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Community Page

Hill set to bike 1,200 km to help save trees

Local arbourist will be part of next week's Tour des Trees fundraiser

By GILLIAN CORMIER
 Special to The Champion

Milton's Greg Hill will go the distance for a chance to see more green.

He will cycle a staggering 1,200 km in the Tour des Trees fundraiser in support of urban tree research.

The journey will begin in Jackson, Mississippi and finish in Nashville, Tennessee.

Fifty riders from three or four different countries will participate in the six-day event, which will take place August 1 to 6.

The 52-year-old arbourist owns and operates Maple Hill Tree Services, and so appreciates the need for research into preserving urban trees.

"This is the single largest fundraiser for research on urban trees," he said. "And research is the backbone of my industry."

The Tour des Trees fundraiser, put on by the International Society of Arboriculture, has grossed nearly \$3 million US for urban tree research since its inception 14 years ago. Every year there's a new route in a different location.

Two years ago it was in Canada, with the route beginning in Ottawa, making its way through New York and concluding in Montreal.

Last year, riders raised \$500,000 US, and like always, they will try to beat that figure this year. Each rider must raise a minimum of \$3,500 US, and the money raised by Canadian riders goes into a trust to ensure the funds aid Canadian research projects.

"I do this for two reasons," said Mr. Hill. "One is because I believe in the cause, and the other is to push myself."

He thinks it's far too easy to fall into a lifestyle that doesn't make physical fitness a priority, and doesn't want that to be him.

There seems to be little danger of that. Mr. Hill began biking the tour in 1996, and this will be his sixth Tour des Trees.

As an arbourist, he feels especially close to the cause.

"The reason I think it's important is because we're cutting down trees at an alarming rate around the world and replacing them with parking lots," he said.

As a result, people come to depend of urban trees instead of nearby forests, which are disappearing, to keep the air clean.

"Our climate is getting worse, but people unfortunately aren't so concerned," he

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GREG HILL

said.

The warm temperature is very hard on the Centurions — century-old oaks often found along roadsides in Milton — and he has observed that the tops of these trees have been dying from drought and pollution.

"One of the things I've noticed are the trees we're removing are older, 150 to 200 years old," he said. "They were doing okay until now. It's all happening at once."

A tree will be planted at the beginning of each day of the race, and the riders will have to bike between 150 to 200 km each day to complete the 1,200 km tour in six days.

Training has been a crucial part of Mr. Hill's preparation for the event. He's been riding his bike daily through Milton's hills to get ready.

"The escarpment is an awesome place for training," he said.

Those hills are a geographic approximation of the conditions he will be biking through in Mississippi and Tennessee.

While the event takes up a lot of his time, he said the cause is important enough to justify the sacrifice. And he has fun along the way, too.

"It's not a race, it's a tour, but you put a bunch of guys on a bike and say 'go' and it becomes a race," he said.

Those interested in supporting Mr Hill's efforts are asked to call him at Maple Hill Tree Services at (905) 824-2100.

Greg Hill's love of trees will see him test his stamina with a grueling bike challenge from Mississippi to Tennessee.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE



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Programming Schedule — Tuesday, July 26 - Monday, August 1, 2005

Tuesday, July 26	Wednesday, July 27	Thursday, July 28	Friday, July 29	Saturday, July 30	Sunday, July 31	Monday, August 1
Midnight - 5:00am Plugged In! EXTRA	Midnight - 5:00am Plugged In! EXTRA	Midnight - 5:00am Plugged In! EXTRA	Midnight - 5:00am Plugged In! EXTRA	Midnight - 5:00am Plugged In! EXTRA	Midnight - 5:00am Plugged In! EXTRA	Midnight - 5:00am Plugged In! EXTRA
5:00am - 8:00am TVCogeco Billboard & Weather Radio	5:00am - 8:00am TVCogeco Billboard & Weather Radio	5:00am - 8:00am TVCogeco Billboard & Weather Radio	5:00am - 8:00am TVCogeco Billboard & Weather Radio	5:00am - 8:00am TVCogeco Billboard & Weather Radio	5:00am - 8:00am TVCogeco Billboard & Weather Radio	5:00am - 8:00am TVCogeco Billboard & Weather Radio
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5:00pm - 8:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	1:00pm - 4:00pm Halton Hills Council Jul 11 2005	1:00pm - 4:00pm Milton Council Jul 18 2005	1:00pm - 4:00pm Halton Region Council Jul 13 2005	1:00pm - 4:00pm Halton Region Council Jul 13 2005	10:30am TVCogeco Sports: Jr.B Lacrosse All Star Game	10:30am TVCogeco Sports: Jr.B Lacrosse All Star Game
8:00pm Halton Hills Council Jul 11 2005	4:00pm - 8:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	4:00pm - 8:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	4:00pm - 8:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	2:00pm TVCogeco Sports: Can Wrestling Championships: Prelim. Matches	1:00pm - 5:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	1:00pm - 5:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA
11:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA	8:00pm Milton Council Jul 18 2005	8:00pm Halton Region Council Jul 13 2005	6:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA	4:00pm TVCogeco Sports: Can Wrestling Championships: Gold Medal Matches	5:00pm - 8:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA	5:00pm - 8:00pm Plugged In! EXTRA
	10:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA	11:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA		6:30pm TVCogeco Sports: Pan-Am Jr. Championships	8:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA	8:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA
				10:00pm - Midnight Plugged In! EXTRA		