

President's Report

April 2010



My first term as President has been a learning experience, and I have enjoyed meeting the challenges of the office, including implementing and rejuvenating some committees: Finance, Special Events, Ways & Means and Honours & Awards. The expertise on these committees has served us well this year.

Thank you to all of our members for your support this term; it has been a distinct pleasure and honour to serve this Branch, and to represent it at Zone and District Council meetings and conventions, as well as various community functions.

Hosting the District Council meeting in January gave us an opportunity to show off the hospitality that has become our trademark. I will be making a formal bid on behalf of the Branch to host the 2011 District convention at this year's District convention in Bancroft on April 25th.

Our Branch has had several significant events since my last report.

Our Halloween Dance on October 31st and Poppy Dance on November 7th were both very successful. We also had a successful Poppy campaign once again, thanks to the leadership of our Poppy Chairman, District Chairman and Past President Cyril Best.

Our Remembrance Church Service and parade on November 8th at St. Paul's United Church was well attended. I asked all of our Veterans that were on the bus before they came back to the Branch to be on the reviewing stand. They certainly enjoyed that and hopefully this tradition will continue in the future.

We had an Honours & Awards Dinner on October 17th. I believe it was the first one in four or five years and it was a great opportunity to thank so many of our volunteers who had not been recognized for all of their time and dedication given to the Branch for many years. Congratulations to Mike Fitzpatrick for receiving the Meritorious Service Medal in recognition of his years of hard work and dedication. Thanks go out to 2nd Vice President Emma Smith for coordinating this special evening.

Our Remembrance Day Service on November 11th at the Cairn in front of the Branch was probably the largest turnout in many years. We also had seating for two hundred which was surely welcomed.

Our Veterans Dinner was on November 15th. What a special night that is when we are given the opportunity to thank all of our Veterans for their bravery and valour to our great country.

On Grey Cup Sunday we had entertainment, a Shuffleboard tournament and of course the game itself. Special thanks to Mike Fitzpatrick, Chester McConnell, Dave Wylie and our Ladies Auxiliary for all of the hard work and dedication behind the scenes.

Our New Year's Eve Party was sold out and the President's Levee was well attended and enjoyed by all. Special thanks go out to the Lorraine Davies Band for doing a great job at both events.

We tried something a little different this year. We had a Robbie Burns Supper. Hugo Straney was entertaining and we were sold out. We had the traditional ceremony with a piper piping in the Haggis. First time I tried Haggis and I wasn't too impressed like many others, but the night was interesting and a lot of fun.

Our St. Patrick's Day Party on March 17th was a tremendous success again thanks to the entertainment of Gary Cooper and the hard work of our Ladies Auxiliary.

On April 8th and 9th our head table and many of our Veterans attended the Vimy Ridge Public School official opening and were very impressed with the two day event; we were very well received and appreciated. I would like to thank Dave Vose for laying a wreath on behalf of the Branch.

We really do have some wonderful volunteers who help out on a continual basis. Sgt-at-Arms Dave Langille and all of the members of the Colour Party, Ladies Auxiliary President Clare Wylie and all of the members of our Ladies Auxiliary deserve a lot of credit. These two groups are always there when called upon.

Last but not least, thank you to all of our Branch Officers and Executive members who should be recognized for their hard work and dedication throughout the year.

I thank everyone who attended our April General Meeting to support the Notice of Motion to give the exterior of our building a much needed face lift. Work should commence the middle of May.

We have had a very successful year and I am very encouraged by the fact that the warm weather will be here very shortly, our patio will be open and with the much needed support of our members our revenue will start to increase once again.

New blood, new ideas, dedicated volunteers and positive changes are always needed to keep the Branch moving forward. Let's keep it going.

Legion branches are closing their doors every day right across Canada. The main reasons are the lack of volunteers, and a membership that does not support their respective branches. That's a shame because everyone loses.

I'm reaching out to all of our members to please support our Saturday afternoon meat-draws, our raffles, dances, entertainment, numerous sporting events, competitions and fundraisers so we can stay strong and healthy. We owe that much to all of our brave Veterans who built this great organization many years ago for us to enjoy today.

Future events being organized are:

We have our annual Branch Fundraiser and Membership Drive on Sunday April 25th from 2pm to 8pm. We have ten bands scheduled, donating their time to help us out as well as a few special guests in attendance. We will have 50/50 draws, door prize and spot dances organized with all profits from the event going to our Building Fund.

Our Karaoke Challenge on Sunday May 2nd with Fenelon Falls starts at 2pm. Registration is at 1pm. Paid up members only from both branches are eligible to sing. It will be a full house. Get there early for a good seat.

Our Canada Day Celebration on July 1st starts outside at 12 noon with a Canadian flag changing ceremony and entertainment from 1pm to 5pm featuring the Phoenix Band. The celebration continues from 5pm until 9pm with the Bonneville's entertaining us in the Clubroom. Bring your family members and friends for a great time.

In closing, Branch 322 welcomes all Legion members from other Branches as well as guests to drop in and visit us anytime. We are financially sound; our membership is growing, and once again thanks to all our members who continue to support the Branch on a regular basis. Our veterans, our seniors, our charities and the needy are the beneficiaries.

To all of our veterans, God bless you and thank you so much for the freedom and prosperity we enjoy today.

Have a great summer.

Bruce Sharpe