

# Friends of McNabs Island Society turns 20!

This year is a time to celebrate as the Friends of McNabs Island Society turns twenty years old. To kick off the celebrations please attend:



There will be voting on a special resolution, please see page 2 for details.

McNabs Island Memories			
In celebration of our 20 <sup>th</sup> anniversary, we are putting together a collection of old photos and memorabilia of McNabs Island. If you have some photos of days-gone-by on the island that you would like to share, please let us know. Contact Carolyn at 477-0187 for more information.			
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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.

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 2009

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Denyse Contrasty

Treasurer Judy Campbell

Membership Secretary Lyn Underhill

Newletter Editor Theresa RolletMcWilliams

Trails Committee Chair Jon Cusick Board Member Katalin Ohlsson

Board Member

Faye Power

Board Member Royce Walker Board Member Carolyn Mont

## 2010 AGM Special Resolution

Pursuant to the Society's bylaws, Mike Tilley would like to give notice of his intention to motion from the floor, at the Annual General Meeting that:

"The Friends of McNabs Island shall adopt the correct spelling of Lawlors Island to include an "s" with or without apostrophe."



Chain saw expert Tommy Harper educated six members of our trails committee on the safe operation of a chain saw on November 14, 2009. If you are interested in joining the Trails Committee contact Jon at 404-1939 or joncusick@hotmail.com (Photo by Jon Cusick)



# McNabs Island Picnic July 17, 2010 Mark your calendars!

The Friends of McNabs Island Society celebrates our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the McNabs Island Picnic. To be held on Canada's National Parks Day, Saturday, July 17, the picnic will also celebrate the opening of our newly rebuilt trails.

Celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with entertainment, food and refreshments. Games for all ages and guided tours of the island are planned.

- # GAMES! Play a game of quoits. Quoits was a popular game similar to horseshoes that was played on the island in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- PONIES! Pony rides for the children! Ponies were a key attraction of the Bill Lynch Shows that got its start on McNabs Island many years ago.
  - TEA TIME! Afternoon tea anyone? Relive tea parties of long ago with afternoon tea on the veranda or the historic Conrad-Davis house.

AND MUCH MORE! These are just some of the events that will be part ŧ of our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

The McNabs Island Picnic is an all day event with departures from Halifax and Eastern Passage. Cost is yet to be determined and depends on the amount of sponsorship funds we are able to raise for this event. Join the planning team to help organize this family picnic and anniversary party on the island. Contact Cathy at 434-2254 or mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca.

Eighteen volunteers spent Saturday March 6 cleaning up the McNab Family Cemetery and Fort McNab National Historic Site as part of our volunteer maintenance agreement with Parks Canada.

If you are interested in participating in future McNabs Island work projects, contact Cathy at mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca

Photo Credit: Katalin Ohlsson



# Who Visits McNabs Island?

Story and photos by Carolyn Mont

Over the years, I have taken many groups on hikes on McNabs Island. As a junior high teacher, I brought classes of teenagers to the island. They were often reluctant visitors when I told them there was nowhere on McNabs to spend money but after half an hour they were talking about bringing their families to the island.



Mike Tilley transports the group of St. Paul's Church members

I've accompanied politicians to the island. They always see the potential for the island as a resource for education, tourism, recreation and environmental studies.

Friends and family always love a trip to McNabs. My family has been going to McNabs Island for generations. Many years ago, when my father was a child, Sunday school picnics were held there. The women and children would go over on a Saturday morning and when the men got off work at noon they joined their families. This was a highlight of the summer!! Many years later, my parents met on McNabs. My father was stationed there for a while during World War II and my mother was a summer resident.

Last year, Eve Burns and I went to the island with a group of people who worked in recreation around the province (See The

Rucksack Volume 17, Issue 1, Winter 08/09). The trip was one of their workshops at a conference and many of them didn't even know the location of McNabs other than that it is in the harbour. In fact, that day we could not see the island from Bishop's Landing because of the fog and rain. However, they had a great hike and fell in love with the island.

Then there are the people who go to the island for our Annual Beach Clean-up and our Annual Fall Foliage Tour. Both of these events bring people from far and wide, some with distant connections, some who always wanted to go to McNabs but didn't know how to do it and some who are regulars.

While on the island myself I have spoken to people from Britain, from Australia, from Georgia and from various provinces of Canada. It often happens that the folks I speak with have some connection to McNabs. I was surprised to find some of these connections when I lead a hike with some members of my church, St. Paul's United Church in Spryfield in October.

Saturday, October 3 was a beautiful day. A group of us from of St. Paul's United Church in Spryfield had planned a hike on McNabs and we had a great day for it. We gathered at the parking lot in Fisherman's Cove and went to meet Mike Tilley of the McNabs Island Ferry. Mike took us up to Ives Cove and from there we walked up the hill to Fort Ives. Many of the group had never been to McNabs and were amazed at the view. We walked over to the Conrad Davis house and the Matthew Lynch house. It was a real treat to see docile deer on the lawn and in the woods.

As we walked down the Military Road, we saw a fox walking ahead of us. Far from being frightened of us, it seemed to watch us coming, then turned and walked ahead of us, stopping periodically to see if we were following him. We stopped to look at a War Department marker and when we turned to see where the fox was, he had disappeared. Every one of us was disappointed to see that he was no longer with us..

While we were there, Carol Schofield asked me where the McNabs Island lighthouse had been. Her father, George Crowe, had filled in for the lighthouse keeper, Colin Cleveland (see The Rucksack Volume 14, Issue 1, Summer

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2005) when Mr. Cleveland was on vacation. Carol didn't stay on the island when her father was there but visited for day trips. She doesn't remember the exact years but knows it was two summers in the mid 1950's. I was thrilled to learn of this connection to McNabs and wanted more information. We know that that lighthouse was demolished in 1976 but like so many of us, Carol wishes she had paid more attention at the time.

As we were approaching the Maughers Beach Lighthouse, Pat Connors told me that he also has a connection with McNabs. He had been with the Coast Guard and in that capacity had been to the lighthouse many times. We walked out as far as we could on the lighthouse road but because of the breach caused by Hurricane Juan, we couldn't get to the lighthouse. In fact, the ocean has twisted



Pat Connors, Lisa Enman, Valerie Connors, Rev. Jeanne Manning-Straight, Mary Manning, Carol Schofield, George Schofield

the breakwater very badly over the years and it has been some time since it was possible to walk to the lighthouse. Pat said that he remembered bringing the big rocks over to the island to protect the lighthouse. It is awesome to consider the power of the ocean; it is no longer possible to access the lighthouse except by helicopter.

Since it was low tide, we decided to walk down Wambolt Trail to Back Cove. From there, we walked to the site of the former Range Pier where Mike met us to take us back to Eastern Passage and then home. It's rare that when a date is chosen for an event everyone who wants to is able to take part. That was the case with St. Paul's United Church's trip to McNabs Island. We had a great day and will return again next fall. Hopefully, the next time around, those folks who wanted to join us on the first trip will be available for the next one.

# **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. (Cost of mailing is extra).

Contact Faye Power at 443-1749 to order either item.

**# Brochures and Maps are available for FREE!** 

# We get by with a little help from our friends....

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 Island Trail Project a Big Success**

By David MacDonald, PEng, photos supplied by Cathy McCarthy

The Friends of McNabs Island Society has accomplished the most significant trail improvement project since adopting the Island in 1990. In the aftermath of the Hurricane Juan cleanup, the hiking trails on the Island had deteriorated, suffering from poor drainage and rough surfaces.

Last year, the Friends began soliciting various levels of government for funding to undertake a major reconstruction to improve the condition of the trail network. Under the leadership of its president, Cathy McCarthy, they were successful in raising **\$271,700**. Trail funding contributors included: the **National Trails Coalition** (\$73,500); **Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection** (\$70,000); **Parks Canada** (\$50,000); **HRM**'s New Parks and Playgrounds Capital fund (\$50,000); **HRM Councillors**, Jackie Barkhouse (\$5,500), Dawn Sloane (\$5,000), Jennifer Watts (\$2,000), Jim Smith (\$2,000), Reg Rankin (\$2,000), Russell Walker (\$2,000), Bill Karsten (\$1,000) and Bob Harvey (\$500). The **Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources** (DNR) contributed an additional \$8,700 and provided engineering specs and staff to oversee the construction project.

As soon as the funding was secured, the Executive selected a project team to begin the construction planning stage of this major trail improvement project. The team consisted of Carolyn Mont, Jon Cusick, Royce Walker, Dave MacDonald, and Cathy McCarthy. Using the trail plan prepared by DNR and approved by the Park Advisory Committee early last year, the committee identified priorities for each trail. It was hoped that along with improving sections of Garrison Road, secondary trails around the Teahouse and the Hugonin-Perrin Estate as well as the Colin Stewart Trail could be rebuilt.

The team met with DNR staff to concur on what construction work should be done to each trail. DNR's position was that improvements to major portions of Garrison Road should be our top priority. DNR drew up draft tender documents and the Friends of McNabs Island called a public tender. With the help of the Rick Draper of the Province's Procurement Services, the tender was listed on the public tenders website. There were six bidders interested in the project and the Friends accepted the lowest bid of \$260,200 from Brycon Construction of Dartmouth. Work started in early December and was completed by mid January 2010. Doug Oliver, DNR's Parks Technician, visited the Island regularly during construction to oversee the work on behalf of the Society.



On your next visit to the island, if you walk north on Garrison Road toward Fort lves, you'll see new ditches along the road as well as new culverts to improve old drainage problems. Note the road section running along Findlay Cove from the Lynch Road to Fort Hugonin. There is new ditching and culverts along the long hill going from the Lynch Road to the marshland at Findlay Cove. This low area has been raised 18 inches above the old roadbed. Many other sections of Garrison Road on the other side of the Island have had similar ditching work and new culverts installed and finished with new gravel to build up the roadbed. The long uphill section from the Wambolt Trail to Fort McNab has been improved. The section going

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down to Back Cove has been fixed but not graveled since there wasn't enough money to finish this section.

As we go to print, another work project has started. The federal Public Works, Government Services Canada is removing the petroleum-contaminated soil, old pipeline and pumphouse south of Garrison Pier. Hopefully once this project is finished, this section of Garrison Road will be greatly improved for hikers too.

As the Society enters its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, the successful completion of this inaugural trail improvement project is a strong testament to its role as committed and conscientious stewards of McNabs Island. It is hoped the Society will be able to continue with similar improvements to more trails on the Island in the future.



Low wet area of Garrison Road near Findlay Cove after trail improvements January 2010

Mount Saint Vincent Public Relations Professor Brent King assigned his class to work on a McNabs Island project last fall. The class visited the island during the Fall Foliage Tours and then got busy interviewing several people connected with the Friends of McNabs Island. The result was several feature stories on McNabs Island that will be highlighted throughout our anniversary year. Many thanks to Brent and his students who did a great job in capturing the sland's character and stories.

# MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE NOW

Last year we simplified our membership renewal process to make all memberships renewable by the end of each year. Therefore all 2010 memberships are now due for renewal. Please fill out the renewal form enclosed with this issue and check off whether you will be attending the Annual General Meeting on Wed, April 14, 2010 at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, Lower Water Street, Halifax at 7:00 pm. Your support for McNabs Island and our society is invaluable.

> For any membership inquiries contact Lyn Underhill at mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca or by calling 902-444-7482.



If you want to be on our email list and get updates about McNabs Island, please send your contact information to: mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca or visit our Facebook group.



Alan Ruffman's: From the archives... These articles signed by 'AN OCCASIONAL', on various 19th century historical matters were prepared anonymously and without source references from past issues of various Halifax newspapers by a Bedford resident, George Mullane, from 1912 to about 1930. Lieutenant-Colonel Wright, commandant of Royal Engineers, writes the Ordnance Office, London, in regard to the tower in course of con-struction at Mauger's Beech, dated 2nd September, 1815. He says, "In compliment to His Excellency Lieut.-General Sir John Sherbrooke, I have General Sir John Sherbrooke, I have named the tower Sherbrooke tower, This building was estimated by the Interesting history of naval and military matters in ? Auld former commanding Royal Engineers to be constructed of common rough Lang Syne." stone masonry, a mode of building which experience has pointed out in the severe climate to be in most in-stances of a most objectionable nature, The stage and its critics in the middle of the last century. from its inadequacy to preserve the building dry, or in good order, and from the constant experience which is The to Saladin Coase before the entailed in the service of repairs to keep the same from going to decay, and which, from the nature of the climate, and the difficulty of procuring Vice-Admirally Court in Halifax in 1844. The construction of the tower at workmen cannot always be done, The foundation of this tower was completed in 1915, by Lieut, Colonel Nicolls, laid on a circle of hemlock logs. The original estimate of the cost Manger's Beach in 1815. The Art School in Halifax, and sits claims on wealthy citizens. of above tower was £2,4407s. 11d., but an additional sum of £1,998 2s. 4d. was found necessary to complete it." Consecration of Camp Hill Camebery, and the laving of the corter stone of the Catholic Album of mounted copies of the OCCASIONAL'S Church, at Ferguson's Cove. LETTER collected daily from The Acadian Recorder, Halifax NS. Manuscript Group 9, volume 78 pp. 128-129 The oily crier of Halifax in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia early part of the last century.



The Acadian Recorder was one of the longest running newspapers in the Halifax-Dartmouth area, printed from 1813 to 1930. It covered events of both the local area as well as throughout Nova Scotia. As such, it is a valuable primary historical resource of that time period.

The Acadian Recorder had an anonymous columnist that produced the "Occasional's Letter" and signed columns An Occasional. Occasional would mine back issues of the newspaper and other sources for items of historical interest, much like Lorna Innes does for The Chronicle Herald once a week.

Occasional was not always the same person and changed identity over time. Occasional's Letter also



does not give specific sources for the items printed, so further research is needed to run down the source of an interesting column. In the pictured Feb 17, 1917 column, Occasional's Letter covers topics from 1815 to 1846.

While researching at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, the laying of the cornerstone of the Stella Maris Chapel in Ferguson's Cove, I was led to the Feb 17<sup>th</sup> column whose lead headline announced "the construction of the tower at Mauger's Beach in 1815." I've not yet pursued the cited 1815 source but any reader could do so.

Alan Ruffman, Ferguson's Cove

## Modern Petroleum Industry Founded in Nova Scotia Kerosene first tested in the Sherbrooke Tower, McNabs Island By Royce Walker

Abraham Pineo Gesner was born May 2, 1797 in Cornwallis, Nova Scotia. He trained as physician and geologist and further 'discovered' coal and 'gum beds' in New Brunswick in the 1830's. By 1846 he was distilling kerosene or 'coal oil' as it was commonly known at the time. In 1846, Gesner experimented with kerosene as a fuel for the lighthouse at Maugers Beach, McNabs Island, Halifax, as an alternative to whale oil. *"no light as bright and steady had ever shone out over the Atlantic"* 

Gesner sensed the commercial possibilities of kerosene, and devoted the next 6 years to improving his process. In 1854 he moved to Long Island and formed the North American Kerosene Gas Light Company. With the switch from whale oil to kerosene Gesner has saved more whales than Greenpeace ever will.

Wikipedia – "Abraham Pineo Gesener, born May 2, 1797 – died April 29, 1864. A Nova Scotian physician and geologist who invented kerosene and became <u>the primary founder of the modern</u> <u>petroleum industry</u>.

On the facing page the Sherbrooke Tower is pictured with the lighthouse in 1941 and features the anti-submarine net in the foreground. Sherbrooke Tower had sustained damage in a storm a number of years earlier which caused the outer stonework to begin to fail, but what is seen in the photo may be the beginnings of demolition. It does not appear that the light is operational, although there may be a small temporary light on Sherbrooke Tower. It is possible that during the war, neither light was needed.

Fall/Win 2009/2010 Celebrating 20 years—Friends of McNabs Island Society



Leftover gravel pile at Back Cove

### Trail Rebuilding on McNabs Island Continues Story & photos by Cathy McCarthy

After years of wishing and hoping and waiting for the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to put some funding into McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park, the Friends of McNabs Island took the initiative on our own to raise funds for the island park.

According to the Management Plan for the park, McNabs Island is supposed to be developed as a "natural environment' park that encourages passive recreational activities such as hiking, cycling, skiing

and snowshoeing. Sadly Hurricane Juan and the subsequent clearing of the trails by heavy equipment left much of the extensive trails system in ruin. So the Friends of McNabs Island sought out funds to rebuild the trail system.

With funding from many sources, we successfully raised \$271,700 for the first phase of the McNabs Island Trail Project. We had hoped that we could stretch our fundraising dollars to repair several trails on the island but DNR insisted that Garrison Road should be repaired first. This road is the main corridor trail on the island and serves as a maintenance road for the federal and provincial owners.

Costs to rebuild Garrison Road to DNR's specifications are extremely high. Extensive amounts of gravel had to be barged over to the island, ditches had to be dug and culverts installed. The worst stretch near Findlay Cove where everyone got their feet wet trying to dodge the huge puddles had to be completely rebuilt.

This year, we turn our attention to rebuilding some of the secondary trails. DNR tells us that an archaeological study needs to be done along the Colin Stewart Trail, which winds its way around McNabs Pond through the McNab Family Homestead toward Fort McNab National Historic Site. DNR requires a landscape plan for the Teahouse and Hugonin-Perrin Victorian Gardens area before any trail improvements can be done there. Hopefully these studies can be done early this spring so that trail improvements in these areas can be completed this year.

For all this trail work to continue, the Friends must raise even more funds than we did last year. Estimates based on the work done so far indicate that rebuilding the trails on McNabs Island will cost over \$1million. This is a lot of money to raise, for a not-for-profit registered charity with no staff resources to rely on.

We have applied for funding from government programs, businesses and foundations, but we need the help of our membership. If you can help in any way with this capital campaign, either by making tax-deductible contributions yourself, helping with funding proposals or introducing us to businesses and organizations that might help, please let us know.



Brycon heavy equipment on McNabs Island

# Paddle and Clean-up Story and photos by By Katalin Ohlsson



This year's Paddle & Cleanup on September 12<sup>th</sup> took place on a beautiful sunny day. A total of five paddlers collected a lot of trash for a small group of garbage pickers. Reps from Canoe/Kayak Nova Scotia and the Friends of McNabs Island Society managed to collect an incredible 50 bags of Styrofoam, plastic bags, bottles and other debris from the shoreline.

Thanks to the Shearwater Yacht Club, the adventurous paddle cleanup participants

were able to use their facilities again. Starting from the yacht club, the paddlers ventured across the waters and concentrated again this year on cleaning up Lawlor Island. After a good paddle to the shoreline of Lawlor Island facing Fisherman's Cove, we managed to collect 50 bags of debris

from less than 3 km stretch of coastline.

Our heartfelt thanks goes out to Dusan Soudek from Canoe/Kayak Nova Scotia, the Shearwater Yacht Club, Clean Nova Scotia for providing the supplies and handling the logistics, Captain Mike Tilley for retrieving the bagged garbage and debris and bringing it to the mainland as well as HRM Public Works for garbage pick up. A Bravo Zulu to all the paddlers and canoeists who came out for the event, their outstanding effort and help truly made a difference to our provincial park.



Paddlers combing the shore for trash

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

# EVENTS

### McNabs and Lawlor Islands Beach Cleanup

#### Sunday June 6 (rain date- June 13)

Time: 10 am – 4:30 pm

Meet at Murphy's on the Water, Cable Wharf, Halifax Waterfront before 10 a.m. <u>Space on the boat is limited</u> and available on First Come, First Served basis.

**FREE** transportation to the island for volunteers willing to clean up the beaches. Bring gloves, a lunch and water. Groups of more than ten persons must pre-register by calling Cathy at 434-2254 (evenings) or Carolyn (477-0187) or by e-mailing mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca. Visit www.mcnabsisland.ca for more details.

### McNabs Island Picnic

### Saturday July 17 (rain date- July 18)

Come to McNabs Island Provincial Park to celebrate the Friends of McNabs Island Society's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on Canada's National Parks Day. The McNabs Island Picnic includes carnival-style games and entertainment, guided history and nature tours, pony rides and tea-time. The event also marks the opening of newly rebuilt trails on the island.

**Location:** Transportation to McNabs Island is from Cable Wharf on the Halifax Waterfront and from Eastern Passage. Cost of transportation TBD.

For more information contact Cathy at 434-2254 (evenings) or Faye (443-1749) or by e-mailing mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca. Visit www.mcnabsisland.ca for more details.

## McNabs and Lawlor Islands Paddle and Clean-up

### Saturday, September 18 (Rain date September 25)

Join fellow sea kayakers and open canoeists of Canoe Kayak Nova Scotia and Friends of McNabs Island Society for a paddle and cleanup of the shoreline of McNabs and Lawlor Islands Provincial Park.

**Location:** Meet at Shearwater Yacht Club. Safety equipment required by the Coast Guard must be on board and approved PFDs must be worn. Bring a lunch and drinks.

Contact Katalin Ohlsson at 902-464-1236, (evenings) or at <u>Katalin.Ohlsson@ns.sympatico.ca</u> for more information or to pre-register.

### Fall Foliage Tours of McNabs Island

### Sunday October 17, (rain date October 24)

Join the Friends of McNabs Island Society for the annual Fall Foliage Tour of **McNabs Island Provincial Park**. Tour includes a visit inside the historic island homes of "midway king" Bill Lynch and his family.

**Location:** Meet at Murphy's on the Water, Cable Wharf, Halifax Waterfront before 10 a.m. Cost: \$10 (members and children) \$12 (non-members).

Bring a lunch and water. Groups of more than ten persons must pre-register with the Friends of McNabs Island by calling Cathy at 434-2254 (evenings) or Carolyn (477-0187) or by e-mailing mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca. Visit www.mcnabsisland.ca for more details.

## *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.

## This issue went to print March 2010

# Time: 10 am – 5:30 pm

Time: 9:30am

Time 10 am – 4:30 pm