

## Finding Your Bugle

—Will Davies

A bugle is the simplest of instruments. There are no valves, airways or features. It is a brass tube that enhances the melody shaped by the bugler's lips. Yet, simple does not mean easy. In fact, a bugle is deceptively the most complex instrument I have ever tried to play. I can tap a key on a piano and hear a note, I can strum a guitar and hear a chord, I can blow into a trumpet and make a sound, but when I blow into a bugle, I hear nothing, or at best the sound of my lips puckering. A bugle call can't be autotuned or filtered. It is purely the unique sound the bugler can make with his lips.

It is fitting that a bugle is used here at Pasquaney rather than a trumpet or cornet. It is symbolic of the authentic and honest lifestyle we live here. Each call demonstrates the significance of honoring others' time and the importance of bringing your best self regardless of where you are and what you're doing. A bugle call doesn't care if you are tired, sad or angry, it demands you to show up ready to be your best no matter what. For the past 47 days you have all done this, you have all adhered to bugle calls even if you did not want to. For instance, the bugle call for walks to gather on that first hike's day, the call to get to an activity after a deep nap during rest and the call for a meal despite a great conversation or an intense game of wall ball during free time. We have all had to make such sacrifices in the name of the bugle, or in other words, a routine. It would be easier to just finish that one page of a book or sleep five more minutes during rest. Yet, look at what this routine has done for all of us. Over the course of a day, we have three full meals, a duty period, 4 hours of activities, at least an hour of free time, an hour of play rehearsal, a rest period and a campfire activity. In a full season we spend weeks in the woods hiking some of the best mountains in the country, improve exponentially at activities, make lifelong friendships, laugh with one another and form a community that makes saying goodbye so hard. Pasquaney proves that a rigorous routine is vital to fostering a sense of virtue.

Yet, in 42 hours, this bugle which has governed our lives for the past seven weeks will vanish. No mines, taps, or reveille. Come Monday, what will then be your bugle?

As a camper, I was devastated every year when camp came to an end. I felt hopeless and terrified at the idea of returning to school in a matter of weeks. I was full of energy and drive to have a great school year but by October, everything I had learned and gained from camp seemed to be locked away deep inside of me. It was a cycle of going to camp, feeling rejuvenated in the

weeks after, but then for no good reason putting camp in the back of my mind during the winter. Come May, I would countdown to opening day and again start to enter the camp mindset. It's like I had a swiss army knife on expeditions and I didn't bother to use it, much less take it out of my bag. I didn't know how to feel like my camp self in the winter. I had internalized everything camp had taught me, I just didn't know how to act it out. It's as if rest just ended, and I was still lying in bed. I didn't have a bugle call to bring out my best self.

Fast forward now to this past fall. I had just begun my last year of college and I knew in a few months, my baseball days would come to an end. I have played baseball ever since I was 6 up until this past fall. Like most sports, my season ended abruptly and I felt the same way as if a Pasquaney summer had just come to a close. Something I knew for so long and took for granted, just ended. I was rather distraught and looking for something new. So, I picked up running. It began with a causal mile every couple days to pass the time and stay in shape. As with anything, after weeks of practice and repetition, my running ability and knowledge improved. My runs went from 1 mile, to 2 or even 3 miles. My bi-weekly mile runs soon became a daily thing because I enjoyed seeing my improvement, having time to unwind, and structure within my day. Running itself was slowly but surely shaping my day. By early October, I was running at least six days a week. It got to the point where every day, I had one simple goal: to run. Then naturally, a routine started to form. The longer my runs, the more time I put into planning out my day. I soon started incorporating new things like cooking, meal planning, stretching, logging runs and reading, into my daily schedule along with balancing homework, an on campus job and baseball practice. My days were organized to the minute and I loved it. As such, I was able to feel more connected to camp. The mental and physical challenges of my routine evoked thoughts of camp and I fell into the camp mindset where I intuitively lived by the values we practice, rather than by needing any prompting. By creating a routine away from camp, it became easier to take Pasquaney with me. I had found my bugle. I had found the spark that naturally brought Pasquaney out in me. By taking an aspect of camp such as our routine and putting a personal spin on it, I was able to embody Pasquaney throughout the year.

Ultimately, my dedication to a routine enabled me to run a marathon this past spring. I couldn't have gotten off the ground and run that distance immediately-- it required proper devotion and sacrifice. By committing to a run every few days, then every day, then longer distances, I committed to adding a grain of sand to the pile each day, and eventually that pile

became a mountain. The point I want to emphasize is that any achievement is a reflection of the routine that manifested it.

Now back to my previous question: Come Monday, what will be your bugle? What will be the thing that brings out your best self away from camp? That is a question each of you must answer for yourself, but I have two things that I think will help you find an answer. First, pick one new thing to do for half an hour each day and stick to it. For me it was running, but it can be anything. Read a book or article, journal like Jack mentioned last Friday, join a club at school, volunteer, or try a new sport. It doesn't matter what you do, just pick one thing to do each day and stay consistent. The human brain is a quick learner, just like we can get hooked on sugar and caffeine, we can as easily get hooked on a good habit. There is a reason we have the saying "sow an act and reap a habit; sow a habit and reap a character; sow a character and reap a destiny." Sow one act each day and see what happens. Second, this offseason, do something that reminds yourself of the way you feel here. Pick one small thing at camp that stands out to you, it could be waiting to eat before everyone is served, making your bed in the morning, picking up trash, or taking on a challenging workout. Choose something that you know will bring back that feeling of being here. Six months from now, when it's a long day at school, it will be hard to put others' needs before our own, stand up to a friend who isn't doing the right thing or be a good sport. Yet, that is why it is so important to have a personal bugle call to rescue yourself in times of distress. At camp we always say, "if the details are right the performance will follow. The same holds true for the offseason. Find a small habit or ritual, and the rest will follow.

Sunday morning, we will stand here again and hear our last bugle note of the season. Be a sponge and take it in, because from that point on, each of you are a bugler. Each of you have the chance to create your own unique bugle call this offseason and bring out your best self.

Thank you.