

## **Troop 49 – The Pathfinders**

### **Nantucket, MA**

August, 2007

#### ***Thursday, August 9 – Travel to Nantucket***

A few years ago, I (Martin Treich) heard about Boy Scout Camp Richard out on Nantucket Island. This type of a trip required a long reservation time so in December of 2006 reservations were made for 5 days at the camp and in January, ferry reservations we made. I thought this would be a great way to visit Nantucket and I was right.

Before the trip, Lisa and Jim planed the menu and loaded all the food in Lisa's van designated for a ferry ride. Rob volunteered to be the Quartermaster and with the help of the trip participants, unloaded the gear from the troop trailer into his garage and then loaded our bikes into the trailer. We met at the OLPH parking lot as we normally do at 8:00 AM, divided into 5 cars and then headed out on the 250 mile ride. We had to catch the 2:45 PM ferry so we needed to be in Hyannis, MA by 2:15 at the latest. Just about 10 miles into the trip, we encountered bumper to bumper traffic that caused us to creep towards the Tappan Zee Bridge. We arrived at the bridge 45 minutes late! This was not good news as we had a lot of miles to go through very congested interstate 95. The ride across Westchester and western Connecticut was not bad but just past New London we got into heavy and slow traffic that seemed to go on endlessly. Looking at the map, I saw a way to bypass the traffic so I called the other cars and exited the highway. At the end of the exit ramp, a police officer told us the delay was just ahead before the next exit so Jim and I decided to get back on the highway (big mistake) while Lisa and Ed took the detour and ended up 15 minutes ahead of us. Rob and Jim were stuck on the highway with us. The cause of the delay was a overturned tractor trailer blocking 2 lanes as there was a front end loader cleaning up the debris from the road. All during the traffic jam, Jim would say, "Note to self, I hate Connecticut". We kept in touch with Lisa and Ed and told them to get on the ferry as planned which they did. Coordinating cell phones before we left really saved the day!

#### **The Ferry Ride**

When we pulled into the parking lot for the ferry, the cars were almost finished being loaded and they were still loading passengers. I decided to hold back the Scouts in Jim's car from the ferry in case they were needed for a contingency plan as Rob pulling the troop trailer was going to miss the ferry and our 8 month reservation! Contingency planning was going on in our car big time.

Lisa, Mike, Michael, Will, Colin, Matthew and Kyle were on the ferry "Eagle" and waved good bye to us on the dock. I went into the ferry office and the staff there was

excellent! They booked Rob's car on the 5 PM cargo ferry and the rest of the us on the 4:30 high speed passenger ferry. We would arrive only a half hour behind the others. We now had well over an hour to eat, use the bathroom, and relax from the 6 hour car ride without a stop! We moved all our backpacks into Rob's car and ate a very late lunch and enjoyed the warmth of the sun and the scenery. I bought out my Coast Guard signaling mirror and taught the Scouts how to use it and that kept them occupied for some time. Soon the cargo ferry "Gay Head" arrived and we watched the tractor trailers and our troop trailer get loaded on the ship. The high speed ferry, MV Iyanough, arrived and we watched them load the bike racks and luggage carts before they let us board. The 11 of us boarded and headed to the stern of the ship on the top deck for a great view across the sound on this beautiful day. The interior of the ferry had bucket seats in rows and along the side were seats facing tables. There were about 50 seats on the back deck and we settled in there as these were prime viewing spots.

The ferry left the pier and turned around and moved slowly through Hyannis Port past magnificent yachts and houses. We moved out through the channel and the ferry gradually built up speed. Once we were clear of the channel, the ferry was moving at 40 MPH according to Rob's GPS. When we stood along the side of the ship, our heads would be in the 40 MPH slipstream and it was exhilarating! There were two dogs on the back deck with us; one with a leg in a cast and the other with a woman (Linda) who was very frazzled. Linda told Bob Miezeiewski that she had also been stuck in the traffic and unable to feed the dog. Now she fed the dog human food and water from a cup. After a few minutes, the dog puked right in front of us all; real nice! Cleaning up dog puke is reason #27 why I don't have a dog. The other entertaining sights besides the beautiful scenery were two occasions where women in loose skirts came out on to the deck and the wind blew their skirts up very high giving all a free show. It was humorous. The ride was absolutely wonderful as we were in the warm sun under a perfectly clear blue sky with a warm breeze keeping the temperature perfect.

After about an hour on the ferry, we arrived in Nantucket Harbor which was bustling with activity. The view from the ferry was of a very quaint harbor town. The harbor was full of boats of all sizes and descriptions. We saw the Brant Point Lighthouse on the right side that we would visit on Saturday. We debarked and met up with the Scouts on the earlier ferry and then began the 3 mile walk to camp as their bikes were in the trailer. Lisa and Jim drove to camp and I rented my bike from Young's Bicycle Shop and rode alongside the group to camp. The walk took just less than an hour to complete. The camp was on Rugged Road which was more like a dirt trail off Lovers Lane which was a dirt road that was graded smooth. Rugged Road was rutted with holes over a foot deep which was fun to ride on with the bikes but difficult in the cars.

## **Arrival in Camp Richard**

The camp was very nice in many respects. It was well wooded with pine trees that were about 30 feet tall and scrub oaks about 10 feet tall and laurels and small pines about 10 feet tall too providing a lot of privacy in the camp site. Blueberry and

blackberry bushes were all around providing a treat. Our campsite was on soft sandy ground with four shelters arranged in a square about 80 feet apart. A few tents were pitched on the edge of the square. One shelter was designated the kitchen and that is where I slept. The kitchen shelter had a picnic table used as a food preparation and serving area which was then the cleanup area. On the side of the shelter we had a large stove and two camp supplied charcoal grills. The water spigot was a few feet away from the shelter. On Friday morning we set up the large grey tarp in the middle of the campsite and had two picnic tables under it. This was the dining room. This arrangement worked out real well so we could all sit at one long table and eat like a giant family. It also was a great place to play cards, braid phone wire, or work on the daily crossword puzzle.

The camp buildings were all in the Nantucket style with cedar shake shingles weathered grey. There were a number of small buildings including a shower house with 2 indoor and 1 outdoor shower and two indoor flush toilets and two sinks with hot and cold running water which is a real camping luxury! There was a small building with three refrigerators in it and we plugged one in to use. There was a small dining pavilion with a giant fireplace that we eyeballed as a fallback position in case of foul weather. The lodge was the finest camp lodge I have ever seen with laminate flooring, modern bathrooms, and a beautiful fireplace. There was a ping-pong table and bumper pool table in there along with plenty of chairs and tables.

Supper was made by Lisa and Jim with Bob, Rob, and Mike helping out on the grills. Lisa and Jim laid out cheese, pepperoni, chips & salsa and fresh veggies and dip for appetizers. We had burgers, hot dogs, pasta salad, beans, and chili for the hot dogs for the main course. After supper, we ate a sheet cake; man we were eating good! We did a nice cleanup, stored the food for the night and then walked to the entrance of camp to the campfire ring. The camp rules limited the fires to one fire in the center of camp. Since we were alone in camp (except for one other tent) we had the fire ring to ourselves. We just sat by the fire, roasted a few marshmallows, saw a satellite and a few shooting stars then we retired to camp at about 10:30 PM. We were all tired and fell asleep rather quickly.

### ***Friday, August 10 - 20+ mile bike ride to Siasconset***

I awoke a little after 5 AM to the distant sound of a rooster crowing followed by a pair of crows calling each other. I started the coffee and then started to write this log. After 6 AM, others started to wake and join me for a drink. Colin was the first up and we spotted a bird I did not recognize in camp. The bird was the size of a robin and had orange and white with a black head. We checked out my Audubon book and believe it was an American Redstart. Soon the others were waking and breakfast of bagels, cream cheese, oatmeal, and tang was being consumed by all under a grey sky. We set up the large grey tarp in the center of the campsite and moved two picnic tables under it. It was a nice arrangement that separated the kitchen from the dining room.

## **Lifesaving Museum**

At about 9:00 AM Lisa and Ed drove into town to rent bikes while we got organized for the day. Upon their return, we reviewed the bike hike plan, packed the lunch supplies in Lisa's van and then headed down Lover's Lane to the bike path. We took the bike path west on Old South Road then north to Polpis Road to the Life Saving Museum. I went into the museum and introduced myself and the group and the tour guide, Amanda, only charged us \$2 for the Scouts and the chaperones were free for a total of \$22 where the listed price is \$5 per person! Amanda gave us a quick tour of the building explaining the Life Saving Service and the boats, breeches buoy, and lighthouses. She explained that men on the light ships would weave baskets to pass the time and these became known as lightship or Nantucket baskets. She had a sample and showed the Scouts how to weave and a few took turns weaving.

## **Sankaty Lighthouse**

In a very light drizzle we continued on Polpis Road eastbound to Sankaty Light. We would pass bike groups and others would pass us. It was a learning experience for the Scouts to deal with passing and oncoming traffic on the 8 foot wide bike path. Luckily, there were no accidents.

I stopped on the path by the major turn off the bike path to the lighthouse to make sure everyone made the turn. At the turn, a telephone repairman was working on a switch box. I started to pick up pieces of wire off the ground and straighten them out. I told him I used to weave the wires into belts. He asked me if I wanted some and then gave me a bundle of about 200 pieces about a yard long. He also gave me a spool with about 200' of bell wire on it. I was grateful as we now had arts & crafts supplies to keep the Scouts busy.

We made it to Sankaty Lighthouse by about 11:45 AM and then set up a chow line on the ground. We made sandwiches and had apples overlooking the golf course with the Light House on the other side of the fence. Other tourists looked on our spontaneous lunch line in amazement and we offered them sandwiches but had no takers. After lunch, Lisa traded driving spots with Jim and a Scout or two took rest time in the van.

## **Siasconset**

Riding in the town of Siasconset was a bit nerve wracking as the streets were very narrow and cars passed real close. Before we left the light house, I told all the Scouts to rally at Broadway and Main street not know the true distances or what was there. It turns out it was only about a mile away and there was a Deli at the very rally point I picked randomly. We stopped at the deli and were able to grab a soda, ice cream, cookies and I grabbed a nice decafe coffee. Our Pathfinder, Jim, told me about

a quaint bridge and access to a public beach a few hundred feet away. We left our bikes along with the dozens of other bikes and walked down the lane past absolutely perfectly cute cottages to a bridge over Gully Road where we paused for a group photo and then and then down the stairs to the beach. The lifeguard was huddled under blankets in the damp air. We spent a few minutes on the beach yelling to the Scouts to keep away from the water then returned to the bikes. The ride out Milestone Road was very boring as it was a straight line for about 8 miles with a forest preserve on the left. The bike path had long sloping hills that were tiring and would sit in the distance and just taunt us. After endless pedaling we came to the bike path to Old South Road and then the rain started to intensify. By the time we all got into camp at about 1:45 the rain was steady and we were glad we had the tarp set up.

### **Evening in camp in the rain**

We made the best of the afternoon and evening playing cards and UNO under the large grey tarp and in the lodge. We played UNO elimination with the loser of each hand leaving the table to rotate Scouts through the game. At times the rain would let up a bit and stop completely but then return in force. For supper we had pasta and sauce that was home made by Jim and garlic bread and salad. Heating the garlic bread on the charcoal grill was new to Scouts but they did it well. The hot pasta and sauce felt nice inside on this cool and dreary evening. Spirits were low when we went to bed as we were all damp and chilled and a lot of our stuff was getting wet and dirty with wet sand and pine needles.

### ***Saturday, August 11 - Touring downtown and the beach.***

I awoke a little after 5 AM to the rooster's call, turned on the coffee pot to perk, and headed to the outside shower at the lodge. I shaved in the bathroom then went out to the shower. It was a little chilly outside but the hot shower felt good and refreshing. The rain had stopped in the night and the skies were clearing. As I left the shower, Rob arrived. In camp I found Lisa anxious for a shower and walked with her to the shower. Lisa was comfortable with the arrangement as it was similar to her parents home in Cape Cod. The inside showers are reserved for Scout, no adults. I told Lisa that if the outside showers were inappropriate for her, I would stand guard outside the shower house and give her privacy. Soon every adult had enjoyed a refreshing shower and the skies were clearing and the brilliant sun was shining through. We had egg sandwiches for breakfast and by the time breakfast was over, the skies were brilliant blue and the warm sun invited us to hang out towels, sleeping bags, pads, and clothes to dry. We left camp at about 9:40 as we took our time to sweep out our tents and shelters as they were drying out. The sun lifted our spirits very high and we had great expectations for the day.

## **Touring Downtown Nantucket**

The goal of the morning was to ride into town, do a little sight seeing, and find out about tour opportunities. We mounted up on our bikes with Rob and Lisa following in the van as they needed to stop at the grocery store and were acting as our backup. The Scouts did an excellent job biking and stopping at the rally points along the way. There was some complaining as some Scouts were jockeying for a better position in the line of bikes. The roads were very narrow and sometimes the cars were just inches away from us. The drivers were kind to us for the most part but it was still scary. Additionally, most of the roads have no street signs so you had to navigate real carefully and stop frequently to reorient ourselves. Some roads were only 80 feet apart so you can easily miss a road since if you are riding, they just zoom past. At one point, we were exiting one of dozens of 4 way stops, and were climbing a slight hill when I realized that we just passed the left turn, Scouts instinctively turned to the left and in an instant 15 bikes were swarming like bees in this narrow street and a taxi was right in the midst of it. One time I was riding and I stopped short and the Scout following me was so close he slammed on his breaks and his hand grip ended up under my seat! We had a discussion on bike safety and traffic safety often.

For the most part, we tried to stay on designated bike routes going from the rotary up Pleasant Street, to Jefferson, to Fair Street, then to Main Street. The area around Main and Federal was rough cobblestone and we had to walk the bikes as riding was challenging in the confusing traffic patterns. We parked our bikes at the tourist information office at about 10:15 and broke into small groups so we could walk the shopping district returning to the tourist office by 11. We stopped in shirt shops for "T" shirts and hats. We bought newspapers, post cards, candy, and Tylenol PM (\$13.35) to help the adults get to sleep easily. While on Main Street, we came across Linda from the ferry with the dog that barfed. We talked to Linda and the dog a bit and then went on our way. We noticed she still had on the same black skirt from Thursday which we could understand since some Scouts were still in their Thursday pants. At the tourist information center we were given directions to places that interested us and advice on Kayak rentals which Mike volunteered to coordinate. We left the tourist office and headed to the Coffin School Museum. This was one of four buildings included with our admission price to the Life Saving Museum.

## **The Coffin School**

The Coffin school was staffed by a pair of senior citizen women who were glad to have the company. Holly gave us a nice overview of the history of the school and the strong role women played in Nantucket. In Nantucket, most of the women were married to whalers so their husbands were gone for up to three years. The women were Quakers who believed women should know how to read so this led to many women establishing small business for themselves while their husbands were away. The women on Nantucket had more freedoms than women on the mainland due to the unique nature of island life. The museum was quaint and consisted of a large

auditorium and two nice size exhibit rooms with artifacts, paintings, and photographs of women in power in Nantucket history. We all enjoyed this short visit. Before we left, Holly called the two other historic sites in the tour package but they were no longer open for the day. With this news, we plotted a course north and east to the Brant Point Lighthouse. The ride there was nice through quaint picturesque streets and was only about a mile away but the roads were treacherously narrow with cars passing us. On the way back we had to walk our bikes down Lilly as we were going against the one way traffic.

## **Brant Point Lighthouse**

The Brant Point lighthouse was a quaint but small wooden lighthouse at the entrance to Nantucket Harbor. The harbor was chock full of boats from small sailboats to ocean cruising yachts. Here we relaxed for a while to look for shells, walk in the water, and Will flew his kite. Lisa met us here with Rob and they took turns sitting in the car as the parking is impossible. We watched the Iyanough and Eagle ferries pass each other in the channel about 600 feet away from us. After soaking up some sun and picking up some shells we got back on our bikes and rode down the street to the Brant Point Coast Guard station where I explained the navigation aids and layout of the station and the boats. This must be excellent duty for the Guardsmen stationed here. We then reviewed the safe biking practices once more as the Scouts needed to constantly be reminded to keep single file, keep safe spacing, and keeping hard to the right. We headed back down Easton, to Lilly, to Prospect and then stopped to look at the windmill which was on the highest point in the center of the island so we needed a little rest after coming up the hill and to collect everyone. From here it was downhill on Surfside Road bike path down to surfside beach. I missed the turn and we ended up in the small sand streets of Surfside and then got on to Lover's Lane and took that sand road back to the camp on Rugged Road. We arrived at camp and then had cold cuts, grilled cheese and tuna sandwiches for lunch.

## **The Beach**

After lunch, we headed down to the beach at the end of Surfside Road. A large group went to the beach before me so Jim and Matt and I rode our bikes to the beach. Naturally, after walking for 10 minutes on the beach and not finding the Scouts, we returned to our bikes and were able to call Mike and get directions to the Troop at the beach at the end of Surfside Road. The beach was very family friendly with a large parking lot, bike racks, concession stand and bath house facilities. We stayed right in front of the lifeguards. The water was brisk but felt good. Scouts stayed in the surf for hours regardless of the cool water. Soon Bob Mizeiewski and Jim arrived walking along the water line. They had walked down the beach looking for the Scouts too and they were exhausted and got right in to cool off. The water was very refreshing and very clean and clear. Being out in the ocean away from rivers may be the reason why the water is so clear. At 5:00 PM the lifeguards left and I pulled the Scouts out of the water in accordance with the guide to safe Scouting; no lifeguards, no swimming. We

then took a group photo on our bikes and then did the mile ride back to camp. The ride down the sand roads was challenging and fun and added to the atmosphere of being carefree and adventurous.

## **Obstacle Course and Supper**

Before supper, I had to do an hour of service to the camp for our troop. I had to cut the grass in the chapel and on the obstacle course. I had to search for the obstacle course as it was far to the south side of camp. When I got back to camp, the Scouts were looking for something to do before dinner so I took them to the obstacle course and they loved it. After riding a few miles on bikes, swimming in the ocean for 3 hours, they still had energy to spare on the obstacle course.

We had dinner of grilled chicken breasts, mashed potatoes, gravy, boiled carrots and salad. It was delicious! Lisa surprised us with another great dessert of brownies and blondies. Having a refrigerator for the leftovers was a tremendous bonus!

In the campsite near us (about 200 feet through the dense woods) was a OA ceremonial team that was staying in camp to practice their dance routines. On Saturday night, they had a OA Brotherhood ceremony and Rob and Curtis went to the ceremony returning just before we went star gazing.

## **Star Gazing**

Saturday night was a night I have been waiting for since I received confirmed camp reservations back in December. This was a great night to see the Perseids meteor shower as the sky was clear and the air was cool and still. We brought our chairs, foam pads, and blankets out to the large field where we were joined by Scouts and leaders from the OA ceremonial team. We settled in and were presented with one of the clearest and brightest night skies I have ever seen. The Milky Way was clearly visible as was Jupiter. I was disappointed I forgot my binoculars at home but this was only a minor disappointment. I had my sky chart and my red-lens flashlight so as Jim called it, I gave a college level Astronomy 201 course. I pointed out many constellations and the Andromeda galaxy and shared the map to aid others in finding the constellations. We stayed on the field till just after 11 PM seeing many meteors. Some were brilliant streaks leaving a trail to linger for a second or two. Others were so quick and short that you doubted yourself that you even saw it until another person called it out too. It was a very peaceful and enjoyable show.

## ***Sunday, August 12 – Kayaking, Geocaching, Jeep Tour, Beach***

Sunday dawned with mist that burned off early. Mike made reservation with Sea Nantucket for kayak rentals at 9:00 AM so we had a goal of getting up and out early.



Colin and Brendan were cooks making pancakes on the large stove with the new griddle which worked out real well. Colin and Sam had picked wild blueberries the night before and we made some blueberry pancakes along with sausages and fruit cups.

## **Kayaking**

I drove Lisa's car to the kayak rental place to have in case Scouts needed to ride home after kayaking. We rented the kayaks and got settled into them. Lisa elected to relax in camp while we were away. Rob and Brendan along with Ed and Sam elected to go Geocaching instead of kayaking and they had fun finding two caches on the island.

We had 13 kayaks, one of which was a double with Jim and Matt. We headed south and east along the south side of the bay in water about 4 feet deep so we had plenty of space to get used to the kayaks and get used to paddling. After we did this check, I told Curtis and Adam to lead the way about a mile away to the next rally point to give them the opportunity to use their leadership skills. I also used the time to watch the Scouts pass me so I could observe their boat and skills to identify issues. When I got to the rally point, Adam and Curtis had done exactly what I had asked reinforcing my trust in their leadership skills. At the rally point under a wooden pier in the shade, we hydrated up, made some adjustments and then got together in a group and discussed our next movement which was straight across the bay to the anchored Nantucket lightship. This would be tricky as we would cut across the recreational boating channel and subjected to wakes. I put PJ in the lead as he was the last Scout to arrive at the rally point and it's healthy for the team to move the slowest to the front as they are then subtly pushed by the presence of the followers. PJ lead us to the lightship which was a great backdrop for some photos with the vibrant red ship against the clear blue sky. We continued on to Coatue which is a large spit of land that is uninhabited and kept as a wildlife refuge. We stayed on Coatue for about an hour exploring the shore line, collecting shells, and taking a refreshing dip in the warm bay waters under a brilliant blue sky. It was a beautiful scene and we referred to the place as "Gilligan's Island" as it was so deserted, there were no signs of man on the beaches, not another footprint other than ours! Adam collected some horseshoe crabs and brought the largest one back to the collection on kayaks. He wanted to bring it back to Oakland but it was way too stinky and we would not allow him to bring it on the kayak. On the beach I found a length of rope and cut it loose from the tree roots as a good piece of rope is always useful. Sure enough, as we began the long paddle back to the rental location, two kayakers were worn out. I made a towing bridle and towed one and with another rope I tied Jim kayak to another so he could help that kayak along the way. The ride back was long but enjoyable as we cut straight through the anchorage of dozens of boats getting a close look at them along the way. We saw boats from as far away as Bermuda, Maine, New Jersey, and Delaware in the anchorage.

We were back on dry sand by a few minutes after noon. Jim walked down the block to retrieve Lisa's van while the rest of us refilled our water bottles and hydrated up. While Jim was getting the car, the scream of a car alarm went off and sure enough it

was Lisa's car. Lisa had given us the valet key without the fob. Now the security system was activated and the alarm was screaming. Jim drove up to us with the alarm screaming. Jim was going to drive the car back to camp so we put his bike on the bike rack while trying to figure out how to kill the alarm. It seemed that once the doors were closed the alarm would stay off. Now I needed to get in the car so I had to climb through the van window. We were laughing hysterically at the comedy of the screaming alarm and the attention it was drawing.

## **Coskata-Coatue Wildlife Refuge**

A few months ago, Rob had made reservations for a jeep tour of the Coskata-Coatue Wildlife Refuge. The vehicle was actually a Ford Expedition that could hold 6 passengers. I had made plans to meet Rob at the Kayak rental place at 12:20 PM so I could join him on the tour but since we got out early, Jim dropped me off at the end of Lover's Lane. Lisa, Brendan, Ed and Sam rounded out the 6 of us. They packed me a sandwich of the leftover chicken from last night on a roll and a cold soda and fruit cup for which I was grateful. Rob drove while his onboard navigation system lead us to the refuge entrance. We were about a half hour early yet our tour guide, Al, was already waiting for us. Al was a local guy in his late 60's and lived most of his life on Nantucket. He was a tour guide along with catering and bartending home parties on the island. He told us about the famous people he met at home parties on the island from Senator Kerry to Tim Russert and many more. Al would drive a bit then stop and point out a piece of nature or a historical feature of the island. Along the way we spotted fiddler crabs and he passed one around the inside of the car and it almost fell into Lisa's pants by accident as she leaned forward so it could be passed to the third row seats. Luckily the crabs were only about an inch long so they couldn't pinch us. When we were out looking at the crabs, a swarm of misquotes came out of the bushes and started to attack us. We have not seen any misquotes in camp and this was a shock. Al told us to get into the car and roll up the windows and we did real quickly then killed the flies in the car. In only a few minutes some of us had multiple bites. It was an amazing experience making us grateful we were not walking outside. Near the ocean, away from the bushes there were no bugs. Al showed us an Osprey nest in the distance and with binoculars we were able to see the mother and a adolescent in the nest and the father circling high above hunting. We saw a Loon on the beach and some American Oystercatchers, Tree Swallows, Semipalmated Plover, Terns, and a variety of mature and immature gulls. We saw a fleeting glimpse of a Northern Harrier too.

## **Great Point Lighthouse**

The car drove through the sand dunes down to the Great Point Lighthouse on the northern tip of the island. Riding in the sand was the bumpiest experience I have ever had as we were shaken all about the car. It was like a ride at Six Flags! Along the way we passed dozens of jeeps with beach permits who were enjoying the solitude of the refuge or were clustered together surf fishing. Occasionally, Al would exert his

authority and tell another car to slow down as the speed limit was 15 MPH in the reserve and teenagers in a jeep on the sandy beach have a hard time driving only 15 MPH. At the point, Al stopped at the light house and we enjoyed the three porta-potties. Al opened up the lighthouse doors and lead us into the center of the lighthouse. The winding circular stair case had open grates and he told us not to look up as the sand from the shoes of the people on top of us rained down on us and settled in our hair. After 66 steps we were at the top of the lighthouse and Al showed us how to turn on and off the light. Actually, there is a photoelectric cell and putting your thumb over the hole made the sensor think it was night time and the light turned on. So Brendan and Sam were able to turn the lighthouse light on and off. Pretty cool...not too many kids in Oakland have ever turned on a lighthouse light that can be seen for 12 miles! Ducking through a hatch in the wall, we climbed out onto the railing around the top of the lighthouse. The views were fantastic. To the south we could see the Sankaty Lighthouse flashing every 7 seconds. To the west we could just make out the major buildings in the harbor and to the north we could see the rip in the water created by the currents colliding as one current came up the east coast of the island and one current came across the north cost. In this area at the tip of the island, about a dozen seals played in the water less than 50 feet from the beach. In hindsight, we should have asked Al to drive us closer to the seals but he considered them more of a pest than an attraction. We got back in the car and bounced about a thousand more times before we returned to the pavement by the Wauainet gatehouse at about 3 PM. It was a very enjoyable educational excursion and I loved seeing birds I have never seen before.

## **Back In Camp**

When we returned to camp, Will had departed as his father had come over on the ferry about noon time and retrieved him as Will needed to be in Cape Cod in the morning for another camp. Most of the rest of the Scouts and adults were at the beach once again enjoying the sun and surf. I retreated to the Lodge and wrote more of this journal and uploaded photos from 5 cameras onto my laptop while Ed watched Sam play bumper pool with Scouts from another troop. I played Sam twice and he beat me both times. While in the lodge, I recharged my phone and camera as both were getting a workout. I returned to the campsite to find the ham steak and Macaroni and cheese supper being prepared. A few of the men went into town in search of Clam Chowder. After the rest of us had just about finished eating supper, the men returned and gave us some delicious clam chowder. Smores over the coals followed the clam chowder. Another great camp feast was enjoyed by all.

## **Star Gazing**

After supper we started to pack up camp. We organized the entire troop and had the grey tarp down and in the trailer in seven minutes! The kitchen was broken down and packed in the trailer too. Once we were done packing all we could, we relaxed and some Scouts went to the Lodge while others hung out in camp and braided phone wire.

I took a nice hot outdoor shower to relax and get all the salt and sand off of me. At about 9:45 PM we gathered our star gazing gear and headed out to the large field for another night of star gazing. Earlier in the evening I proclaimed that I heard the fog horn from the Brant Point Lighthouse about 3 miles away but others did not hear it. I guess my experience listening to the Shark River fog horn for hours in my late teens imprinted that specific noise in my memory. Once we got settled down in the field, we could all hear the fog horn in the distance and the waves crashing on the shore about a mile south of us. It was very quiet in camp. There was a haze in the air that dimmed the stars a bit yet we still saw the Milky Way and many constellations and Jupiter. We saw a nice number of meteors but not as many as the night before. At about 10:45 campers were returning to the campsite. Soon it was Jim and I on our mats talking and listening to the snores of someone sleeping nearby. In the darkness we did not know who it was or even if it was someone from our troop. Nearing 11 PM we made a pact that we would leave after the next bright meteor; as Jim said, "we need to win by two". Shortly, a nice medium size meteor streaked directly overhead just west of Vega and we called it a night. With our flashlights on we noticed the sleeper was Adam. We toyed with the idea of leaving him sleep alone in the middle of the field laughing at the thought of him waking up cold and alone in the middle on the dark field. Then we thought the better of it and woke Adam and walked him back to camp.

### ***Monday, August 13 - Nantucket Ferry and the ride home.***

I awoke at about 5:17 AM to the call of the rooster off in the distance. As I started the coffee pot to boil and head to the Lodge for the bathroom and a shower, the camp was shrouded in a light fog that coated everything with a heavy dew. I enjoyed my last outdoor hot shower with the worlds best skylight. The hot water and the cool air were a refreshing mixture in the morning and I did relish the moment. I walked back to camp passing Rob along the way and then began to pack up my gear. I had a nice hot cup of perked coffee and got the breakfast food out and then started to pack up the rest of the kitchen supplies. Soon Scouts and adults were stumbling about. Lisa surprised the Scouts one last time by pulling out the big box of Lucky Charms for the last meal in camp! We had two packages of mini cup cakes that were never eaten so cupcakes were on the breakfast menu too. I took a whole package to the OA Scouts next door and they were grateful. We were making excellent time cleaning up and dismantling the bikes to pack them in the trailer and I told the Scouts they were doing exceptional.

### **To the Ferry**

The plan was to use Lisa's van to shuttle us down to the ferry while Rob's car was packed full with our backpacks. I had a rental bike along with Sam, Colin and Matthew. I told Lisa that I would ride my bike back to town one last time and Colin and Matthew wanted to join me. San's helmet was broken so Adam volunteered to ride Sam's bike back to town. The four of us powered down the large bumps of Rugged Road getting air on some of the bumps. We flew down Lover's Lane then crossed onto

the bike path toward town. Still, I had to remind one of the Scouts to keep to the right except to pass as some local bikers would just fly by you on the left or come at you quickly from behind a blind curve in the path. It would not be a Scout bike ride without a few close calls and screeching breaks. Matthew asked to stop along the way as he spotted a blackberry bush the day before so we stopped and had a fruit snack straight from the bush. We then got back on the bikes and headed through the Rotary then up Pleasant Avenue to Jefferson to Fair Street then to Main Street. At Main Street we waited until the traffic was clear before we made a break for it as we had to go right about 200 feet then left about 200 feet on a street paved with boulders about 250 years ago. This is the center of the shopping district and is typically a traffic nightmare so we were lucky and found the intersection clear and bolted through safely then caught our breath in the next block. The street back there was not Belgium block of uniform size instead it was just irregular sized round rocks with the relatively flat sides up but they were worn smooth and slick and the gaps between the rocks were significant to make your fillings in your teeth to nearly shake loose when you rode over them.

We went the next four block just fine and I was taking in one last look at the old churches, store fronts, and snooty tourists. We made the last turn and the pier with the ferry was just ahead of us along with the bike shops. A mere fifty feet from the bike shop I hear a crash and screams just feet behind me and I turn and see a Scout under two bikes with another Scout on top of him. Bike store employees bolted into action and we disentangled the flesh from the metal. My heart was in my throat. After perhaps 40 miles on the dangerous roads we have an accident 5 seconds from the end of the ride. Luckily the Scout was wearing his helmet correctly and emerged from the bottom of the pile with a bump on the knee and a scratch. It appears he was reaching into his pocket for his bike lock key and then had to break but his back break hand was in his pocket so he slammed on the front break and Newton's Law of Motion was proven correct as the front of the bike stopped and the back kept going, up and over and taking the Scout with it till he landed on the pavement. The bike shop folks were great and in a few minutes the Scouts had recovered and was out searching for food and bargains in the local shops. Soon other Scouts arrived and did some last minute shopping before hitting the ferry at about 9:50 AM, some with Clam Chowder in hand.

## **The Ferry Ride**

I claimed two tables on the port side of the second deck and used the phone to call the adults so we could gather and finalize the trip costs. Scouts sat at an adjacent table playing cards and some were outside in the light fog and light drizzle. We were all amazed to find the cost per person being only \$145 for the 5 day trip! This excluded the kayaks, rental bikes, and jeep tour which were paid by the individual participants. The food cost per person was about \$45 for the trip which is testament to the planning and shopping skills of Jim and Lisa. It was only when we were on the ferry that I realized that the high speed ferry ticket from Hyannis was only a one way ticket. I had asked for round trip tickets but in all the confusion they only gave me a one way ticket which was still 50% of the one way high speed ferry cost. The ticket taker was more

interested in teasing the Scouts; "I knew you were Scouts cause I could smell you 50 feet away!" that he didn't even look at the ticket carefully enough to spot the issue. I never knew it until I inspected the receipt closely on board the ship. Oh well, 11 of us got a free ride.

After the ferry docked, we took the shuttle bus to the remote parking lot about a mile away where Rob and Lisa were waiting for us. We moved the gear from Rob's car into our cars and then headed on our way home. After stopping for gas, we had some minor traffic in certain spots but were making good time. In Connecticut we took a 20 minute rest stop at McDonalds and were back on the road heading for home. Luckily the traffic gods were smiling on us and we were home by 6 PM after having left the ferry parking lot at 1:00 PM.

All things considered, it was my favorite Scout trip. We had a great group of Scouts who were supportive of each other. The adults all pitched in to share the work so everyone worked a little and had some down time too. Enabling folks to choose different options reduced the stress to try and please everyone. Seeing the stars and the meteor shower was a real treat for me. During the trip we started to hear the Scouts say, "next year when we come back I want to see...". The adults all shared the opinion and look forward to a return trip. We have the menu, know what campsites we want, know how to make ferry reservations, all we need is a few parents to commit to the time in August and to start to make reservations at Camp Richard. Possible things to see next time are the whaling museum, the Coskata Wildlife Refuge, touring the western point of the island, and possibly scheduling a tour of the Coast Guard station.

### **Lessons Learned:**

1. Reschedule departure time to avoid traffic delays.
2. Avoid Connecticut as much as possible.
3. Take a few bike rides in Oakland to get the Scouts used to riding on streets in a large group.
4. Look into a ferry from Weehawken to Nantucket to avoid Connecticut.
5. Everyone should always travel with a water bottle.
6. See what airfare to Nantucket is to avoid driving through Connecticut.
7. Don't stand near a dog on the ferry that was just fed a egg and cheese biscuit.
8. Don't ask Connecticut cops about traffic delays.
9. Print out rules for Canasta, Black Jack, and Poker to make teaching easier and arguments fewer.
10. Get GPS for cars and bikes so we can figure out where we are when streets have no signs and to get around 10 mile backups in Connecticut.
11. Always leave the key fob when lending car keys so the alarm can be disabled.

Recorded August 9-15, 2007 by Martin Treich, Scoutmaster, Troop 49

### the end ###

