

# Save Our Legion campaign started by Eganville Rotary Club

COVID-19 has taken away Branch 353's ability to earn income, threatening its future existence in community

By Debbi Christinck  
Staff Writer

**Eganville** – COVID-19 has been devastating for the local Legion, Branch 353, with cancellations and no possibility of opening anytime soon, and coupled with a decline in membership and support seen in recent years, the situation has become so dire, the local Rotary Club has stepped in to help.

"This is a project for the Rotary Club to save the Legion," said Rotary Club member Dave Clark. "This is a very integral part of the community."

He said when his wife, Carol, noticed an advertisement in the *Leader* recently about the Eganville Legion hosting Friday afternoon barbecues to raise some desperately needed funds, she suggested it was something the Rotary Club might be able to do something about. The club stepped in with a one-time donation of \$2,500.

Shortly after that, Legion treasurer Claude Jeannotte told *Leader* Publisher Gerald Tracey in an interview the dire situation the Branch was in financially. The story never ran in the paper because, as Mr. Tracey explained, he had another idea to help.

"I knew the Legion couldn't issue tax receipts for donations and so I offered to talk to Mr. Clark about the possibility of the Rotary Club spearheading a campaign which would allow them to issue tax receipts."

He contacted Mr. Clark who was 100 per cent behind the idea and then he took it to the club where it got unanimous support.

The *Save Our Legion* campaign is being spearheaded by the club and all donations over \$25 will receive a charitable receipt.

While people could donate funds to the Legion directly, they would not receive a charitable receipt. Although both are non-profit groups, the Legion can only issue charitable receipts for the Poppy Fund. The organizers are hoping for donations of anywhere from \$25 and up to keep this vital organization flourishing and are launching the campaign this week for the duration of the summer.

The need is desperate as the Legion has been very hard hit by the mandated closures due to COVID-19. Mr. Jeannotte said the Branch has fixed costs and it is incredibly challenging with no revenue coming in. The fixed costs are about \$2,000 monthly and sometimes they are more, especially with items like snow removal and heating in winter.

To make the situation more bitter, the Legion was anticipating a busy and more profitable summer.

"We were booked solid and it all had to be cancelled," Walter Hobden, past president and Zone Deputy



The *Save Our Legion* campaign was officially launched today (Wednesday) by the Eganville Rotary Club. Branch 353 is in dire financial situation after COVID-19 put an end to its revenue stream as many functions have been cancelled. The Branch requires about \$2,000 a month to stay open and this does not include the additional heating costs during the colder months. The *Save Our Legion* campaign committee is comprised of, back left to right: Rotarians Wayne Gorman and Dave Clark and Legionnaires Claude Jeannotte and Walter Hobden. In the front is community rep Gerald Tracey.

Commander, said. "Everything is postponed."

The Legion had been very public in the past about the crunch they were facing with an aging membership and few new volunteers. Both Mr. Jeannotte and Mr. Hobden are well past retirement age as are many of their core group of volunteers. As well, they need community support for the events they do hold.

"We were already struggling," Mr. Hobden said. "Declining membership and people not using the facilities."

This message has resonated somewhat because this summer the place would have been busy every weekend with wedding receptions, Stag and Does and other activities. Now the men and the other members of the Legion are left wondering how they will pay the bills.

Making it even more bittersweet is the fact the Legion is celebrating its 75th anniversary this August 4. While there would have been a bigger to-do if COVID-19 had not struck, a smaller outdoor celebration will mark this

significant milestone on July 31 when one of the fundraising barbecues is held. The men are hoping this will also be an event to inspire people to come out and support the Legion and donate to the Rotary initiative. Members of the Rotary Club will be there to take donations and issue charitable receipts.

For Mr. Clark and fellow Rotarian Wayne Gorman, the decision to help the local Legion was a logical one and one they were glad to take on. With the Rotary Club running the fundraising campaign, people can receive a charitable donation and know they are supporting a very important community organization.

Mr. Clark said when he and his wife Carol saw the Legion had resorted to selling hamburgers and hot dogs on Friday, they realized it would not be enough to meet the fixed costs the Legion has.

"So, the club jumped on it," he said.

Mr. Gorman said the Legion has been an important place in the lives of so many families over the years

and it is time for the community to give back.

"It is not just here the Legion is in trouble. It is everywhere," he said. "The Legion has been an integral part of this community for 75 years. When I got married 56 years ago, it was the place to go."

Mr. Tracey pointed out the contributions the Branch has had locally from creating Legion Field to helping build Centennial Park. He recalled many special events held at the Legion through the years, including when Sarah Lavallee of Pikwakanagan was honoured by the Vatican, and when the pilots of the famous Canadian Snow Birds were guests of honour along with Avro Arrow test pilot Jan Zurakowski of Barry's Bay the night before their air show over Eganville and area in 1990, just to name a few.

The Legion has also been an organization which worked hard to make the community a better place and gave to community initiatives, to support young people and other items.

"The Legion has always given

back to the community," he said. "Our feeling is now is the time for the community to give back to the Legion. We want people to recognize the importance of the Legion."

Having the partnership between the Rotary Club and the Legion makes perfect sense, he added.

"The Rotary Club had its anniversary celebrations here and has had many events here," he said. "Both organizations have been integral to community betterment and development."

The emotional impact of the possibility of the closure of the Legion has also been tremendous, Mr. Tracey said. Seeing members of the Legion with tears in their eyes wondering about the future and paying the bills moved him to act, he said.

"Every family has been here at the Legion for events and mostly happy events," he said.

"We've never been turned down," added Mr. Clark.

Mr. Hobden pointed out the Legion has also donated the space for many

good causes and does give money to the community as they are able.

"We think it is a community service, like the Blood Donor Clinic," he said. "We are giving this to the community."

Working behind the scenes, many people don't realize what the Legion does and the importance of the presence of the Branch. However, it is the heartbeat of the community in many ways, from the voting booths on election days to suppers, Remembrance Day activities and large gatherings.

"Remember when we had the *Still Standing* filming here," said Mr. Hobden with a grin.

Minor sports clubs receive donations from the Legion and who could forget the many speech contests, poster contests and the scholarships the Legion gives to students.

### Goal Is To Raise \$50,000

The need for the Legion is great and the group has set a goal of \$50,000 for this campaign. All of the money raised will go to Legion operations.

"No one knows how long COVID restrictions will continue to affect places like the Legion," Mr. Tracey said. "If the campaign reaches its goal and the Branch is able to resume normal activities, surplus funds will go into a sustainability fund."

Mr. Gorman added the Rotary Club will be administering the money to go to the Legion and it is going solely to this cause for this fundraiser.

With the fundraiser beginning this week, it is hoped it will be wrapped up by Labour Day. The group is confident they will be able to meet the goal once the community realizes how great the need is.

"We are hoping for a quick response," said Mr. Tracey. "It's time for us to help an organization that has been so generous to the wider community for 75 years."

### How You Can Help

It is important to note cheques for the fundraiser need to be made out to the **Rotary Club** specifying **Branch 353 Fund** to receive a charitable receipt.

All donations over \$25 are eligible for a tax receipt. There are several ways to donate.

1. Donations can be made out to **Eganville Rotary Club - Branch 353 Fund** -- and mailed to Box 788, Eganville, ON K0J 1T0.

2. Cheques or cash donations can be left at the Eganville *Leader* and receipts will be issued immediately.

3. Donations can be made through [www.eganvillerotaryclub.com](http://www.eganvillerotaryclub.com).

4. Donations can be made at the Eganville Legion Friday BBQs. The next two BBQs are Friday, July 17 and Friday, July 31. Receipts will be issued on the spot.

# Retire ad rep raising awareness on need for kidney donations

By Gerald Tracey  
News Editor

**Eganville** – As Mike Keller lunches on a Cobb salad on the outdoor patio at the Granary Schnitzel House, he speaks candidly about a serious health situation he is facing – kidney failure.

Many of our readers will be familiar with him since he was our advertising sales representative for many years and his picture graced the pages of the *Leader* on an almost weekly basis. However, his career goes much further back than that. The 72-year-old Eganville native who had a long and successful career in television and radio advertising sales that later saw him rise to management positions, began his career in sales at a Woolworth store in Ottawa 50 years ago. He then moved into sales at *CHOV TV* in Pembroke, rose through the ranks of the TV and radio industry and retired eight years ago as the vice-president of mergers and acquisitions for Newfoundland Capital Corporation in the Lloydminster, Alta. office.

When he and wife, Judy retired back to the Valley eight years ago, they took up residence in a comfortable waterfront home on the shores of the Ottawa River in Quebec. However, after several decades of a fast-paced job he soon realized he wasn't cut out for sitting on the end of the dock looking out on to the water and so he began working in sales part-time for the *Leader* and also helping out with management duties at Butler

GM in Pembroke.

He retired from his sales job at the *Leader* last fall and continues to work part-time at the dealership. They sold their waterfront home two years ago and now live in Pembroke.

Mr. Keller has been a diabetic for over 30 years and although he has been fortunate to keep the disease under control, it has taken a toll on his kidneys.

"I am now at a point that it is considered chronic kidney disease," he said. That was the diagnosis in 2011 at which time he was told he would likely require dialysis within three or four years because the disease can get progressively worse fast.

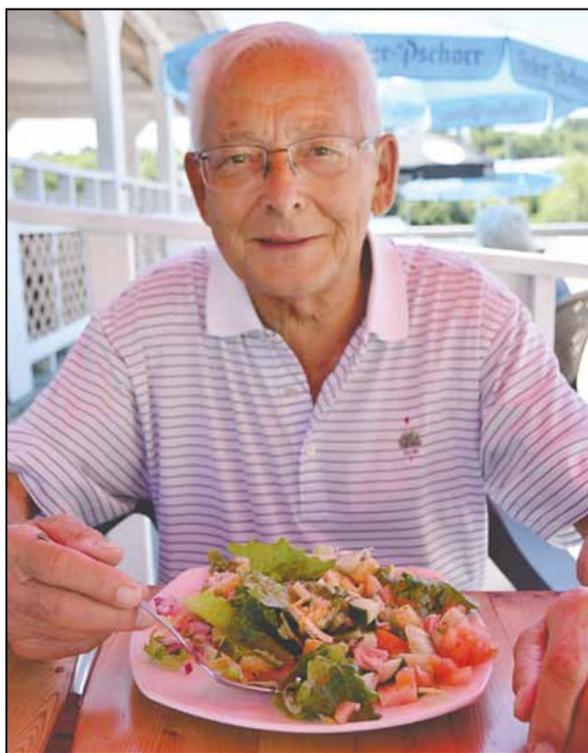
"I was down to about 20 per cent (function) at that point," he said, adding he made big changes to his diet and stuck to a new regime.

"I ate a lot of cucumber sandwiches in the last nine years," he said with a laugh.

While the diet has given him nine more good years, his kidneys are now functioning at nine per cent and he is perilously close to requiring dialysis unless he can find a match and get a new kidney.

"To go much lower (than nine per cent), they won't allow that to happen," he shared. "They will put you on dialysis."

It is not uncommon for family members or friends to come forward and donate a kidney to someone in need. After all, everyone has two kidneys, yet only one is required to function.



Former *Leader* ad sales representative Mike Keller is hoping he will find a matching kidney either from a donor or through the Living Kidney Donation Program at The Ottawa Hospital.

To date no one has come forward volunteering a kidney and neither of his two daughters can be donors because of diabetes and other health issues.

And that has led him to The Ottawa Hospital's Living Kidney Donation Program which offers a good option for people needing a kidney transplant.

According to information on the program, transplant outcomes are generally better with kidneys from living donors than from deceased donors. On average, transplanted kidneys from living donors generally last recipients 12 to 15 years.

Another advantage to receiving a kidney from a living donor is that the waiting time for a transplant will most likely be shorter.

"This program works like a bank," Mr. Keller explained. "Say you said, 'okay Mike, I'm going to donate you a kidney' and they test us and the kidney isn't a match for me, that would just go into the bank. You would donate it on my behalf and as soon as I have had a donation on my behalf I can draw from the bank."

"Somewhere in this bank across Canada, there is a kidney for me and that is the only way I am going to get one," he said.

There are strict laws governing organ donations. For instance, a volunteer must come forward on their own. A person in need cannot, for instance, offer to pay someone to donate a kidney nor can they provide them with financial support during

their recovery.

Mr. Keller said it can be difficult to find a match, but said his best odds are through the Living Kidney Donation Program.

It is frustrating to be in the position he is in, especially when his health otherwise is excellent.

"Everything else is working perfect," he said. "I was running out of energy. That is one of the symptoms."

Mr. Keller is hoping by sharing his story and making people aware of the Living Kidney Donation Program it will inspire others to look into the program and consider making his and the lives of many others on waiting lists better.

It's important to know that donors can live healthy, normal lives with one kidney. It is also important to know donors are screened carefully to see if they are medically suitable to donate a kidney.

Donors must start the screening process themselves by contacting the Living Kidney Donation Program at The Ottawa Hospital.

Other important facts are donors can choose not to proceed with the donation at any step in the process and a program for reimbursing expenses of living donors can help donors with some of the costs related to assessment and surgery.

Anyone interested in donating a kidney to help Mr. Keller or learning more about the Living Kidney Donation Program can contact Mr. Keller at 613-281-0727.

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## \$83,000 is raised for Eganville's Branch 353

**Save Our Legion**  
Date 2020-08-28

**PAY TO THE ORDER OF** Branch 353 Royal Canadian Legion **\$ \$83,000.00**

**EIGHTY THREE THOUSAND Dollars**

**Rotarians** Dave Clark, Wayne Gorman  
**Community Representatives** Gerald Tracey, Zig Mintha  
**Legionnaires** Claude Jeannotte, Walter Hobden

*Raised Through the Generosity of the Community and Friends of the Legion*

The members of the Save Our Legion campaign team had reason to celebrate Friday afternoon as they announced the six-week fundraising campaign had raised \$83,000 for Branch 353 of the Royal Canadian Legion in Eganville. Seen here at the unveiling are, front from left, Legion Treasurer Claude Jeannotte, Rotary Club President, Lorna Byers, Legion President Dieter Stehle, and Rotarian Dave Clark. At rear, Rotarian Wayne Gorman, community committee members Zig Mintha and Gerald Tracey, and Legion past president/Deputy Zone Commander, Walter Hobden. Stories on Pages 2 and 3.

## Efficiencies review warns Catch the Ace funds in action of amalgamation threat

### Province watching how council responds to interim report

By Debbi Christinck  
Staff Writer

**Pembroke** – Renfrew County councillors were warned last week the province is watching their response to a preliminary interim report on a service delivery review funded by the province searching for greater efficiencies and municipalities that don't find ways to save and share may be pressured to amalgamate.

"It is not free money," Chris Loreto, a principal at Strategycorp, the consulting firm hired by the county, said during a ZOOM meeting of county council last Wednesday. "There is an expectation that there will be savings and efficiencies achieved through the process."

"Those that don't take advantage will be at a risk for future amalgamation," he cautioned. "It is fair to say given the fiscal circumstances coming out of COVID, it may not be imminent, but I can certainly see amalgamation being back on the table in a couple of years."

Both upper tier municipalities like the county and lower tier municipalities, like the 17 which make up the county, were given funding by the province to find efficiencies. There was also funding to hire a consultant to help with the process. The county received the interim report, which included some preliminary suggestions, and councillors also offered some input of their own, including begin-

ning a discussion on fire services and sharing some cost.

Mr. Loreto explained this interim report shows the findings so far and potential improvements will be expanded upon in the next report. He said currently there were 35 areas of potential improvement, including 10 which were enterprise-wide, 19 which were department specific and five looking at shared services.

"Overall the county is very healthy based on benchmarks we looked at," he noted.

As well, "leadership and culture across the county is a major strength," he said.

The report will show the areas for improvement, he said.

The county has a strong foundation of collaboration and existing areas of alignment, which are strengths, he said. Weaknesses include a differing capacity among the lower tier municipalities and the large size and low density of the county. The digital connectivity with poor broadband was also identified as a weakness in the report.

Mr. Loreto said threats for the county include staffing challenges, cautions about joint service delivery and variance in rate base across lower tier municipalities.

Service Delivery Improvement Opportunities include implementing a one window approach to customer service, looking at hiring a profes-

sional engineer on staff instead of hiring out engineering services, hiring a human resources specialist to work for the long-term care homes and having increased collaboration with private long-term care homes in the county and other counties and creating a more interconnected health services offering in emergency services.

Another area of finding efficiencies with shared services was facilitating a regional discussion on waste management. The interim report pointed out landfill sites are approaching end-of-life in many municipalities. Currently each of the county lower tier municipalities are on their own in terms of shipping waste or finding a place to put the waste. As well there was the possibility of sharing services for professional development and training, economic development through a regional economic commission, increased communication with the lower tier municipalities and shared trail maintenance services.

**Sharing Fire Services**

"Why wasn't fire considered?" questioned Renfrew Reeve Peter Emon.

The cost of fire is a big burden on the lower tier municipalities and the pressure on the departments is growing, he said.

"The average age in some of our smaller departments is going up," he added.

See Page 3

**Renfrew** -- The new x-ray suite and equipment is up and running at Renfrew Victoria Hospital.

After a tremendously successful lottery that saw the Ace of Spades stay in play for 46 weeks, give out more than \$800,000 to weekly winners, \$1.6 million to the eventual jackpot winner, and raise just over \$2.5 million for Renfrew Victoria Hospital, patients and staff are now reaping the rewards too.

On August 25, x-ray technologists received training on the newly installed Carestream and I find it's pretty easy to use," Meredith Brabant, X-ray Technician, said.

RVH's x-ray department performs more than 17,000 exams per year, and the previous x-ray equipment, at 11.5 years old, was well past its life expectancy.

Dr. Geoff Doherty, President of The Ottawa Hospital and Region Imaging Associates (OHRIA), said that besides the wear and tear of everyday use, the technology changes quickly and especially over a 10-year span. With new, state-of-the-art equipment, "the quality of imaging is greatly improved. We now have the diagnostic

images needed by our clinicians."

Lisa Wherry, Manager, Medical Imaging, compared the old equipment to using a 10-year-old cell phone.

"The new software enhances our ability to see details in the images," she said.

Dr. Kristian Davis, Director of the Emergency Department, said having access to up-to-date x-ray equipment means faster, better-quality images will be available to help doctors in the ED make clinical diagnosis and inform the appropriate treatments for better patient outcomes.

In addition to improved images, another advantage for patients is the reduced dose of radiation required by 20 to 40 per cent.

The suite itself has an expanded footprint which allows the equipment to fully use its capabilities—it can move around the patient instead of having to manoeuvre the patient into position.

"The unit is on a track and can travel the full length of the room," Ms. Wherry explained. "This is really good for patients who come in on a stretcher, in a wheelchair, or who are less mobile. It provides the flexibility needed."

The unit is fully automatic and can be programmed for different positions which means staff no longer have to physically adjust it or reposition the patient to take images from different

angles.

"There is less stress, less manipulation, and it saves our shoulders," noted technologist Kevin Barnes.

Alison Green, RVH VP Corporate Services, noted the communication and collaboration between the entire team helped make this a big success.

"I'd like to thank Lisa (Wherry) for her leadership and excellent management in making this important project a reality and Jamie Cobus, our Director of Physical Plant and Management, for his support throughout, as well as the entire team in Medical Imaging for the exceptional care they continued to provide to all of our patients throughout this renovation and at all times."

Next up, the Medical Imaging department has begun the process to upgrade to a new portable x-ray unit, also funded by *Catch the Ace* proceeds. The portable x-ray is used for patients who are unable or difficult to bring to the unit, for example in the operating room, ICU or the Emergency Department.

"We are very grateful for the hard work of the RVH Foundation team and the ongoing support of our community," RVH President and CAO Julia Boudreau said. "It helps us to keep pace with technology and ensures that our patients continue to have access to quality care close to home."

### Two new cases of COVID-19 reported in county

**Pembroke** – The Renfrew County District Health Unit (RCDHU) is reporting two new cases of COVID-19 in the county as of September 1, bringing the total number of confirmed cases in this region to 33.

The health unit website shows the two newest cases are in self-isolation

at present with 30 resolved cases and one death. Last week, statistics showed eight cases in Arnprior and area and 11 in Renfrew and area, and as of September 1, each of those regions have increased by one, so it can be assumed one of each of the two new cases is in each of those areas.

Confirmed case statistics now show nine cases in Arnprior and area, one in Barry's Bay and area, two in Deep River and area, four in Pembroke and area, five in Petawawa, and 12 in Renfrew and area.

To date, a total of 23,000 tests have been done in the RCDHU jurisdiction.

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Rotarians George and Debbie Vigus were two of the many patrons who enjoyed the barbecue at the Save Our Legion campaign announcement on Friday.



Rotary Club President, Lorna Byers, left, and Branch 353 President Dieter Stehle, sign the Memorandum of Understanding stipulating how the \$83,000 donation from the Save Our Legion campaign will be used.

# \$83,000 cheque presented to Branch 353

## Operation Save Our Legion campaign incredibly successful

By Terry Fleurie  
Staff Writer

**Eganville** – For three quarters of a century, the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 353, Eganville, has not only been supporting military veterans and their families, it has also served as the hub of community activities and has donated thousands of dollars to worthwhile causes.

Last Friday afternoon, the extended community that has benefitted from that generosity and support for 75 years, said *Thank You* in great style when the *Save Our Legion* campaign committee presented a cheque for \$83,000 to the humbled Legion officials.

The campaign was launched a mere six weeks ago after the news of the local branch's financial troubles were made public. A committee made up of members of the public, the Eganville Rotary Club and the Legion answered the call.

The committee consisted of Rotarians Dave Clark and Wayne Gorman, Legion executive members Walter Hobden and Claude Jeannotte, and community members *Leader* Publisher Gerald Tracey and former Bonnechere Valley Township Mayor Zig Mintha. When they launched the campaign, their goal was to raise between \$20,000 and \$30,000.

"Good things often come from adverse situations and today is a true example of that," Mr. Tracey noted in his address to those gathered at Friday's barbecue at the branch for the announcement.

"When the world was brought to its knees in March, little did anyone know how our lives would be impacted or how many businesses would be affected," he continued. "Little did we know how organizations like the

Royal Canadian Legion would be so negatively affected."

He said suddenly everyone was thrown into a new world of many unknowns and of unchartered waters.

"Which brings us to today," he said. "Branch 353, like the majority of Legion branches across the country, all of a sudden found itself with little or no income, yet most of the monthly expenses kept coming in."

He explained when he interviewed Branch 353 Treasurer Claude Jeannotte back in June regarding a story about the branch's financial crisis, there were tears in his eyes as he spoke about the dire situation.

"I knew then it was going to take more than a story to save the branch from financial ruin," Mr. Tracey said. "When I suggested to Claude that we reach out to the community and seek donations, the first hurdle was the branch is not allowed to issue charitable receipts, except only for its Poppy campaign."

Thinking the Rotary Club might be interested in getting involved, he reached out to Mr. Clark, someone he has known since he arrived as a member of the Killaloe detachment of the OPP some 50 years ago. Mr. Tracey said when he contacted Mr. Clark, he was surprised to learn the Rotary Club was also pondering what it could do to assist the Legion and had already donated to the Branch.

"We agreed to meet and discuss how we might be able to help," he remarked.

### A Goal Is Set

The following Friday, Mr. Tracey met with Rotarians Mr. Clark, Mr. Gorman, and Legion members Mr. Jeannotte and Mr. Hobden.

"We put a plan in place and set a goal of \$20,000 to \$30,000," he

explained. "A few weeks later, Zig Mintha, a seasoned community fundraiser, joined the committee, and in the next few weeks, we set out to reach our goal."

"But folks, I have to tell you, you made our job easy," he added. "The Eganville and much, much wider community, including many former residents and natives of the community, family members of now-deceased Legion members, responded with overwhelming support for Branch 353."

Mr. Tracey said like the old sitcom, *Everybody Loves Raymond*, it was quite apparent, *Everybody Loves The Legion*.

"The generous support to help Branch 353 survive these times, showed the respect and high esteem people have for the Legion in this community. Most everyone has used the facility at one time or another, and it was heartwarming to hear people share their special memories of their experiences here."

He said the donation given to Branch 353 will not only help get it through these difficult months, but it will also help establish a sustainability fund for the future.

### Grateful For Support

Mr. Tracey said he would be remiss if he did not publicly acknowledge the Rotary Club, which has been in existence for 74 years, one year less than Branch 353.

"And over those 74 years, like the Legion, the Rotary Club has been an ardent supporter of many, many community projects," he stated. "This community is indeed extremely fortunate to have the Rotary Club of Eganville and Branch 353 of the Royal Canadian Legion as the anchor organizations that have and will

continue to focus their good works on the betterment of the community and its residents."

He noted 2020 was a big year for Branch 353 as it is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its charter.

He said it is unfortunate the event cannot be celebrated the way it should be due to COVID.

"However, I think it will go down in history as a year that the community came to the aid of the Legion, after the Legion came to the aid of this community for 75 years."

He acknowledged his fellow committee members, thanking them for their time, dedication and commitment to the cause, adding it had been a pleasure working with each one of them.

"To all Rotarians, thank you for your willingness to endorse this very important campaign," he stated. "To the donors, feel good for helping out. What you have done is truly exceptional. And to Branch 353 and all its members, all the best as you continue to be an anchor organization of the community."

### Started With Donation

When Rotarian Dave Clark addressed the crowd, he eluded to the popular Joni Mitchell song, "*Big Yellow Taxi*" and the line, "*Don't it always seem to go that you don't know what you got till it's gone*."

"That's a line that resonates in these COVID days," he said. "What is here today is not necessarily going to be here tomorrow."

He said it had only been a short six weeks since a discussion had taken place at the regular Thursday night Rotary meeting (which he noted was not that regular as it was held via ZOOM), about the Legion hosting fundraising barbecues to keep the Branch open. He admitted the Rotary members questioned how bi-weekly barbecues could sustain the operating costs at the branch, let alone the projects and programs the branch runs.

"As a club, we decided to issue an immediate financial relief with a cheque for \$2,500," he explained. "Some members wanted to give more, so we decided to table the topic for the next week and we were going to think about what we could do."

The answer to that question came just two days later when Mr. Tracey called him, suggesting the Rotary form a fundraising committee that would include members of the Legion and the community.

"The fundraising project was called, '*Operation: Save our Legion*,'" he said. "It sounded military and it sounded urgent."

Mr. Clark noted an announcement regarding the campaign was in the following week's edition of the *Leader* and included a financial appeal to the community to help save the Legion.

"We set a lofty goal of \$20,000, maybe \$40,000," he remarked. "The community responded immediately and generously."

"Individuals and business donations started rolling in from everywhere,

far and wide," he added. "People told people, who told people."

He said with the donations came letters of encouragement and little anecdotes why the donors felt they needed to support the campaign.

"So, we're here today, to say with our hearts, and we've said with our wallets, that we need Branch 353 Royal Canadian Legion to remain a part of our community."

Mr. Clark said everyone realizes the birth of the Legion was about the veterans and the country's military past. "So, in military parlance, *Operation: Save Our Legion*, objective secured. *Bravo Zulu* community; job well done."

### Support Strong

Mr. Mintha, a community volunteer on the committee, said although he wasn't at the initial meeting, he immediately wanted to get involved when he heard about it.

"And am I ever happy I did. You couldn't work with a better bunch of people. There were no heroes. They all did what they had to do, and they never let down one minute."

As a former mayor of the township, he knew what the Legion has done for the community, citing the contributions for Fairfields and the donation of the hall for worship services when Grace Lutheran Church burned.

"The hall was here for nothing for a year," he stated. "So, folks, this community could show the gratitude and thankfulness for even those two items, and there are many, many more."

"And they've shown the gratitude 150 per cent," he added.

Mr. Mintha pointed out the street bordering the Legion was renamed Veteran's Way several years ago to honour the Legion.

"Let's make sure it's going to be here for a long time to come," he said.

### The Last Word

Before the unveiling of the cheque, Mr. Tracey introduced two men who have given much of their time to Branch 353 and who were members of the campaign team. He said over the storied history of Branch 353, there have been hundreds of people who have committed immense hours to the organization, from the time it was established in the old George building until the first hall was built at the present location and then expanded.

"We could stand here all night and rhyme off names and still not include everybody," he said. "In modern times, two people I have really enjoyed working with over the years, are Claude Jeannotte, treasurer, and Walter Hobden, past president and deputy zone commander."

Mr. Hobden said most of the previous speakers had stolen his thunder, pointing out almost everything starts out with a word. He said Comrade Barry Watson had suggested hosting some fundraising barbecues to help the financial situation at the branch.

"Branch 353 is celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and we were preparing to have a great celebration

and suddenly a word, 'pandemic'. Then we moved on to the barbecue, then with Claude crying at the *Leader* office, we came up with a fundraiser, '*Save Our Legion, Now*'."

"And that's the word, '*now*', which you people have come through, and we really appreciate that," he added. "It's just amazing. I can't thank the Rotarians enough because they have stepped up and helped us out."

Mr. Hobden said Branch 353 has a proud history of giving and giving, then suddenly, they had no money to give.

"And that really hurts us," he said. He said as deputy zone commander he visits all branches in the area, noting no other branch gives as much money back to the community.

He said it had been a privilege to work with the other committee members, noting when Mr. Tracey puts his mind to something, it always gets done.

He thanked the Rotary Club and everyone who has helped at the barbecues.

### Presidents Sign MOU

Mr. Tracey concluded by noting a Memorandum of Understanding had been created by Mr. Gorman between the Legion and Rotary Club, stipulating how the funds were to be used and the document was signed by Legion President Dieter Stehle and Lorna Byers, president of the Rotary Club.

Mr. Gorman said there was a lot of money involved, so some guidelines were established under the Memorandum of Understanding.

Following the official signing, the cheque revealing the amount raised of \$83,000 was unveiled to a standing ovation amid tears of joy from those gathered.

After the formalities, Mr. Jeannotte said the committee felt quite positive they could achieve their goal.

"Then, the more we met, it was going beyond our expectations. We were very, very happy."

"I'm surprised by the support the community has given us," he added. "It is a surprise, but we knew the community would come through for us. They knew we were in trouble."

He said it was hard not to get emotional over the success of the campaign, noting the branch had started to dip into its GICs to stay afloat.

He said the money they received will help pay their regular monthly expenses.

"Hydro doesn't come cheap. Even when it's not on, they still charge us" he said.

Mr. Jeannotte noted McCarthy Fuels in Killaloe also donated 1,000 litres of propane to the branch as their contribution.

"All our tanks were completely dry, and they filled all four up," he said.

In addition, he said other businesses have contributed supplies for the barbecues.

"They're always willing to help us," he said.

Late donations will be accepted and received until September 15.



Bonnechere Valley Township Councillor Brent Patrick, shown with wife, Katie and children Regan and Stanley, chat with North Algona Wilberforce Township Mayor James Brose and Councillor Maria Robinson at Friday's barbecue at Branch 353 of the Royal Canadian Legion where a cheque for \$83,000 raised in the recent Operation Save Our Legion campaign was presented to the branch.

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# Local artists donate time for new quilt mural in BV

By Terry Fleurie  
Staff Writer

**Eganville** – Visitors to and residents of Bonnechere Valley (BV) Township have a beautiful new piece of artwork to view, thanks to the collaborative efforts of two artists.

Genevieve Townsend of Eganville and Kathryn Kasaboski of the Rankin area have spent the last several months, with some time off for COVID, creating the new quilt-style mural that adorns the eastern exterior wall of the Tourist Information Centre.

Ms. Kasaboski said it all started when BV Community Development Co-ordinator Dana Jennings called for anybody interested in doing things around town to sort of come up with ideas on how to bring more people in to see Eganville and do things.

“There were a lot of ideas that had been put forward by different people and she had just come back from seeing barn quilts done and asked could we do something similar?”

Ms. Kasaboski said the idea interested her, so she put up her hand. Ms. Townsend, who knew Ms. Kasaboski but had never before collaborated with her, thought it would be great to

work with her.

“So we volunteered to do that project,” Ms. Townsend said.

The two had met casually through the farmers markets where Ms. Townsend displays her art and while they knew who each other were, they had never partnered on a project.

“We just started having meetings with Dana and Diane Moore (co-chair of the Eganville and Area Community Development Group) and talked about what the town might want to see,” Ms. Townsend explained. “We’d never done a barn quilt before and it was the biggest thing we’d ever painted.”

“It was a journey from not ever having done anything like this to figuring out how to do it and picking out the colours as to what was going to go where,” Ms. Kasaboski added. “We did a lot of research on trying to find the right colours that we felt would work on the quilt.”

The women did a tour of the Valley to check out the many barn quilts that have been installed on barns over the past year and they also did research online on projects across the country and beyond.

“But I think we always, as a group thought we wanted it to tell a bit more of a story of the area with the barn quilt,” Ms. Townsend remarked. “So it’s not as traditional maybe.”

“It was complicated to grid and complicated to paint,” she added.

The project consists of two, 4’ x 8’ pieces of plywood, so the completed quilt is eight feet square.

“Actually, that worked really well because we’re not really big people, so being able to half the boards and work on them was easier,” Ms. Kasaboski said. “And the nice thing with COVID, we were always at least six feet away from each other.”

The two started the project last year and were just getting ready to start the painting when COVID hit.

“So everything was shut down,” she said. “Then, after a couple of months, we talked together and said if we felt safe and had a good spot, we could work on it.”

They used the spacious Eagle’s Nest at the Eganville Arena.

“Working at the Eagle’s Nest was great,” Ms. Kasaboski remarked. “We could leave the boards out. We used to work two days a week and everybody

was so helpful.”

The two artists have volunteered their time and talents, with Ms. Townsend jokingly noting they may not have done that if they had known how much time it took.

“It was fun and a challenge. Like Kathryn said many times, it was outside our wheelhouse as far as something we would normally do.”

“So it was fun to collaborate and try something we haven’t done before,” she added.

### Historical Elements

While the project incorporates the traditional barn quilt style, it also features several recognizable landmarks in the area including the tower on the former Eganville Village Centre/post office, the main bridge and some of the geographical features of the area.

“Plus we have the two spires from the churches (Grace Lutheran and St. James The Less Catholic) here,” Ms. Kasaboski pointed out.

“When we were talking about it, we just wanted aspects of our area,” Ms. Townsend added. “And then we did the five (river) chutes in the water depiction.”

They admit it took then quite a while to figure out how to lay out the images, discussing different ideas, then modifying them before the actual painting began.

“That was mostly done last year and then it was done in a grid pattern, so we could lay it out on the larger piece,” she said. “It sounds like it would be simple, but it was not.”

Ms. Kasaboski added each one of the squares required three coats of paint.

They said the location of the work was up in the air for awhile but it was Ms. Jennings’ desire to have it at the Tourist Information Centre and she was able to convince council that was the right choice.

“I think it looks great,” Ms. Townsend remarked.

“I’m really happy,” Ms. Kasaboski added. “I’m much happier than having it on this side, (the west wall) which is where I was thinking they said it was going.”

“When I came in this morning and saw it on this side (of the building), that makes more sense to me,” she added. “You’ve got so many things connected to this building that are easy access.”

Both women agree they are pleased with the final result, noting they spent about 40 hours on the project. It is done with an exterior acrylic paint and the work is covered with a sheet of plexiglass. All the materials were provided and there were two coats of undercoat on the board before they began their work.

The women said while they enjoyed working together on this project, they would be anxious to collaborate again in the future, but on something different next time.



Local artist Kathryn Kasaboski, of the Rankin area, left, and Genevieve Townsend, of Eganville, are seen with the barn quilt painting recently erected on the Tourist Information Booth in Eganville. The two women volunteered their time and talents on this collaboration, the first barn quilt for both of them.

## Son of long-time Legion members impressed by support for branch

Another example of how community rallies in time of need

By Terry Fleurie  
Staff Writer

**Eganville** – Like most of the crowd at the fundraising barbecue at Branch 353 of the Royal Canadian Legion Friday afternoon, Jack Rosien stood in amazement when the *Save Our Legion* committee revealed they had successfully raised \$83,000 to help out the branch.

A current member of Branch 353 and a volunteer at the bi-weekly fundraising barbecues, he had a hard time holding back his emotions knowing his late parents, Charles and Elsie Rosien, would be incredibly proud of the support the community had shown to the organization they devoted so many years of their lives to.

“They’d be in tears, like myself,” he said. “What an awesome way to celebrate 75 years, the community saying, *Thank You*, in this way to the Legion for all it’s done for them.”

Mr. Rosien recalled how his late parents were part of so many others who worked so hard to build the current hall.

“And there were so many others who came forward after them to help develop it to what it was and is.”

He recalled as a young boy going to meetings in the old George building across from Papa Ron’s with his parents.

“It was quite a dilapidated old building,” he said.

“And I can remember when they built this, when they did all the extensions and so on,” he added. “I remember mom and dad working at nights, sending tickets out, inviting people to come, just to get it developed. And it’s worked from here.”

He said the campaign was just another example of how the greater Eganville community rallies together in times of need to support worthwhile causes.

“Years back, the two largest churches burned, and one helped the other. Two of the major volunteer organizations here, and one is helping the other out.

“It’s a true tribute to Eganville and to what we are as a community,” he added. “I just can’t say enough. I know they’d all be in tears.”

Mr. Rosien said his mother was heavily involved with the Ladies Auxiliary and his father’s contributions are recognized by the fact the clubroom downstairs is named the Charles Rosien Room.

“They did an awful lot of work, but you just really can’t point to those two,” he said. “There were so many that I can see, I can still picture them at the meetings.”

“There were so many of them that came forward and contributed,” he continued. “They were a very giving group of people, important people in the community who gave but they didn’t look for anything in return. It was just something that had to be done to make the community a better place and they did it.”

He said he and his three brothers would often be recruited to help.

“Sometimes mom called on us to help out when she wasn’t able to get volunteers on short notice or something like that. I remember we were too young to stay at home, so we used to go with them to meetings.”

“And you learned a lot too. You saw who was there and who was contributing,” he continued. “And they all worked as a team. There was very little controversy or anything. It was this is what has to be done and how do we work together to do it, just as you’ve seen here today.”

Mr. Rosien admitted he was not at all surprised by the amount the committee was able to raise in such a short

time.

“This is a giving community and when the call goes out, they give. When you take a look at the financial situation of our community compared to many others, we do well in excess of what others would do in that situation.”

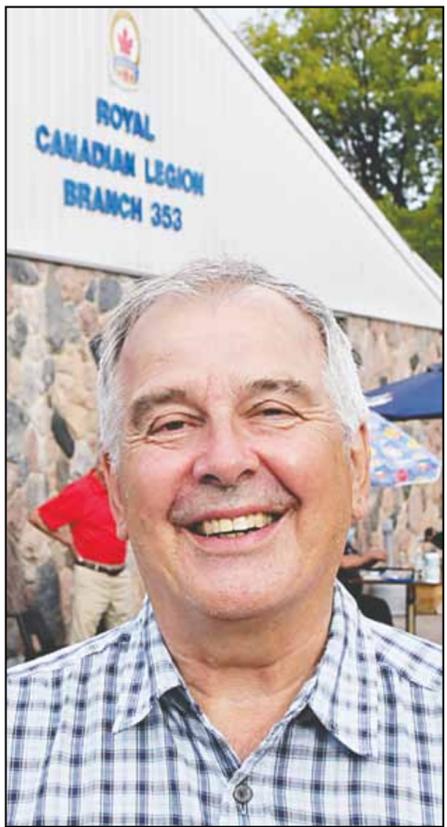
“I’d like to say it’s a surprise but it’s not,” he added. “This is Eganville and this is just the way people react in Eganville. When there is a need, they step up.”

He is hopeful the campaign might inspire some younger people to come forward and consider joining either the Legion or the Rotary Club, or both.

“I hope it will. The fact we could have lost this organization had people like Gerald (Tracey) and others not stepped up will be a wake-up call to others to get involved and say, *Let’s not let this fall apart after we have worked so hard to build it up.*”

“I think it will be a real motivator to get people involved.”

He joined the Legion in 1977 and all three brothers, Don, Jim and Gary, are members in their respective communities.



Jack Rosien, whose late parents, Charlie and Elsie Rosien, were original members of Branch 353, was amazed at the community support shown for the Legion.

## County efficiencies review warns of amalgamations

From front

“Why is it not of higher value given its importance to public health?” Reeve Emon said.

Mr. Loreto said this was not seen as an area many municipalities wanted to explore in the preliminary talks.

“We did not pick up a strong appetite to go down that road,” he said.

However, it would be possible to find efficiencies in this area, he added.

Reeve Emon said fire is a big expense for municipalities and there could be savings by moving across municipal borders.

“I think once we see the entire amount of money spent across the county in fire, it will be a big gulp,” he said.

“There might be some dance partners show up,” he added.

Admaston/Bromley Mayor Michael Donohue cautioned this is not the only big expense for municipalities.

“If the cost of fire makes us gulp, the cost of policing will necessitate a Heimlich manoeuvre,” he said.

Bonnechere Valley Mayor Jennifer Murphy said the issue of fire was something she did discuss in her interview with the consultants, and she agreed with the concerns about starting some discussions. She said

the idea was not uploading the fire responsibility to the county, but rather looking at shared services where feasible and responsible.

“We have an aging infrastructure and aging human resource component to our fire departments,” she said.

“I wish the province had demanded that closest hall goes, no matter what municipality you are in,” she added.

North Algona Wilberforce Mayor James Brose said there are areas of joint collaboration.

“Not only should we look at fire, but look at extrication,” he said.

Head, Clara and Maria Mayor Debbi Grills pointed out her township does not have a fire department and is always more than willing to talk.

“Not all of us have red trucks,” she said.

“We are always interested in the discussion about auto extrication in particular because we have 70 kilometres of provincial highway,” she said.

The issue of extrication is especially important because her township does not have the same number or type of fires as other municipalities do, she said.

“Because we don’t have red fire trucks, we find some of our residents are very careful on how they deal with

fires,” she said.

Petawawa Mayor Bob Sweet said municipalities that have water and sewer systems also have joint concerns. Waste management is more than the landfills, he said.

“I think back 15 years when septage was a major issue in the county,” he said.

Warden Debbie Robinson said having the discussion was important to identify the concerns among the assembled mayors and Reeves.

“We are fleshing out bullet points,” she said.

There will be a final draft in the next four or five weeks, she pointed out. Having the input from the members of county council makes sure it is the best document going forward, she said.

“It is very exciting to see we are going to be moving forward,” she said. “We talked about the leadership of our county.”

“These are leaders sitting here today and they all have ideas. We are just going to be much better off as a county when this is all done,” she said.

Mr. Loreto said the council comments would be taken into consideration as the consultants look at the upcoming final report.

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