

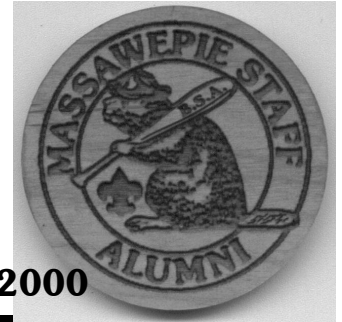
Fall 2004

# NEWSLETTER of the MASSAWEPIE

STAFF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

*Providing Spirit, Service and Support*

**Founded 2000**



## **MSAA Executive Committee**

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Don DeClerck

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*On Beaver Weekend the Alumni Association presented Kathy Elliott with a plaque recognizing her service as a founding member and first President of the Alumni Association. The presentation suitably occurred at Walt Dumas' restaurant. Kathy served as President of the Association from 2000 to 2003, and was the person who was primarily responsible for the initial effort of collecting names and addresses of former staff members. As a result of her efforts, the Association grew to nearly 100 members. During her tenure as President, the Association raised \$22,000 for the Loren R. Hakes Memorial Campfire Circle at Massawepie and ran the hugely successful 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration at Massawepie. Kathy also continues to handle our e-mail address. Thanks to Kathy for all her efforts on behalf of the Association!*

## **First Annual MSAA Beach Party Barbecue for the Pioneer Staff was a Successful Event!**

"Thanks!" "The food was great!" "The root beer was awesome!" These were just a few of the comments from attendees at the August 7 event, held in Gannett Lodge. One young staffer even raved to his mother after he got home! Although the turnout was light, Camp Director Steve Weisenreder reported that all who were there (40-45 junior and "experienced" senior staffers) appreciated and enjoyed our effort. We also received a note of thanks from Mark Catlin, Director of Support Services for Otetiana Council.

By 4pm, still unsure of how many people would eat, we were ready for 80. Due to a steady rain that started just before charcoal lighting time, we opted to hold the event inside. The decorations were all in place, including sand on the serving table. The chips, pretzels and dip were out. The half-keg of root beer (from Custom Brewcrafters in Honeoye Falls) was tapped and flowing. Other flavors of pop were in an ice chest. Food prep was well under way. The only missing pieces were the guests. (Okay, some of the staff – the more adult members – had been there earlier helping with setup. Most are also MSAA members.)

Then they started to trickle in. Each received a "welcome and thank you," plus a souvenir token and a lei. Yes, there were a few jokes among the crew about those. "Here's your token and a lei!" But hey – it was supposed to be a beach

*(Continued on page 2)*

*Shown left & above are the back & front, respectively, of the laser etched wooden tokens given as souvenirs. Brad Van Auken had them made, donating the cost. Thanks Brad!*



## Report on the 2004 MSAA Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Massawepie Staff Alumni Association was held June 5 after dinner at the picturesque Loren Hakes Memorial Campfire Circle. Chair Mark Pulvino welcomed the twenty plus members to the meeting and thanked them for the good work they had done to get Pioneer ready for campers. He also talked about activities from the past year and some plans for the next.

The slate of officers was presented for a vote and all current officers were reelected for a one-year term. Mark also welcomed George Varga to the fold, thanking him for taking on our newsletter!

Treasurer Mike Knittel presented the

## Beaver Weekend 2004 - A National Event!

It was held the first weekend of June, but some of us showed up Wednesday night to get a jump! Through Friday night, they came from Vermont, Hawaii, Texas, New York and Connecticut to participate!

Beaver Weekend #52 was a huge success! Close to 40 current Alumni members worked on various projects. Family and "Friends of Alumni" worked along side of us.

We got the campfire circle spruced up; special thanks to Kathy.

We worked on staff cabins, again. We put up drywall and painted it. The old Pioneer laundry cabin got a new, solid floor. We cleaned cabins up, and put together donated furniture. Most of the cabins are done but will need some upkeep next year.

The "Lewis" crew was on toilet patrol...repairing and replacing floors, resetting and testing toilets! Seems like more may need to be done next year. The Health Lodge got a fresh coat of paint on 2 sides. We'll have to finish the rest next year.

I can't say enough about the Alumni kitchen crew! There were garbage plates for lunch! The banquet was phenomenal...strip steaks and baked potatoes! Thanks to Gary Hicks for heading that up, and to his crew.

The Officers were impressed with the quantity and quality of work. We express heartfelt thanks to all!

financial report stating that we started the year with a balance of \$1464. Income from dues, patch sales and picnic fees totaled \$1328. Expenses totaled \$1575, including a \$1000 Meyering Rifle Range donation, leaving a balance of \$1217.

We talked about membership and the Friends of Alumni option and encouraged everyone to pay their dues and recruit members. There was a discussion about having a new tee shirt color for next year to add to the collection or replace ones that are wearing

out. We'll be looking into this.

The idea of MSAA putting on a barbecue for the staff, mentioned at an earlier Executive meeting, was discussed. It was agreed that we should proceed and after several members indicated willingness to help with and/or work the event, the date of August 7 was chosen. See "Beach Party..." article for details.

The meeting ended with the annual photo of the group with Massawepie Lake in the background. Members then left to prepare for socializing later that evening.

## Beach Party Barbecue

*(Continued from page 1)*

party! (The workers each received a token and a lei, too.) Around 5pm enough of a crowd had gathered for a brief pow-wow about the Association.

At the appointed time of 6:00, the meal was on the table and two buffet lines were started. The menu: pulled pork (home-made by MSAA Chair Mark Pulvino) and rolls; barbecued chicken breast; an assortment of spicy sauces; cole slaw; salt potatoes w/butter; and grilled in-the-husk corn on the cob w/butter. The root beer and other pops were still available. Within ten minutes the noise level decreased markedly. By the time the work crew began to eat, a few guests were going back for seconds.

Just before 6:30 we cleared away the pre-meal snacks and set out dessert. Make your own sundaes, with ice cream, nuts, sprinkles, syrups and whipped cream topped off the meal. I noticed that some opted for root beer floats, and that a few people who saw those tried one after their sundae was gone. In the middle of the sundae frenzy a group of six or eight staffers arrived. They had gone rock climbing at Camp Portaferry and returned late. So after a proper welcome (token and a lei) they headed for the food.

By 7:30, guests had begun to drift away from our Beach Party Barbecue. So the work crew began the task of putting leftovers into cold storage (to be taken to the Dining Hall in the morning for Sunday Brunch). Clean up also began. We made sure the late arrivals had dessert before we put it away. In an hour and a half or so, you would hardly have known there was a party. Except that is, for the two very full refrigerators, and the three half barrels of charcoal with their mellow glow.

This event was so successful we will do it annually. Everyone had fun and we learned a lot about how to improve on our success in future years.

*Many thanks* to the following people who made the event a success! Dave Lippitt (meeting space & initial emails), Kathy Elliott (email plea for help & digging out stored supplies), Mark Pulvino (making the pulled pork and shopping for other food), Gary Hicks (coordinating and placing the SYSCO order) and Mike Knittel (planning) – they couldn't attend but all were part of the success. Attending were Peter Collinge (cleaning, washing dishes, set up, etc.), Brad Van Auken (tokens, buying & transporting the root beer, cleaning, etc.), Brett Elliott (transporting the stuff from Mark & Kathy, shopping, cooking & grilling, etc.), Don DeClerck (shopping, prepping corn, barbecuing the chicken, etc.), Jim Lewis (cleaning, set up, helping the cooks, etc.), Gael & Phil Roberts (decorating & set up, etc.), and George Varga (planning & organizing, shopping for decorations, food & supplies, cooking and prep, etc.). I'm sure this list is incomplete so *thanks to everyone* who helped in *any way*. Let's make the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Massawepie Staff Beach Barbecue even more successful! Be there or be square!

## Massawepie and the Sykes Family: 1917 – 1951 by Peter Collinge

Who occupied the Massawepie property (between Cranberry Lake and Tupper Lake) before the Boy Scouts? The Childwold Park Hotel operated on the shores of Massawepie Lake for twenty years starting in 1890. After the 1909 season the hotel, then under the ownership of a group including Major Henry Dorr, closed permanently. In 1917 William L. Sykes, president of the Emporium Forestry Company, purchased the property from Massawepie Park, Inc., whose incorporators included Ferris J. Meigs of Tupper Lake, Williamsburg & Dorr (Boston attorneys), and Charles I. Marvin (a New York City realtor). The property was divided, with the southeastern section (surrounding Dead Creek and the stage road from Massawepie to Childwold Station) being transferred to the Emporium Forestry Company, and the remaining 2900 acres around Massawepie Lake and the nearby ponds being retained in Mr. Sykes' private ownership.

### Meyering Rifle Range Fundraising Update

The Meyering Rifle Range campaign has exceeded \$63,000 in cash and pledges, 70% of our \$90,000 goal. (About half has come from Massawepie Staff Alumni.) And thanks to recent payment of previous pledges, \$53,000+ of that amount is now cash in hand. We're still hoping for a grant through Senator Alesi of up to \$10,000 (state budget settlement pending). If that comes through, the amount still to be raised will be under \$17,000. If you know of any potential donors, please forward their names to MSAA Secretary Peter Collinge, [capejo@localnet.com](mailto:capejo@localnet.com).

On the construction side, we hit a snag - actually a very large bedrock shelf - on the site. Since shooting .22's toward rock is strongly discouraged due to potential ricochets, Ray LeChase is working on options to solve the problem, which may include some blasting of the rock. (Luckily, Jay Bailey got installation of electric service to the site donated, which will partially offset extra costs.) We're still hoping to get the foundation in this fall, so the range can be built next spring. We're planning to use the new range next camp season if possible. Thanks to alumni who have supported this project!

W.L. Sykes had started in the lumber business by building his first sawmill in Pennsylvania in 1882, and establishing the Emporium Lumber Company there in 1892 with partner William Cafilisch. In 1910, with available timber in Pennsylvania diminishing, he purchased the sawmill of George A. McCoy and Sons in Conifer (southeast of Massawepie). He also purchased A. A. Low's Bog River sawmill, planing mill and wood mill, which were used to retrofit the Conifer property. By 1911, Sykes had moved his base of operations to Conifer to take advantage of the large amount of available hardwood timber in the area. In 1912 he incorporated the Emporium Forestry Company, which took over the Adirondack operations from the Emporium Lumber Company and shared its same group of owners. The Pennsylvania mills gradually shut down between 1913 and 1916 as the New York operation grew.

To transport harvested timber within the Emporium property, and to connect the Conifer operation with a planned new mill at Cranberry Lake (later opened in 1917 along the northwest bank of Silver Lake), Sykes decided to build a railroad. Construction started in 1911, and by 1913 the 16-mile main line was completed. Frank Greco of North Carolina built this line for \$2560 per mile. The main line ran from Childwold Station, where it connected with the Adirondack Division of the New York Central (formerly the Mohawk and Malone) one mile east of Conifer, through Conifer and on to Cranberry Lake. Along the way, the line paralleled Dead Creek briefly, and later followed the South Branch of the Grasse River from the Massawepie Mire to just north of Silver Lake, then followed the northwest shore of Silver Lake to Cranberry Lake. The railroad made Cranberry Lake much more accessible to the outside world, and in 1915 the main line from Childwold Station to Cranberry Lake was incorporated as the Grasse River Railroad, a common carrier of passengers and freight.

The Emporium Forestry Company thrived. At its peak it employed 280 people and owned over 125,000 acres, along with almost 150 dwellings and two hotels in Cranberry Lake and in Conifer. Conifer was essentially an old-style company town. Much of the land near Cranberry Lake had been purchased from International Paper Company, which had previously logged it for softwood pulpwood. The Grasse River Railroad had almost 100

miles of line at its peak, with 23 locomotives and 150 log cars. The railroad's Conifer shop also created several hybrid vehicles to serve the passenger side of the business. These included self-propelled railroad cars made from a 1905 "Thomas Flyer" automobile, from an old Pullman car, and from an old rail interurban car. But the most memorable was probably "No. 11", an old converted White bus that made many of the passenger runs between Cranberry Lake and Conifer.

The Emporium Forestry Company cut and processed a total of over 450 million board feet of lumber from 1911-1949, earning W. L. Sykes the title of "Hardwood King" of the Adirondacks. Sykes was considered a progressive forestry operator who followed the "scientific forestry" methods of his friend Gifford Pinchot.

During this era, the Sykes family lived in Conifer, and used Massawepie and its old hotel buildings as a private Adirondack "camp". As a family preserve, Massawepie was spared from logging. W.L. Sykes and family stayed in the "Big Cottage" (the hotel's Wahigun Cottage) near Massawepie Lake, just south of the hotel. The Big Cottage contained 10 bedrooms, 22 beds, 5 bathrooms, and a huge central living room. Some of the other cottages were rented periodically to paying guests, typically to families that returned year after year. These families included Brigadier General William Verbeck, head of St. John's School in Manlius; Warren Smith and family; and Methodist Bishop Charles Flint of Syracuse, who used a cottage near the hotel bowling alley.

During the summers of 1920-21, Gen. Verbeck and his son Col. Guido Verbeck arranged for St. John's School to hold a summer camp for boys at Massawepie. The camp emphasized outdoor sports, swimming, forestry and woodcraft, physical training, games and singing. The campers used the old hotel casino as a recreation center. The fee for Camp Mas-sa-we-pie was \$40 per week per boy, or \$275 for July and August. (It is interesting to note that more than thirty years later in 1952 the weekly fee for Boy Scouts, including transportation from Rochester, was approximately half that of the earlier camp.) Tutoring was available for an additional \$2 per hour.

The Sykes family members and guests took advantage of the many recreational opportunities on the property and nearby in the Adirondacks. There was canoeing, sailing, bathing, and fishing for brook trout and lake trout on Massawepie Lake and the nearby

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Sykes Family

(Continued from page 3)

ponds. Hiking and some horseback riding were available on the property. Excursions away from Massawepie offered mountain climbing, golfing, fishing for bass and pike on the Raquette River, and even shopping.

Across the town road from the old hotel, near the old hotel golf course toward Catamount Pond, was the large Guide House (later known as the Park House). The Sykes family usually ate in the Park House, where a large bell that could be heard in the outlying cottages announced meals. A hired couple generally lived in the Park House, with the husband acting as caretaker and the wife serving meals to the Sykes and to the guests for a small fee. The longest serving of these couples was probably Fred and Carrie Jebo. The last caretaker couple, Elizabeth and Rolland Lee, worked from 1947-1951. Mrs. Lee, like her predecessors, was known for serving hearty and ample meals to a variety of guests. After the Scouts purchased Massawepie the Lees moved into a house near Route 3 just off the property. (The paving of Route 3 from Sevey's Corners to Tupper Lake in 1927 had made Massawepie more easily accessible by automobile.)

When W.L. Sykes' children had their own families, each family initially used one of the bedrooms in the Big Cottage,



(shown above, located on what is now the Cranberry troop site) while W.L. and his wife occupied their own separate apartment. As the families grew, they began using other buildings. Roy Sykes and family used "Number Three", three doors south of the Big Cottage. The George Sykes family stayed in a cottage north of the hotel, between Camp Sorghum (which was still sometimes occupied by former hotel owner Major Henry G. Dorr) and the Dorr Cottage further

north (which was decorated in white and occupied by Major Dorr's wife). Camp Sorghum was named after the dismal prison camp in South Carolina where Major Dorr and fellow Union officers were held captive during the late years of the Civil War. Clyde Sykes and family used "Number Fourteen" at the far north end of the row of cabins. When W. L.'s wife later needed nursing care, he moved with her to the Park House, leaving his daughters Ruth and Grace and their families to share the Big Cottage. During this era, the Park House meals became a prime "family time" for the entire Sykes clan, along with evening gatherings at the "Big Cottage".

A few other buildings saw some use during that era including the hotel boathouses, but not the hotel itself, which sat abandoned but with furnishings nearly intact. Local tradesmen were hired to do some repair work on the occupied buildings, but the other buildings saw little or no maintenance. After the death of W. L. Sykes in 1941, Clyde Sykes dealt with Massawepie cottage rentals and maintenance, while George Sykes kept the books. George had assumed primary responsibility for operating the Emporium Forestry Company along with Clyde, while Roy was superintendent of the Grasse River Railroad.

The woods operations had become less profitable since the Depression reduced demand. The Cranberry Lake mill closed in 1927. Starting in 1930, Emporium sold almost half of its land in order to reduce its corporate debt, including large sales to Tri-River Power Corporation and New York State. In 1945, Emporium sold most of its remaining land, 72,000 acres, to the Draper Corporation. Most of the land being sold off had been logged and was in a regrowth period. By 1948, the Grasse River Railroad had removed all of its rails except two miles from the Childwold Station through Conifer and about one mile to the west. In April 1949, the remaining Emporium Forestry land and property and the railroad were sold to furniture-maker Heywood-Wakefield Company of Gardner, Massachusetts. In 1950 the Emporium Forestry Company was dissolved.

As more of the Sykes family began spending most of its time outside of

the Adirondacks, there was less agreement about the wisdom of maintaining Massawepie as a family property. For years the expenses of maintaining and operating Massawepie had exceeded the relatively minor income from cottage rental and meals. Dr. Richard Sherwood, husband of W. L. Sykes' daughter Ruth, in particular questioned the Massawepie operation. Ruth Sherwood's sister, Grace Wheaton, sometimes agreed with Dr. Sherwood.

In 1946, when building materials were in short supply after World War II, the family sold the old Childwold Park Hotel building to Mahoney & Mackey of Norwood to be dismantled for scrap lumber and fittings. Afterwards, at least two "camps" in the Higley Flow area between Massawepie and Potsdam were built and trimmed with Massawepie lumber by Len Mackey.

By 1949, Clyde Sykes had begun to make serious efforts to sell Massawepie. The original asking price was \$150,000, but when the Rochester Boy Scouts' Otetiana Council offered \$65,000 Clyde countered with a \$125,000 price for the property except that the family would reserve mineral rights and a strip of land along Townline Pond. After extended negotiations, made more complicated by the resistance of Dr. Sherwood, the Massawepie property was transferred to the Scouts with no reservations in September 1951, for \$105,000. The Sykes era at Massawepie had ended, and thousands of Boy Scouts would be next to enjoy this unique property.



To see many photos of buildings and sites described in this story go to [www.masstaffalumni.org/drebyalb.htm](http://www.masstaffalumni.org/drebyalb.htm)

### Fall 2004 Picnic/Clambake

On Saturday, September 25, 2004, the Alumni Association will hold its fifth annual Fall Family Picnic/Clambake at the Shady Rest pavilion in Powder Mills Park in Rochester. Spouses (one per member) and children are specifically invited. Last year about 35 people enjoyed a great time of fellowship and superb food, and a fierce rainstorm immediately after eating!! This year's event will start at 2:00 p.m. and last until they send us home. Because you asked for it, the menu is the same (clams, chicken, corn-on-the-cob and salt potatoes, with hot dogs for the kids). Please bring your own beverage, and a munchie or dessert to pass. Please also bring your camp pictures and memories. Cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. A reservation form is below. Please return it to our mailing address no later than Friday, September 17. We hope to see you there.

**Massawepie Staff Alumni Association  
Providing "Spirit, Service and Support"!**

## Fifth Annual Fall Family Picnic/Clambake

**Come join us for an afternoon and evening of fun and food!**

**Bring your old camp photos and memories to share!**

*(Must be a PAID Association Member or family of paid member to attend.)*

**Saturday, September 25th, 2004**

**Shady Rest Pavilion**

**(off Woolston Rd. near Irondequoit Creek)**

**Powder Mills Park, Perinton, NY**

**2:00 PM - until ?**

**Cost - \$10.00 per adult (same as last year!)**

**Includes 2 dozen clams, chicken, salt potatoes and corn on the cob**

**\$5.00 per child**

**Includes hot dogs and chicken, salt potatoes and corn on the cob**

***Please BYOB and a munchie or dessert to share***

**Send below RSVP and check or money order (payable to Otetiana Council) to:**

**Massawepie Staff Alumni Association, 7131 Gulick Rd., Naples, NY 14512**

***Please Pre-register by Friday September 17th, 2004***

**RSVP – MSAA Family Picnic 9/25/04**

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**# of Adults attending** \_\_\_\_\_ **x \$10.00 = \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**# of Children attending** \_\_\_\_\_ **x \$ 5.00 = \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total enclosed = \$** \_\_\_\_\_

## Membership News

These new members have joined the MSAA since the last newsletter:

*Wilfred LeBlanc*

*Amy Lippitt (Friends of Alumni)*

Please help recruit other Massawepie staffers or friends, or send us their addresses and we'll send them an invitation. Membership in the Association is now also open to those who love Massawepie, but never served as a paid or volunteer staff member. If you know someone who wants to be part of the Association, is at least 18 years of age and in good standing with the BSA and the Council (does not have to be registered), encourage them to join as a Friends of Alumni member. For \$10 in membership dues, Friends have full membership in the Association, except they cannot be officers. Membership forms for both staffers & Friends are available under "About Us" on [www.MassStaffAlumni.org](http://www.MassStaffAlumni.org). The more the merrier!

## Upcoming Events

September 2004

- 17 Family Picnic/Clambake Registrations due
- 17-19 Massawepie Fall Skills Weekend
- 25 Fifth Annual Staff Alumni Association Family Picnic & Clambake (see article in this issue)

January 2005

- TBA MSAA Happy Hour

May 2005

- 20-22 Massawepie Spring Skills Weekend

June 2005

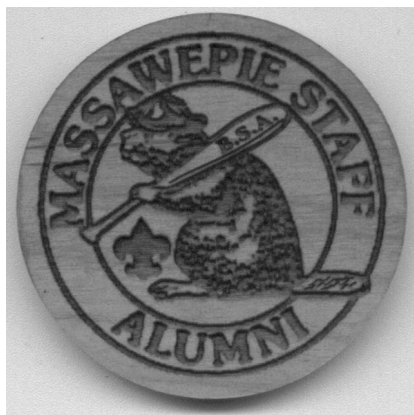
- 3 - 5 Beaver Weekend at Massawepie
- 4 MSAA Annual Meeting following Beaver Weekend dinner, in the Loren Hakes Campfire Circle

If your membership expired in May of this year or earlier (see the mailing label for your membership expiration date), please send in your renewal ASAP! *In order to keep receiving newsletters, please renew today.*

If you have moved please send your new address to: Peter Collinge, MSAA Secretary, 77 Tall Oak Lane, Pittsford, NY 14534-2639.

### Massawepie Staff Alumni Association

c/o Don DeClerck  
 J. Warren Cutler Scout Reservation  
 7131 Gulick Road  
 Naples, NY 14512



Visit us at [MassStaffAlumni.org](http://MassStaffAlumni.org)!

**To:**