

Pasquaney *archives*



When I arrived on the hillside this summer, it had been 4 years since I was last at Camp. Bill Davies greeted me with, “Hi Matt, welcome home” . Bill understands what Pasquaney means to me. When I put on the uniform for the first time this summer, I knew that I was home.

26 years old and needing to start my professional life, there are many things that I could or, according to some well meaning individuals, should be doing to enhance my professional status instead of working at a summer camp, but here I am.

WHY?

For me Pasquaney presents a constant and ever-present challenge. It is a challenge to live a better life and to encourage a better life in those around me. As Robbie Siefker told me the other day, the activities are only something that we do to pass the time during the day as we deal with the more important intangible elements of camp.

Pasquaney is where I was challenged to grow from a boy into the man that I am today. I am indebted to Camp and I will repay Pasquaney with a lifetime accepting this challenge and giving back to the Camp which has given so much to me.

This summer was the perfect opportunity to accept that challenge again and to serve as a counsellor for another camp season. I stand before you as a Pasquaney counsellor, clipboard, uniform, and my young life’s-experience which I am ready to share with anyone who wants to listen in the hope that I can challenge young boys at this camp grow into men.

Yet it is only a seven-week summer camp. All we do is have fun in the sun on the hillside and on the lake, but each of us knows that it is much more than that.

This challenge of Pasquaney exists for each of us here at different stages and at many levels.

For the new camper:

There is fun to be had on the hillside or lake, a new group of friends, and an embracing community.

As your career at camp advances:

You move from Wilson or Jackson into Birch, Cardigan, or Adams and camp takes on a new depth of meaning. The community challenges you. I emphasize community because everyone, the Trustees, Mr. Vinnie, the alumni, the counselors, the campers, your peers, and those younger campers, who believe it or not look up to you ask you to contribute back to the community. This community wants you to mature, to help new campers, to lead your peers, to have more meaningful thoughts and discussions. Older campers and counselors will tell you that you are not a first year camper anymore and we expect more from you.

Camp is more than the raw fun that you remembered from the year before and you are beginning to realize that there is something more meaningful to this community than nice people and fun activities.

Suddenly you are on Stanwood or Dana and you are an older camper. You are challenged again to mature, to open yourself and accept the help of others who truly care about you and want you to lead, to be a role

model, to be self-reliant, to improve the community which has given so much to you.

Counsellors, older campers, and peers are encouraging you to be your best self. I emphasize encourage because there is no timeline for you to rise to the challenge of camp. Some campers understand and accept it their first year, some do not understand the challenge until they are many years past their time on the hillside.

Then your opportunity to be a 16 year old camper approaches and the challenge beckons again, do you trade Pasquaney to experience your first year of being able to drive a car, go to parties, or work? When I was 16, many of my friends were going to work at Ocean City MD and had great plans for the summer. They told me that they were going earn a lot of money and party at the beach all summer long. It sounded glamorous and I was peer pressured to join them.

So, Ocean City MD or do I come back to the hillside for seven weeks? 16-year old campers are now you are invited back early to be with the counselors that you respect and help them set up camp, set the tone for the season, be a camper leader and contributor within the community. I came to camp as a 16 year old and had a marvelous time. After the season was over, I visited my friends in Ocean City who were crammed together in a tiny/dirty apartment, most of them were fry cooks or waiters in restaurants, work ended around 1:00AM, they were exhausted and smelled like fry grease, they rarely went out to party because their paycheck barely covered the rent, their fridge was filled with beer and old pizza. Most of their time was spent sitting around a tiny TV getting fat.

I was glad that I came back to camp.

When your last year as a camper is over: the Grey and blue challenge sounds anew: Do you become a counsellor and follow in the footsteps of those who have been giants to you and attempt to serve the community as they have. For me those giants were and are Mr. Gem-John, Mr. Vinnie, Dave Ryder, Bob Bulkeley, Kirk Phelps, Townley Chisholm, and Brent Powell. It has been five years, but I was happy to accept that challenge again.

Finally you pass into the ranks of the alumni and the challenge follows. Whether you are in the long winter's Dark Desolation or have been away from camp for many years, this challenge never ends as long as the lanterns of Pasquaney burn within you. Sometimes they may flicker or dim, but they will not extinguish. These lanterns can always be refilled to burn anew by opening an old annual or calling an old friend.

How do we accept this challenge?

Stop and think

To have a Friend be one

Have a Seeing Eye

If the details are right the performance will work

If it is not yours do not touch it

If you can keep your head when those around you are losing theirs, then you will be a man my son.

Oh what a tangled web we weave when we first practice to deceive

Your need is greater than mine

Sow an act, reap a habit, sow a habit, reap and character, sow a character, reap a destiny.

These are words to live by and which form the foundation of camp.

The power to rise to this challenge is within us all. You can find that power deftly concealed in the phrase: Sow an act, reap a habit, sow a habit, reap and character, sow a character, reap a destiny.

Here is the power of this statement: With a conscious decision to perform a single act, you can change your destiny

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Pasquaney's challenge is to perform those individual acts which will result in a destiny for you to lead a better life and encourage that better life in those around you.

This challenge of Pasquaney is suprisingly easy to accept. I have many faults: I can be selfish, arrogant, loud, obnoxious, immature, pout, mean-spirited, a bully, irresponsible, short-tempered, self-centered, and the list goes on. Ask my parents, Jonathon, and friends.... Pasquaney is the one place where I can accept the challenge and work on these faults with the help of people that I truly respect.

Many of us have challenged the strength and resolve of the Pasquaney community's commitment to a better life and pushed the limits of acceptable behavior. I lost my Jr. Sailor my last summer at camp.... Bubbles, Mr. Vinnie, and Kirk Phelps helped me to realize that I had had a serious lapse in judgment and potentially put myself and my crew at risk. I realized my error, demonstrated that I understood what I did wrong, and earned back their trust, regained my Jr. Sailor and won the regatta.

One of the great strengths of Camp is that there is no other place where you can make these mistakes, learn from them with the help of campers and counsellors who truly care about you and your well-being. Then, amazingly, be welcomed back into the community with even stronger ties than before.

Thus the challenge is ever present, it is never.....never too late to sow that first act which will refill your Pasquaney lantern, then let you change and grow into a different, happier, and better person.

I came back to Pasquaney to re-forge my bonds with this community that I love. I came back to Pasquaney to give back to the community that has given so much to me. I came back to Pasquaney relearn these important life lessons. I came again back to walk among giants and to let those giants help me grow even more.

In one week my lanterns will be full, they will burn a little brighter inside me and I will carry this challenge forward by sowing small acts.

Will you accept that challenge?