

Pemigewassett Newsletter

Summer 2010 Number Two

Dear Pemi Parents and Friends,

What a wonderful first week we have had! The energy of the boys and the staff has been amazing, the weather quintessential New England (until this most recent heat wave), and the smiles on the faces of the whole Pemi community have been inspiring. Each night as I walk through the divisions it is wonderful to see the flashlights and headlamps in each cabin, signs that counselors are reading stories to their campers as they begin the process of learning to live harmoniously in a group of their peers.

The first week of camp has been a whirl-wind of activities, with trips heading out into the White Mountains and beyond, occupations in full swing, contests against other camps under way, and traditional evening activities, like *Bean Soup* and Campfire, there for the community to enjoy. The busy week culminated with a number of Independence Day activities, including the annual "Pee-rade," Counselor Hunt, and Vaudeville Show in the Lodge. More on the Pee-rade in a moment.

Trips began this week with day outings to favorites like Mt. Cardigan, Mt. Cube, and Mt. Moosilauke. In the past few days, three- and four-day overnight trips have gone out to the Sandwich Range, the Kinsmans, and the Carters; and today, the second of two jaunts to AMC huts in the high Presidentials has also hit the road. Individual cabins have been enjoying delicious suppers prepared over an open fire at Flat Rock and Pine Forest, right here on Lower Baker Pond. Wow! Tom Reed Jr. estimated that 120 campers went out on trips last week, and we're just getting warmed up.

One other trip highlight worth noting was the first of two annual Caving Trips that Larry Davis led to Schoharie, New York. Stay tuned for details on the trip in a future missive.

"Occupations," which are the four hours of skill and activity teaching, began Monday, June 28. Campers participated in such occupations as the Silver Cornet Band, Beginning Butterflies and Moths, Archery, Introduction to Photography, Temari Balls, A Capella, Conditioning, Wood-working, and Instructional Swim,

to name just a few. Department Heads and their staff spent a great deal of time planning each hour, and the teaching that followed was meant to lay the groundwork for the contests, trips, and performances which we also enjoyed during the week. A second week of occupations is just finishing and we look forward to witnessing the lessons learned from week two very soon.

As for contests against other camp, teams have played baseball, basketball, lacrosse, soccer, tennis, and even Ultimate Frisbee this week against our friendly rivals from Camps Moosilauke, Kingswood, and Walt Whitman. Some highlights of these contests included Nate Kraus coming up big as goalie for 15-and-under Lax (especially noteworthy as this was Nate's maiden voyage in goal) and Jonathon Kenkel's hat-trick during a Baker Valley soccer game against Walt Whitman. The week of contests culminated in our annual day of competition against Moosilauke, which included fabulous play all-around, excellent sportsmanship, and the continued commitment to give every boy on the team quality playing time. For those of you keeping score at home. Pemi won six of these games, come up short three times, and tied one. Here's a run down on the day from Athletic Director Charlie Malcolm:

This past Saturday, on a spectacular summer day, Pemi played their annual contest with their friends from Upper Baker, Camp Moosilauke. Doc Nick's wonders, the Pemi 10-and-under baseball team, traveled to Moose and lost a close game 4-3. Grant Noble pitched three scoreless innings in relief, and Pemi fought its way back to a 4-3 deficit with the bases loaded in the bottom of the 6th before having the door shut for the Moosilauke victory. Also at Moose, the 11's soccer team jumped out to a 4-0 halftime lead as Jamie Nicholas and the German twins, Christopher and Leonard Schmitz, combined with the Spanish connection of Pepe and Diego Periel to put Moose on their heels for a 6-2 Pemi victory. The 11's basketball team dropped their morning contest 19-16 despite a gallant effort provided by Lorenzo Ortiz, John Stevenson and James Pumphrey. At Pemi, the "flagship" 15's baseball team jumped out to a 7-0 lead behind excellent pitching from Dan Murphy and Nick Barber. Timely hitting by Barber and Max Hernandez-Webster and aggressive base-running by the team kept our visitors under constant pressure. The 13's tennis team defeated Moose 3-2 behind stellar singles play of

Ryan Meltzer and Alex Baskin and the inspiring doubles play of Sompy Somp and CJ Klinsky. The 13's soccer team played to a spirited 0-0 draw. Ben Nicholas creatively orchestrated the attack while Carl Pohlman dominated the back line for Pemi.

After a much deserved rest hour and plenty of hydration, Pemi looked to continue their strong effort and commitment to each other. The 10's tennis team won a hard fought match 3-2 as Nick Toldalagi and Cortie Fischer lost close matches to talented 11s players while Patterson Malcolm delivered a 6-3 win to push Pemi to the victory. The 12's basketball team lost 25-14 to a very talented Moose team with Jack Purcell and Matt McCaffrey providing Pemi with inspiring play.

With Pemi holding a slim 4-3-1 lead in the overall standings, the Pemi 13's baseball crew provided a decisive blow with a convincing 12-1 victory. Daniel Reiff delivered a prodigious shot deep into neighboring Camp Merriwood to set the offensive tone while Michael DiGaetano drove in four runs with three hits. Zack Leeds and Ryan Cassidy shut down the Moose bats with stellar pitching. The 15's lax team finished the day with an impressive 7-1 win. Nick Kraus, under short preparation, delivered a 93% save rate while Gus Walsh was silky in his distribution on the attack and Nate Williams found the back of the net several times. The sportsmanship and spirited play were equally impressive for both camps as Pemi carried the day 6-3-1. This Saturday Pemi will take on their friends from Camp Kingswood before going up against Lanakila and Tecumseh in subsequent weeks.

As mentioned, the annual Pee-rade was one of the many highlights of Pemi's Independence Day observances. Here's TRJR's take on this year's edition, augmented by Dottie's documentary photographs:

Pemi's Fourth of July celebrations have been highlighted, for as long as anyone can remember, with a splendid parade – fondly re-dubbed “The Pee-rade.” This year was no exception, and the 2010 edition was right up with the very best. In the distant Pemi past, every cabin mounted a “float” – some on wagons, some in wheelbarrows, some mounted on a cot hand-carried like a sedan chair – which passed by the judges' stand like a flotilla of comic medieval pageant wagons. A few featured some dialogue, but the majority

were tableaux vivants depicting memorable moments from national and Pemi history – The Boston Tea Party, Washington Crossing the Delaware, Betsy Ross sewing the first flag (and, naturally, the first Pemi T-shirt), or the Four Docs of Pemi plowing the camp potato patch with an infamously stubborn team of horses named Prince Helly and Mary Ootch (our own version of the Myth of Sisyphus). As modern drama emerged when the pageant wagons gave way to static performances in the courtyards of inns, so has the Pee-rade morphed into a series of comic skits acted out in front of the cultured Pemi Ancients who judge them. While most of the skits are planned little more than forty-five minutes in advance, their verve and inventiveness can be dazzling. Nothing like giving creative boys a captive audience (bearings gifts of Skittles) to get the inventive juices flowing like oil through a faulty blow-out preventer.

This year, as for time immemorial, the whole Junior Camp combined forces in a single act, less (we think) owing to their innate modesty than to a calculated scheme to get Skittles for all. Dressed in a stunning array of red, white, and blue, the lively denizens of Juniorville belted out a hearty rendition of “It's a Grand Old Flag” that stirred our patriotic souls to the roots. Shades of “We Are the World,” with a cast of fifty and an average age of ten. See below...



In the Lower Lovers, runners-up were Cabin One led by Brit Counselor Matthew Wadge, doing his best Simon Cowell impression in “Lower One's Got Talent.” Tom Moore made a fair bid to take top honors with a stirring version of the camp Grace, but this year's Susan Boyle was John Stevenson, reprising his act from the previous night's campfire, crooning “Hey, Soul Sister” while strummin' on the ol' ukelele. The divisional crown, though, went to Lower 3 with a

possibly actionable docu-drama on the famed Pemi sport “Frisbee Running Bases,” stressing the “Hammering Techniques” that staff are alleged to employ on the hapless camper participants. That Neil Band (Anderson Cooper for the Day) made the game sound like something invented by the Khmer Rouge seemed to please the sensation-crazy judges. We are pleased to confirm, though, that the humor the boys were going for was a kind that apparently depends heavily on exaggeration.



Coming in second in the Upper Lovers was Cabin Five, who re-enacted (or imagined) the job interviews of various Pemi senior staff, Charlie Malcom and Sam Seymour among them. Frighteningly like Associate Head of Nature Den Kure was AC Wesley Eifler, who managed to impersonate the most energetic soul and infectious teacher at Pemi in ways that sent the real Deb racing for a mirror to make sure she wasn't already looking into one. Top spot, though, went to Nick Ridley's crew in Lower Seven, with Sparky Brown, Hugh Grier, Nathaniel Kaplan, Sam Larson, Zack Leeds, Finn Tierney, and Max van Paasschen posing as an elegant septet of Michelin-attuned diners having to put up with the limitations of Pemi cuisine, deceptively touted by Nick in a way that assure his future in deceptively varnished television infomercials if he ever chooses that route.



You really “had to be there” to appreciate fully Upper Four's revamping of a Larry Davis Maine Story presented just last week and centering on a Down East farmer who lets his neighbor repeat his own fatal dosing (with turpentine) of his ailing cattle just because his simple comrade asks about the attempted cure and not about the results. Transplanting the narrative to Pemi and replacing the ill kine with campers and the turpentine with Germ-X Hand Sanitizer (a Pemi staple), Dan Murphy as Danny Kerr and Nick Butler at Tom Reed, Jr. would have brought down the house, if the Pee-rade hadn't been an open-air affair. Snatching away the Skittles, though, was Upper One's paeon to the Birth of the Pemi Kid(s), with Alex Truitt as the long-suffering Mom and the core narrative bearing a suspicious resemblance to the tale of the Annunciation and the birth of Jesus. (Assertions of Pemi's sanctity could hardly be pressed any further.) Diehard fans of Monty Python might have felt the torch had been passed to Ben Walsh's own loony crew.



Finally, the Seniors were paced by Lake-Tenters Chris Dollman, Mason Challinor, Nick Barber, and Teddy Gales in an equally loony skit about Mason travelling back in a plywood time machine (undoubtedly built with hand tools in our own Woodshop) to the first Pemi Bean Soup season in 1910. Perhaps because the moral cribbed so thoroughly from *The Wizard of Oz*, though (Mason jetting back to the future intoning “There's no place like home!”), the judges – who value originality above all else – gave the nod to Senior One. Their deal? A politically fractious examination of the new Pemi Package Policy (flat packages only, on a minimalist scale, and only infrequently). Just when it seemed the very institution of Pemi would combust amidst the heat of the debate over the new rules, up stepped Abe Lincoln to take a bold stand for the inherent (and, yes, God-given) fairness of uniform package size and delivery schedule. Actually, it was

Dan Fulham, who looked for all the world like the Stove-piped Log Cabin Nation-saver himself. But any skit which so thoroughly confuses the triumphs of the Nation with the trivialities of Pemi invariably sweeps the judges away, and this year was no exception.



All in all, it was a Grand Old Seventy-five minutes of Pee-rade, and not even the sight of four score and seven staff members plunging off the high dive after being caught in the ensuing Counselor Hunt generated more camper smiles than 2010's inspired acts. Here's to 2011!



I want to mention an exercise I did with senior staff (Charlie Malcolm, Kenny Moore, Larry Davis, Brian Mitchell, James Finley, Porter Hill, Tom Ciglar, and Tom Reed Jr.) in May, which gave me great insight into the Pemi "experience." I asked this group what they thought were the Values and Beliefs that shaped Pemi, and this question inspired us to write a "vision piece," which will soon be posted on the Pemi Blog; enjoy!

Finally, let me hasten to thank you parents specifically for sharing your sons with us this summer. I know from experience how hard it is to stand back and let them develop and grow elsewhere, without your having the chance to see and be with them at this exciting time. Please know that we take this responsibility very seriously and feel tremendous gratitude for the days and evenings we have with the wonderful boys who make up Pemi 2010.

Danny Kerr

