

The Pine Needle

Belgrade Lakes, Maine

July 2024

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

G.O.A.T. Trip Report By Jojo Murray & Bram Renick

G.O.A.T. (Greatest Of All Trips) is a trip orchestrated by two experienced senior campers, traversing numerous mountains in New Hampshire.

Pre-trip: When venturing out on a hiking trip, the first step is to assemble all your necessities, including: tents, food, etc. Then came forth a vision of what route we would take.

Day 1: We began our adventure with a two-hour drive. Fortunately, it was only a 3-mile hike to our campsite. We got there, ate dinner, and went to sleep, resting up for the next day.

Day 2: One of the hardest days. It was an 8-mile trek up the three Carter peaks. The views on the Carters were cool but not as cool as Mt. Hight. That peak was .2 miles of extreme uphill, but the scenery was worth it. It was a 360-degree view showing many mountains and valleys. We spent the night at the Carter Dome campsite.

Day 3: This proved to be one of the most challenging days of the trip. We started by trekking up the Wildcats, which are a set of five peaks, one of which is a ski slope. We reached a consensus to skip the steep downhill and go down one of the ski trails instead. On the way down, we met a ranger, a former Search and Rescue officer, who confirmed that our chosen route was much more efficient and even told us a story about how dangerous the steep downhill could be. We then arrived at Pinkham Notch, the hut at the base of Mt. Washington. We finished by going halfway up Mt. Madison to our campsite, where we rested after our 11-mile day.



Not G.O.A.T., but another great trip: Saddleback

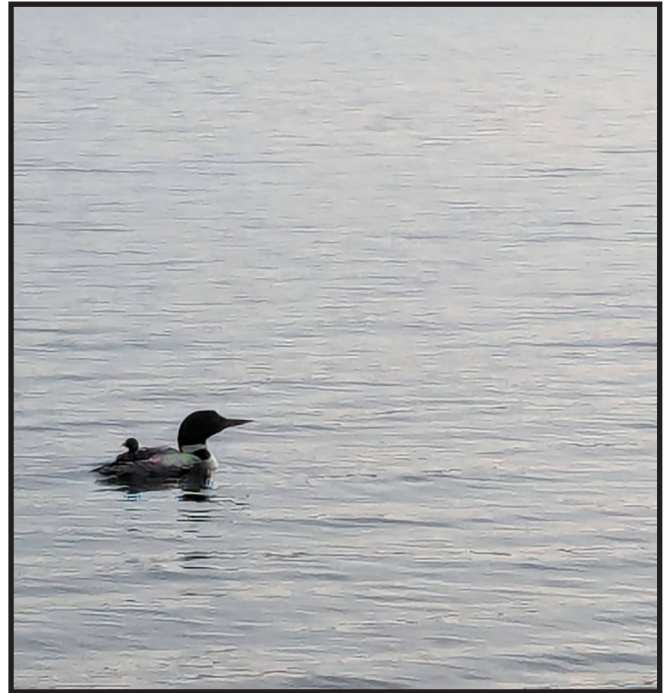
Day 4: This was our favorite day because we hiked along the Presidential Ridge, a mountain range where all the peaks are named after U.S. Presidents. We summited Mt. Madison and Mt. Adams. It was a tough but rewarding day. The views were spectacular, and we ended our day at a campsite called “The Perch!”

Day 5: We woke up and summited Mt. Jefferson, and then the most rewarding mountain of all: Mt. Washington! We chilled up there for a while, ate lunch, and then continued on to our last campsite.

Day 6: This was the easiest day: we woke up late and hiked an easy 2-3 miles down to our pickup point at Pinkham Notch. We had our store stop at a diner, where we all ate burgers and fries. We were exhausted, but very fulfilled and happy to return to PIC.

Survey: PIC Conspiracy Theories!
By Cosmo Oglesby

- “They have a froyo machine at Needle Point.”
– Kiran Dhawan
- “Maxx Murray is a sacred animal.”
– Ryker Baum
- “PIC is moored to the lake bottom.”
– Berly Fichthorn
- “Alex Toole was never a camper at PIC.”
– Josh King
- “There’s a secret Worst Camper award.”
– Cosmo Oglesby
- “Alex is a figurehead and Sumner is still fully in charge.”
– Miller Elston



Two-thirds of our Resident Loon Family



Where Was Austin Kimball?
by Miller Elston

Last summer at Pine Island, Austin Kimball was nowhere to be found. So, where was he? Here are some campers’ and counselors’ thoughts:

- “I think he was mining Bitcoin.” – Nick Newbold
- “I think he was studying under Santa at the North Pole.” – Sam Breese
- “I think he was living with a remote Brazilian tribe.”
– George Fawell

Personally, I think Austin was trying to find a new can of spam (preferably one less than eight years old) for Spamson the Somnambulant Sloth.

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PIC History! Interview with an Esteemed Expert

By Berly Fichthorn

I'm a second-year camper who wanted to know more about the recent history of Pine Island. After giving it some thought, I came to the conclusion that there is only one staff member who is up to this task: Maximus Murray. I came to him with questions, and this is what he said.

Q: What is your name, first year at Pine Island, and current occupation?

A: Maxx Murray, 2011, Assistant Director.

Q: How has the environment and quality of life changed since your first year?

A: There are more bugs due to climate change, but otherwise island life is almost identical.

Q: How have trips changed?

A: It's a bit easier to get on trips with a smaller camp, but the trips themselves are generally the same. However, I do remember a backcountry dish called gado-gado—kind of like pasta with a peanut-butter-based sauce—that doesn't seem very popular anymore.

Q: How has dustball culture changed?

A: The sport had been declining for the past few years, but we're seeing a dustball renaissance of sorts with the influx of new campers.

Q: What's the best thing that has happened for the PIC community since your first year?

A: Definitely the steps taken to reduce campers' sugar intake: no more "bug juice," less SNS candy and sugary cereals, and some serious donut limitations.

Q: How has the community changed in terms of campers?

A: Obviously the kids are different, but Pine Island culture has stayed more or less the same. I'd say the biggest change is the fact that campers who live all across the world can connect over TikTok or other media in the off-season.

Q: How has demand for certain activities changed?

A: Riflery used to be super popular and for the last few years it's been declining. But it has rebounded this summer. Also, rowing used to be a bottom-of-the-barrel activity, but it's made a huge resurgence in the last two years. Tennis had a big heyday a while back, with Junior and Senior Tennis Ladders every single year. It's about due for a comeback.

In conclusion: it was blast doing this interview and I'm looking forward to seeing the future of PIC!



Expedition Campers prep for their Long Trail hike.

The Pencil Sharpener

By Grant Pollack

Joe the bee wakes up in his humble pencil sharpener home to an alarm. Waaaa! Waaaa! the alarm sounds.

The queen bee's voice rings out across the sharpener. "Pencil! Pencil!" she cries. "There's a pencil that needs sharpening!"

The sharpener fills with voices. "Sharpen! Sharpen!" the bees cry.

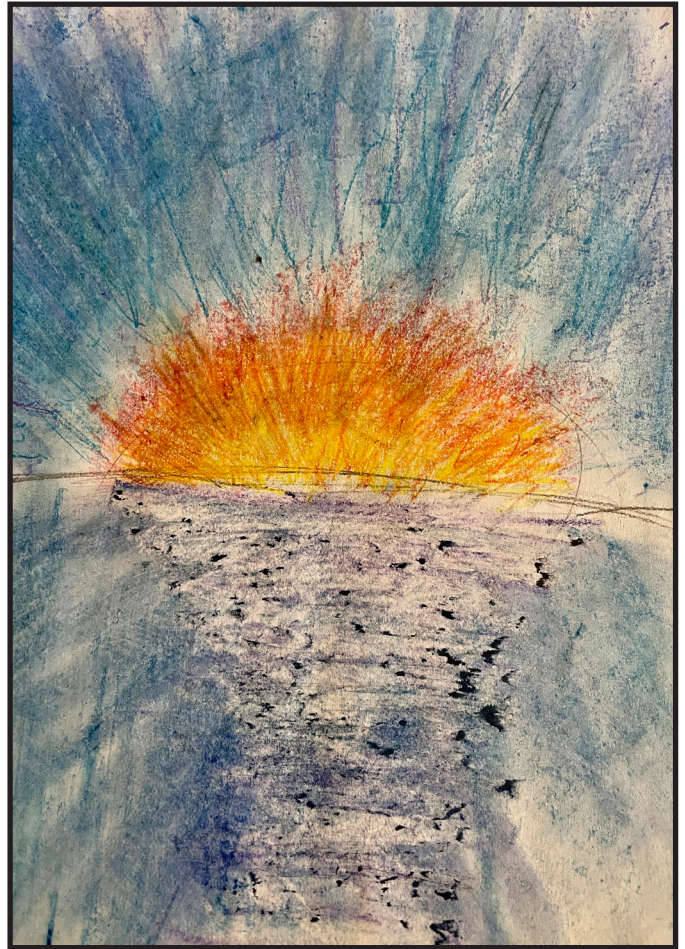
The alarm is soon drowned out by the Bzzzz! Bzzzz! of the bees sharpening. But the pencil leaves too soon.

All the bees grow quiet as the almighty voice* speaks.

"What the huh?" the voice says. "Looks like I'll have to unplug it."

"Noooo!" the queen bee cries. "We are being unplug—"

**The almighty voice is actually the person sharpening the pencil.*



The Blue Sunset by Oliver DeRose



Painting by Tim Comer

Trip Report: St. Croix

By Miller Elston

This is a four-day canoeing trip for ages 13-14 on the St. Croix River in Downeast Maine. On the first day, we had an early breakfast before starting our drive to the drop-off point. We ate lunch when we got there, then got out on the water. We paddled through many small rapids on the way to Little Falls, where we took all our gear to the campsite, then ran the rapids with empty canoes. Only one boat, piloted by two 14-year-olds who shall remain anonymous, flipped! Then we set up camp and went to sleep.

Day Two was a nicely uneventful day. We passed through a few medium-sized rapids, then reached our campsite and had pesto pasta for dinner—we had to pass the pot around and each take a bite until we finished it all. Then we took our boats a little ways out to watch the sunset from the water.

We started Day Three with a small portage, about a quarter- to a half-mile, before getting back on the river. It was mostly calm water, except for a few rapids. When we got to our campsite, we made a fire, then we saw a snapping turtle hanging around some rocks! We named it Bertha and watched it for a couple minutes before it left and we went to sleep.

On Day Four, we paddled on a big lake until we arrived at our pick-up spot. We played baseball with paddles and rocks until the van picked us up. We stopped for burgers, hot dogs, and ice cream on the way back at camp. It was a great trip!



Sunset on the Saint Croix River.



One Little Trip: A Short Story

By Asher Tulupman

Ma, she didn't believe me. Matter of fact, it wasn't just Ma; most of the people I told didn't believe me. Well, Chuck did, but he ain't the wisest.

On the second night of the hike, all of us lay down to sleep in the tent after a hard day. But I soon awoke. It was around midnight, but I'm unsure since my memories began to get fuzzy around this time.

I crawled out of my tent when I heard it: an angelic rustling in the leaves that I had to investigate. It hit me, a feeling of unconsciousness. I felt "third person," like a camera watching myself, as if I was a rat put in a maze to race. Then I saw it, a higher being. It reached out and I saw its other-wordly arms, with veins in a pattern strangely similar to the rat maze. I tried to look up to see the top of it, but found that I couldn't.

Then it reached out its hand, signaling me to touch it. I did, and before I knew it, I had moved into a room, a blank room with a big soup cauldron in the middle and a conveyor pushing me towards it.

Once I got in the soup, which had no color or texture, I sensed the ingredients: it was a soup of everyone and everything, sharing a mind, memories and thoughts.

Then I blinked, and this blink gave me a vision of my life, teleporting me to a tunnel of past memories. Unable to move, I sat and watched them. Once I reached the end, I fell down to the end of the trip, flooding me with new memories of the trails and campsites, as if something had taken my place while I was gone.



The Maine Peaks trippers napping on the summit of South Crocker.



Sunset by Henry Brockett

An Interview with Alex Toole By Averill McCullough

Q: What did you like about being a camper?
A: I really enjoyed the independence and learning camping skills. I also made a great network of friends.

Q: Any comment on Cosmo's portrayal of you in the SNS *Step Directors*?
A: I thought he did a great job and it was the perfect balance of comedy and good-natured teasing. I think he has a good performance career ahead of him.

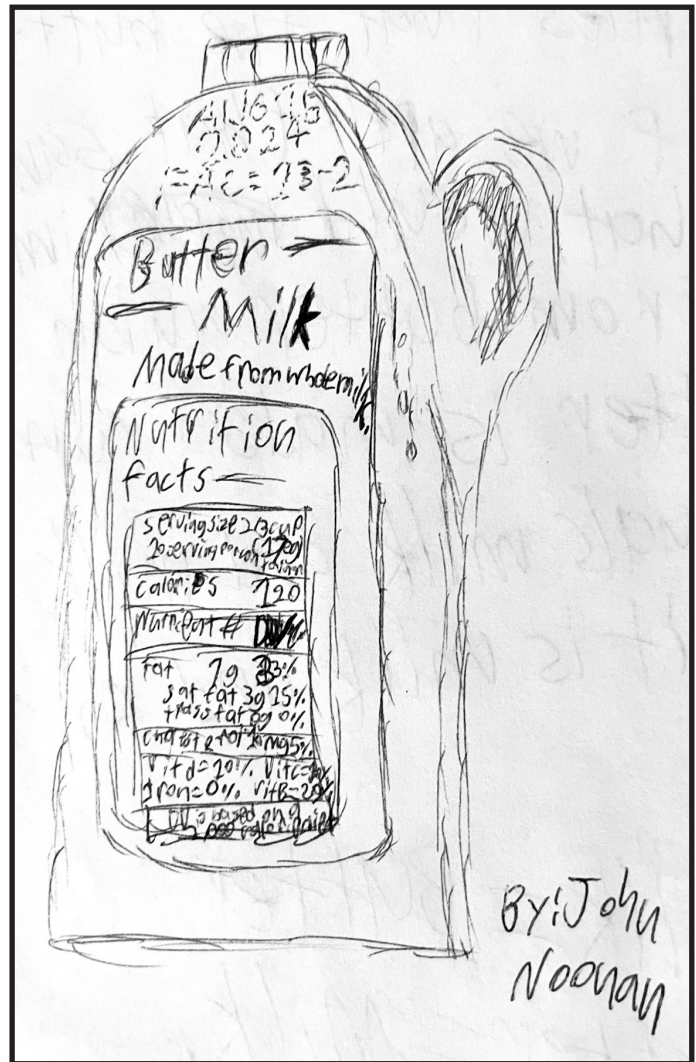
Q: What was your favorite activity combination as a camper?
A: I loved kayaking and woodcraft, and eventually became a kayaking instructor. I loved that you could have so much control over a boat, and woodcraft helped me prepare for trips.

Q: What are your main goals for the future of Pine Island?
A: I want to make PIC more diverse and accessible to boys from all over the world. I want to manage it in a way that allows it to exist for another 120 years and beyond, and to teach the staff skills that will help them in the future.

Q: What's your favorite ice cream flavor?
A: Mint chocolate chip; however, I recently tried a new flavor called "campfire s'mores," and it's pretty awesome.



Alex with his mom, Sandy Holland.



Rant About Buttermilk By John Noonan

Buttermilk must be the in-between state of the solid, butter, and the liquid, milk. Butter is made from milk, but milk isn't made from butter, which is why we don't have milkbutter. But the word "milkbutter" implies that the butter is made from milk, and if we apply that same logic to buttermilk that would imply that milk is made from butter, which sounds wrong! But if butter equals milk and milk can't make milk because it is milk then to conclude:

Milk = Butter
Butter = Milk
Buttermilk = good!

The End.

Food Review: Whitehead Lobster Feast By Javier De Leon

Appetizers: Carrots and ranch were pretty good, and celery sticks with hummus were just as good and fulfilled hunger as an appetizer.

Cornbread: It crumbled but was way better than all the other cornbreads I've had.

Lobster: Really good! Unique way to eat it, and it was fun throwing the shells on the rocks for the seagulls.

S'mores: Really good dessert, really wish I could've had more. I toasted my marshmallows really well!

Scenery: Foggy and hard to see. But it was nice to be by the ocean.



*Lobster Pot on the Rocks at Whitehead
by Javier De Leon*



Lobster Feast at Whitehead

The True Meaning of the Head Waiter By Austin Kimball

Some people might think that being the Head Waiter just means bossing younger campers around, but it is so much more.

Head Waiter is a way for older campers to learn responsibility and consequences. The responsibility is teaching the younger kids how to clean up after themselves, how to do it properly and not lazily. The consequences are if you don't teach the younger kids well, they won't do a good job and you will fail inspection and make the LTIPs' jobs harder.

So the next time you're Head Waiter, remember the weight of responsibility that comes with your authority.

The LTIP Interviews

By Sam Breese

I'm Sam Breese, a third-year camper. My favorite things about Pine Island are the people and the island. While we all contribute to this great community, it's the LTIPs and the LTIP Wrangler, Hannah, who keep the island in tip-top shape. I had the honor of interviewing them in the middle of their workday, and this is what they said.

Hannah

Teddy (an LTIP)

Q: Do you like this job?

A: I certainly do!

Q: What are some challenges of being an LTIP Wrangler?

A: Keeping everyone motivated to do hard work.

Q: What are some of the projects you've been taking on this summer (besides the usual maintenance work you do)?

A: We built a raised walkway and a composting site on the mainland, and we're working on an erosion-control project on the range.

Q: What is it like being an LTIP?

A: It's a stressful, fun and unique experience. I like knowing that I keep the island running.

Q: How do you feel about Hannah as your boss?

A: She's a great boss who gives equitable workloads to all the LTIPs.

Q: What do you like best about Pine Island?

A: I believe it's a place where everyone is connected in a unique way.

After taking a look at the inner workings of Pine Island, I have concluded that it's running well in the hands of Hannah and the LTIPs.

Editor's Note: The Leadership Training Internship Program (LTIP) teaches rising high school juniors and seniors numerous skills. LTIPs learn how to drive motorboats, use power tools, work in the kitchen, and perform countless maintenance tasks around the island, most of which require ingenuity and many of which involve getting dirty. They also learn how to lead trips and teach activities.



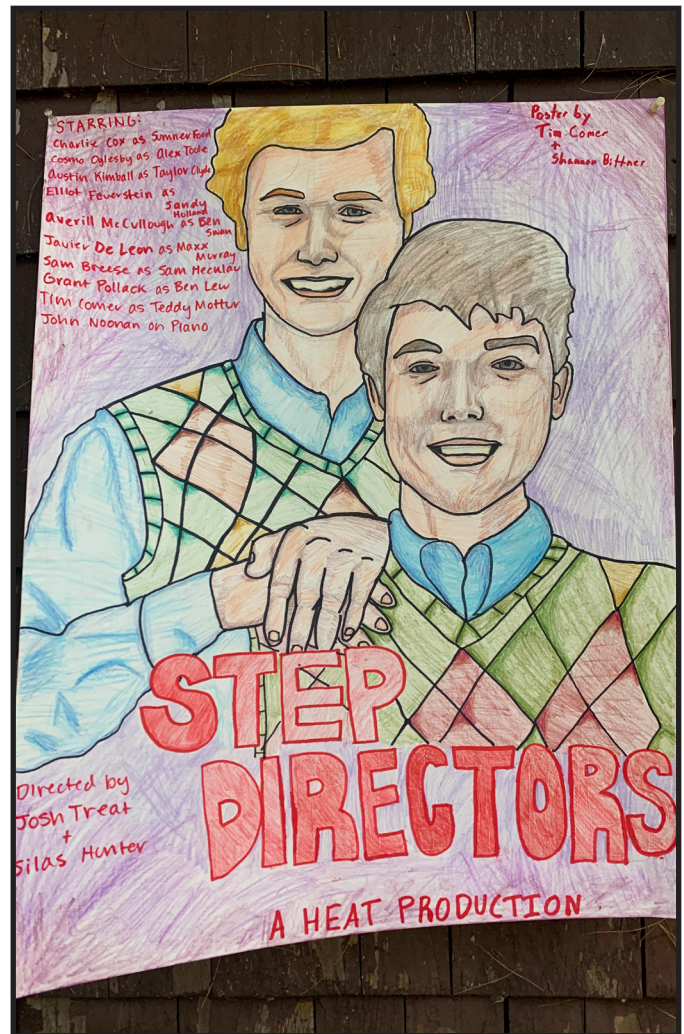
SNS Review: Step Directors By Grant Pollack

A recent SNS (Saturday Night Show) was a Pine-Island-ified version of the movie *Step Brothers*. The story is about Sumner and Alex being forced to merge their separate camps, or they will both fail.

The main antagonist is Taylor because he wants to buy Pine Island. Sumner and Alex end up having to work together to save the camp. The cast is as follows:

Charlie Cox as Sumner Ford
 Cosmo Oglesby as Alex Toole
 Austin Kimble as Taylor Clyde
 Elliot Feuerstein as Sandy Holland
 Averill McCullough as Ben Swan
 Javier De Leon as Maxx Murray
 Sam Breese as Sam Hecklau
 Grant Pollack as Ben Lew
 Tim Comer as Teddy Mottur
 and John Noonan on piano!

This show was directed by Josh Treat and Silas Hunter. Tim Comer and Shannon Bittner designed the poster.



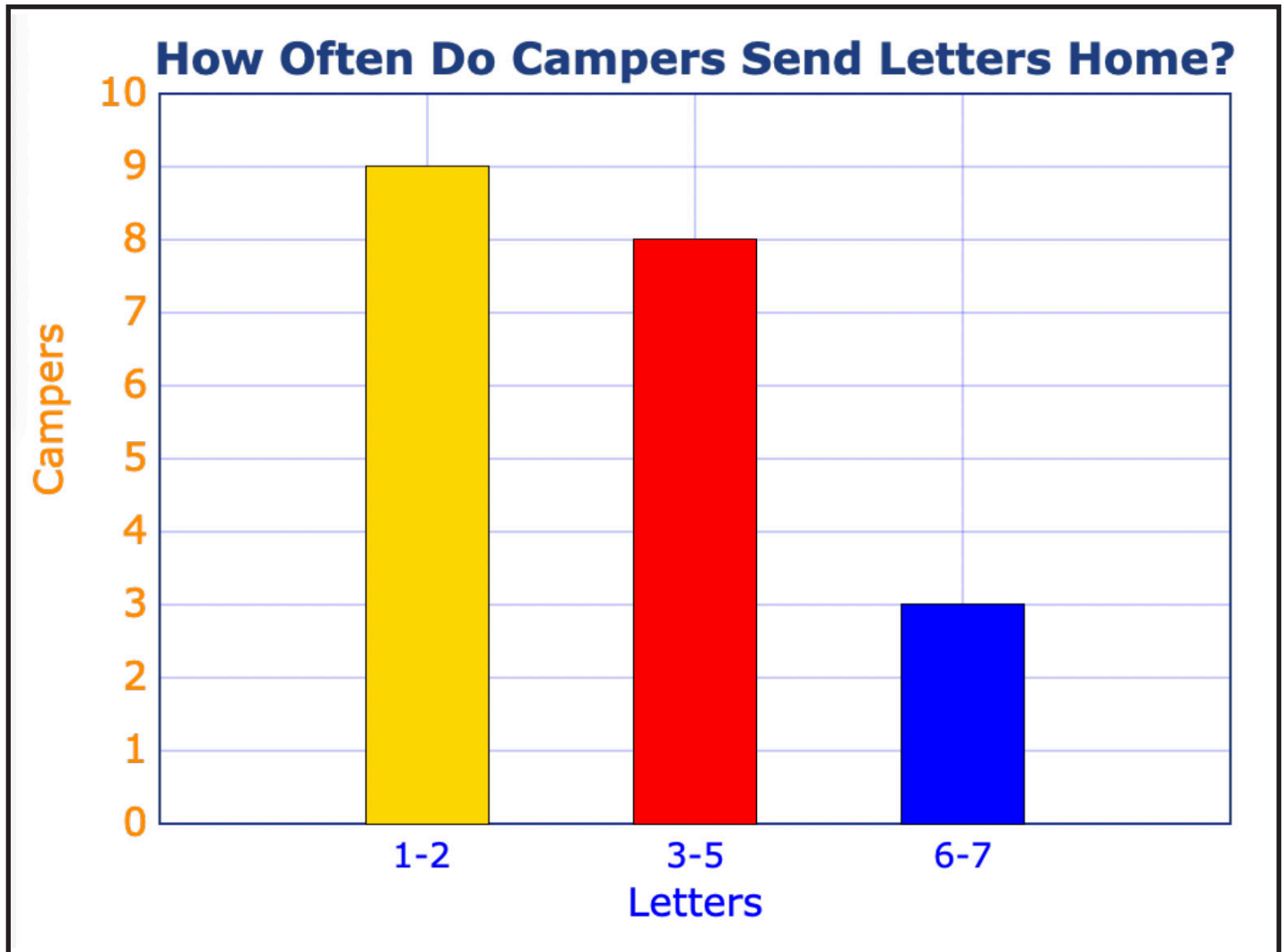
TPUANCNOSI: An Exposé By Rudy Nichols

A strange phenomenon has arisen on the Second Island: a rebellious new nation, founded by the Bezumarangs! The citizens of The People's Underground Anarcho-Communist Nation On the Second Island (TPUANCNOSI) have begun seizing the means of production and abolish both the capitalist class and the ruling class. Most of the citizens of the main island are trying to shut down the new nation; however, a select few may have secretly joined TPUANCNOSI. Although resources are scarce on the Second Island, there appears to be successful crop growth.

How Often Do Campers Send Letters Home?

By Grant Pollack

I often wonder: how often do campers send letters to their parents? So I conducted a survey to find out:



This is sad news. It shows that very few campers actually send a lot of letters. Their parents wait and wait and barely get anything! Seems like most campers only send letters when they have to. I did also notice that several kids are thoughtful and send quite a few letters. I believe all campers should write at least five letters for their family.

PIC Word Search!

By Grant Pollack

Words can be found in any direction (including backward, forward, and diagonal) and can overlap.

A A J S L A M I N A F G K S V
 E H S T N M C F S I O Z J R V
 H N Y G J A H A G C S X P O Y
 M A I P S G C F O D B N F L P
 F W L P A R Z B Z Y F A E E S
 B O R L E X N L K N O H Q S R
 O S F D X P J O K K M I V N E
 A R T N Z O E C F B F X P U P
 T O T N L D S K Q R Y X Z O M
 H T V M O Y T S Q D W C D C A
 O C Q T O D N R D N A L S I C
 U E S A G C E A D J S S U B Y
 S R T A A Q T A B A B A K C P
 E I M M S E I T I V I T C A T
 H D P V Q L P T R I P S E A J

Word Bank

- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| 1. kababa | 2. directors | 3. tents | 4. blocks |
| 5. camp | 6. trips | 7. animals | 8. honk |
| 9. hall | 10. pine | 11. sacred | 12. campers |
| 13. boathouse | 14. activities | 15. island | 16. counselors |