

Film about King will premiere this Saturday

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

In the film, King Township is seen in the broader context of Canadian history. The 35-minute documentary explores history from the glacial period to the present day.

The documentary *King*, explores and examines various historically important locations throughout King Township including King City, Ansnorveldt, Schomberg, Kettleby, Laskay, Lloydtown, Pottageville and Nobleton. The students in the film visit historical sites in King such as Eaton Hall, Carrying Place and Marylake Monastery.

Throughout the film, the changing landscape is explored by the students from Kettleby Public School. The students question the impact of change and what one must do to sustain a balance for the future. The film is narrated by Andrew Marshall who acts as a traditional storyteller and provides a general overview of how the area has evolved over time.

The documentary was based on a concept developed by Robertson, a teacher and historian, who had the idea to make a documentary about King for the past 25 years. She met Magro at a Heritage Committee meeting in Nov. 2008 and knew he had the experience and skills to bring her dream to reality.

"I wanted to do a film on heritage involving children to get kids engaged in history and looking at history from a different perspective," said Robertson. "I wanted to showcase the children's point of view of Canadian history. I want to have people have a better

understanding of the importance of the history surrounding them. This approach to history filmed with children has never been done before - it's unique. There is something in it to appeal to every age."

And King was the perfect location for the film, she said, since King Township is so rich in history, heritage and culture.

"These children are walking in a lot of the footsteps you read about in the history books," said Robertson. "We are in such close proximity to places where history occurred. We had so many historical sites to visit here in King. I don't think people realize how historically valuable King Township is and all the events that took place in this area. A lot of people came up the Carrying Place Trail. That makes history very personal for them. Once it feels personal, it becomes real to them."

The AIM group, comprised of students from Grades 6 to 8, Robertson explained, has worked together under her guidance for three years. The program included a special focus on local history.

"These kids had a lot of prior training and knowledge about local history," said Robertson, adding the 11 and 12-year-olds had a strong grasp of the history in the area and were very comfortable with each other.

She recruited Magro to help her showcase King's rich history. Most of the funding and support from the project came from the Township of King Heritage Committee. The Kettleby School Council also supported the project.

"I approached the

Heritage Committee," Robertson stated. "It was a good way to promote King through heritage. It not only highlights the children, but it highlights the heritage in the area."

Magro has produced four Canadian historical documentaries including *Cedar Mains Farm: A Forgotten Landscape* (2007), *Nonquon Island* (2008), winner of the 2008 Scugog Heritage Media Award, *The Story of Uxbridge Station* (2008) and the newest addition to his repertoire, *King*. He worked on the documentaries with a small crew comprised of Brent Tremain behind the camera and photographer Tom Panasiak.

He described the experience of making the film as "powerful" and said it is a film that breaks free of the standard Canadian historical documentary format.

"I have a fascination with looking at the history of ordinary people and how they impact the cultural and physical landscape," said Magro.

This is the first time he worked with youth in a film.

"One of the most powerful things I found when making this film is the opinion that the students gave to me - from an environmental to the historical perspective, their comments were extremely powerful," said Magro.

The film is important for King but will also appeal to a wider audience.

"The film has a much broader appeal, it's not only about King Township," said Magro. "It's about local history in the context of Canadian history. The events that happened here affected the bigger picture. It connects King with the develop-

ment of Canadian history."

School principal Fiona Allan supported the project from the start.

"I am all for innovation and this sounded like an innovative project," said Allan. "Children who were involved in this project got a better understanding of history but also of drama, literacy, media and technology. That's what they were able to do with this project and that was very valuable for the children."

This was a positive experience for the students involved and the entire school.

"It had a positive effect on the school as a whole," noted Allan. "You could see the excitement around this project. As for the children who were involved, we saw them flourish in confidence through this project. Some of them had to step outside their comfort zone and it really helped with their confidence level."

She also said it was great to see the collaboration and partnerships.

"From a principal's perspective, when I see teachers and students involved in a project that has connections with the Heritage Committee - a professional filmmaker, the museum - to me, community partnerships are something we strive for," said Allan.

The film will be shown on Saturday, Feb. 20 at the Country Day School at 7 p.m.. Admission to the film is free. Copies of the DVD will be on sale at the premiere. A gallery featuring photos from the film will be on display at the King Township Museum in March.



A documentary film entitled *King: An Exploration of a Township and its People*, will be hitting the big screen this Saturday at the Country Day School in King City. The film was produced by Mark Magro in cooperation with the Township of King Heritage Committee, local historian Elaine Robertson and stars students from Kettleby Public School's AIM enrichment program.

photo by Tom Panasiak

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