

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 1

Fall 2007

McNabs and Lawlor Island Fall Foliage Tours

Sunday, October 14 10AM to 4PM
Raindate - Sunday October 21

Join the Friends of McNabs Island Society for the annual Fall Foliage Tour of McNabs Island. See the island in its autumn splendour and participate in guided history and nature tours. Tour includes a visit inside the historic island homes of "midway king", Bill Lynch and his family.



Historic houses will be open to the public.

Wear comfortable shoes, and bring a lunch and drinking water. Meet at Murphy's-on-the-Water on the Halifax waterfront before 10:00 AM.

Cost is \$7 members and children \$9 for non-members

Groups of more than ten persons must pre-register with the Friends of McNabs. Space on the boat is limited and is available on a first come, first served basis. For more information, contact Carolyn at (902) 477-0187 or email the Friends of McNabs at mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca or visit www.mcnabsisland.ca.

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**Friends of McNabs Island Society
Rucksack**

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

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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.

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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.

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McNabs and Lawlor Island Cleanup 2007

Another successful volunteer effort!

On Sunday June 3 to kick off Environment Week, 130 volunteers with the Friends of McNabs Island headed to McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park to clean up the beaches. In total volunteers collected **250 bags of garbage, and 40 bags** of recyclables. That makes the total amount of garbage collected over the past 16 years a whopping 7,800 bags of garbage!!!

The Friends have been cleaning up the islands since 1991 and sadly can report that each year the same type of garbage litters the islands' beautiful beaches. Most of the garbage is plastics



Hurtin' Unit leaves McNabs loaded with garbage

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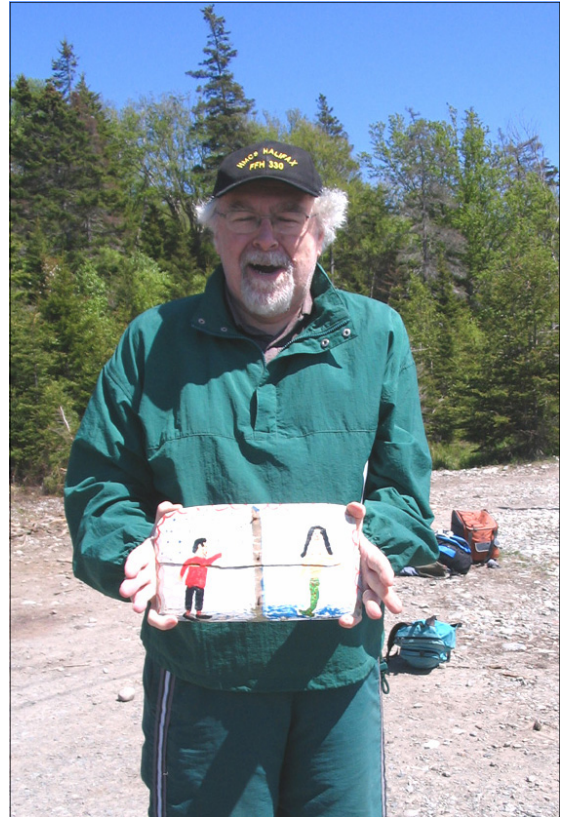
that even Atlantic storms and salt spray can't break down. Plastics like Styrofoam, old nylon rope, plastic bags and Tim Horton's coffee cups, which have a plastic liner, continually litter the beaches of this provincial park and other shorelines around the world.

Unusual items found among the plastic litter this year included: a wet suit, marine flares, a Plexiglas ATM sign, a toy motorcycle, a Tiny Tykes washer and dryer set, a Century 21 realtor sign, a few hard hats, a broken guitar, a wallet and a tennis racket.

Thanks to all the volunteers that helped out. We would particularly like to thank the students, teachers and parents from Falmouth Elementary School who came all the way from Falmouth (near Windsor) to help out with the cleanup again this year.

The cleanup was sponsored by Parks Canada, NS Department of Natural Resources, Halifax Regional Municipality, Clean Nova Scotia, RRFB Nova Scotia, Murphy's on the Water, McNabs Island Ferry and Esso.

Cathy McCarthy
Friends of McNabs Island



James Morrison with folk art find from Lawlor



Theresa Rollet & Ray Lefresne with their cleanup treasures



Touring McNabs with Leopold

(Editor's Note: Friends member, Leopold Sirois has been busy touring McNabs Island this summer. Here are his field reports. Thanks go out to Leopold for enthusiastically sharing his love of McNabs Island with others. If anyone else is interested in leading tours on McNabs Island, please contact us at mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca)

Young Naturalists Clean-up McNabs Island

On Sunday September 23, the Young Naturalists Club — a nature club for kids 8 to 12 years old, participated in the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup by picking up trash on McNabs Island. A group of 38 kids and parents travelled to McNabs with Capt. Red Beard. They enthusiastically scoured the shoreline from the former Range Pier area and southward towards Green Hill Cove. It was interesting to watch as the Club Coordinator and assistant Coordinator were explaining to the kids what and how this garbage got to the island and how it can possibly adversely affect the wildlife.

After the allocated clean up time, they were up for a hike!! The week before, the young naturalists had a presentation from the Department of Natural Resource and learned about the wildlife on the island. They were keen to see some on their field trip but alas, only a fox was spotted.

From Back Cove, we hiked up Garrison Road to Fort McNab. I briefed them on the history of the fort, explaining how the fortifications were used and answered numerous questions from both kids and parents.

On the return trip about half of the group and I continued to Maughers Beach. All were suitably impressed by such a fine sand beach so close to downtown. Maybe in the not too distant future, after the Harbour Solutions Project has been in effect for a while, it will be pristine again!

I received the following email the next day, "Leopold -Thanks again for a fantastic trip! I've already told many people about it, and that they should visit McNabs Island."

Word of mouth, the best advertising there is!

International Delegates visit McNabs Island

In late June, I led a walking tour of McNabs Island for a group of delegates, attending a World Environmental Conference at Dalhousie University. These people were from as far away as British Columbia and Australia. Safe to say; "McNabs Island attracts visitors from all over the world."

For this group, I opted for the shorter North End Hike, which is approximately 2 hours round trip and described by Mike Tilley (aka Captain Red Beard) in his chapter on suggested hikes and maps in *Discover McNabs Island* published by the Friends of McNabs Island Society.

It turned out to be an absolutely gorgeous day - warm and sunny. There were sightings of osprey, a falcon, rabbits, garter snakes, a red-spotted salamander and plenty of deer tracks. Fort Ives, our planned turnaround point and impromptu



International Delegates on the grounds of Fort Ives

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picnic and rest area, brought out the youth in everyone, as they climbed and explored the fortifications and posed for the mandatory picture sitting on the barrels of the big guns.

The delegates were amazed to have access to such a, " remote-like wilderness area" and park just minutes from downtown Halifax - a true jewel for the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Park Advisory Update

The government-appointed Park Advisory Committee for McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park hasn't met since April so there is no update on the park development plans. However, I can report that last fall the Department of Natural Resources spent a considerable amount of money hauling concrete to the island and building a concrete pad for a new maintenance building situated beside the caretaker's house on the island. Funding must have run out because to date nothing has been constructed on the site.

Also over the winter, the government tendered out the dismantling of dilapidated Range Pier at Back Cove. A new wharf is promised but to date nothing has been constructed.

Camping continues to be an issue for the Park Advisory Committee. The current campsite in the field of the Teahouse was supposed to be a temporary measure, but to my knowledge nothing has been done to find a permanent campsite location. The Teahouse location is completely unsuitable as a camping area. Boaters want to camp near their boats on the shoreline, and families find hauling their camping gear kilometers away from the ferry access point at Back Cove extremely inconvenient. Also, under the current set-up, campers must pre-register with the Department of Natural Resources during weekday office hours. Unfortunately, McNabs Island campsites were not added to the Department's new on-line or 1-800 camping registration system.

Another concern for the committee is enforcement. Due to the large number of trees downed by Hurricane Juan, open campfires have been prohibited on the islands for the past four years. However, in spite of the ban, new campfire pits continue to pop up everywhere, even on the lawn of the Teahouse interim campsite. The Department of Natural Resources should address this situation and build approved campfire pits as they have done in other provincial parks.

By Cathy McCarthy



Concrete pad for future DNR Maintenance Building



The challenge of history is to recover the past
and introduce it to the present.

~David Thelen



Tall Ships Visit

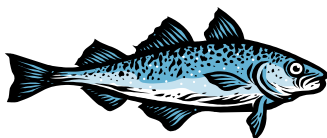
On July 23, 2007, after several foggy days in port in Halifax, the Tall Ships sailed away. As the fog lifted in the Harbour, the gun emplacements at Fort Ives on McNabs Island provided the best vantage point to watch these magnificent ships sail out of Halifax Harbour.



The Bluenose

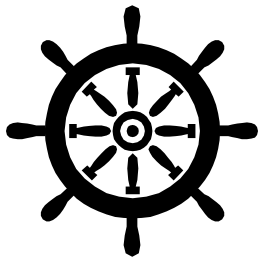


The Virginia
&
Sherman Zwicker



Halifax July 2007

Pride of Baltimore
&
Gorch Fock



The Bounty
&
Providence



Paddle and Cleanup 2007



Hauling garbage off Lawlor Island

This year's paddle cleanup of McNabs and Lawlor Islands was our tenth anniversary paddle cleanup. 12 paddlers and a dog joined forces to collect 75 bags of debris from the shores of McNabs and Lawlor Islands. Thanks to the Shearwater Yacht Club, the group was able to use the facilities again this year. It was a foggy start as geocachers, reps from Canoe/Kayak Nova Scotia, Friends of McNabs Island Society and the Halifax Outdoor Club pushed off from the Shearwater Yacht Club on Saturday, September 8th but the weather cleared up into a perfectly sunny day. Some parts of Lawlor Island had been previously cleaned in the big June Cleanup and so very

little garbage could be found in that area. The side of Lawlor Island facing Fishermen's Cove was a different story with plenty of garbage left by recent campers including a lawnmower and tarp.

Our thanks goes out to Scott Guthrie, Dusan Soudek, the Shearwater Yacht Club, and Clean Nova Scotia for providing supplies and handling logistics, HRM Public Works for garbage -pick up and Captain Mike Tilley's crew for retrieving the bagged garbage and debris and motoring it to the mainland.

A Bravo Zulu to the paddlers, canoeists, and Greg Stevens backing us up with his motor boat.

Katalin Ohlsson



Kayakers crossing the harbour

Treasure Lore

written by Gary Benteau for the Beacon, April 1993

reprinted with permission of the author

(Editor's note: Gary is a long-time member of the Friends and lives in Calgary.



Buried treasure has always been a part of Nova Scotian folklore and there are numerous legends of buried pirate treasure associated with many of the province's maritime communities. Tales of pirate captains coming ashore to bury their ill-gotten loot abound from Oak Island to Country Harbour. It is no surprise that the Eastern Passage-Cow Bay area has a few legends of its own. McNabs Island is particularly rich in fabled lore, with no less than three separate possible treasures said to be buried on its shores. The shores of Cow Bay may also be

the resting place for long forgotten pirate booty.

An article published in the Nova Scotian on May 19, 1905, detailed a search for treasure that was occurring on McNabs Island. The treasure hunt started when a mysterious schooner anchored in McNabs Cove and asked permission of the military authorities, then on the Island, to permit a small excavation. According to the authorities, the men from the schooner spent some days digging in the area of Strawberry Bank but so far as we know they were unsuccessful and left without locating any treasure.

This strange encounter sparked gold fever among the troops stationed on the island and they promptly began a search for clues that would lead them to the treasure. One soldier discovered a rock with strange markings to the south of McNabs Cove off the light, in line with Thrum Cap. The markings that were cut into the face of the rock were:

A. B.
1. 3. 2. 1.
17. 11.

Near the stone were found markings of three lines pointing in different directions that originated at a single point. Men who have seen these markings seem to think that they are directions to some hidden riches buried long ago. If the mysterious markings on the Island are clues to pirate gold, then the riches probably still remain hidden waiting to reward a lucky treasure hunter.

Another treasured hunt was supposed to have taken place on McNabs Island about 84 years ago. It involved a fisherman named John Cooney, who one day spotted an elderly and a young man searching a part of the Island he called Harrigan Cove. He thought they were looking for smuggled goods that had been hidden in the woods but then to his surprise, the older man produced a divining rod and walked around the area. The divining rod did not draw, however

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and the pair rowed away from the Island without recovering what they were searching for.

A fortnight later, Mr. Cooney returned to Harrigan Cove and inspected the place where he had seen the old man try the rod. He saw a hole in the ground that gave the appearance that something had been taken out. The place was marked by a cherry tree and five stones which had been placed with one in each corner of a square and one in the middle where the hole had been dug. The ground was marshy and the stones had sunk to the level of the surface which indicated that they had been there for some time. Could John Cooney's experience be proof that there was pirate gold buried on McNabs Island and if so, was this treasure removed from its resting place 84 years ago?

One of the most common legends regarding buried treasure on McNabs Island involves Bill Lynch, the famous Midway King, who was raised on the Island. Every summer he would visit his boyhood home carrying a tube filled with silver dollars but when he returned home after these annual visits, the silver would not be in his possession. The tube was reported by a colleague to be about two feet long, so each tube could possibly hold several hundred dollars. It is rumored that Mr. Lynch may have left a sizable fortune buried somewhere on the north end of the Island, but there are no clues to its exact location. Mr. Lynch passed away in 1973 and took the secret of the location of the McNabs Island silver with him.

Helen Creighton, the famous Nova Scotia folklorist, made several references to treasure that may have been buried beneath the sands of Cow Bay. The most detailed tale is the account of a woman who dreamed of gold three nights in a row. The next night the woman took a shovel and walked through the woods, accompanied by her dog. She went from Hartlen's Point to the back of Cow Bay until she found the spot that she saw in her dreams. The woman immediately started digging until her work was interrupted by a mysterious groan. Her dog started barking and she called to it to keep quiet.

At this point in the story, an old superstition came into play which stated that if you spoke while digging treasure, ghosts who guard the gold would be awakened. The woman was a great believer in ghosts and quickly jumped out of the hole and ran for home. She later got two men to return to the spot but after much digging they found no treasure. She concluded that the treasure had gone back down into the earth which usually happens if one speaks while digging and disturbs the ghost.

It is clearly evident from the number of buried treasure legends that treasure lore is an integral part of Nova Scotia tradition. The Eastern Passage-Cow Bay area can be particularly proud of its contribution to this aspect of Nova Scotia folklore. According to legend, there are numerous treasures buried from Devil's Island to Ship Harbour which may be real or imaginary, but the richness of the stories that have been passed down through the generations cannot be denied. The advent of television and other institutions of mass culture are slowly eroding the unique character of Maritime culture, but in many communities the old legends are being rediscovered as a new generation seeks to discover the proud and unique heritage of the province. A Nova Scotian treasure hunter has a rich legacy of treasure legend and lore to explore and enjoy, and with some good luck can find a lost cache of forgotten pirate loot.

Notices



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



McNabs Island Merchandise

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

- ◆ **Discover McNabs Island** books are available for \$10.00
- ◆ Panoramic harbour view **POSTERS of McNabs Island** available for \$5.00
- ◆ **Brochures and Maps** are available for FREE.

Contact Carolyn Mont, 477-0187 to get yours today!

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

Photo Credits for this Issue

Most of the photo credits this issue go to Cathy McCarthy. The exceptions are the kayaker photo on page 8 which was taken by Scott Guthrie and the photo of the international delegates at Fort Ives on page 4 supplied to us by Leopold Sirois. Thanks so much for taking pictures at the events!



If you attend any Friends of McNabs event and have some photos you think we'll be interested in, please email them to theresa000@ns.sympatico.ca We prefer JPEG files that are 200 to 500 kb in size so that the quality in print is nice.



Karie Riddell from Clean Nova Scotia shows off a tiny pencil that she found at the Beach Cleanup

**THE FRIENDS OF McNABS ISLAND SOCIETY
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dress: _____

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



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

Contributions, ideas and feedback are welcome.

Visit our website at: www.mcnabsisland.ca

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