

## Home page features - Rocco's ride - May 24

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### MAY 24

What a very special day. First, the folks at Momentum Bikes and Boards were in early and they re-repaired my rear tire. The inner-tube did have a slow leak and so they replaced it. Second, we had a tremendous event in North Bay where we announced funding for another five defibrillators and associated training for four high schools and a community arena. I am particularly pleased that one of those high schools is in a First Nation's community. The event was well attended by leading dignitaries, including Victor Fedeli, the Mayor and the head of North Bay EMS, many local Heart and Stroke volunteers and plenty of media.

The absolute highlight, however, was meeting Michel Langevin from Sturgeon Falls who, on Friday, April 13, collapsed from cardiac arrest on the ice while playing hockey. He is a father of two young children and would not be around with us but for the fact that a defibrillator had been installed in that arena just a couple of months earlier and the appropriate training of personnel had been delivered.



With Michel Langevin, who collapsed on ice from cardiac arrest and was revived with a defibrillator at a hockey arena in Sturgeon Falls, Ont.

The local North Bay/Nipissing Lifeline defibrillation program was the very first program in Ontario that was helped through funding from the Heart and Stroke Chase McEachern Tribute Fund. To have met one of the two people who have been saved in the last two months by this program is more motivating than I can express.

Once the announcement and press conference were over, Ted and I were escorted out of town by an EMS Ambulance.

He and I had gotten a jump on the day by doing a couple of hours of cycling before the announcement once my tire had been repaired and so had already reached Powassan before driving back.

It was an incredibly hot day with temperatures nearing 30° C accompanied by a smog alert. Sadly, the OPP doesn't allow cycling on Hwy 11 south of North Bay and so I have to take a more roundabout route on country back roads that are often gravel. That necessitates switching from road bike to mountain bike and back again depending on the road surface, and makes for fairly slow progress versus what I have been experiencing.

We completed 50 km for the day and stopped in Trout Creek where we loaded the bike in the van and drove to Huntsville to do some media interviews. Those interviews completed, we had dinner and then returned to North Bay.

I've been pushing myself hard, even on many days with dodgy weather to the dismay of my staff, and now find myself several days ahead of schedule. What I haven't told them is that the real reason I was pushing myself was that I wanted to get ahead of schedule and be in North Bay by May 24 instead of May 29. I am often asked what the hardest part of this trip is and I always answer that it is spending my vacation time away from my family. All days away from them are precious, but the day I regretted the most was tomorrow, May 25, because that is the day of my son's high-school graduation.

The reward for all that effort, however, is that I will take tomorrow off and fly down to Toronto from North Bay's airport to surprise DJ, attend his graduation, take him out to dinner and then fly back to restart the cycling the following day.

I could not be more proud of him and I'm delighted that things have worked out so that I can go down to Toronto to share this special moment with him.

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