

**FRIENDS
OF BOSTON
HARBOR ISLANDS**

newsletter

V O L . 3 , N O . 1

S P R I N G 1 9 8 5

Park Opening

The official opening of the Boston Harbor Islands State Park will take place the weekend of May 4 and 5. A key event of the weekend will be a production by the Friends Living History Troupe on George's Island on Saturday. The MDC is expecting an appearance of either the Spirit of Massachusetts or a U.S. Coast Guard vessel on George's Island and they're planning other special events as well. More details will be available closer to the opening date.

Spring Cleanup

April 27 and 28 will see a major special event which will be a cooperative effort of the MDC, DEM, Friends and Peddock's Island Trust. We hope to have Gov. Dukakis in attendance as well. People power will be provided by the MDC and DEM park staff, Friends, community groups and the general public. Free boat transportation will be provided from both Boston and Hingham. Many highly motivated volunteers will be needed (Friends - bring your friends). Come and enjoy the islands in the spring and participate in the first major event of the season.

Details of transportation and times will be available very soon. For more information call the Friends office two weeks before the date (868-6362).

New Officers

The new Board promptly went to work and elected the following officers for 1985.

President	George Marsh
Vice President	Karen O'Donnell
Treasurer	Tom Narcavage
Clerk	Wynelle Brown

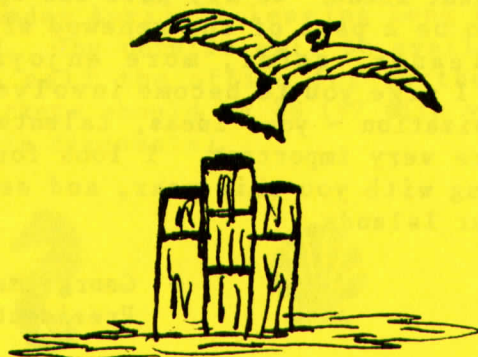
Friends Photo Contest

The Friends are looking for your photographs, one of which will be chosen to grace the front of a postcard to be sold on trips and such.

Here are a few guidelines and notes:

- 1) Entries should be from current FBHI members (anyone can become a member!!).
- 2) Entries can be slides or prints.
 - a. Slides: submit a duplicate slide if you want to keep a copy for yourself.
 - b. Prints: we will only need the negative if your picture is chosen; the negative will be returned.
- 3) Subject matter can be anything as long as it relates to the harbor islands.
- 4) Include your name, address, phone number, and a little information about the photograph.
- 5) Do not write on the back of prints with a ball point pen or other hard writing instrument.
- 6) Credit will be given to the photographer on the postcard.
- 7) Entries will not be returned but will be kept to help form a photo library.
- 8) The deadline for entries is May 1, 1985.
- 9) The judging will be done by a group of somewhat impartial, photographically and compositionally enlightened folk.

Send your entries to the newsletter editor at the Friend's office.



Janet
Burgermeister

Looking Forward

In the previous issue of this newsletter I wrote about the challenge I see facing the Friends - to look toward the future with vision. Our view must be far-sighted while paying close attention to current developments around the Harbor and within the Park. This perspective is also necessary for the dynamic evolution of our organization.

During the past several months, the Friends have been working hard to improve their organizational effectiveness. Our new Board of Directors was elected at the Annual Meeting on January 20th, and officers were elected by the new Board at their February meeting. I'm encouraged by the new members on the Board and committees and a renewed sense of purpose. We asked for your responses to a survey which about ten percent of you returned. We asked you to rank 8 harbor issues and 9 priorities for the Friends. The issue of conservation and preservation was of most concern, followed closely by water quality and pollution. Public education and information and public access/transportation were of slightly less concern. The four remaining issues were rated much lower in importance. It appears that there exists a strong environmental awareness and concern among our members and support for informing and educating the public about these issues. This was by far the top ranked Friend's priority, followed by expanding the Park Volunteer program and running boat trips to the islands. Another important goal is to utilize member skills and interests more effectively in carrying out our programs. Fundraising was also rated as an important priority.

We are looking at different ways of producing income necessary to support our efforts to insure the protection and wise use of the Harbor Islands.

The Friends have an exciting, challenging year ahead. We all have the opportunity to be a part of the renewed effort for a cleaner, safer, more enjoyable Harbor. I urge you to become involved in our organization - your ideas, talents and energy are very important. I look forward to working with you this year, and seeing you on our Islands.

- George Marsh
President

Seafarers' Holiday

January 1, 1985 was cold and rainy but this did not deter a small but dedicated group of island lovers from sailing to Thompson Island. Sue Heilman, the island's representative, gave the visitors a much appreciated orientation of Thompson Island.

The Friends living history troupe took us on a ship that sailed backward in time. Our pilot, John Gallup, recruited the help of a young visitor to ring the bell to help ensure our safe passage. During our journey we met interesting people from the past. We met Trash Monster of Spectacle Island, two delinquents of Rainsford Island and their professor, Lt. Nathan Pryde, Amias Thompson and La Tour. Each had an interesting tale to tell.

Guided beach walks were also offered and enjoyed. The more adventurous decided to explore the island on their own, taking advantage of the solitude that is offered.

At various intervals during the day everyone took time to stop by the reception area to warm up, have a snack, or engage in conversation. It was also a good time to renew memberships. In spite of the weather everyone who sailed with us had a great time.

--Donna Harvey

Fishing Tips

For those who want to try to "live off the land" (or off the water) or just a little sport fishing out in the harbor, the following are a few tips excerpted from the Old Farmer's Almanac.

Fish tend not to bite during windy or stormy days, this is when the barometer is falling. Favorable times for fishing are:

- When the barometer is steady or on the rise.
- one hour before and one hour after each high and low tide. Fish feed most heavily then.
- "The morning rise" - after sunup for a spell and "the evening rise" - just before sundown and the hour or so after. Still water or a ripple is better than a wind at both times.
- When the breeze is from a westerly quarter rather than north or east.
- When the moon is between new and full.

Now, can anyone suggest how to cook this mess of fish we're bound to catch?

-- Paul Nyren

New England Environmental Conference

The 7th annual New England Environmental Conference will take place at Tufts University on Saturday and Sunday, March 23rd and 24th, 1985.

The conference is sponsored by the Lincoln Filene Center for Citizenship and Public Affairs and is cosponsored by over 188 organizations. For registration or information, call (617) 381-3451 or 381-3291.

The B.H.I. is...

It is that green lung. It is a snorkel to the open spaces above the effluvia of a large conurbation. It is the periscope so that the city's overloaded metabolism can find an escape valve from its own wastes, tempers, and petty holocausts. It is the aqualung without which the throbbing megalopolis could drown in its own carbon mono- and dioxide or suffer a cardiac arrest from its own hardening of the arteries. It is a conduit to the sea for the most disadvantaged trapped inside its inner socioeconomic turmoil. It is a window upon part of that 7/10ths of the Earth's surface where life itself originated--and beckon back to understanding the closing circle. It is a laboratory, living, demonstrating, breathing, displaying the ecological succession of Nature reclaiming. It is a playground for the kids, the poor, the elderly, who have no other resources for seeing Nature anywhere else so close to the city heart. It is a doctor who works largely free not with drugs, but with seagulls as one of its many agents. Its east wind is its medicine. It is a museum reflecting the changing kaleidoscope of American seacoast history. It is interface: land and sea, work and play, freedom and confinement, natural and artificial, sea breeze and torrid heat, green grass and blistering asphalt, and, finally, hope and despair for our civilization's future.

--Joseph Carson

Looking for Tax Deductions?

Our new office needs office equipment. If anyone would like to donate a typewriter, space heater, wastebasket, or a filing cabinet we would be most appreciative!

Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting was held on January 20, 1985 and chaired by President George Marsh in this, our seventh year. Sixty members and friends were in attendance.

Highlights included remarks from Mark Primack for the MDC and from Kathy Abbott, Maggie Brown, and Andrea Lukens for the DEM; interesting reports by the various committee chairpersons; and the delicious refreshments prepared by Wynelle Brown and Donna Harvey and others. We learned that the new Master Plan Update should be available soon.

Reports of the years accomplishments were given by Karen Wolkoff, Walter Hope, Joanne Sullivan, Donna Harvey, Carol Reed, and Wynelle Brown. This past season FBHI gave 4,000 hours of service to the Park through 65 Volunteers, and Paul Nyren produced a new and very useful handbook for volunteers. Plans were also presented for new programs and activities.

Tribute was paid to our founder, Suzanne Gall, who gave a history of the organization. Paul Nyren showed his films of past season's activities.

The seven outgoing officers and directors, who have served for many years in various capacities, were presented with certificates of appreciation. These were Donna Baden, Lillian Beauvais, Margaret Cahoon, Jim Comeau, David Dann, Mary Eaton, and John Hannaway.

The new members to the Board of Directors were elected and the 1985 Board is as follows: Lillian Beauvais, Wynelle Brown, Warren Eggly, Suzanne Gall, Diane Greaney, Peg Hamilton, Donna Harvey, Blossom Hoag, Walter Hope, George Marsh, Tom Narcavage, Bonnie Negggers, Paul Nyren, Karen O'Donnell, and Joanne Sullivan.

- Lillian Beauvais

Spring Boat Trip

There will be an FBHI boat trip on Sunday April 21 leaving Long Wharf at 10 AM. The details will be available later, so call the office for further details. Tickets should be \$8 (\$7 with your membership discounts).



Editors Note: The following article is in response to at least 3 letters received regarding the past Fruition Program.

Fruition Program Update

The Mass. Fruition Program is a state-funded (Mass. Dept. of Agriculture) project to promote the growth of fruit and nut trees, shrubs and vines on public access land by community groups. Last fall, in conjunction with the FBHI, DEM and MDC planted 120 elderberry, autumn olive and pear trees on Grape, Bumpkin and Lovell's Islands. Some questions have been raised as to the naturalness of the plants and possible damage to significant archeological remains that may exist on the islands. The plantings were made to enhance the interpretive, recreational and wildlife value of the islands and in no way threaten the natural biological balance or archeological significance of the islands.

Natural and native are relative terms. When taken to their extreme these terms would require the placing of the islands back into the polar ice cap from which they originated - water taxi costs would go through the roof. Plantings were made to: screen a group site, provide shade in campsites, accent trails, and will be used as hedge rows to control access to sensitive areas in place of fences. All plants will be controlled by pruning and be used as interpretive aids.

The soon to be released Master Plan calls for restoration of some low use islands to be restored to native species. With the cooperation of U. Mass. Biology Professor Jeremy Hatch, a list of plants in the harbor prior to 1600 is being compiled. Calf Island will be planted to native species during the fall of 1985, hopefully with the help of the Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands.

Sales

The new island fashion line was unveiled at the March 3rd Volunteer Reunion. A beautiful green has been added to our traditional red, blue or purple T-shirts. Also new for 1985 are blue hats emblazoned with the ever popular FBHI logo (they provide excellent protection from the ravages of sun and gulls). Books (Perkins and Kale), visors (blue), and sweatshirts (blue or purple) are also available! These may be purchased on FBHI boat trips and events.

The concern for possible damage to archeological sites will be addressed before any further planting takes place. Not contacting the appropriate archeological authorities was an oversight on the part of the DEM, but all plantings were made in places previously grubbed for trails and fields. In the future it is hoped that sensitive archeological sites can be clearly marked to both protect them and enhance their interpretive value. Both this spring's Fruition programs and next fall's native plant program on Calf Island will be carefully planned so as not to disturb sensitive archeological sites.

Over the next decade the management of the Boston Harbor Islands will be guided by the soon to be released Master Plan. The plan refers to habitat improvement as second only to acquisition in importance. Long term regeneration of native species, beginning with the Calf Island project this fall, is the main focus of this habitat improvement. Short term plantings designed to aid in the management of the Park, as well as enhance interpretive and wildlife value, provide an avenue for immediate solutions. This is where the Fruition Program fits into the Plan.

Pick up of trees will take place this year on Saturday, April 20 and planting will take place throughout the spring by Park staff and by volunteers on their pre-season weekend shifts. For more information call the DEM at 740-1605 or the Friends office.

- Brian Shanahan
DEM Harbor Island Park Supervisor

Classified Ad Section

As the camping season approaches and new volunteers test the water, the problem of equipment comes up. Our next issue will contain a classified ad section. If you have any equipment you would like to loan or sell, send a description and a way for others to contact you to the Newsletter Editor, care of the FBHI office. Or, send us a request for what you are looking for and perhaps another member can help you out.

Calendar of Events

Unless otherwise indicated the meetings begin at 6:30 and are held at the Phoenix School. This is, of course, subject to change.

Thursday, March 21
Georges Island Committee
5:30 at MDC headquarters

Finance Committee open house and
brainstorming session

Saturday, March 23 & 24
N.E. Environmental Conference at
Tuffs University, Medford, MA

Thursday, March 28
Executive Committee meeting

Wednesday, April 3
Volunteer Committee Meeting

Saturday, April 13
Board Meeting
10:00 AM

Thursday, April 18
Finance Committee Meeting

Friday, April 19
Membership Committee Meeting
6:00

Sunday, April 21
FBHI Spring Boat trip
Leave Long Wharf 10 AM

Monday, April 22 & 23
Lovell's Island Forestry Project

Thursday, April 25
Executive Committee

Saturday, April 27
MDC & DEM Cleanup
Boat leaves Hingham & Boston @ 10 AM

Sunday, April 28
MDC & DEM Cleanup
Boat leaves Hingham & Boston @ 10 AM

Team Captain orientation 10:00 AM

Rain date for FBHI Spring Boat trip

Wednesday, May 1
Volunteer Open House
Deadline for Photo Contest

Saturday, May 4
Boston Harbor Island State Park opens
Start of George's Island volunteer
season

Sunday, May 5
Living History on George's Island

Wednesday, May 8
Volunteer Committee Meeting

Thursday, May 16
Finance Committee Meeting

Thursday, May 23
Executive Committee Meeting

Sunday, May 26
First Aid Course

Saturday, June 1
Deadline for Newsletter Articles

Sunday, June 9
George's Island Day Orientation

Saturday, June 15
Georges Island Cleanup

Friday, June 21 - June 23
Overnight orientation

Friday, July 3
Start of Harborfest

Saturday, July 6
Jazz Brunch Boat trip

Sunday, July 7
End of Harborfest

Saturday, August 3
George's Island Cleanup



Odoriferous Spectacle Island

I have never set foot on Spectacle Island. The closest I have ever come was in April 1934 on board the little steam tug IRVING F. ROSS towing a garbage scow. The smell of the scow and the rendering plant we tied up to at Spectacle was, to put it mildly, pungent. I was familiar with the stench because, having grown up in Winthrop, we smelled the garbage and trash disposal plants, and particularly "Boney Ward", when the wind was southerly. Ward was the name of the owner of the plant that rendered at one time 2000 dead horses a year into bones, glue, and fertilizer. When a family by the name of Ward moved into our neighborhood, the red-headed son was promptly nicknamed "Boney".

As early as 1879, complaints about Spectacle's foul smell were heard from nearby communities whenever the wind veered in their direction. In 1922, after an inspection of the island, a Winthrop newspaper called conditions "an abyss of nastiness." By 1960 the plants were abandoned and complaints ceased. Then in 1962 fires erupted in the trash, 85 ft. deep in some places, producing smoke that bothered the residents of Point Shirley in Winthrop. The fires were never completely extinguished. A 1983 report stated that the surface of a small area "was warm...and grasses in that area were prematurely turning brown...There may be some underground burning..."



Preseason Forestry Project

Lovell's Island will be the site of a two day project (Monday April 22 and Tuesday April 23) which will seek to improve Lovell's natural and recreational resource through selective cutting, pruning and transplanting of existing trees and shrubs as well as some heavy cleanup. The MDC Blue Hills and Harbor Islands staffs will work jointly on this project. Any members of the FBHI interested in participating for one or both days should contact Dick Doucette, MDC Island Supervisor (268-5744 wk, 933-5825 hm).

Send articles, graphics, etc. to Robert Scenna, Newsletter Editor, either at the Friends office or at his home, 68 Adams Street, Lexington, MA 02173. The next deadline is June 1, 1985.

In 1940 the flat surface of the Island's drumlin facing the main ship channel was considered as the site of a 1,500 ft. practice airfield since it had a grassy surface and clear approaches. The project never materialized.

Though the four-masted schooner BESSIE M. DUSTIN loaded fertilizer at Spectacle Island as late as 1927, the last four-master to come to the island was the SNETIND. A gale blew her onto the shallows on the west side of the island Feb. 18, 1936. On board were a lady and her son. They stayed on the partially sunken schooner until the son was drafted in 1941. Their transportation to the mainland was supplied by garbage scows, friendly tugboat captains, and occasionally by the Coast Guard whenever they saw the U.S. Flag flying upside down on the schooner as a signal of distress. The SNETIND was refloated in 1951 and sunk at sea as a worthless hulk.

Man's maltreatment of Spectacle is still evident. However, trees, vines, and dense underbrush have now covered many of the scars. There are encouraging plans for public use. Who knows, Spectacle Island may someday be a valued addition to the Boston Harbor Islands State Park.

-- John Lockhead



Volunteer Reunion

A dedicated group of volunteers came out for the Volunteer Reunion on March 3rd. We enjoyed brief talks by our officers followed by a very interesting slide show and narration by John Lockhead. Paul Nyren showed some of his movies from the previous season which were a lot of fun to see. Interspersed were fantastic food breaks and a fun game to see how much we knew about the harbor. All who attended had a great time and are looking forward to a new season of island volunteering.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Please renew your membership in the Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands (FBHI) now. Spring is upon us --we need you, and want to count you among our growing list of 1985 members.

We are in our seventh year, and thanks to your active participation, have begun to realize our purpose: **TO PROMOTE CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION OF THE NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES OF THE BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS: BY CARRYING OUT PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND APPRECIATION OF THESE RESOURCES, AND BY PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR THE ISLANDS.**

- Your membership entitles you to:
- boat ticket discounts
 - FBHI newsletters
 - special activities
 - discounts on items sold by FBHI
 - opportunities to learn about the islands
 - opportunities to make new friends

It is only through your continued support and active presence that the FBHI will succeed in reaching its goals. So won't you send your check made out to the Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands, Inc., today--we'll send you your 1985 membership card by return mail. Check with your company's personnel office to see if they will match your tax deductible donation.

To those of you that have already renewed, thank you!

George Marsh
George Marsh
President

Wynelle Brown
Wynelle Brown
Co-Chairpersons, Membership Committee

Donna Harvey
Donna Harvey
Co-Chairpersons, Membership Committee

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (please print)

Name _____ Telephone _____ day
eve

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

TYPES OF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP AVAILABLE

Memberships and donations are tax-deductible

- Student/Senior Citizen \$5 _____
- Individual \$10 _____
- Family \$20 _____
- Sustaining \$25 _____
- Donor \$50 _____
- Patron \$100 _____
- Corporate \$200 _____
- Gift _____

New _____ or Renewal _____

Donor's Name and Address:

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

(please check)

- ___ Island Overnights
- ___ Island Daytime
- ___ Newsletter/Writing skills
- ___ Membership Activities
- ___ Finance/Fund Raising
- ___ Exhibit preparation/Art skills
- ___ Living History programs
- ___ Other: _____

Please mail application with check payable to:

Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands, Inc.
15 Sellers Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

We will send you a membership card.

Guidebook Contributors Wanted

If you are interested in developing your artistic or literary talents please consider helping to complete the Guidebook for the Boston Harbor Islands State Park.

The preparation of this guidebook was initiated last year for the intention of providing, in a condensed form, much of the essential data pertaining to the Boston Harbor, the islands, the state park and the agencies, people who manage them, as a handy reference source.

There is still much work to be done adding chapters and updating other information. New chapters are needed to provide suggestions for living on the islands or for managing them. Other helpful information may be suggestions for dealing with people in various situations, first aid tips, camping recipes, etc.

In addition, some illustrative work is needed to improve on guidemaps for each island. The whole guidebook, as is, needs to be edited to give it a more professional look. If you might be able to help out in this endeavor, please contact Paul Nyren at 359-6347 (home) or 722-5515 (work).

Trivia Question: What island may have had a railroad on it?

In 1907, during the construction of Fort Standish, a request was channeled to the War Department Quartermaster General for a 1,500 foot railroad to be constructed on Lovell's Island.

The narrow gage railroad was to run from the Engineer's Wharf, near present dock location, along the batteries, to facilitate the transportation of guns and carriages to the emplacements.

The estimate of materials and costs included the following:

12 1/2 tons of rail	- \$350.00
1125 lbs of spikes	- 28.12
102 splice joints	- 30.60
250 spruce ties	- 241.00
Grading and laying track	- 200.00
One car	- 200.00
Total Cost	\$1,049.72

This information was taken from the Federal Archives. The records do not indicate if the railroad was actually constructed. Perhaps one of our readers may have further information.

- Paul Nyren

Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands, Inc.
15 Sellers Street
Cambridge, MA 02139



FIRST CLASS

