

New Bancroft Legion exec prepares for year ahead



The incoming executive of the Bancroft Legion, under the mural commemorating Canadian servicemen from left, Jim Young (seniors' liaison), Jill Bowman (membership chairwoman), Greg Davis (house chairman), Larry Shattraw (first VP), Roger Lake (president), Gary Kellar (second VP), Bob Brown (vets' services), Beth Tinney (youth chairwoman).

By Tony Pearson

Bancroft branch 181 of the Royal Canadian Legion has a clear vision of its mission and objectives. First and foremost, the 2016-17 executive members declared, is to help veterans. Concurrent responsibilities are to encourage remembrance and support the community.

The local Legion serves as a link between injured veterans and their families, and the Ministry of Veterans Affairs ? for example, in obtaining aids like wheelchairs or ramps for handicapped vets, or help for widows or orphans.

And of course, the Legion promotes remembrance of the conflicts and events into which Canadian soldiers entered, and of the honour due those who have served their country. Each year, the Nov. 11 ceremonies organized by the Legion bring that remembrance to the forefront.

Less known are the contributions of the Legion to the community, notably its young people. Some of these tie in with the remembrance theme, such as the annual art and essay competition. There's also the student public speaking competition held each year at the Legion Hall.

Support is extended to other youth groups ? the Viking branch of the Sea Cadets, the North Hastings High School band, track and field competitors.

The Legion has also helped out with area health organizations, contributing new equipment for the Bancroft hospital, and new beds for Hospice North Hastings.

The Legion Hall is another community resource. It is home to special events like fundraising auctions, crafts shows, family get-togethers, and civic events like the all-candidates' debate during the federal election. But in addition, it is the venue for regular monthly events like the Fun Sunday Jam held on the first Sunday of every month, and the seniors' dance held every first Saturday (?Seniors and younger,? an exec member quickly corrects; ?the dance is open to everyone?)

All in all, the new executive has lots on its plate as the new Legion year starts.