

Ballinafad plaque honours Stompin' Tom

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A plaque to honour Canadian singer-songwriter Stompin' Tom Connors will be unveiled on Labour Day at the Ballinafad Community Centre.

A group of Ballinafad residents decided to erect the plaque and host a social event as part of local celebrations of Canada's 150th anniversary.

Connors passed away in 2013 and was buried at Erin Union Cemetery. The site has a granite marker with a tribute to his music, and a large Canadian flag.

He was born in 1936 and raised in the Maritimes. In 1975 he and his wife Lena bought a house near Ballinafad - a home base when he was not on tour.

"The text and image on the plaque will remain a surprise until its unveiling,"

said organizer Karen Smith. The Sept. 4 event will start between 1 and 2 p.m., including tributes to Connors, and music by Bryce Butcher. Admission is free.

The unveiling will be about 3:30 p.m., followed at 5 p.m. by the annual United Church Smoked Pork Chop Supper. The Ballinafad Community Centre is where Connors celebrated his 50th birthday in 1986.

Smith said the final cost for the plaque could be more than \$4,000. Some funds have been provided by the Wellington County Historical Society and the Town of Erin heritage committee, but more donations from public and private sources are needed to help cover the cost. For information or to make a donation, contact Smith at 519-927-5596 or email karenphamilton@gmail.com. For tickets to the supper, contact Millie

at 905-877-4072.

Stompin' Tom's life is well summarized by the citation he received when he was awarded the Order of Canada:

"Known across the country, this singer-songwriter, fiddler, guitarist is a staunch supporter of Canada, its music and its musicians. A modern minstrel, he has criss-crossed the country chronicling our times and capturing our heritage in song.

"Mindful of his humble roots, he has spent a lifetime championing the 'common' folk. His songs have given a voice to the indomitable spirit of working Canadians and have become woven into our national fabric."

For more on Stompin' Tom's grave marker and his philosophy of life, go to erininsight.blogspot.ca and search "Connors."



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