

JMG Test Encampment and Pre-Test “Rendezvous” Slated for July

Annual training “Rendezvous” reprised for the first time since 2019

The Junior Maine Guide program will reprise its annual training “Rendezvous” for the first time since 2019, prior to test encampment at the Stephen Phillips Memorial Preserve in Oquossoc in late July. JMG examiners will gather on July 13 at Camp O-AT-KA with candidates from participating JMG camps to demonstrate a range of skills included on the JMG certification test, allowing candidates to ask questions and familiarize themselves with the testing process.

Bill Southwick helps lead the JMG program alongside Director Ron Fournier, former director of Bryant Pond 4-H Camp and current Recreation Safety Supervisor at Maine’s Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, and Lynn O’Donnell, a longtime JMG examiner. Southwick calls the Rendezvous “an opportunity for JMG candidates to get together, see a lot of other kids doing the same thing, and meet the ‘big scary examiners.’” Southwick said that 13-year-olds involved with JMG but are too young to go to testing camp will also be invited to the Rendezvous.

Participants will rotate through three separate sessions, Southwick said, two in the morning and one after lunch. Those sessions will include canoeing, where examiners will do a demonstration to help put candidates at ease. “The test can be a little intimidating,” Southwick said. “They’re sitting alone in a canoe with the examiner looking at them from the bow.” Examiners will talk through the test for Rendezvous participants, familiarizing them with what to expect.

“... Let’s get excited, but here are some specific things you can do,” Southwick said. “Anything we can do to help demystify the process is good for kids.”

Shelter and fire, and map and compass are also likely sessions, Southwick said. “It’s exposure to an explanation” of the test camp experience, he said, not “a replacing of an instructor.”

Southwick said he, Fournier and O’Donnell will also meet with JMG instructors from participating camps to discuss expectations of them. In addition, O’Donnell will give a short presentation on food safety, essential to a successful — and healthy — test encampment experience.



Steve Milton, Maine Game Warden, Maine Guide and Bryant Pond 4-H Camp JMG, speaks with JMG candidates from Winona Camps in 2022.

“[The JMG Rendezvous] is kind of meant to be ‘let’s get excited but here are some specific things you can do,’” Southwick said. “Anything we can do to help demystify the process is good for kids.”

“We are looking forward to getting to Oquossoc to welcome a new group of JMGs,” said Fournier, adding that while the JMG candidate numbers have not returned to pre-COVID levels, the team is looking forward to its annual test encampment at the Stephen Phillips Memorial Preserve from July 22-26. In addition, he said, interest in the program continues to grow among camps participating in the Maine Woodcraft and Junior Maine Woodcraft programs.

OUTDOOR LIVING SKILLS AT CAMP BEECH CLIFF

Come summer, Camp Beech Cliff, a day camp on Mt. Desert Island, will teach both Maine Woodcraft and Junior Maine Woodcraft. Kareem A. Dieng, director of outdoor education at the camp said Camp Beech Cliff hopes to offer the full JMG program and send campers to testing camp sometime in the future.

JMG Test Encampment continues on page 5.

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MESSAGE FROM THE MSC PRESIDENT JUNE 2024

Heading into the summer, I've been thinking (and talking) a lot about how summer camp fits into the wider culture in 2024.



Camps have always been a place apart, a bubble, an eddy current aside from the mainstream. Places where the “real world” gives way to a more authentic experience, one more intense and relaxed at the same time.

But I've been thinking about it a little differently this summer, so I've added a new analogy to my lexicon. I doubt it's “new” new, but it's new to me.

I've started thinking about camp as something akin to a wildlife reserve, or a national park, set up to preserve a unique and valuable ecosystem that is facing significant habitat destruction. The ecosystem, or habitat, in this case being childhood and adolescence.

It is no secret that childhood and adolescence have been under intense pressure for quite a while now, but those pressures are accumulating at an accelerating pace, thanks in large part to the switch from a play-based childhood to a phone-based childhood. (Apple recently took pride in their part in this destructive switch, releasing an ad showing a giant hydraulic press destroying guitars, paintbrushes, and toys, only to replace them with a iPad). Beyond this, media fear-mongering, insurance requirements and overdeveloped land all combine to threaten children's play-based time in the outdoors

Previous generations of kids and teens had much more freedom of access to spaces that respected and encouraged play, challenge, peer-to-peer interaction, community mindedness, and more. Today, few places for kids like this still exist, with the exception of camp.

So this summer, keep pushing back the real world. Collectively, camp professionals in Maine have been doing so since the early 20th century. It's always been important, but preserving time and space for childhood and adolescence is more important now than ever. So enjoy the summer inside the bubble, and thank you for doing something that kids and teens need, but is rarely offered. And don't forget to do your tick check.

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

MYCA UPDATE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On April 24, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) officially withdrew the rules for licensed youth camps that were proposed on December 27, 2023. You helped make this happen with members of Maine Summer Camps, responding to the “Call to Action” by submitting comments, preparing public testimony and contacting your legislative representatives in January. Additionally, this “Call to Action” eventually resulted in an emergency resolve, which was unanimously passed by the Maine 131st Legislature, stating: *the department (DHHS) may not adopt any rules that amend its rule Chapter 208: Rules Relating to Boys, Girls, Boys and Girls, Day Camps and Primitive and Trip Camping until the department has convened and engaged a stakeholder group . . . the department shall convene the stakeholder group as soon as possible to solicit input for the department's consideration and engage stakeholders in good faith.*”



Members of the MYCA board have reviewed the posted 208 rule “draft” from DHHS. Here is the good news:

- ▶ Mandatory fingerprinting prior to staff employment has been removed, and no other fingerprinting regulation has been added (page 32).
- ▶ Requirement for an Adult Health Supervisor “on site at all times” has been deleted (page 27).
- ▶ The “Farm Camping” section has been completely reworked, the majority of it deleted altogether, with a new “Farm Animals” section that exempts most camps, other than camps which work with animals for “agricultural purposes” (pages 43 – 47).
- ▶ Requirement to review international staff’s driving records has been removed (page 49).

While I categorize the above as “good news,” the reality is that the items above should have never been proposed as new rules in the first place, and they have caused anxiety to our membership (not to mention costing time and money, as an organization).



[Click here to view the “draft” 208 rules, posted on April 24.](#)

There are still approximately 15 “draft” rules that concern us, including frequent use of new terms (Local Plumbing Inspector, bullying, hazing), discriminatory list of offenses making staff ineligible for hire, increased amount of “critical” violation possibilities, lifeguard requirement for trips, and archery arrows secured & locked separately from bows. **There is no action needed from membership at this time.** Please know MYCA will

continue to closely review the new “draft” rules and prepare for the stakeholders’ meeting (at time of publication, meeting date has not been set but most likely will take place in early September in order for the new rules to be adopted and in place for the 2025 camp season). ■

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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Maine Camp History

Camp Belgrade

"To the Hand – to the Heart – to the Men – and to Belgrade"

By Henry Paul Johnson, Maine Summer Camp Historian

Camp Belgrade, which was founded by Mort Eiseman in 1937, operated continuously until its closure in 1983. The Camp was located on the shores of Great Pond in the Belgrade Lake section of Maine. According to an unofficial website of Camp Belgrade: "each summer 150 boys ages 8-15 from all over the United States would call Camp Belgrade their summer home".

Activities at Belgrade included canoeing, basketball, boxing, camp crafts, tennis, and drama, including instrumental play. The Camp Belgrade alma mater was as follows: "In the midst of Maine's great mountains lies a camp of fame. Under Belgrade's lofty banner glory to its name. Let the spirit carry onward every heart and soul. As we fight for Belgrade's honor till we reach our goal."



Camp Belgrade original camp entry sign

The camp colors of Camp Belgrade were grey and maroon and it is also noteworthy that Camp Belgrade appears to have had a motto which was "to the hand – to the heart – to the men – and to Belgrade".

This Historian had the opportunity to meet campers from Camp Belgrade during Camp Belgrade's participation in what was then the Eastwood Invitational Basketball Tournament in Oakland, Maine. There, Camp Eastwood, in the divisions of 13-and-under and 15-and-under basketball, would invite seven other summer camps to participate in what was one day basketball tournament. There the first home games would begin at 9:00 a.m. and the finals for both age groups were often played under the lights at an outdoor court setting beginning at 8:00 p.m. In addition to participation by Camp Belgrade in the Camp Eastwood Invitational Basketball Tournament, notably several other camps of past

and present would typically be in attendance as follows: Camp Beaumont, Camp Modin, Camp Robin Hood, Camp Kennebec, and Camp Powhatan.

A Podcast entitled "Camp Belgrade, a Staple for Summer Camps in Northern Maine" reports: "For nearly five decades, Camp Belgrade echoed friendship and a spirit of exploration led by Mort Eiseman's vision. The camp fostered an environment where boys can embrace the outdoors, learn life skills, and form bonds that transcend time." According to an interview during the Camp Belgrade Podcast, Jill Eiseman Witherell, the daughter of Camp Belgrade's founder, Camp Belgrade was "in the genes, in the blood."

This Historian would respectfully submit that the experience of camp in Maine for so many will always be "in the genes and in the blood". ■



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.



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"We are taking one step at a time to build our program," he said.

Dieng says the Maine Woodcraft and Junior Maine Woodcraft curricula will reach "dozens of young people" enrolled at camp this summer.

Camp Beech Cliff was also the site of Maine's "Becoming an Outdoors-Woman" (BOW) program, held on May 19 in collaboration with the state's Inland Fisheries & Wildlife Department. Dieng said he made connections through the JMG program and worked with Ron Fournier, JMG program director and IF&W recreational safety supervisor as well as IF&W Education and Outreach Coordinator Chelsea Lathrop.

"There were upwards of 80 women between women and leaders," Dieng said of the day-long program that featured workshops in a broad range of outdoor living skills categories.

"I'm grateful for the experience," Dieng said. "We are thrilled to be able to provide these programs. We're looking forward to continuing to serve; that's what it's all about."

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE 4-H CAMP AND LEARNING CENTER AT GREENLAND POINT ALSO EXPANDING ITS OFFERINGS



Maine Woodcraft will also be added to the offerings at the University of Maine 4-H Camp and Learning Center at Greenland Point, in Princeton, Maine, Fournier said. "They have done JMW since the summer of 2019, building a foundation of the Junior Maine Guide program," said Fournier in an email. "This summer, they will embark on their first Maine Woodcraft program with the hopes to continue on and offer JMG in the near future."

JMG LEADERSHIP

Spencer Ordway, co-director of Winona Camps and chair of the MSC Junior Maine Guides committee, also says the work of the leadership team is going well. That team came together after Moose Curtis, long-time and legendary program director, retired in 2022. "Seeing the strength in the leadership of the program is really exciting," Ordway said.

"For MSC to have that connection with I.F. & W is a new, huge win. Ron is such a passionate supporter," from his time as director of the University of Maine 4-H Camp and Learning Center at Bryant Pond to his current position with the state.

In addition, Ordway says the younger group of testers becoming involved at the encampment level, represents a "new generation."

"The testing camp staff makes it all happen," Ordway said. "If we didn't have that it would change dramatically what the program is."

Ordway also commends Fournier and his role. "For MSC to have that connection with I.F. & W is a new, huge win. Ron is such a passionate supporter," from his time as director of the University of Maine 4-H Camp and Learning Center at Bryant Pond to his current position with the state.



A JMG candidate prepares her billet for the wet-day fire test.

With Southwick as a self-described testing camp "Johnny-on-the-spot," Fournier planning testing camp evening activities and coordinating with the site manager, and O'Donnell doing "just a million things," Southwick says the leadership will be prepared for the 2024 encampment.

"I love to get up there," Southwick said. "I love to see the kids, always asking about trips they've been on and where they've canoed. It's an anchor and a touchpoint for my summer."

Chances are, the same is true for JMG examiners, instructors and candidates who find themselves in Oquossoc the third week in July. ■



Winners of the 2023 MSC Spelling Bee — Camp Fernwood team

Spellers, Get Your Dictionaries!

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The annual MSC Spelling Bee will be held on Wednesday, July 10. The location of the event will be announced in a future Hall Monitor. Last year more than 60 campers gathered at Bradbury Mountain State Park in Pownal for a day of fun, challenge, and friendly competition. This year's competition will begin with registration at 9:30 on July 10 and spelling will begin at 10am. Keep an eye on the Hall Monitor for more information and join us!

LEVEL GROUND UPDATE

More Camps, More Community Partners Mark Growth in Initiative

Maine Summer Camps' Level Ground Initiative continues to grow. With Coordinator Raine Kerhin at the helm, the Initiative now involves several additional community partners and participating camps, and camper registrations are on the rise.

Level Ground, founded in 2018 to provide tuition-free camp experiences to children from Maine's immigrant and refugee communities, is slated to make camp possible for more than 70 children during the 2024 season, and Kerhin says that number is likely to increase. The Initiative is made possible by participating camps providing the full cost of tuition for each Level Ground camper. Kerhin, who also serves as MSC Executive Assistant to Executive Director Lucy Norvell, has made bountiful connections among potential community partners and has helped to place scores of youngsters at participating camps.

Community partners are increasing in number and are essential to making these camp experiences possible. Community partners for summer 2024 include Spurwink, the Boys and Girls Club of Southern Maine, the Maine Association of New Americans, and Portland Community Squash. The following schools have also joined the ranks of community partners: the Gerald E. Talbot Community School in Portland; King Middle School, Lyman Moore Middle School and Lincoln Middle School, all in Portland; and South Portland Middle School.

A wide range of camps will host Level Ground campers come summer, including Camp Susan Curtis, Camp Bishopswood, Chewonki, Agassiz Village, Camp Skylemar, Camp O-AT-KA, the YMCA Camp of Maine, and Maine Teen Camp. A number of additional MSC member camps have also offered to host campers.

According to Kerhin, community partners are likely to place campers at Level Ground camps for one of two reasons: prior knowledge of camps, and the number of spaces available at a particular camp. It can be challenging to fill single available spaces because community partners often want to fulfill potential campers' wishes to go to camp with a friend or sibling.

"I'm happy with the way my first year is going," Kerhin said. "I'm learning on the go. Now that I have seen the timeline and systems, future years are only going to get better."

Among upcoming plans are holding Level Ground orientation sessions for new community partners and camps prior to summer 2025.

Kerhin started that effort this spring, when she created a presentation for families and students intended to answer the question "What is summer camp all about?" Volunteers helped translate the slides into Portuguese and French. During her visit to an ESL class in April, students asked Kerhin a variety of candid questions including, "Are there snakes?" and "Can I go next week, and skip school?" Kerhin was also affectionately referred to as "Chuva," which means "rain" in Portuguese.



Campers at Agassiz Village practice their dance routine

"I am excited to interact with kids more next year and get them excited and informed for when they go home to talk to their parents," Kerhin said.

As for summer 2024, thanks to partnering camps and community partners, with Kerhin coordinating placements, logistics and more, Level Ground campers aged 7 to 17 (with some Level Ground participants serving as CITs) will enjoy all the rich rewards of a Maine summer camp experience. ■



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Nonprofit Camp Leaders Gather at Camp Mechuwana

More than 20 nonprofit camp professionals discuss common goals and concerns

Participants in MSC's "Nonprofit Circle" were well represented on April 10 at Camp Mechuwana, where they came together to connect in person and discuss common concerns. An opportunity to continue conversations that the group has held via Zoom over the past several years, the nonprofit camp professionals covered issues ranging from camper enrollment to budgeting to self-care. They enjoyed camaraderie, collegial support, and a delicious lunch prepared by Mechuwana staff members.

Norm Thombs, now in his 37th year as executive director of Camp Mechuwana, has been with the Nonprofit Circle since it came together several years ago. He said the in-person event – which included 22 registrants representing 14 camps – “just seemed very worthwhile and valuable.”

“Our specific goal was to get people together and just talk about whatever was on the table at the time,” said Terri Mulks, director of Camp Susan Curtis, who has also been instrumental in creation of the group.

“I thought it went great. I was really happy to have everyone in the same room together,” said Mulks. “There was a willingness to share in a way that camps sometimes protect,” including registration statistics and staffing and budget challenges, she said.



Betsy Brown and Laurie Palaygi of West End House Girls Camp.

“A lot of time [camps] don’t openly talk about stuff like that,” Mulks said. “The ability to share those kinds of things helps everyone feel like they’re not alone. This openness is so great,” she said.

That candor included discussions around camp budgeting. “We did a pretty deep dive into the real cost of camp,” Thombs said, adding that it was helpful to learn that “we’re all on the same page.”

Many nonprofit camp directors are in the process of defining the true costs involved in offering a camp experience, he said, and there

Nonprofit Camp Leaders Gather continues on page 8.



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can be struggles involved with meeting those expenses. “Most of our camps, when you go around hearing what they are doing for programming, simply can’t pass that cost on,” he said. “Then you have to start saying ‘so I can’t pass that on to clientele, where does that money come from?’”

“The whole aspect was very valuable.”

Thombs said that bringing the group together in person was also valuable. “We’re a very open group and that hasn’t just happened overnight,” he said. Group members rely on each other for support, Thombs said, and know they can “pick up the phone” if they need help. Having a group like the nonprofit circle can help combat burnout, too, he said.

Mulks and Thombs both acknowledge that coming together as a group is an antidote to the isolation that can come with running a nonprofit camp. Nonprofit camp professionals can feel as though they “are on an island,” particularly because they have small staffs that are “even tinier during the non-summer,” said Thombs.

“Nonprofits are such small things in Maine and to have one so incredibly unique in the population it serves can leave you feeling very alone,” said Mulks. “It really helps to know people. Even though we are all doing different things, both the celebrations and the struggles are very similar.”

Liz Charles McGough, director of Pilgrim Lodge, located in Gardiner, called the event “a wonderful opportunity.” Coming together after so many Zoom meetings “really felt like a great spirit of collegiality,” she said. “It was energizing.”

“For me, as someone newer in the field of being a director can feel daunting,” McGough said. “Everyone is so generous with written content and expertise. It really kind of saved me as a new person in the realm of camp.”

McGough described the elements discussed at the session as “very rich and informative.”

Those elements included self-care ideas, but also the very nuts and bolts issues of budgeting, tiered pricing, sliding scales and scholarships. She expressed appreciation for Mulks and Thombs for organizing the gathering, and to Thombs and Camp Mechuwana for hosting and providing lunch to the nearly two dozen camp professionals.

McGough said she is also grateful for MSC’s involvement as an organization. Members of the MSC team attending the event “draws all the webs of relationships together,” she said. “Small nonprofit camps have different challenges. Knowing that you understand the dynamics is really helpful; it helps connect the dots.”

And as the event ended and participants said their good-byes, the feeling of connection among the group was evident, McGough said.

“I felt like we had this moment of collective cheerleading as everyone departed with good spirits of well-wishing each other off for the season ahead,” she said. ■

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MSC Camp Leaders Prepare for “Difficult Conversations” During Summer 2024

While camps are in “bubbles,” real-world issues still make an impact. And the world we live in now is particularly rife with conflict, division, and passionate viewpoints from all perspectives. On May 7, the MSC education and DEI committees held a “casual conversation” focusing on how to navigate difficult conversations that will undoubtedly take place at camps this summer.

Sponsored by Chalmers Camp Insurance and The Redwoods Group, the conversation brought together 36 MSC camp leaders who met in three breakout rooms for wide-ranging discussion on both the communication challenges posed by current events as well as strategies for healthy dialogue at camp generally. Peter Kassen of Hidden Valley Camp, Clay Miles of Winona Camps, and Terri Mulks of Camp Susan Curtis facilitated the groups.

“We like it when young people of camper age or counselor age speak up about what’s going on the country and the world,” Kassen said in a recent interview. “The question is, ‘how do you do it?’”

DEI Committee member Kassen told the gathering that one impetus for the webinar idea was concern and opinions about the war in Gaza and its impact on camp conversations, particularly among staff and older campers. Camps share common values of tolerance and respect, Kassen said, and while camps may differ in their approaches, they “may need to ask staff to create consensus” around certain topics.

“We like it when young people of camper age or counselor age speak up about what’s going on the country and the world,” Kassen said in a recent interview. “The question is, ‘how do you do it?’”

“How do you express your opinions and thoughts and talk about what you need and what kind of world you want in a way that is also inclusive and treats people kindly and recognizes differences?” Kassen asked. “In more intensive communities where everyone is in close quarters and there’s a premium on mutual respect, how do you balance all that?”

Because language has “been weaponized in our society,” Kassen said, camp leaders must help their camp communities discuss issues in respectful ways. He said sensed from the group he facilitated that that is why the Zoom discussion was so popular, and that those concerned about the issue “want to plan ahead.”

Kassen said participants in his session “don’t want to be in a position where they are reacting” to issues that come up, but rather that staff feel invested in discussion guidelines at camp.

“We talked in very general terms about having circles where staff can contribute to building that structure,” he said. “There

are also camp directors who are just going to impose some limits on this,” including simply telling staff that they can’t talk about specific topics.

At Hidden Valley Camp, Kassen said he and his wife, Meg, will take a “hybrid” approach. “We will meet with returning staff who have a richer understanding of the ongoing nature of the camp community,” including communication styles and community members’ needs. Returning staff will then make a presentation to new staff “about what we’ve decided.”

The Kassens will emphasize to staff that “they are doing this in the context of work,” and to approach discussions “through a less personal and more professional lens.”

“It will be a group effort, guided with some limits from Meg and me,” he said.

Terri Mulks, director of Camp Susan Curtis, also facilitated a breakout room discussion. Members of Mulks’s room focused on the benefits of active listening and pointed out other elements essential to constructive conversations, including ensuring the safety and comfort of participants and making time for such conversations.

It is easy for leadership to get wrapped up in day-to-day camp issues, Mulks said during the gathering, and by “taking care of what is happening in the moment,” camp leaders can model behaviors that will “trickle down to campers.”

“In more intensive communities where everyone is in close quarters and there’s a premium on mutual respect, how do you balance all that?”

With respect to active listening, participants promoted “the art of noticing,” and acknowledged that there can be a level of discomfort when challenging conversations come up. A reminder that one camp director contributed is that it is important for camp leaders to “work toward neutrality” in how they present themselves during times of their own discomfort.

Training staff around communication skills is key, participants said, and that begins with leadership processing issues that may come up themselves.

“It was great working with the camp directors,” Kassen said. And at Hidden Valley Camp, Kassen said he is “feeling less anxious” about these difficult conversations “because we’re getting emails and are on the phone with staff and all they’re talking about is how excited they are” to get back to camp and campers.

“Their hearts and minds are going to be in the right place,” he said. ■

Hiring Fair at UMF Spreads the Word about Camp Jobs

It may have rained, but the MSC/University of Maine Farmington hiring fair held in Farmington on April 24 “pivoted” to an indoor plan where dozens of students had the opportunity to learn about summer jobs at Maine camps. With a food truck operating around the corner, vouchers for chatting with five of the more than 20 visiting camps, even a few dogs in the mix, camp representatives, students and a number of UMF faculty and staff made the most of the 90-minute event intended to help camps fill vacant positions and students learn more about the benefits of working at summer camps.

“The feedback we got was all very positive,” said Dave Schiff, co-owner/director of Camp Manitou and chair of the MSC ad hoc staffing committee. Schiff said members of the UMF faculty “want to see more of their students working at camps” and that the university’s internship coordinator is “really interested in learning more about our programs and what we offer.”

Schiff said the weather’s lack of cooperation — preventing the planned outdoor event complete with s’mores and lawn games — didn’t faze the participating camps. “It’s always great,” he said. “Camp people don’t blink when something comes up.”

"We want to collaborate more ... leveraging the MSC job board and increasing student awareness that there's a lot of camp jobs out there."

Nonetheless, Schiff said, “we will continue to think about ways to make our offerings different from the typical job fair.”

Schiff said camps — and students — may benefit from future fairs being held earlier in the hiring season. In addition, he said, given the potential for credit-bearing internships via camp employment, “it might make sense for some camps to do something [on campus] in the fall,” with a larger scale event offered in the late winter. Having a presence at more colleges and universities during the hiring season might also bring improved results, he said.



Camp Ketcha counselors Avery Ver Way, left, and Emily White, right, with fellow UMF student Hailey.

With camp professionals now focused on the 2024 season, Schiff said the ad hoc staffing committee will reconvene post-summer. “Come September things will pick up,” he said. The committee is interested in branching out to other Maine universities for staff recruitment, for example.

“We want to collaborate more,” he said, “leveraging” the MSC job board and increasing student awareness “that there’s a lot of camp jobs out there.”

With respect to summer 2024, Schiff said “the general feeling I’ve gotten from people is that staffing has been pretty successful; they feel pretty good about where they are.”

“One thing that I want to continue to articulate,” he said. “If someone wants to work at a camp, there are so many camps they should be able to find a job.”

Schiff said the ad hoc staffing committee members are welcome new ideas from MSC members.

“If anybody else wants to participate, we’d love to have them.” ■

Chris Thurber Presentation for Young Camp Leaders Scheduled for July 9



CITs and first-and-second-year staff will once again have the opportunity to come together for both connection and information when Chris Thurber presents a program at **Camp Wawenock on Tuesday, July 9 from 10am to 1pm**. Entitled “Shockingly Professional Talk: Smooth Responses to Sensitive Topics,” the program promises to provide participants with strategies that they can take right back to camp and put into use!



[Click here to register for the July 9 program](#)

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Mark your calendar! Upcoming Events

Tuesday, July 9

Shockingly Professional Talk: Smooth Responses to Sensitive Topics with Dr. Chris Thurber, 10am-1pm, Camp Wawenock

Wednesday, July 10

MSC Spelling Bee, 9:30am registration, Location TBA

Saturday, July 13

Junior Maine Guide Rendezvous at Camp O-AT-KA, Sebago, ME, 9am-2:30pm (tentative)

Monday – Friday, July 22-26

Junior Maine Guide Testing Camp, Oquossoc, ME

September

September Stakeholder Meeting(s) on Draft 208 Rule
Location and details TBA

Wednesday, September 11

Virtual MYCA Board Meeting, 10am-12pm
Virtual MSC/MYCA Annual Meeting, 1-3pm

Wednesday, September 25

Migis Meetup, 9:30am-1:30pm, (coffee at 8:45am) Migis Lodge
MSC Board Meeting, 1:30pm-3:30pm, Migis Lodge

Wednesday, October 9

Virtual MYCA Work Session, 10am-12pm

Wednesday, November 13

Virtual MYCA Board Meeting, 10am-12pm

Wednesday, November 20

Virtual MSC Board Meeting, 1-3pm

Wednesday, December 11

Virtual MYCA Work Session, 10am-12pm

Wednesday, January 8, 2025

Virtual MYCA Board Meeting, 10am-12pm

Wednesday, January 29

Winter Workshop, 9:30am-12:30pm, Location TBA
Business Networking Extravaganza, 12-3pm, Location TBA

Thursday, January 30

MSC Board Meeting, 10am-12pm, Location TBA

Wednesday, February 12

Virtual MYCA Work Session, 10am-12pm

Tuesday – Friday, February 18-21

National ACA Conference, Dallas, TX

Tuesday – Thursday, March 11-13

Tri-State Camp Conference, Atlantic City, NJ

Wednesday, March 12

Virtual MYCA Board Meeting, 10am-12pm

Thursday – Saturday, March 27-29

New England Camp Conference, Manchester, NH

Wednesday, April 9

Virtual MYCA Work Session, 10am-12pm
Virtual MSC Board Meeting, 1-3pm

Wednesday, May 14

Virtual MYCA Board Meeting, 10am-12pm

MSC Membership Dues to Remain at FY23-24 Rates

Membership Dues will stay at FY23-24 rates for the fiscal year that begins on July 1. **Payment is due on August 1, 2024**, unless arrangements are made to pay in installments or later in the year. Our professional association is exclusively dedicated to supporting organized youth camping in Maine! Your dues make a difference for our Members.

Camp Members have already begun to request invoices by completing the Camp Membership form as some prefer to pay dues in May and June, before their campers arrive and before the fiscal year begins.



[Click here to access the MSC Camp Membership form.](#)

Business Members will receive a request for dues before the end of May, so those who wish to pay before July can do so. This Business Membership form will be included in the Business Member dues request. In addition to collecting Business Member information, the form is full of details about advertising opportunities in our quarterly newsletter, the Hall Monitor, and the print directory.



[Click here to access the MSC Business Membership form.](#)



[Click here to view the MSC Business Directory \(by category and alphabetically\).](#)



[Click here for a print version of our 2024 camp and business directory.](#)



MSC Migis Lodge Fall Gathering: September 25

MSC members will come together for their annual gathering at Migis Lodge on September 25. The post-camp event will offer time for connection and catching up, awards presentations and, similar to last fall, roundtable discussions about challenges and successes of the summer 2024 camp season. It will be capped off by the always-amazing gourmet cookout generously provided by Migis Lodge. Watch the Hall Monitor in coming weeks to register.

Teaching Campers about Camps' Indigenous Neighbors

As we move into the summer season, we hope you will continue to actively find ways to teach campers and staff about the history of the land our camps inhabit. Even if it's a small step — like introducing the indigenous history of the area to your staff in pre-season or perhaps adding some new books to your library — no step is too small! Perhaps one of your staff has interest in helping you build resources for your camp — this could be a great internship opportunity!

*Note: click on the **bold** type to access links*

Here are a few resources you can turn to:

► Resources specific to Maine, curated by MSC

► **ACA National Resource List**, intended to be an introduction to Indigenous people and foster insight and understanding of their culture, both historically and today.

Here are a few ideas to consider:

- Give campers who are going on trips the opportunity to learn about the history of the area they are going to. You can begin this research online at **Native Lands**.
- Hire an indigenous guide for a group of campers or staff to have a unique experience in Maine. You can explore this option through a website called **Navitour**
- Take a group on the **trails at the Fore River Sanctuary** and listen to the **recorded tour**, accessible through Navitour, featuring Passamoquoddy language Keeper Dwayne Tomah, who shares his knowledge and perspective about our relationship to the natural world and each other.
- Bring campers interested in contemporary art to the current exhibit at the **Portland Museum of Art — Woven** — featuring incredible baskets made by **Passamoquoddy artist Jeremy Frey** and information about the process of harvesting and preparing the materials as well as his fine craftsmanship.
- Use this list of suggestions for parents to pursue when they're visiting Maine this summer!

In addition to being good role models to young people as caretakers of the land our camps inhabit, we can also be good role models in teaching them about the people who were the original caretakers of this land who together now form the Wabanaki Alliance. Here's to a safe and joyful summer!


L.L. Bean Renews Campership and Level Ground Initiative Funding

Building on L.L. Bean's wish to send underserved Maine kids to Maine Camps

Maine Summer Camps is extremely fortunate that L.L. Bean has awarded us significant funding for the third summer in a row. A \$100,000 grant will be used for camperships that provide camp experiences for underserved Maine children at MSC day and resident camps and an additional \$25,000 will help fund the administration of MSC's Level Ground Initiative.

The largest number of MSC camps is participating in year three. Each of the 37 camps requesting camperships will receive at least one. Many returning campers who received L.L. Bean funding in summers 2022 and 2023 in addition to brand new campers from Maine will receive funding this summer.

Lucy Norvell, MSC executive director said, "In the current economic climate, with family budgets overextended, L.L. Bean's generous funding makes it possible for more Maine children to benefit from the unique, device-free childhood experiences found at Maine camps, full of joy, wonder, life lessons, skill development, and a sense of belonging." ■



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