

OUR FIRST TRUE POST-COVID SUMMER!

With Special Guest Star: Quite a Bit of Rain

By Sumner Ford, Director



General Swim on a typical day

The beginning of the 2023 season followed the path of so many summers before: a beautiful June day on Great Pond greeted campers and parents as they arrived, and the residents of Pine Island prepared for a summer of adventure ahead. From Opening Day onwards—as has so often been the case in the 121 years prior—our season forged a new pathway. New people, new adventures, and so much else made 2023 unlike any other summer at PIC.

This summer we broke free, at long last, from the bonds of Covid-19. We no longer needed to test campers and staff upon arrival, and the risk of Covid infection was greatly reduced. We all breathed a sigh of relief. Finally a summer at Pine Island resembled those of the pre-Covid era. While campers appreciated the lack of saliva testing, the person most excited about the change

was our medic, Annie-Grace. At the end of the 2022 summer, after testing, tracking illnesses, and countless phone calls home, Annie-Grace proclaimed that she would never again touch a saliva PCR test tube. Her wish was granted; PIC enjoyed a summer without constant Covid testing, and we avoided Covid infections.

Pine Island also saw unprecedented interest in our Expedition Camp program this year. Since its inception in 2005, Ex-Camp has played a key role in the experience of many Pine Islanders, being the perfect capstone to one's time as a camper. With over 20 campers applying this year, we developed a new program to provide more boys with an Ex-Camp-esque experience. The Explorer program gave six campers the opportunity to spearhead two seven-day trips, from planning through to completion. They

jumped at the opportunity, combining some of Pine Island's toughest hikes in the White Mountains into one week-long trek. Staff and campers agreed it was the most arduous trip they'd ever attempted. Through torrential rains, they hiked long miles and cooked their own meals. In between the big treks, they went on an excursion similar to Maine Woodsman—the critical difference being a 24-hour solo in the middle of the trip. Their final journey was a week-long exploration of the Connecticut River. They mapped out future Pine Island trips and received effusive praise from a campsite manager, who reported that they had renewed his faith in the younger generation (see page 16).

The Explorer Program was not the only group to deal with downpours. It rained a whopping 22 days in June, and without a cold front on the horizon, July

was largely defined by warm and muggy weather. As any alum knows, most summers at PIC feature a few rainy day activities and the occasional pitter-patter on tent canvas as one falls asleep at night. But this season was another story; when all was said and done, Maine's wettest summer since 1917 had delivered over 17 inches of rain to the nearby city of Portland!

Rain makes any summer more challenging. I, like many other Pine Islanders, enjoy the occasional rainstorm, and have been known to say, "This summer was great, but we could have used a bit more rain." Precipitation pushes campers to attend to their tents and keep track of their belongings, with naturally occurring consequences if they don't. This year, campers learned these

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IN CASE YOU MISSED THE ANNOUNCEMENT IN JANUARY!



Kayaking instructor Alex Toole in 2011

Dear Pine Islanders,

We are excited to share that, after a thorough search, Pine Island has found its next Director! Alex Toole comes to us from Change Summer, an organization that provides summer camp opportunities for low-income students around the country. Alex has a Master's in Education and has served as both a teacher and an administrator in public and charter schools up and down the East Coast.

His fiancée, Emily (good omen) Radziwon, is also an accomplished educator and a Division 1 rower (second good omen). She will surely be a familiar face around camp.

Alex has been part of the Pine Island

community for more than two decades as a camper, an LTIP, a counselor, and even a driver. His brothers Satchel and Nick have also been PIC campers and staff. Alex lives in Portland, Maine and grew up in Brunswick, a close friend of the Swan family.

Alex's educational and camp-management qualifications closely match those we identified at the beginning of the search process. We count ourselves lucky to have found someone who has such wide-ranging and relevant experience, while also being a Pine Islander to the root.

We are fortunate that Alex is able to start in time to allow for a full season of overlap with our outstanding current

Director, Sumner Ford. As many of you know, 2024 will be Sumner's last year as Pine Island's Director, and we are delighted that he and Alex will have an opportunity to work together to ensure a smooth transition.

Look out for Alex in the living room of a Pine Island family this spring or with a guitar in hand at campfire this summer. Thanks to the many folks in the Pine Island community who contributed to the successful resolution of our search.

Akka Lakka!

Pope Ward
*Chair, Search Committee
and Director Emeritus*

VIEW FROM THE DOCTOR'S CABIN PORCH

By Sumner Ford

Every night, part of my routine involves setting down my book, blowing out my lantern (or shutting off the light), closing my eyes and thinking about all the people I'm grateful for. I think about the people who have added to my day—those who were friendly and went out of their way to help. I think about the people I can lean on and express my gratitude to.

I try to remember when this habit formed. I know it started sometime during my adolescence, and I'm pretty sure it was at Pine Island that it first became part of my routine. When I look back at my early years at PIC, I immediately think of the people who defined that time. I think about Matt Clarke, Woody Hoyt, and Jason Fischer, who seemed to lead most of my camping trips. I think about Abe Stimpson, Jesslyn Mullet, Lindsay Clarke, and Winthrop Roosevelt, who taught my favorite activities. I can easily list off my tent counselors: Brian Nicholson, Connor Beliveau, Sam Winans and Ian Malloy, Sloan Critchfield and Marc Lombardo, Woody Hoyt, Niel Kasper and Matt Clarke. (On more than one occasion I had two tent counselors, and my mom used to joke that I needed extra supervision. I'm not sure she was kidding.) I remember tentmates, friends from trips, activities, and skis—far too many to list.

Moving forward in my PIC career, I think about my fellow counselors. I leaned on them to help me teach activities, lead trips, look after my tent, and entertain the community. Those relationships are the most tangible, as many of those folks are my closest friends these days.

Nowadays, I find myself grateful for many more people: Sarah Hunter and her unwavering passion for Pine Island; our Board of Directors and their selfless approach to keeping Pine Island on sure footing; and Ben and Emily Swan, who are so integral to our island's past, present, and future.

These people ring loudest in my memory because they're the ones I've found myself appreciating each night before sleep. I believe I've relied on Pine

Islanders more than anyone else. Living at Pine Island is an exercise in reliance, and it's had a huge impact on the trajectory of my life. As I consider my years as Director and my departure from Pine Island this fall, I try to imagine what my life would look like without these past seven years. It leaves me incredibly grateful for every person who set foot on Pine Island—all the volunteers, campers, staff, parents, and relatives. I'm immensely grateful to every one of you.

Yet even if I hadn't been the Director for these past seven years, Pine Island still would have affected me more than anywhere else. I learned, in nervous moments, to ask questions and trust those with more experience, and before long, I learned the satisfaction of helping others in the same way. When a heavy pack nearly prevented me from summiting Bigelow, I learned to ask others to lighten my load. I learned that the best friendships are built upon a foundation of offering a helping hand. Perhaps most importantly, I learned the value of gratitude and reflection.

My life is defined by values I learned at Pine Island. Many of those values are written into our mission: independence coupled with a concern for others, honesty, generosity, good humor, and the ability to find joy in life. There are many others, tenets I've drawn from Pine Island and consider vital to who I am. Resilience, creativity, and a growth mindset. A love of reading, writing letters, and the outdoors.

I know my nightly ritual of gratitude and reflection will take on deeper meaning this coming summer, my last as PIC's director. I'm already grateful not only that PIC has found a supremely qualified Pine Islander, Alex Toole, to take over the Director's job, but also that Alex and I will have the opportunity to work together this summer to help build another great community steeped in the PIC values that have brought so much joy and meaning to my own life. I'm impatiently counting the days until it all begins in June. Come visit me on the Doctor's Cabin porch any time!

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lessons of camp life with exceptional speed and thoroughness. They quickly battened down their tents, managed their belongings well, and kept their campsites organized.

Our community responded to the weather in the most impressive fashion. Striving for normalcy, we avoided rainy day activities whenever possible. No matter: campers excitedly donned raincoats and never shied away from a day of rowing in the rain. They returned from trips with soaking-wet packs and tents, then signed up for another trip as soon as their gear dried out.

As the season reached its close, I looked for something to summarize the

value of the summer nearly finished. One of our staff members, Pedro, read a Douglas Malloch poem at Password, part of which perfectly sums up the usefulness of the summer's less-than-ideal weather:

"Good timber does not grow with ease / The stronger wind, the stronger trees / The further sky, the greater length / The more the storm, the more the strength."

The campers and staff from the 2023 season grew strong. They grew resilient. And they had fun while doing so. Nevertheless, I think everyone who spent the 2023 season at Pine Island has earned a summer of normal weather next year—with just enough rain to keep us on our toes.

PIC CANOE FLEET GETS MAJOR UPGRADE!

By Sumner Ford



Henry and Max with the new Esquif canoes, ready for their first trip

Roylex, a famously light and durable material, has been synonymous with canoeing since cedar and canvas boats went out of vogue. Unfortunately Pine Islanders' preferred canoe manufacturer, the venerated Maine brand Old Town, ceased making their boats out of Roylex about ten years ago. Ask any recent Pine Islander about the difference between the Roylex and non-Roylex boats, and they will sum it up in one word: heavy. Pine Islanders pride themselves on their ability to solo portage a canoe, but even the strongest counselors have found themselves struggling under the weight of non-Roylex boats.

Thus began a long search for light, durable canoes. This past winter, I finally found Esquif, a small, family-owned manufacturer based in Quebec that builds their canoes from a material very similar to the illustrious Roylex.

With the help of many generous Pine Islanders, we were able to purchase seven new canoes, including one specifically designed for solo paddling.

The effort to retrieve the boats from the factory in Quebec proved to be quite the ordeal—to the point that smuggling them across the border was starting to seem like the least bad option! Fortunately, skipper Thomas Clauson worked his magic and brought the canoes back just in time for Expedition Camp to test them out.

The reports were overwhelmingly positive. The boats were light, durable, and a joy to paddle. The Ex-Campers met some Mainers who were disappointed to see fewer Old Towns on the river. These experienced paddlers were impressed, however, and shared our excitement about finding a suitable replacement for their beloved old Roylex boats.

Pine Island intends to buy a few more Esquif boats to replace our aging Roylex ones. If you loved canoeing at Pine Island, keep your eyes out for a micro-giving campaign to help us replenish our fleet of canoes!



Returning from a trip

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS REPORT

One Year in Repairs and Improvements

By Miles Frank

Opening

Early spring is mud season in Maine. The Camp Road is too soft to drive; one must go on foot to catch a glimpse of the island. Gradually, the lake ice melts and the snow thaws, revealing a harsh landscape quite different from that of the summer months. Only the largest birds have returned, and the lake is eerily quiet. Eventually, with patience and enough sunlight, one may attempt a cautious drive down to the Mainland. There, Great Pond greets an early Pine Islander with a reliably crisp spring breeze. The Lund, PIC's 16-foot aluminum workboat, sits with keel to the sky, as it has all winter. A small team flips the boat, attaches the motor, grabs a couple of life jackets, and pushes it into the water on a ramp built from two-by-fours. Once the Lund is in, everything else is possible. This is New Year's Day for an Operations Director.

The first trip out to the island is always exciting, and a bit anxiety-inducing. Each winter, storms batter the western shore. Ice build-up and high winds can bring down pine boughs and even damage roofs. Often, window panes will need replacing. Usually, things are in pretty good shape, but the season begins with a survey of the entire island. Notepad in hand, one wonders what will need fixing.

Then it's full steam ahead. The KWS is trucked in from its winter quarters in Boothbay Harbor and launched at the Belgrade landing. And once the Camp Road has firmed up a bit, Central Maine Crane (Augusta-Waterville's lauded lift operators) meet an elite squad of volunteers on the Mainland. From the cockpit of a large telescoping mobile crane, (officially termed an "all-terrain crane"), the operator hoists each floating dock section off the stack and into the water. From there, each section is hauled across the lake and installed on the island. The remaining boats are launched, and the island starts to take on a familiar form.

Early this spring, skilled Rockland-based boatbuilder and jack-of-all-trades Cody Smith joined me in tackling some big projects. First, we continued the restoration of Magoon's façade. We braved the May wind and weather to install new shingles and trim on the building's southern side. I was immediately appreciative of Cody's expertise and jobsite charisma. Having him on the team resulted in one of PIC's most productive springs in recent memory...

Kitchen Renovation

In their free time, campers may roam the island and make use of its many unique buildings and features. There are only a few areas where they are not permitted, and by far the most tempting among them is the kitchen. In the mind of a boy aged 9 to 15, the kitchen is a trove of delicacies like the famed "chipwich," PIC's supreme dessert. In reality, the kitchen is more akin to an industrial workplace. Not without charm, the kitchen is flush with

natural light and features a large mural... but the space was due for upgrade.

In October of 2022, a large volunteer crew spent a morning disassembling and relocating the many large appliances needed to feed 150 hungry Pine Islanders. The volunteers then spent the afternoon tearing up the old vinyl floor. The tiles had cracked and delaminated, giving an unsightly appearance, and the added permeability had allowed moisture into the subfloor, creating the potential for more significant damage to the building. Removing the old floor was bulk work, and as usual, transporting material off the island was a chore—thanks again to our dedicated volunteers!

I picked up that thread last spring, replacing the compromised subfloor, installing water-resistant Hardie-Backer and PVC panels around the sink and dishwasher, painting the walls and ceiling, and prepping the space for professional floor installers. The new floor is a rugged rolled vinyl product that is water impermeable and aesthetically consistent with the space. The installation went seamlessly, as it were, and Cody and I jumped into the finish work. We installed baseboard, door trim and window casings, waterproofed the wash station, and applied about a dozen coats of paint to everything. Cautiously, we maneuvered and reintroduced the appliances. Finally, our plumbers installed everything with all-new plumbing, just in the nick of time; the first round of counselors arrived for Wilderness First Responder training the very next day. We enjoyed a momentary sigh of relief, but the work was just beginning.

Perch Stairs

After much deliberation, sketching, and scheming, I built new stairs for the North Perch. Ultimately, they were constructed along the lines of the original stairs and very commensurate with the PIC aesthetic: fresh pine deck boards with cedar log posts and handrails. The anthem? "Stairway to North Perch," the famed Led Zeppelin parody written by The Hippy Cowboys.

Two New Docks

While I worked on the stairs outside, Cody utilized his skills as a builder to cut and assemble two docks inside the Boathouse. With ruthless efficiency, he expertly constructed a new Range dock. The product is a broad, rugged dock, perfect for fishing or watching the sunset on the island's western shore. He also built a new handwashing dock, which now sits on the eastern shore adjacent to the Dining Hall. With the Dining Hall now sandwiched between the new dock and a handwashing station that delivers hot water into a copper basin, the average dustball player has no excuse for dirty hands at mealtime.

Mainland Jacking, Leveling, and Stairs

Pine Island and Whitehead Island contain about 40 buildings between them. Most are quite old, and some are uniquely historic. Each has its own name and distinct character. Collectively, small groupings of them form distinctive spaces: the Aristocracy, the Swan compound, or the Mainland, which has a feel quite distinct from most of the other micro-localities.

Once, the rustic Cabins (First, Second, and Third) that comprise the Mainland compound were surrounded by large, majestic elm trees. The elms absorbed the water flowing in from the adjacent woodland, and the clearing between the cabins grew grass, which was mowed a few times a summer. A large green pump adjacent to the Third Cabin provided ice-cold, thirst-quenching water. By all accounts, it was a thoroughly enjoyable space.

Today, the Mainland is basically a swamp. When Dutch Elm Disease ravaged

required digging and cutting through roots, hauling and pouring crushed stone, cutting and laying foam pads, and finally setting the concrete footings on which the new posts would rest. (Lifting and supporting an old wooden building is akin to lifting a massive wet blanket.) Finally, after repeating the process for every post, we lowered and leveled the buildings, eventually achieving a healthy lift and level on both cabins. Imagine our satisfaction when the door to the KCI opened and shut smoothly on the first try! A big thanks to our hardworking spring crew.

Summer Season

When the remainder of the Pine Island staff arrived, Cody and I led the charge on some final aesthetic touch-ups. This included painting various buildings, some façade shingle repairs, screen door rebuilds, and sailboat repair.

But even by early June, there is always a great deal to do. So here is an



Miles Frank shows Lindsay Clarke's son, Silas, what the deal is with wrenches.

Maine (along with all of North America) in the 1960s, the iconic elms rotted away or were cut down. Without the absorption and root structure that the trees provided, the area reverted to a wetland. It is still beautiful in this mode; today's Expedition Campers enjoy campfires around the firepit, and the fall crew residents make good use of the First Cabin and KCI in the off-season, keeping warm by the woodstoves as the temperatures drop. But all that moisture produces challenges from a facilities-management perspective: wood rots, and building supports shift.

In late spring, LTIP wrangler George Baldwin, skipper Thomas Clauson, and Ex-Camp leader Taylor Clyde joined me and Cody in the very muddy job of stabilizing the KCI and Third Cabin from the bottom up. Making full use of our jacks and levels, we cautiously elevated the buildings post by post. This is tiring work; setting footings in a wet environment

appropriate moment to share a word of appreciation. The world of Pine Island is one of immense depth, with a history that spans over 120 years. Yet across all this time, the place has stayed true to its mission, its principles, and its character. This comes from the hard work and dedication of many generations of Pine Islanders. But perhaps above all, it comes from loyalty. There are so many memories in the collective consciousness of the PIC community: vast stores of obscure institutional knowledge that keep camp running. For every question, there is a story. In my role as Director of Operations, I attempted to organize and codify that knowledge in order to improve efficiency. Yet this was a process that volunteer extraordinaire Ned Bishop began years ago when he produced the first manual on Pine Island operations.

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Year in and year out, he returns to Maine to draft the Pine Island Summer Schedule, delegate staff responsibilities, field questions, and help get the island opened. Over the last three years it has been a true pleasure to work with Ned in getting the wheels spinning in June (and slowing them down in August). This summer was no different; between Ned, Cody, and myself, we accomplished a great deal and provided a safe, effective, and thoroughly enjoyable environment for the boys.

Closing

The island can feel a bit eerie when everybody leaves. The camp season ends abruptly by design, but after a summer of vibrancy and energy, it still feels like it ends too quickly. Everybody takes a bit of Pine Island with them. It always takes being back home for a while to really feel like the camp season has concluded. But for the fall crew who stay at Pine Island, that sudden quiet can be a bit jarring, and it demonstrates an already evident reality: even more than the place, it is the people that make the PIC so special. Nonetheless, this fall's crew was a truly fantastic and hardworking team. In the offseason, the island becomes the world's most idyllic construction site, and the crew took full advantage of it.

Boathouse

Hannah Gordon, Kaja Surborg, and Louis Effron joined me and Cody to tackle this fall's biggest project: a redo of the Boathouse roof and trim. The project featured a brief cameo from Brunswick contractor Johnny Swisher, whose expertise was very helpful in addressing some of the more complicated aspects of the renovation.

The Boathouse is one of Pine Island's oldest buildings. Built in the Colby family era, it likely dates back to the 1890s! And it has undergone many renovations and additions over the past century-plus...

The structure is basically four buildings crammed together and joined under a single roof. The biggest addition to the original Boathouse is the OAR Office: a 10-by-20 foot cottage which was dragged across the ice and attached sometime around the 1920s. For decades, the two structures had separate roofs, and rain (and snow) would work its way between them. Eventually, their roof decks were properly joined, and the structures became more or less uniform. Decades later, the North Perch was built onto the exterior of the southern façade, and in the 1990s, a covered kayak rack was built by John Bunker and Ben Swan. Each of these structures conjoin into a sprawling and uniquely beautiful building. But it leaked. So the fall crew had their work cut out for them.

At face value, the job was pretty simple: take the old roof off and put the new roof on. The pitch wasn't too steep, nor the roof too high. But the scale of the project was daunting by PIC standards, and working on an island presents its own challenges. With cost as a factor, this was a project that we had to do in-house. One of the summer staff's final jobs was to use their strength in numbers to haul 70 bundles of asphalt shingles (70-lbs. each!) onto

the KWS, off the KWS, and into the Boathouse.

Then came the demolition. In many places, the team had to remove double-layered shingles, effectively taking off two roofs at once. (This meant longer roofing nails to pull out!) Taking the old roofing material off the island was also very labor-intensive and took some creative maneuvering. In short order, the crew successfully installed new asphalt architectural shingles and fresh green trim.



Fall Crew members Hannah Gordon and Kaja Surborg prepare the Boathouse for its new roof.

First Cabin Roof

Immediately following the Boathouse project, the fall crew took advantage of the late-summer weather to replace another roof on the Mainland, which was much more straightforward. The First Cabin is a small, rather shotgun-esque shack; its roof has small dormers on the front and rear of the building, and an easily scalable pitch. The team was primed to make quick work of this roof, having just completed the much more extensive and challenging Boathouse project. Along with the new shingles, the job included the replacement of two curb-mounted skylights, which will ensure leak-proof light for many years. The job also featured a brief cameo appearance from Sumner, who joined the crew for an afternoon to help shuffle material and nail some shingles!

The roof renovations were completed just in time. Immediately following their completion, Maine was grazed by one of the largest northern-reaching hurricanes in recent memory. Luckily, the storm avoided making direct landfall and plowed into Nova Scotia. Nonetheless, the consequences of the high winds were rather severe, causing several trees to fall across the Camp Road and pine boughs to drop across the island. Fortunately the buildings did not sustain any direct damage, but the scene on the lake was, shall we say, dramatic, prompting a week's delay of Pine Island's celebrated annual September volunteer weekend.

Sloan Critchfield Memorial Boat Maintenance Weekend

Autumn began to set in, and days on the lake became shorter, brisker, and quieter. By now, the leaves were changing and piling up across the island. The birds were beginning their migrations south, and so were the summer people. Such was the setting on Great Pond when Pine Islanders gathered from far and wide in the last weekend of September. They congregated to enjoy the beautiful setting, good company, and delicious meals, and to paint the island's fleet of custom-made wooden boats.

Since its inception, PIC has been home to countless wooden boats. It has also been the beneficiary of the generations of dedicated alumni and volunteers who help maintain them. Wooden boats require a great deal of care and attention. Weather, UV rays, and basic use all take their toll on a vessel; annual maintenance



Isaac Karchmer, Will Harley, and Josh Treat work on sailboat spars during the Sloan Critchfield Memorial Boat Maintenance Weekend.

is a must. Over the last 15 years, Pine Islanders have come together to maintain our beloved boats and ensure another successful summer on the water.

Cody Smith drew on boatbuilding experience to direct workflow for the weekend. Many dedicated volunteers made the journey to Maine, and Corinne O'Connor, former PIC Head Cook, returned to the island feed the hungry crew. They painted the War Canoe, Catboats, Bezumarangs, Pine Island skiffs, and many buoys. They also sanded and re-stained all of the sailboat spars, an important but admittedly very tedious task. The 2024 summer's water activities will take to the lake in some very sharp-looking vessels. Thank you to the 2023 Boat Maintenance crew!

Shop Porch Rebuild

Pine Island has a strong tradition of working with conventional hand tools. Its iconic Woodshop has long been the epicenter of hands-on creativity; many hundreds of carefully constructed projects have been produced there. Originally built in the 1920s, the small Shop building is clad in extra-wide pine boards and features a large grinning dragon painted by Pat Voigt and John Bunker. This fall, the crew rebuilt the Shop's porch, which looks westward across the lake. The renovated porch includes a wrap-around work bench made from thick slabs of red oak from a tree that was felled on the Mainland and chainsaw-milled the previous winter. The final product is rugged, sturdy, and will aid in the completion of many Shop projects for years to come.

Final Projects

Many other projects were completed in the remaining days of the fall work season. Following Kaja's departure abroad, Cody, Hannah, and I were incredibly fortunate to be joined by Johnson Pope and Sophie Nikolenko. They came to Pine Island fresh off of their summit of Mount Katahdin, marking the completion of their northbound thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail. Although we were in good shape working by ourselves at this point in the season, Sophie and Johnson reliably pushed the pace in whatever project we undertook. In all, the crew

repaired the Kopa Kababa porch, installed new windows on Magoon, jacked and leveled the Mainland Office, re-shingled the Freight Shed façade and repaired its doors, built a small deck for propane tank storage on the First Cabin, and cut back the ever-encroaching foliage along the Camp Road.



The Kopa Kababa porch after some much-needed repairs

One by one, the docks were towed back across the lake, lifted out by the crane, and stacked on the Mainland. Days later, the KWS was hauled out of the lake and taken back to the coast for winter storage. And finally, a moment of reflection is in order...

This work can be challenging. It is physically demanding, somewhat remote, and heavily dependent on weather. At times, the sheer scope of the potential work can be intimidating. This year's fall crew worked tirelessly each day to meet and exceed our goals. They gave each project their all, and embodied the qualities that make Pine Island so unique. Thank you so very much to our beloved crew: Cody Smith, Hannah Gordon, Kaja Surborg, Louis Effron, Sophie Nikolenko, and Johnson Pope. Many further thanks to our fantastic volunteers. Finally, after a flurry of activity, the buzz of tools, and many great laughs, the season ended just as it began: with the Lund resting quietly, alone on the lake. Eventually, it was pulled out and flipped upside down to rest before next spring's crew commences operations.

THE KING'S GAME

Challenge Points Prove Decisive in High-Scoring Starks Victory

By Nick Isles, Head Umpire

The eagerness of the Starks and Mercer armies to crown a new victor was keenly felt this summer. Indeed, the planning began in the early days of June, when Starks general George Baldwin contacted head umpire Nicky Isles to raise concerns about a potential flaw in the rules. Premature though it may have been, Baldwin's protestation turned out to be well-founded, as it uncovered a loophole by which one army could prevent the other from obtaining any scoring points at all! A brief but intense discussion among the high umpire council deemed the concerns warranted and immediately introduced an amendment prohibiting one army from claiming points for the other in most circumstances.

The 2023 King's Game began with a swift and calculated attack from the Mercers. Using a carefully coordinated system of timing, location, and party mixing, the Mercers managed to score most of their army while also coming out ahead in challenge points for what most would consider a solid start to the contest.

Heading into the second period



Mercer attackers consider their next move at East Gate.

of play, the Starks attacked hard and fast, with some clear systematic improvements to their core strategy. This, too, proved highly effective; the Starks were able to score every member of their army at least once, bringing the score close to even at the end of Day One.

Day Two, however, began with a change of tune. General Baldwin and his officers wanted to end it right then and there, and in historic fashion: with a massive, game-deciding blue flag challenge play. Could the Starks pull off this long-coveted, oft-attempted, never-quite-successfully-executed maneuver?

Well, they sure came close. With a party of 33 Starks hidden deep in the blue flag area at North Gate, a smaller group at the other end of the road sought to lure a lone Mercer into following them across, as had become routine for defenders of both armies. The ruse worked, but the Starks officer yelled "Challenge!" just a split second too soon; the defender's foot was mere inches from the ground, but it had not yet made contact with the road surface, and the play came to naught.

Nevertheless, the Starks were able to regroup and continue their relentless attack, managing to add a more mundane but still highly significant 21-point challenge play to enter the afternoon with a favorable score.

The final period of play began with yet another fierce attack. With more scoring points left to gain and a steadfast system to rely on, the Mercers clawed back. Ultimately, however, it was too little, too late, and the final whistle blew to a score of 204-196 in favor of the Starks.

EVERYTHING WAS FINE... UNTIL IT WASN'T

A Stranger's Search for Her Hero Leads Back to PIC!

By Ben Swan

During my tenure as Director of Pine Island I often, especially when seeing off camping trips, pulled out these words of caution: "Everything is fine... until it isn't."

Undoubtedly, counselors got tired of hearing it, but I couldn't help but throw it out there, hoping that one more repetition would be the one that sank in. I think it did, and perhaps it kept some counselors and their boys out of some tough spots. The truth of the words was brought into perfect focus the other day, when director of operations Sarah Hunter received the letter excerpted below. I have never forgotten that day in September over 30 years ago.

A few of us were on Pine Island taking down the tents, which were still up because it had been raining a lot after the season was over. The tents had finally dried, and I recruited a few folks to help me put them away for the winter. Unfortunately, there were only four of us there to sweep, take down, mothball, roll up, and carry all 18 or so tents up to Honk Hall! And it was a very windy day, making the task a bit like furling the mainsail of a schooner—though mercifully on solid ground and not atop a swaying mast. We were working up on the Ridge when someone heard some distant cries for help. They were so faint, and the wind was so loud, that

we were at first not sure what we might be hearing. We stopped working and looked out onto the lake, which was now full of whitecaps, and saw the source of the cries: two people in a double kayak had capsized about halfway between Pine Island and the shore to the southwest.

In my experience, Pine Islanders are always up for an exciting marine rescue, and I quickly went down to the dock with John Hubbard, who was on the island helping out with the tents. It was John's son, seven-year-old Kevin Hubbard—in later years a renowned PIC skipper and veteran of many marine rescues—who first heard the cries for help. John and I headed out in the Boston Whaler to see if we could help. It turns out (see below) it's a good thing we did.

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter may seem crazy to a stranger reading it, but I am writing this in hopes of it reaching the right people, even if it probably will not.

One September approximately 30 years ago, my family and I were on vacation, staying in a friend's lakeside cabin on Great Pond. My older brother had rented a kayak, and we were in the middle of the lake arguing. I cannot swim and was wearing a life jacket, but (stupidly, as it turned out) I didn't have it zipped up. In the middle of the lake, near the island

used as a boys' camp (which I think is Pine Island), the kayak overturned. My brother was on one side and I on the other. I couldn't get ahold of the kayak; it was spinning. I panicked, my jacket was coming off and I was going down. Right when my life was flashing before me, I was plucked out of the water by two men in a rowboat—or it may have had a motor. Anyway, in the few minutes I was in their boat, I think I remember them saying they were counselors working on the island. They had seen us struggling, jumped in their boat, and they truly got there just in time. Right after the two men arrived, my brother righted the kayak and got in. He was fine, I was not. I was freezing and in shock after nearly drowning.

I cannot leave this earth without thanking those two men for saving my life on that terrible day. I would not be here today if it weren't for them. I realize that 30 years is a long time to wait to thank someone for saving one's life.

There are no words for the emotions I feel towards those two men, after all this time. Please, if either of you read this and remember me and/or that incident, please write back to me, I would really love to thank you, if not in person, maybe through a telephone call.

Whoever is reading this now, I thank you for your time, and I hope you are able to locate these two men who should

know that even after 30 years, I have not forgotten them and never will. Others should know how they saved a life, and they should be given the recognition for doing so.

*Sincerely,
Lynn Luzzi*

My own recollection of the rescue is a bit hazy after all these years. Some aspects of the rescue, however, are clear as day. It was very windy. The two people who had capsized were extremely frightened and cold, to the point that they were largely unable to speak. The letter we received indicates that they got back in the kayak and paddled ashore, but I remember distinctly bidding them farewell on the shore, so we must have towed them there, or at least followed them. There is no way we would have left them out on the lake. As the letter makes clear, the situation for the young woman was much more serious than I knew, and it explains why both she and her brother just walked away after they got on dry land. It was very nice to hear from this woman all these years later.

And remember, campers and counselors: "Everything is fine..."

PINE ISLANDERS REPORT IN FROM AROUND THE WORLD

**Isaac Karchmer
Lenk, Switzerland**

There is no place quite like Pine Island. With its magical campfires, challenging trips, and lifelong friendships, Pine Island becomes a treasure to all who attend. Sadly, it's only six weeks, so in between seasons, Pine Islanders are forced to find another place that still has that special and unique community.

Last year, hoping to find something on par with PIC, I did a semester abroad in Switzerland. While it may seem like the polar opposite of camp, this program shared Pine Island's core values: independence coupled with a concern for others, community, immersion in nature, and a step back from technology. Like Pine Island, it aimed to build character and turn kids into independent young adults. In Switzerland, I became immersed in the culture and got to experience traditional activities and foods. Just like Pine Island, my experience was nothing short of magical, and I made lifelong friends and memories. I got to ski the Swiss Alps, visit the capital city, and even take a tour of their parliament. I learned about Swiss history and customs; throughout the experience I filled a binder with more than 75 hand-written pages covering each week's topic—history, Swiss culture and government, trip reports, lab reports, English essays, and so on. Just like the camp experience, it was super fun and also pushed me out of my comfort zone. There is no place I can recommend more than Pine Island, but once you go, you may spend the rest of your life trying to find a place that is quite so special.

**Walker McDonald
Kasempa District, Zambia**

My day starts sometime between six and eight a.m. The reason for the

variation is that I don't use an alarm clock out here. The sounds of the village are a great deterrent against oversleeping: crying babies, Zambian pop music played through Bluetooth speakers, women singing as they start their daily chores, and roosters. The amount of noise my 800-person community is able to make in the morning rivals that of a small city. But it doesn't bother me much, since the earlier I rise, the better spot I'll get in line at the village bore hole. Most of the chores here are separated by gender, so I'm often the only male at the water pump. The village Ba Mammams love to take this opportunity to hound me about the weak spots in my language learning, or tease that I need to eat more if I hope to find a wife someday. I bid my female fanbase goodbye as I drag off my daily 20-liter bucket of water. Once back at my house, I start building a fire in the base of my mud brick stove, a slow process during the rainy season. I'll usually cook porridge with peanut butter added for protein. After cleaning up, journaling, and exercise, I'm ready to really get started with my day.

On Mondays, I bike four and a half miles into town to shop for groceries at the open-air market and lunch on some local cuisine (usually fried chicken with nshima), followed by a three-hour shift at the radio station. A friend of mine from the village helps me to produce weekly educational programs focusing on health and environmental issues. The other weekdays might be spent teaching a class at the local primary school, visiting farmers who ask for help with organic gardening or agroforestry, doing bike or house repairs, teaching music lessons, or spending rec time with inmates at the local prison. If the rainy season is in full swing, I might spend an afternoon holed up inside with my guitar or a good book. The great part about being a volunteer with an open-ended project is

that I get to fill my days however I please. This freedom is a double-edged sword, though, as I sometimes worry that I'm not doing enough. Thoughts like these can get me bogged down, so I'll try to remind myself that the experience is worthwhile regardless of how much work I get done.

Late afternoon into evening is my favorite part of the day. Starting around four p.m., the local choir will gather to practice in the church next to my house. This means I get to start cooking dinner and watch the sunset with a free soundtrack provided by some of the most beautiful drumming and vocal harmonies I've ever heard. Once I've eaten and the sun has set, I'll retire inside for the night to read or watch some downloaded TV if my laptop has enough juice. I'm usually asleep by ten.

In June, my two and a quarter years in Zambia will be coming to an end. I'll be reunited with friends, family, and my beloved American fast-food chains. I've even started putting some thought into the daunting prospect of getting a real job. America has a much faster pace of life, which may take some time to get reacclimated to. Dust will have to be blown off the old alarm clock! I'll gladly welcome air conditioning and household electricity back to my life, but I'll still be thinking of my village Ba Mammams whenever I turn on a faucet to get some water.

**Adlai Lipton
European Alps**

Every Pine Islander has come across the dilemma that I faced this summer: What to do with their first summer away from the island? Though I was sad not to be returning to Pine Island, I was looking forward to some of the traditional summer experiences, such as spending time with friends and teaching swim

lessons. But I simply couldn't imagine a summer where I did not spend time outdoors as I had done in all my years at PIC. I hoped to embark on an adventure that could match the thrills of hiking the Long Trail and paddling the Allagash during Ex-Camp.



Adlai Lipton out on the trail, with Mont Blanc in the background

I was lucky enough to join Apogee Adventures (based out of Brunswick, Maine!) on a three-week backpacking trip on the Tour du Mont Blanc. This trail passes through Switzerland, France, and Italy as it circles Mont Blanc, the highest peak in Western Europe. Hiking there was a very different experience from the trips I had done as a Pine Islander. Unlike the remote trails of New England, the ones in the Alps took us from one town to the next. In fact, in a single day of our journey, we might pass through multiple villages nestled in the mountains. Another unique feature of hiking in the Alps is that due to the high elevation, most of the time is spent well above tree line, passing through alpine meadows and lakes.

PIC APPEARS IN LITERATURE!

Dead Man's Wake: A Critical Review

By Coleman (Woody) Hoyt

Dead Man's Wake is a novel by Paul Doiron, set on Great Pond in Belgrade, ME. It is the 15th (!) book in the Mike Bowditch series of mysteries, featuring the titular game warden and a varied supporting cast of colleagues, assistants, and enemies. But this story is of particular interest to Pine Needle readers as it mentions and includes Pine Island (along with many other recognizable landmarks) as a plot point! Mr. Doiron is apparently very deliberate about using real places and geography in his works.

The book was recommended to me by a friend and fan of the series, who was surprised to find among the characters a certain father/son duo, both with the first name Coleman, both PIC alumni. This was intriguing to me, as my father and I share the first name Coleman, and

we both attended PIC. Surely this couldn't be a coincidence?

(Author's Note: I have since exchanged emails with the author, who assures me that it was, in fact, just a coincidence.)

DEAD MAN'S WAKE. The title evokes a rolling wave of mystery, expanding inexorably outwards from a single point of intrigue. Or maybe a turbulent, multi-perspective romp through a funeral, exploring the ways in which one man's death can cause ripples through an entire community.

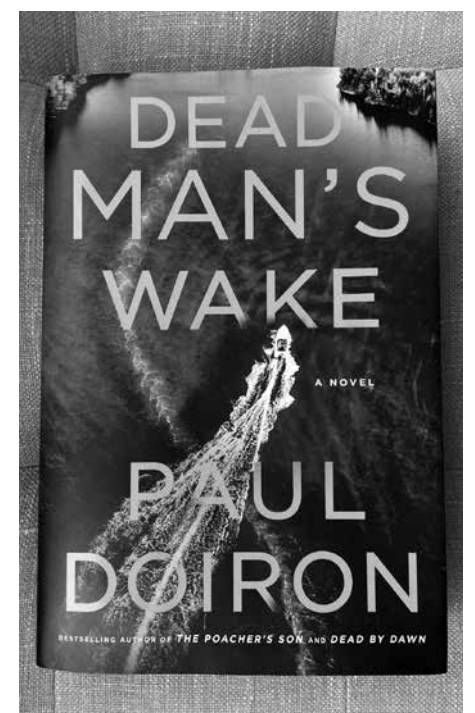
But, alas, that's not what this story is.

This is a book full of tedious characters making tedious decisions. It is littered with overly specific explanations and patronizingly verbose descriptions that

inflicted, at times, physical pain. I enjoyed reading about Great Pond, the Belgrade Lakes area, and dozens of region-specific quirks that any Pine Islander would recognize. I pumped my fist at the line, "Some idiot on a Jet Ski was still buzzing about the lake..." and chuckled when someone complained about a long, bumpy driveway down to the shore. But the characters all came across like milquetoast dorks—unimaginative, predictable, and lifeless. The dialogue was full of cringeworthy clichés, while the plot was thin and distinctly unsatisfying.

Unfortunately, while it's always nice to see Pine Island represented in literature, I cannot pass along my friend's recommendation.

Two out of five shined propellers.



One of the most interesting aspects of the trip was hiking from one country to another on foot. In just one day, I could walk past people speaking Swiss German and French in the morning and hear only Italian along the trail in the afternoon. A moment that I will never forget was hiking around a bend and seeing the Aletsch Glacier for the first time. It stretched for miles, like a highway of ice carved into the mountains, meandering through the peaks. Another highlight was seeing the towering Matterhorn (as seen at Disneyland and on Toblerone packaging) on a day hike near the town of Zermatt. Finally, a bonus of hiking in the front-country was the privilege of replacing Spammies with authentic Italian pizza and other delicious local fare as we passed from town to town.

As with any Pine Island trip, the connection with others and sense of community were probably the best part of my experience backpacking in the Alps. If there was one thing I learned, it's that wherever I find myself hiking, the many lessons and memories of Pine Island will always be with me.

Sawyer Carson
The High Seas

This past summer I had the opportunity to go on a trip so exclusive, Pine Island doesn't even offer it! 86 days and 85 nights, no hiking, canoeing, rowing, or fishing—just sailing quite literally around the world on board a liquid natural gas tanker. On this trip I earned my 35,000-mile patch, my Five Continents patch and my Three Oceans patch. Or I would have, if PIC awarded them.

The route was a bit heftier than your typical PIC trip, beginning in Cove Point, Maryland, then across the Atlantic Ocean and through the Mediterranean Sea to Athens, Greece. From there we sailed back across the Atlantic and south

to Buenos Aires, Argentina. Then we crossed the Atlantic again, to Equatorial Guinea on the west coast of Africa. (Looking back, the itinerary seems a tad inefficient, but then, my bosses never worked at PIC.)

The next leg took us past Cape Town and around the Cape of Good Hope to the island of Mauritius. And finally, we sailed across the Indian Ocean, through the strait of Malacca (narrowly avoiding a Malay man-catcher!) to our final destination in Seoul, South Korea.

Unfortunately this is not a trip you can sign up for in the activity line, but looking back, I think my time at PIC certainly helped to prepare me for the voyage, as I'm sure it will for any other Pine Islanders who find their way into the merchant marine. In the meantime, and for those who don't feel drawn to heed the call of the high seas as I did, St. Croix and Bigelow will do just fine.

Chris Ward
Fiordland National Park,
New Zealand
Trip Report: The Keppler Track

The trip began with a ferry ride back from Stewart Island, off the southern tip of New Zealand's South Island, where we had spent the previous night searching for kiwi birds. We planned to start the infamous Keppler Track that day, so our itinerary now entailed driving 100 miles to the trailhead as fast as possible. The Keppler Track is one of New Zealand's "Great Walks," of which there are a total of ten across the North and South Islands, each one as stunning as the next. They pass through rainforests, mountain passes, glacial parks, fjords, beaches, and the other magnificently variable landscapes of New Zealand. My friend and I had been eyeing the Keppler Track for a while. We had heard many great things about it, but it was our first Great Walk, and we didn't know what to expect.



High winds and stunning views on the Keppler Track

After stopping to grab some groceries for three days on the trail, we got to the trailhead around two p.m. and knew we had about nine miles ahead of us. Luckily, we were eager to get moving after a few hours in the car, and most of the hiking was flat, skirting the edge of a fjord. When we finally reached our campsite, we were stunned. It was on a beach looking out across the fjord, with facilities you can only find at the nicest lean-tos on the AT. That night was an early one, because the next day we had decided to hike 22 miles from sea level up to the summit, almost a mile high, then all the way back down the other side of the mountain.

The second day started off easily enough, but soon the trail started to shoot upwards, and we could tell we were in for a haul. After a good bit of grinding through steep terrain, we finally reached the top of the first peak, where they had the nicest mountain hut I've ever seen—think Lake of the Clouds on steroids. Stunning 360-degree views of the fjords below, jagged mountain ridges on one side and the vast Otago plains on the other. And we weren't even at the summit

yet! It's safe to say this was one of my all-time favorite days of hiking. The views at the peak were amazing as well, but we couldn't stay up there for long because on that side of the mountain, the wind was whipping in from the sea. Not just any winds—they were gusting at about 75 mph and at some points, and it was all we could do just to stand upright. If you picked up your foot, it was blown off course immediately. To make matters worse, one of the defining features of the Keppler Track is the steep drop-offs on either side. You really feel like you're walking on a catwalk, which is quite disconcerting when you're being buffeted every which way. Eventually, we managed to free ourselves from the onslaught and make it down to camp, but it's safe to say we went to bed early that night.

The last day was a short, simple hike out of about six miles through peaceful marsh and shrublands. We got to appreciate the unique plants and animals, some of whom followed along behind us, hoping to nab some insects in the dirt we disturbed. All in all, it was an unforgettable experience that I hope to repeat one day.

HMMM... YUM!

Experienced Chefs Expand Pine Islanders' Palates

By Sumner Ford

It was a huge relief when Anna Ashby contacted me to inquire about working as the Head Cook at Pine Island this summer. Anna had previously been an outstanding counselor, and she had added experience in the kitchens of Michelin Star restaurants to her resume since working at Pine Island in college. When we spoke about the job, a couple of concerns popped into my head. Anna, her husband Pedro, and their baby daughter Clara would need to travel from their native Brazil. They would leave behind the farm they were starting. It seemed incredible that Anna would be willing to take such a giant leap. But she quickly brought up the possibility of cooking traditional Brazilian fare and providing boys with fun, nutritious food, and my concerns faded. I knew Anna cared deeply for both Pine Island and the culinary arts.

I still wondered, how would Anna find

ingredients in central Maine that matched her Brazilian recipes, how would campers respond to strange new foods, and how in the world would Anna keep up the pace, preparing these highly involved meals day after day, meal after meal?

After a staff week filled with delicious food, those worries also evaporated. Anna was joined by longtime camper Irving Baldwin as her Assistant Head Cook. Irving was a sponge, drawing on years of experience at his father's esteemed New York City restaurant, Houseman, and picking up new tips and tricks from Anna.

Anna and Irving prepared many Pine Island classics — stuffed peppers, Emily Swan's mac-and-cheese, and pizza bagels. But they also added many novel tastes to Pine Islanders' palettes. We dined on classic Brazilian dishes like feijoada, a stew with sausage, veggies, and black beans with Anna's unique twist (a couple



Head Cook Anna Ashby (right) and Summer Manager Lindsay Clarke (left) have lunch with their children.

of orange slices), and brigadeiro, often known as Brazil's chocolate truffle. Anna converted the dessert to a pudding form, and campers could not get enough of the sweet combination of cocoa powder, condensed milk, and chocolate sprinkles. Anna and Irving also went to great lengths to prepare food from campers' home countries. To take just one example, they cooked up an Austrian sausage mac-

and-cheese dish to the delight of many campers—especially Louis, who lives in Vienna.

I'm among the many 2023 Pine Islanders who have added Brazil to their travel bucket list. And while I'm eager to eat Brazilian fricassee when I get there, I know it won't be—couldn't be—quite as tasty as when Anna prepared it in the Pine Island kitchen.

CAMPERS WRITE...

The following contributions first appeared in the 2023 Mid-Summer Pine Needle: A collection of articles, poetry, and artwork that seeks to provide a glimpse into the creative, imaginative, and active lives campers lead at Pine Island.

Skabootch the Rooster...

Mystery Solved?

By Moses Ferney



Skabootch the Rooster has long been a subject of speculation, including in this SNS from the early 2000's.

We all know about Skabootch the Rooster. He was the very first sacred animal, gifted to the earliest Pine Islanders by King Kababa for following his guidance.* Skabootch first appeared atop the flagpole, watching over Pine Island with unending vigilance. But one day in 1995, the Great Fire caused almost all the sacred animals to flee, returning to King Kababa's home on Mount Philip. Most of the missing sacred animals have returned to Pine Island in the years since, but one is still missing: Skabootch the Rooster!

So now we must ask: why did Skabootch not return after the fire? Why does Skabootch, the first sacred animal of them all, seem to have permanently abandoned his post? Well, I have a theory.

The Fire of '95 is what caused the sacred animals to leave, so it would be wise to start there. The story goes that the fire started when some propane accidentally ignited. But what if I told you that the real culprit is above us, in the rafters of the dining hall? I think the real culprit is actually Venus de Flylow the Flaming Go, who arrived in 1994.

"But why would he do it?" I hear you asking. But never fear, I have an explanation. Imagine how would it feel to be one of only four sacred birds on Pine Island, but to find yourself constantly overshadowed by the other three, who had been there for far longer.

I think Venus de Flylow became so frustrated that he lost control of his flames for a moment, accidentally setting the island alight. Then, as the sacred animals evacuated, Venus de Flylow ambushed Skabootch and trapped him inside Mount Bigelow, never to be seen again!

No Kababologists were available at press time to confirm (or deny!) this theory.

*King Kababa desires that campers be Good Humored and demonstrate Honesty, Independence coupled with a Concern for Others, Responsibility, Cooperation, and a Generous Spirit.

Survey: What's Your Favorite Activity at Pine Island?

By Cosmo Oglesby

Moses Ferney

Activity: Kayaking

Reason: "It's always open and fun. I don't know why some people don't like it."

Johnny Miller

Activity: Shop

Reason: "I get to build stuff"

Sam Breese

Activity: Fly Fishing

Reason: "It's chill."

Roman Ferney

Activity: Riflery

Reason: "I'm too good."

Thomas Heenan

Activity: Swimming

Reason: "It's relaxing."

Jack Johnson

Activity: Canoeing

Reason: "It's fire, and all the other activities are aggressively mid."

Teo Fiorella-Baptista

Activity: Sailing

Reason: "It's lit."

Conclusion: Out of the campers I asked, Swimming and Canoeing were the most popular activities at Pine Island.

Trip Report: Maine Peaks

By Bram Renick and Jojo Murray

Maine Peaks is one of Pine Island's senior hiking trips. It covers Saddleback, Saddleback Junior, The Horn, Sugarloaf, and Spaulding Mountains.

On the first day, we drove to our drop-off spot, ate lunch, and started hiking towards our first campsite. It was 1.7 miles uphill in the rain, but we finally got there, set up our tents, ate dinner, and went right to sleep.

The second day was the hardest: nine miles over Saddleback, The Horn, and Saddleback Junior. At the beginning of the day, we hiked Saddleback. It was a hard but fun trek up. After quickly reaching the peak, we hiked even more quickly up The Horn. We ate lunch at the summit, then went over Saddleback Junior to our campsite.

On Day Three, we were supposed to hike eight miles. We had gone one mile when one of our friends injured his leg and had to be hiked out. It all went smoothly, but it took a long time, so we decided to change our plan: we went one more mile to the closest campsite and stayed there for the night.

On the fourth day, we decided to go the whole 10.4 miles to our pick-up spot. We did a solo hike* for 1.5 miles and then met up for a quick detour to the summit of Sugarloaf, where we had some great views of the mountains all around. We finished the day by trekking the last 2.5 miles to the campsite closest to our pick-up spot.

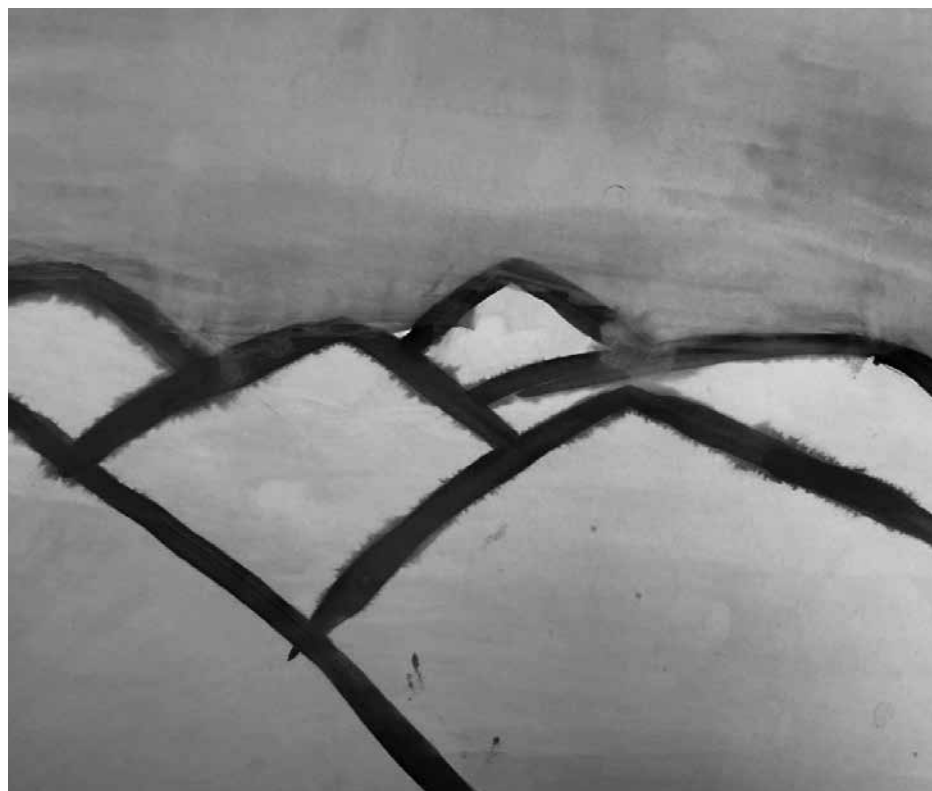
On Day Five, we hiked five miles down an old logging road and waited for the van. On the drive back, we stopped at McDonald's and ate very well. We were exhausted, but it had been a great trip and we were happy to be back at Pine Island.

*Solo hiking is a tradition on PIC senior hiking trips. Campers set out on the trail one at a time, allowing enough space between them for each hiker to experience the feeling of hiking all on their own.

Why I Love Fishing

By Johnny Miller

I've been fishing for about a week and in one day I caught three fish, and that goes to show how amazing fishing is at Pine Island. One of the reasons I love fishing is that when you've been fishing for a while and you finally catch a fish, it's such a great feeling. One of the best fishing spots at PIC is on the Second Island, because there are more fish.



Sand Dunes By Alex Tsiopanas



Sunset on the Lake By Tim Comer



NOTES FROM THE TRIP LOCKER

By Kaja Surborg

We talked about it all summer long and even mentioned it at the Farewell Feed: the 2023 Pine Island season was a rainy one. While we didn't beat the record rainfall of the summer of 2008, there were several days where that felt like a distinct possibility. To be honest, I spent much of the week and a half before Opening Day nervously going through the Trip Locker and Infirmary, making sure we had enough extra loaner items for campers whose own clothes, boots, and gear might not have time to dry between trips. Drying out tents between trips also proved to be a challenge throughout the summer, and when I debriefed with trip leaders, they often prefaced their comments with some variation of, "It was raining the whole time, so that was the main thing we were dealing with each day."

And yet, the rain did not hold anyone back! Time and again I met campers returning from trips in soaked raingear, but with beaming smiles, excitedly telling me about their adventures throughout Maine and New Hampshire. Staff told me about their creative problem-solving and decision-making as campsites got washed out and water levels rose at creek crossings.



One of the Expedition Camp crews taking in summit views

Most of all, I saw the confidence boost in campers as they discovered that they were capable of making it through more uncomfortable and difficult situations than they had ever previously thought.

Adaptability was the key to another successful season. Campers and staff alike took on new routes, new campsites, and even several brand-new trips like seasoned pros! For example, Big Croc, led by Sophie Efron and Madron Joyce, combined the Pine Island classics of Crocker and Bigelow when water levels in the South Branch of the Carrabassett River made the usual Crocker route



A game of cards with a view on Pierce Pond

untenable. The crew spent four grueling days following the Appalachian Trail, summiting three 4,000-footers in a single trip. Meanwhile, Ben Cabot and Emily Campbell, along with LTIP Tanner Carson, led campers to the never-before-explored (by Pine Islanders, for fly fishing) waters of the Androscoggin River on a new Super Secret Mystery Fishing Trip, where they cooked and ate the trout they caught.

Perhaps the most notable of 2023's new trips was the Expedition Camp Hike, which was rerouted after flooding led a crestfallen Green Mountain Club to advise hikers away from the Vermont's Long Trail. While Ex-Camp

has done a two-week hike since the program's inception in 2005, this was the first year they did not follow the Long Trail, instead hiking the Appalachian Trail from the Maine-New Hampshire border to the Kennebec River. Nineteen Ex-Campers—led by program directors Taylor Clyde, Alex Sidorsky, Chris Ward, and Anders Westermann—traversed peaks, valleys, and ridges in wind, rain, and sun to do what no Pine Island trip had previously done. They passed through the Mahoosuc Notch, summited some of Maine's highest peaks, and came out on the other side

with a host of new stories to share.

I started the 2023 season feeling anxious. While I had total faith in our staff and campers, I knew how crucial the weather is to both camping trips and island life, and had no way to predict what the effect might be. But I ended the season feeling immense pride in the way everyone made the best of the situations they encountered on the trail. Campers loaned each other dry clothes and boots, staff made quick decisions to keep everyone safe and happy, the rain made the sunny days feel even brighter, and everyone demonstrated that even bad weather can't quell Pine Islanders' sense of adventure.



Getting to work on the Super Secret Mystery Fishing Trip

BIG CROC!

A Brand-New Trip Report

By Madron Joyce and Sophie Efron

This summer was exceptionally rainy, which was an added challenge for staff and campers. Against all odds, Pine Island sent out the same number of trips as we usually do, and all were successful. But the rain was heavy enough that the backcountry was often flooded, and some trips needed to be adjusted.

Crocker is a PIC classic that normally consists of day hikes, hitting the multiple peaks of Crocker Mountain along with nearby Sugarloaf. But this year, the river between the two mountains was impassable, so the original trip was a no-go. No big deal: after some careful map consultation, we came up with Big Croc, a four-day, three-night trip that followed

the Appalachian Trail over both Crocker and Mt. Bigelow. Intended for ages 12 to 13 like the original Crocker and Bigelow trips, Big Croc was nothing to shake a stick at. Most hiking trips for this age group do not cover as many miles as we did, especially over two 4,000-foot peaks.

Nevertheless, during those four brief days in the Maine backcountry, we witnessed true character growth as these boys learned to motivate themselves to tackle those mountains. The beginning of the trip was undoubtedly a challenge; rain on the first day followed by a lengthy nine-mile hike on the second day, during which we summited Crocker, our first 4,000-footer. This mountain doesn't

quite rise above the tree line, but it was a beautiful day and we found a spectacular viewpoint—the perfect place to enjoy a gorp break. Feeling accomplished, the boys still had to face seven miles of moderate downhill, which was no easy task after the first bit. With energy running low and patience running a bit thin at the seven-mile mark, we powered through the last two miles in one hour, making it to our campsite in impressive time.

On the third day, we had a lighter hike of about five miles and summited Mt. Bigelow, another 4,000-footer. The boys pushed hard, and after a lunch break and a bit of hiking boot troubleshooting,

we made it to the peak at the perfect moment. The skies were perfectly clear, and the view of Flagstaff Lake and the surrounding area was stunning. We had a great time at the top, just taking in the silent beauty of this special place. On the fourth day, the rains returned, so we quickly bagged Avery Peak (the second-highest point on Bigelow Ridge) and began our descent to the pick-up spot.

Overall, this trip was a great adventure in the Maine wilderness. It wasn't perfect (curse that rain!), but it was wonderful to lead a brand-new Pine Island trip, especially with such a great crew.

PINE ISLAND CAMP 2023—ANOTHER GREAT SUMMER!



Rudy with a largemouth bass caught off Dr.'s Cabin dock



Campers beginning their journey on ATC HAWG



ATC HAWG appreciating recognition of their hard work



One of the wettest summers in Maine history led to some challenging river crossings.



A classic game of Nupletucker



Graham flexes on the West Branch canoe trip.



Campers inspecting a sample from a tide pool at Whitehead



The Mt. Washington trip resting their legs and soaking up a bit of sunshine



Hannah enjoying a special day trip to pick strawberries



The Jr. Katahdin trip taking in the view



Otey is excited to sign up for activities.



Isaac and Akul engage in a riveting game of chess. Sebastian and Wells spectate.



Cosmo hanging out with Moxie the cat



Hudson practicing a song for Club Honk



OD Josh sending activities to the Mainland



AD Maxx helps Ford with his life jacket.



Alex successfully water-skis behind the War Canoe at 12 XP (Ex-Camp Power).



Hudson and Roman descending a steep section of Bald Pate



Otey and Lukas practicing for Club Honk



Billy and Ben enjoying a peaceful moment



Ryker helps Henry with a project in the Woodshop.



Taking advantage of favorable winds on Moose River



Ryker and Heath writing letters home



Sebastian writing a letter home



The Founding Fathers trip in the clouds in the White Mountains



Austin and Oliver hanging out



Our community enjoys one last song before the summer ends.

MONTAGUE G. BALL, JR.

November 18, 1938 – January 17, 2024

It is with sadness and a deep well of gratitude that we bid Montague G. Ball, Jr. a final farewell. Monte died in hospital near his home in Chiang Mai, Thailand after a short illness. His association with Pine Island Camp spanned nearly 70 years. Even among the myriad colorful, talented, interesting characters who make up PIC alumni, Monte was unique. He was a skilled naval officer, a master teacher, an unparalleled storyteller, and an extraordinary leader.

Monte graduated from the Choate School and then from the University of Virginia. While a student at UVA, Monte worked with the YMCA Boy's Club in Beaumont, VA, and, upon the recommendation of Jim Breeden's middle school teacher, recruited Jim to help him with the camping trips. This led to Monte eventually recruiting Jim to become a counselor at Pine Island. Jim went on to be Pine Island's assistant director for Jun Swan and to become the head of Pine Island's first Board of Directors.

Monte first came to Pine Island in 1958, when he was recruited by UVA classmate Monroe Baldwin to teach sailing, and was a counselor for two years. In 1963 Monte joined the U.S. Navy, in which he served for six years, first on the *USS Rankin* and then on the *USS Springfield*, the flagship of the Sixth Fleet, homeported at Villefranche-sur-Mer in the Mediterranean. Shipmate and lifelong friend Barry Lindquist met



Monte on the Mainland with the late Tim Nagler and Jim Breeden, late 1970s

Monte in 1965 when he first reported for duty on the *Springfield*. Monte was a deck officer, and, among other duties, was in charge of one of the ship's most hazardous activities: nighttime refueling at sea. Less hazardous duty was operating the admiral's barge, which once provided Monte with the opportunity to give Princess Grace of Monaco a hand coming aboard. Monte used to quip that they were keeping the Cote d'Azur safe for democracy.

Several years ago, Barry honored Monte's long friendship and Monte's many years of service to PIC with a gift that funded the construction of two of the camp's four custom-designed and -built sailboats, which were appropriately named the *Rankin* and the *Springfield*.

After the Navy, Monte began a long career as a teacher and administrator and, to the great good fortune of Pine Island Camp and generations of young people, became Pine Island's third Director, succeeding Jun Swan in 1969 and serving for 20 years.

Somewhere in his earliest days as



Monte performs the Lion Hunt at the final campfire, circa 1985.

Director, Monte introduced a motto to the Pine Island Camp dining hall: "Gracious Living Is Our Goal." Knowing Monte, this was his somewhat desperate attempt to bring order out of chaos. What an improbable motto for a place that had no electricity or running water, and where honeydipping was a daily occurrence. But perhaps the motto was no more improbable than the fact that Montague G. Ball, Jr., a man who appreciated luxury perhaps more than most, would be the immensely successful leader of Pine Island Camp for two decades.

But of course, Gracious Living meant a lot more than having good table manners. It meant living up to one's

many people received that gift because of Monte's own selfless example every day, rain or shine.

Monte's first teaching job was at the Shattuck School in Faribault, MN, where he taught for seven years. During this time he recruited numerous "Shads" as counselors, including Rex Bates, who later became Monte's assistant director and served on the PIC Board for decades. In 1970 Monte left the icy climes of Faribault for comparatively balmy Long Island, NY, where former PIC assistant director Chip Handy was headmaster of the Lawrence Country Day School. Monte taught and served as assistant headmaster until 1973, when Chip



Monte with Director Ben Swan on the Mainland dock, circa 2018

responsibility to the community, whether in camp, out on a camping trip, in an activity, or at campfire. It meant having respect for one another; listening to what other people had to say; keeping your bed made, your tent neat, and yourself neat; and, most importantly, realizing that what *you* want to do will often not be as important as what *others need you to do*. Monte Ball taught generations of young men and women what it really meant to give freely and continuously to a community, thereby conferring on them the great gift of being an essential element in that community's success. It would be difficult to calculate how

retired and Monte decided to move to the truly balmy Greenville, SC, where he taught eighth-grade geography at Christ Church Episcopal School, and served as director of the middle school for 13 years. Monte finished his teaching career at Fayetteville Academy in North Carolina. His charisma and his position at PIC enabled him to attract legions of campers and counselors wherever he went. To this day there are more alumni with a Greenville, SC address than just about any other city.

When Monte retired, he moved to Bali, Indonesia, where he had traveled numerous times. Monte lived in Bali for

many years and then moved to Chiang Mai, Thailand. His greatest pleasure was to travel, and travel he did, every chance he got—back to Indonesia, and to Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and India. He served as a knowledgeable tour guide to friends from the US throughout his retirement. Just a few weeks before he died, Monte was off to Bangkok for more gracious living.

Monte was, often to his personal disadvantage, an exceptionally generous person. In Bali, Monte became a virtual father to several young people. He not only hired them to work for him, but after he moved to Thailand he continued to support them whenever he could, helping them as they grew up, married,



Monte chats with Tom Yoder at Whitehead Light Station following a PIC Board meeting, circa 2015.

built houses, and started businesses, and he would visit them in Lombok whenever he was in Bali. After Monte moved to Chiang Mai, a friend of his moved to Luang Prabang, Laos and started a workshop to teach children in an orphanage through the Lao Children's Workshop, which taught basic computer, photography, and film-making skills and in the process taught the children English. Monte supplied the workshop with computers and cameras and built a network that included a number of his successful friends in the US who supplied needed equipment. Hundreds of children benefited from his assistance.

It would take dozens, if not hundreds of pages to recount even a tenth of the collection of fond memories, many of which are fittingly hilarious, that dwell in the minds of anyone fortunate enough to have lived for a while in Monte's orbit. We are lucky to have these memories, and we will treasure them and recount them to each other for years to come. This writer's head is full of them, but the one I want to share is this one: I am a young counselor at Pine Island. I walk into the Dining Hall early one gorgeous July morning. Monte is sitting alone at his seat at the first table by the kitchen, which is abuzz preparing breakfast. He has taken his 100% dip, shaved, and donned his usual pressed shirt and khakis. He has a styrofoam cup of instant coffee, and the sounds of classical music come from a small transistor radio on the table in front of him. Monte is perusing the pages of a one- or two-day-old *Waterville Sentinel*. He looks up, sees me, smiles and says, "Is this the life, or is this the life!"

Akka Lakka, Monte!

IN MEMORIAM

By Ben Swan

Theodora “Teddy” Berg died August 14, 2023 at the age of 90 at her home in New Canaan, CT. Teddy was an enthusiastic camp mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Son Tad Gibson was a camper, as were his two sons Cole and Cade. Cole was also a counselor and assistant director. Teddy’s grandson Nick Gibson was a camper and counselor, and Nick’s son Jaiden was a camper. Teddy was an exceptionally generous supporter of Pine Island Camp over many years and a great friend to director Ben Swan. Ben often spent a night or two at Teddy’s amazing home in New Canaan on his travels to recruit campers and hire counselors. He always felt welcome and comfortable and was energized by Teddy’s enthusiasm for Pine Island’s important mission. When Ben asked Teddy to help cover the cost of publishing a book to mark Pine Island’s 100th anniversary in 2002, without hesitating she said she would cover the entire cost and wanted to

dedicate it to Ben’s father, Jun Swan, for whom, along with Ben’s mother Tats Swan, Teddy had great admiration. Teddy was a strong woman with strong opinions and a deeply generous spirit that prompted her to support many organizations in addition to Pine Island Camp. She was a tireless and expert gardener, with gardens in New Canaan, CT and Walpole, NH that drew visitors from all over. Teddy was also a lifelong lover of animals of every sort, caring for two or three cats and dogs at a time, all of which were in need of the kind of love and support that flowed so easily from Teddy Berg. Akka Lakka, Teddy.

Brad Vogt died Sept. 20, 2023, after complications from a rare, previously undiagnosed blood disorder. Brad was a healthy and active person, which made his sudden passing at the age of 58 a shock to all who knew him. Brad was a camper during the summers of 1977 and 1978. He is survived by his brother

Andrew who was a camper in the early ‘80s, his wife Kate, his three daughters, his parents, and his sister. Rex Bates, who was an assistant director when Brad was a camper, remembered immediately what a thoughtful, enthusiastic, great boy Brad was. Fellow camper and head of the Pine Island board Ben Hincks had the same immediate and vivid memory of Brad. Brad was an exceptionally loyal and generous donor to Pine Island, starting with a gift to Pine Island after the fire in 1995. He made generous gifts to the Annual Fund every year thereafter, and responded very generously to Pine Island’s other fundraising efforts. Executive Director Ben Swan connected with Brad for the first time a few years ago at a PIC gathering in Washington, DC. He was charmed then, and again on a recent visit to Brad’s home, where Ben learned more about Brad’s career and his tremendous enthusiasm for Pine Island Camp. Ben was looking forward to nominating Brad to join Pine Island’s

Board when he learned that the world had lost Brad and what certainly would have been many more years of his service to institutions that serve the common good. Brad’s official obituary reads like the citation for Pine Island’s highest award, the Loyalty Award. His “favorite activity” was spending vacation time at his home in Owl’s Head, ME, where he and his family spent every August. Akka Lakka, Brad.

Suzi Ronson died July 15, 2023 at the age of 83. Suzi was a lifelong New Yorker and an enthusiastic supporter of all things Pine Island, starting one evening in 1977 when she and her late husband Raoul and son Paul were introduced to PIC by Director Monte Ball through the Fisher family. Suzi expressed her gratitude to the Lovett Scholarship Fund in annual gifts for more than 20 years and in a very generous legacy gift to the fund. Akka Lakka, Suzi.

A WARM WELCOME AND DEEPEST THANKS TO NEW AND RETIRING PIC BOARD MEMBERS

The Pine Island Board is thrilled to have added three talented and energetic new Directors to its ranks since April 2023. Dr. Bianca Bell is a pediatrician in Atlanta, GA whose two sons, Max and Anselm, have been Pine Island campers for the past several years. Among other contributions to the Board and staff thus far, Bianca has provided invaluable advice regarding the healthy physical and mental development of our campers. Bianca has also served on our New Director Search Committee this past fall and winter.

As a true PIC “lifer,” Rip Swan is already well known to most of the Pine Island community. Rip was a camper from 2001 through 2007, before serving the camp as an LTIP, then counselor, then LTIP “Wrangler” from 2009 through 2013. After joining the Board this past summer, Rip can now add “Director” to his PIC resume, and the camp’s leadership is very lucky to have him! He lives in the Portland area and works as a carpenter for a Brunswick-based construction firm. Rip has focused his Board activities thus far on the preservation and upkeep of the camp’s “physical plant” and, most recently, served on the search committee that successfully recruited and hired the camp’s new Facilities Manager.

Will Sahlman’s connection to Pine Island dates to the late 1970s, when he was a camper for two summers, later returning as a counselor in 1986. Will’s three sons, Oliver, Sebastian, and Reed, have attended PIC as campers for multiple summers, and all have

returned as staff members. Will lives in Brooklyn and works as a financial advisor at Merrill Lynch. Among other contributions, he is providing great depth and experience to the Board’s Finance Committee.

In 2023, John Pollard stepped down from the Board after three terms of loyal service. As we welcome aboard our three newest members of the board, we extend our sincere appreciation to “JP” for his years of hard work for the camp!



New Board member Rip Swan (left) and newly hired Facilities Manager Peter Thompson on the Camp Road in January

PETER THOMPSON NAMED NEW FACILITIES MANAGER

After a comprehensive search including six interviews, Pine Island is very excited to announce that Peter Thompson, the runaway first choice, will join the PIC team as our Facilities Manager. Peter will begin April 1. He lives with his wife Liz and several dogs at their home in New Sharon, ME, a little over half an hour’s drive from Pine Island.

Peter and Liz returned to their land in New Sharon in 2017 after a few years away, during which Peter served as the fish hatchery manager in a small native village on the tip of the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska, and later at a hatchery in rural New Mexico. Peter first became acquainted with the aquaculture business in 1985 working for Green Lake National Fish Hatchery, a federal fish restoration project in Ellsworth, ME. In 1989 he moved to a commercial hatchery, where he was assistant manager and then manager for fifteen years. Peter is also an accomplished woodworker, having worked for Thomas Moser and for Maine furniture maker Mike Hoy, brother-in-law of Pine Islander John Alsop. Peter has been the workshop instructor at Mt. Blue Middle School in Farmington, ME for the past four years.

Peter and Liz built a small, off-grid cabin on their New Sharon property when they returned to Maine in 2017 and are currently at work on a larger home there, which will also be solar-powered. Board member Rip Swan and Executive Director Ben Swan walked down the Camp Road in January with

Peter to give him a look around. They were unable to take him to the island, as Great Pond was still wide open. If enough ice comes in this winter, they will make the trek out to take a look. Peter will handle all the maintenance and other work associated with preparing both the Mainland and Pine Island for the arrival of the staff and campers this spring. He will spend two or three days a week on the island during the summer to handle in-season repairs and to advise both the Shop counselor and the LTIP Wrangler, and will be “on call” throughout the season to help as needed. Peter will start the fall maintenance and project work immediately after the campers depart and will manage the vaunted “First Cabin Crew” and various volunteer opportunities during the fall. He will move to non-Pine Island work on December 1 and will start again at PIC the following April.

In the coming months, Peter is excited to see the rest of the facility, learn more about the unique Pine Island community, and be introduced to the myriad facets of this demanding job by former Facilities Managers Cody Smith, Ben Swan, and the irrepressible Miles Frank. Peter will also work closely with veteran Man of Maintenance Ned Bishop and both Sumner Ford and Alex Toole. Peter looks forward to meeting lots of Pine Islanders this spring and summer.

Welcome aboard, Peter Thompson!

FROM CLUB HONK TO SPOTIFY!

PIC Experience Leads to Musical Success Beyond Great Pond

Since the days of Clarence Colby, music—and specifically live music, due to the island’s lack of advanced recording equipment, or electricity—has been integral to life at PIC. And despite the stunning technological advances since that time (now including easily portable sound systems that can blast high-quality audio miles from the nearest outlet) we seem just as inexorably drawn to these real-time, in-person musical performances as the Pine Islanders of old. Songs performed live by campers and staff form, along with games and skits, the Holy Trinity of our nightly hours of self-produced entertainment, and musicians are always highly sought after by ODs looking to fill their campfire lineups.

And for many Pine Islanders over the years, that has proven to be the beginning, or a key part of the beginning, of a lifelong passion—or even a career. Everyone above a certain (now somewhat advanced) age is aware of Edwin McCain, the former counselor and popular singer-songwriter whose single “I’ll Be” has been a bona fide hit for more than two decades. But he’s far from the only one whose experience at PIC has contributed to musical success long after they leave camp.

Matthew Hawkins has spent many years at Pine Island, as a camper from age nine, and later in a variety of staff roles. He is now a teacher in Mid-Coast Maine, where he continues to play locally and explore the region’s musical community.

Matthew recalls that he first started playing music “when my dad told me I was going to take piano lessons and, being four, I didn’t really have a choice.” He now lists among his biggest musical influences John Prine, The Band, and also Matt Clarke, with whom he only overlapped at PIC for one summer, but whose classic campfire performances

of “The Ballad of Love and Hate” and “Cold Missouri Waters” continue to inform Matthew’s work.

“It’s impossible to overstate the impact PIC has had on my music,” Matthew says. “I think of myself as a live musician much more than a recording artist, primarily because campfire isn’t recorded... I can still name some of the most moving campfires of my time as a camper, and I try to bring that same energy any time that I perform.” He finds that he still can’t listen to some of his favorite John Prine tunes without thinking of Johnny Credit Card’s Pine Island-themed covers. “I should also mention,” Matthew says, “that as you might remember, I wasn’t very good when I started. Pine Island allowed me to be not very good (or very loud!) for a long time, and I think that without that, I wouldn’t have been able to grow into myself as an artist.”

Noah Solt got into music considerably later, starting out on the ukulele when he was 12 and only picking up a guitar for the first time at age 14. It was around the same time that he arrived at PIC, first as a camper, then as an LTIP and a counselor. And while those two things may have technically been coincidental, the timing of it all was certainly fortuitous. “PIC completely changed the trajectory of my life,” Noah says. “I’m now a musician and a professional sailor (26,000 miles around the world and counting). My first time playing my own my own songs was at campfire, and my first time sailing was on Great Pond.”

Asked about his influences, Noah replies, “It’s funny, most of my musical influences have not been specifically musical characters. I’m deeply inspired by the natural world and good, welcoming people.” And the Hippy Cowboys, of course, whom he still recalls idolizing as a camper.



Noah Solt seeks inspiration in a picturesque setting.

Noah is now on Spotify under his own name, and there’s definitely a hint of Hippy Cowboys and campfire influence in some of the folk/rock singles he has released thus far. His first EP, *Big Water*, is set to be released this May. It’s quite an artistic evolution in the ten years since he first started playing the ukulele, and Noah believes that it largely started at Pine Island: “Without that encouragement to foster self-trust, respect for the natural world, and most of all the importance of community, my life story would be completely different.”

Mark Pierce’s musical odyssey, on the other hand, long predates his time at PIC; you might even say it began the day he was born! Mark’s parents were both professional musicians before he and his brother came along, and growing up in Nashville, TN, he recalls hearing his father’s original songs around the fireplace, listening to his mother’s beautiful singing and piano playing, and generally absorbing their deep knowledge of, and passion for, all things musical.

So when he first came to Pine Island as a counselor in 2018, Mark naturally threw himself into the musical side

of camp life, playing at countless campfires, heading up the annual performance of “My Sweet Pine Island” at the Farewell Feed, and even working with the campers from one of his trips to write educational/PSA tune about the importance of wearing shoes on Whitehead’s famous “Barrel.”

Mark was already a highly skilled musician when he arrived at PIC, but he nevertheless found his time at camp to be beneficial to his musical development in many ways. As he puts it, “Playing for a crowd of 70-plus people on an almost nightly basis, learning to feel comfortable on whichever instrument the song at hand requires, figuring out how to collaborate effectively, maintaining familiarity with enough songs that you can always play something if somebody needs an act last minute—these are all markers of good campfire performers and professional musicians alike! Also, skills I developed by prepping and running Club Honk have helped me immensely over the last three years in Nashville, booking and throwing outdoor concerts to give a platform to my favorite local and regional acts.” And along with Ween, Michael Hurley, and Modest Mouse, Mark now considers the campfire performances of Walker McDonald (also now on Spotify) to be among his biggest musical inspirations.

At press time, Mark is in Europe, having been booked to play bass for the French singer Elsa Esnault on a tour across France and Belgium. It’s an exciting step it what’s sure to be a brilliant career, and Mark says he feels “seriously lucky to have put in so many of my ‘thousand hours’ of music at a place as special as Pine Island.”

A 2023 SATURDAY NIGHT SHOW REPORT

“All the [island’s] a stage, and all the [campers] merely players...”

By Kaja Surborg

The campers line up on the Honk Lawn, sweet treats in hand. Saturday evening: it’s time for the show! All day during General Swim and rest hour, they’ve been trying to get a peek at the goings-on inside Honk Hall, where rehearsals have been underway since the start of morning activities. For hours, rumors have been swirling around the island: Who’s playing Sumner? We heard it’s an original this week! What have the Ex-Campers come up with?

Eight o’clock approaches; all these questions will soon be answered.

The 2023 SNS season was a stellar one, with incredible acting, writing, directing, set design, and comedic timing in equal measure. I would have given everyone a Tony if I could!

The season opened with a new take on an old classic. *Johnson’s 6* followed a group of intrepid campers as they attempted to pull off the biggest candy heist in Pine Island history by raiding a secret stash allegedly hidden on nearby Oak Island. Camper Jack Johnson starred as himself in the role of crew leader and heist mastermind. His performance was so committed and convincing, I found myself wondering if there might really be a secret candy cache on Oak Island that even I didn’t know about.

The following week saw another brilliant adaptation with *The Great Sethi*. Starring Zaid Palaniswamy as the narrator and Oliver Grossi as the titular Great Sethi, this show took the audience

on an emotional journey across Great Pond that left me hoping for a sequel in 2024.

The mid-season show is traditionally produced and performed by the Ex-Campers, in the few days between their canoeing and hiking trips. This year was no different, bringing us *21 Pine Street*, starring Arthur Murray and Anselm Bell as Ex-Camp leaders Taylor Clyde and Anders Westermann. The story followed the pair posing as campers in order to infiltrate and bust an unsanctioned on-island candy trading operation, delivering action and drama as they encountered various members of the Pine Island community.

As we entered the second half of the season, we were lucky enough to

bring in guest director Josh Treat to put together his long-awaited production of *The Big Sidorsky*. Following a classic case of mistaken identity, Alex Sidorsky, played by Spenser Davis, embarked on an increasingly uproarious quest to clear his name and settle scores.

The final show of the season was exceptional in more ways than one; check out Sumner’s article on the next page for more about this incredible production.

I spend my weeks at Pine Island eagerly awaiting Saturday evenings, and this season’s performances delivered on all fronts. I’m already counting down the days until the first show of 2024!

NOT YOUR AVERAGE WOODCRAFT CLASS!

By Reid Hill

A group of my best friends and I hike quickly through the woods in the morning light. Speed and timing are everything. Each of us understands his assignment and our common goal. We have practiced our techniques and know that we can execute when the time comes to attack or defend. We know where the enemy is, and how best to outwit them. As we round a corner of dense pine trees, we come face to face with the opposition: not campers and counselors in Blue and Gray or Green and Purple, but a crackling wall of red, yellow, and orange.

If you had asked me, back when I was a camper, what I would do when I grew up, I probably would have told you I didn't know. But one thing I knew for a fact was that I loved the War Game. A decade and a college degree later, I find myself in a career as close to that exceptional game of strategy as I believe exists.

During my time at college in Montana, Wildland Firefighting became an interest, which transformed into a passion, and which has now become my work. It's only in retrospect that I've made the connection between this job and my Pine Island (and War Game) experience. I'm certainly talking about the physical skills I gained as a camper, climbing through the ranks in

my favorite activities and learning the ways of the wilderness out on trips. But it's more than that. I've found that the ability to make connections with people has become the most important skill I've gained from my summers on the island. Resolving a quarrel among tentmates is not so different from having to settle conflicts among the fire crew. Showing a young camper how to shoot a rifle for the first time is not so different from assisting someone who has never run a chainsaw before. And explaining to a concerned member of the public that we will do everything in our power to protect their house is perhaps not so different from comforting a nervous parent as they drop their son off for his first summer away from home.

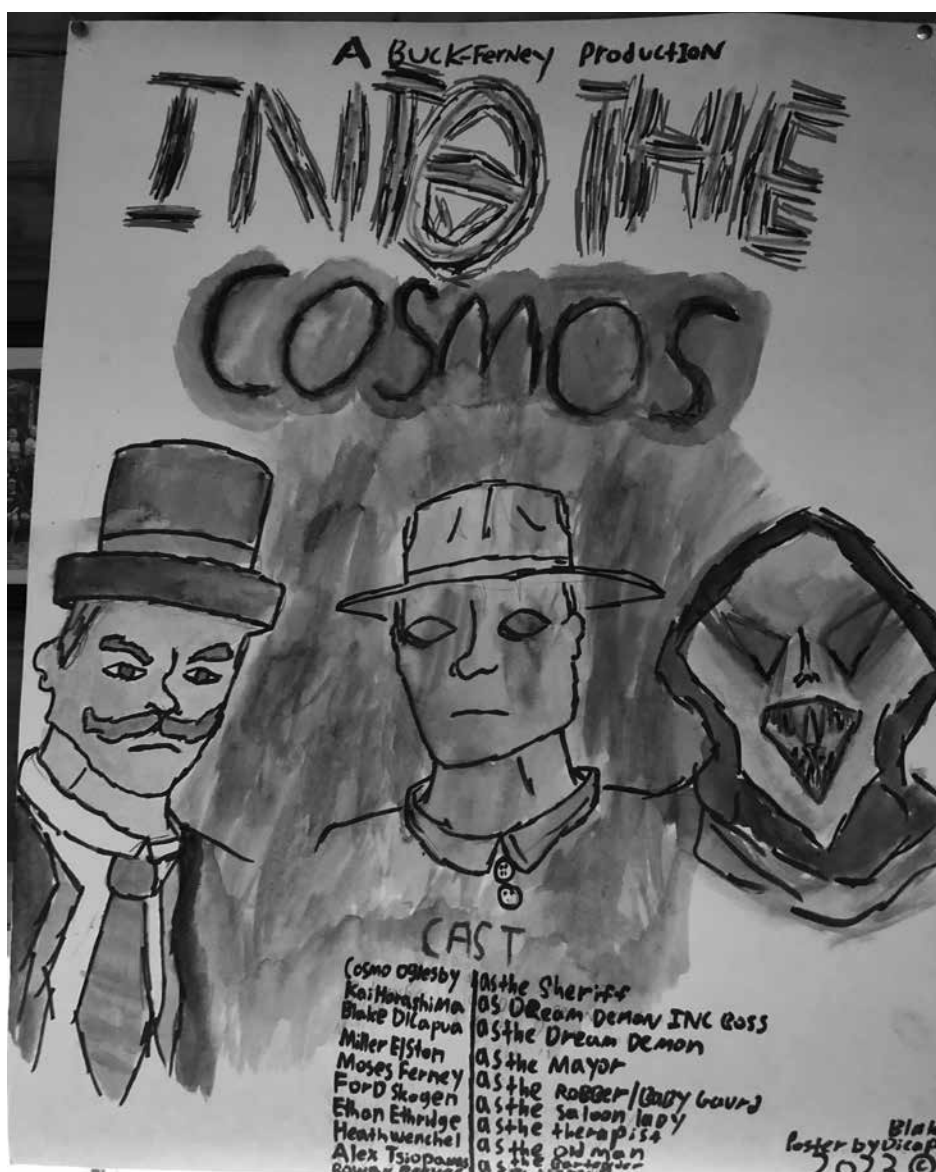
This is not to say that PIC is steering campers to become Wildland Firefighters when they grow up, but rather to illustrate a fact that most of you are very familiar with. Pine Island is giving boys the guidance they need to grow up to be thoughtful, capable young men, well-equipped to engage in their lives. These foundational years in a boy's life are where he discovers who he is and who he would like to become—whether that be a master canoeist, a Kababologist, or even, perhaps, a Wildland Firefighter like me.



At work during fire season out West

A CAMPER-DIRECTED SNS?!

By Sumner Ford



Promotional poster for Moses Ferney's SNS, Into the Cosmos

If you've ever had the pleasure of directing a Saturday Night Show (SNS) at Pine Island, you know that to do so is borderline madness. Your work begins the night before with an idea, perhaps a few one-liners—at most, a rough sketch of a plot for the night's spectacle. At breakfast on Saturday, you still have no cast; less than twelve hours lie between you and the one and only performance of the hour-long show you must create in that short span.

For many counselors, it's the best-worst experience at Pine Island. The nonstop work and pressure, coupled with the joy of seeing your vision come to life and watching campers perform for the first time, make directing an SNS a uniquely rewarding proposition. When the uninitiated hear about this (in)famous aspect of the PIC experience, they cannot believe we accomplish such a feat every week. They would surely be dumbfounded to learn that during this past summer, a first-year camper wrote and directed one of these shows!

Moses Ferney first expressed interest in taking on this challenge around the midpoint of the summer. Having directed and performed in many fantastic campfire skits, Moses turned

his attention to the Pine Island thespian's holy grail. Writing and directing an SNS as a camper was not quite unprecedented; Buckley Livingston, along with his creative partners Alex Lanoff and Will Napolitano, had helmed the successful horror-comedy *The Dust* several years before. We naturally turned to Buckley, now a counselor, to assist Moses in his effort to create an SNS.

The duo developed an incredible show: *Into the Cosmos*. It was the last SNS of the season, capping a memorable summer of performances. Not only was it a wholly original story, the play was also nuanced, hilarious, and imaginative. And most importantly, all the performers loved putting on the show. Moses and Buckley deserve the utmost praise for pulling it off, and it highlighted a sometimes-forgotten facet of PIC: the all-important creative aspect of living on an island without screens. Buckley and Moses reminded us that great creativity is still possible without advanced technology, and that powerful, hilarious entertainment can come not only from Hollywood megastudios, but from our own friends and community.

WHOA! ADVANCED STATS AHEAD!

Next-Gen Data Analysis Leads to Groundbreaking Activity Line Improvements

After months of fact-finding, exploratory analysis, and statistical research, PINE SAP is back to share its latest findings with the Pine Island community. As you may remember, PINE SAP (Pine Island's Newly Exhaustive Statistical Analytics Program) was founded last year to fill PIC's glaring need for sufficiently next-gen quantification of the camp experience. As always, the folks here at PINE SAP have been laboring diligently—collecting data under the watchful eyes of Zommule of Zim, the Omniocular Wiggly Ziggler; running Spamson the Somnolent Sloth's painfully slow, yet highly accurate models; and helping Glubb the Gourmandizing Grouper crunch numbers day in and day out. A dizzying array of projects remain in the works, but after last year's quantification of Dustball demonstrated the importance of our highly advanced work, we shifted focus to an even more pressing issue: the statistical correlation between campers' breakfast seating and their subsequent position in the vaunted activity line.

Since time immemorial, when campers entered the dining hall each morning, they were faced with a choice: to head straight for a table with Cinnamon Toast Crunch, or prioritize their spot in the activity line. While an enlightened subset of campers recognized the superiority of Boathouse activities, the majority tended to be dead set on a luxurious afternoon in the Shop, the dubious "Rif-Arch" combo, or perhaps a role in that weekend's SNS. And to have any hope of attaining these activities, a spot near the front of the line was essential.

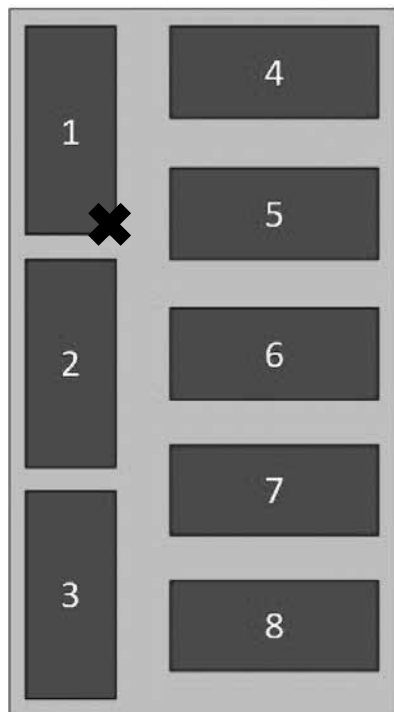
After poring over decades of Ned Bishop's carefully compiled spreadsheets of activity selections (and adjusting for any clerical errors), we are pleased to present the average line position needed for each activity on a day with 80 campers (see Figure 1 below).

Our findings show a distinct bias towards non-water activities, with Shop, Riflery, and Archery ranking among the most sought-after, while Boathouse mainstays such as Canoeing, Rowing, and Kayaking placed at the bottom of the list. However, we also noticed a distinct pattern: as the summer progressed, interest in riflery and archery decreased, while interest in water activities increased. PINE SAP has not yet been

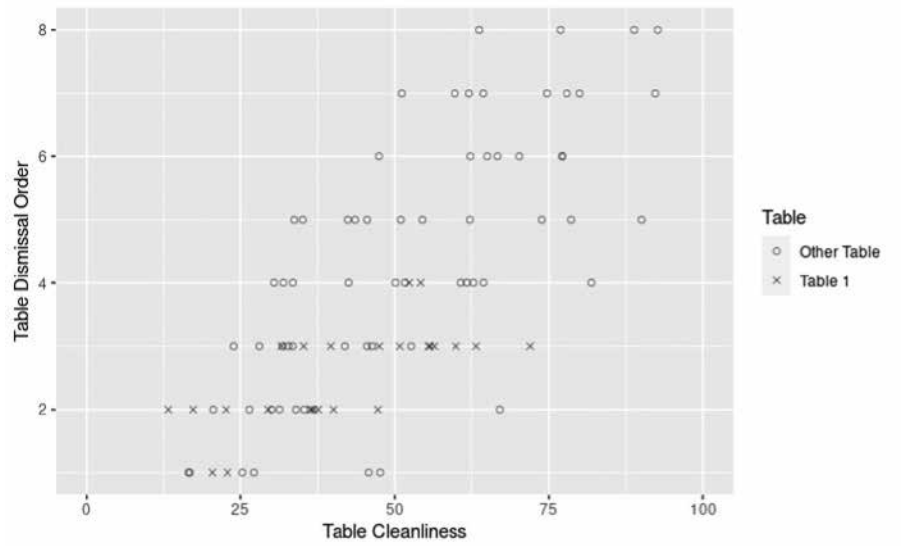
able to identify the cause of this trend, but as a wise-beyond-their-years Tent 7 camper once said: there's a sacred animal named Whocan the Warcan, but none named Who-arch the War-arch.

In any case, of perhaps greater importance for campers was how to optimize their chances of getting the activity they want on a given day. And our findings clearly show that the odds of securing some of the more popular activities without a good spot in line are close to nil. After carefully measuring the exact contours of the dining hall and subjecting them to rigorous algorithmic analysis, we were able to determine the likelihood that each seat would secure the head of the activity line (after waiters and birthdays, of course).

First of all, we found that within each table, the position that minimizes the Euclidian distance from seat to dining hall entrance (accounting for table orientation) is most likely to secure the best spot in line. We were then able to ascertain the seat with the best average line position, denoted by the 'X' on the diagram below:



Spurred on by the thrill of discovery, we performed additional research into table dismissal order, which has led to a notable change. In summers past, campers were typically released to the activity line by order of table cleanliness, as determined by the OD. Our research appeared to confirm long-held suspicions of systemic bias, with ODs selecting their own table to be dismissed first far more often than others (see Figure 2 above).



After hours of table-cleaning analysis, we were able to determine that while there was a loose correlation between actual table cleanliness and table dismissal order, Table 1 tended to be dismissed far earlier than any other (although to be fair, it was typically among the cleanest). Nevertheless, this bias needed to be addressed if any semblance of justice was to be maintained.

Thus, after careful review of game tape and thorough analysis of all relevant data, PINE SAP met with Director Sumner Ford to devise a revolutionary new dismissal system based on pure randomness. And all that's needed is

a deck of cards; not an algorithm in sight! The low-tech ingenuity of Pine Islanders truly knows no bounds. Now each morning, campers no longer have to strategically select their table to increase their odds of a trip to the riflery barn, and can focus instead on what really matters: Cinnamon Toast Crunch.

Till next time, Akka Lakka!

Xander Schwartz, K.D.
PINE SAP Founder and COO
(Communications Optimization Officer)

PINE ISLANDERS RENEW FAITH IN YOUNGER GENERATION!

When Pine Islanders travel remote footpaths and waterways throughout New England, they are not alone. Each summer, campers and counselors encounter hundreds of people while out on trips, from caretakers and campground owners to fellow adventurers and day trippers. And each summer, at least one person is so impressed by the Pine Islanders they meet that they reach out to camp via phone, email, or social media to express their gratitude. Once again, in 2023, Pine Islanders were superb ambassadors for PIC (and, indeed, the entire "younger generation") on the trails.

Dear Sumner Ford,

A group of Pine Islanders recently stayed at my campground along the Connecticut River Trail, and they have renewed my faith in the younger generation. I've been in the military and served as a state representative. I've worked with many different types of people, and I'm genuinely impressed by the wholesomeness of your group.

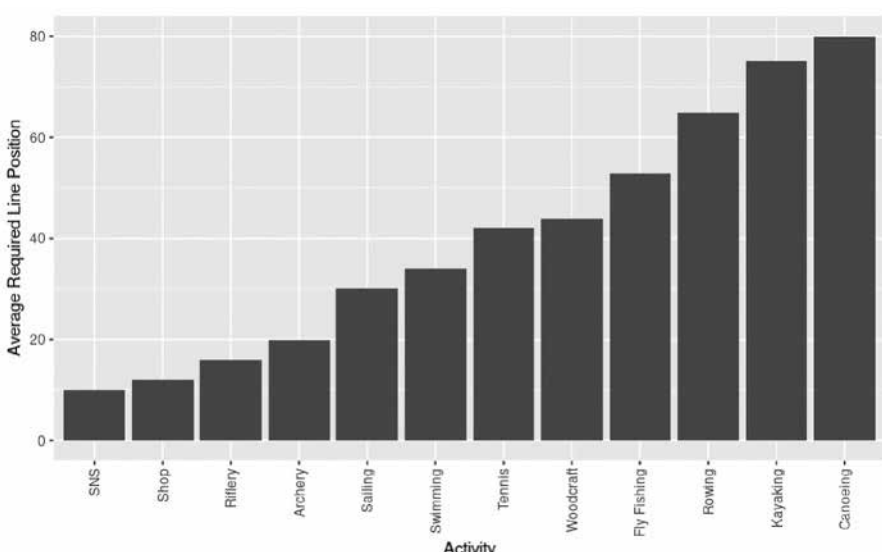
They were model campers.

They are welcome back anytime.

Thank you,
Brandon

"I'm out here at Hall Mountain Lean-to, mile 251 of the Appalachian Trail, and I've run into a group of solid young men from Pine Island Camp... a traditional boy's summer camp in Maine. It's good to see young people out here participating in nature... The counselors were a couple of good fellas—both just finished their sophomore years at college and both have been going to the camp together since they were 11 years old. It was really awesome to run into these guys. The campers with them were the oldest campers at Pine Island, and they were managing the maps and setting up camp—they know what they're doing. It's really cool to see that there are young people out here doing really hard stuff and not backing down in bad weather. It rained today and it's going to rain again tomorrow, and they have seven days left of their 13-day trek. Pine Island Camp - check them out."

-2023 Appalachian Trail through-hiker,
via social media



THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 DONORS!

Alumni and Friends Respond Generously to PIC's Annual Appeal

Dear Pine Islanders,

Boyhood is a precious season. Before sending my sons to Pine Island, I thought a lot about what boys need, what boys may not get from school, and what is not conveyed in athletics and extracurriculars. During my boys' first summer at Pine Island, they seemed impossibly young to spend six weeks away from us and we missed them terribly, so my husband and I decided to visit mid-season. As soon as we arrived, it was clear our visit had been solely due to our parental anxiety; our boys were thriving and this unnecessary interruption meant precious hours away from camp. Upon returning them to camp that afternoon, we watched our

boys join their friends on the Mainland dock and witnessed a magical moment as they stepped back onto the KWS. It seemed to us they passed through the wall of an invisible bubble, back to their cherished island of protected, celebrated boyhood. Almost forgetting we were dockside, they gave us the briefest of waves after the boat departed before eagerly turning back toward Pine Island. And there it was: our young boys had gone to a place far from home where they knew no one and had cultivated a community of friends and mentors, learned new skills, had excellent adventures, encountered new challenges, and were flourishing without us.

Pine Island provides a moment in boyhood needed now more than ever. As

a pediatrician with experience in child and adolescent development, I share the concern of many parents: the social-emotional development and mental health of children is seriously challenged by the distractions of screens, hazards of social media, overscheduling, loneliness, and far too little time outdoors. Pine Island offers an alternative vision of boyhood: living in open-air tents, building community, taking healthy risks, persevering through challenges, and reflecting on life while listening to loons and lapping waves on Great Pond. It is a place where boyhood thrives and where boys become independent, compassionate, good-humored, generous young men poised to embrace the challenges of young adulthood.

Your generous support means a great deal to Pine Island Camp and the boys who benefit from summers spent there. Pine Island is fortunate to have wonderful staff, alums, and friends who give their time and talents behind the scenes, and you are part of that community. The ability to continue to provide this unique and essential Pine Island experience requires your support, and I hope you will join this dedicated team and make a gift to Pine Island's Annual Fund.

Thank you and Akka Lakka,



Bianca Bell, MD

Chris Acker
 Chuck Albers
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 Anonymous
 Dana Strickland Archer
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 Lise Aubry
 Monroe and Sherry Baldwin
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 Harrison Bilodeau
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 Rob Boutwell - *In honor of Sumner Ford*
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 Christian Westermann Family
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 Sam Winans
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 Tom Yoder
 Karan Zaranka
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NEEDLENOTES FROM NEEDLENEWS THE NEEDLENOSED NEWSHOUND

Joe Kovaz, his wife Susan, and their daughter, Anna Kendall, have recently moved back to Belfast, ME. Susan is an attorney working for UNUM. Joe is weighing his options and is much in demand as an experienced physics and chemistry teacher.

Cody Smith, Taylor Ackerman, and their daughter, Juniper, live in Rockland, ME. Cody's work on wooden boats was mentioned in a recent article in *Maine Boats and Harbors* magazine, which described him as "a young master builder on the rise."

Eben Weislogel is a senior pursuing a dual diploma at Camden Hills Regional High School in nearby Rockport, ME, and the Midcoast School of Tech Outdoor Leadership Program. He will be heading to the University of Montana in the fall of 2025 after working with Maine Fishing Guides (both here and possibly in Chile) next year.

Rich Bradley celebrated his 80th birthday at Whitehead Light Station last summer, with friends and family visiting throughout a cake-filled week.

Dave Olsen is based out of an off-grid cabin in Downeast Maine, but spends most of the year in Alaska, salmon fishing and doing welding work on salmon boats in Bristol Bay in the summer, and diving for sea cucumbers out of Ketchikan in the fall.

Satchel Toole is a Program Manager at Efficiency Maine, helping businesses around the state become more energy efficient. He and his wife, Monica Manning, just bought a house in Falmouth, ME and are fixing it up. In the meantime, Satchel and Monica live in nearby South Portland with his brother, **Nick Toole**. Nick and Zoe Malia were married in September, and he just started a Master's program in Data Analytics at the Roux Institute in Portland.

Their brother **Alex Toole** and his fiancé, Emily Radziwon, recently bought a house in Portland. Their wedding is planned for August, and Alex just landed a pretty sweet new job (see Page 1).

Max McKendry lives in Cape Elizabeth, ME, working for the fire department there and in nearby Windham. He recently started training to become a paramedic as well.

Will Webb and his wife, Lorraine, live in Gorham, ME, where Will works in software support for Tyler Technologies.

Carrie Turner Chamberlain and her husband, Kevin, live in Scarborough, ME, and welcomed a baby boy, Trevor Turner Chamberlain, in June.

Olivia Lobdell is living in Medford, MA, working in the customer success department at a software company called Datadog. She recently got engaged and plans to get married in Maine this December.

Rob Chandler has retired fully from a long career as an architect in Boston. He lives in Gloucester, MA, where he keeps a couple of O'Day daysailers. He joined Ben Swan for a few days last spring on Whitehead Island to construct a (very well-designed) deer

fence around the garden.

Chris Brunet lives in Boston with his family. His son, Ben, will spend his first summer at PIC next year.



(Left to right): Nick Newbold, David Efron, and Akul Sethi out for a winter hike on Galehead Mountain in the Whites

David Efron is in Paris for the spring semester. Fellow counselors **Akul Sethi**, **Louis Efron**, and **Will Hartley** (all Northeastern), and **Nick Newbold** (Boston College), will miss David during their frequent meetups around Boston.

Will and **Erin Lobb Mason** live in Tiverton, RI. Will is still running the music department at Wheaton College, and Erin's band, The Whelks, plays all over the Ocean State.

Nico Walsh and his cousin recently sailed their 34' sloop *Far and Away* in a speedy 22 days from Martha's Vineyard to Ireland, where Nico was joined by his wife, Ellen. They then cruised the south and east coasts of Ireland and crossed to Scotland, where the boat is laid up in the town of Ardrossan. They will return next summer to cruise the islands off western Scotland and the coast of Norway. Nico will sail back across the Atlantic in the late fall of 2024. He reports that a great deal of prior planning has prevented potential poor performance.

Nico's son **Jack Walsh** will be married in Argentina in January 2025. His brother **Willie Walsh** is an officer aboard a ship in the Gulf of Mexico that is outfitted to recover passengers from extreme balloon journeys to the edge of space and back.

Victor Dillard married Francesca Andrews in Florence, Italy in September. **Felicien Dillard** and **Steve Kemp** were groomsmen, and **Charles-Elie Laly** was also in attendance.

Andrew Hathaway got engaged in August and is living in Mexico, where he has a job writing software.

Ned Donovan's podcast, Encounter Party, has been picked up by Dungeons & Dragons and turned into an official series airing on the new D&D Adventures TV channel. The show is an improvised epic fantasy mystery written in real-time using the rules of D&D. Ned is an executive producer of the project, as well as one of the lead actors.

Pete Zeman continues to work three days a week as a psychiatrist at The Institute of Living in Hartford, CT. His brother, **Andy**, has retired from the Episcopal ministry and is living in St Augustine, FL.

Whit Fisher has transitioned from the hopelessly corrupted field of hospital

work to become a 1099 rogue samurai mercenary medical provider. He is semi-retired and only works at places where there is nothing left for corporate medicine to plunder. The rest of the time he lives with his husband, Dennis, and their cats in Pawcatuck, CT. Recent visits with **Rhoads Miller**, **Seth Sutel**, **Andrew Goodale**, and **Peter and Otey Ward** have been highlights of 2023.

Andrew Chapman is now a resident of New York City and Shelter Island. He is nearly fully retired from a long career heading and guiding large public utilities. He keeps a boat on Shelter Island, fishes for (and frequently catches) bluefish, and makes journeys across the Sound to visit his brother **Fred** from time to time.

Zander and **Simon Abranowicz** continue their freelance work and have been amazing resources for the Pine Island Board's Marketing Committee. Simon continues to live in Los Angeles, and Zander recently moved back to Brooklyn with his wife, Taylor.

Patty Morel is in her third year teaching fifth grade math in Asbury Park, NJ. She thinks of Pine Island often, and looks forward to the peace of self-reflection during long outdoor runs so much that she's training for her first half-marathon in April.

Sam Weeks is in his sixth year teaching anthropology at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. He and his wife, Lizzie, bought a house in the city in 2022 after two long years of looking. He's always looking to link up with other Philly-area Pine Islanders—email him at ssweeks1@gmail.com.

Josh Treat continues to give selflessly to Pine Island, lending his advice at every Marketing Committee meeting. He's splitting his time between Washington, DC and Maine... mostly.

Dan Bristol recently spent three years in New Hampshire politics, including organizing young voters during the crazy 2020 presidential primary. He is now happily taking a break from elections, working for a pilots union in Washington, DC.

Thomas Clauson is also in DC, where he competes on the Georgetown sailing team and works in the Washington office of Senator Angus King (I-ME).

Rob Gowen lives in Charlottesville, VA and is preparing for a long-awaited adventure: he will attempt to hike the entire Appalachian Trail, starting this March. His wife, Seamane (honorary Kababologist), will handle some logistics and care for their many four-legged housemates.

Jacob and **Amber Ronson** live in Richmond, VA with their son, Reece, who is one and a half. Jacob works for the Henrico County Fire Department and recently started a small woodworking business, Backstep Woodworks, on the side.

Trueman Baldwin recently moved in with his brother, **George**, in downtown Charleston, SC. Trueman will start his studies in computer science at the College of Charleston this fall.

Their brother **Larson Baldwin** is in Savannah, GA, where he works for Sands Co. building cottage neighborhoods.

Maxx Murray, **David Austin**, and **Anders Westermann** continue their tradition of meeting up for dinner during winter break. Maxx is wrapping up his final semester at the University of Maryland as a Business Management and Classical Literature Major. He plans to stay for an additional year to get a Master's in Management Studies. David recently transferred to the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. He likes it there in spite of the heat, and has especially enjoyed cultural adventures in nearby Mexico. Anders is a Junior at Vanderbilt and will miss PIC this summer, when he starts an internship at Morningstar Financial Services in Chicago.

Noah Brodsky has also given the PIC Marketing Committee many hours of work, helping to improve our marketing strategies. He lives in Carbondale, CO, and recently began working as a Senior Account Manager at KAR.

Roe Baldwin IV is married and living in Newport Beach, CA, where he works at Toyota Racing.

Kit Smith is still combining business and sports in his job at StringKing, and lives in Santa Monica, CA. He sometimes hangs out (and probably goes surfing) with **Oliver Lowe** in Hermosa Beach.

Tom Ryan got married on Cliff Island, ME, during the summer of 2022, and his daughter, Margot, was born in early December this year. He earned his MFA at the California Institute of the Arts and now lives in Pasadena, CA.

Clem Wright and his wife, Kathleen, live in Los Angeles, CA. Their son, Wylie, is one and a half—just a few years out from his first summer at PIC.

Sam Hoyt also lives in Los Angeles (only five minutes away from Clem!) with his wife, Emma, and their one-year-old daughter, Helen. Sam works for a video game studio called Treyarch.

Alice Packard is living in the San Pedro neighborhood of Los Angeles. She writes screenplays and has a side gig as the card art project manager for Ravensburger North America, working on a new trading card game called Disney Lorcana.

Steve Fisher is in Los Angeles as well, "plugging away at the actor thing," as he puts it. He's a professor at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and the short-form pilot that he wrote and acted in was just accepted to its 20th festival.

Christian Schneider is also involved in the Los Angeles creative scene. He has a couple of screenplays in development, despite spending much of the past year on the picket lines during the Writers and Screen Actors Guild strikes. Meanwhile, he has a day job as the Director of Outreach at Mulholland Prep Tutoring, and coaches a school debate team.

Duncan Lowe and Olivia Kronemeyer got engaged in December. They live in Sausalito, CA, where Duncan works for the outdoor brand Huckberry and enjoys running trails around Marin County.

Woody Hoyt and his wife, Kate, live in Tacoma, WA. Woody works for Heidelberg Materials, doing environmental and sustainability management things all over the Pacific Northwest.

Ben Schachner lives in Bozeman, MT, where he works as a carpenter. He loves Bozeman, but misses the high-quality lumber of the Northeast. His brother **Jason Schachner** visited Pine Island this spring during staff week, looking to get in some strenuous manual

Pine Island. Both excelled at learning new skills, and Hannah enjoyed her time so much that she is currently looking for carpentry jobs in Maine. Kaja is living and working in Montreal, and recently applied for an MFA in Education. She likely misses former Montreal residents **Alex Audi**, who now has an internship in Turin, Italy, and **Matthew Hawkins**, who continues to teach and play a lot of music in the Mid-Coast Maine region.

Sumner recently went skiing with **Ben Cabot**, who is a sophomore at

Schachner, Sam Hecklau, David Kemp, Forrest Brown, Will Durkin, Alec Durkin, Sarah Hunter, Nick Bellamy, Jim Ford, and John Timken.

Cece Carey-Snow and Charlie Klein were married in Portland, ME in September. **Sarah Mason, Olivia Lobdell, Matt Moss-Hawkins, and Camilla Walker** were in attendance.

Ben Herman and Libby Simpson live in Brunswick, ME, and welcomed a son, Duke Hurricane Herman, in January 2023.



Ben Herman, Libby Simpson, and Duke



The Pine Island contingent at Sumner and Lizzie's wedding (left to right): Sarah Hunter, Forrest Brown, John Timken, Ben Schachner, Jim Ford, Nick Bellamy, Lizzie (Durkin) Ford, Sumner Ford, David Kemp, Sam Hecklau, Ian Ford, Will Durkin, and Alec Durkin

labor while on leave from flying F-35s out of his base in Japan.

Karl and Debbie Kasper also live in Bozeman, where it recently dipped to a chilly -31 degrees. They do a lot of outdoor activities and often visit their children, **Niel, Ben, and Kelly**, in Truckee, CA.

Nick Jones lives in Missoula, MT, where he spends his winters skiing and traveling, and his summers in the woods as a squad boss on a wildland fire crew—the best job he's ever had.

Hannah Gordon and **Kaja Surborg** spent much of this past fall doing maintenance and improvement work at

St. Lawrence and continues to run his apparel company, Fly Loose, on the side. He frequently runs into freshman **Ryan Gilbert**, who is on the St. Lawrence club hockey team. Ryan and Ben recently went skiing with Hobart junior **Taylor Clyde** at Loon Mountain. Taylor will study abroad in Lisbon, Portugal this spring.

Baxter Worthing is in Burlington, VT, working away on a PhD in Plant Biology at UVM, which he plans to finish this year.

Sumner Ford and Lizzie Durkin were married in Cavendish, VT in August 2023. Pine Islanders in attendance included **Ben**

Percy Stoddard and Tessa Weber recently bought a house in nearby Bowdoin, ME. Percy currently puts his gregariousness to good use behind the bar at Moderation Brewing in Brunswick.

Anne Read lives in Portland, ME, and recently started a job as a Land Protection Specialist at the Trust for Public Land.

Katie Swan and **Tom Nagler** also live in Portland with their dog, Jones. Tom recently completed a Master's in Data Analytics at the Roux Institute. His brother **Jim** lives in nearby Bath, ME.

Rip Swan lives just a few blocks away

in Portland, and works for Brunswick-based building contractor G.M. Wild. He recently joined the Pine Island Board of Directors.

Luke Emerdello and his wife, Kate, live in Portland and welcomed a son, Benjamin, in August. Proud uncles and aunties (both biological and honorary) include **Gabe Mondello, Erik Lombardo, Marc Lombardo, David Lombardo, Margaret Yang, and Phoebe Sanborn**, who recently represented Maine at a national snow sculpture competition in Lake Geneva, WI.

Gates Sanford and his family also live in Portland, where Gates runs a branch office of 3Degrees, providing renewable energy and decarbonization solutions to businesses around the world.

Harry Swan proposed to Quynh Nguyen on the Tent 8 platform in September. They were married in November, and plan to get married again next year in Vung Tau, Vietnam, should any Pine Islanders happen to be in the neighborhood. They live in Portland, a few blocks from both Rip and Katie. Harry is the “warehouse guy” for a nonprofit that ships surplus medical supplies overseas, and still moonlights as the editor of this publication.

If you'd like to appear in next year's NeedleNotes, visit the “Alumni” section of our website to send us your life updates!

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

A Poetic Reflection on the 2023 Whitehead Season

By Sam Hecklau, Whitehead Program Director



If one slows down, one notices more.
 If one notices more, one experiences more.
 That makes all the difference.
 It makes one better suited to finding the objective.
 What, then, are they trying to find?
 Victory and glory
 Experience and exercise
 Camaraderie and connection
 To find me?
 It's not only for The Spirit to decide.
 What is the objective?
 To hide and hunt
 Discover and explore
 Slow and see
 To find me?
 One will see it's the camper who decides.





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SUMMERS THAT SHAPE A LIFETIME. SIMPLE. UNPLUGGED. CLOSE TO NATURE.

Help Us Find New Campers!

We have space for more new campers! An unprecedented number of campers aged out of camp last summer, leaving room for many new families to join us.

We are eager to fill the camp with boys whose lives will, without a doubt, be changed for the better by spending an unplugged, adventurous, safe summer on Great Pond.

For those of you who know first-hand the value of a summer at Pine Island, please help us share this news. Think back to how you learned about us, and extend an invitation to a family you know. Encourage families to visit our website, send us an email, or give us a call.

Sharing PIC with friends is almost as gratifying as spending a summer at Pine Island yourself.

Thank you,
 Sumner Ford
 Director



Parent Quotes

"There are no adequate words to thank you for providing our son with this summer. His step has never been lighter and more sure-footed. He's never been more present and centered. Never happier."

"I believe that this past summer at Pine Island was, quite simply, one of the most important experiences of our son's life and one of the best investments we could have made in his future."

"Not having grown up with a camp experience, I was a bit skeptical but I am a true convert based on the simplicity and serenity your camp has instilled in my son."



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