

the nib

Published for members of Eastern Canada's Farm Writers Association
Winter 2006

Here's what you'll find inside this issue:

- Details on upcoming professional development seminars
- ECFWA annual meeting notice
- Call for Life Member nominations
- Snippets from recent membership survey

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Prez says

As we stand at the onset of another year, I wonder how different 2006 will be from 2005. After all, it seems like many things in agriculture and in farm journalism haven't really changed – such as the stories we are covering and the issues agriculture is dealing with.

Sadly for the farming world, there is still no workable solution to the farm income crisis, world trade disputes remain unresolved and the number of farmers continues to decrease every year. The gap between farmers and consumers shows no sign of shrinking and although concerted efforts are being made, agriculture really wasn't a front burner issue in the recent election.

That being said, there are also many positive developments as new technologies come on board, new programs are being developed and farmers are actively looking for unique and creative alternatives to bring products to market and find their niche.

On the farm journalism front, one of the things that will be changing in the weeks and months ahead will be the programming that your farm writer organization will be offering you.

Many of you responded to our membership survey last fall and provided us with a plethora of suggestions and ideas as to how we could provide more value and service to you – whether you're working journalists, broadcasters or communications professionals.

And for that we thank you. As an organization, we are lucky to have a membership who is so interested in what we do and the programs we put together for you.

More will be forthcoming on this subject over the next few months as we analyze your feedback and try to incorporate it into our activities. The first change you'll notice is in our professional development seminar schedule. Seminar offerings will be spaced out over the course of the year

and will be held in various parts of the province in an effort to provide programming for all of our members.

We will also be providing seminar notes for those of you who are interested, but weren't able to attend the actual event, while we investigate alternate means of making seminars accessible to everyone, whether that's through webinars or videoconferencing or downloadable oral proceedings.

We always welcome more feedback and suggestions. And if you are interested in becoming more involved with the organization, we welcome that as well.

As 2006 unfolds and begins to define itself, I'd like to wish you all a Happy New Year –and best wishes for the year ahead.

Lilian Schaer
ECFWA President
Ontario Pork

Winter Photography Seminar

This year, ECFWA is offering three professional development seminars – spread out over the year. Here are the details on the first one.

What's behind a good photo?

When it comes to being an agricultural photographer, it's not all glitz and glamour! Although they provide authentic subject material, farmers rarely make the best models for agricultural photographs. They're generally far more comfortable talking about their crops or cattle from the cab of their pickup trucks than posing for a camera. Likewise, when trying to shoot corporate exhibits, farm shows or other agricultural settings, it's often difficult – sometimes almost impossible – to get that the perfect photograph when you're working around crowds, unpredictable weather conditions and even uncooperative livestock!

Join ECFWA to find out what's behind a good photo:

Tuesday, March 7, 2006

4:00 – 6:00 PM

Guelph Place, 492 Michener Road

(located north off Woodlawn Road behind the Guelph Auto Mall, enter east of Elmira Road)

You'll hear the perspectives of two agricultural industry photographers – **Jeff Carroll** of Carroll and Carroll Inc. Commercial Photography and AgStock (www.carrollphoto.com) and **Terry Scott White** of Terry Scott White Photography (www.terryscottwhite.com).

And we've arranged a special behind-the-scenes look at how Terry and Jeff do their work as a followup to the March 7 workshop. A limited number of ECFWA members will be able to *join*

Terry or Jeff on a shoot later this year. Find out more at the March 7 event, and you could be joining Terry on location when he shoots the 2007 Faces of Farming calendar this summer, or watch Jeff in action during one of his summer projects.

A household name in ag photography, Jeff Carroll has been in the business for more than 30 years, specializing in food, product, industry and business portraiture. While relatively new to agriculture, Kitchener-based photographer Terry Scott White has been a professional photographer for 13 years. Most recently, Terry was the personable artist behind the photos in OFAC's 2006 Faces of Farming Calendar.

Please pre-register for the March 7 photography workshop by contacting Karen Lewis BEFORE March 1 at klewis@adculture.com or (905) 817-1238. Payment by cash or cheque at the door.

Members: \$10

Non-members: \$15

Stick around and join us for a pay-your-way pub dinner at the Stampede Ranch.

Summer writing seminar

We've got a writing seminar in the works for June that we hope to hold in Ottawa. And to serve more of our members, we plan to offer it as a web-based seminar. So you can attend it in person, view it from the media room at the Ontario AgriCentre in Guelph, or log in from your home computer. Stay tuned for details.

ECFWA AGM date set

We've got a date and location – and soon we'll have the rest of the details – for the ECWFA annual meeting. Please set aside this date and look for more information to come shortly.

ECFWA AGM

Tuesday, April 25, 2006

Halton Region Museum, Milton

SurveyMonkey: a slick and simple way to hear from you

As most of you know, ECFWA recently conducted an online survey to take the pulse of member satisfaction and gather feedback on activities and programs offered. Through the process we received several questions about the survey and thought we'd provide an outline of how the process worked.

We used SurveyMonkey – an online survey tool available at www.surveymonkey.com. It was a simple, inexpensive way to get your responses.

- Professional subscription is \$19.95 USD/month
- Includes up to 1000 responses per month
- No long-term contract required
- No restriction on number of surveys or number of questions
- Surveys carry no SurveyMonkey branding

With a subscription, the surveyor can develop the theme and format of the online survey, including choosing colours and branding with the organization's logo if desired.

ECFWA executive drafted and finalized multiple choice, ranking and open-ended questions to get to the heart of our information needs, then simply copied questions into the online survey development tool at surveymonkey.com.

With the content complete, SurveyMonkey generated a link that ECFWA sent to the membership through the listserv with an introduction to the survey and its purpose. The response period was limited to about a week and a half, with a reminder email sent to encourage more people to respond.

We received an amazing 60 responses (see a sampling in next story). And the site enabled us to collect the data anonymously and kept member's contact information completely separate from the survey site. By developing and sending the survey, and collecting the data within a one-month period, we kept the cost to only one month's subscription fee and gathered priceless data.

ECFWA executive is now using survey results and input to plan events and deliver new offerings to the membership. For a member-driven organization, what better way to deliver what people want than to ask them?

For more information about the service and the process, contact me at boudreac@fleishman.com

Chrystal Boudreau

ECFWA Director

Fleishman-Hillard Canada Inc.

And the survey says...

When the new ECFWA executive decided to gather feedback and input from the membership to help guide the year's activities, we never imagined so many thoughtful responses. From our membership of 118, a hefty 50% of you took the time to talk to SurveyMonkey.com. We'll be featuring some of the comments in the next few newsletters. Here's a start of what we read. We're taking your suggestions to heart, and you should be seeing the results in our offering this year.

“Do you have suggestions for specific activities you would like ECFWA to offer its members?”

- Tours have been great – more on the fruit and vegetable production side
- Boardroom briefings, informal breakfast meetings
- New members package
- Professional development seminars – have seminar notes available for those that can't make it
- Access to experienced writers to ask questions about entering new markets
- Annual leadership forum – inviting farm leaders and/or politicians to brief ECFWA once a year
- Seminars and activities in Eastern Ontario and the Maritimes
- Job posting service
- More social and networking opportunities

Do you have a potential Life Member to nominate?

In the last issue of *The Nib*, a new format for nominating ECFWA Life Members was outlined by Glenn Powell. With our AGM coming up in April, now's the time to put names forward for this honour. Take a read through the new guidelines for nomination – and the information required to put forward a nomination – and let us know if anyone comes to mind. If you have any questions, John Greig, chair of the Honourary Life Membership Committee at jgreig@bowesnet.com

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.

Niblets

ECFWA Life Member **Clyde Bell** passed away on December 10, 2005 at the age of 90. Over the past few years, Clyde continued to send fortunate executive members one of his typewritten letters, bringing news from the Tweed area.

Marilyn White has joined the Poultry Industry Council in Guelph as Manager of Research, Education and Communications. You can reach her at (519) 837-0284 or mwhite@poultryindustrycouncil.ca

Kristy Nudds is the new editor of *Canadian Poultry Magazine* at (519) 428-3471 ext. 266 or knudds@annexweb.com

Murray Tong is assistant editor at *Milk Producer* at (905) 821-8970 or mtong@milk.org

Mark your calendar for the **CFWF 2006** annual conference in Winnipeg on September 14-16, 2006.

Welcome to the following new ECFWA members:

Jody Delong, freelance writer, photographer and speaker

Kathryn Doan, AgCareers.com

Sarah Fischer, University of Guelph

Michelle Graham, Quarry Integrated Communications

Kay Grulich, Canadian Farm Business Management Council

Sharon Hill, *Windsor Star*

Jill Rutherford, Fleishman-Hillard Canada

Karen Sample, McCormick Company

David Townsend, NK Brand Seeds
Andy Walker, *Island Farmer*
Kate Wilhelm, freelance

ECFWA 2005/06 Executive

President – Lilian Schaer, Ontario Pork
Past President – John Greig, Ontario Farmer
1st Vice President – Kate Klages, freelance
2nd Vice President – Marilyn White, Poultry Industry Council
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 If you have any comments or suggestions, please forward them to the editor.

www.cfwf.ca