

OAC Welcomes Dr. Ralph Martin, Loblaw Chair in Sustainable Food Production

“If food production was the focus of the 20th century, the 21st is about sustainability,” says Ralph Martin. “The challenge is not so much feeding the world, but the production and distribution of food that is safe, reliable, and enjoyable.”



As the inaugural Loblaw Chair in Sustainable Food Production, Martin will be meeting that challenge, and assuming a position that is the first of its kind in North America. Beginning August 1, he will develop and implement a national program in sustainable food production that brings together producers, processors, retailers and consumers for the first time.

“This position will allow me to draw in people from many sectors and we need a lot of people on this,” Martin says. He is uniquely suited to the task. A professor at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College since 1990, he is currently the director of the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada, and recently launched Canada’s Organic Science Cluster through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the country’s first federally funded agriculture research cluster program.

“Food is not just a resource,” he says. “Heritage and community are extremely valuable.” The interconnectedness of people, plants and the land sums up Martin’s perspective. He holds a PhD in Plant Science from McGill University, and an MA in Biology and BA from Carleton University. His research is focused on integrated plant production systems and applied environmental science.

The Loblaw Chair has been funded by the largest single gift ever made to OAC, a \$3,000,000 commitment from Canada’s largest food distributor. With additional support from OAC’s class of 71-72, the Chair is an important element of the College’s research, teaching and service in food, agriculture, communities and environment, and reinforces our endorsement of The BetterPlanet Project. ■

< **Ralph Martin will assume the position of inaugural Loblaw Chair in Sustainable Food Production, based in OAC’s Department of Plant Agriculture, effective August 1.**



CHANGING LIVES
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**THIS
ISSUE**

Dean’s Message	2	Hall of Fame Inductees	8
Kenneth W. Knox Fund	4	Congratulations	9
A Changing Arctic	5	Community Spirit	10
Student Achievements	6-7	Photo Contest Winners	12

>forward

Dean's Message

2



It is with anticipation and hope that we see the last days of winter – anticipation of warmer days to come, the hope of successful hockey play-offs, and finally, the imminent arrival of spring and another growing season.

At OAC, we have much to look forward to. On behalf of the College, I would like to extend a warm welcome to Dr. Ralph Martin, the newly named Loblaw Chair in Sustainable Food Production. Ralph is originally from Wallenstein, Ontario, and been a professor at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC) since 1990. He is the director of the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada and he also launched Canada's Organic Science Cluster. It takes a special kind of communicator and bridge-builder to create these kinds of networks. The chair – funded by a \$3-million gift from Loblaw, with additional funding from OAC class of '71-72 – will form the hub of OAC's research and technology transfer capacity in supporting sustainable food production systems. It is a Canadian first and unique in the world, focusing on sustainable local food and production systems and integrating education, research, practice and outreach. It is a real pleasure to welcome Ralph back to Ontario and we look forward to working with him.

Winter is a time of planning for spring, and over the course of the past season we have continued our efforts to streamline the College's operations to meet the University's funding challenges. Steady progress is being made. We continue to improve our teaching efficiencies and we have seen enrollment growth across all of our graduate, undergraduate and associate diploma programs. The Loblaw Chair is an example of our work with industry and alumni to support research. It is this type of innovative program that supports and sustains much of what OAC does. I look forward to being able to share more of these types of successes with you. ■

Robert Gordon

Dean, Ontario Agricultural College
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\$150,000 donation announced at SWAC Conference

3

At the 2011 Southwest Agricultural Conference (SWAC) held at Ridgetown campus, January 5-6, Maizex Seeds announced a gift of \$150,000 towards the construction of a new east wing for Ridgetown's Reek Building – a \$2.5 million capital project. The new wing will serve as a centre for student services and recruitment, as well as provide additional classroom space.

"We have a passion for innovation in serving the farmers of Canada and on behalf of the entire team at Maizex I'm very pleased to support this important project at the Ridgetown campus. This gift is made possible thanks to the support of Canadian growers from coast to coast," said Dave Baute (OAC '77), president of Maizex. Baute is also current chair of the Ridgetown Agri-Food Foundation.



The SWAC is a cooperative effort between the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), the Southwest Soil and Crop Improvement Association, and Ridgetown campus. This year's conference provided a forum for agribusiness leaders and supporters to share perspectives on consumer, government, bioscience opportunities and the business of agriculture.

Speaking to this year's theme, *Harvesting Successes from Research and Innovation*, the keynote address was delivered by U of G President, Alastair Summerlee. His talk, entitled *The Time is Now*, conveyed the message that successful development in agriculture has always involved innovation on the farm and in research, which together will transform agriculture in the future. ■

< **At the conference are (from left): Dave Baute; Chantal Petitclerc, paralympic champion, world record holder and recent speaker at the SWAC; and Gary Paling, Reek project campaign vice-chair.**

CFI funding supports revolutionary research

Announced January 21, the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) invested an additional \$61 million in revolutionary research at 48 Canadian universities.

Among the U of G recipients, Kris Inwood (Economics), working with John Cranfield (Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics) and Graeme Morton (History) received nearly \$375,000 for "People in Motion". The project is using data mining and other computing techniques to prepare a Canadian database to understand how experience, family circumstance and even genetic heritage affect adult health, migration and social mobility. Taking a historical perspective on issues, challenges and implications will help understand a wide range of public policy issues. CFI funding for the "People in Motion" project was matched by the provincial Ministry of Research and Innovation for a total of \$750,000. ■

New endowment honours a legacy and enriches the student experience

4

While Kenneth Knox (OAC '72), president and CEO of the Innovation Institute of Ontario, is not one to seek public recognition, his colleagues, friends and supporters have come forward to acknowledge his dedication and contributions to Ontario agriculture.



Ken Knox

It began with a surprise for Knox when a new OAC endowment in his name was unveiled at a special event at the Guelph Cutten Club on November 18. For months behind the scenes, colleagues Bruce Archibald (OAC '79), President of the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, and Bob Kalbfleisch, senior consultant and strategy specialist in the agri-food sector, quietly led efforts to honour Knox's legacy as a public servant and mentor, by gathering support to build a learning trust for tomorrow's leaders.

Knox is a graduate of Kemptville College and his career includes 27 years in the Ontario Government, working with the Youth Program, the Ontario Farm Adjustment Assistant Program, as Assistant Deputy Minister and six years as Deputy Minister. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program over 26 years ago.

The Kenneth W. Knox Fund under the OAC Learning Trust will enrich the student experience and provide opportunities for tomorrow's leaders to look beyond the boundaries of discipline to solve complex problems and rise to future challenges. It will support three annual awards (valued at a minimum of \$1000 each) in OAC for diploma, undergraduate and graduate students attending Guelph or the regional campuses in Ridgetown, Kemptville and Alfred.

On February 24, Knox was honoured by the University of Guelph, when he received an honorary doctorate at OAC's convocation ceremony.

In June, he will be inducted into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame, along with outstanding leaders Albert Maxwell Barr who served as Principal of the Kemptville Agricultural School from 1951 to 1966, and John C. Benham (OAC '51) (See Page 8). ■

OAC acknowledges leadership in capital campaign

Since its launch in 2010, the University of Guelph's BetterPlanet Project has gained momentum thanks to the support of the many people committed to improving the quality of their food, environment, health and communities. One example of leadership is a gift towards OAC's Institute for Advanced Study of Food and Agriculture Policy, a key initiative of the Department of Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics.

Andy Wilder (BSc.Agr '84) has pledged \$250,000 to the proposed institute whose members will provide independent and timely analysis of food and agricultural issues to enhance the lives and competitiveness of Canadian farmers, producers and food processors.

Wilder is a senior grain merchant for Horizon Milling, a branch of Cargill Foods that refines flour products under the Robin Hood brand. He also represents OAC on The BetterPlanet Project campaign cabinet.

For more information, see: <http://thebetterplanetproject.ca> ■

SES events explore a changing Arctic

5

17th Annual Environmental Sciences Symposium

The Changing Arctic: Past, Present and Future was the theme of the 17th Annual Environmental Sciences Symposium held January 29 at U of G's Rozanski Hall.

This student-run, non-profit event represents the interdisciplinary focus and concerns of undergraduate students in Environmental Sciences at Guelph. Brandon MacKay, a student of the Bachelor of Science (Environmental Sciences) program and symposium director, explained that this year's topic was inspired by summers he spent working in the Arctic.



▲ In a contest leading up to the symposium, students were challenged to create a video or artwork inspired by Canada's Arctic. The videos and top five pieces of art were part of the display in the concourse of Rozanski Hall.

Keynote speaker Michael Byers, Canada Research Chair in Global Politics and International Law at the University of British Columbia, presented *An Arctic in Crisis: Sovereignty and Environmental Protection in the North*.

Representatives from industry, science and social backgrounds shared their perspectives and research related to the Arctic. At other talks, topics included the future of polar bears in Hudson Bay; challenges and rewards of large-scale remediation projects in the North; how micro-organisms in the permafrost will respond to climate change; human impacts on remote Arctic and alpine lakes; and an Inuit perspective on Nunavut and the land claims agreement.

Karsten Heuer, a wildlife biologist, park ranger and author, closed the symposium with his talk *Being Caribou*. In 2003, Heuer and his filmmaker wife, Leanne Allison, spent five months following a 123,000-member Porcupine caribou herd from their Yukon winter range to Alaskan calving grounds and back, and created a documentary of their journey. ■

Kenneth Hammond Lecture

Food security in the Arctic was the topic of the Kenneth Hammond Lecture held January 28 at the U of G.

During their talk, *From Tuk to Tonga – Climate Change Is Threatening the Menu*, Stephanie Meakin, technical advisor to the Inuit Circumpolar Council, and Tiina Kurvits, current member of the Norwegian Polar Program at UNEP/GRID-Arendal, discussed how communities in the Arctic and on small developing islands are addressing food security issues caused by climate change.

"Their talk was an exploration of the commonality of challenges faced by communities in the Canadian far north and Pacific small island states," said Jonathan Newman, director of the School of Environmental Sciences (SES).

The annual lecture series, sponsored by SES and the University of Guelph, is named for Kenneth Hammond, a former member of the university Board of Governors and an advocate for environmental and resource issues and environmental education. ■

2011 OAC Leadership Conference



6

OAC students came together to discuss leadership in the university and the agri-food system at the 2011 OAC Leadership Conference held February 4-5 in Guelph. This year's theme was *Expand Your Horizons*.

Interactive workshops, panel discussions and speakers including industry members, U of G faculty and alumni focused on enhancing leadership skills. Topics included risk-taking, social media, communications, getting the competitive edge and job search success.

The keynote address at the closing banquet was delivered by Sylvain Charlebois, associate dean, research and graduate studies, College of Management and Economics.

The Leadership Conference is organized by a student committee and funded entirely through the generous support of sponsors across Ontario, as well as the OAC Dean's Office. ■



High school students “Reach Ahead” to OAC

High school students and teachers from across southwestern Ontario visited OAC for “Reach Ahead Days” March 3 and 10.



More than 100 students toured the U of G campus, met business undergraduates, attended lectures and entered a business case study competition.

The events highlighted the Department of Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics (FARE) and support the Ontario Ministry of Education's specialist high skills major (SHSM) program. Under that program, Grade 11 and 12 students focus on an economic sector to prepare for post-secondary education, apprenticeship training or work.

OAC also held a professional development workshop March 3 to connect Ontario high school teachers in the SHSM program with the School of Environmental Sciences (SES). Supported by Knowledge and Technology Transfer funding, the workshop addressed initiatives and resources that support SHSM programs. Teachers discussed best teaching practices with each other and with SES faculty. ■

▲ **Cassie Kuehni, assistant OAC Liaison Officer (right), with SHSM students from Central Peel Secondary School in Brampton during the business case study seminar at the March Reach Ahead Day.**

For more information on upcoming events, contact OAC Liaison Officer, Jason Tran at tranv@uoguelph.ca or Ext. 56812.

Student designs showcased at Guelph City Hall

7

Designs created by 58 fourth-year landscape architecture students were displayed in Guelph City Hall gallery to offer citizens, city staff, downtown merchants and the University community a glimpse into how a former prominent factory site could be redeveloped for residential and commercial use.

The six-acre brownfield site, located near downtown and next to the Speed River, was formerly the W.C. Wood manufacturing facility, which shut down last year.



“From site surveys to stakeholder meetings to design development and presentation, the project gave students a taste of city development,” said Lise Burcher (School of Environmental Design and Rural Development), who teaches the fourth-year community design course.



“This is the first time students have been involved in a brownfield project of this size. It’s also the first time students have truly collaborated with all the partners involved in a development project, including the neighbourhood association, architects, planners and representatives from the downtown businesses,” she continued. “I think we have been able to model as closely as possible the real scenario of what is involved in a development project of this magnitude.” ■

< **These designs created by landscape architecture students for the Guelph brownfield project were among those displayed at Guelph City Hall in November.**

Students selected for agri-marketing team

OAC is home to one of only two Canadian student teams participating in the 2011 Agri-Marketing Conference. Chosen for their passion for agriculture and interest in marketing and communications, eleven undergraduate students have been selected to represent the University of Guelph at the event in Kansas City, April 13-15.

Andreas Boecker (Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics), the team’s faculty advisor, is working with them as they choose an agricultural product, conduct market research, develop and write a marketing plan, and prepare a presentation in competition against other agriculture college teams from across North America.

The students are studying in a range of fields, including agricultural business, organic agriculture, marketing management and agricultural economics. Team members are: Anne Borgjink, Rebecca Hannam, Erin Harris, Leigh Hudson, Sarah McIntosh, Rebecca Richards, David Schouten, Elizabeth Schouten, Cara van Burck, Ben Versteeg and Rachel Weber. ■

Leaders selected for induction into Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame

8

The Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame Association will induct three leaders into its Hall of Fame Gallery at Country Heritage Park in Milton on June 12.

- > **Albert Maxwell Barr** (1904-1979) became the Principal of Kemptville Agricultural School in 1951. During his tenure, he was dedicated to developing student training and the school's reputation, overseeing the establishment of facilities for engineering, poultry science, home economics, the Regional Veterinary Services Lab, and a dairy building which housed milk and cheese research laboratories. After retiring from Kemptville in 1966, Barr became an advisor in animal husbandry to CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) in Uganda and Trinidad.
- > **John C. Benham** (Rockwood, Ontario) graduated from OAC in 1951 and became a dairy farmer and breeder. He was an early adopter of new crop production practices and helped to educate others across Ontario by regularly hosting at his farm Crop Science and Animal Science students from OAC, 4-H clubs, judging competitions and OVC researchers investigating the links between nutrition and herd health issues. Described as an agriculturalist, an environmentalist and an economist, he was awarded the OAC Centennial Medal in 1974.
- > **Kenneth W. Knox** (Blackstock, Ontario) graduated from OAC in 1972 and joined the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. He was the driver behind the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program, and was directly involved with the creation of Agricorp as a non-governmental organization to manage crop insurance and other risk management programs. A further result of his vision was Agriculture in the Classroom, now known as Ontario Agri-Food Education, Inc. He continues his involvement in Ontario agriculture today as Chair of the Departmental Audit Committee of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and advisor to agricultural associations. ■



^ Happy Cloud sculpture, Arboretum

Upcoming EVENTS

March

- 25-26** 53rd Annual OAC Curling Bonspiel, Guelph Curling Club
- 27** Campus Day for Applicants, Guelph

April

- 25** Applicant Information Day, Ridgetown
- 27-28** Interaction for Grade 10/11 Students, Guelph

May

- 2-6** Leadership through Equine-Assisted Personal Discovery, LEAD Program, Kemptville Campus
- 12** Guelph Science Olympics
- 16-19** Spring Academic Open Houses, Guelph

June

- 7-8** Climate Change and the Implications for Plant Science Symposium
- 13-14** OAC Summer Convocation
- 17-18** Alumni Weekend

August

- 21-24** Delivery of Functionality in Complex Food Systems – Physically-Inspired Approaches from the Nanoscale to the Microscale. 4th International Symposium.

For upcoming events, also see:
www.oac.uoguelph.ca/news/events.cfm

Congratulations

- > **Wayne Caldwell** (School of Environmental Design and Rural Development) has been selected by his peers from across Canada to assume the position of President, Association of Canadian University Planning.
- > **Stan Eby** (ADA '64) was selected by the U of G Alumni Association as the 2010 Alumnus of Honour. Eby is an agribusiness expert, farmer and volunteer. He was president of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association during the Walkerton water crisis in 2000 and worked diligently to unite the livestock industry and uphold the reputation of the farming community.
- > Plant Agriculture weed researchers were honoured at the 65th North Central Weed Science Society (NCWSS) annual meeting in Lexington, Kentucky, December 2010. **Darren Robinson** received the Distinguished Achievement Award – Young Scientist. **Peter Sikkema** was the recipient of the Distinguished Achievement Award – Research. They are the first Canadians to receive these awards from the NCWSS.
- > Graduate students - **Thomas Gludovacz** (Plant Agriculture) and **Erica Ferguson**, **Stephanie Lalonde**, and **Katherine Procter** (Environmental Design and Rural Development) - were among the 2010 recipients of High Quality Personnel (HQP) scholarships through the U of G-OMAFRA partnership.
- > **Stew Hilts**, retired faculty member and former chair of Land Resource Science, was nominated by OAC and named a 2010 Conservation Pioneer at the A.D. Latornell Symposium in November. The award honours individuals who have demonstrated life-long innovation, leadership and dedication to the field of conservation.
- > **Sean Kelly** (School of Environmental Design and Rural Development) was the 2010 recipient of the U of G Faculty Association Distinguished Teaching Award for OAC. Annually, one faculty member within each College of the U of G is selected for excellence in teaching and learning.
- > **Jonathan Newman** (School of Environmental Sciences) has been selected by the University of Albany Alumni Association as the recipient of the 2011 Excellence in Science and Technology Award. The award will be presented at a gala on April 30.
- > **Larry Schaeffer** (Animal and Poultry Science) has been awarded the Hermann von Nathusius medal, the highest honour the German Society for Animal Production bestows upon an individual committed to national or international animal breeding. The presentation took place at the 2010 World Congress on Genetics Applied to Livestock Production in Leipzig, Germany.
- > **Katie Wood**, PhD student in Animal and Poultry Science, is one of 12 students around the world to receive an International Stockmen's Educational Foundation Travel Fellowship. Wood used the fellowship to attend the 2011 International Livestock Congress in Denver in January. ■

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OAC Dean's Team competes in annual fundraiser

10



The 5th annual Tractor Tug for Tots, organized with the support of the Student Federation of OAC, was held November 24. The OAC Dean's Team (at left) was among the groups from the university community, the city of Guelph and surrounding areas and collected \$6000 in pledges for pulling tractors 100 feet across a finish line on Reynolds Walk. The money raised this year benefited the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides, specifically for the program which provides assistance dogs for autistic children. ■

2010 United Way Campaign

OAC exceeded its 2010 United Way goal by collecting more than \$82,000 across its units and regional campuses, contributing to the U of G campaign which raised more than \$550,000 in gifts and pledges for the greater Guelph community.

An appreciation event was held in December for the many staff, students and faculty volunteers who run the University's annual fundraising drive. The Co-Chairs Award for Special Merit was presented to Jim Atkinson (Animal and Poultry Science) who previously served three years as campus co-chair and worked this year with retiree and faculty groups. Alan Sullivan (Plant Agriculture) began his term as co-chair for the 2010 campaign.

A highlight of the volunteer event was the announcement of results from the third College Idol competition organized by the Office of Research as a campus-wide initiative. Representing OAC, Chris Earley, an interpretive biologist and education coordinator at the Arboretum, was this year's winner. ■



▲ Chris Earley's bird call act, one of eight performances at a noon luncheon on October 28, raised the most dollar votes for United Way.

Guelph Organic Conference celebrates 30 years

11

Generation Organic was the theme of the 30th Annual Guelph Organic Conference held January 27 - 30 at the University of Guelph.

Started as an afternoon seminar by graduate students, the conference and organic trade show has grown over three decades to attract some 2,000 people to campus.

This year, visitors attended seminars and interactive workshops on organic branding and marketing, crop planning, edible weeds and forest gardening, as well as exhibits by organic producers, retailers, consumers, researchers and students. Other conference highlights included an organic expo tasting fair with more than 150 exhibitors. ■



▲ At the conference, OAC and the Guelph Centre for Urban Organic Farming promoted educational programs and research related to organic agriculture.

Faculty Retirements

Congratulations to three OAC faculty members who retired at the end of 2010.

- > **John Walton** (Animal and Poultry Science) is known for his research into reproductive management and physiology of domestic animals, particularly dairy, cattle and sheep. In addition to his teaching, he served as chair of undergraduate curriculum program committees. Notably, he also provided leadership as head coach for U of G student teams competing at the annual North American Inter-Collegiate Dairy Challenge. Walton joined the University in 1979.
- > **E. Ann Clark** (Plant Agriculture) offered 27 years of service to the University of Guelph. Her research interests focused on organic and pasture production systems, and in risk assessment in genetically modified crops. In addition to her teaching, she, together with Paul Voroney (School of Environmental Sciences), coordinated the Organic Agriculture major offered through the Bachelor of Science (Agriculture) degree program.
- > **Larry Erickson** (Plant Agriculture) joined the faculty at Guelph in 1989. He specialized in genetic engineering of crop plants, particularly for medical and veterinary applications, and more recently focused on the utilization of crops for industrial applications, specifically materials for autoparts, packaging and construction. He is an inventor/co-inventor of several patents, and serves as Research Program Director of Bioeconomy-Industrial Uses through the OMAFRA-U of G partnership. ■



OAC Photo Contest Winners

12

Thank you to everyone who submitted pictures. More than 200 images capturing visions of a better planet were submitted by U of G students, faculty, staff and alumni for OAC's first photo contest held throughout October. Entries were evaluated on content, image quality, creativity and relevance to one of four categories: Food, Agriculture, Communities and Environment. Contest winners were:



Food

Ron and Deborah Riddell
U of G/OAC Alumni



Agriculture

Linda Slits
BSc(Agr) student, Agricultural Economics



Communities

Silvia Sarapura
PhD student, Rural Studies,
Environmental Design
& Rural Development



Environment

Yvonne Su
BAH student, International
Development

Each winner received a \$75 gift certificate from Future Shop, and their work is being featured in a variety of print- and web-based promotional materials for OAC.

Thanks are also extended to Chris Earley (Arboretum) and Mike Peppard (Plant Agriculture) who offered their expertise in the judging process. ■