



PASSING IT ON



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PILGRIM LODGE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

DAVID & DOTTY-KAY STILLMAN

David and Dotty-Kay's connection to Pilgrim Lodge literally goes back to the beginning, the very beginning. David grew up on Lake Cobbosseecontee as his parents had a cabin a couple miles down the lake from what is now Pilgrim Lodge. On one of their regular summer evening boat rides, they noticed that a large camp facility was for sale. As members of South Parish UCC in Augusta, David's father knew that the Maine Conference was looking for a facility to be the home of its expanding outdoor ministry program. The minister of South Parish was on the Conference committee seeking a facility, and as they say, the rest is history: PL's history.

Jump ahead to the early years of their marriage and family, and we find David and Dotty-Kay living in Andover, Maine and attending the UCC church there. In 1964, David got a call asking him to counsel at PL. Their first child went to his grandparents for the week, and Dotty-Kay, pregnant with their second, accompanied David to PL, and they both served as counselors for the first time. David and Dotty-Kay continued to counsel, and even after moving to Washington, DC for work, they returned the next two summers to PL for a week in the woods.

Their experience at PL turned out to be deeper and more profound than they could have expected involvement in outdoor ministries could be. Their experience at PL led David to decide to make a change in his life and attend Bangor Theological Seminary. If you can put your hands on a copy of the booklet celebrating PL's 40th Anniversary in 1996, you can read a lovely essay David wrote about this transition. After seminary and a move to Mount Desert Island to serve at the MDI Larger Parish, PL called to see if David was interested in becoming a dean, and the Stillmans' years of deaning began. They packed up their four kids and headed up to PL where David deaned and Dotty-Kay counseled and after a number of years, Dotty-Kay deaned and David counseled. David and Dotty-Kay figure that they have attend counseled and deaned over 60 weeks combined. That's over a year at PL!



The Stillman Family: Dotty-Kay & David (front) Darin, Doreen, Dan, Darcy (back) at David & Dotty-Kay's 50th Anniversary, 2011

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MESSAGE FROM THE CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIR

This month, my church will host Rev. Mollie Landers from Pilgrim Lodge. Each year we have a PL Sunday - usually in the bleak mid winter - so we all (not just children) have something to look forward to. This year, Mollie and I will be talking about the new Pilgrim Lodge and asking for our congregation's individual support. My church, as a whole, has already decided to pledge. This same story is being repeated in many churches in Maine. I guess you could say we are the "church phase."

If you would like to join us in the "church phase," - even for just a Mission Moment - let me know and the PL team will get on it.

Think Spring and Think Pilgrimlogically!

Pam Gormley, Co-Chair
Capital Campaign Committee, pgormley@msln.net

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DAVID & DOTTY-KAY STILLMAN *CONTINUED*

However, their contributions to PL don't end at the 60+ weeks on the boardwalk. David served on the Outdoor Ministries Committee for seven years and as chair for five. Dotty-Kay was on the OMC for 13 years. More recently, they have deaned Grandparents Camp and the Shipboard Camp on the Maine Seacoast Mission boat SUNBEAM. Here's just a tiny list of some of their other major contributions to Pilgrim Lodge.

- Dotty-Kay designed the PL logo during her time on the OMC.
- Dotty-Kay put together the very first PL songbook, *Make a Joyful Noise*, and their son Dan designed the cover.
- David and Dotty-Kay put together the very first PL slide shows when they actually were slide shows. They coordinated the shows with music and narration on cassette tapes. David made several of these, which were used by churches around the Conference to publicize Pilgrim Lodge.
- You know that huge *Give us this day our daily bread* sign above the kitchen in the dining room in the Lodge? Yup, Dotty-Kay designed it and then constructed it with the help of the campers and counselors in 1975 during a week David was deaning.
- Together they revived Family Camp in the 1980s and co-deaned it for several years.



Dean Dotty-Kay, 1970s

It's not surprising after reading a list like that to find out that all four of their kids attended PL as campers for as many years as possible. Their oldest child, Dan, has been both a camper for years and then a counselor and his two children, Dylan and Bailey, attended Grandparent's Camp with the Stillman's and have since both been campers "on their own." Their daughter Doreen was also a camper and a counselor, and attended Family Camp in 1986 with her husband and infant daughter Charli, who continued to attend as a camper when she was old enough. (Dotty-Kay said it was a dream come true to dean a camp with one of her own grandchildren as a camper.) Their third child, Darin, was a camper from grade 3 through high school. Darcy, their youngest, claims to have been attending PL the longest – from an infant and toddler in Dotty-Kay's backpack, while her parents were deaning and as a camper from 3rd grade through her high school years, then as a counselor, and now as camper again with her mother and sister at Women at the Well. Darcy also continues to be a counselor at Senior High Camp.

I think it could easily be said that David and Dotty-Kay have done an extraordinary amount to make campers' PL dreams come true over the years. And this is from two people who never attended PL as campers. The PL spirit got 'em!



David, Chair of the OMC with P.L. display at the Annual Meeting of the Maine Conference in 1977

bring that enthusiasm back to their home churches.”

One would be hard pressed to not understand why David and Dotty-Kay believe in the power of PL and why it is important to donate to the Pilgrim Lodge Capital Campaign. The OMC, under David's leadership, created the first Adopt a Cabin program where local churches provided money and/or time and personnel) to keep “their” cabins in good shape, and the Capital Campaign is an extension of the intentions of that program. “We need to keep the camp up physically, so our seasonal facilities don't deteriorate,” says David. “If we're committed to this kind of ministry we really have to also be committed to providing the funds. For those of us who come out of a mainstream moderate to liberal Christian tradition, we feel it is so important to be able to offer young people an inclusive kind of vision for understanding and living out the Christian faith.”

David points out that although Pilgrim Lodge's core constituency is young people, “local churches benefit significantly from having adults going to PL as counselors and deans. Adults, just as much as youth, are inspired at PL and

bring that enthusiasm back to their home churches.” Even though their years and years of service to PL and impact on its rich history is worth millions (if you ask me) the Stillmans have also made a \$1,000 pledge to the campaign. David describes the general climate at PL as “accepting in terms of coming to understand and have a relationship with God. It's an open, affirming, challenging approach, and a person can go and not feel that they have to accept a certain narrow view of the Christian faith. But they can fit in and find what fits with their spirituality. That kind of inclusiveness is so important in this polarized society, and that has been a rich part of the PL experience.”

CAMPER SPOTLIGHT: ELI & BEN DISALVATORE

When Chris DiSalvatore was a camper at PL in the mid-80s, he never imagined he would tear up when describing the experiences of his two sons at PL as a debt that can never be repaid. Fast forward many years to when their oldest son, Elijah, was old enough to attend PL. He had grown up hearing about it and was incredibly excited to go, but Chris and his wife Kathy were worried. Eli has Asperger's, and life for him when he was young was really difficult. But they took a leap of faith, and off Eli went to PL.



Chris & Eli, Faith Foundations 2003

The PL Director, Bryan Breault and his staff worked closely with Chris and Kathy, calling them every night to keep them abreast on what was going on with Eli and how they were responding to it. Chris gushes to this day about Bryan and his team. "The amount of effort they put into it was remarkable. Other places bailed on him very quickly. School was not a welcoming place. Our neighborhood wasn't a welcoming place, but PL was. Kathy and I were beside ourselves. It is a debt that can never be repaid."



Eli, Arts Alive 2013

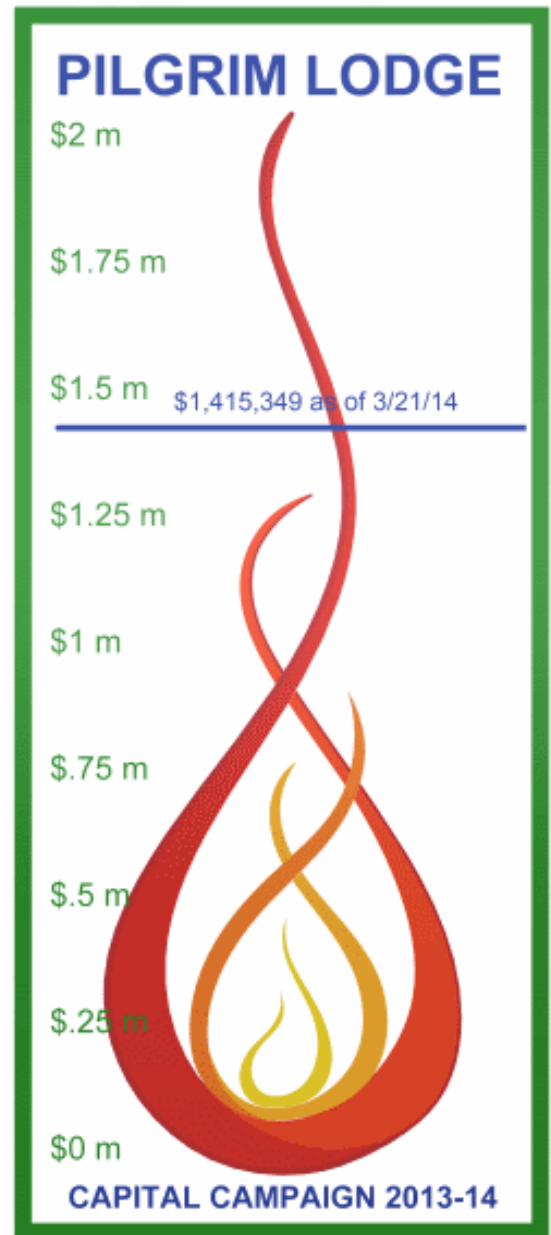
As Eli continued to attend camp, the frequency of the phone calls from Bryan were fewer and fewer until they disappeared altogether when Eli was in middle school. "He had just internalized the program. Everyone knew him. He knew what to expect. He thrived there." At the end of middle school, Eli headed to Arts Alive and over the years developed a deep connection with Dean Sally Colgrove (featured in our January newsletter). Sally took Chris aside after Eli's junior year and told him that if Eli ever wanted to come back to PL as a CIT that Chris should call Sally because she wanted Eli to CIT for her. Since graduating from high school, Eli was a CIT in 2013 and plans to be on this year too.

Talking to Eli, now 20, he knows what efforts PL made in order for him to be a part of the camper community. He started going in 3rd grade and remembers the extra effort the PL staff put in so that he could attend. He's proud that they only needed to do that for a few years and then he didn't need it anymore. When asked to describe why he loves PL so much, Eli didn't have to hesitate for a minute to nail the PL experience on the head. "I've never encountered anything that's like PL. There are feelings of happiness and acceptance and kindness that are just nowhere else. You don't have any barriers between you and the rest of the world there. It's great! You can be yourself, and no one will pick on you."

Eli's younger brother Ben, now 17, also started going to PL as early as he could. He had seen Eli go, and he wanted to go too. He's gone every year since and will be attending his final summer as a camper this year. When asked what makes him want to go back every year, Ben said, "Oh man. Everything. The people there – great friends, kids, adults, counselors."



Ben & friends, 2013



OUR TIME

Rev. Bryan S. Breault, Director of Outdoor Ministries

Lent always seems to come so quickly after Christmas. Joy to the world twists into reflections of our mortality and the fragile nature of our brief time to find our way to wholeness. The church calendar has always felt out of synch to me. After our 40 days in the wilderness (no premature hallelujahs mind you) we explode into the new life of Easter and before we know it, we find ourselves in the half-a-year long season unimaginatively named "Ordinary Time." Ordinary time. Our time.

As the church year winds down we are hitting our stride, fully engaged in the Spirit, and boldly exploring community while watching the convergence of summer beauty and youthful exuberance explode onto the scene at Lake Cobbosseecontee. It is a season of faith, of connection, of discovery. And while every camp has its traditions and rhythms, no two summers are alike. In my experience, there is nothing ordinary about Ordinary Time.

We hold to our mission, and our philosophy and they serve us well. Joy to the world all summer long and beyond. That mission is not just about having a fun week, but incorporating all the wonder and responsibility before us to share and experience the presence of God in real and tangible ways, and to take that experience with us into the world.

It's miraculous how much of a positive impact Pilgrim Lodge has on children and adults. It's worth your prayer, your time and your pledge. Don't wait to be asked. This is a worthy endeavor in which to invest. Dig deep and give with an open heart. Make it part of your Lenten devotion. Not only will you make heaven and nature sing, you will inspire a host of Hallelujahs – even if they're a little out of season.

BEN & ELI *CONTINUED*

Like many campers, Ben also got involved with the State Youth Council and is the current SYC President though his term ends this month, which is bittersweet. When asked why people should donate to the PL Capital Campaign, Ben's first reaction is to say, "it would be a really long conversation." Agreed. "Not only is the place itself beautiful – serene lake, loons at night, cabins, campfires – that's not the point of PL. It's for boys and girls to have not only a religious experience but also to meet new people and become friends with people from places you didn't know existed. It's, by far, the best place to be in the world."

Ben is capping his PL experience and his Boy Scout tenure by doing his Eagle Scout project at PL. He's connecting the farmhouse to the blue and orange trails which will include building a brand new trail that includes one 14' bridge and one 103' floating boardwalk! Ben thought long and hard about his Eagle Scout project and realized that "I would not be the guy I am today if it wasn't for everything I learned at PL. The ideas about respect we learn in Boy Scouts and at PL go hand in hand, and if I could do even a smidgen for PL of what PL has done for me, I would do it."

Kathy and Chris both mentioned how PL served their boys differently. Each had needs, and though they were completely different, they were both met. Both had poignant and powerful experiences. "Imagine that heaven was a place," Eli says. "That's PL. Everybody genuinely cares. It's not just business as usual. People come first."

Thank you!

Several local UCC churches and Associations of the Maine Conference have donated to the PL Capital Campaign. Thank you for moving us closer to our campaign goal of \$2,000,000.

Boothbay Harbor Congregational Church
Congregational Church in Cumberland
Cornish UCC
Cumberland Association
Falmouth Congregational Church
Federated Church in Thomaston
First Church in Belfast UCC
First Church Waterville, Women's Fellowship
First Congregational Church in Scarborough
First Congregational Church UCC in Brewer
First Parish - Brunswick
First Parish Church Congregational UCC - Freeport
Hancock Waldo Association
High Street Congregational Church, Newport
Katahdin Association
Kennebec Valley Association
Kennebunkport, South Congregational Church UCC
Midcoast Association
Moose River Congregational Church UCC, Jackman
Old South Congregational Church in Hallowell
Rangeley Congregational Church UCC
United Parish Congregational Church of Harrison & North Bridgton
West Paris Mission Congregational Church, South Paris
Whittier Congregational Church, Island Falls
Williston-Immanuel Church, Portland



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