

Fundraising Bike Ride For Hospice

The Twins Team



John (Arnold Schwarzenegger) Yakabuski and Gerald (Danny Devito) Tracey

Hello again friends. Last week I told you I would be walking/cycling from the *Leader* office to Hospice Renfrew on Friday, October 9 to raise funds for *Hospice Renfrew*. *Hospice Renfrew* traditionally hosts the most successful *Hike For Hospice* fundraiser across Canada but due to COVID-19 this year's hike, as well as many other events, had to be cancelled and that has seriously impacted our donations.

The Need:

Like other hospices across the province, we receive about 50 per cent funding from the province and the balance we raise through events like the hike, donations, bequests and many other events. We were making good progress with the province regarding increased funding but then the pandemic came along and discussions got put on hold. We look forward to reopening talks soon, and to the day when more funding is given and less is expected from the community. Until then, we depend on your generous support.

To replace the traditional hike held each May in Renfrew, a **Virtual Hike** will take place Saturday, October 10. My walk/ride will be a lead up to the **Virtual Hike** which hundreds of other Hospice friends and supporters will be taking part in.

The Confession:

I want to be honest with you. I will be biking most of the way to Renfrew because my sciatica nerve is killing me and it makes walking painful. I'll let you know if cycling is any better. Heartfelt thanks to Chris Hinsperger of the Bonnechere Caves. Chris stopped me on my training ride to the Caves Sunday morning and the seasoned cyclist offered to arrange to get me a better bike, one with narrow tires that require less work. My old baby has the wider tires and so Chris' offer will definitely make the trek easier for me. (He actually dropped it off Tuesday morning so I am ready to go. It's one of the bikes his wife, Val uses). *Thanks folks!*

After announcing my plans last week, much has changed.

The Other Twin:

Most importantly, my good friend and our MPP and Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, John Yakabuski, will be joining me on the ride. He called last Thursday on his way home from Toronto and when I told him what I was doing this Friday, he said, "*Gee, maybe I should go with you!*"

Of course I said *sure*, and thanks to quick action by Ray and Greg Pilon at Canadian Tire in Pembroke, they assembled a bike in record time and John picked it up Friday afternoon.

The Support:

Then came an offer from another good friend, Mark Wheaton and the *Assante Financial Pembroke* team to sponsor our ride with signage, T-shirts and a Gold level pledge. So Assante is a proud major sponsor of *Cycling For Hospice Renfrew*. The slogan is: **Assante ... Supporting the Financial Health of Our Hospice**

After Maynard Vander Galien, the wealthy bachelor farmer who lives in the South McNaughton Line – Fulton Road area of Admaston/Bromley, read last week's paper, he is offering to donate \$10 from every cord of hardwood he sells in October. The wood is 100% dry and stored in barns until sold, so I am encouraging anyone who burns wood and needs some for the coming winter season, to call Maynard at 613-432-6551 and place an order. You might want to suggest he increase Hospice's share to \$20. I know he will feel a lot better giving more.

Thank you to everyone who has responded with donations/pledges. We are accepting donations at the *Leader* office until 4 p.m. Friday but if you can't make it in, you can mail a cheque to the *Leader* or directly to *Hospice Renfrew*. You can also make a donation on the *Hospice Renfrew* website. Details below.

The Ride:

The first leg of our ride takes us to Douglas and the Tavern where we will have lunch, a non-alcoholic beverage and a chat with Terry and Evelyn. We plan to leave Eganville between 9:30 and 10 and will arrive in Douglas between 11 and 11:30. After lunch, a few of the firefighters will escort us out of town with the fire trucks. (*Better than the old days when we got chased out of town!*)

As we descend the hill from the tavern, we will be singing:

*May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at our back, pushing us
May the sun shine warmly on our bodies
And until we meet again*

*May the Lord encourage you to place plenty in the palm of our hands
All for a wonderful cause – all for Hospice Renfrew.*

After we cross the Bonnechere River bridge, we'll turn left on to the South McNaughton Line, then make a stop at Cavanagh's Quarry to pick up a donation from Jenny and then it's pretty well straight cycling for a couple of hours through the rich farmlands of Admaston/Bromley and on into Horton before turning onto Butler/Campbell Road and cycling to Highway 60 for the final four kms to Hospice.

We will gladly accept donations along the way if you are out and about, and it will give us a chance to rest. We will make our grand entrance to Renfrew around 2:15 - 2:30 where we expect an official greeting from Mayor Don Eady and emergency services.

The Pitch:

Folks, as chair of the board of *Hospice Renfrew*, I can't tell you how important your support is to a facility run by a dedicated and committed staff and group of volunteers and governed by an equally committed and dedicated board of directors made up of Bill McMahan, Renfrew; Donna Anderson, Arnprior; Leo Hall, Renfrew; George Wade, Burnstown; Karen McEwen, Pembroke; Jamie Cybulski, Renfrew, and Kevin Cherry, Glasgow Station.

Our ride is being done **In Memory** of the more than 750 people who have spent the last leg of their journey on earth at *Hospice Renfrew* and as a tribute to all of our wonderful staff and volunteers.

The End:

We are both fortunate and honoured to be able to help out in a small way to ensure *Hospice Renfrew* is there for others requiring end-of-life care. Many people have asked to join in the future and since Yak has a brand new bike now, we just might make it an annual fall ride. The beauty along the route is the closest you'll come to heaven on earth!

Care - Comfort – Compassion! That's what Hospice Renfrew is all about.

Cheques/donations can be dropped off at The *Leader* until 4 p.m. Friday or at *Hospice Renfrew*.

They can also be mailed to:

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Eganville, ON
K0J 1T0
Att: Cycle Donation

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459 Albert St.
Renfrew, ON
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Att: Cycle Donation

Online at:
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119th Year - No. 17

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

Eganville, Ontario

(\$1.90 plus 10 cents GST) \$2

Construction and traffic woes in Eganville

By Debbi Christinck
 Staff Writer

Eganville—Traffic woes are continuing with the bridge construction and Bonnechere Valley council wants staff to look into a temporary light to help big trucks make a tricky turn.

The proposed lights would deal with traffic coming from Highway 41 and turning right onto John Street at the Northern Credit Union. The turn has created a lot of issues for trucks especially.

"That turn is a nasty turn for the larger trucks to take," Councillor Brent Patrick noted during a committee meeting of council via ZOOM last Tuesday.

"It will help too if we can keep the cars coming up John Street back if the trucks can make the turn," Acting Works Superintendent Jason Zohr told council.

Earlier in the meeting he also informed council the bridge project had encountered some unexpected delays.

"They are behind," he said. "Everything was going great until last week."

Mayor Jennifer Murphy asked if there was a new timeline. However, Mr. Zohr said he did not know what the plans were, but additional work was now required.

Councillor Tim Schison said it was especially important to look at finding a better solution for the hard right turn onto John Street. It was then that Mr. Zohr said there could be lights put in place to direct traffic flow better. Having the lights keeping traffic back on John Street would make the turn easier, he explained.

"It is an extremely tough turn to make," Coun Schison said, adding other job sites have temporary lights so this could work.

As well, he noted there are people who have asked "why the bridge is out again?"

Mr. Zohr said it is a maintenance issue.

"It is something that had to be addressed because of how the deck was starting to deteriorate," he said.

Coun Schison pointed out proper maintenance and repair of bridges is especially important.

Mayor Murphy said people have been very patient with the detour. However, the construction zones are always challenging, she admitted.

"We received a very hefty grant through the connecting link project to do this," he said.

Councillor Merv Buckwald said it will be a challenging turn with traffic lights.

"I don't know how you would set that up," he said.

Mr. Zohr said there are lights on the construction project on Highway 41 and they run on a timer.

The practical application of installing temporary lights will be challenging at the intersection of Highway 41 and John Street, he noted.

"If we put the light on 41 it will back up traffic and be a problem," he said.

He also questioned if anything has been put on GPS mapping to allow for detours around the construction.

"That larger trucks can go down Grattan Road," he said.

CAO Annette Gilchrist said she has put the information on the Municipal 511 site and could provide more updates for GPS.

Council directed Mr. Zohr to look into lights for the intersection to allow for a smoother flow of traffic and turning for big trucks.



Cycling For Hospice

The Twins, Leader Publisher Gerald Tracey (Danny DeVito) and MPP John Yakabuski (Arnold Schwarzenegger), pedalled from Eganville to Hospice Renfrew last Friday, raising thousands of dollars for the six-bed county facility. Shown with The Twins are Marjory Joly, left, Executive Director of Hospice Renfrew, and Wendy Hewitt, Clerical Assistant, who had special t-shirts made up for the event. The Twins expect to reach their goal of raising \$40,000. Mr. Tracey is chair of the board of Hospice Renfrew. See Pages 2 and 3 for stories and photos of the fun trip.

Councillor questions extra pay for fellow council member in a testy exchange

By Debbi Christinck
 Staff Writer

Eganville—Public discussions on salary, wages and compensation are never easy ones, but things became especially uncomfortable at Bonnechere Valley council when one councillor questioned why another is getting paid extra.

"I think it is unfair to the ratepayer that one councillor is billing the taxpayer to go to committee meetings where, for example, I went to 22 committee meetings last year and Merv (Councillor Merv Buckwald) goes to plenty and Tim (Councillor Tim Schison) goes to plenty too," Councillor Brent Patrick said at a ZOOM committee meeting of council last Tuesday afternoon. "Just because you can do something does not mean you should."

The councillor he was referring to was Councillor Jack Roesner who was in the process of presenting a report from the Police Services Board (PSB) where he sits as a member and representative from council. Ironically perhaps, Coun. Roesner had been re-

porting how the police find COVID-19 was making relationships more testy within families and with neighbours. In the past there had been some rather lively exchanges between the two BV councillors, but things have been smoother as of late.

Coun. Patrick began his exchange by asking from the perspective of a township resident and taxpayer.

"As a ratepayer, do you charge for the Police Service Board meetings?" he asked. "Do you bill the ratepayers for your time?"

Coun. Roesner replied it was according to policy, but Coun. Patrick did not agree.

"So our policy of pretty much \$1,000 a month covers our committee..." said Coun. Patrick.

He was referring to the remuneration system for council which was approved by the last council and was brought in for this council. Under the old system members of council billed for meetings and committees and there was always a great disparity among council remuneration and expenses because some members of council would bill for more meetings and items than others. Instead, the new system which was recommended by an independent group suggested a flat salary system so there is no question of billing.

However, Mayor Jennifer Murphy was quick to interject the PSB falls outside these parameters.

"The Police Services Board is governed by the province," she said. "It is not our policy."

This explanation did little to appease Coun. Patrick.

"As a ratepayer if we are going to nickel and dime..." he said.

He said councillors are paid \$1,000 for meetings and committee each month.

"I don't think one councillor should be billing the ratepayers for something," he said.

Mayor Murphy repeated PSB members are paid in accordance with provincial stipulations.

"Another member of the Police Ser-

VICES Board did not want to get paid and our suggestion was we will pay you and you can donate it back to whatever you want," she said.

The mayor said the BV policy is councillors are not paid for committee meetings. However, the PSB is different.

"If that councillor wants to donate the - I'm not sure how much we pay them. \$50 three times a year? -back to the township that is on them," she said.

The council pay is based on not being paid for meetings, she said. Coun. Roesner indicated he has attended two PSB meetings so far this year.

Coun. Patrick said he just wanted things to be fair.

"We agreed we would be paid a salary and that is that," Mayor Murphy said.

"It does not matter if I go to two committee a month or 20 committees. We get paid the same. The Police Services Board happens to be a different ball game."

Coun. Roesner did not respond to the comments but continued to discuss his PSB report.

Another member of the Police Ser-

Quinn is drafted by Sabres
 See Page 16

Canoeers rescued near Pembroke

Pembroke—Two individuals who were left stranded on Cushing Island Monday afternoon were rescued by the Pembroke Fire Department's Water Rescue Unit.

The department was called out at about 3:30 p.m. after receiving a report of a capsized canoe due to heavy winds and high waves.

The Pembroke FD was dispatched to assist the Laurentian Valley Fire Department near Heron Drive.

After rescuing the two from the island, they were transported to the Heron Drive Boat launch, where the LV firefighters and Renfrew County Paramedics assisted them.

The rescue boat then returned to the scene to retrieve the capsized canoe, which was hung up on rocks near the island.

Man dies after pulled from water

Killaloe—One of three men who were paddling across Opeongo Lake in Algonquin Provincial Park Saturday died in hospital several hours after he was pulled from the water.

Xing Lin, 32, of Toronto, was pulled from the water, unconscious. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation efforts were conducted by witnesses and conservation officers and the victim male was transported to hospital but later died.

Provincial police from Killaloe responded to a report of a capsized canoe at Opeongo Lake at about 4:20 p.m. Two of the three males in the canoe were towed safely to shore after their canoe encountered rough waters and ultimately overturned.

Police said the deceased was part of a larger group who had planned to paddle across Opeongo Lake and camp for the night. Investigation has determined that the deceased was wearing a life jacket. A post mortem has been ordered. Police have deemed this incident as non-suspicious at this time.

EDPS student tests positive, class and some staff ordered to isolate at home

Pembroke—The Renfrew County District School Board was notified Tuesday by Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) that a student at Eganville District Public School tested positive for COVID-19. The health unit has directed a class of students and a number of staff to go home immediately and self-isolate.

The school remains open to in-person learning for all other students and the district is working closely with RCDHU to ensure necessary measures continue to be in place to protect all staff and students. This includes

cleaning and disinfecting all items touched by the individual and removing and storing items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected (paper, books, etc.). All cleaning protocols have been implemented by the facilities staff.

The health unit will contact the parents/guardians of classmates of the student who has tested positive to provide them with direction and guidance on next steps. If you are not directly contacted by RCDHU then your child is not a close contact and should not be at increased risk from COVID-19. However, parents are asked to

self-monitor their children for symptoms.

All students directed to self-isolate will receive support to maintain school work during the self-isolation period and will receive ongoing communication directly from Eganville District Public School.

There was a Thanksgiving weekend jump in the number of COVID-19 cases diagnosed in Renfrew County, bringing the total number of cases to 67 since the outbreak began in March.

The weekend saw a jump of seven cases since 60 cases were reported on Friday and

67 on Tuesday following the Thanksgiving Monday holiday.

According to information released by the Renfrew County and District Health Unit, there are currently eight active cases, all of whom are in self-isolation. This means 58 cases are listed as resolved and there remains one death in the county because of COVID.

The health unit reports they have conducted 30,339 tests so far. The largest number of reported cases are in Renfrew and area were 27 cases have been reported.



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Cycling for care, comfort and compassion for Hospice

By Johanna Zomers

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Eganville -- The journey began auspiciously (or was that suspiciously?) as the mismatched fundraising cycle team nicknamed *The Twins* (after the movie of the same name starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito) interrogated each other on a beautiful brisk Friday morning at the *Leader* office.

"Did you take your heart medication?" John Yakabuski, MPP and Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry demanded of Gerald Tracey. "I did," replied the sportily dressed spandex-clad publisher of the *Eganville Leader*. "Randy Penney wants you to have a urine test if you make it as far as Renfrew Victoria Hospital. Just to make sure you're not on steroids."

"Is there a defibrillator in the vehicle?" they both ask the Killaloe OPP officer, Const. Julie Bourgoin, who would be escorting them out of the village and onto Fourth Chute Road, the first leg of their planned 40-km route.

The first challenges have been surmounted. A team of three (all suitably masked) have successfully strapped a too-small helmet to Gerald Tracey's head and *Yak*, as Mr. Yakabuski is commonly known, has survived a near catapult over the handlebars while he figures out which brake is front and which is rear. Now they're off in a blaze of orange t-shirts with the Assante-sponsored "Cycling for Hospice Renfrew" slogan on the front.

Unprepared and untrained, they immediately exhibit their unique cycling styles. Gerald, on a borrowed bicycle, has a knees-apart-pumping-madly technique. He resembles a kid's wind-up toy. On one of his six practice runs "one in reality and five in my dreams", Gerald encountered Chris Hinsperger, an avid cyclist, who took one look at the off-road wide-tired bicycle and suggested a



Hospice Renfrew cyclists MPP John Yakabuski and Gerald Tracey were greeted in Douglas by members of the Douglas St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee. On the truck from left, Preston Cull, Bill McHale, Mr. Cull's daughter, Ella Mae, and Art Jamieson. Missing from photo: Mr. Cull's wife, Terry

legislature. He stays on the straight and narrow, upright, with a minimum of wasted motion. Gerald bobs and weaves enthusiastically from one side of the road to the other across the meaningless yellow line.

Fortunately, there is little traffic and what there is often stops to hand over cheques and cash when they realize the purpose of the journey.

The two are making good time along this picturesque back road. Rob Jamieson's shaggy herd of

Hewitt (Clerical Assistant) of Hospice Renfrew, and more donations flow in from motorists stopping in the parking lot at the Bonnechere Caves. A few miles further, on the outskirts of Douglas, they are met by the St. Patrick's Parade committee of Preston Cull, Billy McHale and Art Jamieson, along with Preston's wife, Terry, and daughter, Ella Mae.

From the outskirts of Douglas, *The Twins* are escorted with a fanfare of toe-tapping music, an Irish flag wav-

ing important cabinet meeting because I'll probably have to tow Gerald into Renfrew," *Yak* explained. "The premier said he knows that fundraising for Hospice is an important task but he says don't have a heart attack because I need you."

The term hospice means "end of life care" and is designed to give supportive care to people (and their families) in the final phase of a terminal illness and to focus on comfort and quality of life, rather than cure. Over 750 people and their families have received superb care and comfort in their final days from the caring staff at Hospice Renfrew over the past 11 years.

"The community has to raise over \$400,000 each year to cover the shortfall in government funding," Gerald reminded the socially distanced little group gathering over Evelyn McHale's delicious lunch in the Irish-themed beverage room.

There was a little scuffle over the issue of masks... not about whether they should be worn but rather whether it should be a *KIOTI* mask from Bromley Farm Supply or the controversial *Preston Cull Auctions* face-covering which Gerald claimed had earned him a stern reprimand from Father Ken O'Brien who told him, "Don't be coming to Mass at St. James in Eganville wearing a mask from Preston Cull who attends St. Michael's in Douglas!"

Despite this little flurry of parish rivalry, the parade committee of Cull, Jamieson and McHale handed over \$500 to the Hospice fund amid the usual good-natured insults and jocularity.

"Let's get out of town this time without a police escort," Gerald and John said. "We've had many a good night here in the past that we'd like to forget and I'm sure that Terry McHale would also like to forget!" They are escorted down the hill

by the sirens of the Douglas Fire Department, encouraged by Jimmy McHale on a feisty little scooter. Despite their hearty lunch of sandwiches, vegetables, fruit, shrimp and a delicious cake baked by Mrs. Cull, the first uphill stretch on the South McNaughton Line was no challenge as they coasted alongside the fire truck furtively holding on to the side mirror and chatting with Billy, only swerving to miss the horse buns on this stretch of freshly paved road, a blessing for their rear-ends.

Past colourful barn quilts, past a huge but disinterested Limousin bull, past a hopeful dog bouncing in his pen hoping to give chase and on to Cavanagh's quarry where another donation was waiting. Indeed, the entire trip is punctuated by people coming by to hand over money and cheques.

Despite the jovialities, this ride isn't totally a piece of cake for either Gerald or John, both of whom spend most of their days at their desks or in a vehicle. Their Ottawa Valley ability to find joy and even humour amidst difficulties exemplifies the spirit of Hospice Renfrew. Many think of hospice care as a serious time full of sadness but families remember the incredible atmosphere of comfort and kindness that surrounded them.

"It's ironic," Gerald says "that a place for the dying is so full of life and hope. That's what sustains people during that difficult time of losing a loved one."

By the unharvested cornfields, past stately old farmhouses, the long view ahead reveals the distant water tower in Renfrew, a welcome sight for sore legs. A slight downward grade brings *Yak's* well documented love of speed to the forefront. They are dangerously close to each other racing down the hill! If one of them goes down, they both go down, just like the peloton pileups on the *Tour de France!* With the wind whistling past their ears in their classic low crouch over the handlebars, they look heroic, almost as if they know what they are doing!

Time for a quick rest which turns into a contest of 20 push ups each on the yellow line.

"My legs are feeling a bit rubbery," John says. "If you want to know where the potholes are on a road, go for a bike ride," he announces.

"So, get us a grant to fix them," Gerald retorts, adding "I hope there's a bed free at the hospice. I might need to lie down for a nap."

A few miles further and a side road takes them over to Highway 60 with its speeding convoys of shiny trucks, large and small. The plan here is to stop on the edge of town at the old Butson's Valley Hotel location to trade their bicycles for a photogenic bicycle built-for-two (loaned from Greystone Manor on Golden Lake) to complete the ride to Hospice with signs carrying Assante Financial Pembroke's slogan - *Supporting the Financial Health of Hospice Renfrew* - strapped to the front and rear. But *Yak* takes one look at the old-fashioned two-seater and says, "I am not riding that thing on the highway!"

After a short consultation, they decide they'll get on the tandem bike when they get closer to the Hospice. And so, they do, but the back seat is too low for John and the front seat is too high for Gerald. *Twins*, eh? They

almost make it across the parking lot before a bolt on the front forks lets go and the wheel comes loose.

Yes, the wheels have come off but not before Gerald's inspired "Twins" fundraising project and *Yak's* enthusiastic participation has garnered almost \$35,000 for Hospice Renfrew in a time where most fundraising efforts have had to be cancelled because of COVID-19.

As the *Twins* completed their journey along Health Village Lane and Albert Street, escorted by two trucks from the Renfrew Fire Department and a paramedic unit, the riders are greeted by Hospice staff, volunteers and Renfrew Mayor, Don Eady. Applause, congratulations and plans, of course, already afoot to make it a bigger and better ride with more participants next year! While self-congratulating themselves on their hours of noble exertion, it was noted that the actual pedalling time was about 2:15 hours if one eliminated the tomfoolery along the way! Not bad for a couple of Valley Boys accustomed to spending most of their days on their butts!

Yes, the inaugural *Twins* ride of 2020 has been completed without serious incident but the need for additional funds is ongoing. Donations can be made one of three ways, by mail, by phone or online:

Mail to: The Eganville Leader
Box 310
Eganville, ON
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Att: Cycle Donation
or
Hospice Renfrew
459 Albert St.
Renfrew, ON
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Att: The Twins Team
Online: <https://hospicerenfrew-events.micharity.com/>
The Twins Team
By phone: 613-433-3993, ext. 2234 or ext. 2229.



Killaloe OPP Constable Julie Bourgoin escorted the cyclists out of Eganville on their way to Fourth Chute Road.

more modern and efficient bike. His wife Val's to be precise.

Yak, roped in only days before, tall and stately on a brand-new bicycle assembled by Ray Pilon's team at Canadian Tire in Pembroke, rides with dignity (once he found the correct gear!) as befitting his position as a cabinet minister in the provincial

swooping horned cattle add a touch of the Scottish Highlands to the landscape and the morning dew glistens on the autumn grass much as the perspiration glows on the brows of the pedallers. There is a brief rest, imbibing bottled water from the support team of Marjorie Joly (Executive Director) and Wendy

ing from Cull's truck adorned with green tinsel, and the shamrocks on Preston's signature green suit shining in the sun.

In the parking lot of the Douglas Tavern, Art Jamieson insisted that *Yak* get the Premier of Ontario on the phone.

"I apologized for missing an



The cyclists were joined by Jim McHale in Douglas on a motorized scooter, for their escort from the village, but he was soon left behind in a cloud of dust.



Douglas Tavern owners, Terry and Evelyn McHale had a hearty lunch waiting for *The Twins* when they arrived at the Douglas Tavern.



The cyclists received an escort out of Douglas from Douglas firefighter Billy McHale.

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Mayor Eady, FD greet Hospice cyclers on the home stretch

By Bruce McIntyre
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Renfrew -- Although the tandem bike meant to carry the devoted cyclists fell short of its mission, Messrs. Tracey and Yakabuski did not let a mechanical mishap get in the way of finishing their journey. As they gathered in a Renfrew Victoria Hospital parking lot on Health Care Village Lane just a few hundred metres from Hospice Renfrew, *The Twins*, along with some members of their support team that accompanied them much of the way, hopped back on their individual bikes for the final stretch.

Led by Renfrew Fire Department Chief Kevin Welsh, *The Twins* rounded the corner onto Albert Street and made their way to the main entrance of the hospice where a crowd of cheering and appreciative supporters were waiting for them. With a Renfrew fire depart-

ment truck and a Renfrew County Paramedic vehicle close behind, they drove up to the front door and got off their bikes for the final time.

Renfrew Mayor Don Eady was among those gathered and he expressed his thanks to the cyclists. "We look at these two gentlemen and what we see is true leadership," he said. "I am talking about true community leadership and what they are doing is coming straight from the heart. Even though this hospice is located in Renfrew, it is a county building and today you gentlemen did this for everyone in the county."

Mayor Eady shared his family's story of his Aunt Mabel Eady who spent her final days in hospice and even though she passed away in February, his family still fundraises and it shows just how important the facility is.

"I spent some time inside this

incredible building and I just can't say enough about the dedication and the level of care she and so many others received and it is in part only possible because of the efforts of you gentlemen and so many others. So on behalf of the Town of Renfrew, I just want to thank you John and Gerald for your effort."

Mr. Tracey said the bike ride brought not only a great sense of satisfaction, but a few surprises along the way.

"From the time we left Eganville, where we were escorted out of town by police, we had people beeping their horns and waving all along the way showing their support," he said. "The funny thing is this little venture only came about a week ago. I was going to do a solo ride and John called me and suggested that maybe he should join me."

He thanked Ray Pilon, owner of the Pembroke Canadian Tire



Hospice staff and volunteers along with Renfrew Mayor Don Eady welcomed *The Twins* at the end of their ride.



The Twins were escorted on the final leg of their fundraising trek by members of the Renfrew Fire Department and County of Renfrew paramedics.

store for quickly getting a bike built for his partner and he also extended thanks to Bonnechere Caves owner Chris Hinsperger for providing him with a proper bike for the trek. He said they were just two examples of the community support for the ride.

"In just a week I think we will have raised somewhere between \$25,000 to \$30,000 (as of Friday morning) and that is because it is from the people who believe in the wonderful services of Hospice Renfrew," he said. "Commitment, dedication, compassion, care and comfort is why we do this. When you see what goes on here, and I know it is going to sound strange, but it makes dying quite an experience. The care that is given here is unreal and there really are no words to describe just how special this facility is unless you have had a loved one here."

Mr. Tracey said he fielded a number of calls from people who wanted to join him on his ride, but with the uncertainty of COVID, he said it couldn't be done this year.

"I am hoping we can turn this into an annual fall ride and perhaps have up to 100 or 200 cyclists take part," he said. "We do depend on community support and this would be one way to keep it in the public eye."

Mr. Yakabuski said it had been at least 45 years since he had spent a great deal of time on a bike and he joked that although better sense would have seen him keep quiet, he immediately said he wanted to take part without realizing he had neither

the proper bike or training for the journey.

"At first I wasn't sure if I could actually do it, but it ended up being easier than I thought," he said. "I was here when it (Hospice Renfrew) first opened and I can't tell you how many people I have met over the years who have told me just how special this place is and how fortunate we are to have Hospice Renfrew."

"It has been specifically designed to make those final days or weeks as comfortable as possible and there really is no other place like it anywhere."

He said that although he has never had a direct relative spend their final days at hospice, he understands the value of the facility and why it is so important to be part of this fundraising event.

"I have never had a close relative here, but that could happen anytime, it could even happen tomorrow," he said. "But I sure understand what it means to the families of people who have someone here. And that is why I say thank you very much for all you do and you are doing God's work in there and I am so pleased to have been part of this effort today."

With a number of Hospice board members, volunteers and staff present, *The Twins* posed for one last photograph before packing up their bikes and heading back home to kick off their shoes and cycling gear and relax.

As the *Leader* goes to press, *The Twins* are confident they will reach their \$40,000 goal.

DON'T LET THE BEEP STEAL YOUR SLEEP

Remember the Law. It's time to replace your CO Alarm.



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