

The hippest viewing party in town

By Sarah Sobanski

Three local businesses are coming together for a great cause to honour a famous Canadian band.

Bancroft's Century 21 with the Bancroft Eatery and Brew Pub and Bancroft Brewing Co. has organized a special viewing event for the Tragically Hip's final concert this Saturday. Proceeds including cash donations for entry, commemorative tee-shirt sales and empties returns will go to the North Hastings Community Cupboard.

"We thought it was fitting that we could do something good with it as well, with the community. A lot of places are sending proceeds to cancer research, but we thought the food bank would be a better fit because it is more local. They don't get a lot of fundraisers. It is something that will benefit the community, not more, but it is more needed in our community," said Bancroft Eatery and Brew Pub co-owner Jake Krupa.

Tragically Hip's lead signer Gord Downie announced in May that he was terminally ill with an aggressive form of brain cancer. The Hip's Man Machine Poem tour would be its last, concluding in the band's home town of Kingston, Ont., Aug. 20. Tour tickets sold out faster than fans could keep up - something many attributed to scalpers, who bought the tickets in mass numbers to resell for outrageous prices capitalizing on the band's somber situation.

"He just spoke of our country, and how great it is, and what it means to be Canadian. The lyrics in his songs were direct into the hearts of every Canadian," said Krupa, explaining what the Tragically Hip has meant to Canadians. "They are the face of Canadian music. They were one of the greatest bands of all time, but they never went mainstream. They never sold out and went mainstream America. They always stuck to their Canadian roots."

The CBC announced in late June that it would broadcast the concert live as a result of the many frustrated Canadian fans who couldn't get tickets across the country. It's set to air commercial free at 8:30 p.m. eastern time.

McCaskie TV and Stereo is supplying a 120 inch screen for the viewing. Bancroft Eatery and Brew Pub food supplier SYSCO is supplying hot dogs and hamburgers to the food bank's tent. It'll all be set up at 4 Hastings Street North.

Executive director for North Hastings Community Cupboard Dani Lang said the event and its donations would mean having fresh fruits and vegetables for families in the winter. Their community gardens will only last until October and much of that produce cannot be preserved for the cold season.

"I think it's going to be huge. There's going to be a lot of interest in it just of friends getting together to view the last concert," said Krupa. "It's going to be a lifetime memory and the impact on the food bank is going to be huge."

The event gets underway at 6 p.m.