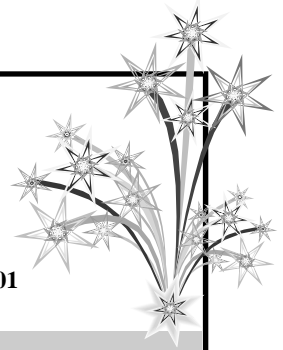




# *The Rucksack*

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



Volume Twenty Four Issue 1

*Celebrating 25 Years*

Spring 2015

## **McNabs Island: Protecting Halifax and the North Atlantic during Wartime**

**Friends of McNabs Island Society  
25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual General Meeting & Special  
Presentation Wednesday, April 22 at 6:30 pm – Small Craft  
Gallery - Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, 1675 Lower Water  
Street, on the Halifax Waterfront.**

**Special guest speaker - Dr. Roger Sarty, professor of naval,  
military and Canadian history at Wilfrid Laurier University in  
Waterloo, Ontario.**



Professor Sarty, who is originally from Halifax, first became interested in military history during a visit to McNabs Island over forty years ago. This interest led to a PhD thesis on the history of Canada's coastal defences for the University of Toronto, and a distinguished career as an historian with the Department of National Defence, and later, deputy director of the Canadian War Museum.

Dr. Sarty's presentation will take us back 100 years to the important role McNabs Island played during the First World War. Some 800 troops took up station in the forts and barracks on McNabs Island during WWI.

"In 1914, McNabs Island became a self-contained fortress, ready for action until the last day of the war," says Dr. Sarty. "Even in the summer of 1918, as Allied armies marched to Victory in Europe, McNabs' defences had to be reinforced as German submarines hunted in the waters off Nova Scotia."



*Fort Ives During WWI*

The British Empire's military effort during the war depended upon the safe delivery of supplies from North America. Learn more about how McNabs Island protected Halifax and the North Atlantic convoys. **This presentation is free and open to the public.**

## Friends of McNabs Island Society The Rucksack

**MEMBERSHIPS:** Individual Membership or Newsletter Only is \$20 per year, Family Membership is \$25 per year, Supporting Membership is \$75 per year and Sustaining Membership is \$150 per year. We are a registered charity and accept donations.

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

Contact address: **The Friends of McNabs Island**  
PO Box 31240, Gladstone RPO  
Halifax, NS B3K 5Y1

*We welcome contributions, ideas and feedback.*

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## Friends of McNabs Island Executive 2014

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≈ Royce Walker

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≈ Denyse Contrasty

### Treasurer

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### Membership Secretary

≈ Cathy McKenzie

### Newsletter Editor

≈ Mary Avery

### Trails Committee Chair

≈ Brent King

### Board Members

≈ Greg Noddin

≈ Brian Phelan

≈ Faye Power

≈ Alex Tamo

≈ Dan McKenzie

## Island Updates



### Island Tour Guides Needed

We get a lot of requests for guided tours and don't always have the volunteers to lead them. We are planning to organize another training session for new guides this spring. If you have an interest in the island's history and natural environment, and would like to learn how to lead a tour, contact Royce at 902-462-7346 or [roycewalker@eastlink.ca](mailto:roycewalker@eastlink.ca).

### Discover McNabs Island – makes a great gift

Our self-published popular guidebook is available in local bookshops or from our members for \$20. If you order a book locally directly from us, we will give you an aerial poster too. We are looking for a volunteer to look after book sales. Contact us if you can help.

### McNabs Island Summer Jobs – the best job ever!

We have applied for a grant to hire summer students again this year. Hopefully our application will be successful. If you know of a university student, who loves the island, and is returning to school in September, ask them to contact us at [info@mcnabsisland.ca](mailto:info@mcnabsisland.ca).

### More Park Benches

We have ten more park benches to install this spring. If you want to help, please contact us.

### New Trail Signs for McNabs

Thanks to Waterfront Development, we should be seeing some trail signs on McNabs this year, so there won't be any excuse to get lost on the island anymore!

## **MCNAB FAMILY CONNECTIONS**

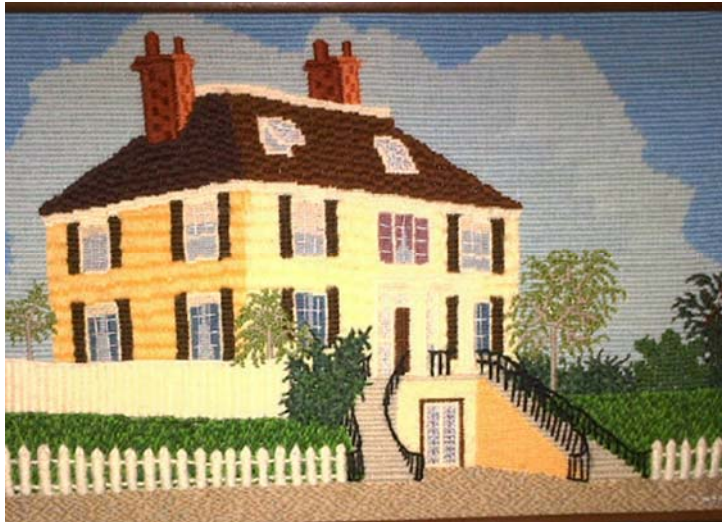
By Carolyn Mont

Those of us who are interested in McNabs Island always have our eyes and ears open for stories. Last year I gave a talk about McNabs to the Halifax Probus Club. At the end of the talk, Bill Gard approached me to tell me about his friend Fraser MacKee, who is connected with the McNab story. The only difficulty is that Fraser lives in the Toronto area.

As I was planning a trip to Toronto, I contacted Fraser and made arrangements to meet him. His late wife, Rosalind, was a direct descendant of Peter McNab. James McNab (1792-1871), son of Peter II, was her great-great grandfather. Although her branch of the McNab family had been living in Quebec for five generations, she was well aware of her McNab heritage.

During World War II, Fraser spent time in Halifax, training as an anti-submarine officer on the north end of McNabs Island. In 1951, he married Rosalind Wiggs. Always interested in her McNab heritage, they made a trip to Halifax in the late 1970s and visited McNabs Island. This trip was far different from what it was like during his wartime stay there. Fraser told me that they found a fisherman in Eastern Passage who took them to the island, dropped them off after pointing them in the direction of Fort McNab and returned to pick them up later. Remember that was in 1978, long before the Friends of McNabs Island Society existed. If they came today, knowledgeable guides would be able to assist them in their search.

While in Halifax, they visited the Museum at Citadel Hill and saw a photo of the house Ros' great-great grandfather had owned in Halifax at the corner of Barrington and South streets. A slide showing that picture was sent to their daughter, Gillian, who created a lovely petit point of the house and gave it to her mother for a Christmas gift in 1980. I was delighted to see this image of the house as I had not seen it before. It was a pleasant afternoon meeting Fraser and learning something new about the McNab family.



Petit Point of Hon. James McNab home at the corner of Barrington and South streets. The house was demolished after WWI.

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## ***Friends of McNabs 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year Dinner & Auction Raises funds for the Teahouse & Gardens***

By Catherine McCarthy

We began our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year by bringing back our popular dinner and auction. One hundred people came out to help us celebrate our milestone anniversary at Murphy's Cable Wharf restaurant on the Halifax Waterfront. We were lucky, as February 21<sup>st</sup> turned out to be one of the few storm-free days of this long winter.

The evening featured wonderful music by the Celtic folk band The Worry Birds and a McNabs Island slide presentation by Rochelle Owen. Rochelle presented us with the files for 1,445 photos taken in her yearlong photo shoot of McNabs Island. She has graciously offered these photos to the Friends of McNabs to help us tell the story of our favourite island.

The food and service at Murphy's was excellent! Guests were served a delicious dinner of their choice - salmon, chicken or vegetarian plates -finished off by tasty apple crisp. The evening was topped off by presentations of McNabs Island pins to our members who have been longtime supporters.

We had tremendous support from local businesses and our members who donated items for our silent auction and raised over \$3,500 for the society. We will use these funds to begin to restore the Victorian Gardens on the island and get the McNabs Island Teahouse, located in the centre of the gardens, open again. The Teahouse will become the centre for outdoor education activities on McNabs Island.

Thanks to the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Events organizing committee members for putting together such a fabulous evening. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed it. Committee members included; Cathy & Dan McKenzie, Françoise Dardanne, Dachia Joudrey, Faye Power, Linda Maxwell, Judy Sanford, Ann Marie Gouchie, Lorna MacLeod, Greg Noddin, Carolyn Clegg, Brent King, and Judy Campbell. Job well done by all!



**Dinner Greeters—Linda and Judy**



**Greg, Cathy, Faye & Royce**



## ***Dinner and Auction Photos***

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**M.P. Peter Stoffer and Cathy**



**Dachia, Anne Marie & Françoise**



**The Worry Birds**



**MLA Joyce Treen and Cathy**



**25th Anniversary Committee**



**Dinner Guests**



*Thanks to everyone who donated gifts for our  
25th Anniversary Dinner and Auction*



*Atlantic Superstores  
Bettyanne Power & Rob Field  
Councillor Bill Karsten  
Blooming Café  
Bluewave Energy  
Brian & Cathy Phelan  
Canada Games Centre  
Carrefour Atlantique  
Casaroma Wellness  
Cheapy Tire  
Christine Ostling  
Cole Harbour Place  
Curves  
Cyclesmith  
Cynthia Hirschfeld  
Dachia Joudrey  
Dan McKenzie  
Dartmouth SportsPlex  
Donna Hopper  
Evergreen Writer's Group  
FinBar's Irish Pub  
Françoise Dardanne  
Giovanna's Hair Design  
Global Pet Foods  
Halifax Magazine  
Interlude Spa  
Ticket Atlantic  
Janet Charest  
Jim Cleveland  
Joyce Treen - MLA  
Just Us! Coffee Roaster Co-op  
Kent Building Supplies  
Larry Hatt's Auto  
Lorna MacLeod  
Maps and More*

*Joe McSweeney  
Mary Ann Archibald  
Megan Leslie MP  
Metro Windows & Doors  
Mic Mac Bar & Grill  
Mid East Foods  
Mooseheads Hockey Team  
Murphy's the Cable Wharf  
Nimbus Publishing  
Nora Gross  
Nordic Walking Nova Scotia  
Northwood  
Nova Scotian Crystal  
O'Regans Toyota  
Palladium Restaurant  
P'Lovers  
Putting Edge  
Richardson's Law Office  
Royce Walker  
Seaside FM  
Sou' Wester Restaurant & Gift Shop  
Spirit Spa & Hair Studio  
Starr Dobson  
Suzanne Lajoie  
Swiss Chalet  
The Old Triangle  
Trimar Promotional Products  
Uncle Buck's  
Uncommon Grounds & Lost Cod Clothing  
Waterfront Development Corporation Ltd.  
Wendy Dunham Travel  
Westin Nova Scotian  
White Point Beach Resort  
Shoppers Drug Mart*



## Monitoring Barn Swallows on McNabs Island

By Tara Imlay

Across Canada, Barn Swallow populations have declined by 95% over the last 40 years. This decline means that the Barn Swallow is listed as 'endangered' in Nova Scotia and assessed as 'threatened' nationally.



In 2013, I began my doctoral degree at Dalhousie University with the goal to examine why this once-common species is experiencing such a rapid decline. More specifically, I want to test the two most likely causes for the decline: 1) a decrease in aerial insect populations, which is their primary food source, and/or mis-timing between when insects are most abundant and when swallows are breeding, and 2) if changes to wintering ground conditions negatively impact survival or breeding success.

This research involves monitoring the timing of breeding, breeding success and survival of Barn Swallows over multiple years. One of the sites included in the project is Fort McNab National Historic Site. There are over 70 old Barn Swallow nests in the buildings and several of these are reused each year. It is estimated that about 15 pairs nest annually at Fort McNab.

In July 2014, representatives from the Canadian Wildlife Service, Bird Studies Canada, and Parks Canada accompanied me to Fort McNab to check nests and trap adult swallows. On our first visit, we found that most of the nests had already fledged their young, but we did find three nests with chicks and one nest with eggs. After checking the nests, we set up nets inside two buildings and caught six adults and one juvenile. On our second visit two weeks later, we found five nests with eggs and two nests with chicks. We set up our nets again and caught three more adults.

I was not able to do as much research at Fort McNab last year as I had hoped. With only two visits, it is difficult to know how many pairs successfully bred at Fort McNab. I hope to continue working at Fort McNab over the next couple of years to collect more data on population size, breeding success and the survival of adult Barn Swallows. This valuable information will be incorporated into research to understand why Barn Swallows are declining, and will likely be valuable for managing the colony at Fort McNab.





*Friends of McNabs Island Society*  
**25th Anniversary 2015 Events - Mark your calendars!**



**25<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting & Presentation by Historian Dr. Roger Sarty**  
**Wednesday April 22, 2015 – 6:30 pm** - (see details on front page)  
**Maritime Museum of the Atlantic - 1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax Waterfront**

**McNabs Island Beach Cleanup—Sunday, June 7 (rain date June 14) 10 am – 5:00 pm**  
Departure from Murphy's Cable Wharf, Halifax Waterfront and A&M Sea Charters, Eastern Passage. Bring your work gloves, lunch, drinking water and enthusiasm! Since 1991 we have collected over 11,600 bags of garbage from the island's beaches. This is a very popular FREE event that fills up quickly – **everyone must pre-register by contracting [info@mcnabsisland.ca](mailto:info@mcnabsisland.ca)**

**McNabs Island 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Picnic**  
**Saturday, July 18 (rain date July 19) 9:30 am- 5:30 pm**  
Guided hikes - entertainment and games for all ages. Departure from Murphy's Cable Wharf, Halifax Waterfront and A&M Sea Charters, Eastern Passage. Tickets \$15 members & children: \$20 non-members, available via Ticket Atlantic or at Superstore customer service counters.

**Fall Foliage Tours of McNabs Island Sunday October 18 (rain date October 25) 10 am – 5:00 pm**  
Enjoy the Fall Colours on a guided history or nature tour. Departure from Murphy's Cable Wharf, Halifax Waterfront and A&M Sea Charters, Eastern Passage. Tickets \$15 members & children: \$20 non-members, available via Ticket Atlantic or at Superstore customer service counters.

**Watch for updates on our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary events on Facebook and Twitter!** Join our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee and contact us at [info@mcnabsisland.ca](mailto:info@mcnabsisland.ca) or 902-434-2254. We need volunteer power to make our 25<sup>th</sup> year a success!

**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*.**

**Renew your Membership Now!**

We thank you for your continued support and welcome your interest!  
Renew your membership directly via our website:

**[mcnabsisland.ca/membership-application](http://mcnabsisland.ca/membership-application)**

or send a cheque payable to:

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

**The Society is a registered charity:  
CCRA Number 888 474 194 RR0001**

***The Rucksack*** is published by the Friends of McNabs Island Society.  
Contributions, ideas and feedback are welcome.

Visit our website at: [www.mcnabsisland.ca](http://www.mcnabsisland.ca)

***Follow us on Facebook or Twitter.***

Phone: Cathy (902) 434-2254 evenings or email [info@mcnabsisland.ca](mailto:info@mcnabsisland.ca)

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