



# Tidings

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS, INC.

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### Members Make a Difference

The Friends derive their sense of purpose, energy, and concern for Boston Harbor and its varied resources from you our diverse and committed members. We have grown to almost 500 members during 1987 while over 100 of you volunteer your time and skills to the Park and our organization. Many other members support the Friends and express their harbor concerns on our special trips to the islands and by attending educational events for the public. We have recently formed an advocacy committee to focus our efforts on important issues relating to the Harbor; both to encourage member involvement and input, and to spread the word to government officials and the public.

The Board of Directors take their responsibility to our members and the public seriously. During the past year a working group has been reviewing our current set of bylaws (1982), or operating guidelines, with the goal of updating, clarifying, and streamlining this document to make it more useful and relevant to the organization. This group has been reporting back to the Directors for input and review of proposed changes. Our present goal is to have a Board approved set of new bylaws available for interested members to review, before our Annual Meeting of members on January 24, 1988. At this important meeting, our members will be asked to ratify our new bylaws, after an opportunity for discussion. All members will receive timely official notification of the purpose in the call for this meeting (mailed separately). I strongly urge our members to express their support for the Friends by attending this meeting and casting their vote for our future success.

--George Marsh  
President

### New Year's Day '88

What better way to start the New Year than on a Boston Harbor Island? The sixth annual "Seafarer's Island Holiday", sponsored by the Friends, will take place on Friday, January 1, 1988.

This afternoon outing to Thompson Island has become a Friend's tradition. Activities will include: free time to explore, island tours, an (indoor) slide show, and (maybe) a scavenger hunt. There will be indoor warmup space where beverages will be served; bring your own snacks.

The boat, Pilgrim IV, will depart from Kelly's Landing, in South Boston. The schedule for departure/returns is: leave Kelly's 12:00 return 4:00; lv 12:30 rt 4:30; or lv 1:00 rt 5:00. You must return on the corresponding boat.

Tickets are: Adults \$8; children \$5, Senior Citizens and Friends will receive the customary \$1 discount.

You may purchase tickets in advance, by mail, from the Friends. Send a check to the FBHI office, attention: "Seafarer's". Tickets will be sold dockside on a first-come, first-serve basis. Rain date is Sunday, January 3rd.

There is plenty of free parking at Kelly's Landing. By T: take the Red Line to Broadway Station and connect with the Bayview or City Point bus.

Thompson Island will be a winter wonderland. See you there!

--S.G.M.



## Day Trip to New York City

The 34th Street Express, a Boston to New York City special Amtrack train has been chartered by the Mystic Valley Railway Society. This "Christmas Shopping Special" which leaves Boston at 7:00 AM December 12, 1987 and returns at 11:15 PM the same day, allows all those taking part approximately seven hours of time in the Big Apple.

For those who live to the west of Boston, the train will depart Rt. 128 station at 7:18 AM and return at 10:51 PM. It will also make stops in Providence R.I.

A side trip to some point of interest will be arranged. Cost of this expedition is \$44.00 for adults and \$34.00 for children under 16. Send a check made out to the Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands, Inc. to the Friends office, attention Bill Connell.

Those members and their friends who may be interested, contact Mary McCarthy at 265-7114 or Bill Connell at 438-9282 for more information.

--Bill Connell



## Christmas Carolling

December 20th we will be carolling on Beacon Hill. We won't be sending out flyers, so mark your calendar now! Song books will be provided and there will be hot refreshments at the Beacon House afterwards. Call the office in December for further details.

## Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting will occur on Sunday afternoon, January 24th. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Agenda items will include: election of our new Board of Directors, bylaws, a special program event, and refreshments. If anyone is interested in being nominated, now is the time to speak up. Call the office and leave your name. Details will follow.



## Fall Special Event

Our Fall Special Event was great. People had an opportunity to visit the U.S.S. Constitution and the Museum. The Hull Room at the Visitors Center is run by the National Park Service and is free for nonprofit groups. The large plate glass windows in this second floor room gave members who wanted to sit and relax a view of the pier and Old Ironsides. Fifty members brought food to share and the supper was a well balanced success. The Friends Folk Music Group entertained us with great sea songs following supper. With new and old members who like to sing this is only a beginning of many musical events to come. There were plenty of choruses for the non-singers like me to join in on.

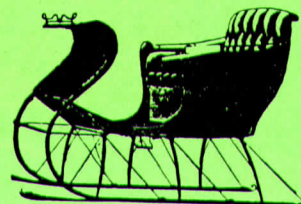
--Nancy Martin

## Deer Island 1987

On October 10th, about 40 Friends, both of the Boston Harbor Islands and Belle Isle Marsh, joined together to spend a few hours exploring and picnicing on Deer Island. It was a beautiful day despite the earlier weather forecast. Our designated last minute leader, Bill Connell, did a fine job getting our "wagon train" rounded up and across the border from Point Shirley onto the wilderness of Deer Island adjacent to the Light. I was very impressed with my first visit on the island but was out thought by a fellow volunteer who said it would be a lovely place to have volunteers there. But I think with visitor count being what it is, it would be like volunteers or managers on Peddocks this year - very lonely.

As time passed and some of the group began to leave, Bill got hung up on a "hill" for at least an hour. Pat Embree drove to the gate to get help but instead was given a shovel. Finally off the hill, we left and crossed the gate. The guard stopped and searched Pat's car but did not check Bill's car. I guess Pat looked more suspicious and shady than Bill.

--John Hannaway



## Advocacy Committee Activities

The newly formed Advocacy Committee is taking the first step to involve the Friends in the future of Spectacle Island and Boston Light.

At a meeting on October 2nd, committee members, Steve Mazur, Jim Stevens, Wynelle Scenna, Rich Williams, and Diane Greaney, along with staff member Nancy Martin, chose to focus on those two issues, and to participate with other groups in planning the future of the Boston Harbor Islands.

Spectacle Island has been in the news lately as a possible site for the 497,000 truckloads of fill that will be dug up for the third Boston Harbor tunnel. Some environmentalists see this as a good solution to reduce truck traffic in the city, and 'cap off' the island's poor surface with a decent cover. Several acres of land would be gained for the island, according to one report.

Spectacle is also ranked among the 12 possible sites for processing sludge from the Deer Island Sewage Treatment plant. Processing can take several different forms, which the Mass. Water Resource Authority is still considering.

The oldest lighthouse in the United States, Boston Light, has been visited by many Friends during any of several cruises to Little Brewster Island. The U.S. Coast Guard, which now staffs the island, will automate the lighthouse in two years, and no longer have full-time personnel on the island. Will the island be abandoned and its buildings demolished by the wind, sea, and vandals?

Members of Advocacy will investigate what other groups are doing in these areas, including pending legislation, and recommend to the Board of Directors what action the Friends should take.

Advocacy members also will be participating in the Alliance for Boston Harbor Action and its CLEAN task force, meetings of which Nancy Martin has attended.

The City of Boston's new Open Space Plan, released at the end of September, lists FBHI as one of the groups already established in the city as an advocate in the future planning for the four islands the City owns (Moon, Spectacle, Rainsford, and Long). A Boston Harbor Island Task

Force is proposed in the report. The Advocacy committee will contact the Mayor's Office for Capital Planning to ensure our role in long-range planning for the islands.

The next meeting of the Advocacy Committee will be Thursday, November 19th at 6:00 PM at the Beacon House. If you would like to join, or have suggestions about topics the Friends should participate in, contact Rich Williams (448-9258 hm, 371-1660 wk) or Wynelle Scenna (643-8279 hm, 742-2553 wk), or leave a message with Nancy at the office.

--Rich Williams

### Elderhosteling on Thompson

Sunday, August 23, the boat, PILGRIM IV, carried a group of Elderhostelers, myself included, to Thompson Island for a week of outdoors recreation and several learning experiences. I wore my Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands T-shirt to advertise myself as a member of that organization and as a Bostonian, the only one in the group. The others, 31 in all, came from far and wide. Places like Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Missouri, Michigan, New York, and Maine.

I set foot on the island with the attitude of an explorer, it being my first visit. I left six days later in love with every inch of it, which I had covered alone snapping pictures, or on field trips with the class.

Bill Perkins, well known to the Friends, opened our eyes to the island in transition, which he defined as the gradual change over time and space caused by wind, weather, and water.

Mr. Silver, the husband of the island Director, gave us the guidelines for artistic landscape pictures and showed many of his spectacular slides. I can testify that Thompson Island is very photogenic.

Forty-seven bird species were spotted in our birdwatching class during the week, according to our leader, H.W. Harrington, but I only saw the gull family.

Those who plan to explore Thompson Island in the future are in for a real treat.

--Gertrude Lutze



## Notes From Nancy's Diary

With the cool days of fall, summer 1987 seems like a pleasant dream. On our cruise to Lovell's Island we invited workers and clients from about 100 agencies around the City. About 100 people joined us for the cruise and exploring Lovell's Island.

The volunteers continued to be very busy every weekend on all of the islands. Volunteers braved the wet elements to cover the islands on a rainy Saturday in August. We surprised the island managers, did some work and then returned on the next boat to Boston. Six volunteers camped out for the fall overnight. I chickened out when I heard the weather forecast but did go out for the day on Saturday and with the help of Serena Rinker and Fred Johnsen, led a combined nature and history tour of the island.

The next weekend both Harborpark Day and the Charles Street Fair were rained out. Harborpark was rescheduled for the next week. Special thanks to Wynelle and Robert Scenna, Stephen Mazur, Marion Lent, and Cath McCafferty for their help at the booth.

With the help of Fred Johnsen we had a display at the Corporate Volunteer Fair at the Prudential Center. The Corporate Volunteer Council of Greater Boston, which sponsored this event, is a collaboration of corporations dedicated to promoting volunteerism amongst their employees. Fred also drove me to a retirement home in Bedford where I showed slides and talked about the islands. One woman remembered visiting Peddocks as a child before World War II. Pat and George O'Brien helped me present our slide show to the Mass. Bay Yacht Club.

The Boston Harbor Monitoring volunteers had a picnic on George's Island. The Friends helped to make their day a success by offering these volunteers, some of whom had never been to the islands, tours of Fort Warren and the island. Thanks to Bill Fitzpatrick for a lively tour through the fort, including the legends of the islands.

Please remember that everyone of you reading this newsletter has a talent, please share yours with us. As we continue to expand our membership events, training sessions, sales items, the Hewitts Cove

project, boat trips, and other unthought of things everyone's talents will be needed.

Many people enjoyed our Fall Cruise to Great Brewster Island. The sumac was beginning to turn and the apples were ready for picking. Exploring beyond the paths we found grape vines just loaded with ripe, purple Concord grapes. Everyone ate their fill and the vines hardly looked touched. I made some grape juice which the Volunteer Committee had a chance to taste.

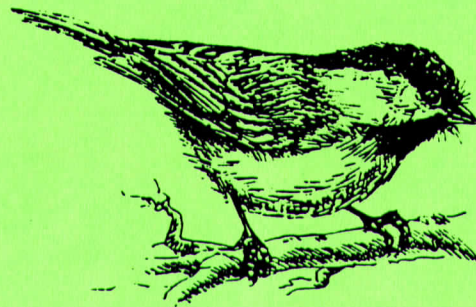
October 17th was the Thank You party for the island volunteers sponsored by the MDC and DEM. We were entertained by sea chantys and lots of food. Each volunteer received a block of paper with the quote "Harbor Island Volunteers are Noteworthy". Thanks go to Ellenor Simmons from the DEM for this idea. The second special thing that happened was a large lemon pie (square) which was a birthday cake for me. Yes it was my birthday that day and the Friends gave me a large thank you card and some small gifts, including a guidebook to birds. Thanks everyone for making it a memorable birthday.

We have a sold out boat for the lighthouse trip again and, as I write this on Friday, I am still hoping for good weather tomorrow the 24th. Watch the newsletter for lighthouse trips in the spring.

I have started back to Graduate School so I am not in the office as often. I will try to call people back as soon as I can. Olive Silva is still helping me with boat trips, memberships, small mailings, and a multitude of small things that need an extra set of hands.

As the leaves turn and the snow falls, remember you can have summer on the islands by reserving our slide show presentation for your group. The show will vary to meet the needs of all ages and all types of groups. Please call the office if you are interested, 523-8386. The show is free but a donation to the Friends is gratefully accepted.

--Nancy Martin



## Novice Volunteer

This summer, I served my apprenticeship as a volunteer, and I'd like to share a few thoughts with you on my days and nights spent on the islands. First of all, the dominant impression is one of sheer joy and renewed wonder at the quality and variety of natural beauty, silently waiting our discovery on the harbor islands. "My" island this year, and I think other volunteers will agree that we become proprietary about the islands on which we serve, is Grape Island. Each visit brought me closer to nature, and I revelled in the profusion of wildflowers, birds, and rabbits.

The island was covered with luscious, red raspberries, there for the picking; plenty for the birds and us too. Indeed, they were a favorite food of the bunnies as well, and I watched many of them standing on their hind legs to feed from the bushes. Katie Durham, who kept such careful count of the birds and studied the ecology of the island, taught me about the many wildflowers, beyond the common ones I knew. My lore expanded to include such island plants a meadowsweet, steeplebush, orange pimpernel, and sea lavender. We were also treated to the serenade of many birds. The island seemed alive with the flash of goldfinches on the wing, and many catbirds, redwings, wood ducks, and shorebirds of all kinds.

"Grape" welcomed campers all summer, groups of Boy Scouts and boy and girl "Junior Rangers", together with their leaders, used the group campsites on my particular weekends, as well as families and single campers. Michael Early and Mel Ruhl worked very hard to keep the island in order, provide programs and offer help and advice. Some of our exhibits included an aquarium on the dock, a geological display of the islands and the harbor, and a solar oven for cooking.

We also had campfires on the beach, toasted marshmallows, sang songs, and told stories. There were many shaded trails, through woods of aspen and pine, and space for company or solitude. sunsets there were unforgettable in beauty, and the cam-

araderie of other volunteers and the island managers made life very pleasant. I confess that at the training weekend, I was of "tenderfoot" status, needing help in assembling my tent and using camping equipment, etc., but I have reached a confident state at present where I take pride in managing it all by myself.

My last weekend as a volunteer was a "gift", a gift to FBHI, as Calf Island was shorthanded, and a gift to me, because it gave me the opportunity to share in the beauty I discovered in a different setting. At the volunteer site I was the sole tenant. At first I was made to feel that I was a very definite intruder by a "regular" resident. She was a gull, in speckled brown and gray, and I nicknamed her "Grandmother". She made her home on the large rock, immediately adjacent to the sumac grove which sheltered the spot where I pitched my tent. The rock was white, and she distinctly thought of it as her own. At first, she made quite a fuss every time I appeared; flapped her wings, "scolded me" in a loud voice for disturbing her domain, flew off and, in general, made it known that she disapproved. However, each time she would return. After several excursions in and out she accepted me in the natural order of things, to the extent that she tucked her head in her wing and slept, standing, acting as my sentry perhaps. If I passed by, she would open one eye, crane her neck a bit and then settle back to sleep.

By the same token, a very large, brown rabbit took great exception to my invasions of his terrain. He lived in a thicket of briars that edged my path and never did get used to me. He made it a point to jump out in front of me and kick up a large amount of sand, looking back as he disappeared in the brush, to let me know I was not wanted!

Nevertheless, I enjoyed all of my time on the islands this summer, both on and off duty. Next year I shall hurry to repeat the performance.

--Phyllis Iva Meserlian



CALENDAR

- November 14 & 15. MDC sponsored day or overnight trip to Peddocks Island. Leave Rowes Wharf 10:00 AM. Contact MDC 727-5290 or Mass. Bay Lines 749-4500
- November 19. Advocacy Committee 6:00 PM. Beacon House.
- December 20. Carolling on Beacon Hill
- January 1. Seafarer's Holiday Excursion
- January 24. Annual Meeting
- February 1. Newsletter Deadline. Send articles to Robert Scenna, 24 Piedmont St., Arlington, MA 02174 (643-8279 eves.)

Change of Address (Yours Not Ours)

Please remember that bulk mail does not get forwarded. More and more of our mailings are going out bulk mail. If you move, send us a card with your change of address so we can keep you informed of events.



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