

# Walter Gretzky scores as Heart and Stroke Foundation spokesperson

by Michelle Minnoch

Last Wednesday, RVH welcomed Walter Gretzky, the national spokesman for the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

Gretzky suffered a stroke in 1991 and spoke about what he faced during months of rehabilitation and what he is still struggling with today.

“I know first hand how important this work is,” he said. “I know, because on October 13, 1991, I started to have terrible headaches and had trouble speaking.”

On that day, he made it upstairs to the kitchen of his Bradford home, and his daughter’s room-mate took him right to the hospital.

After a six and a half hour operation, doctors discovered he had various blood vessels broken along the side of his head.

With two to three headaches per week over the years, it was determined he had had numerous mini-strokes and wasn’t even aware.

“I’ve now had one headache since 1991,” Gretzky said, smiling.

After surgery, he had no memory, could not walk and surprisingly, could not speak English. He woke up speaking in his mother tongue, Ukraine.

It took 10 months for Gretzky’s rehabilitation.

“During that time, someone would wake me up, shower, shave and dress me,” he said. “I didn’t even know my family.”

He said everyday continues to be a rehab day.

He said he does remember Wayne’s wedding day, and also remembers the night Wayne broke Gordie Howe’s record.

His son had called him up and asked him to come to the game in Edmonton, and Walter said he remembers sitting beside Howe during the game.

He said he also remembers the 1987 Canada Cup, especially “all those guys

jumping on each other after they won.”

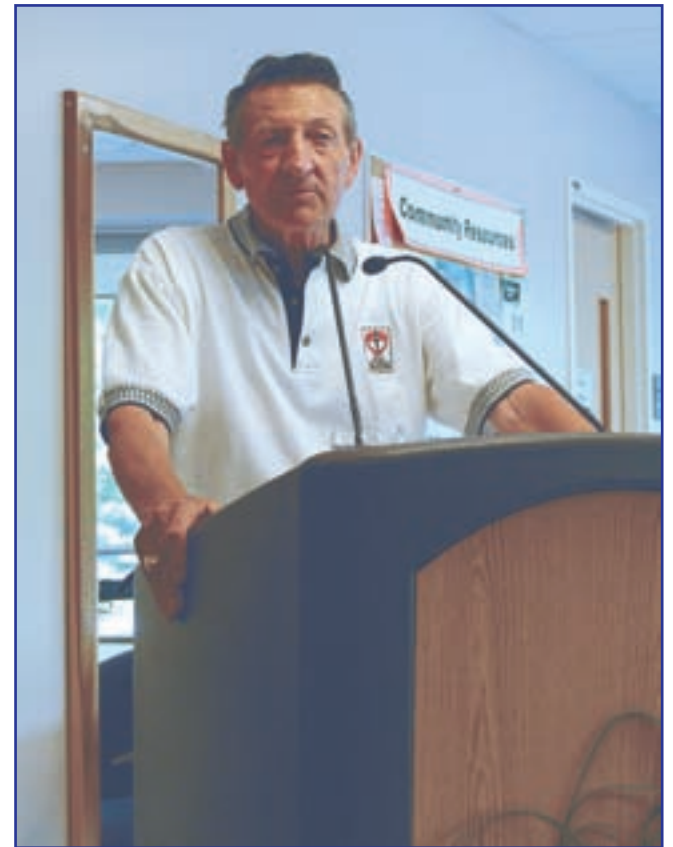
A great story teller, adding humor to the situation, Gretzky said he has improved his golf game over the years because “I can’t remember what I shot the day before.”

As the spokesperson for the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Gretzky travels across Canada, speaking at various engagements about the signs of the disease. He travels with a companion, who takes him to and from events.

During the session, Gretzky said he couldn’t remember where he was the day before, and he was reminded he was in Bradford. He will go to the mall to get bread and milk and unless he writes it down, he said he sometimes can’t remember why he went there in the first place.

When asked about his diet, he said he never learned how to cook, and didn’t bother to try after the passing of his wife.

“I can eat whatever, McDonald’s, anything.”



## Heart and Stroke fact sheet

- Stroke is the fourth leading cause of death and a leading cause of disability among Canadians
- Stroke costs the Ontario economy almost \$1 billion per year
- The Heart and Stroke Foundation estimates that 15,000 to 20,000 strokes take place a year in Ontario and more that 90,000 Ontarians living with the effects of stroke
- The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care is serious about taking a leadership role in the prevention of stroke and the care of stroke survivors. They have committed \$30 million annually to improve stroke care in the province
- The Ministry has partnered with Ontario hospitals to create a regionalized system known as the Ontario Stroke System. With this innovative strategy, Ontario has become a leader nationally and globally in stroke care

## Five warning signs of a stroke

It is vital you call 9-1-1 immediately if you or someone you know is experiencing any of the following warning signs of a stroke;

1. Weakness – sudden loss of strength or sudden numbness in the face, arm or leg, even if temporary
2. Trouble speaking – sudden difficulty speaking or understanding or sudden confusion, even if temporary
3. Vision problems – sudden trouble with vision, even if temporary
4. Headache – sudden severe and unusual headaches
5. Dizziness – sudden loss of balance, especially with any of the above signs

## Area-wide growth management process moves ahead - County

The Growth Management Process Steering Committee with membership from area municipalities in the County of Simcoe and the Cities of Orillia and Barrie have moved closer to the development of an area-wide growth management plan.

The area-wide growth management plan process is intended to be inclusive and engaging for all partners.

The initial meeting held Tuesday June 5, focused primarily on the development of a directions report, the intent to establish growth management forums and sub-committees, as well as a discussion on timelines.

The committee recommended and approved an amendment to the Growth Management Process Outline which will focus the process on growth

management strategies only in an effort to further promote an inclusive process.

The Growth Process Steering Committee is composed of 9 members of County Council, 2 representatives of the City of Barrie and a representative from the City of Orillia.

All recommendations from the committee will be forwarded to the Corporate Services Committee and to County Council as part of the County’s approval process.

“Today’s meeting was a great start to the process for developing a co-operative, local solution.”

“This is not just another study, the processes that are developed and followed through will create an inclusive area-wide plan, which the County will be including as part of our official plan,” commented Simcoe County Warden Tony Guergis.

“All municipal partners participating and working together is the key component in developing a growth management plan for the greater good of all residents of the County of Simcoe and the cities of

Barrie and Orillia. Those we have been elected to represent expect nothing less, we should be working together on effective strategies, plans and solutions for today and tomorrow.”

The County of Simcoe is composed of sixteen member municipalities and provides crucial public services to County residents in addition to providing paramedic and social services to the separated cities of Barrie and Orillia.

Visit the county website at [www.county.simcoe.on.ca](http://www.county.simcoe.on.ca) for more information and news updates regarding the county and growth.

## Show and Sale at The Wheel

The Show and Sale will take place at The Wheel in the south side of Sandycove Acres on Friday, June 15.

It’s probably the biggest fashion show in town with quality gently used fashions and many well-known labels.

Schedule as follows: pre-sale from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and again from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Fashion show with skits and lots of laughs begins at 8 p.m. Sale will continue after the show.

Final Clearance Sale – Saturday, June 16 from 9 a.m. till noon. Tickets - \$2 may be bought at the door at any of the above times.

## Another step closer to a double-double

by Michelle Minnoch

With conditions in place regarding possible traffic issues, the Town is another step closer to a Tim Hortons location at Innisfil Beach Road and Commerce Park Drive.

The Developer’s Traffic consultant met with the Town’s Traffic Consultant and Town staff to discuss traffic measures and controls that should be in place before the construction of the coffee shop.

Councilor Paul Wardlaw said he thought there may be trouble with the exit on the east side of the property.

“The report suggests five steps, and the fourth one I really question why.”

Report PDS-080-07 states the “consultants also agreed to a stepped hierarchy of investigation and responses to be taken should the operational level of service of this

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