

A joint newsletter from  
The Friends of Crescent Beach,  
Green Bay and Area Society &  
the LaHave Islands Marine  
Museum

# CHANGING TIDES

[www.crescentbeach.ca](http://www.crescentbeach.ca)

[www.lahaveislandsmarinemuseum.ca](http://www.lahaveislandsmarinemuseum.ca)

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Got something to say?  
Everyone is encouraged to  
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and observations. Simply  
send your submissions to the  
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[wordbyword@eastlink.ca](mailto:wordbyword@eastlink.ca).

## Heart Like Singing Bird

*Don Sedgwick*

I am told there are two almost invisible “lines” that indicate boundaries at Crescent Beach. There’s a line that marks the edge of the roadway allowance and the beginning of the actual beach, and another one delineating the actual shoreline. But there is another “line” much further out in the water that I witnessed two summers ago. And it’s one I will never really understand, but I’ll never forget it either.



*Ocean* by Don Pentz (*Friends’* fundraising print, see page 6 for details)

I was fortunate enough to be invited by my father-in-law to join the P.E.I. tuna fleet as they sailed to the “Hell Hole” in the Atlantic Ocean. For those of you who read the magical *Perfect Storm*, or saw the less magical movie version, you know where I was: bobbing like a little cork about 100 nautical miles off Yarmouth and equidistant from Boston harbour. It was comforting to have a dozen other boats around us, as our vessel was less than forty feet long, and most of that length was open deck.

There were moments of great joy and equal sorrow on that six-day voyage. We subdued three 500-pound tuna using old-fashioned rods and reels, all the while watching for sharks and other predators. Indeed, there was more than a whiff of Hemingway in the air, particularly when I ran my hand along the multi-coloured surface of these giants once they were safely on board. I was proud to have helped these brave fishermen in their triumph. But I was a bit conflicted that such beautiful creatures were destined for elegant dining halfway around the world in less than 24 hours.

But the most memorable two moments of the voyage were when we seemed to cross that “line” I mentioned earlier. The first time it occurred to me was on our second morning at sea. I could spot in the distance a series of fins headed in our direction, rising and falling between waves and probably breaths. And in my mind they seemed on a collision course with our boat.

“Whales,” said my father-in-law.

“What kind?” I asked.

“Probably minke or pilot,” he replied.

“They’re coming right for the boat,” I offered a bit foolishly.

And they were, but at the last moment they dove just deep enough to skirt under our hull and emerge on the other side.

“You’re in *their* territory now,” he calmly explained.

“Oh,” was all I could offer in amazement.

That night, feeling a bit claustrophobic in the cramped quarters, I slept out on the back deck on top of one of the “ice coffins” where you stow the tuna. The water was calm. The stars and the moon were glorious. And the silence was magical. Then I heard a noise that I could only describe as the chirping of a little bird – which seemed unlikely at best.

I got up and walked over to the starboard rail. There, not more than ten feet from the hull, was a whale and her little calf. And the young one seemed for all the world to be singing to us. Even if my two mates had been awake, I would not have known what to say. And if I was more religious, I might have said I had an epiphany. Instead, I just stood, and stared, and listened – my heart also feeling like a singing bird.

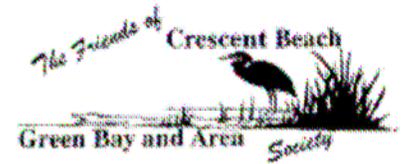
We sailed home on the sixth day, somewhat battered and bruised after our arduous adventure at sea. The following day, I found I couldn’t walk because I still had my “sea legs” and my sense of balance had gone a bit wonky. I think my brain was probably in a similar state. I imagine I had crossed over the line that separates our shore from the wildness of the ocean. And in doing so, I’d had a glimpse of something even more extraordinary.

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## Bird That Filleth Own Nest

For years *Friends* ran a very successful fundraising campaign to purchase armour rock in order to help secure the dunes on Crescent Beach. In the aftermath of Post-tropical Storm Noel, the government completed that project to secure more permanently the link to the LaHave Islands. With this additional rock in place, *Friends* will turn its attention to new fundraising projects – ones that will continue to enhance the stability of Crescent Beach.

The collection of sand in and around the rocks has always been an issue of concern. Over the coming months (and under the advice of a number of environmentalists), *Friends* will establish a series of test sites for sand reclamation. Short sections of snow fencing (both in height and length) will be erected at a number of locations along the dunes in order to test its efficacy in catching and depositing blown sand. If the tests are successful, a larger-scale project may be considered. Stay tuned to future issues of *Changing Tides* for further developments.



## The Days When Birds Come Back

Bruce Raymond,  
Chair

Summer is now here! That means our visitors will notice several changes at the beach since last year, primarily in the addition of armour rock along the whole length of the face of the dune. A result of that work was the inadvertent filling of one of the two *Friends*' "walkways through the dune" with immovable and extremely large rocks. The remaining walkway, identified by a sign along the road, will be renovated soon. The cribwork was extensively damaged during last November's storm, so most of it will be removed by the Department of Transport and Public Works to eliminate the hazards of exposed spikes and broken rails.

On the plus side, those who saw Post-tropical Storm Noel's damage will also see how the beach is recovering. After the storm, the cribwork and its posts appeared to have grown in height very suddenly! As the sea continues to return a foot or more of sand to the beach, the posts have now almost returned to their pre-storm height. Over the years, *Friends* has tried to encourage this deposition of sand, most recently by volunteers who planted roses and grasses on the top of the dune. Although some of this planting was damaged, other sections continue to grow. A new trial in sand collection is also underway: the use of a low-height "sand-fence," a scheme which has reportedly worked well on beaches elsewhere. We'll have to wait to see how successful this will be at Crescent Beach.

The beach sweep in June had surprisingly few participants, but the volunteers were still able to gather a significant collection of garbage (although rather less large material than in previous years). *Friends* will participate in a similar operation in late September as part of a TD Bank countrywide initiative. We are delighted that a number of students from Petite Riviere School have offered to lend a hand.

In memory of local resident and fly-fishing expert Captain Doug Bell, *Friends* has been making a contribution to an aquarium project at the Petite Riviere School. For the second year, students were able to watch young salmon eggs grow into inch-long salmon "fry" during the winter and spring months. The project proved to be an even bigger success this year. In June, with great excitement on the part of the students, more than 100 tiny salmon were released into the Petite watershed just behind the school.

The *Friends of Crescent Beach, Green Bay and Area* Annual General Meeting is coming up on August 13, 2008, at the Petite Riviere Fire Hall. Members of *Friends* and the general public are all encouraged to attend. The guest speaker will be Bob Taylor of the Geological Survey of Canada, who has a special interest in the local ecology. He has been studying Crescent Beach and others in Nova Scotia for many years. You'll remember him as the author of the feature story in the spring 2008 newsletter. We will have door prizes, giveaways, and refreshments, so make sure you don't miss this big event!

As a volunteer community organization, *Friends* needs new members and, particularly for the board, people with ideas about what we can do to preserve and enhance our wonderful beach and the other natural resources in our area. If you want to check out our activities, the *Friends* website ([www.crescentbeach.ca](http://www.crescentbeach.ca)) is a good source of information. At the meeting, you might also take the opportunity to pick up some of our "souvenirs." These include the newly designed T-shirts, as well as the quality reproductions of the Don Pentz paintings used as a background for the interpretive signs at the beach.

We hope to see you at the August 13 annual meeting!



## Thou Warbling Bird

*Friends* has had a change of address. Please note that we can now be contacted via the LaHave Post Office rather than through a postal drop in Petite Riviere. The new address is listed in full on the left-hand column of the covering page of this edition.

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Many thanks to everyone who participated in last month's headline contest. As many of you correctly guessed, all of the headlines were quotes from Shakespeare. Our winner was Michael Colborne of Halifax, who received a copy of Marq de Villiers' newest book, *Dangerous World*. Special commendations should also go to Doris Wentzell and Shirley Cohrs who, in addition to knowing that all the quotes were Shakespearean in origin, delivered to us a list detailing the individual works from which they had been derived. Great work!

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As you will note, all of our article titles are once again thematically linked by literary and avian references. Anyone who wishes to guess their origins will be eligible for this month's book prize. Please email (or snail mail) your guesses to us by August 1<sup>st</sup>. A winner will be drawn from all correct entries at the *Friends* AGM on August 13.

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## The Bird Flies Out

As noted in Bruce Raymond's letter, we are losing three of our valued board members to other commitments at the end of this term. We would like to extend our warmest and most sincere thanks to Neiff Joseph, Anne Greer, and David Weagle, who have given so generously of their time during their respective tenures. We wish them all the best, and look forward to their continued good guidance and friendship despite their departure.

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## Bird Soft-Sigh Me Home

*Jean McHarg*

Just to the south of the Crescent Beach entrance is the Nichols cottage. It was built in 1924 by Grant Romkey and a Mr. Risser for Vincent Paton, who practised law in Bridgewater with the Firm of Paton and Robertson from 1914 to 1928 prior to becoming a Supreme Court Judge in Halifax. In 1928 he sold the property to Stephen Paton of Massachusetts. The heirs of his widow, Frances Paton, conveyed the title to Arthur C. Barnaby in August 1937. In 1954 it was conveyed to his daughter Edith Howard after Isabelle Barnaby gave up her interest. Archie and Edith Howard came each year from Ottawa to spend a month at the cottage. Edith was the sister of Harry Barnaby who married Margaret Rhexuss, one of her best friends.

John and Kiki Nichols purchased the property from Edith Howard in 1968. The only change was undertaken in 1969 by Grant Romkey and Elliot Corkum when they created a front dormer and completed the upper floor to three bedrooms with (as Grant called it) a "Hopper" (toilet and basin). Last year the chimney was redone, and this year they have to repair the skirting and grounds following Post-tropical Storm Noel.

Across the cove from the Nichols property is the Fraser McHarg Cottage. Dr and Mrs. Hugh Fraser purchased the land in 1953 after seeing the surf break on the reef while attending a party at the Howard cottage. It had been owned by Tilley Paton, widow of Judge John Paton, and was purchased from Irving Hebb, a businessman in

Bridgewater. A well was dug by hand and water was found at seven feet. When the cottage was built in 1957, it took two men 10 weeks to do the work and cost \$2700.00.

The Fraser McHarg Cottage was the first property to have a telephone, which shared a party line from Mount Pleasant. Folklore tells us there was also a wharf in the cove at one time and it was referred to as “Stinky Cove” because of the large amount of seaweed that collects and rots there. After Dr Fraser died in 1962, Ruth Fraser continued to stay at the cottage every summer until 1996 when she broke her hip. When she died, the cottage passed to daughters Jean and Mary and to Ruth’s five McHarg Grandchildren, all of whom have spent many summers there. They and their families continue to enjoy summers at Crescent Beach.



## Firebird

*Don Sedgwick*

For many young boys and girls, the sound of a fire engine brings images of excitement and adventure. I remember at least two school trips in primary grades to the local fire hall, where I was disappointed not to see a dalmatian sitting in front of the pumper truck. Not everything in a Disney movie, it seemed, would be duplicated in real life.

Newfoundland author Russell Wangersky had a more realistic image of being a firefighter before he signed on as a volunteer in Wolfville, N.S., and later in Portugal Cove in his home province. But he was still in for a series of shocks once he donned the heavy gear and started racing to disasters in the middle of the night. In the Preface to *Burning Down the House*, he offers a pretty candid view of being the first person at the scene of something horrific. “People who called either department [in the two provinces] had no choice but to allow us into the most frightening, embarrassing and emotional times of their lives.”

We tend to think of post-traumatic stress syndrome in the case of Canada’s military, but the sad effects are much closer to home. Even the subtitle of Wangersky’s book – *Fighting Fires and Losing Myself* – hints at the eventual toll that firefighting took on himself and his family. He eventually left his senior volunteer firefighting position in Portugal Cove-St. Phillips to devote himself fully to writing for *The Telegram* in St. John’s, as well as his award-winning work for Canadian magazines. But he left with decidedly mixed feelings. “I was angry, because I felt as though I was letting the other firefighters down.” He felt he was “trained and ready and alert and sharp.” Looking back, he’s doubtful. “Now I’m not so sure I was any of those things, except trained.”

*Burning Down the House* is an excellent book, but it’s not for the faint-hearted. It’s a deeply personal and emotionally gut-wrenching memoir of a man who set out to save lives and help others. In the end, he lost part of himself through a painful divorce. And he lost any sense of the heroism of the men and women in red. He learned that the odds of saving someone through CPR, for example, are about one in ten. Still, he claims he would do it all over again if given the opportunity.

Closer to home, we are all fortunate to have the services of our local firefighters in Petite Riviere and the surrounding communities. In addition to saving homes and lives during fires, floods, accidents and other calamities, they also spend countless hours in training sessions in order to prepare for emergencies. Plus, there are the endless evenings of equipment repair and fund-raising that add to their workload.

And it’s that kind of dedication and caring that will now jog my memory every time I hear a siren wail down our country road.

*(Burning Down the House by Russell Wangersky, published by Thomas Allen Publishers, hardcover, \$32.95)*

## Gold-Feathered Bird:

A reminder to all *Friends* that Dennison's Custom Framing and Needlework in Bridgewater has agreed to sell copies of its three fundraising Don Pentz prints. If you choose to have your prints framed at Dennison's, they will offer a 20% discount on the framing charge. Dennison's is located at 626 King Street in Bridgewater, (902) 543-0486.

These spectacular works are a welcomed addition to any home or cottage, and make a fantastic gift. And best of all, a portion of the proceeds from each sale will help to continue the good local environmental work of *Friends*.

Here is what will be available through Dennison's:

Large Prints: *Dunes* (\$150), *Marsh* (\$125) and *Ocean* (\$125) - each 28 x 16.5 inches, museum quality rag paper, archival UV resistant inks.

Small Prints: *Dunes* (\$80), *Marsh* (\$80) and *Ocean* (\$80) – each 15 x 9 inches (except *Dunes*, which is 15x11.5 inches), museum quality.

\* Special package deal: Purchase all three Small Prints for \$225.00

High Quality Posters: *Dunes* (\$85), *Marsh* (\$70) and *Ocean* (\$70) - each 28 x 16.5 inches (except *Dunes*, which is 28 x 22.5 inches), high quality paper with protective matte laminate.



*Marsh* by Don Pentz



*Dunes* by Don Pentz

Our thanks to Michelle Wamboldt at the *Blue Splinter*, located near the entrance to Crescent Beach, who has generously agreed to sell our *Friends* fundraising T-shirts. These fantastic cotton shirts feature regional birds (also by artist Don Pentz) and come in a wide variety of colours and sizes at \$20 each. Please plan to visit them soon:



## Fine Feathers Make Fine Birds

This summer the Marine Museum will showcase a new exhibit entitled “Treasures from the Islands,” featuring handmade quilts in both traditional and whimsical patterns. These quilts have strong connections to the LaHave Islands and will be on display from July 1<sup>st</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup> during regular Museum hours (10am to 5pm daily). Everyone is welcome!

## Stirring Birds on Wing

The “Vera Mae” is a great addition to the Museum’s collection, bringing a piece of local history back home where it belongs. The restoration process is going smoothly, and the “Vera Mae” is becoming quite comfortable in her new “retirement home.” Her spine surgery (keel restoration) was a success, and she is beginning to look like her old self again. “Vera Mae” will soon sport a brand new dress (be painted) and get her motor running (have her engine repaired). This sixty-year-old lady will soon look like she did in her glory days.



## When Birds Do Sing

The last two summers working at the museum have been a tremendous learning experience. Although last summer much time was spent in front of the computers and digging through accession records the result was a well organized system, and a new perspective on the amount of work needed to organize a museum. Returning for a second summer is a wonderful experience, giving me a chance to see the progress on the “Vera Mae”, an amazing transition from aged and run down to beautifully restored with her own shelter. This summer also promises exciting events at the museum, such as the renovations to the museum, updating and re-vamping the website, and the much anticipated quilt exhibit. I have been lucky both summers to have wonderful people to work with, and look forward to what new experiences this summer at the museum has to offer. -- *Emma Bell*

Although I grew up a mere twenty minutes away, I had never visited the Museum before I came here for my first day of work. What I found was a fascinating building filled with artifacts and pictures, each with its own story to learn. It was a bit overwhelming at first, but even in just the few short weeks I’ve been here I have learned so much about life on the Islands—fishing, boat building and heritage. Being able to watch the restoration progress with the “Vera Mae,” seeing her go from an old broken boat to her former glory, is remarkable and the quilt exhibit promises to be quite an interesting display. Come out and visit us!

-- *Alyssa Peeler*

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

July 14– Society Meeting at LaHave Islands Community Hall, 7 pm

July 16– Salad Supper at LaHave Islands Community Hall, 4 pm-6:30 pm

July 30– Coop and Fitz concert at Saint John’s Church, 7 pm

August 4– Fun Day at LaHave Islands Community Hall, 10 am-1 pm

August 11– Society Meeting at LaHave Islands Community Hall, 7 pm

August 17– Fisherman’s Memorial Service at Saint John’s Church, 2 pm

September 8– Society Meeting at LaHave Islands Community Hall, 7 pm

September 13– Variety Supper at LaHave Islands Community Hall, 4 pm-6:30 pm

November 10– Annual Society Meeting & Christmas Party at LaHave Islands Community Hall, 7 pm

## Up With The Birds

**Saturday, July 19th:** Breakfast, Petite Riviere Fire Hall, 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

**Wednesday, August 13th:** *Friends Annual General Meeting, at the Petite Riviere Fire Hall. Guest speaker Bob Taylor on *Assessing the Beach While Walking the Dog*, 7:30 p.m. (doors open 7:00 p.m.)*

**Saturday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Baroque Concert, St. Mary's Anglican Church, Crousetown, 7 p.m.

**Saturday, August 16th:** Breakfast, Petite Riviere Fire Hall, 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

**Saturday, September 20th:** Breakfast, Petite Riviere Fire Hall, 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

**Sunday, September 21<sup>st</sup>:** Little River Folk presents Old Man Luedecke, with special guests Petunia & The Loons, Petite Riviere Fire Hall, 8 p.m.

**Saturday, October 18th:** Breakfast, Petite Riviere Fire Hall, 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

See LaHave Islands Marine Museum events on previous page.

*If you have a community event you'd like to list, please contact the editors at [wordbyword@eastlink.ca](mailto:wordbyword@eastlink.ca)*

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## Loaf To Every Bird

Just a reminder that many of the annual *Friends* memberships will have expired on May 31, 2008. As a not-for-profit agency, *Friends* depends on the financial stability provided through the membership program for its ongoing livelihood. Please make sure your membership is up-to-date. You can renew at the *Friends* AGM on August 13<sup>th</sup>, or simply send your renewal fee to the *Friends* address on the front page of this newsletter. Memberships are \$10 per person, or \$20 per family, per year, and all proceeds are invested back into our local area.

### ***REFRESHMENTS – DOOR PRIZES – SPECIAL LECTURE***

Please join us for the  
***Friends of Crescent Beach, Green Bay and Area Society***  
**Special Lecture and Annual General Meeting**

Wednesday, August 13<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 p.m. (doors open 7:00 p.m.)  
Petite Riviere Fire Hall (Members and Non-members are welcome)

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER: Bob Taylor of the Geological Survey of Canada

Bob Taylor has been studying Crescent Beach for many years, as both a personal and professional passion. He was kind enough to pen the feature article on the damage done to Crescent Beach by Post-tropical Storm Noel in our last issue, and has been a supporter of our local environs for many years. Bob's presentation is titled *Assessing the Beach While Walking the Dog*, a layman's guide to the science behind the ebb and flow of our local coastline.