

# ARTS & LIFE

BREAKING NEWS AT LEADERPOST.COM

SECTION B MONDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2014

## WHEN OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS



PAUL CUTTING PHOTOGRAPHY

Geoff Gilbert, left, Ken Kupchuk, centre, and Mickey Kupchuk, right, of The Milkman's Sons are heading to Chicago to play at The House of Blues on Jan. 14/15.

**The Milkman's Sons cover band is headed to Chicago's House of Blues to open for The Tragically Hip in January**

GORD BROCK  
FOR THE LEADER-POST

**M**arketing savvy garnered through years of operating a Regina business has helped a fledgling local tribute band land a gig on the bill with the Tragically Hip at a famous venue in Chicago. They're called The Milkman's

### THE MILKMAN'S SONS

9 p.m., Dec. 31  
The Artful Dodger

Sons and include two baby boomer brothers who picked up their axes for the first time only a few years ago. A cover band that strives for note-perfect reproductions of

famed songs from decades past — most of them are rock songs — they've got an upcoming date at The House of Blues in Chicago.

The venue's manager struck up a conversation with Mickey Kupchuk, 59, who plays rhythm guitar and handles business dealings for the five-member band. That's when opportunity knocked and Kupchuk grabbed it before it got away.

He took up the guitar for the first time a few years ago. A year later

his brother Ken, currently age 52, started playing bass guitar. They soon began jamming with their drummer buddy Terry Anaka, 51, in his basement. Then came a brief performance at a local open mic night, and then paying gigs.

The Milkman's Sons wound up doing about two dozen shows in 2013 and the same in 2014, according to Mickey Kupchuk.

See OPPORTUNITY, B2

# Opportunity Chance led to gig

CONTINUED FROM B1

In the meantime, they went through some personnel changes and ended up adding keyboardist Carol Kingston, aged 50-something, and lead guitarist Geoff Gilbert, who's on the far side of 40.

"We're having a lot of fun acting like a bunch of kids sometimes, but we do understand the whole business side," Mickey Kupchyk said in a recent interview with the brothers.

Being mature and realistic, they've all kept their day jobs.

"We have no illusions about where our money comes from," said Ken Kupchyk.

Life experience has taught them to keep their eyes peeled for the next big break, and that's what got them the gig scheduled for Jan. 14 with The Tragically Hip at The House of Blues.

Some months back, Mickey and his wife were visiting

their daughter who lives in Chicago when they stopped at the high-profile haunt for a meal.

Mickey ordered a bowl of jambalaya, which was tasty but small in portion size. So when he got back to Regina, he complained in an email to the House of Blues.

He got a reply from the manager, who pledged that if they returned to the venue, they'd be well looked after.

So on their next trip to visit their daughter, the Kupchyks again went to The House of Blues. They had a top-notch experience that included a chat with the manager.

Mickey asked him how to get a gig there and the manager suggested including The Milkman's Sons on the bill with The Tragically Hip, making for a night of Canadian rock.

Like a dog with a bone, Mickey tracked the next booking of The Tragically Hip at the venue and then

reminded the manager of his idea for The Milkman's Sons.

Good to his word, the manager had his booking agent pursue the lead.

"Although The House of Blues gig all started from a chance encounter over a bowl of jambalaya, we still had to meet their standard for acts," Mickey said. "They just don't let anyone up on the stage. The booking agent at Live Nation.com required a fair bit of information from us, including references."

The Kupchyk brothers both said they're excited about the opportunity, as are others in Regina who've heard about it.

"As soon as we made the announcement, everyone's been treating us like rock stars, literally," Mickey Kupchyk said.

The band will be rocking in the New Year at The Artful Dodger. Tickets for the event are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door.