

# Credit Valley Trail winds through Halton

By: Vivien Fleisher

A delegation from the Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) presented an update to Halton Hills Council on August 28 regarding the Credit Valley Trail, which stretches for 100 kilometres from its headwaters in Orangeville to the mouth in Port Credit on Lake Ontario.

It's the longest river trail system in the country, featuring whole villages along the way. It also features one of the top-ten archaeological sites in Canada around Glen Williams according to preeminent archaeologist Ron Williams. The north-south route means it intersects with many other trails, including the TransCanada.

The idea behind creat-

ing the trail in 1956 was as a "pretty cruise along the Credit River" but it has evolved over time to become a substantial legacy project that has a strong link to Indigenous Heritage.

The CVC joined up with the Credit Valley Heritage society to develop the trail. They decided to take it off the books and bring it to life with a 'Call to Action' in 2014.

Currently only 40 per cent exists. While 'cultural heritage' is abundant along the route, because there is very little visible of the indigenous heritage, the CVC has engaged several First Nations in the process. The group's vision is "100 kilometres of continuous pathway through the Credit River Valley to Lake On-

tario that connects people to nature, past to present, rural to urban and communities to culture."

A steering committee identified an optimum route with twenty destinations which includes Glen Williams, Georgetown and Norval. Next steps include a municipal leader's forum in September, and a final tourism development plan in October. In January of 2018, they will seek council's endorsement after the Final Indigenous Experience Plan is completed. Councillor Jane Fogal, who attended the indigenous meetings, felt they were a perfect vehicle to build bridges between cultures.

For more information, go to [www.creditvalleytrail.com](http://www.creditvalleytrail.com)

# Stompin' Tom Connors plaque unveiled in Ballinafad



A temporary plaque honouring Stompin' Tom Connors was unveiled last Monday afternoon at the Ballinafad Community Centre. The permanent plaque is expected to be installed by Thanksgiving. - Les Schmidt photo

By: Harry Rudolfs

Stompin' Tom Connors's legacy was celebrated with the dedication of a memorial plaque at the Ballinafad Community Centre on Labour Day. The event was well attended by about 100 people who enjoyed a sunny afternoon of country music supplied by singer Bryce Butcher and other local players.

The audience sat in lawn chairs or under the shade trees, some watching and listening from inside their cars and trucks.

The unveiled bronze replica—the original is still being cast—features the lyrics of "Ballinafad Ball" written by Connors as a tribute to his community. "The Man from Skinner's Pond" and his wife Lena bought a house on Trafalgar Road in 1975 just north of the hamlet where his family still lives. He was a well-recognized figure in the neighbourhood. The 76 year old Connors died at home in Ballinafad in March of 2013 but his

music lives on.

Lena Connors was the honoured guest along with her son Tom and grandson Tom—the fourth Tom Connors in the lineage. The event was followed by the annual United Church Smoked Pork Chop Dinner.

The erection of the memorial tablet is the work of several Ballinafad residents spearheaded by Karen Smith. "We started working on this as a Canada 150 project. I originally wanted to have a statue, but that was way too much money," she said.

The highlight of the afternoon might have been the combination Tom's good friends Sam Leitch (Leitch's Fuels Erin), and Paul Weber (Mary Hill Tavern) along with Bryce Butcher performing "Gumbo Cloggeroo."

Stompin' Tom's songs are pure Canadiana—heartfelt verses that celebrate the work-a-day Canadian;

"Tillsonburg," "Sudbury Saturday Night," "Bud the Spud," etc. He loved local history and wrote most of his songs about Canadian themes and characters, picking up his stories and ideas as he hitchhiked from coast to coast as a young poet/troubadour. He continued touring into his senior years and his appearances were always warmly greeted across the country.

"The timing was just right with this Canada 150 thing," said Town of Erin councillor Jeff Douglas, whose council contributed \$500 towards the project. "Sometimes you don't appreciate the people that you have, so this is our way of giving him a tip of the hat."

The Wellington County Historical Society also contributed towards the project according to president Ron Hattle. "He's a Canadian icon. He was always for the common man."

# Dozens gather for Kindergarten Fun Fair

By: Vivien Fleisher

Prospect Park was the scene of a lot of happy kids last Wednesday at the third annual Kindergarten Fun Fair.

Kids donned bright blue t-shirts emblazoned with "I'm an awesome Acton Kid" on the front and a list of fifteen area resources on the back, for easy reference by parents.

Kids and parents were treated to free food and activity kits to help kids with their fine and gross motor skills. In the past, as many as 150 families have come out.

This highly successful event flows from under the umbrella organization Halton 'Our Kids Network' (OKN). The guiding philosophy of OKN is that "no single group or individual

can address all the needs of one family, one child, one neighborhood or one community" and the concept originated right in Halton.

Acton Hub coordinator Alison Hilborn emphasized that the event is a response to the finding that 42 per cent of children entering kindergarten are 'unprepared'—defined as having one or more developmental vulnerabilities.

Because the numbers were so high, they realized the best response was from the community as a whole, strengthened through partnerships between services across Halton. It aims to prevent vulnerabilities before they happen by starting conversations with and engaging parents.

The response is based on data collected and ana-

lyzed by EDI, or 'Early Development Instrument', which gathers statistics on young families through surveys and comprehensive reports.

Engaging parents before kids go off to junior and senior kindergarten is crucial to long-term success. Hilborn, who sits on the Early Years Committee, said they are doing so well that they received funding from the Ontario Trillium Fund in order to duplicate the event in six other communities in Halton. She added, "This year, we're trying hard to show off resources available to parents of preschool children. We're hoping to affect actual data but that's a very long term goal."

For more info, contact [actonhub@ourkidsnetwork.ca](mailto:actonhub@ourkidsnetwork.ca)

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