



Scott McKague puts on a Coldest Night of the Year toque. He heads up the Coldest Night event locally.

Woodstock cold walk will boost shelter

By Eric Schmiedl

They'll be braving a cold night's walk for a good cause.

The Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) fundraiser is coming to Woodstock on the evening of Feb. 20, 2021, to raise money in support of Operation Sharing's Inn homeless shelter. The Inn runs nightly starting at 7:30 p.m. at Old St. Paul's Anglican Church in Woodstock and serves homeless people throughout Oxford County.

As of Dec. 15, eight teams involving a total of 34 walkers had signed up. Scott McKague, Woodstock event director, said he is thrilled with the \$6,000 raised so far. Since the event is in its infancy in the Friendly City, the fundraising target for 2021 is \$20,000. How the funds will be spent is up to Operation Sharing.

"CNOY began in 2011, and we're thrilled that Woodstock is joining this year. 2021 will be our

Continued on page 2

Woodstock cold walk will boost shelter

Continued from page 1

largest year ever across Canada with over 160 charities,” said Mika Takamaki, corporate and community partnerships director with Coldest Night.

“Woodstock has shown itself to be a generous community, and that bodes well for CNOY. With its population of 40,000, Woodstock is the perfect size for a great Coldest Night, as people most likely know of someone who will be positively touched by their generosity. And who knows, not that people in Woodstock are competitive or anything, but we do have walks in London and Stratford, so maybe a little competition will move the needle as well,” Takamaki said in an email.

McKague, who lives in Innerkip but walked in the Kitchener Coldest Night for several years, said competition is nothing new for the charity.

Walkers in the Kitchener and Toronto walks have competed for years with their totals coming in at

nearly \$200,000 each, supporting their respective area shelters.

As for him, McKague didn’t know quite what to expect in heading a Woodstock walk for the first time.

“This is totally uncharted territory for me,” he said.

The five-kilometre Woodstock walk will start and end at the Inn shelter, going along Norwich Avenue to the Wal-Mart area. There will also be a two-kilometre walk going along part of the same route – a 10-kilometre walk has been cancelled due to COVID-19. Walkers under 18 who raise \$75 will get a CNOY toque, as will those 18 and over who raise \$150.

There are several corporate sponsors in the works, with Cambridge-based Logikor being the lead sponsor.

For more information or to participate, look up cnoy.org or contact McKague at smckague@logikor.com or 519-221-5836 (mobile).

New facilitator of Bullwinkle’s Eatery



John R. Smith

The Bullwinkle’s Eatery and Hospitality Training Centre has a new person at the helm.

John R. Smith officially became facilitator of the eatery in November, replacing Vanessa Page in the role.

Smith is no stranger to the eatery, which currently runs out of College Avenue United Church. He has been with Bullwinkle’s for several

years, and has been known as the man behind its soups. His favourites are bell pepper and potato bacon.

“My responsibilities have increased. I’m happy about that,” he said, and he is backed by a team “with a wealth of knowledge.”

Bullwinkle’s is valuable in the community as it serves people in need, Smith said.

Call 519-539-3361 for information about any of our programs.

Hello again

His eyes sparkled and he flashed a smile as he looked at me. It was the first time I had seen my father in 18 years.

“Hello, son,” he said warmly. My father had always had a bit of a gruff side but he genuinely loved me and I could tell from looking at him that hadn’t changed.

“Bips? Is it really you?” I had called him by that nickname for years.

He stood under a green, leafy maple tree and started walking towards me. The sun shone overhead in a cloudless, beautiful blue sky. Birds chirped in the distance.

“Yes, it’s me. Is it so hard to believe that I’ve come back for a visit?” Bips opened his powerful arms and embraced me. It was Bips, all right ... no one else hugged like that.

“We have so much to talk about,” Bips said. “It’s been a long time,” he said in his thick, Germanic accent.

The last time we were together was in a darkened hospital room on a Tuesday night. He was ravaged by pancreatic cancer and had already lost a leg some time before. Seated next to his bed, I held his right hand in mine while reading a book – I believe it was an Alfred Hitchcock paperback. His breathing was shallow and he was struggling. Eventually, at about 9 p.m., that breathing stopped. Alarmed, I sought out a nurse who confirmed my father had indeed passed away.

I always thought his passing was a bit out of keeping with the man. He was always so strong, so vibrant and outspoken. For this powerhouse of a person to slip away so silently was almost beyond belief.

Yet, here he was – young and whole. And I couldn’t be happier to see him.

“Bips, where have you been?”

“Everywhere ... all over the place. And nowhere at the same time.”

I didn’t quite understand that, although it made perfect sense. Bips had always been interested in the universe and all that was in it ... the stars, black holes and galaxies. For a man like him to comment that he was everywhere and nowhere was a proper fit.

“Bips, do you remember us talking about the universe?”

“Of course, I do, son. And I remember other things as well ... how about the time we went fishing and lost the oars to the rowboat? We didn’t know how we’d get back to shore, but we did after all.”

I laughed at that memory.

“Bips, remember taking me to the comic shops when I was a little boy? I was so interested in superheroes that each month, when the new comics came out, I’d drag you to the shops to get the new comic magazines.”

“How can I forget? It’s a memory I often think of.”

So many memories to discuss. And yet, I felt our time together was fleeting. Bips seemed to realize this. “Do you remember when I said, there is no God, I swear to God?” Bips asked.

I nodded, smiling at the memory of that.

“Well,” Bips continued, “I was wrong.” With that, Bips started walking away from me.

“Where are you going?” I asked.

“Everywhere and nowhere,” he replied. “Don’t worry, son, we will meet again. Now it’s time for you to wake up.”

With that, I awoke. Bips and I were closer than ever, I thought, even though I hadn’t seen him for 18 years.

— *Short story by Eric Schmiedl, Writers’ Café/
Expressive Arts coordinator*

Call 519-539-3361 for information about any of our programs.

The word 'bride' in old English meant cook



Dragonflies have 6 legs but can't walk.



M U D O N F I R E

Solve this conundrum

Discumgalligumfricated is an old American word which means very greatly astonished but pleased



L E T S R E S T

Solve the teaser ~ 'Let's rest here,' they said.
And they have been there ever since.

(Japanese): TSUNDOKU - the practice of buying a pile of books and then not getting around to reading them.

Happiness starts with you – not with your relationships, not with your job, not with your money, but with you.

It is not always easy to find happiness in ourselves, but it is always impossible to find it elsewhere.

Regardless of the situation you face, your attitude is your choice.

Remember, you can't have a positive life with a negative attitude.

Ian's A.P.S.A.L.M.

By Ian Robinson of the Writers' Café/Expressive Arts

Spring

Colourful flowers
Beautiful butterflies
Trees blowing in the wind
Walking by the lake
Watching the sun rise

The beautiful rainforest
Listen to the water fall
And the flowers growing tall

—Poem by Tara Myers, Writers' Café/Expressive Arts participant

Bullwinkle's

WOODSTOCK – Running temporarily out of College Avenue United Church, takeout lunches are available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and

Thursdays (from noon to 1 p.m.) at the Bullwinkle's Eatery.

People are asked to donate a minimum of \$1 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On Wednesdays, lunches are free.

Food for Friends

OXFORD COUNTY – Please remember to give your 25 cents each time you shop at supporting grocery stores in Woodstock and Ingersoll through the year.

Call 519-539-3361 for information about any of our programs.