

ERCA presents 2006 Conservation Awards

BY ANDY COMBER

A Woodslee farmer was among the recipients of the 2006 Conservation Awards presented by the Essex Region Conservation Authority at their annual general meeting at the Essex Civic Centre, Jan. 18.

ERCA's Conservation Awards recognize individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions towards improving our natural environment and, ultimately, the health and quality of life in the Essex region.

Woodslee farmer John Diemer was honoured with the 2006 Conservation Farm Award, presented each year to the farming operation that best displays conservation-minded farming practices. The award is sponsored by the Essex Soil and Crop Improvement Association and the Essex Conservation Club and was first announced at the ESCIA annual meeting Dec. 7, 2006.

"John began farming with his father Gerald in the early 1960s," said Danielle Stuebing, ERCA's coordinator of communications and education, in her introduction. "John and his wife



John and Helen Diemer, centre, are presented with the Conservation Farm Award by ERCA Chair Ray Renaud, left, and Vice-Chair Dave Brister at the Essex Region Conservation Authority's 2006 Conservation Awards Jan. 18.

Helen have developed a successful farming operation, incorporating many modern conservation farming practices."

The Diemers farm 650 acres, consisting of corn, soybeans and wheat. Features of the award-winning farm include no-till cropping, crop rotation, and ditch bank protection methods using buffer strips, rock chutes and tile outlet protection. Other highlights include windbreaks, a pond and a professionally managed woodlot.

Another Essex County farmer with managed

woodlots in Leamington and Comber, David Ainslie was presented with the Environmental Achievement Award. Ainslie was recognized for incorporating natural systems into his farming operation, adopting many conservation farm practices, and influencing the practices of other farmers across the region. His nominator described him as "an innovative farmer who was amongst the first in the region to adopt conservation farming techniques such as no-till planting."

Another six awards were presented to individuals and

organizations in recognition of their service to local conservation efforts.

Don Learn, a former principal at Harrow Junior Public School from 1986 to 1992, was honoured with a Volunteer Award of Appreciation, recognizing his volunteer work as a photographer for ERCA.

"Don's photos have been used to inspire emotion through presentations, to promote our natural heritage through brochures, and to recognize and thank others who have contributed to our environment," said Stuebing, when

introducing Learn.

Kingsville resident Mireya Campbell, who currently teaches geography at Harrow District High School, received the 2006 Education Conservation Award.

"Education is key to creating a future of sustainability for this region," said Stuebing in her introduction of Campbell.

Campbell was recognized as a leader in environmental education. She has involved her students in many ERCA activities including tree planting, hawk spotting at Holiday Beach Conservation Area, and the Essex Region Children's Water Festival. Her classes run the recycling programs in the school and have established a Roots and Shoots Chapter.

Celebrating four decades in Canada this year, the Ontario Provincial Organization of Questers received with the John R. Park Homestead Award, for demonstrating excellence in the preservation or interpretation of human history in the Essex region.

Volunteers are the cornerstones of the environmental movement, and Carl Pascoe, Rachel Powless and Corey Naroski were presented with Conservation Awards in this category.

Pascoe is one of only a handful of licensed Hummingbird banders in Ontario. Powless initiated a Monarch butterfly tagging program at Holiday Beach and is the Canadian Monarch Tagging coordinator for all sites in Canada.

Cory Naroski of LaSalle, president of the Friends of Turkey Creek, earned the volunteer award for organizing countless Friends of Turkey Creek tree plantings, stream cleanup events, fundraising and social activities over the years.

The Ontario Great Lakes Renewal Foundation was

also presented with a Conservation Award for Environmental Achievement. The Foundation has been a key partner for over 10 habitat restoration projects completed by ERCA in the Detroit River and Wheatley Harbour Areas of Concern.

"We continue to be inspired by these organizations and individuals who are committed to improving the environment that we share," said ERCA Chair Ray Renaud, thanking all of the winners for their efforts.

"We hope that by recognizing these winners today, others will become motivated to help work together to create a future of sustainability for this region."

New Vice Chair

LaSalle Councillor Ray Renaud was confirmed as chair of ERCA for the second year.

Renaud, who has been a strong supporter of environmental improvements for years, was pleased to return.

"Serving on the ERCA board of directors has been one of my most enjoyable council appointments," he said. "Protecting our environment and creating a future of sustainability for our grandchildren is one of our most important responsibilities."

Windsor Councillor Dave Brister was acclaimed as the authority's vice chair.

"The prosperity and economic development of our region is integrally connected to and dependent upon a healthy natural environment," said Brister. "As vice chair, I look forward to working collaboratively with my city and county colleagues to ensure that the Essex Region Conservation Authority leads the way in creating a healthy and sustainable environment for current and future generations."



RELAX AND ENJOY – Members of the Essex Retirees' Social Club enjoy massages from students of the Canadian College of Health, Science and Technology during a health fair Jan. 16. Several representatives of the health care sector were on hand to answer retirees' inquiries including the Canadian Diabetes Association, the Canadian Hearing Society and the Canadian Liver Foundation. Photo courtesy of Jim Frith.

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PRIZE PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- Overnight Accommodations at the Pelee Days Inn - Leamington,
- Dinner Theatre & Breakfast for two!
- Also \$50.00 in BIA Bucks to spend in Essex!

Watch for draw boxes and ballots at participating businesses!

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY! MUST BE 19 OR OLDER TO WIN!

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Essex Shores
REHABILITATION

MEET THE STAFF

Christine McCormick
Physiotherapist

Graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy from the University of Toronto in 1975. Christine has worked in various locations including management positions in Leamington Hospital and the Canadian Back Institute. She is the owner of the Essex and Kingsville clinics and also supplies physiotherapy services to the Kingsville Court and Harrowood Retirement Homes.

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