

Fish Hatchery honours Campbell as volunteer of the year



By Tony Pearson

Pig and lamb were on the menu, but fish was top of mind at the Bancroft Curling Club last Friday night, as the North Hastings Community Fish Hatchery held its annual dinner.

The hatchery, an all-volunteer organization, has as its slogan Local Fish for Local Lakes.

Started a number of years ago by Dennis and Mary Lefevre, its mission is to engage the community in the management and stewardship of local fishery resources and to ensure they are available for the enjoyment and use of present and future generations. A dedicated group of environmental enthusiasts and sportsmen works year round at the hatchery, raising trout from eggs gathered in conjunction with the Bancroft office of the Ministry of Natural Resources. Last fall, these were gathered from Weslemkoon Lake. In addition, the hatchery hopes to renew its partnership with the Pembroke MNR branch, which has provided over 5,000 eggs a year for the past three years to expand the seeding area.

The hatchery also benefits from the assistance of Outdoor Studies and Environmental Research students from the North Hastings High School NERDS and NOS programs. In addition to this learning partnership, the hatchery is open for tours year-round, and is part of Bancroft's Nature Discovery Tours program.

All told, over the last year the volunteers donated more than 9,000 hours of their time to keeping local lakes healthy and fish-rich. As a result of their efforts, this spring a number of local lakes, including Lavallee Lake, Lake St. Pierre, Macauley Lake and Blair Lake, were stocked with over 4,000 trout yearlings. The hatchery is now launching a new five year program. This plan looks to stock Paudash, Lyell (Cross), Hudson, Dark, and Limestone lakes.

The dinner is the organization's main fund-raising effort. Community support was evident in the turn-out; over 250 tickets were sold, and raffles and silent auctions added to the take. Although the organization has no paid staff, fundraising is vital to pay for large bills for hydro power and for food for the growing trout.

Hatchery president Ron Bowman observed that the North Hastings operation is somewhat unique in that in addition to providing yearling trout in the fall to places like Round Lake near Killaloe. It also raises a large number of fish over two winters, allowing them to grow from 30 to 180 grams, raising not only their size but their survival rate.

At this year's dinner, the annual award for Volunteer of the Year, sponsored by the Bancroft Area Stewardship Council, was

presented to Terry Campbell. Campbell himself was modest about his contribution, claiming "I'm just a regular volunteer, like so many others". However Association president Bowman, himself a former recipient of the award, noted that Campbell showed a high level of dedication: "He's always there for a shift every Friday, and he helps on most Tuesdays as well" and he does it year after year.. He's an all-around volunteer who can handle any job that comes up. Plus Terry is a hell of a good fisherman, and you can quote me on that," Bowman added.

Both Bowman and Campbell noted that the hatchery can always use new volunteers.

"We have a great group of helpers, and that makes it a great deal of fun," Campbell said.

One person who certainly enjoyed her evening was Alice Olsen. An organization member from Coe Island Lake, Olsen pocketed \$1,080 in the "cash in your pocket" raffle.