

Lieutenant Governor Community Spirit Award Entry Form

Community Name: Paradise, Nova Scotia

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

1. Paradise School, Jack & Jill Nursery School
2. Paradise Women's Institute
3. Paradise Active Healthy Living Society
4. Paradise United Baptist Church
5. Paradise Community Hall Trustees

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.

**From “Nesogwaakade—Place of Eel Weirs” to
“Paradis Terrestre—Paradise on Earth”
to Paradise, Nova Scotia” - Our Home
Constant for centuries —The Community of Paradise**

The Mi'kmaw & The Acadians

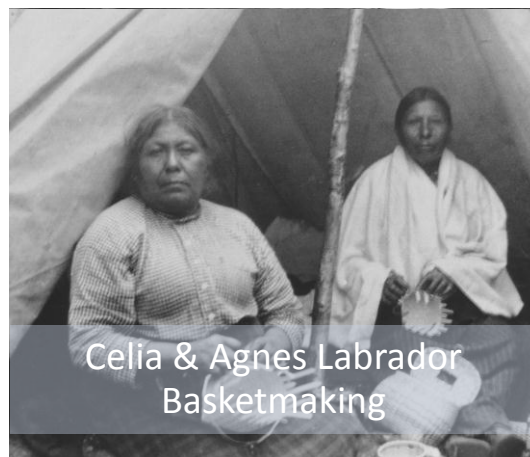
Nestled between the North and South Mountains on the banks of the Annapolis River, at the “head of the tide” Paradise has undergone many changes over the centuries.

The Mi'kmaw named it Nesogwaakade – Place of Eel Weirs and described its situation “at the head of the tide amidst the finest fishing and trapping”. To the Mi'kmaw, Nesogwaakade was a noted landmark as they travelled up and down the valley or across the mountains to the southern barrens and inmost lakes. As long as memory serves, the Mi'kmaw came to Nesogwaakade, set up their tents, fished the Annapolis River and hunted the forest.

The last known Mi'kmaw to live in Paradise was Heggie Luxie, born in 1834. Heggie was a life long member of the Guides Association, guiding throughout North America. Heggie passed away in 1941 at the age of 108.

In the 1600s the Acadians came and named the land Paradis Terrestre - Paradise on Earth. The earliest known map showing Paradise was found in 1933 by William Inglis Morse in the Archives du Service Hydrographique de la Marine in Paris, drawn by Lalanne in 1684.

The Mi'kmaw befriended the Acadians and taught them to live in a sometimes harsh environment. The story is that upon hearing of the expulsion of the Acadians, the Mi'kmaw portaged from the Cornwallis River to the Annapolis River and with great haste spread the word to those in the Paradise area of what was happening to their countrymen. A group of Acadians escaped the expulsion and hid in the woods on the South Mountain. With the help of the Mi'kmaw they survived for months. Finally the Mi'kmaw led them to the Bay of Fundy, built canoes for them and the Acadians made their way to New Brunswick and on to Quebec.



PLANTERS, LOYALISTS AND INDUSTRY

By 1764 the Acadians were gone; planters and loyalists took their place. The first mail moved through the village in 1786 and by 1795 the post road ran from Halifax to Annapolis Royal. The community grew and prospered; farms and orchards were planted. In the 20th Century business sprang up along the Dominion Atlantic Railway line that ran through Paradise.

Now in the 21st Century, the thriving orchards and farms of the 1800s and the businesses that defined Paradise in the 1900s have disappeared. So how does Paradise remain a Community?

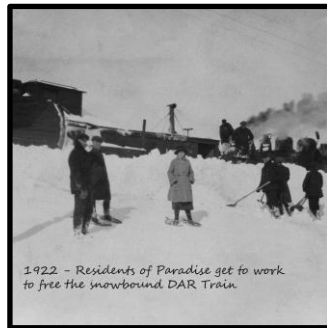
In the following pages you'll see how - through expulsions, world wars, depression and the decline of rural Nova Scotia. It's because of volunteers and volunteer groups.

The Paradise Women's Institute, The Paradise United Baptist Church, the Paradise Active Healthy Living Society. It's because a handful of residents sit as Trustees of the Paradise Hall – the place where so many community making events take place. Church suppers, dance and exercise classes, socials, gospel music concerts, and more.

It's because of the Moonlight Concert – the annual event that brings every resident and volunteer group in Paradise together to put on a one night show enjoyed by over 1,000 people.

It's because of the people who call Paradise home. It doesn't matter if they've been here for 400 years or 4 years.

The Acadians could not have survived without the help of the Mi'kmaw who befriended them. As different as they were, the Mi'kmaw and the Acadians worked together to build a community. Today people from every walk of life do the same and call Paradise home.



Apple Warehouses beside the DAR line



Paradise School about 1900



Paradise School Today



Primary Class 1898



Jack & Jill Pre School 2012



The Paradise School

The New England Planters who came in the 1770s valued education highly and soon organized schooling. An early teacher "Uncle Asaph" Marshall taught Shakespeare as he sat by the fire making "split brooms" from yellow birch saplings. He established a community library from his home, so his students could read the classics.

Mathematics was a specialty of the Paradise schools. A copy of a teacher's workbook belonging to Caleb Phinney (1828-1890) was found by the owners of "Caleb House" in the 1990s. By 1850, Paradise Academy was recognized as one of the best four schools in the

province and attracted students from as far away as Massachusetts. In those days, Annapolis County was second only to the Halifax area in prosperity. University and post-doctoral graduates from the village in the 19th and 20th centuries studied at universities such as Harvard and became researchers and scholars in agriculture, medicine, biology, theology, and history. In 1850 the provincial Superintendent of Education reported that "an excellent teacher and liberal-minded people have enabled it [the Paradise School] to attract pupils from a distance, and to attain a degree of efficiency rarely surpassed by any of the county academies. This school is interesting as an excellent example of what might be done in rural districts of this province..."

In 1894, the present County Heritage Second Empire building replaced an older and simpler structure. In the 1970's when the trend began to close down small feeder schools and send all students to regional schools, the Paradise Women's Institute presented a tender to the Municipality and became owners and trustees of the property. Today it is the home of the Jack and Jill Pre-School. Once again children's minds are being challenged by dedicated teachers, their parents form friendships, and our community is strengthened.

Paradise Women's Institute 1918—Present

Formed in 1918, the Paradise Women's Institute has been involved in the Paradise School since the early 1900's. Members of the Women's Institute provided hot lunches and the dishes to serve them for children who had very long walks to and from the school. In the 1970s the Women's Institute became the owners and trustees of the historic school. Women's Institute members work hard to maintain the building and with the help of the entire community maintain the Heritage Garden planted in front.

The Women's Institute has been involved in many fundraising endeavors over the years, by far the largest was the replacement of the Paradise sidewalks. In 1964 they were in such a "deplorable" state that everyone, including the children, walked on the road. It took 7 years, but in 1971 the new sidewalk was completed, paid for by the Women's Institute.

In 2011 the Paradise Women's Institute donated a sign, placed at the Community Hall, on which to post events. The dedication of the sign was held in November with a large showing from the Community on hand.

In addition to looking after the School, today's Women's Institute members are involved in every aspect of Paradise living, sitting on the Boards of the Jack and Jill Pre School, the Community Hall Trustees and the Paradise Active Healthy Living Society. They are members of the Paradise United Baptist Church. They participate in fund raising events to support the Community Hall and the other Community organizations. Every year Christmas packages are assembled and delivered to residents of the village in need.

There is an adage that states "the more things change, the more they stay the same". This applies to Women's Institute, one of the groups that acts like glue to hold Paradise together and promote Community Spirit.



Paradise Active Healthy Living Society

PAHLS was formed in 2007 to encourage active healthy and sustainable lifestyle choices and organize events to promote those goals. PAHLS helps residents become more active and provides forums for community interaction.

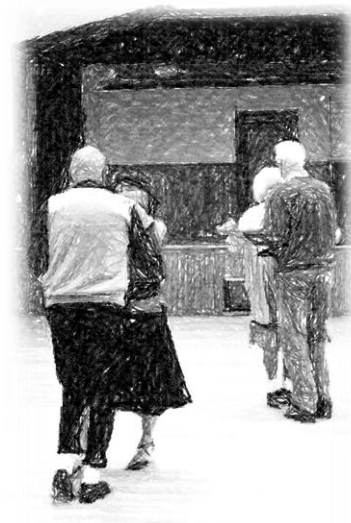
First came a weekly walking group, later longer annual hikes and snowshoeing outings. PAHLS is the liaison for the Paradise entry in the Annapolis County Winter Activity Challenge.

On Canada Day in 2009, PAHLS sponsored a Walking Tour of both historic and new homes of Paradise. Residents opened their homes to strangers and volunteers worked to make the day a success. Over 160 people enjoyed a peek at Paradise living and refreshments at the Community Hall.

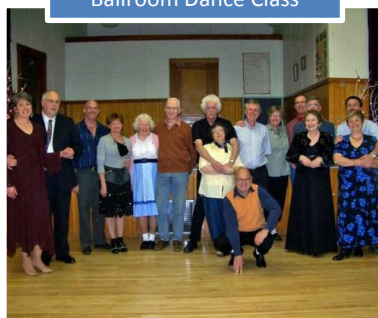
PAHLS sponsors Ballroom Dance Classes during the fall and winter. Exercise classes three times a week have a large following and are taught by a properly certified instructor, a member of the organization and resident of Paradise. Both classes are open to the public. PAHLS makes its classes affordable to all and accepts the responsibility of working with the Community Hall Trustees to raise funds to maintain the Hall so that local groups can use it for activities without paying “rent”.

In an effort to fight childhood obesity, a new class has been added in 2012—Fun Fitness for children on Friday afternoons. This will accomplish two goals—parents of children will have an opportunity to interact socially, while the children learn about fitness and healthy choices. From time to time PAHLS members will hold seminars on preparing healthy meals.

PAHLS’ newest endeavor is “Dance like no one is watching”. Open to all and free of charge, we hope to encourage singles and couples alike to come out and dance to a variety of musical tunes, reconnect with friends and neighbors and, of course, get some exercise.



Ballroom Dance Class



Snowshoeing 2011



Walking Group





PARADISE UNITED BAPTIST CHURCH

The Paradise United Baptist Church is an outstanding example of Victorian Gothic architecture, both inside and out. The Steeple dominates the valley landscape acting as a beacon to Paradisonians returning home. It's been painted by many famous artists, including Valley native Tom Forrestall.

Since it was founded in 1810, the Paradise United Baptist Church has been the center of community activity. Construction began on the present building in 1876 and was completed in 1882. To this day the parking lot is full on Sunday.

In 2004 Reverend Mark Reece became the pastor of the Church. He came to Paradise a young minister right out of the seminary. Seven years later Rev. Reece is married and he and his wife Jennifer have strong roots in Paradise.

Over the next pages we will meet Rev. Reece and Jennifer and some other residents of Paradise.

We will try to show you through their eyes why Paradise is indeed a Community and why we believe it is deserving of the Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award.

View from the top of the Steeple – Paradise United Baptist Church



SOME STORIES OF PARADISE

Rev. Mark Reese: While moving to Paradise in June 2004 as the new pastor of the Baptist church, my connection is more deeply-rooted. It was here that my own grandparents lived for many years. I still have family in the area, have since developed many good friendships, and have the space and freedom to enjoy several hobbies that might be inaccessible otherwise. Paradise is a wonderful community in which to live, work and play.

As the sole full-time pastor in the village, I have been privileged with numerous unique opportunities to accompany local individuals and families in both times of joy and sorrow. In 2010 our Church celebrated 200 years of ministry. The congregation determined that celebrations should find us looking forward as much as backward. We reminisced over the highs and lows of the past, and recognized that we must continue to be adaptable and flexible in our outreach. With that in mind, we continue to hold traditional events like church suppers while pursuing new family fun events such as bowling, ice-skating outings, BBQs, corn boils, gospel music nights, bon fires, nature walks, and movie nights.

As our Sanctuary was on the upper floor of the Church, to honour our seniors and their ongoing contributions to our life as a Church, we installed a chair lift system in 2011. Meanwhile, we continue to forge connections with our young people. Partnering with a neighbouring church we provided 2 new youth groups for students in grades 5-12, and continue to reach out to students at the local NSCC campus, particularly international students from African countries. We recognize that we live in a very dynamic rural community—full of potential and firmly rooted in history.

Jennifer Reese: I grew up in southern Ontario and moved to Paradise in 2006. It goes without saying that they are 2 different worlds. I have come to love living in this rural community. It's not uncommon for me to go for leisurely walks and come across people I know and start a conversation. Some family members who visit me regularly often comment about ending up having friendly conversations with those they meet along the way on a walk or bike ride. Newcomers to Paradise never go unnoticed. Paradise has a humble, charming, old-fashioned, friendly atmosphere. I try to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and fitness is important in my life. Paradise is a great place to live for just that. What other small, rural community has a very well used sidewalk (thanks to the Paradise Women's Institute)? Activities such as Zumba, Adult and Senior Fitness Classes, Fun Fitness for Tots, and even dance classes are offered at the Community Hall. The Paradise Active Healthy Living Society does a tremendous job of offering other activities and getting the community involved, such as snowshoeing and nordic walking. PAHLS also fundraises (e.g. yard sales) to raise money and create awareness of how important fitness is for everyone.

One project that I've grown fond of is Paradise's involvement in the Annapolis County Community Winter Activity Challenge. Local communities compete with each other for the most total personal fitness hours per week. I am proud to say that for the past little while, Paradise has been maintaining 2nd place! I'm happy to promote the community of Paradise to all those I meet, and really enjoy the wonderful community spirit.

My family came to Paradise in the 1770s, part of the Planter emigration from New England. Our home overlooks the site of an old Acadian mill. Once Paradise was rich with orchards, crops, and forests. And stories. We grew up with “Jonathan and Sarah”, our ancestors, as real as our own parents to us- how they came, what they did, what remains of their heritage. By the 1950’s, the prosperity of the apple industry had declined along with family farms. Most of us left. I went to Acadia, became a teacher, and met my husband who was studying to become an engineer. For forty years, Paradise was “back home”, but not a huge part of life. We had our family, our careers, and our friends. But life has a way. In 2003 we came home to live with my mother in one of the three houses on the old land- the one with my great-great-great grandparents buried at the end of the lawn!

We came back as young retirees seeking refuge and calm from the stress of urban life. I came with a built-in love of Paradise. My husband was quickly absorbed into the ways of my remaining family. At first it was lonely, missing our children and friends. But I rejoiced daily at the wonder of the river, the oak and ash groves, the wildlife, the fresh air, and the landscape of the homes of Paradise I knew so well. So many people were new, but within a few months, my partner and I had both been embraced by the energetic and communal life of a place that was totally changed, and yet had evolved into the same thing it always was- a community of friends and neighbours working to sustain a good life. It doesn’t matter who’s “new” or “old”. We all work together, have fun together, and as someone once said, we still celebrate the “amazing spirit” of Paradise. –Rev. Barbara Bishop, Ret.

My name is Anne Marie Pearle and my family came to Paradise in 1768. My husband Jack’s family are newcomers – they didn’t come until 1895. We were both born in Middleton, but things were different from there. My Dad was in the airforce so we lived all over the world until I was 16 and my mother brought us home. Dad had passed on, but Mom, a British war bride, wanted to raise her children in Paradise.

Jack lived in Paradise his whole life. Within months of our move back to Paradise, we found each other and celebrate 45 years of marriage this summer.

Jack decided he wanted to farm, okay by me until he started growing strawberries and decided I was supposed to sell them! Since he said I could have all the money I made that day, my life in retail began. Oh, I had to pick the berries first!

We had a wonderful life on the farm we purchased from his parents. We raised our family and both worked full time jobs while we farmed. I look back now and wonder how we did it.

Our kids got into 4H, so I became a leader. I joined the Paradise Women’s Institute in the 1980s, the Paradise Community Hall Trustees in the 90s and the Paradise Active Healthy Living Society in 2007. Jack became involved with the Annapolis Valley Exhibition, so I did too.

Although both of our children left Nova Scotia after university, our daughter has moved back home and lives 3 houses from us. Our 2 grandchildren are the lights of our lives.

To say life is good in Paradise – no debate there. I hope our ancestors are proud of what we have accomplished!

My name is Joyce Manns and my husband Brian and myself were born in London, England. We came to Canada in 1973, and in 2007 we decided to move to Paradise, Nova Scotia. The beauty of Paradise is amazing. Every day I look out of my kitchen window and reflect on the beauty of the Annapolis River and the Valley.

Before we moved here someone told us, "You'll like Paradise – it is a very tight community". Unlike in England where "tight" means tight fisted or mean with one's money, this man meant that the people of Paradise cared about each other and were tightly connected by a common sense of community. This is certainly the case.

Early on I joined the Women's Institute and met an amazing group of women who welcome any woman who wishes to enjoy their place in the community. WI has a history of taking up causes which others would shrink at and I find that refreshing. Recently WI has started an Art group which has been well received.

As a couple, Brian and I joined the Paradise Active Healthy Living Society. We take part in fitness classes and recently I have achieved my certification to teach those classes.

We work along with everyone else in the Community to help with the Moonlight Concert – all for the benefit of the Community Hall.

Although not church goers, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the work of our local church. Last Christmas we were the grateful recipients of a delicious turnkey dinner when we were both quite ill. It was so kind of them to include us – but then why would I be surprised – after all this is Paradise.

My name is Lynn Moar. Born and raised in Halifax, like many I left the province after high school in 1976. In 2007 my husband and I moved to Paradise from Western Canada. 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 in Halifax, our only living parent.

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 that changed quickly. 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. We were astounded when over 80 people showed up to welcome us - the 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 from families that have been here for 400 years. There are folks from every walk of life and every age group. All have only one thing in common – our Community - Paradise.

The Moonlight Concert



All set up and ready to go



Over 1000 Come to Paradise every August



The Moonlight Concert - Under the Stars



August in Paradise

In 1999, David Hankinson, a trumpet player with the Annapolis Big Band invited the entire band to a bar-b-que and jam session at his home in Paradise, historic Ellenhurst. After some discussion 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. Then, as David's wife Linda was a member of the Hall Trustees at the time, it was decided that the small concert would accept free will donations for the maintenance and upkeep of the Paradise Community Hall.

Thus the Moonlight Concert was born. Now in its' 13th year, the event brings together the entire community of Paradise who work together to transform Ellenhurst into a true Paradis Terrestre 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 and transports them to the natural Amphitheatre at the back of Ellenhurst using golf carts donated for the event and driven by Volunteers. There is no charge for the concert but free will donations are accepted and all funds go toward the maintenance and operation of the Paradise Community Hall.

The Moonlight Concert *is* the Spirit of Paradise. Although life in rural Nova Scotia has changed dramatically since the time of the Mi'kmaw, Paradise has managed to sustain a cohesive community with a growing population. Just as 400 years ago the Acadians, Planters and Loyalists came to Paradise to start a Community and raise their families, today young families and retirees alike choose Paradise as their new home.