

## OAC Students Study Soils in Brazil

Thirteen OAC students travelled to Brazil in April and May to study soils in tropical ecosystems. The trip provided students with first-hand knowledge of how soils form a critical part of an ecosystem.

The students, led by Profs. Richard Heck and Paul Voroney, School of Environmental Sciences, travelled across three of Brazil's five bioclimatic regions: Mata Atlantica (Atlantic rainforest), Cerrado (tropical savannah) and Caatinga (arid).

The group spent two weeks visiting research centres, field sites and geological formations with the professors' Brazilian colleagues. They also paired with three universities and received special access to a range of sites.

"It's a tremendous learning experience," says Heck. "The students' vision of the world becomes broader. They realize that environmental reality is closely linked to real issues like land use and social issues. This kind of international travel is always a learning experience."

The trip received funding from the OAC Learning Trust, which is generously supported by OAC alumni and the OAC Alumni Foundation. By offsetting travel, food and accommodation expenses, the funding helped save each student about 10 per cent of the trip's cost.

To learn more, visit [www.uoguelph.ca/oac/brazil-soils-trip](http://www.uoguelph.ca/oac/brazil-soils-trip).

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[www.oac.uoguelph.ca/alumni](http://www.oac.uoguelph.ca/alumni) | Summer 2013



The OAC Class of '53 poses for a photo during their second year.

## A Story Worth Telling: Chronicles of OAC '53

In September 1949, a group of 89 young men and four young women arrived at the Ontario Agricultural College. Sixty of the students came from rural Ontario, 28 came from the city and five were recent arrivals from Britain, the Netherlands and South America.

Tuition was \$50 per term; room and board was \$10 per week, including three meals a day, seven days a week. All of the students lived in the same residence and took the same courses for the first two years.

Although their time at OAC mostly involved study, they also took part in extracurricular activities, including their share of pranks. Rumours still exist of a motorcycle roaring down the floors of Mills Hall and a homemade cannon booming out of the windows. Then there was the prank in fourth year, when a cleverly rearranged sign directed Junior Farmer girls, who were visiting the college, to the men's residence for their medical examinations. This is where the foundations were laid for the Class of '53's cohesiveness and spirit.

The class of 77 men and one woman graduated in the spring of 1953 with a bachelor of science in agriculture. Many of them soon had multiple offers of employment: 27 went into business; 16 joined the government; 15 became schoolteachers; nine, university professors; eight, farmers; two, clergy; one, an entrepreneur; and one, a homemaker.

The class members made many contributions to society throughout their careers. Two became vice-presidents of multinational corporations. One developed an oil company. They also made major contributions internationally.

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CHANGING LIVES  
 IMPROVING LIFE

UNIVERSITY  
 of GUELPH



**Peter Warmels, far left, and OAC dean Rob Gordon (holding trophy), present the OAC Class of '73 team with the Year '51 OAC Trophy at the OAC Alumni Association's 2013 curling bonspiel. Second from left, Gary Houghton, Tom Ford, Richard Wright, Robert Anderson and Glenn Hayter (not pictured) also received the Dr. N.R. Richards Trophy.**

## Spring is a Time for Renewal

Hello to all our alumni. The winter and spring have continued to be an active time for us both on and off campus. At Cocktails and Careers Night, we saw many students, alumni and staff partake in excellent dialogue on future plans, opportunities and directions. Most noticeable was the enthusiasm about the many options available to OAC graduating students in furthering their studies and employment. Thanks to the dean, Rob Gordon, for continuing to support this successful event.

In March we enjoyed another boisterous day of fun and competitive curling at the Guelph Curling Club. With another sold-out event, the OAC Alumni Association continues to consider other types of events that we can offer alumni. Bringing friends and alumni together is important to share the Aggie spirit that thrives within us.

The upcoming AGM, jointly held with the OAC Alumni Foundation in the Science Complex, will be another great event for camaraderie. I believe an in-depth review of the OAC Alumni Association's strategic plan will be of particular interest. More information following the AGM will be available at [www.uoguelph.ca/oac/alumni](http://www.uoguelph.ca/oac/alumni).

The OAC Alumni Association will also recognize the departure of two advisory council members, Anna llnyckyj and Matt Grant, after completing their three-year terms. Laura MacDonald, a long-standing volunteer with the association, will also be departing. We thank all three for their commitment to the association and to OAC.

Overall, it is very gratifying to see a resurgence in alumni volunteers coming from recent graduating classes. I hope that this will continue. Youth attracts youth, providing renewal and innovative ideas complementing the history of long-serving volunteers who continue to support the association.

**Peter Warmels, B.Sc. '79  
OAC Alumni Association President**



## OAC Celebrates a Fantastic Year of Support

After more than a half-century, the OAC Alumni Foundation's proud legacy is its investment in the leaders of today and tomorrow.

Over the past year, with the support of generous donors, the foundation provided more than \$76,000 in scholarship funding and support for the OAC Learning Trust, outstanding faculty and extension, special lectures, Golden Anniversary classes, College Royal and the *OAC Alumni News*. An additional \$20,000 directly supported the college's student liaison initiatives.

To align with current student needs and donor wishes, we also approved several new and restructured awards, each named for remarkable past and current members of the OAC family. Norman McCollum established a dairy

science scholarship. The Bruce Christie award in communications supports the student Canadian Agri-Marketing Association team in international competition. The W.S. Young award will support a student communications intern at OAC. The George Raithby Memorial Lecture became a student travel grant in the Department of Animal and Poultry Science. The T.R. Hilliard award in agricultural extension will become an annual gift to the OAC Learning Trust. Through the foundation, each of these awards makes important contributions to the overall learning experience of OAC students.

It has been a tremendous personal honour to serve as chair these past two years, and to work alongside such a dedicated team of volunteers, all incredibly dedicated to the college and committed to investing in its students.

I wish to pay particular tribute to our hard-working past chair, Bruce Christie, ADA '58, who has served the foundation for many years as an exemplary fundraiser and counsellor.

It's my pleasure to introduce the new foundation chair, Mark Ostrowski, B.Sc. (Agr.) '79, who also has an MBA from the Schulich School of Business at York University. With broad-based skills in strategic planning and marketing, he will provide leadership for shaping the future as the foundation continues to focus on its core mission and unique strengths.

Yours in Aggie spirit,

**Linda Hruska**  
**B.Sc.(Agr.) '85 and M.Agr. '88**  
**Chair, OAC Alumni Foundation**

For more information on becoming a member of the OAC Alumni Foundation, or to donate to the foundation's Student Liaison Initiative, contact Tara Collins, OAC alumni advancement manager, at 519-824-4120, Ext. 56842, or [tcoll02@uoguelph.ca](mailto:tcoll02@uoguelph.ca).



**From left, Rob McLaughlin, former dean of OAC; Rich Moccia, associate vice-president, research (strategic partnerships); and Rob Gordon, OAC dean, network at the Good Food Innovation Awards presentation.**

## The Art of Networking

OAC alumni always comment that a main draw of our alumni events is the opportunity to connect. I believe the value of building and nurturing these connections is something that everyone in the OAC family shares, and the skill of networking is one we continue to foster in our students.

OAC alumni, faculty and staff aim to provide students with the opportunity to expand their networks, meet new people and learn new things. These skills will benefit students in job prospecting, in their research endeavours and in their social life.

We emphasize networking as a skill to our students in many ways.

Over the past few months, for example, OAC has hosted multiple events giving students a chance to network and expand their connections.

At Cocktails and Careers Night in February, alumni and students mixed and mingled with the goal of giving current students the opportunity to ask alumni questions about career prospecting, employer expectations and life post-graduation. There was a

tremendous turnout at the event, and I want to thank the many alumni who graciously donated their time and experience to benefit our students.

At College Royal, an annual student-run, campus-wide event in March, OAC students once again took leading roles, showcasing their capacity to connect and communicate with the larger community.

A value-added component to life at OAC is the province-wide friendships that students nurture. Having campuses in Ridgetown, Guelph, Kemptville and Alfred allows our students to meet their peers from across the province. Events like the OAC Winter Games, held in February, give students from all campuses the opportunity to meet, share perspectives, enjoy friendly competition and make new connections.

It has always been an important focus of OAC to graduate students who have built strong networks during their time at the University. We continue to reinforce the value of building connections, one graduating class at a time. I know that our students leave OAC with a wider group of contacts and a stronger capacity to make connections.

**Robert Gordon, PhD '96**  
**OAC Dean**

# Out and About with OAC

We hope you enjoy this collection of photos from events and special projects, as well as photos submitted by OAC alumni.



**1** ■ The Class of 2013 poses with honorary president Rene Van Acker at the annual Student Federation of OAC Good Times Banquet and Awards Night.

**2** ■ Like father, like son. James Peter Davidson, Agr.(Dip.) '72 from Kemptville College, with his father, James Thomas Davidson, B.Sc.(Agr.) '46.

**3** ■ From left, Julia James, Gregory Pate, Chad Garrod and Liz Francis, all Class of 2006, which won the Spirit Award for the most classmates in attendance at the OAC Alumni Association's 2013 curling bonspiel.

**4** ■ OAC alumni and current students networked at the student-run Cocktails and Careers Night in February.

**5** ■ Rene Van Acker, left, OAC associate dean, external relations, presents Mike Cowbrough, M.Sc. '01, OMAFRA weed management lead, with the T. R. Hilliard Distinguished Agricultural Extension Award. The annual award, named for the late T. R. (Dick) Hilliard, was established by the OAC Alumni Foundation in recognition of people making outstanding contributions to agricultural extension in Ontario.

**6** ■ Kemptville Campus recently produced three 15-second commercials that ran on CTV Ottawa. The ads promote the new food science and quality management diploma program, and the equine care and management diploma program. Watch the videos at [www.youtube.com/UofGuelphOAC](http://www.youtube.com/UofGuelphOAC).



**7** ■ From left, food science undergrads Lizzie Chan, Lauren Jans and Dave Jackson presented a milk-tasting session at the 2013 College Royal.

**8** ■ Danny Jefferies, an environmental science grad student, explored the student-created “mine” with 2013 College Royal visitors.

**9** ■ Food science undergrads Carina Sue-Chu, left, and Nicole van der Boom were this year’s milkshake co-ordinators. The 2013 College Royal specialty flavours were lime and maple.

**10** ■ The OAC '95A team won the “Best Dressed” Trophy at the OAC Alumni Association’s 2013 curling bonspiel.

**11** ■ From left, Katelyn Spence, Liz Maloney and Mike Whiting, a Ridgetown agriculture diploma student who volunteered for the day, answered questions and kept animals and visitors safe in Old MacDonald’s New Farm at the 2013 College Royal.

## RIDGETOWN

### Record-Breaking Crowd at Southwest Ag



Paul Sayers, Class of '98

More than 1,700 field-crop producers, agribusiness representatives, researchers, students and alumni packed the Ridgetown Campus Jan. 3 and 4 for “The Future of Agriculture,” presented by the Southwest Agricultural Conference.

Paul Sayers, Agr.(Dip.) '98, says the conference was a great opportunity to come back to campus. “As an alumnus, it’s great to return to campus for two days for one of Ontario’s premier agricultural education programs. While attending this event, I see many Ridgetown and Guelph alumni in various capacities, including conference speakers, trade show representatives, planning committee volunteers and conference participants.”

An enthusiastic team from OMAFRA, Ridgetown Campus, and the Southwest Soil and Crop Improvement Associations put together a dynamic program of speakers, a trade show, research posters and a packed reception. Slides and audio recordings from the sessions are available at [www.southwestagconference.ca](http://www.southwestagconference.ca).

Adds Sayers: “Working in agribusiness sales and service, I gain a lot from the event, especially information that will be critically important to my clients: farm producers. It’s great to see the continued success and growth of the event.”

By Liz Meidlinger

## KEMPTVILLE

### OAC Winter Games Recap



Kemptville takes on Guelph during an Aggie basketball game.



Kemptville students on the soccer team celebrate their victory.

The 2013 OAC Winter Games held at Kemptville Campus in February was another great success. More than 200 student athletes from all four campuses competed in badminton, basketball, bowling, curling, ice and floor hockey, indoor soccer and volleyball. Although Kemptville won the most medals, everyone who competed had a great time. The medals were awarded during the closing banquet, which was held in the W.B. George Centre.

The purpose of the OAC Winter Games is to foster closer ties among

students from all four campuses.

The team spirit displayed during the games and loud cheers heard during the closing banquet were evidence that this goal was achieved.

Special thanks go to the organizers and volunteers, team coaches, referees, score keepers and the many fans who supported their respective teams. Another thank you goes to Chartwells’ staff for feeding the hungry appetites during the event. The highlights of the weekend were posted on a Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/oac2013](http://www.facebook.com/oac2013)) for all to enjoy.

## CAMPUS D'ALFRED

# A Rural Innovator



Joël Béland is pictured with his bean grinder.

Joël Béland, in partnership with his brothers, owns one of the most hip and happening coffee shops east of Ottawa. Located in Rockland, Ont., Café de Joël is a place where the young and old gather around a good cup of coffee. The café serves fair trade coffee and roasts its own beans on site.

The idea to serve fair trade coffee was inspired by Béland's urban travels and the impact of his courses in agriculture and rural development at the University of Guelph, Campus d'Alfred. He has always had an affection for rural life because of his family's influence. Living outside the urban circuit, Béland saw his grandparents farm the land and his mother engage in exploratory farming models.

In an apartment in Ottawa, he developed his expertise as a master roaster using a tiny kitchen stove.

The growing success of his artisanal roasting led him to establish his roasting operation in the garage of the family home, but once again the demand for his delicious product grew. With help from his family and his brothers Louis and Nicholas, his idea to open a café took shape.

Café de Joël opened in June 2011 and expanded a year later. The café is a popular place for the community to meet. Béland also offers his customers a window into the art of making great coffee. He is well known in the community and by local business owners, making the café's success even more apparent.

His creativity and independence was nurtured at Campus d'Alfred. He graduated in 2004 and went on to build a rural community hub that serves fantastic cups of coffee.

By Nicole Tessier

## CAMPUS D'ALFRED

### Un innovateur en milieu rural

Joël Béland est, aujourd'hui, en partenariat avec ses frères, propriétaire du café le plus prisé à l'est d'Ottawa. Situé à Rockland, le Café de Joël bouillonne d'idées de jeunes et moins jeunes qui se rassemblent autour d'un bon café. C'est lui, Joël, qui le torréfie sur place.

L'idée du café équitable servi dans son entreprise vient davantage de ses périples urbains et de l'impact de ses cours en Agriculture et développement rural à l'Université de Guelph-Campus d'Alfred.

La toile de fond, celle de son affection pour le milieu rural, lui provient de sa famille. Habitant en dehors du circuit urbain, Joël a vu ses grands-parents cultiver la terre et sa mère s'engager dans des modèles maraichers exploratoires.

La période de « l'expérience café vert » se passe dans un appartement à Ottawa où il acquiert l'expertise comme maître torréfacteur avec le poêle de la cuisine comme brûleur. Le succès grandissant de la brûlerie artisanale font en sorte qu'il établira sa brûlerie dans le garage de la maison familiale. Encore une fois, l'espace ne suffit plus pour la demande. C'est donc en famille, avec ses frères Louis et Nicholas, que le projet d'un café se dessine.

Le Café de Joël ouvre ses portes en juin 2011 et un an plus tard doit agrandir l'espace d'accueil pour la clientèle. Le Café, c'est un « happening » communautaire avec un programme de divertissement. C'est aussi une fenêtre sur l'art de fabriquer du très bon café. Au gré des ententes commerciales affluentes et aux nombreux friands du café, le succès est palpable.

Le système scolaire au secondaire n'a pu accrocher la créativité et l'indépendance du jeune Joël. L'Université de Guelph-Campus d'Alfred en a produit un diplômé en 2004.

Par Nicole Tessier

## Continued from page 1

Of particular significance was the development of small-scale farming methods, which the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations promoted in Asia. Also, one of the first successful alternatives to mould-board plowing occurred on a '53 grad's farm in Oxford County and over the years no-tillage methods were developed.

The class has also made major contributions to OAC. Grateful for the guidance they received as students, they have a strong desire to give back. In addition to a number of small projects, their first substantial gift was in the name of their honorary president, Ross Cavers. About \$150,000 from this gift has supported students studying

abroad for a semester. During their 50th anniversary, the class raised more than \$60,000 to boost student recruitment and enrolment. In total the classmates have donated an amazing \$870,000.

The classmates are also committed to keeping in touch. They print a newsletter every year and hold an annual reunion. This year, the Class of '53 will celebrate its 60th anniversary, and they're looking forward to a "bang-up" party during Alumni Weekend, joined by MAC '53. As proud members of OAC and the University of Guelph family, this class certainly has a story worth telling.

To read the full story, visit [www.uoguelph.ca/oac/a-story-worth-telling](http://www.uoguelph.ca/oac/a-story-worth-telling).



From left, Murray Bancroft, Murray Miller, Glenn Rowett and Brad Schneller, all Class of '53, participated in the OAC Alumni Association's 2013 curling bonspiel in the competitive category and were the oldest team in attendance.

## Are You Following @UofGuelphOAC?

If you're on Twitter, be sure to follow [@UofGuelphOAC](https://twitter.com/UofGuelphOAC) for updates on student accomplishments, alumni stories, research news, campus updates and upcoming events. Following [@UofGuelphOAC](https://twitter.com/UofGuelphOAC) is a great way to stay in touch with the college. Tweets are by Stephanie Craig, OAC communications manager.

## Upcoming Events

- May 16:** OAC AA/AF combined AGM
- June 14 and 15:** Alumni Weekend at the University of Guelph
- Sept. 6:** OAC Alumni Association golf tournament at the Ariss Valley Golf and Country Club

For more information, please contact Tara Collins at 519-824-4120, Ext. 56842, or [tcolli02@uoguelph.ca](mailto:tcolli02@uoguelph.ca).

## 2012/2013 OAC Alumni Association Board of Directors

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### OAC Alumni News – Summer 2013

A publication for the alumni and friends of the Ontario Agricultural College, University of Guelph.

Contact *OAC Alumni News* by emailing Tara Collins at [tcolli02@uoguelph.ca](mailto:tcolli02@uoguelph.ca) or visit [www.uoguelph.ca/oac/alumni](http://www.uoguelph.ca/oac/alumni).

