

# The Pine Needle

Belgrade Lakes, Maine

July 2025

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

## A Special Wiffleball Event! By Hudson Eklund

On July 10, for the first time in many years, the RMMBLADIACW (Really Minor Memorial Baseball League Annual Duck Itch Awareness Competition of Wiffleball) took place on the Mainland. This was a thrilling game of comebacks and exciting moments.

The final score was Henchmen: 12, Sacred Animals: 9. Sebastian Cela-Trowbridge had an amazing catch, and so did Alex Lester-McMinn. Christian Everhart had the first and last homer of the game.

The Henchmen are scheduled to go against the Elves in the coming weeks. Averill McCullough is the #1-rated player on the Henchmen.

Coaches Madron and Ryan have stated that the lineup for the Henchmen will remain the same, with the lead-off hitters being Miller, John, and Hudson.

And that's your annual RMMBLADIACW update!



Art by Mayer Raleigh

## What is the Loon Society? By Ben Ohly

The Loon Society is a small group of campers, led by our Wellness Specialist, Susan Lambert, who are interested in learning about and studying loons. Susan came to camp this summer as an art therapist, doing arts and crafts sessions with the campers and helping them feel better when they are sad or homesick. She also has a passion for loons that quickly spread to many of the campers, and many people began getting more and more excited about the majestic black and white birds that live near the island.

On the second day of camp, the Loon Society made its Campfire debut, singing a rap song about loons and announcing a loon call contest later in the summer. From there, word of loon club spread across

*(continued on page 3)*

Why I Love Fishing  
By Griffin Luckhurst-Fletcher

A few days ago, during fly fishing class, I caught a bass. It was nine inches long. (I also almost got my “25-foot cast” block.) At first, I thought the hook was caught on the bottom, because that had happened a few times before. But instead, it was a bass!

That’s what I love about fishing: you never know if what you catch is going to be big, small, or nothing at all. You also never know when you might catch something, so you have to be patient and alert. Everyone should fish, because it tests your patience, and the more patience you have, the easier it will be to help people.

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Drawing during rest hour

PIC Conspiracy Theories!  
By Tom Viennot

*Ford Skogen:* Alex Toole is rigging tent inspection and is also turning Pine Island into a baseball club.

*Hudson Eklund:* Buckley’s feet have an infinite stink.

*Ben Ohly:* Tent 15 never existed.

*Taylor Clyde:* Alex Toole didn’t actually hire international staff; they’re just very well-trained actors.

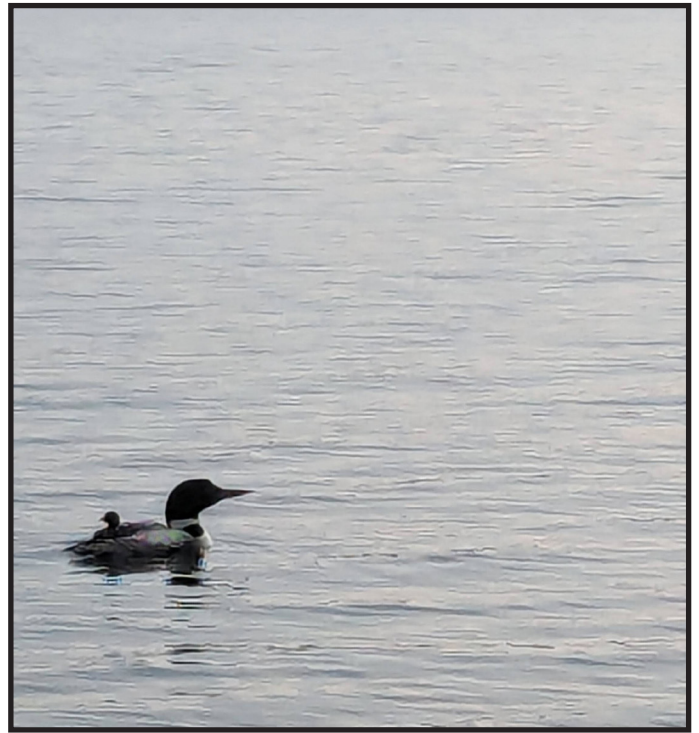


## What is the Loon Society?

By Ben Ohly *(continued from page 1)*

the camp. Campers are initiated by stating a fact about loons, then they are given a black-and-white bead necklace, a loon feather pin, and a loon-themed (temporary) tattoo. They must also promise to dedicate their time with the Loon Society to learning about loons.

The president of the Loon Society is Ferris Ethridge and its meeting spot is Susan's cabin in the Staff Office building. The Loon Society is a unique, interesting, and experimental group of nature appreciators and researchers. It is a beautiful and inspiring group, and I hope they continue to enlighten and educate Pine Island about the magnificent creatures with whom we share this glorious lake.



## Expedition Camp

*Expedition Campers explore the Ghost Trains of the Allagash on their 13-day canoe trip down the Penobscot, Allagash and St. John Rivers.*

*The trains were abandoned by the Great Northern Paper Company in the 1930s.*





## Fourth of July Report!

### By Isaiah Sherman

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Every year, PIC has an amazing tradition for the Fourth of July. A select group of campers are picked to build a giant raft, and after Campfire, the rafts are set ablaze.

This year the two rafts were a cowboy hat and a tank. The tank burned for much longer than the cowboy hat. We also enjoyed a fireworks show put on by one of our neighbors across the lake.

It was a very fun event, and I recommend getting as close to the front of the activity line as possible so you can help build the rafts.



*Cardboard Rafts Set Ablaze by Isaiah Sherman*



*Archery by Hugo Adams*

## The Game of Dustball

### By Ben Ralles

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Dustball is a very special game that is only played at Pine Island. There are many aspects of the game, like dodging and alliances.

Dustball is a game kind of like dodgeball; there are many rules that are the same and some that are different. Some rules that are the same are: no headshots, and if you catch the ball, the person who threw it is out. On the other hand, some rules that are different are: there is only one ball, and you only have three steps.

Many people play dustball; even some counselors do. The three best players are:

#### Campers

1. Averill M.
2. Desmond T.
3. Baadj A.

#### Counselors

1. Max B.
2. Anselm B.
3. Will R.



## Trip Report: Old Speck

By Christian Everhart and Desmond Taylor

Day 1: Scott dropped Buckley, Juan and our crew off at the head of Austin Brook Trail. We received ham and cheese sandwiches and hiked 3.6 sweaty and rainy miles until we reached Gentian Pond campsite.

Day 2: We hiked 12-ish miles over peaks and ridges, while sweating non-stop. Constant “encouragement” from Buckley kept our gang moving until we got to Full Goose campsite, where we had buffalo chicken mac n’ cheese.

Day 3: We woke up to dried ramen and Belvita bars, which helped us get through the icy Mahoosuc Notch and Arm, which were extremely draining.\* From there, we had a smooth journey to Speck Pond campsite, where we had pesto Spammies and swam in the pond.

Day 4: We hiked 4 total miles in which we ventured to the top of Old Speck Mountain, where we burned our sacred unicorn stuffed animal next to the Speck Fire Tower. We then continued downhill slowly and back to Scott to finish our trip.

*\* Editor’s Note: This section is widely considered to be the hardest mile on the entire Appalachian Trail.*





## SNS Review: *Animal Cabin*

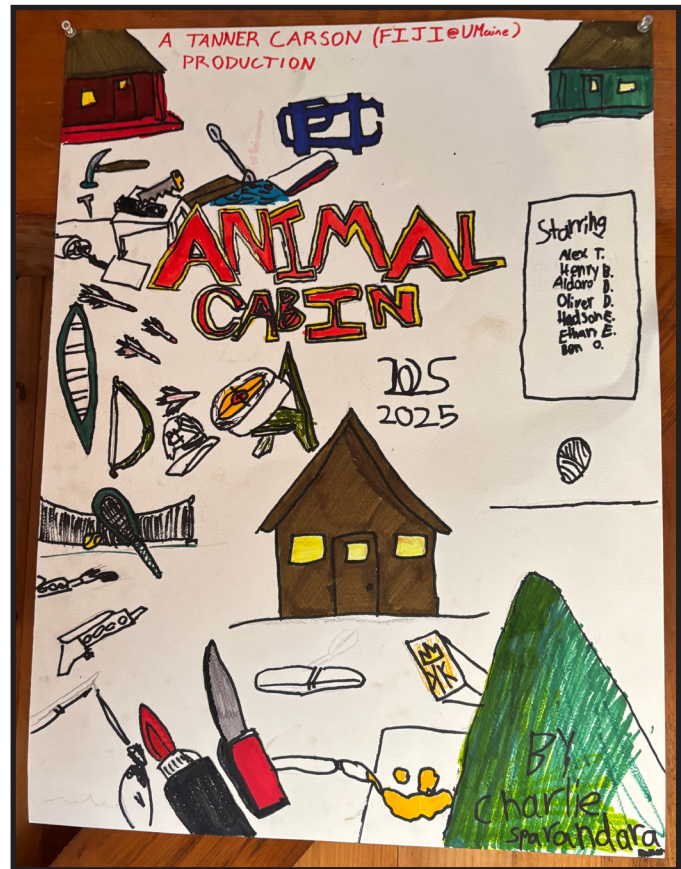
### By Ben Ohly

So far this summer we have had one SNS (Saturday Night Show), called *Animal Cabin*. It was based on the 80s movie *Animal House*, which is about two rival college fraternities. The SNS was about the two cabins for campers on the island: North Hampton and Kopa.

One of the most entertaining parts of the show was seeing how parts of *Animal House* were reimagined in the Pine Island setting. For example, instead of students failing their classes, the campers were doing badly in activities. And instead of stealing from a grocery store, the campers steal candy from the Trip Locker.

There was also a good variety of humor. The jokes were kept appropriate, but remained funny and got laughs from campers of all ages. (For example, one of the characters tries to give an inspiring speech, but loses the inspiration effect when claiming it was the Germans who bombed Pearl Harbor.)

Another aspect that made the show so enjoyable was its relatability. There were lots of references that only a Pine Islander would understand, making the entire show feel unique and special. For example, the pranks that the two cabins pull on each other are all pranks that could only be pulled at Pine Island, like soaping



up the dock or hiding Alex Toole's dog, Scout, in another person's bed. The show was a great balance of parody and original ideas, making it an interesting and entertaining piece of work. And for that, it deserves admiration.



*Rainbow over Great Pond*



## The PIC Banana Hunt

By Charlie Sparandara-Bauer

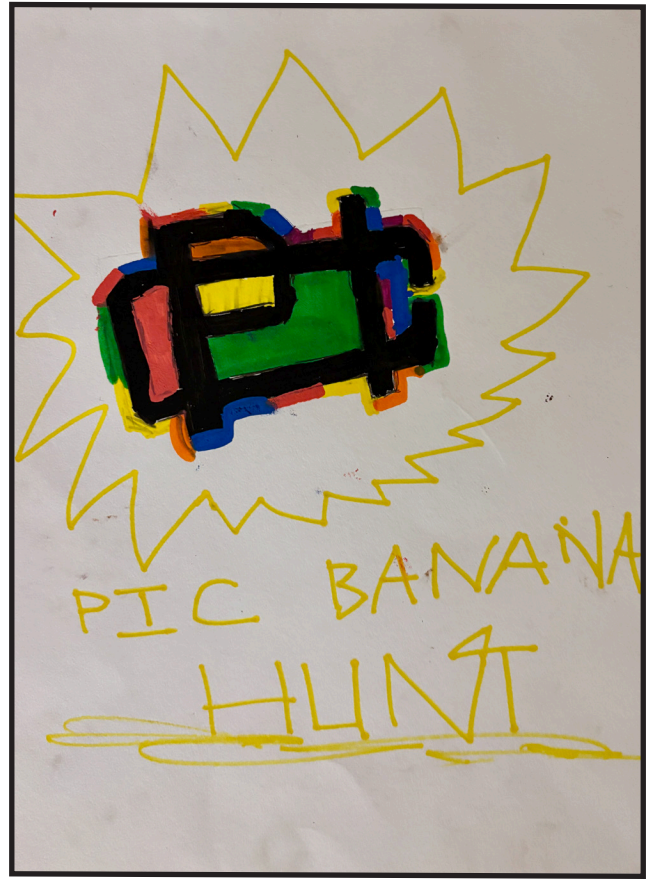
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As the kitchen crew moves fast for another bowl of apples, campers rampage into the Dining Hall for bananas.

It all started when one camper desired more than just apples, and got a banana. When he tried this new fruit, he wanted more! The word spread. Soon 10 campers wanted bananas. Then 30. Then 40. And it went on. Bowl after bowl. Box after box. Truckload after truckload. Pine Island was obsessed with bananas!

Soon bananas became famous. Dustballers, swimmers, rowers, kayakers, and woodcrafters all ate bananas for snacks. It was madness. Some campers called it: The PIC Banana Hunt. And so it was.

The banana hunt may have died down now, but there are still those who lurk to take the leftovers.



## Trip Report: Maine Peaks

By Ethan Ethridge

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Day 1: We had about a 90-minute drive from camp to the intersection of the Appalachian Trail with Maine Highway Rt 4. From there, we started north on the AT. We hiked 1.8 miles of relatively flat trail to Piazza Rock lean-to. Piazza Rock was pretty, and we were able to climb on top of it. We had pesto chicken pasta and went to bed early to rest up for the next day.

Day 2: We woke up at 5am, had granola, and started hiking. We hiked 8.8 miles and summited Saddleback, The Horn, and Saddleback Junior. Most of the day was steep uphill, but the views were worth it. When we got into camp at Poplar Bluff lean-to, we enjoyed spammies for dinner.

Day 3: We had oatmeal for breakfast, then hit the trail. First, we lost all our elevation by going

downhill 3 miles to reach Orbeton Stream. Then, we hiked 5 miles uphill to Spaulding lean-to. On the way, we climbed Spaulding and Lone Mountains. We planned to hike Mount Abraham, but the rain prevented us. For dinner, we had chicken cheese quesadillas.

Day 4: We had oatmeal for breakfast and then departed. We had about 7 miles to cover to make it to our next campsite. In addition, we day-hiked Sugarloaf, which added an extra mile. We crossed a river, and some of us took a dip. Chicken and rice was on the menu at Crocker Cirque Campsite.

Day 5: We woke at 4am, hiked 7.4 miles over North and South Crocker, and made it to our pick-up spot at 10am. We stopped for pizza on the way back to camp.



## The Secret Fishing Trip

### By Ford Skogen

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One day on the Isle of Pine, invites went out to six lucky people: Buckley Livingston, Desmond Taylor, George Stanley, Sam Breese, Johnny Miller, and me, Ford Skogen. We were invited on a fishing trip for most of the day. It was an eight-minute drive to a neighboring lake called McGrath Pond and during four and a half hours of fish-eat-fish, George, Ford and Johnny each caught a smallmouth bass, Sam caught a big largemouth bass, and Desmond caught three pumpkinseeds and a yellow perch—all after a lunch of hamburgers, corn, and red hot dogs.



## Anders Westermann Interviews Ford Skogen

*Anders:* How did you get invited on this trip?

*Ford:* Alex Toole came up to me and asked if I was interested in a secret fishing day trip. I'm very into fishing, so I was excited to take part.

*Anders:* What was your favorite part of the barbecue?

*Ford:* My favorite part was the so-called "red hot" hot dogs that they asked me to try. Also, the corn on the cob was delicious.

*Anders:* Did anyone get new fly fishing ranks while on the trip?

*Ford:* Since I caught a fish on a fly that I tied myself, I received my Angler, which is the third rank. Desmond also got his Angler.

*Anders:* Do you feel that you are a core member of the growing PIC fishing community?

*Ford:* I think I am now. It was a great time and I hope to go on more fishing trips and reel in more fish.



## Shop Van Gogh: Artistic Expression at Whitehead Island

*Our remarkably beautiful saltwater outpost has long been a source of artistic inspiration. We celebrate this through Shop van Gogh, a Whitehead trip devoted entirely to the arts. This summer, campers explored a variety of creative expressions—including natural sculptures, pastels, and water colors—guided by alums Simon and Zander Abranowicz.*

*These are just a few of the pieces created during this summer's Shop Van Gogh.*

*Artwork credits:*

*Dathan Nesbitt, right*

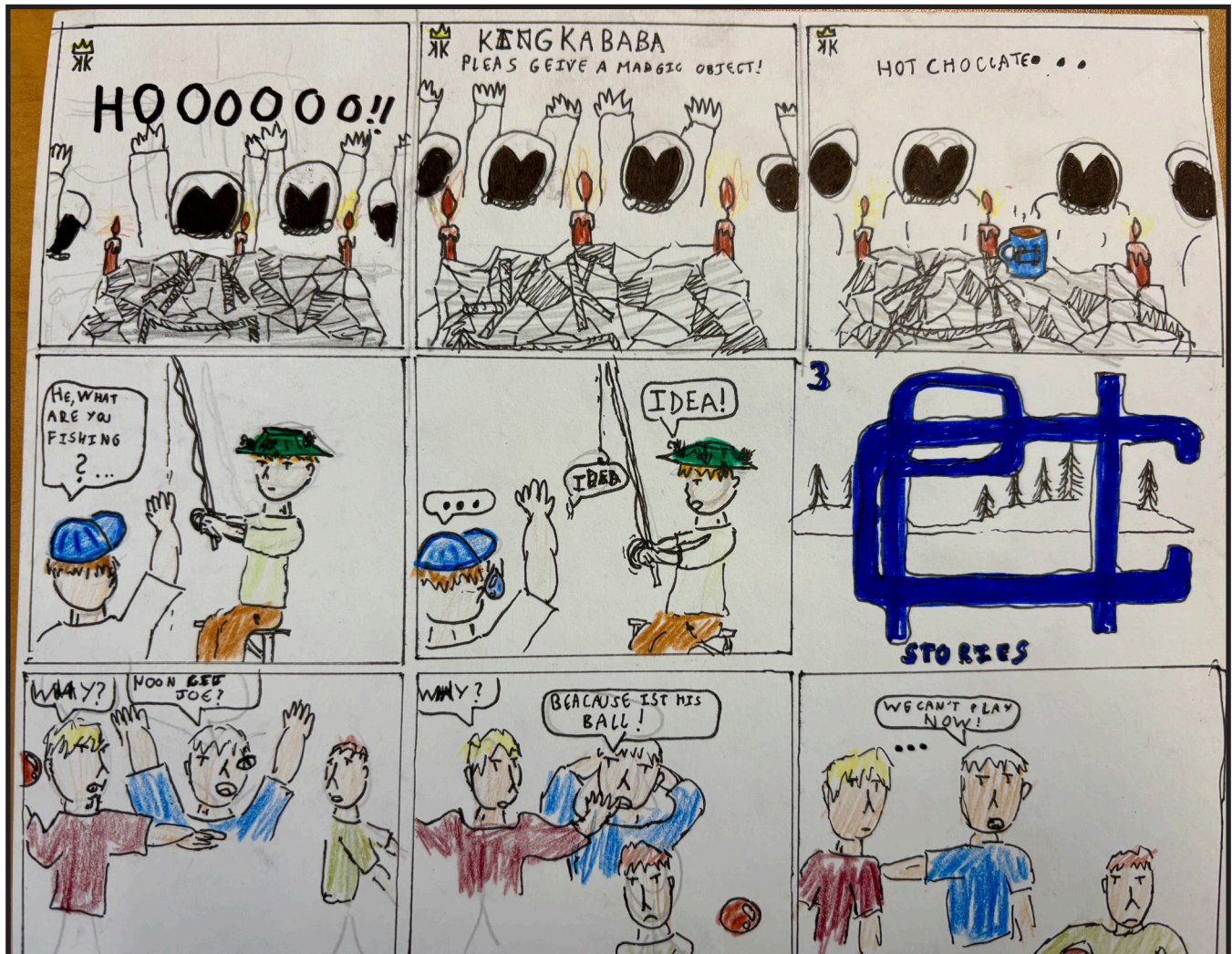
*August G., Lyle F., Ford S., below*

*Anonymous, bottom right*





# 3 PIC Stories By Anatole Dillard





Fishing for Words  
By Griffin Luckhurst-Fletcher

## Fishing Word Search

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

### Word Bank

1. cast
2. bass
3. rod
4. reel
5. fly
6. hook
7. line
8. trout
9. pike
10. bluegill
11. crappie