

Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award Entry Form

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

Womens' Institute... Margaret Dawe
Sable River Post Office... Kimberly Williamson and Bessie Robart
Health Matters Program... Anna Freeman
Inclusiveness... Deena Harlow
Sable River Community Hall... June Williams and Gloria Gilbert
Youth... Carson Swim
Chernobyl Connection... Dawn Harding and Vica Viarbitshaya
Guatemala Connection... Gail Daniels
Crafts and Gardens... Shirley Guthro
Church Choir... Anna Freeman
Heritage Properties... Bessie Robart
Friends of Sable River... Bessie Robart and True McKinley
Shelburne County Women's Fishnet... Alice Lloyd and Cindy Embree

Please enjoy pictures and music from Sable River by using the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hx6HI3ac0cY>

Poetry by Leslie Freeman
Set to music and performed by Cathy Cook
Photographs by Linda Ross

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

Dear Selection Committee Members

The community of Sable River respectfully asks to be considered for a Lieutenant Governor's **Community Spirit Award**.

Our community is a diffuse rural population of approximately 550, with seasonal residents adding to our summertime numbers. When folks comment on why they like living here, the natural environment is consistently mentioned. We find pleasure in the unspoiled wilderness landscape and seascape and sightings of wildlife and birds, and we treasure the resources of land, river and sea that have traditionally provided the livelihood of the community. These features are celebrated on highway signs approaching Sable River, designating the "River Trails" as a key to the identity of the community. Local art projects illustrating community history are located along the trails, and historical murals are "works in progress". We invite visitors to share the beauty around us and to appreciate the rural history of lumbering, fishing and farming.

The village of Sable River is the hub of several small hamlets and villages. Like the arms of a starfish, there are 5 neighbourhoods, each extending about 15 kilometers from the center. Low population density is considered a positive value here, and given the broad distribution of our populace, the degree of volunteerism and participation in community events and municipal affairs is remarkable. Voter turnout at the municipal level has been as high as 82%. Within recent months, local residents have participated in Natural Resources' voluntary planning activities at the provincial level, have negotiated trail development with the multi-use trail enthusiasts, and have participated in workshops at the municipal level for Integrated Community Sustainability Planning. The municipality's Physical Activity Strategy sessions have inspired higher attendance in Sable River than in any other District, and all ages were represented.

Our Municipal Council member holds community meetings that attract capacity crowds to discuss specific municipal issues, and his casual breakfast meetings are also well-attended. When young residents age 12-20 were invited to participate in a visioning circle, "Sable River 2020", 16 attended, out of the 25 invited. (The outcome of this quest is described in the stories submitted for your consideration.)

Road maintenance challenges and Citizens on Patrol have also inspired people to become involved and to advocate for improved neighbourhoods. Residents participate in tourism associations and the Arts Council. Wildlife protection is important to our people. Residents serve as Piping Plover guardians, and hunters respect a number of designated bird and game sanctuaries in our area. Adults have volunteered to coach and supervise young people in mural painting, ping-pong and music activities. Roadside cleanup and recycling are practiced by regular walkers. The preservation of a low-key, quiet lifestyle, neighbourliness and safety are paramount.

History, family connections and tradition are solid values in Sable River, and a big part of our identity. Our view to the future is rooted in the patterns of the past. "What was old is new again." Our built heritage is being restored by traditional families and new owners. The story of A Tale of Two Rivers, a locally published collection of anecdotes and history, is included in our submission.

With service communities being 20-40 minutes away, it might be predicted that Sable River would be a suburb, or "bedroom community". This is not so. As is common in rural Nova Scotia, our demographic is older. Many residents are retired, and only a few are rich, yet the community supports 5 churches, 3 community halls, and 2 volunteer fire brigades / first responders. Fundraising and the provision of good social events go hand in hand. Having fun within our community is a tradition that persists, and we are making sure that the next generation inherits knowledge of, and respect for the past, so that they can build toward a positive and sustainable future. Demonstrating a love for community and modeling ways to have healthy fun close to home are examples of one generation passing tradition to the next.

One example is the revival of Mummering, or Santying in Sable River. A Grade 6 teacher has led a class research project, a local writer has published a story about mummering, and each year at the Tree Burning in January, costumed characters cavort with the kids and puzzle the grownups.

Grandmothers for Grandmothers is an international outreach group that has established a local cell. Individuals are also involved in Amnesty International, Breaking the Silence, a Guatemalan relief effort, the support of a rural school in Guatemala and the support of a Child of Chernobyl.

New initiatives that will help us to maintain our quality of life are our Farmers' Market, a project of Shelburne County Women's Fishnet, and neighbourhoods looking into wind power as sustainable, affordable energy. Transportation is a perpetual challenge, but carpooling is increasing and public transportation may become

viable, perhaps with an electric bus! We have applied for funding to develop a Neighbourhood Networks project, identifying seniors' needs and creating resources to enable seniors to remain in their homes.

Our strengths are our natural environment and our people. Volunteerism, thrift and generosity are social values that sustain us. Protecting and encouraging these characteristics assures a healthy outlook for the long future. Conservation is more than a local ethic... it may be genetic!

We invite you to enjoy the stories submitted, along with our music and poetry and pictures. We trust that this will be almost as good as paying a visit to Sable River. There is always more to learn and include, so if you drop in, we will take you "around the river" and maybe out in a kayak, or to a wild and deserted beach to sunbathe with the seals.

STORIES FROM AND ABOUT SABLE RIVER

Health Matters

This is a program that is available to all residents of the area, and from its inception in April of 2008, has been very well attended and appreciated by both our men and women., 18 or 20 each session. Volunteer registered nurses give of their time to record blood pressure, weight, test blood sugar, cholesterol, every other week. A pharmacist, lawyer, massage therapist, nurse practitioner, dietitian, and more have given of their time to help and inform all interested.

Sable River United Baptist Church Choir

In 1958, at the age of 15, I was invited to join the choir, under the capable baton of my grandmother. Such a thrill! The Choir, 16 members strong, with gifted singers including the highly regarded Sable River Quartet. My Dad, Maurice, was the 1st Bass; Stan, Earl and Gordon Giffin rounded out the foursome. They competed in the first ever NS Barbershop Quartet Competition in the late 50's, and although they did not win, received many comments of praise from the adjudicator. What an honor for a young girl to sing with this fine group! Thus began my "career" as an Alto. Upon returning to Sable River in 2007, much to my delight I learned that a Sable River and Osborne Choir, directed and accompanied by talented Sandra Elliot, performs at Christmas and Easter Services in both communities. It is really an ecumenical group, with singers also from the Anglican and United faiths. Recently, a group of young and older members "gig" together with their instructor in the Community Hall on Thursday nights. The spirit of music is still alive and well in Sable River!!

Shelburne Association Supporting Inclusion

My family lives in Sable River and I work with the Association. I also volunteer with the Women's Fishnet, Harmony Bazaar, and I am a Medical First Responder with the Sable River Volunteer Fire Department. When people ask what I do for work, I tell them and then I smile and say, "I love it! It's not like work at all." When you can make a difference with a smile, patience and understanding, you learn so much. The best thing about our work environment is our outlook "every day is a new day". The Association workshop is an amazing and rewarding place. It offers fulfilling days for persons with disabilities, a small Café` and a second hand Furniture Store called "Shanty". We work hard and are proud of our accomplishments as we continue to grow and watch for opportunities for employing our participants within our community.

Sable River Youth

Growing up in Sable River I have always found the trails and river as a source for my enjoyment. I had never taken into consideration the opportunities in our community to provide fun and companionship for the youth.

In June of 2008 we were invited to the Community Hall to take part in a traditional Mik'Maq talking circle. The very first settlers of Sable River were Mik'Maq so it was a fitting and new concept to use to express our ideas. As the talking stick was passed from each youth we expressed our feelings; and as a whole felt we had "nothing

to do". But after much discussion we grouped all ideas towards planned events and activities.

Our initial project was to clean the upstairs of the Community Hall for our activities and achieve an overall better look. Informing the community was the next project, which we resolved by obtaining an outside event message board, which is visible to all that drive by.

Thursday nights became "Ping-Pong Night", where all youth are welcome to come and get involved in a game with volunteer supervision by adults from the community. Also over summer, with a grant we were able to purchase a very nice ping-pong table to give us a total of two to use.

A local musician, when available, guides a music jam with us. The opportunity to show our talent had encouraged our participation in a musical fundraiser in the community to raise funds for a foreign youth attending a community college in our area.

Recently we got together to start another project, which involves painting murals on barns and housing throughout the community. We plan to post bulletins throughout the high and elementary schools, inviting all to come and take part in our local "art".

Since the "talking circle" I have taken notice that our voice in the community has a definite place. It has been acknowledged and our ideas and involvement have been welcomed, as we now have "something to do"!

This photo shows the talking stick:



The Chernobyl Connection

Viktoryia Viarbitskaya is a young woman from Belarus who has chosen to make Sable River her home. She first came to Canada through the efforts of the Canadian Relief Fund for Chernobyl Victims in Belarus when she was eight years old. Local families who were involved with the program hosted children for six weeks during the summer. Vica came to visit every summer until she was sixteen, after which time the program no longer sponsored her. Her host family brought her back the next year and was able, with the help of the Rotary Club International, to enroll her as a grade twelve student at Lockeport Regional High School. She graduated with the class of 2007.

Vica's wish to stay in Canada and become a Canadian citizen has led her to attend the Shelburne Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College where she is studying Office Information Technology. This has been made possible for her by the efforts of the people of Sable River and surrounding area. So many have been generous with fund-raising and financial support to help her realize her dream!

Why I Feel at Home in Sable River (by Vica Viarbitshaya)

Sable River is the most beautiful place filled with very nice people. Because they are so generous and welcoming, I feel like I am home. Even though I miss my family in Belarus, I have another family here and I have

lots of friends. So many people in the community are helping me raise money for my tuition. Whether it is a bake sale or pot luck supper at the hall, the good cooks of Sable River are always willing to share their culinary treats. I feel welcomed when I am asked to participate in community activities like the Fireman's Fun Fest and volunteer work with Women's Fishnet and Harmony Bazaar. Sable River is my happy place to live!

A Tale of Two Rivers (book compiled by The Friends of Sable River)

In 2005, the Municipality of Shelburne's 150th anniversary, friends of the village of Sable River formed an ad hoc group to assemble various writings, photos and memoirs. Material flooded in and the book A Tale of Two Rivers was born.

Launched on October 28 2007, the book was an instant best seller as 250 copies (the complete first printing) were scooped up in less than two hours! This popularity has continued with the second and third printing. Letters of congratulations from near and far, along with more memories, continue to arrive as the book makes its way to those who grew up or spent time here. Comments from those who received the book follow:

"That is why books like this are so important; they keep us connected to our past." "I was particularly touched by the essay on Allister Harlow, one of my heroes when I was a Kid"

"It is so easy for people to forget what it was really like to live and work anywhere 20, 30 or 50 years ago. This book shows and tells the real 'people's history' of Sable River so that it won't be forgotten"

"This book will help me to remember. The photos are amazing in themselves! So, we would like to order two more copies... cheque enclosed"

"It is fabulous—really interesting!! I remember---, I remember---, I can relate to many people (mentioned). A good tribute---well written". (From a 90 year old former resident).

"It is wonderful. Great work. A labour of love. I can hear Wilbur's voice when I read some of the stories"

"Your book was wonderful. It's amazing how much Sable River has changed over the years. I can't believe all the events that took place in your kitchen---!"

"I opened it and never put it down until I read it from cover to cover. I did my exercising to the wonderful music by Phillip (and looking at the photos on the CD). It was a delight! A big thank-you from this former resident of Sable River"

"The thing that touched me was seeing the sweet faces of my two grandmothers" (from Chad, Africa)

"There was a lot of good wholesome fun growing up in a rural community where everyone knows everybody. The people, both young and old helped make Sable River the best place to grow up in."

"The photos and stories have brought alive again for me many, many pleasant memories of my teen years in Sable River in the 50's. It is good to see that the community continues to be a good place to live."

Sable River Post Office

In this era of the world wide web, when it's possible to send and receive text messages and photographs in just seconds, we remember and honour those pioneers who worked so hard to establish the excellent postal service that we have today.

When the first settlers came to the Sable River Valley there was no way to communicate with relatives and friends except by the spoken word entrusted to the captains of the sailing vessels. In the late 1800's, bridle paths connected Sable River to settlements in Jordan Falls and Shelburne. Messages scripted on parchment and sealed with wax were passed to the rider of the pony express.



The Halifax and South Western Railway was built in the early 1900's, and postal service was greatly improved. The daily train ran between Halifax and Yarmouth, stopped and handed off letters and parcels to be picked up by residents at the country general store. It was a great place to meet and keep in touch with all the local news!



In following years, Post Masters often worked from their homes. In 1951, "Aunt" Gertie Harlow gave out the mail along with delicious ginger cookies from her fragrant kitchen! Many other dedicated residents followed, laying the foundation for the welcome deliveries we still receive from Canada Post today.

In Sable River now we have just one rural route that covers West Port L'Hebert, East and West Sable, Little Harbour, Rockland, East Ragged Island and Walls Lake. This covers an area of about 102 kilometers. The post office has played an important role in the community during each of its eras, but in my opinion, even more so in this day and age. In our world where the internet links just about everyone and everything, I think it's important that we realize our post office remains the only real physical link among these communities.

Today's post office looks like this:



Heritage Properties

As a long-standing member of the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee, I hereby testify that community spirit is alive and well in this tiny village of Sable River!

We proudly describe some of our Municipal Heritage Properties:

Our beautiful church is now 103 years old and has a vibrant choir and congregation of mixed denominations. The Community Hall, built by the Sons of Temperance in 1903, is now the center of the community. It plays an important role in the lives of all, young and old.



The Esker is our only Provincial Heritage Property, a perfect Cape Cod, built in the 1820's and is still on its



original rock foundation.

Two other registered homesteads are the Freeman Harlow House and Priscilla's Place.

We have a wonderful walking trail that crosses our two rivers, The Tom Tigney and the Sable River with the 100



year old Swinging Bridge and the Trestle Bridge.

We know that with continued interest by our youth and the cooperation of all of us, that we will preserve our cherished heritage and thrive in the future growth of Sable River.

Committee Membership

This begins in September 1990. We came from Ontario to visit our daughter and family, and ended up purchasing a home in this part of God's country called Sable River. At the end of November we became permanent members of this community.

As a craft person, I was asked to be part of the Oktoberfest celebration, run by the Volunteer Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary. I subsequently became President/Secretary for a period of time. Now I am a member of the Community Hall Committee.

There is a wonderful group of Craft Ladies here and they meet each week to create items for fund raising and companionship. I have participated for the last twelve years and learned so much about the people and history of this area. Our son and myself operate Dream Garden Creations, selling perennials, shrubs, hanging baskets, etc. Throughout the years a variety of garden beds have been developed on our property for people to take in the beauty of the landscape. Now established in this community, we wouldn't want to live anywhere else as the camaraderie and spirit is great!



Connection with Guatemala

My home is in Little Port L'Hebert, near Sable River. My husband and I bought property on the ocean 18 years ago and camped on it every summer for ten years. During that time we met some of the wonderful people here who made us feel very welcome. After retiring and having our house built by some talented locals six years ago, my husband passed away. My new community helped me through the difficult time of bereavement. My children feel quite at home when they visit, so my new place by the sea has become my new home base.

From here I became actively involved with a group out of Tatamogouche, called "Guatemala / Maritime Breaking the Silence Solidarity Network". This group is working in Guatemala to help support social justice organizations there. I have visited there four times in the last three years and am learning to speak some Spanish to be able to assist more effectively. I am raising awareness of the human rights abuses there, and also in my own community. I belong to the Women's Institute of Nova Scotia in Sable River. I'm leading a new and different life on my own and very grateful for the good friends and their support here.

Sable River Farmers' Market

Opening on May 23 2009, the market, sponsored by Shelburne County Women's Fishnet, was an overnight success! Vendors were attracted to the free and open space, and a local restaurant contributed a big pot of soup each Saturday. This was especially welcome in the cool spring weather.

At one of the two service stations in the village, vendors of meats, fish, produce, breads, home baking, preserves garden plants, folk art and crafts display their wares each Saturday. The second station hosts yard sale-ers, antique and flea market booths. Much excitement was generated through good advertising, and the market quickly became the place to meet friends and neighbours. Students offer BBQ and homemade soup and sweets, fundraising for school activities. Local musicians contribute entertainment, and a carol sing was organized for the final market on Dec 12 when Christmas trees, wreaths and decorations were sold.

Average vendor participation was 13, with a range from 6 to 22. A customer survey produced encouraging comments and we look forward to re-opening in Spring 2010.

Sable River Community Hall

There's no coffee shop in Sable River. The men congregate at the garage to swap stories and gossip, but the place where most folks meet socially is the Community Hall.

The milestones of our lives are celebrated in the Hall. From baby showers to wakes, shared food and conversation mark the passages of time and people in the community. Church receptions, Women's Institute events, variety shows and all sorts of family gatherings happen here in the center of the village. It is the heartbeat of the community with regular programs such as the twice weekly women's fitness class, swimming at a nearby resort and weekly cribbage games, giving the residents the opportunity to connect and enjoy common interests. "Health Matters" addresses the needs of seniors in the district. We come to the Hall to vote, consult with our Council member, plan our community's future, learn, celebrate, mourn, talk and eat together.

With our Volunteer Fire Department, we have created an Emergency Comfort Station, equipping the Hall with generator power. Fundraising is a perpetual challenge in a small community. Organizations and groups such as Shelburne County Women's Fishnet have raised money for their work through bake sales, flea markets, concerts, suppers and auctions. The Friends of Sable River donate all the profits from Book sales to help support the Hall and community. Amazing things (sometimes thought impossible), are accomplished while the folks are gathered for positive social connectedness.

The Hall Committee sponsors weekly Crib Nights an annual corned beef supper, a flea market, dances, and a tree-burning after Christmas. A new youth group initiative is currently planning music events, sports and art projects to involve our younger community members in their choices of activities. These projects were generated when the youth were asked to gather at the Hall and share their vision for the future of Sable River, as part of this Spirit Award application. Sixteen community members between the ages of 12 and 19 participated in a "talking circle" based on the First Nations' healing circle. Adults in this area have committed to assisting the young people with their projects.

We are so grateful to have the Hall as our gathering place! For many years it has housed the spirit of the community in all its facets, and we will work to maintain this important function, and the welcoming atmosphere of the dear old building.

Below are photos taken during Hall events:



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SABLE RIVER & AREA WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Community has always been and continues to be a main focus of the Sable River and Area branch of the Nova Scotia's Women's Institute. Since 1940 there have been many varied projects undertaken and carried out by these community minded ladies. Health clinics were set up at different times to provide cod liver oil and nutrition information. A "Buckle Up Baby" program provided baby car seats for parents of infants. The ladies are continuously making items for the Grace Maternity and Issac Walton Killam Children's Hospital, such as layette sets, blankets, and premie caps for newborns. They also make mittens and hats which are given out in the Emergency Department when there is a need. Finger puppets and comfort bears are also sent to be used for the children's pleasure. As well, some members make large knitted comfort bras for Alzheimer patients. Each year a bursary is provided for a graduating Lockeport High School student who is furthering their education. At Christmas there are gifts and "goodie" bags provided for community shut-ins.

A highlight each year is the annual Christmas meeting and social to which many ladies from the community who aren't members are invited. Laughter and smiles always abound with true community spirit.

In July 2007 the two Women's Institute Branches in Shelburne County (Sable river and area , Port Clyde and area) were hosts to the Provincial Annual General Meeting. This gathering was attended by members from the whole Province. Our theme, "Water, Water Everywhere" stressed the importance of water quality, particularly with its purity and supply.

The Institutes developed a "Buy Local" program emphasizing its importance and value to us all. This is now a main focus of the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture.

Although the Women's Institute group in Sable River is small, we continue to try to identify and help with Community and home needs for everyone here.



Please enjoy pictures and music from Sable River by using the following link:

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