

# Galt resignation 'unfortunate', but MPP can't help

By Bill Eekhof

Northumberland MPP Joan Fawcett calls Doug Galt's forced resignation as warden "unfortunate," but says she can't do much to challenge it at Queen's Park.

"The fact Doug doesn't want to pursue it makes it tough for me to," she said in an interview last week.

Galt resigned Tuesday as county warden on the urging of deputy minister of agriculture Ruth Burak.

Burak said in an interview Galt's political activities had

become too time consuming for him to fulfill his duties as head of the Agriculture Ministry's veterinary lab in Brighton.

As a provincial employee, she also found his job as head of the county government had placed him in a conflict of interest with his professional activities.

Galt says he is between a "rock and a hard place" and has no wish to pursue a confrontation with his employer.

Fawcett's office has received inquiries about the Agriculture Ministry's ultimatum — that

Galt could not remain warden and a government employee — but said she really can't do much.

The Public Services Act is quite clear in what constitutes conflict of interest, she said.

New legislation which would give more political freedom to public servants may not be passed in the current session of the legislature, Fawcett said.

In an interview, Agriculture Minister Elmer Buchanan hinted that Galt's role as warden might have been freer from conflict under the proposed law.

In the meantime, Cramahe Township has sent a letter to Buchanan and Burak, demanding an explanation as to why Galt was forced out as warden.

He subsequently chose to quit as Cramahe reeve, saying he felt he could not fulfill this function properly without violating conflict of interest restrictions.

Cramahe administrator Gerry Morrison said Galt is still technically reeve because his resignation was never accepted. Council won't replace him until it gets a

response from the ministry, Morrison said.

Acting warden Bill Petherick said the county considered the possibility of not accepting Galt's resignation, but rejected the idea when Galt made it clear he wouldn't return as warden.

"Galt feels there isn't any use in fighting this," Petherick said. "His job is at stake otherwise. It's unfortunate."

A new warden is scheduled to be selected Wednesday to fill the balance of Galt's term. It expires in December.



Fawcett: can't help Galt

# Cuts in provincial grants cause pain at county

By Bill Eekhof

The province's pain sure isn't the county's gain.

Cutbacks announced by Queen's Park are likely to cost

Northumberland \$67,000 in provincial grants, forcing it to look at even more belt-tightening measures.

The provincial government's sweeping measures to control its spiralling deficit include

cuts in most areas, including unconditional grants to municipalities.

Northumberland was counting on \$612,000 this year in those grants, but

county treasurer Don O'Neill says the province's "big hit" is likely to reduce this by 11 per cent.

That figure is one O'Neill has based on preliminary documents from Queen's Park about the mini-budget.

"They're downloading everything onto the local tax base," he said in a recent interview.

"We've cut back the fat, muscle and now we're down to the bone."

It isn't known yet where the county will make up for the shortfall, O'Neill said.

This year's county budget, completed last month, increased taxes by six per cent on average.

The \$67,000 cut roughly equals the amount another one-per-cent tax increase would have brought in.

County finance committee chief Ian Angus says the budget cannot be re-opened.

Already lean county departments will have to become a little leaner in spots, he advised.

"We are trying to keep everything going efficiently with the least amount of money, but in the meantime we must cut \$67,000," he said.

Angus suggested this could be achieved by cutting out a county council session in the fall, or reducing the frequency of committee meetings. County politicians get paid a *per diem* rate for attending those meetings.

The cut in grant money also means going back to various departments and cutting out "\$3,000 and \$5,000 amounts" here and there, he said.

"They can add up."

# Apple Route won't focus

By Eileen Argyris

The Apple Route will "not be strictly tied to apples" said Cramahe Councillor Howard Whaley last week.

Whaley is Cramahe's representative on a committee that is working on developing the concept of a tourism route through eastern Northumberland, similar to a Wine Route that has been successful in the Niagara Region.

Whaley told council that the people involved with developing the so-called Apple Route are seeking primarily to create a tourist attraction and will use any device that looks promising, with apples as the

focus, but not overlooking heritage and other attractions that may be available.

Dana Johnston of Colborne has been selected as chairman of the planning committee, he added.

At its initial meeting April 28, the committee laid out the route, beginning at the Big Apple in the west and finishing at Highway 33 in the east, or vice versa, depending on the flow of traffic.

If the flow of the traffic is easterly, motorists will be able to hook up with the Loyalist Parkway and continue east. To the west, there will be a branch trip running from Colborne through Wicklow,

where some of the area's significant orchards, such as Deleeuw's and Knight's, are situated.

"We hope to have people attend the committee if they

## only on apples: committee

want a place to be designated buide motorists along the on the (tourist) map.

A brochure outlining the attractions of the area is planned, as well as cassette tapes that will be available to

Whaley.

The next meeting of the Apple Route committee will be held in the municipal building in Brighton beginning at 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 26.

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