



January - February 2014

*TIDINGS*  
*FBHI - 35 Years on Mainland, Island, and Sea!*



Scan this image to find our web page

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**Online Survey & Contest  
 Who are you?**

We have an idea who our readers are, but if you could help us... please click on this [LINK](#) to **SURVEY** and complete the information. We won't sell the information to anyone.

**Welcome**

January 24, 2014

**Greetings!**

Welcome to our January-February Edition of Tidings. Click on the "In this issue links" to go directly to the item, or just read the entire issue. *[to print this, set your printer to portrait]*

Thank you for reading, and thank you most of all for your support. The Friends are primarily supported by your membership.

Our volunteer at the office (see her bio below) sends Membership Renewal Letters approximately 4 weeks before your membership expires. You can respond by mail/check, or you can renew easily on our web page - it's instant!

If you were on the harbor and/or visited one or more of the islands this past summer and would like to write an account of your experience, please send it to me for an issue of Tidings. We may print your story for all to see! Email your story to: [ChairmanFBHI@gmail.com](mailto:ChairmanFBHI@gmail.com)

On a personal note, one of the reasons I love the islands is the rich history - and with this edition of Tidings we're bringing you "news" of the **Jailbreak from the Reform School on Rainsford Island - in 1899** that is!

Enjoy the story, and if you know of other stories that bring the islands to life - please send them on to me!

Thank you!

Walter Hope, Chairman  
 PO Box 121020, Boston MA 02112 for personal notes, and stories...

**Quick Links**

- [Join Online JOIN or RENEW your Membership with FBHI](#)
- [Bostons Best Cruises](#)

**Back Issues of Tidings**

To see back issues click on [TIDINGS](#)

**Boston's Best Cruises**

FBHI Members receive a \$2 per ticket discount on Boston's Best Cruises - Specialty Cruises!



**Winter Fortress Cruise  
 Feb 22  
 11am-2:30pm**

This trip to Fort Warren on Georges Island is truly one of a kind! Visiting the fort during the winter is something that very few living people have experienced.

Park Rangers lead tours of the fort, but you can also explore on your own. Visit the mini-museum at the Visitors Center to warm up and learn more about the island and the fort history. Remember, the ferry will always remain docked so that you can get snacks, warm up and use the restrooms.

- See more at: <http://bostonsbestcruises.com>

**Find FBHI  
 on the**

information - it is just a way to gather information about you - our readers and members. And as a thank you - one lucky survey respondent that finishes the survey and provides their mailing info will win a restaurant gift certificate - Thank you!

## FBHI Membership Benefits

FBHI membership has its benefits including eTidings, discounts on boat trips with FBHI, Boston's Best Cruises, Boston Harbor Cruises, and more. For Membership Benefits - click [BENEFITS](#)

**JOIN the FBHI**  
**Join the Friends ONLINE**  
**"Instantly" Click on JOIN**

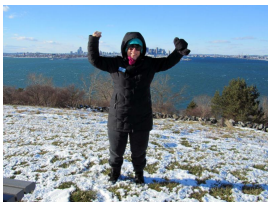
### January 1, 2014 Spectacle Island Trip

By Suzanne Gall Marsh

January 1, 2014 was sunny with sparkling views and a snowy owl sighting as seventy seven harbor island enthusiasts welcomed the New Year during the Friends annual Seafarers Island Holiday. Thank you to the FBHI boat trips volunteers for planning and hosting this event.

Alan Rilla the first live-in caretaker of Spectacle since it opened left his position after eight years on January 17<sup>th</sup>. He will be getting married in May and our very best wishes go to him and his finance Carolyn for their mainland life together. Alan would like us to remember, "It's all about the visitor." We will miss him and his faithful companion Max.

Photos from the day below, by FBHI Board Member Ken Stein



My neighborhood during one of our recent storms

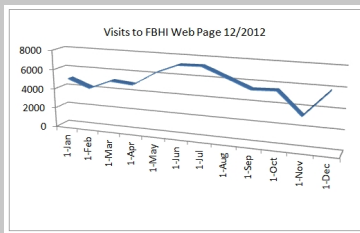
## Numbers make the ...

In the paper edition of Tidings issued in December, I was allotted some space to write to you about the Friends.

In this space, let me share with you some numbers that keep me thinking... we have opportunities, now how do we address them?

### Our Web Page - FBHI.Org by the numbers:

Our almost 2 year old revamped web page is continually updated with new information, and receives 5500 visits per month in the peak Summer season, with 66 thousand visitors annually.

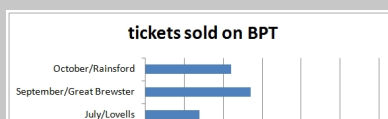


66,000 web visitors annually

### Boat Trips & Brown Paper Tickets by the numbers:

In 2013 we switched from a very manual boat trip ticketing system to an automated system using "Brown Paper Tickets (BPT)". This switch saved us time and money, and provided a up-to-date accounting of the number of sold and available tickets.

The 9 boat trips we planned this year were subject to weather and equipment issues, and we were able to sell 200 tickets using BPT. It is important to know that we run these trips as a public outreach effort, and offer a way to get to islands that are not serviced by public ferry, shuttles, or at times (sunsets) that are the islands are not served by the shuttles.



internet!

CLICK on the LOGOS to:

Follow us on [twitter](#)

frequent 'tweets' with information about the harbor, Boston & the islands

[Like us on Facebook](#)

frequent posts from fellow island lovers and notices of upcoming events

View our videos on [YouTube](#)

videos from island lovers, telling their stories of the harbor islands

And you can always find out more information on our web page

[FBHI.ORG](http://FBHI.ORG)

## New England Boat Show



(February 22- March 2) at the Boston Convention and Expo Center ("BCEC").

We've got wonderful Raffle donations from:

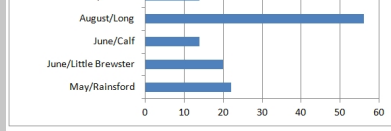
[Admirals Hill Marina](#), [Cabelas](#), [Ben's Boat Works](#), [Constitution Marina - Bed & Breakfast Afloat](#), [Eldridge Tide Guide](#) and several hotel nights and restaurant gift certificates have been received so far, with more expected for the raffle.

We have received Total goods worth over \$1500 as of this writing! Raffle tickets will be sold at the show.

In the past we've spoken to hundreds of people who know "of" the islands, but have never stepped foot on them.

We've also chatted with people who met Edward Rowe Snow, and others who lived on Calf, Spectacle and Peddocks Islands.

We've also forged partnerships with other show vendors including Boat US (member discount), Black Rock Sailing School (discount), Admirals Hill Marina (discounts on hauls and fuel & donated boat haul), Constitution Marina and Bed & Breakfast Afloat (donated a night aboard).



## Park News & Notes



### Park Advisory Council Meetings & Vacancies

March 5<sup>th</sup> is the annual meeting of the Park Advisory Council from 6:00-8:00 p.m. It will be held at WilmerHale, 60 State Street, 26<sup>th</sup> floor in Boston. The speaker will be announced. The Advisory Council has 4 public meetings a year. Walter Hope is the FBHI voting representative and Suzanne Gall Marsh is ex-officio for FBHI.

The Advisory Council currently has 7 vacancies on the 28-member council. They are: 1 in Municipalities, 2 in Business & Commercial, 2 in Native American, and 2 in Community Groups. If you know of someone who may be interested in participating please check [www.nps.gov/boha](http://www.nps.gov/boha) and right click on Partnership and Advisory Council for information. You may contact Mary Raczko, NPS Partnership Liaison for more information (617)223-8637 or email [Mary\\_Raczko@nps.gov](mailto:Mary_Raczko@nps.gov).

Upcoming Park meetings which are all open to the public:

Operations Committee on February 6<sup>th</sup> and March 6<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-11:00 at Park Headquarters, 15 State Street, Boston on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor. The Partnership meets bi-monthly: January 21<sup>st</sup> and March 18<sup>th</sup> from 3:00-4:30.

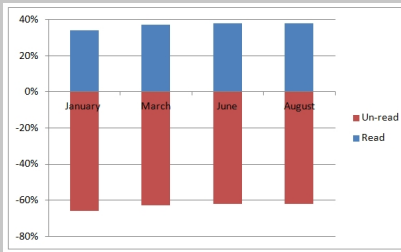
For a schedule of park meetings, locations and upcoming events go to [www.bostonharborislands.org](http://www.bostonharborislands.org) or call the Park "hotline" at 617-223-8666.

### National Park Service Seasonal Jobs!

National Park Service seasonal job postings as a Visitor Services Assistant with the Boston Harbor Islands are now on line through February 3<sup>rd</sup> at <https://my.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/357011600>.

## eTidings Newsletter by the numbers:

We published 5 editions of our newsletter electronically this year and averaged a 34% "open rate" which means 66% of our audience (you, our members and Friends) did not see the Tidings, and did not learn of events and Friends activities. This is one reason we're providing a paper copy of Tidings this month. Our goal with Tidings is always to keep you informed of not just FBHI activities, but of activities in and on the harbor and the islands.



eTidings open rates (blue-open, red-not opened)

## So, in summary...

**Brown Paper Tickets** and our boat trips seem to be working well - but we have room for improvement. Weather is always an issue, and getting the word out seems to be working relatively well. Adding some "value" to the trips with visits to different islands, activities, specialized tours may help.

Our **web page visits** are good and continue to grow. We do receive a small number of inquires about the park or the islands over email from the web page, and we've had a tiny number of online sales of merchandise over the web. Some of our members are renewing their memberships online - and we hope that number increases.

As for **eTidings** (the very document we hope you're reading now), **a huge portion of our addressees are not even opening the email to read the 'content' within.** The reason we use

Chairman's note: as of 1/23/2014 we have been told that we will not have a booth at the show - we are hoping that "luck" will intervene and we'll be able to open up shop - the loss of income would be a blow to the FBHI budget.

## US EPA Proposes E15 or more ethanol in fuel-hazards to boaters

The **National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA)** is asking boaters to contact the **Environmental Protection Agency** and voice their support of a proposal to modify the mandate requiring higher concentrations of ethanol in the nation's gasoline fuel supply. The feedback deadline is **January 28**.

**Ethanol** is a gas additive made from corn. When added to fuel in concentrations higher than 10% it can damage marine engines and equipment.

In November, the EPA announced its proposal to modify the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) and to reduce the amount of ethanol required to be blended into the nation's fuel supply.

To make it easier for boaters to create and send a message to the EPA, the NMMA has set up a special page, which you can connect to by

[Contacting Gina McCarthy at the US EPA Click HERE](#)

"We already know that the ethanol and corn lobbies are submitting thousands of comments," the NMMA says. "We can't sit on the sidelines. It's time to take action and let the EPA know that you want lower ethanol mandates in 2014."

*Editors note: I have commented on the proposal, and noted that a boat that stops working because of an engine problem could put the boaters lives at risk. In addition, when the price of boating fuel goes up, in Massachusetts alone the 629 million dollars and 30,000 jobs that boating adds to our economy could be at risk. [Mass Marine Economy Study WH](#)*





eTidings is that the cost is low - pennies per contact versus .75-\$1 per contact using a paper mailing (printing, folding, sealing, addressing, postage). It all adds up and we have a very nice sized list. If you have gotten this far... **thank you, and if you can, please encourage your friends to OPEN the email from the FBHI - there just might be an article or event that they'll be interested in!**

Thank you for reading -  
Walter Hope, Chairman



### Stewardship Saturdays

Volunteer outdoors on the islands on "Stewardship Saturdays" with Marc Albert and the natural resource management team during the winter. January 25 will be on Thompson Island; future dates are February 8 and 22; and March 8 and 22 with the islands to be announced. You must pre-register on [www.bostonharborislands.org/event-details?rid=1591](http://www.bostonharborislands.org/event-details?rid=1591) or call Marc at 978-360-0421.

### Cupid Splash!

Feel like a dip in the harbor? March 29<sup>th</sup> is the 4<sup>th</sup> annual **Cupid Splash** at the BCYF Curley Community Center in South Boston. The fundraiser is sponsored by Save the Harbor/Save the Bay for the public beaches programs in 2014. [www.cupidsplash.com](http://www.cupidsplash.com)



### Library Outreach Program

Our program is an effort to assist the park service in generating interest and appreciation for the Boston Harbor Islands National Park in communities surrounding Boston. Library displays are a very important tool to fulfill FBHI's goal of promoting a greater appreciation and stewardship for the Park amongst Boston Area residents.

What started at my hometown of Halifax in 2009 has grown dramatically through the years! We have put-up displays and donated Legacy Books at over 100 libraries. We want to have an ongoing relationship with these libraries by setting-up displays at each of these libraries every couple of years. This will take many more volunteers than we currently have.

We continue to expand our coverage area as we try to maintain our relations with previously visited libraries. My ultimate goal for the program is to visit the libraries bordering I-495 eastward including the harbor communities. We have volunteers that cover areas near their hometown. The volunteers' areas range from a handful to a dozen or so libraries in their area. Displays stay at a particular library for one month before moving to the next scheduled library. We have volunteers in different parts of Boston, but need many more in all areas of the city. Acknowledging that I had many helpers, I was recently recognized with the Superintendent's Award for my work at creating & growing the Library Outreach Program.

If you'd like to help this great program, please contact Carol Fithian or myself directly at [kevinsouthshore@gmail.com](mailto:kevinsouthshore@gmail.com) or 339-933-2634

Also I wanted to let people know of our efforts to give talks at libraries around Boston. We have continued to expand this effort and have had many FBHI members help. I currently do three talks consisting of : Boston Harbor Islands Park in general; Home on the harbor ( about different people who have called the harbor their home over the years); Fort Warren & the harbor's Civil War contribution. In addition, Walter Hope has done several talks using his "Boston Harbor 101 - the ice age and beyond". Kevin has several libraries scheduled for this Spring.

If you think your library might be interested in these talks, please have them contact us. Thank You - Kevin Rogers - FBHI - Community Outreach Coordinator [kevinsouthshore@gmail.com](mailto:kevinsouthshore@gmail.com)

# Winter Campfire Festival

Friday, February 14 5:30 - 7:30 PM  
Constitution Beach, East Boston

Gather around an evening beachside campfire with park rangers  
and listen to nature stories.

Roast marshmallows, ice skate at the indoor rink  
or make wintry owl crafts.

**Astronomers will be on hand to let you look through  
their telescopes at the night sky.**

Meet at: Constitution Beach Bathhouse, Zero Barnes Ave., East Boston



Hosted by MA Department of Conservation and Recreation,  
Boston Natural Areas Network, FMC Ice Sports at the Porrazzo Rink,  
The East Boston YMCA, Save the Harbor Save the Bay,  
The Friends of Belle Isle Marsh and The Friends of Winthrop Beach.

For more information, call DCR park ranger Enzo  
(781)485-2803 EXT. 109



Rainsford Island source: Wikipedia

## Jailbreak at Rainsford Island - Boston Harbor: August 1899

By Forgotten New England (reprinted with permission)





Boys, House of Reformation, Rainsford Island, Boston Harbor, Massachusetts (Photo credit: Wikipedia)

A steady stream of ten boys, each jumping from the classroom windows of the Rainsford Island House of Reformation, sprinted for the shore under the cover of the night fog on August 19, 1899. They found their way through the brush by the light of the fire that raged through their prison behind them. As the boys reached the shore, a boat appeared and several of them crawled into it. The rest found another boat nearby, belonging to a lobsterman, and stole away in that. From there, the boys escaped first to Moon Island, and then into Boston itself.

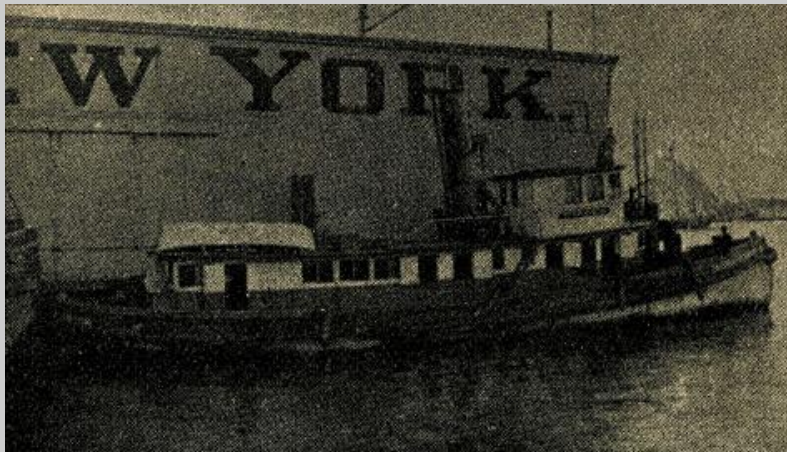
While the boys slunk off into the darkness, the prison's superintendent, John C. Anthony, was the first to notice the flames issuing from the north wing of his House of Reformation. Just days earlier, the same building had been set afire. And the day before, a boy named Joseph Sullivan escaped by jumping off the island's gangplank and swimming over to Hull, across Boston Harbor. Sullivan had told his fellow inmates that, if his escape was successful, he would return to help the others.

Superintendent Anthony issued the alarm. Within moments, his sixteen officers directed the House's remaining inmates as they took the fire hose and began their efforts to fight the raging fire. It proved little use. The poor quality hose kept splitting. Whatever little water pressure they had was leaking away before the water even had a chance to hit the flames.



House of Reformation, Rainsford Island, Boston Harbor, Massachusetts (Photo credit: Wikipedia)

As the fire raged, Superintendent Anthony called Superintendent Hopkins of Boston Harbor's Long Island for help. Their ship, the John Howard, soon arrived. The men from the Howard found the north wing completely ablaze, and the inmates fighting the blaze with their single line of hose that had burst in many spots. The crew of the Howard aimed two streams of water at the fire while Superintendent Anthony put in a call to Boston, which also sent a ship of firefighters to the island. Their ship arrived, and their crew fought the flames alongside the crew of the Howard, and the inmates. The fire was gradually brought under control, but not before the North Wing's top two floors were destroyed.



Steam Fireboat of the period

In the commotion caused by the fire, twenty-five Boston City policemen arrived to guard the island's shores trying to prevent the boys still missing from escaping the island. They found boys running about the island "as they pleased, like Fijis". Some tried constructing rafts and floating away into the harbor. One boy, named McNulty, nearly drowned about 50 yards off the shore of Hull, before he was rescued from his floating log by a reporter named Frank Sibley.

Two other boys were later found crawling through a cornfield in search of driftwood that they too hoped to use for a Hull-bound raft. As midnight approached on that Saturday night, Boston police had rounded up nearly all of the boys who hadn't managed to escape the island's shores. The boys were gathered on the House of Reformation's recess yard and spent the night in the chapel, which had not been destroyed in the fire. Sleeping atop mattresses that had been pulled out of the burning building, some of the island's more unruly boys caused trouble for the guards, yelling, hollering, and calling them names. The guards tolerated the abuse, owing to the boys' agitated state of mind, but after some time, they adopted 'extreme measures' to restore the peace.

A few 'knock-down' battles ensued between police, prison officials, and prisoners. Eventually, the law got the upper hand. With the unruliness reigned in, the officials picked out eight of the worst offenders and subjected them to "the administration of the rattan stick" the next morning, when they were made to bend over a bar and were flogged. As for the boys who escaped, they remained at large for weeks before law enforcement was able to recapture them.

In the investigations occurring in the weeks and months following the fire, cases of prisoner abuse were unearthed, and Superintendent Anthony resigned his position. Four of the ten escapees were later charged with setting the fire. Their names were not immediately released by authorities, but were known to the local press soon after the arson. James McNulty, the boy later rescued while adrift on a log several hundred yards from Hull was among their number.

The investigation found that the boys used shavings, paper, and oil that they had hoarded during the months before the fire. Escaping to the attic on that Saturday night, the four boys lit several spots in the attic at once, and watched as the fire rapidly gained ground. McNulty, after his recapture, was later implicated in the August 1900 burning of a barn at another reformatory school, in Westboro, Massachusetts.

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