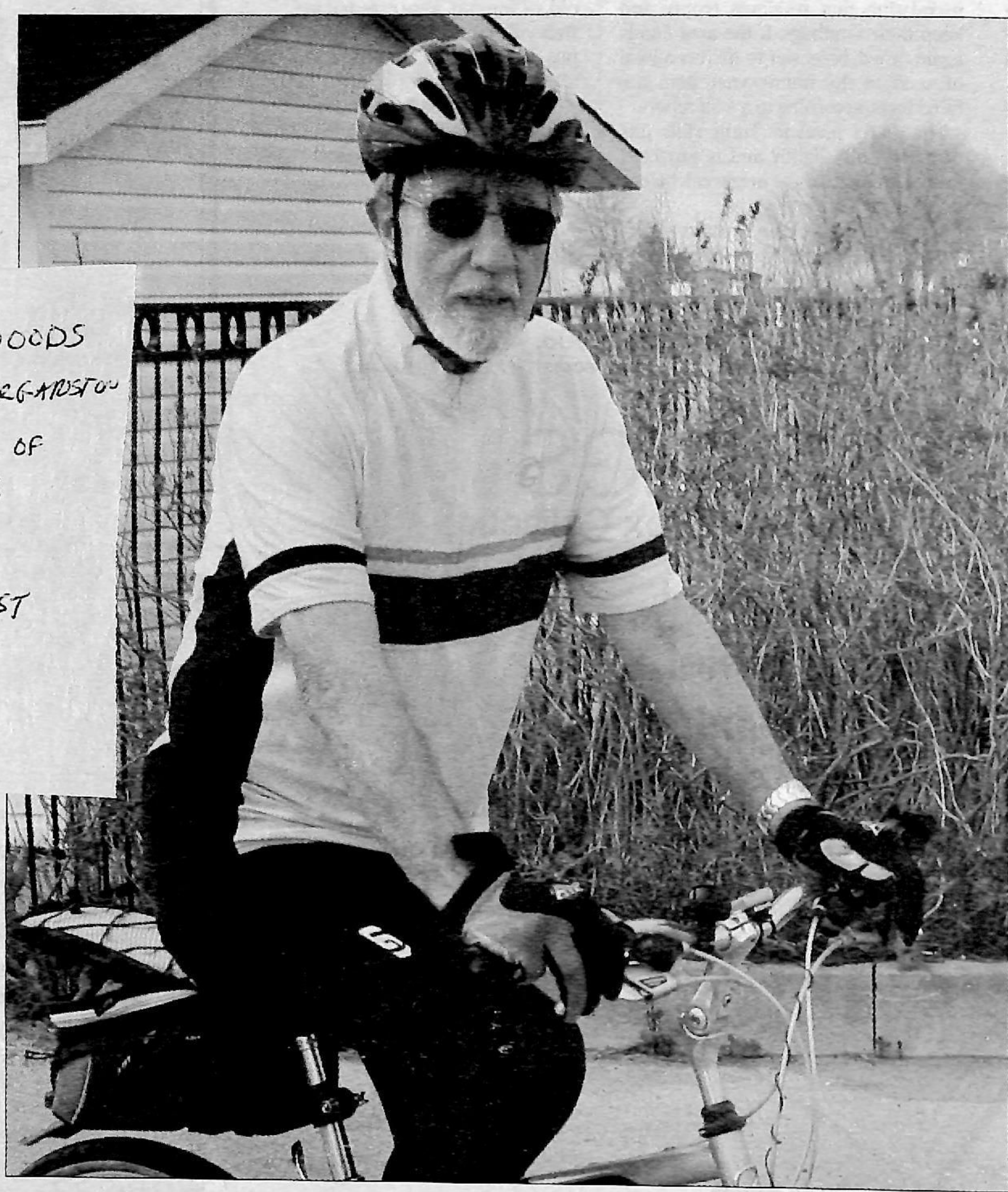


Thanks for a second chance

Grahame Woods gives back to hospital for saving his life



GRAHAME WOODS
LIVED IN MORGANTOWN
FOR A NUMBER OF
YEARS
WROTE
BLOODY HARVEST
& other titles

Matt Milne/Northumberland News

Cobourg resident Grahame Woods is biking to raise money to buy a new defibrillator for the Northumberland Hills Hospital. Mr. Woods suffered a heart attack in 2002 and was saved by NHH emergency staff.

By Matt Milne
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COBOURG - A Cobourg resident is cycling to raise funds to express his gratitude for something very precious from the hospital — his life.

In June 2002, Grahame Woods nearly died when he suffered a serious heart attack, but was saved by the efforts of emergency room staff at the Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH). Today Mr. Woods wants to give back to the organization that gave him his second chance at life.

His 'Thanks For Life' bike tour will raise money for the NHH Foundation to buy new defibrillators to replace the aging ones currently in use — the very devices that helped save his life six years ago.

"I really wanted to do something connected to emergency and the ICU, so when I heard about the need for new defibrillators it seemed quite fitting," he said.

The new state-of-the-art Lifepak20 defibrillators cost around \$21,000 each. To raise the funds, Mr. Woods will collect pledges and bike across Cobourg every day this summer, weather-permitting. He is confident he can cover 2,500 kilometres over the course of the season, since he biked over 2,000 km last year. This time around, he's pedalling with a

purpose.

NHH Foundation Executive Director Rhonda Cunningham said when Mr. Woods pitched the idea, the foundation wholeheartedly supported it. Efforts of citizens like Mr. Woods are integral parts of the hospital's fundraising plans, said Ms. Cunningham.

"The foundation really relies on citizens and community members stepping up to provide funds through programs like these. If you take a walk through the hospital most of the equipment you see was bought this way," she said.

Mr. Woods said he does not have a specific dollar goal, noting the foundation's cash needs are substantial.

"I just want to put as big a dent in it as I can," he explained.

Response from the community so far has been wonderful, he said.

Although no businesses have donated to the ride yet, he said he is confident they will once the word gets out.

Ms. Cunningham said the hospital always has a wish-list of equipment ranging from simple items like IV pumps and stretchers to expensive devices

like MRIs or CT scans. The new defibrillators are at the top of the list, she noted.

The Thanks For Life ride is not the first way Mr. Woods has helped to give back to the community following his brush with death. He also started the Northumberland Cardiac Support Group for people who have suffered a heart attack, have had bypass surgery or a transplant. Mr. Woods said he is quite happy with the way the group has grown to the point where they now need a bigger room at the hospital to hold meetings.

"When I first started the group I thought it would last for a year or two. But now, five years on, I realize there will always be a need for it," Mr. Woods said, adding that all of his recent efforts can be traced back to that fateful night six years ago.

"Having a heart attack is an experience that gets your attention," he said. "You really start to appreciate life and all the little things, like birds singing in the morning."

For more information on how to donate to the ride, contact Mr. Woods at (905)372-6054. For more information on the cardiac support group visit their website at www.heartrecovery.ca

'If you take a walk through the hospital, most of the equipment you see was bought this way (through community fundraising)'
Rhonda Cunningham
NHH Foundation