



Abnaki Awasos

Alumni Newsletter

Fall 2009

Skipper Shack Dedication

On Sunday July 19th, many alumni, friends of camp and community members gathered at camp to help celebrate the dedication of the new Skipper Shack. The ceremony was the culmination of many years of hard work fundraising for the building. The money was fundraised from a \$30,000 matching contribution from alumnus Ned Pike, and the donations of numerous alumni and friends of camp. Over \$60,000 was raised in about 2 years to build this much needed building at camp. The new building was well received by both campers and staff this summer and has made a great addition to camp's waterfront.

The new Skipper Shack



2009 Alumni Campaign

Following up on the extremely successful skipper shack campaign of 2008, the Abnaki Alumni Association is excited for the fall/winter campaign of 2009. The goal of the Alumni Association is to replace all the current kayaks at camp and to also increase the number of boats. Kayaking has long been one of the most popular classes and cabin activities at Abnaki. Increasing the number of kayaks will allow more classes to be taught and more cabins to explore the Gut together. The magic number for this year's kayak campaign is 24 boats. Rhet Amos, the Property Manager of camp, has secured an outstanding price, which will allow us to purchase each boat from Dick's Sporting Goods for \$250 dollars each. Any additional funds beyond the purchase of these new kayaks will be used for new paddles, life preservers, and racks to store the boats. The boats at camp have served their purpose well, but after over a decade or more of being capsized and dragged up and down the rocky shores of Lake Champlain, it is time for them to be replaced. Our official kick-off party for this campaign will be at our fall alumni event on November 28th (Saturday after Thanksgiving). Look for more information in the coming months.

Save The Date

The Abnaki Alumni Association will be holding an alumni event during the afternoon of November 28th (the Saturday after Thanksgiving) in Burlington. The event will be a casual social event where alumni can reconnect and enjoy some free food. The location is TBD. Please RSVP via the Facebook group event or by emailing abnakialumni@gmail.com

Alumni Scholarship

This past summer, the Alumni Association raised money by selling Abnaki headbands to campers and alumni. Part of the profits will be funding the alumni event and \$100 went to the first annual Alumni Scholarship. All staff at camp that had been there for more than one summer qualified. Any staff member who was interested submitted a short piece discussing how camp has helped them. The winner was chosen out of a hat of entries. The winner was Nick Gallant, who received \$100 towards books or other college expenses.

Maintenance Minute - Rhet Amos

Another camping season is almost done, as I write this we have only one rental group left in our 2009 season. As many of you can imagine there is still a great deal to do to put the camp to bed for the winter. Today I started the process of shutting off the water and winterizing the water lines, with the goal to have the water all shut down by the end of the October. Thursday the 15th we will have 20 volunteers from IBM to close and clean a large part of camp. This work will continue on the weekend with our annual work weekend for staff and alumni.

After the last group has left and the cabins are all closed we will begin the long winter list of repairs, we are still finalizing this list so keep in touch if you would like to know what will be new at Abnaki next spring. I hope you all have a great winter and if you are ever up in the Islands, then swing by camp for a visit. Hope to see you all next year.

Rhet Amos is the current Camp Abnaki property manager. Rhet is a former Assistant director of Abnaki and an alumni of YMCA Camp Beckett, located in Massachusetts. Rhet, a native of Australia, is heavily involved in the Burlington Rugby team as a player and team captain

Purpose of the Abnaki Alumni Association:

The main goal of the association is to help connect alumni and foster relationships between them. The association also seeks to use the power of the alumni to help camp out where needed and help fundraise for special projects. Our current goals are to produce a newsletter twice a year and hold two social events a year.



Abnaki Awasos



Alumni Newsletter

Fall 2009

Bits and Pieces-Jim Albright

It was nice to be asked to write this piece as I have found so much history while working for and helping with, the place my family has come to love for twenty plus years. I had the chance to go into the attic of the admin building a few years ago while working for a past director, Nelson Bagnardi, 1994 to 1997. He had asked me questions about some of the buildings. He was curious about the year they were built and who built them. I just poked around up there until I got the answers for him. Things became interesting when I saw an old picture of Dad Clark inside of an ABNAKI HEARALD. I read it and just like that, I found myself hooked on ABNAKI history. I found greater treasures as I read who Byron Clark was, where he was born and what he did for a living. Did you know that Dad Clark became a printer after he had graduated from high school? He traveled all over the country learning this trade. This was quite a feat considering he was born in Stafford, Vermont in 1866, right after the Civil War. I believe most of Dad Clark's travels were on the railways that consequently gave him the knowledge to build the camp close to the railroad tracks. This would allow boys from all over the world to find their way to Abnaki easily. We even had a sidetrack. Do you think that Dad Clark knew that some of the most important people in the country would be riding the rails right past our camp? – To be Continued

There are so many stories to tell about this camp. I have given you bits and pieces of some of my studies and conversations with past and present alumni. I hope you find this piece enjoyable and thought provoking. If you have more stories from past and think, it would be a good read or not for that matter send them to me at caretaker.123@hotmail.com. Let's keep this going!

Jim, his wife Cecile and family have been involved with Camp Abnaki for over 20 years. In the past, Jim worked on property management and as the Camp Historian. Jim's wife Cecile is the current Food Services Director at Abnaki. All four of the Albright children, Jamie, Mike, Katie and Emil have worked at Camp in various capacities.

Grinds My Gears- Chris Cox

You know what really grinds my gears? Traveling out of state to non-maple syrup states. Also non turn-signal states. Unfortunately for both, these tend to be billboard states, big city states, and deer tick states. You can imagine how these unpleasant factors would combine to negatively affect a day outside of Vermont. You pick up a deer tick at a Gulf Station on the highway; you have some unsatisfying excuse for pancakes at a Waffle House with "maple flavored" high fructose corn syrup straight from Indiana. Bah.

On the way out of the parking lot, you ease out on to the road.

Oblivious hooligans in their speed wagons zip and zag all over the road--no turn signals whatsoever. What is this, non turn signaling? Is this rebellion? Because I'm all for rebellion. But I am not all for this. This aversion to turn signaling endangers lives. And it's got to stop.

And idling. You know. When people are just going to "run in the store for a second" and they leave the car running. Bah. Shut the thing off and take your time. Unless it's Vermont in the ultra dead of winter and you really are just getting a cup of coffee from a thermos style dispenser at a gas station and you can reasonably see that there is one or fewer people in line ahead of you. But even then--treat gas as precious. Otherwise, best case: you're wasting gas. Worst case: a twelve year old steals your car and commits a heinous crime and then returns the car which the cops find and they think you did the crime and good luck getting out of that one because DNA evidence doesn't lie, so have fun in prison...idler. But that's just the worst case. Chances are, you'll merely contribute to a worldwide rise in CO2 levels, causing childhood asthma and global ecological collapse. But by all means, take your time picking out those powdered donuts.

And overfishing. Boy oh boy, in many places we're just taking too much out of the ocean. All fish should be caught by hand. Literally.

You might say, whoa Chris, what's overfishing got to do with an emerging dysfunctional culture of non-turn signaling, billboards, and corn syrup? And I tell you, it's this--in every case, someone is not thinking about the other person. Serve me corn syrup? That's not thinking about the other fellow. Because corn syrup is bad and Maple Syrup is awesome and that's just a fact. Billboards blocking the view of the nice trees? Where's the love? That's not the lovely scenery for my drive that I was hoping for.

Do you know there's a trash island in the ocean that's made of floating plastic and it's bigger than Texas? Gears ground. Because someone put all that plastic out there, and it's screwing up the ocean. Yeah, we all have to think about that Burger King straw that we used in 1987 and whether it ever made it to the landfill or if, when it flew out the back of Matty's truck, maybe it flew into the ocean and began its long and perilous journey to trash island. Good shelter for wandering straws. Bad for the ocean and humanity in general. And what of zipping in front of someone without signaling, perhaps endangering the other fellow? Well then my friend, consider my gears grinded. Or ground. That's like letting a million trillion straws fly out of the back of the truck. When the tide's running and endangered species are feeding nearby on fish that resemble plastic straws.

This is all gear grinding craziness. We Abnaki embrace the idea of Helping the Other Fellow, which is really a positive way of saying, "Don't Feed the Other Fellow Shoddy Syrup", "Don't Ruin the Other Guy's Ocean By Letting Plastic Fly Out of The Back of The Truck" or "Don't Endanger the Other Fellow by Not Using a Turn Signal". We actually thought of "Don't Endanger the Other Fellow" as the camp motto first, and were all set to go with it. But then we reconsidered after further discussion suggested that it might be setting too low of a bar.

Chris Cox: Is a Camp Abnaki alumni who currently resides in Florida. Chris is a former Waterfront director and Assistant Director at Abnaki. While Chris was in Vermont he attended the University of Vermont and taught English at Burlington High School. Chris is an avid sailor, fisherman and wind-surfer.

Get Involved! If you are on Facebook, please join the "YMCA Camp Abnaki" group. Feel free to contact Brad Calabro or Brian Roy at AbnakiAlumni@gmail.com to get more information on how to help out with the Alumni Association. We are always looking for camp stories, camp pictures, life updates, job updates, and fundraising ideas. Also please email us your up to date contact information. Thanks!