



Birching 101

Influencing Your Local Community

by Matthew Rhodes, *Field Coordinator for New Hampshire and Maine*

Question: “How do I help launch a patriotic resurgence in my community?”

Answer: To bring a patriotic resurgence into your community, first make sure you are a patriot. There are many wonderful facts about our country’s founding and its cultural icons. As JBS members, we have an obligation to not only educate others about Americanism, but to show everyone we know why we love America.

The first thing to do is to assess your battleground, which for you is your town, city, or district. In large cities, you may only be able to work in a small quadrant. The point is to establish an area where you can be the most effective and not bite off more than you can chew.

Begin by researching your town’s founding and its place in American history. This includes researching war heroes, prominent patriotic leaders, and other Americanists in spirit and action. You must be an expert on your locality’s history. The local historical society is usually a treasure trove of wonderful facts, perhaps gone fallow in the minds of many townspeople but waiting to be brought to light once more. Make sure to take advantage of this tremendous resource. Americans love their history and their towns. Because The John Birch Society’s educational focus is on the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, these are equally good starting places to begin choosing your American heroes. Keep yourself a running list of men and women you wish to honor and the events you wish to call attention to.

Now you are intellectually armed, having gathered all the information you wish to share with your community. The best way to keep track of this information is in a personal calendar of events; it will be your guide throughout the year. Be ready to adjust as your town’s needs change.

Next, find out what kind of activities your town already partakes in. All of the following places should be under your purview in terms of patriotic activity: the town or city hall, library, police station, fire station, Elks Lodge, Moose Lodge, American Legion, Am/Vets, and other similar institutions. As JBS President Emeritus John F. McManus would say, “start a conversation.”

At the library, bring attention to upcoming American holidays or the birthday of one of our Founders. You can also suggest books that could be brought out on a special table, request to show a video about your topic, or even pursue more creative ideas such as hosting a play or having the kids make a banner about a Founding Father. Get your entire JBS Chapter involved, and offer to help where needed and be a humble guide.

For an Elks Lodge or similar place, suggest a community event such as a barbecue or bake sale. Raising funds is important to such groups. Talk about JBS’s pro-American and pro-Constitution agenda. Each event should have an honorary recipient or topic, such as a prominent American historical figure or event.

At your town/city hall or library, offer an adult education class about American history and/or a “Constitution Is the Solution” class.

At any event or location, distribute JBS literature that is topical and relevant to the event. And finally, remember that you are not there for controversy, but to show others how much you love America and to offer solutions.