



### MAN IN MOTION

Shortly after four they began arriving. There was a feeling of anticipation in the air. As the Seeley's Bay Lions Club members dished up hot dogs and served soft drinks, all eyes kept straying to the highway, watching and waiting. R.E. Wills & Sons broadcast regular reports of Rick's progress over their public address system. And still they came ... mothers with young children, students, business men and farmers, all eager to meet Rick Hansen.

Every face was aglow with anticipation; every murmur held the promise of wonderful things to come ... and come they did. Shortly after six p.m. on Tuesday, October 28th, Rick Hansen wheeled into the Bay Motel to the delight of the large crowd who had been patiently waiting to see this man who had come so far and accomplished so much.

Despite the lines of fatigue etching his face and the weariness born of miles travelled that day, Rick Hansen greeted the crowd with his usual warmth and sincerity. The little village of Seeley's Bay was honoured to be chosen as a resting site for the "Man in Motion" World Tour and showed Rick the true meaning of the phrase "small town hospitality".

Representatives from the Seeley's Bay Fire Department, the Ladies Auxiliary, the Lions Club, The Anglican Church, Lyndhurst and Seeley's Bay Legions, Carveth Nursing Home, The Townships of the Front and Rear of Leeds and Lansdowne, the local elementary and secondary schools, St. Barnaby's Parish, Lansdowne Fire Fighters Association, the Kinsmen Club of Gananoque and many other organizations and individuals stepped forward to present Rick with donations to aid his "Man in Motion" tour. They opened their hearts, their homes and their wallets and made the evening an overwhelming success. Over three thousand six hundred dollars was raised by this community of eight hundred people. Beautiful bouquets of flowers donated by Niblock's greenhouses were also presented to Rick and his entourage by the local children.

Mark Chojecki, owner of the Bay Motel and the driving force behind the organization of this evening, should be congratulated for his fine efforts and his generosity. Mr. Chojecki not only provided free accommodations for the entire entourage, but his wife, Hanna, together with some of the local ladies provided a wonderful meal of Canadian and Polish cuisine for the entire crew.

A lot of hard work and planning went into the evenings festivities. When Mark was first approached about the possibility of providing accommodations for the "Man in Motion" tour, he was in a quandry. Having just moved to the area four months ago, he was a virtual stranger to these parts and unsure who to turn to for help. Through an article in the Gananoque Reporter, Mark explained the situation and called for help. Rick and Karen Bergson, a Lansdowne couple, were the first to respond offering help. They immediately began construction of ramps to provide wheelchair access to the motel and its facilities.

Tony Noakes, Chief of the Seeley's Bay Fire Department, was the next to respond, and with his usual flair for organization began contacting the representatives of the local support groups and organizations to arrange a meeting at the Fire Hall. Soon the whole community was involved. Special mention must, however, go to the following people for their special efforts: Jack de Graaf, Terry Thompson, Doug Clark, Doug Dean, Doreen



Gray, Helen Sweet, Kay Stafford, Larry Winters and Peter Billings. The community at large deserves a special thank-you for their generosity and encouragement and we wish to thank everyone who participated.

And the giving didn't stop that night either. Dave Tate, owner of Tate's Texaco, invited the crew to a free breakfast at his restaurant the next morning. Afterwards, it was time to hit the road again. Much to the delight of Rick and his crew, Mark Chojecki mounted his bike and rode along with the tour as far as Joyceville where they said a tearful farewell.

I think that we will all remember this special occasion for years to come. Certainly the three disabled children who shared centre stage with Rick that night will cherish the memories. Devin Dean, astride his special "all terrain" wheelchair fairly glowed with pride and excitement, as Constable Walker wheeled him alongside of Rick.

Jim Taylor, a close friend of Rick's, has been travelling with the tour for the past nineteen months working on a book about the tour. He called Mark a few days later from Toronto where they were resting, to assure us that we would never be forgotten. "We were overwhelmed by the generosity and hospitality of the Seeley's Bay community," he told Mark. "We never expected this kind of welcome".

Jim's book should be completed by next spring and available to the general public by early summer. He assured us that their visit to Seeley's Bay would never be forgotten and would be mentioned in his book. Thanks again to everyone who participated, who came out that night to greet Rick and who opened their hearts to this great Canadian with a dream and the will to make it a reality.

Karen Simpson



Reeve Bob Smith greets Rick at St Columbanus Church. Cliff Smith, representing Elgin Lions presents Rick with donation photo credit - Earl Mattice

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