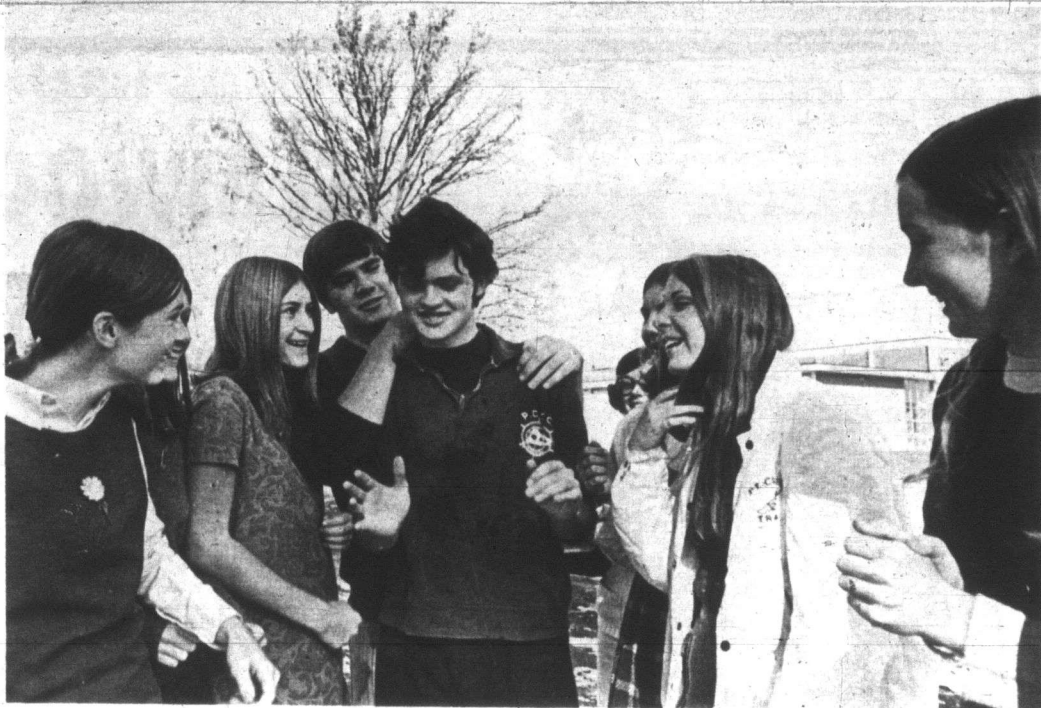


Bryan Beckstead, a 17-year-old Port Credit Secondary student, approached his student council this year with the idea of raising money for UNICEF. He told the group he planned to run 50 miles, if sponsored to make the money. Last Tuesday night, Bryan set off on his trip. Here's what happened.



Bryan discusses his run last week with some of his fellow students at Port Credit Secondary. All helped in some way during the marathon. To the left of and behind Bryan is Brian Smith. Smith drove the pace car throughout the night. The others took

turns running with Bryan (Beckstead, that is) and providing clean dry clothes and hot soup for him. Bryan completed the 50-mile run in just under eight hours.

Photos by Mike Salomon

The Mississauga News

SPORTS

THE MISSISSAUGA NEWS, Oct. 29, 1969

Bryan's eight-hour trip for UNICEF

For some young people today, a "good trip" implies a freaked-out voyage of ecstasy following the consumption of an hallucinatory drug. Whatever turns you on baby!

Bryan Beckstead, a 17-year old student at Port Credit Secondary school, and a few of his chums revel in another kind of good trip. For them, it's any long distance Bryan can run across country without stopping.

Late last Tuesday and early Wednesday morning, Bryan travelled 50 miles in his sneakers and sweatsuit for UNICEF. Thanks to him and his friends, the fund's coffers are richer today by more than \$2000.

Bryan, a member of the Toronto Olympic Track Club, has been preparing himself for the race against fatigue and the elements during the past three months. In that time, he has logged approximately 135 miles each week on the training course.

The run for UNICEF started at exactly 10:11 p.m. last Tuesday night. A grizzly snowstorm provided the setting as Brian took his first few steps on Highway 10, six miles north of Highway 7.



BRYAN BECKSTEAD

From there he ran south along No. 10 to Lakeshore Rd., east along the Lakeshore to Bay St. in downtown Toronto and then back along the same route before finishing in the back yard at Port Credit Secondary.

Final leg of the trip was one lap of the track which surrounds the Port Credit football field. He finished the marathon at precisely 5:59 a.m. Wednesday morning.

By
Phil Bingley
Sports Editor

The elapsed time of seven hours, 48 minutes was more than four hours better than the 12-hour period Bryan had originally planned on.

WORDS WON'T DO

Any a postiori attempt to describe the feat would be anticlimactic at best. Fantastic, incredible and brilliant are only words — and overworked ones at that. The fact that Bryan is a trained long distance runner was overshadowed by the ruinous conditions he had to overcome.

The premature snowfall, freezing cold, a nasty wind and the sheer distance involved would have rated the attempt longshot odds from the stingiest bookie.

It is hard to measure the run against any standard because of the unique circumstances. But anyone who saw many of the OXFAM walkathon participants stumble across the finish line in various states of near collapse last spring will have some idea of what Bryan went through. And, remember the OXFAM march was only a 30-mile jaunt.

While Bryan was helping the UNICEF cause, there were a number of individuals helping him.

Brian Smith stayed with the runner all night, driving the pace car. Dawn Stoutley, Gar Mason, Robyn Dubois, Caren McTavish Shirley Dubois, Barb Amos and her mother, Lorraine Stewart, Jennifer and Leslie McGuire, Jeanne Taylor and Nancy Woodruff took turns running with Bryan and providing him with clean dry clothes and hot soup.

Mrs. Amos fed and gave sleeping accommodations to the students in her home throughout Wednesday.

Bryan's landlord came out to watch the start of the run. Port Credit principal J.L. Brown arrived during the first mile and even jumped out of his car to run a few yards with Bryan.

THOUGHT ONCE OF QUITTING

Friday morning, Bryan sat in the cafeteria of Port Credit and looked back on his experience.

"There was only one point when I thought I couldn't make it. That was around the 35-mile mark. But I kept going and it was all right after that.

"I changed into dry shirts and jackets twice but I could not change my pants. They became wet and froze to my legs but I thought if I stopped I wouldn't be able to get going again.

"The snow blowing in my face blinded me and passing trucks were bad. Other than that, things were all right."

Actually the cold was a bit of a blessing in disguise. Bryan is bothered by bone chips in his left ankle and the pain from the injury could have prevented him from completing his effort. However, the temperatures numbed his legs from the knee down and the ankle didn't bother him at all.

As long and uncomfortable as the run was, it was not without its lighter moments.

"I asked the kids in the car for a fresh change of clothes and took all my jacked and shirt. I guess they were having trouble hearing me because when I threw the wet clothes into the car, they handed me a cup of soup."

Gar Mason was running with Bryan for a while before he fell behind and couldn't keep up. At that point, he was stopped by the police and almost arrested for vagrancy. His assets at the time totalled one cent and the law was a little disturbed to find him running around in the early morning hours.

UNCHARITABLE SPIRIT

Brian Smith's pace car broke down twice with battery problems during the night. The second failure resulted in a \$7.50 repair bill and Brian had only \$5. Garage operators who fixed the car were obviously not in the charitable spirit of the night and they relieved Smith of his wallet and driver's licence as assurance the other money would be paid.

While the car was out of service, Bryan was left on his own for a period and passersby didn't realize what was happening. "I was offered a ride on three occasions while the car was being fixed."

A photographer from a Toronto daily paper had problems snapping a shot of Bryan in action. Finally, he pulled ahead of the runner, parked and asked him to run in circles for a while so he could get his picture and go home.

Bryan's speed (incidentally he travelled the final two miles in less than two minutes) washed out a school-wide reception planned for the finish. Most students were still in bed when he came in way ahead of schedule.

Proceeds for UNICEF could have been much greater had it not been for loose organization at the last moment. But the students involved will make certain that this problem is rectified in time for next year.

And, oh-yes, there will be one other change for the 1970 Bryan Beckstead UNICEF marathon. In the true spirit of onepmanship, Bryan plans to stretch the distance a little.

"I think next year I'll run 75 miles" he said. Don't bet against him.

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