

**Camp Pathfinder**  
**Final Banquet, August 19, 2007**  
**Speaking for the Campers: Nick Cavallo**

So as some of you may know, this is my 6<sup>th</sup> year at Pathfinder and I would like to start by talking about my first experience on the island as a Mic n' Chip.

As usual I was excited and nervous like every other kid, not really knowing what to expect. I had ordered a dry bag and sleeping bag from camp and was expecting them to be the best choice as I had no clue what to buy. It turned out that I didn't get my sleeping bag until the next day so that night I spent huddled in fetal position listening to the calls of loons which sound just like wolves to a newcomer. Camp has since changed this and you are now handed your sleeping bag as you step off the dock.

I also found out that there weren't any showers. But the next year I came back, probably because I had momentarily forgotten that episode when my parents asked "do you want to go back?" and I had had a great first trip with Will Hopkins.

But instead of blabbing on about Mic n'Chip horror stories, I would rather talk about something that is more important to me and to this camp, which is tripping. Each one of you has a different idea of what tripping is about and for me it's about perseverance. This year, I had the privilege of going down the Dumoine River and eventually crossing the Ottawa, which was the best trip I have taken so far, with the staff men Steve Szymkowiak, Tim Carey, and Charlie Katrycz. But I have to admit that I didn't like

tripping when I first came to Pathfinder and really only enjoyed getting back to camp and eating as much as I could.

But one day, as I, Mike Floyd, and the rest of the trip hiked up to the top of the ridge on Greenleaf, 300 ft up, I realized what it was all about. It's about being with 8 other guys for a number of days and bonding with them in a way that you could never do at any other summer camp. It's about being with nature for those few days without the distractions of the world. It's about being able to go back home and tell someone that you shot a C III and dumped while they were sitting at home watching TV. It's about meeting sketchy people on the Winneway River and running up a 30 degree incline to meet a man named "Tiger" and then laughing about it for the rest of the trip. I think that story is a lot better than "I sat at home all summer."

In the end, it's mostly how tripping changes you that makes it worthwhile. After a 10 hour day and 2 hour bush, a lot of things don't seem so hard anymore. Those experiences give you a new perspective on life, one which will allow you to persevere in ways that you haven't been able to do before.

And I would like to thank all the staff and campers for giving me the opportunity to enjoy my six years in a way which changed me forever. I've thoroughly enjoyed all my time spent at camp and the traditions which we all partake in: the 9 old men game, its wild interruptions, the canoe regatta, and of course Turbo. For me, camp has also become a tradition in my summer and hopefully will continue to be. But before I get too

sentimental, I also want to say that Pathfinder is the only camp that does tripping right. After years of watching tourists tin-tub-it down the Delaware River and canals near my house, it still amazes me when we glide over 40 km in cedar canvas in a single day. It is differences like that which define the Pathfinder experience. One day you wake up at 5:00, on the water by 6:00, getting to the campsite 12 hours later to “chili-mex” or some other awful Harvest Meal. The day after will always seem so much easier no matter if it’s only an hour shorter. Once you have pushed yourself that hard, you know you will always be able to strive, whether it is in school, work, or just life.

No matter where I go in life after Pathfinder, I know that I will always remember the canoe tans, long paddles, “chili-mex”, probably Tiger, and the friendships that I made on and off Source Lake.

Nick Cavallo, 2007