

Ever Loyal Be

Stories from Camp Fernwood Alumnae

Edited by Suzi Piker





For once you've passed that Fernwood gate
you've made a little date with fate
and you're heart is at Fernwood to stay ...





*From the hearts of all at Fernwood ...
Thank you Macky.*



Editor's Letter

In the face of a constantly changing world, Camp Fernwood remains a place to come home to – a buoy through time, calmly anchored to the shores of Lake Thompson. Since 1921, generations have entered the Fernwood gates and departed better for the experience.

Connected down that dusty road – to our own history and to each other – we are proud of our legacy and we should be – for Fernwood is a reflection of everyone who has loved her.

This collection is a snapshot into what it means to be part of Fernwood – bigger than all of us and yet so meaningful to each of us. I hope you find yourself somewhere in these pages and that this book brings the sounds of laughter and memories of sisterhood a little bit closer, wherever you are.

Ever Loyal Be.

Suzi Piker, 1990 - 1994

Counselor 1998, 2000 - 2003



Introduction

Since 1921, Camp Fernwood – a summer camp for girls in Poland, Maine – has remained a place of tradition, commitment and warm idealistic spirit. The Fernwood philosophy is dedicated to the growth of character and nurturing traits such as tolerance, unselfishness, and an appreciation of a simpler life in the out-of-doors.





Dearest Fernwood Family –

Can it really be eighty five years? The old cliché about time going fast should be augmented by – “a lifetime goes fast.” I can hardly believe that I have been a camper for that long a period!

What a privilege, a pleasure, – a joy that experience has been! What riches in friends, in simplified living, in childhood adventures, of new experiences in activities, trips, of independence from parents and home.

We, at Fernwood from its earliest summers, have known four generations of wonderful women (and more than two generations of male staff) who have brought with them, and given freely, skills and occupations to enjoy, and high ideals by which to live.

My gratitude goes to my parents, Julius and Ina Bluhm, for the creation of Fernwood. My gratitude goes also in great measure to Christine and Fritz Seving for carrying on its fine traditions into the future – and I offer my gratitude to Suzi Piker, Fernwood camper, counselor, historian, and treasured friend – for all those roles she has fulfilled – and for this book.

M.B.K.

*Maxine Bluhm King
February 2006*





The logo features the word "Zerewood" in a decorative, blackletter-style font. The letter "Z" is particularly ornate, with a large, curved flourish that resembles a fern frond or a leaf. Below "Zerewood" is the phrase "Alumnae Stories" in a smaller, elegant, cursive script font.

Zerewood
Alumnae Stories



On my way through the lodge one afternoon, I casually looked at one of the albums of photographs from the '20s. I was amazed. The pictures showed the lodge and candy store soon after they had been built. These were isolated buildings, surrounded by little that would strike us as beautiful today. There were no trees, no grass, no lush green foliage, and no softness. Nothing inviting. The landscape looked bereft—like another abandoned New England farm. And what came out of this barren place? A miraculous transformation based upon vision, years of hard work—the legacy of the Bluhms and Kings, and the joy and pleasures (as well as many tears) of thousands of girls. The lush green landscape of tall trees, grasses, hedges, flowers, ferns and the animated activities of campers and counselors.

Yes, there are changes but there are there are crucial constants. And Macky is one of them. In a time of bombastic leadership and celebrity clones, it is amazing to feel the impact of quiet leadership and considerate caring. I watched—I must say I watched in awe—at the calm way in which she led us. There were no strident gestures of authority, no distancing of herself because of age or position. Instead she gained respect and affection because she gave respect and concern with quiet kindness and a strong sense of values. Imagine after all these years, after all of these thousands of girls, Macky continued to relate in heartfelt ways to old and new campers and counselors! So she sent us out into the world to become volunteers, teachers, doctors, social workers and lawyers. And then she welcomed us back to indulge in sentimentality, revisit memories, share joys and concerns, see our children and grandchildren, family members and friends as Fernwood campers, note the changes in us all, and to touch, once again, the uniquely rich foundation of Fernwood values.

*Judith "Judy" (Stein) Goldstein, 1950 - 1956
Counselor 1959 - 1960*

Oh, how I loved this magical wonderland of ours! Countless memories glow in my heart and brighten my life.

I was an awkward, messy, bright – though outwardly goofy – kind of kid. Yet, here I found a nurturing home where myriad aspects of my personality could blossom. Here I belonged, and here I thrived. I wasn't much of an athlete, but that didn't matter at Fernwood. I could be a loving and valued friend. Just as important, I could sing and I could cheer and I could write! My best friend Nancy Haber and I spent our winters writing camp songs. I recall we had Senior Show virtually finished by Christmas. Most of our bunk had a reunion, presumably in New York City, and we proudly sang them all the songs that we had spent so many joyous hours writing. We were deliriously happy about this!

Macky's calm demeanor, wisdom, and uncanny ability to recognize the unique worth in each of us has been an inspiration to me all my life. As an independent college counselor, I try hard to discern just what it is that makes each client special. As a mother, wife, and friend, I strive to be supportive, to nurture and cherish the strengths in those I love, and to listen carefully. I try not to judge harshly. My model, of course, is Macky.

The "Fernwood family" is not just a figure of speech; the bonds are strong among some of us to this day.

Jill (Wertheimer) Rifkin, 1958-1962

This memory is unique to me and, at the same time, universal for anyone who attended camp during the "Mickie years." My third summer at camp, the summer of '64, we had chicken pox at camp. I was the last case to be diagnosed and was confined to the infirmary for nine (NINE!) days. On the Sunday of my "isolation" (the other three cases in camp had recovered), I was alone in the infirmary and feeling very sorry for myself. Everyone was down at the campfire and camp seemed deserted. Suddenly, I heard a blood-curdling scream from the direction of the campfire. It took less than a fraction of a second to realize that I had missed that summer's annual rendition of "Ada Jones" by Mickie.

Betsy (Rosenberg) Roumm, 1962-1968



One of my favorite memories of camp was sitting around the campfire, all warm and cozy, listening to Macky read "Burhead's Confessions." Looking back, camp was really an idyllic spot. Teaching us all life lessons but more importantly the spirit and richness of connection that I'll never forget. Bravo!

Ellen (Stern) Kerr, 1967-72



Whenever I think of Fernwood, a specific image comes to my mind. Those amazing campfire afternoons: the sun's rays peeking through the pine trees, the smell of wood burning, and the smiles and laughter of all the girls enjoying each other and singing their favorite song. My personal favorite – "The Flicker of the Campfire":

The flicker of the campfire,

The wind in the pines,

The moon in the heavens,

The stars that shine.

A place where people gather to be friends for all times.

A place where all men's troubles are always left behind.

So give me the light of the campfire, warm and bright.

And give me some friends to sing with,

I'll be here all night.

For love is where you find it

And I've found mine right here.

Just you and me and the campfire and the songs we love to hear.

Doo-doo-doo ...

*Kitty Villalobos, 1988-1995
Counselor 1999-2001*



Here you see before you some girls in green and white
They all look quite athletic and fight with all their might
Watch them at their field sports
Watch them as they swim
They do every single thing with vigor and with vim ...









Remember the times you've had here
Remember when you're away
Remember the friends you've made here and
Don't forget to come back someday

Remember beside the campfire
The rippling waters too

For you girls belong to Fernwood
And Fernwood belongs to you ...