

ARTS



Newlove goes solo

Rural artist's collection featured in exhibit

By Stephanie Hounsell
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

With themes including vulnerability and violations of privacy, Tina Newlove's paintings might appear somewhat dark at first glance. But give them another look, and you're bound to find an overriding emotion: hope.

"Some of the themes are darker, but I hope in general my work is hopeful... self-assuring, feeling better about yourself," the local artist said.

That dark/light interplay is evident in her most recent collection entitled 'Protection,' which is being featured at the Latcham Gallery in Stouffville until November 29 — her first solo exhibit at a public gallery.

"'Protection' is very personal... there's a lot about self-protection, protests, declarations and secrets," Newlove said.

The paintings — mostly oils canvas and paper — vary in size, with everything from tiny snippets of thoughts captured in antique photo albums to a giant protest piece measuring six by four feet. Some projects are mixed media, in which she assembles pieces with stitching.

No shortage of ideas

"There are a lot of ideas in my show because my mind is always racing around," said the former Campbellville resident.

Newlove enjoys trying new things and allowing others to see her thought process.

On opening night of the show she did a live painting, starting with a blank canvas and creating as people looked on.

"People find watching the process really interesting," she said.

Newlove often incorporates wordplay into her art; for example, she may paint over a dictionary page specifically chosen for the words it features.

Some of her paintings are fairly abstract, but oftentimes they still have figures in them.

For an artist to have his or her work shown in a public gallery is quite an honour and something they usually must build up to. It's not something they'd apply for, it's something they'd be invited to do by the curator of the gallery, Newlove said.

That's what happened in her case.

The curator of the Latcham Gallery saw Newlove's work at a juried show in Toronto and talks began regarding a solo show.

"It's been really exciting," Newlove said.

The fact the exhibit is in a public gallery means Newlove is being paid for the show and doesn't need to rely so much on sales of her artwork as she would with a show at a private gallery. That makes for a more relaxed atmosphere where she can simply enjoy the feedback from gallery-goers.

Goes against the artistic grain

While some artists think through the painting and then create it, the process is the opposite for Newlove, who said she enjoys the surprise of never knowing quite what she's going to end up with; she doesn't intentionally project her thoughts onto her paintings, but they end up there nonetheless.

"I do the work and then I reflect on it (and say), 'Oh, that's what I was thinking about,'" she said. "I feel like I'm not in control of the process."

She sometimes refers to her paintings as "subconscious leakings."

Highlights of her career so far include having a piece displayed in the City of Toronto's permanent collection. Her paintings have been accepted into more than 70 juried exhibitions, from which she's received numerous awards.

Newlove spent some of her teen years in Campbellville, eventually moving away to attend McMaster University and graduating in the Honours Fine Arts program.

She now lives in Guelph, but splits her time painting between her studio in Guelph and her studio at her mother's Campbellville home. Her two greatest fans are her mom and her husband, who, as a musician, shares her artistic bent.

As a mother of a five-year-old son, it's not always easy finding time to paint, Newlove said. But not finding time isn't an option.

"I have to find time to paint or I'd go a little crazy," she said.

For Newlove, painting is more than a means of expression — it's a way of life.

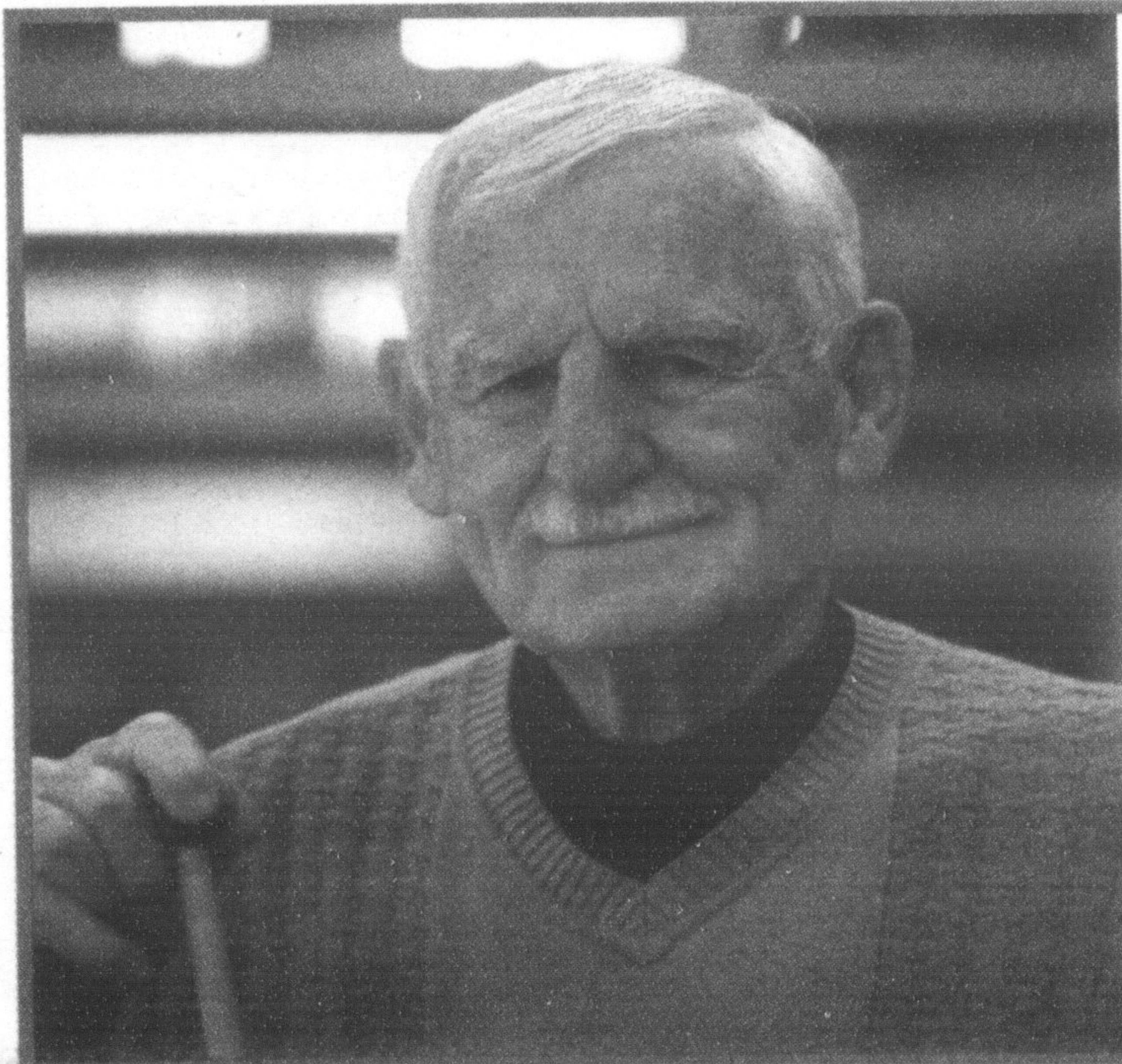
"I like to escape into my own little world."

Stephanie Hounsell can be reached at sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com.



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ARTISTIC FLAIR: Tina Newlove works on one of her pieces, entitled 'Memory Girl.'

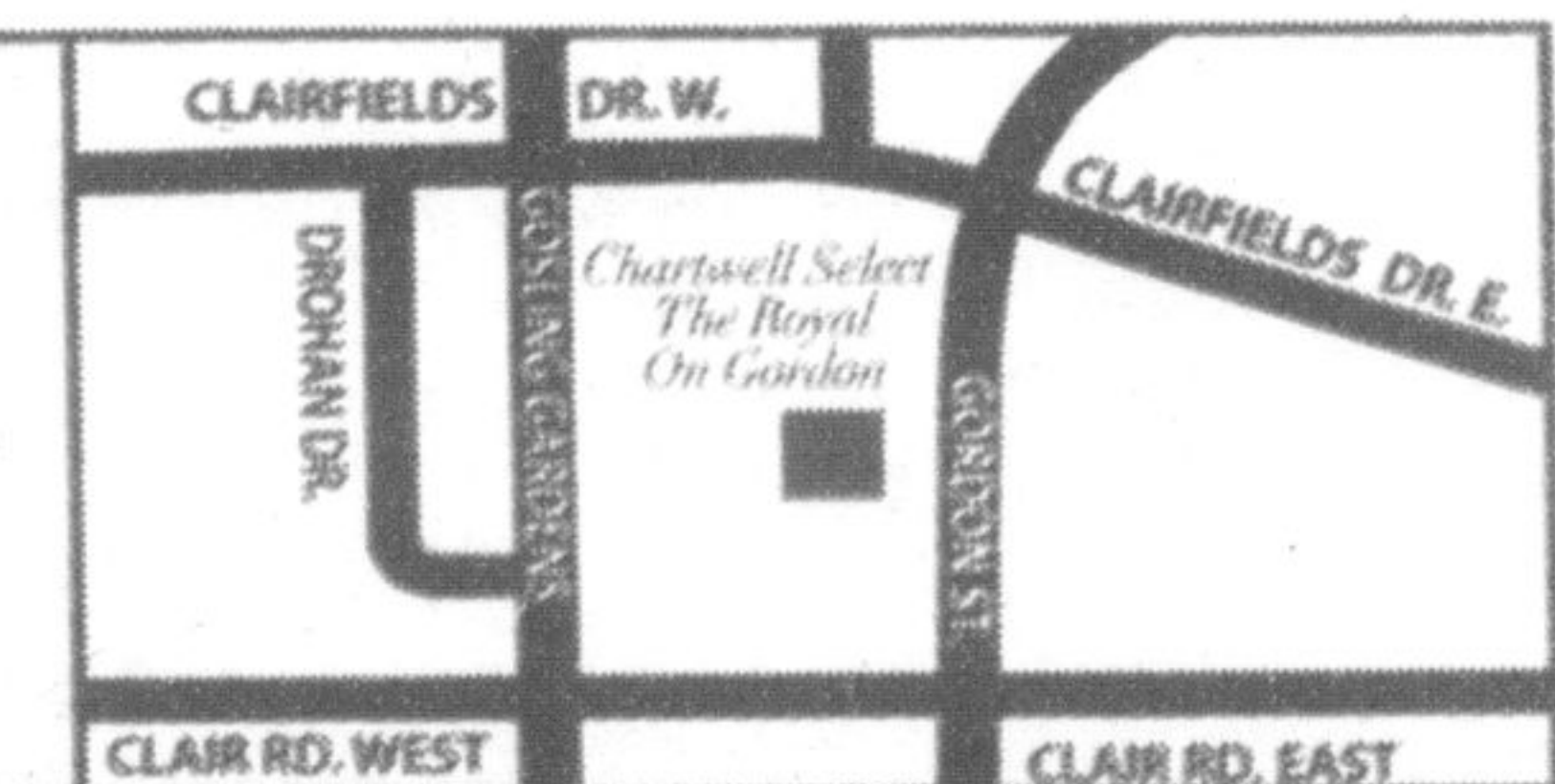


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