

COMING UP: Hospitals benefit from horse event

Al's love for riders, charity lives on through ride

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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Al Humphrey loved leading fellow horse riders through the trails around his Vandorf Road tack shop and then feeding them a home-cooked meal.

He also believed in giving back to the Whitchurch-Stouffville area community, so Mr. Humphrey combined his two loves by charging riders \$5 and donating all the money to organizations such as the Community Association for Riding for the Disabled, the Canadian Cancer Society and the Palliative Care Network of York Region.

When Mr. Humphrey died in 2006 from prostate cancer, the riding, feasting and fundraising could have come to an end, but his wife Norma decided to carry on her husband's tradition.

This July 31 marks the fifth annual Al Humphrey Memorial Ride.

"It is a wonderful tribute to his memory," Mrs. Humphrey said.

The riders have raised more than \$60,000.

Every year, the ride's organizing committee chooses two charities. This year's charities are the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation palliative care unit and the Prin-

cess Margaret Hospital Foundation stem cell research fund.

This is the second year Al's Ride has supported stem cell research and it is because of a personal connection.

According to Mrs. Humphrey, about seven years ago a friend of hers was sent home from the hospital to die because her disease had no cure. But a doctor in Ottawa, she said, treated her friend with stem cells and today, that friend is alive and well.

"She's amazing. It's hard to believe that she was given up on and she's come back so well," Mrs. Humphrey said. "I know there's a stigma attached to stem cell research, but it's the blood. Stem cell research today is done with blood, not an infant's umbilical cord."

Although the rides are a financial success, nothing is deducted for expenses and everything is donated, Mrs. Humphrey and the ride committee want to keep it that way, so this year they have instituted a minimum \$100 donation be made by riders, along with the registration fee.

"We're not asking for \$2,000 like cancer research is asking for. Two thousand dollars is a lot to anybody. We think \$100 is doable," Mrs. Humphrey said. "It's just to ensure we're raising the most funds we can raise."

"I really don't think \$100 is out of line. All you need to do is get 10 people to donate

\$10 each."

The three to four-hour 25-kilometre ride through the York Region Forest starts at 8 a.m. with a lunch stop scheduled halfway through at no additional cost to the rider.

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Water for the horses will also be provided.

Registration is \$45 until July 25 and \$65 until July 30. There is no same-day registration available.

Post-ride entertainment, along with a beef barbecue dinner will be offered for \$10 per person.

For people interested in volunteering, contact Norma Humphrey at 905-640-2011 or noral@netrover.com

For more information, go to www.alsride.com



STAFF PHOTO/SUSIE KOCKERSCHIEDT

Norma Humphrey is ready for the fifth annual Al Humphrey Memorial Ride July 31 to benefit the Princess Margaret and Markham Stouffville hospitals' foundations.



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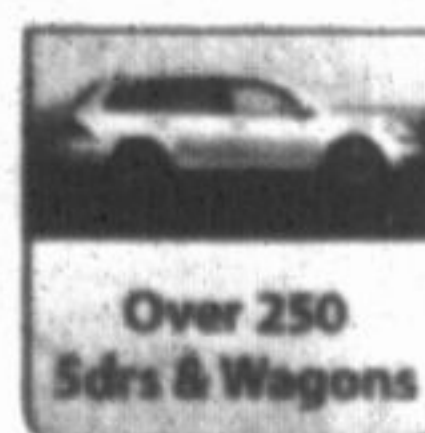
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