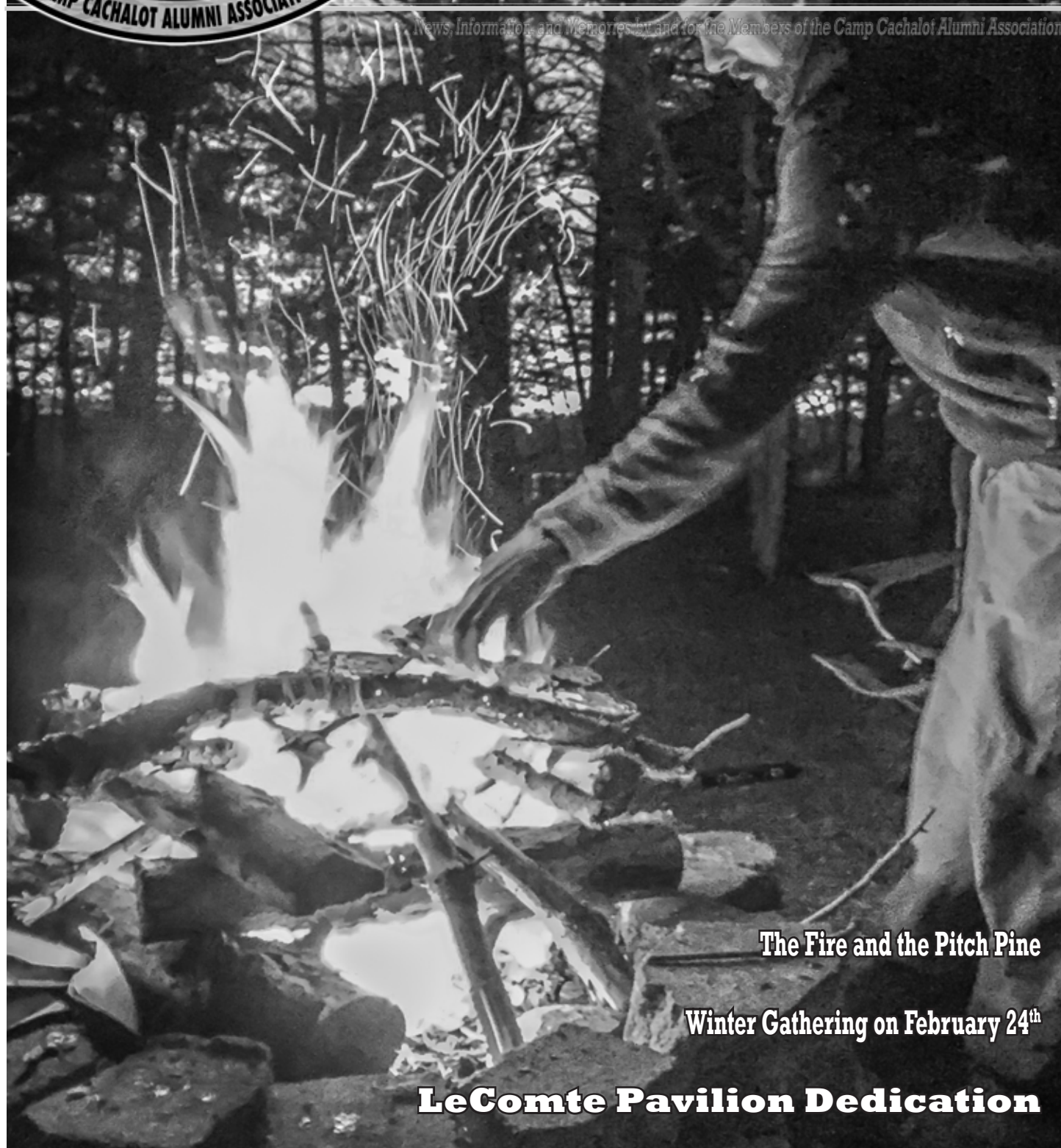


Fall 2017



The **Cachaletter**

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



The Fire and the Pitch Pine

Winter Gathering on February 24th

LeComte Pavilion Dedication

The Cachaletter

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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
Brian Bastarache

On the cover: Mike Joseph gets the campfire going at our 2017 Memorial Day Family Weekend at Cachalot. Photo courtesy Dennis J. Wilkinson, II

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



Fighting Fire

Brian Bastarache, Association Chairman

As many of you have heard, the Cachalot summer camp program has been “suspended.” That is a very difficult subject to write about. Ranting will not help at this point. All that matters now is taking care of the place that has been so very important to all of us. The Camp Cachalot Alumni Association has been working on this terrible situation for weeks.

We are strategizing and building a plan to show the viability of Cachalot as a Council facility. It must make at least enough money to pay for its own upkeep. That is just reality. (Remember, all camp properties will be sold if Narragansett Council goes bankrupt.) We will step up. We are working on several proposals for new program events to be **held at Cachalot**.

We have all experienced the stages of grief over the past few months. It is time to dry tears, check anger, and be productive. While thinking about how to write about this difficult topic I realized that I may have already (eerily) done so. I offer this lesson of the Pitch Pine, originally from 2014. Only our membership number has been updated.

The Fire and the Pitch Pine

We call it “The Fire.” It is a memory for some. To others, like me, it is a legend we have heard told for most of our lives. The Fire is certainly the biggest “character” in the Cachalot mythology; an event so great that it shaped the very land we love. It was 50 years ago this spring that The Fire consumed most of Cachalot. Its legacy can be seen all over the camp and within those that love it. Its legacy can be read in the Cachalot forest we call Pine Barrens.

The land that we know as Cachalot had burned many times before The Fire on May 22, 1964. Cachalot lies in the middle of the second largest unbroken and undeveloped tract of Pine Barrens in the world and the largest in New England. Pine Barrens are actually a collection of associated ecosystems that occur on sandy soils deposited by glaciers that scrubbed across northern North America 10,000 years ago. This makes the Pine Barrens of the Northeast very, very young (for a forest). The Pitch Pine is dominant tree in, and icon of, the Pine Barrens.

The extremely sandy soils are acidic, nutrient-poor, and predisposed to drought and therefore these dry, sunbaked forests are prone to fire. The Pitch Pine and other plants that have come to define these ecosystems have had to adapt to adverse these conditions. Many have responded by producing oils (e.g., bay berry) or resins (e.g., pitch pine) that cause them to burst into flames when set to fire. We have all seen what happens to a green Pitch Pine bough thrown into a Cachalot camp fire. Why would a plant living in a hot, dry site that is prone to burn evolve to be more flammable?

Pitch Pines cannot stop the wildfires, nor can they run from them. These plants have evolved an alternate solution and burst into flames when the inevitable fire comes to them. Their flammable leaves burn at such low temperatures that the fire often sweeps past them. Often only the leaves and twigs are lost. These will be quickly regrown after the fire. Pitch Pines are protected by thick, plate-like bark, through which needles will sprout if the branches burn. Recently denuded tree trunks are soon fuzzy with green needles. Photosynthesis, and life, carries on. Only in the hottest fires will more extensive damage occur to the barrens plants, but they have a response to such hellfire.

Many of the barrens plants reproduce most vigorously and effectively after a fire. Sunlight easily reaches the ground after a fire has burned away the vegetation and the resulting ash offers nutrient-rich fertilizer for tender seedlings. The blackened aftermath of a fire transforms into a lush, diverse, green oasis. Fire also eliminates the competition from invading species, such as White Pine. These invaders would eventually turn the Pine Barrens into something else. The Pitch Pines and other barrens plants not only thrive, but use the flames to sustain their unique community.

“Fighting fire with fire” means something completely different to a Pitch Pine. These plants have adapted to an environment with conditions that would kill the average pansy. A Pitch Pine does not yell louder or hit harder when fighting fire with fire. A Pitch Pine uses its strengths to endure. A Pitch Pine finds the benefits of a would-be tragedy to achieve success in the face of disaster. Pitch Pines have evolved to use the action and fury of fire to their advantage and today cover the sandy hills and support unique communities of animals found nowhere else in Massachusetts, New England, and some cases, the world. What can we learn from The Fire and the Pitch Pines?

Can we learn to thrive in what others perceive to be hardships, or even disaster? Can we learn to exploit perceived disasters to generate opportunities and success? Decades ago visionaries wandered into the Plymouth Pine Barrens. They envisioned a camp in the scrub and they created Cachalot. Fifty years ago decades of hard work was turned to ash in a matter of days. Yet, just as the Pitch Pine seedlings, Cachalot rose from the ashes.

Two things make Cachalot a magical place: the beautiful and unique ecosystem that is home to rare species and the thousands of Scouts and Scouters who have learned, experienced, and made memories there. The Cachalot Wall of Fame honors those that have given us so much at Cachalot. It honors those that taught and/or helped make the learning possible. But it seems that even the plants of Cachalot have something to teach us. A Pitch Pine fights fire with fire in its own way. Cachalot will again face "flames" in the future.

Today Cachalot has an ally that did not exist in 1964: The Camp Cachalot Alumni Association. Now at more than 173 registered members, the Association keeps growing and getting stronger. With our roots dug deeply into the sand we will continue to grow and support Cachalot. We will help it grow. If needed, the Association will be here to help it sprout from the "ashes" once again, if we remain steadfast in our commitment, work diligently, and plan for the future. If we learn from The Fire and Pitch Pines, that is. 🌲



How Can You Be Like a Pitch Pine in 2018?

Commit to Cachalot: Our membership has exploded. Your support cannot wane. Our acceptability-baseline cannot slide. Attend events at camp. The Association will be proposing events to be held at Cachalot. Numbers are noted—trust me. (Never underestimate the power of a compliment about a job well-done.) Volunteer to be a committee member (e.g., CCAA Events Committee.)

Work Diligently: Encourage units to attend events at Cachalot and use its facilities in the off-season. Don't forget about Venturers, Explorers, Sea Scouts, Webelos, and Cub Scouts.

Plan for the Future: The CCAA endowment is the lifeblood of the Association. All of the money spent from the CCAA accounts is spent on camp and camp-related events (e.g., Winter Gathering.) Make a donation if you can. Include the Cachalot Alumni Association in your estate planning.

Rally Together: Attend CCAA events. Call old camp friends encourage them to join. Give them a gift membership. Bring them to gather with us. We are Cachalot!

Keep in Touch: We are working on the terrible situation at Cachalot right now. At some point we'll need you. Keep up with our social media.

2018 Cachalot Alumni Events

February 24th, 2018
11:00AM - 3:00PM

Gathering 2018
Fairhaven Council on Aging
228 Huttleston Avenue
Fairhaven, MA

May 25th through 28th, 2018
**Memorial Day
Family Camping Weekend**
Cachalot Scout Reservation
Plymouth, MA

June 2nd, 2018
All day
Beaver Work Day
Cachalot Scout Reservation
Plymouth, MA

July 7th, 2018
11:00AM - 5:00PM
Homecoming 2018
Cachalot Scout Reservation
Plymouth, MA

August 31st through September 3rd, 2018
**Labor Day
Family Camping Weekend**
Cachalot Scout Reservation
Plymouth, MA

Executive Committee and Other e-Mail Contacts

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Scenes from

Here's an assortment of photos from events at Cachalot since our last issue, including our Memorial Day and Labor Day Family Camping weekends, Homecoming 2017, Summer Camp, and the #OptOutside hike on the day after Thanksgiving.

Clockwise from the upper left: an alumnus looks skyward on a starry night at Cachalot during our Labor Day Weekend activities; the CCAA logo on one of two Adirondack-style chairs built by Association committee member Bill Belmore and donated to Cachalot for use in the

Scoutmaster area during summer camp and for Campmasters year-round; alumnus Andy Novick showing off the critter he captured to one of the alumni kids at the waterfront from our Memorial Day weekend event; 2017 Cachalot Summer Camp Program Director Kevin Thompson



m Cachalot

updating the audience on camp during our Homecoming Event; a #WeAreCachalot banner that blends together the camp staff photos from the summers of 1948, 1969, 1970, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996, 2001, 2007, and 2017; and in the center is a group shot of everyone in atten-

dance at Cachalot's first #OptOutside hike, for folks who'd rather head outside to enjoy the day rather than shopping for questionable deals on "Black Friday." Here's hoping that #OptOutside becomes a new tradition at Cachalot!

It just goes to show that Cachalot really is a camp for all seasons, and why the Association loves to see people out there and making new memories, regardless of what the thermometer reads or whether the ground is bare sand, covered in fallen leaves, or white with snow. 🏡



Cachalot



Gathering to Start 2018

Join Us in February for an Afternoon of Fellowship in Fairhaven

On Saturday, February 24th, 2018, starting at 11:00AM, we will be holding our annual Winter Gathering at the Fairhaven Council on Aging facility on Huttleston Avenue (just east of the Stop and Shop.) Our Gathering is a free event, open to members and non-members alike—although we're always glad to welcome new members to the fold!

From 11:00AM until noon, we'll have some time for everyone to get settled and say hello to old friends, then we'll sit down for a pot luck lunch. Everyone is encouraged to show off their favorite recipes and bring a hot dish or a dessert to share. If you plan to bring something yourself (and we hope you do!), please contact Bill Begin, who is coordinating lunch, to let him know, either by phone at 508-789-1169 or via email at wlb2750@comcast.net.

After lunch there will be a meeting of the Association. Our officers will provide updates on what we've been up to since we last met, including information about our projects at Cachalot, our financial picture, and our plans for the upcoming year. As you might expect, the suspension of summer camp at Cachalot will be a major topic of discussion, and we will share with you what information we have and discuss both the plans we're making to support and/or develop programs that will ensure Cachalot remains a viable, vibrant year-round camp, and for pursuing a return of a summer camp program to Cachalot.

We will be raising a few dollars for the Association's project fund by holding a fifty-fifty raffle as part of the festivities, with addi-

tional prizes including a 2018 Cachalot photo calendar and Association merchandise.

Speaking of Association merchandise, we will have an assortment of Association T-shirts, polo shirts, decals, and other merchandise for sale at the Gathering. We'll also have information about our merchandise that available online year-round, which includes coffee mugs, T-shirts, posters, and photo prints. We also have old camp memorabilia available for sale, from patches to coffee mugs to a collection of summer camp unit photos from the late 1980s and early 1990s. Proceeds from all of our merchandise and memorabilia sales go to support all of our programs and our projects at camp.

Our history committee will also have our electronic archive of over 6,500 photos, videos, and documents from Cachalot and its predecessors, including Camp Noquochoke and Camp Stafford. We'll be projecting many of those in the room for folks to have a look at, but if there's something in particular you're interested in seeing, just ask—we'll see what we can find. With so many recent photos being captured by digital cameras, feel free to bring any you'd care to share with us on CD, DVD, USB hard drive, or memory card and we'll make copies for the archive. We'll also have photo and document scanning equipment at the event for capturing a printed photo or slide that you might bring with you. If you have a more than a handful of pictures, slides, or documents that you'd like us to scan, allowing us to borrow the collection to give us time to capture it is far simpler than trying

to do that in the limited time available during the Gathering. We've done this with a number of collections in the past, and we take pains to take great care of your memories while they're in our possession, and return them to you, along with digital copies, when we're done scanning them. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us in advance at curator@cachalotalumni.org.

Past Gatherings have always been a great time, with good food and good friends coming together to hear about and support the Association's efforts at Cachalot, and to reminisce about our time at camp. If you have friends from camp who aren't yet members of our Association, bring them along! We look forward to seeing everyone in Fairhaven in February! 🐻

Gathering 2018 Information

Where & When

February 24th, 2018
11:00AM-3:00PM

Fairhaven Council on Aging
229 Huttleston Avenue
Fairhaven, Massachusetts

More Info

Free Admission for members
and non-members

Send email to
gathering@cachalotalumni.org
or visit
www.cachalotalumni.org
for additional information
or to RSVP

Agenda Includes

Pot Luck Lunch
(coordinated by Bill Begin,
please contact at 508-789-1169
or wlb2750@comcast.net
if you plan to bring a dish)

Alumni Association
Semiannual Meeting

Fun and Fellowship
with your fellow Alumni

Historic Photos and Videos



Some of the Association merchandise on sale at last year's Gathering

Honoring Bob LeComte

Dedicating the New Order of the Arrow Pavilion in Honor of Robert W. LeComte

Representatives of the Camp Cachalot Alumni Association joined Tulpe Lodge 102 Order of the Arrow out at Cachalot on October 21st, 2017 to formally present the completed Order of the Arrow Pavilion, in Honor of Robert W. LeComte, a founding member of Noquochoke Lodge 124 and the long-time Lay Adviser of Noquochoke and Neemat Lodges. This pavilion, which doubles the covered space under the awning at Noquochoke Lodge and adds a new covered cooking area, was an Order of the Arrow-led project to which our Association contributed volunteer labor and \$3,000 from our Project Fund. This supplemented other labor and monies raised by the lodge including a grant from the National Order of the Arrow and contributions from T. L. Edwards, GBI-Avis, and A. M. Designs.

Mr. LeComte and members of his family were greeted by well over 100 Arrowmen and Alumni on their arrival at camp. Tulpe Chief Liam Roessler served as an excellent Master of Ceremonies for the dedication. After a stirring rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" by Mr. LeComte's grand-daughter, guest speakers took to the podium to share their memories of Mr. LeComte's many years of service and to congratulate him on this recognition. Guest speakers included the Association's own Dennis Wilkinson, who had been the last Lodge Chief of Neemat to have Mr. LeComte as his Lay Adviser; current Tulpe Lodge Lay Adviser David Paulson; and former Abnaki Lodge and Section NE-1B Chief Elliot Gault, who shared a message from former Abnaki Lodge Lay Adviser Jonathan Widmark, who

had consulted with Mr. LeComte extensively when documenting the histories of all the lodges that formed Abnaki for the OA's 100th Anniversary. The ceremony concluded with a song of dedication performed by Wollomonuppoag Indian Council, and the unveiling of a plaque recognizing Mr. LeComte and his many years of service to Scouting and to the Order of the



Arrow in Southeastern Massachusetts.

Our thanks and congratulations go out once again to Mr. LeComte. The honor is well-deserved,

For those who were unable to attend, a video of the event can be found on our YouTube channel at https://youtu.be/6tParsS_F8Y.



Wall of Fame Nominations

We are currently accepting nominations for the 2018 Camp Cachalot Wall of Fame ballot. The Wall of Fame serves to honor and memorialize those people and organizations who have made meaningful contributions to Camp Cachalot and to the Scouts, Scouters and families who camp there. Unlike other Scouting honors intended to recognize contributions at the unit, district, or council level or to Scouting in general, the Camp Cachalot Wall of Fame specifically recognizes those who have had a great impact at Cachalot. We rely on our members to make a strong case for their nominees, so the more information you can provide, the better.

Nomination forms and additional information can be found on our web site at

www.cachalotalumni.org/walloffame/

and must be received before April 15th, 2018 for this year's ballot. 🏹



William "Bill" Ashworth passed away on July 29th, 2017 after a long battle with leukemia. In addition to a lengthy career with United Parcel Services, Bill was involved in Scouting in the area for a very long time. He served at various times in the leadership of Troops 24, 46, 3, and 1, helped run a number of events out at Cachalot, and was a frequent volunteer on projects at camp. He was recognized with the Vigil Honor for his work by Neemat Lodge.

He was among the charter members of the Camp Cachalot Alumni Association, contributing some of the first photographs added to our archives, and did research on multiple occasions in support of our efforts to document Cachalot's history.

He is survived by his wife Karen, his children Peter and Kerry, and his grandchildren Nicholas, Madison, and Alexis.

In Memoriam



Robin J. Cambra, who served on multiple Cachalot staffs as Program Director and as Business Manager, passed away on October 9th, 2017. Robin was active in local Scouting for many years, and was involved in the early days of Neemat Lodge following the merger of Agawam and Noquochoke Lodges.

Robin was a well-known school teacher, guidance counselor, a licensed mental health counselor, and a licensed marriage & family therapist.

He leaves his sister, Cheryl Cambra, and was the brother of the late Shawn Cambra. Robin is also survived by his dear friends, Linda Sacco of Wareham, Michael Cheney of Dorchester, and Bob and Vicky Gomes of Tiverton, RI. 🏹

If you learn of the passing of a member of Cachalot's extended family, please let us know via email at info@cachalotalumni.org



Cachalot's Ranger, Karrie Dumais bringing in the heavy equipment to level out the footing of a new outhouse at Beaver Day in 2016.

Beaver Day

Lend a Hand on June 2nd

This year's "Beaver Day" volunteer work day will be held at Cachalot on June 2nd. Scouters and Alumni are invited to come out to Cachalot and help tackle various service projects. More information on what those projects will be will be shared on the Camp Cachalot Facebook page as the date approaches. Work at past Beaver Days has included painting, pouring of concrete footers at the maintenance building, brush clearing and tree work, and the assembly of new outhouses behind Cabins 1 & 2. There's always work to be done at every skill level, so everyone will have something to do.

Lunch will be served, so please register for the event if you plan to attend. You can register online via the Council's web site or at either of the Scout Shops. Those who register by May 25th, 2018 will receive a T-shirt for the event on arrival.

Questions can be directed to our Ranger, Karrie Dumais, at 781-831-0834. 📞

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