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## Weather



TODAY:  
PERIODS OF  
SNOW

HIGH OF -3  
LOW OF -5



TUESDAY:  
CLOUDY

HIGH OF -4  
LOW OF -9



WEDNESDAY:  
CLOUDY

HIGH OF 1  
LOW OF -2



THURSDAY:  
SNOW

HIGH OF 2  
LOW OF -1



FRIDAY:  
RAIN OR SNOW

HIGH OF 5  
LOW OF 0

# The misunderstood snake— a visit dedicated to the memory of Brian Barczyk



## THE SCOOP

### MABLE HASTINGS

On Jan. 9, the youth who take part in the Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre (CABMN) youth programs had a special visitor as Sigabus snake, a Royal Python owned by Youth Centre Coordinator, Ethan Ball, stopped by for a visit.

“By some strange twist of fate, I started breeding snakes about four years ago,” said Ball. “I decided to share my passion for reptiles with our group.”

The visit began with Ethan asking the kids what a few perceptions that people have about snakes are and he got the usual replies, “they are slimy, they are squirmy, they bite...” Ethan shared with the group some facts about snakes and talked about a YouTube blogger, Brian Barczyk, who had inspired him about five years ago and stimulated his interest in snakes and other reptiles.

Barczyk was an American reptile enthusiast, YouTuber, and founder of the Reptarium Reptile Zoo and Lagasea Aquarium. He was a star on the TV Series Venom Hunters on the Discovery Channel.

“When I started working at the youth centre I contacted Brian Barczyk and asked if he would send our group an autographed photo of himself for our wall of fame,” shared Ball. “To my delight and great surprise, I got an answer and shortly thereafter, a signed photo arrived personalized to our group.”

Ball had promised Barczyk in his request email that he would share his passion for snakes with the group and



COURTESY

admits that it has taken him awhile to do so. After recently learning that Barczyk was in palliative care with stage 4 pancreatic cancer, Ethan wanted to fulfill his promise.

“I wanted to share some of Brian Barczyk’s videos with the youth and to tell them about him and his passion and felt that the best way to show the kids that snakes are not the creatures they are sometimes portrayed to be, I decided to bring a snake to meet them,” he said.

The group interacted with Sigabus snake, the eldest of Ethan’s snakes (he is 11 years old, which makes him older than many of the youth participants!) The group seemed amazed at how docile, non-slimy and non-vicious and friendly the snake was. All of the youth commented on the fact that snakes are one of the most misunderstood animals

on the planet. These comments would be music to Brian Barczyk’s ears.

*The group seemed amazed at how docile, non-slimy and non-vicious and friendly the snake was. All of the youth commented on the fact that snakes are one of the most misunderstood animals on the planet.*

“Our group dedicates this visit and information sharing session to Brian Barczyk who lost his battle to cancer of Jan.14 at just 55 years old,” Ethan shared.

## Ben by Daniel Shelton

