

?Full Moon? tours aim to shine a light on Aurora?s creepy past



By Brock Weir

The familiar strains of Blue Moon can be heard from unknown sources at certain points in Aurora, if you're in the right place at the right time.

Or can it?

You'll have several chances to find out for yourself as local historian David Heard takes the brave of heart on evening walking tours around Aurora illuminated only by a torch and the moon up above.

The ?Blue Moon? story has almost taken on a life of its own since Mr. Heard started his historic walking tours of Aurora, usually kicking off each fall just in time for Hallowe'en. This year, however, Mr. Heard has expanded operations ? running his recently rebranded ?Full Moon Tours? from May through October.

?I have been saying time and time again Aurora has great potential to come up with creative ideas to bring people here,? says Mr. Heard. ?Unfortunately, we don't have assets like water and these massively incredible tourist attractions others have, but what we have, I think, as a community, is very unique.?

His ?Full Moon? program, under the umbrella of CreepyTours.com, aims to be part of the uniqueness that is Aurora and, after eight years of feedback and growth, Mr. Heard says he believes they might just be on target.

After nearly a decade, awareness of the tours have grown beyond Aurora itself, with people coming from all parts of Ontario to take part during the autumn months. More people take part, more stories are shared, more connections are made, and all viewpoints are embraced, as long as you come in with an open mind.

?Come and check out our Town,? he says. ?Visually, you're going to get a smorgasbord. I am going to make people notice things they have never noticed before. I am going to hopefully open up their minds and their hearts to a different part of awareness about spirit. They are going to walk away feeling energized. It is motivating. People are going to walk away saying, ?WTF' (Whoa, that's freaky) because it is! I am still blown away because I can't, for the life of me, believe this would become bigger than itself. The tour itself is writing its own stories.?

In a way, the tour itself developed as a way for Mr. Heard to write his own story.

As a Grade 2 student at George Street Public School, his teacher, Ursula Ostick, encouraged him to become involve with public speaking to help aid a speech impediment and boost his self-esteem.

Over four decades on, people are driving long distances to hear him speak, and this is also a way for him to give back.

?We now know we have something very, very special,? says Mr. Heard of the tours. ?I am proud of what this community has helped me achieve. I couldn't have done this on my own. I get to share the history of our wonderful town, I get to share some unusual stories that are real. These people are real.?

Proceeds for this year's series of Full Moon Tours benefit two organizations: the Rise and Shine Breakfast, a weekly morning of food and fellowship, hosted by volunteers from Aurora United Church, as well as the Aurora Lions Club's newly re-established youth group, the Leo Club.

?The Leos was one of the first organizations where I started to find my footing in volunteering,? says Mr. Heard. ?I still take people on tours and talk to people about how incredible this Leo Club was and the energy this group of young people had. It just turned the Town upside down with fundraising. They did amazing work and I was glad to be a part of that. We win because the money comes back to the community, the support comes back to the community.?

As for the stories behind Blue Moon and its connections to Aurora ? well, you'll just have to take the tour to find out.

Tours run on select dates through October beginning May 4. Each tour departs at 8 p.m. from Town Park. Tickets are \$15. For tickets and further information, visit creepytrails.com.