



The members of Lakeside Chapter of the IODE were recently named 2008 Acton Citizens of the Year by the Acton Rotary Club. The group, which was formed in 1917 dissolved its membership earlier this year. Members on hand for the 90th anniversary of the group were from left, Ernestine Foster, Kathleen Harding, Jane McAllister, Elma Braida, Kay Dills, Rosalea Dawkins, Helen Jocque, Joyce Sprowl and in front May Dumarsh.

Submitted photo

Lakeside Chapter of IODE named Acton Citizens of Year

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Staff Writer

The Lakeside Chapter of the IODE has been recognized for its 90 years of charity work with the announcement the group has been named the 2008 Acton Citizens of the Year.

Brian Robertson of Acton's Rotary Club, which runs the Citizen of the Year program, said the selection was made by three former Acton Citizens of the Year— Bill Spielvogel, Diane Spielvogel and Jon Hurst.

In a press release issued by the selection committee, the former citizens said, "each member of the chapter has brought their own individual strengths and skills to the chapter."

"All members have been hardworking, eager volunteers who never sought the limelight and remained steadfast in providing a strong, caring example to their community."

The committee said the group's activities span generations and "together they have quietly helped many."

"The IODE worked with other community organizations in many ways, including their participation in the Christmas Hamper program. The highlight of their year was always their tea and bazaar."

Due to the increasing age of the members and a decreasing membership, the Lakeside Chapter of the IODE, which formed in 1917, dissolved earlier this year. Foster said the group's former members were "all pretty excited and happy" to be named Citizens of the Year.

"It's good news," said Foster.

She said the fact the group "did a lot of things for people who needed help" and the companionship were the main reasons she joined.

The IODE has always helped with the Knights of Columbus Christmas Hamper program, she said.

The organization donated money towards the food in the hampers and helped to pack and sort them before they were distributed to needy families.

Foster said the group also provided annual bursaries for students at Acton High School

and plaques to the most improved male and female student at Acton public schools.

The local IODE chapter had also adopted a school in Labrador. Over the years the group sent money, school supplies, hand-knit mitts, scarves and toques to the students at the school.

Their annual bazaar and bake sale each May was a major fundraiser for the group.

Former IODE president and member for 57 years Helen Jocque said all the members donated something to the annual bazaar. The group didn't hold one last year because with the membership dwindling to only nine it was too difficult for the women to make items and host the event.

Jocque remembers when she first joined the group at the age of 22 there were about 75 members.

"We used to wear hats and white gloves and dresses," said Jocque, who misses the group and its monthly meetings.

"IODE friends are special," said Jocque.

Other long-time members of the group include Elma Braida, who was with the IODE for 66 years, May Dumarsh (57 years) and Kay Dills (55 years).

The first event held by the group was a tea and bake sale in 1917. During the First and Second World Wars the members assisted in many projects such as knitting for the Red Cross.

After the First World War the ladies helped decorate veteran's graves in Fairview and Dublin cemeteries on Nov. 11 every year until 1954 and helped organize Decoration Day with a number of Acton groups to be held each June.

In the early years of the organization meetings were held at members' homes and at the Odd Fellows Hall on Willow St.

The IODE later moved its meetings to the YMCA and in 1946 to the old Acton Legion on Main St., then to the new legion in 1974. Beginning in 1993 meetings were held at Knox Presbyterian Church and before the group disbanded they moved back to members' homes.

The group will be honoured by the Rotary Club at a dinner next month. At press time a date had not yet been set.

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