

Good crowd out to see and discuss Al Gore's film

By Bill Rea

An Inconvenient Truth, former American vice-president Al Gore's documentary movie on global warming has been sparking a lot of discussion all over the world, including in King.

The film has been subject of two recent showings, hosted by Arts Society King, in conjunction with the King Township Public Library, the Dufferin Marsh Committee and Cold Creek Forest and Wildlife Area, the latest one occurring last Thursday evening at the library in Schomberg. There were about 40 people on hand for the showing and the panel discussion that followed.

"It sort of strikes me that the people who are here really don't have to be here, because you're pretty knowledgeable already," remarked local resident and meteorologist Phil Chadwick, one of the panel members.

The Academy Award Winning film delved into the impacts of global warming that have been realized so far, and discussed possible future implications, including the melting of polar ice caps, etc.

Chadwick observed these implications have been known for some time, but it's been Gore who has brought the message out.

"I don't really consider this a political issue," Gore said in the film. "I consider it to be a moral issue."

Both Chadwick and Gore made the point that the situation isn't hopeless.

"We have everything we need, save perhaps, political will," Gore said in the film. "But you know what? In America political will is a renewable resource."

"Future generations may well have occasion to ask themselves, 'What were our parents thinking? Why didn't they wake up when they had a chance?'" Gore said at the conclusion of the film. "We have to hear that question from them, now."

Local environmental toxicologist Gordon Craig, another member of the panel, cited an article that appeared in the Washington Post, which looked into the math presented in the film, combined with the demands of existing technology, but no government will adopt draconian restrictions of

people's use of electricity or their ability to travel. The conclusion was if global warming is a calamity, new technology is needed to deal with it.

Skid Crease, from the Kortright Centre for Conservation in Kleinburg, commented that General Motors is trying to get an electric car developed again. But he pointed out the question is where does the energy to charge such a vehicle come from.

He also said Canada has a federal government that doesn't believe in global warming, and that is listening to lobby groups that maintain it's a myth.

One man in the room cited a CBC program that looked at how the media dealt with certain issues, with the point being there's an obligation to present both sides in order to appear balanced, meaning there's a perceived obligation to talk to people who believe global warming is a myth.

The panel discussion also included talk of hydrogen fuel cells. "It's still many, many, many years off," Crease commented, adding someone has to come up with the necessary infrastructure to deliver the power. One man in the room pointed out hydrogen is very common, adding the way to get at it is to break down water. The problem is that takes electricity.

Wind power was also discussed, but the problem with that is wind is unpredictable.

Crease said he buys gas that contains ethanol, but he pointed out that producing it requires about as much energy as what's obtained from it.

One woman complained about office buildings in Toronto that have lights on late at night. Chadwick agreed it's a problem, with migrating birds flying into them, but another man pointed out they are left on to help heat the building.

Crease pointed out Sweden has exceeded its obligations to the Kyoto Accord by imposing strict rules on things like the use of lights and car idling. For example, he said a driver stopped at a red light must shut off the engine. And he observed Sweden has a colder climate than Canada. "Political will is lacking in this country," he declared.



Skid Crease was addressing the audience at Schomberg library last Thursday after the showing of An Inconvenient Truth with Al Gore. Gordon Craig and Phil Chadwick were also part of the panel.

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The Best Campaign award was given for the promotion of its household hazardous waste program.

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Visit the reunion Web site at (www.hometech.com.ca/leafrapids.htm) for more information, or call Barb Boycey, organizing chairperson, at (204) 727-5319.