

The Rucksack

Newsletter of the Friends of McNabs Island Society
The society is a registered charity: CCRA number 88847 4194 RR 0001



Volume Sixteen, Issue 4

Summer/Fall 2008

Fall Foliage Tours of McNabs Island



Sunday October 19, (raindate October 26)

Time 10 am - 4 pm

Cost: \$10 for members & children, \$12 for non-members



Come to the island and enjoy a tour! There will be guided history and nature tours as well as two new tours for this year, Hangman's Beach book tour and the McNabs Family graveyard tour. The historic island homes of "midway king" Bill Lynch and his family will be open to the public.

Location: Meet at Murphy's on the Water, Cable Wharf,
Halifax Waterfront before 10 a.m.

Space on the boat is limited and available on First Come, First Served basis.

Wear comfortable shoes and bring a lunch and drinking water. Larger groups must pre-register with the Friends of McNabs Island by calling Cathy at 434-2254 (evenings) or Faye (443-1749) or by e-mailing mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca.

Visit www.mcnabsisland.ca for more details.

In this Issue:

Obituaries	2	Beach Cleanup	3
Letter to Friends	4	Former Premier Remembers	5 & 6
Tour Photos	7	Thanks to Donors	8
Raddall Book Tour	9	Paddle Cleanup	10
Notices & Events	11	Membership Form	12

**Friends of McNabs Island Society
Rucksack**

Web address: <http://www.mcnabsisland.ca>

Published 4 times each year: Spring, Summer, Fall & Winter

MEMBERSHIPS: Individual Membership or Newsletter Only is \$15 per year, Family Membership is \$20 per year, Supporting Membership is \$50 per year and Sustaining Membership is \$100 per year. We are a registered charity and accept donations.

Contact address: **Friends of McNabs Island**

PO Box 31240
Gladstone RPO
Halifax, NS
B3K 5Y1

DEADLINES: 1 February for the Spring issue, 1 June for the Summer issue, 1 September for the Fall issue and 1 November for the Winter issue.

We welcome contributions, ideas and feedback.

DISCLAIMER: The articles contained in this newsletter are the property of the authors. No portion of the publication may be duplicated without permission from the author/editor. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Society. We cannot vouch for groups, businesses or activities described in this newsletter. Information is provided for members' interest and readers are to use their own discretion.

**Friends of McNabs Island
Executive 2008**

President

Cathy McCarthy

Secretary

Denyse Contrasty

Treasurer

Judith Campbell

Membership Secretary

Carolyn Mont

Newsletter Editor

Theresa RolletMcWilliams

Board Member

Katalin Ohlsson

Board Member

Faye Power

Board Member

Carolyn Gallagher

Board Member

Royce Walker



A Fond Farewell

The Friends of McNabs Island Society wishes to acknowledge the passing of two members of the organization, Irene Arthur and Don Ross.

Irene Mary Arthur was born on McNabs Island August 15th, 1913, and was the daughter of Master Gunner, Russell Arnett, who was stationed at Fort McNabs. Irene and three siblings were all born on the island and lived there until Irene went to high school, when they moved to Preston Street in Halifax.

Irene had many fond memories, including skating and going to dances at the fort. Her family took turns boarding the school teacher, who came from the Valley, and she remembered that when her parents went out for the evening, the school teacher would make them go to bed early - Irene didn't like that. Irene passed away peacefully at the Northwood Care Centre on August 21, 2008.

Donald Salter Ross was born Sept 9, 1913 and passed away August 19, 2008. Don and his wife Nancy were long-time members of the Friends of McNabs Island Society. Nancy was a direct descendent of Peter McNab and Don worked tirelessly to piece together the McNab family genealogy. Don and Nancy attended our McNabs Island dinner at RA Park last March and very much enjoyed themselves.

Our condolences are with the families of these extraordinary people.



McNabs and Lawlor Islands get Cleaned up Again...



Volunteers cleaning up Back Cove

Cleaning up McNabs and Lawlor Islands has its challenges and its rewards. For the past 18 years, the Friends of McNabs Island have organized beach cleanups of the islands. Thousands of people have given freely of their time to clean up McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park over the years and we thank them for their efforts. It takes a special kind of person to give back to their community and volunteer their time to clean up someone else's garbage.

Cleaning up McNabs and Lawlor Islands is not an easy thing to do. Arrangements have to be made to transport volunteers to the island and to get the garbage off the island. All of this is costly too. Today it costs us \$1000 plus HST to rent the Murphy's on the

Water boat to take volunteers to McNabs for the cleanup. On top of that we have to pay a local fisherman to haul the garbage back to Eastern Passage where HRM trucks pick it up and haul it away for disposal or recycling.

With all this bother, one might ask, "Why do we do it?" It is because we love our islands and want to make sure that the islands look like a park and not a garbage dump. We don't want irresponsible people who toss garbage out of their lives and into our harbour to ruin our island parks.

We have kept a running total on the amount of garbage collected from the islands over the years. Since 1991 we have collected over 8,000 bags of garbage from the shores of McNabs and Lawlor Islands. This amount is staggering and unfortunately there seems to be no end to cleaning up the beaches. Each year we can predict that there will be hundreds of Tim Horton's cups, plastic bags, fishing gear, oil containers, and other assorted plastics littering the beaches of these beautiful islands.

This past June our annual Environment Week cleanup netted another 215 bags of garbage. Seventy-five volunteers scoured McNabs Island picking up everything from an old TV rejected by HRM garbage collectors to a 20-year old Towers shopping cart.

Volunteers this year were hoping to find less sewage-related garbage since two of HRM's new sewage plants are up and running. But, alas, there were still hundreds of plastic tampon applicators strewn about on the beaches of McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park. Hopefully next year with all the sewage plants up and running, we won't find this eyesore littering the beaches anymore. If only something could be done to filter out those Tim's cups!



Towers shopping cart recovered from Mauger's Beach

A Letter to the Friends

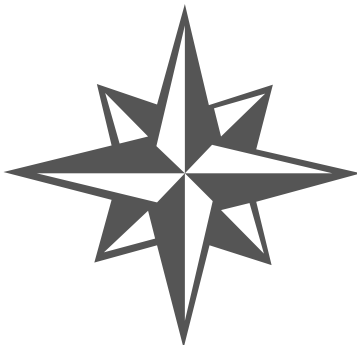
Just a note to say how much I enjoyed reading “The Rucksack” with the information from Don Bianco. I also spent my summers on McNabs Island for a number of years as a small child. We had a cottage in the Ives Cove area looking across to the mainland. I remember most of the names in the list of families in that area, especially Patty Morriarty. I especially remember the times he organized a family day with lots of games, races, etc. He had a dock for his boat and one of the games was for him to have a long pole going out from the end of the dock, which he would grease and at the end of it was a bag of coins for whoever could slide out on the pole to the end without falling in the water. My brother Bob won it at least once.

My dad, Arthur Sibley, bought a large boat which had been a water taxi so it had lots of room. He quite often transported neighbours on the Island back and forth to Halifax to shop for groceries, etc. My dad worked in Halifax so he made the trip each day during the summer months. We usually went to the Island in May or early June so we went in the boat with Dad each day to attend school in Halifax until school closed for the summer. We usually stayed until late September or early October. We loved the spring and the fall on McNabs.

My brother Art was stationed on McNabs Island at Fort McNab when the war broke out. He used to bring some of the fellows from the camp to our cottage to wash and shave as the facilities when the camp reopened did not have many amenities in the beginning, after being closed down for many years. My brother Bill was in the Air Force and stationed at Eastern Passage so he came over to the cottage as often as he could.

If there is anyone in your membership that remembers my family, I would love to hear from him or her. There were eight children in the family, from the eldest to the youngest: Jean, Bill, Art, Hazel, Aubrey, Cliff, Bob and Myrle. I will look through some of my old pictures and see if there is any you might like to put in the Rucksack.

Merle Hamly
(nee Myrle Sibley)
727 Banwell Court
Qualicum Beach, B.C.
V9K 1C2



The Findlay-Innis Farmhouse fades into history

**HE'D NEVER BEEN OFF THE ISLAND:
Former Premiere John Buchanan Recalls his First Trip to McNabs Island**

by Carolyn Mont

I recently spent an interesting couple of hours with former premier John Buchanan talking about McNabs Island. I've known John for many years as a neighbour but didn't realize that he, a Cape Bretoner, had a connection with McNabs Island. I was fascinated as he told me of the few weeks he spent there in August 1946.

During World War II and continuing until 1946, all high school boys had to serve as cadets. John chose the Sea Cadets and was happy that their summer camp was to be on McNabs Island. Fifteen years old, this cadet had never been off Cape Breton Island.

The trip didn't start out well for him. He and his friends felt that they were young men, practically in the navy. His mother insisted on coming to see the train off. This was embarrassing but it got worse.

Peter Murray was the lieutenant in charge of the cadets. He had them lined up, standing at ease and ready to board the train, all of them feeling very proud and grown up. It was at that point that John's mother went right up to the lieutenant, in front of everyone, and asked him to look after John because he had never been off the island. She asked him to be sure that John would not get lost, as if that could ever happen! I'm sure we can all imagine how John felt. He told me that at that point, he wished the earth would open up and swallow him.

All the young men were excited about their adventure. They didn't have berths on the train but were happy to sit up in their seats. They felt like they were real sailors. When they arrived in Truro the next morning, they had time before the train continued on to Halifax and the young men were given the freedom to go into town. John and two friends made their way to a drugstore in Truro and had ice cream sodas. When they left the drugstore, they made the wrong turn and GOT LOST!! Not only that...when they arrived at the train station, they learned that their train had left twenty minutes earlier.

Good fortune followed the bad and a woman drove them to the highway to hitchhike. They soon got a drive and went as far as the Chickenburger in Bedford, where they ate and then got another drive to Halifax. It was not exactly how they had seen themselves arriving in the city but at least they were there.

They found the Army, Navy and Air Force office and were met with, "Ah, you're the lost Sea Cadets". A call was made to McNabs on their behalf and they were told to go to King's Wharf (now Queen's Wharf) to await the Duty Boat. They sat on the wharf from 1:00 to 5:00, not daring to move. It was a very hot sunny day and they were extremely uncomfortable but afraid to leave the spot to look for some shade. Eventually, the Duty Boat came along and they were finally on McNabs.



(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

They went to Range Pier at Back Cove and up the hill to Fort McNab where the rest of the cadets were already settled in. After dinner, John and his two friends learned that they would be sent home. The Commander gave them a serious dressing down and told them they would be sent home to Sydney the next day.

John got no sleep that night, worried about being sent home and all that entailed...missing the fun, the disgrace, facing his mother.... In the morning, they got a reprieve when Lieutenant Murray told them that they wouldn't be sent home. They did not get off scot free; they had to scrub the barracks on their knees for three mornings. Those buildings are long gone from Fort McNab but John remembers them as housing 80 people, long rooms with 40 bunks on each side.

Once settled, the two weeks went by quickly. Due to the military presence on the island, there were certain restrictions placed on their activities. They only traveled from Fort McNab to the central part of the island and John remembers that the military detention barracks were out of bounds to them. They didn't mind not having free reign on the island because there was lots to do and they were kept busy.

They would be up at 6:00 to make beds for inspection. They then marched to the Mess Hall for breakfast; they went to the Rifle Range where they practiced shooting; they went swimming at Back Cove. From McNabs they observed both the Queen Mary and the Aquitania, ships of the Cunard Line, coming into port bringing troops home from overseas. Twice they were taken to Halifax on the Duty Boat to see the troop ships. It was a great thrill to sail alongside the Queen Mary and Aquitania. They had leave in the city and John assured me that he was back in time for the Duty Boat to return to the island.

This was certainly an exciting adventure for these young boys, having grown up during a war and then serving as cadets.No wonder they felt like real sailors.

Unfortunately, John has no pictures of those days on McNabs. If any of our readers have pictures of the Sea Cadets on McNabs in the summer of 1946, we would greatly appreciate



St Mary's Mini University Day Camp at Fort Ives June 2008

Demand for Guided Tours of McNabs Island Increases

by Cathy McCarthy

From time-to-time the Friends of McNabs get asked to provide guided tours of McNabs Island. This past year, the number of requests has increased significantly. Most requests come from elementary schools organizing their class field trips, others are from university classes using the island for study, and some are for service groups and clubs interested in having someone along who knows the island's history and natural features.

For first-time visitors to the island, a guided tour makes the visit quite relaxing and enjoyable. You don't have to worry about getting lost or stumbling upon an interesting historic site that you know nothing about.

To increase the number of tour guides who are able to lead tours of the island, the Friends organized a one-day training session on McNabs last July. Carolyn Mont, who has guided thousands of people on tours of McNabs Island over the years, led the training session and gave pointers to those interested in leading tours of the island on their own. McNabs Island is sure to become even more popular now that Halifax is no longer dumping sewage into the Harbour. As interest in the island grows, requests for guided tours of the island will continue to increase.

If you are interested in joining the growing list of McNabs Island tour guides, but missed the training session last summer, please contact Carolyn Mont at 477-0187 or carolynmont@ns.sympatico.ca. If there is enough interest, we will organize another training



Ski Club 30 tour of Fort McNab

A Profound “Thank You” to the donors who made the 2008 Annual Dinner and Auction a Success!

TAO - The Adventure Outfitters
 Credit Union Atlantic
 Dofsky's Grill
 Home Depot
 Christine Ostling
 Canadiana Restaurant & Lounge
 Cynthia Sponagle
 Montana's Cookhouse
 The Courtyard Tennis & Fitness Club
 Redwood Grill
 Bill Mont
 Blue Forest Baskets
 Jeanne Thomas
 Mary Ann Archibald
 Richardson's Law Office
 Atlantic Wholesalers (Superstore - Barrington St.)
 Applebee's Clayton Park
 Nubody's
 Tim Horton's, Clayton Park
 McDonald's Clayton park
 Mark's Work Wearhouse
 O'Regan's Toyota Halifax
 Dr. Galen Snook
 The Westin Nova Scotia
 Maria Valverde
 Sharon Bishop of Shar-liz
 Tony Publicover
 Councillor Jackie Barkhouse
 Becky Kent, MLA

Carolyn Mont
 Topiary
 Carrefour Atlantic
 Stern's Mansion
 Lorraine Beattie
 Eastside Marios
 Pizza Delight
 Curves, Clayton Park
 Shopper's Drug Mart, Lacewood Dr.
 James Morrison
 Steele, Ford, Lincoln
 Radha Mohandas
 Faye Power
 Jim Cleveland
 Metro Centre
 Bill Gimby, Cornerstone
 Cynthia Phillips
 NDP Caucus
 HRM c/o Russell Walker, councillor for district 15
 University Computing & Info Service, Dalhousie University
 Dalplex
 Sally Ravindra
 Royce Walker
 Carolyn Gallagher
 Marlene Robart
 Mike Tilley - McNabs Island Ferry
 Marjorie Willison
 Iris Shea
 Giovanna's Hair & Suntanning Salon



On July 10th John Sinclair of New Brunswick requested a tour of Fort McNab and the island where his father was stationed during the war. Carolyn Mont and Cathy McCarthy took this opportunity to use this trip as a tour guide training session. Even though we got caught in the rain in the afternoon, we had a great day and saw a whale on the return trip to Purcell's Cove.

Pictured from left to right (Back Row) is Bob Guscott, John Sinclair, Katherine Burke, Mary Francis-Lynch, and Brian Lynch, Greg Steiner, Cathy McCarthy, Lyn Underhill
 Front Row - Carolyn Gallagher, Carolyn Mont, Faye Power.

Discover McNabs Island

Published by the Friends of McNabs Island Society

Discover McNabs Island is a collection of writings, photos and maps about McNabs Island, Lawlor and Devils Islands. Readers will find that **Discover McNabs Island** is more than just a guidebook. It is a history book and nature book wrapped under one cover.

Originally published in 1995, the second edition of **Discover McNabs Island** includes updated chapters, new photos and a new chapter on the islands' geology that shows how the island is ever changing.

Discover McNabs Island is self-published by the Friends of McNabs Island Society. The 116-page book is printed on 100% recycled paper by Halcraft Printing Inc. of Halifax and retails for \$19.95. The book is available in local book and gift shops or directly from the Friends of McNabs Island Society. For more information visit www.mcnabsisland.ca or contact Carolyn Gallagher at: 477-8624 or Faye Power at 443-1749.



Hangman's Beach Tour

By Kim Cahill

On a beautiful sunny day in August, ten members of the Captain William Spry Library Book Club set off from a Purcell's Cove dock for an excursion to McNabs Island. The women had been reading the novel *Hangman's Beach* by Thomas H. Raddall and decided to spend

the afternoon hiking and discovering key locations depicted in the book. They were ably guided around the southern end of the island by Halifax- area tour guide and fellow book-clubber Carolyn Mont.

The book club members embarked, met one of the few residents of McNabs Island, had a leisurely stroll around several parts of the island, learning about the flora and fauna, and imagining themselves on the trails where the fictional and historical characters had walked many years before in the novel. They enjoyed a picnic lunch overlooking remaining fortifications while a member read from an old letter sent to a relative by Thomas Raddall himself.

After an exciting day spent on the island, while waiting for the charter boat to return in the late afternoon, many of the women dipped their toes in the now clean waters surrounding the island, watched with envy as a large load of teens jumped from a boat docked at the wharf for a "pirate" birthday party, while others hiked north to see the old tea house, the remains of another home and the camping area.

The boat returned to find ten tired but content book clubbers hoping to make a return trip to the island in the near future, some making plans to take friends and family. McNabs is a treasure right in our backyard and is accessible thanks to the efforts of the many volunteers who maintain and protect the island for future generations.

The Captain William Spry Book Club has been meeting for over ten years, with many of the original members still attending regularly. At this time, the group is made up of nearly 20 women, with a typical turnout of 15 members per meeting, and an occasional male visitor. Men and woman are welcome to join the club, which meets monthly to discuss a variety of novels chosen by the members with the help of librarian Scott Taylor.



Kim Cahill and members of the Captain William Spry Book Club taking the boat over to McNabs Island

Paddle & Cleanup



Bravo Zulu to another very successful annual McNabs and Lawlor Islands paddle cleanup this fall! Saturday, September 20 turned out to be the perfect sunny day for our 11th Annual paddle cleanup. Thanks to the Shearwater Yacht Club, the adventurous paddle cleanup participants were able to use their facilities again. Starting from the yacht club, sixteen paddlers and two dogs ventured across the waters in five canoes and seven kayaks.

Our efforts this year concentrated on cleaning up Lawlor Island. After a good paddle to the shoreline of Lawlor Island facing Fisherman's Cove, we managed to collect 125 bags of debris from less than 3 km stretch of coastline. Paddlers from Canoe/Kayak Nova Scotia, geocachers and Friends of McNabs Island Society worked tirelessly at beautifying the protected Lawlor Island. There were some interesting seasonal and historic finds such as snow shovels, Christmas lights and a plastic sled as well as a few election signs from the past. An old pirate hat probably blown off the head of an eager privateer last summer had also made its way over to the shores of the Island making its mark in the debris.



Our thanks goes out to Dusan Soudek for all his assistance in the realization of the event, the Shearwater Yacht Club, Scott Guthrie and the geocachers, Clean Nova Scotia for providing supplies and handling logistics, Captain Mike Tilley and his crew for retrieving the bagged garbage and debris and motoring it to the mainland and HRM Public Works for garbage Pick Up.

Katalin Ohlsson
Photo credits to Dusan Soudek

GUIDES, TEACHERS, EXPLORERS TO MCNABS ISLAND!

The Friends of McNabs Island Society put together a kit about the Island that is available at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History. The materials are available for use in the classroom as well as to anyone interested in learning about the Island.



There are slides, an amazing pictorial album, plant and animal specimens (even magnifying glasses), sensory experiences, games, exploration guides, and both editions of our books. To borrow this kit for your group, association, classroom or yourself simply contact the Museum at 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, phone 424-6099 and arrange for booking and pickup. (photo by Carolyn Gallagher)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**The Annual Dinner and Auction will be held on
February 28, 2009 at 5:30.
More information in the Winter Issue.**



McNabs Island Merchandise

For a unique souvenir or gift consider supporting the Friends of McNabs Island.

- ◆ **NEW Discover McNabs Island** 2nd Ed. books are available for \$19.95
- ◆ Panoramic harbour view **POSTERS of McNabs Island** available for \$5.00. Contact Carolyn Gallagher at 447-8624 or Faye Power at 443-1749 to order either item.
- ◆ **Brochures and Maps** are available for **FREE** from Carolyn Mont. Call her at 477-0187 to get your copies today.

Photo credits:

Beach Cleanup page 3 - Cathy McCarthy and Royce Walker
Page 4 - Cathy McCarthy
Tour photos pages 6, 7, 8 - Faye Power
Hangman's Beach Tour - Carolyn Mont
Other credits appear with photos.

How can YOU help?

The Friends of McNabs Island Society runs on volunteer power, please consider giving a few hours of your time.

Do you have an interesting story about the Island? Submit it to the newsletter! Not all jobs take a lot of time, some can be one-time-only help with an event, doing call backs or mailing out the newsletter. Please contact the executive through our email address:

mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca

Email Updates

If you wish to receive updates about the status of McNabs Island by email, please send your contact information to:

mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca

**THE FRIENDS OF McNABS ISLAND SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION and RENEWAL FORM**

NEW MEMBERSHIP

Name: _____

RENEWAL

Ad-
dress: _____

I AM ENCLOSING \$ _____ FOR

DONATION

SUSTAINING MEMBER (\$100 annually)

SUPPORTING MEMBER (\$50 annually)

INDIVIDUAL MEMBER (\$15 annually)

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP (\$20 annually)

NEWSLETTER ONLY (\$15 annually)

Phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Willing to help out? _____

Annual membership to the Friends of McNabs Island Society starts on the date of payment of dues and includes a year's subscription to the society's quarterly newsletter, *The Rucksack*. We thank you for your continued support and welcome your interest!

Send money or cheque, payable to:
The Friends of McNabs Island Society

PO Box 31240
Gladstone RPO
Halifax, NS
B3K 5Y1

or phone Carolyn Mont at 477-0187 for membership inquiries.



The society is a registered charity: CCRA number 88847 4194 RR 0001

The Rucksack is published by the **Friends of McNabs Island Society**.

Contributions, ideas and feedback are welcome.

Visit our website at: www.mcnabsisland.ca

Phone: Cathy (902) 434-2254 evenings

This issue went to print October 2008