

Pedaling for Parkinsons exceeds fundraising target



Submitted photo

Cyclists preparing for the Sunday, July 17, 110 km ride that looped to Rosseau, Minett and Foothills Bay and back are from left, John Rynard, Kevin Barks, Uli Simon, Evi Donevan, David Bialkowski, Greg Edgar, Rob Donevan, Moe Rynard, Peter Istvan, David Newall, Gregg Connor, Norbert Kraft, Marie Faughnan and Chuck Gravely. Other participants included Tim Graves, Zack Crafts, Ian Scott and Wayne McGill.



Charlene Peck photo

The Pedaling for Parkinson's rides began Friday morning, July 15, with a 120 km jaunt out Highway 124. Shown heading out from the Parry Sound Mall, from left, are event organizers David Newall, and Peter Istvan and Parry Sound Nacho Average Triathlon Club liaison for the event Tim Graves.

BY CHARLENE PECK

The first Parry Sound Pedaling for Parkinsons has exceeded the fundraising target, with overwhelming support of close to \$17,000.

"It has exceeded our expectations above and beyond - this is fantastic," said Peter Istvan of Parry Sound, who organized the event with David Newall.

The initial target was \$15,750 and as of Thursday morning, July 21, donations were

still coming in, to bring the total raised to \$16,687.

"We actually set a Canadian record for the amount raised in a Parkinson's Society fundraiser at this level," says Istvan, explaining that the society distinguishes between its large Super Walk and personally-initiated Parkinson's Society fundraisers organized at the grassroots community level.

Organizers have requested that all the money raised go into research. Currently,

there is no cure for the neurodegenerative disease.

Over the three days, 20 different cyclists supported this new fundraising event tallying 1,000 pedal strokes, the equivalent of one for every person in Canada diagnosed with this. The routes on July 15, 16 and 17 took riders from Parry Sound out Highway 124 and back; from Parry Sound to Gravenhurst and

back; and from Parry Sound looping around Rosseau, Minett, Foothills Bay and back.

Smiles permeated the pack of cyclists throughout the three days.

"Obviously I like riding, but the reason why we were riding was pretty cool," says Istvan. Organizers are considering holding the Parry Sound Pedaling for Parkinson's event again next year.

Get Off The Bus concerts will support health centre foundation

Healey Lake resident and owner of Haljoe Coach, Joe Bamford, has had a long and varied career in the music and entertainment industry.

This summer, he will be bringing Get Off The Bus concerts to the Stockey Centre, and will be donating all proceeds to the West Parry Sound Health Centre Foundation.

Bamford started in the music business as a concert promoter while attending high

school in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

After becoming the first licensed booking agent in eastern Canada, he moved to Toronto, and, after a short time as an agent, formed a management partnership that managed such popular bands as The Kings, Glass Tiger, Leslie Spit Treco and The Headstones.

"While managing Glass Tiger in the mid-eighties, I recognized a need in the music industry and purchased my first tour bus,"

says Bamford. "It was a small bus that we called Paradise but it got us to where we needed to go."

Over the past 22 years, that business has grown to 30 plus buses on both sides of the US/Canada border and has carried entertainers such as: Leonard Cohen, Elton John, Bruce Cockburn, Sarah McLachlan, Jann Arden, Blue Rodeo, The Tragically Hip, Rain, Broken Social Scene, Barra MacNeils, Trailer Park Boys, Johnny Reid, Guess Who, Sloan, Leahy...

Haljoe Coach's head office is currently in MacTier, Ontario.

Ten years ago, Bamford, along with his

wife, Fatima, purchased a cottage on Healey Lake near MacTier. Undertaking a major renovation project in 2009, the cottage is now a lake house where Joe and Fatima enjoy the summer months.

"As I was thinking about heading back to our lake house this summer, I thought, 'Wouldn't it be fun to do some concerts in Parry Sound with some people who have traveled on our buses over the years?'" says Bamford.

"I was inspired by my daughter, who fundraises relentlessly for the Canadian Cancer Society with a variety of events through her Relay For Life team called Harley's Heroes.

This year, she had East Coast comedian, Jimmy Flynn as the headliner for one of her events and I decided to give him a call since I'd booked him back in the early days of my career when I was still on the East Coast. Jimmy asked if there was any potential to bring his show to our area and the idea of "Get Off the Bus Concerts" was born."

The Get Off the Bus entertainment line coming to the Stockey Centre in Parry Sound on August 18, 29 and 31, includes the hand clapping, foot stomping comedy show with the East Coast's Jimmy Flynn, to the dazzling harmonies and smooth arrangements of The Nylons and the passion and soul of JJ Grey & Mofro.

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