

Group presents first in a series of events

By Mark Pavilons

The importance of trees is the first topic up for discussion, at an upcoming event.

'Is Every Tree is Important?' is the first of many events, organized by a new group of concerned citizens.

The discussion, featuring many well known experts, will take place Thursday, March 5, at King City Secondary School, from 7 to 9 p.m.

The purpose, according to organizer Ann Raney is twofold:

To increase awareness and discussion in the community of King Township about the importance of trees and how we think about them.

To include youth as much as possible by partnering with the public high school and when possible, have the event at King City Secondary School.

Raney explained the format will be a panel discussion and questions from audience (in the spirit of the Couchiching Conference, or a Munk Discussion). The panelists will have a short time to present their point of view and then questions will be taken from the audience.

Also, for those interested, a more intimate event will take place at The Roost, Sunday, March 8 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. for further discussion. Ted Anderson, who will speak to the indigenous perspective, will only be present at the discussion at The Roost on March 8.

For the evening session, panelists include Dr. Laura Westra, Professor Emeritus. She received her BA from York University (1977) and MA and PhD from the University of Toronto (1983). Professor Westra's main teaching interests were in Greek philosophy and applied ethics, with a concentration in environmental philosophy and ethics.

Among her publications during her Windsor years are *Living in Integrity: Toward a Global Ethic to Restore a Fragmented Earth* (1998), *Land Grabs and Climate Change as Crimes Against Humanity* (2017), to name a few.

After retiring from the Windsor philosophy department in 1999, Dr. Westra had a one-year appointment at Sarah Lawrence College (NY) before she returned to Canada to earn a doctorate in law at Osgoode Hall in Toronto (2005).

King's own Dr. Hans Martin, retired consultant, will also be on hand. Dr. Martin received his BSc from University of Manitoba and later attended the University of Western Ontario for his MSc and PhD. He has career has taken him out of Canada at times to Australia, the U.S., and Germany.

He was the director of the Air Research Branch of Environment Canada (atmosphere) between 1987 and 1999 where he managed an annual budget of \$20 million and a staff of 150, of which 60 were scientists. Dr. Martin worked on acid rain, stratospheric ozone, climate change, and toxic chemicals. From 1999 to 2003, Dr. Martin worked for the Department of External Affairs, Diplomatic Service as a Science attaché at the Canadian Embassy in Bonn, Germany.

Since retiring from public service in 2003, Dr. Martin has been a private consultant. Dr. Martin is active in the scientific community as well as his community of King Township.

Dr. Riina Bray is a practicing physician who specializes in how our growth and our mental and physical health is affected by the environment in which we live, work, and play. Dr. Bray is a resident of King Township.

Peter Wynnyczuk, executive director of Ontario Urban Forest Council, has over 35 years experience with urban trees, forestry, and municipal property and tree bylaws. Wynnyczuk lives in nearby Richmond Hill and has previously spoken to King Township residents during an event hosted by Concerned Citizens of King Township.

Avrum Liederman, a financial planner, will address the costs versus benefits.

Ted Anderson, retired high school physics teacher, and organist, is a member of York Pines United Church in King Township and has been the music director there for many years. He is proud of his indigenous Canadian identity as one of the Tyendinaga (Bay of Quinte), a part of the Kanyen'kehá:ka (Mohawk) Nation. He will speak about the indigenous peoples perspective as to the question, 'Is every tree important?'

Mohammad Totah, a consulting engineer who lives in Oak Ridges, has agreed to moderate this town hall. Totah and his wife were recipients of a volunteer award from King Township in 2019.

For more, contact Raney at ann.raney.king@gmail.com or 416-825-4275.