

Passing the torch

The year has gone by so quickly and now I am passing the torch to President Elect Helen MacCormack.

It has been an enjoyable year and certainly following in the footsteps of Norm Paget eased the transition because he had done much to pave the way for me.

What will I miss the most? I guess it will be presenting awards and recognition on behalf of the Chamber. It was such a pleasure listening to speeches from recipients from the youthful group that was involved with Junior Achievement,

to Citizens of the Year in Georgetown and Acton and of course the Annual Gala Awards ceremony where heartfelt speeches told wonderful stories of humble beginnings leading to successful organizations.

Without these businesses, small and large, our business community and indeed the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce could not exist.

Of course I must take this oppor-

tunity as well to thank a most competent and professional staff that runs the Chamber on a day to day basis. They are the people behind the Board of Directors that help us to maintain its success and continuity.

There were 69 members who volunteered their time to chair and sit on committees, to make sure that events ran smoothly and to help our membership with information, networking and taking advantage of all the Chamber has to offer.

People ask me how it feels to be moving on and I reply, "it's a bitter sweet ending". Bitter only in that it's over as President and I will miss what I loved the most about it. Sweet because I have made a contribution and will continue to do so as Past President. My involvement in committee work will also continue.

So it's not an ending, it's another beginning and I look forward to what the future holds.

*Wendy Hue, PCC, CSP
President,
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**From
the
Boardroom**

**Wendy
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President**



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The Business of Farming

By Marnie Hughes,
Communication Artistry

One of the most common remarks you might hear about the attractions of the Halton Hills area is the unique blend of rural and urban spaces. We are fortunate to have the luxury of conveniences at our fingertips with the natural beauty and fresh air of our agricultural areas. As you travel the highways of Ontario you are bound to encounter signs that say, "If you ate today, thank a farmer" or some similar sentiment. Perhaps we do take our farmers for granted. Do we embrace them for the contribution they make to our society, or do we pass them by without a second glance just assuming that they will always provide what we will always need?

Sitting down with Jeff Nurse of Nurseland Farms on Trafalgar Road was an eye-opening experience for me. Even with years of living in rural communities, I was reminded of the long hours and hard work that go into the life of a farmer. It was refreshing to review the business of farming with a man who had done it all his life and had decades of experience to share.

A typical day at Nurseland Farms would start with an early morning trip to the barn for the first of two daily milking sessions. There are some 35 to 40 milking Holsteins currently at the farm as well as some Clydesdale horses. During the milking, Jeff and his wife Kenda are able to check over each animal for any unusual health issues that can arise overnight. This personal attention is imperative to keeping the herd strong and free from disease. The milk is shipped locally to Neilson's.

Running a farm includes a wide range of activities to ensure the success of the operation. There are schedules for

vaccinations and breeding cycles. There is ongoing maintenance for equipment, machinery and buildings. Growing of crops for the animals includes planning and field work. Nutritional balance for all livestock is reviewed and any necessary vitamin or mineral supplements are added as needed. Membership in one or more associations keeps the farmer abreast of current regulations and legislation and also gives him a voice when lobbying becomes necessary.

One of the enjoyable components of farming for Jeff is bringing the calves and heifers to local fairs or entering them in competitions. This can be one of the best venues to showcase purebred livestock that he may wish to sell. Breeding the animals requires a keen eye and knowledge of the creatures attributes to select a bull that would complement the characteristics of the heifer to be bred. There is also a registration process required and records to be kept when selling purebred livestock.

To keep a farm operating in the black, one of the biggest challenges is to keep costs down. There is often a fine line whether you choose to purchase a new piece of equipment for a large capital outlay, or whether you try and keep an older piece of equipment operating with mounting repair expenses. To keep the farm as self-sufficient as possible, Nurseland farms grow feed and alfalfa crops that are required by their livestock. In past years they have grown other cash crops such as soybeans. For additional income, Nurseland has started a Christmas tree cutting operation. Christmas trees can be planted at the same time as other crops and no new equipment purchases were necessary. It's a joy for Jeff to participate in that wonderful family tradition of selecting

and cutting down the family Christmas tree.

The freedom of working the hours you want while making daily decisions for yourself is an attractive part of the job. It is hard work with long hours, however, and you really need to love it to stay in it. It can be difficult for someone to get into farming from scratch if they didn't have land or equipment in their family. Sadly, many who do come from this situation often want to move on to more lucrative pursuits.

The business of farming has ups and downs like any other. As long as there are people like Jeff and Kenda Nurse committed to the traditions of farming while remaining flexible to new opportunities, Halton Hills will continue to enjoy a refreshing urban and rural mix.



**Jeff Nurse of Nurseland Farms
enjoying a quiet moment.**