

The human condition is shaped by a web of multifaceted stories. We are the past, and the future looks to us to see the outcome.

A group of students have been exploring the story of King Township. Questioned about what they know, their observations expose a dynamic landscape in constant change.

"King" is an historical documentary by award-winning producer and director Mark Magro. It tells the stories of villages, towns, landscapes and people. Currently in development, it is slated for completion late this fall.

"The concept of the film was first brought to my attention last December when I was approached by historian Elaine Roberson, who was at that time, teacher at the Kettleby Public School and chair of the Township of King Heritage Committee. She had, for many years, been formulating the idea of a film illuminating the importance of local heritage from a student's perspective," says Mark.

Since that fateful meeting, the idea for the documentary was developed, filmed and is in the midst of post-production.

Financed by the Township of King Heritage Committee, it has been deemed a project of great significance.

"This film is a perfect introduction to local history," Mark says. "It shows the important role King Township played in the early development of Canada. The students have impressed me with their thoughts and their views on history I hope it will encourage people to dig up stories in their own area."

The students involved in this project are from the AIM (Achievement, Initiative, Mentorship) Group. This unique enrichment program was initiated by Elaine at Kettleby School. Students were required to produce individual projects on specific areas throughout the township as part of their preliminary research. They learned about the production of a documentary. All in all, this has been an enriching experience for the intermediate students. The first-hand knowledge of local heritage has given them an insight into the importance of appreciating and maintaining cultural and built heritage.

"Tearing down buildings creates cultural amnesia," Elaine observes. "The students have been impressed by the richness of history, but also saddened by the thoughtless elimination of structures that has taken place over the years."

Staff members from the King Township Museum, King Archives and

Toronto Region Conservation Authority have provided a wealth of material to help produce a project worthy of recognition.

"With so many people sharing their input in this project, the end result will be a memorable film that can be enjoyed for future generations," Mark says.

"This film is unique because the students give their own point of view on the past and will relate it to relevant events today," adds Elaine, who observes that with most of the AIM students leaving for high school and her retiring from teaching, this has been a unique year.

"I have truly understood the power that a film of this nature can bring to youth."

Filming commenced early in May. Many people in King might have noticed the Wanted Media crew working throughout the township.

"There is a step-by-step process when creating a film," Mark professes. "It takes a significant amount of effort to do this. Condensing so much history in a short period of time is an art in itself."

The film will be narrated by former CBC host and producer Andrew Marshall, who is also a member of the King Heritage Committee.

Historical fact, coupled with unique style and experimental cinematic technique, is part of the method incorporated into the documentary.

"With this film, I hope to connect to people who may have only understood history in a singular linear perspective," Mark says. "I wish to create a body of work that is educational, engaging and entertaining. Working with these students was a thrilling experience and I hope to expand and continue creating films of this nature."

Elaine and Mark are geared to use this film, after its completion, as a template for future projects, possibly involving various educational institutions.

"What I find fascinating about making these films is the way in which the smallest story in a little village can relate to so many aspects of our lives," Mark says. "There is a notion that the past is separated from us. What I am starting to discover is that, underneath all these events, there is often a personal connection."

The goal is to capture the spirit of King Township in the format of film. There will be flashback sequences to First People's involvement, links to the building of Canada and stories of war, survival and love.

"Our backyard is a place where a



photography by Tom Panasiak

thousand stories can be told," states Mark passionately.

Mark has a BA in history from York University and a diploma in computer networking from Centennial College. In addition to attending the Toronto Film School for Film Production, he has worked on a multitude of film sets. He is a poet, visionary and a pursuer of the arts.

Wanted Media is a production company that Mark founded several years ago. Brent Tremain, director of photography and Tom Panasiak, photographer, form his professional crew. They have worked with Mark on other award-winning projects in Caledon, Scugog and Uxbridge. ■



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