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Message from the Mayor

It is my pleasure to extend greetings and a warm welcome to everyone participating in Neilson Park Creative Centre's (NPCC) 30th Anniversary Celebration.

Congratulations to NPCC on this significant milestone and best wishes to the readers of this commemorative magazine honouring your anniversary.

Thank you to NPCC for providing quality and affordable arts programs for people of all ages. I am very pleased that NPCC serves the community through arts based classes, workshops, drop-ins, open studios, exhibitions and more, helping participants to connect to and celebrate a richer life through the arts.

The arts are an integral component of Toronto's cultural and economic fabric that enrich and enhance the lives of many. Throughout the pandemic, the arts and film have played a vital role in bringing people together and providing hope for residents as we navigate these challenging times.

On behalf of Toronto City Council, please accept my best wishes for an enjoyable event.

Yours truly,

John Tory
Mayor of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
100 QUEEN STREET WEST, TORONTO, ONTARIO, M5H 2N2



A Message From Brenda Shewchuk, President of the Board of Directors

Congratulations to everyone who has worked hard the past 30 years to bring us to this amazing milestone, our 30th Anniversary. The creativity and dedication of each one of you has made this day possible.



We are thankful to all who have joined us on this journey:

The many founding members of NPCC who were the driving force behind the successful lobbying to have this facility purpose-built for our resident groups to be makers and creators in a delightful park setting.

The staff and volunteers who provided their time and skills to support the office and the programming that has sustained our continued growth and recognition.

The board and committee members who provided their wisdom, insights and guidance in leading us continually forward, being fiscally responsible and meeting the needs of our community.

The NPCC membership who have supported the sponsorship and scholarship initiatives to ensure future generations will be able to enjoy the beautiful park-like setting and the beautiful creative space of the Centre.

The Community who has actively participated in NPCC programming including adult classes, children's camps, Culture Days, and attended our annual Handmade Art and Fine Craft sales.

Our sponsors who support and believe in our vision of "connecting to and celebrating a richer life through the arts".

The members of the Anniversary Committee for their determination and hard work and to bring together this celebration so that we can all remember and rejoice.

NPCC will continue in its mission, "to serve as an inclusive arts hub that meets the creative needs of the community by facilitating artistic expression through education, exhibitions and events." Thank you all for your ongoing support and personal contribution to our beautiful Neilson Park Creative Centre.

Sincerely, Brenda Shewchuk

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda M. Shewchuk".



A Message From Petra Nyendick, Executive Director

Beauty surrounds us inside and outside our home at Neilson Park Creative Centre.



Photo Credit: Kylynn Bhathena

As I write this 30th Anniversary message, I'm fortunate to be able to look out the picture windows into the beautiful park, lush gardens and fertile land that surround us. We are so blessed to be able to enjoy and share the trees, vegetation and water with our feathered, furred and finned friends living in Neilson Park and nearby Etobicoke Creek.

Inside, our facilities are filled with laughter, happiness and creativity. Resident Groups, community members, and staff and volunteers work and play together to achieve a common goal: to allow the creative process to flourish. We sew, paint, knit, draw, support, dance, collage, photograph, express, print, critique, write, play, hook, spin, encourage, weave, eat, carve (and so much more!) because it's good for the soul. We see friends and make new ones and it's good for the heart. We learn new tricks of the trade and solve creative problems. Good for the brain!

Neilson Park Creative Centre opened its doors on February 12, 1993. We've hit a milestone anniversary and are proudly celebrating our accomplishments over the past three decades. Some things have changed but the encouragement and support we provide to our community to engage in the arts remain the same. Over the years we've offered a safe haven for youth and adults, from beginner to advanced levels, to engage, explore, experiment and exhibit.

We thank our community for supporting us by cheering and rallying; attending our excellent programming and exhibitions; spreading the word about our good work in the community; and advocating for diversity, equity and inclusion. The arts enable and empower a community and remove social barriers, increasing neighbourhood livability, community identity, well-being and ownership. This is the impact Neilson Park Creative Centre has had since opening its doors.

As we envision our future we embrace and look forward to serving our community in the next 30 years and well beyond.

Best regards, Petra Nyendick

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Petra Nyendick".



Stephen Holyday

Councillor, Ward 2 Etobicoke Centre



Message from Councillor Stephen Holyday

As the City Councillor for Ward 2, Etobicoke Centre, I am pleased to offer my heartfelt congratulations on Neilson Park Creative Centre's 30th Anniversary.

This significant achievement speaks not only to the excellence of Neilson Park Creative Centre's contribution to sustaining local creative arts, but also to the scale of the positive impact the Centre has made for many of the City's residents over three decades. I am proud to recognize the hard work of the leadership, staff, volunteers and members, and their dedication to sparking individual creativity, developing talents and promoting social cohesion through both the most celebrated and the most challenging of times. Our community is fortunate to have such an organization that has made great efforts to sustain programs and events that include people of all ages, abilities and artistic interests.

Neilson Park Creative Centre pivoted and transformed their services during the pandemic, and expanded programming in recent years to include digital arts, a focus on isolated seniors, and child and youth programs. The initiatives have been well received and I am proud that they will continue to offer fantastic programs in our community and will continue to engage Etobicoke Centre residents of all ages in a meaningful way.

Please accept my best wishes for a memorable milestone and continued success ahead.

Sincerely,

Stephen Holyday
Councillor
Ward 2, Etobicoke Centre



YVAN BAKER

Member of Parliament
Etobicoke Centre



Congratulatory letter on the occasion of Neilson Park Creative Centre's 30th Anniversary

I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to Neilson Park Creative Centre on their 30th anniversary and thank all those who have worked hard in the last 30 years to provide services to my constituents in Etobicoke Centre!

NPCC has been an important organization in our community for the last 30 years as they've provided a creative outlet for people of all ages. By offering free and paid art-based workshops, exhibitions, drop-ins and events, NPCC has created an inclusive and creative hub for the community.

The arts have a profound impact on the community, and this was essential during the pandemic. NPCC eased isolation and created a sense of social well-being and belonging and they continue to do so today.

Once again, congratulations to Neilson Park Creative Centre for being an outstanding service in our community for 30 years and I wish you all the success in the future.

Sincerely,

Yvan Baker, MP
Etobicoke Centre

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Neilson Park, Photo credit: Mia Cavicchia Buono

Neilson Park Creative Centre Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge our presence within this land that is the ancestral territory of the Anishinaabe, the Wendat, and more recently the Haudenosaunee peoples, and since 1805 the Treaty Lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit, now home to many Indigenous populations.

The lived experiences of these nations are passed on today by the stories and teachings of ancestral knowledge keepers. Philip Cote, Young Spiritual Elder has taught us about creation and arrival stories and the Seven Grandfather teachings: Wisdom, Bravery, Respect, Honesty, Truth, Humility and Love.

At Neilson Park Creative Centre we respect the stories and teachings of each of these nations to guide our creativity and actions on this land. And as we acknowledge our Mother the Earth, we acknowledge the medicine wheel and its teachings. We recognize the four directions: North, South, East and West, and the four seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. It is these four seasons that represent the circle of life.

We now share a covenant with the Indigenous peoples to care for this territory and a responsibility to continue the tradition of compassionate stewardship of the land so that future generations will continue to enjoy the beauty of the lands.



Overview: Neilson Park Creative Centre

Mission

To serve as an inclusive arts hub that meets the creative needs of the community by facilitating artistic expression through education, exhibitions and events.

Vision

Connecting to and celebrating a richer life through the arts.

Mandate

Neilson Park Creative Centre exists to foster and facilitate connections among our membership and stakeholder communities on their creative journey through our arts-focused programming and facilities.

For our Resident Groups, Neilson Park Creative Centre is a permanent home for current and potential members for their creative, organizational and social needs.

For our artists – creators and makers alike – Neilson Park Creative Centre serves as an alternative to the home studio existence of solo artists by offering a creative community of like-minded individuals to share that journey.

For emerging groups of practitioners, Neilson Park Creative Centre delivers a supportive studio setting to encourage the creative, social and personal growth of artists, creators and crafters across disciplines.

For the public, Neilson Park Creative Centre is a gateway to discovering and exploring how the arts define and enrich their lives.



Values

There are certain core values that Neilson Park Creative Centre holds to be true; like prisms, they refract and illuminate the broader spectrum of options that inform NPCC's decision making.

- Accessibility
- Diversity and Inclusivity
- Engagement
- Mutual Respect
- Quality
- Transparency

A formal submission to Etobicoke Council (January 15, 1991) presented by Doris Kennedy on behalf of the ACDC (Arts Centre Development Committee) and the founding groups, stated “In our times, when society is wrestling with problems of anti-social behaviour and negative influences, this [NPCC] would be an oasis where the local arts and crafts groups offer experiences that increase self-esteem, self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment – all positive attitudes, good for the soul.”

Doris Kennedy

Fun Facts About the Centre

NPCC was built in 1992 by the then City of Etobicoke specifically for our Resident Groups with support from Mayor Bruce Sinclair and city councillors. It replaced a bungalow also situated in the park, called "The Willows," which was subsequently torn down. The Willows housed one of our Resident Groups: the Etobicoke Art Group.

NPCC doors opened on February 12, 1993, and became home to five of our six Resident Groups: Etobicoke Handweavers and Spinners, Etobicoke Art Group, Etobicoke Quilters' Guild, Etobicoke Rugcrafters and Humber Valley Art Club. The Calligraphic Arts Guild of Toronto joined NPCC a few years later, in 1999, as our sixth Resident Group. All six groups remain with us today.

Since 1992, NPCC has been a not-for-profit organization, obtaining our registered charitable status in 2018 (Charitable Registration Number: 132270703 RR0001). As an arts hub in Western Toronto, NPCC serves the community by offering arts based classes, workshop, drop-ins, open studios, events and exhibitions within and outside its facilities. We serve the diverse landscape of Toronto through partnerships, outreach initiatives and community engagement.



We welcome all individuals to the Centre through free and paid programming and deliver free arts-based learning as outreach programs outside the Centre. NPCC provides gallery space as rentals in its fully accessible facilities of 4 studios, 4 gallery spaces, administrative offices and support spaces. We are proud to serve all demographics through our art exhibitions – we offer an average of 17 exhibitions per year per gallery, rotating on a 3-week exhibition schedule. Our internal programming primarily targets adult populations through the guilds we serve; and family and youth programming through the classes and workshops we offer. Externally, we serve a wide range of populations including youth, families and adults.



Art Space Connect Gallery, Bruce Parsons Exhibition,
March, 2019, NPCC archives

Resident Groups

Calligraphic Arts Guild of Toronto

The Etobicoke Art Group

Etobicoke Handweavers and Spinners
Guild

Etobicoke Quilters' Guild

Etobicoke Rugcrafters

Humber Valley Art Club

Our Studios, Galleries and Resident Groups

Studio A

Studio A is home to two Resident Groups: The Calligraphic Arts Guild of Toronto (also known as CAGT) and the Humber Valley Art Club (also known as HVAC).



Studio A, NPCC archives

Calligraphic Arts Guild of Toronto

- CAGT was founded in 1974 by Alf Ebsen and incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in 1975.
- CAGT has been a resident group at NPCC for over 20 years.
- CAGT meets 10 times per year and offers a variety of educational and hands-on activities related to the calligraphic arts.
- Guest speakers, artist demonstrations, opportunities to practice with experienced instructors and the camaraderie of shared interests are on offer.
- CAGT works with all types of lettering arts materials from gouache to gold while learning about scripts, calligraphic history, design, new trends and more.

Humber Valley Art Club

- HVAC was founded in June of 1951 by a group of eight women with art school backgrounds who decided to start painting again after many years in other fields. They carried their easels outdoors to paint landscapes in the Humber Valley area of west Toronto. By the end of that summer the group totalled over 40 artists and Humber Valley Art Club came into being.
- The group painted in various locations over the years, beginning in each others' homes, back yards and en plein air. Eventually in the 60s - 80s they rented space in the original wing of the Humber Valley United Church, running popular workshops for up to thirty-six participants. During these years juried exhibitions were held in various locations, including the O'Keefe Centre (juried by well-known Toronto landscape painter Doris McCarthy!) and the Women's Building at the Canadian National Exhibition.
- In the late 80s, along with members of other art groups, they formed the Arts Centre Development Committee and began the task of lobbying local politicians, key among them Bruce Sinclair, then mayor of the City of Etobicoke, to take on the challenge of persuading the City of Etobicoke to build a brand new Arts Centre in Neilson Park.
- Mayor Sinclair and city councillors were supportive of the project and fundraising began in earnest. Key members from five different art groups (two painting groups - HVAC, EAG & three fibre arts groups - EQG, EHS, ER) were integral in planning the interior design of the Centre, providing their "wish list" to the architect for the layout of four studios, two galleries, the main office, kitchen and other essential space in the Centre.
- HVAC has been a not-for-profit organization since its founding in 1951.

Studio B

- Studio B is equipped with tables, chairs, easels, drawing horses, a large etching press and a small press, slot-hood and overhead ventilation, and a variety of still-life materials.
- Studio B is home to The Etobicoke Art Group (also known as EAG).

Etobicoke Art Group

- Established in 1951, the Etobicoke Art Group continues as a vital group of practicing artists.
- All EAG activities are run by volunteer members who enjoy classes, workshops, lectures, and exhibitions organized for their mutual benefit.



Studio B, NPCC archives

- EAG classes focus on studio opportunities to improve skills in portraiture, life drawing and painting, painting in oils or acrylics, and printmaking.

Studio C

- Studio C is equipped with tables, chairs, looms, spinning wheels and sewing machines.
- Studio C is home to our three fibre and textile groups:
 1. Etobicoke Handweavers and Spinners Guild (also known as EHS)
 2. Etobicoke Quilters' Guild (also known as EQG)
 3. Etobicoke Rugcrafters (also known as ER)



Studio C, NPCC archives

I love the openness of Studio C and the light that comes flowing through the windows!

Fondest memory - At first I thought that NPCC was too far from my house and that 40 minutes was too much time to spend driving. But, after coming a few times, I decided it was well worth it! My rug hooking group is so welcoming and friendly and I simply decided to commit! So, I come out every Tuesday and I'm so happy that I do. And... sometimes I get home in 20 minutes!

Karen Light

Etobicoke Handweavers and Spinners Guild

- EHS was founded more than half a century ago to encourage an interest in handweaving, spinning and dyeing, offering services and learning opportunities to members and educating the larger community about their crafts.
- Their large scale looms are used by members for joint weaving projects like blankets, scarves and decorative textiles.
- Monthly meetings feature guest presentations and, throughout the year, several weaving and spinning workshops take place, usually on weekends.
- Most EHS members are interested in a variety of textile arts such as knitting and felting.
- EHS participates in an annual gallery show of members' work, participates in community events like the Royal Winter Fair Sheep-to-Shawl competition and the Etobicoke Farmers' Market and has a robust charity knitting program.
- EHS offers a weekly Friday drop-in and monthly Sunday drop-ins, along with monthly spinning-focused drop-ins, offering members the chance to turn up, share ideas, seek help, show recent achievements and, not incidentally, have lunch together, share stories and laugh.
- At the core of these achievements is a dedicated group of volunteer executive members and chairs.

Etobicoke Quilters' Guild

- The Etobicoke Quilters Guild (also known as EQG) is one of the oldest quilting guilds in Canada.
- Since EQG was formed in 1975, the guild has grown to more than 140 members and incorporates a wide range of interests and skill levels.
- In its early days, EQG formed a joint quilt show with York Heritage Quilters Guild, which led to the formation of Quilt Canada.

- In addition to monthly meetings, members enjoy a range of activities, including open studio time, educational workshops, annual exhibitions and judged quilt shows.
- Members give back to the community through the long-standing "Comfort Quilt" program, which began in 1989. Members create unique and beautiful quilts to be donated to charities. Each year EQG donates more than two hundred quilts to provide comfort to people of all ages in hospices and shelters across Metropolitan Toronto.

Etobicoke Rugcrafters

- The Etobicoke Rugcrafters (also known as ER) practice, promote and share the techniques of traditional and contemporary rug hooking in a congenial group setting.
- ER's membership represents all levels of skill from novice to expert.
- During regular meetings, members work on projects of choice using various hooking styles such as: primitive, fine shading, Asian, pictorial, geometric and many more!
- ER's regular meetings are where members can exchange ideas and information, and be inspired.

Studio D

- Studio D is used for smaller groups such as our children's classes and workshops.



Studio D, NPCC archives



John Notten's Installation "Tug"
on display, November 2022
Photo credit: Kylynn Bhathena

Galleries

- Neilson Park Creative Centre has four unique gallery spaces for artists to exhibit their artwork, connect with other creatives and celebrate their art.
- Individual artists, artist collectives, independent curators and other organizations are all welcome to apply to exhibit in our galleries. Exhibitions run for a duration of three weeks. We welcome artworks of all mediums.

Art Space Connect Gallery

- Art Space Connect Gallery is the largest exhibition space at Neilson Park Creative Centre.
- It is a bright and spacious gallery with a 20 foot ceiling and adjustable spot lighting. It has over 130 running feet of wall space in a 1600 square foot facility.
- Pedestals and moveable walls are available.
- This is an ideal gallery space for exhibitions of two and three dimensional visual artworks of all mediums.

I love to visit NPCC, it has a very soothing effect on me. It inspires me, motivates me and broadens my horizons. I like seeing all the new exhibitions and attending opening receptions. NPCC always has a great atmosphere, I can meet artists and new people and enjoy light refreshments. The Centre "feeds the senses" and it's always interesting to see what is happening in the world of fine arts.

My unique experience at NPCC was in December, 2019, when I had the opportunity to exhibit in a group show. Led by instructor Jacqueline Crawley, The Islington Seniors Centre presented the exhibition entitled "As We See It". The large gallery, "Art Space Connect", was an excellent space for us to exhibit our work with large windows and plinths for 3D artwork.

I also had the pleasure to meet the devoted NPCC staff, like Petra Nyendick and Cory Therrien. All this will stay in my memories and I appreciate it very much! Thank you.

Barbara Urbanczyk

The Calligraphic Arts Guild of Toronto

THEN

I have been a member of Neilson Park Creative Centre since the Calligraphic Arts Guild of Toronto (CAGT) became a resident group in the late 1990s.

NOW

Since then, I have participated in a number of NPCC art exhibitions and most of CAGT's annual art shows, both in the hall and the main gallery. It is always a pleasure to see exhibitions of the other resident groups when I come for a CAGT meeting.



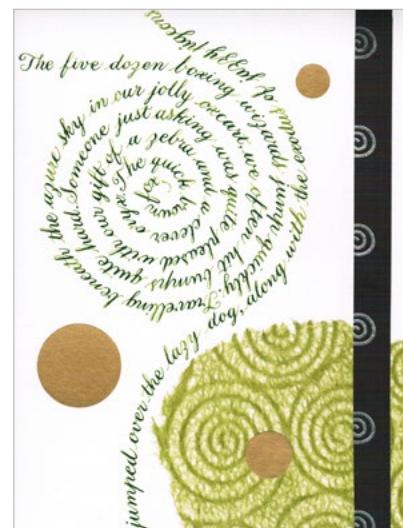
I have both taught and participated in many CAGT Calligraphy classes and workshops at NPCC. In the spring of 2020 NPCC offered a number of classes on Zoom, and I was pleased to be invited to teach a Calligraphy class at this time. This was the first time I had taught online. I also took several of the art classes offered at this time, including Kal Honey's Collage workshop. The image that I have included is homework from his class. It was a privilege to be able to do online presentations for Culture Days for NPCC on behalf of CAGT in October of 2020 and 2021. I have been a vendor at the Handmade Sale a couple of times, and have also volunteered at the CAGT table at this event on several occasions.



Calligraphy: Mark Lurz

The various programs and events at this beautiful facility along with its proximity to nature have made being a member a wonderful, enriching experience and I am glad to have been a part of it.

Michele Nidenoff



Calligraphy: Michele Nidenoff

24 Years with NPCC

It wasn't until 1999 when the Calligraphic Arts Guild of Toronto found its permanent home at Neilson Park Creative Centre.

By then, its sister resident groups had already comfortably settled in the new building, and the excitement and challenges of its construction were in the past.

For us calligraphers the excitement and challenges came six years after the new Centre's opening:

How would we be welcomed?

How would we fit in?

Our reservations quickly changed to feelings of gratitude.

Instead of the dark basements, senior homes or libraries, our first monthly meeting was in the bright Studio A.

It came with a bookcase and additional storage space in the basement.

We also realized the advantages of having a receptionist at the front desk.

In time we learnt that we were not just renting a studio, but were integrated with other resident groups into an aspiring artist community.

It was always rewarding to hear their comments and praise during our calligraphy exhibitions.

Some of them visited our writing classes,

some helped with advice

and some of them, just recently,

bequeathed us their remainder

of walnut and butternut dyes, which we could convert into inks.

Pen and ink, and by now, all sorts of media are our tools. Back in 1974, the year of the founding of our Calligraphy Guild, we drafted the mandate to introduce Canadian school boards to Italic writing.

Our lofty goals have been pushed away by the electronic age.

But our guild tries to keep the handwritten scripts alive.

Despite computer fonts, most people still appreciate a handwritten message.

To NPCC and to our fellow artists, thank you for having us and allowing us to be part of a community spreading the arts.

Mark Lurz

The Etobicoke Art Group Then and Now

By Kathleen Haushalter

THEN

This summer a surprise email landed in my inbox, asking if it was true that Jack Pollock had once taught for the Etobicoke Art Group. Coincidentally, that day I had a photo on my desk of Jack Pollock at his Pollock Gallery in Toronto with a group of EAG members who had taken his class. Serendipity. I had been researching the same question after finding a photocopy of an excerpt from Pollock's book "Dear M" in our archives where he had mentioned teaching for EAG in 1968.



Harold Town, Speaker at the EAG Open Meeting Lecture Night, March, 1977. L to R: Margaret Clifford, Program Convenor; Joan Jamieson, EAG President; Harold Town. Photo credit: Nancy Barrett

EAG was founded after a meeting with representatives of the Art Gallery of Toronto, now the AGO. Twelve people met in President-to-be Fred Brown's house in November 1951 to plan to form an art group in Etobicoke. Of the eight of those meetings held across various Toronto communities with the Art Gallery extension department, the Etobicoke Art Group is the only one still in operation today.

EAG's history is the story of some wonderful artists who founded the group and spent



many years supporting its goal to bring us to this day. It is also the story of the many marvelous instructors who have inspired our members and led them to the advanced edge of innovative contemporary art.

In 1952, children's Saturday morning classes were started together with two adult evening classes at Islington Public School. The adult classes ran for twenty weeks of the school year. Karl Forage, (Brighton College of Art and Regent Street Polytechnic) taught EAG's children's classes for 28 years while working first as an art teacher in local schools and then as an exhibit and graphic designer for the Ontario Science Centre. Karl was hired by EAG founding member Alice Rycroft (University of Toronto and OCA) who was an Art Specialist first for the Etobicoke Board of Education, then the Toronto Board of Education, and who in 1960 also helped form the Haliburton School of the Arts where she then taught for 4 years. Alice was herself a talented artist and her energy and enthusiasm were at the core of EAG's children's art program, which later became NPCC's children's art program in 1996.

Meanwhile, adult classes in the early years and at "The Willows" were taught by some of our member artists and by notables including:

Frederic Steiger, Adrian Dingle, Jack Pollock, Lois Steen, Phillipa Faulkner, Harold Norrington, Sharon Merkur, Margaret Lloyd, John Bennett, Jack Reid, Nancy Hazelgrove, Ann Meredith Barry, Ethel Raicus, Susan Rivait, Greg Hindle, Thomas La Pierre, Robert Achtemichuk, Vernon Chilton, Pat Fairhead, Geri Puley, Telford Fenton, Marjorie Hodgson, Bill Sherman, Zoltan Markan, Judi Frost Townsend, Sandra Altwerger, Bob Middleton, Gabor Mezei, Loraine Tunley, Brian Atyeo, Rudi Stussi, Maria Gabankova, Stephanie Rayner, Wendy Whitemore, Jane Champagne.

Four lectures a year were also planned and the Art Gallery of Toronto initially provided assistance. The first open meeting was held in January, 1952 with 250 people in attendance. Open lecture meetings were held in local schools until 1992 as they attracted a large audience.

Even though EAG was a new group, a look back through our archives shows an impressive list of speakers whose names are easily recognized:

- William Arthur Winter, Canadian Group of Painters, RCA, whose works are in the National Gallery of Canada, Art Gallery of Ontario, Vancouver Art Gallery and the National Gallery in Auckland, New Zealand
- A.Y. Jackson, Group of Seven
- A. J Casson, OSA, RCA, Group of Seven
- Konrad Sadowski, Polish-Canadian potter and modernist
- Jock MacDonald, a co-founder of Painters Eleven
- E.B. Cox, sculptor, a member of the Ontario Society of Artists (OSA), Sculptors' Society of Canada (SSC) and the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (RCA)
- Paul Duval, sculptor,
- Lois Steen, OSA, SCA

- Dainis Miezajs, Latvian-Canadian painter
- James (Jim) Ogilvie, RAF, painter
- Mary Hecht, American Society of Contemporary Artists, Sculptors' Society of Canada
- Tony Urquart, CM RCA LL.D
- Alan Perkins, RCA, OSA, SCA
- Harold Town, Painters Eleven
- Paul Fornier, AOCA, LL.D
- Saul Field, painter, printmaker, film maker
- Joseph Aigner, stained glass
- Osvald Timmas, RCA
- Walter Bachinski, AOCA, MFA
- Sandra Lawrence, Master of Art Conservation
- Doris McCarthy, CM OOnt RCA LL. D.
- Brigitte Shreyer, SCA, CSPW, OSA,
- Pat Fairhead, RCA
- Joanne Clarke, CSPW, OSA
- William Ronald, RCA, Painters Eleven

All these speakers provided inspiration in our open-to-the-public lectures in the earliest years.



Jack Pollock with EAG class members at his Phase II Gallery March 15, 1968.
Photo credit: Frank Barrett

In September 1970, thanks to the determined lobbying efforts of Vera Halhed, editor of the Etobicoke Press and writer for the Toronto Daily Star and the Toronto Telegram, a founding member of the Etobicoke Historical Society and an art lover and painter, among other accomplishments, the EAG moved into "The Willows," a small bungalow at 56

Neilson Drive. It had become available on a rental basis from the Borough of Etobicoke. The move enabled the EAG to expand adult classes into the daytime as well as evenings and to bring children's classes to the main floor and to an extra studio added in the basement of the building.

Astoundingly creative artists taught the children's classes over the years; Karl Forage, Linda Gaelynn Smith, Sheila Gregory, Bonnie McVittie, Karen Korn, Angela O'Hara, and Sharon Epstein taught at "The Willows."

The adults' and children's classes continued at "The Willows" until May, 1992.

On June 16th of 1992 we held our Annual General Meeting and a last, lovely, potluck luncheon on the site, and then "The Willows" was demolished to make way for the new building. EAG members had been hard at work the previous year lobbying the City of Etobicoke with a proposal that "The Willows" be replaced by a new, purpose- designed art centre. Led by a determined Art Centre Development Committee then representing the combined interests of The Etobicoke Art Group and four other community visual arts groups, this project succeeded and Neilson Park Creative Centre opened in February, 1993 amid great celebration.

The group's founding principle "to further the best interests of the visual arts in Etobicoke" took an impressive step forward when NPCC opened.

EAG had the opportunity to be the first group to move into NPCC, settling in to Studio B, installing the large press and other equipment and both adults' and children's classes began there in September, 1992. As the other Resident Groups moved into their studio spaces one by one, the Centre became very lively.

Moving into NPCC with its bright, purpose built studio provided exciting opportunities to have all of our equipment available to members whenever they came in. The large

press, the small press, lots of ventilation, room for drying racks, a large model stand and lights, storage for still life materials... having all of these easily available was not previously an option for EAG. In fact our large press had been in storage for several years while we hoped for a new home for it. A full EAG art program for adults began as soon as Studio B was available to the group.

A huge part of the continued success of EAG's painting program can be attributed to two artists who committed long term to the success of EAG painters: John Leonard and Denis Cliff.

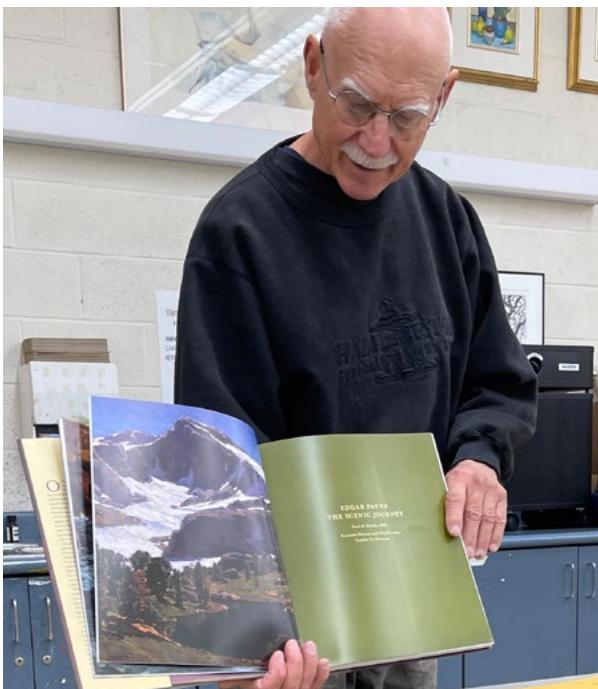
John taught his first EAG class in 1973, twenty years before NPCC opened, and continues to help us find the best in ourselves and to reach new heights each year. Denis Cliff taught his first painting class for EAG in 1975 and continued until his death in 2013. A recognition and tribute to Denis was held at NPCC on Saturday, December 7th along with a retrospective exhibition of his work. One of his large canvases hangs in Studio B.

Both of these artists made the effort to nurture the individual development of each of the artists in their classes. Both contributed their expertise to the planning ideas for NPCC as both had taught in art centres across Ontario and elsewhere in Canada. Their ideas were incorporated into the building goals.

EAG volunteer members ran the children's program on Saturdays for several years at NPCC. And with a gallery on site, the children's art show became a high-profile focus of the year starting in November 1993.

In 1996, those classes were consolidated into regular NPCC programming. It was a big decision to hand the children's program

over to NPCC and EAG volunteers continued to provide support for the program over the next couple of years.



John Leonard teaching in Studio B, Fall, 2022.

Photo credit: Darlene Kulig

EAG was fortunate to have opportunities for art related social events. The late Gail McQuillan, past President of both EAG and NPCC, organized many years of EAG fundraisers at the Kingsway Theatre where movies such as "Frida", "Surviving Picasso", "Artemisia" and "The Red Violin" among others informed and entertained us and raised money for the group to help fund the annual award given to a local high school art student.

EAG members had also contributed over the years to many art events across the city. They participated in exhibitions at the CNE starting in 1979, helped organize and exhibited at Etobicoke's Art in the Park at the Civic Centre and then later at Neilson Park. They showed work with other art groups across Toronto such as the Don Valley Art Club.

Once the Centre opened, there were new events such as annual arts and craft sales, "Shades of Red" in October 1995, "For Canada with Glowing Hearts" in 1997, plant

sales, book sales, the "Garden Art Auction" with the excellent support of Sherway Gardens and which raised more than \$110,000 for NPCC's operating budget over ten years, the Foot Squared art show, and so many more.

NOW

Now our class and members' studio program runs throughout the year. Exhibitions are held at the Neilson Park Centre Creative galleries twice a year while our juried show is usually held at the Etobicoke Civic Centre Art Gallery.

Our programs continue to offer challenges for artists interested in the development of their skills. We paint, print and draw, and experiment with new techniques, always pushing the boundaries in making innovative art.

Members thrive in an environment of companionship, mutual exchange of skills and knowledge, and a wonderful sense of community. We make friends, hold regular exhibitions of our work (in 1966, EAG's first Juried Exhibition was held at Eatonville Library) and enjoy lecture evenings with lively experienced speakers who share with us their artistic visions.

Each year we raise money for our award for an exceptional local student to continue their visual arts education.

Members pay annual dues, studio, class and exhibition fees and contribute their expertise to the group on a volunteer basis to make it all happen.

Within the Centre, The Etobicoke Art Group continues today with a year-round program that maintains a high standard of art instruction with an emphasis on sharing the lessons learned, the discoveries made and the opportunities offered.

The Etobicoke Handweavers and Spinners Guild – Then and Now

THEN

From our November 1993 Newsletter

At our November Guild meeting we formed small groups to discuss the purpose of the Guild. Our discussions quickly became brainstorming sessions, out of which came many suggestions for ways in which we could more effectively reflect our purpose in our Guild programs, meetings and activities.

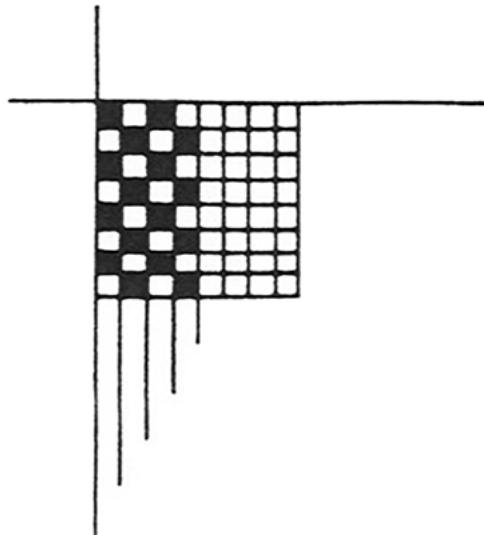
The four components of our purpose are as follows:

1. Encourage an interest in handweaving, spinning and dyeing amongst our members.
2. Encourage an interest in handweaving, spinning and dyeing in the community.
3. Encourage and provide opportunities to increase skills and artistry in these crafts by sharing of experience and by providing learning opportunities and services.
4. Encourage and assist those practicing these crafts in any appropriate manner.

Interestingly enough, while each group was to address a different component of the purpose, many of the suggestions were very similar. This article attempts to group and summarize those common suggestions.



NPCC official opening, open house Studio C, February 12, 1993. Weaving demo by EHS member Eleanor Conway and Florence Lloyd. From the archives of Kathleen Haushalter.



Revealing the Joys of Fibre, Weaving, Spinning, etc. to Children

Almost all groups mentioned involvement of children in weaving as an important element for consideration by the Guild. We could involve children in weaving possibly through teaching workshops using inkle looms, basketry, tapestry, tie & dye, drop spindles. Other suggestions included demonstrating at schools and libraries.

Involve the Community

In order to promote membership in the Guild and educate the community about fibre arts the following activities were suggested.

- Pass extra newsletters to prospective members.
- Invite Cable 10 to the Guild to profile a specific activity (e.g. group on 60" loom, or fashion show).
- Demonstrate in more places and ensure Guild pamphlets are available for handout.
- Provide introductory classes to adults.
- Hold mini-workshops for both members and non-members.

Keep All Members Up-to-date

Some suggestions pointed to the need to keep all members (past and present) up-to-date about Guild activities and fibre issues. It was suggested that old members be telephoned and encouraged to join the Guild, and as well, that a "buddy" system be instituted which would pair new with more experienced members.

Guild Programmes

While much of the focus during discussions was on our interface with the community, one common suggestion was made by at least 2 groups. Both identified the need to pass on members knowledge. It was suggested that individual members be invited to talk about specific projects, including basic instructions for drafting, yarn purchase, etc. through garment design, construction and finishing.

It was encouraging to note that many people mentioned support for open studio time at NPCC. In this context, formation of study groups was proposed, as was formation of a committee to organize the monthly Thursday afternoon sessions. More on this initiative will be announced at our December meeting, including plans for joint Studio C open studio time.



Large loom in Studio C, demo by Jean Linden, February 12, 1993. From the archives of Kathleen Haushalter.

NPCC is an oasis where I can leave the cares and worries of my everyday life behind and focus on creative activities and interactions with the people I encounter.

Fondest memory – I was a brand new spinner and joined EHS in September, 1996. I think it was the following spring that there was a numbers challenge for all members of NPCC. Each person was to draw a number out of a jar on the front desk and create something inspired by that number.

Whatever we made would be displayed in the Hallway Gallery. Being very new to EHS and NPCC I wasn't planning to participate. When I arrived for an EHS meeting some very persuasive and encouraging guild members sent me back out to the front desk to draw a number. I drew the number 1. I had no idea what I was going to do and Carole Gay wanted the number 1 so she could weave lace. I traded with her for the number 13.

I can still remember the excitement of thinking about all the ways I could use the number 13 in what I planned to make. I spun 13 different handspun yarns and used them to knit a hat in stranded colourwork motifs of the Roman numeral XIII. I knit thirteen triangular decrease sections on the top of the hat. It might have been the first time I experienced the sense of creativity that can flow from a random challenge and a sense of community. My work was displayed along with work of painters, quilters, rug hookers, weavers, spinners and other NPCC members inspired by the challenge.

Elizabeth Evans

NOW

We, too, have had many discussions about how to encourage interest in weaving, spinning and dyeing in our guild and community. Pre-pandemic seems so far away now but the last three years have given us so much more reach to other communities. We have used Zoom to reach textile enthusiasts farther afield that wouldn't be able to attend Neilson Park.

In the past couple of decades or so bricks and mortar shops have closed for many reasons, but a couple were the decline in people interested in the textile arts considering it old-fashioned as well as the increase in cost for rents and payrolls.



Carol and the 50 Mile Coat

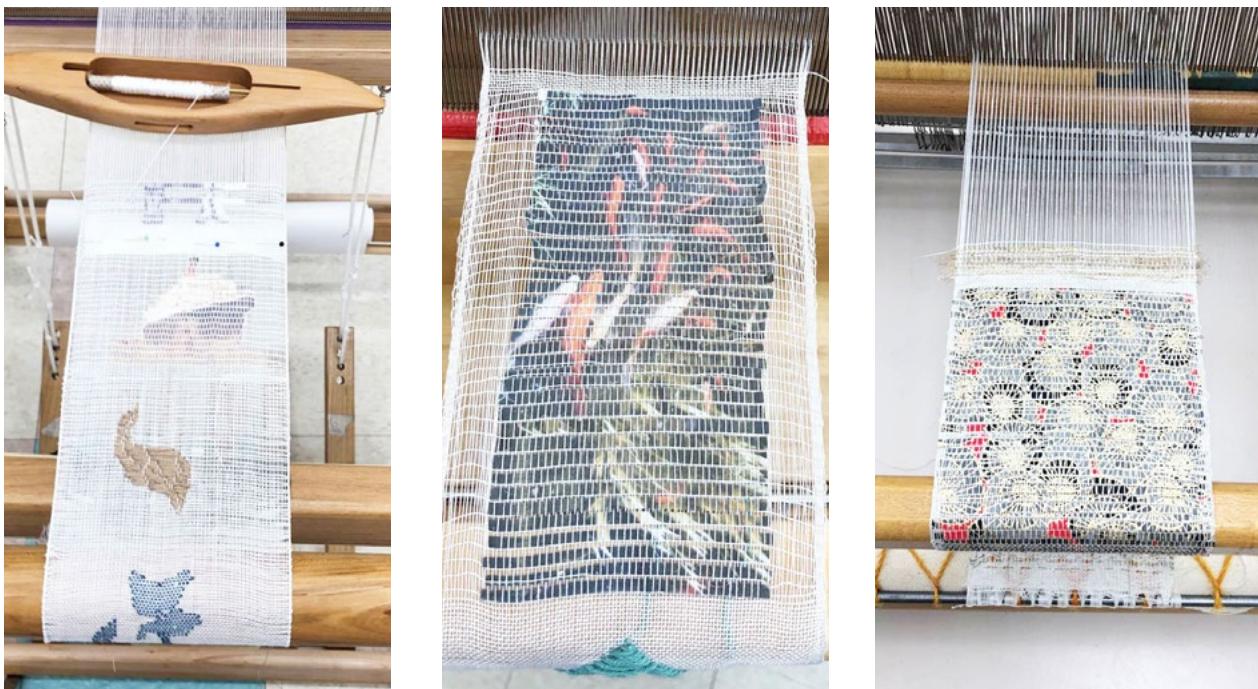
However, the trend has begun to change. In the last few years, knitting, weaving, spinning and dyeing have become much more popular with the younger set. Online shops have had a huge impact on the depth of our stashes. Indie dyers have offered us amazing opportunities for spinning and dyeing fibre. We have new mini mills in areas close to Toronto where shepherds send fleece to be carded into roving for spinning or spun into yarn for knitting.

Despite the drawbacks we all faced during the pandemic, there have been a few positives. We have been able to connect with members of other Guilds and to share our speakers and workshops with them. Thanks to Zoom, we have had workshops and speakers from the USA, the UK, and Canada. None of this would have happened before the pandemic.

The Upper Canada Fibreshed is building a regional fibre system centered around local fibres, local dyes and local labour. This promotes local wool and products made from local wool. Over the years, we have participated in the RAWF Sheep to Shawl. After a two year hiatus, we are very excited to be at the RAWF again in 2022.



Transparency Workshop



Details of Transparency Workshop

The Etobicoke Quilters' Guild

Then and Now

The Etobicoke Quilters' Guild was established in 1975, so when it found its home at Neilson Park Creative Centre at its opening in 1993, it was already quite an established entity. But what a difference being part of NPCC has made to our guild!

Many quilt guilds rent space for their monthly meetings in places like churches or community centres. While the fact that their rent is low keeps the members' dues down, they have minimal storage space and no place that they can actually call their own. We are so very fortunate to be part of NPCC, where we have lots of storage space and a familiar place to work multiple times every week. Whenever a guest walks into Studio C they comment on how wonderful the tables, the cupboard space, and the fantastic, sun-filled windows are!



Small star quilt from the mid-90s
(unknown quilter and photographer)

Our monthly meetings are held in the evening on the third Monday of each month in Studio A. Less formal get togethers have fluctuated and evolved over time but these



days we meet informally in Studio C to work on quilts from 9 am to 4:30 pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. Members pay a small fee to attend, but refreshments are provided, as well as the well-stocked cupboard of quilting supplies such as rulers, mats, cutters and even sewing machines. Many people in the room work on Comfort Quilts to donate to charity, while others bring their own projects. Having this time together is another thing that sets our guild apart from others: when you're at a meeting, you tend to sit and listen, and maybe chat a bit with the people seated nearest you, but during our Studio C time, we all have an opportunity to get to know each other better, perhaps in wandering around the room to admire what others are making, or getting advice on border placement or colour choices, or providing an extra set of hands pin-basting a quilt. The sense of community that is fostered by this connection is a priceless benefit of being part of this group.

One thing that has stayed surprisingly consistent is the number of members in our guild. The first year that EQG came to NPCC, there were between 140-150 members, and last year we had 144. (We're still a little bit shy of that number so far this year, but registrations are still trickling in.) It is fun to see that some of the members that were part



EGQ membership 2015. Photo credit: Rod Lord

of the guild in 1993 are still active members today! Fortunately, we continue to attract new members—and did so even during the pandemic (which was due in no small part to NPCC's encouragement and support of distance access for our guild activities). While a membership consisting of people who love to play with fabric and make pretty things has stayed constant, the art of quilting has evolved somewhat over the past three decades. When quilting as a craft made its resurgence in the 1970s, there were not a lot of fabrics or tools available, and techniques were a little primitive. When you wanted to cut out a bunch of shapes to sew together (like triangles or squares), you had to cut a template out of cardboard (perhaps an old cereal box?), trace the shape multiple times on your fabric, and then cut them all out with scissors. Nowadays we use rotary cutters (think pizza cutters) and acrylic rulers of all shapes and sizes, and get done in a fraction of the time.

Most quilters sewed their pieces together by hand, and then certainly quilted the quilt by hand as well. Many quilts were appliqued (by hand) in the past, which means small, non-geometric shapes (like flowers or leaves) were hand-sewn onto a background fabric. Our guild had a large quilting frame set up in Studio C up until just a few years ago—and there was a dedicated crew of quilters

who would come in and hand quilt sections on whichever quilt was being quilted at the time. For many years we raffled off several beautiful quilts at each biannual quilt show, and they were frequently appliqued and always hand quilted. (We stopped the raffle primarily since it's so difficult to run a raffle in the province of Ontario, but there have been many stunning quilts created for that purpose over the years.)



Modern Quilting: Log Cabin Hover quilt.
Made by and photographed by Sandra Sarner.

But technology has certainly influenced the quilting world! Almost everyone assembles their quilts on a sewing machine now (although there are a few types of quilts that are still done by hand), and either quilts it on their own machine or sends it to a long-arm quilter to have it professionally done, with perhaps only the final binding around the quilt sewn on by hand. It's not only the techniques that have changed though—quilt design is evolving too. Lots of people create traditional-type quilts, but many are also migrating over to a more modern style. Modern quilting tends to use solid or non-floral fabrics, with a large amount of neutral space, and larger pieces—clean, spare designs.

And whether they're traditional or modern, our guild makes many, many quilts to give away to various local charities. At one point early on, EQG donated quilts to a local women's shelter, but shortly after NPCC opened, their donations pivoted to the fire department. Small quilts were made to be placed onto fire trucks, so if there were children involved in a fire or accident, they could be wrapped up in a quilt. One guild member fondly remembered that they were given bags of 7" squares of assorted fabrics, which they then took home and transformed into simple quilts. Nowadays our guild makes over 200 quilts each year, which are donated to over a dozen local charities in the GTA. We are so fortunate to have the time and wherewithal to be able to quilt, so it only seems right that we somehow share our good fortune, and try to brighten up lives with warm, cuddly quilts.

One special project that we worked on together this past year was an orange quilt with 215 blocks to commemorate the lives of



215 Indigenous Quilt. Made by the guild and photographed by Karen Cooper.

the children that were lost at the Kamloops residential school. Members were asked to make a small 3" block, and to do it mindfully, keeping those young ones in their hearts while they were making them. We received many beautiful blocks—some with traditional Indigenous motifs, and others with things found in nature like bear paws and flying geese. We consulted Philip Cote, and upon his recommendation will be donating this to the Centre for Indigenous Student Services at York University. We can't remedy the horrors of the residential schools, but we did want to somehow acknowledge their grief.

The Etobicoke Quilters' Guild is a vibrant and creative organization, and we are honoured to be part of Neilson Park Creative Centre—it is truly our home.

Etobicoke Rugcrafters Then and Now

THEN

Once upon a time... a group of excited women were taking a class in primitive rug hooking, taught by Carmen Rossi, at Montgomery's Inn. After the class was completed, these members wanted to continue hooking together so they formed "The Heritage Rughookers of Etobicoke" and met in a Richview Library meeting room. When Neilson Park Creative Centre was proposed being built, they joined the Centre as one of the founding member groups. Later the group's name was changed to Etobicoke Rugcrafters to help distinguish this group from several other member groups of the Ontario Hooking Craft Guild whose names also included the word "Heritage."



Suzanne Edgar, *Heather on Exmoor*, Hooked

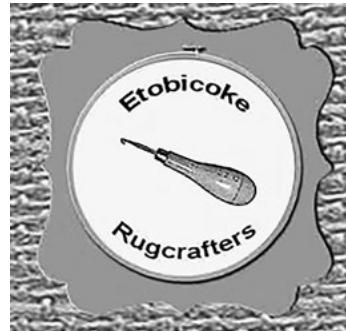
Some of the founding members were very early members, including:

Carmen Rossi, Leah Batty, Sally Mogridge, Shirley Kirby, Marjorie McGinn, June Turner, Joan Grose, Audrey Weller, June Goodbrand... just to name a few.

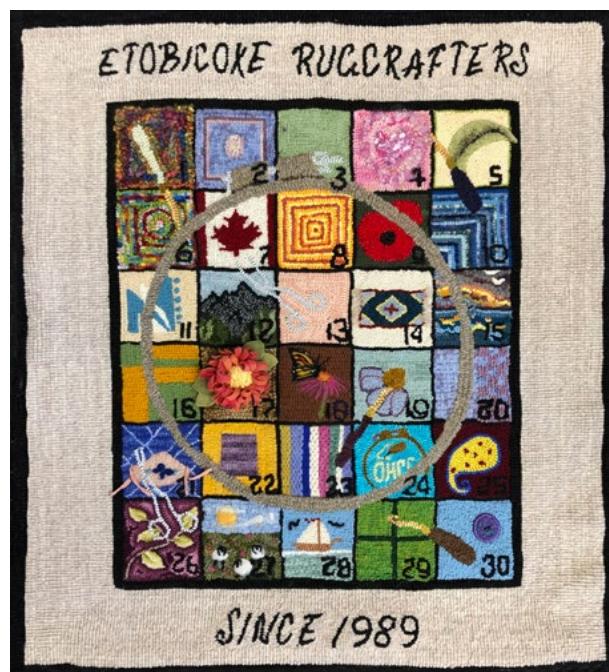
NOW

ER Celebration – 30 Years together

The Etobicoke Rugcrafters also celebrated 30 years together a few years ago and produced "The Etobicoke Rugcrafter Anniversary Rug."



If you go into Studio C at the end of the hall of Neilson Park Creative Centre, the studio where the Rugcrafters meet, you will find the 30th Anniversary Rug the members created to mark the milestone.



Etobicoke Rugcrafters

The piece is a true group collaboration – from design, to creating the 30 individual squares, to the finishing. That alone makes it special. But when you look closely at the rug what you can really see is the evolution of rug hooking. Traditional rug hooking with wool strips is represented including fine shading,

geometrics, oriental, and florals. But you will also see how the craft has continued to grow and evolve. 'Normal' loops are there but so are creative stitches, proddy, and sculpting. Wool strips have been joined by yarn, nylons, velvet, sari silk, ribbons, and needle felting.



Martha Gonya, *Folk Art Farm*, Hooked

COVID brought new challenges in keeping our members together. ZOOM became a new word and tool and we learned together. We became creative in ways to keep ourselves engaged in our work. We held workshops, presentations and playdays. We even came up with a "curbside" kit pick-up process for ensuring that everyone had the materials necessary to keep hooking.

Hearts for Nova Scotia

During the tragic events in Nova Scotia, rug hookers were encouraged to make small rug mats and send them to Nova Scotia to show support during their difficult times. We were

very pleased to send a number of pieces from our group – the process of pulling loops to design a broken heart was overwhelming to the maker and more so, to the families that received them.

Hook and I Show

Every year we put together an amazing display of the works of our members. The show demonstrates the variety of styles and designs in our craft – many original designs by our own members. During the 3-week period, visitors are encouraged to vote on a piece of work that they feel inspires them the most. It's hard to pick just one rug!

Coat of Arms in Studio C

Yvonne Lane tells a wonderful personal story which is combined with Leah Batty, NPCC founding member and the hooked "Canadian Coat of Arms" in Studio C.

When I (Yvonne) retired I started water colour painting classes at Fairfield Senior Centre, not having painted since I was a teenager. It was there that I met Leah Batty, a founding member of Neilson Park Creative Centre. We discovered we had many common interests apart from both having lived through WWII in England and later emigrating to Canada. She told me she was



Hearts for Nova Scotia

a member of the Etobicoke Quilters' Guild at NPCC and, having been taught how to sew and knit at a very young age, quilting was already on my 'to do' list. I immediately signed up for NPCC quilting lessons given by 2 of EQG's very accomplished quilters and, of course, was 'hooked' and joined NPCC. No pun intended, as I am now a rug hooker with the Etobicoke Rugcrafters. I have really enjoyed my long association with NPCC and the guilds with which I have been associated. I have also very much enjoyed being involved, in a variety of capacities, with the multitude of events put on over the years.

It was while we were organizing the Fibre Arts Festival in 2011 that I last met up with Leah. I arranged to pick up some of her rug hooked pieces for this Show and spent a lovely few hours reminiscing. She then asked if I would also take a piece she was donating to NPCC. That was her hooking of the Canadian Coat of Arms. She had worked with Rittermere, a long established Rug hooking supplier, to obtain government permission to hook the piece which she wanted to give to her son for his office. I understand he returned it to her later as there were stipulations as to where such an item may, or may not, be displayed and his office was no longer eligible. This beautiful hooking is now proudly displayed in NPCC for all to admire and also to help us remember Leah herself, who is no longer with us.

And then... Fibre Art Festival - 2011.

From the moment I joined the Etobicoke Quilters' Guild, I kept hearing about the great Fibre Art Festival that the 3 fibre art groups had hosted some time ago. The 3 fibre groups set the date, April 2 and 3, 2011 to take over the entire building, with the exhibition and sale of our work to continue until April 17th.

Studios A and C were set up as the Merchant Mall with a total of 20 vendors offering all one could wish for - sewing, quilting, hooking, spinning, weaving, knitting, beading,

dyeing and more. Studio B was set up as a Tea Room and well run by an outside caterer. Apart from being a place to rest for a while and indulge on sweets and beverages, it provided an opportunity to display the charity work being carried out by our members. There were quilts from the EQG Comfort Quilt Programme and preemie blankets, booties and toques that are donated to local hospitals by EHS.



Jennifer Curran, *Town Square*, Hooked

The Atrium was set up as a Members' Boutique, selling a variety of our handmade items and demonstrations were provided by the 3 guilds.

The Main Gallery and Hall Galleries (since renamed) were beautifully set up to display the diverse work of our 3 guilds. It was wonderful to see the combination of quilting, hooking and weaving being shown together and many items were sold throughout the period of the Show.

All in all, it was a great success, and each group was able to add something to their coffers after the expense of putting on such an event.

Words from a few members:

Lann Smyth (former president) tells us why she loves NPCC and ER - I retired from a 32-year career at a single company that fulfilled what I wanted from a career... challenge, opportunity for travel, a pride of accomplishment both financially and

personally and making life long friends. When this career ended and I was ready to start the next phase of my life, I was a little lost trying to fill the gap of working 8-12 hour days. Taught by my creative mother, I always had a knack for sewing and knitting which over the years had to take second place to my work. After retirement, my sister introduced me to the art of rughooking and to the Etobicoke guild of rughookers. I not only fell in love with the art of pulling loops, but also with the social atmosphere of belonging to a group of like-minded, talented, inspirational rughookers. That this group met in a studio at Neilson Park Creative Centre overlooking beautiful parkland was the sweet icing on a delicious cake.



Karen Light, A Robin's Nest, Hooked

I was thrilled to be accepted as president of this group, where for 6 years I was able to bridge my working life skills to my new, creative, retired life. Although now I am entering a new phase of life which involves extensive travel with my recently retired husband, I will always maintain my connection with the Rugcrafters and Neilson Park Creative Centre.

Wendy Beales - While in Cape Breton Island I visited Cheticamp and wandered into a rug hooking store that had a myriad of hooked rugs on display. You could buy a kit and produce a beautiful work of rug hooking art. I bought a small one and a larger one,

both in yarn. My friend Lann Smyth was a member of NPCC and encouraged me to join so I could get the mentoring I needed to get me into rug hooking. I came as a guest and was overwhelmed by the knowledge and help received from the members. There was also a great supply cabinet and an extensive library of books and magazines for instruction and inspiration. Well, I was hooked (no pun intended). Since then I have taken on the responsibility of Librarian and have been doing this for many years now. I love organization and things to be neat and tidy and readily available to our membership. We have grown our library inventory and I am always looking for ways to make the library an even greater resource for our members. Thanks to all the people who have supported me in over 7 years of membership.

Karen Light - I had just started hooking with Vivien Thompson. I asked her where I could go to rug-hook with others. She told me there were several guilds in the Toronto area but that her favourite was at Neilson Park Creative Centre because it was such a beautiful open bright space filled with very beautiful, open, friendly and welcoming people. Sounded great to me!! It was quite far from my home though so I was a bit hesitant. But after going for awhile, I decided to commit myself to it. "Just go" I told myself, just commit to going on Tuesdays to Neilson Park Community Centre. So I did. And Vivien was totally correct about the space and the people!

The Etobicoke Rugcrafters are proud to be part of the Resident Group family and acknowledge the hard work that has gone into making NPCC what it is today – change is positive.

Humber Valley Art Club

Then and Now

THEN

Humber Valley Art Club sprang into vibrant life in 1951 when a "Group of Eight" women with a variety of art backgrounds decided to organize themselves into a club dedicated to artistic pursuits. They enjoyed getting together to paint en plein air in the Humber Valley, the Old Mill area and also in more northerly destinations. Painting primarily in oil and watercolour, they challenged themselves to capture the vibrancy of the varied, seasonal Ontario landscapes. So successful were they, that by the end of the first summer this loosely structured group boasted a membership of over 40 enthusiasts.

Originally meeting in each other's homes, they soon met in other facilities including the Pavilion in High Park, Kingsway Lambton United Church and Humber Valley United Church. Over the years, regular

Humber Valley Art Club To Hold Annual Exhibition

The Humber Valley Art Club exhibition of original paintings will be officially opened by Mrs. Jean Newman at 3 p.m. Wednesday



HVAC Juror for Annual Juried Exhibition, Mrs. Jean Newman, 1961

Thursday April 4, 1963.

Humber Valley Art Club Has Active Year

Members of the Humber Valley Art Club enjoyed a luncheon March 19 at the Art Gallery of Toronto.

The President, Mrs. M. Magill and Vice President

HVAC article in local newspaper, 1963



juried exhibitions were held in a variety of locations, such as the O'Keefe Centre (juried by Doris McCarthy!), the Canadian National Exhibition and High Park.

HVAC'S most exciting and rewarding venue was finally established when the transition was made to the newly constructed Neilson Park Creative Centre in 1993. The club settled happily and eagerly into the custom-designed, spacious Studio A with its bright, expansive north facing windows and airy high-ceilinged ambiance. And it's important to point out, that a small and very dedicated group of our own HVAC members, along with other artists, artisans and groups, were instrumental in fundraising and lobbying Mayor Sinclair's local government to construct this wonderful city-owned community art facility that we are still privileged to call our home. We owe those members our boundless thanks!

At the time of this move, HVAC membership numbers exceeded 300 and workshops often filled to the Studio A capacity of 30, many with waiting lists. An exciting roster of artists provided instruction in watercolour,

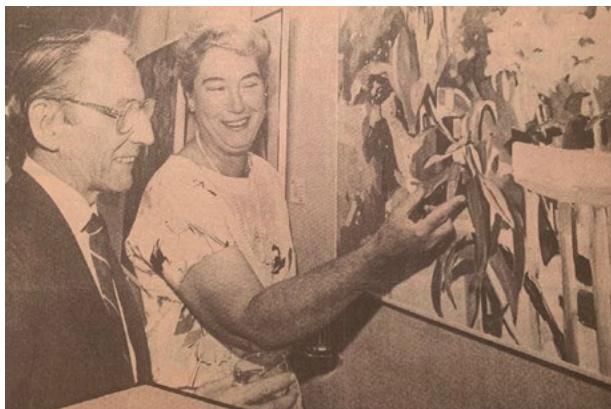
acrylic and mixed media/collage on Mondays and Wednesdays. A one-page annual workshop flyer was sent out in hard copy by mail every June to outline courses for the next instructional year (September – May). Workshops for the year usually filled up within weeks, with many members rushing to get their registrations posted in order to ensure a space. Exciting times!



Margaret Nurse, Doris Kennedy (center-NPCC Founding Member), Nora Marnie - HVAC members pictured in the 1980's.



Instructor Greg Paul and HVAC member Betsy Whalen in workshop, 1983



Marilyn Coulter, HVAC President with the juror at a juried show, 1987

NOW

The computer age has so dramatically changed our way of functioning, that it is difficult to remember pre-computer days for our club! And of course, the recent pandemic has amplified those changes. The silver lining in the last decade or more has been the grand leap that our members took in

gradually embracing new computer skills, thus facilitating a smooth transition to email communication and more recently to Zoom classes and meetings, as well as online art exhibitions during the pandemic.



New HVAC aprons for Executive Committee members Heather, Sharon and Bev!

We are so thrilled now to finally return to our home in Studio A after a two-year hiatus. And happily, our two main annual shows, the Members Choice Exhibition and our Annual Juried Exhibition, will be returning to the beautiful NPCC galleries in November and the Etobicoke Civic Centre Gallery in April. Our HVAC volunteers are truly wonderful and support our club in a multitude of ways!



HVAC Executive Committee September 2018, following AGM in Studio A



Intermediate/Advanced Acrylic Workshop with Andrew Sookrah, September 2022 in Studio A

Presently the club is run by an Executive Committee of eight members. The Workshop Committee ensures that a bright and colourful e-Brochure for the following year is emailed to "Members and Friends" in June.

The HVAC e-Brochure details, along with vivid photos, our full array of Monday classes (half days) and Wednesday workshops (full days) from September – June. All courses for this year are in Studio A, with the exception of one long-distance Zoom series in January.



Our hosts Kay and Bev, displaying their art at our HVAC table at the NPCC Handmade Fine Arts and Crafts Show, November 2019. Lots of fun!

Members are invited to enter three shows this year: the "Members Online Website Gallery" (October – August), the "Annual Members Choice Exhibition" in the NPCC galleries in November and the "Annual Juried Exhibition" at the Etobicoke Civic Centre Gallery in April, 2023.

HVAC has endeavored to provide quality instruction, annual exhibition opportunities, camaraderie and social events for 71 years. Our Holiday Luncheons, AGM Buffet meetings, Opening Receptions and many other special events at NPCC have solidified club friendships and been enjoyed by many!



Fun with the Beginning/Intermediate Watercolour Class instructed by Wendy Bannerman, in Studio A, 2018

Humber Valley Art Club's goal has remained consistent over these many exciting and eventful years: "To provide a welcoming fellowship of artists at all levels, from Beginners to Advanced."

Our motto: "Join us in experiencing the Joy of Creation through Painting!"

SERENDIPITY NPCC Style

A trip down memory lane with Kathleen Haushalter (EAG) and Thelma Amos (Sr. Arts Consultant West, retired, City of Etobicoke/Toronto). Interviewed by Jerry Smith.

Once described by Councillor Michael O'Rourke as a “death trap,” what role did “The Willows” play in helping to articulate the need for a community centre for the arts?

Thelma: “The Willows,” a small City-owned bungalow, was being used by the Etobicoke Art Group (EAG) as an art facility. As a tenant was living in the building for security, the space to use for art was very small, so EAG needed to use the basement area for some of their art activities.

Kathleen: The Etobicoke Art Group was fortunate to have the use for about 20 years of “The Willows,” located towards the front of Neilson Park. The living room was used for adult programs and the basement for children’s classes. When the fire department decided during a safety inspection that the basement could not be used even for storage unless a second exit was available, activities became very limited.

The time had come to discuss the need for another facility. Luckily, the Parks and Recreation Commissioner, Tom Riley, was willing to discuss the options. But it wasn’t a given, as City Council had to approve the location and funding for a new building.

ACDC – the Arts Centre Development Committee, made up of representatives of the founding groups and the community – played a key role in the advocacy campaign to convince the City of Etobicoke’s elected officials (Mayor and Councillors) that

Etobicoke needed an arts-based community centre – not another sports facility. At the Council meeting in February 1991, the final vote in support of investing \$1.3 million was 9 to 3 in support. What are some of the highlights of that campaign?

Kathleen: There was an initial base of support from several of the city councillors and that was quite encouraging. Several of the ACDC committee members took turns meeting with other individual councillors whose support was tenuous at first. One-on-one meetings proved our determination to move the project forward, gave us an opportunity to hear the questions that would be asked in council meetings and to formulate suitable replies.



Sept. 25, 1992: Thelma Amos in the NPCC office
From the archives of Kathleen Haushalter

WEDNESDAY MAY 2 ETOBICOKE LIFE

Etobicoke Life, May 2, 1990.



Deteriorating art centre puts squeeze on artists

Etobicoke Life cartoon, May 2, 1990

Thelma: The "Focus on the Arts" event in the fall of 1990 is what I remember the most. Snow fencing was erected all around the area in Neilson Park where the ACDC visioned a new facility. Doris Kennedy, chair of the ACDC and a huge community champion of the campaign to build a new art centre spearheaded the event. The mayor, councillors, city staff and the community were invited to the site, where the 5 founding groups occupied the temporary art corral with displays and demonstrations of their artwork - and speeches, of course! It was a brilliant idea to bring attention and 'focus' to the need for an art facility in a very visual and memorable way.

With your individual roles over the construction period - Thelma as a city employee, Kathleen as the NPCC rep - what are some of the moments/experiences of that construction phase that stick out for you some three decades later?

Thelma: The Art Centre Development Committee put together a Capital Project sub

committee to have input into the design of the new facility. It included representatives from the 5 major groups that would be using the centre, and how quickly and efficiently they organized themselves to deliver their requirements was amazing to me. Sub-committee members also assisted in the selection of the architectural firm, R.E. Winters and Associates. Brian Luey, the lead architect, was very accommodating and embraced input from the artists who would be using the facility. The sub-committee met and gave information to Kathleen Haushalter who in turn brought their views to the Capital Construction group. Any feedback from the meetings at the City, Kathleen delivered back to the group. I was the main City contact for Kathleen and the chain of information flowing back and forth was seamless as can be on such a large project.



Feb. 12, 1993: Official opening day with Thelma Amos, Etobicoke Parks and Rec Supervisor (left) and Kathleen Haushalter, NPCC Director and Acting Administrator (right) From the archives of Kathleen Haushalter

This inclusive approach to designing the art centre was a key factor in the centre's success. In the end, once built, it was a model for other communities. I remember how proud NPCC artists were in showing off the facility when artists and administrators from other jurisdictions arrived for a tour. From the tile pattern on the floor to specialized ventilation and lighting requirements, NPCC is a great example of how well an arts facility can function when the end users have input from the beginning.



Feb. 20, 1992. Photo credit: Gail McQuillan, Nancy Barrett and Peg Drew

Kathleen: Among the volunteers who contributed to our planning were artist-members, including a retired architect and a retired civil engineer, and the committee received good advice as well as from the highly qualified spouses of many members who contributed their expertise.

Other important planning support came from two long-time EAG instructors: John Leonard and Denis Cliff who had taught in arts facilities across Ontario and in other provinces as well. To this day, John Leonard says that Neilson Park Creative Centre stands above the others as a well-planned arts facility.

Discovering that the architect was not just willing to listen to our ideas but had, on his own initiative, visited several other art centres and talked to people at those centres about what worked and what didn't, was very positive. We were fortunate that the architect also understood the limitations of city

funding and how to guide us through those constraints and still give us a unique facility that met all of our requests.

February 12 – 14, 1993 was the official opening of NPCC, coordinated jointly by the centre's board and the City of Etobicoke. Given all the work that went into getting to opening day, what are some of your fondest memories of that experience?

Thelma: Opening day was very exciting for all, a very special time. However, the standout for me was the intense period between the completion of the building and the opening. There were many things that had to happen as the interior neared completion and before it could be open to the public - deliveries, inspections, technical follow-ups, questions, and timing issues resulting in many phone calls from me to whoever would normally be the staff person managing the building. But in this case, being volunteer run, it was Kathleen Haushalter who acted as scheduler, greeter to all the trades, on-site trouble-shooter, receiver of

materials and my go-to person during this period. Her competence, professionalism and dedication is the memory that has stayed with me from that time - as is the amazing volunteer efforts of many individuals at NPCC who made themselves consistently available to do whatever needed to be done.

Kathleen: What most people think of when remembering the official opening is the ceremonial hoopla that was the recognition of a huge community success; it was a bleak and snowy February day on the 13th but you would not have known that for all the smiles and laughter. It was a pleasure to welcome all of those excited people to our new home!

While the ceremony was an important aspect of the three days, it was wonderful that this was the first opportunity for the Resident Groups to hold an open house that showcased all of their art practices. Politicians, local celebrities, and community visitors had three days to see the Centre and its founders in action and at their best. Once the ceremony was over, the groups swung into action. Humber Valley had two days of demonstrations in Studio A. The Etobicoke Art Group opened Friday Portraiture, the Saturday Children's classes and Sunday Printmaking to visitors. Even our Mayor Bruce Sinclair got in on the action by posing for a portraiture demo! Studio C was busy with demos by the three fibre arts groups. The Gallery was full of work by the members. It was a rewarding time for artists who had spent many months planning and politicking to be able to share the art practices that they loved best.

A formal submission to Etobicoke Council (January 15, 1991) stated: "In our times, when society is wrestling with problems of anti-social behaviour and negative influences, this [NPCC] would be an oasis where the local arts and crafts groups offer experiences that increase self-esteem, self-confidence, and a sense of accomplishment

- all positive attitudes, good for the soul."
Three decades later, is NPCC still meeting that need?

Thelma: As the campaign for a new art facility began, there was an immediate shift from 'our art group needs to find another activity space' to 'we need a space so that we can serve the community's arts needs, and we will join together with other arts groups to deliver'.

This was huge in winning over councillors. The new facility would not only be a home for the art groups but be a place of learning for all ages, for established and beginner artists and for the community to have the opportunity to appreciate and participate in the arts. Engaging in the arts has many benefits including increased self-esteem and giving a sense of accomplishment. You only have to look at the array of successful programs in varied media to know that NPCC is still meeting that need - from children's summer art camps to outreach senior's programs and from art exhibitions by local artists to those beyond its borders.

Kathleen: If the pandemic showed us anything, it taught us that the NPCC staff and members are amazingly resilient with new ways to reach out, get together and to share art even while the Centre endured the closures required to keep everyone safe. The new ventures of the Centre and its groups to hold classes, workshops, and meetings via Zoom, to hold online exhibitions, and then quickly return to in-person activities when the Centre re-opened, is the best proof of the positive feelings engendered in those who meet or visit there and that it continues to be "good for the soul".

Behind the Scenes at NPCC

A Glimpse at the Administration

Nancy became a NPCC member in 2007. Since then, she has been active in the Etobicoke Quilters' Guild, and served a 3-year term as President of the Board of Directors from 2016-2018. Interviewed by Petra Nyendick.

How did you first hear about Neilson Park Creative Centre?

I've known about Neilson Park for a long time because I had friends whose kids took cartooning and art lessons at the Centre. Then, a member of my church invited me to attend a quilt guild meeting with her; she said "You should come along with me!" We had chatted about my family's quilting background – my mother and sister were both quilters. After that, I became a member of EQG.

What year was that?

It was in 2007.

So you were not at NPCC at the very beginning when it was first built?

Oh no, I'm not nearly old enough for that!

Let's talk about the board of directors. What was the structure of the board previously?

There were seven people: the president, and then one representative from each resident group. I think there was a vice president as well. And a secretary. They were the core executive and the rest of us were the board members. But you know, the old structure didn't really allow us to do very much and that's when we got to the point of saying that it really wasn't working very well. People



Nancy Green, NPCC President, 2016-2018. From the archives of Nancy Green.

weren't happy, they said, "Nancy, you be the president and change it."

So, as far as you know, was that the structure since day one?

As far as I know, that was the structure that NPCC put in place when they built the Centre. Kathleen Haushalter and other founders had a vision and we owe them a big debt. It's like any other kind of family business, you get to a certain point, and it needs to change.

Because we were in dire straits for money and a smoothly run administration we had to make changes. Everybody knew it, but most of the people who were on the board were just tired.

Would you agree that since your term as president of the board things have really changed at Neilson Park Creative Centre?

That's when we changed the structure, of how the board would be constituted, of how the Centre would be run. We received charitable status. The reorganization has been terrific. I think the Centre is just bouncing in regards to its capacities now. And you know, while we hated the pandemic, the way that we've been able to harness the resources of the wider internet community has just augmented our programming. It will give us another stream of activities that will carry us forward if we should have another situation like that. Online programs also help as our membership gets older, or our membership becomes unable to travel to the Centre. I think the journey has just started and I've enjoyed watching the journey move forward!

Getting back to administration – how was the staffing set up?

Most things were done by volunteers. The volunteers – all members – they went in the storage room for their mail, they were behind the counter, they were everywhere. It felt like people were being invited into their home, and so that's how people treated it. So, as we grew, having a professional staff made a huge difference in helping people figure out that the Centre wasn't just their living room.

What do you think is the biggest challenge we've faced here at NPCC?

Embedding in decision-makers' minds the importance of creativity in the lives of the citizens of the community. It's so easy if you're looking only at the tally sheet to say



Etobicoke City Hall Meeting Room, NPCC Board Meeting, January 20, 1992. L to R: Nancy Roberts, Secretary; Lisa Ellkot, Community Member; Leah Batty, Vice-President; Gail McQuillan, President. Photo credit: Marg Nurse

that art is not important. NPCC as an entity, for the support of the arts, or children, or seniors, for those who are seeking a place to be, is so important. If we can't keep that top of mind for our politicians, for our government agencies, we won't get the support that we need.

I can remember taking a friend and her caregiver to an event at Neilson Park, and she said "I can't believe there is a place like this, that people can come and create." She was a painter in her country before coming to Canada. That cemented in my mind how important it is for us to be a fulsome community magnet, to bring people together, to enable them to be creative. The most important thing is advocating the importance of art, creativity and NPCC - to the community at large.

Has there been, since your time at NPCC, a so-called "golden age"?

I think the best years are still to come! The last four or five years have been astounding to watch as the organization has built strength, resources and capacity!

The Curtain Rises

Speech by Gail McQuillan, NPCC President at NPCC's Opening Ceremonies,
Friday, February 12, 1993

Short Address to Gathering at Official Opening of NPCC
FRI. FEB. 12/93

by NPCC President : Gail McQuillan

Your Worship, Councillors, Special Guests :

Thank you for coming to a very exciting
event for us — a dream come true!

Before introducing the NPCC Board, I
would like to introduce to you a very committed
group — the ART Centre Development Committee (ACDC)
Chaired by Doris Kennedy. They began their
planning for this Centre JAN. 1990 — two years
before the Board began. They certainly deserve
our applause of thanks — but please wait until
I've completed naming all 20 members. (Read list)

Thank you all again and again!

However — even before the ACDC, the arts
and crafts community had an energetic advocate
in our very own Hall of Fame member, ALICE RYCRDFT.
Alice's health did not permit her to be actively
involved in the ACDC but her presence and
encouragement supported them at every stage.

Thanks Alice.

^{the NPCC Executive}
Now I'm very proud to introduce to you the
present Board: Leah Batty - V.P., Kathleen Haushalter -
Treasurer, Nancy Roberts, Sec'y : plus the other
Board Members, many of whom are committee chairmen:
BILL MCCLURE (in charge of Administration, Gallery,
Studio Rentals, Fundraising, Membership etc.):
Bill McClure, Lorraine Jantzen, Joan Grose,
Irma Korozsi, Marie Prospero, Bo Sodja, Thelma
Tipping, Fred Collins, Marty Markowitz and our
M.C., Duncan Green. Thank you.

This dedicated group is backed by a support
team of volunteers from both the community and
the Resident Groups. These unsung workers — whom

I would love to name one by one — certainly have deserved our thanks in applause. Since ours is a volunteer run centre — 14,000 hours worth a year! We always need more help — only 3-4 hrs a month is necessary. Please see JOAN Grose afterwards for more information.

We are thrilled with our new home here and are delighted to "show off" this wonderful Centre to you after this ceremony.

The Resident and Associate Groups have set up displays and demonstrations in the studios and with thanks to the Presidents: Kathleen Haushalter (^(EAG)); Marilyn Pike (^(EVAC)); Jennifer James (^(EHS)); Heather Sproule (^(EQG)); Sally Mogridge (HRY); Mae Wagenhorn (Porcelain Painters); and Mark Bargent (Etobicoke Camera Club) and their respective executives all of us hope you enjoy our creations! It's our pleasure to show them to you!

We trust you ~~will~~ all leave today so impressed by what you have seen, that you ~~will~~ spread the good news about the exciting new Visual art Centre in NEILSON PARK built by the City of Etobicoke!

Finally on behalf of all the members of N. P. C. L. (over 650 now), I thank you, Mayor Sinclair, — you and your Council and your city staff for FULFILLING our DREAM!

Sm.

“The Story of NPCC A Dream Come True” by Doris Kennedy

This was written for the opening of NPCC's 10th Anniversary - “SYNERGY” - April 25, 2003.

(A three year history in 8 minutes!)

I have been asked to give you a synopsis of the story of “Neilson Park Creative Centre” - a dream come true. I will condense it as much as possible. It began in 1989 with the demise of “The Willows,” a little white cottage in Neilson Park that had been the home of the Etobicoke Art Group for 20 years. Its condition deteriorated, it was no longer able to be repaired, by Etobicoke Parks and Recreational Services, under the supervision of Mr. Tom Riley. We were told we must find another home. This was a shock for our 200 members. We suggested that maybe a new building could be built. Mr. Riley indicated that other art & craft groups had also approached him for operational space and wondered whether we could agree to move in together in one building. After fast visits to the Etobicoke Quilters' Guild, Etobicoke Hand Weavers & Spinners, Humber Valley Art Club, and Etobicoke Rug Crafters, we all agreed we would enjoy a permanent home TOGETHER... in all... 600 people. Back to Mr. Riley we went, and he agreed that a centre might be possible.

As a result, in the Etobicoke Capital Budget for 1991 appeared this item for consideration: “1.3 million dollars for a recreational visual arts facility (approx. 10,000 square feet in size) to replace “The Willows,” for the EAG and provide a location for other art organizations needing permanent space.” All the groups were thrilled, but we needed to organize to tackle the political process involved. The Arts Centre Development Committee (soon known as the ACDC) was



NPCC official opening. Open House, February 12, 1993 with EAG in Studio B, hosting a painting demo. R to L: Doris Kennedy, Ruta Teener. NPCC Archives.

formed in March 1990 with reps from 5 groups and one from the community. I was asked to chair this committee of 17 members. Two groups threw in \$100 each, so did the community rep and Arts Etobicoke donated \$100. We were financed. Little did we all know what we were getting into. Really our task was TO PERSUADE THE ETOBICOKE COUNCIL AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE THAT A VISUAL ARTS CENTRE WOULD BE A GREAT RECREATIONAL ADDITION FOR THE RESIDENTS OF ETOBICOKE... some mountain to climb, especially when none of us had experience in the political arena... but we were fast learners! Thank heaven for the late Councillor Michael O'Rourke, who supported the idea from the beginning and led us through much of the “politicking” that was needed... and “politicking” it was for 18 months from March 1990 to November 1991.

1. We attended endless discussions and meetings to sort out what kind of building we needed and we visited other centres for ideas
2. We made 2 presentations to council, all

including piles of information and paperwork
3. We launched a relentless lobby, speaking to ratepayers, and community groups, distributing thousands of lobby sheets to be mailed back to councillors, writing letters, gaining press publicity, attending council meetings, talking one on one with councillors.

4. Then came a period of frustration when some councillors tried to find cheaper quarters for us... a dirty smelly old warehouse... get our families and friends to help clean it up, we could have a free lease for 5 YEARS ONLY, or a heritage house... we could meet in the various small rooms, or let a developer built a complex in the park... we could use the party room... the big problem: we numbered 600 people, WE COULDN'T FIT INTO SMALL SPACES.

5. In desperation we held "FOCUS ON THE ARTS", on September 28, 1990 in NEILSON PARK within a 10,000 SQ FT SPACE, surrounded by snow fence; the 5 groups moved in, artists painting, quilters working on a big quilt, and the other groups all demonstrating... in spite of the cold and wind we showed everyone the space we really needed, there were posters & placards, speeches by Mayor Sinclair and Councillor Luby in favour of the Centre, 230 people signed a petition, Rev. Stuart East gave me a \$100 dollar bill toward the cost... and as always more lobby sheets were distributed.

At the final presentation in January 1991, many councillors acknowledged that they had received hundreds of the "yellow lobby forms." We offered \$10,000 from the groups and \$20,000 from Christmas Card Sales to cover the cost of furnishings and any staff, although we felt we could operate the Centre with volunteers from the groups. The final deal with the City was, you build the facility, agree to maintain it and pay utilities, like all city buildings... BUT WE WOULD SUPPLY THE STAFF, AND PURCHASE ALL THE FURNISHINGS. (We continued to sell Christmas cards to fundraise.) Now we had

to work closely with the city to make plans for the building. The ACDC continued, only split into sub-committees, most important... a building committee. Councillor O'Rourke insisted that 2 members would sit on the city building committee, to help carry out our ideas. An architect, Brian Luey, was chosen and financial details worked out, another committee worked on a constitution and more organizational details. Final approval was made by council on Nov. 18, 1991... THE VOTE 9 TO 3... we had a centre, a building permit was received... a sod turning ceremony followed... the ACDC had done its job, it was dissolved and the first Board of Directors was put in place to operate the Centre. The first board meeting was held in the fall of 1992, THE OFFICIAL OPENING IN FEBRUARY 1993.

What an honour it was to work on the ACDC with 17 amazing, optimistic, dedicated, tenacious ladies and one man. Thank God we all had a sense of humour. Also we appreciated all the city representatives who were so supportive and helpful.

Not only is NPCC "a dream come true"... it is a miracle.

Today the Centre continues as an oasis for creative people, adults, teens, children, who want to try out their artistic abilities, receive instruction to improve their skills, exhibit their works and enjoy art-oriented programs and activities. We want this to continue for years and years. We have a dedicated Board of Directors, a magnificent staff, and loyal volunteers, but we need your help, as alumni and friends, to continue your support in membership and donations and attend our events.

BE PART OF NEILSON PARK CREATIVE CENTRE... AND ITS FUTURE.

Remembering the Willows and NPCC Beginnings

*In conversation with Marie Prospero.
Interviewed by Petra Nyendick*

I understand that you have been a member of NPCC since it first opened its doors. Are you also a member of a Resident Group?

Yes, I've been with the Etobicoke Art Group since the early 70s and Humber Valley Art Club since the 80s.

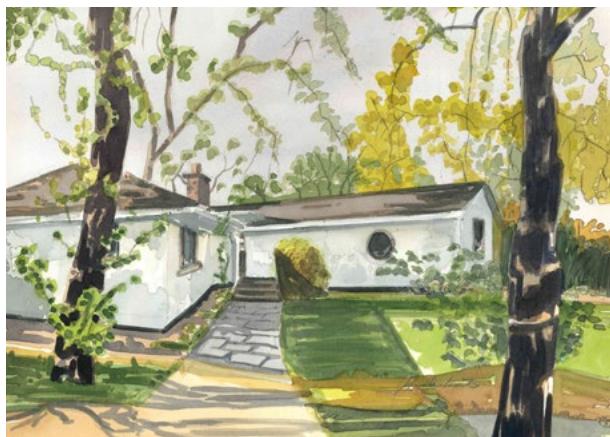
That means you remember "The Willows"?

Yes, I was with EAG even before "The Willows". EAG used to have a joint art show at the CNE; they gave us a big room and we exhibited with two or three other groups. When I joined EAG, we had art classes in the high schools - night school. EAG would rent a room and hire an art teacher.

And some time in the eighties I joined Humber Valley Art Club. I was the vice president of HVAC when Doris Kennedy and the EAG called a meeting with other art groups about their proposal to have an arts Centre built. I was president of HVAC from 1990 until 1992. Those two years when we lobbied hard for it, I was on the ACDC. We used to laugh about that. The ACDC – Arts Centre Development Committee. It was a beautiful enterprise with so many people working together.

Before NPCC, HVAC had their classes in the old Humber Valley United Church. We had over thirty people in our classes and we needed a bigger room and so we advocated for HVAC to move into what would become NPCC's Studio A. My own two contributions to the planning - because I was on the committee - were 1) that HVAC have that big room (Studio A), and 2) a moveable wall.

My husband and Jeanette Labelle, who was also a member of Humber Valley and on the executive, both belonged to the Islington Golf Club. They had just installed moveable walls. It was a new and innovative construction at the time.



John Drinkwater EAG and HVAC member, *The Willows*, Watercolour

The other thing that I pushed for was big windows that we could open. At the time the planners said, "Oh, it's going to be air conditioned, we don't need the windows to open. It will be a sealed building." But if that had happened, in the first six months, when everything was new like all the glues for the flooring, and the paint - we would have been ill.

The planning committee had meetings in Etobicoke City Hall, because it was City of Etobicoke in those days, of course. And we were very lucky to be supported by the city, although there were some counsellors who were not in favour of a new Centre. The whole point was that there was money in the budget for parks and recreation to spend on a new facility. And we lobbied to the point that art is as much recreation as sports, otherwise, it would have been spent on a tennis court or swimming pool, or some kind

of sports facility.

I have to thank you for advocating for NPCC because if it wasn't for you, I wouldn't be here! I'd like to get back to "The Willows" for a moment. What was it like?

It was a little old bungalow and there was a kitchen, a living room, a couple of bedrooms, and a bathroom. There was one large room and we could get seven or eight people in there, maximum. For ten years I took the EAG life classes there. We would have a model, and some people would just sketch, and others paint.

The house was called "The Willows" because big trees surrounded it. When EAG had their annual meeting, it was a potluck, we'd be outdoors if the weather was good. You'd bring your folding chair and your food, and it was a nice atmosphere with nature all around you. Not as it is today, with the big parking lot.

"The Willows", then, was a private residence at some point.

Yes, it had been a private residence, and I gathered when they built the park, the city took it over.

What kind of events did you have?

We once had one of the Group of Seven come and demonstrate for us. I got his autograph! And we had other well-known Toronto artists demonstrate but we would have to host those in a school auditorium because the turnout was so large. In those days, we were very busy. We had "Art in the Park" to publicise and get support for the Centre. We painted and did art demos.

I remember one year, I think it was September or October, we had a terribly cold



John Drinkwater EAG and HVAC member, *The Willows*, Watercolour

day. We were out there in our ski jackets trying to paint! But the participation was marvelous and people like Doris Kennedy and Kathleen Haushalter from EAG were so into it, and very good at what they did – they were true leaders.

I've been going through our historical literature and I noticed you were the gallery coordinator for a while. What can you tell me about that role?

As the building was being planned, I suggested that we have a gallery. The committee I was on told me, "It was your suggestion, so you have to be the gallery coordinator now!"

Ha, ha, yes, that's how it tends to work!

So, they sent me around to various public galleries to conduct a study of how they were run. I went to Burlington and Hamilton, east and north, to the Kortright Gallery – all over! Based on the study, we decided that

we would offer the gallery as a rental with three-week shows, to have additional revenue for the Centre. I believe the exhibitions are still on a three-week rotation to this day.

We also set up a gallery committee made up of six people who then decided on the exhibitions and did all the installations. I was either chair or co-chair for 20 years, from about 1992 until 2012.

You folks were very smart and many of the initiatives that you built continue to this day. Conceiving the IMPACT exhibition was brilliant! It's such a well received show and that's because you fine people got it going 30 years ago.

We discovered we couldn't rent the gallery in the summer, so we would have group shows in the summer to fill it up. There would be some traffic in the Centre, but for some reason, most artist groups didn't want to exhibit in the summer. So, we thought of IMPACT.

What do you think have been our greatest challenges here at the Centre?

The out-of-the-way location and being on the edge of Etobicoke. When the Centre was built, we had a bus running down Neilson and stopping right at the Centre. Within a few years, the bus stopped that route and that made it difficult for people who couldn't drive.

The other thing was the city. We were not given our fair share of publicity and



NPCC Directors Marie Prospero, Gallery Chair and Leah Batty Vice-President, February 12, 1993

support from the city when we became part of the City of Toronto. The City of Etobicoke was very supportive. After the amalgamation, Etobicoke was neglected, we would not get the same publicity or the same support as the downtown people.

How do you envision our future?

I just hope you keep going as you're going. I know it's hard to make changes. It's a different world out there.

Hi De Ho... We Did It!

*Interview with Sally Mogridge
by Sonya Young*

How did Neilson Park Creative Centre become such a part of your life?

I worked for Bell Canada as an engineering clerk, and then I took early retirement. I was lucky enough to get a pension because it was one of the first offers that came through. My husband said it's like a birthday gift; take it and run.



Studio C and Lounge, May 22, 1992.
Photo credit: Gail McQuillan, Nancy Barrett and Peg Drew

I still wanted to do the many things that I hadn't been able to do before my retirement, so I decided that I would get involved with the Etobicoke Quilters' Guild and I joined them in 1985. In the fall of '88, I was also interested in rug hooking because my mother had done it through the years. I ended up at Montgomery's Inn where we had such a great class. Our teacher, Carmen Rossi, was a wonderful Montgomery's Inn volunteer.

When we finished the fall class, we decided that we would come again back in the spring of '89. And so the same group of ladies all met

again. And we all felt so badly about parting with one another. We decided that three of us who sat at a table together were going to rug hook in one another's homes. Well, we were spread across the city from Mississauga to Moore Park to Etobicoke. Some quilters were meeting at the Richview Library on Mondays and Wednesdays, so I knew that Tuesday was free, so I went to the school board and asked if the rug hookers could come in. They gave us the permit and we started to meet at the Richview Public Library. We ended up there and at the same time, unbeknownst to us, the quilters and the rug hookers, the brush and palette people, the Humber Valley Art Group and the Etobicoke Art Group, were meeting there as well.

Keep in mind I was still attending quilting meetings and we had been meeting offsite at various churches. We even met at the Burnhamthorpe and West Mall offices there. The City loaned us one of the rooms to use and there were always evening meetings at this point with the quilters.

Bruce Sinclair, who was the mayor of Etobicoke before amalgamation, asked if we would lobby. Of course, we said we would. We'd band together at certain times and go over to Etobicoke City Hall and be there



Studio C and Lounge, May 22, 1992.
Photo credit: Gail McQuillan, Nancy Barrett and Peg Drew

telling them that we needed a new building - an arts and crafts centre.

February 12 - 14, 1993 was the official opening of NPCC, coordinated jointly by the Centre's Board and the City of Etobicoke. Given all the work that went into getting to opening day, what are some of your fondest memories of that experience?

It was a dull day, first thing in the morning. The weather wasn't really very pleasant and we were all standing out in the open waiting to have the sod turned. After the turning of the sod, speeches and what not, we went next door to Dom Lipa, the nursing home; so there we had our tea and coffee and told each other "Hi de ho... We did it!" You know, we turned all this out in the new building. So then we watched it grow.

The fibre arts people ended up with, what I think is the best studio - Studio C. It is the brightest because we have natural light from three sides. Most of the large receptions were held in Studio C because it was the cleanest as we didn't want paint in there. It just seemed to work out so well that C became the nicest studio within the building.



NPCC, Studio C, June 26, 1992. Photo credit: Gail McQuillan, Nancy Barrett and Peg Drew

About having this grand facility, we actually were the envy of all! Etobicoke Rugcrafters really appreciated what the city had done for us, and I think the quilters would agree with me there. Because we just were able to have a home rather than a rented place.

In those early days our front desk had

volunteers. We only had a couple of people in the office - we had the administrator, a treasurer. How much volunteering? It meant a lot to the building because volunteering was dollars. You know, it wasn't physical money that was being handed out, but when we volunteered, you know, it was like giving money in a sense, and many a time in that first and second year, husbands and wives like me were members and volunteers.

If there was something going on in the evening we had to make sure that the front desk was stationed. If I was there for rug hooking in the evening, my husband would come and he'd man the front desk. And it wasn't just us. There were other couples who did the same thing. When we had these sales, the husbands would be there helping to tell people where they could park.

In the year after opening we had what we called Spring Fest. That was one of the initial sales/moneymakers for Neilson Park; and then we tried the fall, which turned into the Winter Fest. People who wanted to come and sell their wares from the community, they put up their tents. That has changed. We haven't done that for several years now. But you know, we lost a bit of funds that way, although I've heard recently that we're doing much better financially.

I was a member of the board, as well as being President. At one point, I think I was at the Centre between three to five times a week because I'd be there on Tuesday for rug hooking. Quilters were on Wednesday. And then if there was anything pertinent going on, like when we were having a reception, "Uh, would you consider preparing some goodies?"

Did you live close to the Centre? How long did it take you to get there?

I took a four-light drive down from Kipling and Martin Grove, north of the highway. Yeah, so not that far. I wasn't driving across

the city, but I was spending my time, my gas money and my husband didn't drive. I was the only driver. He never cared to be a licensed driver. But whenever we came to Winterfest, I handed over about \$1000 from income from the tea room because I used to set up the tea room.

There may be a couple of other members from the rug hookers from those days. Everybody else is new now. Within the executive of the rug hookers, I used to do the volunteering. I negotiated all the food and cheese trays, and whatnot. It was just a very natural thing for me to be able to do this. They phoned me from the front office and they'd say, "So and so wants the reception for an opening for an art show. Can you help provide something? "What you have to remember in those days is that we were still trying to prove to Etobicoke City Hall and the councillors that this building was worthy and that we needed it. And we kept saying it is important for the children in the community to end up having this environment.

We also would go down to Sherway Gardens when they'd offer space in the big malls to the community, and that was usually only once a year. The rest of the time we were doing our own thing at Neilson Park.

**How do you think NPCC has changed?
It's not just about space; it's also about incorporating the whole community - all different nationalities and walks of life.**

We were all people who enjoyed our form of art; but we were age fifty and up. There were a lot of members in the art group, and they

were much older than I was. I think most of the members in the early years realized how important it was to reach out to the community. We offered children's programs, and they did well in the early years.

Up until then most of us were really working hard at trying to bring in the money with book sales, etc. I do miss that part, and particularly, I think that was a great money-making project. But it was an awful lot of hard work. Gathering books and making sure that they were dropped off, that they were in good shape. Studio A would be lined with all the tables that had all the books available.

Are you thinking you could possibly come into Neilson Park sometime? Are you planning on it? I mean, maybe just to see a show or something?

Oh, I'm still a member, and I will continue to be and look forward to seeing the rug hookers. I have a two-bedroom suite here at Parkland on Eglinton Ave., just east of Kipling. I did turn 87, so I figure that I'll just continue to take taxis. I will say there was a lot of collaboration between the quilters and the rug hookers. Whenever I had a tea room and I needed people they would be happy to volunteer. I was on the membership committee for the Centre as well. I could reach out to just about anybody in that building. I would go to the art groups, the fibre groups, and I would say, "Can you give me a couple of hours of your time? And they would say, "Of course, of course". I never had an issue. I just reached out to everybody and they'd laugh at me because I would say, "Oh, hello, Dolly. Hello, Buddy. Hello." And they would be surprised that I remembered their name. And I'd say "Why wouldn't I? I am your membership chair." My jobs were easy at the Centre. You know. I was going to make up for all the lost time. All those years I'd worked for Bell. There were so many things that I wanted to do. You know, I was going to catch up.



NPCC official opening. Open House, February 19, 1993, Studio C rug hooking demo by Sally Mogridge, President of Heritage Rugcrafters of York.

In Service of Many Masters

Reflections of Brian Luey, architect of record for Neilson Park Creative Centre, in conversation with Jerry Smith.

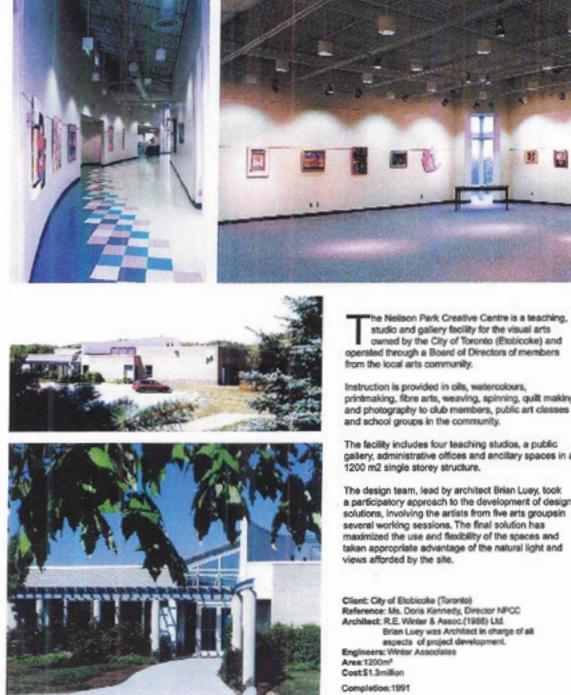
On his company website www.brianlueyarchitect.com, Brian Luey – the architect who led the design team for Neilson Park Creative Centre in the early 1990's – encapsulates his firm's mission:

"Our approach to design draws on the collective knowledge of the client, stakeholders, and the full consultant team to shape innovative solutions which meet the functional, environmental, social, aesthetic, and fiscal demands of the project. Through creative synthesis of this extensive information we strive to explore and consolidate ideas that best suit the unique requirements of each situation."

In a conversation with Brian at his favourite café on Lakeshore Road East, Oakville, around the corner from his ongoing practice, he acknowledged that that insight served him well in the design process for Neilson Park Creative Centre. He recalled one design brainstorming session at the Committee Room of the (then) City Hall for the City of Etobicoke, in which there were twenty-one participants, including City representatives (Parks & Recreation, Conservation Authority) and members of the Arts Centre

BRIAN LUEY ARCHITECT

Neilson Park Creative Centre, Etobicoke Ontario with R.E. Winter & Associates (1988) Ltd.



The Neilson Park Creative Centre is a teaching, studio and gallery facility for the visual arts, named by the City of Toronto (Etobicoke) and operated through a Board of Directors of members from the local arts community.

Instruction is provided in oils, watercolours, painting, drawing, printing, spinning, quilt making and photography to club members, public art classes and school groups in the community.

The facility includes four teaching studios, a public gallery, administrative offices and ancillary spaces in a 1200 m² single storey structure.

The design team, lead by architect Brian Luey, took a participatory approach to the development of design solutions, involving the artists from five arts groups in several working sessions. The final solution has maximized function and flexibility of the spaces and taken appropriate advantage of the natural light and views afforded by the site.

Client: City of Etobicoke (Toronto)
Reference: Ms. Doris Kennedy, Director NPCC
Architect: Brian Luey, Brian Luey Architects Ltd.
Brian Luey was Architect in charge of all aspects of project development.
Engineers: Winter Associates
Area: 1200 m²
Cost: \$1.3 million
Completion: 1991

Courtesy of R.E. Winter & Associates

Development Committee (ACDC). In Brian's words, "You cannot develop a design without input."

Technically, the City was the client; and NPCC had champions in the City Manager (Tom Riley), the Mayor (Bruce Sinclair), and several Councillors (Michael O'Rourke); and the budget had been set - as Brian characterized it, "the budget is a client too."



Courtesy of Brian Luey

The parkland site was also a client, with the Conservation Authority as their voice, pointing out that the uncrossable line was the "top of bank" – the site bordered on the Etobicoke Creek, and the footprint of the building site simply had to fit within the limits imposed by Mother Nature – who rarely draws in straight lines.

And so was the Etobicoke Fire Department a client. The site design had to meet the safety requirements that would allow for a fire truck to enter, manoeuvre, and exit safely and easily. Thus, a parking lot designed as a loop, with parking spots around the edges, "... otherwise, a dumb way to design a parking lot," according to Brian.

And the project was starting from scratch – one of a kind - no identifiable comparators (maybe one in Banff, Brian tries to recall). But what it did have, generously available, was a large group of people – Arts Centre Development Committee as their voice – who knew what they wanted, who were generous with their wealth of knowledge about colour, materials, design, texture – form and function. (Brian recalled one meeting where he had brought a sample of a "buff brick" he was proposing which earned him the epithet from one member, "That is bilious!" And the buff brick was gone.

An advantage the design team benefitted from was the economy; in the early 90s, Etobicoke, Toronto and the province were experiencing rampant inflation – property values dropped by 50 %, interest rates doubled from 8% to 15 %, and unemployment rivalled levels not seen since the Great Depression, meaning that the \$1.3 million budget went a lot further – more build for the buck – as contractors were hungry for the work, and materials and supplies were less expensive.



NPCC official opening, February 12, 1993. L to R: Duncan Green, NPCC Director; Brian Luey, Architect; Nancy Cuttle, EAG Vice-President; Nancy Roberts, NPCC Secretary. NPCC Archives

With the complexities and prerequisites set by the site and the budget, and the wealth of practical experience and insight from the future/potential users, there was not an inch of space to lose, or waste – hallways became gallery spaces; washrooms were tucked into corners; there were no empty stairwells to inaccessible upper floors - accessibility became a design issue in the 90s - there were no redundant spaces; studios were open to generous natural light with floor to ceiling windows. Studio spaces were meant to be just that – spaces.

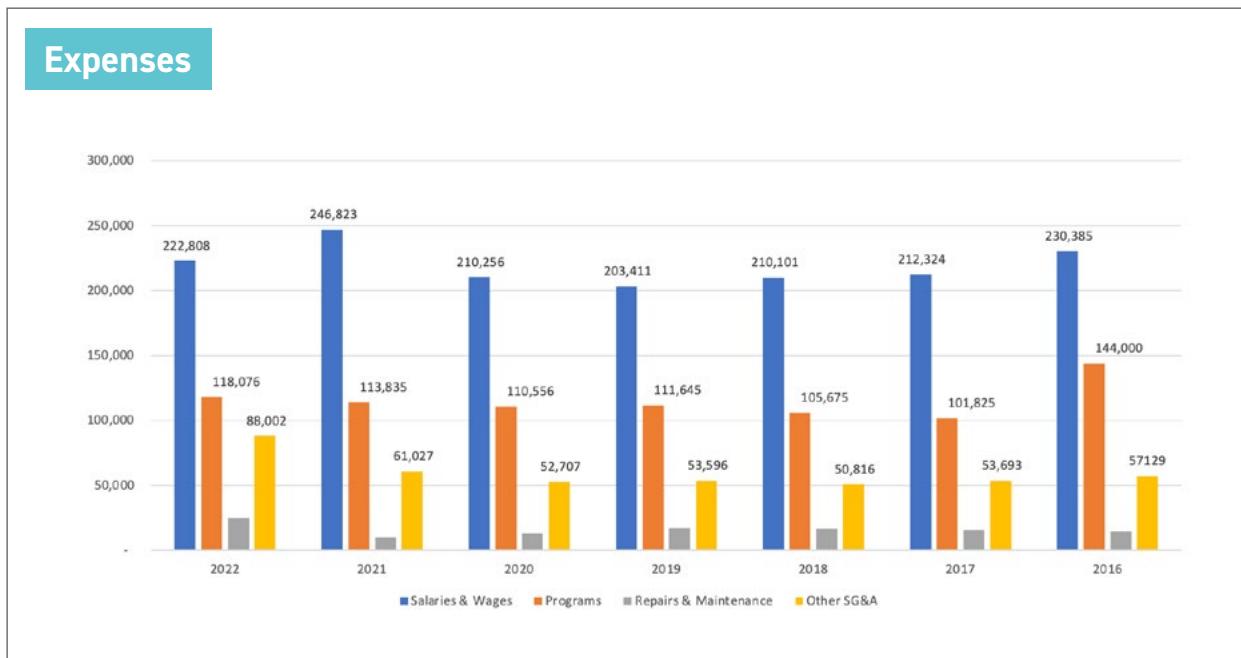
When asked if he had a fond memory that stood out, that he would like to share with us, Brian reached into his folder and pulled out something he had received from Mary Anne Ludlum, a member of NPCC and the ACDC (Arts Centre Development Committee). It was an invitation to an exhibition of her work at the Heliconian Hall on Hazelton Ave. for March 28, 1998 - a little more than five years after NPCC's official opening. Pencilled in on the bottom of the flyer was the following: "Brian – do you realize how successful Neilson Park really is?"

Brian smiled.

Financials

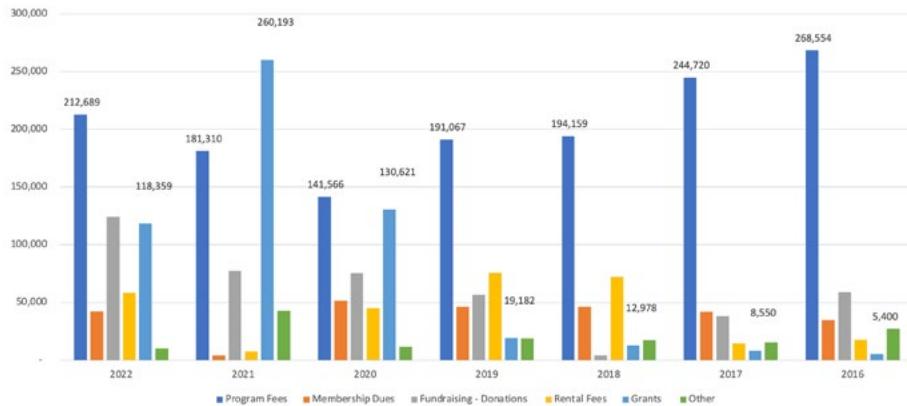


Over the past four years NPCC has been able to operate maintaining fiscal responsibility. In fact, with the assistance of the government during COVID-19 NPCC was able to continue to reach and service the community while maintaining funding for increased expenses.



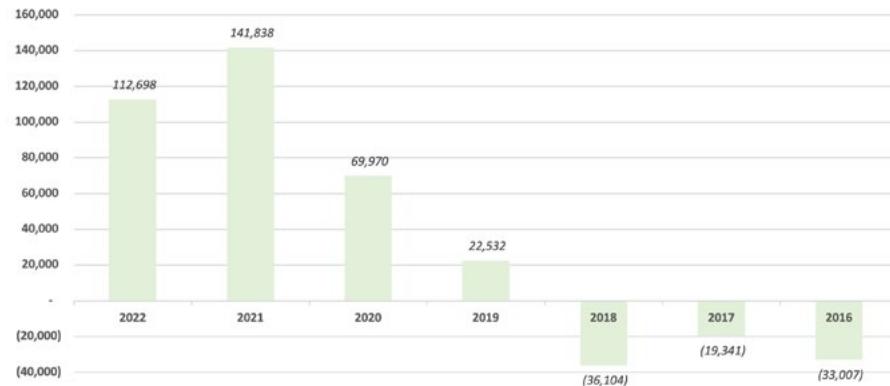
Total expenses are up 2% from 2016

Revenue Streams



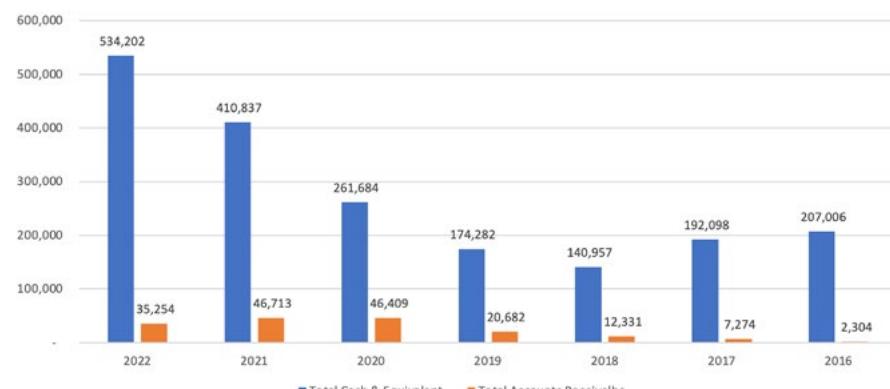
Revenue has grown each year. Since 2016 revenue has grown 2 1/2 times as much while maintaining expenses. Fundraising, Rental Income and Grants have risen tremendously over the past seven years. Membership dues are consistent year over year.

Surplus / (Loss) for the Year



The last four years have shown a surplus at NPCC, although two years are with COVID subsidies that won't be seen moving forward.

Total Current Assets 2016 to 2022



Total Assets have gone up almost threefold from 2016.

30th Anniversary Memories

*Wendy Smith in conversation
with Kylynn Bhathena*

How did you come to be a part of Neilson Park Creative Centre; what brought you here?

I was mainly a quilter, meeting in the main library in Etobicoke, the one up Islington, and there were problems - there was no storage, it was very limited in space; I certainly loved the idea of having a studio where we could meet.

Have you always lived in the area?

I grew up a little bit north and east of Neilson Park, and I went to Richview Collegiate so I was there all through my childhood and schooling. Then, for a number of years I lived downtown; then I had a townhouse out by Centennial Park, and then we moved down to Lakeshore, so most of my life has been Etobicoke for sure.

How has Neilson Park Creative Centre changed since its inception?

At the very beginning we had no staff, it was entirely volunteer run; it wasn't open in the evenings much, and then they hired students to be at the front desk and so it was open for meetings and working. Now it's grown so many more programs, more times that you can go in and work. It's much more flexible; it's great.

What were Neilson Park Creative Centre's best years, and why?

I think it's getting back to being really great, once people are a little more comfortable post-pandemic. Just before the pandemic, I thought it was great! I belong to the three craft guilds - rug crafters, spinners and



NPCC, July, 1992.
Photo credit: Gail McQuillan, Nancy Barrett and Peg Drew

weavers, and quilters, and there is so much going on; it's quite wonderful, so the years before the pandemic were the best for me.

In the early years there was some confusion over who would provide programming; whether it was the individual groups, or if it was going to be Neilson Park. That seems to be calmer now; so I would say next year is going to be the best year!

You are a member of the quilting guild, the rug crafters, as well as the weavers and spinners; what are your thoughts on all of these three guilds and do you want to talk about how they differ from one another, how they are similar to each other.

I was always a member of the quilters. There were years when my son was still young and I worked full time, and I didn't participate much; I probably didn't even pay a membership those years, but for the most part I have always quilted, and I do quilt at home.

I don't tend to go to the Monday and Wednesday sessions right now, partially because of masks and partially because I am getting so hard of hearing. There is so much emphasis now on the Comfort Quilt program; when I started with the quilters, there was a lot more emphasis on teaching the craft so that people would do things to the best of their ability.

Over the years, not just at our group, but in the quilters' magazines and that kind of thing, there became a lot of emphasis on making a quilt in under four minutes, which means that some of the finer details and hand quilting is not as emphasized. I still do what I want to do. I do some machine quilting, I have some of my quilts machine quilted, a little easier on the arms.

I really am enjoying the rug crafters right now, the people are lovely, not that the quilters and the spinners aren't lovely, but they are very welcoming. I don't know whether you heard about Carole Adams; she is amazing - during the pandemic she had what she called "play dates," and so we would learn how to make a little sheep, or something fun. I enjoy that, and I am still learning.

With the spinners and weavers – I took a beginner's weaving course and, because we live in a condo, I don't really have room for a big loom, so I am not as engaged in that as I was. Also, the spinners and weavers have a knitting component to them, so I enjoy that, and participate. I like knitting - it's an obsession.

So, I think they interact quite well. There is a group that meets to talk about Studio C, to resolve any conflicts or difficulties. All of those fibre groups create a lot of fibre, and a lot of fabric, and need a lot of equipment; so there are sometimes some questions around – well you are taking up too much room and whatever, but yeah, for the most part it's great. And I think they interact pretty well. I would like to see them do some joint things, but so far that hasn't really happened, but we'll see.

Wow, I really like that idea, joint programming with all the guilds. That could look really good, actually.

Well, one of the things I did recently – was to take a course from the Ontario Hooking Craft Guild, and it was an Indigenous pattern where we did some beading and we attached the beading to the canvas, like little circles of beads, and then the rest would be rug hooking. So you know when you add other components from other crafts in, it's kind of fun.

What would you like to see happen in the future at Neilson Park Creative Centre?

I'm pretty happy with the way it is; I can see even more cohesion between groups and interacting. I have very little interaction with the fine art groups. I think the calligraphers are interesting too, and I love seeing their shows. I don't know - to me it's already pretty wonderful.

Well, that's really nice to hear; as I said, I love your idea about potential collaborations between all the groups and more interactions with the fine arts and the fabric arts. I think that those groups together can create something pretty wonderful, some amazing artwork together.

Here is an idea that just popped into my head. Rug hooking - I don't know whether you know, usually it's just a pattern, simple or complex, on a piece of linen or burlap. There is no reason the fine art Resident Groups couldn't draw some of those, and we could hook them, even if they're just small things. But that's all they are, just usually made with permanent ink, drawn on canvas. I've been bugging my sister, she lives in Ottawa, but I've been bugging her to make me a couple of things to hook and she resists, but she is much more of an artist than I am. Yeah, it's pretty simple. That would be fun, we could, you know, maybe have a showing of the collaboration.

Yeah, I love that idea. Thank you.

In Their Own Words

Gathered by Jerry Smith

Covid-19 certainly changed the way we behave, but not who we are.

From the earliest days of masking, closures and isolation (March 2020), the Neilson Park Creative Centre staff executed an amazing pivot. While the studios might have been shuttered, NPCC continued to develop, design and deliver art-based programming – online!

Led and supported by our triple C staff/instructors [capable, creative, caring], NPCC members, supporters (and instructors) learned how to Zoom, and how to love what Zoom could offer, rather than what it was not capable of.

As part of this new pathway – enabled by multiple grants from the federal New Horizons for Seniors Grant Program and the provincial Seniors Community Grant Program, NPCC reached out to some 500 participants and surveyed them.

Personal comments from members, registrants and supporters about their NPCC experience and connection during COVID-19 tell the story best:

“Working from home with access to all of my art supplies.”

“Not carting all my materials. I don't mind working at home at all! Miss the comradeship but over time it develops online as well.”

“The chance to connect with my fellow artists. It was a comforting sense of community!”

“Not having to pack up supplies to go to class.”



The times of covid. Behind the masks are L to R: Carole Adams, Karl Lippay and Marion Jenson.
Photo credit: Eileen Markwick

“So helpful in these sad times to keep me occupied.”

“I have numerous health issues and it is impossible for me to venture out to take any classes... this was a life-save for me.”

“Being connected to such a level of creativity, requiring basic materials that we had on hand in the comfort of our homes.”

“I found it stimulating and very engaging. I took much more away from it than I expected.”

“I felt very encouraged to practice and keep up and improve what I learned. Delighted I took the course.”

“It gave me something to look forward to each week. Although virtual, I felt like I was part of a class of like-minded people. Helen was very adept at using the technology to make her classes work.”

“The fact I could still take care of family if I had to during class.”

“It was a surprise that connectedness was as immediate as it turned out to be. Direct and accurate guidance. Very hands on.”

"Being able to learn in real time with a group during the pandemic."

"That I learned how to Zoom and the fact that we were in our own homes, And the supplies required were ordinary ones we have on hand. Everyone seemed to have a love of writing letters regardless of past experience. Instructions were sent prior to beginning the course and I found it helpful to be more familiar with the format on the actual date and time of the course. I was pleasantly surprised how valuable e-learning was. I was surprised at the intimacy of the experience, even though it is a distant medium. It was wonderful to see and hear the other participants, as well as the instructor. I have a hearing impairment but with Zoom I was able to hear every word."

"I was nervous because it was my first online class, I really missed being at NPCC a lot. I felt pretty isolated by the pandemic, my creativity was sad. The very first class dispelled my anxiety and loneliness and it recharged my creativity. I am very grateful that I had got into the class, the fact that I didn't have to squeeze and search the budget is a gift. Thank you so much."

"I am so appreciative to have this community of talented instructors and students who are so keen to improve their skills. This is a gift that brought me joy, focus, relaxation, and connectedness to people I would not have known to share this passion."

"I attended talks on Indigenous art. It was interesting to learn the respect Indigenous people have for nature, and the explanation of the symbols used in their art."

"The courses offered greatly contributed to my creative journey. In this isolation time, stimulation is important and it was great to connect with Neilson Park members. I did

not have to drive anywhere. This was great especially in inclement weather."

"It was so good to be able to see the people I know from Neilson Park. Although Zoom is not the same as being with folks in the same room, it is an excellent alternative. My art practice and study are able to continue uninterrupted. I can safely create in my own home yet have the opportunity to interact with my friends and colleagues."

"I could depend on company every Wednesday and know that I would laugh and learn."

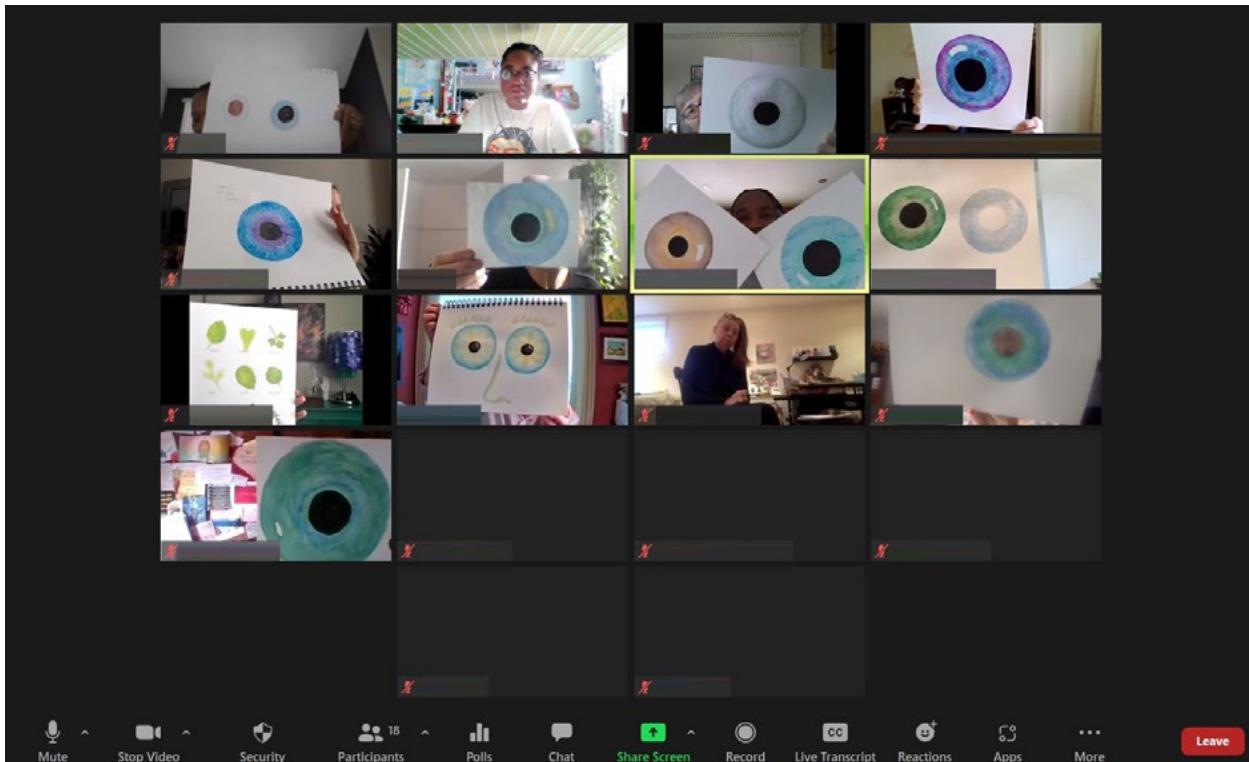
"Since I live alone and have just been meeting one friend once a week for a walk, just being part of a group to deal with the isolation during the pandemic."

"To remember that creativity remains the heart and soul of this organization. Petra, Cory, Brenda, and team are doing a wonderful job! Especially impressive given the pandemic challenges. Keep up the good work!"

"Thanks for doing what you do. It is vital to my life as an artist and member of the community."

"Hard to improve on excellence. As a senior I have benefitted, from so many free programs, and have found instructors inspirational and informative. I especially enjoyed the photography workshops with Hamed Tabein. Perhaps more photography sessions and or workshops with him. He is a talented and excellent teacher. I was so disappointed that I had internet problems and could not access his last session. I did later email him and expressed my regrets."

"Ability to communicate with other artists during the pandemic. Professionalism of NPCC to deliver the courses and the teacher's willingness to adapt to the technology."



Online class funded by the Seniors' Provincial grant, February, 2022.

"The fact I did not have to drive in the winter weather. The fact I could interact with like-minded people even under the lockdown situation of this pandemic. Appreciate the offer of free classes to seniors. Thank you. Access is key. I'm caring for [family] and the opportunity afforded me for time, interest/learning, and social interaction is beyond measure, because it is both enriching and supportive of my mental health/general well-being. The Centre is an hour's drive away and these drop-in classes would NOT be for me, given my responsibilities at home (and I don't feel safe driving on highways)."

"I am not able to attend courses in person due to having to care for my [family] -- it is great that I can keep in touch with people who share the same textile passion. The group is so supportive of each other-- also you don't have to be the best embroiderer to join in -- everyone is welcome no matter what the level of skill."

"The team spirit, the sharing, the feeling of belonging, and the fact that it gave me the opportunity to learn more in the field of embroidery and to practice and improve my skills."

"It took some getting used to for most, but generally you accept the glitches that occur. The camaraderie of those involved is awesome. What a great way to fill those quiet hours and learn something at the same time. I love the variety of interests and learning from others. The employees of NPCC have been awesome! I don't think this could happen without their help."

"I liked the chance to engage in my interest (embroidery) with inspiration to do new projects, instruction and - most of all - the chance to discuss my interest with others. I also *loved* getting to know people from another area (I live near Waterloo)."

"As a new person exploring textiles for the first time in a long time with limited experience, I thoroughly enjoyed the sharing of knowledge. A very welcoming and inclusive group."

Celebrate With Us!

Help Neilson Park Creative Centre celebrate its 30th Anniversary in 2023! Join us for year-round free programs and special events for all ages and interests. Check our website for details.

Free of charge programs

AGM and 30th Anniversary

Video Premiere

January 22, 2023, free of charge

30th Anniversary Kick-Off Party and Magazine Launch

Family Day, February 20, 2023 free of charge

Celebrating Black History Month

February 2023 programs are free of charge

Embroidery Trunk Show and Workshop sponsored by The Felt Store at Handmade Spring 2023

April 29 and 30, 2023 embroidery events are free of charge

Celebrating Asian History Month

May 2023 programs are free of charge

Celebrating Pride Month

June 2023, programs are free of charge

Celebrating Indigenous History Month

June 2023, programs are free of charge

NPCC Drum Circle in The Park

June, July, August 2023, free of charge

Culture Days 2023

End of September 2023, free of charge
Land Acknowledgement, Drum Song and Feast with Philip Cote

Holiday Luncheon

December 2, 2023, free of charge

Special Events:

IMPACT Juried Exhibition 2023:

Celebrating 30 Years

July 10 – August 6, 2023, featuring larger prizes!

Handmade Art and Fine Craft Sale

November 18, 2023, with vendor prizes!

Neilson Park Creative Festival and Plein-Air Competition

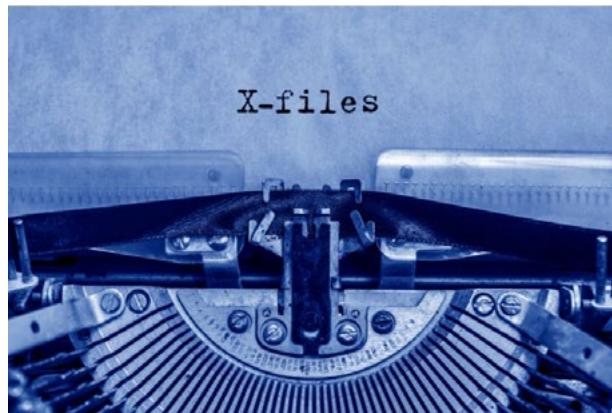
July 29, 2023, spend a day in the park with arts and crafts!

What Else Was Going On In 1993?

- Brian Mulroney was Prime minister (until June 25), followed by Kim Campbell (until November), followed by Jean Chretien; Bob Rae was Premier of Ontario, June Rowlands was Mayor of Toronto, and Bruce Sinclair was Mayor of Etobicoke (pre-amalgamation).
- Whitney Houston's "I will always love you" topped the charts; *Jurassic Park* was most popular film, beating out *E.T.* at the box office; *The Bridges of Madison County* was the best-selling fiction book, and *60 Minutes* (CBS) was the top TV show.



- Bill Clinton was inaugurated as the 42nd President of the United States; Rudy Giuliani became mayor of New York City.
- Nelson Mandela and South African President F. W. de Klerk were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, Toni Morrison for literature.
- Montreal Canadiens won the Stanley Cup, and Toronto Blue Jays won the World Series.
- The World Trade Centre was first bombed in 1993.
- Fashion trends included crop tops, platform shoes, animal prints, faux fur, velvet, windbreakers and denim.
- A postage stamp commemorating Elvis Presley was issued; the last episode of the sitcom *Cheers* was aired on TV.
- *Unforgiven* won an Oscar for Best Picture, Al Pacino in *Scent of a Woman* as Best Actor and Emma Thompson as Best Actress in *Howards End*, Clint Eastwood as Best Director.
- *Seinfeld* (NBC) won an Emmy for outstanding Comedy Series, and Eric Clapton's "Tears in Heaven" won a Grammy for Song of the Year.
- Bob Dylan presented his 30th Anniversary Concert Celebration, and Bruce Springsteen World Tour included stops in Canada.



- In 1993, there was no Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram or Reddit; no LinkedIn, Pinterest, Tumblr, Snapchat or Flickr'; no Google Maps, Google Books, or Google Goggles. Likewise, no iPhones, camera phones, iPods, Blu-Ray discs, Amazon, Kindle, Skype, Gmail, Wikipedia and iTunes.

- Average life expectancy in Canada was 75.42 years (currently 82.81 years in 2022)

- Unemployment rate in 1993 was 6.5% (5.5% in 2022); inflation was 2.99% (8.1% and rising, currently); and the minimum wage was \$4.25 (rising to \$15.50).

- Top Visual Artists of 1993 included Pablo Picasso (1881), Robert Rauschenberg (1925), Andy Warhol (1928), Jasper Johns (1930), David Hockney (1937), Henri Matisse (1869), Ellsworth Kelly (1923) and James Rosenquist (1933).

- Galleries founded in 1993 included Art Projects International/API in New York City, Beaux Arts (United Kingdom), Camera Obscura (France), Galerie Schmidt (Austria, Mnuchin Gallery (USA), and Neilson Park Creative Centre.



The Fashion Trend in 1993

A Force of Nature

Sandra Lowry started teaching in 1962, mostly in North York. By the time NPCC opened in 1993 she had been a teacher 30 years. Interviewed by Brenda Shewchuk.

What brought you to NPCC in the first place?

1975 was International Woman's Year, schools were on strike and I was on the Executive at EQG. I needed an International Woman's Year project, so I got married, got a condo on Mill Road. I wanted creative activity and my husband John saw a notice on a bulletin board about quilting being offered by Sandy Small so I called her. The Etobicoke Quilters' Guild had just started so I joined her classes and the Guild was in need of some executives so I agreed to join as Membership. They were meeting in the Richview Library and I have been involved ever since.

I'm not sure how I ended up being President of EQG three times. One time I was sitting at the back during the AGM and someone asked me if I would be President and I said yes. The year I became President of NPCC, I was planning to be the EQG rep on the board, and unfortunately I was late to the meeting, and they had appointed all the members to the Executive except for President so I became President.

When we first moved to NPCC the quilters were concerned about what the other groups would say. They didn't know if quilters were just quaint or if they were artists. But as time went on and they saw the creativity, originality, design, they became educated as to the quality of the work and the social impact, we did so much for the community. Now the lines between art and craft are much more blurred.

What were some of your proudest achievements?

Our first Quilt show at Christmas when we moved into NPCC that included other Resident Groups. I went to Rugcrafters and they gave us rugs and textile things for the show, we went to the painters' groups and asked for paintings with a Christmas theme to hang on the walls. It was a wonderful show: rugs, shawls, paintings, quilts, and a big doll show. Bringing in vendors to the Quilt show was wonderful.

What were some of your fondest memories?

Moving into NPCC in 1993. We had been using a nice space at the Library, it was small, it was handy, we had a kitchen, we could hang our coats, but we were like little orphans schlepping about Etobicoke, we were at a church, then a school, and the problem was demonstrating our pieces, hanging quilts; our poor guild librarian had to handle all the books in boxes, put in the car, put in a wagon, bring them in, spread them out, then gather them all up and do it again next time. It was a labour of love.

Doris Kennedy and Kathleen Haushalter, were agitating for us, we went through snowstorms to sit in the chamber at Etobicoke City Centre and Doris was a force of nature and we were so happy when we moved into NPCC. It was wonderful to have the physical space. We had storage in the basement, didn't have to trek quilt racks all around Etobicoke for a quilt show. It created a space of collegiality; we had our own design consultants, Marg Moffat, Mardi Taylor. And it still happens every Monday and Wednesday.

And now, EQG has a beautiful studio with windows on the park, we have two large

cupboards, sewing machines, and a beautiful space. The networking that goes on when people have had losses in family, in health changes, in their lives, you have support and structure; it's great to put down roots and make friends within your own guild and with the other guilds and art groups.

EQG was the first quilting guild in Toronto and they have been rich in germinating things. So much goes on at a personal level at NPCC. The painters had a beautiful view, they could paint or create art; the quilters were into colour and creating design.

What were the key challenges for you as president of NPCC?

I had support, I had people, I worked my way through my Presidency. I wanted to do something to update the signs, the bureaucracy is tedious, we are a small little agency, we can't compete with the big art centres. I was pleased when we started expanding into children's programs. There was so much to celebrate, Art Shows at Civic Centre, a lively quilting community. I knew big changes were coming and was ready to welcome them.



Peg Drew and Ron Clifford, NPCC Official Opening, February 12, 1993.
From the Archives of Kathleen Haushalter.

What is your favourite thing about NPCC?

A combination of things, its purpose, camaraderie, creativity, opportunity for collegiality and contributing to people at many levels, personal, neighbourhood, and community.

Youth in Etobicoke Are Creators!

By Petra Nyendick and Jerry Smith

Year over year, the steady flow of creative youth participating in NPCC's art programs has increased. NPCC began offering beginner level art classes to adults in its first year of operation. In 1995, its second year, NPCC offered the Artsmartz summer art program for children, first established by Parks and Recreation. By 2011, the program offered eight full weeks of summer camp. Today, with nine weeks of summer camps, almost 400 children come through our doors and have a blast!

During the academic year, Saturday classes for children, operated previously for 40 years by The Etobicoke Art Group, were held at NPCC for its first four years of operation in 1993-97, then integrated into the NPCC programs. Youth programs have grown to include after-school and Saturday classes, portfolio development, teen workshops, March Break, P.A. Days and Family Fun Days.

Summer Camper Scholarships

Since 2020, we've offered Camper Scholarships to community children who could otherwise not attend camp. New in 2022 were our Newcomer Scholarships for children that have been in Canada seven years or less. Over the last three years, we've sent over 75 kids to summer camp!



Open House, February 13, 1993 in Studio B. Sharon Epstein teaches children's multi-media class. NPCC Archives.

Who benefits from the Camper Scholarship program?

Directly and immediately, local youth, ages 5-14, from Etobicoke are provided access to a week of engagement and creativity within a creative environment where participants are encouraged to explore and enrich their lives through the arts, perhaps a first step on a life-enhancing journey.

Secondary and post-secondary students who work and volunteer for NPCC's Summer Camp also benefit by working with the young participants as facilitators and support staff. Some meet their volunteer prerequisites for academic purposes, and others explore a career pathway.

Artists and art educators benefit as summer camp provides additional income in a sector that has limited job opportunities. Ultimately, Etobicoke and its citizens benefit from future engaged residents.



ARTSMARTZ 2011

The little artists of Artsmartz summer camp have been busy creating fabulous works of art. So far this summer, we've produced our own mini-plays, learned cartooning skills, explored the Canadian wilderness, and created a village of kooky people! Soon we'll learn printmaking skills, work with clay, and create our own books! Artsmartz staff and Instructors have been impressed with how creative the campers have been and are looking forward to seeing where else their imagination takes them.

Join us this August to sculpt, paint, and draw in one of our week-long art classes for children ages 5 and up. At Artsmartz, your child will learn valuable art skills and techniques while having fun and making new friends and memories!

You can register online at www.neilsonparkcreativecentre.com, over the phone at 416-622-5294 or in person at NPCC. We hope to see your child or grandchild at Artsmartz this summer!

FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE PAGE 8

Ashlee Ferreira Artsmartz Coordinator

Artsmartz, 2011 summer camps. NPCC Archives

Are arts-based programs beneficial?

Research and experience have demonstrated the value contribution for young people that arts engagement delivers:

- An effective outreach tool to engage youth
- Enhanced learning in other domains and general scholastic achievement
- Building resilience and self-esteem in young people
- Contributing to healthy and supportive communities for youth
- Helping in the successful transition to adulthood and the development of in-demand job skills
- Opportunities for youth leadership development and for youth to affect positive change in their communities
- Opportunity to ensure that more children from disadvantaged homes, single parent families or challenged financial home environments will have access to the positive impact that an arts camp can deliver

UPCOMING EVENTS

LATE SUMMER EVENTS

ARTSMARTZ 2011 SUMMER CAMP

July 4 to August 26, 2011

ARTSMARTZ, NPCC's famous 8-week summer camp continues into the month of August! For this final month, Juniors (5-8), Children (8-13) and Teens (12+) will enjoy:

JUNIORS: (ages 5-8)

Aug. 2 – 5	Week 5 Juniors
Aug. 8 – 12	Week 6 Juniors
Aug. 15 – 19	Week 7 Juniors
Aug. 22 – 26	Week 8 Juniors

CHILDREN: (ages 8-13)

Aug. 2 – 5	Kid's Adventure Books
Aug. 8 – 12	Outdoor Adventures
Aug. 15 – 19	Oriental Brush Painting for Kids
Aug. 22 – 26	KidSculpt

TEENS: (ages 12+)

Aug. 2 – 5	Cartooning for Teens
Aug. 8 – 12	The Graphic Novel
Aug. 15 – 19	Portfolio Building
Aug. 22 – 26	Japanese Sumi-e Brush Painting

ARTSMARTZ
ARTS CAMP
CRAFTS
THEATRE
WRITING
MUSIC
MOVIES
TELEVISION

For more details, check our website at www.NeilsonParkCreativeCentre.com or drop by the centre for a copy of our **ARTSMARTZ** brochure!

Artsmartz, 2011 summer camps. NPCC Archives

Amazing! A Sense of Wonder with Kids at NPCC

A conversation with Toni Caldarone, long time teacher at Neilson Park Creative Centre, talking to Jerry Smith about the children's program development over the last 30 years.

How did you start here, what was the impetus?

I worked at a major Toronto entertainment venue where I had just received the 15-year award after working there from prior to its opening. Three weeks later, I was walked out the door to what they called 'restructuring'. I vowed that I would never work in the corporate sector again. It took a year to realize that they actually did me a favour, for if I had stayed, my health would have suffered dramatically as the position of event manager did not fall in the standard 9 am to 5 pm realm and it took its toll after 15 years.

What were your options?

My dream had always been to be a teacher but I couldn't afford university and teacher's college, so I ended up going to college for a recreational leadership program at Humber College. From there I worked in administrative fields in various government ministries working my way through the ranks landing in the corporate world. While on medical leave, having gotten ill during my time at the entertainment venue, I started doing designs on stones as a way of healing. I then started to sell the stones at various events when a woman who owned her own kids art workshop company, spotted me and asked if I was interested in doing workshops for her as she liked the way I interacted with the customers.

I then met a friend who introduced me to Haliburton School of The Arts (now called

Haliburton School of Art & Design – HSAD) where I was her assistant for her classes. The following year I applied and was hired to do my own summer programs starting in 2004/5 and have continued to do so every summer since.

I was looking to expand my art instruction after teaching through TDSB's Community Program, Parks & Recreation and private workshops, when one of my neighbours said she knew the receptionist at NPCC. I met with the director, Sandy Green, who interviewed me and hired me on the spot. I haven't looked back since.

There were some children's programs in place back then at NPCC, but the primary focus was mostly on the rental from the resident groups, the membership fees, the adult programs and rental of the facility and gallery. The current investment I'm seeing now in the children's programs (junior, senior and teens) with Petra's leadership and Dani's programming coordination, has really helped flourish the entire vision for the children's programs that I'm very happy to see.

What are some of the changes you have witnessed?

I like what I've been seeing over the past few years since Petra has been executive director. The positive changes are taking NPCC into very new and exciting directions. Changes such as including the resident groups in the NPCC catalogue, hiring Kylynn to handle marketing, community programs and volunteers along with all her other responsibilities, having Cory managing the gallery rentals and operational aspects of the building, hiring Dani as programs coordinator, who herself is an artist and



Toni Calderone teaches "Artist For The Week" during 2021 Summer Camp. NPCC Archives

understands instructors' needs. Also the help of all the university-level CSRs and young volunteers during classes and workshops is a definite asset for NPCC and the instructors.

In the past, NPCC was somewhat perceived as a private privileged club. But as one can obviously see, inclusion and diversity are not only written words, but are definitely visible in the variety of classes/workshops being offered by instructors from all walks of life, the variety of art shows being brought in from various communities, the types of workshops being offered out in the communities and so much more. This is something that NPCC can be very proud of in taking a leadership role as a pro-active, current cultural art centre.

The caliber of instructors that NPCC has

attracted and have been with NPCC for some time, such as Helen McCusker, John Leonard, Steve Rose, Jacintha Krish, Kim Lee Kho, Kal Honey, to name a few, have added value to the level of class instruction. Two newer instructors have been doing great work with the children's classes – Tawni and Juliana. There are many more new, diverse NPCC instructors who I have not named who help grow the understanding of art from a variety of cultures from around the world.

Among some of the newer programming opportunities that I have the privilege to be a part of are the monthly Family Art workshops where families are charged minimal registration fees with all materials supplied so that they can come and enjoy a couple of hours having fun making art with their kids. And there are now affordable adult art classes where the registration fee includes all materials! This encourages the participants to come and try out a variety of different mediums and techniques in both

2D and 3D formats. It can help them decide which medium they like best to hopefully take some future NPCC classes in the medium of their choice.

This summer, camps were a great success as there were many camps that had huge waiting lists – the most ever! I also hear that there are good things planned to help grow the 2023 summer camp program that I'm looking forward to.

When you said you started out with rocks, you referred to it as healing?

When I was still working as an event manager, I was off for a year dealing with my cancer diagnosis. My mother had already passed away with cancer and my dad was nearing the end of his cancer journey when I was diagnosed. Following my surgery and post treatments, I started going down to the lake to gather smooth stones where I dabbled in doodling and painting on the

stones I had collected. I found it healing as I slowly painted and drew on each stone, various patterns and designs – a way of meditating. I started giving some of the stones to those that were going through challenging times either physically or emotionally.

I was so touched at hearing the stories of those that received one of my stones, that when I attended Wellspring (wellspring.ca) – a wonderful organization that helps those that are going through cancer, we had a yearly group of approximately 30 people who, every September would have four days at this special camp near Lake Rosseau. I started teaching them how to paint their own stone. I ended up being the Arts & Crafts Coordinator every September. Even though I was brought to this by cancer, it was an awesome 10 years of being a part of Wellspring and Camp Renewal that provided me with such a sense of peace and happiness to my life.



Aeri paints a masterpiece! NPCC Archives

Many of those campers have since passed on, yet I'm blessed that I'm still here. One of the wonderful things I always remember and still remind my students to this day is that those who say that they don't have an imagination, I tell them that if they can worry, then they have an imagination – as worry comes from one's imagination and we all worry.

Taking that first step to actually start instructing art classes was a big step and Camp Renewal helped me find my footing before I started with the first kids workshop and at HSAD in Haliburton. I had always loved art starting at a very young age but again, was not able to attend art college. I won my very first art award and the grand prize of \$5 in Grade 6 for a multi-green abstracted painting submitted to the annual CNE children's art competition but unfortunately, I never got that painting back. I still have many of my high school sketchbooks and photos of the art I've done throughout the years at venues such as Three Schools of Art, Toronto Art School, Haliburton School of Art & Design, AGO, OCAD, TDSB and the various art shows and fairs I've been fortunate enough to be a part of.

I encourage all my students to be brave and let go "perceived perceptions". It's ok to make a mistake, if there is such a thing in art - as many mistakes turn out to be amazing works of art. I remember, years ago, in one of John Leonard's classes up in Haliburton, he said that: 'good artists borrow, great artists steal!' I've always loved that saying (I'm not quite sure where he got that quote from), as I encourage all my students in class to not be afraid to get up from their chairs and walk around the studio/classroom to check out what others are doing. If they see something they like, I tell them that it's ok to incorporate that into their own work, for their style will never be quite the same as the person who they copied from. It's a great way of learning as that's what the old masters did – they copied from even older masters!

Toni, thinking specifically about your time here at NPCC, what do you notice between then and now, how has the population of kids changed?

I would have to say that technology is one of the very first things that has impacted the overall experience in just about everything here. As I had the privilege a few years back in being in the position of working in the office, we basically worked with a few programs, Word and Excel. Today, the computer programs are more intelligent and make the overall management of the administrative aspect so much faster economizing on time and expense. It's great to see the staff adapting to the changes that are happening at such speed that it's hard to keep up. As an example, I now use my iPad to introduce images as samples of artwork to the class whereas in the past, I would have to print various images to demonstrate to the class. As instructors, we are now using a program to order our supplies, and the list goes on – all to make things easier and quicker. Since Covid, the addition of on-line Zoom classes was received quite well and continues even though in-class instructions resumed. It's another added value that NPCC has to offer.

The same aspect applies to the kids as they now have so many different devices that they either own or have access to. I allow them to access their devices whenever in need for reference but other than that, I don't allow the devices to be turned on during class as they can be a source of distraction.

In addition, NPCC changed over to a charity organization and is now able to provide tax receipts for donations. Along the same vein, the grant writing team has greatly increased the number of grants that NPCC has submitted and received. This benefits both NPCC members and the community. I know the amount of effort required in applying for these grants.



L: Rachel Lin, Summer Camp Counsellor, R: Anica Latchman, Summer Camp Instructor, C: Summer Camp Student

There's also been a change in the diversity of the kids and their backgrounds as the neighbourhoods surrounding NPCC changes with new families moving into the area. It's great to see such a wide variety of different cultures coming together for art's sake and sharing their stories. Some of the parents of these children are experiencing art through their children's eyes and are excited to talk about their experiences and conversations that they are having with their children. This has led to another new vision from Petra in programming classes for parents and anyone else wanting to attend for Saturday adult art class while their children are having their own Saturday classes. I'm hoping both the morning and afternoon program starting this winter will run as this can be the start of great programming for parents who want to 'do art'!

You've been generous with your time - I do appreciate it - but I'd like to ask you a couple more questions about the evolution of the

kind of work being done, and the exhibition of the kids.

Over the past several years, I see how important the kids classes have become to NPCC's overall aspect thanks to Petra. She has taken an active role, not only in making the kids programs just as vital as the adult programs but that the kids programs are actively recognized. For example, prior to Covid, Cory and Petra introduced a children's art show in the gallery based on the artwork produced in the kids classes at NPCC throughout the year. The children were treated just like the adults who were exhibiting their works in the gallery. The children and their families were also invited to a reception with snacks and beverages to host their guests when they came for the opening reception of their show. The kids were so proud of their work, talking about how they produced their art. It was exciting to be a part of their experience. I want to recognize Petra's contribution

in making the kids program as important as all the other programs but also in her involvement in the overall management of NPCC in regards to understanding how the various departments work i.e. operations, programming, gallery rentals, resident groups, rentals, finance, and more, Petra has made a point of getting in there and knowing how they operate. She managed to see how the supplies for programs works, how shelving for classes work, how resident groups share storage space, how the physical set up of the studios work, and so on. She's made it a point to get to know how NPCC operates, let alone her volunteering time she's done for NPCC. It's great to see an executive director's honest willingness to know NPCC inside and out – literally! A role model to be followed, that's for sure. Also, recognition to Brenda Shewchuk for all her contributions, too numerous to name.

Parents of kids today seem to be much more involved in getting their kids' to develop their creative artistic skills whether it's for future consideration in applying to art schools or just to increase their knowledge of art. Most of the kids come for the fun of art-making where you can see their enthusiasm as they watch their creations come to life. There are also those kids that come to learn and want to know more as they want to pursue art in high school and post-secondary school. There is a new in-depth program offered to teens this winter by Matthew Summers that will be directly related into what a student needs to know and do when applying to get into an art school. Programs like this are what makes NPCC stand out in thinking ahead.

You mentioned that coming here is like coming home.

I love it here. I've been a part of the NPCC family since 2008. I've seen many changes over the years being both an instructor and having been a part of administration for a

period of time. I'm proud to say that right now, it's the best yet with I know, more good things to come.

Not only is NPCC a fantastic place to be in physically with all the beautiful large windows with bright sunlight pouring through, nestled in a wonderful park-setting with a nature trail and edged by a lush green golf course, the parking is free, many events are free from the bi-annual Handmade show, constantly changing gallery shows and their receptions, and many unique community events, with more to come. NPCC welcomes special event rentals such as birthday parties, choir practices, etc. It's also a great place to meet people where you can make friends for life through the resident groups or classes. It's a community of like-minded people who love to keep their creative juices alive – no matter one's age.

So, to those who have been reading this, if you haven't been to NPCC yet, I hope that you'll stop in one day to see what NPCC is all about. It has so much to offer! And to those who have experienced NPCC and/or are a part of NPCC, its resident groups, its staff, its instructors, I thank you all for being a part of the NPCC community and keeping NPCC alive and well, moving to an even brighter and more exciting future!

Thank you!

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Thank you to Staff, Board, Volunteers

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2022 NPCC Retreat

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Front row, L to R: Petra Nyendick, NPCC Executive Director; Nancy Green, EQG; Sum Duff, Customer Service Representative; Carole Adams, ER President; Dani De Angelis, NPCC Program Coordinator; John Ming Mark, CAGT, EAG, EQG; Eileen Rademacher, HVAC, CAGT; Heather Patterson, EQG; Brenda Shewchuk, NPCC President, EQG; Aleksandra Piascik, NPCC Treasurer; Marion Jenson, ER; Jenneen Beattie, NPCC Vice-President

Photo credit: Matthew Summers

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Legacy to celebrate a richer life through the arts.

Over the past five years, NPCC has received over \$20,000 in bequests.

These funds have been used to further NPCC's mission and to meet the creative needs of the community by facilitating artistic expression through education, exhibitions and events.

Please look for our Bequest Information Session in 2023 to learn how to leave your legacy at NPCC.



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