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# AARCH MATTERS

*Your Preservation News for the Adirondack Region*

*"The richness and promise of the Adirondack region will be fully realized when its architecture and communities are as celebrated and vibrant as its natural resources."*
Steven Engelhart

Throughout the past year, AARCH has reflected on 30 years of good work under the remarkable 27 year leadership of Executive Director, Steven Engelhart. Steven's deep commitment to preservation, from our beginnings at Camp Santanoni, our widespread advocacy throughout the region, developing a robust series of education programs, and forging partnerships and friendships in every corner of the Adirondacks leaves a lasting legacy, and a rock-solid foundation for AARCH's work to continue.

The symbiosis of the human and non-human environment at **Camp Santanoni** illustrates how our rich architectural heritage can enhance our experiences and relationship with nature. At Santanoni, Steven was instrumental in developing creative partnerships that have helped preserve the richness and beauty of the Adirondacks' only publicly-owned 'Great Camp'. We thank our partners at the **Town of Newcomb** and the **New York State Department of Environmental Conservation** for 30 years of collaboration

It was fitting that AARCH held its final outing of 2021 to Camp Santanoni for an exceptional experience, delving into 30 years of advocacy at the site, led by **Steven Engelhart** and founding AARCH Board President **Howie Kirschenbaum**. Together, these two champions of Santanoni's preservation shared the deeper history and stories that make the camp shine as a vibrant, public cultural resource. We were thrilled to share this outing with many wonderful participants and friends to cap off an exciting season of tours, workshops, and events.

As summer programming comes to an end and we reflect on the year and the challenges overcome, we again send out our sincerest THANKS to all our members, partners, friends, and supporters who make our work at AARCH possible and so enjoyable.

We welcome our new Executive Director, **Erin Tobin**, on November 1 and are full of enthusiasm for the next chapter at

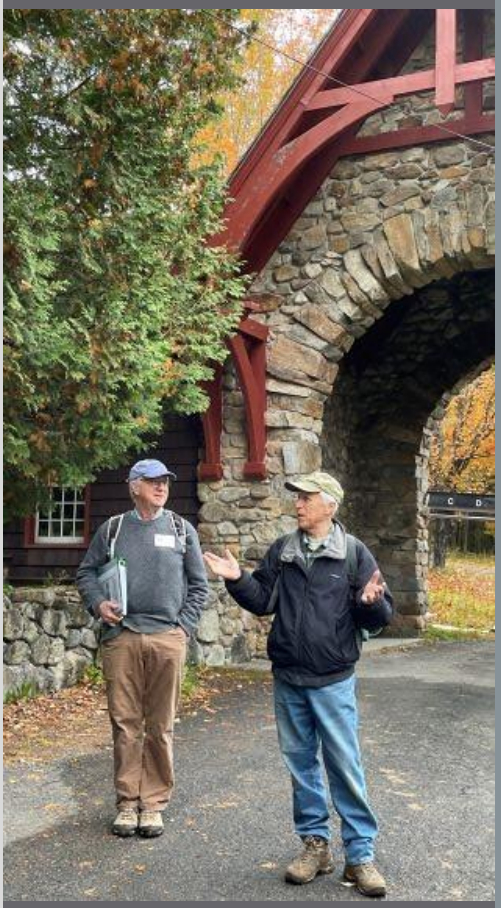

*Image: Howie Kirschenbaum and Steven Engelhart at Camp Santanoni*

AARCH. Lastly, we all wish **Steven** the best and look forward to hearing where his next adventure takes him!

***In this Edition:***

- **Parting Thoughts from Steven**
- **Aristole by Billy Collins**
- **Support**

*Image: AARCH group at Santanoni courtesy Nancy Battaglia*

## Parting Thoughts from Steven Engelhart

I am one of those truly fortunate people who have enjoyed going to work every day for the last 27 years while I've been AARCH's executive director. This is because the work of the organization has been a great fit for my skills and passions but, more importantly, because I've had the great pleasure of working with so many incredible people, in almost every community in the Adirondacks, to do great things to improve the vitality of this extraordinary place we live. It's truly been an extraordinarily rich and rewarding work life and so I thank all of you with whom I've worked and who have supported AARCH's work with your interest, contributions, and sweat.

Moreover, I am especially happy to be ending my time at AARCH on such a high note. We've been able to artfully and imaginatively navigate these pandemic years and still offer a great range of programs and activities, to complete the largest restoration project done to date at Camp Santanoni, to see our fire tower friends thrive, to do the most survey and National Register work ever, and to emerge financially healthy, too. At the heart of all this is a really incredible staff, a supportive board of directors, dozens of partners, and thousands of believers all over the region.

Whenever a new staff person joins AARCH, at our first staff meeting together, I read the Billy Collins poem *Aristotle*. It is a poetic reminder that in all the things we do, from the smallest to the largest; there are beginnings, middles, and endings and in each of these are joys, challenges, and meaning. So, in my stepping down as Executive Director, it *is* a time of change, but it's also a time of great continuity because the foundations of AARCH are so rich and deep.

I hope you will give Erin Tobin, AARCH's new Executive Director, and the AARCH staff all the love and support you have shown me for decades.

With love and gratitude,

Steven

## ARISTOLE By Billy Collins

This is the beginning.
Almost anything can happen.
This is where you find
the creation of light, a fish wriggling onto land,
the first word of Paradise Lost on an empty page.
Think of an egg, the letter A,
a woman ironing on a bare stage
as the heavy curtain rises.

This is the very beginning.
The first-person narrator introduces himself,
tells us about his lineage.
The mezzo-soprano stands in the wings.
Here the climbers are studying a map
or pulling on their long woolen socks.
This is early on, years before the Ark, dawn.
The profile of an animal is being smeared
on the wall of a cave,
and you have not yet learned to crawl.
This is the opening, the gambit,
a pawn moving forward an inch.
This is your first night with her,
your first night without her.
This is the first part
where the wheels begin to turn,
where the elevator begins its ascent,
before the doors lurch apart.

This is the middle.
Things have had time to get complicated,
messy, really. Nothing is simple anymore.
Cities have sprouted up along the rivers
teeming with people at cross-purposes—
a million schemes, a million wild looks.
Disappointment unshoulders his knapsack
here and pitches his ragged tent.
This is the sticky part where the plot congeals,
where the action suddenly reverses
or swerves off in an outrageous direction.
Here the narrator devotes a long paragraph
to why Miriam does not want Edward's child.
Someone hides a letter under a pillow.
Here the aria rises to a pitch,
a song of betrayal, salted with revenge.
And the climbing party is stuck on a ledge
halfway up the mountain.
This is the bridge, the painful modulation.
This is the thick of things.
So much is crowded into the middle—
the guitars of Spain, piles of ripe avocados,
Russian uniforms, noisy parties,
lakeside kisses, arguments heard through a wall—
too much to name, too much to think about.

And this is the end,
the car running out of road,
the river losing its name in an ocean,
the long nose of the photographed horse
touching the white electronic line.
This is the colophon, the last elephant in the parade,
the empty wheelchair,
and pigeons floating down in the evening.
Here the stage is littered with bodies,
the narrator leads the characters to their cells,
and the climbers are in their graves.
It is me hitting the period
and you closing the book.
It is Sylvia Plath in the kitchen
and St. Clement with an anchor around his neck.
This is the final bit
thinning away to nothing.
This is the end, according to Aristotle,
what we have all been waiting for,
what everything comes down to,
the destination we cannot help imagining,
a streak of light in the sky,
a hat on a peg, and outside the cabin, falling leaves.

*Billy Collins, "Aristotle" from Picnic, Lightning. Copyright © 1998 by Billy Collins. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press. Reprinted with the permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press, www.pitt.edu/~press/.*
*Source: Picnic Lightning (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998)*

*Guest as Camp Santanoni circa 1903*

*Michael Frenette working at Camp Santanoni*

*AARCH staff at Camp Santanoni, October 2021*

*Photo courtesy of Nancy Battaglia*

## SUPPORT

Please join the Adirondack Architectural Heritage Board of Directors in honoring Steven Engelhart's 30 years with AARCH and 27 years as its executive director by making a contribution to the **Engelhart Education Fund**.

Proceeds from this fund will be used to further AARCH's educational work in a variety of ways, including to develop new programs, fund new publications, bring more educational content online, and reach and educate new audiences.

The fund will ensure that AARCH's programming will continue to be innovative and far-ranging far into the future. The AARCH Board of Directors has established a goal of raising $200,000 from AARCH's members and friends over the coming year.

You may mail in a contribution or**DONATE ONLINE**. THANK YOU for honoring Steven and ensuring the continuation of our remarkable educational programming with your support!

***ADIRONDACK ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE***

***Preserving the architecture and communities of the Adirondack region through education, advocacy, and action.***

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We would like to sincerely thank Humanities New York for awarding AARCH a generous Emergency Relief Grant as part of the HNY CARES program. With this vital funding, we are able to expand our virtual programming and create a more robust, accessible digital presence for our organization.

A world of AARCH exists online. Join us there.

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