



THE MAPLE LEAF

MARCH 2022 EDITION

Newsletter of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 270 Coldwater

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LAP RUGS FOR VETERANS



Veterans Affairs
Canada

Anciens Combattants
Canada

BACKLOG OF VETERAN DISABILITY CLAIMS

24 Feb 2022 - The Royal Canadian Legion is reassured by significant new investment to clear Canada's backlog of Veteran disability claims.

We thank the Federal Government for providing Veterans Affairs Canada with the additional financial support needed to retain extra temporary staff, and we look forward to seeing this serious backlog shrink rapidly over the coming months.

The Legion has been advocating to clear this backlog for a number of years. See our most recent letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on page 10.

*Inside **The Maple Leaf** this month*

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Thank you to Marie Langley (above), Dorothy Gerrard and her daughter for all the time and yarn they have invested in knitting and crocheting lap rugs and toques for some of our Veterans and spouses over this long snowy winter. Many thanks, ladies.

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FROM THE BRANCH PRESIDENT



Happy spring everyone! This winter ended up a little rougher than was predicted, but we made it through. Things are looking better on the pandemic side, with all the good changes that this will bring along. We hope. Again.

First, thank you to the organisers of our Daytona 500 Party and Spaghetti Dinner that took place on Sunday February 20th. The loosening of the restrictions came in too late for us to plan a Valentine's Day dinner, so we decided to have something special in February. And so the Daytona 500 spaghetti dinner was born. It was a tremendous success. Thank you to the organizer, Carol Baird, and the dinner coordinator, Gaëtanne Robinson. Many more also contributed, and Carol will provide details in her Entertainment report. I also want to thank John Anderson and *Leadbetter's Foods* from Orillia who donated the meat for the sauce. Thank you so much.

The gradual reopening that was announced in early February was accelerated, so, as of March 1st the proof of vaccination will no longer be required, although the wearing of masks requirement will remain. No more capacity restrictions; so, we're planning for our annual St. Patrick's Day celebrations on March 17.

You may have noticed that the national flag is off at the Cenotaph. The rope broke off during the high winds last month, and it fell inside the pole, so we will need a cherry-picker to go up and feed the rope back in the hole at the top. This may have to wait for a while. In the meantime, we will fly the flag on a pole at the front of the building.

Our first post-pandemic in-person General Meeting should take place on March 23, starting at 6:30 p.m. I know, we've been through that a few times already, but I have a feeling this is the good one. I hope to see you on March 23.

The Zone E4 Spring Convention will take place at the Elmvale Branch on Sunday March 20, starting at 10 a.m. All Legion members and Ladies Auxiliary from within the Zone are welcome. Same for the District Convention that will be held April 1-3, 2022 at Branch 232 Huntsville. All welcome to attend. And as announced in last month's issue, the Ontario Provincial Convention is coming up May 14-18, 2022 in North Bay.

Sadly, we recently had to say goodbye to two of our past members, Joe Barron and Gary Hamilton. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends.

Yours in comradeship,
Norm Marion, President

FROM THE LADIES AUXILIARY PRESIDENT



March has finally arrived; the sun is making an earlier appearance in the mornings and staying brighter in the evenings. Spring is in the air.

As COVID restrictions are becoming more lenient, we're hoping that we can socialize more and with people that we haven't seen in a while.

The Branch hosted a Daytona 500 Day, complete with a spaghetti dinner. Gaëtanne Robinson did an amazing job with the spaghetti sauce, and there were many compliments to support this. A thank you goes out to Leadbetter's Meat and John Anderson for donating the hamburger for the spaghetti sauce. Irene Brasil and Gaëtanne Robinson generously donated the homemade desserts and as always the desserts were delicious.

The Ladies' Auxiliary account currently has a working balance of \$4,871.19. Thank you to Gaëtanne Robinson for her exceptional work at keeping our books up to date.

Ladies' Auxiliary executive meeting will be held Tuesday March 15th at the Branch at 6:30 p.m. We hope to start the Ladies' Auxiliary General meetings with the first one being Tuesday April 19th at the Branch at 6:30 p.m.

Never give up, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn."

Harriet Beecher Stowe

Yours in Comradeship,
Anne McArthur, Ladies Auxiliary President

THE MAPLE LEAF

The Maple Leaf is the award-winning newsletter of The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 270 Coldwater, published each month in the first week of the month. It is primarily an internal communication tool through which the Branch Executive and Committee Chairmen disseminate information and report to the membership on their respective activities. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the writers and do not imply endorsement by the Branch or the Legion. Committee reports and articles must be submitted by email to: Branch PRO – Maple Leaf at branch270@rogers.com.

GENERAL MEETINGS

The next General Meeting will be on **Wednesday March 23**, beginning at **6:30 p.m.** Branch General Meetings take place on the fourth Wednesday of each month, from September to June, in the upstairs hall, starting at 6:30 p.m.

BAR OFFICER REPORT

Submitted by Comrade Marg Murphy, Bar Officer

We have seen more people coming out to the branch in the last few weeks. As of March 1st, all COVID restrictions will be lifted, except for masks. It seems the government is turning all responsibilities over to the individual establishments. They are encouraging everyone to take responsibility for their own health and safety. We will wait to see if Dominion or Ontario Command sends any direction for us to follow up with. We had a great day on our special Daytona 500 Day spaghetti dinner. I would like to give a shout out to everyone who made this a perfect day. A special thank you to Carol Baird for coordinating, and Annie McArthur, Gaëtanne Robinson, Dianne Sauve and Henry Risebrough for making and serving the spaghetti dinner.

SPORTS REPORT

We are still looking for someone to take over the duties of Branch Sports Officer. Please contact the Branch office if interested, 686-3388, email: branch270@rogers.com.

SICK & VISITING

Submitted by Comrade Betty-Anne Burnie, Sick and Visiting Chair

I have been keeping in touch with those I know are ill or not well. If there are any issues that require my attention please let me know. Home phone (705) 686-3270 or email bburnie6@hotmail.com.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Submitted by Comrade Cheryl Barr, Membership Chair

Hello Comrades:

Happy St. Patrick's Day to Everyone!

With great sadness I have to report that Comrade Joe Barron passed away on January 25th, 2022, and Comrade Gary Hamilton passed on February 6th, 2022.

Our membership at the end of February stands at 258.

Affiliates 70, Associates 145, Life 3, Ordinary 40.

The Branch welcomes the following: Comrade Michael Simms who has transferred from the Warminster Branch. Comrade Brian Newman who has transferred from the Penetanguishene Branch.

There is still a number of outstanding 2021 membership dues that need to be paid, if you want to stay in good standing. Please check the back of your card. You can still pay your dues either at the bar, online or you can mail in a cheque in the amount of \$60.00 to Royal Canadian Legion Branch 270 Coldwater, P.O. Box 89, Coldwater, ON, LOK 1E0, and I'll look after it.

The 2022 Membership stickers are in and available at the bar. Just ask the Bar Steward working. The \$55.00 membership for 2022 is still running.

If you have any question about your membership you can contact me at:

legionmembershipbranch270@gmail.com

Hope to see you soon.



Joe Barron and his fiddle were a familiar sight at the Coldwater Branch *Jammin' at the Legion* pre-pandemic Saturdays.

JOKE OF THE MONTH

I was walking past a clothes shop and saw a beautiful dress in the shop window. I went in and asked the shop assistant, "Hi, can I please try on the dress in the shop window?"

"Of course," nodded the shop assistant, "but you know we also have changing rooms, right?"

TREASURER REPORT

Submitted by Comrade Rick Morse, Secretary-Treasurer

As of 23 February 2022, the General Account balance is \$23,487.64.

In the General Account, we still have restricted funds of \$7,705.87 for Grants, \$3,900.00 for Seniors Literacy and \$1,000 for the Cenotaph's Second World War Coldwater Veterans project.

With funds committed in the Grant, Seniors Literacy and the Cenotaph projects equaling \$12,605.87, a total of \$10,881.77 remains for the daily operation of the branch.

The Bottle Drive deposits for the month of February add up to \$658.00

All amounts listed above are included in the General Account provided in this report.

Building Bank Account balance is \$3,004.80.

Nevada Account balance remains \$237.61

POPPY REPORT

Submitted by Comrade Betty-Jean Murray, Poppy Chair

The Poppy account bank balance still stands at \$16,601.30.

We thank our community for their response in November to our Poppy Campaign. The success of that campaign allows Branch 270 Coldwater to make the following donations from the Poppy Fund in support of our veterans.

We will donate \$1,000 to **Heroes Mending on the Fly**. This organization has proven to be very beneficial for veterans and emergency service workers suffering from PTSD.

Another \$2,000 will go to **Operation Service Dog** as Ontario Command has a firm commitment of more than \$400,000 this year to try to place more service dogs with veteran handlers. Each dog costs an average of roughly \$40,000 and not every dog bred will pass the training.

An additional \$2,000 has been allotted to **Homeless Veterans - Leave the Streets Behind**. With the recent pandemic, we now have many more homeless and unemployed veterans on the streets. We must help them to find homes.

A donation of \$1,000 will go to **District 'E' Hospital Trust Fund**. We gratefully donate to our District 'E' Hospital Trust Fund, which is available to help when our veterans require more extensive assistance.

And finally, a donation of \$500 will go to **Zone E4 – Posters and Literary**. Marg Murphy, the Zone E4 Youth Education Chair, will soon be awarding certificates and prizes to students whose posters and literary progressed to Zone and District.



Veteran Maggie van Tassel and her service dog Kili pose for a photo during a visit to the Coldwater Branch last fall. Kili was trained through Operation Service Dog.



BUILDING OFFICER REPORT

Submitted by Comrade Wayne Tutt, Building Officer

Hello comrades. I do not have a lengthy list to report this month. Just the following. The south-east corner of our building has developed a bit of settling. I will get an elbow and a piece of pipe to take the downspout water away from the corner. When the frost is out of the ground, the sunken asphalt will be removed so the erosion can be viewed. I'm hoping that the repair will only require a small amount of self-consolidating concrete. I'll keep you posted. Hopefully, a vast number of you have noticed that the ugly stains in the ceiling tiles have been prettied up. I'm looking forward to seeing all members at the Branch very soon.

ENTERTAINMENT/WAYS & MEANS

Submitted by Comrade Carol Baird, Entertainment/Ways & Means Chair

What a great day we had for Daytona Day. The clubroom was busy, the food was really great and lots of fun and prizes. Frank Lauzon won the Daytona Race prize of \$100. Karen Cuthbertson won the 50/50 draw of \$110.00 and Wanda Beaudoin won the door prize. The food was excellent. Many thanks to Gaétanne and Kari, and Gail and John for the idea for the dinner and the Daytona Day. The meat sauce was made by Anne McArthur and it was

fantastic. Also thanks to June and Dianne who also helped in the kitchen. Also to Gail for those wonderful shooters. We will be doing that for St. Patrick's Day as well. They were a hit. Thanks to Cathy Larkins and Maggie for selling the 50/50 tickets. Thanks to Marie Langley and George Jones for the donations for the silent auction. We also couldn't have done it without Cheryl volunteering at the bar. I would like to make this an annual event.

Jane Lauder will be starting the "Meat Draws" the second Saturday of each month. The first one will be March 12. Instead of meat we will be giving \$25 gift certificates from Foodland. The start time is 3:00 p.m.

Pencil March 17 on your calendar. On St. Patrick's Day we will be featuring Bruce Naismith from 3:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. We will be having prizes, draws, something Irish to eat and great entertainment. I hope to see you there.

THIS MONTH WE REMEMBER

THE BATTLE OF NEUVE-CHAPELLE

The Battle of Neuve-Chapelle took place on March 10-12, 1915, in northern France, near Belgium. The battle provided a new role for Canadian troops who had just arrived from England, where they had been training. While not a large battle, it was not without significance from a Canadian perspective, in that it was the first time that the Canadian Expeditionary Force had been fully involved in action with the enemy.

The role of the Canadians in the battle order was to prevent the Germans in this sector from reinforcing the combat zone. This would allow the British 1st Army to successfully push through German lines and establish a new Allied front line on conquered territory. Despite this success, however, the British missed a golden opportunity to exploit their advantage.

Source: Library & Archives Canada

Quote of the Month

"Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every new year find you a better man."
—Benjamin Franklin

PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT

Submitted by Comrade Norm Marion, Public Relations Officer

Not much to report this month. On-line media are kept up-to-date. Our BIDDY is back up and running. We can always use help with the Public Relations work. If you feel you could take photos at some of our events, or contribute articles for the Maple Leaf and/or our Facebook page and website, contact me at norm.marion@amtelecom.net

SERVICE OFFICER REPORT

Submitted by Comrade Randy Rice, Branch Service Officer

Great news with regard to Veterans Affairs Canada announcement concerning Veterans disability claims. In short the government has approved funding to maintain and extend the current short term staff required to reduce the backlog of claims. While this is welcoming and somewhat overdue, it is a move in the right direction. Comrades there are thousands of Veterans, widows, widowers and their dependents who receive disability pensions or some form of support from Veterans Affairs Canada, and there are thousands who receive no support whatsoever.

There are Veterans who made a career of the service and receive a pension and there are those who served for short engagements and did not qualify for a pension. Did you know when a Veteran who is receiving a service pension passes away, their pension is reduced by 50 % and that is what their survivor receives; if they were receiving a disability pension, their survivor is still entitled to benefits. On the other side of the coin a Veteran passes away with no pension, no disability award and nothing in place to assist their survivor. So, where does that leave the survivor? In both cases, sometimes in a dire financial situation not of their making. With growing inflation, the pandemic, supply issues and "the high cost of everything", the basic needs for some to live are becoming out of reach.

As you know the Legion is there to help, however that assistance is short term and limited in its scope. Funding is available through the Poppy Fund and other programs based solely on donations.

So comrades, there exists the dilemma. The vacuum, where there are limited resources and not every Veteran or survivor gets the assistance they might need. You might ask what I can do. Well sometimes it's the small gesture that matters most because it boosts morale and gives self-worth to those concerned.

- Contact your MP, MPP or municipal officials;
- Buy a Veteran a coffee or meal;
- Renew their Legion membership;
- Start a conversation with them;
- Support their family in some way;
- Purchase a banner in their memory;
- Direct them where assistance is available i.e.; Service Officer or Poppy Chair or local Legion;
- Help them submit their story to the Legion's Military Service Recognition Book;
- Make a donation;
- Recognize their service is your freedom;
- And last, REMEMBER THEM!



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SENIORS LITERARY REPORT

Submitted by Comrade Betty-Jean Murray, Seniors Literary Chair

At the moment things are falling in place for the SENIORS LITERARY COMPETITION. I have begun receiving entries from authors who have not submitted in prior years, so, that indicates to me that the word of the competition is spreading. I will need to recruit additional judges though. If you know of any retired teachers or librarians who might be interested, please give me their names. The judges never receive the name of the authors submitting any entry.

Our Seniors Literary program is catching on. Last year I was thrilled to receive submissions from Windsor to Ottawa. This year, I have received queries from writers from Nova Scotia, Manitoba and BC. Unfortunately, they are not able to enter but I will make their interest known to Command. As well, we have just received approval from Ontario Command to have a display at the Provincial Convention in North Bay in May as well as at our District Convention in Huntsville in April.

BRANCH HISTORIAN REPORT

Submitted by Comrade Norm Marion, Branch Historian

Believe it or not, we have found another Coldwater-born airman who was killed in action during the Second World War. And when I say "we", I mean Bruce Missen (again) of Coldwater, who has previously discovered several Coldwater Veterans through his genealogical research. Thank you Bruce for sharing with us. The name of the airman killed in action is Ross JH Johnstone, Flight Sergeant, RCAF, Air Gunner on a Lancaster bomber that was shot

Royal Canadian Legion Branch 270

down over Germany on 23 February 1945. He will be added to our on-line Roll of Honour, included in the next Military Service Recognition Book (MSRB) volume, and featured on a banner in the fall.

If you have any questions concerning MSRB submissions, please contact me at (705) 686-3941, email norm.marion@amtelecom.net

REMEMBERING ROSS JOHNSTONE

Born in Coldwater, Ontario, on January 12, 1924, Ross John Hugh Johnstone was the son of James and Jean (Doherty) Johnstone of Coldwater. He attended school in nearby Orillia, and was employed as a boiler maker for a year after his graduation. He joined the Royal Canadian Air Force on March 30, 1943. His first months were spent training as aircrew and air gunner at various RCAF stations including Fingal and Jarvis, Ontario, and Valleyfield and Lachine, Quebec. Then, Flight Sergeant Johnstone (RCAF service number R221221) proceeded overseas to serve as an Air Gunner on Lancaster bombers with No. 625 and No.170 Squadrons (RAF). On February 23, 1945, Ross and his crew were on a mission to Pforzheim, Germany, when their Lancaster (PB 595) was shot down. Johnstone and two other crew members were killed in the crash, while four others managed to bail out, were taken prisoners, and returned home at the end of the war. Flight Sergeant Ross Johnstone was 21 when he died. He is buried in the Durnbach War Cemetery, south of Munich, Germany.



Flight Sergeant Ross Johnstone of Coldwater served with the RCAF as an Air Gunner on a Lancaster bomber during the Second World War. He was killed in action on February 23, 1945.

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CLEAR THE BACKLOG - VETERANS WAIT IN DIRE NEED OF DISABILITY BENEFITS

16 February 2022 - Recent reports revealed Veterans Affairs Canada is set to lose many of the staff tasked with clearing the backlog of disability benefit claims that has delayed supports for Veterans for years. The Royal Canadian Legion is calling on the Government of Canada to uphold its promise to clear the backlog that reportedly has 34,000 Veterans still waiting in dire need to receive benefits and supports. Read the letter to the Prime Minister below.

16 February 2022
Prime Minister Trudeau:

May you remain well.

I am alarmed by recent media reports revealing that crucial funds needed to help end the current Veteran disability claims backlog may not exist. It was astonishing to learn there is no tangible end in sight to this situation and we might actually see a setback in the progress that was being made.

The Minister of Veterans Affairs could not confirm whether all adjudicators specifically hired to tackle this mess will be retained past March 2022. This is especially concerning since clearing the backlog is listed as the number one priority in your mandate letter to the Minister. We ask that funds be openly guaranteed to enable these adjudicators to keep working, and to bring on even more assistance.

It was particularly distressing to hear of the 2020 warning by the Parliamentary Budget Officer that a longer commitment to temporary staff would be needed to eliminate the backlog by 2023. It appears that astute warning was not heeded, and we understand that some vital temporary staff moved on due to the uncertainty of their jobs.

Legion Service Officers assert that our Veterans are still waiting much longer than is acceptable for disability claim decisions to be made. While they await these decisions, treatment is not accessible through any VAC benefits and their health continues to deteriorate. This is indefensible and cannot continue in good conscience.

Your government rolled out a pandemic plan within a very short period to assist Canadians in financial need, so we know it can be nimble and quick action is possible. Why must injured Veterans keep waiting for a similar commitment that will finally end the backlog that is further harming them?

We ask for immediate action to end this insufferable delay for our Veterans.

We stand ready to discuss and help.

Regards,

Bruce Julian
Dominion President

LEGION DECRIES DECISION OVER PLATINUM JUBILEE MEDAL

23 February, 2022

The Royal Canadian Legion is disappointed and bewildered to hear our country does not plan to issue a Platinum Jubilee medal in 2022. A recent media report confirmed the decision by the Department of Canadian Heritage. This year commemorates the 70th anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's ascension to the throne.

"I am saddened by this decision," says Bruce Julian, Dominion President. *"A unique medal would also have allowed us an opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding service of fellow citizens."*

For close to two years, the Legion has advocated for having a Platinum Jubilee medal presented to Canadians who have made a real difference in their communities. It would recognize admirable service - from military and RCMP personnel to first responders, teachers, long term care workers and others.

"The Queen is our respected Head of State, and these fellow citizens are people who have made their communities and country better," adds Julian. *"We hope the decision not to produce a medal will be reconsidered."*

Canadian medals were produced for the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977, for the Golden Jubilee in 2002, and for the Diamond Jubilee in 2012 (right). But there won't be a Canadian medal for the Platinum Jubilee this year.



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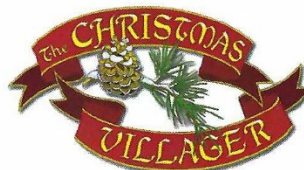
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Performing at the Coldwater Legion
Thursday March 17, 2022
Music starting at 3:00 p.m.
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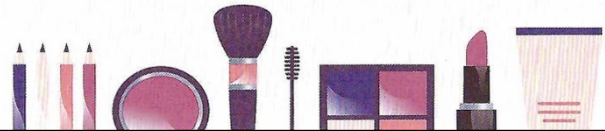
Jackie Cowderoy

Independent Beauty Consultant

jackie.cowderoy@gmail.com

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SPORTS AT BRANCH 270

FRIDAY NIGHT STEAK DARTS

Feb 4

1. Gaëtanne
 2. Anne
 3. Dave
 4. Debbie
 5. Gaëtanne
 6. Anne
- Sunshine: Henny

Feb 11

1. Sheri
 2. Henny
 3. Hans
 4. Hans
 5. Henny
 6. Henny
- Sunshine: Anne

Feb 19

1. Gaëtanne
 2. Carol
 3. Henny
 4. Lloyd
 5. Jennine
 6. Frank
- Sunshine: Lloyd

Feb 25

1. Kari
 2. Kari
 3. Jennine
 4. Jordan
 5. Al
 6. Carol
- Sunshine: Bob



Yes! We're back!

**Friday Night
Steak Darts is
back on, every
Friday, starting
at 6:00 p.m.**

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TICO# 50013851

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L0K 1E0

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Laurie Doyle

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Royal Canadian Legion Branch 270 Coldwater • www.coldwaterlegion.com		MARCH 2022				
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Shrove Tuesday 1 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm Fun Pool 6:30 pm	2 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm	3 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm	4 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm Steak Darts - 6 pm	5 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm
6 CLOSED	7 CLOSED	8 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm Fun Pool 6:30 pm	9 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm	10 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm	11 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm Steak Darts - 6 pm	12 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm Meat Roll 3 pm
13 CLOSED	14 CLOSED	15 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm Fun Pool 6:30 pm	16 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm	St. Patrick's 17 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm Parade 1 pm  Music 3 pm	18 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm Steak Darts - 6 pm	19 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm
20 CLOSED Zone Convention Elmvale Br. 10 am	21 CLOSED	22 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm Fun Pool 6:30 pm	23 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm General Meeting Starts 6:30 pm	24 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm	25 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm Steak Darts - 6 pm	26 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm
27 CLOSED	28 CLOSED	29 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm Fun Pool 6:30 pm	30 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm	31 Branch open 11:30 pm-7:00pm		