maher



*Dennis Maher and Rich Crosby play cornhole
at Ponkapoag Camp's Centennial*

Thank you again for the privilege to act as Ponkapoag's Chair. As I turn over the Chair position to Rich Crosby, I know he will continue to be a commanding and boisterous voice at Karaoke Night and will help lead us through the challenges ahead. You can support Rich and Ponkapoag by volunteering, whether it's cleaning up a little while staying at camp, coming to a work party, or doing other work behind the scenes. See you at camp!

Your Outgoing Chair,
Dennis Maher



Introducing our in-coming Chair

Meet Rich Crosby, a face many will recognize from his lifelong attendance at camp, as well as his constant presence and leadership. For those unfamiliar, Rich is part of a great Ponkapoag Legacy; his parents Rick and Roberta Crosby were long-term summer managers doing several summers back during Rich's childhood, and Rich and his powerhouse wife Nicole have carried that torch, doing several summers as Managers and carrying us through the harrowing ordeal of surviving pandemic shutdowns. Now Rich is stepping up to the plate one more time, taking on the role of Camp Chair, while also helping out on Facilities, and being a one-man Outhouse Committee.



Rich Crosby

The father of 3 and karaoke connoisseur is also known for his ability to light up any room he walks into, his infectious smile, and his love of Trillium Brewing can graphics. An avid David Bowie fan, an electrician by trade, and a tough Horseshoe competitor, you may think that he is a Jack of all trades, and you would be right, but don't be fooled, he is a master at all he sets his mind to. Thank you, Rich, for your continuous service to camp and to Nicole for her countless hours in camp's service as well!

Send in Your Summer Reservations!

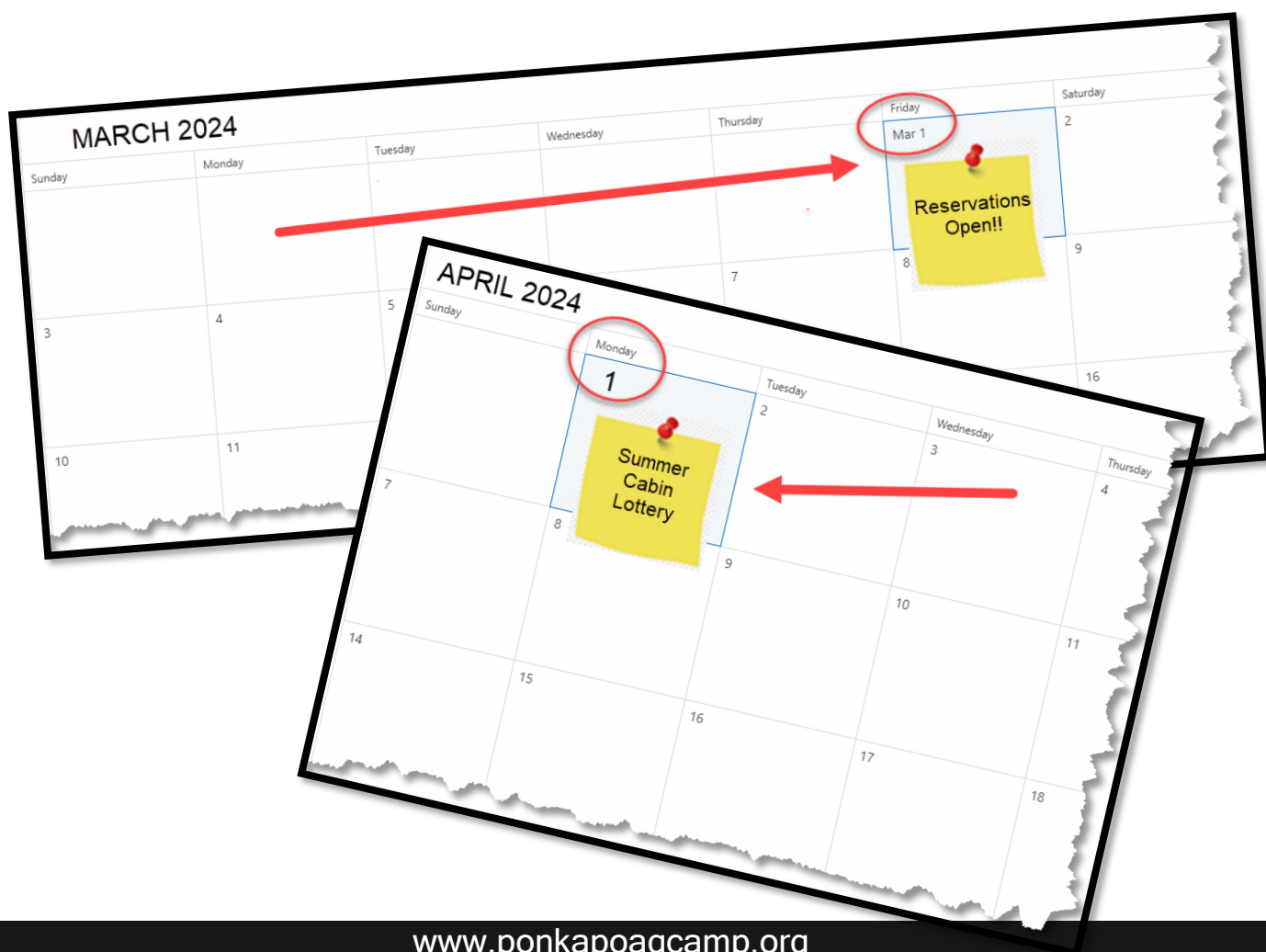


After decades of the same system, we are shifting things to keep up with the rapidly changing world and many people's desire to have their summers sorted out earlier.

PLEASE NOTE, WE ARE NOW ACCEPTING SUMMER RESERVATIONS EARLIER THAN USUAL!

Starting **March 1st** we will be accepting Summer Reservation Forms, still via mail-in, with an **April 1st** Lottery Pull. Everything after April 1st is first come first serve.

If you have any questions about how our mail-in reservations work please call our Caretaker, Lauren at (781) 961-7007 and if you would like to volunteer to be on our Reservations Committee, please email Laura Dowd, Camp Secretary at <mailto:ponkapoagcamp@outdoors.org>.



Meet Our Executive Committee Members

Many of the Executive Committee are staying on board, and a few are passing the torch.

Thank you to Dennis Maher, Chair, Barnabas Furth, Vice Chair, John Lerner, Treasurer, and Nolan Whitehead, Secretary for all the great work over the past few years!!

As of January 2024, we have a new Executive Committee, with a few new faces.

Let me introduce you to all the executive committee members...



Julie Linehan



John Linehan
Vice Chair



Laura Gersch
Facilities



Lauren
Off-Season
Caretaker



Ann Tweed
Bookkeeper



Peter Furth
Treasurer



Rich Crosby
Chair



Laura Dowd
Secretary



Mike



Henry
Barbaro



Trisha Minton



Cindy Maher

Rich Crosby	Chair	PonkapoagChair@outdoors.org
John Linehan	Vice Chair	PonkapoagViceChair@outdoors.org
Laura Dowd	Secretary	Ponkapoagcamp@outdoors.org
Laura Gersch	Facilities	PonkapoagFacilities@outdoor.org
Lauren	Off Season Caretaker	PonkapoagCaretaker@outdoors.org
Peter Furth	Treasurer	PonkapoagFinance@outdoors.org
Ann Tweed	Bookkeeper	
Trisha Minton		
Mike		
Henry Barbaro		
Cindy Maher		

Meet Ponkapoag's New Off-Season Caretaker



Lauren!

I grew up in Wrentham Massachusetts on 10 acres, so I'm a woods girl at heart. I moved to Quincy almost 12 years ago. I have been coming out to Ponkie for quite some time, but more recently the last few years. I was a veterinary technician for about 20 years, and I needed a change. I applied for the position of Off-Season Caretaker, and I was so lucky I got it. It has been such a delightful experience and honor to have been given this role as a caretaker. I was introduced to camp and got settled into my new role the last few months. I learned the operations of the camp and how its runs. I have met a lot of great people. Some new and old to camp, and I am truly blessed and lucky to be here taking care of this land and fulfilling people's needs in coming and staying in this sacred land we are on. I love my job, and love meeting everyone who walks through or stays here. I am truly living my best life.

And how's the winter going at Ponkapoag, you ask? Well, it's just gorgeous here! Check it out!



Volunteer Appreciation



You love Ponkapoag!
And Ponkapoag **LOVES** you back!

To show gratitude and appreciation for all the love at Ponkapoag we have a new happy tradition – it is The Volunteer Appreciation Event. This is our third year!

If you volunteered at a Work Party or did other volunteer work for camp last year, you will be invited this year to join the event on Saturday, May 11th.

More importantly, **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!** Who will be the volunteer of the year 2023?

It's time for **YOU** to **NOMINATE!**

You can nominate as many people as you want, and they will all be recognized, but only one can be Volunteer of the Year.

Here are the details....

What:

The award is given out annually to the outstanding Ponkapoag Volunteer who consistently volunteers and works to improve Ponkapoag. There are prizes for this person, including their name engraved and proudly displayed on the plaque, and one week cabin rental free.

When:

Nominate now and up to April 15th.

How:

Write a brief paragraph or two describing the work and dedication of this volunteer and why you think they deserve the award. Send it to Laura Dowd, camp Secretary

Ponkapoagcamp@outdoors.org

Where:

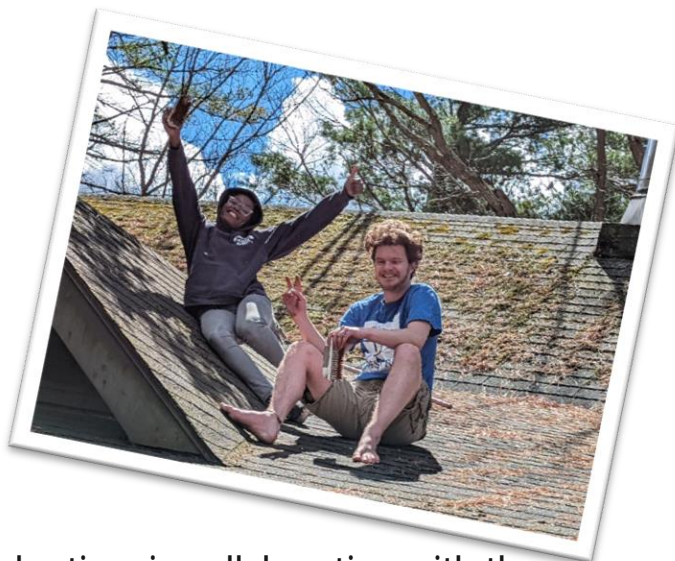
At the Volunteer Appreciation Event the Ponk Executive Committee, having made the decision, announces the winner of the Volunteer of the Year. All who were nominated will also be announced at the event.

Work Party Calendar

Hear ye! Hear ye!!

All hands on deck for camp work parties!!

Here are the dates for the
Ponkapoag Work Parties
this spring and early summer.



- **April 6th (Saturday)** – Road Work
- **April 21st (Sunday)** – Earth Day Celebration, in collaboration with the Friends of the Blue Hills (Leaders: Trisha & Julie)
- **May 11th (Saturday)** – Cabins and Grounds (Volunteer Appreciation following that night)
- **June 9th (Sunday)** – Opening the summer cabins (Leader: Laura D)
- **June 22 (Saturday)** – Camp Summer Opening weekend
- **June 23 (Sunday)** – Camp Summer Opening weekend

To sign up for a work you check your emails for the work party announcements with sign up form attached.

If you are not sure if you're on the work party email distribution list or want to subscribe to it, please contact Laura Dowd, Camp Secretary.

<mailto:PonkapoagCamp.org>

