

Warkworth Legion hosts a New Year's levee amidst concern over possible closure

BRIGHTON INDEPENDENT JAN 7/16

By Sue Dickens

Warkworth – The New Year's levee at the Warkworth Legion, Branch 380, was held to welcome 2016 but it was a bittersweet event as the organization faces an uncertain future.

"Membership needs to be increased or closing is a real possibility," said Len Kenny, branch president, on the day of the levee.

"It's a provincial command decision but we would have to apply to surrender the charter from here," he explained, setting the mood for a somber discussion.

Approximately 93 per cent of the membership fee goes to Dominion Command.

"It's a matter of economics basically."

If the branch is closed, the building would revert back to the Legion command, "because they actually own the property. They might sell it off."

The threatened future of Branch 380 is news that Lenny wants people to know.

A member of the Royal Canadian Legion for more than half a century, joining when he was living in Colborne, he has strong connections to the organization.

"The Legion is the largest

veteran support and community organization in Canada," he noted.

His father, Frank Kenny, was a sergeant-major in the paymaster corps. Three uncles fought in the Second World War. His brother George Kenny spent 18 months in Egypt with UN forces before the Seven Day War and Lenny was an aircraftman first class in the RCAF.

He has always been active in the Legion. He has been president more than once and a Sgt.-at-Arms. He is currently the Zone F2 public relations officer.

For Lenny it became clear that the New Year's levee was bittersweet yet he stood ready to welcome members and guests with the 1946 charter hanging on a wall nearby.

The building is used for many local functions from presentations to winners of the Legion's poster contest and public speaking contest to a place where community groups can gather.

"The Cancer Society uses our hall every month to have euchre and we donate the hall so the seniors can have their weekly card games," Lenny said.

The local soccer club holds its registration there.

"For most of the organizations it's free."



Warkworth Legion President Len Kenny greeted members and guests to the New Years levee on a day when he also talked about the possibility of the closure of Branch 380 as it faces an uncertain future. Photo by Sue Dickens

The Legion has donated much to the community over the years from The Bridge Hospice, to the hospital while it continues to support local sports teams for youth.

"We make \$9,000 or \$10,000 every year at our bingo (in Cobourg) and we put at least half of that into the community plus what we make in fundraisers," he said.

The Legion relies on money raised to pay its bills.

"We get no money from the

government. It costs us \$1,100 a month just to have the doors open (insurance, taxes etc.) and there's hydro on top of that," he said.

"The bottom line is we have to get new members."

Three years ago the branch had 150 members. Today it has 105.

Muriel Nichols, a World War II vet, is the remaining veteran who is a member at the branch.

Looking forward in spite of

the threat of closure Lenny said the branch will hold nominations for a new executive in April and May.

"I'd like to see a lot more young members join and actually become involved in our Legion. I talked to some younger people and they are helping us by putting functions out on Facebook," he commented.

Anyone interested in joining can phone the branch at 705-924-2007.

New Year's Eve attempted murder near Grafton

BRIGHTON INDEPENDENT JAN 7/15

Alnwick-Haldimand Township - The Northumberland detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) have charged a

61-year-old man with attempted murder following an incident on Dec. 31 at 9:55 p.m., where two people sustained serious injuries

at a home on County Road 2 west of Grafton.

Two people from that residence, believed to be a man and woman in their 80s, were transported by ambulance to a nearby hospital and were subsequently transferred to a Toronto area trauma centre.

Responding officers located and arrested a man outside the residence.

No other suspects are being sought.

Daniel Stewart Grant, age 61 of no fixed address, is charged with two counts of "attempt murder"

and is being held for a bail hearing.

There were no other details released by police and the type of injuries sustained by those in hospital were likewise not released by police. It is not known what if any weapons were involved, again, as police have not released any details in that regard.

The investigation is continuing by the Northumberland Crime Unit under the direction of Det. Insp. Gilles Depratto of the OPP Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB).

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