

# The Cachalotter

*News, Information, and Memories by and for the Members of the Camp Cachalot Alumni Association*

## Reminiscing with Old Friends

*Reunions, Stories, and a Campfire Highlight Our First Annual Homecoming*

In 2005, Camp Cachalot celebrated its 60th consecutive summer camp season, once again welcoming hundreds of Scouts and Scouters to a week (or more) of fun and advancement.

On July 9th, the Camp Cachalot Alumni Association wrapped up its first year of existence by celebrating all the memories those 60 years have created, by hosting our first-ever Homecoming. Current and former Cachalot campers and staff, spanning the whole of the camp's 60 year life so far, were welcomed out to camp for a bright sunny day filled with history, fellowship, and fine dining, Prescott Hall-style.

The day got started with alums gathering in the Boathouse, overlooking Five Mile Pond, for coffee, donuts, and talk. On display were many pieces of Cachalot and Noquochoke history: old photos, items from the "Save Our Camps" campaign of the 1970's, even

some camping promotions films dating from the 1950's. Once we were sure everyone had arrived, our Homecoming chair, Jeff Dumais, had everyone introduce themselves, starting

things off with his own introduction. Our attendees ranged from current campers and staff members, all the way back to members of the original 1946 summer camp staff and very early members of both Agawam and Noquochoke Lodges, and every decade in between. For some, it was their first return in camp in many years. Many people shared brief anecdotes of their days at Cachalot, both during the introductions and throughout the day.

After getting reacquainted, we took a leisurely walking tour of camp. In addition to letting people see what has and hasn't changed in Camp, we talked about the history of various parts of Camp as we walked. Many stops had displays of photos of those areas through the years, culled from the Association's collection of pictures graciously provided by

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Alums at Homecoming 2005 during the Historical Tour of Cachalot, enjoying both the great weather and Jeff Dumais' (2nd from right) presentation on the central camp area. (Photo: John Woolley)

## Get Ready for 'Expo 2006'!

*Annual Winter Gathering Taking Place January 14th*

Consider yourself invited to our second annual Winter Gathering and Memorabilia Exposition! This year's event will be taking place on Saturday, January 14th, 2006, from 9:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. at the church hall at Smith Mills Christian Congregational on Anderson Way in Dartmouth. As we did at last year's Gathering, we'll have lots of Cachalot and other Scouting memorabilia on display, and we'll be having a brief meeting for our members to update you on what we've been doing since the last time we got together. To add a little more to the program, this year we will also be hosting a Trade-o-Ree, with exhibits and memorabilia traders and vendors that will be open for general admission.

The Trade-o-Ree vendors and the exhibit area will open at 9:00 A.M., with Alumni-specific activity beginning with lunch at 12:00 P.M., followed by a brief Alumni meeting. Tickets

will be available in mid-November at Council Scout Shops and from Association committee members. Tickets that include lunch must be purchased before January 11th, 2006 so we can be sure to have the right amount of food on hand.

If you have Cachalot or related memorabilia you wish to display (this is free to do), or are interested in buying a trader table for the Trade-o-Ree for a small donation, please contact us at [expo2006@cachalotalumni.org](mailto:expo2006@cachalotalumni.org). As always, our History Committee will also be on hand to take photos of your memorabilia or scan in your old photos or slides. If you have photos already scanned in, we can handle most formats including CDs, DVDs, and various types of "flash" memory as well.

See you in January! 🐳

### Winter Gathering and Memorabilia Exposition 2006

January 14th, 2006

Exhibits Open 9:00 A.M.

Alumni Gathering Begins 12:00 P.M.

Exhibits and Gathering  
(includes lunch)

\$10 for Association members

\$15 for non-members

\$5 with a new membership

Exhibits Only:

\$5 General Admission

Free to under-18 Scouts in uniform

Email [expo2006@cachalotalumni.org](mailto:expo2006@cachalotalumni.org)  
or visit [www.cachalotalumni.org](http://www.cachalotalumni.org) for  
more info.

## The Cachaletter

*The Cachaletter* is the newsletter of the Camp Cachalot Alumni Association. It is published twice annually: once in the spring and once in the fall, by the Communications Committee.

Questions or other feedback related to *The Cachaletter* can be sent via email to [cachaletter@cachalotalumni.org](mailto:cachaletter@cachalotalumni.org).

Editor  
Dennis J. Wilkinson, II

Contributors  
Christopher Rooney  
Thomas Whelan  
John Woolley

## The Camp Cachalot Alumni Association

The Camp Cachalot Alumni Association was founded in 2004 with the express purpose of supporting Camp Cachalot and being a social organization for the extended family of the Camp. Anyone who has ever had any involvement with Camp Cachalot, the former Moby Dick Council, or any of the predecessor camps or Councils is eligible for membership. It is a not-for-profit organization operated under the auspices of the Narragansett Council, Boy Scouts of America.

Our membership year runs from July 1st through June 30th, and all membership fees contribute directly to our endowment fund, the proceeds of which go directly towards the support of Camp Cachalot.

More information about the Alumni Association, including membership forms, back issues of *The Cachaletter*, Camp history, and online discussion forums, can be found online at our web site:

<http://www.cachalotalumni.org/>

We can also be reached via US Mail at the following address:

Camp Cachalot Alumni Association  
c/o Narragansett Council, BSA  
P.O. Box 14777  
Providence, RI 02914



## For Our Members...

*Thomas P. Whelan, Association Chairman*

Thanks to your support the Camp Cachalot Alumni Association had a successful first year! In service to Camp Cachalot the Alumni Association stained two buildings in Camp (Prescott Hall, and the Falling Rock Waterfront Tower), presented our first annual Summer Camp Staff Scholarship, assisted Council with the integration of Scouts displaced from Yawgoog for an additional week of Summer Camp at Camp Cachalot, and a group of Alumni members worked with Council and the Ranger to replace the rotted utility poles coming into Camp.

In service to our members we held several events in the past year including our Winter Gathering, Memorial Day weekend campout, Homecoming Day at Camp, and Labor Day weekend campout. Each of these events will be an annual event, so mark your calendars now for the coming year!

The 2005-2006 year promises to be even more fun-packed than last year. Now that we are 'in full swing' we can concentrate on making the events bigger and better. This year we plan to open up the Winter Gathering to the general public, so be sure to tell your friends about it. The Homecoming Day at Camp will be held on a Sunday which will allow us to watch as the Scouts get settled into Camp and we will have the ability to relive our own first time at Camp through them.

Our goals for the coming year include raising funds for the Alumni endowment fund, performing several more service projects at Camp, renew all our existing members (if you have not renewed yet please do it now), gather new members at all levels, start selling Camp Cachalot Alumni Association merchandise at various locations (these will make great gifts).

We need you now more than ever before. To meet this year's goals we need people to serve on committees or to be available to assist at the various events. If you are interested in getting active in the Alumni Association I can be reached at 617-592-1745 or at 508-993-1981. I hope to hear from all of you!

See you at the Winter Gathering! 



## Cachalot 2005: In Review

*Christopher Rooney, Reservation Director*

Cachalot had another successful year in 2005 on a variety of fronts. This success started with the quality of the staff. Their spirit, their dedication, and their obvious pride in their camp set the tone for the entire season and the Scouts and Scouters who were our guests responded in kind. The reviews from Scouts, leaders, and visitors to camp were uniformly positive. Most importantly, the quality of the program was high and thus the Scouts were provided with an experience that helped develop character, citizenship, and fitness, the three aims of the Scouting movement.


As I mentioned above, the key to this program is the staff, and the key to a quality staff is experience. When compared with other camps, we pay our staff a competitive wage, but this still pales in comparison with what your average college student could make in the private sector. With this in mind, the Alumni Association established a scholarship fund to supplement the scholarship monies already provided by Narragansett Council. This year four staff members received scholarships, one from the Alumni, and three from Narragansett Council funds. It is my belief that this scholarship program will directly benefit the program by encouraging staff members to lengthen their tenures on staff, and the Alumni association can be proud of the role it is playing in this.

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We also played host this summer to about 125 Scouts who were unable to attend Yawgoog Scout Reservation (where they typically camp), due to reasons beyond their control. The staff again performed their roles flawlessly, making these Troops who were completely unfamiliar with Cachalot feel at home. I would also like to thank Alumni members Henry DeGrace, Mike Joseph, Vic Sylvia, and Tom Whelan for helping with check-in. With a full house of brand new Troops, their help was indispensable in ensuring a smooth check-in process.

In sum, Cachalot's 60th Season was a smashing success. It was great to see so many Alumni this summer and I hope to see even more of you next year. 

# "A Man, a Plan, a Can..."

(of stain, that is)

In addition to the family camping and fellowship that took place over Labor Day weekend (see related article on p. 4), the Alumni Association tackled its first few service projects at Camp. Working over both Memorial Day and Labor Day weekend, we cleaned, repainted trim, and restained the siding of both Prescott Hall and the waterfront tower. This was a great volunteer effort all around, with many alums stopping in to give a hand or in preparing lunch for the painting crew.

Prescott Dining Hall was by far the bigger project, taking all of Memorial Day weekend and a few return trips out to fully complete, but the building was looking fantastic by the time summer camp opened in early July. In addition to the alums who dropped out over the holiday weekend to paint (and be entertained by the acrobatics of Fred Barreiros painting the high trim), Troop 52 from Fairhaven pitched in on the Saturday by scraping some windowsills and slinging a paintbrush or two, and Campmasters Manny Mello and Al Langlois (and family) both helped with the painting and flipped burgers to keep our volunteers fed for the day.

We weren't able to completely wrap up the dining hall over the course of Memorial Day weekend, courtesy of our reliable New England weather. No matter - a number of alums came out individually throughout the summer to finish what the rain prevented us from completing.

After finishing Prescott Hall, we turned our sights towards the waterfront. Once we managed to find enough matching pieces of staging in Camp's motley collection of parts, we were able to wrap up the entire waterfront tower in a single day during the Labor Day weekend camp-out. The painting crew had a fairly high concentration of former waterfront staffers, too, which certainly didn't hurt. Both buildings now look a lot better than they did, so here's a big "Thank You!" to everyone who came out and helped - this wouldn't have happened without you! These projects were suggested by the Narragansett Council Scout Executive, Dave Anderson, and he's told us that he's very pleased with the results.

Since we still have some stain left over, we plan to continue sprucing up other buildings at Cachalot with a fresh coat at our upcoming family camping weekends. As always, we'll be posting information related to any of our events on our web site, [www.cachalotalumni.org](http://www.cachalotalumni.org), so check back when you have the chance! 🐸



Our illustrious Chairman, Tom Whelan, "supervising" Vic Sylvia (on ladder) doing some trim painting on Prescott Hall.  
(Photo: Dennis Wilkinson)



A group of alumni painting the waterfront tower. Pictured (clockwise, from the upper left) are Russell Monast, Tom Whelan, Vic Sylvia, Chico DeDeGrace, and Brian Bastarache

(Photo: John Wooley)

## Upcoming Events and Important Dates

July 1st, 2005  
Start of 2005-2006 Membership Year

January 11th, 2006  
Last day to reserve tickets including a meal for the 2006 Winter Gathering and Memorabilia Exposition

January 14th, 2006  
Winter Gathering and Memorabilia Exposition  
9:00 A.M. through 3:00 P.M.  
Smith Mills Congregational Church Hall  
Dartmouth, MA

June 30th, 2006  
End of 2005-2006 Membership Year  
Renew early!

## Executive Committee and Other e-Mail Contacts

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# Alumni Families Enjoy Labor Day at Cachalot

*A new, old tradition returns to Camp*

Once upon a time, Labor Day weekend was a time when Scouters would bring their families out to Cachalot, to see just where they were spending all of that volunteer time with their Troops, Packs, or Posts. There would be a few loosely-organized games, fishing, swimming, and fellowship. Sometimes, a little work might even get done in the process (bringing the waterfront docks onto the shore for winter storage was always a fun diversion). 1950's style rock n' roll blaring from Prescott Hall wasn't unheard of. Members of our own Neemat Lodge might even come out as well, helping out with the volume and zaniness at a campfire or two. It's been about ten years since the last Labor Day weekend for families -- and we thought that should change.

This year, Narragansett Council opened Camp Cachalot up for tent camping to the families of the Alumni Association, in what turned out to be a fine start towards a new tradition of family camping over that holiday weekend. Fifteen alums and their families all came out to partic-

ipate, including several familiar faces from the "old" Labor Day weekends. The weather couldn't have been nicer, and everyone got right into the spirit of things: boisterous singing around an impromptu campfire, complete with s'mores and pan-roasted peanuts; a late-night nature hike from the center of camp and out through Dan Beard to Abner's Pond; swimming, canoeing, and fishing in and on Five Mile Pond; even some kite-flying in Tom Cullen Field. One big extended family, getting to know Cachalot, and each other, a little better.

Those waterfront docks might not need to be pulled out of the water for the winter any more, but we managed to squeeze a little volunteer work in as well, re-staining the waterfront tower (see the related article on p. 3). A pretty fair trade, we think -- a weekend spent out at Camp with our families, all in exchange for pushing some paintbrushes around for a few hours.

On Saturday evening, the Patricio and DeGrace families took over the beach for a little while,

graciously hosting a clamboil for everyone in attendance. It was a fantastic meal -- sitting on the shore of Five Mile Pond, enjoying steamers, corn, chourico, boiled potatoes, and drawn butter is a fine way to spend a late-summer evening. Many thanks to the Patricios and DeGraces for putting on this shindig!

As people packed up their campsites Monday morning, reluctantly departing Cachalot for the "real" world, one thing was perfectly clear: we need to do this again next year. Keep an eye out for more information on the Alumni Association's family camping plans for 2006 in the spring Cachalotter and on our web site, [www.cachalotalumni.org](http://www.cachalotalumni.org). 🐉



*Left: Tom Bednarz and his son, Mason, fly a kite in Tom Cullen Memorial Field during the Labor Day Weekend family campout.*

*(Photo: John Wooley)*



*Right: Tom Bednarz' daughter, Christie, takes over on kite duty*

*(Photo: John Wooley)*



Chico DeGrace and Brian Bastarache paddle for the finish line in a dusk "swamped-canoe" race on Labor Day Weekend.  
(Photo: John Woolley)

## Alums Return to Camp for Homecoming


(continued from page 1)

our members. We hoped to prompt people's memory by doing this, and we were successful in getting a few more holes filled in our record of Cachalot's history (even if not everyone remembered things in quite the same way!) The tour travelled from the maintenance yard, over to the 21 Club, down to Tom Cullen Memorial Field, to the waterfront, then finally up the hill to Prescott Hall and the Covill Chapel. After the tour, people were free to visit other areas in Camp, including visiting the program areas of this year's summer camp season.

The afternoon closed with a Scout's Own service at the Covill Chapel, the lowering of the Flag for the day, and finally a barbecue chicken dinner in Prescott Hall. The dining hall couldn't be a more appropriate place to share even more memories of Camp, as it's packed with history itself. From the collection of plaques removed from buildings that no longer stand, to the hundreds of Troop and Patrol plaques from summer camp, even to the names of kitchen staff members scrawled in chalk on the ceilings themselves, it's as good as dining in a museum. And since no meal at Camp would be complete without announcements, announcements, announcements, Jeff once again thanked everyone in attendance and gave our Chairman, Tom

Whelan, the opportunity to say a few words about the Association and our efforts to keep the Cachalot Spirit alive and well.

Those that opted to stay after the meal were treated to a traditional campfire down in the Council Ring. In addition to discovering that our current Camp Director has an affinity for physical comedy, with his one-man production of "The Motorcycle Skit", people were encouraged (or requested) to get up and perform their own favorites. As you might expect, rollicking renditions of several camp songs followed, including such perennial favorites as "The Cat Came Back" and "Wild Cheese Moose Hunt." Everyone got their fix of campfire story with a recitation of "The Cremation of Sam McGee", and the campfire, and the night, concluded with a "Scoutmaster's Minute" of sorts, the "Cachalot Hymn", and "Scout Vespers" (with a "Molly Molly Hey" thrown in for good measure).

We hope everyone who attended had a fantastic time; we know that we did, and we hope that we'll see even more alums out at next year's Homecoming. We think it's better to be involved in making the next 60 years of memories! 





# A Brief History Of...

## The Waterfront Tower

Call it what you will: “The Waterfront” or “Aquatics” is arguably the most popular place at Summer Camp that doesn’t sell snacks, and it’s pretty easy to tell why. Even ignoring the beauty of Five Mile Pond and its white sandy shore, getting into the water (with your buddy, of course!) is simply the best way to cool off on a hot Cachalot summer’s day. And for almost as long as there has been a Waterfront, we’ve had a Waterfront Tower for our lifeguards to keep a watchful eye on the proceedings.

Which Waterfront Tower you think of, however, will probably depend on when you went to summer camp: we’ve had three towers over the years, and the very first one looked quite a bit different in its first few years than it did in its last few.

### The First Tower

Built in 1950, the first Waterfront Tower at Cachalot was one of the earliest buildings constructed in Camp, and certainly one of the simplest. Looking not too dissimilar from a classic X-trestle pioneering tower, it was an open structure with an observation platform at its top. While useful for spotting purposes, it didn’t provide any shelter or storage on the waterfront, something that was pointed out in the 1951 camp inspection report, which reads, “It occurs to me that the lower half of your Tower, below observers platform, can be boarded in to make good storage place for oars, paddles, and other equipment.” Alan Novick, the Waterfront Director that year, makes a similar recommendation in his end-of-season report.

It is not immediately clear in what year the work was done to enclose the tower, but pictures provided to us show that, by the end of the



The original, open-structure Waterfront Tower, taken from an early 1950’s camp promotional film. (Archive photo)

1950s, this recommendation had been followed through on and the lower portion of the tower was enclosed in white clapboards.

The first tower continued to be used in this configuration through the remainder of that decade and well into the 1960’s, at least until the year of the Big Fire, 1964. While the Waterfront Tower did not suffer any significant damage in the fire, it had fallen into some disrepair, and with money available from the reconstruction capital campaign and a donation from Mr. and Mrs. Howard Young, a second tower was built in 1965.

### The Andrew Jackson Tower

If you attended summer camp between 1966 and 1998, the Waterfront Tower you remember is the Andrew Jackson Memorial Tower. While not very different in construction from the tower that preceded it (the biggest difference was the use of rough-edged, dark-stained clapboards for the lower enclosure) this tower was very clearly dedicated to one Andrew Jackson, with monies provided by his granddaughter. A brass plaque recording this was affixed to the tower itself. Unfortunately, over time, the memory of just who Andrew Jackson was faded from the Camp’s collective memory. This left many campers familiar with the tower in later years to wonder why the tower would have been dedicated to our seventh President, and somewhat surprised that his granddaughter would have been around to donate a tower in his name.

A little research turned up an article in the July 2nd, 1965 edition of the New Bedford Standard-Times, titled “Camp Tower to Be Named for Mariner”. This was indeed the story of the naming of our second Waterfront Tower. Mrs. Howard Young of North Dartmouth was the granddaughter of Andrew Jackson, a Portuguese whaler who had been born Andre Cabrara. He had been shanghaied from his birthplace, the Canary Islands, as a boy of 9 years old. After many years whaling, he eventually ended up first mate of the whaler Charles W. Morgan out of New Bedford, retiring from the sea to Marion in 1880. He had been urged to change his name by friends after arriving in America, and chose President Jackson’s name after reading about and coming to admire him. Mr. Jackson passed away in 1903.

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Scouts checking in at the waterfront in the late 1950’s. The original Waterfront Tower, its base now enclosed to provide storage, is visible on the right. (Archive photo courtesy Larry Harney)

## A Brief History Of... the Waterfront Tower

(continued from page 6)

The Jackson Tower remained in use for nearly 35 years, serving as storage area, observation deck, and the mounting spot for the Lost Bather Drill gong. After a number of years with very high water in Five Mile Pond, however, the bottom of the tower, including its corner supports, began to suffer rot, and once again the need for a new tower presented itself.

### The Present Tower

The current Waterfront Tower (theoretically named "The Falling Rock Waterfront Tower", although nothing currently on the tower indicates this) was completed in early 1999. The final funds to complete the tower came courtesy of a donation from a member of "The Falling Rock Patrol". Unlike the previous towers, the new tower was envisioned as being not only an observation tower and storage, but also as a residence for the Waterfront Director and perhaps members of the area staff.

The tower itself is a two-story structure, completely enclosed except for a second-story porch that serves as the observation deck. The lower floor serves as program storage for the Waterfront, and the second story is equipped to sleep a small number of people (although it was not used as a residence in the 2005 summer camp season for a variety of reasons.) An external staircase leads up the eastern side of the structure to the second story. To help prevent the same rot conditions that damaged the Jackson Tower, and to increase the amount of usable beach, this tower is set back further from the edge of the water. Most recently, re-staining this tower was the Alumni Associations second major service project in camp. We hope it will continue to serve as our lookout point for swimmers and boaters for a long time to come!

*This is the second article in what we hope will be a continuing series of Cachalot history articles. We hope you enjoy them! If there's a particular topic you'd like to see covered, or you can fill in the blanks on this or any previous subject, please drop us a line at [curator@cachalotalumni.org](mailto:curator@cachalotalumni.org) –The Editors*



Above: Andrew Jackson Memorial Waterfront Tower, circa 1979. (Archive Photo)

Below: The current Waterfront Tower, circa 2005 and before its new paint job (Photo: John Woolley)



## Help Wanted!

We got off to a good start in our first year, and we've gotten bigger. In order to serve all of our members, we need volunteers in a number of areas to help get the job done.

*The Communications Committee* are the people who bring you our web site, [www.cachalotalumni.org](http://www.cachalotalumni.org), your twice-yearly issues of *The Cachalotter*, and who put together our press releases and e-mail messages that announce our events and successes to the world. They are in need of people with: writing skills; drawing or graphic design skills; an interest in photography; or even just the willingness to fold and staple paper, and stuff envelopes. A sense of humor helps, too.

*The History Committee* is looking for people with first-hand knowledge of Cachalot's history, as well as a willingness to do research. In addition to digging through old documents, they also scan in old pictures and slides, and help the Communications folks get historical information articles written for the web and for the newsletter.

*The Membership Committee* is charged with keeping all our current members, finding new ones, and helping current and new members keep their information up-to-date.

*The Finance Committee* handles finances, including raising funds in support of our various

efforts out at Camp, including our Building Fund, our Scholarship Fund, and, of course, growing our Endowment Fund.

Finally, we organize committees for our activities throughout the year, including the Gathering and Homecoming. These events require all kinds of support, and every helping hand is appreciated and welcome.

We hope that you'll consider volunteering a little of your time to help us keep Cachalot a great place for Scouts to learn, and to preserve the history of Cachalot. If you're interested, please contact our Chairman, Tom Whelan, at [chairman@cachalotalumni.org](mailto:chairman@cachalotalumni.org).



# Program Director Awarded Our 2005 Scholarship

*A dedicated Rene Dupont takes home our first-ever award*

Rene Dupont, our Program Director out at Camp Cachalot over the past few summers, was named as the recipient of our first-annual Alumni Association Summer Camp Staff Scholarship. This year's award contributed \$500 towards his college endeavors.

2005 marked Rene's ninth season on summer camp staff, his third as the Program Director. Rene attends the Bristol Community College, where he is a business communications major. He also works as a shift supervisor in the East Bay Scout Shop. Rene's dedication to Cachalot was evident to our selection committee, and he deserves a heartfelt "Congratulations!" from his fellow alums!

The scholarship program was quite successful in its first year, with over \$1000 raised and several staffers applying. The money we raise for the scholarship is split between the current year's award and establishing a permanently endowed scholarship - if you'd like to contribute, please contact us at [scholarship@cachalotalumni.org](mailto:scholarship@cachalotalumni.org). 🐟



Rene Dupont, this year's scholarship recipient, holds his congratulatory letter following the award presentation. (Photo: Dennis Wilkinson)

## **Camp Cachalot Alumni Association**

c/o Narragansett Council, BSA

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