

# Paul Harris celebration: COVID-19 version

**By Ron Nordstrom**  
NEEPAWA ROTARY CLUB

Each year, the Neepawa Rotary Club celebrates its achievements and honours Rotary and community members in the spring. The celebration is called "Paul Harris Evening", after Rotary's founder, Paul Harris.

This year, because of the coronavirus pandemic, Rotary's evening of gathering with friends and family to celebrate had been cancelled. Rotarians, like everyone else, are keeping safe in their homes and following safe physical distancing recommendations.

The Rotary club felt it was still important to recognize those people who have been nominated for awards and who were to receive recognition for their contributions to Rotary and their community.

This year, presentations were made privately in homes, offices and public spaces. The individuals recognized have joined a long list of those honoured for their contributions to our community and to Rotary International. A 20 minute video was created of the private presentations and will be aired on NACTV on May 18 at 6:30 pm, May 20 at 10:30 am and May 23 at 2:35 pm. You can also view the video on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/NlpCgzuoaus>.

The highest award in Rotary is the Paul Harris Fellowship Award. The award is given to Rotarians or community members who have promoted the goals of Rotary through volunteerism or by making a financial commitment to the Annual Fund or the Polio Plus initiative. Their actions align with the Rotary motto, "Service Above Self". These are people who make a difference in our community and throughout the world.

Rotary recognizes donors who contribute \$1,000 to the Rotary Foundation. Rotary offers individual recognition, as well as opportunities that enable individuals to honour a friend or family member with a Fellowship. This year, Don Schmall was honoured with a Fellowship. In addition, Bob Durston honoured two fellow Rotarians with Fellowships for their work

with Rotary and in the community: Scott Dyke and Michael Boyle.

Each year, Rotary recognizes a community member that has made an outstanding contribution to the community. This year, Carolyn Durston was chosen for a Paul Harris Fellowship for her many years of music contribution to the community of Neepawa and to the province. She has helped to promote the ideals of Rotary through volunteerism and "Service Above Self". Her actions have truly made a lasting difference.

Everyone knows Carolyn through her work with local choirs, including the Choraliers, but that is a small part of her impressive list of achievements. Her work with the Fine Arts Festival and various local and provincial boards, as well as her involvement with the music program at Brandon University are a few other noteworthy accomplishments.

Finally, Rotary also recognizes one Rotarian with the Tony Otten Award. This prestigious award is presented to one Rotarian who is recognized for the hard work they have done for the club. This year's recipient was Wayne Jacobsen.

Wayne's involvement with Rotary started in 1993, when he was chosen as a member of a Rotary Group Study Exchange team that went to Japan. He has served as club president and other various positions on the Rotary executive. Wayne has also been involved with the Rotary Youth Exchange program. His wife Gwen assumed the role of counselor for Neepawa's inbound exchange student and became one of the host families. As well as being co-chair of the Foundation Committee, Wayne has taken on the role of program coordinator for Rotary meetings. In July, he will become president of the Rotary Club of Neepawa for 2020-21.

Congratulations to all those who were honoured this year. Although a private presentation lacks the glamour of a dinner gathering with family and friends, the appreciation of those honoured is still deeply heartfelt.