

An Open Letter from the Hepworth Shallow Lake Legion President

As I near the end of my first year as president of branch 586 of the Royal Canadian Legion I would like to thank everyone that has volunteered and come forth with several ideas to make our Legion a place for you to enjoy our hospitality as well as entertainment we provide in both the club room and our concert hall. We have had some top notch entertainment this past year and have tried to mix up the music with both country music and rock music in order to provide entertainment for groups of all ages and tastes. We plan on continuing this format this coming year.

I have found by talking to several people that the Legion has a reputation as being an old persons club and the younger generations do not patronize our club because it offers nothing for them. We have tried to remedy this by having our first rock band in our main hall in decades as well as karaoke in the club room on Saturday nights which is a great success. We have not forgotten our members that enjoy traditional country music and had a number of concerts including The Barn Dance and the Old Tyme Radio Show. We have also had Crystal Shawanda perform in our main hall and hope for a return visit from her. She is one of Canada's brightest stars in the music industry today and is a local Native Canadian. I have several other top entertainers in consideration for this upcoming year that will please a variety of music enthusiasts and hope to see you at these events. Bogner Jam Productions has been a great help with providing us with entertainment and guidance through the music industry and I would like to personally thank Bill Murdoch and Arnie Clark for all they have done for us and look forward to working with them again this year.

We also are the location for the Grey Bruce Music Hall of Fame. For those of you that have visited our main hall you would have noticed the display we have that honours the musicians that have made a great impact on the music industry. These musicians are all born and raised in our area. It is amazing to see how much talent we have locally and it is a privilege to sit on the board of this organization.

As well as music we also have bingo on Wednesday evenings that is a huge success and I would like to thank all the volunteers that come out week after week to ensure the entertainment of this evening. Betty Murphy leads this fine group and is there every week and deserves a huge thanks from all of us.

As a charitable organization we are only allowed to keep a small portion of the proceeds we raise throughout the year and the rest must be given to several charities in our area. I am sure most of us have benefitted from these donations to our local hospitals. They have received donations of approximately \$10,000 each as well as the Salvation Army and the Hospices in our area receiving large donations as well.

Unfortunately the one thing I have not been able to improve on is the participation of our members at the general meetings and volunteering a small amount of time to help run this Legion as well as maintaining our huge building. We have a small group of us that have been carrying the majority of the load for several years. We very often do not have enough members attending our meetings to have a

quorum in order to distribute our charity money as well as make decisions on the running of our organization. I realize that our membership is getting older and it is difficult to get out in the weather we have in the Hepworth area but for those that can help please contact us or attend our General Meetings which are held the ***2nd Thursday of every month at 7:30 pm.*** Your opinions matter to me and it will ensure the Legion is being run to your satisfaction. I promise not to saddle anyone with a lot of work. This is not my intention. I need your help in order to manage this club as best as possible and to ensure your needs are met and you enjoy your membership to the fullest.

In the past year we have recovered from a financial difficulty that was indeed difficult to pull ourselves out of and have required the expert help of Joanne Comeau to go over our books from at least 5 years back in order to alleviate the problems we faced. We now have our books balanced and it should be smoother from here on. Unfortunately Joanne works full time in another location and will be stepping down from this position at the end of May. We need someone with book keeping experience to help us with this paid position. Joanne has enough time to train someone for this position using the software program already in place. If you can help us with this please contact us at the branch. I would like to thank Joanne for all she has done for us and I will miss her dearly for not only her work, but her smile and laughter lifted my spirits every time we spoke.

I would also like to thank the Ladies Auxiliary for all they have done through the year and I personally am amazed at the dedication of this group and cannot thank them enough for all they do. I enjoy working with every one of you and you have my utmost respect.

In closing, I have enjoyed most of my time as your Legion president and some parts of the job have not been easy and a little more difficult than I anticipated. I will persevere and continue to do my best to run this organization but your opinions and help is required. This is your club, and requires some participation from all of us able to help, in order to move forward. Please feel free to contact me at the Legion or offer your opinions when we next meet. Your views will always be respected.

Joe Ferris,

President

Hepworth Shallow Lake Legion Branch 586