

## HONORING EMILY SWAN: A LEGACY OF LOYALTY

Last December, Emily Swan fully retired from Pine Island after more than 30 years as the camp's Business Manager. This was a woefully inadequate job title; Emily seamlessly handled everything from finances and payroll to logistics and endlessly frustrating regulations. Her attention to detail touched every aspect of camp life, both during the summer and throughout the year. As she finally settles into full retirement, it felt essential to recognize Emily's sweeping contributions, so at the 2024 Farewell Feed, we took a moment to honor her legacy.

Years ago, Ben Swan shared a story that aptly described Emily's role. A



communications; and preparing minutes for all Board meetings.

And that doesn't even include Emily's work during the summer, a great deal of which was also behind the scenes, unnoticed in the daily lives of Pine Islanders. She staffed the Mainland Office every morning, stocked and managed the Camp Store, conducted periodic safety checks, tended to flower boxes, tested drinking water, arranged camping permits, and made countless other contributions that went far beyond logistics. She was the heartbeat of Pine Island, working tirelessly to keep the camp running smoothly while nurturing its unique community spirit.

Emily also managed to incorporate her hobbies of foraging and birdwatching into her work. She participated in Belgrade Lakes' annual loon count and carefully monitored the algae levels in Great Pond each summer. During meetings at the mainland office, she would often hop up suddenly, grab her binoculars, and rush outside to catch sight of a bird she had just heard calling. On other occasions, she'd return to the island with a basket full of edible mushrooms—black trumpets, chanterelles, or hen of the woods—from some undisclosed location in the woods. In recognition of these passions, Pine Island has dedicated a section of its



Ben & Emily Swan outside Magoon, 2011

camper, seeking trivia for a campfire game, asked Ben for information about staff that most people on the island wouldn't know. Ben said, "Well, did you know that Emily graduated from Harvard Law School?"

The camper replied: "Duh, anyone who could run this camp *single-handedly* would've gone to a school like that!"

That camper's wisecrack was actually quite astute. A (very) broad overview of Emily's *off-season* duties alone includes: preparing and tracking the PIC budget; depositing funds and reconciling accounts; processing donations and generating donation reports from the PIC database; sorting and processing incoming mail; ordering all office

supplies; preparing and processing all camper forms mailed to parents; preparing annual updates of the Staff Manual, Health Policy Manual, Emergency Procedures, Infirmary Manual, Kitchen Manual, and Driver's Bible; handling "all insurance matters"; preparing and submitting the annual Maine State Fundraising Report and Charitable Solicitation Registration application; ensuring annual renewal of PIC's Maine state operating license; preparing, distributing, and tracking all paychecks, tax forms, and benefits documents; copyediting the *Pine Needle*, parent and prospect letters, camper address list, fundraising letters, e-newsletters, and other major

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## A TALE OF TWO DIRECTORS

By Alex Toole

This summer was a season of growth and transition as I served as Pine Island Co-Director alongside Sumner Ford, who is stepping down after seven years of dedicated leadership. From day one, Sumner showed incredible graciousness, making space for me to take on most of the leadership responsibilities while remaining a steady source of support and guidance. He encouraged me to find my own voice as a leader while ensuring I always had someone to turn to for advice. It was a perfect balance of mentorship and autonomy, which allowed me to grow into the role with confidence.

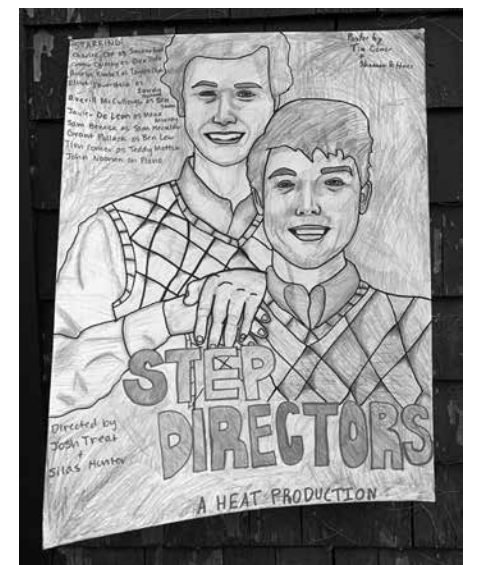
Sumner's approach to training was hands-on and thoughtful. He never hesitated to answer my many questions, no matter how big or small, and he

shared invaluable insights from his years of experience. Watching him handle challenges and interact with staff and campers reaffirmed the values that make Pine Island so special. His calm demeanor, thoughtful decision-making, and unwavering dedication to the camp's mission made him an exceptional role model.

I'll never forget when I got a phone call late at night from a trip requesting an evacuation the next day for an injured camper. Given that it was my first time dealing with a situation like this as Director (not to mention well past my bedtime), I was stressed. Bringing Sumner into the conversation, he calmly looked at me and said, "Well, what does your gut tell you? Where should we pick them up and at what time?" He

kept everything so even-keeled and emotionally constant, and urged me to follow my instincts. This gave me a great perspective on strong leadership.

As I prepare to take the helm as the sole Director in 2025, I'm deeply grateful for the time I spent working with Sumner. His mentorship not only equipped me with the skills and knowledge to lead, it also reaffirmed my love for Pine Island Camp and its incredible community. While I'll miss having him by my side, I'm excited to carry forward the legacy of leadership and care that he exemplified so well. Best of luck to Sumner in his new job at The Nature Conservancy, and here's to hoping he comes back to visit. Let's send him off with a heartfelt "Akka Lakka!"



This Saturday Night Show, a parody of the 2008 film "Step Brothers," explored the comedic side of the summer's unique management structure.

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library to books on birding and foraging, along with binoculars and foraging tools. These additions ensure that Emily's love of the natural world will continue to inspire campers for generations.

Most meaningfully, though, Emily's name has been added to Pine Island's Loyalty Award—a testament to the qualities she embodies and instills in others. This prestigious award celebrates Pine Island's core values: honesty, good humor, independence, cooperation,

responsibility, and generosity. Emily's name now joins those of past leaders—Molly Swan, Eugene L. Swan, Jr., and Katharine W. Swan—who exemplify these principles that define the Pine Island community. As Director of Operations Sarah Hunter reflected, "Pine Island is better because of Emily's commitment, dedication, and loyalty." Pine Islanders far and wide wish her a happy retirement; she has certainly earned it!



Books and equipment for the PIC Library's new foraging and birdwatching section

## CANDYGATE 2024: THE SWEET DEBATE AT PIC

This summer, Pine Island Camp was rocked by a seismic policy shift. As far back as anyone can remember, campers had always received two cherished pieces of candy for consumption during the weekly Saturday Night Show (SNS). But in 2024, Director Alex Toole made the bold decision to reduce the candy ration by half, to just one piece. "It's a decision I made after consulting with health experts, budget spreadsheets, and a very persuasive ant colony," Toole explained.

The reaction was immediate and highly polarized. Campers, accustomed to a two-pronged sugar fix, expressed their dismay in dramatic terms. "I didn't survive canoe capsizes and campfire smoke in my eyes just to have one serving of processed sugars per week," complained one camper, clutching a bag of standard Skittles. Another lamented: "This is the Nanny State in action. I was watching FOX News with my uncle and never understood what they were talking about. Now I get it!"

Counselors, on the other hand, rejoiced at the reduction in sugar-fueled chaos. "The energy levels after two candies were... terrifying," said counselor Nick Newbold, recalling a time that some campers tried to stage an impromptu Saturday night mosh pit. "One piece is perfect. They still get their treat, but it doesn't turn the tent into a circus." Other counselors reported enjoying quieter post-SNS evenings, with one saying: "Honestly, this change saved my sanity. I can finally hear myself think after bedtime."

While CandyGate may remain a hot topic of debate, one thing is certain: the Pine Island tradition of sweets on Saturday night is here to stay, just in slightly smaller portions. And should campers find themselves craving more—well, there's always next week's show. Or as Director Toole puts it, "Hey, this is Pine Island; learning to adapt is a great way to build character!"

## PINE ISLAND WELCOMES A NEW FURRY RESIDENT!

By Alex Toole



for swimming (her absolute favorite), and new best friends at every turn. It was hard to tell who was more delighted, Scout or the campers watching her leap into the water like she was training for Greased Watermelon. By the middle of the summer, she'd become an expert at greeting campers, lounging in the sun, and helping me during campfire activities, which resulted in one of the summer's funniest moments.

One night at Campfire, we decided to play a new game starring Scout. Six campers had to build her a toy using only materials they could find on the beach. The goal? To see which creation Scout would choose to play with. There were a couple of elaborate contraptions made of scrap wood and acorns, one tied together with lengths of found rope, and even a mini "cat sculpture" made of rocks. When it was time for Scout to decide, she trotted through the assortment of handcrafted masterpieces—and chose a plain old stick that a camper had lazily picked up and tossed into consideration, claiming this was their submission to the contest. The laughter was contagious, and Scout, tail wagging, was in her element. That stick? It became her new favorite toy for a few days, until it was gnawed to wood chips.

This past summer, I had the joy of bringing my dog, Scout, to Pine Island. She's a sweet, quirky creature, and while I had high hopes that she'd fit right in, her start at camp was a little rocky—literally and figuratively. At first, Scout was nervous about all the commotion: the boats, the chanting, the endless parade of enthusiastic kids wanting to pet her. Her response was to bark. A lot. She barked at boats, at campers, at particularly suspicious-looking pinecones. But with each passing day, she found her rhythm. Slowly but surely, she started to relax, learning that camp life wasn't so scary after all.

Scout's transformation didn't go unnoticed. The campers loved her, and she quickly became everyone's unofficial mascot. For Scout, camp was paradise: endless hours outside, a lake



## ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SLOAN CRITCHFIELD MEMORIAL BOAT MAINTENANCE WEEKEND!



This year's Sloan Critchfield Memorial Boat Maintenance Weekend was a tremendous success. Pine Island's wooden boats are ready for the 2025 camp season thanks to a terrific group of volunteers led by alum and builder Cody Smith. But it's not just about working on the boats. It's about honoring the memory of our friend Sloan Critchfield, a Pine Island camper and counselor and lover of boats who passed away in 2004 when he was just 20 years old. Everyone who knew Sloan still misses him, and it's fitting that an annual gathering at Pine Island to care for our fleet of beautiful wooden boats is in his memory.

Special thanks to our generous volunteers, including Austin Barr, Dan

Bristol, Gene and Heidi Brown, Ben Cabot, Sawyer Carson, Tom Disario, Whit Fisher, Miles Frank, Byron Gaspard and Andrea Salas, Justin Gaspard, Ryan, Ian, and Owen Gilbert, Charles Hale, Thomas Hallett, Doug Handy, Isaac Karchmer, Robin Pfahning, Ramunas and Lukas Balcetis, Will and Ethan Pomerantz, AJ Powers, Akul Sethi, Satchel Toole and Monica Manning, Josh Treat, Peter Tulupman, Peter and Otey Ward and staff members Ben Swan, Hannah Gordon, Silas Hunter, Drake Loomis, and Alex Toole.

If you've never attended a Sloan Critchfield Memorial Boat Maintenance Weekend before, come on up next September 19-21! It's well worth the trip.

# REFLECTIONS ON MY FIRST YEAR AS FACILITIES MANAGER

By Peter Thompson

As I sat for my interview in Brunswick last winter, listening to Ben Swan give some PIC history and describe not only the position to be filled, but the Pine Island experience, I was amazed at how well it fit with my life and work experiences. No electricity...check! After managing a fish hatchery in a small native Alaskan village on the western tip of the Kenai Peninsula, my wife and I had built a small off-grid cabin when we returned to Maine in 2017. Living in tents...check! When we got back to our forested 85 acres in New Sharon last July, we lived in a tent for three weeks while we built a proper structure to get out of the weather. Bathing outside...check! We didn't have the shower drain hooked up until mid-October that year, so that meant heating water over the campfire and washing (very quickly) in an outdoor shower between some mature hard maple trees. Composting toilets...check! Yes, that also meant walking out to the unheated outhouse when the temperature was -20° in the winter months. Operating a water system...

check! While I was down in New Mexico running a rainbow trout hatchery for Game and Fish, I was certified as a Level 2 Water Operator, since we had a public water system that supplied drinking water to the local ranching community. Carpentry...check! I built my first fine furniture studio in 2005 and have progressed from there as a rough carpenter. Presently we have three tiny houses and are building the main house on our property. And the list comparing experience with needed skills could go on...

Another thing that stood out to me during the interview was the fact that Pine Island is technology-free for the campers. This is wonderful. For the first two years that I taught Wood Shop at Mount Blue Middle School in Farmington, they allowed students to carry their cell phones to class. Disengagement and challenging behaviors came down drastically when this policy was changed. It's so important that when boys are placed in the Pine Island environment, they can connect

with the physical world and create healthy social relationships with each other without these types of modern-day distractions.

Two instances in particular this summer highlighted for me how special Pine Island Camp is. The first was coming into the Dining Hall one morning prior to breakfast. Tables were set, sun was shining through all the windows and the view of the lake was spectacular. The second was walking down to Aristocracy one day to fix a tent platform support while the campers were in activities. It was extremely hot, until a slight breeze picked up and blew through the tents. A few of them had both their flaps open, showing how close the lake was on the Western side. It was like being in a postcard.

I'm very excited about the projects we have scheduled for the coming year, including upgrades to our "physical plant." PIC's water system and Perches will see improvements starting in April. There are quite a few infrastructure improvements in the works as well. This



*Peter quickly masters the art of KWS-driving as Summer looks on.*

fall a group of volunteers rebuilt the platforms of Tents 2 and 6, and they look beautiful. Now I can really envision the rest of the Ridge's platforms matching these two in the near future. This winter will be a time to reflect on what was accomplished last year and a time to plan on what can be achieved for 2025!

## THE KING'S GAME

### Unorthodox Tactics and Unlikely Heroes Define Mercer Victory

By Nick Isles, Head Umpire



*Starks defenders at South Gate*

Once again, a peaceful Pine Island summer was disrupted in the final week as the Armies of Starks and Mercer found themselves called to battle, each marching into York's Crossing aiming to rise as victor of the King's Game. Day One displayed the strengths of both armies. The Mercers used their wit and experience to rack up a healthy number of challenge points, and in an unusual twist, many of these points were won by a camper, Isaac Karchmer, whose efforts were hailed by

one umpire as "one of the best camper King's Game performances ever—way better than many counselors I've seen!" The Starks, meanwhile, combatted this challenge point deficit with simple and effective fundamentals. Their defense was especially effective at limiting the number of points scored during "lockdown"—the portion of each period when (according to the math) the attackers' dwindling manpower means that the defenders *should* be able to stop them from scoring entirely.

As a result, the first day ended with the outcome very much up in the air. On the morning of Day Two, the Starks switched up their defensive strategy, which turned out to be a rather reckless move that ultimately turned the tides against them. The Mercers took advantage of this shift, managing to score almost all their previously unscored players before securing a third and final scoring point for a large portion of their army. As a result, the Starks faced a nearly insurmountable

challenge as they attempted to mount an epic comeback in their final attack period. Throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Mercers (and their Blue Army predecessors) have been renowned for their ability to effectively close games on defense, and this year proved no different. After the final whistle blew, the Mercers were crowned the victors of the 2025 Kings Game, by a score of 177 to 150.

## “KEEP ON RIDIN’... !”

### Controversy Surrounds New Clothing Brand, Classic Pine Island Band Faces Legacy Concerns

By Ben Swan

Anyone who was a camper or counselor from the late 1980s through last summer will have fond memories of epic performances, both at campfire and at Club Honk, by the fan favorite Hippy Cowboys. Founders Dan Steinhacker and Joe Kovaz co-authored the PIC megahit “Keep on Ridin’ on the Tilt-a-Whirl” and other perennial favorites such as “Kababa” and “Down by the Pumphouse,” and in the process, established a band that simply would not go away. Much like Black Sabbath, Genesis, or Parliament, the Hippy Cowboys have added and subtracted numerous members over the past 35-plus years, including Chris Newlin, Matt Clarke, Ian Swain, Forrest Brown, Walker McDonald, Sam Chester, Mark Pierce (who sang lead vocals on “Tilt-a-Whirl” on the *Campfire* album), Corinne Alsop, Matthew Hawkins, Toby Bregar, David Efron, Nat Burr, and George Baldwin.



A recent email from Dan Steinhacker included a photo of a “Hippie Cowboy” logo on a shirt label, alerting the *Needle* to a brewing controversy and a raft of burgeoning theories unimpeded by facts. When asked in a recent email exchange whether there might be a connection between the Hippie Cowboy brand and the enduring Pine-Island-based

band, Steinhacker responded with a typically cryptic Hippy Cowboy utterance: “Who am I to argue?” Meanwhile, band co-founder Joe Kovaz, now teaching at a Zen center in Cambridge, MA, mused in a recent phone interview: “Man, sounds like a clear case of copyright infringement to me. Hey, did we ever copyright our name? We definitely should have. Wow, this is surreal...”

The smoldering question of a connection and possible copyright infringement burst into a raging firestorm of controversy when it was discovered that the Hippie Cowboy clothing line is a pet project of San Francisco 49ers star running back Christian McCaffrey, who designed the clothes and promotes the brand. His connection to PIC was not immediately apparent, but soon became so when fans pointed out that he is married to former Miss Universe Olivia Culpo, first cousin and close friend of none other than Pine Islanders Amandine, Cecily, Millie, and Maddie Pulver! “Given the widespread cultural influence of the Hippy Cowboys, I’m not surprised that Christian would want to ride the coattails of their enduring fame to promote his brand,” Cecily remarked. “Hardly a day goes by where one of the Pulver sisters isn’t strolling about humming one of their hits. He could have latched on to the potential for brand name recognition as early as the engagement party last year. It seems pretty clear that one could draw a nearly straight line from PIC to his new clothing line.”

Hippy Cowboys long-time rival Johnny Creditcard, reached at what he described as his estate outside Nashville, pointed out that the Hippie Cowboy clothing is made in China and quipped, “Doesn’t surprise me. No doubt those two no-talent clowns are behind this massive sellout.” When asked what proof he had of



*Christian McCaffrey and Olivia Culpo at a swanky event, with a guest appearance by Pine Islander Cecily Pulver (top left)*

this, Creditcard angrily responded, “Don’t give me that proof stuff. The only proof I need is 90 proof! They always were frauds.”

Some might chalk up Creditcard’s bitter response to the continuing strong sales of the Hippy Cowboys’ “Tilt-a-Whirl” while Johnny’s one-time chart topper “A Camper Named Sue” has all but disappeared from both campfire and the country charts. In reality, with the exception of “Stairway to the North Perch,” “On the Cover of the *Pine Needle*,” and “Should I Sail or Should I Row,” none of which were penned by the brilliant Steinhacker/Kovaz songwriting duo, neither The Hippy Cowboys nor Johnny Creditcard have produced any new music for decades, and it has been reported that the Hippy Cowboys may have finally played their last gig. Creditcard insists he has turned down many large-venue gigs since he appeared on the *Campfire* album and is working on “something really special that will be welcomed by campers and critics alike.” In a recent phone interview, Pine Island Director Alex Toole, a talented musician and performer in his own right, brought

us up to date on the current music scene at Pine Island and on the Cowboys and Creditcard legacies.

“The most recent incarnation of the Hippy Cowboys did appear once, and a new band came on the scene this past summer, providing the kind of foil for the Cowboys that Johnny Creditcard once offered,” Toole explained. “The Dories, a Beatles-inspired band, are rule-followers; they love Staff Week and professional development, they revere the Staff Manual, and they write Personnel Policies when they aren’t practicing. This summer, they debuted at Club Honk and also appeared at one or two campfires, playing ‘Hey Jude,’ ‘Let It Be,’ ‘I’m a Camper at PIC,’ ‘A Camper Named Sue,’ and their original: ‘Whoa King Kababa,’ a rewrite of José Feliciano’s ‘Feliz Navidad.’ This new song in the PIC repertoire was a huge hit, bringing crowds to their feet and inspiring near-religious fervor. Another musician who made an appearance this summer was DJ Johnny Crypto, the European cousin of Johnny Creditcard. He performed EDM remixes of ‘Ring of Fire,’ ‘Folsom Prison Blues,’ and ‘I Walk the Line.’ Campers weren’t sure what to think at first, given the foreign nature of the hits, but they were hooked after the first big bass drop. I’m sure the Steinhacker/Kovaz team and JCC will be glad to hear that good music, including theirs, is alive and well at Pine Island Camp.”

Neither McCaffrey nor Culpo responded to repeated requests for comment, suggesting that they almost certainly owe the Hippie Cowboy brand name to their Pine Island connections, and are eager to avoid a public outcry and possibly the wrath of the King.

## PIC TO ADD NEW WATER ACTIVITY IN 2025!

This summer, Pine Island will make a splash with the addition of paddleboarding to our activity offerings. That’s right: campers will now have the chance to balance on boards, glide across the water, and maybe even discover that falling off can be half the fun.

Why paddleboarding? First, it’s a natural fit for PIC’s focus on adventure and outdoor exploration. Plus, who wouldn’t want to channel their inner surfer while surrounded by the beauty of Great Pond? “We’re always looking for new ways to get

campers out of their comfort zones and into the water,” said Director Alex Toole. “And let’s be honest—watching first-timers wobble around like the Flaming Go on roller skates is going to be hilarious.”

Paddleboarding offers something for everyone. For those who crave serenity, there’s nothing like paddling through calm waters, basking in Maine’s natural beauty. “It’s like yoga on water, but with the added bonus of fish occasionally splashing you in the face,” said longtime staff member and paddleboard enthusiast Ben Cabot.

Paddleboarding also aligns with Pine Island’s commitment to skill-building. Campers will learn balance, core strength, and navigation—all while laughing so hard they won’t realize they’re getting a workout. “Paddleboarding teaches resilience,” explained Assistant Director Taylor Clyde, who will help train staff in the new activity. “Because the first rule of paddleboarding is: You will fall. The second rule? Laugh when you do.”

We’re looking for two counselors to teach this new activity, pioneers of the program and mavericks who are

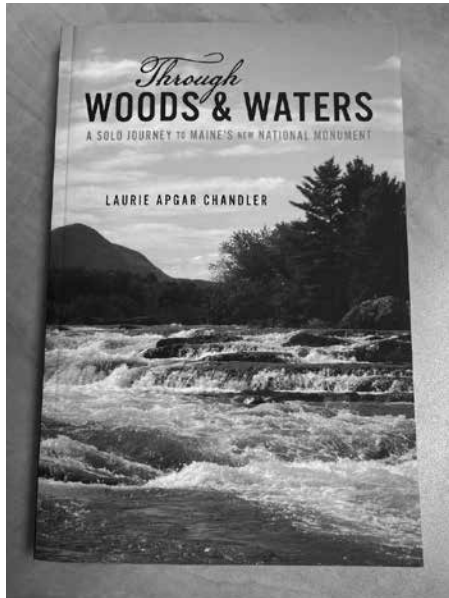
willing to go where no Pine Islander has gone before. If you are that person, or you know someone who is, please reach out!

We can’t wait to see campers take to the boards next summer. Whether they’re exploring coves, racing their friends, or tweaking campfire classics (White Knight, Black Knight, anyone?), this new activity promises to make waves. Stay tuned for updates on paddleboarding adventures in the *Mid-Summer Pine Needle*. Let the balancing act begin!

## PIC APPEARS IN LITERATURE (AGAIN)!

### 2018 Expedition Campers and Nicky Isles Appear in Laurie Apgar Chandler's *Through Woods and Waters*.

By Sarah Hunter



Late one night last fall, in a lodge bunkhouse deep in Maine's Hundred-Mile Wilderness, I discovered, much to my surprise, that my weekend reading material mentioned Pine Island! *Through Woods & Waters*, about the author's 2018 solo journey to and through Maine's recently established National Monument, had been on my book list for a few years. But it wasn't until the previous weekend, while camping outside Baxter State Park for a gravel bike event, that I had purchased a copy from the Golden Road Crossing. Now, tucked into the top bunk on another gravel bike trip, reading by headlamp, I found that early in her journey, on the West Branch of the Penobscot River, the author, Laurie Chandler, had crossed paths with a "group of boys from Pine Island Camp on Belgrade Lakes." This was exciting! I wanted to text Sumner, but it was late, and there was no cell service. I read on, wondering who the Pine Islanders were and whether they would show up again.

A few pages (and river bends) later, there they were! "Not far downstream from Big Ragmuff," Chandler writes, "I discovered the group from Pine Island packing up at a roomy, attractive campsite on Big Island... We talked back and forth as we paddled... the campers were from all over the states and even London." Now I knew which group it was! In 2018, we sent out two Expedition Camp groups. This one was led by Ian Ford and Satchel Toole and included Dylan Ashby, David Austin, Ben Brill, Ash Fraiman, Alex Sidorsky, Tom Straus, Anders Westermann, and Cole Wofford.

But there was more to come. Nicky Isles, who spent fourteen summers at Pine Island as a camper, counselor, and driver, soon entered the cast of characters. On his way to resupply the Ex-Camper canoe trip in 2018, he got a flat tire on the Golden Road, which delayed his arrival at Allagash Carry and put him in a position to offer assistance to a certain fellow paddler.

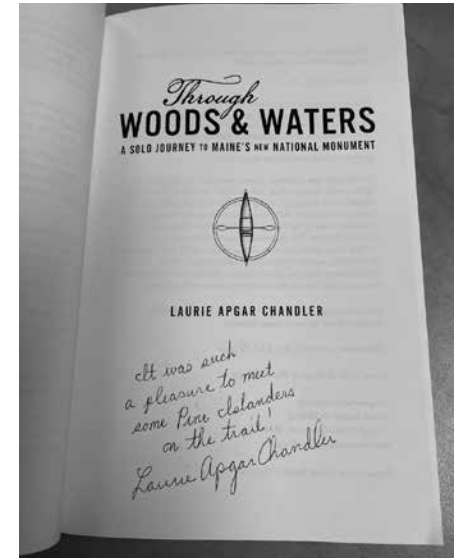
"When I arrived [at Allagash Carry]," Chandler writes, "...gear was spread everywhere—tents set up and sleeping bags and clothes drying in the sun. I recognized some of it. The Pine Island campers must be somewhere ahead, portaging their canoes. Just then, I heard a vehicle approaching. The driver, Nicky, hopped out with a friendly hello."

Nicky had expected to move the campers' canoes, but they had already shouldered the heavy loads in his absence, so he offered to help Ms. Chandler instead. He strapped her canoe to the truck, and they headed down the road together. "As we passed [the campers], Nicky offered encouragement but didn't stop...it's good for those boys to carry the canoes, he said."

As Nicky navigated the tricky, potholed road, he talked about Pine Island and the Expedition Camp program, but it was his kindness and generosity that made an impression on Ms. Chandler. He saved her from a



The 2018 Ex-Camp group that Ms. Chandler encountered on the Allagash. Standing: Ian Ford, Cole Wofford, Anders Westerman, Dylan Ashby, Ash Fraiman, Alex Sidorsky, Satchel Toole. Kneeling: David Austin, Ben Brill, Tom Straus.



Laurie Apgar Chandler's inscription in her book, now in the PIC Library

tough carry and a long day that would have pushed on into the evening. When I met the author at a book signing a few weeks later, she fondly remembered Nicky and the Expedition Campers. She wrote a note in one book to Nicky, thanking him again for the ride, and in another she wrote: "It was a pleasure to meet some Pine Islanders on the trail." This signed copy was added to the island library last summer.

Like Laurie Chandler, I've encountered Pine Islanders out on the trails and waterways during the summer, and each time, it's been a delightful surprise. Although I've never needed a ride, I've always appreciated seeing them. But this was the first time I've come across Pine Islanders in my reading material, and it was wonderful to follow Ms. Chandler's journey knowing some of the personalities she encountered on the beautiful Maine rivers.

## MEDITATION ON CHANGE

By Sam Hecklau, Whitehead Program Director

Possibly the only certainty: what has come soon will pass. A winter storm takes with it bedrock features of an island not accustomed to change. A new director brings with him passionate ideas and vision. We often struggle with change, some shy away and avoid it outright. We fear losing the ways of old, our current contentment. And yet, trepidation gives way to acceptance of new ways. We rebuild, we embrace new ideas. But not without holding firmly to a foundation that keeps us rooted.

Tradition. For a place such as Pine Island Camp and Whitehead Island, no matter the changes we confront or embrace, there remains something wholly immutable. The latter days



of June will continue to bring eager smiles, whether new or old, to Whitehead's docks. Boys will explore the granite shores whose changes are measured in millennia, gaze at the same night sky their fathers and their fathers' fathers observed from the same vantage. They will return to camp and tell the same stories that friends told 100 years ago. No matter the changes that come to pass, there is always the comfort and stability of tradition. It will forever be the finest attributes of our islands.



# PINE ISLANDERS REPORT IN FROM AROUND THE WORLD

## **Will Hartley** **The High Seas**

I'm currently sitting on the pool deck of a cruise ship, looking over the waters of the Indian Ocean with a mild offshore breeze reminding me of sailing on Great Pond. Needless to say, I'm not in Boston attending my usual university this semester. Instead, I'm on a study abroad program called Semester at Sea, where we take classes on a ship and travel the world, spending around about a week in each of the ten countries that we visit. Starting in Amsterdam, we have navigated down the West African coast, rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and are currently on our way to India. Just recently we made a short stop in Mauritius, a beautiful island nation in the turquoise-blue waters off Madagascar, where I got to catch up on some of my favorite Pine Island activities. I devoted an entire day to sailing a Laser, a small boat comparable to a Bezumarang, and another to deep-sea fishing, making me miss the waters of Great Pond and teaching sailing alongside Akul Sethi and Charles Schell. The last day in Mauritius was spent on a Vespa moped, as my friends and I explored all over the island, eating local seafood, and taking dips in the ocean from time to time.

One of my favorite parts about Semester at Sea is meeting people from so many different places. I've gained a new understanding of different cultures in the countries we've visited, and from the other students on the ship, including some of my closest friends, one from the Netherlands and one from Mexico. Being unplugged out on the high seas without cell service, we're pushed to create an atmosphere that fosters true friendship, reminding me of the community that we build and experience on Pine Island each summer. While in Ghana, my friends and I woke up early one morning to go on a run, training for our half marathon in Hong Kong, followed by yoga and a hearty breakfast. After doing the Arch Arch chant (with the permission of David Efron, K.D., of course), we explored a nearby village, where my friends and I ran into a group of schoolchildren and met the volunteers who work with them, leading us to spend the afternoon playing soccer and surfing with the kids. Later that day, we boarded a local fishing boat to check out an offshore island, where we explored the tide pools and ate some uni (sea urchins). We ended the day going out to dinner, where we met some more locals and spent time getting to know them, learning more about their culture and their lives. What a day! Much like camp, though, this semester is flying by and will soon be over.



*Will with a tuna, hooked off the island of Mauritius*

As this semester comes to an end, one thing that I'll make sure to do is to take this experience with me; the friends I've made from all over the world, the lifelong lessons, and the sense of independence coupled with a concern for others that both camp and this experience abroad has helped me strengthen. How Pine Island has stuck with me! Until next summer, Akka Lakka!

## **Sophie Efron** **Grenoble, France**

Leaving camp this summer, I headed straight to Logan airport with my Gregory 70L pack on my back, and a smaller backpack on my front. Ten hours later I was in Spain, embarking on a five-day hike over a short section of the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage route. From there, I flew to Grenoble, France, where I would spend the next four months. Pine Island had something to do with all this; it's inspired a sense of adventure that I would never have

known otherwise and uncovered the beauty of disconnection, of processing my thoughts while immersed in a natural world where signs of humanity seem distant.

The people here in Grenoble often remind me of Pine Islanders, in that they seek a life filled with social connection and are drawn to the mountains. They'll spend hours on end chatting at a cafe, then set out for a hike on the Vercours massif. And they acknowledge the need for balance. Where life here differs from what I know, I absorb the newness. Some of the delights include a weekly grocery shopping trip to the markets, filled with scents of fresh baguette and Saint-Marcellin cheese; plenty of cafes where I can spend hours reading; and countless paths where I can stroll through the city and admire the small details etched into the stone buildings.

Fall passes slowly in Grenoble, and there's surreal beauty here, a combination of fall-stained trees and the sharp-peaked Alps sprinkled

with snow. I'm unable to find a spot where there isn't a mountain peeking through.

While I don't have the joy of music every night around the campfire, I quickly discovered a jazz club that provides the pleasures of live music I was searching for. In the early weeks, buskers were widespread; from a Moroccan-French rock band to a septet of saxophonists, the street music here is consistent in its quality.

Many people back home don't know that Grenoble exists. Tucked away in the Alps region of Southeastern France, it is a vibrant city filled with Pine Island-like people who seek an outdoor escape—highly worth a visit if you get the chance!

## **Krista Wiberg** **Hong Kong SAR, China**

Greetings from Hong Kong! It's been so long since I've visited Belgrade Lakes, and I've missed it tremendously. These days, I'm still living in Hong Kong, teaching fifth grade at an American international school. I still cook often with quite a bit of inspiration from my PIC kitchen days, and even hosted a pizza bagel party this semester with my students. Outside of work, I've been playing a lot of field hockey with my adult club team. It's a lot of fun being able to play sports as an adult, and the community is amazing. Traveling is still a big part of my life as well. In October, I went to Lombok, Indonesia for a relaxing beach trip with friends, scootering around and watching the surf. In a few weeks, I will travel to Japan with friends to do some snowboarding and catch some sumo wrestling. All in all, life is pretty good over on the other side of the planet. Akka Lakka!



*A peaceful scene in Grenoble*

# PIC DREAMS REALIZED: GEORGIA TO MAINE ON THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

By Rob Gowen

On March 18, 2024, after years and years of thinking, reading, planning, and hoping, I finally embarked on one of my lifelong bucket-list items: thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail.

My experience at Pine Island Camp over ten summers between 1981 and 1994, first as a camper and later as a staff member, had inspired me to hike the AT one day. As many of you know, PIC sends out trips along stretches of the AT throughout Maine and New Hampshire each summer.

However, I had not done any significant backpacking since my last summer at camp. My body had changed a lot during my 30-year career working in an office—and not in a good way. King Kababa would certainly have disapproved of my sedentary lifestyle. When I set out from the southern terminus of the AT at Springer Mountain, just north of Amicalola State Park in Georgia, I had just turned 52. Although I knew my body was not as strong (or lean) as it had once been, I had definitely underestimated the physical difficulty of the trail early on.

My preparation for the adventure had mostly involved spending a lot of time online, reading and watching videos about hiking and hiking gear. Today's equipment and technology are vastly different from what was available in the 1980s; everything is lighter, more innovative, and *expensive!* An app called Far Out gave me mile-by-mile information about what I could expect on the trail, including water sources and shelter conditions, while my Garmin in-Reach ensured that I could easily request support in an emergency and even allowed me to stay in touch with my wife when there was no cell service on the trail. I'm in absolute awe of the thru-hikers from the 1970s and '80s who would don cut-off jeans, a cotton T-shirt, and heavy boots and strap their equipment onto their backs using an external frame pack. They had to rely on paper maps, and their walking support came courtesy of a stick, rather than lightweight, graphite trekking poles. Hiking today has never been easier (but not *easy*), and I needed all the help I could get.



*A campsite with a heck of a view*

I was very glad to start in the south and make my way north, because the terrain in Georgia, while still challenging, is a much gentler introduction to a thru-hike than starting



*Rob Gowen at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy Visitor Center in Harpers Ferry, WV*

at the summit of Mount Katahdin. My summers at PIC had given me a lot of confidence, though some of it was perhaps misplaced, given the physical struggles I had early on. Georgia is no joke for new thru-hikers; however, compared to the trail further north, the terrain was smooth and largely foot-friendly. At first, I hiked between eight and ten miles per day so my body could get accustomed to the repeated abuse I was about to put it through for the next six months.

Forging relationships with my fellow hikers also proved to be an early challenge, for a few reasons. The first was that the usual norovirus outbreak was particularly severe this year. The Georgia trail runners cautioned us to keep our distance from one another, so everyone slept in their tents—rather than the larger, communal shelters—and refrained from socializing at campsites, as they typically would have done. The second issue was the weather. March in Georgia was unseasonably cold, so hikers would retreat to the warmth of their tents as soon as they had finished eating dinner. The third issue was pace. Everyone was “hiking their own hike” as the saying goes (and rightly so), which meant that each person moved on a different schedule. Although the hiker bubble was huge, it was a bit amorphous. While some hikers were keen on forming a “tramily” (trail family) early on, I was still feeling things out and didn't want to commit to any group right away. In retrospect, this seems a little odd, because at PIC, hiking was very much a group activity. Hiking solo was a unique experience at first.

As I progressed up the trail, the weather started to warm, norovirus faded away, and people with similar hiking schedules tended to naturally stay together, which gave me the chance to forge some nice relationships and hike with some wonderful people. After a few weeks, I reached the Great Smoky Mountains in Tennessee and North Carolina. The highest part of the trail travels along the border between the two states, and based on my experience hiking as a Pine Islander, I expected that any time I got higher than 4,000

feet in elevation, I'd be above the tree line, enjoying some gorgeous, expansive views. But that was not the case in the Smokies. Several times, the trail brought me up well over 5,000 feet, yet I was still surrounded by full vegetation and had only limited views. Because it was still winter, though, the trees had no foliage, so I'd occasionally be treated to some nice vistas, visible through the bare branches.



*An iconic barn along the trail*

As I made my way further north and spring wore on, the rising temperatures became the biggest factor in my hike. In Virginia, I'm pretty sure I got heat stroke, which left me feeling weak and nauseated at the thought of food for a few days. I was struggling to continue hiking, but thankfully the PIC network is strong, and I reached out to one of my favorite camp alums, Dr. Whit Fisher. His advice and encouragement were tremendously helpful. I took a few days off the trail at home, rehydrated, rested, and got some food in me before resuming my hike. However, the weather continued to be problematic. The miles from Maryland through Massachusetts were especially tough, not because of the terrain but rather because of the incredible heat and humidity. At times, I doubted that I'd be able to finish the trail because I was so hot and constantly sweating, resulting in some not-so-nice skin ailments. I nearly ended my hike in Massachusetts, but after some long conversations with my wife, I recommitted to making it to Katahdin. Following that pivotal moment, I could feel the energy from my wife and everyone following my progress via my blog pushing me—in a good way. I started to make deeper connections with my fellow hikers and to embed myself more solidly in the culture of the

trail.

When I reached Vermont, my hike began to take on a much different tone. For most of the mid-Atlantic and southern New England sections, I'd been so wrapped up in trying to manage the heat that I had regrettably missed out on the full thru-hiker experience. Thankfully, as the trail took me further north, the weather became progressively more manageable. The temperature was still higher than I would have like, but it was less of a hindrance. I started to feel as though I could hike just about anything without too much physical struggle.

Interestingly, once I entered the toughest parts of New Hampshire and Maine, I noticed that many of my fellow hikers began struggling to maintain the kind of daily mileage they'd been able to do further south, whereas I began to feel as though I had come into my own. I realized then how much I benefitted from having already hiked these sections of the AT during my PIC days—some of them more than once. Certain parts of the trail seemed so familiar, it was hard to believe I hadn't touched that ground for more than 30 years. I lucked out and had perfect weather crossing the Presidential Range, which is one of the most beautiful (and challenging) sections of the trail. As a Pine Islander, I had hiked the Carter-Moriah Range (just north of Mount Washington) from north to south, but as a thru-hiker, I did so from south to north, and I can say with great confidence that those 20 miles are some of the toughest that anyone will find anywhere. My favorite trip down memory lane, though, was hiking Saddleback Mountain. I woke up early that day and reached the peak before any other hikers, so I had the place to myself. As I stood and enjoyed the view, many PIC memories came rushing back.

These memories and my deepening trail relationships took my focus away from the physical act of hiking, which I suspect is not actually the main point for most thru-hikers. Hiking with purpose, witnessing the beauty of nature, making human connections, being in the moment, and seeing the good in people are all more powerful aspects of the hike than just putting one foot in front of the other. Maybe I'm a slow learner, but it took me a long time to fully process that thru-hiking the AT is not really about hiking.

Early on in my days on the trail, I heard that there are three phases of a thru-hike: physical, mental, and spiritual. The first two are the challenges; the last one is the payoff. For me, entering Maine felt like the spiritual payoff. The trail is so remote, so wild, and so beautiful. I had more than 1,900 miles under my belt at that point, and while the terrain in Southern Maine is

*(Continued on page 9)*

# CAMPERS WRITE...

The following contributions first appeared in the 2024 Mid-Summer Pine Needle: a collection of articles, poetry, and artwork that seeks to provide a glimpse into the creative, imaginative, and active lives of campers at Pine Island.

## 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 un-plug—"

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

**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.

## 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.

## 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 St. Croix River

## 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:

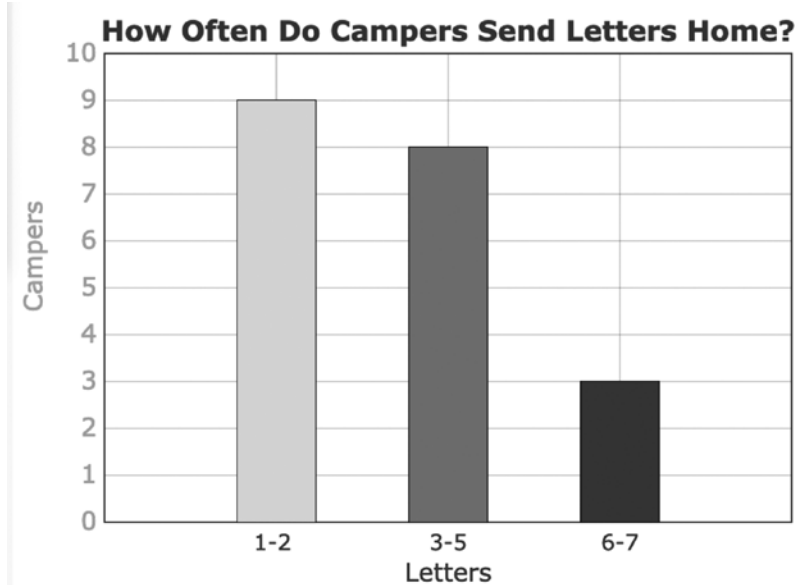
Milk = Butter  
Butter = Milk  
Buttermilk = good!  
The End.



## 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.



(Continued from page 8)

## 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

## 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-worldly 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.

## Trip Report: G.O.A.T.

By Jojo Murray & Bram Renick

*G.O.A.T. (Greatest Of All Trips) was a trip orchestrated this summer by two experienced senior campers, traversing numerous peaks 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 three-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 eight-mile trek up the three Carter peaks. The views on the Carters were cool but not as cool as Mt. Hight. That peak was 0.2 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.

**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.

(Continued from page 7)

absolutely brutal (anyone who's been on Old Speck will have an idea), it felt different to me. Maybe that's because I spent so many summers at PIC, or it could be that the state just has a different feel. I can now say for certain that the PIC hiking trips traversed some of the most challenging terrain on the entire AT. I'm not sure whether the term "bulk" is still in use, but if it is, Pine Islanders represent it well.

The final stretch of the AT is known as the 100-Mile Wilderness, and it's truly a hiker's dream. I got lucky with great weather, and I hiked in the company of two phenomenal people. After being

apart for months, I finally reunited with my wife, Seamane, in Baxter State Park on September 19th. We summited Katahdin the next day with a group of hikers I'd gotten to know well—some since Virginia. I couldn't have asked for anything more. Many times, my thru-hike had seemed to be taking forever, and now, suddenly, we were at the peak of Katahdin! I didn't really know how to react when I touched the famed sign at the summit. Some around me cheered with joy. Others sobbed at the enormity of it all. I was just happy to be done! I'd lost a lot of weight, my knees and hip were hurting, and I was ready to be home

again. More than two months later, I'm still processing the whole experience.

My current challenge is figuring out how to capture the feeling and state of mind I had during my hike, now that I'm back at home. I don't want to rush into anything. I'm renovating parts of our 100-year-old house, doing some contract work for my former employer, reconnecting with friends, and trying to focus on what I really want to do versus what I feel like I "should" be doing now that I've returned to the "real world." I owe that to myself and to everyone who helped me along the way.



Mission accomplished! Rob and his wife, Seamane, at the summit of Mt. Katahdin

PINE ISLAND CAMP 2024—ANOTHER GREAT SUMMER!



*Berly with a textbook dive into Great Pond during swimming class*



*Johnny with the catch of the day!*



*Lindsay, Madeline, Sagan and Silas on an uncharacteristically peaceful Dustball Court*



*Ben and Liam share marshmallow-roasting tips during a Weenie Roast.*



*A group of first-year campers with Ben, Madron and Josh enjoy a beautiful day on the river.*



*Madron and Will caffeinate on a beautiful day.*



*The legendary Effron siblings lead another successful Whitehead trip.*



*Rowing class explores the shallow waters off the north tip of Pine Island, with Mt. Philip in the distance.*



*Water skiing, Pine Island style*



*Sam cools his tea during Rest Hour.*



*Campers take advantage of free time in the library.*



*Oliver enjoys the peaceful scenery out on a trip.*



*Getting ready for the Regatta*



*Campers on Lafayette's March*



*Veteran camper Ben prepares for activities on the waterfront.*



*Charlie reels in a big one!*



*Damian leads a guided meditation during Campfire.*



*Kayakers respond to the starting gun during the Regatta.*



*Phoenix congratulates Sam on a race well paddled.*



*Tom, Inigo, Ford, and Abe rest at Piazza Rock.*



*A celebratory high five on Regatta day*



*Expedition Campers prep for their Long Trail hike.*



*Expedition Campers sing "Wonderwall" during another successful Club Honk.*



*Campers and medic Shannon Bittner check out Alpine Lake on Tumbledown Mountain.*



*Campers hang around on the Kopa porch.*



*Expedition Camp returns triumphantly from their 14-day canoe trip.*



*A family tradition! Brothers Adlai and Abe: PIC water skiers*



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



*A beautiful sunset during Boats Out*



*One last song: "My Sweet Pine Island" at the Farewell Ceremony*

# MONTE BALL'S LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP AND GENEROSITY

## CELEBRATION OF A LIFE LIVED GRACIOUSLY

By Pope Ward

Fog blanketed the lake and the skies were overcast, though not heavy. A chill nipped at exposed skin. On any other August morning in Maine, I would have been happy to sit in front of a fire, watching loons dive and listening to red squirrels chatter.

But this morning had to be glorious. The deck officer had issued only one order: "Choose a sunny day. You know how much I hate the rain." I imagine Monte Ball saying this in his distinctive nasal drawl.

In addition to his weather directive, Monte had asked his lifelong friend, Rex Bates, not to publicize the ash-scattering ceremony, suggesting that he gather only a handful of old friends and those already in the area.

Around 10:30, a handful of us headed out from the Rink and congregated at the Adirondack chairs by the mainland dock. One by one, figures emerged from the shadows of the camp road. Among them were three of Monte's trusted Assistant Directors and several former staff members, as well as his niece, Christina, and her fiancé—ten in all.

expression unique to him that somehow lies between somber and friendly. Everyone present was aware of Monte's wish for sun on this day, and we eyed the persistent cloud cover uneasily. As we backed out and swung around toward the island, I thought of the countless times I'd seen Monte overtake the camp's launch in his Blue Fin before finishing the crossing in a flawless fishtail, coasting up to the island dock with precision.

We need not have fretted about the weather. The collective will of the boat's passengers parted the clouds just as Ben cut the engine about two thirds of the way to the island. The boat bobbed, and the lake sparkled in the sun.

Tom Macfie, Assistant Director to Monte in the early 80s and minister (ordained the same year that Monte hung up his bowtie as Director), led us in a short service followed by silence while Christina Ball committed Monte's ashes to the lake. Tom then invited others to offer their own reflections.

Two themes dominated. The first

or grudge. For each storyteller, their primary feeling was of gratitude, gratitude to Monte for speaking truth and moving on.

Almost without prompting, the group concluded the service with a passable rendition of "Abide with Me" and the Lord's Prayer, Pine Island's equivalent of Taps.

While we, the congregants, hungered for some sort of ritual to mark Monte's passing, Monte himself would certainly have preferred what came next. The group retired to the Dining Hall for lunch at the Director's table, "Monte's table" during his tenure. For Christina and her fiancé, Brian, this was their first time on Pine Island. For others, a decade or more had passed since their last visit. Nevertheless, the group slipped seamlessly into storytelling as though this were any other mid-summer meal in the Dining Hall.

Christina shared a poem written by Monte's Navy friends and delivered at his retirement from the service. One verse echoed a thread from our stories on the boat and at lunch:

*But of this good fellow as he goes his way,*

*I cannot finish but to say*

*That of the titles many which he did consume,*

*None was more fitting than "Scourge of the Wardroom"*

I don't claim that it was written by Ogden Nash, but it does suggest that the standard to which Monte held us all had roots stretching back at least 60 years to his assignment keeping the officers' mess shipshape.

The poem's twin references to dining facilities and retirement prompted Rex to share the plaque that Pine Island had made for Monte upon his retirement, bearing the renowned inscription, "Gracious Living is our Goal." Rex had retrieved this memento from Monte's home in Chiang Mai and presented it to Christina.

After listening to each other's stories of lessons learned from Monte, it occurred to more than one of us that



*A small party of Monte's closest friends and relatives prepares to head out on the KWS.*

Once again, Pine Island's mainland served as a gateway between camp and the "real world" beyond. Old-timers joked with first-timers, nervous tensions diffused, and decades melted away as friends reconnected.

Rex arrived with Monte's remains, having transported them from Minnesota, where Monte's brother Ian lives. They were stored in a simple wooden box—fitting for a man who could pack his belongings in a seabag and considered the Doctor's Cabin spacious. Somehow, the box drew our abstract purpose into material focus. If we'd been engaged in introductions and reunions before Rex's arrival, now we each made a mental transition, considering how we wanted to say goodbye to such an outsized figure in each of our lives.

Ben Swan docked the KWS punctually at 11:00, wearing an

was gratitude to Monte for bringing us to this place that had been so formative in shaping our lives. Like so many campers and staff during Monte's tenure, the eleven Pine Islanders on that boat included individuals whom he had recruited from Minnesota, Virginia and South Carolina—all ports of call in his teaching career.

The second theme was correction, by Monte, for some blunder made while in his employ. To a person, the story went something like this. The individual made a mistake, often because they were thinking narrowly rather than about the needs of the group. Then came the correction, immediately and sometimes with a flash of anger, but only a flash. And then... nothing. Once the correction was made, the moment passed, and Monte moved on without judgment



*Former Assistant Director Tom Macfie and Monte's niece, Christina Ball, prepare to commit Monte's ashes to Great Pond.*



*The party on the Mainland dock. Left to right: Tom Macfie, Ben Swan, Lisa Regier Ward, Rex Bates, Andrew Regier, Katherine Campbell, Christina Ball, Brian Smith, Tom Yoder*

the phrase had more meaning than we'd previously grasped. We all knew that gracious living was about more than manners, but we hadn't fully appreciated that true graciousness requires grace. So many of us had benefited from Monte's grace, bestowed after honest correction that shaped us into better people than we'd been before we knew him.

In many ways, Monte was a gravitational force. Certainly, he attracted people to Pine Island through his tremendous charisma and kept many in Pine Island's orbit through his exceptional leadership. Beyond Pine Island "the place," his

values, expectations, and generous spirit shaped us into better adults, more capable of meaningful contribution to our communities. He was sun in our formative years, a moon as we aged.

It's fitting, then, that a symbol of his character remains on Great Pond, pulling future generations to a place that meant so much to him and to us. In that same spirit, Monte left the bulk of his estate to Pine Island. The camp has channeled the bulk of his gift to a scholarship established in his honor. We're confident that Monte would approve.

## GENEROUS BEQUEST AND GIFTS FROM ALUMNI ESTABLISH THE MONTAGUE G. BALL, JR. SCHOLARSHIP FUND

By Ben Swan

The late Monte Ball, Pine Island counselor and the camp's Director for 20 years, lived on a teacher's salary and at times struggled financially. One reason for Monte's occasional bouts of financial hardship was his instinctive generosity, which in many instances led to his actually paying part of the Pine Island tuition for a boy whose family could not afford the full freight. Only a very few people—perhaps only his former student, great friend and assistant director Rex Bates—ever knew that Monte had provided these scholarships that he could ill afford. Generosity was part of Monte's DNA, and it was expressed long after he retired from teaching and as Director of Pine Island. So, although it was *definitely* a surprise, perhaps it was not *entirely* surprising

that upon Monte's death, Pine Island Camp received a bequest of \$175,000.

Monte's super-generous bequest sparked interest in raising the \$300,000 necessary to generate enough annual revenue to fund the equivalent of one full scholarship each year to honor Monte Ball's extraordinary legacy of leadership and generosity. Numerous and generous donations from alumni, friends and parents during Monte's tenure as Director rapidly provided the funds necessary to complete the Montague G. Ball, Jr. Scholarship Fund. It is fitting that even as those who knew him personally recede from camp life, Monte's legacy will be one of making the Pine Island experience possible for many more generations of deserving boys.

## VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTER ESTABLISHED IN CHIANG MAI, THAILAND TO HONOR MONTE'S LEGACY OF GENEROSITY

By Brian Pern

*Mr. Pern, collaborator with Monte Ball in another project to serve others, sent this tribute shortly after Monte's death.*

In January, our community of Chiang Mai felt a profound sense of loss with the passing of our dear friend and devoted supporter, Montague Ball, who lived here during his final years. Monte's life was marked by compassion, generosity, and an unwavering commitment to helping those in need.

To honor his remarkable contributions and ensure that his legacy continues, we are proud to announce the establishment of the Monte Ball Training Centre, dedicated to serving Burmese refugees and at-risk young adults from the hill tribes. For many years, Monte was more than just a friend; he was a passionate advocate for



*Aspiring chefs at the Monte Ball Training Centre*



the underprivileged, working tirelessly to create opportunities and provide essential resources. His dedication was rooted in a deep desire to see others thrive, driven by a belief in the transformative power of education and vocational training. This belief now serves as the foundation for the work of our training centre.

The Monte Ball Training Centre stands as a tribute to Monte's lifelong commitment to empowering others through education. Naming this centre after him is a small gesture compared to the immense impact he had on so many lives. We have successfully completed our

first 12-week training course in the new building, and are proud to have achieved the milestone of 50 graduates. Our ultimate goal is to train up to 60 aspiring chefs each year.

As we move forward with this initiative, we are continually inspired by Monte's words and actions, which guide us each day. It is our heartfelt wish that this centre will allow future generations to learn about Monte—a man who exemplified generosity—and through his legacy, find the strength and motivation to spark positive change in their own lives and communities.



*The Monte Ball Training Centre's state-of-the-art kitchen*

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# IN MEMORIAM

By Ben Swan

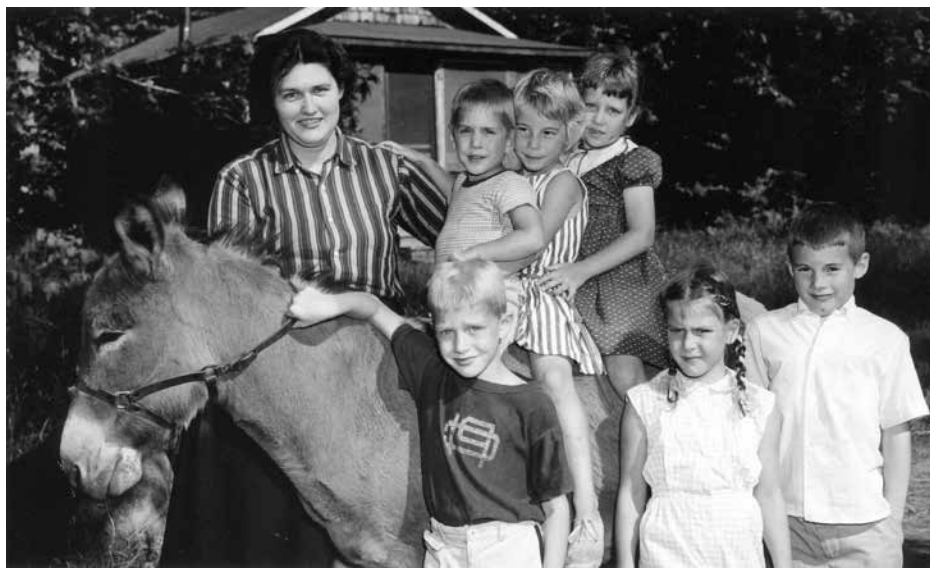
## Anne Elise “Lise” Aubry

September 29, 1936 –  
November 15, 2024

Lise Aubry, longtime friend of Jun and Tats Swan, godmother to Ben Swan and de facto godmother to his three siblings, their children, and hundreds of former students, campers, and parents, died after a very brief illness on Friday, November 15. Lise had moved recently to an assisted living apartment at Granite Hill Estates in Hallowell, ME, having reluctantly given up her lovely cottage and studio at Granite Hill after suffering a fall. Lise’s physical health was declining, but her generous and independent spirit were not.

After graduating from Smith College in 1958, Lise began a long teaching career as a student teacher at Shady Hill Academy in Cambridge, MA. When she completed her student teaching, Lise, known as Miss Aubry to generations of kindergarten and first grade students, moved to the Park School in Brookline, MA, where she taught until 1972, completing an M.Ed. from Boston University during that time. In 1973, Lise accepted a teaching position at Great Salt Bay Community School in Damariscotta, ME and fulfilled her dream of moving to Maine full-time. She bought and renovated an old cape next to the renowned Damariscotta Mills fish ladder.

Lise first came to Maine in the summer of 1956 when she was hired by a friend of a friend, Tats Swan, as one of two babysitters for the Swan children while Jun and Tats were busy running Pine Island. Lise subsequently worked for Pine Island for many years,



*Lise Aubry c. 1959, with Pine Island day campers in front of the Third Cabin on the Mainland. Seated: Ben Swan, Lynne Handy, Lynn Uhe. Standing: Rip Swan, Kate Swan, Doug Handy. The donkey was rented each summer and named “Toastie” by the children because it enjoyed eating the toast that was inevitably burned in the Rink stove’s broiler.*

running a wonderful day camp for the children of camp administrators and several children from the local area. In 1957, Lise accompanied Tats and Jun on a visit to Whitehead Island off Spruce Head, where they were considering buying property. The Swans ended up purchasing the derelict property on which there was no running water or electricity, and thus began a nearly 50-year friendship that brought Lise to Whitehead with the Swans every summer until 2004. The Whitehead summers (and springs and falls after Lise retired from teaching) were filled with hard work, myriad adventures, improvements to the buildings, visits from countless friends, gardening, artwork, birthdays, lobsters cooked on the west shore, and, because Lise was there, lots of wonderful infectious

laughter. It would be impossible to list the vast number of people whose lives were improved by Lise Aubry. Her independence, grit, humor, generosity, and love set an example for others throughout her life and will live on in all of those who knew her and will be passed on by them to others. Lise’s generosity and love for Whitehead Island was expressed in her will, in which she made a bequest of \$200,000 to the Pine Island Camp Whitehead Light Station programs. Akka Lakka, Lise.

### Dean Jackson

It is with great sadness that we report the death at age 46 of Dean Jackson, camper 1990-91 and counselor 1994-95. Dean was reported missing by friends in West Quoddy Head, ME after they found his truck near a boathouse owned

by his family. Dean was a true expert in all kinds of watercraft and had recently purchased an inflatable paddleboard. The paddleboard was found a few days after Dean was reported missing and his body was found August 19 in St. Andrews, New Brunswick, Canada, about 17 miles from where he had set out. Dean was a charismatic and energetic counselor who brought a high level of expertise to Pine Island’s relatively new kayaking program in 1994. He was a counselor in 1995, the year of the Great Fire, and, like all the staff, worked tirelessly to help make the season, improbably, a tremendous success. Dean always had a twinkle in his eye and had enormous affection for Pine Island Camp and its sense of fun combined with an insistence on teaching competence and responsibility. He went on to teach kayaking to hundreds of people, working for Outward Bound and other organizations. Over the course of his life, Dean overcame the severe stammer that he contended with while at Pine Island, and even incorporated his speech impediment into a thoroughly memorable Password in 1995 that was a perfect example of his positive spirit. The Password was all about the value of Duct Tape and how anyone, with a bit of imagination and ingenuity, could address just about any difficulty. The Password of the Day that Dean delivered at the end of his short talk was: “If you can’t duck it, ... f-f-f-f-forget about it!” Dean is survived by his brother Peter, a camper in 1985, and by his mother, Amy Jackson.

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## NOTES FROM THE TRIP LOCKER

By Taylor Clyde, Assistant Director

The 2024 trip season at PIC was a resounding success. Campers signed up for trips at a higher rate than any summer in recent memory, which aligned perfectly with my radical “Trips-First” political project. Campers wanted to go on so many trips this year, in fact, that some found the island too quiet during the first half of the summer. I’m still trying to figure out what they could possibly have meant by “too quiet,” but in any case, we ended up reducing the number of trips sent out in the second half of the summer. Fortunately, all of what I like to call the “headliners,” such as Old Speck, Senior Whites and Senior Canoe, went ahead as planned.

The staff this summer displayed exceptional organization, motivation and poise, leading all trips successfully despite some substantial obstacles. While this summer wasn’t as rainy as 2023, Alex and I noticed the increased intensity of rainstorms—climate change in action. They came and went quite quickly as always, but there were still



multiple storms this summer that posed risks to our campers on the trail. Luckily, our staff prepared properly (preventing piss-poor performance), and made the right choices in the backcountry, allowing for a safe, fun and challenging trip experience for the boys this summer.

We also experimented this summer with some new day trips, exploring areas of Maine that were not suitable (or available) for our usual multi-day excursions. One of these was DayKat, a day-hike that allowed campers who had never summited Mount Katahdin before

to give it a shot. Regulations limit the number of overnight trips we can send out in Baxter State Park, so DayKat may be here to stay. Since two eligible drivers were required as trip leaders, I joined Akul Sethi on the trip, which left bright and early at 2 AM to beat the crowds. We also sent out a day trip to Tumbledown Mountain, a short, steep day hike in central Maine featuring Director Alex Toole and Medic Shannon Bittner as trip leaders. These day trips were very successful and will likely be continued in the future.

Meanwhile, this summer’s Ex-Campers showcased their maturity and honed their leadership skills, culminating in another successful year for the program. The group, led by Ben Cabot and Ryan Gilbert, not only completed their usual epic canoe trip on the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, they also made a triumphant return to Vermont’s Long Trail. When I led Ex-Camp last summer, heavy rains had made the Trail impassable, so we hiked a long section of the Maine Appalachian Trail instead. While both routes certainly have their pros and cons, a passionate debate over which one is better is now roiling the small Former Ex-Camp Leaders community. So, if you happen to see Ryan or Ben anytime soon, I’d appreciate it if you’d tell them they’re wrong, and they know it.

Heartfelt thanks to all the staff and campers for representing Pine Island values on the trail this summer, and here’s to many more miles in the future!

# MAINE'S GREATEST MOUNTAIN: A WINTER ASCENT IN BAXTER STATE PARK

By Sarah Hunter

*Pine Islanders have been hiking Katahdin, Maine's highest peak, for over a century. In the early years, simply reaching the mountain was its own adventure. These days, campers are conveniently transported to the trailhead in a camp van, but hiking Katahdin in winter harkens back to an earlier time; with park roads closed, hikers must undertake a long journey on foot, just like the early Pine Islanders. This trip marked Sarah's third winter expedition into Baxter State Park and her second attempt at summiting Katahdin.*

My pulk sled, laden with five days' provisions, threatens to pull me down the hill I've been laboring up for the past quarter mile. I lean forward, dig in with my mountaineering snowshoes, and summon all the strength I can muster to lug this tremendous burden to the top of the hill. On level footing, I pause for a break, a sip of water, and a Reese's peanut butter cup while I wait for my friend to join me. We exchange words of encouragement. He moves on, and I step forward, falling in line behind him and taking up the back of our nine-person team. The sled moves with me. We are one, connected by PVC poles and a belt. I channel my inner draft horse and plod on.



*All roads in Baxter are closed in winter. Sarah's group accessed the park via the winter parking lot on the Golden Road, then trekked in along the Abol Stream Trail to the Tote Road.*

The beauty of the snow-globe landscape softens the hard work. Plump flakes have been tumbling down all day, piling up on the spruce and fir branches that frame our trail, on our hoods, shoulders, and eyelashes. It's a gentle welcome, and we take it as a good omen. Since I secured our camping permit months earlier, all we could do was hope that the weather would be on our side. For now, it appears to be, but we know this can change, of course. Nearly everyone in our group has tried more than once to reach Maine's highest peak in winter. It's an expedition that requires training, planning, perseverance, and luck.



*Sarah, thrilled to be on her way to the summit*

After 13 miles, we reach Roaring Brook Campground. The hut is cold, but we build a fire in the woodstove and use the hooks on the walls to string up laundry lines. Soon we're warm and our damp clothes are drying. We dine on dehydrated meals supplemented by an array of appetizers and homemade desserts before collapsing in our bunks. Sleep comes easily that night.

The miles are short but occasionally steep the next day, and the work is made tougher by heavy sleds and tired legs. Our reward, though, is Chimney Pond, an awe-inspiring spot surrounded by Katahdin's towering cliffs decorated in cascades of blue-green ice. Our only neighbor is Ranger Jen, whom we greet heartily when she knocks on our door, bearing the gift of a promising next-day forecast: cloudy, 20 degrees, winds 10-15 mph. We feel good about our chances. We spend the afternoon gathering and filtering water, collecting firewood, and checking and rechecking our gear. At 4:30 the next morning, the music of our alarm chimes fills the bunkhouse, and by 6:30, our headlamp beams are bobbing through the misty forest on a path toward Hamlin Ridge.



*The group on Chimney Pond*

The route is steep and covered with freshly fallen snow. We take turns breaking trail, pausing now and then to keep the group together. When we reach the treeline, the mist consolidates, and a dense cloud presses around us. Our world turns white; trail-finding becomes trickier.

We move methodically, each glancing back regularly to keep an eye on the person behind us. If we all notice the thinning of the clouds at once, no one mentions it. It's nearly imperceptible, a change that's felt more than seen. It begins to give way, ever so slightly, to empty spaces. And then, just for a moment, it falls away completely. We stare in disbelief as Knife Edge is revealed for a moment, before the cloud presses in again, and the mountain we stand on disappears.

But there's movement above us. Wisps of sunlight are filtering through. Soon, we're enveloped in a dramatic show as the clouds dance to a silent orchestra. We stand awestruck as they swirl playfully, offering brief, veiled views of the ridges above us, then embracing us back into a world of white until, finally, the plot is revealed. The clouds sink and settle in



*Baxter State Park's low-tech, high-stakes winter permit selection process. Sarah's name was on the 46th slip of paper to be pulled from the bucket. She didn't get her first-, second-, or third-choice dates, but it all worked out.*

unison, a weightless skirt on the lower half of the remarkable Katahdin massif.

Now we can see the drops into the Great Basin to our left and the North Basin to our right. We switch from snowshoes to ten-point crampons and move on, biting into the ice as we climb the ridge. By the time we reach Hamlin Peak, we're in a sort of collective dream. Sandwiched between an overcast above us and an undercast below us, with a thin line of blue sky at the horizon in every direction, we are travelers in another world—a frozen, windless moonscape. Our brightly colored jackets pop brilliantly against the snow-covered tableland. We are a box of crayons on an adventure, marching towards Baxter Peak.

We take our time and stick together. We have all day. When the snow becomes deeper between the peaks, we switch back to our snowshoes. The final climb up the Saddle Trail is steady, but

*(Continued on page 16)*

# WHOA! ADVANCED STATS AHEAD!

## Next-Gen Data Analytics Shed Light on Perch Usage Trends

After months of exploratory analysis and statistical research, PINE SAP is back to share its findings with the Pine Island community! As you may recall, PINE SAP (Pine Island's Newly Exhaustive Statistical Analytics Program) was founded in 2023 to fill PIC's glaring need for sufficiently next-gen quantification of the camp experience. Throughout the past year, 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. With previous analyses of Dustball spin rates and activity line placement having clearly demonstrated the importance of

occasional hectic visits from Boathouse activity practitioners and Jacques the Darin' Great Pond Heron.

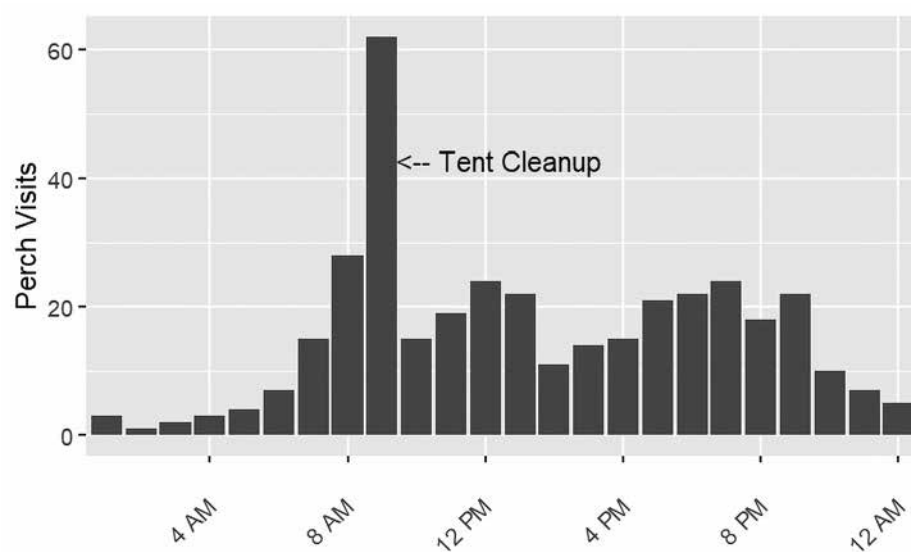
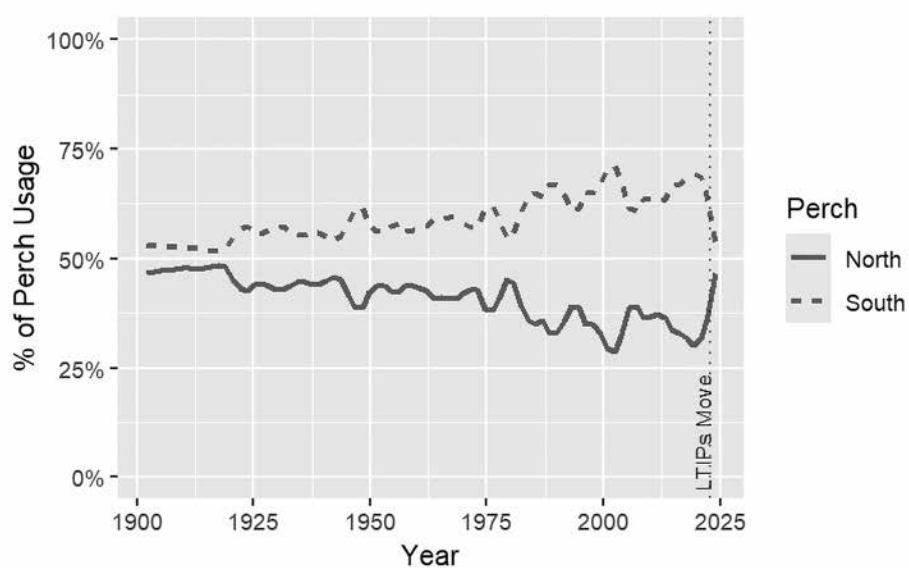
During our investigation, PINE SAP, in close consultation with the LTIP Wrangler, identified a key change that has notably altered the trajectory of perch usage: in 2023, the LTIPs moved from Tent 1 to their new cabin, known as the Bulkhead, on the northern side of Honk Hill. Although less than 20 meters separate their old and new quarters, the upshot is that the LTIPs now live just 44 meters (roughly the length of 9.2 Hisspahtahdispahs) from the North Perch, and 59 meters (12.3 Hisspahs) from the South Perch—a nearly perfect reversal of the situation in their previous dwelling. Although LTIPs make up just 4% of the camp population, the effect of their newfound proximity to the North Perch is clearly visible in the data:

potential problem once a day: during tent cleanup. Rigorous scrutiny of the patterns found a significant spike in perch foot traffic during the hour immediately following breakfast. While campers typically pin the blame on various breakfast foods, most staff members appeared deeply skeptical of this claim; one anonymous Ridge counselor noted that the campers most consistently found reading *Calvin and Hobbes* in the perch during tent cleanup also tended to be the least enthusiastic about making their beds. This, too, was borne out by the data: grouping campers by tent, we found a clear inverse correlation between total collective minutes spent in the perch during tent cleanup and the chances of winning tent inspection that day. The complex statistical relationship between tent cleanup and perch usage is summarized in the charts below:

Fortunately, high-level consultation between PINE SAP and management has resulted in a simple improvement that should forestall any potential problems: new state-of-the-art fluid collection tanks. While these tanks will not change the perch experience that we all know and love, they will optimize the cleaning and maintenance process for the LTIPs and help keep things running smoothly during peak usage hours. Campers, staff members, and LTIPs alike can look forward to seeing (but not smelling!) these new tanks in action during the 2025 season.

Till next time, Akka Lakka!

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

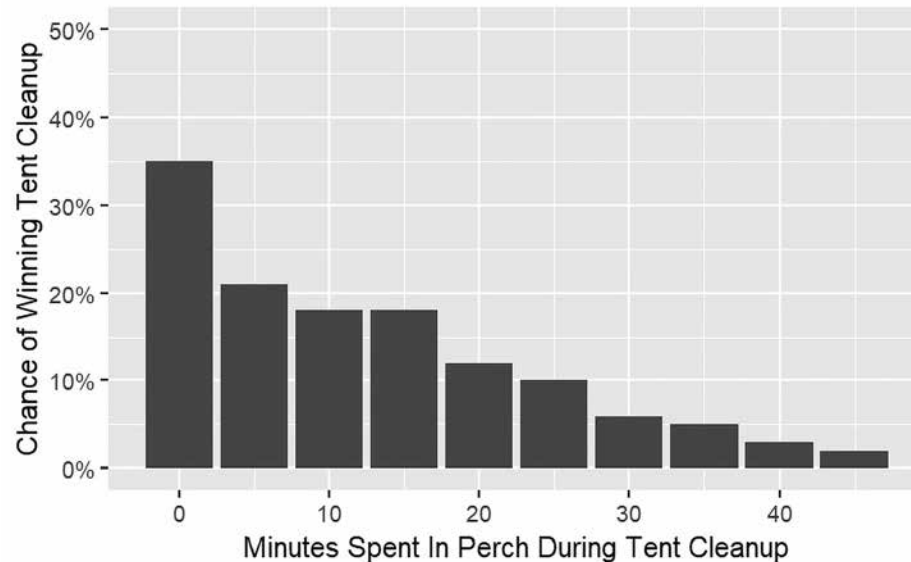


our highly advanced work, we turned our full attention this year to one of the most essential aspects of camp life.

As far back as anyone can remember, PIC has struggled with a persistent imbalance in perch utilization rates. Analysis of the available data reveal a consistent trend, with South Perch usage significantly above optimal levels, while the North Perch sits comparatively idle. Despite being the South's equal in terms of elevation and quality of lake views, the North Perch's foot traffic has nevertheless come almost exclusively from the residents of Magoon and Needlepoint, with

This finding, while revelatory, also clearly demonstrated that the problem of unequal perch utilization is likely intractable; with over 80% of the Pine Island population living south of Honk Hall, the South Perch seems destined to receive far more visitors than the North. (Our historical analysis found that even the memorable "Poo in the North" messaging campaign of the early 2000s had a negligible effect on overall usage rates.)

Fortunately, we also discovered that the concentration of living quarters in South Perch territory only presented a



(Continued from page 15)



Above the clouds

by now, we know we will make it, and the joy of it all masks our aches and pains. And then, the iconic Katahdin summit sign comes into view. We've done it. Together.

We linger at the top, take pictures, and embrace one another. We want to stay all afternoon, but this is only the midpoint of our hike. Eventually, one by one, we move away from the summit, each glancing back through tear-filled eyes. We retrace our steps and try not to blink, not to miss a moment. Back on Hamlin Ridge, we switch to crampons and move carefully down into the cloud.

We plan to leave in the early morning hours on our last day, to allow ourselves time for the 16-mile trek back and the long car rides to follow. But Ranger Jen stops at our cabin that night with news of a clearing sky. She urges us to stick around for sunrise. We do, and it is more than we could have hoped for. Standing in the middle of Chimney Pond at golden hour, the entire ridge of Katahdin is laid before us as the moon sets and the day's first rays light Hamlin Ridge ablaze. It's an extraordinary scene, and a fitting end to a life-changing trip.



# THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 DONORS!

## Alumni and Friends Respond Generously to PIC's Annual Appeal

Dear Pine Islanders,

As I reflect on my first season as a director of Pine Island, I am reminded of one of my favorite moments of the summer. At one point in July, we needed to do some maintenance on our water pump. Our fantastic new Facilities Manager, Peter, had to pump nearly 500 gallons of water out of the well in order to do this work. The water exited the well via a hose, and it drained over the pathway next to the South Perch into Great Pond. As I walked by the stream now coursing across the island, I noticed a series of bridges, dams, and eddies that had been built into the flowing water. Small pine-needle boats and acorn-cap watercrafts drifted down the newly formed waterway, and a camper from the Range stood by the shoreline, digging canals and tributaries with a sharp stick. I asked what had possessed

him to become an amateur civil engineer, and his answer was enlightening: "I was bored and decided to do something about it, so I started this project. Now look at what I've created!"

Boredom: one of the many marvelous inconveniences that Pine Island Camp has to offer. With so much free time for independent decision-making and agency, our campers are forced to find ways to entertain themselves by building relationships, discovering new passions, and developing creativity. This is what I saw on that July day. By removing modern distractions like cell phones, tablets, video games, and the internet, we push our boys to think outside the confines of the toxic sludge that is social media and doomscrolling. But, this can be uncomfortable. In fact, discomfort is one of our greatest assets. We live in a world that teaches our children that comfort – as much as possible – is the ultimate

goal in life. But at what cost? The pursuit of comfort is making people miserable. It's stripping away opportunities to grow and be pushed by challenges. It's allowing us to settle for less and to not seek personal betterment and self-actualization.

Pine Island is such a fantastic experience for our boys because we encourage them to embrace discomfort and in the process find a way to eschew the temptations of comfortable modernity. By seeking out the challenge of a hiking trip across Maine's many peaks, they learn how to be more resilient and gritty. By pursuing the discomfort of rowing for the first time, they develop diligence and physical strength. By embracing the novelty of living in a canvas tent with three other boys, they become more independent and empathetic toward the experiences of others. Isn't this our ultimate goal, the development of the boys

who will become the well-adjusted men of our future communities?

Continuing the work we do here starts with you: our current campers and their families, our venerated alumni, our current and past staff members, and the many friends of the camp. To those of you who made a generous, tax-deductible gift to Pine Island's 2024 Annual Fund, thank you. There are many organizations worthy of your hard-earned dollars, and we are grateful that you have chosen to honor the impact PIC has had on your life and the effect it can have on the lives of future campers by donating to Pine Island. It means the world to us to have your support.

Thank you, and Akka Lakka!

Alex Toole, Director

Simon Abranowicz  
Chris Acker  
Kady and Ford Adams  
Maura Ahearne and John Bregar  
Charles Albers  
Anonymous  
Dana Strickland Archer  
Roe Baldwin III - in honor of Monte Ball  
Monte Ball  
Maria and Larry Baum  
Marty and Kathy Becker  
Anselm Bell  
Bianca and Mark Bell  
Max Bell  
Nick and Robyn Bellamy  
Harrison and Arria Bilodeau  
Ned Bishop  
Clarence Bonebrake  
Rich and Cheryl Boulet  
Charlie Boutwell  
Bruce Bower  
Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Boyle  
Richard Bradley and Ellen McCarthy  
Cameron Brandt  
Jim and Mary Ann Breeden  
Dan Bristol  
Gene Brown - in honor of Monte Ball  
John Bunker and Cammy Watts  
Stephen Burt  
Gary and Barbara Butts  
Daniel Byman and Victoria Wachino  
Bryan and Sarah Carey  
Pat Carrington-House  
Kenneth Casey  
Marian Castell  
Robert Chandler  
Andrew Chapman  
Fred Chapman  
David and Ben Chester  
Jack Chorske  
Ellie Christie  
Stephen Christy  
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Thomas Clauson  
Raymond Clevenger  
Mark and Marla Cohen  
Jim Cornwell  
Sandra Cortina and Enrique de la Campa  
Horatio Couture  
John and Francesca Cox  
Julia Cox  
Jim Cox-Chapman  
Joe Crary - in memory of Lise Aubry  
Margot Crary  
Mary Crary  
Albert M. Creighton  
Peter Creighton  
David and Triss Critchfield  
Will Dana  
Oliver R. DeRose  
Graham R. DeRose  
France Desjonquères-Sanson and Guillaume Sanson  
Britt and Sanjeev Dhawan  
Sophie Dhawan  
Carol Diamond and Family - in memory of Charles "Chuck" Diamond  
Lawrence Dickey  
Dickinson-DeGraffe Family - in honor of Ben Swan  
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Noah Donoghue  
John Dowling  
W. Bradford Drury  
Ralph Drybrough  
D.E. Duncombe  
Keith Eaton  
Sarah Eaton and Adam Joyce  
Jonathan Edwards  
James and Linda Eklund

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The Elston Family  
Betsy Enck  
Spike and Sandy Enck  
Wilson Everhart  
Nathan Fairmont  
Ann Falby  
Fritz and Cyndi Farquhar  
Elizabeth and Reed Fawell  
Aidan Fennessy  
Josh Feuerstein and Madeleine Milan  
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Tom Fiorella and Marcio MS Baptista  
Whit Fisher and Dennis Gagne  
Neil Folger  
Ray Foote, Jr.  
Sumner Ford  
Jim and Susan Ford  
Lynn Frackman and Tom Meites  
Peter Frailey  
Roy and Roni Friedman  
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Alvin and Gay Gamage - in memory of Monte Ball  
Merritt Gasho  
Dana and Barbara Gaspard  
The Geyer Family  
Tad Gibson - in honor of Teddy Berg  
Kathy and Ian Gilbert  
Don Gilchrist  
The Goodale Family  
Nicolas Grabar and Jennifer Sage  
Josh Greenberg  
David Griffin  
The Grossi Family  
Gaines Gwathmey  
Gordon Hafner  
Newell Hall  
Gray Harley  
John and Koko Harris  
Nancy Harris  
Peter Harris  
Kevin and Lee Hartley  
Peggy Hayes  
David Hertzberg  
Anne and John Hincks  
Martha and Benjamin Hincks - in honor of Monte Ball  
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Frances and Tim Holbrook  
Richard Holden and Grace Won  
Margaret Holland  
Robert Holland  
Dan Hollnagel  
Ken Howe and Michele Giggi-Howe  
Coleman and Amy Hoyt  
Harriet Hubbard  
Nina Huber  
Pam Dana Hudson  
Matile Hugo  
Jack and Sally Ijams - in honor of staff and leadership at PIC  
Chris Isles  
Nick Isles  
Cameron Jackson  
Mark K. Jones  
Anne Joyce  
Nadia Judson  
Matthew Karchmer and Eliza Geer  
Keith Kasper and Fran Pomerantz  
Bob and Sarah Kasten  
Matthew Kennard  
Wayne and Norva Kennard  
Pat and Tricia Kenny  
Charlie Kernan  
Billy Kimball  
Arthur Kimball-Stanley  
Zev and Bonnie Kindler  
James King  
Klivans Steinheimer Olds  
Charlie Krause

Carol Krauss  
Iris Krell  
Bob Kriscunas  
Bert Lachmann  
Peter Lawrence  
Billy Leahy - in memory of Monte Ball  
Jeffrey Lew  
Barry and Gloria Lindquist  
The Lipton Family  
Jesse Lipton  
Chip Liversidge  
Rich Liversidge  
Bryan and Leslie Lorber  
Sam Lovett  
Pamela Macfie  
Cat and Mike Martin - in memory of Monte Ball  
Caleb and Anne Mason  
Michael Mattison and Lisa Lane  
Bill Matzelevich and Alina Romanowski  
Charlie Maule  
Ian McIlvaine  
David and Jamie McLain  
Greg Melville  
Allison Mertens  
Nick Miller  
The Mondello Family  
Tav and Olga Morgan  
Howie and Connie Muir  
Bruce Murray  
Stuart Murray - in honor of Monte Ball  
Donald and Susan Myers  
Jeff Nagle - in honor of Connie Nagle  
John Philip Nagler  
Nick Newbold  
Eliza M. Nichols  
Hooper Nichols  
Dixie and John Noonan  
Devon O'Brien  
O'Dell-Brent Family - in memory of Monte Ball  
Derek Ohly  
Doug Orr - in honor of Ben and Emily Swan  
Douglas P. Owen  
David A. Pap  
Adam Peck  
Rob Perkin  
Robin Pfahning  
Stewart and Julie B. Pierson  
Will Pomerantz  
David and Linda Pope  
Ned Pressman  
Emily and Graham Proud  
Cecily Pulver  
John Quattlebaum  
Mary Jane Quattlebaum - in memory of Monte Ball  
Gordon and Amy Ramseur  
WM Redpath  
Kita and Chris Reece  
Reich-Allen Family  
Barbara and Walter Reitz  
Mary Reuter  
Colonel David Ridlon, USA (Ret.)  
Angela Ringo and Daniel Sherman  
Chris Robinson  
C.P. and Louise Robinson  
Joanne Robinson and Adam Pomerantz  
Paul and Mia Ronson  
Bob Roth  
Diana and Peter Ryan  
John Ryan and Jenny Scheu  
Sebastian Sahlman  
Will Sahlman  
Emilia Saint-Amand  
William Scheer  
Chris and Deirdre Schell  
Mary Schlosser  
Jack and Diana Schultz  
Sara Schwartz and Will Hannum  
David and Joan Senior  
Ted Senior  
Christopher C. Seymour

David Seymour  
Russ and Pam Sharples  
Mike Sheehy  
Steve Shepley  
Natasha Shick and Tull Price  
Jordan Shields  
Alex Sidorsky  
Peter Siebert and Candace Nelson  
Ted Siebert  
Tom Siebert  
Andrew Sims  
Chris Skelton  
Doug Skokos  
Timothy S. Smith  
Howard and Page Smith  
Earl M. Smith  
Elizabeth Hilder and William R. Smith - in honor of Connor Smith  
Spencer Smith  
Andy "SPOR" Spiel  
David and Sarah Stack  
Bob and Marianne Steinhacker  
Dan Steinhacker and Sara Mairs  
Karl Stockbridge  
Seth Sutel and Alyse Rothman  
Ben and Emily Swan  
Will Tamburri  
The Joel Taplin Family  
Harry Teague  
Jim and Nancy Thomson  
Rob and Lydia Thomson  
Alex Toole  
Nick Toole  
Henry Towbin  
The Treadwell Family  
Josh Treat  
Carrie Trowbridge and Fernando Cela Diaz  
Peter and Jeannie Vaughn  
Mark Vollmer  
Michael Wah  
Jim Waldo and Susan Mitchell  
Fawn Walker and Ric Ricci  
Matt Wall  
Ben and Ginger Wallace  
Roy Wallace  
Andy Wallerstein  
Peter and Amy Ward  
Pope and Lisa Ward  
Samuel Weeks  
The Heath Wenchel Family  
The Westermann Family  
Angus White  
Sandra Whitfield - in memory of Porter Breeden  
Laura and Michael Williams and Family  
David Williamson  
David and Amiee Wills  
Constance Wolfe - Zach Congdon's Aunt Connie  
Ethel M. Woolverton  
Susan Yoder and Jonathan Wills  
Tom Yoder  
Pete Zeman

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# NEEDLENOTES FROM NEEDLENEWS

## THE NEEDLENOSED NEWSHOUND

**Cody Smith** and Taylor Ackerman, with moral support from their daughter Juniper, are building a house in Rockland, ME.

**Josh Treat** is living in Lincolnville, ME, and was back at PIC for his 15th (!) summer this year.

**Sawyer Carson** is a student at Maine Maritime Academy in Castine, ME, and recently made a trip down to New York City to donate stem cells to a patient in need.



*Sawyer Carson, more than happy to donate some stem cells*

**Satchel Toole** and Monica Manning recently bought a house in Falmouth, ME, close to Satchel's job at Efficiency Maine.

**Nick Toole** is enrolled in a master's program in data analytics at Northeastern University's Roux Institute in Portland, ME, and is currently wrapping up an internship with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services.

**Anne Read** also lives in Portland with her dog, Goose. She is a Land Protection Specialist at the Trust for Public Land and does a lot of backpacking and bikepacking; her excursions have included a camping trip to Oak Island, and a canoe race on the Kenduskeag Stream, near Bangor.

**Kyle Bucklin** and his wife, Elena, are expecting a baby boy in April. They live in South Portland, ME, and have a small camp on Great Pond!

**Will Webb** works for Tyler Technologies as an implementation consultant, traveling around the Gulf Coast teaching new clients how to use the software. He and his wife, Lorraine, live in Gorham, ME.

**Silas Hunter** is using his experience managing campers in the activity line while working as a ski lift operator at Sunday River in Newry, ME.

**Cole Gibson** lives in Statham, NH, where he is a business analyst at Fidelity Investments. In his spare time, he's been working on an MS in information technology, focusing on programming and software design—and making cool stuff with his new 3D printer.

**Jim Cox-Chapman** recently took **Ben Swan** on a short, pleasant cruise from Harpswell, ME over to his dock on Chebeague Island, near Portland. Jim has retired from practicing medicine in the Hartford, CT area and is now taking courses in divinity school.

**Pete Zeman's** long career as a psychiatrist in Hartford continues as he puts in several hours a week.

**Alex Miller** is living in Bridgeport, CT, after moving around a bit in the pre-pandemic years. He works at a local bank, where he recently started a new position, and spends his spare time honing his artistic skills.

**Nat Burr** lives in New Haven, CT, where she is starting a Master's degree in Forestry at the Yale School of the Environment.

**James Elkund** and his wife, Linda, have been spending a lot of time on the water down around Shelter Island, NY. James owns many boats and has a bit more time to spend with them now that he is moving toward retiring (sort of) from his construction business. He recently donated a fine Boston Whaler to PIC to replace the aging Cove Boat.

James's son **Andy Eklund** works for the construction business and is now growing flowers as a commercial hobby. James's other son, **Jonathan**, and grandsons **Hudson** and **Cade** are frequent visitors to Shelter Island.

**Henry Towbin** recently finished a PhD in earth science, and is now working on a postdoc studying diamond growth deep in the earth's mantle. He lives in Brooklyn, NY, with his wife, Natalie, and their dog, Juniper—they can often be found in Prospect Park during off-leash hours.

**Alec Durkin** also lives in Brooklyn with his partner, Emma, and their dog, Bunker. He recently started a job as the first recruiter at a startup called Arch, and is excited to help the company continue to grow.

**Doug Phillips** lives in Brooklyn as well, working in research on criminal justice reform. He and his wife have a 4-year-old son, Atticus, and welcomed a daughter, Matilda, in October. He meets up with **Will Mason** each summer in Maine, and recently ran into **Eric Lombardo** and his sons at the local playground.

**Will and Erin Lobb Mason** live in Tiverton, RI. Erin continues with her artistic and musical endeavors, and Will is teaching music at Wheaton College. In January he released *Hemlocks, Peacocks*, an album he describes as "microtonal jazz-ish... scored for a re-tuned Fender Rhodes using the system from LaMonte

Young's "Well-Tuned Piano," alongside tenor saxophone, alto saxophone, and drums." Translation: it rocks.

**Andrew Chapman** is now fully retired from the public utilities business, having served as an executive in New Jersey keeping the lights on and the taps running for millions. He is now living in New York City and spending as much time as possible at his home on Shelter Island. He recently made the local paper with a photo of the largest bluefish he'd ever seen. He is also serving as an extremely valuable advisor to the finance committee of Pine Island's Board of Directors.

**Max Huber** lives with his wife, Caroline, and their two small and doofy dogs in New York City, where Max is in his sixth year of surgery residency.

**Miles Frank** lives in New York, where he is a contractor and avante-garde fashion designer.

**Corinne Alsop** and **Sam Chester** have been honing their musical skills around NYC, where Sam has a band and Corinne sometimes joins in for a song or two. They're excited to share their new material at the next Winter Campfire.

**Ruth Tucker** and John Bilgoski also live in New York, and welcomed a baby girl, Ruby Jean, in July.

**Thomas Clauson** is a junior at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. He is a member of the University's Division I sailing program, and recently started a new job in the office of Maine Senator Susan Collins.

**Ben Byman** graduated from Amherst College last spring and is working in DC for a consulting firm advising governments on how to combat money laundering.

**Jacob** and **Amber Ronson** are in Richmond, VA, where Jacob is still working as a firefighter. Their son, Reece, is two and a half, and they welcomed a daughter, Marlowe Lynn, in September.



*Jacob and Amber Ronson with their children, Reece and Marlowe Lynn*

**Anders Westerman** is in his final semester at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. He plans to move to New York City after graduation for a job at Deloitte Consulting.

His father, **Christian Westerman**, is semi-retired but working full time caring for the family's new puppy.

**Geoff Grout** has donated a lovely boat to Pine Island, a 15-foot "Beach Pea." Ben Swan will meet with Geoff and his wife at their home on the South Carolina coast and bring the boat to Maine. Geoff has been an avid sailor throughout his life and wrote recently: "I have been through a few boats and yacht clubs (including NYYC and Essex), lots of ocean sailing (Nova Scotia to Caribbean), and several Bermuda Races. Also found time to become a Licensed USCG Master, certified instructor (both sail and power), and race officer. Most vacations were spent sailing in Maine. (Always wondered what was happening on Whitehead, source of the best blueberry pie ever!!)"

**Maddie Pulver** and her husband, Ben, recently moved into a new house in Greenville, SC, and are expecting their second child at the end of February.

**Benedict Santos-Pearcy** lives in the North of England, working as part of a camera team on film productions across the UK. He recently worked on Guillermo del Toro's new Frankenstein movie, and is currently in Brazil, working on the early stages of a documentary.

**Victor Dillard** and his wife, Francesca Andrews, welcomed twin girls in April—rather unexpectedly during a trip to Venice. Fortunately the purchase of their first home in Chiswick, West London was finalized a few days later.



*The expanding Dillard-Andrews family: Victor, Francesca, Ayla and Flore*

**Millie Pulver** is in Amsterdam, where she is closing in on her PhD in male breast cancer at the Netherlands Cancer Institute.

**Lucien Malle** has recently moved to Singapore, where he is starting an MBA.

**Jason Schachner** is in the Marine Corps, finishing up his stint in Japan. His next posting will be in San Diego, CA, as an F-35B Instructor Pilot for the West Coast Fleet Replacement Squadron.

**Morgan Patterson** and his wife, Rachel, were married in March. They recently bought a house in San Diego, where Morgan works for the city's Housing Commission, helping

developers secure funding to build more affordable housing and working to expand the supplier diversity program. In his spare time, he's still surfing, along with doing improv at a local theatre, cooking, camping, and aquascaping (i.e. designing and building home aquariums).

**Christian Schneider** and Sarah Burkett are engaged, and plan to get married in Houston in June. They live in Los Angeles, CA, where Christian has some screenplays in development ("blah blah, Hollywood, blah," as he puts it), and has a side gig teaching test prep and sports writing—and coaching his debate team to a league championship last spring.

**Alice Packard** and her partner, Christopher, are also in Los Angeles. Alice is a producer for Ravensburger, working on a trading card game called Disney Lorcana.

**Steve Fisher** is an actor in Los Angeles, where he recently starred in the world premiere of a political satire play and shot a short-form pilot. He and his fiancée, Erin Coleman, have taught at The American Academy of Dramatic Arts for the past four years. Since the Academy announced its closure, they've been spearheading an effort to open a new acting conservatory, and have already received an initial investment.

**Clem Wright** also lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Kathleen, and their two-year-old son, Wylie.

**Simon Abranowicz** and Meghan Reilly were married in the Catskills in September. They live in Los Angeles as well, where Simon has recently taken up tennis—with a few PIC activity periods as his only previous training. He and his brother, **Zander**, continue to run their own strategic design studio.

**Paul Phelps** lives in San Luis Obispo, CA, where he works with endangered shorebirds for California State Parks. He and his wife, Brooke, are expecting their first child in June.

**Andrew Irvine** lives with his wife and two daughters in Boulder Creek, CA—a Pine-Island-like community nestled deep in the redwood forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains. He has taught chemistry at the nearby Harker School for the past 18 years, and competed on the US kayak polo team at the World Games in 2022.

**Jack Faherty** has started a new job at Stanford University's Gordian Knot Center for National Security Innovation, moving to Palo Alto, CA with his wife, Bekka Miller, who is a nurse at the Stanford University Hospital.

**Mahesh Francis** and his wife, Melina Polit, are also living in the Bay Area. They are expecting their first child, a boy to be named Rio, in March.

**Tom Macfie**, along with a small group of Emily Swan's Sewanee classmates,

visited Emily and Ben at Whitehead Island in the fall and also officiated at the scattering of Monte Ball's ashes in late summer.

**Rex Bates** was also at PIC for that occasion and has fully retired from his longtime work for the Annie Wright School in Tacoma, WA.

**Nick Isles** has started a new job at Amazon Web Services, selling generative AI to startups, and proposed to his now-fiancée, Savannah, on a recent holiday trip to New Zealand. They live in Seattle, WA, where they see **Charlie Krause** and his wife, Claire, on occasion.

**Will Stack** is teaching at the Sun Valley Community School in Sun Valley, ID.

**Ben Schachner** and his partner, Lauren, live in Bozeman, MT, where Ben runs a small "frame-to-finish" construction company specializing in remodels, additions, and new houses. He and **Reid Hill** have crossed paths a few times, and even had a chance meeting with **Noah Solt**, who was passing through. Noah lives on his sailboat in San Francisco, CA, playing music and teaching sailing on the Bay. He is releasing an album in October, and the first track, "Old Star," came out on Spotify in January.

**Toby Bregar** also released a new album, *After the Fall*, in January. Inside sources have confirmed that the track "A Taste of New England" was inspired by Pine Island. The full album is out on Spotify and other streaming platforms under the name Tobias Bregar.

**Ian Ford** lives in Jackson, WY, where he works as a fly fishing guide on the Snake River in Grand Teton National Park, and recently landed a job with the Jackson Hole ski patrol.

**Will Donovan** lives in Eden, UT, where he recently bought a house on Powder Mountain.

His brother **Ned Donovan** continues his work on *Encounter Party*, a fantasy mystery series that he created and stars in, improvising the story with six other actors using the rules of Dungeons & Dragons. All 22 episodes are available on Roku and Tubi.

**Deb Hummel** lives in Longmont, CO, where she works in land management for a nonprofit, leading design and construction of river restoration projects. She and her husband, David, are expecting a baby boy in March.

**Madron Joyce** and **Sophie Effron** are both at Colorado College in nearby Colorado Springs.

**Andy Spiel** lives in Madison, WI, where he works as a gastroenterologist and is also getting into woodworking. He proudly reports that he has succeeded in getting his family to do 100% whenever they're near a body of water.

**Josh Byman** has embraced life in Chicago, IL, where he lives in Hyde Park near Lake Michigan.

**Alex Toole** and Emily Radziwon were married in East Aurora, NY in August. **Rip Swan, Jack Faherty, Cody Smith, Emily Swan, Hannah Gordon, Tom Nagler, Chris Toole, Nick Toole, Satchel Toole,** and **Sandy Holland** were in attendance. Alex and Emily live in Portland, ME, where Alex is really getting the hang of his sweet new job.



A newly expanded family at the big wedding! Left to right: Nick Toole, Sandy Holland, Alex Toole, Emily Radziwon, Chris Toole, Satchel Toole

**Ben Cabot** and **Ryan Gilbert** both go to St. Lawrence University in Canton, NY, and both are returning to PIC as Assistant Directors in 2025.

**Rob Chandler** joined Ben Swan on Whitehead Island last spring for another project: the installation of a beautiful wooden ceiling in one of the Barracks' upstairs bedrooms, which had been without a ceiling for a couple of decades. Rob has fully retired from his career as an architect in Boston and is enjoying life on the water in Gloucester, MA, where he and his wife Ronda have lived for many years.

**Will Hartley, Akul Sethi,** and **Nick Newbold** all go to school in Boston, where they still find time to meet up on occasion.

**Amandine Pulver** is living in Woburn, MA, and was recently promoted to a new level of management at Wegmans.

**Cecily Pulver** is living in Marlborough, MA, trying to maintain her sanity raising two young daughters, teaching high school science, and being married to an enthusiastic Bills fan. She makes a point of hanging out with **Eve Whitehouse**, who is an academic dean at the Millbrook School in Millbrook, NY.

**Olivia Lobdell** lives in Medford, MA, where she works in tech. She and Conor Draleau were married in Berwick, ME in December. **Cece Carey-Snow, Sarah Mason Brookings,** and **Ben Herman** were in attendance. Sarah lives in Lisbon, ME with her husband, Alex, and their son, Teddy. Ben and Libby Simpson live in Brunswick, ME. They recently celebrated the second birthday of their son, Duke, and are expecting a baby girl in April.

**Rip Swan** is working for G.M. Wild Construction in Brunswick. He lives in nearby Portland, ME, a few blocks from **Katie Swan, Tom Nagler,** and Jones (their awesome dachshund).

**Corinne O'Connor** is also in Portland, where she works at a therapy practice called WellSpace as a licensed clinical social worker for children and adolescents.

**Harry Swan** and Quynh Nguyen bought a house in Topsham, ME in August, and held a second wedding at Whitehead Island a few days later. They plan to get married for the third (and final!) time in Vung Tau, Vietnam next winter—if the US immigration system can get its act together. Harry still works in the warehouse at Partners for World Health and has a side gig as the editor of this here 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!





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## Help Us Expand Our Geographic Reach!



Dear Pine Islanders,

In 2024, we were thrilled to welcome campers from 15 states and three countries to Pine Island Camp. While this is impressive, we're always striving to improve. We'd like to expand our geographic footprint into currently underrepresented areas. Doing so will enhance the camper experience and make our community even stronger. Diversity is important to us at camp, and geographic diversity is as important as any other kind.

We've identified ten areas with alum cohorts but no (or very few) current campers, including:

- Chicago, IL
- Washington, D.C.
- Greenville, SC
- Seattle, WA
- Indianapolis, IN
- Bethesda, MD
- Philadelphia, PA
- Concord, MA
- West Hartford, CT
- Greenwich, CT

If you know families in these areas (or anywhere else) who would benefit from the transformative Pine Island experience, we'd love your help in introducing them to us. Your recommendation can make a lasting difference for a future Pine Islander.

Here's how you can help introduce a new family to PIC:

- Share a bit about your own Pine Island journey.
- Point them to our website or social media.

- Encourage them to contact me directly at [atoole@pineisland.org](mailto:atoole@pineisland.org) or 207-465-3031—I'm happy to connect and answer any questions.

Thank you for being an integral part of our efforts to grow the Pine Island community into new areas! Your support and recommendations are invaluable to us.

Akka Lakka!  
 Alex Toole



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