

Thousands celebrate Tragically Hip in Aurora



By Brock Weir

Nearly 3,000 people filled Town Park on Saturday night for a live screening of the Tragically Hip's farewell concert and to pay tribute to lead singer Gord Downie.

Revellers descended on the celebration, which included live performances from The Spencer MacKenzie Band, featuring young local bassist Jack Davies, a barbecue by the Optimist Club of Aurora, a corn roast helmed by Mayor Geoff Dawe, and Councillors John Abel, Sandra Humfries, Tom Mrakas, and Michael Thompson and, of course, a simulcast of CBC's Tragically Hip: A National Celebration, which was beamed from Kingston live from coast to coast.

The party was hosted by the Aurora Winter Blues Festival in conjunction with the Town of Aurora and Councillor Abel, one of the driving forces behind the event, welcomed the crowds.

"This is an iconic moment, as well [as a moment that is] drawing awareness of cancer research," said Councillor Abel, referencing Downie who is living with terminal brain cancer. "This is a great moment celebrating with over 300 communities across Canada and another 500 local establishments."

Throughout the evening, a table was set up to collect notes of well-wishes for Mr. Downie. The table also provided opportunities for people to make donations to the Gord Downie Brain Cancer Research Fund, an initiative that was bolstered before and after the concert by a Pass The Bucket movement collecting loose change for the cause.