



The Cachalotter

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

Were You There?

Remembering the "Big Fire" of 1964, Forty-Five Years Later

May 23rd, 1964: over seven hundred Scouts and Scouters participating in the spring Camporee at Camp Cachalot are told to evacuate the camp, which is in the path of a large forest fire. Over the course of the following two days, this fire destroys cottages at Charge Pond, sweeps into Cachalot from Myles Standish State Forest to the west, burning down much of the forest in camp and reducing several of the camp's buildings to ash, jumps the Agawam River, and burns down homes in

Plymouth, only stopping at White Island Pond to the east of Cachalot. Thankfully, the Scouts and Scouters are evacuated safely, and many of the buildings at Camp survive. More than 800 firefighters and volunteers fight the fire, several of them injured in the process.

Forty-five years later, Cachalot, and the region, has recovered. New buildings have been built to replace the few that were lost. The forest throughout the camp now boasts trees even taller than the ones present when the fire struck. The Cachalot Alumni are dedicating this "anniversary" year of 2009 to preventing another loss: the memories of the fire and of the way that Cachalot recovered from it.

first-hand memories of the fire and the years that followed, so we can record this "living history" for the Cachalot Scouts and Scouters of today and tomorrow. We know that there were over 1,500 people involved directly at the fire itself, either being evacuated or fighting the flames. Were you one of them? Do you know one of them?

If you were there, whether for the fire, fighting the fire, or as a volunteer working on restoration of the camp afterwards, we'd love to hear from you. If you have pictures or newspaper clippings from the fire or the restoration in the years right after, we'd like to see them. If you know someone who was there, let us know about them (or let them know about us!) Please, contact us via email at iwasthere@cachalotalumni.org, or send a letter to our surface mail address (on page 2), and we'll get back to you via telephone or whatever method is convenient for you.

It'd be a shame if we were to lose these valuable memories of what was one of the most significant events in Cachalot's history, so please, help us get the word out. 🐋



We'll be discussing the fire at both our Winter Gathering (see below) and at Homecoming this year (watch the web site and the spring Cachalotter for details). We're also looking for people, Scouts or otherwise, who have

Gathering 2009 Details

January 17th, 2009
11:00AM through 3:00PM

Fall River Heritage State Park
200 Davol Street
Fall River, MA

Free admission for members and non-members (\$5 suggested donation for optional lunch)

Send email to gathering2009@cachalotalumni.org or visit us online at www.cachalotalumni.org for more information.

Winter Gathering Time

Whether or Not You "Were There", Be Here...

On January 17th, 2009, please join us at Fall River Heritage State Park for our fifth annual Winter Gathering of the Camp Cachalot Alumni Association!

This year's Gathering will take us from the beginnings of Cachalot history, up to the big blaze of '64, with a few guest speakers and info from people who really were there for the fire. It's also a great excuse to get together with your fellow alums, just to catch up or to reminisce about your time at camp.

We'll have food and drink on hand for lunch, and the event is free and open to all (although we'd appreciate a small donation of \$5 to help

cover the costs of lunch if you're able). If you are planning to join us for lunch, please drop us a message or visit our web site to RSVP and let us know you'll be coming.

If you're still in touch with any friends from your camp days who aren't already members of the Association, be sure to invite them to come along. All the information for the Gathering can be found in the box over to the left, but if you have any questions, please drop us an email at gathering2009@cachalotalumni.org and we'll do our best to answer them.

See everyone there! 🐋

The Cachaletter

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Cachalot Alumni Association

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.

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Dennis J. Wilkinson, II

Contributors
Peter Ashworth
Michael Brown
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Jeff Dumais

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



2007-2008 Wrap-up

Jeffrey P. Dumais, Association Chairman

Well, here it is, late Fall 2008, and we are in the midst of prime camping season. Another Winter Gathering quickly approaches, and it is time to finalize our Membership retention drives.

First, I'd like to outline a few of our great accomplishments of 2007/2008. During the past year, we have: completed funding of a second \$250 Scholarship; awarded both the Thomas Whelan Chairman's Scholarship and the new Cachalot Alumni Scholarship to current staff members; completed construction of the 4 sections of climbing wall for the Extreme Scouting program area; rolled out our new multi-year memberships (a great success!); and continued to grow our endowment to benefit Camp Cachalot and its programs into the distant future. I'm looking forward to an even more impressive list next year.

I'd like to outline
a few of our great
accomplishments
of 2007/2008.

In my letter to you all last year, I mentioned that membership was probably the most time-consuming and mentally challenging task that faces our Executive Committee. Thanks to our new multi-year options, I can gladly say that, although it will still be a major focus of the Executive Committee, we have already secured 62 memberships through June 2009, 35 memberships through 2010, and 30 into 2011 and beyond.

During the next year, you will see a couple of new things as our focus. Beginning with the Winter Gathering and continuing throughout the year, our theme will be the history of Cachalot with the year 1964, and the major fire that ravaged camp, as its focal point. And with our first major scholarship goals behind us, we will be unveiling in January some ideas for maintenance and program fund-raising needs.

I invite you all to drop me a line and let me know what it is that we can do to make the Association the best it can be. Our commitment to the preservation of Camp Cachalot and the history of its predecessors will ensure many more young men and women can experience its unique magic.

Thanks to all you 'men of faith and courage!' 🐾



Roller-Coaster Ride

Michael Brown, Camp Director

The summer of 2008 was a great summer. I liken it to any good roller-coaster ride, it had its ups and it had its downs, but for the most part everyone enjoyed the ride and wanted to come back for more. As many of you know, I came on as Camp Director from Cub World on the opening day of camp. It took me a little time to figure out the lay of the land, but it was great working at a Boy Scout camp again. This past summer we served over 420 campers from across three councils, and next summer we have an incentive plan in the works to bring even more troops to camp.

I came on as Camp
Director... on the
opening day of camp.

Over the past summer I learned the history and traditions of this great camp. It is one in which you should all be proud of and I am happy to be a part of it now. Thank you for bringing me into the fold and I will do my best to serve Camp Cachalot and to continue its traditions and quality program! 🐾

New Ways to Stay In Touch

Expanded Options for Getting Announcements and Sharing Your Memories

(Allow me to apologize in advance to our readers who don't "speak geek". But if you're an active computer user, or at least know what a "blog" is, read on. – The Editor)

Over the summer, we've added a few ways to make it easier to find out when our web site has new information, and to share your own memories with other Cachalot alums online.

First, we've begun sending out "tweets" using the Twitter service, even for the smaller updates to our web site that we haven't previously announced. Twitter is a "microblogging" service that lets people post very short (140 characters or less) messages that others can subscribe to. If you're a MySpace or a Facebook user, you can check up on Twitter users using applications right from that web site, and if you use an RSS reader you can read tweets like any other feed. To follow our updates on Twitter, you can visit our Twitter update page at:

<http://twitter.com/CachalotAlumni>

Twitter users can just select the "follow" link on that page to get our tweets automatically.

Part of our purpose as an Association is to help enable Cachalot alumni to share their memories of Cachalot with one another. A lot of people have pictures of camp, so we thought that might be a good place to start. We've always had pictures of Cachalot up on the web site, but it hasn't really been possible for us to host everyone's photos--we've tried to focus on historic photos from our archives. This might change in the future, but as of now we've set up a group using the Flickr service, which is a free online photo service. Flickr (part of Yahoo!) is a photo-sharing service that lets people post their own photos, discuss them, and should allow us to show those photos on our web site as well (although I have a little more work to do to make that happen). You'll find our group page on Flickr at:

<http://www.flickr.com/groups/campcachalot/>

There are a few steps to getting an account at Flickr and becoming a member of the Camp Cachalot group (which you need to do to post your own pictures). If you're interested, there's a page on our web site with instructions and frequently asked questions:

<http://www.cachalotalumni.org/about/flickr.php>

Of course, if you're still interested in contributing pictures to our archive but aren't interested in Flickr, we'd love to have them, and we're still more than happy to scan them in for you--drop us a line at curator@cachalotalumni.org. You can also email digital pictures to us at that address.

Our hope is that our archive will continue to collect all the great, old photos of Cachalot, Noquochoke, and older Council events that people have shared with us, along with the new photos the Association is taking, and that the Flickr group will include all those other great shots that are being taken every day, whether it's great landscape shots you've taken or pictures of your most recent Troop outing at Camp.

Finally, we've added official "Camp Cachalot Alumni Association" groups on the social networking website Facebook and on the professional networking website LinkedIn. On Facebook in particular we'll be sending out invites to our events, so that's yet another way to keep up-to-date with what the Association is doing.

<http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=153295>

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=38070857335>

For the groups on Flickr, Facebook, and LinkedIn, keep in mind that we want any Scout who happens across them to find material suitable for Scouts on the group's pages, so we will be keeping an eye on them to that end.

None of these new options are intended to replace our own website or discussion forums at www.cachalotalumni.org, but rather to supplement it. Our website is still the go-to source for the most up-to-date info on the Association, but hopefully these new choices will make it easier for more alums to keep track of what we're doing. 🐸

Upcoming Events and Important Dates

January 17th, 2009
11:00AM through 3:00PM
Winter Gathering 2009
Fall River Heritage State Park
Fall River, MA

May 22nd through May 25th, 2009
Memorial Day Family Camping Weekend
Camp Cachalot, Plymouth, MA

July 11th, 2009
12:00PM through 5:00PM
Alumni Homecoming 2009
Camp Cachalot, Plymouth, MA

September 5th through
September 7th, 2009
Labor Day Family Camping Weekend
Camp Cachalot, Plymouth, MA

Executive Committee and Other e-Mail Contacts

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Family Camping Information
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curator@cachalotalumni.org

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Fun at Cachalot Alumni Summer Activities

The Alumni Association held three summer-time events this year, with our fourth annual Homecoming book-ended with the Memorial Day and Labor Day family camping weekends. We were happy to see a good representation of our members out at camp for all these events, and we hope that everyone who joined us had a good time!

We were once again fortunate to have excellent weather on Memorial Day weekend, with more than 15 alumni families in attendance. While the alumni kids enjoyed the waterfront or played in Tom Cullen Field, some of the adults got together and worked on a few projects around camp. At the maintenance building, several folks built a new awning roof over the old loading dock. Down by the archery range, another group put together the beginnings of a low climbing wall. At night, there was always a campfire to enjoy.

Twenty-seven alums joined us at Cachalot on a bright sunny Saturday in July to hear Larry Harney, Ray Covill, Jr., and Ed Tavares regale us with tales and remembrances of camp's first summer camp season in 1946. We heard a bit more about Roland Deneault, the first camp director; about staff nights off in town; about the camp chef who disappeared in the middle of the season; and some of the mischief that summer camp staffs invariably seem to get in to. We also got it all on videotape, and hope to be able to make pieces of it available on the web site in the future. Afterwards, we got together for some "class photos", grouped by decade.

It was more sun and pleasant weather during Labor Day weekend, and a bit slower pace. Some of our "regulars" were unable to attend, but we had a few new faces there to fill out the pine grove with people. We spent a little time finishing up the climbing wall we had started back in May, then filled the rest of our time with swimming, campfires, hikes, and fishing (not to mention a huge session of frisbee in Tom Cullen field!)

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, so we hope you enjoy the 7,000 words on the adjoining pages from these events. More photos can be found on our web site as well.

We're glad of everyone who came out for these events, and hope that a good time was had by all. More information on Homecoming 2009, slated for July 11th, will appear in the next issue of the *Cachaletter*. Cachalot is open to alumni and their families every Memorial Day and Labor Day weekend, so we hope you'll plan to join us for one or both of those weekends in the new year! 🐸



Above: The 1946 Summer Camp staff (photo courtesy Ray Covill, Jr.)



Above: Chico DeGrace (l) and Duane Houghton working on the new awning roof, Memorial Day weekend.

Below: Sarah Whelan (l) and Kristen Wilkinson roast marshmallows with some alumni kids on Memorial Day weekend.



Cachalot & Massasoit Districts Report

*Diane Cloutier, Massasoit Senior D. E.
Peter Ashworth, Cachalot D. E.*

2008 is turning out to be a banner year for the Cachalot and Massasoit District. Both of the former Moby Dick Districts are showing growth in membership. Massasoit is leading the Council with 43 more youth this year than last and has started 5 new units (Pack, Troop or Crew) for a total of 38 units. Cachalot is showing its first year of membership growth in over 5 years with 14 more youth this year and 3 new units including a second Sea Scout Ship (45 units to date). Cachalot continues to try to reach more kids with the program by starting another 4 units before the end of December. Together these districts boast 1581 Scouts. Massasoit also led the council in the largest dollar amount increase for their popcorn sale! Cachalot could still use some help with theirs.

But what did all these Scouts do? 25 advanced to the rank of Eagle. The Cachalot District awarded the Boy Scout Medal of Merit to a Cub Scout for helping a neighbor who had a fire in their house. The Klondike Derby, attended by both Districts, had over 30 sleds compete this with the Webelos Division returning to this event (THANK YOU to the alumni for manning the hot chocolate station). MASSJAM happened this year with over 130 youth from both districts and believe it or not, it did not rain. Each district ran its own Pinewood Derby with well over 120 Cub Scouts competing. Our partnership with the Buttonwood Park Zoo continues to grow as Cub Scouts and their families attend Pin and Belt Loop days and sleep overnight there. Day Camp, run both at Cachalot and the Fall River Rod and Gun Club, had over 140 Cubs in attendance run entirely by volunteers. Cachalot overnight had 284 Scouts from both Districts. Venturers from around New England took part in a Shooting Sports day sponsored by the local crews at the New Bedford Rod and Gun Club this spring.

Both districts have made great strides in finding leadership on the both the unit and district levels, but could always use more help. Fernando Garcia, of Fall River Ford, has agreed to sign on as the Chairman of the Massasoit District, while Bill M. Whelan, of Whelan Associates, continues to skillfully lead the Cachalot District. Robert Dorgan of Pack and Troop 52 Fairhaven and Jack Staskiewicz, Massasoit District Commissioner, were the recipients of the council's highest award, the Silver Beaver.

Thank you to all the alumni that continue to support the local Scouting program by giving of their time and/or FOS dollars to keep the tradition alive. 2010 will be the Boy Scout's of America's Centennial year, and both the Cachalot and Massasoit Districts are poised to enter the next 100 years strong. 🐻



Above: Larry Harney (l) tells some camp stories from 1946, while Ray Covill watches on. (photo courtesy John Woolley)



Above: Alumni kids make Chinese lanterns at Labor Day Weekend.



Above: Working on the climbing wall, Labor Day Weekend

Below: Brian Bastarache (l) and Dave Goldrick tossing a frisbee with some alumni kids, Labor Day Weekend.



A Brief History Of...


A Little Peek Behind the Scenes

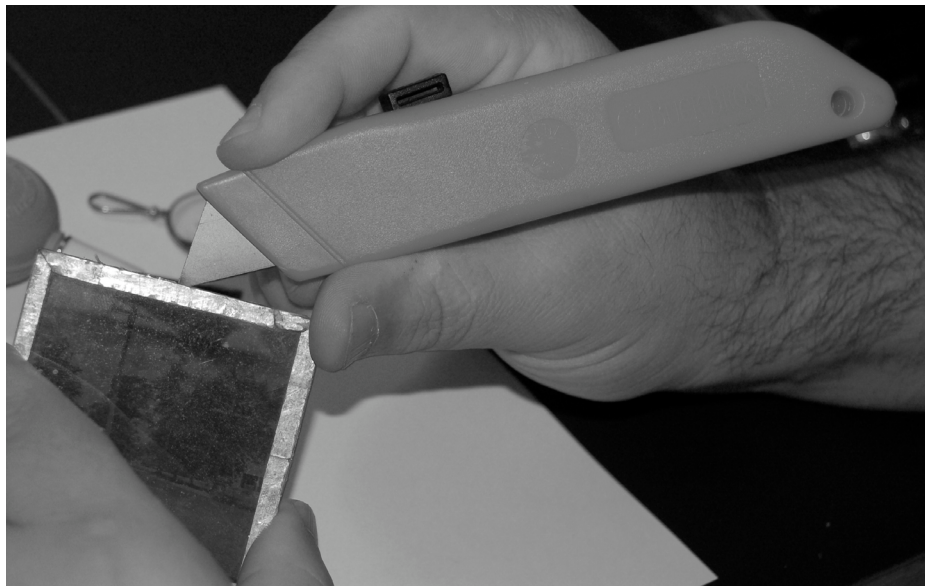
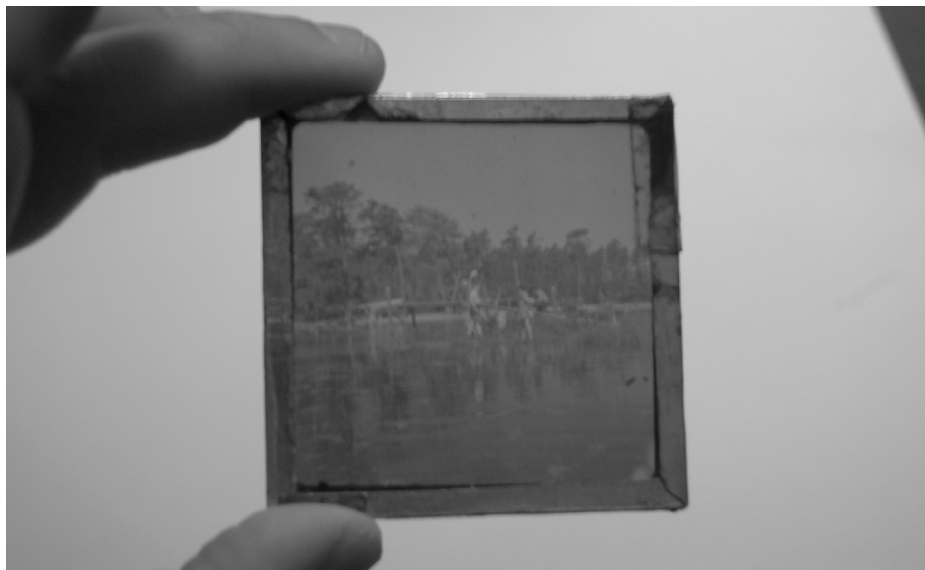
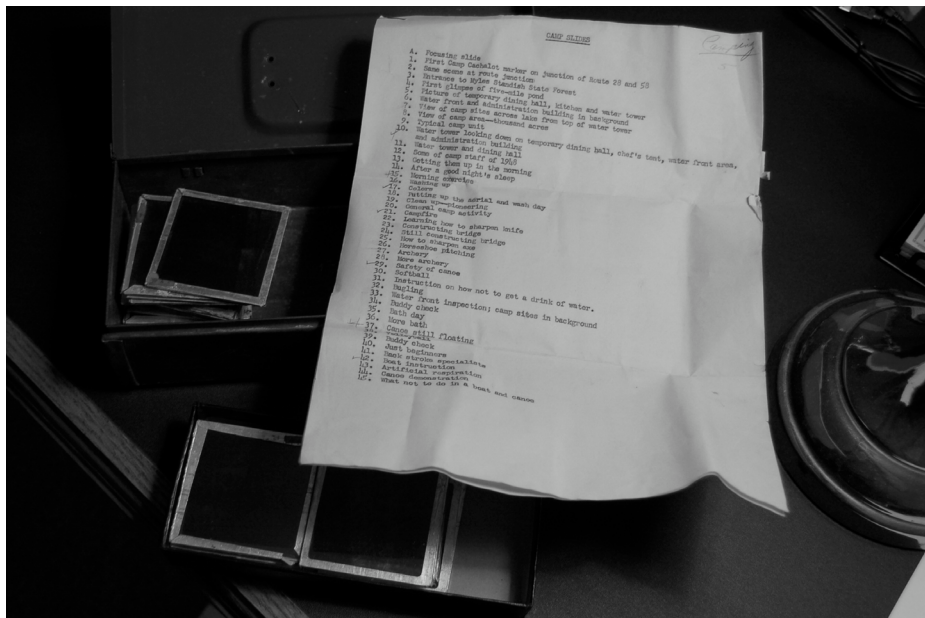
One of the things our History Committee has spent a lot of time doing is scanning photos to be preserved, and later doing work to restore the images and clean up scratches and other defects. Just scanning the photos can be a lot of work, as some of the photos are quite old, and in some cases very delicate. We thought that it'd be interesting to show you some of the work that goes into the pictures we're archiving, in this case a batch of slides salvaged from the old Moby Dick Council offices in New Bedford containing most of the 1948 Summer Camp promotions pictures.

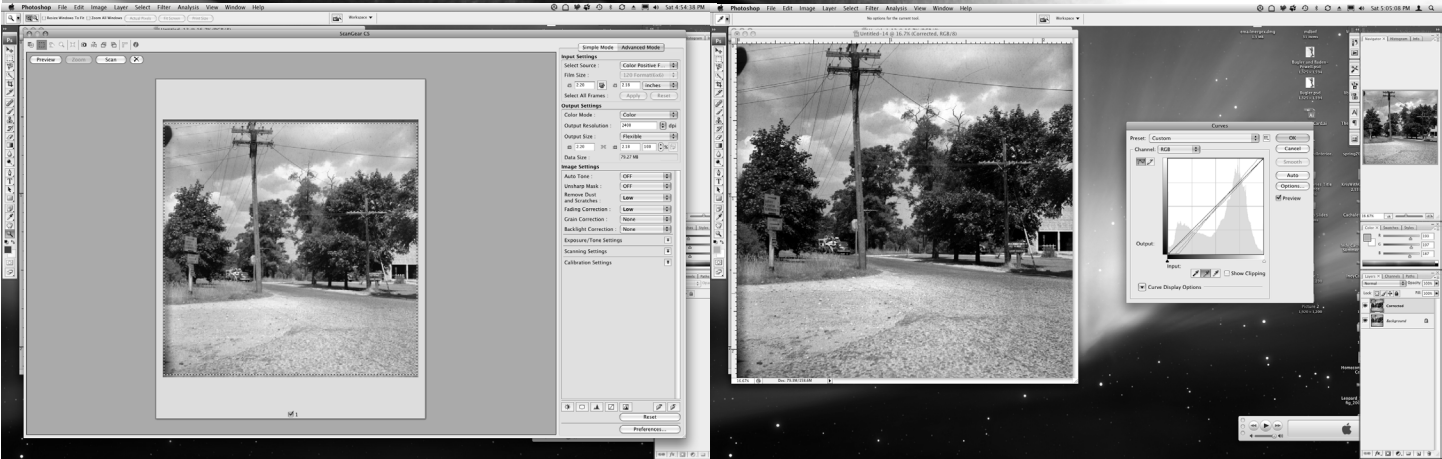
We received the slides in a metal box along with the original, hand-typed sheet describing each shot (see the picture on the right.) These slides are old "120 format" slides, the same medium-sized format shot by the Kodak Brownie camera. They are roughly 2.75" square pieces of slide film sandwiched between two thin pieces of glass, taped all around the outside with a foil tape. Each slide had a small piece of red tape affixed to it with a hand-written number. The glass was dirty, scratched, and in some cases broken, and the numbers were difficult to read, but the mounts had done their job: aside from fading, the glass had taken the brunt of the damage over the years and the slide film itself was in pretty good condition. An example of what the slides looked like can be seen in the photo to the right.

Because the mounts were in such poor condition, and also because 120 format adapters for slide scanners are outside our budget, we decided to un-mount the slides in order to scan them. This would also give us the opportunity to examine the film itself for damage and do some minor cleaning before scanning them. This involves very carefully cutting the foil tape with a sharp utility knife where the two pieces of slide glass come together, carefully extracting the film, and then cleaning the surface by blowing air on it and possibly lightly brushing the side of the film without the film emulsion on it to clean off any deposits.

Once cleaned, the film is mounted on the film carrier for the film scanner (top photo, opposite), scanned and roughly color-corrected to help reduce the effect of fading (middle photos, opposite), then stored in non-reactive mylar sleeves to await new glass mounts (bottom photo, opposite). Any photo restoration happens to a copy of the digital source we scanned in. Scanning alone takes 15-20 minutes per slide, and restoration several hours per slide.

While we haven't finished restoring all of these slides, we've done some clean-up, and those images can be found on our web site in the "1948 Summer Camp Photos" gallery. Check them out at www.cachalotalumni.org/ 





Staff Scholarship Winners

Two Staffers Receive Awards this Summer

This summer, for the fourth time, the Association presented a scholarship to a member of Cachalot's summer camp staff.

For the first time, we presented a *second* scholarship.

The winner of the \$500 "Thomas P. Whelan Chairman's Scholarship" is Paul M. Kelly, Jr., of Carver, Massachusetts. Paul is a member of Troop 48 in Carver, and a recent graduate of Sacred Heart High School in Kingston. He is in

his freshman year at Rensselaer Polytechnic University in Troy, New York. The 2008 summer camp season was Paul's fifth season as a member of Camp Cachalot's staff, and he's progressed rapidly from a counselor-in-training to serving as the Nature Director.

The \$250 Cachalot Alumni Staff Scholarship was presented to Zachary M. Card, also of Carver and also a member of Troop 48. A June 2008 graduate of Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical High School, he is a

freshman at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. He was the Archery Director for the 2008 summer camp season, his fifth year on staff.

Both of these young men have served as excellent examples and role models to the Scouts attending Cachalot in their time on staff, and the Association extends it's congratulations to Paul, Zach, and their parents. 🐟



Camp Cachalot Alumni Association

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