

The Pine Needle

Belgrade Lakes, Maine

July 2021

The Mid-Summer Pine Needle is a collection of camper-created articles and artwork that seeks to provide a glimpse into the creative, imaginative, and active lives campers lead at Pine Island.

Honkabionk's Revenge By Xander Schwartz K.O.

When the staff first arrived at Pine Island in early June, we were greeted by a legion of tiny foes in the form of browntail moth caterpillars. While these 'pillars' at first seemed like an unfortunate itch-inducing coincidence, it may have actually been a sign from one of the most important sacred animals of them all: Honkabionk the Caterpillar.

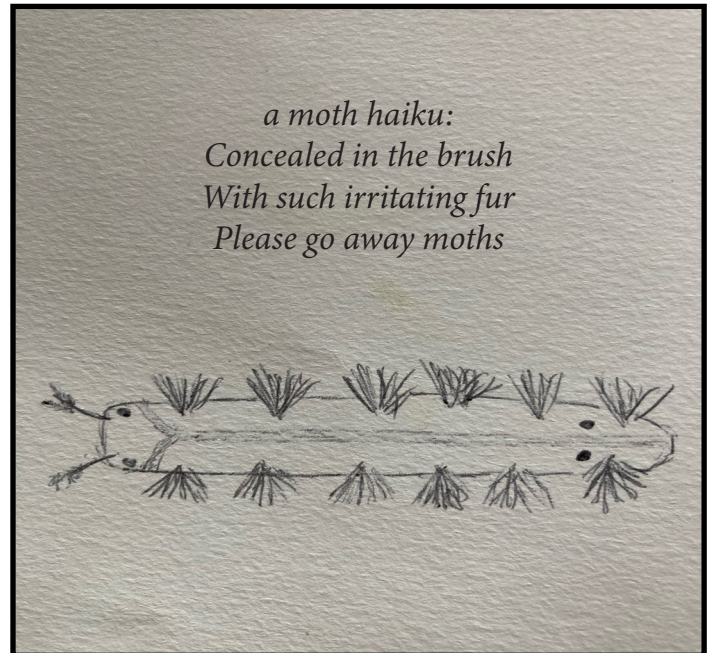
When Honkabionk, who no longer resides on the island, arrived in 1919, it was a monumental event. In particular, Honkabionk's ceremony was capped off by the introduction of the longest sacred chant currently known. The chant goes as follows:

I am a sacred caterpillar; Honkabionk's my name!
I am a sacred caterpillar; Honkabionk's my name!
I'm not too big, I'm not too small,
Of sacred caterpillars, I'm king of them all!
Honkabionk Is My Name!

The chant is recited three times followed by three "Woahhh King Kababa"s and a bow towards Mt. Philip.

In recent years, Honkabionk's chant has fallen out of favor due to its duration and the disruption it causes to our dining. However, this recent infestation seems too improbable to be purely coincidental. Furthermore, after a recent recital of Honkabionk's chant, the caterpillar-to-tent ratio substantially decreased.

While we wait upon a sacred sign for more guidance from the King, it appears our best protection is Honkabionk's chant.



*a moth haiku:
Concealed in the brush
With such irritating fur
Please go away moths*

Attack of the Pillars By Frank Brockett and Rachel Effron

Due to a particularly dry season in Maine, there has been a state-wide invasion of the browntail moth caterpillar. These monstrous creatures have spread far and wide across the state, and have now set foot on Pine Island. They attack by shedding their hairs. When these hairs make contact with our skin, we immediately break out with mountainous lumps that cause severe irritation and extreme itching. Many of us Pine Islanders have been or are currently victims to this horrendous invasion. Some haven't made it out alive.* They've itched to the point of no return! It's not in the caterpillar's nature to be merciful or show remorse. Our only hope of survival is if our saviors, the LTIPS and Kitchen Crew, can successfully irradiate THE PILLARS.

* Disclaimer: This article is slightly exaggerated.

Bug Juice at PIC

By Charlie Gibbons, Oliver Grossi and Zaid Palaniswamy

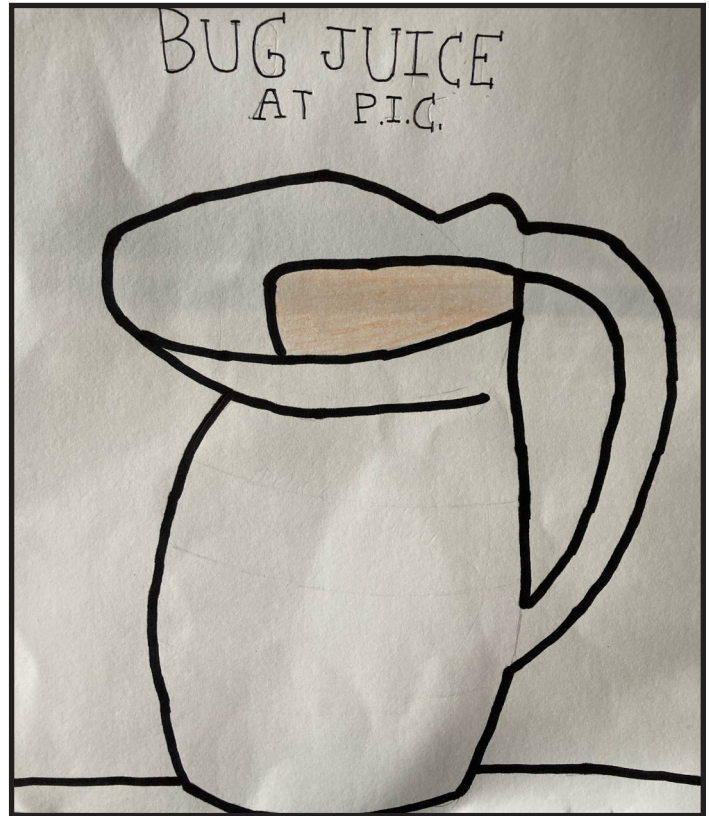
A team of investigative reporters look into the disappearance of a beloved sugary drink.

This year is a very different year at Pine Island but one of the most shocking changes for returning campers is the lack of bug juice at lunch. Lately there have been rumors of bug juice returning. But is it true? An anonymous source reported seeing “some unmarked packages coming off the KWS one morning.” Our source thought this might be bug juice. “I smelled sugar and the kitchen crew would not tell me what was in the packages.” When Bobby Flynn, the skipper, was asked if these mysterious packages could be bug juice, he could neither confirm nor deny this theory.

This investigation caused our reporters to question what had happened to the bug juice. We were able to snag an exclusive interview with the camp’s director, Sumner Ford. “Campers were consuming too much sugar,” said Ford. “The main sources were bug juice and care packages. Over the past 10 years the number of care packages has increased dramatically.” Bobby Flynn confirmed this. When asked if Sumner missed bug juice, he responded, “I have never been a big bug juice fan. However, there are days that I greatly appreciate a lemonade or iced tea.”

Our reporters asked if lemonade and iced tea might replace the missing bug juice. “There may be some days where lemonade and iced tea are in your future,” said Ford. When asked if red and purple bug juice would return he responded bluntly, “No.”

In conclusion, if our sources are correct, our traditional red and purple bug juice is not likely to return, but not all hope is lost. It seems we may indulge in the sweet deliciousness of lemonade and iced tea sometime soon.



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A Third Island Cat?

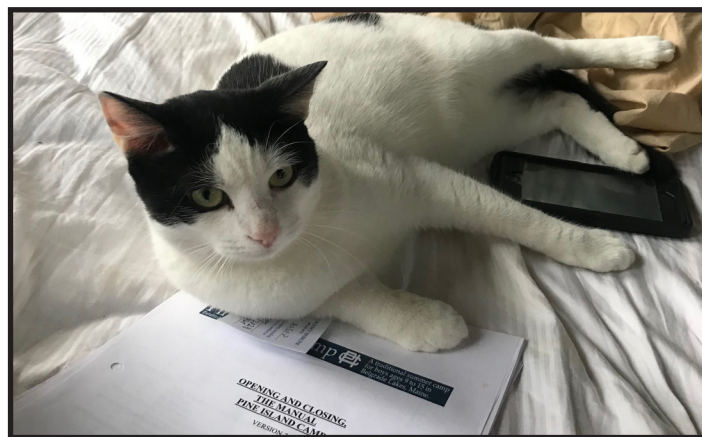
By Arlo Skogen

As most of you know, there are two island cats – Corrine’s cat Otis and Lindsay’s cat Moxie. But lately rumors - true or false, I cannot say – have been spreading of a third cat. Some even claim they have seen this mysterious feline. Those who have witnessed this cat say she has a ginger fur coat, sparkling blue eyes, and an attitude. As of right now the owner is unknown, but we have some ideas.

An anonymous camper says, “My cat would love to live here on PIC for six weeks.” Another source has speculated that Ginger is the cat’s name, judging by her coat. I have also heard that “Ginger” is Otis or Moxie’s mate, but neither Corrine or Lindsay have claimed ownership of this feline. It’s possible, though, that they might not be telling the whole truth. It’s up to you to ultimately decide whether or not “Ginger” is real.



Moxie never has to look far for some attention.



Otis (above) and Moxie (below)



On the Record with Otis By Heath Wenchel and Desmond Taylor

We sat down with Otis to get his unique perspective on island life, talk about the mystery cat, and day-to-day cat opinions.

Q: What is your favorite part of Pine Island?

A: The Bunkhouse Bed window and climbing up the staff office poles.

Q: What kind of food do you like?

A: Wet food.

Q: What is your relationship with Moxie?

A: Strictly professional, but Moxie is a great mentor.

Q: Why did you chase Duck?

A: I thought the duck wanted to play.

Q: Is there a secret third Pine Island cat?

A: I can’t say anything for sure, but yesterday I saw some paw prints I didn’t recognize.

Q: Where did you see the paw prints?

A: Behind the South Perch.

Q: Have you seen any other signs of a third island cat?

A: Yesterday some of my food was missing from my bowl.

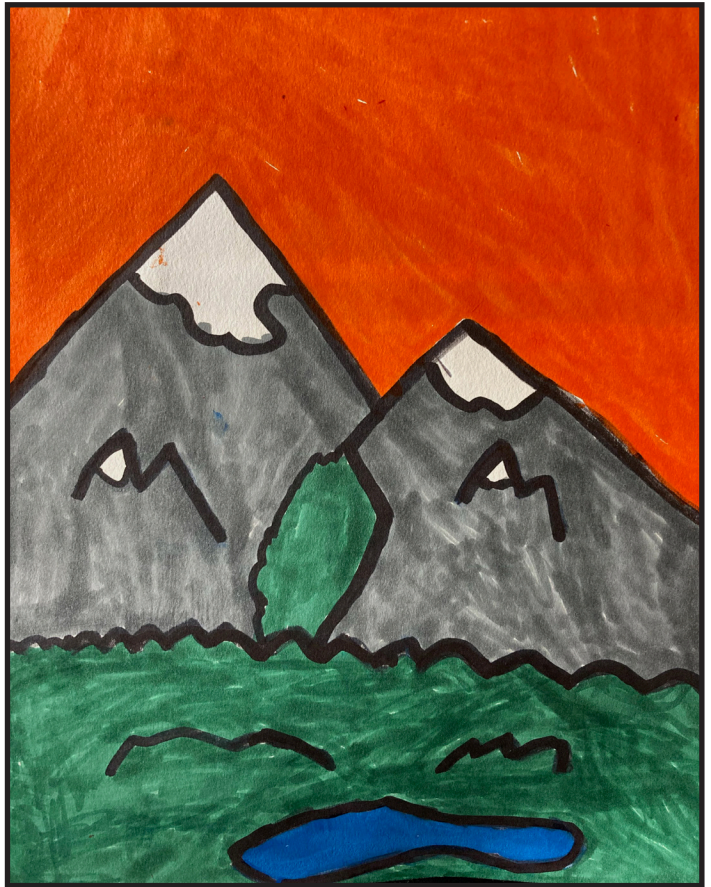
A Day in the Life of a Camper

By Anonymous

I was a little hesitant to sign up for archery. I had never done it before and the sheer power of the bows was a little frightening. I knew that archery was likely to be the first activity to be completely filled due to its immense popularity, but today I had volunteered to be a waiter for breakfast, which had earned me a spot at the front of the activity sign up line. As the line inched forward, I decided to take a risk. When it was my turn, I did it. I signed up for archery in the morning.

The archery range is on the mainland, and as I rode over in the KWS I admit I was feeling anxious. However, my fears were quickly set aside once we got to the range and I got to know our instructor – Chris Ward. As a camper Chris was a highly-skilled archer who had trained with elite master archers from around the country. He explained to me the proper ways to string a bow and nock arrows. He showed me what good technique looked like and how to improve my aim. Before long I had gotten into a groove and was consistently hitting the target and even got a bullseye!

By the end of that first day I got my first rank, which I achieved by getting a score of 24 in two separate rounds. I even got well on my way towards my second rank! All in all my day was awesome and I can definitely say archery is my favorite activity.



Mountains by Desmond Taylor

Is an Alien Invasion Coming?

By Anonymous

You may read this title and discount me as a conspiracy theorist, but I'm here to warn you that PIC could be a staging point for an alien invasion. Recent sightings of a third cat could mean that Moxie and Otis are being replaced by robot spy cats. If so, Pine Island has the perfect defensive position. It has water in every direction and dense foliage, making it impossible to penetrate using aerial reconnaissance. Plus, Pine Islanders are trained in strategic practices, so we could certainly mount an ingenious defense. There's only one way we could be convinced to join the aliens. King Kababa. What proof do we have that he is not an alien? Prepare yourselves, Pine Islanders. The aliens are coming!



Boats Out photo by Robby Kasten





Pandemic at PIC

By Frank Brockett

Things are a bit different this year, but it's worth it because, hey, it's PIC. For the first five days of camp we had our meals outside, in the dust ball court. We're back in the dining hall now, but I have to admit that it was kind of nice to eat outside.

Our morning Password is in the cove instead of in Honk Hall, and that's not too bad. But, it's annoying to wear face masks inside and in line for the dining hall. And in the boathouse. Jeeze! Trying to get life jackets on in that place while wearing a mask is...hard. So is shop. Sawing wood in that small building with a mask on is a challenge. Luckily, we can usually go outside and do that work on the deck.

So, in the end the annoyances are, well, annoying, but not that bad. It's still PIC. The pandemic hasn't changed that. The outdoor activities, trips, and the hilarious nightly entertainment – they're all still great. PIC is surviving covid!

*Top: Morning Password in the Cove
Right Top: Working inside the Shop
Right Bottom: Campfire!*



Pine Island Trips

By Adlai Lipton

While there are many unique aspects of Pine Island that make it so special, the thing that truly makes it stand out is the tripping program.

In most summers an average of over forty trips are sent out. These trips range in difficulty and mode of transportation, so there's something for everyone.

For example, some trips are hiking, some are canoeing, kayaking, or rowing, and there are a few trips that use the War Yacht, an 18-foot boat that seats 10 campers and 2 counselors.

Many of the hiking trips follow sections of the famous Appalachian Trail up beautiful (and tough) mountains in Maine and New Hampshire. On hiking trips, you carry everything you need on your back, so you really learn the importance of packing light.

Boating trips are sent out on many rivers in Maine including the Kennebec, Penobscot, Allagash, St. Croix, and others. On these trips you can carry more gear, and you learn how to “read the river” and maneuver on white water, which is really fun.

I love Pine Island trips. They've made my summer experience even better than it already was.



Socked in and happy on Saddleback

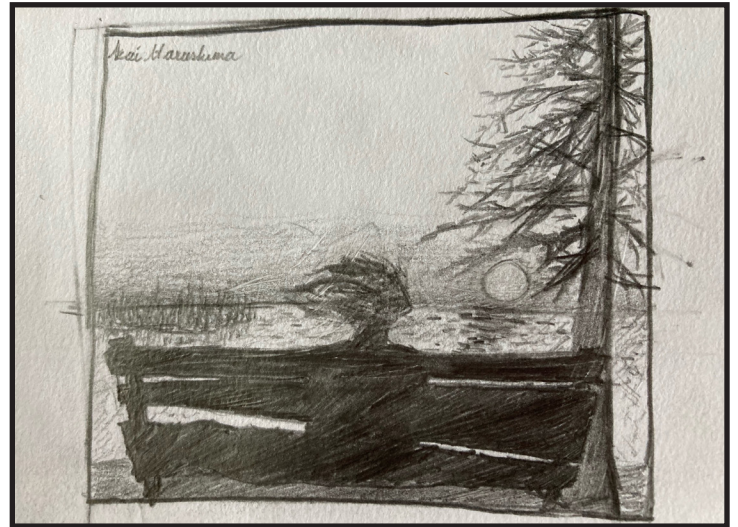


Paddling on Clauson's Trip
photos by Robby Kasten



Dawn at Pine Island
By Kai Harashima

Early dawn, a quiet camp,
 Sailboats rocking, grass still damp
 Soon the whistle will blow, camp'll be flooded
 With many campers, many cold-blooded
 Skipping, shoving, the others sigh
 But for now, the sun rises against a colorful sky



Club Honk - A Musical Mid-Summer Celebration!



For the first time all summer our entire community of campers and staff gathered together on Pine Island for our traditional mid-summer celebration. It was a great day and it culminated with Club Honk, a tremendously entertaining afternoon concert, performed and enjoyed by this unique community of 2021 Pine Islanders.



Club Honk - A Musical Mid-Summer Celebration (continued from pg 7)



Special thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition, and to Kaja Surborg and Rachel Effron for helping and encouraging our writers and artists to produce all of this great work.