

## Final Words

A Tree Talk delivered by Bob Bulkeley on August 7, 2019

People often say about institutions that they were at their best when they first arrived and went downhill from that point on. From the perspective of well over six decades, I can say that is not true of Pasquaney. Each summer a group of campers and counsellors work hard to strengthen and improve what had been passed on from the previous summer and decade. We are entrusted to carry the torch forward, brightening the path into the future.

Thus, as we go forward carrying Pasquaney with us into the lives we lead away from here, let us do so joyfully and treasure all we have gained this summer and celebrate those who have gone before us and given us this great gift, this way of life embodied in this wonderful Camp. I would like to celebrate in particular Mr. Charlie—the third Director and the one who is undoubtedly responsible for Mr. Vinnie, Kirk, and my being here today and for inspiring in us a love of education in general and in this institution in particular.

In 1923 my father came to Pasquaney. In his years, Mr. Ned was Director, Mr. Teddy was his assistant, and Mr. Charlie was a camper. Pop Watson was a seasoned veteran of the council. Gil Bovaird started his career of 52 years at the Office. Expeditions were called camping parties and were on Belle and Cliff Island across the lake. In 1926 the Watson Theatre was built, and the theatre was turned into a dormitory called Tradition.

In 1953 when I came to Pasquaney, Mr. Charlie was Director; Gil Bovaird and Pop Watson were senior members of the Council. Mr. Gem-John was a new boy also, sleeping in Birch where the youngest campers were. I slept in Upper Tradition, the old theatre stage next to Northern Stanwood Porches. We still went to the islands for camping, and Notchpost and the Short Walk were visions yet to come. We had a rest period before lunch as well as after; the boathouse and shell houses were at what is now the picnic area. The ball field, which had been leveled since my father's day, had deep center field where the ball house is today.

In 1959 when I came on the council, we were in the midst of dramatic physical changes. The Boathouse had been built and opened in 1956, and in 1959 the current Infirmary was dedicated and the old one became the Alumni House. By 1960 Tradition had been torn down

and Wilson and Jackson were built and Adams replaced the much larger Tradition. In 1964 the Rosemary Stanwood Library was built in her memory. Bathhouse expansion, the Shower House, the Shop labyrinth, Centennial, the historical museum, and the Gemmill Lodge came in the decades after 1976. In 1958, the Short Walk began with Mr. Charlie leading it, and in 1960 Notchpost emerged as the jewel in the camping crown, building the Nancy Pond Trail and initiating a slow process of change culminating in our present-day expeditions.

So much change, and yet Camp has grown much more than it has changed. Mr. Ned would recognize Camp today and smile warmly looking at what has come of his vision 125 years ago. Mr. Charlie with his vibrant intellect, charismatic personality and deep moral fiber made this preservation and transformation possible. He was courtly and mannered, courteous and respectful but demanding that we all try our hardest and be our best. With his marvelous grin, eyes that both probed and sparkled, he drew us all into the compass of his ideas and values. It was hard to say “no” if Mr. Charlie asked something of anyone. We were taught the pride in a job well-done. Hard work was expected and our loyalty to Camp and Mr. Charlie made it happen.

As the Chapel is the heart of Camp, rightly its spiritual home, it is fitting that Mr. Charlie’s voice and words echo to this day in the minds of those that heard them. His sermons were spellbinding and reached the depths of our souls and invested in our minds a vision of what should and could be in our future lives. Every summer: Opportunity and responsibility, friendship, honesty, popularity and respect, thoughtfulness and consideration, tolerance, and loyalty to the values taught here. His story of the New Zealand runner and later physician Jack Lovelock’s caring all night long for a sick fellow runner before his own most important mile run taught us compassion and selflessness. Or Sir Philip Sydney’s waving away a desperately needed flagon of water, giving it to a foot soldier, saying, “His need is greater than mine.” Mr. Charlie’s sweeping hand gestures and his notes held in one hand were mechanics that brought grace and ease to his delivery.

Mr. Charlie seemed bigger than life and in many respects he was. He was sought out wherever he was: at Choate where he was assistant headmaster, dean of students, English teacher, and track coach. When approached for headmasterships at Andover, Holderness, and

Woodberry Forest, he turned them down to stay at Pasquaney. John Wayne sought him out for breakfast at Lake Louise in the Canadian Rockies; Louis Armstrong teamed up with him in a jazz troupe that toured England. He was invited to dine with Pink Panther star Peter Sellers on a trip to England in the mid-1960s. At Oxford, he had C.S. Lewis as a harsh tutor, whose words, “Stanwood, you cannot write,” moved him to becoming a writer extraordinaire, a gifted poet writing a modern Canterbury Tales prologue of Yale and Harvard alumni travelling on the train to the Y-H game in Cambridge, and of course, the *Portrait of Pasquaney*.

Mr. Charlie celebrated the English language, and we grew appreciative of its beauty, its poetry, and its power. Among his favorite lines were:

*But at my back I always hear  
Time's winged chariot hurrying near;  
And yonder all before us lie  
Deserts of vast eternity.*

—Andrew Marvell’s urging us to make time run, lest we waste our lives.

By his personal example and by his extraordinary verbal eloquence, Mr. Charlie imbued in campers and counsellors alike for 35 years a moral compass, a sense of purpose, a dedication to duty, and service that became the substance of their characters for lifetimes. Our individual debts to Mr. Charlie are beyond all measure. He literally went from school to Camp without a real break. His example of hard work and dedication persists to our day. Mr. Charlie imparted these values to generations of us.

I am not sure Pasquaney would exist today if Mr. Charlie had not rebuilt enrollment and buildings after the Depression, the Second World War, and the Korean War. In 1953, we had 10 long tables with two table heads each, and, with just 15 counsellors, five COIs headed tables and ran the clubs. Dick Thorington as a camper was the nature counsellor. Ten years later, Camp was so overfull, he deferred all the 10 and 11 year olds a year and in one fell swoop Camp’s average age went from 12 ½ to 13 ½. He worked hard with both Onaway and Mowglis to get them to be non-profit camps, not owned by individuals, a move which I am sure saved both from extinction. And of course, with Owen Lindsay as the prime operative, Mayhew came

into being. Mr. Charlie's vision led to the present extraordinary range of diversity in the Camp society.

I was fortunate to be with Mr. Charlie at some times outside the Camp season and had the pleasure of knowing him more personally than was possible in the busy days of Camp. On delivering the galley proofs of the *Annual* to him at Choate in October 1962, we sat in eerie silence listening to the Cuba missile crisis play out, a moment of great fear and apprehension as the US and Russia came as close as ever to a nuclear confrontation. In 1961, after spending a final night at Kef Yali and dying of cancer, Pop Watson stopped by Eastbourne to say good-bye to Mr. Charlie and several of us who were there at the time. It was a touching moment indeed and Mr. Charlie was at his grandest showing his deep affection and gratitude to Pop. Away from Camp, Mr. Charlie loved a good party, good food, and elegant living while at the same time appreciating the austere living we enjoy at Pasquaney.

Mr. Charlie had his passions. The clarinet coming from the shack could play a happy jig or sound a plaintive tone; it told us how he felt and struck a sympathetic chord in us all when he was down. He loved trains with the seasoned eye of the most serious train buff, counting the freight cars as they passed by the campsite across from the Inn Unique adjacent to Notchpost—often it was well over one hundred. He started the Hebron fire department and was rarely happier than when he was training a high-pressure fire hose on the tops of the pine trees above the campfire at Water Sports. That is when the child in him came out and the noise of the pumps ran well into the night as the camp went to sleep.

Mr. Charlie, the ultimate Renaissance man—husband and father, educator, athlete, scholar, musician, poet and above all gentleman—set standards and widened our vision of what a good life could and should be. To a large extent, he had an Elizabethan world view where the courtly gentleman by dint of strong character did noble deeds and brought valor to the community. He lived that life himself and inspired generations to do likewise. To this end, he believed in the once almost universal, ritualized adolescent retreat, a quest for spiritual and moral growth in a simplified environment where such development could flourish. Thus, he had a classical, philosophical foundation for the role Pasquaney plays in the lives of boys and young men.

As we move forward, home, to school and beyond, live a full life joyfully, treasure goodness, and remember the great words of Tennyson:

*Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'  
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades  
For ever and for ever when I move.  
How dull it is pause, to make an end,  
To rust unburnish'd not to shine in use!  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.*

Celebrate joyfully the certainty of the values and ideals that Mr. Charlie embodied and which will guide us through the months to come and beyond.

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We are reaching the end of another era with a new set of leaders to take over. It is premature to recognize and appreciate fully Mr. Vinnie's magnificent leadership, but in his 20<sup>th</sup> year as Director we had a glorious celebration at the Boathouse on Trustee's Saturday. The following words were spoken then, some by current campers and counsellors:

*"With abundant gratitude for his ability to inspire,  
his boundless energy and passion,  
his love of teaching,  
his capacity to listen to and connect with people,  
the twinkle in his eye,  
and his loyalty to all that Pasquaney stands for,  
the boys, council and trustees bestow this chair  
upon a man whom we rarely see sitting still."*

Asked if I would be sad to retire from the active council, I have replied, "I doubt it." I have been most fortunate to serve three magnificent Directors and work with literally thousands of campers. Pasquaney has given me such joy as well as great challenges; it has enriched my life beyond any expectations. I am deeply grateful to all of you here and the host of others in the past.

So I want us to close this Tree Talk by rising and giving a resounding railroad to Pasquaney and walk slowly to Mem Hall with a sense of gratitude for all we have been given this summer and a commitment to an even brighter future.