

# A moment in time

## Reflections on Pope John Paul II

By ANN KORNUA



Burkhard Nowak standing with his awe inspiring photograph he took of St John Paul the Second in a 1984 tour.

In 1984, Milton resident and photographer / restaurant entrepreneur at Harrop House, Burkhard Nowak experienced what he calls "a moment of true goodness" when he captured Pope John Paul II on film in one of his visits to Canada. With John Paul's passing, it is a time to reflect on how he inspired the world and all that he touched. Nowak became known for his photography skills when in 1983, one of his photographs became the Royal Tour poster for Queen Elizabeth's visit to the nation. One year later, when the Pope was on his Tour, Burkhard managed to get a picture of the Pontiff.

Burkhard has always been into photography, even as a child. Back when he was studying film and processing, the field was quite different from the world of computers and digital cameras today. It was far more challenging but just as exciting. "I had an interest in documenting and capturing the moment. I can describe it best as when a writer puts a feeling into words, only I use a camera. One moment will tell you a whole story about that person and it is exciting," Burkhard explained.

In the Harrop House Cottage, Burkhard sits almost twenty years after that passing moment when St John Paul the Second came to Toronto. A magnificent gold leaf frame

holds what Burkhard describes as an awe-striking portrait. Like the old saying goes, a picture says a thousand words and that is true of Burkhard's print.

"It is a dynamic picture," Burkhard describes. "I had positioned myself after mass had finished right on Downsview and I was a metre and a half away from him. I will never forget. I had a wonderful lens, my camera in my hands, he looked straight at me and I did not take the picture!"

Imagine, being right at the center of the action, your camera in hands, the Pope in arms reach and

suddenly being paralysed with excitement. For a moment, Burkhard paused. "There was just good that emanated from him, so accepting, I could see why young people are so attracted to him, he is the ultimate father figure. It was projected from him.

Those were just some exciting moments. That was the most awe stricken moment I have ever had, and I just could not take the picture. There he was looking right into the camera, right into the lens and I was just frozen."

Quickly that moment passed and Burkhard managed to get the photo that he now holds beside him. The photo currently hangs on the wall inside the cottage, an image of a truly magnificent soul never to be forgotten.



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