World reknowned artist calls King home

By Larry Johnston

KING — Picture the rugged hills of the statue across the Adriatic. Greece. Two hundred oxen harnessed marble toward the sea.

The method has not changed since the cables were not strong enough. Michaelangelo. The largest block of Before they were strengthened, the marble ever quarried, 17 feet long, 23 docks were shut down by a feet wide, weighing 400,000 pounds, is longshoreman's strike. Two helicopters painstakingly moved for one of the couldn't lift the statue. world's leading sculptors.

Michaelangelo was patronized by popes ship. and princes, the scluptor's work is now commissioned by captains of industry include "perpetuity" for Georgialooking for tax breaks.

studio in King and another studio near the British Columbia Centennial to satisfy his clients.

That 200-ton slab of marble was tland, Oregon.

King Township studio, von Svoboda had the Sacred Heart Church in King city. won a competition over Henry Moore and two other scluptors, for a contract in seven figures, the largest commission in modern times.

But he still had to find a block of marble large enough to do five largerthan-life human figures in "The Quest" and that required an exhaustive search. (Michaelangelo avoided this by finding his block first and then deciding what to do with it.)

Once the block was found and quarried, and moved it would take a team of skilled craftsmen, each with his later with the design. own language and belief, two years to complete. "If there was one mistake, one flaw in the marble, my sculpture would have been nothing."

In the midst of the work near Athens, the Greek political situation worsened.

Henderson had retreat place

KING CITY — Douglas Campbell Henderson, 63, whose King City property served in part as a retreat for the public for the past five years, died last week of a blood clot after a cancer operation.

troller of operational services of the Etobicoke board of education, and was with them for 25 years.

cabin on the property, milking cows country club. and growing vegetables.

the land and allowed people, singly or in out financially in wartime upheavals. groups, to live in the cabin for short periods.

which people could help fulfill them- have forgotten. selves, as well as contribute to the betterment of mankind.

Royal Canadian Navy in World War 11, anything but. and was a salesman with York Knitting

For many years he helped set policies for all Canada while with the national committee of the YMCA.

Mr. Henderson leaves his wife, Dorothy; a daughter, Georgia Parsons; and two sons, Gordon and Alan.

Fearing he could not carry on, von Svoboda rented a freighter and moved

There was more trouble when it together drag a huge block of white reached the United States by ship. The sculptor checked the crane and found

Finally through negotiations, using

"I sell imagination," says Count lawyers, von Svoboda got special Alexander von Svoboda. While permission to take the statue off the

Von Svoboda's other major works Pacific, made from the circumference Von Svoboda maintains his home and of a giant redwood tree and bronze, and Florence, Italy. He travels all over the fountain, depicting the province's world seeking out materials and ideas ragged coast with granite, black marble and mosaic.

Von Svoboda is one of the few artists destined for the head office of the acknowledged to be able to use mosaic Georgia Pacific Corporation in Por- on a large scale, and is acknowledged worldwide as a designer of churches, With a scale model fashioned in his including the interior and art work of

"There is a story in every work," said von Svoboda. There was the man who came straight to his door from the airport and asked von Svoboda in very broken English to do a job for him. He turned out to be a priest from the Barbadoes asking him to build and design a church. The artist flew to the Barbadoes and took on the work.

There was the executive who flew him to San Francisco in a private jet to discuss the design for a \$3.5 million house. Von Svoboda came back weeks

The executive said the design was what he wanted and left Von Svobada to do the rest. "I am not an architect. I hire an architect."

To do all this, von Svoboda has had to become more than an artist. He is the soul of a corporation, Svoboda International Designs Ltd.

His designs are conceived in his studio here. They are shaped into reality in Florence where up to 30 craftsmen may be working at one time. He always finishes his art work him-

He looks like a businessman. Clean-shaven, with his hair respectably short, wearing gold rimmed glasses, any banker would be proud of von Svoboda. Dealing with the Mr. Henderson was assistant con- people he does, he said, you can't dress like a hippy.

At a press conference last week, except for the mandatory artist's He and his wife lived on a 240-acre cravat, he dressed like any King farm, and at one time stayed in a log executive would on his way to the

His life was not always so easy. Born They later built a modern house on in Vienna in 1930, his family was wiped

He was left with nothing to inherit but the title. "I was a refugee, a DP, he The idea was to provide a retreat in said, dredging up a term most people

With his studies in art schools in Vienna, Paris and Rome behind him, he A native of Oshawa, he studied emigrated to the promised land of forestry at university, served with the Canada in 1950 and found it was

"I took odd jobs, collected garbage." He said once he went three weeks without a meal. He finally got 75 cents and went into the local greasy spoon (it was in the Ronscevalles-Queen area of Toronto.)

He ordered the most filling thing on the menu, for 75 cents, spaghetti.

Alex von Svoboda

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World famous sculptor and designer Alex von Svoboda also paints. He is sharing "Suzy Wong" and about 40 other water

He realized too late he covered it with drop in for a visit? hot pepper seeds. It tasted terrible but he ate the whole thing, tears streaming down his face.

work until 3 a.m. and get up at 6 a.m. his art with his neighbors in his beloved Artists can't just work when the spirit King Township. moves them, any more than heart The show at Mary Gilbert's York surgeons can, he said.

he must learn the craft and work at it. Von Svoboda could choose to raise his

missioned except for the paintings he near Schomberg for 16 years, where he has done of his impressions of people is a director of the local fair, and the and places around the world, a Chinese historical society, and his four children girl, a Hawaaian beach, an Arizona attend local schools.

at Snowball Corners called him. She ternational quarter horse show. had heard he did some paintings too, But what he likes about King is the and was wondering if he would like to "hominess. To my neighbors, I am just show them in her gallery. Would he Alex."

colors of people and places around the world with his neighbors in a show at the York Fine Art Gallery opening Thursday.

He might. She was persistent and the meeting was arranged for three days later. She For 10 years, von Svoboda would finally sold him on the idea of sharing

Fine Art Gallery, featuring 40 of von An artist is a craftsman first and first Svoboda's paintings opens Thursday. All von Svoboda's work is com- family anywhere, but he has been living

Somehow he has had time to develop He found it amusing, he had to admit, a hobby, raising quarter horses and he when the girl from the local art gallery has been a judge at the leading in-

Photo by Johnston

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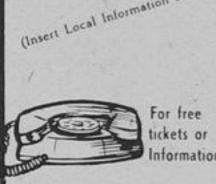
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TOWN OF **PUBLIC MEETING**

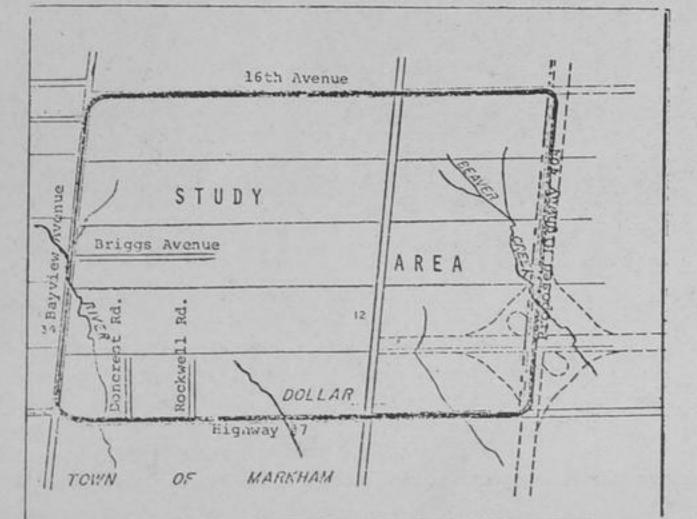
A public meeting will be held at 8:00 p.m. on

Wednesday April 27th, 1977 in 16th Avenue Public School

To hear a presentation and to submit comments on the Southeast Industrial Study which encompasses lands between Bayview Avenue and the future Highway 404 and between Highway 7 and 16th Avenue.

Councillor M. Graham Chairman Planning Committee

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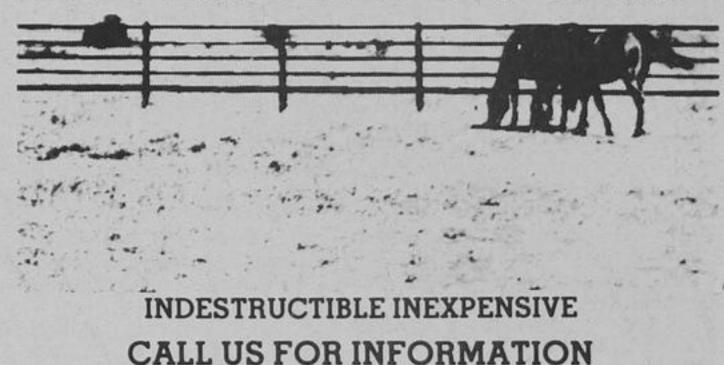
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