

The Rucksack

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

Volume Twelve, Issue Four

Spring 2004



Dinner at Royal Artillery Park a Smashing Success

The February 28th Dinner at Royal Artillery Park was another successful event for the Society. The dinner was served in the 18th century historical Officers Mess. In this setting, with acoustic guitar music provided by Dave Johnson, Friends had a lovely evening. This was another opportunity for people who appreciate the Islands to renew old contacts and establish new ones.

The evening's event also included a silent auction fund raising table that overflowed with donated items that expressed the generosity of our community. We raised \$1361 from the proceeds of the auction. The Society would like to extend a very large THANK YOU to all those who made donations:



Aikens Pewter
Alison Cude
Atlantic Superstore – Barrington Street
Blake Maybank
Carolyn Gallagher
Carolyn Mont
Charles & Joanne MacDougall
Charles and Vern Flower Salon
City Deli – Farmers Market
Cynthia Phillips
Darren Hatfield
Department of Natural Resources - Parks Div.
Eric Fisher – Fisher's Stationery
Faye Power
George Taylor, Outdoor Education Centre
Grant Thornton Chartered Accountants
Great Ocean Natural Food Market
Greg Haverstock
Halifax Citadel Regimental Association
Yuen Chen – Painter
Janet Doble Pottery
Kathy Brown

Lucie Logan Esthetics
Maritime Campus Store
Mitchell Furriers
Jean Morrison, Sea Nymphs
Park Victoria Women's Fitness Club
Renee Campbell
Rogers Video, South Centre Mall
Royce Walker
Ruth Morse
Sally Ravindra
Scanway Catering & Pastry Shop
Subway, Herring Cove Rd
Take 30 Fitness - Coburg and Robie
That Dutchman's Farm
The Orb Factory
The Trail Shop
Theresa Rollet McWilliams
Those to These
Wade Company Ltd.

Step Back in Time: Conrad Davis House



Pictured above is the A.J. Davis house on Woolnough's Hill at the northern end of McNabs Island. A.J. Davis, a partner in the meat packing business of Davis & Fraser of Halifax, bought the surrounding property around 1898 from the then bankrupt Charles Woolnough who ran a large picnic ground on the site in the late 1800's. The old picnic pavilion was used as a summer cottage for the Davis family until a fire destroyed it around 1914-15. A.J. then built the luxurious three story summer home with its panoramic view of the Halifax Harbour.

The family photo (circa 1915-1920) shows A.J. sitting with his wife, Constance. Standing behind is A.J.'s son from his first marriage. The identities of their two guests are unknown. A.J. lived here during the summers until his death in 1933. Constance then sold the estate to long time residents, Ralph and Gladys Conrad, whose fathers had been lighthouse keepers on McNabs Island. While Ralph, an RCMP coastal officer, did tours of duty throughout the Maritimes in the 1940's and 50's, Gladys stayed home safe on the island and looked forward to his homecomings.

After the deaths of Ralph and Gladys in the 1980's, the estate was sold in 1987 to the Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forests for future park development. This occurred in November 1992, but to date there are no formal plans for the use of the house. Department of Natural Resources is currently looking for stakeholder partners with ideas.

Could you be one?

Conrad Davis House Today



CALL FOR UPDATES to Discover McNabs Island BOOK

We are beginning the process of updating our successful book to incorporate changes that have occurred since its first publication in 1995. While we're not anticipating dramatic changes, we welcome your corrections, updates, suggestions and a modest amount of new material, photos and artwork.

Please send your info to ghaverstock@hfx.eastlink.ca or mail to Greg Haverstock, 1567 Le Marchant St. Halifax, NS, B3H3R2 by April 26, 2004.

Alternatively, bring your information to me at the 2004 Annual General Meeting, on that same day. Original authors will then be invited to consider your suggestions as they update their chapters.

SPECIAL FRIENDS AWARD

For some time, the Board of the Friends of McNabs Island Society has been considering an award for Special Friends. This award would recognize those people who have made outstanding contributions to the island. It was an easy decision to choose Colin Stewart as our first recipient for the award.

In March, 1990, Colin was one of the founders of the Friends of McNabs Island Society. At that time, there was a possibility that a sewage treatment plant would be located at Ives Cove on McNabs. That threat activated a group, including Colin, to take action. Since then, he served as a member of the Board for many years and, when not on the Board, he had been an active member of the Society.



Sally Ravindra, a potter and member of the Friends of McNabs Island Society, offered to create some of her ships mugs with the McNabs Island logo. It was decided that we would use those unique mugs only as gifts for the Special Friend of McNabs Island Award. Because Colin was unable to attend the Annual Dinner and Silent Auction when the award was presented, Cathy McCarthy delivered it to Colin at home. Sadly, Colin passed away on March 15.

A Tribute to our First Special Friend

I first met Colin Stewart at the inaugural meeting of the Friends of McNabs Island Society held at the Alderney Gate Public Library in Dartmouth on March 20, 1990. Colin, Barry Edwards, and John Jenkins had called a meeting in an attempt to raise public support for McNabs Island. At the time, the island had made the short-list as a site for the ill-fated Halifax Harbour sewage treatment plant. Colin, Barry, John and others saw the sewage plant as a threat to an island that was designated as parkland. They rallied public support for McNabs and the Friends of McNabs Island Society was born.

Over the years, Colin served on the Board of Directors of the Friends and when he was not on the Board he attended many of our meetings. He was always there to advise the rest of us about the Parks Act and park planning issues. He was in touch with other groups around the province and across the country that were facing similar hurdles in protecting parkland and wilderness areas, and he shared their experiences with us. We heard about Cape Breton's Jim Campbell's Barrens and about parks' groups that worked to protect Banff National Park. We relied on Colin for answers to many questions.

When the sewage plant threat was over, the next challenge was to work toward a park for McNabs and Lawlor Islands. Colin was a strategic thinker. He warned us that once McNabs Island was developed into an operational provincial park, the province would have a difficult time managing all the people who would want to visit there. The key to managing the new park was to put together a management plan that considered every issue, and every scenario. Colin sat as a member of the government-appointed McNabs and Lawlor Island Park Advisory Committee representing the Halifax Field Naturalists. The Committee took over three years to draft and then re-draft the management plan. Finally at our last meeting on January 14, 2004, the plan was finished and Colin was there to see the plan through to its conclusion.

Cathy McCarthy, Friends of McNabs Island Society

McNabs Island Visitor Survey

by Catherine McCarthy

The McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park Advisory Committee's mandate is to develop a management plan for the islands. In order to develop

a plan for any park, there needs to be some understanding of the people who will use the park. There was very little information on the people who visit McNabs Island. About 15 years ago, Parks Canada conducted a survey of island visitors, which provided details about where island visitors came from, and charter boats that ferry visitors to the island keep statistics on the number of trips to the island, but that was the extent of information on island visitors.

The McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park Advisory Committee felt that a new survey was needed to better understand where visitors come from, why they visit the island and what they do while they are there. The Advisory Committee asked the Friends of McNabs Island if the society could hire students to conduct the visitor survey. With matching funds from Human Resources Development Canada, students Tanya Dill and Jaimie Vickers were hired during the summer of 2001. Part of Tanya and Jaimie's job duties was to interview island visitors during July and August of 2001. Sixty-six island visitors were asked a series of questions ranging from where they came from to how they felt about their experience on the island. The information gathered sat dormant for over two years. This past winter, I took a fresh look at the survey results.

The survey questionnaire consisted of 29 questions designed to gather information on the demographics of island visitors and gauge their interests and concerns regarding McNabs Island and its status as a future provincial park. There were clear trends in the data that are relevant for developing educational material for island visitors and for assisting in changing current behaviours on the island. Education campaigns raise public awareness of park management issues, and in many cases, are designed to change the behaviour of park visitors. For example, one of the current behaviours on the island is camping. The Park Advisory Committee struggled with the camping issue for months, if not years. It constantly resurfaced as Committee members tried to balance the needs of visitors with the need to protect park resources. In the end, the Committee decided that camping should be limited to one area on McNabs Island off the Old Military Road. Camping is a tradition on McNabs Island. Currently it is chaotic, unregulated, and park rules and regulations are not enforced. The favourite camping spots are on or near the beach in sensitive dune areas.

The survey data indicated that 29% of visitors surveyed were camping on the island either overnight or for a few days and 41% indicated that camping is one of their preferred activities on the island. This is a large percentage of people that are doing something that will be discouraged if the draft management plan is accepted by the Minister of Natural Resources. In order to change the behaviour of traditional campers on the island, considerable education along with enforcement must be put in place.

The survey data provides valuable insight into the profile of McNabs Island visitors. Most want the island to stay as it is now. The survey indicated that 100% of respondents enjoyed their visit to the island and would return. This overwhelming satisfaction among visitors can be credited to the island's diversity of historic and natural features. The survey showed that the island is valued for its natural beauty (18%), peace and quiet (38%) and relaxing effect on visitors (10%). Once visitor services are developed and the island is promoted, large numbers of visitors will want to visit Halifax Harbour's "green jewel". As the island becomes more popular, the island's tranquillity will diminish. Interpretive programs that educate visitors about the island's fragility offer a way to protect the island's environment while allowing visitors to enjoy the peace and quiet. It will be a difficult balance to allow visitors to appreciate the island experience at the same time as preserving the fragile environment.

For the full analysis of the visitor survey, visit the Friends of McNabs Island website:

www.mcnabsisland.ca

Hurricane Juan Restoration begins on McNabs Island

On February 26, Carolyn Mont, Greg Haverstock and I met with Richard Hurlburt, the Minister of Natural Resources, and his senior staff to discuss McNabs Island and the damage caused by Hurricane Juan. I had invited the Minister to provide an update on the hurricane damage restoration during our dinner on February 28, but since the Minister was not able to attend the event, he invited us to meet with his senior staff before the dinner.

The Minister told us that McNabs Island is expected to be open to the public on the Victoria Day long weekend in May. The Department will proceed with the hurricane clean-up in phases, beginning with safety priorities first. The 400 foot-long oil pipeline that crosses Garrison Road, which was exposed after the hurricane, will be cleaned up this spring.

It is encouraging that the Minister took an interest in the island and wanted to meet to give us an update on the hurricane restoration plans. He is anxious to tour the island this spring to see the damage first hand.

A tender to clean-up the trails and roadways on McNabs Island was posted on the government website on March 18. The work is expected to begin in early April and be completed by May 15. Since the island will be open on the May long weekend, the Friends of McNabs will proceed with plans for the annual Environment Week Beach Clean-up set for Sunday June 6. Apparently volunteers will have plenty to do since there is more garbage than ever in the aftermath of Hurricane Juan.

Catherine McCarthy



Mark your Calendars!

Friends of McNabs Island Annual General Meeting

To be held at Royal Artillery Park Halifax
Monday 26 April, 2004
7 to 10 pm

Gavin Manson, a geomorphologist with the Geological Survey of Canada will be speaking about the changing coastline of McNabs Island.

Parking is available on the grounds.

Refreshments will be served.

McNabs and Lawlor Islands Beach Clean-up

Sunday June 6, 2004
(Raindate) Sunday June 13, 2004
10 AM-4:30 PM

Bring gloves, comfortable shoes, lunch and drinking water. Meet at Four Winds Charters on Cable Wharf in Halifax.

Transportation to the island is FREE for volunteers.
GROUPS OF MORE THAN TEN PERSONS MUST PRE-REGISTER WITH THE FRIENDS OF MCNABS ISLAND.

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

For more information, contact Carolyn 477-0187 or visit the website or e-mail mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca

Annual Paddle & Cleanup of McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park

Saturday, September 11, 2004
(Raindate) Saturday September 18, 2004

Join Friends of McNabs Island Society and Canoe/Kayak Nova Scotia in a leisurely paddle around McNabs and Lawlor Islands. Help keep the islands clean by collecting garbage from the shoreline of the islands and McNabs Pond. Participants must have their own canoe, kayak or row boat.

For details contact Dusan at 422-4015 evenings.

Fall Foliage Tours, McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park

Sunday October 17, 2004
(Raindate) Sunday October 24, 2004
10 AM-4:00 PM

Guided history and nature tours, including a tour of the historic island homes. Wear comfortable shoes, and bring a lunch and drinking water. Meet at Four Winds Charters, Cable Wharf in Halifax. GROUPS OF MORE THAN TEN PERSONS MUST PRE-REGISTER.

Space on the boat is limited and is available on a First Come, First Served basis. For more information: contact Carolyn 477-0187 or visit www.mcnabsisland.ca or e-mail: mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca. Cost: TBA

McNabs Island Poster & Book

Our poster has been updated and is available by calling Carolyn at 477-0187. The price remains \$5.00 plus mailing. The critically acclaimed book "Discover McNabs Island" is for sale at \$10.00 per book. This is an indispensable resource for people who enjoy visiting the island.

The Gift of Membership

With Christmas approaching, please consider giving a Friends of McNabs Island Society membership to friends or family.

In addition to receiving *The Rucksack* and a reduced rate for transport from Eastern Passage, you support this worthy cause with your gift.

Island brochures and maps are still available!

Contact Carolyn at
477-0187
for your copies.

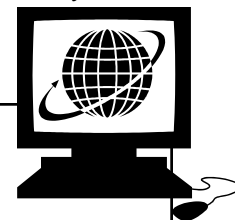
Email Updates

If you wish to receive updates about the status of McNabs Island by email, please send your information to either: Carolyn Mont at carolynmont@ns.sympatico.ca or to Cathy McCarthy at cathymc@accesscable.net

Friends of McNabs Island Website

www.mcnabsisland.ca

Photos of Hurricane Juan damage, updates to the state of the island and much more!



Mail Me!
THE FRIENDS OF MCNABS ISLAND SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION and RENEWAL FORM

NEW MEMBERSHIP

Name: _____

RENEWAL

Ad-

dress: _____

I AM ENCLOSING \$ _____ FOR:

DONATION

SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP (\$100)

SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP (\$50)

INDIVIDUAL MEMBER (\$15)

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP (\$20)

NEWSLETTER ONLY (\$15)

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: (902) 434-2254

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