

Dexodus concert smashes fundraising record



By Chris Houston

The annual Dexodus community rock music event took place at Red Eagle Trailer Park in Coe Hill on Aug. 24. A crowd of more than 100 enjoyed performances by 10 local acts from lawn chairs and boats. This year marked the fifth anniversary of the event, a community-oriented fundraiser that also included a raffle and a rib cooking competition. Organizers raised funds for Bancroft This Week/The Bancroft Times' journalist Bill Kilpatrick, who is navigating a recent cancer diagnosis. The \$1,600 raised surpassed the previous record of \$700. Deb Scott and Ted Schirk hosted the event at their riverside plot in the trailer park. Calum McMaster kicked off the day's music with a trilogy of Tragically Hip songs. Each musician or group played three songs, with McMaster followed by vocalist Kate Rees, supported by Ellie Nicholas on drums. Other musicians included Mike and Zakk Parisienne, Gord Youmans, Norm Lewis, Josh Logan, Jesse Robinson, Wayne Dulmage, with violins by Oliver and Spencer Burd. Dexodus co-organizer Schirk spoke about his motivation to put on the event: "We're a bunch of musicians, we all play guitar at night, so why don't we have a session, invite everybody down, and get a bunch of people here. We've all done well, so why not donate some money to make it worthwhile?" Schirk retired from Cisco Systems in Bay Street in 2019 and splits his time between Norwood and Coe Hill. Co-organizer Norm Lewis recalled a 2019 conversation that led to the event: "There was a cancellation for a concert called Roxodus that was supposed to have Kid Rock and Aerosmith." Riffing off the Roxodus name, Lewis and fellow organizers named the event Dexodus, a nod to the deck where the musicians perform. Local artists played rock, country, and bluegrass before the event turned into a jam session. Speaking about the decision to raise funds for Kilpatrick, Lewis said, "When we heard of his diagnosis, we immediately thought it was a worthwhile cause." Lewis, based in Belleville, has been camping in Coe Hill for more than 20 years. He is the events coordinator for the Coe Hill ATV Club and noted many members at Dexodus, although the event is independent of the club. Dexodus attendee Danian Greenop spoke about Kilpatrick's reporting: "He's been fantastic for this community, he's very factual with his reporting, he cuts to the chase." Jessie Roppel, a rib competition contender enjoying her fifth year at Dexodus, reflected on their plans to attend Roxodus together before the event was cancelled due to the organizer's bankruptcy. "We're all about supporting our local community as much as possible," Roppel said, mentioning previous fundraising for the local Legion, the Coats for Kids program, and the local food bank. Roppel, who lives near Trenton, is part of the fourth generation of campers at Red Eagle Campground since 1974. She credited the event organizers: "Norm, Lisa, Ted, and Deb? you can't ask for four people with bigger hearts who always put others first." On Aug. 16, Bancroft This Week reported on Kilpatrick's journey with cancer. Kilpatrick, a part-time journalist currently on health leave from writing for Bancroft This Week and The Bancroft Times, launched a fundraiser in July to cover the mounting costs, especially those linked to long journeys to the hospital in Kingston. While his expenses are rising, his income has dipped, with Employment Insurance covering only 55 per cent of his previous earnings. Kilpatrick described the roller-coaster of emotions he has faced as he confronts his mortality and conflicting test results. His initial lung cancer diagnosis

was followed by news of rectal cancer, which was later ruled out. However, the sample taken from the lung tumour was inconclusive, and a deeper biopsy is needed to confirm the presence of cancerous cells. The mixture of bad, better, and inconclusive news has left Kilpatrick feeling numb. Neither his current condition nor the exact next steps are clear, and the emotional toll is evident as his voice cracks between laughs and jokes with his daughter, who played with a volleyball nearby. During the interview, Kilpatrick shed tears as he spoke of his fears but also laughed with his daughter as a stray volleyball interrupted his words. He asked well-meaning people not to inquire about him through his children, especially when they are at work. Kilpatrick expressed deep gratitude to the Dexodus organizers, saying, "It means a lot; it's huge."