



NEWS FROM KING TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



Art Weis, University of Toronto Professor and former Director of the Koffler Scientific Reserve to speak on The History of Jokers Hill

**Sat, October 19, 2:00 - 4:00pm
Hogan's Restaurant - 2nd floor
Cost \$20 (hors d'oeuvres & cash bar)
RSVP to rvien@me.com**

King Township Historical Society (KTHS) presents its second speaker series of the year on **Oct. 19th** – Art Weis, Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at U of T and former Director of the Koffler Scientific Reserve will speak on the fascinating history of one of King's jewels - Jokers Hill. From equestrian events with Royals to a bastion of graduate environmental studies research. Join us for a fun afternoon at Hogan's, 12998 Keele Street. Help us spread the word!

A Fond Farewell to Kathleen Fry

By Ann Love and Elsa Ann Pickard

Kathleen Fry has moved on after being curator at the King Township Museum for 16 years. There are so many reasons for us to appreciate what Kathleen accomplished here at the King Museum.



To date, we have received 35 donations to the history of King book fund, including one from Hal Jackman, and are getting closer to reaching our fundraising goal!

THANK
YOU!

KTHS is still looking to raise \$12,970 - will you join us in funding this project? Please consider a donation of \$50, \$100, \$500 - any amount is appreciated. Donation by credit card is also an option through **Canada Helps**, available on the KTHS website.

As a registered charity, we provide a receipt for income tax purposes, and those who donate \$250 or more will be listed in the book as patrons if they wish.

Donate Today!

Among the recent exhibits she mounted were five World War I themed exhibits to commemorate the 100th anniversary. Recently she also curated exhibits with the themes of King brides, Wedgwood China, winter in King, and more. In fact, she mounted several exhibits a year despite consecutive building closures for asbestos removal, construction of the new gallery room, renovation of the schoolroom, absorbing the Archives, the moving of Laskay Hall — plus money-making work such as summer camps and the more recent space-sharing with ASK.

Those summer camps and holiday programs for years engaged hundreds, maybe thousands, of Township kids in history fun and learning.

Kathleen always maintained a roster of hardworking and loyal volunteers. She has the unusual gift of offering rewarding work to volunteers that also greatly benefited the Museum.

Kathleen threw full support behind ASK when it was a fledgling organization offering meeting and display space, ideas, and resources. She was a major partner and/or host for all King Township Historical Society events including the major 400th Anniversary celebration of the French in Ontario several years ago.

As Bill Salter, our Treasurer, recently reported to us, she also successfully applied for and used \$152,588 of Fawcett Bequest monies to enhance the Museum collection and exhibits.

In the last two years Kathleen received several large donations independent of the Historical Society including a Wedgwood collection with \$100,000 cash to support it. Recently, the Museum was notified it would be the recipient of a bequest inspired by her known curatorial integrity. Over her tenure as curator, she has built the confidence of the community to store their treasures that add to King's story.

And, of course, two years ago Kathleen brokered the

nearly \$100,000 grant from the federal government heritage department which she was able to match with funds from the Fawcett Bequest. The Township stepped up with a new furnace and other upgrades, including storage in the basement. Her dream to renovate the old schoolroom in the Heritage and Cultural Centre and to mount in it a permanent display of the history of King Township should open soon.

Many Historical Society members have admired Kathleen's expertise and personal integrity. We will miss her.

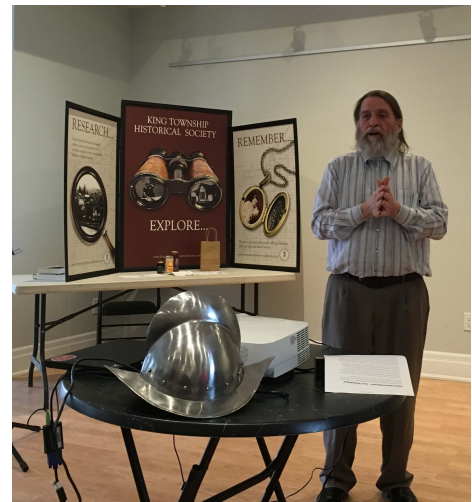
The Township has recently hired Liza Mallyon as Collections and Exhibitions Co-ordinator to carry on in Kathleen's stead. We look forward to working with her.

The Museum Board will host a goodbye tea to honour Kathleen on Thursday, August 29 from 2-4pm in the Pine Farms Orchard Gallery, 2700 16th Sideroad in King. In order that we have enough refreshments, we ask that you RSVP to Ann Love at kannlove@me.com or call 905-859-4721. We hope to see you there!

KTHS Speaker Dispels the Myths of 1492

Dave Patterson, a.k.a. "the 1492 guy," dazzled his audience at the King Township Historical Society's first speaker series of the year on May 4, and reminded us how in 1492 the Europeans and Indigenous people of the Americas were peers and equals. In the interim, we seem to have forgotten that fact.

Patterson enlightens his audience with all sorts of facts about how Indigenous people of the Western Hemisphere gave more than their share to the Europeans and the world, including gifts of innovation (rubber, refinements in road systems, cotton, and the art of terrace farming — turning useless land into farmland); food and nutrition (including corn) — did you know that 75 per cent of our vegetable varieties today come from the Indigenous in the Western Hemisphere; knowledge of health, cleanliness and medicine; and even aspects of equal rights and democracy.



Author of the book *500 Years of Lies*, Patterson claims that he "saw the light" in 1999 while listening to Ray McFadden's recorded broadcasts from 1975. Soon after, Patterson launched his public speaking career in an attempt to dispel the myths of 1492 that are so widely taught in school still today. In an era of truth and reconciliation, Patterson exposes the "big truths" of the many lasting contributions of Aboriginal peoples of the Americas to the world in which we currently live.

Patterson shared that while Columbus "sailed the ocean blue," he was also responsible for the eventual enslaving of two to four million North American Indigenous people. He believes it is time we start sharing the truth about the Indigenous people's contributions to life as we know it, and perhaps adjust how we teach our history accordingly. A fascinating perspective indeed!

The next KTHS speaker series will feature University of Toronto **Professor Art Weis**, discussing the history of Jokers Hill on **Saturday, October 19** at Hogans Inn from 2-4 pm. To reserve a seat, RSVP to rvien@me.com. For more information on upcoming events or how to become a KTHS member, visit www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com.

Were There Ever Passenger Pigeons in King?

Story by Ann Love

Reading about the extinction of passenger pigeons recently, I realized their great flocks of up to half a billion birds must have passed through King Township. They probably roosted and nested in King forests. I wondered, what would this have been like to witness?

Apparently, when they migrated, passenger pigeons flew about 100 kph in tight formations, almost touching each other, responding to changes in the landscape with synchronized twists and rolls, without breaking speed or rank.

One 19th Century witness said, "... you would think sometimes they were coming straight at you when all at once when within thirty or forty feet, they would make a quick turn to the right or left or upward, a swift and most graceful turn, and away in another direction. It would seem, sometimes, as if they just tried to see how near they could come and get away successfully ... The sheen of their plumage in the evening sun was such that no words could be found to describe nor a painter to paint it. The flash of brilliant color and the wonderful whirr of the wings in flight as they passed within a few yards can never be forgotten."

Strong, well-adapted, and successful – no-one who watched a flock pass in the mid-1800's could imagine the passenger pigeon would be extinct within 50 years. At times, the flocks were so big, they would block out the noon-day sun, three days running.

I discovered a number of reports collected by a passenger pigeon enthusiast after the birds disappeared in 1914. The reports are archived at McGill University, available on the Internet, and mostly undated and unattributed. But a few among them are credited to individuals with clues to dates and locations. To my delight, I found some accounts by residents of communities east of present-day King City. Some of the stories are from what would have been King at the time because our eastern boundary then was Yonge

Street. I think the reports speak for themselves. I have left the spelling and punctuation as I found them.

Mr. N. Pearson wrote: “I have seen them in flight no doubt in the millions by standing on the streets of the little hamlet of Machell’s Corners [... Aurora before 1854 ...] and looking south towards Oak Ridges a mile and a half away creeping over the treetops with apparently no end, and looking north for three or four miles to the Holland Landing a continuous band of them twenty of thirty feet wide and continuing for hours every day ... This seems incredible, but so it was.”

Mr. Pearson also wrote: “My leisure on Saturday was my own time for the pigeons, and I went out nearly a mile one day at about 10:30 and came in before noon with twenty-four. Not much of a bag, but for a boy not ten years old it was satisfaction. I lit on a field of pea stubble and had a small beech for a foreground ... and in a very little time the birds appeared and in the first shot there fell eighteen which I picked up and retired to the beech tree, and looking up I saw two birds in proximity and I let off my gun, and instead of two down came six...”



Mr. Pearson described a nesting “city” the locals found east of Aurora. “In a place called Pine Orchard ... [where] there is, or was, a grove of pine trees of from ten to a hundred feet high with close branches and very dense ... there were millions of nests... Wagon loads of Farmers with their sons from miles around came during the daytime and at night with lanterns and torches and slaughtered with wholesale vigor. Caught the old birds and wrung their necks and carried off the squabs in bags by the wagon load.”

Mr. Pearson reported how his mother, whom he said “was the first white woman to settle north of the Ridges [Oak Ridges],” would prepare the birds. “She plucked and opened them and laid them in a mild pickle for a day or two. She had a large fire place with two cranes (stoves were not invented) and she hung the birds in the chimney in the smoke for a time and then packed them in tubs and barrels for future use. This was before cattle, pigs and sheep were common, and their meat was venison, fish and partridge, and the pigeons were good food.”

One final story, this one from Wm. Metcalf: “There was a woman I knew, she lived in Markham Township. On her dying bed, they had to remove [the] feather bed from under her, as she would not die on pigeon feathers.”

I’d loved to have witnessed the original pigeon abundance and exuberance in a King field or forest.

Because the great flocks decimated a local food supply in one year’s nesting, the pigeons looked for fresh sites every year, cycling back only after the forest regenerated. When a flock chose a site and descended, residents would send the news to surrounding communities – and

the hunt began. Pigeon was never an annual fresh food source because their movements were unpredictable. In fact, though the birds were wildly numerous, there may have only been about 10 flocks of half a billion birds at any one time in their breeding range east of the Rocky Mountains.

Since their extinction, southern Ontario has seen significant deforestation. I am sure the pigeons would not choose to roost or nest in King now. Would we want them to, really?

The loss of the pigeon has seen changes in our southern Ontario forest. Pigeons preferred red oak acorns – about a cupful a day – so more white oaks survived back then. Now the red oak is dominant in King. In the 19th century the forest carried more predators than now because of the plentiful prey, especially the flightless young or squabs. Hawks and weasels in particular have declined in numbers. And the white-footed mouse has much less competition for acorns, so these transmitters of Lyme disease have seen a big comeback.

The Quebecois term for the passenger pigeon was *la tourte* – hence the meat pie, *tourtière*. I wonder if Mrs. Pearson used her smoked passenger pigeons in pie. Modern recipes for tourtière call for minced pork, veal and beef. I am on the hunt for a modern ingredient to recreate the taste of passenger pigeon. Perhaps a vegan ingredient would be most appropriate!

**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!**

Adam Saunders and the Hammered Brass Band will perform once again at this year’s **KTHS Christmas Concert Friday, November 29 from 8-10pm in Laskay Hall**. Ticket information to follow in the next newsletter.



What’s Happening in and around King?

Mixer on Main - a partnership event between Arts Society King and the Schomberg Fire-fighters Association

Saturday, September 14 at 7:00 pm, at Lot 15, Schaumburg

Food, drinks and a silent auction. Tickets are \$30 in advance and at the door. More information at ArtsSocietyKing.ca or SchombergFirefighters.org

Arts Society King presents the annual Schomberg Street Gallery

Sunday, September 15, 10:00 am-5:00 pm

The Main Street of Schomberg is closed to traffic allowing full access to a selection and sale of fine art, including paintings, jewellery, wood working, photography and more. Free community event and a true kick-off to the fall season! More information at ArtsSocietyKing.ca



Holland Marsh Soupfest


Saturday, October 5 from 11:00 am-3:00 pm at Ansnorveldt Park

Tickets are \$12 per person. Come one, come all and bring your appetites! hollandmarshsoupfest.ca



Help KTHS Grow Our Membership!

Have you renewed your membership for 2019? Do you have any friends who would like to support and preserve the history of King? Please help us grow our membership by spreading the word and encouraging membership. Only \$20 for an individual and \$25 for a family membership. Why not join today? Thank you!



King Township Historical Society, 2920 King Road, King City ON L7B 1L6
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2019
(PLEASE PRINT INFORMATION AND MAIL CHEQUE TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS)

NAME(S) _____ PHONE _____
ADDRESS _____ FAX _____
_____ POSTAL CODE _____
EMAIL _____ NEW _____ RENEWAL _____

INDIVIDUAL \$20 _____ FAMILY \$25 _____ DONATION _____
ENCLOSED \$ _____

A Brief History of the KTHS:

The KTHS dates back to 1972 when a group of dedicated residents, with interests in preserving the history of their Township, gathered to form the King Township Historical Society. In 1981 ~1982, the KTHS was incorporated by the Ontario Historical Society under a Provincial Letters Patent. Our goals and objectives are to encourage research into the history, to secure and preserve an accurate account of the progress and development, and to promote public interest in the history of King Township. More information may be found on our website at www.kingtownshiphistoricalsociety.com.

Walk the Six West



August 3rd
Etienne Brule Park,
Toronto

August 4th
McMichael Canadian Art Collection,
Kleinburg

walkthesixwest.ca
Info line: (647) 859-3901
@WalkTheSixWest

Walk along the shared path and witness the magic of outdoor theatre as we celebrate the diverse human history of the Humber River. Discover six theatrical installations sharing Indigenous, Francophone, and Newcomer stories of the Humber River region. Featuring performances by Mixed Company Theatre, Ars Musica, Jason Wilson's Sumach Roots, Cheri Maracle, Erika MacNeil with Eric Cadesky, and more.

Marchez au long du sentier partagé et laissez-vous émerveiller par la magie du théâtre en plein air alors que nous célébrons l'histoire humaine de la rivière Humber. Découvrez six installations théâtrales partageant l'histoire des peuples indigènes, francophones et des nouveaux arrivants de la région de la rivière Humber. Mettant en vedette les performances de Mixed Company Theatre, Ars Musica, Les Sumach Roots de Jason Wilson, Cheri Maracle, Erika MacNeil with Eric Cadesky et bien plus.

This family-friendly and accessible event is **FREE** and **OPEN** to all members of the public. To register, please visit: walkthesixwest.ca/

Cet événement familial et accessible est **GRATUIT** et **OFFERT** à tous et chacun. Pour s'inscrire, veuillez visiter: walkthesixwest.ca/

WHEN and WHERE:

Saturday August 3rd: Etienne Brule Park, Toronto (by Old Mill Subway)
12pm - 2pm and 2:30 - 4:30pm

Sunday August 4th: The McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg
1pm - 3pm

OÙ et QUAND:

samedi 3 août: Parc Étienne-Brûlé, Toronto (Station TTC Old Mill)
12:00 - 14:00 et 14:30 - 16:30

dimanche 4 août: La Collection McMichael d'art canadien, Kleinburg
13:00 - 15:00

Funding Partner: Partenaires financiers:

Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada



Community Partners: Partenaires communautaires:

