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Acton Branch of Legion celebrating two anniversaries

By FRANCES NIBLOCK
The New Tanner

Members and friends of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 197, Acton, will look backward and forward on Saturday as they celebrate several milestones at a special awards night and anniversary party.

It was 73 years ago, on March 27, 1931, that the charter establishing the Acton Legion was signed. It was 30 years ago that the growing branch moved from the home it had known for 30 years on Main Street North, to a new building on Wright Avenue.

Branch president George O'Donnell said this year's celebration is special, with a dinner, live entertainment, a dance and the awards, along with special guests, including all past presidents, life members and the Zone Commander.

O'Donnell said while they look back and celebrate the rich history of the Branch, they would also continue to plan for a future that includes more charitable work that results in thousands of dollars in annual donations to local groups and organizations.

With 648 members - approximately 50 of them

veterans - O'Donnell said the Legion continues to fight an image of a place for "old guys to go to reminisce about the war and drink and have a few smokes - although we can't do that anymore," O'Donnell said on Friday, alluding to the Town's smoking bylaw that has restricted smoking in the Legion and will ban it totally as of July 1.

"A lot of people don't realize we are a charitable organization," O'Donnell said, adding that may be partly the Legion's fault because it tends to act quietly, without a lot of fanfare.

One of the members who will help celebrate the Legion's 30 years on Wright Avenue is Gord McCutcheon, who chaired the building committee when the Main Street North building became too small.

The Legion purchased a 10-acre site from the Nelles family on Fairy Lake and began planning for a new state-of-the-art building that opened in the fall of 1974.

"It was without a doubt a shock to everyone

that we had gone with such a large and well-equipped building," McCutcheon said on Saturday, adding the building is

used on a regular basis for meetings, weddings, parties and other social events.

Looking back, McCutcheon said one of the memorable events at the new building was on the Sunday before Remembrance Day in 1975, when a helicopter delivered a decommissioned Star MK3 Lockheed jet aircraft that was installed behind the Legion near the lake.

"We purchased the plane for so much per pound and there was quite a crowd as it was lowered by the helicopter," McCutcheon said.

A history prepared by Joe Hurst for Branch 197's 50th anniversary, recounts how many veterans' organizations developed after WWI, including a branch of the Great War Veterans' Association in Acton.

In 1925, the Canadian Legion of the British Empire League was founded, and in late 1930, permission was granted to form an Acton branch, with the charter being dated March 27, 1931.

The Branch's first home was in the former Beardmore and Company's arena clubhouse on the tannery lands, which the Legion used lease-free until 1945, when the space was needed again by Beardmore.

The Legion purchased the former Lantz building on Main Street North, for \$500, and moved to the new location, staying there for 30 years, through numerous expansions and renovations, until it was outgrown in the early 1970's and the new building was constructed.



APPRECIATION: John Wagg, right, membership chairman of Acton Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion receives a certificate of appreciation from Dep. Dist. Cmdr. Oliver Bilton, left, and Dist. Cmdr. MacMcLean, right, at the spring convention. - James Hayes photo

BRANCH
No. 197



LEGION NEWS

By James Hayes
P.R.O.

Comrades,

At the Zone B7 Spring Convention held at Branch 197 Acton last Sunday, our membership chairman John Wagg was presented with a Certificate Of Appreciation by District B Commander Mac McLean. This was for achieving a 100 per cent paid-up membership for 2003, over 2002. Well done, John.

Remembrance Day Contest.

Local students who were successful at the District level are:-

8-year-old Amelia Torrance from Robert Little School, Honourable Mention for her colour poster in the Primary Class.

12-year-old Kara Masse from St Joseph's school, 3rd place for her Essay-French; in the Intermediate class. Congratulations to these fine students.

The Anniversary and Awards Dinner is upon us; see you on Saturday night.

Yours in comradeship,

Ladies Auxiliary Notes:

Hello Comrades:

We had another fun sports day in Brampton. Acton had 11 ladies attend. Two ladies were playing Euchre and nine ladies were playing darts. The Acton team consisting of Norma Titus, Sue Poulsen, Gail Gibson and Peggy Harris won six out of eight games in darts and tied for first.

Our trip to Toronto to see Hairspray will require 20 to 25 ladies to attend if we are to go. If we can't meet this count then we will have to cancel the trip.
Dates to remember: April 1 -LA General Meeting
April 26 -LA Zone Convention - Port Credit
Yours in Comradeship,
Peggy Harris President

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ATTENTION RESIDENTS OF ACTON NOTICE LOW WATER PRESSURE ON SUNDAY, MARCH 28, 2004

As a result of work to connect a new watermain on Churchill Road North, the Town of Halton Hills (Acton) will experience significantly lower water pressure on Sunday, March 28, 2004 for approximately six hours, from 6:00 a.m. to approximately 12:00 noon. Although the water pressure will be reduced, we do not anticipate a complete shutdown of your water supply at any time. Arrangements have been made with the Town of Halton Hills Fire Department to ensure that an adequate water supply will be available if required during an emergency.

Churchill Road North will be reduced to one lane of traffic just north of Lasby Lane (at the Acton Curling Club) during this watermain work.

For further information, please contact Leonard Verwey, Construction Supervisor at extension 7616, or Greg Ellis, Systems Operations Supervisor at extension 7706, of the Planning & Public Works Department.

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