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**King MOSAIC**

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We welcome your feedback, contributions, and suggestions.

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Anne Ahrens-Embleton is the Heritage & Cultural Administrative Assistant at the King Heritage & Cultural Centre (KHCC), where she also supports Arts Society King with administrative tasks, including coordinating the bi-weekly eBlast newsletter. She holds a Master of Museum Studies and a Master of Anthropology from the University of Toronto, reflecting her deep interest in community, history, and cultural engagement. Before joining the KHCC, she spent eight years working in the School of Graduate Studies at the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) University. A lifelong King Township resident, Anne also loves to explore local trails with her dog.

ON OUR COVER  
**BONES OF THE SEA**

Dorita Peer, a long-time volunteer with Arts Society King, came out on top in the recent juried art competition held by the Fine Arts Society of Milton with her ceramic and paper clay sculpture, *Bones of the Sea*, a stylized shark. Dorita says, "I had carved out some beautiful fish forms, all without eyes, because it speaks about the rape and pillage of the oceans." Judge Stephen Cheung called the piece, "Striking, elegant and unusual."



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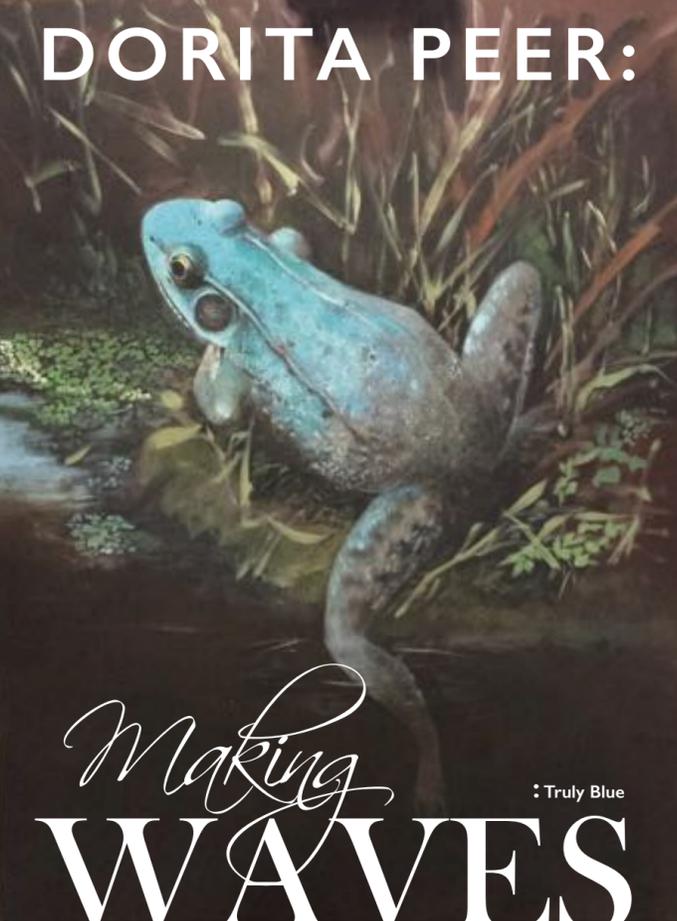
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**DORITA PEER:**



*Making*  
**WAVES**

Truly Blue




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THE COVER OF MOSAIC IS THE IMAGE OF A WINNER

WRITTEN BY **BRIAN BOAKE**  
 Brian is a survivor of decades in the IT industry, husband, father of two, supporter of the arts and Toronto Raptors fan.

Dorita Peer's sculpture *Bones of the Sea* took first prize in a recent juried art competition.

In 2025, the Fine Arts Society of Milton (FASM) accepted 124 entries into its first juried show in a while. When the results were in, Dorita's work was revealed as best in show and this King Township artist was able to enjoy a wondrous moment and a substantial cash prize. "One of the best days of my life!" she says.

A triumph of this magnitude is worth celebrating by all of us. Happily, it fell to me to ask my friend (since high school!) some questions about her work in general, and the brilliant *Bones of the Sea* in particular. I did so at her Kettleby home of more than four decades, surrounded by forests, flowers and fields, with wildlife at her doorstep. The natural world has been a source of much inspiration.

When she was but seven years young, Dorita was discovered by her beloved Grade One teacher, Miss Marion Scott.

The policy of the Toronto School Board in the 1960s cautioned against allowing adults to interfere in children's art but that didn't prevent Miss Scott from offering encouragement to Dorita to find her own artistic voice. Dorita's talent was recognized by others, as well: she showed me news stories and photographs from newspapers, including one from the Toronto Star with a headline that read "Girl Sculpture Genius."

Sculpture became secondary when her working parents had neither the time nor the means to indulge their prodigy's needs. Dorita instead turned her attention to drawing, with her favourite subjects being animals and, in particular, the horses she loved from birth. She would spend her life pursuing, not art, but the dream of riding for Canada in the Olympics in the Renaissance sport of dressage, the remarkable *pas de deux* between human and animal.

Finances, so often a problem with aspiring athletes, was dealt with through Dorita's career as a managing optician and self-employed professional equestrian – training, coaching, officiating internationally and breeding champions in four disciplines. A writer and poet, she

chronicled her equestrian career in *The Horsedancer's Destiny*, a memoir soon to see its second edition.

This article would be incomplete without mention of Dorita's contributions to Arts Society King over her decade-plus on the organization's board. She originated and ran the Art Lab Workshop Series with world-renowned instructors, the King's Feet Underground Sound and Literary Festival, and Picnic with Poets. In the spirit of friendly competition were the contests: White Hot Shots Winter Photo, Autumn Reflections En Plein Air, and Timeless Tales All-Ages Writing Contests. Still not enough? Dorita edited, designed and oversaw the production of the Timeless Tales annual anthology.

Dorita's reverence for equines has carried over into her art: *Sleipnir*, Odin's eight-legged horse from Norse mythology, was created (as was the Lion Fish) using the Japanese "nerikomi" technique of applying layered colours of clay that have been stressed by rolling. Dorita has also been exhibiting *Truly Blue*, her painting of a blue frog, an astonishing fluke of nature that called her goldfish pond home before disappearing. Such a rarity cried out to be memorialized in art and has spawned her

*Overlooked* project which, through heroic-sized paintings, calls attention to small creatures she knew personally. A rescued cicada born too early and stranded bumble bee are waiting to be painted.

A blue frog is an attention-getter. For me, a work of art is a failure if I'm not surprised; I want to be shaken, maybe even changed in a positive way, by an unexpected colour, a melody, a compelling rhyme. Dorita's work manages to surprise us not only in subject matter but in execution.

Consider *Bones of the Sea*, a work shaped out of scrap clay, which Dorita says, "gave birth to itself." To quote Steven Cheung, one of the Milton judges, "This is Art!"

We are fascinated by a shark-like skeleton floating in the cosmos. Whether fearful or cuddly, all creatures deserve their claim to habitation on our planet, as *homo sapiens* does for itself.

Buoyed by the reception of her art, Dorita plans further endeavours powered by her wish to "elevate mankind's consideration for all the non-human inhabitants of Planet Earth." We wish her bon voyage, in the hope that her second run at sculpture brings further success.

Facebook.com/dorita.peerkozak



Michele working her magic by serving up her legendary sangria with a smile!

Cheers to victory! Michele channels WWII spirit with Churchill himself.

# A FOND FAREWELL

– TO ASK PRESIDENT –

# MICHELLE MCNALLY

WRITTEN BY  
**PATTI SKRYPEK**  
Patti is a retired communications professional and active volunteer who applies her creative skills to support a number of not-for-profit organizations within the community.

Michele is a powerhouse of creativity and connection, a leader whose passion for the arts has inspired countless people and projects across King Township. Since joining the ASK board in 2018 and stepping into the role of President in 2020, Michele has left an indelible mark on the organization. Her ability to bring people together, her infectious energy and her genuine warmth have helped strengthen ASK's presence in the community. With every event, every meeting and every new initiative, Michele has led with both heart and vision. Her list of accomplishments is impressive. Michele played a key role in many of ASK's signature events, including the Mayor's Celebration of Youth Arts; Gin, Joint & Jazz; the Spring Blooms Pop-Up Art Show; Cabernet & Canvas; VE for Victory Dance;

and the newly established King Artisan Holiday Market. Her leadership has been a constant source of inspiration, turning creative ideas into reality and ensuring that the arts continue to thrive in King. Before her time with ASK, Michele already had a rich background in the arts. A retired actor, she founded the Nobleton Children's Theatre Company, where she introduced young performers to the magic of the stage. Her love for the arts has always gone hand in hand with her love of community. Over the years, she has volunteered her time generously at Nobleton Public School, the Canada 150 celebrations in Kettleby, and as emcee at the Mayor's Cultural Gala and the beloved Nobleton Tree Lighting, to name just a few. Of course, no gathering hosted by Michele would be complete without her legendary sangria. Known among friends and fellow volunteers for her signature blend of fruit, wine and good cheer, Michele's sangria has become something of an ASK tradition. As Michele prepares to leave King Township and begin a new chapter in

WHAT CAN WE SAY ABOUT OUTGOING ARTS SOCIETY KING (ASK) PRESIDENT MICHELE MCNALLY? SHE'S ENGAGING, PERSONABLE, ENTHUSIASTIC AND ENERGETIC, BUT THAT ONLY BEGINS TO DESCRIBE HER.

Kansas City, Missouri, we can't help but feel a mix of gratitude and sadness. We'll miss her steady leadership, her infectious laughter, and her remarkable ability to make every event feel special. But we know that wherever she goes, Michele will continue to share her creativity, kindness, and energy with those around her. Michele, thank you for everything you've done for ASK and the King community. You leave behind not just a legacy of strong leadership, but a spirit of joy and connection that will continue to inspire us all.

## Join Arts Society King as Our Next President!

Arts Society King (ASK) is seeking a dynamic, community-minded leader to serve as our next President. This volunteer role offers a unique opportunity to guide a vibrant non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and celebrating the arts in King Township. The ideal candidate is enthusiastic, organized, and passionate about the arts and community engagement. As President, you'll work with a talented and dedicated board and creative volunteers to support events such as art shows and cultural initiatives that enrich our community. If you're a connector, a motivator and someone who thrives by bringing people and ideas together, we'd love to hear from you! Learn more or express your interest by contacting [info@artsocietyking.ca](mailto:info@artsocietyking.ca). Come lead with creativity and help shape the future of arts in King!



### WINTER 2025 MOSAIC MAYOR'S MESSAGE

On behalf of King Township Council, welcome to the winter edition of the Mosaic. As cold, snowy weather greets us and the holiday season approaches, it's a lovely time to reflect on the particularly special year we've had celebrating King Township's 175th anniversary. Fall highlights featured a commemorative concert for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, community events like Sidewalkable Saturday in Schomberg, Halloween activities at the museum and Cold Creek Conservation Area, the 100th anniversary and rededication of the Aurora War Memorial, and the recent One of a King Handmade Holiday Market. The celebration doesn't end here – we've got an assortment of interactive programs and festive holiday traditions to help you through the winter blues.

#### Arts and Culture Programs

Sign up to do something creative this winter, such as holiday card printing and snowman table décor crafting, and the continuation of the "Grandma/Grandpa & Me" series at the museum. Visit the museum as a family to view educational exhibits including the Wedgewood popup, on now until February 28, and the fifth edition of the annual International Women's Day art exhibition, on display from January 31 to March 28. Program details are available at [king.ca/recreation](http://king.ca/recreation).

#### Community Events

Winter brings a host of family-friendly events and community traditions. Experience what makes living in King special at these events:

**The King Christian Church and King Railway Station:** both designated heritage buildings will officially reopen on Friday, Nov. 28 at 2 p.m. with a ribbon cutting ceremony and tour, following extensive renovations and accessibility upgrades funded by a \$250,000 Rural Economic Development (RED) Fund grant. The improvements now allow for year-round arts and cultural events in these historic spaces.

**Santa's Cookies, Bites, and Holiday Lights:** Cookie decorating, festive crafts, a cozy storytime with hot chocolate, a nostalgic "Retro Forest", pictures with Santa and the lighting of the Christmas tree at the King Heritage and Cultural Centre on Saturday, Nov. 29 from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

**Main Street Christmas:** On Saturday, Dec. 7, Main Street in Schomberg will transport you to a bygone era with carolers serenading, lively street performers, carriage rides, fireside readings, hot chocolate, roasted chestnuts, and more. Santa's Parade kicks off at 4 p.m.

**Nobleton Tree Lighting:** The free, family-friendly event on Sunday, Dec. 7 at 8 Sheardown Drive features selfies with Santa, face painting, holiday crafts, musical performances, and festive treats.

**Mayor's Pancake Breakfast:** The annual King Township Pancake Breakfast will be on Saturday, Jan. 10 at Dr. William Lacey Nobleton Arena from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. The Schomberg Lions Club will make all the breakfast goodies you can eat, including pancakes with maple syrup, sausages, bacon, and more.

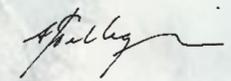
**King Township Mayor's Cultural Gala – Local Legends:** Hosted by the Township in partnership with Arts Society King and the King Historical Society, the fourth edition of my biennial gala is a celebration of what makes King unique. Join us on Thursday, Feb. 26 at the Manor in Kettleby to support arts, culture, heritage-based programming, exhibitions, special events and the preservation and restoration of important heritage buildings in King Township.

To sponsor, donate to the silent auction or learn more about the event including tickets, visit [king.ca/mayorsgala](http://king.ca/mayorsgala).

As the new year approaches, we look forward to a 2026 full of community and cheer. We are fortunate to live in King Township where there is no shortage of opportunity to connect with our neighbours and participate in local initiatives. Please continue to volunteer, support local businesses, and subscribe to receive King Township's top stories directly to your inbox at [king.ca/subscribe](http://king.ca/subscribe).

Wishing you a happy holidays and a spectacular new year!

Sincerely,  
Steve Pellegrini  
Mayor, King Township

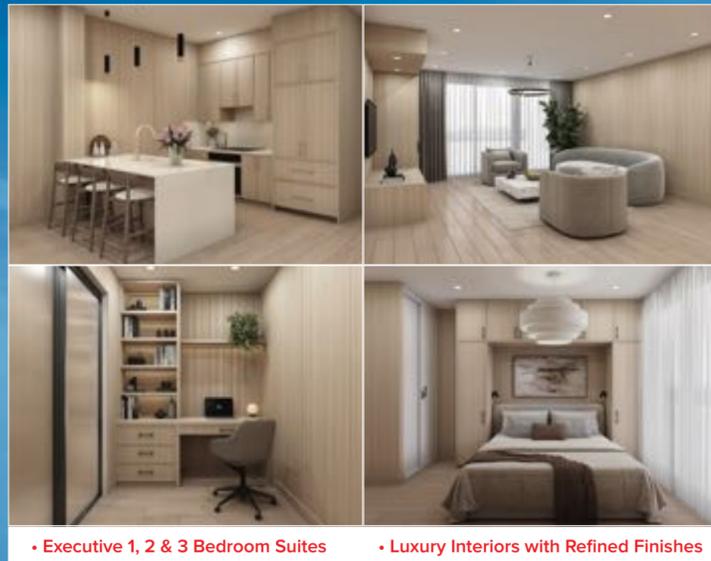



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# Let me ASK you...

featuring **CAROLE AHMAD**  
& **KATE GREENWAY**



Along The Humber



## CAROLE AHMAD

Carole Ahmad is a long-time resident of Schomberg and lover of the landscape that surrounds her. For seven years, she managed the Schomberg School of Art, supporting many local learners in strengthening their creative expression. Some of these students have gone on to be art teachers and professional painters themselves.

Carole paints, pots, writes, quilts, collages, art journals, makes installation art and mosaics. She travels the sideroads of King Township sketching in ink and watercolour and believes that sketching in ink is freeing because once the mark is made in ink, "the dye (sic) is cast."

Sometimes, Carole's inspiration arrives when she least expects it. *Nobleton Barn* began as a photo captured years ago after countless drive-bys. Only recently, when a vintage truck appeared in the scene, did the moment feel complete and ready to paint. Its gentle curves, warm tones and nostalgic charm brought the piece to life. This artwork is featured in the "Celebrate King" acoustic art installation at the King City Public Library.

Email: [carole.ahmad@outlook.com](mailto:carole.ahmad@outlook.com)



Winter Blue / Green Belt

## KATE GREENWAY

Kate Greenway is an educator, author and artist who works in watercolour, mixed media collage and glass – stained, fused and mosaic – sometimes blurring the distinction between mediums. She completed an award-winning Master's and a PhD in practice-led Arts-Based Research and Education and has published many journal articles showcasing her research and artistic creations.

Kate has exhibited in solo and group shows across Ontario, the GTA, and several provinces and states. She has also served numerous artist residencies, volunteers with arts associations and is the recipient of multiple awards. Her artwork can be found in private collections across Ontario.

When not engaged in her artistic pursuits, Kate can be found cooking, tending her gardens in her rural backyard and snuggling with her beagles.

<https://www.instagram.com/beaglesofballantrae/>  
[beaglesofballantrae@gmail.com](mailto:beaglesofballantrae@gmail.com)  
<https://beaglesofballantrae.ca/>

## WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO PURSUE THE TYPE OF ART YOU CREATE?

Luscious-coloured crayons as a kid and a sketching course in my early 20s launched my interest in art, tweaking my observation skills. Intense vibrant colour always leads the way in my eclectic and mixed media creations.

## YOUR FIRST JOB EVER WAS...

I was a terribly quiet and introverted teenager. When my cousins took a job at a beachside restaurant and invited me along, my parents accepted, knowing, "it would be a very good place for me to come out of my shell."

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO YOUR 18-YEAR-OLD SELF?

Join a class or group. Your energy and creativity are enriched by being with like-minded others and not-so-like-minded others. Keep taking courses to deepen your self-expression through your art.

## A PIECE OF ADVICE YOU OFTEN GIVE BUT FIND DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW IS..

"Find a place and time to create," even if it's a small table. I do not do that. I "follow my nose," grab my supplies, create anywhere,

## I SURPRISE PEOPLE WHEN I TELL THEM...

I am retired. I suppose that's a good thing!

## WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO BE AN ARTIST?

I have always loved art: making it, experiencing it. I went into it full time during COVID when I wanted to tune out the scary and unsettling news and concentrate on positivity, creating beauty and putting something hopeful into the world.

## WHAT IS THE HARDEST PART OF CREATING YOUR ART?

Deciding what to work on next. I create in many different media: watercolour, mixed media collage, and glass. Sometimes it's difficult to decide how to tackle a project, with so many possibilities. Also, because I work in tiny detail, it does take a long time to finish a piece.

## IF I HAD AN EXTRA HOUR IN THE DAY, I WOULD...

Spend it with my lovely husband and dogs gazing at a beautiful waterscape anywhere in the world. I love to travel and water

## THE ARTS



WRITTEN BY  
**PATTI SKRYPEK**

Patti is a retired communications professional and active volunteer who applies her creative skills to support a number of not-for-profit organizations within the community.

everywhere and whenever I like...and even sometimes in my art studio.

## WHAT'S ONE OF YOUR DREAM PLACES IN THE WORLD TO VISIT AND WHY?

The Northwest Territories. I have travelled every place in Canada except the NWT. I plan to celebrate Canada Day 2026 in Yellowknife, prompted by women painters of the Canadian Arctic, an adventure by ship through Lancaster Sound and a road trip in the Yukon.



Nobleton Barn

soothes me. (That might also depend on winning a lottery...).

## WHAT IS THE TRAIT THAT YOU DEPLORE MOST IN OTHERS?

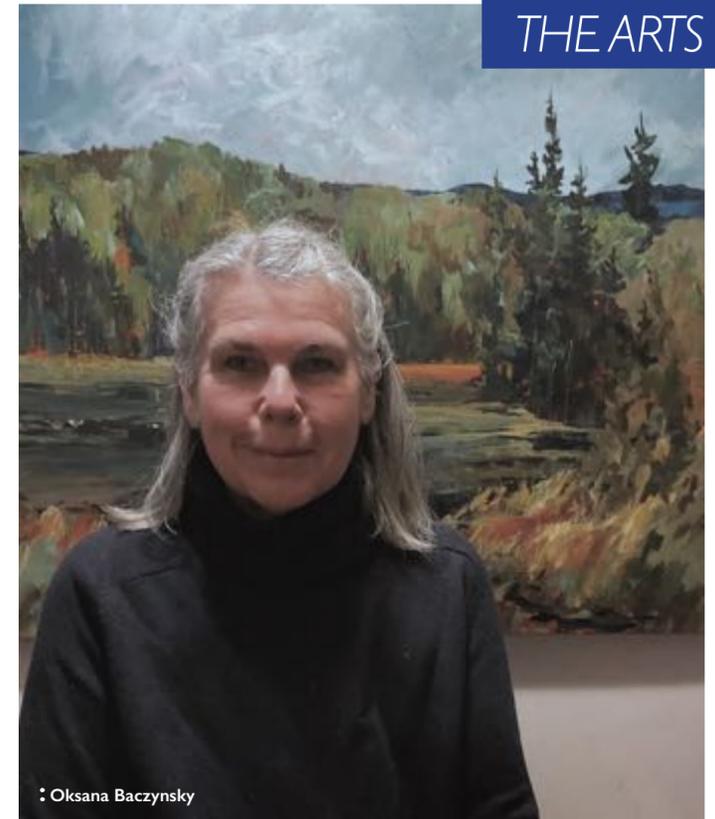
Not wanting to be negative, I do think hubris. Or a lack of kindness. Especially to animals.



Pick Me Santa

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*Christmas*

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MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR KING-VAUGHAN  
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*From*  
**LAB COATS to LANDSCAPES:**  
**OKSANA'S DUAL PASSIONS**

WHEN OKSANA BACZYNSKY HEADED OFF TO UNIVERSITY, SHE WAS TORN BETWEEN TWO LOVES.



WRITTEN BY  
**BARBARA MAHER-ERWIN**

Barbara has had a varied career in journalism, government communications and policy development. Now officially retired, she spends her time volunteering and acting as a full-time servant of a very demanding West Highland White Terrier.

scientific career working at the Ontario Cancer Institute but, wanting to start a family and concerned about the potential health risks of the radioactive materials she was dealing with, she chose to pivot to a career in teaching. After obtaining yet another degree, this one a Bachelor of Education, she spent almost 20 years teaching science at R.H. King Academy. But what did Oksana do on the side? She ran the art club, of course.

in oils, but found the clean-up required wasn't conducive to the demands of raising young children, so she switched to watercolours and later added acrylics to her repertoire.

people – there's a spirit of community," she says. "Artists are very giving."

Calling herself "a born teacher," Oksana has continued to provide instruction in art through Newmakeit in Newmarket, where she teaches acrylic painting. "Seeing people enjoy art, play and get those creative juices going – it's such a feel-good feeling," she says. "It's very satisfying to see people later and have them say, 'I sold my first painting.' It's passing the torch."

She was excited to pursue an academic path that captivated her scientific mind, but at the same time, she was leaving behind the dream of post-secondary studies in another of her passions – art.

Oksana's Toronto high school didn't have an art department and, despite having taken courses on her own time, "I didn't have the pre-requisites to major in art," Oksana says. "So, I chose science, which I had always liked."

Never one to give up early on any of her interests, Oksana went on to complete a Bachelor's degree, capped off by a PhD in cell biology. Meanwhile, she continued to indulge her artistic ambitions as a hobby, reluctant to abandon the pastime that brought her such joy.

Born in Montreal to parents who fled Ukraine during World War II, Oksana was driven to succeed. She began her

"I was lucky because my art didn't have to feed me," Oksana says, acknowledging the difficulty of making a living as a working artist. "I had the summers off to paint, and I didn't have to sacrifice my inner voice."

Despite the seeming dichotomy between the study of science and art, Oksana sees synergies between the two. "The study of science, and particularly biology, has allowed me to both recognize and appreciate the patterns that exist within the natural world. Perhaps it has also nurtured my love of gardening and enjoyment of the great outdoors."

While working and tending to her family, Oksana continued to take art courses, whenever and wherever she could. She studied at the Haliburton School of Art and at Seneca College, attended many workshops, and began to exhibit her art in the late 1980s. She started painting

While she has dabbled in pottery, mosaics, jewelry-making and stained glass, Oksana's body of work consists mainly of landscapes and florals. In keeping with her favourite subjects, she does much of her painting outdoors, "en plein air." She has lived in three different provinces, journeyed the breadth of Canada from Newfoundland and Labrador to British Columbia and the Yukon, and continues to travel extensively. Wherever she goes, she carries a sketchbook and might even bring along her watercolours.

"Ontario and Canada are so beautiful and have such varied landscapes," she says. "I've gone on canoe trips and, when I saw something I wanted to sketch, I told my husband, 'Ted, you've got to stop the canoe.'"

Oksana belongs to several artists' groups, including Arts Society King, Artistic Adventurers, the Royal Rose Gallery, Society of York Region Artists, and artist collectives in her hometown of Aurora and around her Haliburton cottage. She credits her fellow artists with helping to inspire her: "It's good to be with like-minded

Oksana is nowhere near having to pass the torch to a new generation just yet, though. She is still very active on the local and provincial art scene. She has had her work displayed in galleries throughout Ontario, including Rails End Gallery in Haliburton and Art Gallery Burlington, as well as in Upper New York State. Four of her paintings are featured in the recently erected Celebrate King acoustic installation at the King City Public Library. She was also one of the three finalists at ASK's Cabernet and Canvas en plein air competition in September.

Being immersed in nature, either in the laboratory or in the wild, is where Oksana is most inspired. So, when you're out among the lush landscapes of York Region or Haliburton, don't be surprised to see Oksana scientifically assessing where best to set up her easel.

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AROUND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD



• Schomberg seniors enjoy a Titanic themed afternoon tea.



• Nobleton seniors and their pumpkin centrepieces



Diverse programs and activities enhance seniors' wellbeing and foster a sense of purpose, joy and fulfillment. These experiences keep seniors active, engaged in their communities and improve their overall quality of life.

**PROTECTING CANADA'S HISTORY  
CELEBRATING OUR HERITAGE**

Proud to deliver \$250,000 investment to restore the King Christian Church & King Railway Station - Canada's oldest surviving railway station built in 1852.

**STEPHEN LECCE**  
MPP King—Vaughan

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King City, ON L7B 1L3  
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@SLecce  
StephenLecceMPP  
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**LIFESTYLE ENRICHMENT FOR SENIORS**

WRITTEN BY  
**JOANNE BAILEY**  
Joanne is a retired college professor and registered nurse. She is an active volunteer with Arts Society King and the Nobleton Seniors Centre.

AS an active board member of the King Township Seniors and chair of the Nobleton Seniors 55+ programs, I take great pride in organizing weekly educational Thursdays that connect our seniors with industry professionals and health care leaders to learn about emergency practices, nutrition, exercise, computer skills and community safety. We also offer fun activities such as art, cooking and fashion.

Our seniors are involved in decision-making and offer their suggestions to assist me in organizing our weekly programming at the Nobleton Seniors Centre at 15 Old King Road. I have seen new friendships develop and delight in the fact that our seniors are enjoying something new. As the chair of the program, my goal is to provide the opportunity for our King Township seniors to remain active, independent, healthy and involved in the community.

Erin Burford, Recreation Coordinator for King City, Nobleton and Schomberg,

oversees the functions of all three seniors' centres. Erin states, "I have seen first-hand how our seniors' centres, volunteers and programming have had a positive impact for seniors. Our various senior programming locations offer a safe, welcoming space to stay active and socially connected. Through our annual senior membership program, seniors can have access to a variety of programming such as fitness classes, card and board games, social events, educational workshops and more. If you haven't joined yet, now's the perfect time. It's more than just activities – it's about staying engaged, building friendships, and being part of a vibrant community that supports healthy aging and lifelong fun."

King City has had an active seniors' program since the fall of 1970 when a group of seniors formed "The 39ers," a tribute to Jack Benny. "This group met in the United Church for many years and organized activities, trips and dinners," says Carolyn Kanitz, communication director of the King City seniors. In 1986, several people decided that King City needed a recreational building for its seniors. With financial support from the Township, the King City Lions and a New Horizons grant, plans were put in place. When the Township decided to redo the King City

Library, a Seniors Centre was added to the site at 1970 King Road. It has since become a hive of activity five days a week, with one or more activities taking place each morning and afternoon. There are exercise classes, such as mobility matters, bone fitness, line dancing and Tai Chi, as well as card games, artistic workshops, crocheting, knitting and even organized trips.

Our third centre is in Schomberg at the Trisan Centre, 25 Dillane Drive. Lynn Bird, who is the chair of the program states, "We welcome new members to our Schomberg 55+ community where we embrace change with open hearts and curious minds. We celebrate the joy of life-long learning, the warmth of laughter, and the power of love – for ourselves, for each other, and for the journey we share. We have enjoyed themed events such as the Maritime Kitchen Party and an Afternoon Tea Aboard the RMS Titanic. Join us for a game of social bridge or mahjong, or learn the ukulele and play with our Tightly Wound Ukulele Group. Some members meet to attend York Symphony Orchestra concerts, live theatre outings, escape room adventures, hands on workshops and much more."

The success of our seniors' programming comes from the volunteers and the weekly

commitment of our senior population, along with support from King Township and provincial grants. We now have 473 active members across the three centres. The board members of each centre meet monthly with Erin Burford to share ideas and support one another. Our events are listed quarterly in MOSAiC, weekly in the King Sentinel newspaper and on the King website, seniors@king.ca.

As a (retired) Registered Nurse, and a Director of Care in a Nursing Home, I understand that these opportunities are crucial for our seniors to remain active, independent, healthy and involved in the community. Through these well-designed social programs, we are enriching the quality of life of our seniors, who in turn play an important role in society at this golden age.



• King City seniors share a meal

## NOW AND ONGOING – WRITENOW!@KING

A partnership between Arts Society King and King Township Public Library, WriteNow!@King is a writers' group that meets on the first and third Thursdays each month. New and experienced writers are welcome to participate in stimulating writing exercises, guest speakers and feedback from peers.  
Location: King City Public Library, 1970 King Road, King City  
Time: 2-4 PM  
Contact: info@kinglibrary.ca for more information

## ONGOING –VARIOUS WORKSHOPS – KINGCRAFTS STUDIO

Discover hands-on workshops that spark creativity and inspire your imagination. Learn stained glass, pottery, enameling, knitting, fine art and more — no experience needed! Create in a fun, friendly atmosphere with guidance every step of the way. Take home something truly unique, made by you.  
Location: 12936 Keele Street, King City  
Website: www.kingcrafts.ca for information on current workshops

## DECEMBER 7, 2025 – KING TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY CHRISTMAS CONCERT

KTHS is hosting the Borealis Big Band. Location: Sacred Heart Church Hall, 14485 Jane Street, King City  
Time: 2 PM  
Website: www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com  
Email: kinghistoricalsociety@gmail.com

## DECEMBER 7, 2025 – NOBLETON TREE LIGHTING – TOWNSHIP OF KING

Join in the family fun and festivities at the annual Nobleton tree lighting as it brings the holiday spirit to life each year. Enjoy local food, sing carols and support your community!  
Location: 8 Sheardown Drive, Nobleton  
Time: 5 PM–7:30 PM  
Website: king.ca/NobletonTreeLighting

## DECEMBER 13 TO 21, 2025 – A CHRISTMAS CAROL – KING THEATRE COMPANY

King Theatre Company is thrilled to bring this timeless Christmas classic to life with professional performers and a unique, intimate staging in Schomberg Community Hall.  
Location: Schomberg Community Hall, 325 Main St, Schomberg  
Time: 7 PM Evening Shows, 2 PM Matinee Shows  
Website: www.kingtheatre.ca/christmascarol  
Email: kingtheatrecompany@gmail.com  
Phone: 647-622-6055

## DECEMBER 22 & 23, DECEMBER 29 TO 31, 2025 – ART VENTURE WINTER CAMP 2025 – MCMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION

Led by talented art instructors, our Artventure camps provide in-studio art activities, outdoor exploration and in-gallery visits.  
Location: 10365 Islington Avenue, Kleinburg  
Time: 9 AM-5 PM  
Website: mcmichael.com/event/artventure-winter-camp-2025/

## DECEMBER 31, 2025 – NEW YEARS BASH! – SCHOMBERG LIONS CLUB

Join us to Ring in 2026!  
Location: Schomberg Community Centre, Main Street, Schomberg  
Time: 7:00 PM  
Email: schombergionsclub@gmail.com

14 MOSAIC winter 2025

## JANUARY TO MARCH 2026 – WINTER SKATING LESSONS – NOBLETON SKATING CLUB

Canskate, Power Skating, Teen/Adult Learn-to-Skate and figure skating  
Location: Nobleton Arena, 15 Old King Road, Nobleton  
Time: Monday/Wednesday/Friday/Saturday sessions  
Website: nobletonskatingclub.com  
Email: nobletonskatingclub@outlook.com

## JANUARY 10, 2026 – MAYOR'S ANNUAL PANCAKE BREAKFAST – TOWNSHIP OF KING

Join Mayor Pellegrini and members of Council for a feast of pancakes with maple syrup, sausages, bacon and other breakfast goodies.  
Location: Dr. William Lacey Nobleton Arena and Community Centre, 15 Old King Road, Nobleton  
Time: 9 AM-11 AM  
Website: king.ca/events

## JANUARY 17 TO MARCH 7, 2026 – SATURDAYS AT THE MCMICHAEL CHILDREN'S ART CLASSES – MCMICHAEL CANADIAN ART COLLECTION

These popular children's art classes offer a creative exploration of various art mediums, encourage skill development, cultivate art appreciation and introduce children to the art of Canada through in-gallery activities.  
Location: 10365 Islington Avenue, Kleinburg  
Time: 10 AM-12 PM  
Website: mcmichael.com/event/saturdays-at-the-mcmichael-sam-childrens-art-classes/

## JANUARY 26, 2026 – A GARDENING CONUNDRUM: WHY NATIVE PLANTS ARE SOLD IN NURSERIES – NOBLETON & KING CITY GARDEN CLUB

This talk will answer that question and suggest actions that we can all take to safeguard biodiversity.  
Location: Zoom Presentation, contact for link  
Time: 7:30 PM  
Website: https://gardenontario.org/society-listing/entry/635/  
Email: Nobletonkingcitygardenclub@gmail.com

## FEBRUARY 8, 2026 – FLOWER HAMMERING WORKSHOP - NOBLETON & KING CITY GARDEN CLUB

Use real flowers and leaves to transfer vibrant natural pigments onto fabric or paper, learning the joyful art of botanical imprinting.  
Location: Laskay Hall, 2920 King Road, King City  
Time: 1 PM-3 PM  
Website: https://gardenontario.org/society-listing/entry/635/  
Email: Nobletonkingcitygardenclub@gmail.com

## FEBRUARY 23, 2026 – PREPARING FOR FLOWER SHOWS WITH CONFIDENCE - NOBLETON & KING CITY GARDEN CLUB

How to prepare for Flower Show Season with confidence.  
Location: Zoom Presentation, contact for link  
Time: 7:30 PM  
Website: https://gardenontario.org/society-listing/entry/635/  
Email: Nobletonkingcitygardenclub@gmail.com

## FEBRUARY 26, 2026 – MAYOR'S CULTURAL GALA – TOWNSHIP OF KING

The Township of King is partnering with Arts Society King to bring you the fourth Mayor's Cultural Gala in support of arts, culture and heritage in King Township. Tickets coming soon.

Location: The Manor, 16750 Weston Road, King  
Time: 5 PM-10 PM  
Website: king.ca/mayorsgala

## MARCH 7, 2026 – COLD CREEK MAPLE SYRUP FEST – TOWNSHIP OF KING

Join in the family fun and festivities, enjoy pancakes with maple syrup and other local foods, outdoors activities and vendors, tickets will be available soon.  
Location: Cold Creek Conservation Area, 14125 11th Concession  
Time: 10 AM– 2 PM  
Website: coldcreek.ca/MapleSyrupFest

## KING HERITAGE & CULTURAL CENTRE PROGRAMS

Location: 2920 King Road, King City  
Website: www.kingheritageandculture.ca  
Phone: 905-833-2331

## NOVEMBER 29, 2025 – SANTA'S COOKIE BITES & HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Santa is in King and ready to share his favourite festive treat of all: cookies! Decorate cookies, craft something festive, enjoy a cozy storytime with hot chocolate and wander through our nostalgic "Retro Forest" exhibit. Don't forget to snap a photo with Santa himself – arriving at 4:00PM sharp! Join the festivities at 5:30PM for a magical lighting of the KHCC Christmas Tree – the perfect start to a season full of cheer! Cost: \$15/person, pre-registration required.  
Time: 3:30 PM– 5:30 PM

## DECEMBER 6, 2025 – GRANDPA, GRANDMA & ME: HOT OFF THE PRESS – HOLIDAY CARDS

Our "Grandma/Grandpa & Me" series is wrapping up the year with festive cheer! Work together with your grandchildren to design and print your own holiday card using our lino press. Along the way, learn about the history and science behind the printing press and discover the first holiday card that started them all!  
Time: 10 AM–11 AM

## DECEMBER 6, 2025 – DECK THE PRESSES: HOLIDAY CARDS PRINTING WORKSHOP FOR ADULTS

Try your hand at designing and printing your own holiday cards with a custom lino-block and our KHCC lino press. Get inspired by the art of historic printing presses and card making to craft a one-of-a-kind piece of art to gift to your loved ones this season!  
Time: 12 PM–2 PM

## DECEMBER 29, 2025 – ONCE UPON A STAGE: WINTER WONDERLAND THEATRE DAY --CAMP FOR KIDS

King Theatre Company is back as kids step into a magical world of snowy adventures and theatrical fun! They'll create their own characters, learn fundamental theatre skills, and bring snowy scenes to life on stage. Best part: they get to perform for their friends and family at the end of the camp day!  
Time: 10 AM–4 PM

## KING HERITAGE & CULTURAL CENTRE EXHIBITIONS

ONGOING TO DECEMBER 12 – TREES OF GIVING: THROUGH THE DECADES  
Annual exhibition of Christmas trees decorated by community groups who compete for Best in Show!  
Time: Tuesdays to Saturdays, 10 AM–4 PM

## ONGOING TO FEBRUARY 28, 2026 – THE ART OF WEDGWOOD – POP-UP EXHIBITION

This display highlights a selection of the many artists who contributed to the legacy of Wedgwood over the decades.  
Time: Tuesdays to Saturdays, 10 AM–4 PM

## JANUARY 31 TO MARCH 28, 2026 – IN HER OWN TIME: ART EXHIBITION FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

5th annual art exhibition in recognition of International Women's Day features artists from King Township and beyond in a variety of mediums. Visit kingheritageandculture.ca for information about art opening and forum.  
Time: Tuesdays to Saturdays, 10 AM–4 PM

## ALL SAINTS ANGLICAN CHURCH, KING CITY

Location: 12935 Keele St, King City  
Website: allsaintskingcity.ca

## DECEMBER 6, 2025 – HOLIDAY BAKE SALE

Delicious baked goods and other treats will be available for purchase, perfect for holiday hosting!  
Time: 9 AM–12 PM

## DECEMBER 6, 2025 AND JANUARY 3, 2026 – MONTHLY MAKER'S CIRCLE

A welcoming space to craft, knit and create community together.  
Location: Fellowship Room (back entrance)  
Time: 10 AM–12 PM

## NOBLETON SENIORS 55+

Location: Nobleton Arena, 15 Old King Road, Nobleton  
Time: 10 AM – 12 NOON  
Contact: Joanne Bailey 416-706-9375  
Email: jbailey133@yahoo.com  
Website: www.king.ca/seniors

## NOVEMBER 27, 2025 – DOES JOINT PAIN AFFECT YOUR DAILY ACTIVITIES?

Guest speaker, Tara Steir OT from the Arthritis Society will present information on joint pain and its effects on our daily life.

## DECEMBER 4, 2025 – MAKE YOUR OWN CHRISTMAS CENTREPIECE

Artist Angela Del Borrello will engage the seniors in making a Christmas Centrepiece. Register by November 27. Cost: \$10.00, including all required supplies.

## DECEMBER 11, 2025 – CHRISTMAS PARTY & PRESENTATION ON DOWNSIZING YOUR HOME

Come out and listen to Real Estate Broker Greg Hart discuss ways to downsize your home. Potluck lunch, wear festive attire for our Christmas gathering and final presentation of 2025.

## JANUARY 8, 2026 – NOURISH AND FLOURISH: GUT HEALTH FOR SENIORS

Guest speaker Dr. Christina Carew ND, FABNG will discuss topics such as constipation, reflux, fibre, fluids, probiotics, medication and more.

## JANUARY 15, 2025 – DECORATE YOUR HOME WITH A WINTER DOOR HANGER

Artist Angela Del Borrello will give detailed instructions on how to create a wooden winter door hanger. Register by January 8. Cost: \$10.00, including all materials.

## JANUARY 22, 2026 – THE RED CARPET IS READY

Sit back and watch a movie on the new TV

screen. Choice of movie to be determined by the group.

## JANUARY 29, 2026 – ARE YOUR AFFAIRS IN ORDER? A COFFEE & TEA WORKSHOP ON BEING PREPARED

Guest speaker: Gordon MacGregor; Certified Executive Advisor on behalf of Egan Funeral Home in Bolton, will discuss the 7 Key Steps to Being Organized.

## FEBRUARY 5, 2026 – CREATE YOUR OWN ACRYLIC WINTER FOREST SCENE

Artist Angela Del Borrello will give detailed instructions on painting a winter forest scene with acrylic paint. Register by January 29. Cost: \$10.00, including all materials.

## FEBRUARY 12, 2026 – ENERGY RESET – 5 NATURAL WAYS TO RAISE YOUR ENERGY

Guest speaker Brian DeCastro, Holistic Health Practitioner and Reiki Master, will lead us through an experience of feeling grounded, mentally clear and re-energized. Register by February 5. Cost: \$5.00.

## FEBRUARY 19, 2026 – HEART TO HOME – TRADITIONALLY BALANCED MEALS

Heart to Home will discuss their menu, how it caters to various dietary needs and the delivery of the food. Sample foods will be available to try.

## FEBRUARY 26, 2026 – FRAUDS, SCAMS and FINANCIAL ABUSE

Guest speaker Mary Shkoury, Prevention Consultant with Elder Abuse, will talk about recognizing frauds, scams and financial abuse.

## SCHOMBERG SENIORS 55+

Location: Variable  
Times: Variable

Contact: Email kingtownshipseniors55@gmail.com Phone: 905-833- 6565, unless otherwise stated.

## DECEMBER 1, 2025 – LET'S PLAY Pictionary

A game where your inner artist meets your wildest guesser—and chaos ensues in the best way!  
Location: Trisan Centre, Curling Lounge  
Time: 10 AM for coffee, Meeting starts at 10:30 AM  
Email: klbird@hotmail.com

## DECEMBER 8, 2025 – TOUR SISTERS OF HOLY THEOTOKOS CONVENT

Tour of the convent to see their Joyous Candle creations.  
Location: 4369 Faulkner Ave, Stouffville  
Time: 11 AM, free Admission, self drive  
Email: klbird@hotmail.com

## DECEMBER 14, 2025 – "RAPUNZEL: A BRAID NEW WORLD" PANTOMIME

Live show, ticket price \$ 51.00, self drive  
Location: Orangeville Theatre  
Time: 2 PM  
Email: klbird@hotmail.com

## DECEMBER 15, 2025 – FESTIVE LUNCHEON

Join us for Christmas goodies and carols. Entertainment provided by our own "Tightly Wound Ukulele Players."

## JANUARY 19, 2026 – "COSMIC CLARITY" WITH NAOMI SIMPSON, PROFESSIONAL ASTROLOGER & COACH

Naomi will explore how to discover your natal Sun, Moon and ascendant (or rising)



# NEW SEASON, NEW READS



**The Charmed Library**  
by Jennifer Moorman  
**Expected:** January 6, 2026  
**Genre:** Fantasy Romance  
Step into a reader's dream in the cozy and magical public library of Blue Sky Valley, North Carolina – where fictional characters step out of the pages into the real world. Assistant librarian Stella Parker is about to discover just how magical her workplace truly is when she meets Jack, her first crush and the fictional hero of her favorite book. But when she impulsively invites a villain into the real world, chaos follows. Characters can only stay for 14 days – but is that enough time for Stella and Jack to get their happily ever after?



**The Star Society**  
by Gabriella Saab  
**Expected:** January 6, 2026  
**Genre:** Historical Fiction  
Hollywood, 1946. Post World War II, Ada Worthing-Fox is rebuilding her life as a rising star when her sister Ingrid – long believed to be dead – shows up unannounced. As the sisters confront dangerous secrets from their past, they must decide what matters most: justice or safety, silence or truth, loyalty or survival. Together, they'll chase revenge – and perhaps redemption.



**First Sign of Danger**  
by Kelley Armstrong  
**Expected:** February 17, 2026  
**Genre:** Mystery  
Haven's Rock isn't as safe as it once seemed. Detective Casey Duncan and her husband, Sheriff Eric Dalton, are ready for a quieter life – but something's wrong with the town. Hikers are turning up dead, neighbours are acting strangely and long-buried secrets are bubbling to the surface. Can they protect their new community before it all unravels?



**When the Wolves are Silent**  
by C.S. Harris  
**Expected:** April 14, 2026 | **Genre:** Historical Fiction  
London, 1816: A city shaken by political unrest and economic hardship faces a new horror – a series of ritualistic murders terrorizing the streets. Former cavalry officer Sebastian St. Cyr, Viscount Devlin, is drawn back into the world of investigations as ancient sacrifices and deadly secrets come to light. Is it a case of revenge? Or is something darker haunting the city? Can Sebastian put an end to the ruthless threats to innocent lives, the tearing of a troubled nation on the edge of riots driven by fear?



WRITTEN BY  
**NICOLE GNEO**  
Nicole is the Interim Program Supervisor for the King Township Public Library.

WORD HAS IT

# MARCH 27, 1980

It was our third winter in Ontario. It had been harsh of course, but not unlike the others.



WRITTEN BY **LESLIE HOBSON**  
Award-winning writer and photographer Leslie Hobson has lived in King for nearly 40 years.

Perhaps we should have known better. Perhaps if our neighbours had been closer they might have warned us. Advised us to wait a little bit longer.

We had planned and stored and stocked for winter as best we knew. The root vegetables in the cellar were almost gone. The woodpile, stacked so high in October it seemed unimaginable that we could deplete it, yet for so many long nights the fire had burned and burned as we huddled close to stay warm.

The winter had been so long. And after so many months locked up together in the tiny cabin we quietly longed for both a change and rest. Those warm days that blew in with the Ides of March were so seductive. Windows open. Boots off. Small shoots of green starting to appear through stark earth.

Now, too, the days were longer and the darkness didn't come so quickly. Late in March, it was decided that my husband would make the long trek into town for a few days to replenish our dwindling supplies. I would stay to tend to the animals. I admit to being jealous as we tightened the straps on the old wagon, but I knew he was better suited to the rough roads and harsh conditions of the trip.

He left at dawn and as I watched the wagon disappear down the lane, I felt the wind pick up and wrapped my shawl tighter around my shoulders. By early afternoon, the clouds had rolled in hard and the skies turned sullen and heavy with snow. By sunset, snow had covered the ground and was rising around me. I tended to the animals early and stoked up the fire. The sound of the shrieking wind kept me awake and listening throughout the night. The beams of the cabin creaked and moaned and drafts blew across the floor. And still it snowed.

By morning, I had to fight to get to the animals. I chopped the ice on top of the water for the cows and chipped away at the frozen feed for the chickens. It was harsh, unforgiving work but that had been our story since coming here. Warming my fingers with my breath, I gathered a few long ropes and tied them together to make one long strip. I fastened one end to the barn door and carried it with me as I fought my way back through the storm, almost missing the farmhouse entirely. Exhausted, I tied the other end of the rope to a post on the back porch.

Still the snow came down. It was almost two weeks later when I heard from neighbours what had happened. They found him on the road less than 4 miles from town, where the horse had gone down. Nobody had seen a storm like that in 50 years. Nearly 16 inches fell in that single day, March 27, 1870.



Cheryl Uhrig's Hearty Pine

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FPLC.CA

## HELLO my name is ALEX ROJAS

I am a photographic artist based in King City, and my work explores time, movement and inertia — how photography can reveal what isn't visible to the naked eye. My background in gymnastics informs how I see the body in space, and the fleeting balance between motion and pause.

Collaboration is central to my practice. I work with athletes, dancers and artists worldwide — from Japanese 2019 World Champion and 2010 Youth Olympic Champion Chisato Doihata (土井畑知里) in Osaka, Japan (*In the Void*) to Olympian Dafne Navarro from Mexico (*Flux*). Each project is a shared exploration built on trust and intuition, resulting in images that capture a spectrum of experiences — from quiet, introspective moments to dynamic bursts of energy, reflecting both motion and emotion in equal measure.

Having earned my Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography from OCAD University, I developed a conceptual approach grounded in experimentation and curiosity. My work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including at INTAC: Ebb & Flow in Fukuoka, Japan, and INTAC: Invisible String in Mexico City. Recent projects, *In the Void*, *Flux* and *Adrenaline*, continue this dialogue, translating physical movement into visual reflections on rhythm, resilience and human connection.

In my practice, I aim to create work that suspends time by inviting viewers to enter a dialogue with the unseen — moments suspended beyond perception.

Website: [www.alexrojas.ca](http://www.alexrojas.ca)  
Instagram: [@alexrojasphotography](https://www.instagram.com/alexrojasphotography)  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/official.alexrojasphotography>

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Unknown group of men and children, Kinghorn Farm, early 20th century

Ellen (Barnhart) Smith in front of her Laskay home, late 19th century



Nobleton Brass Band, late 19th century



# Uncovering Hidden Histories

## EARLY BLACK CITIZENS IN KING TOWNSHIP

WRITTEN BY KHCC STAFF

**I**n the early 19th century, Black settlements grew up across Upper Canada, largely centred in southwestern Ontario and communities like Hamilton, Toronto, Barrie, Owen Sound and Guelph. Various factors drove approximately 15,000 to 20,000 African Americans northward to settle in Canada during this time, including the 1834 Slavery Abolition Act (which made slavery illegal in Canada) and the American 1850 Fugitive Slave Act (which encouraged the re-capture of free Blacks and refugees living in northern states).

While King was not a major destination for early Black settlers, many families did make their homes here. Although still exposed to racial discrimination, it has been suggested that Black settlers may have found it easier to integrate into King Township, with its high percentage of Quakers, a group known for their opposition to slavery. As early as 1836, Black Canadians who worked as labourers, post masters, teachers, domestic servants and homemakers called King home.

Notable names from the Township include Richard, Charlotte and Ellen Barnhart, and Benjamin Jr. and Sarah (Britton) Rolling and their children (including well-known educator Walter

Rolling). Lesser-known Black citizens were found only in archival records: Eliza (Lewis) and John Welles, Gertrude Johnson, the Cox family and the Jackson family.

**Gertrude Johnson, domestic servant**

In the 1911 census, Gertrude is recorded as a domestic servant in the household of Dr. George Lockhart and family of King City. Gertrude's personal details in the census were supplied by her employer: age 16 years, born in Canada, worked for the family for one year, Anglican in religion and "Mulatto" (a term for mixed race that is no longer used).

Gertrude was the only live-in servant listed in the census and thus was responsible for a wide range of household tasks including cooking, cleaning, laundry, mending and helping with the three Lockhart children, who ranged in age from three months to 10 years. Gertrude worked 60 hours a week with an annual wage of \$96 per year. Even for 1911, this wage was low; the annual average pay for domestic servants was \$120 for women and \$272 for men.

**Benjamin Harris Rolling, merchant**

Benjamin Rolling Jr. was born in Ontario to American-born Benjamin and Elmira Rolling. His parents likely

came to Canada in 1829 with a group of largely free Black American citizens seeking asylum from slavery and anti-Black laws in the US. The government, directed by Colonel Edward George O'Brien, helped these Blacks to relocate to Oro Township, north of Barrie. An estimated 460 Blacks immigrated to Canada during this time. By 1835, Benjamin Sr. and Elmira had moved their family south of Aurora, where Benjamin Jr. was born.

Benjamin Jr. established a good life in King Township. A peddler by trade, Benjamin and family settled in Laskay and, in 1869, purchased a home there. In 1883, he opened a general store in the village and was also appointed as one of the earliest Black postmasters in Ontario. Tragically, Benjamin Jr. was killed in 1897 while returning from a delivery in Toronto; his rig was hit by a train at a crossing between Thornhill and Richmond Hill. His eldest son, George, went on to operate the general store while his next eldest, Walter Rolling, became a beloved educator in King.

**Eliza (Lewis) & John Welles, homemaker and labourer**

Like many other early Black residents of King Township, Eliza's journey began in the United States. According to the 1850 U.S.

Federal Census, Eliza and her first husband, George Lewis, were living in Pennsylvania with their nine children, ranging in age from two to 18. George was listed as a farmer, suggesting that Eliza likely worked alongside him in the fields while also managing the household and raising their children.

Sometime after 1850, Eliza lost her first husband and her life changed (it is not known what happened to George). She is recorded on the 1861 Canadian Census as living in King Township with a second husband, John Welles (b 1821, USA). Living with them were four sons from Eliza's first marriage, and an 11-year-old daughter, Sarah Welles, possibly from her second marriage. The family lived in what can only be described as poverty, recorded in the census as a "shanty" on the 8th concession, north of Lot 7 (where Tasca Park, Nobleton is now located). The family was not found in the 1871 census for King Township.

Research into the hidden histories of Black citizens and other marginalized groups is ongoing at the King Heritage & Cultural Centre (KHCC). If you have any family or community stories, information or photographs about early Black citizens or other minority groups in King Township, we would love to hear from you! Please contact the KHCC at kingmuseum@king.ca.

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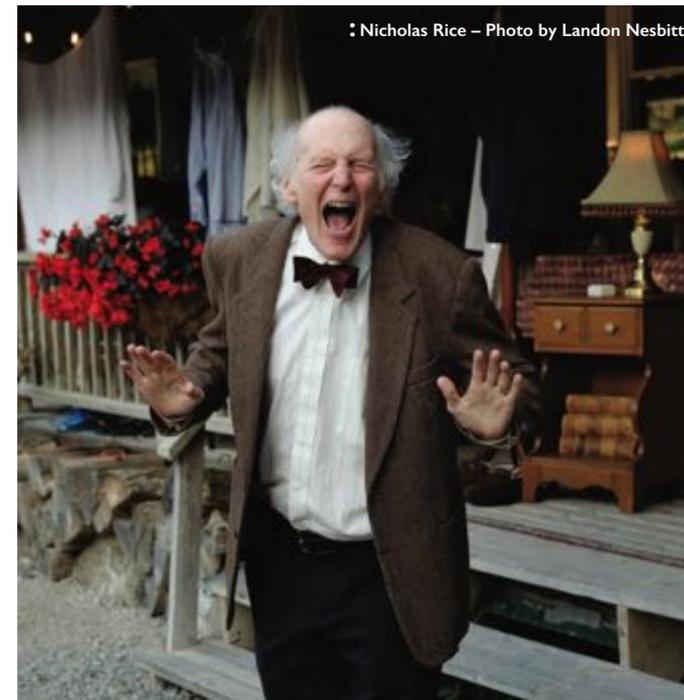
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: Nicholas Rice – Photo by Landon Nesbitt



ANOTHER **KING THEATRE COMPANY TRIUMPH**

: Nicholas Rice and Josh Palmer dance  
 : Photo by Landon Nesbitt



: Nicholas Rice and Josh Palmer  
 : Photo by Landon Nesbitt




## Tuesdays with Morrie Delivers Heartfelt Lessons on Life

On a warm August evening, the audience settled into plastic chairs.

WRITTEN BY **BRIAN BOAKE**  
 Brian is a survivor of decades in the IT industry, husband, father of two, supporter of the arts and Toronto Raptors fan.

**WE** had assembled out of doors to view the latest offering from King Theatre Company. *Tuesdays with Morrie* is derived from the memoir of the same name penned by Mitch (or is it Mitchell?) Alбом. The book was a massive success, inspiring Alбом to co-author the play with Jeffrey Hatcher.

The backstory belongs in the “truth is stranger than fiction” category. Professor Morris Schwartz taught sociology, Alбом’s major, at Brandeis University, and the two became close. After graduating in 1979, Alбом forgot his promise to stay in touch with his favourite professor while he surged to success as a sportswriter and broadcaster. We catch glimpses of Alбом’s competitiveness as he fends off efforts by rivals to poach his interviews.

Meanwhile, Schwartz had been diagnosed with ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a.k.a. Lou Gehrig’s disease), rendering the devil’s brew of a hopeless prognosis and pain beyond measure. When Schwartz was interviewed by

Nightline’s Ted Koppel, Alбом saw him on TV by chance. He reconnected with Schwartz and was astonished by the dying man’s resilience and lack of bitterness. So while the play commences with Alбом meeting and becoming close to Schwartz in the late ‘70s, most of our time is spent with Alбом as he visits the professor on Tuesdays in 1995. They discuss the “Big Questions,” like love, marriage and the purpose of life itself. More correctly – Mitch asks, Morrie answers.

The play is a two-hander, meaning it involves only two performers. To sustain such a work over a 90-minute runtime is no small feat. The actors chosen by KTC’s Artistic Director, Chloë Rose Flowers, are up to the task. Playing the wrapped-too-tight Mitch is Josh Palmer, who made an impressive debut in KTC’s production of *Salt-Water Moon*. He must provide a considerable amount of stagecraft along the way, including playing jazz piano and lifting and carrying the dying Morrie to his bed. There was a collective gasp in the theatre at this risky move, but the youthful Palmer acquitted himself perfectly.

We were all thinking, “Don’t drop Morrie!” played by live-theatre veteran Nicholas Rice. He is called upon to

demonstrate a wider range of emotions than Mitch, as Morrie dances, laughs, throws out queries, and demonstrate the dreadful pain of an ALS patient in his final days. Rice is comfortable on those occasions when Yiddish fits the bill. Morrie never complains; never asks, “Why me?” The play is not a tearjerker, mercifully. I suspect Morrie, who died in 1995, would have detested being portrayed as someone shaking his fist at the heavens.

I like how Mitch displays his accelerating world. He bangs away on the piano, until “Fascinating Rhythm” loses its appeal – Mitch the wannabe jazz man is playing it too fast, like he’s living his life. Nor is his tinkling of ivories proving lucrative. He realizes to his regret he needs a real job, gets one, and loses himself in the excitement.

There is a lot of work for the stage manager, with many musical stings. The pace never flags, however. Morrie never talks about Sociology, and neither does Mitch. Is it a field of study they have both graduated from? I wondered about the omission.

Morrie is quite happy to answer questions, rather than merely ask them. One he doesn’t answer, because it’s never

asked, is why he considers Mitch his favourite student.

The play was perhaps 10 minutes too long for my taste. Drawn-out death scenes are a strain. Wisely, the actors are “mic-ed,” which is particularly important in Morrie’s final moments, still philosophizing from his bed with his voice a whisper.

Quibbles aside, the play was a success, and the actors received a well-deserved standing ovation. I’m informed that had been the norm.

KTC has proven its skill at mounting small-cast plays. Chloë and her fellow young theatrical guns are stretching themselves and will be staging *A Christmas Carol* December 13 to 21. The pleasant broad verandah of Pine Farms Orchard (an outdoor production in December?...maybe not) is being replaced as the venue by Schomberg Community Hall. There will be a cast of 12 in Jacqueline Goldfinger’s streamlined 90-minute treatment of Charles Dickens’ beloved tale. If there ever was an “all ages” piece of theatre, it’s this one.

Scrooge will be played by Mike D. Smith. The “swing” performers (those who learn multiple roles, to step in as needed) are Miranda Wiseman and Andrew Easterling. All the details are at <https://www.kingtheatre.ca/christmascarol>.



## Out of the Ashes, Something A-maize-ing



WRITTEN BY  
**ART WEIS**

Art is Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Toronto, and former director of the Koffler Scientific Reserve at Jokers Hill.

than 10,000 years. Scientists were long puzzled on what could have been corn's wild progenitor and many were surprised by the answer...but I'll save that story for a later column. This time my topic is the all-important cooking innovation that made maize the staple food of Mesoamerica.

Over the millennia, people developed numerous local maize varieties that were early versions of what we call dent corn. That's the kind you see on a drive through the country. Farmers today grow it mostly as cattle feed, but back then people ate it directly. Recent archeology suggests that peoples of the Mississippi valley would harvest some of their crop just as the kernels filled out. These they roasted and ate right off the cob. But as summer ends, the kernels turn hard and flinty. At this stage, people had several cooking options, which likely varied from place to place. These included popping or toasting to produce crunchy snacks. In many places, the maize was ground into a meal on a stone slab called a *metate*, using a hand-held stone rolling pin, a *mano*. The corn meal could then be fashioned into cakes.

But the simplest way to cook maize was to boil it down into a gruel.

Mesoamericans didn't develop metallurgy, so you might ask, how did they boil corn without metal pots? It was simple. Fill a ceramic pot halfway with water and dried corn, then heat some rocks in a roaring wood fire and drop them in. The hot rocks set the pot to boil.

Someone at some point, or perhaps several someones at several time points, noticed that if you add wood ash from the fire along with the rocks, the maize comes out soft and more flavorful. These softened, white kernels are hominy. If you give it a quick course grinding you have grits, while a longer, finer grind makes a pliable and elastic dough, called *masa*. Soon, the tortilla and taco were born!

This way of processing maize is called nixtamalization, coming from the Uto-Aztec words *nextli* (ashes) and *tamalli* (tamale). How does it work and why do it? Wood ash is alkaline, raising the pH of the cooking water. This dissolves the glue-like hemicellulose in the corn's cell walls and loosens the tough hull from the kernels; this makes it a bit easier to grind. But there are also nutritional benefits. Unprocessed

maize has niacin (vitamin B3), but it's bound in form that our digestive systems can't easily absorb. Nixtamalization releases the niacin, which helps prevent pellagra, a disease caused by niacin deficiency. It also increases the availability of some amino acids and several minerals. And it destroys toxins from fungal contaminants. The alkaline treatment made maize both more delicious and nutritious.

Nixtamalized maize became the everyday, staple food. Interestingly, when Europeans brought corn home with them, it was adopted as a staple in several pockets of Spain and Italy, where it produced higher crop yields than wheat. But they didn't know about nixtamalization, and the incidence of pellagra went up. Meanwhile, back in the Americas, grinding the treated kernels for tortillas became a daily chore. While the processed kernels were easier to grind than unprocessed, it was still a lot of work. Women typically spent several hours every day at the *metate* and *mano* making *masa* for tortillas. Industrial-grade mechanical grinders were finally developed in the 1920s, and soon you could buy *masa* flour at the market. I am sure there was much rejoicing.

## POZOLE THE EASY WAY

Pozole is a hearty soup featuring pork, chilies and hominy. I often make it on New Year's Day. Fancy versions use several types of dried peppers, but this one uses canned enchilada sauce and green chilies.

### INGREDIENTS:

1 kg pork shoulder or similar cut; 1 medium onion, chopped; 3 cloves garlic, chopped; 2 t ground cumin; 1 t oregano; 2 bay leaves; 1 can red enchilada sauce, 300 ml; 1 can chopped green chilies (other than jalapeño), 115 ml; 1 litre chicken broth; 1 can white hominy (800 gm).

### DIRECTIONS:

- Cut pork into 3 cm cubes, then brown in olive oil. Remove from pot and reserve.
- Sauté onions, garlic, cumin and oregano until fragrant.
- Deglaze with a cup of chicken broth, then add back the browned pork, the chilies, enchilada sauce and the rest of the broth. Bring to gentle boil, then reduce heat to a simmer.
- After 1 hour, remove the pork to a plate, shred into strips, then return to the pot.
- Drain and rinse the hominy, then add to the pot. Return it to a simmer for another 45 minutes.

Serve in bowls and garnish with any or all the following: chopped cilantro, fresh lime wedges, shredded cabbage, shredded cheese, diced avocado, sour cream. Serves 4.

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!



## HOW GARDENING HELPS THE MIND BLOOM — EVEN IN WINTER

If you've ever noticed that a bad day feels a little brighter after pulling a few weeds or breathing in the scent of freshly cut grass, you've already experienced the quiet magic of nature therapy, otherwise known as **ecotherapy**.



WRITTEN BY  
**ANNA SANTAROSSA**

Anna is a retired teacher and the founder of ARYCT (Active Retired York Catholic Teachers). She is also highly active in the community, serving on King Township's Heritage Advisory Committee, and as co-president of the Nobleton and King City Garden Club.

For people living with dementia, that magic can be truly transformative.

I'll admit, I hadn't given much thought to how nature might benefit those coping with dementia until one of our members at the Nobleton & King City Garden Club, Mona, who is the director of Memory Lane Home Living, said, "You should write about this!" So, I did some digging (pardon the gardening pun) and discovered a wealth of research showing just how powerful time spent outdoors can be. This connection between nature and healing even has its own name: *ecotherapy*, a recognized practice increasingly embraced by professionals working with dementia patients.

Now, before you imagine a white-coated therapist prescribing "two daisies and a wheelbarrow," let's be clear — *ecotherapy* doesn't come in a pill bottle. It's about reconnecting with the natural world through gardening, walking outdoors or simply sitting under a tree and letting nature do what it's always done best: heal, soothe, and quietly remind us that we're part of something beautiful.

Researchers tell us that time in nature can lower blood pressure, reduce



• Nina Vicol's Winter's Silence

anxiety and even boost memory. For those living with dementia, whose worlds may feel smaller and more confusing, that's a big deal. But there's another reason *ecotherapy* works so well: it gently engages the senses.

Think of it as a natural spa for the brain; no cucumber slices required. The sound of birds, the scent of lavender, and the warmth of the sun all light up parts of the brain that illness hasn't dimmed. A whiff of freshly turned soil might bring back childhood memories of helping in the family garden, while the sight of tulips might spark a smile no crossword puzzle could manage.

Gardening is grounding, literally and figuratively. For people with dementia, tending to plants can bring structure, purpose and a comforting sense of accomplishment. And let's be honest, plants are wonderfully patient companions. They don't mind hearing the same story twice, and they'll never rush you.

Some care facilities are catching on, creating safe and accessible gardens designed specifically for people with memory loss. These spaces often feature familiar plants, shaded benches and circular paths that invite wandering without worry. It's not just therapy; it's joy, independence and the simple pleasure of fresh air.

Now, before you roll your eyes and say, "That's lovely, but have you looked outside lately?" Yes, I know. It's winter. The garden beds are sleeping under snow, and we've traded trowels for toques.

But that doesn't mean *ecotherapy* has to hibernate.

Winter calls for a different kind of connection with nature. A short stroll on a sunny afternoon, bundled up in a warm coat, can lift the spirits. Even a few minutes outside, feeling the crisp air and hearing the crunch of snow underfoot, can awaken the senses. Birdwatching is another gentle option; setting up a feeder near a window and keeping a simple "bird log" can bring daily joy and purpose.

Nature doesn't disappear in winter; it just changes its wardrobe. The bare branches, the silvery light, and the quiet rhythm of the season all have their own beauty. For those living with dementia, small, mindful moments outdoors can offer calm, comfort and connection.

Because the spirit of gardening isn't really about the season, it's about noticing life in all its forms. Whether it's the symmetrical perfection of the evergreen trees or a cardinal flashing red against the snow, nature keeps finding ways to remind us that growth never truly stops.

Now remember, I'm a garden enthusiast and nature lover, not a doctor. Consult your doctor and use your common sense to determine which winter activities are suitable. Icy conditions are bad for everyone!

So yes, even in February, bundle up, breathe in and find a little piece of nature. Because sometimes the best medicine doesn't come from a pharmacy; it comes from a bit of fresh air, and sharing the wonder of the winter landscape.

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