

Fitness Centre reno underway on first floor of Kente building

The holiday season was chosen, as it was determined to be the least disruptive time for members. Students surveyed say the closure is not a problem at this time because most are going home

By Mike Morris

The closure of the Loyalist College Fitness Centre for repairs and additions during the holidays is good news, said fitness staff and students.

Cory Mestre, co-ordinator of the Fitness Centre, told QNet News the closure for the holidays is only inconvenient for some people.

"Truthfully it's the least intrusive time," said Mestre. "While it's still going to cause an inconvenience for some of our members, we acknowledge that. It's going to impact the smallest number of our members."

"We would usually be closing down around the 16th or 17th anyway, for the holiday closure of the college after classes and exams are done. And also, with people being gone on placements, and heading home after exams, it just seemed to be the best choice to cause the least problems."

Mestre said there were other fitness facilities in Belleville, such as the YMCA and Good Life Fitness.

He said he was excited because the renovations will offer more to members and students to train for their sports or fitness goals.

The centre's closure for the season received a positive reaction from students and members alike. Some, like Loyalist College student Brendon Mouncey, were not bothered at all.

"It wouldn't affect me much," said Mouncey. "I'm going home for the holidays."

Mouncey said he is also aware of Belleville's Good

Life and YMCA being alternatives, so he did not mind the centre's temporary closure.

"That's probably the best time to do it," said Jake Magistrale, front desk controller for the centre. "There's going to be fewer people here. Everybody goes home for the holidays for the most part."

Ethan Blankenhoren is a second-year automotive student. He also feels it's good to make renovations during the holidays, because fewer people will be affected.

"I agree with Jake," Blankenhoren said. "It's the best time of the year to do it, because even though there are going to be kids still on campus, the majority of the students are going to be enjoying the break, drinking, partying, whatever they want to do. And you know it has to be done some time, unfortunately, so they might as well do it when the least amount of students are going to be here. That's a less amount of people that are going to be affected by it being closed."

Other students at Loyalist who shared a positive opinion of the temporary closure included Gavin Ondaatje of police foundations, and Katrina Neal of early childhood education.

"I guess it's more beneficial for the students in the long run," Ondaatje said. "You can always do workouts at home, or you can just wait the few days. You know, go for a run — do all that kind of stuff. There's always opportunities to work out anywhere, right?"

"That's fine," Neal said. "I don't use it anymore. There's a lot of gyms in Belleville with free or day passes."



Harrison Perkins

A worker measures a piece of duct work for the renovations to the Fitness Centre on the first floor of the Kente building.

Adopt- A- Child needs donations

By Taylor Renkema

Quinte Broadcasting's annual Adopt-A-Child drive is collecting cash and indoor clothing donations again this year for children in need at Christmas.

The drive works in collaboration with the Kinsmen Toy Drive and Salvation Army to help single and low-income families celebrate Christmas.

Matt Goodman, co-ordinator of the program, said Quinte Broadcasting has been involved in the program for 23 years. He said they participate to give a little something back to the community.

"Most people spend about \$100-125 and that's a great donation, because that's on av-

erage what it would cost to sponsor a child," said Goodman. "That usually gets them [the kids] a few indoor outfits, socks, pajamas and underwear — items like that."

He said the Salvation Army gives food baskets, and the Kinsmen Club gives toys. Goodman said some people donate cash to the indoor clothing fundraiser, but there are others who prefer to do their own shopping.

"We get about half and half — people that want to shop do the shopping, and we give them a child's first name and sizes, and they bring the stuff here. The other half will donate cash, and we will do the shopping. We have a team of about 12 shoppers this year that do [the shopping] for the program," he said.

Goodman said kids' styles are always

changing, and they try to keep up with the latest trends.

He said they join together with the Salvation Army and Kinsmen Club to help families celebrate Christmas.

"They get a food basket through the Salvation Army, and they also get toys through the Kinsmen toy drive and our part of it is indoor clothing," Goodman said.

There are about 1,300 kids in need this year. Goodman said they still have about 200 left to cover. He said it's difficult to know exactly how many kids they help until the end, when they tally everything up.

Quinte Broadcasting is trying to wrap the program up by Dec. 16, to give them time to get everything organized.

Dental help may be on the way for adults

By John Boldrick

Lawrence DeRushie has been without dental coverage for about four years now. The lack of care has clearly taken a toll on his oral health.

"Currently I have absolutely zero coverage. No one will help me and by the looks of it, I have gingivitis," he said.

DeRushie is just one of the residents who could receive help from Belleville city councillor Pat Culhane, who is petitioning the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care for better dental care for the city's adults.

Culhane attended a recent public meeting of the health care board and asked members of the board if there were any way for working class citizens to get assistance in paying for dental care.

Culhane was told there is dental care for under-privileged children 17 and under, and also dental coverage through programs such as Ontario Works and social assistance. But there is nothing for working adults who are just over the poverty line and are not eligible for any type of government program.

"They make a minimum wage, or just above it. They have no benefits, but they pay all their own bills, and by the time you pay your rent and your food and all your day-to-day expenses, dental care gets shoved to the back of the bus," said Culhane.

Culhane plans to write a letter to the Ministry of Health in an attempt to get coverage if she can get approval from the health board. She also plans to present the letter to

Belleville Mayor Neil Ellis and other city councillors at their next meeting.

The hope is that the council will pass the information on to other municipalities. From there, the other municipalities could write to the ministry, urging them to provide coverage for working class people.

"Hopefully we get a whole bunch of people on board," said Culhane. "I would like to see the ministry begin to put some thought into providing dental care for that class of people."

The cause is a personal one for Culhane, who has worked as a nurse for 43 years, including 22 in the emergency room. She has been a first hand witness to the effects of neglected dental care.

"It's my nursing background and my position with public health that brought it to



Ashliegh Gehl

Miss Lily lazes on the counter at Books & Company in Picton. She died Nov. 23 of diabetes.

Beloved Picton pet passes away

By Ashliegh Gehl

The scratches in Books & Company's countertop isn't the only place Miss Lily left her mark.

As the bookstore's live-in ginger cat, she was a permanent fixture in the storefront window, admired by passersby trotting down Picton's Main Street.

One minute she would be perched next to the cash register waiting for kibble, and in the next, interrupting an author mid-way through a book reading.

Shortly after Margaret Atwood was in the store on Nov. 23, fundraising for Al Purdy's A-frame house, Lily died of diabetes. She was nearly 12 years old.

Before moving into the bookstore, she lived wildly as a stray, finding comfort in handouts from friendly neighbours. When Alexandra Bake, owner of Books & Company, lost her cat Olivia on Christmas Eve more than eight years ago, a woman came to her saying she had the perfect cat.

"To be honest, if I had to pick a cat, it wouldn't have been Lily because she was not happy and didn't seem to register well in the shelter at all. But she was the cat that was chosen for me," said Bake.

A disgruntled Lily eventually became a great lover of people. She would stretch on the hardcovers of art books and rest on her favourite daily newspaper, The Globe and Mail.

Even though she was very miss-ish, she was also mischievous. Addicted to Temptations, she learned how to open the drawer her treats were in and fish them out at leisure.

"When we realized that she wasn't eating anything but Temptations, we weaned

her off them," said Bake. "She was very cross with me for a long time."

On a rare occasion, when the drawer of bottomless treats ran empty, Lily was not pleased.

"One of the staff members said she had a bruise on her arm from where Lily kept hitting it," said Bake. "I had run out of treats and there wasn't any in the drawer for her. She didn't believe us of course. How could you not give Miss Lily treats! She would open the drawer and not see anything there, so she would hit the employee on the arm. She swore by the end of that day she had a bruise."

Even though Lily was a bit of a diva about her treats, she appointed herself as a representative of the Loyalist Humane Society.

"She'd lay on the cash register and point to the jar and say, 'That's where I came from. Help them,'" said Bake.

For Bake, life without Miss Lily gets harder every day.

"At first I just used to think, you know, Lily's not here, but it's the every-morning, when she's not here to greet you," Bake said tearfully. "I've never owned a bookstore without her."

Skye Beaumont, a barista at Miss Lily's Café, got to know a different side of Lily.

Even though she was the face of the café, putting one paw on the black and white tiled flooring was a faux pas. But when Bake was away, like any respectable teenager, Lily would play.

"It would usually take two or three days for Lily to start to realize that Alexandra wasn't here and she would start to act like a surly teenager. Like, 'You're not my real mom — you can't tell me what to do,'" said Beaumont.