Legion unveils new banners to fly over Belmont Village

By Mike Mortensen

BELMONT — Red, white and blue banners will soon be hanging from utility poles along main roads leading into Belmont Village thanks to the generosity of individuals and businesses who contributed to a fund-raising effort launched by the local American Legion Post.

Post Commander Robert Stevens said that more than $2,000 had been raised by the campaign run by Charles Kilborn Post 58 in Belmont. He said that money would pay for the purchase of at least a dozen banners which feature a stylized version of the American flag.

“I thought we might raise maybe $1,500,” said Stevens, who with Post Vice Commander Woodbury Fogg unfurled one of the banners for Selectmen Jon File and Ruth Money to see before the start of the business portion of Monday’s selectmen’s meeting.

Stevens presented selectmen with a framed certificate from the Legion Post honoring those who donated to the effort. He said the amounts of the individual donations ranged from $20 to $300. The certificate will now be displayed in Town Hall.

Stevens said the banners will be displayed along Routes 106 and 140 in the town center. He said the plan is to have the banners up by Memorial Day, May 28.

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Foxwoods Resort Casino in Mashantucket, Conn. A few days later, the Frates received notice that they had been selected to attend the taping later this month.

Toks, although she was the one who got her family members involved, won't take part because of complications of her employment. Instead, the team will include Larry and Jean, their son Oliver, their daughter Amelia and her husband Lyall.

Until they participate in the taping, they won't know if their family will be on the Feed. Even then, they won't be allowed to discuss the specifics of their experience until after the show has aired. With that in mind, the family is planning to have a good time — and is hoping to keep the idiosyncratic Larry from causing too much of a stir.

“We’re going down to have fun,” said Larry. “It’s strange and exciting. Amelia was more concerned about what I might wear on the show.”

Amelia is serving as the team captain. She said, referring to her father, who is often seen performing in the Laconia area as a cartoon artist or magician. “He’s not allowed to wear his checkered jacket. That was a family thing, we were like, ‘Dad, that’s not a good idea for this one.’”

Family Feed is an unusual contest in that it challenges contestants to predict what the results will be of surveys administered to the general population. For example, one challenge the family was presented with at Foxwoods was to name birds that can’t fly. One acceptable answer was flamingos. Although that bird could indeed take to the skies, enough respondents gave that answer when given a survey.

To try and prepare for the game, the Frates have been busy practicing with board game and electronic versions of the game, and by watching episodes when they air.

“I think we’re going to have fun, I have no idea how we’re going to do,” said Amelia. “We had fun just going to the audition.”

Still, she admitted to harboring a bit of anxiety about appearing on television with the unpredictable and creative Larry. “We’re all just hoping that he doesn’t whip out something bizarre he has up his sleeve, literally,” she said. “We’re hoping he doesn’t try to upstage Steve Harvey,” she joked.

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In the business portion of the meeting, selectmen took under advisement information from Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin regarding the possibility of switching its property liability and workers’ compensation insurance coverage to a different carrier.

Presently, the town’s liability and workers’ comp coverage is provided through the Local Government Center. But Beaudin told selectmen that competing carrier Primex is offering to provide the coverage at a premium savings of $15,600 the first year. But the deal would obligate the town to sign a three-year non-renewable contract, with a stipulation that the annual premium increases could not exceed 8 percent for workers’ comp or 7 percent for property liability.

Selectman Chairman Jon Pike acknowledged that the $19,000 savings in premiums the first year was substantial. But he wondered if that figure was “the carrot” to get Belmont to switch carriers and that with the potential increases in premiums in the second and third years, the overall savings might not be that significant.

Pike said he was also worried that if Belmont left the LGC insurance pool it might forfeit any rebate it could potentially receive arising out of a suit filed by the Secretary of State’s Office which has charged LGC has held up $110 million excessive premium surplus rather than refunding it to the member communities which have paid into the pool. One part of the suit charges that the LGC skimmed $18 million paid by public members, including Belmont, for health insurance and used to create a workers’ compensation program to compete with Primex.

In denying the charge, the LGC has said banked the millions of surplus dollars to protect its members in the event of catastrophic claims, while using sound accounting methods to determine how much surplus it’s kept.

Pike directed Beaudin to talk with representatives of other municipalities insured by Primex to see what their experience has been with the insurer. The board is expected to discuss the matter again at its May 19 meeting.

In other business, the board approved disbursing $600 from a downtown revitalization fund to be used for a movie night to be held in a town park in July. Beaudin said that Tina Fleming, the town’s special events coordinator, is hoping to arrange the showing on a giant outdoor screen on July 24 or July 28.