



The Rucksack

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

Volume Seventeen, Issue 2 & 3

Spring/Summer 2009

McNabs Island Fall Foliage Tours Sunday October 18, (rain date October 25) Time 10 am – 4:30 pm

Join the Friends of McNabs Island Society for the annual **Fall Foliage Tours of McNabs Island Provincial Park**. See the island in its autumn splendour, participate in guided history and nature tours, tour the McNab Family Cemetery, relive Thomas Raddall's novel, *Hangman's Beach*, and visit the historic island homes of "midway king" Bill Lynch and his family.



Wear comfortable shoes and bring a lunch and drinking water.

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 a First Come, First Served basis.



The Portuguese Sagres meets the Russian Kruzenshtern just off Hugonin Point, McNabs Island during Tall Ships 2009 Parade of Sail July 20, 2009. McNabs Island offered the best view of these magnificent sailing ambassadors.

Cost: \$10 members & children, \$12 non-members (cash or cheque only).

Groups of more than ten persons must pre-register with the Friends of McNabs Island by calling Carolyn at 477-0187 or by e-mailing mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca.

Visit www.mcnabsisland.ca for more details.

Fall Foliage Tours one-day Book Sale! Members of the Friends of McNabs Island participating in the Fall Foliage Tours can purchase **Discover McNabs Island** for a one-day only sale price of \$15.

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**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.

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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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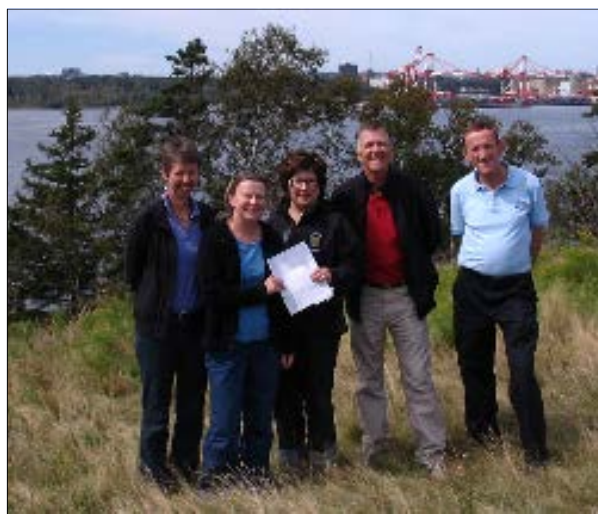
HRM COUNCILLORS VISIT MCNABS ISLAND

Four HRM Councillors visited McNabs Island on September 11, 2009 to walk the trails that they are helping to rebuild. Eight councillors are contributing to the McNabs Island Trail Project with funds from their District Capital Funds. Councillors supporting our project include:

Councillor Bill Karsten (Portland - East Woodlawn) - \$1000;
Councillor Jackie Barkhouse (Woodside-Eastern Passage) - \$5500;
Councillor Jim Smith (Albro Lake-Harbourview) - \$2000;
Councillor Dawn Sloane (Halifax Downtown) - \$5000;
Councillor Jennifer Watts (Connaught-Quinpool) - \$2000;
Councillor Russell Walker (Fairview-Clayton Park) - \$2000;
Councillor Bob Harvey (Lower Sackville) - \$500;
Councillor Reg Rankin (Timberlea-Prospect) - \$2000.

In addition to the funding from the Councillors, HRM is also contributing \$50,000 to the project.

Photo: Councillors presented a cheque for \$20,000 to the Friends of McNabs Island during their visit to the island. Pictured at historic Fort Ives overlooking Halifax Harbour (from L-R): Councillor Jennifer Watts, Cathy McCarthy, Councillor Jackie Barkhouse, Councillor Jim Smith and Councillor Reg Rankin.





Fort Hugonin Today

A Happy Ending for Fort Hugonin

By Carolyn Mont

Fort Hugonin, or Hugonin Battery, has been the subject of several articles in *The Rucksack*. The most extensive article was written by Barry Edwards in Volume Fifteen: Issue 1: Fall 2006.

The fort is located between Garrison Pier and Fort Ives, on the western shore of McNabs Island overlooking Halifax Harbour. Currently, Hugonin is owned by the Department of National Defence and will most likely be sold to the provincial government to be included in the park.

Construction of Fort Hugonin began in 1897 and was completed in 1901 as part of the Halifax Defence Complex. Upon completion, the gun battery consisted of four 12-lb rapid-fire breech loaded guns. Two of these guns were moved to

Royal Artillery Park in 1905 for drill practice but by the time World War I began they were back at Fort Hugonin. The guns were removed between World War I and World War II but two were returned at the start of WWII. However, these, along with the soldiers stationed there, were moved to Strawberry Battery, also on McNabs, in 1940.

Today, all that remains at the site is the officers' barracks and the four gun emplacements. The barracks, built in 1900, was a basic one story concrete building. After Fort Hugonin was decommissioned in 1940, a second story was added and the building was used by the military as a "listening post" to monitor ships' traffic in Halifax Harbour. It also served as a caretaker's residence until 1993 when it was closed. It has been empty ever since.

In the winter of 2008, the Friends of McNabs Island Society learned that DND had called for tenders to demolish Fort Hugonin. This was in preparation for handing the site over to the provincial government. The Friends then became involved in trying to save the building. There was certainly some hazardous waste such as asbestos, lead paint and PCB's that required removal but it was felt that the building itself had historic significance. See Volume Sixteen: Issue 2: Winter 2008 of *The Rucksack* for the Friends appeal to save the building.

Cathy McCarthy of the Friends of McNabs Island Society deserves a lot of credit for getting the media and the public involved in these efforts. A number of people who had been stationed at Fort Hugonin expressed their concern about the demolition. The Department of National Defence took the time to revisit the site and decided that the original part of the structure could/should be saved. This past winter, they removed the top story and took the hazardous material off the island.

This is a good example of the power of the people. Enough people from a variety of backgrounds became involved and vocal to preserve this historic building. Thank you to all who responded.

The property is still in the hands of the Department of National Defence and we look forward to the next development. Fort Hugonin could certainly be put to good use as an education centre, an interpretive site for the military history of the island, or a picnic site..... the possibilities are endless.



Faye Power inside Hugonin Battery

McNabs Island Trails to get Upgraded

By Cathy McCarthy

In recent years, the island's trail system has deteriorated quite a bit. Those of us who visit the island are used to jumping over puddles or skirting around wet areas. Many of the trails were damaged by heavy machinery used to clear them following Hurricane Juan. As well, the century-old Garrison Road receives a fair amount of heavy traffic because it also serves as a maintenance road for the park.



Photo: Dawn Neil, HRM Trails Specialist, looks over a wet section of Garrison Road near Findlay Cove.

With little hope of any funding from Nova Scotia Natural Resources, the government department responsible for the provincial park, the Friends of McNabs Island Society took action as the stewards of the island to find funding for the trails. The net result is we have raised \$250,000 to rebuild the trails on McNabs Island from the following agencies that support our vision for McNabs Island:

- \$70,000 NS Health Promotion & Protection
- \$50,000 HRM
- \$20,000 HRM Councillors (generously donated from their district funds)
- \$50,000 Parks Canada
- \$60,000 National Trails Coalition

NS Natural Resources has offered the services of its staff to prepare a construction plan and to help oversee the project. We hope to go to tender very soon since funding for this project must be spent by March 2010.

\$250,000 may seem like a lot of money, but this is only one quarter of the estimated cost to rebuild the trails on the island. Although rebuilding Garrison Road could easily swallow up all of our trail money, we want to fix up other popular trails too.



Jon Cusick, Friends of McNabs Island Trails Committee Chair, walks through a wet section of Garrison Road near Maugers Beach.

Our priorities for this first phase of the McNabs Island trail rebuilding project include:

- Sections of Garrison Road from Fort Hugonin to the Hugonin-Perrin Carriageway;
- Farrant Rd from the Old Military Rd to the Findlay Farm site;
- Hugonin-Perrin Carriageway located north of Teahouse Lane off Garrison Road;
- Wambolt Trail to Back Cove;
- Colin Stewart Trail, which winds around McNabs Pond to the ocean; and
- Brow Hill Trail, which leads to Fort McNab.

This ambitious project will be greatly appreciated by those who visit McNabs Island. On behalf of all island visitors, we thank those agencies that have generously donated towards the McNabs Island Trail Project.

Another Successful Annual Dinner and Auction!

By Denyse Contrasty

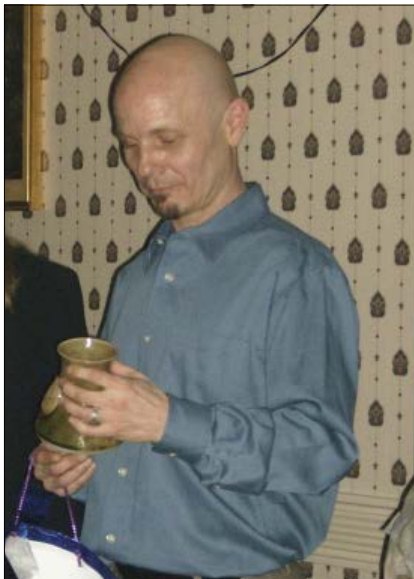


Guests browsing the auction items

Eighty-five Friends and guests gathered at the historic Royal Artillery Park on Saturday, February 28, 2009 for the 11th Annual Friends of McNabs Island Society's Dinner and Silent Auction. Dennis Williams provided musical entertainment at the grand piano before dinner. Special guests included Peter Underwood, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, Jackie Barkhouse, HRM Councillor for Woodside-Eastern Passage, Becky Kent, MLA for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage, Megan Leslie, MP for Halifax, Leonard Preyra, MLA for Halifax Citadel-Sable Island and Michele Raymond, MLA for Halifax Atlantic.

Special thanks to Major John McCallum for making all the arrangements with RA Park and to Faye Power for selling the tickets and pulling in so many donations for the auction. Funds raised at the dinner and auction will go toward our McNabs Island events and trail maintenance. Many thanks to everyone for their generous donations.

This year for the first time ever, two Special Friends awards were presented to Greg Haverstock, a former Board member, and Chris Poulain, our webmaster. Both Greg and Chris volunteered many hours editing and laying out the second version of our book, "Discover McNabs Island" that was released in June 2008. They both received a set of ship's mugs made especially for the Friends by potter and long-time member Sally Ravindra.



Special Friend Chris Poulain,
our Webmaster



Special Friend Greg Haverstock

FIRST TIME VISITORS TO MCNABS

By Carolyn Mont

The Friends of McNabs Island Society has members from far and wide. We also have a number of members who have never been to the Island but who support the work of the Society. On September 9 long time members Terß and Julaine Hamer from Peace River Alberta visited McNabs for the first time. They had a beautiful day for their first visit and in talking with them, it seems that they hope to be back here in the future.



Terß Hamer and his wife Julaine on McNabs Island

In the early 1990's their daughter attended university in Halifax at Mount Saint Vincent. Terß and Julaine came to Halifax at that time but did not get to McNabs. Terß began reading the set-in-Halifax novels of Thomas Raddall and was fascinated. He learned of McNabs Island by reading Raddall's novels and joined the Friends of McNabs.

Terß had some comments and suggestions for our island. He felt, and rightly so, that signage would enhance the visitor experience. Some years ago the Friends erected trail signs but vandals destroyed them. Terß suggested that geocaches could be used with short descriptions of various points of interest. These would be less likely to be of interest to vandals.

The Hamer's also said that they were very pleasantly surprised to see the beautiful beaches, especially Maugers Beach. This long crescent-shaped beach leads to the lighthouse and Hangman's Beach. Hopefully, next year after the harbour sewage plants are repaired, the waters off Maugers Beach will be fit for swimming.

They brought a picnic lunch with them and ate at Fort McNab, which has a magnificent view of the mouth of Halifax Harbour. However, it would have been more comfortable to have had picnic tables there. Their favourite part of the island though was Fort Ives at the north end. It has a large, flat open space that is a wonderful location for family-oriented activities.

Terß and Julaine enjoyed their first visit to McNabs Island. For us, it's a pleasure to see, if vicariously, the island through fresh eyes.

McNabs Island Trail Volunteers needed

The Friends of McNabs Island have had a longstanding trail maintenance agreement with Parks Canada to look after the trails and the McNab Family Cemetery near Fort McNab National Historic Site. Each year our Trails Committee and other volunteers visit the island during the fall and winter months to cut down brush in the cemetery and groom the trails near Fort McNab.

Once the trail-rebuilding project is completed, our trail maintenance responsibilities will increase since we will be responsible for the maintenance of these rebuilt trails.

Our Trails Committee is organizing a safety training session this fall to better equip our volunteers to handle equipment needed for trail maintenance. If you are interested in volunteering to manage the trails on the island and want to take the safety course, contact Jon Cusick, our Trail Committee Chair, at 902-404-1939 or mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca.

MEMBERSHIP NOTICE

At the Annual General Meeting of the Friend of McNabs Island Society held on April 28, 2009, an important membership decision was reached. It was decided that in keeping with many other not-for-profit organizations, we would renew all our memberships by the calendar year.

All current memberships will expire on December 31, 2009. Anyone who takes out a new membership after July 1 will have his or her membership extended until December 31, 2010. Remember that you get a tax receipt for your membership dues and donations.

Lyn Underhill is our new membership secretary. She can be contacted at mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca or by calling 902-444-7482.

Friends of McNabs Island to Celebrate 20th Anniversary!

It is hard to imagine! Next spring, the Friends of McNabs Island Society will be 20 years old! Join the planning team to help organize a big family picnic and anniversary party on the island to celebrate this milestone!

Contact Cathy at 902-434-2254 or mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca.



McNabs Island Merchandise

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

- ◆ **Discover McNabs Island** 2nd Ed. books are available for \$19.95
- ◆ Panoramic Harbour view **POSTERS of McNabs Island** available for \$5.00 or **FREE** with a book purchase. Contact Faye Power at 443-1749 to order either item.
- ◆ **Brochures and Maps** are available for **FREE!**

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.

Photo Credits

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Page 6 - Jon Cusick

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

Address: _____

I AM ENCLOSING \$ _____ FOR

Phone: _____

DONATION

E-mail address: _____

SUSTAINING MEMBER (\$100 annually)

SUPPORTING MEMBER (\$50 annually)

INDIVIDUAL MEMBER (\$15 annually)

Willing to help out? _____

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP (\$20 annually)

NEWSLETTER ONLY (\$15 annually)

Annual membership to the Friends of McNabs Island Society runs on the calendar year 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 cheque, payable to:

The Friends of McNabs Island Society
PO Box 31240
Gladstone RPO
Halifax, NS
B3K 5Y1



Phone Lyn Underhill at 444-7482 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
or email mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca.

You can also join our facebook page for regular updates of coming events.

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