

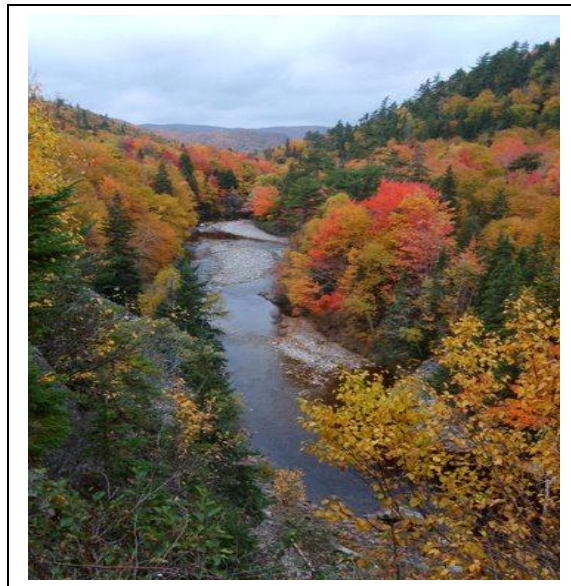
Lieutenant Governor Community Spirit Award Entry Form

Community Name: St. Ann's Bay/North Shore Cape Breton

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

St. Ann's Bay Community Health Centre
St. Ann's Bay Development Association
North Shore and District Volunteer Fire Department
North Shore Fishermen's Coop
Harbour Authority of Little River, Victoria County
North River Recreation Committee
North Shore Gaelic Heritage Society/North Shore Gaelic Cultural Centre
Gaelic Film Festival Committee
St. Ann's Bay Players
The Arboretum Society
North River Community Hall
Stewards of St. Ann's Harbour Association
St. Ann's Bay United Church
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

By submitting this nomination we agree 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,

Please consider the community of St. Ann's Bay/North Shore Cape Breton for the Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award. What follows will demonstrate the strength of this community through its history and culture, as well as its ability to respond positively to a changing demographic and to enhance the quality of life for all of its residents.

Background

This community stretches along the Cabot Trail and its side roads from the South Haven turnoff to the foot of Cape Smokey, a distance of 72 kilometres. The area includes 450 residents in numerous smaller, autonomous, communities. There are three community halls and two postal zones as well as two churches, both Protestant, down from the four that existed a few years ago. Until the North Shore School closed, half the area's children went to school in Baddeck, 40 minutes away, while the rest went to the North Shore School. Two Community Access Sites have been established to service the community and its visitors, and the North Shore and District Volunteer Fire Department is responsible for all but a few houses in the area. Within the population there are the "Come from Aways", and the "Locals".

The area is known for its beauty, with steep hills stretching into the Cape Breton Highlands and fast flowing rivers emptying into St. Ann's Bay and Harbour. The North River falls is the highest waterfall in the Maritimes, protected by the North River Wilderness area, and the river is known for trout fishing and a unique salmon population of large, two-sea-winter fish. Further north up the coast is the Barachois River, Indian Brook, Little River, and French River.

History

Before the arrival of the Scottish settlers, Mi'kmaw people camped along the shores of St. Ann's Bay and the local rivers to hunt and fish. It is believed that they had camps at North Gut and Jersey Cove, and until the turn of the 18th century they traded with the businessmen of the settlements around the Bay. The Scottish immigration began in the 1800s, mostly from the islands of Lewis and Harris, the largest number arriving with Norman MacLeod in 1820. Thereafter there was a steady migration of Gaelic speaking Scots creating homesteads and small farms on the shores and in the hills around St. Ann's. In 1843, three hundred Scottish immigrants arrived in the North River district from the Isle of Harris.

By the early 20th Century, industry was thriving. Camp One up the North River housed one hundred men cutting pulpwood for the North River Lumber Company. Soon there were thirty more camps with tote roads and telephone lines connecting them to the head office down river on the Murray Road. Ultimately there were as many as nine hundred men employed in the woods and a hundred or more working at the Murray debarking and loading plant. As well, the Plaster Quarry at St. Ann's began in 1904, hiring up to fifty

men and loading up to 20 railway cars to run to the shore for shipping. The lobster fishery started and there were canning factories from 1905-1920 on the North Shore in Wreck Cove and Breton Cove. Trapping led to commercial fur farming which remained a successful business from 1936 to 2006. Highland Blueberry, a community corporation, produced organic blueberries for several years in the mid 1990s.

Determined to Stay

Currently, although the quarry has been closed since the last century and the Murray Road debarking mill is now a picturesque ruin enjoyed by eagles and by the North River kayakers, the community is still home to a thriving lobster fishery with twenty-seven license holders and a hundred people actively involved. Twenty-three boats leave the harbour at Little River every day. And although the community's population has diminished, small businesses, studio craft and gift shops from Wreck Cove to Goose Cove testify to the creative initiatives of those who have come to this area determined to stay.

In the 1970s a new in-migration began. Young people, coming mostly from central Canada and the U.S., came to the area looking for a place to settle. They found the local citizens welcoming and willing to share their talents and skills, so they moved into the abandoned homesteads. Some became fishermen's helpers, others planted trees. Some were drawn by the music, others by the chance to work a piece of land or to try their hand at a creative endeavour. Many of them remained to build a life and raise families here.

People around Nova Scotia still talk about the **Tarbot Music Festival** that existed for a brief three years in the late 1970's. It brought in the best bands in the region during its short life to play to crowds of hundreds. All the organizing was done by community volunteers, and in spite of the crowds, there was not one accident in any of the three years.

John Roberts arrived in 1971 and became a Master Craftsman. His shop, Leather Works, won the Tourism Business of the Year award in 2008. Ron Caplan, arrived on the North Shore in 1972 and began to produce *Cape Breton's Magazine* to record the rapidly disappearing Gaelic culture through interviews with local residents for whom Gaelic was still their first language. For his work, Ron has recently been appointed to the Order of Canada.

Otis Tomas also arrived in the 70s and is one of three people in the community who build instruments, Otis was showcased in Celtic Colours last year with the family of instruments he created from the Fiddle Tree, a giant sugar maple near his home. (Please check www.youtube.com/TheFiddleTree for the story.) Many local tunes and recordings can be found in **Cranford Publications**, produced by Paul Cranford, another "come from away" who stayed. (See www.cranfordpub.com.)

Then there's the iron art of Gordon Kennedy and Carol Kennedy's photographs, the pottery of Carole MacDonald, Deanie Cox, Sarah Beck, or Jitka Zgola, glass art at

Wendy Smith's, or hats made by Barbara Longva at Sew Inclined. It's an impressive list that could go on, but perhaps to demonstrate community building, one story will do. The **St. Ann's Bay Players** turns thirty this year.

Story: St. Ann's Bay Players

Bev Brett came to North River with a background in theatre. In 1980 she began the St. Ann's Bay Players, drawing impressive casts from a mix of the local community and newcomers. From the 1980s into the '90s the Players did full length plays with large casts for three to six performances as well as many "made to order" productions created and performed for special interest groups. In one year, 1992-1993, the Players staged twenty-seven performances of four different plays, and became known as a semi-professional company. Many members (Murdock MacDonald, Mike Crimp, others) began to get work in film and television. Meanwhile Bev furthered herself as a professional artist and began to work on *The Margaret*, a play about Norman MacLeod.

The Margaret demanded great commitment by all the Players to support its development through the fully professional process of workshops, readings and rehearsal with a professional director and dramaturge of a locally scripted play. As Bev points out, "This was certainly a first for a Nova Scotian community theatre company, and maybe a first for a Canadian one."

Along with the professional process came funding from the Canada Council, the Nova Scotia Arts Council, and the Sponsorship Program, allowing high quality sets, lighting, costumes, and promotional materials. "All this lavished on the play I wrote about the place I love with the people I have loved working with for years and years." The final reward came when the production was taken to Waipu New Zealand to the descendents of Norman MacLeod.

Bev has done more since Waipu, including writing "Out the Meadow". First staged in Halifax, it returns here this spring to celebrate the Players' thirtieth year. The Players have truly demonstrated that theatre is the art of community collaboration.

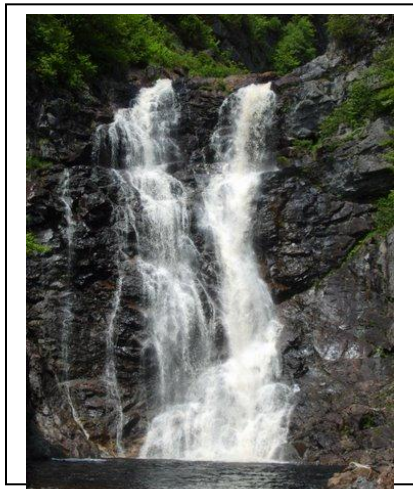
Strategic Planning

The **St. Ann's Bay Development Association (SABDA)** began in 1992 in order to document existing community assets and to engage the community in discussion about natural resource management, community services and economic development. With training on rapid rural assessment from the Coady International Institute, a community survey was created. Community organizations were asked to propose one or two questions they would like to ask every household in the community, and these questions (forty were received) were distilled to eleven for interviews done by a community team over three months.

All households were contacted, and sixty percent of the households in the area were surveyed. Of these, when asked "Do you see yourself or your family living in this

community ten years from now” 82% said yes. A large team of volunteers digested the responses, and this material formed the Strategic Plan for the area that was endorsed at community meetings held in each of the three community halls, and was reviewed and updated five years later.

For the past eighteen years attendance at meetings has varied, going from a high of forty (usually when there is a contentious issue to be discussed) to a low of six. The organization is flexible, acting as an umbrella group that supports people to develop their particular interests that might benefit the community. For example, the **North River Centre for Performing Arts** was begun by Angelo Spinnazola and Nicole Cammaert in 2000-2001, and brought numerous well-known

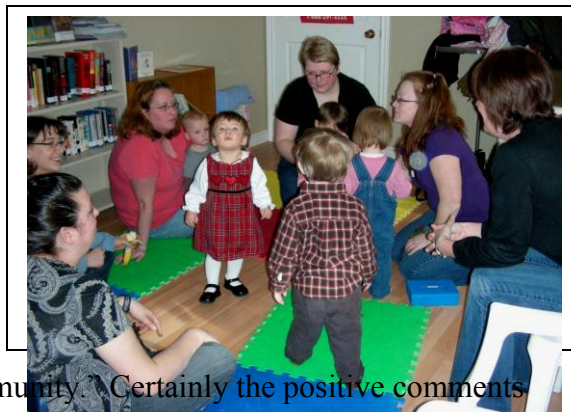


musicians such as Tony McManus, James Keelaghan and Oliver Schroer, Dutch Robinson, Martha Wainwright, Laura Smith and Mary Jane Lamond, to perform in the former United Church in North River, always, needless to say, to a full house. The Centre was totally supported by volunteers and to recreate the atmosphere, the community repurchased the former church pews and reinstalled them.

One of the newer community events has been the very successful **Cabot Trail Writers Festival** that began in 2009 in North River, bringing in writers like Donna Morrissey, Douglas Arthur Brown, Susan Zettell, Michael Crummey, Bill Connell, Marq de Villiers, and Sheree Fitch. Originally under the SABDA umbrella as a committee, the Festival will soon develop a Board of Directors and become its own society.

SABDA was also responsible for reopening the **North River Trail** to the popular waterfall. The trail had been closed for several years and was in danger of permanent closure, but in partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour and the Department of Natural Resources as well as with the municipality and with Tourism Nova Scotia, the community managed to get it reopened. A brochure was created under the direction of local artists, and the trail is now actively used.

Another success came from the original SABDA strategic plan committee work on the goals of Health Services, Seniors’ Quality of Life, and Activities for Youth and Families. Many community members had stated that if a community focused on social development: health, education, security, for example, economic development will follow as people are drawn to what they see as “A good community.” Certainly the positive comments



received from residents in other communities on our extensive **Community Event Sheet** would support this. (See the current Event Sheet on the final page below.)

The St. Ann's Bay Community Health Centre

With this in mind, SABDA applied for funding from Health Canada's New Horizons Program to work with seniors and to set up a medical clinic. The Presbyterian Session provided a vacant manse for a clinic, and volunteer nurses from the community made themselves available on a weekly basis for blood pressure checks and medication, with a monthly clinic provided by doctors from Baddeck.

Then, in 1996, the community was chosen to be one of the three pilot communities for the **People Assessing Their Health (PATH)** project. A local facilitator was trained who brought over thirty small groups of people together to talk about what affects health in our community. Out of these discussions came *Voices of St. Ann's, A Community Health Impact Assessment Tool*. The Health Centre is now a registered charity located in its own space, with a level of community involvement and financial assistance from the Cape Breton District Health Authority and the Victoria County Community Health Board that has made it one of the most visible of our community assets.



Volunteers from the community come together in changing combinations to help deliver Health Centre programs and services. There are yearly **Well-Women's** and **Men's Wellness Clinics** serving about twenty people each. There are two **Saturday Morning Community Walks** each month from November through March. An exercise program called Healthy Moves was introduced last year, and the organizer has since become a certified NIA trainer who is now offering NIA three days a week. As well there is **Tai Chi** on Wednesdays and **Yoga** on Tuesdays and Thursdays.



But the **Seniors' Lunch Program** has gathered together the most people: Twenty lunches were held at the Celtic Tea Room in St. Ann's Bay United Church from November 2009 to April 2010, with attendance ranging from twenty-seven to sixty-five (remember, the population is only 450), and seven take-out lunches for those who have mobility issues or illness. Up to twenty-five people stayed after the lunch for games and to socialise. Each lunch

had a speaker (seventeen in all). So far, this year appears to have even greater numbers attending.

Story: Building a Boat

There have been numerous activities for youth, including a ski club, and the North River Playground project, completed by volunteers. The playground includes a small playing field, a fenced-in tennis/basketball court (which serves as a skating rink in the winter), and a playground with a swing set, a teeter-totter and a double humpty climber.

Then in 2009 the Health Centre received funding under a New Horizons Grant, “I have something to share” to encourage seniors to pass on knowledge and take a leadership role as well as to promote interaction between seniors and youth. As part of this grant, Dave Green, a local senior and a boat builder, held two sessions with local youth to build picnic tables. The tables were donated to the North River Recreation Committee for their playground project.



Dave continued by teaching members of the community boat building techniques by building a 12' Herscoff design tender as a joint initiative with the Health Centre and the North Shore and District Volunteer Fire Department. He held weekly boat building sessions at the fire hall with a regular attendance of up to ten people and another ten observers. The project has recently been completed, and the tender, now exhibited in the fire hall, is being raffled off to raise funds for the fire department.

Story: The Examination Table

This story is too good not to tell, and it does tie in with the carpentry above: In the early years of the Health Centre, a gynaecological table was needed for the Well Women's Clinics. An old birthing table had been used that was too heavy to move to the upstairs room where the clinics were held. Attempts at appropriate tables had been tried: massage tables, cosmetic tables and reclining chairs, but nothing really worked, so the Health Centre had become dependent on the good will of four strong men to move the birthing table. Then the Army was contacted about a field examination table (they don't do such things, they said), as were overseas development agencies; all to no avail.

So a local bachelor carpenter was contracted to create something light enough to carry and strong enough to use. With a bit of explanation, some drawings, and a few photographs, he created the table. It worked, and it was duplicated in the Annapolis Valley and later presented on behalf of Nova Scotia to the World Health Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. The Health Centre gave the carpenter permission to patent the design on condition that he did not go into production, but as far as anyone knows, after this one

foray he has stuck to house construction. The Health Centre now has a real examination table.

Something for Everyone

This community has something for everyone. If you want excellent cross-country skiing and maybe a comfortable cabin for the night, there's **Ski Tuonela** at Goose Cove. Each year a call goes out for volunteers to help clear the extensive trail system and telemark hill. Anyone who comes for the day's work is treated to lunch and given a year's pass. A potluck supper is shared when the work is done.

And of course there is the **Mushroom Foray** organized by the Chanterelle Inn in September that brings over seventy people to the local woodlands.

Eight to seventeen people attend the **Gaelic classes** offered on the North Shore all day Monday and Tuesday. **Kitchen Parties** at the Gaelic Singers Hall are offered every other Saturday afternoon, and Wild Fire Pottery and Used Books in Indian Brook is open every Friday afternoon. (People can shop, have a cappuccino, and maybe join a 2PM discussion group called "**Bits of Books**".) And yes, there is a **Book Club** that meets monthly with approximately fourteen people.

There's cribbage on Monday night, darts, movie nights (or you can watch Hockey Night in Canada with your neighbours on the large screen in the fire hall). The North Shore and District Volunteer Fire Department sponsors frequent dinners: Italian night, prepared by Italian community members, lobster suppers, all you can eat crab suppers, and more. The tickets are always sold out. St. Andrews has a **Men's Breakfast** every other Saturday attended by about thirty men, and both churches have well-attended potlucks, flea markets and auctions. (The United Church has a **Blessing of the Pets** in the spring. The pets go right into the church and, remarkably, behave themselves as they get blessed.)

Story: The Travelling Church

As an example of concerted community action, it's appropriate that our final story is about the creation of the St. Ann's Bay United Church.

In May of 1993, a five-year covenant was signed between the United Church of Canada and the Presbyterian Church of Canada which combined the two congregations into one community of faith with seven church buildings under the leadership of a Baptist minister. For the next six years the people of both churches worshipped together. However, in February 1999, after much discussion, the United Church members voted to withdraw from the covenant and reorganise the United Church in the area.

The members found themselves with a declining church membership, three ageing buildings and no minister. Looking at the long term they knew that the energy required to maintain three church buildings would detract from the church's ministry and outreach. After prolonged discussion, the difficult decision to sell two of the buildings and move

the third (Bethel) from North Shore to Barachois was made, and very early on September 21, 1999, the church travelled sixteen kilometres from the North Shore to its present site where it was renovated and the **Tea Room** was added. The church took out a \$100,000 mortgage over fifteen years, which was paid off in full with the help of lots of fundraising.

Some of the fundraising includes the **Summer Ceilidhs** that pack the Tea Room with community members and visitors on a weekly basis for acoustic music from musicians like the Barra MacNeils, Duane Cote, Dougie MacPhee, the former Jerry Holland, and many, many, others. The Tea Room also holds the Seniors' Lunches throughout the winter, and those who want to walk can take the beautiful **Red Island Trail** to the shore after lunch, passing the newly planted Arboretum beside the church where Arbour Day is celebrated.

A Last Word

The St. Ann's Bay/North Shore community has welcomed the opportunity to review our history and strength as a community and to collect a few of our many stories. We feel that our community meets the essential criteria put forth for the Lieutenant Governor's Community Spirit Award, and we are pleased to offer this application.

A Caring, Healing Community which Provides Community Members with the Supports to be Healthy, Happy Individuals and Families, Creating and Preserving a Community where People Live by Choice – Not By Circumstance.

- Voices of St. Ann's



Weekly Events

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>WEEKLY EVENTS</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Monday, January 24, 2011</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">NIA 9:00 AM North River Hall at North River Bridge</p> <p>Beginners' Gaelic Immersion Classes 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM 45033 Cabot Trail (Beside the Clucking Hen) \$10 / day. 20 week course Tea/Coffee served at classes. Please bring your own lunch. (Payment plans & bursaries available.) Presenter: Amber Buchanan Sponsored by The Office of Gaelic Affairs</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CRIBBAGE 7:30 PM In the Fire Hall at Indian Brook, North Shore</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Tuesday, January 25, 2010</i></p> <p>Beginners' Gaelic Immersion Classes 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM 45033 Cabot Trail (Beside the Clucking Hen) Same as on Monday...</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Wednesday, January 26, 2011</i></p> <p>T'AI CHI 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Indian Brook Fire Hall Free Admission</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SENIORS' LUNCH 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM St. Ann's Bay United Church Tea Room 48885 Cabot Trail, Barachois DVD Presentation "Australian Geographic - "The Great Ocean Road" Followed by lunch, games & socializing.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NIA 7:00 PM at the Gaelic College, St. Ann's</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Thursdays, January 20, 27, 2011</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">PLAYGROU 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM St. Ann's Bay Health Centre, Indian Crook Fire Hall For children from birth to five years of age and their parents or caregivers.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Fridays, January 21, 28, 2011</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">NIA 9:00 AM In North River Hall at North River Bridge</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ADULT SKATING 10:00 Am - 11:30 AM Baddeck Arena \$5.00 per person</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WILDFIRE POTTERY 1:00 PM-5:00 PM 44556 Cabot Trail Open for browsing - books: new & used; CD's - music & audio books; pottery & jewelry (929-2391 or 2315)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Saturday, January 22, 2011</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">MEN'S BREAKFAST 8:00 AM St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Memorial Hall Freewill Donation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SATURDAY MORNING WALK 10:00 AM Waterfall & Lake 1-2 hr easy Meet at Schneider's driveway on West Tarbot Road</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WELL WOMEN'S CLINIC 11:00 Am - 3:00 PM St. Ann's Bay Community Health Centre Indian Brook Fire Hall For bookings, call 1-877-794-5427 1-877- 794-5427</p> <p style="text-align: center;">KITCHEN PARTY 2:00 - 5:00 PM Gaelic Singers' Hall Breton Cove, North Shore All welcome!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sunday, January 23, 2011</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">SUNDAY WORSHIP 11:00 AM St. Andrew's Presbyterian 48462 Cabot Trail, North River Bridge Regular Worship Mrs. M. Serafinus</p> <p>11:00 AM St. Ann's Bay United 48885 Cabot Trail, Barachois Regular Worship Dianne Kempt, DLM</p>
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