

Saying goodbye to Tom

By Julia McKay

Tim Hadley, a local musician and teacher, thought it was an April Fools joke when he got a call to join Stompin' Tom Connors tour in 2001.

Hadley says he jumped at the chance.

In an interview on Thursday afternoon he discussed his time with the man behind the character.

"He was a remarkable man, extremely intelligent, very much in control of everything that he did, from his business life to his philosophy of life to the way that he lived," said Tim Hadley, a bass player who toured with Connors. "I think people see the character of Stompin' Tom, the fellow with the big black cowboy hat and the stomping boot. I was very fortunate in that I was able to really get to know Tom Connors."

Canadian country musician icon Stompin' Tom Connors died on Wednesday at the age of 77.

Known for his love of Canada and iconic songs like The Hockey Song, Bud the Spud, and Sudbury Saturday Night, Connors recorded over 61 albums, ten of which have yet to be released to the public.

Hadley, an elementary school teacher in Trenton, last spoke with him on his birthday in February.

"Playing with Tom was like a cross between being in The Beatles and the Grateful Dead, because when he would play he wouldn't have a set list. You knew the first song was going to be Bud the Spud and at the end of the night he'd play Sudbury Saturday Night for an encore. He'd tailor his show to how he was feeling, how he felt the audience was responding to him, where he was in the country because he had songs about every different area and every different region of the country that he'd been through."

Connors also had a great catalogue of songs in his head. "I know he was remembered for a lot of his humorous songs but he had an encyclopaedia memory of songs he could sing at a drop of a hat," said Hadley.

We had nights where we'd sit around the hotel room and he'd say 'oh, it'll be a Hank night tonight' and we'd just play songs by people called Hank."

Hadley has many fond memories and stories to tell about his time on the road and in the studio with Connors.

"One of the stories Tom told me, he liked puzzles, scrabble and games like that, so he said that there was a thing in the Toronto Star and they asked you to sum up Canada and I forget how many words and he sent his answer into the newspaper and he was hoping he would win a prize, cause he liked to do that. He didn't win but he called a song after it. He said 'If you don't believe your country should come before yourself, you'd better serve your country by living somewhere else.'"

Connors is survived by his wife Lena, two daughters, two sons and several grandchildren.

There will be a celebration of his life at the Peterborough Memorial Centre March 13 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Final word from Stompin' Tom

Stompin' Tom Connors sent this final message, provided by his family:

"Hello friends, I want all my fans, past, present, or future, to know that without you, there would have not been any Stompin' Tom.

It was a long hard bumpy road, but this great country kept me inspired with its beauty, character, and spirit, driving me to keep marching on and devoted to sing about its people and places that make Canada the greatest country in the world."

I must now pass the torch, to all of you, to help keep the Maple Leaf flying high, and be the Patriot Canada needs now and in the future."

I humbly thank you all, one last time, for allowing me in your homes, I hope I continue to bring a little bit of cheer into your lives from the work I have done."



Photo by Richard Barclay

Tim Hadley reflects on his time touring with the famous late Stompin' Tom Connors. Hadley began touring with Connors in 2001. Canada is mourning the loss of one of its most prolific and well-known icons – the one and only Stompin' Tom.

International Women's Day an inspiration

By Jason Prupas

Many people all over the world will be celebrating International Women's Day on March 8, a time to think about all the progress women have made, as well to think on some of the issues that still remain.

This past year has been less than kind toward women in some countries. The brutal rape of a 23-year-old student in India led to a global outcry. India, a male-dominated culture, has an ongoing issue with rape.

In Pakistan, Malala Yousufzai, a 15-year-old outspoken activist, was shot because she petitioned for women to be allowed in schools. In some parts of the world, rape is used as a weapon towards women and often it is the woman who is blamed for it.

In some cases, women are forced to marry the rapist or they are even killed by their own family because they are considered to be at fault and therefore, shameful to the family.

Canada is no exception to women's issues. First Nation's women have systematically been denied fair and unbiased police response in missing women cases or sexual assault, according to a 2008 statistic by the Parliament of Canada.

"Issues like that have not changed enough in recent years. They were issues in 1967 and they still are issues, and that is not acceptable," says Karen Fisk, president of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

"International Women's Day is a day for celebrating the accomplishments and all that women do in their daily lives, but also it's acknowledging that we still have quite a ways to go."



Photo by Justin Greaves

Mieke Thorne enjoys a good laugh at the International Women's Day Art Exhibit at the CORE Centre on Pinnacle Street.

Fisk is also a member of the International Women's Day Committee in Belleville. For the past nine years, they have been spreading awareness and organizing various events.

Wednesday night, they hosted an art gallery at CORE Centre in downtown Belleville. They asked artists from all over the Quinte region to create a piece of art

inspired by the phrase: *What does International Women's Day mean to you?*

They received quite a variety of artistic mediums from paintings to clay pots. Viewers could then vote on which piece resonated the most with them.

Eighteen-year-old Kiera Dinsmore won the award for a black and white series of photographs featuring different

women who are important to her.

"For International Women's Day, I used photography to pay tribute to the women in my life that I love and respect," says Dinsmore, when asked about why she entered the contest. "I was kind of toying with the idea of entering the contest, until my best friend Camille got cancer, and she is only 19.

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Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
Karen Fisk

Being a part of her support network, I really wanted to capture her beauty and strength."

After receiving the award, Camille's mother gave Dinsmore a big hug.

"To be supported by those in your community is really lovely and really nice," says Dinsmore.

The International Women's Committee is hosting other events this week, with a march through downtown Belleville on Friday. On Saturday, Canadian author Marina Nemat will be speaking at the Belleville Public Library about her international best selling book, *The Prisoners of Tehran*.

Nemat was arrested at the age of 16 under the brutal Ayatollah Khomeini regime of Iran in 1982.

She was tortured and sexually assaulted while imprisoned. She remained silent about it for almost 20 years until she mustered the courage to put her account of what happened in her memoir.