

Weekend of celebration in Wilberforce



By Chris Drost

Royal Canadian Legion Branch 624 50th anniversary Wilberforce experienced a full weekend of festivities from June 23 - 25 in celebration of the Legion's 50th anniversary. Things got underway on Friday afternoon with an opening ceremony, followed by a feed of chicken wings, nachos, dancing, and music by Bill O'Reilly. Saturday provided a full afternoon of fun for the entire family. There were games, raffle draws, free hot dogs, three large cakes and music by Half Tuned. A large crowd gathered out of the hot sun under a tent in the yard behind the Legion to listen to the music, check their tickets for the draws, and enjoy some hot dogs fresh off the barbecue. Inside, others gathered around the tables to enjoy their food and have some refreshments with friends. Fifty years ago, they started meetings in the firehall and eventually bought this building, which was formerly a laundromat, said Legion president, Janice Sorensen. They were successful in obtaining a couple of Ontario Trillium Grants which provided the funds for new flooring and the furniture. We are trying to bring in new members. We are just getting into the swing of things after COVID-19, explained Sorensen. The Legion gives a lot to the community and the community has given to this event. There were eight people on the 50th and anniversary committee who put the festivities together. We have put photo albums together with photos people have dropped off over the years. We also put them on a disc that is playing on a loop on the TV. I scanned 1,300 photos, said Sorensen. I am absolutely thrilled after all the years doing things with the Legion. I am pleased we can partner together. During my time, the Legion has been a godsend. We survived COVID-19 and are here. We would like to expand the partnerships and do more, said Mayor Dave Burton. Mayor Burton, along with Sorensen, Jan, representing the Ladies Auxiliary, and 1st ice, Bruce Rennie, gathered for the ceremonial cutting of three large slab cakes appropriately decorated for the occasion. During the afternoon, Burton, Jamie Schmale and Laurie Scott had the honour of judging the poster contest. There were five categories of submissions: kindergarten, Grades 1 and 2, Grades 3 and 4, Grades 5 and 6 and Grades 7 and 8. It was a lot of pleasure judging the poster contest, said Mayor Burton. Winners in each category are as follows. Winners were awarded with generously donated prizes.

- Kindergarten ? 1st - Allie McArther 2nd ? Max Risk 3rd ? Angel Heins - Grades 1 and 2 - 1st ? Aubriella Sowden 2nd ? Jackson Browning 3rd ? Tori Coburn - Grades 3 and 4 ? 1st ? Madeline Blaney 2nd ? Liam Blaney 3rd ? Keira Lindsay-Gale
- Grades 5 and 6 ? 1st ? Morgan McKnight 2nd - Chris Fillier 3rd Tax Cox

Grades 7 and 8 - 1st ? Ana Fillier 2nd ? Mya Plumbley 3rd ? Mia Alden
Wilberforce Red Cross Outpost Hospital Open House The doors were opened at the Wilberforce Red Cross Outpost Hospital on June 24 to welcome visitors for another season. This national historic site of Canada has been refurbished since COVID-19 with new windows and doors and renovation of all the displays. In the early 1920s, there was no medical help nearby in Wilberforce. The closest one was in Haliburton. So many women died in childbirth, explained volunteer, Linda Cameron. At that time, Alfred Schofield an inspector for the Children's Aid Society, contacted the Red Cross about sending a nurses and some equipment. The Monmouth Charitable Organization was established to raise funds to house the nurse. Eventually, this building was purchased, said Cameron. The Red Cross Outpost Hospital opened in

1922 with a steady stream of nurses providing medical care to the surrounding area over the years. These nurses were also valuable assets in the community through their participation in a variety of activities. The outpost eventually became more than a treatment centre, more of a central social gathering place in the community. The hospital became a mini hospital with three rooms for in-patients, often maternity patients. Those strong and hearty nurses reached their patients by any means possible, by walking, using handcarts on the railway tracks, dog sledding and snowshoeing. During this time, the hospital had no running water and no indoor plumbing. A housekeeper was always on staff to keep the fire going for the in-patients and for the nurses returning from their calls. In 1982, the building opened as a museum that is currently operated by volunteers, with a summer student helping during July and August. The museum is open July and August from Wednesday to Monday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. or off-season by appointment. The volunteers would be interested in learning more about some of the nurses who worked from the outpost, especially those in later years about little is known. If anyone has information, they are encouraged to connect with the museum. For more information visit Wilberforce Outpost on Facebook or email redcrossoutpost@gmail.com. Memberships and volunteers with the Wilberforce Heritage Guild are always welcome.