

# *the nib*

Published for members of Eastern Canada's Farm Writers Association  
Fall 2005

Welcome to the new email version of *The Nib*. We're trying out this simpler format, and we just might not get it all right the first time. Our hope is that we can produce it easier, and you can read it as an extended email message. Please let me know if you have suggestions, or difficulties, with it.

*Jane Robinson*

Nib Editor

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## **Prez says**

As summer turns into fall and the leaves are changing colour, your executive has started the task of planning events for the upcoming months. Over the past few years, ECFWA's slate of activities has gradually expanded to include a winter professional development seminar series, a day long annual meeting with speakers on current issues, and a bi-annual summer bus tour focusing on a particular region of the province.

This past year was particularly busy, as ECFWA also hosted the Canadian Farm Writers' Federation national conference in Windsor last fall. We were blessed with excellent attendance, generous sponsors, and an organizing committee that worked tirelessly to ensure everything went off without a hitch. The great weather helped us showcase our "sunny south" to our colleagues from across the country.

As has become an ECFWA tradition, two professional development workshops were held during the winter months, followed by our annual meeting in April. It sparked some fierce debate as Toronto author Gina Mallet shared her sometimes controversial views on cooking, food and farming in the modern era at the day long event held in Ingersoll. Farming on the Urban Fringe was the theme of the ECFWA bus tour to York, Halton and Peel regions this summer. The two-day tour focused on farmers and agri-businesses operating in the shadows of the Greater Toronto Area, and how that provides both challenges and opportunities. Stops included the Toronto Food Terminal, the University of Guelph Muck Crops research station, and a fruit and vegetable operation.

Our events are always well attended, leading us to assume that we are providing you with interesting and relevant programming. But we're interested in hearing from you. We'd like your feedback – not just on what we're doing, but also on what you think we should be doing. Are we meeting your expectations of what a professional ag writers' association should be providing you with? Do you have any great ideas for speakers we could bring in or tours we could arrange? Do you have professional development needs that we could address through our

winter seminar series? Or do you have a brain wave for an entirely new event we could bring to ECFWA?

We have put together an online survey that will be distributed to all members by the end of September. Please take a few moments to complete this survey and let us know what you think. Your input will help us make sure that ECFWA continues its tradition of being a relevant and valuable organization.

*Lilian Schaer*  
ECFWA President  
Ontario Pork

### **Letter to the editor**

It was with great sadness that I learned on-line today, via the ECFWA and CFWF newsletters, of the deaths of Dr Stan Young (University of Guelph) and John Schmidt (farm journalist extraordinaire).

As an OMAF Communications Branch employee in Guelph during the late 70s and 80s, I recall Stan Young very well. His enthusiasm and smile were infectious and never-ending. His passion for effective agricultural extension and communication, legendary.

Many will recall that Stan's "What's On" agricultural events sheet became the de-facto 'bible' for those of us tracking agri-events in Ontario and beyond.

And what can one say about John Schmidt! A legend in his own lifetime, I initially was intimidated by John's 'in your face' persona, but as Sharon McKay has remarked, his gruff facade was matched equally by a soft, marshmallow interior side.

Canada has clearly lost two 'larger-than-life' agri-professionals and is poorer for it.

Regards from Brisbane, Australia to all my ECFWA friends,

*Rob Wilson* (ex ECFWA member)  
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### **Let us have it – your take on the value of membership**

To help the ECFWA executive plan and deliver the activities and resources you want from your membership, we've put together a short survey to answer a few questions about your experiences and expectations. We distributed a short **online survey** via email through the ECFWANET listserv on September 26 and ask that you reply by October 5.

The survey is anonymous. Nothing you share will be attributed to you directly, so please be open and honest in your responses so we can better tailor ECFWA activities to meet the needs of the membership.

We'll report the survey results in *The Nib* and use your feedback to plan events for the coming year. Stay tuned for the results!

Thank you in advance for participating and for helping to make your ECFWA card the most valuable membership card in your wallet.

*Chrystal Boudreau*  
ECFWA Director  
Fleishman-Hillard Canada Inc.

### **Farming on the Urban Fringe – tales from the 2005 summer bus tour**

Sixteen ECFWA members joined our two-day power tour this summer of farms and agribusinesses located in the vicinity of the Greater Toronto Area for a look at “Farming on the Urban Fringe.”

Challenges with the greenbelt, urban traffic jams and disappearing muck soil were just some of the discussions as we visited the Ontario Food Terminal, John Doner Ltd. (grain and oilseed operation), the University of Guelph’s Muck Crops Research Station at Bradford Marsh, fruit and vegetable grower Don Chapman, Armstrong Manor Farms dairy operation, and Jeff Wilson’s Birkbank Farms.

Thanks to organizers Alicia Roberts and Hilary Edmondson for a well-planned event, and to the following tour sponsors: the Agricultural Adaptation Council, Bayer CropScience, CropLife, FS Growmark, Pioneer Hi-Bred and Syngenta Crop Protection.

### **Life Member Nominations**

At our annual meeting earlier this year, Glenn Powell presented a protocol for nominations and approvals of honorary life members for ECFWA. Here is a copy of the framework that was presented and accepted by the membership. We look forward to future nominations, following this format.

#### **ECFWA honorary life membership awards**

The ECFWA may confer the Association’s Honourary Life Membership Award upon any member who has made a significant contribution to the advancement of agricultural communication and rendered meritorious service to the Association. Honourary Life Members are exempt from further payment of annual dues.

### **Guidelines for honorary life membership**

- The Honourary Life Membership Award may be conferred upon any ECFWA member who is retired or near retirement and who has made a contribution of outstanding and lasting importance to agricultural communications. The honorary membership should not be conferred simply as a reward for longevity or passive committee or organizational activity. This award recognizes an accumulation of years of service and leadership.
- While it is expected that living persons be considered for the Honourary Life Membership Award, it may be conferred posthumous.
- The Honourary Life Membership Award is not necessarily given each year, but more than one such honour may be awarded in any given year.
- The ECFWA Secretary will keep a cumulative list of ECFWA Honourary Life Membership Award recipients. The list shall include the year the honour was bestowed and a brief bio. This information shall be readily available in both printed and electronic form.
- The recipient will be presented with a scroll proclaiming the honour.
- The ECFWA Secretary will retain a sample copy of the scroll to be modified and copied as needed.

### **Nomination criteria and requirements**

The nominator shall:

- Provide examples of the nominee's dedication to the ideals and objectives of the ECFWA and to the improvement of the craft of agricultural communications.
- List achievements in and contributions to leadership in the ECFWA
- List achievements in and contributions to the community and organizations other than ECFWA
- State period of membership in the ECFWA
- Include a short biographical sketch of the nominee
- Provide three letters of support, a minimum of two of which must be current ECFWA members.

All nominations shall be submitted to the Chair of the Honourary Life Membership Committee, which after reviewing and approving a nomination(s) shall put forward the name of the individual(s) for ratification at the Annual General Meeting.

### **Honourary Life Membership Committee**

The Honourary Life Membership Committee shall include the immediate past-president of the ECFWA, who will serve as Chair of the Committee and who will appoint a minimum of two other ECFWA members to the Committee. (Consider at least one Honourary Life Member) The Committee shall meet (in-person or conference call) prior to the AGM to review all nominations received. Nominations approved by the Committee shall be presented to the AGM for ratification.

The Chair of the Honourary Life Membership Committee shall ensure that a call for nominations is included each year in the AGM notice sent to all members.

## **Niblets**

Congratulations to life member **Murray Gaunt** who was recently inducted into the Ontario Ag Hall of Fame.

ECFWA member and freelance writer **Ray Ford** won a Gold Award in the How-To category of the National Magazine Awards last June for “When Barbed Wire isn’t Enough” in B.C.-based *Small Farm Canada*. Ford has had six NMA nominations and won a silver in 2001, but the *Small Farm Canada* piece marked the first time he’s been nominated for an agricultural story. “The NMA tends to be dominated by big urban publications, like *Toronto Life* or *Saturday Night*, and a lot of smaller publications don’t enter,” Ford says. “I think this demonstrates that smaller magazines from outside the Big Smoke produce strong work, and the NMA Foundation.” Way to go Ray!

You can now find **Margaret Boyd** at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency as the communications officer in the Guelph office. Margaret replaced Bruce D’Andrea, when he moved to Ottawa.

### **ECFWA 2005/06 Executive**

**President** – Lilian Schaer, Ontario Pork

**Past President** – John Greig, Ontario Farmer

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President** – Kate Klages, freelance

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President** – Marilyn White, Canadian Poultry

**Secretary-Treasurer** – Karen Lewis, Adculture Group

**Newsletter Editor** – Jane Robinson, AdFarm

**Directors** – Chrystal Boudreau, Fleishman Hillard; Blair Andrews, Ontario AgRadio Network; Clare Illingworth, Ontario Pork; Kelly Daynard, OFAC; and Karen Dallimore, Words for Hire

**The Nib is produced periodically for the members of the Eastern Canada Farm Writers’ Association. Editor: Jane Robinson, [jane.robinson@adfarmonline.com](mailto:jane.robinson@adfarmonline.com) If you have any comments or suggestions, please forward them to the editor.**

[www.cfwf.ca](http://www.cfwf.ca)