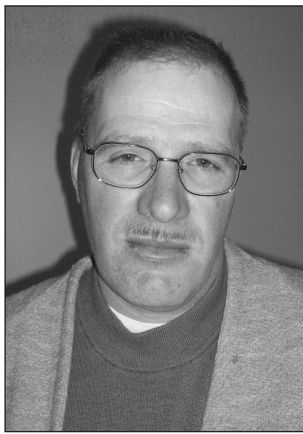


ECFA elects new executive

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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BERNARD NELSON

The president of the ECFA works with the board and acts on its decisions, which represents the interests of 1,500 local members. The president also works as a media liaison and is responsible for making presentations to municipal councils on land and environmental issues.

Local farmers Richard Pearce and Tony Unholzer were also chosen as vice-presidents of the ECFA.

Outgoing ECFA president Julien Papineau said the position means "making sure agriculture's voice is present."

Papineau, who has spent the past three years as ECFA president, will now serve as the OFA's provincial director for Essex County East.

The OFA has 103 directors, with two representing Essex County.

After the meeting, Papineau reflected on some of his accomplishments as president.

"During the Agriculture Discovery Tour in June, we were able to meet with a lot

of politicians and get our message out about the farm situation. Unfortunately it wasn't a good situation with the farm crisis, but it did get the support," Papineau said. "We made presentations to municipalities and the county and got their support. We also engaged the provincial and federal governments to recognize the situation we're in."

Papineau said if the province introduced a risk management program it would help to resolve the current farm income crisis. The commodity-specific support program would trigger payments semi-annually whenever prices for a six-month period fall below a

commodity's selected support price. The Ontario Grain and Oilseed Group introduced the option in June 2005 as a replacement for Market Revenue Insurance.

"We need food security in the long term and for our rural communities to be vibrant so we some programs to support our farmers," Papineau said.

"Farmers need to cover their cost of production. That's what we're really asking for. We're not pricing in any big profits here.

"Farmers have been in a negative income for too many years, and we need to come out of it," Papineau said. "We're right at the bottom."

The former ECFA president said Essex County is losing some efficient farmers.

"There are good farmers who are packing it in and not looking back on it," he said. "It's rural Ontario that's going to be the loser in that situation. We've got a lot of talent and we've got to hold on, and we've got to attract new people into agricul-

ture."

Postcard Campaign

Paul Mistele, vice-president of OFA, said the group started a postcard campaign about five months ago to petition federal Minister of Agriculture Chuck Strahl about "the worst farm income crisis in history."

The campaign is asking for a predictable and bankable program for all farmers.

"It's just part of an overhaul strategy," Mistele said. "We're not stopping here. Three weeks ago we started looking into starting a postcard campaign for people who are non-agricultural. We're certainly focusing on snowmobile users, because anyone using a snowmobile will understand the fact they're running on private land and quite often that land is owned and operated by a farmer."

Mistele said it's been a successful campaign so far, extending across the province.

Initially, 8,000 postcards were printed and the OFA is in the process of printing more, Mistele said.

Motion on Autism adopted

Our son has autism and is unable to speak, but if he could we know that he would call Fredericton MP Andy Scott his hero!

We want to thank Andy Scott for all his hard work and effort in getting Private Members' Motion M-172 for a National Autism Strategy adopted by the House of Commons Dec. 5.

This is a historic and unprecedented event that will provide our community with a new lobbying tool.

Thank you to all who wrote to MP's, came to the rallies and signed petitions. Thank you also to local MP's Joe Comartin and Brian Masse for supporting the motion.

This is wonderful news for Canada, and it is just the beginning.

Up next: Charlottetown MP Shawn Murphy's Bill C-304 to create a National Autism Strategy will be debated later this week. The Senate Committee inquiring into funding for the treatment of autism will hold more hearings by May 2007.

Thank you also to Rolly Marentette and Mr. Gary L. Parent, CAW Local 444, who invited us to speak on behalf of the Ontario Autism Coalition at the Labour Council's General Meeting Nov. 14, and for joining and supporting us in advocating for all with Autism.

Greg and Mary Beth Rocheleau, Members Ontario Autism Coalition



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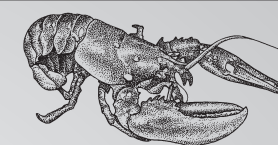


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