

The Boynton Society

LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY

FALL 2015

New Acquaintances and Old Friends Welcomed to *This is Björklunden*

Linda Laarman '73, Fish Creek Wis.

For the second consecutive year, individuals who had never spent time at Björklunden gathered along side many familiar, friendly faces, on a sunny Sunday in May to celebrate everything Björklunden! The goal of the event was to give people a taste of this special place and what it means to students during the academic year, to adults participating in summer seminars and to community members and visitors year-round.

An impressive turnout of 80 people spent the day at the lodge, beginning at 10:30 a.m. with tours of the grounds and the chapel and concluding at 5 p.m. with a light reception. At the heart of the day, attendees lunched with students who were spending the weekend at Björklunden. Most weekends during the academic year, approximately 100 students come up from Appleton to use Björklunden as an extension of their campus for classroom and laboratory work, or to pursue extracurricular activities. Lawrence students recognize and appreciate their unique opportunity to have experiences like these.

We also learned about the history of Björklunden from Mark Breseman '78, who has served as the long-time director of Björklunden, and who also serves as associate vice president of alumni and constituency engagement at Lawrence. We were reminded of Björklunden's rich history and how we can help preserve this amazing place.



Mark's presentation was followed by a fascinating seminar lecture, *Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation*, by Jerald Podair, Robert S. French Professor of American Studies and professor of history at Lawrence. The lecture was modeled after what one might encounter at a summer seminar and a long-cherished foundational requirement of every Lawrence education, *Freshman Studies*. Professor Podair engaged in a question-and-answer session with attendees following his lecture.

Music and drama dominated the last major event of the day. Lawrence students performed selections from Aaron Copland's classic folk opera, *The Tender Land*, with an introduction and commentary from Copeland Woodruff, Lawrence's director of opera studies and associate professor of music. The opera was performed in full on the Appleton campus in February 2015. Woodruff, who joined the faculty in 2014, is one of the premier opera educators in the country and a joy to hear.

Margaret Koss from *Fox Cities Magazine* participated in *This is Björklunden*, and later blogged about her experience, captioning her piece "Björklunden Offers Unique Learning Opportunities." Unique indeed! Thank you to those who were able to join in the fun. 🍷





It turns out what they say about variety being the spice of life is certainly true. There has been enough variety in my life recently to make it plenty spicy! One of things I love so much about my job is that I get to experience many different things. For example, as Lawrence University's fiscal year drew to a close, I was able to contact many good friends and acquaintances to remind them to get their Lawrence Fund and Boynton Society donations in the door before the end of June. After a few phone calls and emails I took off my development hat and switched it out for the one labeled "Trip Planning."

We had a wonderful alumni/Björklunden trip to Italy in April, but it was time to turn our attention to the next one. We are putting the finishing touches on an exciting trip to Cuba next March. Stay tuned for more information about that trip soon! At the same time, I was working on the final details for the Björklunden seminar in Springfield, Ill., where we spent a week in July learning all about the life of Abraham Lincoln with Lawrence faculty member Jerry Podair, Robert S. French Professor of American Studies and professor of history, and curator of the Lincoln Museum and Library, James Cornelius '81.

Of course, all this was happening as Reunion was approaching. We had another fantastic event with over 950 alumni and friends returning to Lawrence, with a number of them taking the time to visit Björklunden on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. There's so much that goes on during Reunion that it would be impossible to comment on everything here, but one of the highlights for me was having lunch on Saturday in the Teakwood Room with the Milwaukee-Downer alumnae. It is always enlightening for me to hear their stories and experience the passion they have for their alma mater. It is encouraging to know that many of these ladies also enjoy spending time at Björklunden.

Just before Reunion, a little thing happened on campus called Commencement. That day is big not only for all the graduating seniors, but also because it marks the beginning of the Björklunden seminar season. After listening to an inspiring and motivating speech from Rep. John Lewis, I quickly drove to Björklunden to help kick off the first seminar. As always, it was great to greet old friends as they returned for a week at this magical place. It looks like this year we will have the highest number of seminar guests ever! I've heard from many people that they felt this year's seminar lineup was very compelling and they appreciated the wide variety of courses offered. All this means, however, is that we need to do even better next year! We are spending a lot of our time these days making plans to accomplish that goal. Many exciting courses have already been locked in for 2016. Look for an email later this fall that will give you an early peek at, and opportunity to register for, next year's seminars.

The bottom line is that Björklunden will add plenty of spice to anyone's life! Björklunden offers a wide variety of things to do—seminars, retreats, family and classmate reunions, business meetings, weddings—to make sure you do not lead a bland existence. I look forward to your next visit to Björklunden—for whatever the reason!

Mark Breseman '78, Director of Björklunden
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at the lodge!



Greetings from your Boynton Society Co-Chairs!

As we write this, the 2015 Björklunden Seminar season is fully underway. We hope your summer included a stay at the Lodge for another wonderful time of learning, relaxing and fellowship.

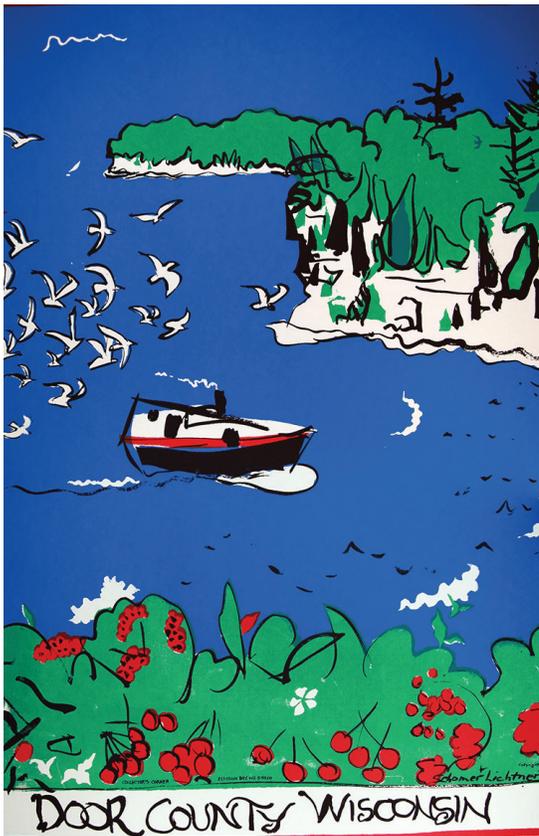
Before putting spring and summer 2015 into the distant past, we want to thank those who participated in *This is Björklunden...An Insider's Look* on May 3. Jone and I were not able to attend because we were called to travel west to serve as babysitters for our first grandchild—a summons one cannot ignore! But we understand that the tours of the

Björklunden grounds, lunch with students, the concert and the seminar session were all well-attended and well-enjoyed. Thanks to all who designed and hosted the event.

One year ago, we were getting ready for our daughter's wedding in the Björklunden Chapel on Labor Day weekend. We haunted the aisles at Nelson's Shopping Center in Bailey's Harbor in the period leading up to the wedding day, as rain was predicted and we needed tarpaulins, ponchos, etc., in case a deluge marred the afternoon. But, as with many milestone moments in our family's history, Björklunden lived up to its promise as a refuge and a setting for memorable, peaceful bonding. The "Birch Forest by the Water" delivered on all of the bride's hopes and dreams for a perfect day.

We find that we are getting into the rhythm of the Boynton Society's year. Thanks for all your well-wishes as we embark upon this labor of love. No one can ever truly replace Bob Schaupp '51 in this role, but we look forward to serving the Boynton Society in every way we can. See you soon at Björklunden!

Jeff '70 and Jone Riester '72



Björklunden is a special part of Door County and you are a special part of Björklunden

Help sustain the Björklunden experience for generations by remembering us through a gift in your will or trust.

Join the Lawrence-Downer Legacy Circle, our recognition society for those who leave a legacy to Björklunden or Lawrence through a planned gift.

For more information, please visit us at legacygiving.lawrence.edu

Or contact Stacy Mara
920-832-6557
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What is your Björklunden Legacy?

Door County Lithograph
A Gift to the Wriston Collection from The Kohler Foundation, Inc., Schomer Lichtner Trust

Chapel Tradition

Before Gina and Travis Frye planned their first-ever trip to Door County to celebrate their four-year dating anniversary in 2008, Gina did what most people set to explore the beautiful peninsula would: She went online and found a long list of unique things to do and see in Door County, one of which included the heart of Björklunden, the Boynton Chapel.

Upon setting eyes on the chapel, she described her emotion as “love at first sight.” Not even being able to enjoy a tour of the inside due to the timing of their visit late in the season, Gina felt a strong connection as they both admired the exterior design and carvings and hard work that must have gone into it.

Fast forward just about a year later, Gina and Travis planned to be married in the Boynton Chapel. They agreed that even though they had initially intended to host a large wedding in a different area, the wedding they celebrated on November 7, 2009, could not have been more perfect. Most of you know that the chapel at Björklunden is a picturesque setting for a wedding, but understandably, Gina and Travis worried about the weather in the days leading up to the ceremony. Hoping for a day with temperatures in the 40s or 50s they were blessed with beautiful sunny day in the upper 60s! Their families and closest friends watched as they said their vows to one another under Winifred Boynton’s angels’ watch.

Gina and Travis felt so fortunate to have begun their lives together in that setting, “a magical safe haven,” as Gina describes it. They feel so connected to the Boynton Chapel that they make a point of getting to Door County to visit it every year. It has become even more special to them as they make their annual visits with their two small children, explaining their “love story” to them each time.

The chapel has become the backdrop of their shared life, as a favored family tradition is taking a photograph on every visit to Björklunden. As it is with many others who have seen or learned about the Boynton Chapel, the chapel will always hold a special spot in their hearts.

Thank you to all of you who make experiences like the Fryes’ possible—for helping to preserve the Boynton Chapel with your support. Your Boynton Society gifts help to ensure that we all can continue to enjoy the history, beauty and the rarity of Winifred’s chapel of peace. 🌿



Donor Profile: Alissa '98 and Louie Clark '98

Lawrence graduates of 1998 and devoted friends of Björklunden, Alissa and Louie Clark recently took time to explain why Björklunden holds such exceptional meaning to them. We extend our thanks to all our supporters who, like the Clarks, help to ensure that Björklunden remains a foundation for education and lifelong learning for future generations.

Q: What are your favorite memories of Björklunden?

A: Obviously, we enjoyed Björklunden as students. We made our first trip to the lodge in 1996. As adults, we have mostly enjoyed the work weekends, holiday/tree decorating events, the summer gala, and friends' weddings. We see so many people come alive in this amazing environment. There isn't a better place to learn.

We have so many memories from our time at the May work weekends, that we find it impossible to pick just one. We remember having to chop down phragmites; chopping endless piles of wood with John; sharing many stories over roaring fires built by Steve Meyer; watching a deer swim in Lake Michigan; helping to put in the flagstone around the lodge fire pit and the walkway by the chapel; eating the most delicious food created by our good friend, Steve Martin; inviting our family and friends up to enjoy this incredible space; and finally, the opportunity to grow closer to President Warch in his final years.



Specific moments aside, the best memories have been watching our girls grow up with the love of Björklunden that we have, watching them learn about nature from the amazing people whom we meet each year at the work weekends, seeing them skip rocks into Lake Michigan and explore the woods where they could always discover something new.

Q: What makes this place special to you?

A: The amazing people who work at Björklunden ensure each trip is wonderful. We always feel welcomed from the moment we arrive, sharing hugs with Kim and Sam, and reconnecting with Steve and the latest addition, whom our girls refer to as "new Mark." We are comfortable, relaxed, and happy when we are there. Being surrounded by beautiful, unique settings, getting to eat delicious food and enjoying great conversations make our time there memorable each and every visit.

Q: Why do you think it is important to support a place like Björklunden with annual gifts?

A: We are Boynton Society members because Lawrence means a great deal to us, and our lifetime of experiences with the college are celebrated through a shared love of Björklunden. Louie is always surprised when others fail to embrace what he loves. But, if Louie's opinion isn't enough to sway you, support the Boynton Society because our beautiful liberal arts college in the heart of Appleton has a northern extension that transforms learning. We were gifted the estate, and it is our honor to ensure we embrace Björklunden's ability to change lives, a vision we first embraced because it was presented by the beloved Rik Warch. 🍄





Credit: Jocelyn Harris '17

Credit: ...

Farewell, Ben

With heartfelt gratitude, we bid farewell to Ben Meyer '00, one of our beloved Björklunden staff members. Ben spent four summers working at the lodge as a Lawrence student, followed by nearly 15 years as the head of the Lawrence Student Weekend program. For many students, Ben personifies Björklunden and he is one of the reasons students enjoy their time there. Fall, winter or spring, Ben has always been present as the friendly guardian of the lodge.

Since 2000, Ben has instilled a love of Björklunden and a respect for the lodge and the Boynton Chapel in many generations of Lawrence students. He has truly helped shape our northern campus into the wonderful retreat facility it is today. We know the educational community of Sturgeon Bay is lucky to have him, but plenty of people will certainly miss him!

“Throughout your time at Björklunden, I have seen you encounter students and guests from all walks of life, from all countries and cultures, and of all ages, and with each encounter you’ve always had a genuine interest in each person, respectfully giving them your full attention. The genuine kindness you bring is a beautiful reminder of how humans should treat one another and a quality of yours that I have been gifted to witness and learn from, time and again.”

—Sam Szynskie '09, assistant director

“Thank you to the generous donors who make students’ stays at Björklunden possible. Thank you, Ben, for helping us to not mess up our opportunity, and for making it even more amazing. Thank you especially for doing all of this with a smile on your face. You have been a pillar of the institution, and we will miss having you there!” —Eli Grover '11



Jocelyn Harris '17



Credit: Jocelyn Harris '17



“Ben is at the heart of Björklunden’s identity for many students. It is only fitting that he will be helping more students in the next chapter of his life as a fourth grade teacher at Sunrise Elementary school in Sturgeon Bay. I will never forget, as I hope no one else does, the last golden rule that Ben shared with students every weekend: ‘Visit Björklunden again.’”

—Bimalsen Rajbhandari '17

“My position as a weekend worker at Björklunden was not just a job to me, although a lot of work was done. Ben made sure it was a time for me to learn life lessons in and out of the kitchen.”

—Brianna Christian '18

“I was constantly struck by Ben’s positive, ‘tackle any project with a smile’ attitude. I remember thinking, ‘Wow, nothing ever gets this guy down.’ And years later, his love for Björklunden continues to shine through everything he does! He will be missed!”

—Kim Eckstein, office coordinator

Future Lawrence students may never know “that red-headed guy who lives at Björklunden” (as so many Lawrentians thought to be true). A different face will greet seminar guests on Sunday nights, and Steve the chef will have someone else to banter back-and-forth with in the kitchen on the weekends. Things will certainly change once Ben is gone. But some things will stay the same because Ben has worked so hard to engage Björklunden’s visitors and to preserve its beauty. For all the ways Björklunden won’t change because of you, Ben, we thank you! 🍷



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Photo Credit: Rachel Crowl DE15-116

