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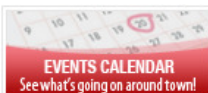


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Cranbrook photographer recognized with ultimate Legion award



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FEBRUARY 22, 2011

SALLY MACDONALD
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The Cranbrook Legion has handed out their most coveted annual award.

Photographer and musician Mike Turner was named Legionnaire of the Year last month for the volunteer work he does for the Royal Canadian Legion Branch #24.

"For a person to win this, they have the utmost respect from the members of this branch, and the members realize how much work they put in," said Legion president Rob Martin.

"In Mike's case, he has been doing our photography and audio at the Remembrance Day ceremony for 35 years and he plays in the house band with Brad and Brad."

Since becoming a member four years ago, Mike has taken on extra tasks at the Legion whenever he sees a need.

"He comes down and changes the sign for us," said Martin. "That's just something he can do - so he does it. It's just the little things."

The award was handed out at the Legion's Honours and Awards ceremony on January 9th. Knowing Mike's humble attitude, Martin said they had to trick him into attending the ceremony by asking him to photograph the event. Then Rob made the announcement.

"He wasn't even really paying attention," said Martin. "I said, 'I'm going to do the Legionnaire of the Year Award and I'd like to present this award to Mike Turner.' Well, I turned around and the look on his face - he almost dropped his camera. It was hilarious."

Mike said he had no idea he had even been nominated.

"I nearly had heart failure when I heard my name called. I was thrilled. I think surprised is an understatement," he said.

"There are lots of people who do excellent work for the Legion as volunteers. To be recognized out of that group and to win, it is amazing to me."

Mike's grandfather was a veteran who served at Passchendaele, and his father in law was an instrument mechanic for the Golden Hawks, which became the Snowbirds, so he had long been aware of the Legion.

After three decades of volunteering with the Legion on Remembrance Day, Mike finally took the leap and



Sally MacDonald photo
Legion president Rob Martin (left) recognizes Mike Turner as the Legionnaire of the Year.

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became a member in 2006.

"I've always wanted to be a Legion member," he said. "For years I have heard of the positive things the Legion does in the community, such as bursaries and caring for the veterans."

Mike plays lead guitar in the Legion's house band, Brad and the Boys, with bass guitarist Brad Couttie and drummer Brad Poburn. According to Rob Martin, the band is a big drawcard for visitors to the Legion bar.

"There are people who come down here every week because Brad and the Boys are playing - and they might not come down when another band is playing," said Martin.

Mike agrees that the band has been positive for the Legion.

"Through our Legion jams, more people are coming in to check out the bar and see what it's like. Now we're starting to see a new clientele on Friday nights," he said.

Brad and the Boys perform every second Friday at the Legion, located at the Heritage Inn in Cranbrook.

At the awards ceremony last month, the Legion also recognized three long-time members: Bob Knight, a member for 65 years; Walter Rojek, a member for 55 years; and David Dakin, a member for 50 years.

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