



The Cachalotter

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

Hello, Larry!

Homecoming 2013 to Welcome Lawrence "Larry" Harney to the Wall of Fame

The ninth annual Homecoming of the Camp Cachalot Alumni Association will begin at noon, Saturday, July 13th, 2013, after the close of the first week of the summer camp season. As has become our tradition, we'll meet by Noquochoke Lodge by the side of Tom Cullen Field for a cookout lunch of burgers and dogs, spend some time catching up, and then launch into the business of the day: congratulating Lawrence "Larry" Harney, long-time Scout, Scouter, and a founding member of the Camp Cachalot Alumni Association as we induct him onto the Camp Cachalot Wall of Fame as the sole member of the Class of 2013.

A fifty-five year veteran of the Boy Scouts of America, Lawrence "Larry" Harney began his Scouting career in 1945 as a 15-year-old Scout in New Bedford, eventually attaining the rank of Star Scout and becoming an Assistant Scoutmaster. In the years since, he has served with multiple units, led units to and participated on the staffs of National Jamborees, worked in multiple arenas at the District, Council, and Region levels as commissioner staff, Properties committee member, and camp visitation specialist. He is an Arrowman, having been elected into the Agawam Lodge in 1961. He has been recognized with the

Scouters Key, Adult Training Awards, and, in 1998, the Silver Beaver.

Larry's service to Cachalot is as long as the history of Cachalot itself. As a youth of 17, he was a member of its first camp staff in 1946, and served multiple roles on staff in the early years of camp, until enlisting in the U.S. Army in 1951. Upon his return to the area in 1953 he immediately returned to camp staff on the maintenance corps, providing many services needed for a new and growing camp. He spent numerous weekends at camp performing service projects and security before Cachalot Council hiring a permanent Camp Ranger. During the fire of 1964, he volunteered with the Wareham Fire Department, manning a brush breaker helping to fight the fire, then served on the Restoration Committee for many years to help rebuild, personally helping to clear debris, plant new trees, and repair damaged buildings and program areas at Cachalot.

Over his long Scouting career, he has helped with the installation of water lines at camp, helped with the construction of the Boat House, the building of the Guilmette Ranger's Residence, the Follansbee docking system at

the waterfront, the construction of Magee Village, and other projects too numerous to mention. His collection of meeting minutes from the Camping and Properties committee, dating from the 1960s through the 1990s, have been a fundamental resource for the Association's documentation of Cachalot's history. For his many contributions, you saw fit to elect him to a position on the Wall of Fame, and we hope that you'll be able to join us in celebrating that honor.

In addition to Larry's induction ceremony and catching up with old friends, we'll get updates from the Association's committee on the state of the Association, along with some news on the summer camp session in progress from the camp director, Eric Oulette.

As always, Homecoming is free to our members, their families, members of the Cachalot family who have not yet joined the Association, and interested members of the public. A cookout lunch will be available (suggested donation \$5) for those interested. Your RSVP via our website will help us ensure ample food for everyone.

See you at camp in July! 🐻



**2013 Inductee
Lawrence "Larry" Harney**

Homecoming 2013 Details

Saturday July 13th, 2013
Noon until 5:00PM

Induction Ceremony
begins 1:30PM

Cachalot Scout Reservation,
Plymouth, MA

Program will end approximately
2:30PM, Camp will remain open for
attendees until 5:00PM

For more information, or to RSVP,
visit us online at

www.cachalotalumni.org/homecoming

or via email at

homecoming2013@cachalotalumni.org

Free to members and non-
members alike. Cookout lunch
available (suggested donation \$5)

The Cachaletter

Copyright ©2013,
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
Victor Sylvia
Brian Bastarache
Nicholas Evan Sarantakes

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



The Sounds of Cachalot

Vic Sylvia, Association Chairman

The first weekend in May, I had the opportunity to serve as Camp Master with fellow alumni Dr. Bill Langfield and Dave Houghton. Taking a break from the arduous duties of performing my yearly survey of fish residing in Five Mile Pond, I sat on the porch of the Phillips House drinking a cup of coffee and listened as the sounds of Cachalot came to life. Each sound was evidence of the impact that the Cachalot experience has on so many Scouts, and was a reminder of our responsibility as stewards of this amazing place.

Down by the Boat House I could hear Scouts shouting "look at the size of that pickerel!" as Doc was helping Scouts from Troop 21 Somerset prepare for their hike to Abner's Pond for a morning of fishing. The sounds of table saws and hammers echoed across Five Mile from Prescott Hall where Dave and fellow alumni Rick Partridge and Bob Flynn were busily installing tongue and groove siding to the interior of the dining area. Songs and camp cheers were resonating from Tom Cullen Field and surrounding sites as "Spring Into Scouting" was taking place and occasionally I could hear the yells of Webelos Scouts as their hand-made rockets soared into the sky. As I looked across Five Mile Pond I could see Scouts of Troop 31 Rochester hiking the Red Trail with full packs as they set upon a five mile hike. All around camp were the sounds of Webelos as they learned new Scouting skills that would prepare them for their future adventures at Cachalot. After a while I walked down to Scouter's Corner where I met up with an old friend and dedicated Scouter, Bill Thorne, who was camping with alumni Bill Begin of Troop 74 Dartmouth. Beside a campfire Bill Thorne and I reminisced, sharing stories of past camporees, Klondike Derbies and fish stories.

Reflecting on that weekend, I was reminded of the role that we as Alumni play in insuring that current and future generations of Scouts can share similar life-shaping experiences. As Alumni we need "To Do Our Best" to encourage all units to utilize Cachalot, not only for Summer Camp, but year-round camping as well. We need to emphasize to the various Narragansett Council committees that Cachalot should be utilized for more Council sponsored events that introduce a new generation of Scouts and Scouters to a truly unique camping experience. If you no longer live in the area and are involved in Scouting in your city or town, encourage your unit to visit Cachalot and take advantage of the many historical and educational attractions within a short drive from Cachalot. You can still make an impact even if you don't live nearby or can't attend one of our Association workdays by making a donation to our Building Fund or our Endowment Fund, to continue the Association's efforts to continually improve the programs and infrastructure so vital to Cachalot. This year we are donating 40% of our Building Fund to much-needed Summer Camp site improvements. All alumni need to reach out to known Scouting friends to encourage them to join our Association. We are at an all time high in paid membership, but as our membership rolls increase so does our ability to provide the necessary funds and manpower to continue our mission.

**You can still make
an impact**

This summer hundreds of boys are expected to participate in Summer Camp. I'm proud to say that thanks to your efforts, they'll enjoy improved program areas, a cleaner and brighter dining hall and better maintained campsites. I want to thank you for everything you have done over the past years and challenge you to continue your stewardship of our Association and Camp Cachalot. 🐟



Seeking Lodge History

Historian Nicholas Sarantakes Writing History of Local Order of the Arrow Lodges

On July 16, 1915, E. Urner Goodman and Carroll Edson created the Order of the Arrow at Treasure Island, the summer camp of the Philadelphia Area Council. The rest as they say is history. In two year's time, the OA will celebrate its hundredth anniversary. As part of that celebration, every lodge across the country is preparing a history, documenting the local activities of the OA.



The OA has been in southern New England for a long time—since the late 1930s—and has a good, colorful history with many achievements. Five separate lodges have represented the organization in what is today the Narragansett Council. As a result, the history of Abnaki #102 will tell the story of each of the four lodges that have combined to create the modern day lodge. This book will include a narrative chapter of each lodge, historical photographs, and images of each flap of the five lodges.

Nicholas Evan Sarantakes, a unit commissioner in the council, a Naval War College professor and the author of five books, has agreed to write this study. There are a number of holes in the written record and he is asking that alumni of Noquochoke

#124, Agawam #509, and Neemat #124 help fill in the gaps. To do that your help is needed. Historical photographs and old newsletters are particularly useful. The authors also want to make sure we have good photographs and captions of other important memorabilia like patches, neckerchiefs and anything else that documents the history of the OA. Sarantakes has also put together a questionnaire, which is a great tool for sharing stories about times past. To contribute to this history, please contact Mr. Sarantakes at Nick.Sarantakes@usnwc.edu or Jonathan Widmark of the Narragansett Council at jwidmark@narragansettbsa.org.

News in Brief

Executive Committee Meetings

Meetings of the Camp Cachalot Alumni Association's Executive Committee take place from 7:00PM to 9:00PM on the third Tuesday of each month in the conference room at the New Bedford Wastewater Management plant near Fort Tabor (except for July's meeting which is conducted at Camp Cachalot.) Executive Committee meetings are open for observation to interested members of the Association, although space is limited. If you would like to attend a meeting, we recommend double-checking with us via email at info@cachalotalumni.org just to verify there have been no schedule or venue changes.

Summer Camp Staff Scholarships

The Association will once again be offering its scholarship program, including the Thomas P. Whelan Chairman's Scholarship, to members of Cachalot's 2013 summer camp staff attending post-secondary education. Staffers interested in applying for the scholarship will be given applications via the camp director at the beginning of the season. We are always looking to increase the scholarship endowment to enable us to permanently fund larger awards; if you would like to make a donation to the scholarship fund, please contact us at staffscholarship@cachalotalumni.org. Donations can be made directly via the Association's web site at www.cachalotalumni.org/scholarship.

Upcoming Events and Important Dates

June 30th, 2013

2012-2013 Member Year Ends

July 13th, 2013, 12:00PM - 5:00PM

Homecoming 2013
and Wall of Fame Induction
Cachalot Scout Reservation
Plymouth, MA

August 30th - September 2nd, 2013

CCAA Family Camping Weekend
Cachalot Scout Reservation
Plymouth, MA

Executive Committee and Other e-Mail Contacts

Victor Sylvia
Association Chairman
chairman@cachalotalumni.org

Brian A. Bastarache
Association Vice Chairman
vicechairman@cachalotalumni.org

Richard F. Partridge
Treasurer
treasurer@cachalotalumni.org

Timothy A. Connick
Secretary
secretary@cachalotalumni.org

Eric Oulette
Council Representative
eoulette@bsaemail.org

Membership Committee
membership@cachalotalumni.org

Staff Scholarship Information
staffscholarship@cachalotalumni.org

Homecoming 2013 Information
homecoming2013@cachalotalumni.org

Family Camping Information
familycamping@cachalotalumni.org

To Submit Historical Information
curator@cachalotalumni.org

Other Inquiries
info@cachalotalumni.org

Photos from Winter

Association Joined by Representatives of Abnaki Lodge to Discuss t

Alumni checking out some of the Lodge memorabilia on display at the Gathering. Abnaki Lodge has been assembling a comprehensive collection of local Order of the Arrow Lodge memorabilia, and it was all on-hand in January



Abnaki Arrowman and current NE-1B Section Chief Elliot Gault discussing the Lodge's ongoing history project with the alumni in attendance at Gathering 2013



Association Vice Chairman Brian Bastarache updates the audience



(L-R) Conrad Rousseau, Bob LeComte, and V Sylvia catching up at Gathering 2013

er Gathering 2013

the History of the Order of the Arrow in Southeastern Massachusetts



Long-time Lodge Lay Adviser Bob LeComte recalls some Noquochoke and Neemat Lodge history



Dennis Prefontaine sharing his memories of Agawam Lodge and his own Order of the Arrow experiences with his fellow alumni

Wild Cachalot: Pine Barrens and Fire Birds

Now Extinct, the Heath Hen Was Once a Common Sight in the Forests of Cachalot



BY BRIAN BASTARACHE, CCAA VICE-CHAIR, NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DIVISION HEAD, BRISTOL COUNTY AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL

Many Cachalot scouts and scouters are familiar with the term, "pine barrens." The deep, acidic sand of the Pine Barrens was formed as the outwash plain of the mile-thick glaciers that last covered New England approximately 10,000 years ago. The rolling topography

and kettle holes of greatly varying size were also created by the movements and eventual retreat of the ice. The result is the short, scrubby, scruffy-looking forest that covers Cachalot, Squanto, Myles Standish State Forest and points beyond. Many a scout and scouter have expressed dissatisfaction with our forest. They wished for a, "real forest," of larger trees of some different, yet unspecified species. Cachalot is a rare and wonderful

place. Its unique forest is just one reason why.

The Pine Barrens were deemed "barren" by colonial settlers as they quickly learned that there favored crops would not thrive (to say the least) in the acidic, nutrient-poor, drought-prone sands. The young age of the outwash sediment, the dryness, and the resulting frequency of natural-occurring fires keep organic matter from accumulating the

soil. Any decent gardener knows that organic matter in the soil holds moisture and decomposes into nutrients which typical plants require to thrive. Both organic matter and moisture is in short supply in the sands of the barrens.

The low diversity of plant species able to grow in these conditions may be another reason that these places were labeled “barren.” The plants that grow here must be tolerant of conditions that would kill most New England plants. As always, natural selection has created a suite of plants able to take advantage of these “harsh” (harsh is in the eye, or root, of the beholder) environments. Cachalot tree species diversity is greatest within a few yards of the many ponds, streams and wetlands, but the high and dry majority of the barrens is dominated by just three species: Pitch Pine (*Pinus rigida*), Scrub Oak (*Quercus ilicifolia*) and Dwarf Chestnut Oak (*Quercus prinoides*). Many of us may not consider Scrub or Dwarf Chestnut Oaks “trees,” but they may reach a height of 15 feet or more. All three of the dominant tree species provide large, nutritious seeds which feed the abundant Cachalot wildlife.

What we often refer to as the Pine Barrens is actually several important habitat types that transition into each other across the rolling sands. Even the lakes and ponds of the barrens are unique; something we have all known since our first swim in Five Mile Pond. The unique plants of the barrens help to create these unique habitat types. Many of these plants may be found scattered anywhere the conditions give them an edge over the other “typical” plants, however they dominate the pine barren landscape. Unique plant communities eventually generate unique animal communities. While no mammals are restricted to Pine Barrens habitats, there are several species of birds, reptiles, moths, beetle, and dragonflies that are found almost nowhere else.

The Heath Hen (*Tympanuchus c. cupido*) is arguably the most interesting of the Pine

Barren-adapted birds. A subspecies of the Greater Prairie Chicken, the Heath Hen inhabited the open, scrubby barrens habitats along the Atlantic Coast from Maine to Virginia. Some of the old literature refers to this vegetation as *shinnery* as it only came up to one’s shins. These grouse-like birds fed on the numerous berries and scrub oak acorns. They moved in loose flocks and exploded into the air when startled. Heath Hens almost certainly inhabited the more open areas of Cachalot; the booming calls of the males ringing out over the hills and ponds every spring.

The dry coastal habitats that comprised the entire global range of the Heath Hen, was also the epicenter of European colonization. The birds were so numerous along the Massachusetts coastline that servants regularly requested that heath hen be served to them not more than two or three times per week. We did our best to create a perfect storm to bring about the demise of the Heath Hen. Prior to modern game laws, Heath Hens were harvested in tremendous numbers. Blackhead, a contagious disease believed to have been introduced with Ring-Necked Pheasants and domestic poultry, soon spread through the Heath Hen populations. Our dogs, cats and rats easily depredated clutches of the ground-nesting Heath Hen.

The last known population of Heath Hens occurred on Martha’s Vineyard; an island dominated by Pine Barrens habitats. Heroic efforts, including the hiring of full-time wardens, were made in an attempt to preserve this last population of this formally abundant bird. The last known Heath Hen – a male – was heard booming across an island meadow on the evening of 11 March 1932. While in no way beneficial to the species, our “perfect storm” is not seen as the most important nail we hammered into the species’ coffin.

The most prevalent global cause of species decline and extinction is habitat destruction. The Heath Hen was no exception. One of the heroic Vineyard efforts was to douse any fire

that ignited anywhere near the Heath Hens. This was their undoing. You see, the Heath Hen was a fire bird.

It is fire that sustains all of the Pine Barrens habitat variations. It was fire that created and recreated the open areas upon which the Heath Hen depended. Without fires open shinnery succeeded into closed-canopy forest, a habitat which the Heath Hen could not use. Many fewer blueberries, huckleberries, teaberries, and green brier berries grow in the shade of trees. Dousing fires destroyed their habitat, which in turn destroyed the species.

The Heath Hen is gone; however the Pine Barrens complex of habitats is home to at least 25 rare species in Massachusetts. Only 30% to 40% of Massachusetts Pine Barrens habitat remains intact today. The majority has been destroyed by development and the associated poor fire management. (Home owners don’t often want forest fires burning in their neighborhoods.) The war against the barrens continues today as evident by the huge commercial development on Long Pond Road (Exit 5) off Route 3 in Plymouth only about six miles from Five Mile Pond as the crow flies.

Cachalot, Squanto, Massasoit National Wildlife Refuge and Myles Standish State Forest comprise one of the two largest intact Pine Barrens left on Earth. (The Massachusetts Military Reservation is the other.) These adjacent properties protect a nearly unbroken forest. With proper fire management, which also makes the barrens safer for humans and their structures, this forest will provide a place for the remaining species for which Pine Barrens are essential. Pause for a moment and think of the Heath Hen when you pass an open, grassy, shinnery area the next time that you hike the trails of Cachalot. Imagine the fire birds. Picture them dancing. Hear them boom. And then tell me the Pine Barrens are not a “real forest.” 

For More On Heath Hens

Prairie Chickens in the Fort Pierre Grasslands (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJCy0d94YS0>)

These birds belong to the same species as the Heath Hen and look nearly identical. You can see the mating dance and hear the mating calls (i.e., booming) in this video.



Our lead photo is from Flickr user Arthur Chapman, of a heath hen on display at Chicago’s Field Museum of Natural History.. The color original can be found at:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/32005048@N06/5288943186/>



Approximate Original Range of the Heath Hen



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