

?Wolf Pack? promises Cochrane, Cuddy, and Robertson



By Brock Weir

Aurora's Team Wolf Pack doesn't do things by halves.

When it was suggested the men, including Dave Beswick, Mike Elliott, and Thomas Seidel, get on their bikes to take on the Epic Ride to Conquer Cancer in 2011, they immediately jumped on board ? not withstanding they didn't have a single bike between them.

Nevertheless, the men ? including Jim Kay, Kevin Macdonald, Steve Smith, and Brad Starr ? trained hard, got ready for the battle out on Toronto and Hamilton streets, but decided they wanted to do something more to help the local community as well. The result was the first ?Epic Barbeque? bringing together good food and good music all for a great cause. From those humble beginnings, the fundraiser is now in its third year, and is slated to bring together significantly more than just an epic barbeque on May 23.

Clearly for Team Wolf Pack, what happens in Aurora doesn't stay in Aurora, and people from far and wide will be descending on the Edward Street Bistro parking not just to sample food created by Toronto's top chefs, but for two hours of live entertainment featuring Canadian icons Tom Cochrane, Jim Cuddy, and Barenaked Ladies' Ed Robertson ? and the chance to meet Canada's Olympic heroes.

?I can't get over how generous people are,? said Mr. Elliott of past years' successes, the last of which as a ?patio lanterns? themed evening featuring a performance from Kim Mitchell. ?In these economic times, times are tough, but last year was over the top, so this year we just have to make sure the weather is nice. If it is a gorgeous day, it is going to be unbelievable.?

For Mr. Seidel, the nature of the event sets it apart from York Region. It is a party essentially right in the middle of Yonge Street and that rarely happens, except during the Aurora Street Festival in the spring. People were sent away last year due to overflow with people asking to be kept on the list for this year.

?A lot of people get invited to a lot of different corporate events and fundraisers, and I think the difference with this one is it is actually a parking lot party on Yonge Street,? says Mr. Beswick. ?There's nothing fancy about it, you're in your jeans and shoes and as long as the weather holds out, it is just a casual and fun night with a huge community presence. You know a lot of people, the food is great, and the entertainment obviously stands on its own.?

The Evening of Legends will benefit not only the Ride to Conquer Cancer, but also Hospice King-Aurora, Special Olympics Ontario, which will be hosting their Summer Games throughout York Region this July, as well as supporting Canada's Olympic athletes through the Gold Medal Plates Program.

Serving up unlimited food for ticketholders will be Chefs David Lee of Nota Bene Restaurant, Rob Lizotte of Edward Street, Lorenzo Loseto of George on Queen, Ted Reader, and Marc Thuet of Petite Thuet.

Warmed up by Start the Car, a local group founded by four friends who spent their formative years together in Richmond Hill, the crowd will be treated to 45 minute sets each from Jim Cuddy and Ed Robertson, and 30 minutes from Tom Cochrane, before the three come together in the last half hour for a 30 minute jam session, which they have never done together.

Chefs and entertainment are donating their time for the causes.

“These are names that are hugely familiar within the demographic we attract,” says Mr. Beswick. “For foodies, the names that are attached to this is phenomenal. It is rare for them to be at an event like this and actually donate their time and their staff’s time.” With just a few short weeks before they have their third “epic” barbeque under their belt, the men feel they have now got things down to such a science that the 200 km Ride to Conquer Cancer is now the easiest part of the mix.

“That’s a piece of cake,” says Mr. Elliott. “We don’t ride fast, but we’re getting better at it, so we can pedal all day long and it isn’t a big deal.”

That being said, it is not necessarily a leisurely journey for Team Wolfpack.

“The group of us have been to Las Vegas a few times and, okay, we didn’t steal a tiger, but even in Hamilton on the Saturday night of the ride when we’re supposed to be resting, it has a tendency to go a bit sideways.”

Tickets for An Evening of Legends are \$200 and can be purchased at www.thewolfpack.ca.