

Lieutenant Governor Community Spirit Award Entry Form

Thank you for taking the time to tell your community's stories and what makes it so special.

- Please fill out the following information and then continue to complete your nomination by adding extra pages to this word document so that it will arrive in one single attachment.
- Please save your file by community name.
- All entries should be in Microsoft Word format and, if appropriate, in video format (avi or mpg only) as a second attachment.
- **All completed entry forms and submissions must be emailed to submissions@communityspiritaward.ca by midnight, January 31, 2010.**

Community Name: Town of Dominion

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Names of Groups within the community who have joined together to put forward this nomination:

1. Dominion Heritage Schoolhouse Museum
2. Dominion Recreation Society
3. Dominion Community Hawks Club
4. Dominion Italian Community
- 5.

By submitting your nomination you are agreeing to allow the Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award to post your stories on the Award's website and to share these stories online with the Award's media partners.

We agree

COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARD APPLICATION

Dominion:



Names of groups in our community that have contributed to the preparation of our nomination:

1. Dominion Heritage Committee
2. Dominion Recreation & Area Society
3. Dominion Community Hawks Club
4. Dominion Italian Club
5. Shamrock Club
6. Dominion Volunteer Fire Department

Introduction:

In early November of 2008 a group of community volunteers from a number of volunteer organizations met to discuss applying for the prestigious “Lieutenant-Governor’s Community Spirit Award”. Although our town is small in geographic boundaries, our people are very proud of their historic background in coal mining, the main source of income for residents since the early 1800’s. Our group decided to focus mainly on our people and what they have done to put our town on the map.

History:

The community of Dominion, Nova Scotia, is located 6 km northwest of Glace Bay on the south side of Lingan Basin in Cape Breton. Long before Dominion was incorporated the residents, although from many ethnic backgrounds, had a strong commitment, work ethic, dedication to family and a camaraderie that inspired them to shape our community – a community full of “pride”. The village of Old Bridgeport became the Town of Dominion by an act of the Legislature of Nova Scotia dated February 13th, 1906. The name was chosen in honor of the Dominion Coal Company that set up the first of their mines in our community.

Coal Mining:

Dominion Coal Company



Henry M. Whitney, a promoter and financier from the New England Area of the United States with a large amount of capital, formed the company that was incorporated in Canada as Dominion Coal Company Ltd. That company received a 99 year lease that gave them the exclusive right to the coal resources of Cape Breton. They bought out small companies and were granted other leases when they expired.

The Dominion Coal Company numbered the collieries 1 to 26, the first of the collieries was sunk in the area directly behind St. Eugene's church and named Dominion No. 1. The numbers following were numbered 2 to 26 except for No. 13 and No. 19.

Dominion No. 1 produced 14,786,710 tons of coal before closing in 1927. Unfortunately, 53 miners who lived in Dominion were killed in Dominion No. 1. The last fatal accident was Wendel Stephens, the 17 year old son of Aubrey Stephens, the first Fire Chief of the Town of Dominion.

An event of interest concerning the mine was when a fire that broke out on March 19, 1903. Two men were rendered unconscious and 11 horses suffocated in the fire. Huge crowds descended on the village of Old Bridgeport. Transportation at the time was by horse and buggy, train, tram cars and by water. A dam was built in the mine and water from the ocean was pumped into the mine. Six Hundred Million gallons of water were required to quench the flames. The fire was out by May 26, but the pumping out of the water kept the mine idle until production began again on July 27, 1903.

When the fire broke out in March, a 13 year old boy was transferred to No. 2 colliery to keep him working to support his widowed mother and other family members. Sadly the boy was killed after working only a few shifts.

Our community has a long history mostly related to coal mining. The earliest mining began in 1830 when the General Mining Association began their mining in the cliff below the present day St. Eugene's Graveyard. At the time, the community was named Bridgeport in honor of an official of the G.M.A. With the opening of Dominion No. 1 shaft, our area became Old Bridgeport.

No 1B was an extension of the No 1A, a shaft was sunk 620 feet deep in Glace Bay to continue the operation of No 1A.

No 1B started producing in 1924 and the output totaled 19,065,716 tons of coal before closing in 1955. Twenty-two miners who lived in Dominion were killed in No 1B. When someone is born and raised in a small mining community, he or she knows first hand the countless negative hardships which are often turned into positive aspects of cultural development through communal hard work and cooperation.

Early Settlers/Italian Heritage: Dominion Italian Hall



The immigrants who came and settled into our community at the turn of the century may have had little understanding of the seed they were about to sow. A seed that would grow into a productive, progressive and inclusive community. A community which holds a very special place for all who have lived here or visited.

Dominion has a very proud Italian history and heritage. Shortly after 1900 the Coal Company began recruiting young men from Italy to work in the coalmines of Cape Breton . In 1911, 152 Italians left their hometowns in Italy to live in Dominion. This number increased substantially and peaked around 1927 – 1928. The Italians have made a remarkable contribution to the growth and development of our small coal mining town, their adopted home. From the very beginning of the migration, our Italian citizens have been a self-reliant group. From maintaining their gardens, keeping livestock and working hard underground, they earned the respect of the residents. Many had been farmers in the country of their birth. Their greatest influence has to have been in the coal mining industry that brought most of them here in the beginning. Strong powerful men, they sought the most strenuous and hazardous jobs in the colliery.

They loaded coal, removed stone or did any other type of work that paid the highest wages based on performance and production. In 1936 they formed the Italian Community Club and the following year, on May 25th, 1937, they held the official opening of their Italian Community Hall on a site where they had operated an outdoor rink for public skating and hockey. The hall was the first Italian Community Hall in our province and probably the first, east of Montreal. Our community has been so fortunate to have such a wonderful Italian heritage. One that will live on for centuries for future generations.

Italian Choir



Dominion Community Hawks' Club:

Sports:



➤ Baseball:

Besides coalmining, Dominion is one of the greatest and most successful baseball communities in our province in many categories. Our recorded community involvement in the sport dates back to 1902 – 03. The present Community Hawks Club and baseball field first became a reality in 1906, the year of our incorporation. Probably the most satisfying victory in our long history concerning Cape Breton baseball was the “Colliery League Championship” series in 1935. The press release dated August 23rd, 1935 states “Hawks triumph in one of the most amazing baseball series in the history of the game in Cape Breton. Several changes in the New Waterford line-up fail to halt Dominion. Hail the Dominion Hawks, 1935 senior baseball champions of Cape Breton. The Dominion Hawks defeated the Waterford Dodgers in the Waterford ballpark yesterday afternoon by a score of 6 to 1.” Some of the great names in Dominion baseball were Sam Melanson, Vince “Ozark” Gouthro, Londo Scattolon (all deceased) and many more. The Dominion Community Hawks Club is one of the most dedicated sports organizations who provide the youth in our community with the opportunity to enjoy the sport of baseball. This dedicated volunteer group provide uniforms, assist with travel out of province and organize tournaments on an annual bases. The history of Dominion Hawks dating back to the early 1900’s is one of which our residents are very proud. The Club is buzzing with activity during our annual Seaside Daze celebrations, as well as during special events during the year.

Seaside Daze:



Every year in the last week of July our Community celebrates Seaside Daze. In 2009, we will be celebrating our 28th year. Organizers from all groups and organizations come together to prepare events for the entire week for people of all ages. Some of the volunteer groups who organize the special events on a volunteer basis:

Sponsors:

- Dominion Recreation Committee,
- Dominion Heritage Committee,
- Dominion Community Hawks Club,
- Italian Community Club,
- Dominion Shamrock Club,
- Dominion Volunteer Fire Department,
- St. Eugene's Parish,
- Immaculate Conception Parish,
- Church of the Good Shepherd,
- Sandbar Lounge,
- Royal Canadian Legion – Branch #78,
- Marcia Fiolek Memorial Playground Committee

Events:

- Seaside Daze Parade,
- Evening of fun and music – Dominion Hawks' Club,
- Jammie Walk and Pancake Breakfast
- Seaside Caleigh under the Big Tent
- Doll Carriage Parade,
- Bicycle Rodeo,
- Heritage Walk
- Heritage Day Fair
- Seniors Tea and Afternoon of Musical Talent
- Dominion Idol (children and adults),
- Dominion Hawks Club Golf Tournament,

- Dominion Hawks Club Story Telling Evening,
- Dominion Fire Department Steak Barbeque and evening of entertainment,
- Marcia Fiolek Memorial Kiddies Day,
- Dominion Fire Department Kiddies Day,
- Downtown Market and Entertainment
- Dominion Recreation Committee – Scavenger Hunt
- St. Eugene's Parish Cemetery Day,
- Immaculate Conception Parish Cemetery Day,
- Dominion Fire Works Display and Closing Night Socials

Our town, during our Annual Seaside Daze week, is buzzing with locals and people from away and other communities taking part in all of the special events. In 2006 we celebrated our 100th Centennial (1906 – 2006). In the commemoration of this milestone a pictorial and short-storied souvenir publication was prepared by our Town Historian, Mr. Len Stephenson. This was prepared for the Dominion Heritage Committee. We ordered 1,500 copies and sold out in the first week. This publication was one of 4 writings by Mr. Stephenson. His writings for the 50th, 75th and the 100th anniversary book, as well as the history of our Fire Department, coal mining and our sports heritage have preserved our proud history and culture for the past 100 years. The Seaside Daze events are listed on a web page and every year former residents book their vacations to partake in the activities.

Dominion Volunteer Fire Department:



From the time the Dominion Coal Company opened the No. 1 Colliery in 1893 until the Town organized the Community Brigade in 1913, fire protection was the responsibility of the Colliery Brigade. The first mention of a Fire Brigade for the Town is documented in the minutes of a Council meeting dated March 26th 1913. “Resolved that the Board of Fire Escapes have the consent of this Council to encourage the organization of one Hook and Ladder Company to consist of one Captain and one Lieutenant and twelve men with a permanent station, and when properly organized and chartered by the Town Council, it will be known as the Dominion Fire Brigade and the members thereof shall be entitled to all privileges and exemptions as by law established “.

Apparatus purchased by the Town for fire fighting consisted of a hand-drawn hose reel. With the consent of the Mine Manager, the reel was stored in the old Firemen's Parlor, located on the Colliery grounds. Firemen kept their coats and boots at home. The only remuneration was the exemption from poll tax. Since those early days the Fire Department gained the love and respect from local residents for their volunteer service to the community.

We have been most fortunate to have a Department staffed with dedicated volunteers to this day. They not only engage in fire fighting, responding to motor vehicle accidents or hazardous spills, they provide a realm of volunteer services on an annual basis.

Marcia Fiolek Memorial Playground:



In 1996 a ten year old child in grade 4 had a dream and that dream was to build a playground for the school children. Her name was Marcia Fiolek and she began a fund raising initiative. She and her grade 4 classmates began selling lollipops and raised over \$300.00 in just a few short months. In January of that year Marcia became ill and was diagnosed with leukemia. In just 6 short weeks, Marcia passed away. A volunteer committee was formed to continue Marcia's dream. In 1997 the Committee was successful in their fundraising efforts and the "Marcia Fiolek Memorial Playground" was finally a reality.

Last year on the 10th anniversary of Marcia's passing, her former classmates gathered at the Kiddies Day Teddy Bear Picnic at the playground and released 10 balloons in Marcia's Memory. Over 100 prizes were purchased by the Playground Committee and were given out to the children. This demonstrates what a community is all about. The closeness, love and pride that our residents have for their fellow citizens is phenomenal. Marcia at the young age of 10 was already a pioneer for her community. The loss of this beautiful little girl devastated her family and community. But her genuine bubbly personality and her love of family, friends and her town will live with us forever. The fact that our community rallied to make Marcia's dream come true, demonstrates the love and respect our citizens have for each other. We may be small in size but grand in spirit and determination.

Dominion Heritage Committee – School House Museum:



The Dominion Heritage Committee is comprised of a small group of citizens organized to restore an 1888 schoolhouse and establish a museum and tourist information center at the site, located near the Dominion/Gardiner Mines Boundary. The Committee had the facility restructured in 2005 and as a result were able to open the upstairs to the general public to view the artifacts. The original facility housed a one room school house from 1888 to 1896. The museum is staffed by college students under grant programs during the busy tourist season from July 1st to September (Labour Day) each year. The museum contains early desks, chalk boards, slates, as well has thousands of artifacts, photos and other documents relating to the early history of the community.

The volunteers on the Heritage Committee organize events each year that would be of an interest to all age groups. They also ensure that the senior population have the opportunity to attend special events such as Socials, Teas, Heritage Day Fairs and Walks.

The museum is located right next to Dominion Beach. A narrow strip of land one and a half miles in length, fronts on the Atlantic Ocean and Lingan Bay. Two miles of boardwalk traverse the beach and ample vehicle parking is available. Lingan Bay is considered a bird watcher's paradise.

The Committee is proud to have a number of dedicated volunteers who help with the special events. Many of them are seniors who have great pride in the museum and their ancestors who donated a lot of the old artifacts housed in the museum.

Our historian, Mr. Len Stephenson, has been dedicated to the preservation of the artifacts and he has written a number of anniversary booklets that have a lot of information and pictures depicting our mining, sports, fire departments, early education and former business people. The School House is a tourist icon and it supports our community on a social/tourism scale. It also creates a sense of community by serving as a gathering place where residents and tourists can scan through the numerous photo albums, scrap books to view pictures of our past.

From a tourism and business aspect our museum adds to the economy of our area and promotes business opportunity for local establishments with the increasing number of visitors and tourists who come out to partake in our special events.

Our museum has been designated as a “Municipal Heritage Property” and we have a lot of community support, support from the Municipality as well as our local Department of Natural Resources who are responsible for the land adjacent to our facility.

Dominion Beach



There is no question that Dominion beach had an interesting past. In fact, the mile long crescent of sand that separates Lingan Bay from the Atlantic Ocean on the east coast of Cape Breton Island has played a lively and significant role in the history of several communities. In the old days an iron bridge linked the sandbar to Lingan and between 1890 and 1924 when River Ryan bridge was built, the sandbar was the main route from Glace Bay and Dominion to Lingan and New Waterford. Back then, electricity was pumped across the bar from Seaboard Power Corporation to the coal mines in New Waterford.

The beach also had its romantic mystique. In 1929 during the rum-running days, a tidal wave uncovered a large (they say as yet unclaimed) cache of buried treasure. Pictures from an even earlier era show the pilings of a hotel wrapped in fog midway between Dominion and Lingan. A winter storm in 1909 devastated the inn. Some say the dunes were as high as twenty-feet in those days, and everyone says it was the best swimming around.

The beach was mined for sand with the formation of the Dominion Coal Company in 1893, until the middle of the twentieth century. Tons of sand were removed regularly for the use of various phases of coal mining. Many more tons were used in steel production, paving projects and constructions sites.

The Department of Lands and Forests took measures to restore the beach over the years. The beach was declared a protected area and given provincial park status. At present, the beach has been closed for swimming due to high levels of bacteria. The construction of a sewer treatment facility which is well underway will result in the beach being opened for the summer season in 2009.

Conclusion:

There is so much more that we would like to share about our community, but far too much to include. We are very proud of our past and present day people. Our people have a strong faith and are also very proud of our churches, schools, recreational facilities, businesses and much more.

Should our community be successful in receiving this prestigious award, we would be humbled and honored to host a special event for presentation by the Honourable Mayann Francis.

Respectfully Submitted;

Cathy MacIntyre – Chair – Dominion Heritage Committee
On behalf of Dominion Volunteer Groups and Organizations
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