

Spring and Summer 2021



The Cachalotter

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

Celebrating 75 Years of
CACHALOT
Established 1946

Diamond Jubilee Events • A Brief History of Cachalot

The Cachaletter

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Camp 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.

Editor

Dennis J. Wilkinson, II

Contributors

Brian Bastarache

Daryl Sylvia

On the cover: Cachalot turns 75 this year! Check out the images from throughout Cachalot's history peeking out through the letters. The background is the boathouse as seen from the air.

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:

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



Happy Anniversary!

Brian Bastarache, Association Chairman

Happy anniversary! We are in the middle of Cachalot's 75th year and what a year it has been.

Of course, no institution lasts for three-quarters of a century without changing. Cachalot has certainly changed. Many of the changes of the last five or six years have not been our favorite. Many of our least favorite changes have been associated with the decline of the Boy Scouts of America itself. Membership in the BSA has dropped since its high point in the 1970s. Efforts to address the decline were too few and ineffective.

Unsurprisingly, the essentially ignored problem grew over the decades until the 600-pound gorilla was a full-fledged member of the executive board.

Enter COVID-19. No one can blame the youth that dropped out of the program during the pandemic as Scouting had to move to virtual meetings and activities. Most of us are now sick of "Zoom meetings" and so were the Scouts after months of virtual school. The already anemic BSA membership dropped by 43% in 2020.

Like most facilities, Cachalot was shut down during the height of the pandemic, and camps in Massachusetts remained closed to overnight use for longer than in some other parts of the country. However, units quickly took advantage of the eventual day-use opening and the subsequent outdoor overnight use opening. Now Scouts are hiking, paddling, and swimming at Cachalot every weekend again. Fire Explorer Post 774 of Westport recently held a unique and successful program at Cachalot and hopes to grow this event in the future. We are tremendously grateful to Post 774 and all of the units that returned to Cachalot during the reopening. This is one of the best things that can be done for Cachalot. The 2021 Cachalot Homecoming and Diamond Jubilee Celebration and the very popular Highland Games are both scheduled for September. You can find more information on the Homecoming event right in this very issue.

These events are great. They are encouraging but make no mistake that the current state of the BSA and its decades of mismanagement likely mean that Cachalot's hardest times are ahead. Stay vigilant. Stay dedicated. I hope to see you all in September because no matter what, we will always be Cachalot. 🐼

**... no institution
lasts for three-
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Thrive for Seventy-Five!

Daryl Sylvia, Membership Chairman

As we move along the new year we all hope for a better season with lots of camping at our Scout camp. One way we all can help to continue with our traditions, is to do two things: the first is to make a donation to the Alumni Endowment if you feel you can. Our Endowment fund creates income annually that can be used to improve the property and buildings at camp. The second thing you can do is to talk up being a member of the Alumni Association and help us build our membership.

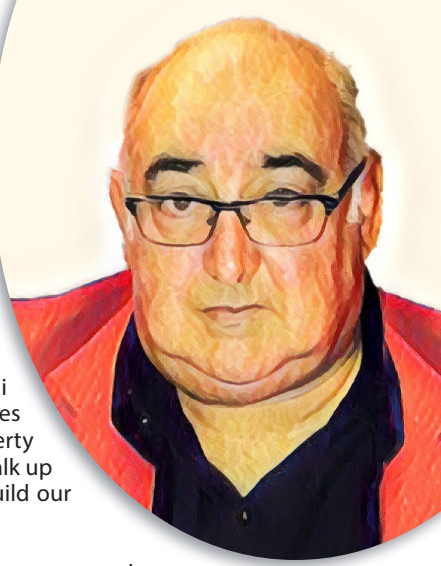
This year we are celebrating the 75th year anniversary of our camp, and we have been working very hard to create events that everyone in the Narragansett Council can enjoy.

The membership committee will of course be participating with a Program called **Thrive for Seventy-Five**. This program has a goal to recruit at least seventy five new Alumni Association members before the end of the year. We hope that every member will talk to their Scouting friends, camping buddies from the past, and the Scouts and Scouters in your Troops, Crews, Packs, and Posts, and ask them to join the Alumni Association. The more members we have, the more projects can be completed at Cachalot.

We have a tremendous number of dedicated volunteers that spend a lot of their time working to improve camp and we all thank them, but there is no such thing as too many volunteers. If anyone would like to help, either on projects at Cachalot or on Association committees, please let someone from the Executive Committee know. You can find my contact email on the right, or you can reach out through the Alumni website at cachalotalumni.org or in our Facebook group.

Many take membership for granted but the fact of the matter is that membership is the lifeline of any organization. Without members we cannot function, we would not have funds, we would lack leadership, and we would not have enough volunteers to achieve progress. The membership committee believes that it's everyone's job to spread the word and help bring in new members.

We all hope to see you on Sept 18th, 2021 at our 75th anniversary Homecoming event and Wall of Fame induction. The Membership committee will be there to help you sign up new members and to renew your membership. Remember we are striving for 75 new members this year. We are also looking for a few more members who can think out of the box to join our committee. If you are interested please drop me an e mail and I will get back to you with more information. This is a sub-committee and we only meet on Zoom every other month or six times a year. 🐟



2021-2022 Cachalot Alumni Events

It is still possible that the ongoing public health situation with COVID-19 could impact out events.

Should any changes be necessary, they will be announced on our web site at www.cachalotalumni.org and on social media including our Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter feeds.

September 3rd through 6th, 2021
Labor Day
Family Camping Weekend
Cachalot Scout Reservation
Plymouth, MA

September 18th, 2021 11:00AM - sunset
Homecoming 2021
Cachalot Scout Reservation
Plymouth, MA

February 26th, 2022 11:00AM - 3:00PM
Winter Gathering
Holy Name of the
Sacred Heart Parish Hall
121 Mount Pleasant Street
New Bedford, MA

Executive Committee and Other e-Mail Contacts

Brian A. Bastarache
Association Chairman
chairman@cachalotalumni.org

Timothy A. Connick
Vice-Chairman
vicechairman@cachalotalumni.org

Richard F. Partridge
Treasurer
treasurer@cachalotalumni.org

William Begin
Secretary
secretary@cachalotalumni.org

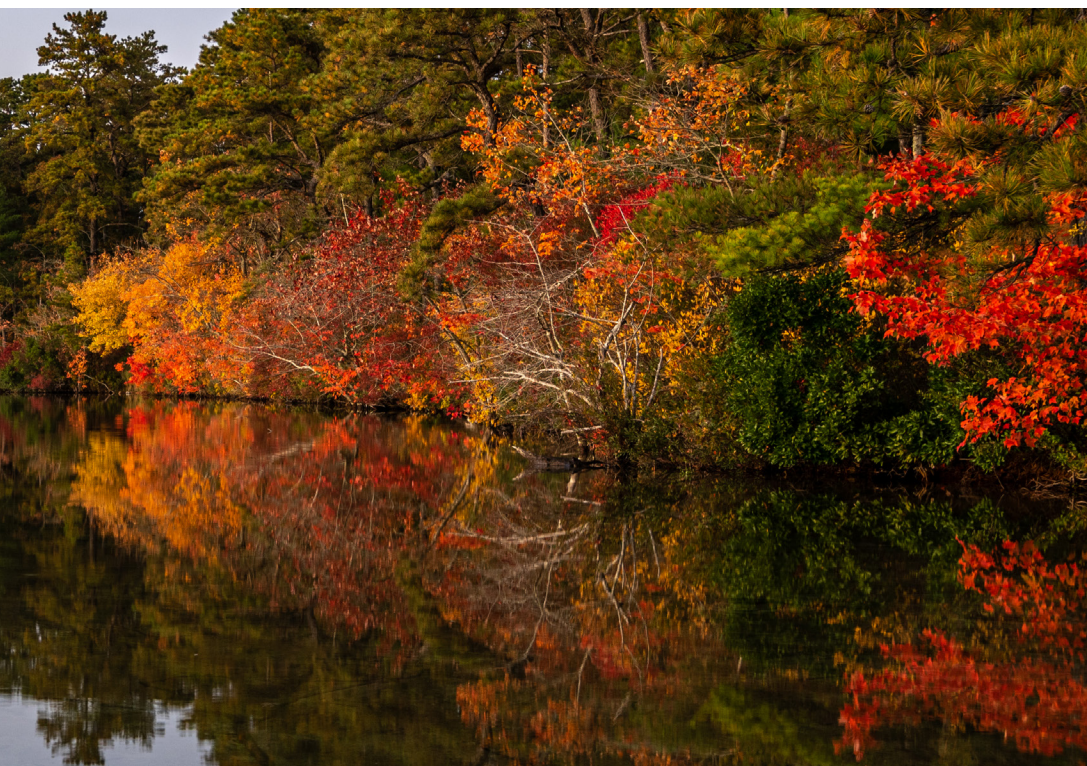
Victor Sylvia
Immediate Past Chairman
pastchairman@cachalotalumni.org

Daryl Sylvia
Membership Chairman
membershipchair@cachalotalumni.org

Fred Barreiros
Projects Chairman
projects@cachalotalumni.org

Dennis J. Wilkinson, II
Communications Chairman
webmaestro@cachalotalumni.org

Other Inquiries
info@cachalotalumni.org



We're Celebrating 75 Years of C

Join Us at Cachalot As We Induct Our 2020 and 2021 Cachalot Wall

CAMP CACHALOT DIAMOND JUBILEE 75th ANNIVERSARY



On September 18th, 2021 we will be hosting a Homecoming event like no other Homecoming event so far: Cachalot is turning 75, and we're pulling out all the stops to celebrate!

Arrivals begin at 11:00AM, and we'll get started over at the Noquchoke Lodge Pavilion by Tom Cullen Field for a cookout lunch with your fellow alumni. You'll have plenty of time to catch up with old camp friends, or maybe introduce yourself to some new ones, and check out camp memorabilia and some of the Association's photo and video archives under the pavilion. Lunch will begin at noon.

After you've had some food, we'll get started on the day's events. We'll begin with a brief meeting of the Association, as with the events of 2020 it has been well over a year and a half since our last meeting at Winter Gathering 2020. We'll talk a bit about the state of the Association, update you on recent goings-on at Cachalot, and give you a look at the projects we have planned at camp and the events still to come in our Diamond Jubilee year, which we won't wrap up until March of 2022.

We'll then relocate over to the Bill Joyce Memorial Flag field for our Wall of Fame induction. We're playing catch-up here: with no Homecoming last year, we will first induct 2020's honoree, Marcel Hudon. Marcel's many contributions were described in last spring's issue of *The Cachalotter*, but to refresh your memories, Marcel was considered a true inspiration to Scouters of all ages. He was always willing to help out in any capacity served in the leadership of multiple area units over several decades, on Roundtable Staff, Wood Badge Staff, and the Training Committee, and at Cachalot as a Camp Commissioner. He was a long-time adviser to the Neemat Lodge Order

of the Arrow, often helping out in the kitchen at lodge events. At camporees and other events he was often seen with his frequent partner-in-crime, Wall-of-Famer Al Hall, helping teach

2021 Homecoming, W and Diamond Jub

Cachalot Scout Reserv
September 18th, 2021

Alumni Meeting

Wall of Fame Induction

Lunch (\$ donation suggested)

Camp History Tours

Association, Camp, and 75th
Anniversary Merchandise Available

For more information, or to regist



Scouts at camp how to build a hobo stove, manage a bean pit, or care for cast iron cookware. He is being recognized for his service and program contributions.

Our 2021 honoree is Association Communications Chairman Dennis J. Wilkinson, II, who is at least a little embarrassed to be the editor of a newsletter in which he is being recognized. His contributions are detailed below.

After celebrating our Wall of Fame honorees,

Dennis J. Wilkinson, II - Our 2021 Wall of Fame Honoree

Dennis first came to Cachalot as a member of Pack 12 New Bedford in the fall of 1978. He spent his youth in Pack 12, Troop 12, and Troop 46 New Bedford where he achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. While a youth he served two terms as Lodge Chief of Neemat Lodge, after holding several other positions in the lodge. He co-chaired the first Spring Into Scouting event held at Cachalot, and went on to serve on its staff for several years.

He first served as an adult as an Assistant Scoutmaster with Troop 46, going on to serve as Scoutmaster, Committee Chairman, and Committee Member with Troop 46, then as a Committee Member with Troop 1 New Bedford and Troop and Crew 24 New Bedford.

Dennis served on the Camp Cachalot Summer Camp Staff and Cub Day Camp Staff in various leadership roles, including serving as the summer camp Program Director in 1991. He served on

the staff of the National Jamboree in 1989 and attended Philmont Scout Ranch in 1984. He also served a brief stint as temporary Camp Ranger.

Dennis has served on the Moby Dick Council Camping and Properties Committee. He is a member of the Camp Cachalot Campmaster Corps since its inception, and has served on staffs of numerous events.

While a youth he helped produce two *Camp Cachalot Songbooks* that are still in use today. After completing college, along with fellow Eagle Scouts and Troop 46ers Peter Ashworth and Thomas Whelan, Dennis hiked the entire Appalachian Trail.

Although Dennis has contributed to Camp Cachalot serving on numerous Order of the Arrow service weekends, Beaver Days, and Alumni Service projects, his greatest contribution has come through our Alumni Association.

His tireless dedication to preserving history, traditions, and communications have inspired countless individuals to contribute to our archives and assist our Association's efforts in maintaining Cachalot for future generations. He is a founding member, and the first Lifetime member of the Association. He designed the Association's logo, has served as the Association's Secretary and Vice-Chairman, works with the Council Office to keep our membership database up-to-date and has filled the role of Communications Chairman since the beginning of the Association. He's the primary author and editor of *The Cachalotter*, and designs, writes, and produces nearly all of the printed material that comes from the Association, along with many of our merchandise items. He also maintains the Association's presence on the web and on social media.

Dennis is often spotted with his cameras around camp, capturing images and video of Association and camp events to share with the Cachalot

Cachalot at Homecoming 2021

of Fame Honorees and Celebrate Cachalot's Diamond Jubilee Year

we will shift to celebrating Cachalot itself! The program for the celebration is still being developed, but is sure to include lots of stories and memories from seventy-five years of spring,

all of Fame Induction Jubilee Celebration

Location • Plymouth, MA
• 11:00AM until Sunset



Free to Members,
Scouts, Scouters,
and interested members
of the public

A fun afternoon at Cachalot
catching up with old friends

Questions? Contact us at
homecoming@cachalotalumni.org

er, visit cachalotalumni.org/75th

summer, fall, and winter activities at Cachalot.

We also plan to offer historic tours of Cachalot, to give you the opportunity to see those places you remember from your time at camp (or, if you haven't been out in a while, to see what has changed at Cachalot since your last visit.)

Once we wrap up our formal program and our tours, Cachalot will remain open long enough for you to take in sunset over Five Mile Pond, and continue your conversations with other alumni.

family. He also does video production for our events. For the last 5 years he has turned many of those photos into a Cachalot calendar which he sells and donates both printing costs and proceeds to the Association. He also donates the proceeds of sales of his camp photographs to the Association.

When Dennis is not busy doing everything already described, he somehow finds time to be the main Archivist and Historian for the Association. He researches and documents the histories of Camps Cachalot, Noquochoke, and local Scouting in general, and has published dozens of articles on that history, spending many, many hours researching newspapers, magazines, and book archives both online and at libraries on microfilm.

He has scanned thousands of historic photos and documents, photographed memorabilia, and digitized or donated the cost of film trans-

To commemorate Cachalot's Diamond Jubilee, we've produced a number of collectible items that will be available, along with our usual Association t-shirts and decals, at our Homecoming Event. Some of these items may be pre-ordered.

The first item of note is our Diamond Jubilee logo patch. There are two variants of this patch: a limited edition of 75 patches, and the normal version of the patch. The limited edition adds an embroidered "75", metallic thread for the border, and comes with a numbered certificate. The normal edition of the patch is pictured on the left. Limited edition patches will be available for \$35 each, first-come, first-served; the normal edition will be \$10, but if you'd like to make it a set, you can purchase both for \$40.

This same logo will be available on both a polo shirt (\$30) and on hats (\$20) via preorder; visit our web site at cachalotalumni.org/75th for more details. There may be limited inventory of these available at the event, but that's not guaranteed.

Our final item is a 90+ page 11"x8.5" "75 Years of Camp Cachalot" photo book, with hundreds of photos carefully selected from the Association's collections by our archivist, covering Cachalot's history from 1946 until today. These will be

initially available at Homecoming itself. We don't yet have a price set for these, but will make an announcement via our social media channels and our Spouter Diamond Jubilee e-Newsletter, as soon as we know what the price will be. You can subscribe to the Spouter at the web site listed above.



We've been looking forward to this celebration since we kicked off our Diamond Jubilee year with the premiere of our "Brief History of Cachalot" video on March 28th, Cachalot's birthday. We hope that you'll not only join us for the day, but that you'll reach out to your old camp buddies and get them out to camp to join us as well! The more, the merrier!

See you at Cachalot in September! 🐸

fers, video and film for the Association's archive, which currently stands at over 8,000 photos, over 1,000 documents, and more than 40 hours of video.

He has helped provide archival material for the OA's history project celebrating the Order of the Arrow's 100th Anniversary, along with providing archival material for Mike Vieira's History of Noquochoke book.

Since the Association's founding in 2004, Dennis continues to pay for much of what he does, often not seeking reimbursement from the Association, and those contributions well exceed \$10,000 over that time frame.

For all of Dennis' service and financial contributions, our membership has seen fit to elect Dennis to a spot on the Camp Cachalot Wall of Fame. 🐸



A Brief History of Cachalot

With 2021 being Cachalot's Diamond Jubilee year, how could we run a "Brief History" article that wasn't the history of the place itself?

Much of this material has been available on our web site in the past, but since it was first published we've spent a lot more time adding new documents to the Association's historical archive, which has helped answer questions we weren't able to answer before, and added additional details to the story. It is time for an update.

So, as part of the commemorative issue you hold in your hands, we present this updated "Brief History of Cachalot."

It begins with the name. Cachalot.

On May 13th, 1935, to comply with new rules of incorporation for Boy Scout councils in Massachusetts, the New Bedford Council changed its name to the Cachalot Council. The name Cachalot is derived from the French and Portuguese words for sperm whale (and literally translates as "big head"). It was proposed by Joe Allen, a columnist for the [Martha's] Vineyard Gazette, in January of 1933 to honor the history of whaling in New Bedford. At the time, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket were a part of the Cachalot Council (they would become part of the Cape Cod Council in 1949.)

The Cachalot Council did own a camp, a small property at the intersection of Rock o' Dundee and Potomska Roads in South Dartmouth, alternately referred to in documents from the time as either Camp Warren or Camp Rock o' Dundee. This camp, which opened in 1920, enjoyed a healthy rivalry with neighboring Camp Noquochoke, which had opened the following year. Scouts attending summer camp would often embark on the 9 mile hike between the two camps to engage in sporting and skills competitions, camp overnight, or to share a meal. After 17 years Camp Warren was showing its shortcomings: it was too small and lacked access to water sources, so boating and swimming were unavailable to campers, and the council sought out other facilities for summer camp for its Scouts. It would eventually be sold in 1953.

For a short time, from 1937 through 1942, the council shared the summer camp facilities of the Fall River Council at Camp Noquochoke, but this was deemed "not satisfactory for many reasons." In 1943, largely because its director was overseas serving in the Second World War, the local Boys Club Camp Maxim was available, and the Cachalot Council operated its summer camp there under the supervision of new Scout Executive Tom Cullen. Cullen passed away unexpectedly in late 1944. His successor, Richard Molby, was in charge in 1945. After the summer of 1945 the Boys Club camp director returned from the military, and the Boys Club resumed their use of the camp. This again set the Cachalot Council searching for a summer camp after only 3 summers at Camp Maxim.

A search committee, including Ray Covill, Raph Mutterperl, Joseph Novick, and Francis Quinn looked at several properties, including one that would eventually go on to serve as the third (and current) site of Camp Squanto. Acting on a tip from Myles Standish State Forest supervisor Daniel Potter, they found a large tract of land at the southeastern corner of the state forest, including several pristine ponds, owned by the "Five Mile Corporation." This group was led by Theodore Steinway of Steinway Piano fame. Steinway was initially reluctant to sell, but did not want the property to go to a developer. After some negotiation, he finally consented to sell the property to the council for \$12,000, claimed to be the same price he had paid for the property in 1932 at the height of the Great Depression.

The deed was signed over on March 28th, 1946, and preparations commenced shortly after to acquire equipment and supplies in order to open the new Cachalot Council Camp for its first summer camp season.

The Summer of 1946

The first Scouts to camp at Cachalot were the Senior Scout outfit out of New Bedford, a group made up of Explorers, Sea Scouts, and Air Scouts. They set out only a few weeks before the first summer camp season would open. These Scouts, including future Wall-of-Famer Ed Tavares, hiked in to Cachalot to camp on a property that had only a small clearing by the waterfront and a single well point. Several members of this group, including Ed, would return to Cachalot just a few weeks later as part of its young summer camp staff, under the leadership of first Camp Director Roland Deneault. They'd arrive packed with the camp equipment in a military surplus truck, to get things ready for the soon-to-arrive campers.

This first summer ran differently from how we think of summer camp today. Troops didn't attend together—rather, Scouts attended on their own, formed into Troops at camp led by members of the staff. Half of the day was Scoutcraft skills, the other spent working on the property, all for the low price of \$5 per week, although the council wouldn't turn anyone away that couldn't afford the fee.



The Early Years

During its first few years of operation, Cachalot saw a flurry of activity: moving or constructing buildings, and otherwise preparing the property for use as a year-round Boy Scout camping facility. The 21 Club was moved to Cachalot from its original site by Drift Road in Westport in 1946, and one of its earliest uses in camp was as the trading post. An administration building (the current Phillips House) and a Quonset hut for maintenance and storage were constructed, along with an open waterfront tower (in 1950) and swimming docks.

The first large building to open in Camp was the Dining Hall, which was completed and first used during summer camp in 1951. Prior to the construction of a permanent dining hall, meals were prepared and served under a large military hospital tent with a floor platform sitting on the same site as the Dining Hall (early camp reports mention having to coat the wooden floor with creosote at the start of each season!) The Dining Hall at this point was a simpler structure, and consisted only of most of what is now the dining room. The kitchen occupied the end of the building nearest to what is now the parking area.

The summer camp reports that still exist from the late '40s and early '50s clearly show a summer camp "getting its sea legs"—figuring out what kind of a staff needs to be hired, what programs to run, even what foods to prepare. Despite that, the program served hundreds of boys from the area each summer. Scouts camped either in one of the Nob Hill sites to the south of Five Mile Pond (by the dining hall) or in Sleepy Hollow across the pond to the north.



Some activities would be familiar even today. Cachalot got its reputation as a camp where people sing in the very early days. Out-of-camp trips like canoeing down the Agawam or Weweantic Rivers were common. Those canoe trips were often quite long, continuing down the coast as far as New Bedford. Boys would spend part of their days learning Scouting skills, competing in different games and contests, and the waterfront was extremely popular.

Active construction at Camp continued into the early 1960s. An outpost shelter was built at Abner Pond; a fireplace was added to the 21 Club; the "Tom Cullen Memorial Archway" was erected, all in the early 50s; and a Cook's Cabin, the old show-erhouse, a rifle range, and the Boat House were all built in 1960. In 1961, the dining hall became "Prescott Hall," which had been the name of the the dining hall at the old Camp Rock o' Dundee. The name was in honor of Oliver Prescott, Jr., one



of the early influential board members of the New Bedford-Fairhaven Council. The plaque from that original hall in Dartmouth was mounted in the building at Cachalot.

The last bit of planned construction for the early 1960s was for a new Trading Post, the foundation of which was completed in early May of 1964, with framing to commence on May 22nd. Unfortunately, fate had something else in mind for that weekend.

Fire!

That date was also the start of the spring Camp-o-ree, one whose attendees ended up being witness to one of the most significant events in Cachalot's history.

The majority of Camp Cachalot lies in what is known as an Atlantic pine-oak barren (the largest example of which is the 1.1 million acre New Jersey Pine Barrens.) These types of forests consist of predominantly sandy soils populated by pitch pine and scrub oak, both of which are fire-adapted species. Fire is an essential occurrence in this type of forest, clearing away dead wood and placing nutrients back into the soil. As with other pine-oak barrens, Pine barrens like Cachalot experience relatively frequent forest fires of various sizes, usually when the growth gets denser and the load of ready-to-burn fuel accumulates. This history of fire accounts for all the soot and ash mixed in with the sand that invariably stains one's ankles after walking through Camp. A very large fire had burned through parts of Myles Standish State Forest, missing Cachalot to the north, in 1957.

During that spring Camp-o-ree a fire swept into Cachalot from the adjoining Myles Standish State Forest, burning through Cachalot, eventually threatening homes in Plymouth and Wareham, and stopping only when it reached White Island Pond to the east, on May 24th, 1964. This fire wasn't a part of the natural cycle of fire at all: the New Bedford *Standard-Times* later reported that the fire was the work of an arsonist who had set

no fewer than 63 separate blazes! Most of these were lit by improvised incendiary devices made by affixing a lit cigarette to a pack of matches secured to rocks with tape and thrown into the forest. This conflagration burned hot, and fast: at its peak, the fire consumed 11 acres *per minute*.

Over 700 Scouts and Scouters were evacuated from Cachalot. Fortunately there were no significant injuries at Camp, but many units had to abandon their gear to the fire as they escaped. The path of the fire caused it to split around Five Mile Pond, which was a bit of luck, as it allowed most of the major buildings on the property to be defended from the flames. Outer structures could not be protected in the same way, and many were destroyed, including the Quonset Hut (which exploded when the gasoline stored inside ignited), a commissary building, the original Cook's Cabin, and the outpost shelter at Abner's Pond, along with all of the tent site latrines. In all, 5,500 acres of forest, including most of Cachalot, were consumed by the blaze. The monetary damage was substantial as well: an estimated \$500,000 in total, \$25,000 of which was to camp. In 2021 dollars, it would be nearly nine times those amounts.

Restoration

The damage at Cachalot was severe enough that the council board briefly considered abandoning the property altogether. Thankfully, they reconsidered nearly as quickly, and a plan to restore the property was put together. However, the plan involved Cachalot remaining closed for two years while cleanup and some reconstruction took place. That left a pressing issue—how could summer camp, scheduled to begin in just over a month, be held at all?

The solution to that issue presented itself when Carl Ritchie, then Scout Executive of the Squanto Council, and Bob Patrick, then Scout Executive of the Cachalot Council, agreed to cooperate by having many troops from Cachalot attend summer camp at neighboring Camp Squanto. At the same time, an outpost camp would be



operated at Cachalot for interested troops. This arrangement continued through the summer of 1965, with Cachalot's own Sumner Morse running the joint program in its second year. There would still be program at Cachalot, too: Fred Prefontaine would work with older Scouts and volunteers to clean up the camp, with Scouts from the joint program at "Squachalot" often hiking over to participate.

With the "Reopen the Door to Adventure" campaign successfully raising \$75,000 to restore the property, the damaged buildings at camp were replaced. A new Cooks Cabin, new Maintenance Building, and staff duplex housing were built, the planned Trading Post constructed, and Prescott Hall underwent a major expansion, adding a brand-new kitchen area and expanded seating. The aging waterfront tower was also replaced by the Andrew Jackson Waterfront Tower, named for a Portuguese whaler who had adopted the former president's name when he emigrated to New Bedford, thanks to a donation from his family.

In 1966, the summer camp program at Cachalot resumed full operation. Campers were greeted not only with new buildings, but by wide-open expanses, with only low brush and seedling trees over much of what had been pine forest. Despite the changes to the view, 450 to 500 Scouts each summer returned to Cachalot for a week or more of fun. They had to learn new camp-site names: Nob Hill and Sleepy Hollow were no more, replaced by sites named for local waterways in the former Nob Hill area or for Scouting's founders in what had been Sleepy Hollow.

In late May of 1967, in an effort to emphasize that Cachalot was more than just a summer camp and that it was in fact a year-round training center for the Council, it was suggested by Kenneth Liberty, then the Scout Executive, to change the name of the property. The new name, recommended by the Camping and Properties Committee, and approved by the Executive Board, would be "Cachalot Council Scout Reservation." The concern was that many potential donors would

be more willing to give to a year round reservation than to something that operated only during the summer months, and the new name reflected the actual use of the property.

1968 saw the construction and dedication of the Raymond F. Covill Memorial Chapel, 1969 the construction of the Ranger's Residence. Armand Guilmette, a long-time volunteer, began his tenure as Cachalot's first full-time, resident ranger. This was followed by another flurry of activity in the early 1970s which saw the 21 Club winterized with funding from the *Standard-Times*, and the completion of Bob Fugere's pet project, the Adirondack shelters. The first Council Ring on the current site was also established at this time, through the efforts of the Agawam Lodge.

In order to control the water rights and right-of-way to Five Mile Pond, the cranberry bogs at the southern end of Camp were purchased from their previous owner, Richard Arne Johnson of South Carver, in 1971. This added another 40 acres to the property, and extended its footprint into the town of Wareham.

Mergers and Acquisitions

The 1970s were difficult years for the Boy Scouts of America. Over the span of the decade, Scouting nationwide lost over 30 percent of its membership, and the losses were even worse than that in the southeastern Massachusetts area.

This decline in membership helped push for the consolidation of smaller councils nationwide. In 1971, largely for financial reasons, the National Council recommended a merger of the Fall River-centered Massasoit Council with the New Bedford-based Cachalot Council. After initial reluctance (and a decline of the merger) from the Massasoit Council, the two councils' Executive Boards approved a merger late in the year, forming the new Moby Dick Council in 1972. This new council would serve youth from Tiverton, RI and Somerset in the west to Wareham in the east. This was not a complete solution to the

financial issues, as the new Council was still faced with a \$12,000 deficit left over from the Massasoit Council at its formation.

Members of the National Council's Engineering Division visited Cachalot in 1973, for the purpose of drawing up a long-range plan for developing the property. While most of the suggestions from this plan were never acted upon, given the Council's financial condition, had it been implemented Cachalot would be a significantly different facility today.

The council continued to operate summer camps at both Camp Noquochoke in Westport and at Cachalot in 1972, attempting to share staff across both facilities. This attempt was seen as unsuccessful, and that year would mark the last season of Boy Scout summer camp at Camp Noquochoke. From 1973 through 1977, Camp Noquochoke would host only Cub Scout activities during the summer months. Attendance continued to decline at both facilities, and, in the fall of 1977, after a failed fundraising campaign left the Council with a substantial deficit, the Executive Board made the decision by nearly a 2-to-1 margin to sell the Camp Cachalot property.

This decision didn't sit well with many volunteers, and the then-Lodge Chief of Neemat Lodge, Brian Nobrega, who had a seat on the Executive Board by virtue of his position in the Lodge, got together with many other volunteers to both oppose the sale and to present an alternative to the Board. This new "Save Our Camps" committee acted swiftly to develop an alternative plan — emotions on both sides of the issue were running very high, with volunteers even picketing the Council's offices in New Bedford in protest.



In December of 1977, the "Save Our Camps" committee's plan to address the deficit and prevent the sale of Cachalot was presented to the Board by Brian Nobrega and the committee's chief supporter on the Board, local attorney Alan Novick. This plan included a number of options to address the deficit, running the gamut from promises of funding to the sale of gravel from Cachalot. At this December session the Executive Board voted to postpone any talk of selling Cachalot until at least their June meeting the following year. A representative of the National Council was brought in to work with a locally organized task force to consider all the possible options, including evaluating both Council-owned camps.

Ultimately, the "Save Our Camps" campaign was able to prevent the sale of Camp Cachalot, but unfortunately, as the Council was still lacking funds, at the recommendation of the task force, the Executive Board unanimously decided to sell off the smaller Noquochoke facility. This decision was certainly no more popular than the proposed sale of Cachalot had been, but attempts to block the sale were thwarted, and Noquochoke ceased all but occasional weekend operations in 1978

and was sold by 1980. The money raised by selling Noquochoke paid the Council's debt, with the remaining amount being split in two. The first half was made immediately available for physical improvements at Cachalot, and the second half provided the seed money for the Moby Dick Council's Endowment Fund.

The Moby Dick Era

By the beginning of the 1980's, large-scale construction at Camp had slowed to a crawl. It hadn't stopped completely, however, as money set aside for physical improvements was used to build the two winter cabins, near the Ranger's residence. Construction on these cabins began in 1980, and they first opened for use in 1981, dedicated in memory of Scouters John Humphreys and Frank Escobar, Jr. Humphreys, now on the Wall of Fame, was instrumental in the post-fire restoration efforts at Cachalot, and Escobar was well-known for his contributions to program and his service in and out of camp.

A frost-free water system was installed at the same time, and Cachalot began to move away from dry-pit latrines to flush toilets with real septic systems. The first of these were constructed in James West, Baden-Powell, and between Acooshnet and Sippican.

The Council Ring had fallen into disrepair. The wooden seating was in poor condition, the view of the pond had been obscured by brush growth, and the soil to either side of the approach steps had begun to erode. Beginning at its 1983 Ordeal Weekend, the Neemat Lodge set out on what would be its largest, longest single service project to date—an effort to restore and improve the Council Ring. This would take two years of effort, mostly in the form of monthly work weekends, and involved completely tearing down the old structures, elevating the stage by moving large quantities of sand, cutting a new, less steep (and less likely to erode) approach path, planting new trees on the old approach, and terracing and installing benches in a new seating area. With the exception of some tree and telephone pole cutting, done by chainsaw, this was done entirely by hand and predominantly by the youth of the lodge.

Overall, the 1980s were very good years for Cachalot. The summer program expanded, serving 500 plus Boy Scouts and several hundred Cub Scouts over seasons 8 to 10 weeks long. The Ranger program was revived for several summers, this time under the leadership of Ray Phillips, but with the same goal of leadership development. The council also experimented with a resident camp for Webelos in the middle of the decade. Cachalot remained a busy place for the rest of the year, with units taking advantage of weekend camping, and the Council and Districts hosting many camporees and other events. 1981 saw the first Klondike Derby, initially a district event, run by Bill Joyce and Vic Sylvia. The Klondike remains an annual event to this day, with 38 of the 41 Klondikes being held at Cachalot. It's also

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tently one of the most well-attended events at camp. The Cub-o-Ree, another district event that became a long-running council event, also kicked off in the 1980s, with most of them run by Jack Byrne. The Cub-o-Ree got hundreds of Cubs and their families out to Cachalot, and got them excited at the opportunity to come back for more as Boy Scouts.

The Health Lodge was expanded in 1985, its size nearly doubling with the addition of a wing specifically for the Camp Nurse's residence. This allowed the whole of the original building to be used strictly as the medical facility, for checkups and for treatment or quarantine of sick campers during summer camp. The 21 Club also underwent major revisions at this time, with all of its windows being replaced, the interior winterized and re-paneled, with new siding for the exterior and a new, fully-covered porch on the front of the building.

One cool fall morning in 1987, the resident Ranger, Art Churchill, discovered that Cachalot had had another bout with arson. While driving into the central camp area to bring a contractor in for other reasons, he crested the hill by the Health Lodge to discover the smoldering ruin of the Trading Post. Fortunately, the fire had been contained to the site of the building itself, and wider damage to the camp had been avoided. It would take well over a year, with the camp Commissioner's Corner building returning to its original role as the Trading Post in the interim. Staffers and campers alike referred to it as "The Geedunk." A new concrete slab was poured to cap the old Trading Post footing and a new building made of concrete block would be erected on the same site to take its place.

1990 saw the introduction of another long-running program at Cachalot: Neemat Lodge's "Spring Into Scouting" event, which gave Webelos a taste of the full Boy Scout experience with a weekend of Scout skills, usually with a themed event-long game. Spring Into Scouting would be an annual event for the next 12 years.

Small construction projects dominated the 1990s. These included more modern bathrooms and showers being built in the sites that did not yet have them, the expansion of the rifle range to include a shotgun range, another small addition and new walk-in cooler for the Dining Hall, and a shelter for the archery range. The docks at the waterfront were also replaced with a new set meant to be left in over the winter months and able to withstand ice on Five Mile Pond.

The waterfront changed more dramatically in 1998, with Neemat Lodge coordinating the construction of a new lookout tower to replace the deteriorating Andrew Jackson Memorial Waterfront Tower. The new tower, designed to incorporate not only storage but also be the residence of members of the Aquatics staff, was set much further back from the

water's edge. As a result of this change, and the addition of additional fencing, the usable beach area of the waterfront was significantly increased.



Wilderness Survival?

In the mid- to late- 1990s, it had become increasingly evident that Scouting membership nationwide was once again in decline, and pressure from the National Council to reduce the number of councils in the Northeast was on the rise. The implication was clear: a merger with another Council was extremely likely, and in the very near future. With the painful experience of the Cachalot/Massasoit merger and the resulting sale of Noquochoke in the not-so-distant past, the Council began to take steps to protect its interests, including Camp Cachalot, in the event of a merger. Working under the assumption that a more fiscally-sound Council would have more influence in a merger, efforts began both to increase the size of our Endowment fund and to ensure Cachalot's continued operation.

Together with two of our neighboring councils (Annawon and Cape Cod and the Islands Councils), the Moby Dick Council in May of 1995 formed a group known as the Southeastern Massachusetts Camping Alliance, or SEMCA. Under this umbrella organization, Cachalot became the Boy Scout-level summer camp for all three councils, helping to ensure attendance at the camp. Cub Scouts and Webelos would attend programs at Camp Norse, Annawon's camp, and Cape Cod and the Island's Camp Greenough was designated as an "adventure outpost" camp for older Scouts.

In 1997, the council was approached by the State of Massachusetts to establish a "conservation restriction" on the outer, undeveloped portions of Cachalot. Effectively, the council would grant a permanent easement to the state, which would present a significant disincentive to ever sell the property, and we would agree not to develop specific areas in camp. In exchange, the state would handle all forest and wildlife management in that area, and some access would be provided to the public for hunting and fishing. It would also be a financial windfall for the Council, with the state paying the council one million dollars for this easement, more than doubling the size of its Endowment fund.

The concerns about a possible merger were well-founded.





The Narragansett Years Begin

Towards the close of the 1990s, Moby Dick Council began to preemptively discuss a merger with the Councils it was involved with for SEMCA, and somewhat later in four-way merger discussions with those Councils plus the Old Colony Council. These talks were abandoned as the representatives of the four Councils were never able to arrive at a plan that was amenable to their respective Executive Boards, so SEMCA continued in the same state it had been in.

In 2002, Moby Dick Council's Scout Executive, Gerald Monahan, retired. It was at this point that the Council was informed that no new executive would be hired to replace him, and without a Scout Executive no charter for the Council could be issued. Soon after, Narragansett Council approached the Moby Dick Executive Board with an offer to merge, keeping the two existing districts as districts of the merged Council, and maintaining Cachalot as a property of the new Council. The Board accepted, and the Moby Dick Council ceased to be, with final approval coming with an act of the Massachusetts State Legislature in September of 2003.

At the time, Cachalot was unique among the eight camps then operated by the Narragansett Council, as it was the only camp actually owned by the Council. The remaining seven camps are owned by the Rhode Island Boy Scouts (RIBS) but operated by the Council. The Rhode Island Boy Scouts are one of the multiple Scouting organizations in the United States that merged with the early Boy Scouts of America, but unlike other such organizations never relinquished ownership of the camps they operated.

In addition to the Councils themselves merging, a new Order of the Arrow lodge was formed out of Narragansett's Wincheck Lodge (#534) and Moby Dick's Neemat Lodge (#124). Unlike the previous Noquochoke/Agawam Lodge merger, it was possible to take any open lower number for the newly formed Lodge, and not just the older Neemat number. The resulting lodge was Abnaki

Lodge #102, with the lodge number selected on the basis of the date of the merger.

Construction in the early 2000s in camp included a set of 3-season cabins built mainly to house the summer camp staff, dubbed "Magee Village", completed by new Ranger Karrie Dumais. A shower facility was added to the back side of the Trading Post, and the sides of the Trading Post were covered with rough-edged wood siding to better fit in with other buildings in Camp. Work also continued on completing the build-out of modern shower and latrine facilities in all of the summer camp sites, with the most recent addition being made in 2005.

In fall of 2004 the Camp Cachalot Alumni Association was founded, with a goal of preserving Cachalot's history and traditions, and to advocate for the camp. The alumni would host their first Homecoming event at Cachalot in 2005, with attendees from many generations of campers and staff coming for a day at camp, in some cases for the first time in several decades. This would also mark the renaming of the old Trading Post as Noquochoke Lodge, to honor the legacy of Camp Noquochoke.

Cachalot was called on in 2005 to play host to a number of units displaced from Narragansett's Camp Yawgoog by an unexpected temporary closure due to a norovirus outbreak, with members of the fledgeling Alumni Association pitching in to help welcome and orient these troops, many of them first-time Cachalot visitors.

The Association would soon recognize first resident Ranger Armand Guilmette by dedicating the Ranger's residence in his honor. We would build on this with the creation of the Camp Cachalot Wall of Fame, and inducted its first honorees at our Homecoming in 2010. The Association also renovated and restored the Bill Joyce Memorial Flag Field with the construction of the Wall itself, which was unveiled at Homecoming 2012. Since that first year, the Association has recognized 23 Scouters and organizations for their contributions to camp.

Further Mergers

In 2015, among continuing consolidation of councils throughout the northeast, Narragansett Council merged with the Annawon Council of Massachusetts, one of the SEMCA partners, adding neighboring Camp Norse to the properties owned by the council. Abnaki Lodge would merge with Annawon's Tulpe Lodge, keeping the Tulpe name and the Abnaki number to form Tulpe 102.

Prescott Hall would also see a major renovation in this time frame, with an expansion of the dining area, new landscaping, and cupolas for ventilation in 2015.

Unfortunately, Scouting nationwide continued its downward trend in membership through the 2000s. The same was true both in local membership and in Cachalot's attendance. New Bedford, once home to dozens of units, was down to only 3, and the situation was similar across the old Moby Dick Council. Efforts by the council and the Association had started to bear some fruit, however, with Cachalot's summer attendance ticking upwards in 2016 and 2017, while membership as a whole remained down.

Cachalot Today

In the Fall of 2017, council leaders called for a fireside chat in Tiverton, RI. This chat was to announce sad news for the Cachalot family: 2017 would be the last year of a summer camp program at Cachalot. Once again, declining attendance at all Council camps along with financial concerns made it impossible for the council to sustain Boy Scout summer camp programs at both Cachalot and at the much larger Camp Yawgoog.

Cachalot remains open for year-round use, and the Camp Cachalot Alumni Association is doing everything it can to ensure that Cachalot remains a vibrant, vital piece of the Scouting program in Southeastern Massachusetts. Our Project Fund and the proceeds from our Endowment continue to support projects to make it a desirable location for winter camping and other programs, including improvements to all of the winter cabins, improvements to the camp's shooting sports facilities, and collaborating with Tulpe Lodge to expand the outdoor area at Noquochoke Lodge with a larger pavilion in honor of long-time OA adviser Robert LeComte. We have more projects planned.

We want to bring summer back to Cachalot, too, and are working toward that end, but we know that we face many challenges and the outcome is anything but certain.

Five Mile Pond is still the jewel in Cachalot's crown, and many units both from the area that once was Moby Dick Council and from outside it take advantage of Cachalot's facilities each year. In 2018, nearly 3,700 Scouts and Scouters from 90 units, 20 of which came from outside Narragansett Council, spent time enjoying Cachalot. We continue to work to ensure that Cachalot is well-used, and well-loved, by the Scouts who camp there, and can join us in supporting "the place we know so well." 🐾

In Memoriam

In Recognition of Members of the Cachalot Family Who Have Gone Home



Paul Menard passed away on November 26th, 2020 at the age of 54. Paul was a summer camp staffer in the Scoutcraft area at Cachalot in the early '80s, and an Arrowman active for many years on the Neemat Lodge Dance Team and Ceremonies Team, both as a youth and as an adviser throughout the 1980s. Paul's extended family was a driving force behind the dance and ceremonies teams for many years, and brought many Scouts with them to AIS and LIHA pow-wows to educate the teams on appropriate use of Native traditions and regalia. He was a member of Troop 27 in Fall River.

An industrial laborer by trade, he was an avid model car collector. He leaves his companion Tara Coderre, his siblings Morel Menard, Jr., Michelle Wray, Philip Menard, Nicole Lipeles, and many nieces and nephews.



Antonio "Tony" Mendes, 62, former Scoutmaster and long-time leader of Troop 3 New Bedford, passed away on June 3rd 2021. Tony was a Silver Beaver recipient, active with the Cachalot District in a number of roles, and spent time later in his Scouting career with Troop

70. He is remembered by many who worked with him as a friendly, enthusiastic leader who always helped guide his Scouts through many adventures.

Having served in the Marine Corps Reserves and in the United States Air Force, Tony served his community with a 24 year career with the New Bedford Police Department. He is survived by his wife Barbara, his sons Tony Mendes Jr., Wayne Estrela, and Nicholas Estrela, his brothers Jorge Mendes, Paul Mendes, and Victor Mendes, his sister Tara Bessette, and his 8 grandchildren.



Paul Parente passed away at the age of 89 on May 12th, 2021, after a courageous battle with Parkinson's Disease. Paul had a more than 40 year Scouting career, including as a member of the Moby Dick Executive Board, as Massasoit District Chairman, on the Catholic Committee on Scouting

as its Lay Chairman, and as Scoutmaster of both Troops 26 and 47, the latter of which was founded to support local Scouts with developmental disabilities. He was a recipient of the District Award of Merit, the Silver Beaver, and the St. George medal.

Born in Fall River, he was a veteran of the Korean War with the US Army. He had a PhD in

Mathematics and taught for many years at SMTI/SMU/UMass Dartmouth, including two terms as chairman of the Mathematics department, retiring as Professor Emeritus in 1996.

He leaves his wife Anne, his sons Paul (wife Margaret), Robert (wife Natalie), John (wife Dawn), David (partner Heather); along with seven grandchildren, Shane, Sarah, Sage, Raina, Koral, Roman, and Lea; three great-grandchildren, Lucas, Jack, and Faye; and several nieces and nephews.



Olga Tavares, 89, the wife of Wall of Famer Ed Tavares, passed away on May 29th, 2021 after having been ill for some time. Olga was Ed's constant companion, and was often by his side at Association events. Like Ed, she had her own Scouting background, having spent time working for the Girl

Scouts. She was active with many of the coed Explorer Posts and Venture Crews that Ed worked with over the years.

Born in New Bedford, she earned both Bachelor's and Master's degrees, and worked as a middle school teacher in school systems in Montgomery County, MD; New Bedford, MA; and Dartmouth, MA

She is survived by her husband, Edmund.

Lawrence "Larry" Harney, our 2013 honoree for the Camp Cachalot Wall of Fame, passed away peacefully on May 20th, 2021, at the age of 91. Larry had been at Cachalot for as long as there has been a Cachalot, serving as a member of the first summer camp staff in 1946. He was a long-



time presence on the Camping and Properties Committee, and is the source of many of the meeting minutes from that committee that have been preserved in the Association's archive, an important historical source for us. A veteran of the Army during Korean War, he worked with several units in the New Bedford area, most prominently with Troop 5 at Sacred Heart Parish. He was a founding member of the Association, and attended many of our Homecoming and Gathering events. Larry was a 1998 Silver Beaver recipient, and had been recognized with the Scouter's Key and Adult Training Awards.

Born in New Bedford, he was a truck driver for Milhench and Baarder North American for many years until his retirement. In retirement he drove for Laidlaw. He is survived by his sons and Kevin, his daughter and Alice M. Faria; and her husband George, his siblings Patricia Smith, Margaret Riendeau, Mary Jo Feresten, and Frances Baldwin, his grandson Alexander Faria, and several nieces and nephews

If you should learn of the passing of a member of the Cachalot family, please let us know by sending email to info@cachalotalumni.org



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