

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](#)
Lieutenant Governor Community Spirit Award Entry Form

- [@communityspiritaward.ca](#) by midnight, January 31, 2010.

Community Name: Paradise, Nova Scotia

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

1. Paradise Active Healthy Living Society
2. Paradise Women's Institute
3. Paradise Community Hall Trustees
- 4.
- 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.

My Story

Born and raised in Halifax, like many I left the province after high school, westward bound. That was over 30 years ago. Now I'm back and I live in Paradise. I believe it is the most welcoming place I've ever lived, filled with Community Spirit. Let me tell you why.

In 1995, I was diagnosed with Breast Cancer. After successful treatment my husband and I took a look and decided it was time for a quieter, more restful lifestyle; time for my husband to wind down his working life a little; time for us to move closer to my mother, our only living parent, in case she needs us.

We traveled Nova Scotia to see where we would most like to settle. The day we found Paradise was the day we stopped looking. We didn't know anyone here, but we both love the beauty of the Valley and wanted a rural lifestyle.

We were barely unpacked when a representative of the Women's Institute came to the door, with a cookbook they had written; then the ladies from the Church. Our neighbors held a welcome party for us. When some 80 people showed up for the party we were astounded that such a large percentage of the population would show up to welcome new residents to the community.

Since then we have been swept up in the spirit that is Paradise. Many residents here are new, like us; others are generational. There are armed forces personnel, artists, engineers, lawyers, farmers, homemakers, accountants, doctors, young families and retirees. All have only one thing in common – Paradise. There are fitness classes, dance lessons, community dinners, historic house tours and, of course, the Moonlight Concert all organized by Paradise residents and all paid for by funds raised by those residents.

The Community Spirit of Paradise

Nestled between the North and South Mountains on the banks of the Annapolis River, Paradise has undergone many changes since it was first settled in the 1600s. The thriving orchards and farms of the 1800s, and the businesses that defined it in the early 1900s may be gone, but the 200 residents succeed in maintaining an air of Community in an age when we are more connected to our computers than our neighbors.

Paradise isn't a village and doesn't collect taxes. Residents raise money to maintain the Community Hall, Cemetery and the Paradise Community Heritage Garden in front of the Historic Paradise School.

In 2004, in celebration of the 400th Anniversary of Working and Living Together, residents prepared a photographic and written exhibit of the historic homes of Paradise. They invited everyone in the community to come and help paint a mural showing life in Paradise. Both grace the walls of the Community Hall, a constant reminder of the history here.

The Hall boasts a new roof, an extended kitchen and washroom area, and the hardwood floors have been refinished, all within the last 5 years. It is also wheelchair accessible thanks to the residents who are and have been the Hall Trustees.

Annual events are many and include Canada Day Festivities, a Pig Roast, the Annual Christmas Cookie Exchange and Tree Lighting Ceremony and, of course, the Moonlight Concert.

When the Acadians came here, they could not have survived without the help of the Mi'kmaq who befriended them. As different as they were, the Mi'kmaq and the Acadians worked together to build a community. The people of Paradise have carried that spirit of cooperation with them for 400 years and live it every day to make Paradise a successful Community.

Paradise Women's Institute

The Paradise Women's Institute was formed in 1918 to bring women together to improve their skills in homemaking, healthful living and the betterment of rural community life.

WI has been involved in the Paradise School since the beginning, having provided hot lunches and the dishes to serve them for children who had very long walks to and from school in the early 1900s.

By far their largest fund raising effort was the replacement of Paradise's sidewalks. In 1964 the sidewalks of Paradise were in a "deplorable" state, so people, including the children, walked on the road. WI realized how unsafe this was and took up the challenge. It took 7 years, but in 1971 the new sidewalk was completed.

In 1979 the school board phased out the Paradise School facility. With a view to preserving the heritage, WI presented a tender to the Municipality and became owners and trustees of the property. It is now the home of the Jack and Jill Pre School and the historic building is lovingly maintained by the members of WI.

In 1969 when the County wanted to build a dump in Paradise, WI and the residents banded together and took a united stand. The project was stopped and Paradise remains a quiet residential community.

Over the years WI has produced a cookbook and a History Book of the Village. Today WI meets monthly to study healthful living and supports a vigorous "buy local" campaign. All new residents of Paradise are invited to attend.

There is an adage that states "the more things change, the more they stay the same". This applies to WI which, as the only service organization in the Community, is one of the groups in Paradise that acts like glue to hold it together and promote Community Spirit.

The Paradise Active Healthy Living Society

The Paradise Active Healthy Living Society (PAHLS) was formed two years ago to encourage active healthy and sustainable lifestyle choices in our community and to organize events to help residents make those choices.

A weekly walking group started up and later, annual longer hikes. The first large event hosted by the group was the 2008 Canada Day Celebration. Although it was pouring rain, members of the community both young and old gathered to play in the "Paradise Games" and enjoy strawberry shortcake.

Canada Day 2009 featured a Walking Tour of 6 Historic Homes in Paradise. As residents opened their homes to strangers, adults and children worked to make the day a success. Over 160 people enjoyed a sunny afternoon walk through Paradise featuring refreshments at the Hall and an inside glimpse of some of the historic homes of Paradise. Over \$2,000 was raised by PAHLS that day to support further community events.

PAHLS sponsors formal Dance Classes during the fall and winter. Twice weekly "+50" exercise classes in the Hall have a certified instructor leading an exercise regimen geared to toning the muscles and increasing the flexibility of participants. Both exercise and dance classes are open to the public and are filled to capacity.

Work is underway for the 1st Annual Valentines Pie Auction and Sock Hop to be held on February 13th at the Hall.

The Hall Trustees this year decided that community groups using the hall would not have to pay the usual per diem rental fee, but instead could make a donation at the end of the year. This allowed those who could not afford to pay both the class and hall rental fees, to still attend the Dance and Exercise Classes this winter. PAHLS recently won a Wellness Initiative Fund Grant to subsidize the 2009/10 winter season.

The Moonlight Concert

In 1999, a trumpet player with the Annapolis Big Band invited the entire band to a bar-b-que and jam session at his home, historic Ellenhurst, in Paradise. In subsequent discussions, the band decided that since they were going to play at the bar-b-que anyway, they may as well use the opportunity to give a small concert. Since they were already giving a concert, they may as well collect donations for the Community Hall committee.

Thus the Moonlight Concert was born and has taken on something of a life of its own over the ensuing 10 years. For a week before the event, almost one half of the residents of Paradise work together to transform Ellenhurst into a true Paradis Terrestre, or as the Acadians called it, "Paradise on Earth". Lights are strung through the trees along the banks of the Annapolis River, staging constructed and seating set up. A committee cooks for days in advance to feed band members and workers. The Welcoming Committee greets every visitor to the event. Anyone who cannot make their own way from parking lots in the village to the natural amphitheatre at the back of Ellenhurst is transported by golf cart donated for the event and driven by Volunteers.

Now, each year approximately 1,000 people from around the world gather in Paradise under the stars to listen to the Annapolis Big Band. The money raised by free will donation is given to the Hall Trustees to use for maintenance and to support community events in Paradise.

This is the Spirit of the people of Paradise. Although life in rural Nova Scotia has changed dramatically in the last generation, Paradise has managed to sustain a cohesive community with a growing population as newcomers choose Paradise as a place to live.