

Winter Workshop & Business Networking Extravaganza Slated for Jan. 24 “Zap the Generational Gap” with Meagan Johnson, author and generational expert

Meagan Johnson believes that learning about generations – our own and others’ – allows us to better understand generational differences and answer a simple question: “What can I do to enhance my multigenerational experiences in the camp world and at home?”

Johnson will bring her expertise to the MSC community when she presents “Zap the Generational Gap” at the annual Winter Workshop scheduled for Wednesday, January 24, 2024, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Portland in South Portland.



Camps across Maine have representation across generations – from Silents to Boomers to Gen X, Millennials

and Gen Z – not to mention the generation of campers themselves. In many cases, summer camps employ members of all of these generations, bringing together varying perspectives on work philosophy and communication that can give rise to frustration, conflict and confusion – a distraction from staffs’ primary focus on creating meaningful experiences for campers. At this year’s Winter Workshop, generational expert and multi-generational humorist Johnson will help participants learn to tackle generational challenges and come away with strategies to bridge differences and create a more cohesive, understanding, and effective camp workplace.

MSC “is such a great group from what I’ve learned,” Johnson said.

“I love talking about generations and the variety between younger and older and the strengths they bring,” she said. “It’s fun to learn about your own generation and taking it a step further: ‘because I have this experience here are how my expectations of others are different.’”

Johnson has spoken with members of different generations in the MSC community and will use information she gains from those interviews in her program.

“I think we take our work very seriously. There are a lot of emotions invested and when someone comes along and their actions or what they say doesn’t align to what we feel is due, we take it personally,” she said. Generational knowledge can help explain where those differences come from, she said.

This author and generational expert also calls herself a humorist and hopes to bring levity along with learning at the program.

The event will take place from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at the DoubleTree by Hilton Portland, 363 Maine Mall Road, South Portland. Come for coffee and conversation beginning at 9:00. Thank you to H&H Purchasing for once again sponsoring the Winter Workshop. All our business sponsors are listed on page 4. We look forward to seeing you there!

It’s not too late to register! ■



Click here by January 19 to register for January 24 Workshop



On a visit to the MSC office last fall long-time camping professional Alan Kissack received his Dedication to Camping honor from Executive Director Lucy Norvell.

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MESSAGE FROM THE MSC PRESIDENT JANUARY 2024

Happy 2024. While some of us are still scratching our heads and wondering where the last quarter of 2023 went, 2024 is in full swing, with another summer just around the bend.



While it seems that summer camp becomes increasingly more relevant and necessary in kids' lives, there can be zero doubt that in 2024, kids and staff will be needing the sanctuary of their summer camp experience more than ever. As we collectively prepare to regather our camp communities yet again, staff recruitment and alignment with mission are the critical components.

MSC is doing a ton of work to help all Maine camps find and prepare staff in a challenging labor market. The Winter Workshop, coming up on January 24, 2024, focuses on the importance of working among generations, a particularly fraught challenge when it comes to staffing. In addition, the MSC Camp Staffing committee is working on a number of initiatives to help you find staff, including a new sponsor for the MSC job board, and a mechanism for sharing staff leads. Also, Lucy has been sharing information on a Maine fund that will pay for 50 percent of any staff training expenses this year and next (conferences, certifications, staff week speakers, etc.). Contact the MSC office or check your Hall Monitor for more info.

Finally, a sincere thank you to the members of the Indigenous Neighbors Working Group who have put in an astonishing amount of collaborative work preparing, sharing, and educating around the Indigenous Appropriation Assessment (IAA) tool. MSC will be honored with a Special Recognition Award at the National ACA conference next month for this industry-leading work. If you haven't reviewed the IAA tool yet, I encourage you to do so.

Hope to see you at the Winter Workshop and Extravaganza on the 24th!

Matt Pines, MSC Board President, Maine Teen Camp Co-Director

MYCA UPDATE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On December 27, the Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention published notice of “routine technical” rulemaking for 10-144 CMR Ch 208, Youth Camps Rule, also known as the “Chapter 208” rules. These are the regulatory rules for all youth camps licensed in Maine and inspected by the Health Inspector Program, “HIP”.



Although Maine licensed youth camps must continually keep up to date with multiple codes and regulatory statutes (e.g. Maine Drinking water code, Life Safety building code, Food code, etc.) this is the first time in 15 years that the Chapter 208 rules have gone through the “routine technical” rulemaking process. There are several proposed changes, some of which MYCA expected; some we did not expect. I encourage each camp to review this proposed rulemaking closely:

 [Click here to review the proposed rulemaking](#)

Currently, MYCA is focusing our public testimony and written comments on the following issues:

- ▶ Proposed fingerprinting requirements for staff and volunteers (pg. 30)
- ▶ Proposed “Ineligible for hire” rule (pg. 31)
- ▶ Proposed “On site at all times” rule – adult health supervisor (pg. 26)
- ▶ Proposed requirements for drivers, specifically international drivers (pg. 47)
- ▶ Clarify definition of new section “farm camps”; suggest separate licensing (pgs. 42-44)

- ▶ Clarifying hazing and bullying “reporting” (pg. 32)
- ▶ (Chap. 201 rules – clarify the removal of inspection “waivers”)

There are several other, more moderate, proposed changes. MYCA would like to hear from you if a proposed rule, either those listed above or others not listed here, would have a detrimental impact on your camp and programming.

Email us at camps@mainecamps.org

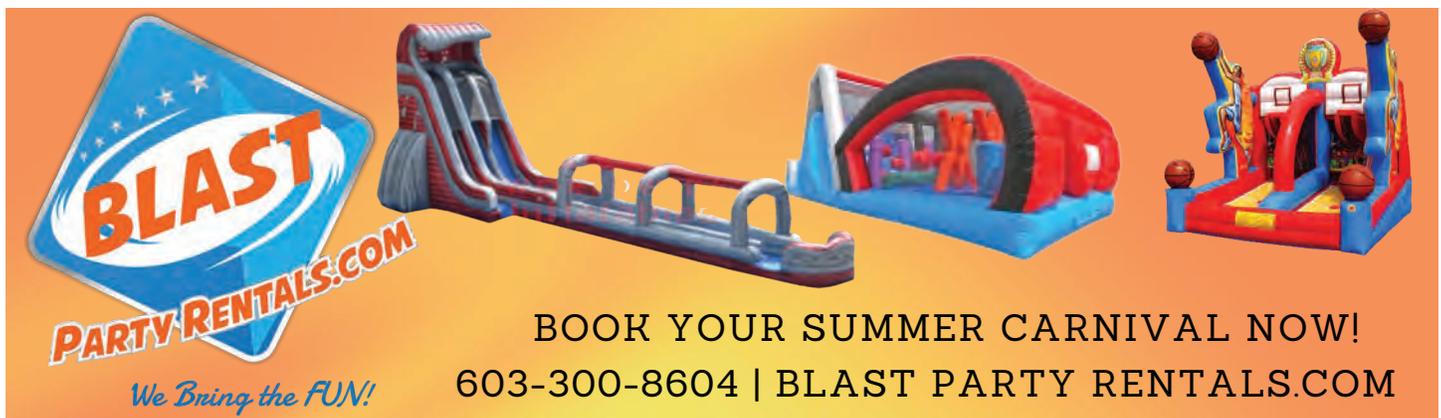
The public hearing for this rulemaking will be on January 18 at 10:30 AM in Augusta.

There is no opportunity for virtual public testimony, so if you are unable to attend in-person it is critical that you submit any concerns you have in writing to DHHS/CDC by January 28th (comment submission form is accessed in link to left).

All of this information and resources would not be possible without the hard work of each member of the MYCA Board and the MSC/MYCA legal counsel. Thank you all. ■

Laura Ordway
President MYCA Board
Winona Camps, laura@winonacamps.com

MYCA (Maine Youth Camp Association) is an affiliated organization to Maine Summer Camps (MSC). MYCA's mission is to monitor, publicly comment and interpret state and federal legislation on behalf of MSC, with the purpose of furthering the welfare of camps in Maine. We maintain relationships with agencies and policy officials for camp advocacy. Additionally, our 501(c)(4) non-profit status allows for limited activities supporting political campaigns. As a member of MSC, your camp is also a member of MYCA. The LDs and laws in rulemaking above have been more thoroughly explained in the most recent Legislative Report which is sent to members prior to the annual and semi-annual membership meetings.



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Thank you, Winter Workshop & Business Extravaganza Sponsors!

The **Business Networking Extravaganza** follows MSC's much anticipated **Winter Workshop** happening the morning of the January 24 from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. After a quick lunch, the mini-expo of the Business Networking Extravaganza will last until 3 pm. More than ten new businesses will be among the nearly fifty exhibitors joining us this year. Twelve generous Business Members are sponsoring the 2024 Winter Workshop & Business Networking Extravaganza.



H & H Business Services & Purchasing is the lead Winter Workshop Sponsor.



Brio Custom is sponsoring nametags and **REMAX Shoreline** is providing swag bags for Extravaganza attendees.



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DEI Panel Discussion Shares Ideas, Inspiration

2024 Plans include Podcast Club

The MSC DEI Committee is “eager” to increase their work, says Chair Katie Goodman, director of Camp Chewonki. A post-camp DEI Initiatives panel discussion on November 29 – which will become an annual event – offered ideas and insights intended to support camps in their DEI efforts.

Along with Goodman, Amanda Hatley of She Summits, Matt Cornish and Kareem Dieng of Camp Beech Cliff, and Janette Martinez of Camp Arcadia shared some of their experiences and efforts with the Zoom participants.

Working with outside consultants

Goodman described Camp Chewonki’s work with outside consultants as a means of offering training from individuals who hold the same identities as the groups they were talking about. For example, Strength Perspectives’ presenters “held identities as women of color,” Goodman said. This was a response to feedback that a 2022 presentation by a cisgender white woman was less well received, Goodman said.

Camp Chewonki’s DEI staff training work also involved a number of preparation meetings with Strength Perspectives to be sure the organizations “were on the same page,” Goodman said. This offered more time for practice scenarios during training, she said.

The camp also has a relationship with OUT Maine, which offers consultant services on LGBTQIA+ issues.

One important element of DEI, Goodman says, is striving for “shared language” at camp. Another vital goal is examining how to incorporate DEI efforts into “everything we are doing every session.”

Opportunities to build community

With respect to MSC generally, Goodman says the DEI committee is eager for the opportunity to do “more community building across camps around DEI topics.”

“One big goal is to create a space where we people can come and be vulnerable and learn from one another,” she said. The committee would also like to focus more on “actionable ideas,” including hearing from other camping professionals about what has worked and what has not.

Supporting diverse genders is a top priority, Goodman says, Adding that programs at Chewonki have been very valuable in navigating gender inclusion. Meanwhile, MSC as an organization

DEI Panel Discussion continues on page 6



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DEI Panel Discussion *continued from page 5*

is now exploring the option to include “gender inclusive” in their directory categories and in the online “Find A Camp Tool.”

Goodman, along with Hatley, Cornish and Dieng, and Martinez, all gave brief presentations at the November panel discussion, each focusing on DEI issues and how camps are addressing them.

Fellowship programs

Hatley discussed a fellowship program that she has initiated at She Summits. “I really wanted to be cognizant of the fact that it costs a lot of money” to pay for trip gear, as well as meet other expenses while working at camp, she said following the panel discussion. Staff applicants often “really love being outside and really want to work with kids but just can’t justify what they are being paid because they don’t have parents to pick up the bill or family that can help them out.”

She Summits has supported staff in a number of ways, including gear expenses and childcare costs.

Hatley acknowledges there have been challenges in having a staff with different socio-economic backgrounds. “There’s a big difference between staff who can afford [working at camp] and staff who can’t,” she said. “We have a lot of learning to do.”

She Summits also hopes to have a staff that shares ethnicities represented by campers. It’s another area for growth, Hatley said.

Starting DEI conversations at Camp Beech Cliff

At Camp Beech Cliff, on Mt. Desert Island, Director Matt Cornish calls issues around DEI a “constant conversation,” one which interestingly has been shaped by a DEIB training last summer that “didn’t land well.”

As a result of that, Cornish said leadership pointedly asked staff, “When you think about the umbrella of equity and work we are doing, where are we succeeding and where are we off the mark?”

Staff members gathered in groups to consider open-ended questions addressing how the camp is doing “from the equity lens and what areas still need attention,” Cornish said. “We are using this information to inform how we move into this coming season.”

Hearing, and then incorporating, staff input “is the best way to make meaningful change and really be rooted in helping staff and campers to live in that equity mindset.” – Matt Cornish

Cornish says camp staff members working face-to-face with campers have the best insights. Hearing, and then incorporating, their input “is the best way to make meaningful change and really be rooted in helping staff and campers to live in that equity mindset.”

Kareem Dieng, who leads Camp Beech Cliff’s outdoor education program, joined Cornish on the panel. He said conversations

around DEI issues last summer “provided space for experience and knowledge and skill sets in and among our staff to shine through.” The dialogue also “enabled folks to take ownership and step into leadership roles in their own right.”

“This isn’t secondary stuff,” he said. “This is key to what we do, for staff and for our kids.”

One vital element is identifying a DEIB consultant “that we can rely on,” he said. Dieng also said that the camp as an organization is committed to supporting Maine organizations that focus on DEI issues.

A new focus on July 4 at Camp Arcadia

Janette Martinez, head of staff, development and inclusion at Camp Arcadia, wrapped up the panel discussion by describing a “call to action” to consider how the camp celebrates the July 4 Independence Day holiday. With a diverse camper and staff population, camp leadership was asked to consider “why are we celebrating America?” Martinez said.

The result was a day of celebration that included what campers and staff “love about July 4,” but left behind elements of the traditional celebration that didn’t feel inclusive. Camp leadership suggested prior to the camp season that staff and campers come to camp “representing their cultures.” The resulting global community-themed celebration included a variety of new elements, including a land acknowledgement, flying the Arcadia flag, and a camp assembly celebrating the camp’s diversity. For example, campers learned a Hungarian lullaby, a Colombian dance, ate international foods, and engaged in a passport activity.

Martinez says responding to staff and camper input about previous celebrations was vital.

“It would have been a misstep not to respond,” she said. “We were able to get back to the purpose of an all-camp event: celebrate camp, celebrate each other, and have a great time.”

In addition, Camp Arcadia is in the process of developing a fellowship program “with a goal of empowering new leaders either in camping or the outdoor industry.” Fellows would have access to travel reimbursement, professional development, and a cohort of mentors, she said.

“The goal is to amplify new voices that we may not have on staff,” she said.

Plans for 2024

The DEI committee has ambitious plans for 2024, including a DEI Podcast Club, says Goodman. “We’ll have a meeting in February and in the spring, and we’ll be announcing the topic and podcast episode soon,” she wrote in an email.

“We’ve also decided to make the post-camp DEI Initiatives Panel an annual event so that we (MCS camps) can all continue to learn from each other.” ■

Welcome, Raine Kerhin!

New MSC Executive Assistant and Level Ground Initiative Coordinator



“At a pretty early age I realized that I think play is a top priority and should be in other people’s lives.”

Raine Kerhin, MSC’s new Executive Assistant and Level Ground Initiative Coordinator, understands play. And as a former camper, event planner, and leadership team member at Camp Cobbossee, she brings an understanding of camp and the vast skill set required to do the behind-the-scenes efforts to make play possible for kids at Maine camps.

Kerhin, a native of San Francisco and a graduate of the University of Nevada, says she now realizes that the population she is planning for matters. As a planner since high school and college (where she served in leadership positions), and a veteran of planning parties for Fortune 500 companies, she is now looking forward to using her skills to serve MSC.

“How I’m doing it and who I’m doing it for makes a dramatic difference,” she said. “Everyone knows that working with camp people is the best.”

Kerhin’s role includes serving not only as the executive assistant to Executive Director Lucy Norvell, but also coordinating the Level Ground Initiative, founded in 2018 to provide tuition-free camp experiences to children from Maine’s immigrant and refugee communities.

“Level Ground has so much potential,” Kerhin said. “It’s a program that will continue to grow from here on out. We are in communication with new community partners, opening the door to more campers.” Kerhin says camps also continue to reach out, offering to host Level Ground campers as well.

“The response from camps and community partners has me so excited,” she said.

With respect to the camping community, Kerhin said, “These are my people. They have my priorities, and they love play and extreme connection and being present.”

“They are doing such difficult jobs in such a meaningful and present and intentional way.”

Kerhin’s work in leadership at Camp Cobbossee for three summers gave her a perspective on camp that is now being enhanced through exposure to other camp operations, she said.

“Camp directors are so multi-faceted and mentors to so many people. They are also running a business and managing a staff. I’m in awe of it.”

MSC now has the privilege of benefitting from Raine Kerhin’s expertise, enthusiasm, and dedication to Maine youth camping. *Welcome, Raine!* ■

A.M. Skier to sponsor MSC Job Board

Camps may have noticed that MSC has not been asking for them to sign up for the MSC Job Board this year. That is because **our generous sponsor, A.M. Skier Insurance, has stepped forward to make participation possible for ALL MSC camp members.** There will be no limit to the number of jobs our camps can post at no cost. And, the posts will appear on the MSC website, here, of course. They will also appear on the major Maine Tourism Job Board. We think the job-seeking public will be amazed to see the number of seasonal positions available at MSC camps in Summer 2024. If you already know how to post, post on! And, if this is new to you, we’ll be sharing the details after our upcoming Business Networking Extravaganza. ■

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Camps are eligible for Alfond Workforce Development Grant

Thanks to a grant from the Alfond Foundation, the Maine Community College System is helping employers connect with training opportunities for their employees. While the community colleges offer a host of accessible, customizable training programs and classes, this funding can also be used for training provided by other institutions and vendors. MSC has recently become an approved training vendor and will appear in the drop-down menu. Like all Maine businesses, camps can apply for reimbursement of training expenses. Fifty percent of expenses are reimbursed per employee up to \$1,200 per year. Those attendees of the MSC Winter Workshop are eligible to apply to receive 50 percent reimbursement of registration fees.

Who is eligible for funding? Paid employees, At least 18 years old, Maine resident (seasonal is fine), and High school diploma or equivalent.

What is covered? Annual/mandatory training, Internal training, Staff development, Webinars, College classes, and Conference registration fees.

All Maine camps are eligible to join the compact. There is no cost to join. NOTE: For those who registered in December after our webinar, they have just rolled out a new website and things look a little different but are much more streamlined.



[Click here to learn more](#)

Camper Privacy and Parental Rights Webinar Friday, February 2

Join MSC/MYCA lawyers, Nancy Savage Marcus, of Curtis Thaxter, and Newell Augur, of Pierce Atwood, for a webinar sponsored by Chalmers Camp Insurance on “Camper Privacy and Parental Rights” on Friday, February 2, 11 am to 12 pm.



[Click here to register for the February 2 Zoom](#)

MSC is fortunate to have lawyers who are staying current with regard to this important legal issue for camps.

This webinar will cover:

The Camp’s responsibility ‘in loco parentis’

Do campers have a right to privacy?

Protecting campers from bullying and harassment (new proposed language in Rule 208)

Do campers have a right to keep information from their parents?

Best Practices

Recent cases and examples



Mark your calendar! 2024 Event Dates

Thursday, January 18, 2024

PUBLIC HEARING: Maine CDC, Dept. of Health & Human Services, Health Inspection Program - Chapter 208, Youth Camp Rule

Friday, January 19

Information Meeting for Proposed 'Chapter 208' Rulemaking via Zoom, 10am

Tuesday, January 23

MSC Level Ground Committee Meeting, DoubleTree by Hilton Portland, South Portland 11:45am - 1pm

Tuesday, January 23

MSC Board Meeting, DoubleTree by Hilton Portland, 2 - 4pm

Wednesday, January 24

Winter Workshop & Business Networking Extravaganza, DoubleTree by Hilton Portland, Workshop: 9:30am - 12:30pm; Lunch and Extravaganza: 12:30 - 3:00pm.

Friday, February 2

Camper Privacy and Parental Rights Webinar, 11am - 12pm

Tuesday, February 6 - Friday, February 9

National ACA Conference: Empowering Camps to Create Quality Experiences, New Orleans, LA

Wednesday, February 14

DEI Podcast Club via Zoom, 12 - 1pm

Friday, February 16

Virtual MYCA Board Meeting, 10 - 11:30am

Thursday, February 29

MSC Book Club: *Killers of the Flower Moon*, Hybrid at the MSC office and via Zoom, 9am

Tuesday, March 12 - Thursday, March 14

Tri-State Camp Conference, Atlantic City, NJ

Friday, March 15

Virtual MYCA Board Meeting, 10 - 11:30am

Thursday, March 21 - Saturday, March 23

ACA New England Camp Conference, Manchester, NH

Friday, March 22

MSC/MYCA Semi-Annual Meeting, in-person at the ACA New England Camp Conference, Manchester, NH, 4:45 - 5:45pm
MSC/MYCA Social, 5:45 - 6:45pm

Thursday, April 11

MYCA Workshop via Zoom, 11am - 12pm

Friday, April 12

Virtual MYCA Board Meeting, 10 - 11:30am

Thursday, April 25

Virtual MSC Board Meeting, 10am - 12pm

Wednesday, May 8

Virtual MYCA Board Meeting, 10 - 11:30am

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Contact: rae-a@campfireinstitute.org
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DEI Podcast Club to meet Feb. 14

The first meeting of the DEI Podcast Club will be Wednesday, February 14 at 12 PM. The podcast episode for discussion will be announced in the next Hall Monitor. Join us! Next meeting will be in April 2024.



[Click here to register for February 14 Podcast Club Meeting](#)

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Indigenous Neighbors Working Group Continues to Address Cultural Appropriation

Camp Directors Share their Experiences in Fall Panel Discussion

MSC's Indigenous Neighbors Working Group (formerly the Native American Working Group) continues to engage with MSC members in its efforts to help camps assess and respond to cultural appropriation of Maine's Indigenous people. A fall panel discussion brought together four camp leaders who shared their experiences of discussing vital concern with different camp constituencies.

"Our intent was to help people think about how they might approach the [Indigenous Appropriation Assessment] tool from a very specific way," said committee member Catriona Sangster of Camp Wawenock. The result was a discussion about "how colleagues have navigated change in their camps," she said.

Camps are made up of many constituents. Board members, alumni, parents, staff and campers all have a stake in changes camps make. "It was helpful for people to hear personal experiences of how they engaged folks in their communities," said Sangster. "Each of the different presenters did a good job and addressed issues from different angles."

Presenters included Greg Shute of Chewonki, Erik Calhoun of Agawam, Mark Van Winkle of Wohelo, and Laura Ordway of Winona.

According to Sangster, Shute discussed relationship-building with Indigenous communities. Calhoun talked about working with Camp Agawam's board. Ordway described Winona's decision to change the names of its camper groups and Van Winkle spoke about working with campers and staff.

"Interestingly, [Van Winkle's] staff came to him wanting things to change," Sangster said. "He kind of took the ball and ran with it. That was a little different from Erik, who was talking about working with a politically diverse board and needing to navigate that."

"It was one hundred percent worth doing," said Sangster. "I think we need to figure out how to engage camps that aren't already thinking about it. That's the challenge: how do we get other people there?"

Sangster emphasized that this isn't a "check the box" endeavor. Rather, assessing and addressing cultural appropriation is a continual work in progress. She said she counsels camps "not to try to do everything." Rather, she said the Indigenous Appropriation Assessment tool is intended to be used one section at a time. "Just take one thing, one section and respond to it," she said. "Then see what you feel the camp needs to do."

"For a lot of people that's hard because it's more satisfying to do something that's a checklist," she said. "We will probably need to consider doing some more – ask people what they want and provide more opportunities for conversations."

"We want to make people both aware and to give them resources to help them in their process wherever they are," said committee member Andy Lilienthal of Camp Winnebago. Lilienthal also points out that the effort in making camps aware of issues of appropriation of Indigenous cultures addresses work that "is going to take a long time."

The group has invested tirelessly in its efforts since members of the Wabanaki Tribal Nations, including Tribal Ambassador Maulian Dana Bryant, brought cultural appropriation by camps to the attention of MSC nearly three years ago. That work has developed to the degree that the working group successfully submitted Bryant's name to make a keynote address at this winter's national ACA conference in New Orleans.

A great deal of credit goes to former MSC Executive Director Ron Hall, says Sangster. Hall was "very proactive in response," to tribal concerns. "It could easily have been shoved under the rug, because it has been for hundreds of years – everywhere, not just camps," she said.

"We sprang into action really quickly," said Lilienthal of the group's initial efforts in early 2021. "We hit the ground running and haven't stopped."

That action began with what Lilienthal calls an "organic and planned effort to educate the board and to be very cognizant that it's a long-term effort and that it is very complicated and multi-factorial."

The introduction to the [Indigenous Appropriation Assessment] tool asks camps to consider it as a "an opportunity to thoughtfully observe, discuss, consider, and take action."

The group's awareness of those realities was a cornerstone of its development of the Indigenous Appropriation Assessment (IAA), a tool designed for camps to consider their appropriation of Indigenous cultures in their symbols and practices. The introduction to the tool asks camps to consider it as a "an opportunity to thoughtfully observe, discuss, consider, and take action," said Lilienthal. An evolving document, the IAA was first published on MSC's website in March 2023 and was updated in December 2023.

Today, less than a year after its introduction to MSC members, the assessment and its use have led to collaborations with ACA National, ACA New England, and ACA New York, New Jersey,

"I think that we got to a point last year where we put together the assessment for camps to use, which was very well received

Indigenous Neighbors Working Group *continues on page 11*

Indigenous Neighbors Working Group *continued from page 10*

– enough that national and tri-state wanted to pitch into that and funding-wise helped us,” said Lilienthal. “ACA National understands this issue is very important,” Lilienthal said. “They see this as a super important issue that they need to get on the right side of in a timely way.”

Lilienthal said the group’s relationship with Indigenous leaders has resulted in visits to camps for educational talks, including the ways that Indigenous people live, including the political climate. “Across the board regarding issues and topics, it’s been very edifying for people, very positive,” he said.

Lilienthal calls the challenges Indigenous people face a matter of “human rights.”

“We see other world events, including Ukraine and Gaza and younger people see these as human rights issues, not geopolitical or realpolitik.”

“Indigenous peoples in Maine consider this as a human rights issue. They take that point of view into their thinking when they are thinking about these issues,” Lilienthal said.

MSC camps have undertaken a range of actions to address their cultural appropriation, including “taking down totem poles, not wearing feathers, and not showing up in face paint” for certain camp events. At Lilienthal’s camp, Camp Winnebago, what was formerly called the “council ring” is now called a “campfire,” he said. Another example of their work is hanging tribal flags in the dining room “as an acknowledgment of where we are.”

This year the camp will start a woodworking project in which they will put up identification signs with Indigenous words. It will be done with permission from tribal leaders, Lilienthal said.

Addressing the challenges facing Indigenous peoples will never be done, Lilienthal said. It’s all about building relationships.

Addressing the challenges facing Indigenous peoples will never be done, he said; it’s all about building relationships. First, it is an educational effort involving ongoing learning, he said. Second, “it’s a long-term thing,” involving pressures among camps full constituencies – alumni, campers, staff.

“We know this is going to take a long time, and everyone has to do it on their own timeframe.” ■

MSC Indigenous Neighbors Working Group to Receive ACA National Award

The efforts of the MSC Indigenous Neighbors Working Group will be honored at the ACA National Conference February 6-9 in New Orleans. The group will receive an ACA Special Recognition Award “designed to honor groups, organizations or individuals for their efforts to promote camp on a national level.”

A recent press release announcing the awards states that “ACA is proud to honor those who lead the way in exemplary leadership, in service, and in passionate commitment to the value of the camp experience.”

The Indigenous Neighbors Working Group (formerly the Native American Working Group) was formed in early 2021 in response to concerns among Maine’s Indigenous peoples about cultural appropriation by Maine camps. The group has worked closely with representatives of Maine’s Wabanaki Tribe, as well as with professionals nationwide, to begin to address these concerns. In 2023 they distributed the Indigenous Appropriation Assessment tool to Maine camps, which has given camps the opportunity to thoughtfully consider their own traditions.

Catriona Sangster, a founding member of the committee, credits former MSC Executive Director Ron Hall for the proactive role MSC took on this issue. “He deserves a shout-out for his role in that,” she said.

“It’s very gratifying,” said Sangster, about the award. “It’s another example of how Maine is proactive. It should have been done a long time ago – we aren’t ahead of the curve, but we are trying to be leaders in whatever areas we can be. I think it’s a nice recognition of the time and effort we put in thus far.”

Maine Camp History

Camp Teconnet: China, Maine

By Henry Paul Johnson, Maine Summer Camp Historian

According to one historical account, Camp Teconnet for Girls was the first children's summer camp located on China Lake in the Town of China, Maine. Camp Teconnet for Girls operated from 1911 through 1925. The camp was owned by Charles Towne, an assistant superintendent of schools in Providence, Rhode Island, along with Herbert L. Rand, the director of Camp Winnecook in Unity, Maine, and Arthur G. Rand of Nantucket, Massachusetts. By all accounts, Camp Teconnet campers and staff patronized a general store in China Village and every summer the Teconnet campers and staff presented an evening entertainment in the village to benefit some local cause.



DINING HALL

According to a 1917 brochure of Camp Teconnet, “the camp encompasses the whole of an island of six acres situated at the upper end of China Lake. The eastern shoulder of the island forms a sheltering cove making it easily accessible from the mainland yet also providing a seclusion desirable for a camp...”

All the buildings were constructed for the purpose for which they were used. At the highest point at the northern part of the island was a living hall 40x40 with a ten-foot piazza across the front of the building. It had a large main room with an open gate and a window, a piano, victrola, couches, chairs, and tables all of which made it “very attractive” on rainy days and cool nights. Opening from the main room were smaller rooms used by the girls of the camp for ping-pong, games, and storage rooms.

Each tent at Teconnet, 12x15 feet with four-foot walls, was pitched upon a wooden platform elevated enough off the ground to secure “perfect dryness at all times.” The platforms extended five feet in front for a veranda. Each tent was on the lakefront, with a “delightful water view that was placed far enough away from neighbors to allow for complete privacy.”

Charles Towne and his wife were actively engaged in caring for the campers each day of camp and were assisted by counselors especially fitted for the work for which they were chosen. The camp boasted that counselors for drills, tennis, boating and canoeing were accompanied by instructors in athletic dancing, domestic arts, and dramatic arts.

The tuition in 1917 was \$150 unless the camper elected the one-month option of \$75. A 1917 Camp Teconnet brochure said that in order to reach the camp a special car “leaves North Station in Boston on July 2 on the 10:00 a.m. train for Augusta, Maine. From that point, the party is taken directly to camp. Mr. Towne and the counselors will meet the campers at North Station at 9:15 a.m. to arrange for pickups and baggage.” ■



This article is written by noted author and Maine Summer Camp Historian, Henry Johnson, who attended Camp Powhatan in Otisfield, Maine from 1966 through 1979 as a camper, counselor, and, ultimately, program director. Mr. Johnson is the author of numerous articles and publications relating to the history of Maine summer camps. If you wish

to submit information to Mr. Johnson relating to the history of any Maine summer camp, you may do so at the following email: hjohnson@henryjohnsonlaw.com.

MSC Book Club Hybrid Meeting Thursday, February 29

The Maine Summer Camps Book Club is always open to suggestions, and we were happy to hear from the MSC Indigenous Neighbors Working Group (formerly NAWG) suggesting we read *Killers of the Flower Moon* by David Grann. This is the book we will be talking about on Thursday, February 29 at 9 am.

If possible, we encourage you to support your local, independent bookstore or library when accessing this book.

The book club is a hybrid format with an in-person and zoom opportunity to discuss this book. The in-person portion is at the Maine Summer Camps office in Portland. **Please email Laura Jo (laurajo@kingsleypines.com) to confirm you can attend in person.**



[Click here to attend the Feb. 29 book club meeting via Zoom](#)

We look forward to discussing this challenging book. Even if you haven't been able to read all of the book, please join us for a discussion.



[Click here to listen to a NPR Fresh Air interview with the author](#)

A film has recently been released based upon this book and it works to join our discussion if you have seen the film and not read the book!

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■ Summer CAP Coaching

Summer CAP is an employee assistance program for summer camp counselors and staff providing private, therapeutic coaching sessions to help counselors manage the stress of the job and their own mental health..

Contact: nichol@summercapcoaching.com
(207) 329-0485

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Ivy Oaks provided control services for Browntail Moths, Ticks, Mosquitos, Poison Ivy, Ants, Spiders and more to over 25 Maine summer camps.

Contact: isaiah@ivyoaks.com
(844) 489-6257

■ Jesse Ruben

Jesse Ruben is a singer/songwriter from Brooklyn, NY who had some of the best summers of his life at summer camp in Maine.

Contact: jesseruben@gmail.com
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