

Elvis Stojko performs at the BSC Carnival



By Kaitlin Sylvester

The Bancroft Skating Club hosted its highly anticipated annual fundraiser on April 6 at the Bancroft arena. The event that brought together skating enthusiasts and community members alike. With both afternoon and evening shows this year's fundraiser featured a performance by Canadian skating legend, Elvis Stojko. Under the leadership of Christopher Saylor, the event was a resounding success, showcasing the talent of local skaters. Skate Canada certified in 1973, the Bancroft Skating Club has been a hub for skaters of all ages and skill levels. This certification not only recognizes skaters' achievements but also serves as a testament to their dedication and hard work. The anticipation for this year's fundraiser reached new heights when one board member, on a whim, reached out to Elvis Stojko to invite him to perform. Initially sent in jest, the invitation turned out to be anything but a joke when Stojko agreed to join the event. Stojko is a three time world champion, two time Olympic silver medalist, and a seven time Canadian skating champion. On April 2, Stojko told Bancroft This Week that he has "a special place in [my] heart for smaller communities," such as those found in North Hastings. With a cottage in the region, Stojko felt it was important to offer his time and skills to fundraising for the local skating club. With tickets more than half sold ahead of time, excitement buzzed through the community as the fundraiser approached. Skating club members gathered on Friday night for set up, including photos from the club throughout the years. The arena lobby was a visual journey through the club's history, with photos spanning decades. It was a poignant reminder of the club's rich heritage and the countless memories created on the ice over the years. The heart of the fundraiser was of course, in the performances, with skaters of all ages taking to the ice to showcase their talent. Sponsored by Skate Canada, the performances not only captivated the audience but also highlighted the vital role skating plays in the community. From group numbers to solo routines, each performance was a testament to the skill of Bancroft's skaters. Beyond the performances, the fundraiser served a

greater purpose to support the club. Revenue generated from the event ensures the club's continued operation, providing opportunities for skaters of all ages to pursue their passion. The atmosphere of the event was electric as skaters contributed jars filled with goodies for auction, alongside a crowd favourite card game and a 50/50 draw. Saylor said 'the revenue the event brings in is what finances our club, which in turn supports the youth in the community - it's a symbiotic relationship.' While the event was well attended and enjoyed, it also shed light on broader issues facing the community arena. As Saylor passionately stated, 'the club is just one piece of a larger puzzle.' The venue, once a thriving hub of activity, now sits largely underutilized. Saylor's call to action resonated with many, sparking conversations about the need for greater community engagement and investment in local resources. In the end, the annual fundraiser was more than just a showcase of skating talent; it was a celebration of community spirit and resilience. As guests departed, hearts full and spirits lifted, the legacy of the Bancroft Skating Club lives on.