

## Gift boosts Bean Research program: focus on genomics and plant breeding

The common bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) is the world's most important food legume. An inexpensive source of protein, fibre, carbohydrates and antioxidants, it is a staple food for more than 300 million people worldwide. Beans are excellent sources of vitamin B12 and bean consumption is related to reduced risk of developing cancer, diabetes and heart disease.

In Ontario, approximately 100,000 acres of white and coloured beans are grown annually, with 85 per cent of the product exported, primarily to European markets.

The development of higher-yielding, disease-resistant bean varieties for Ontario growers became more efficient through a 2008 partnership agreement that resulted in the merger of OAC's bean breeding research program led by Prof. Peter Pauls (Plant Agriculture), with an AAFC program previously located at Harrow Research Station, but now operated out of Plant Agriculture and led by AAFC Research Scientist Dr. Alireza Navabi. Breeding research and annual trials of new bean varieties, now based at Guelph, is focused on the development of higher-yielding, disease-resistant varieties to meet grower needs.

That research is now poised to take another giant step forward, thanks to the generosity of Dr. Norman (OAC '39) & Jessie Thompson, who have provided a gift of \$100,000 to be used to further bean genomics and breeding research in OAC. Dr. Thompson, who also completed an MSc in Crop Science at OAC (1949), served as a professor and researcher at Michigan State University for thirty years prior to his retirement. The Thompsons now reside in London, Ontario.

The gift will be used to advance work now underway to improve disease resistance in bean varieties and to diversify the genetic base of common beans to introduce new traits such as enhanced nutraceutical content. As well, it will allow researchers to initiate a new project to sequence large portions of the bean genome that contain genes controlling seed quality traits, disease resistance and vitamin B12 content. ■



▲ Prof. Peter Pauls (Plant Agriculture)



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## Dean's message

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The beginning of a new year is always a time for reflection, looking back over the accomplishments of the past year and making plans to address the challenges and opportunities the new one will bring. For OAC, 2009 was a year of tremendous change as the college embarked on a process of strategic repositioning to maintain and develop our strengths in teaching, research and service in the face of some daunting fiscal challenges and realities.

The college's new senior management team, consisting of Dr. Beverley Hale in the role of Associate Dean (Research & Innovation), Dr. Jonathan Schmidt as Associate Dean (Academic) and Dr. Rene Van Acker as Associate Dean (External Relations), will be instrumental in helping to guide OAC through this evolutionary process. The appointment of the new Associate Deans must certainly be counted among the highlights of the past year, and I am tremendously grateful for their assistance and support as we move forward.

Another highlight was the creation of the new School of Environmental Sciences that was established through the merger of the departments of Environmental Biology and Land Resource Science. Under the directorship of Dr. Jonathan Newman, the new School will

integrate physical and life sciences to address environmental issues in agricultural, forest and aquatic ecosystems. It will provide a permanent home for the University of Guelph's environmental science programs and bolster public recognition of OAC's leadership role in the area of environment as well as in agriculture, food and rural communities.

We have initiated and reinvigorated our efforts to connect and reconnect with partners to find new ways to deliver relevant education, research and service programs that will address not only today's needs, but tomorrow's as well. Development initiatives are currently underway in a number of areas, and in the months ahead we will continue to cultivate partnerships that will enable us to retain and build human capacity across core teaching and research areas.

Your continued support in these efforts is most appreciated as we explore new avenues for realizing our vision of global leadership in education, research and service programs for food, agriculture, communities and the environment.

With thanks,

Robert Gordon  
Dean, Ontario Agricultural College  
Guelph • Alfred • Kemptville • Ridgeway

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## Agriculture in the City: Perspectives

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*Opportunities for Action*, U of G's first urban agriculture symposium, was held in November at the Arboretum. Hosted by U of G and several local partners, the event connected close to 150 leaders – municipal planners, environmentalists, business entrepreneurs, politicians, designers, architects, academics, students, gardeners and farmers – in their efforts to promote the use of urban space for local sustainable food production.

### Karen Landman

In her keynote address, Prof. Karen Landman (School of Environmental Design and Rural Development) spoke of her summer tour of urban agriculture projects across western United States and Canada. In October, she also attended the 2009 Nova Scotia Food Summit.

Landman explained that the urban agriculture movement has grown from a grassroots level to a point where organizations such as public health are viewing it as one way to address concerns about food justice, and some municipalities are proactively incorporating it into their planning process and policy development. In October 2010, participants at the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) symposium will explore the issues connected to agriculture, food, healthy communities and their relationship to planning.

It is also playing a role in community development as many non-governmental organizations invest in public outreach programs to provide information on healthy, local and affordable food systems.



### Shannon Lee Stirling

For Shannon Lee Stirling, former project coordinator of Backyard Bounty, the urban agriculture symposium brought people together to share ideas and experiences, identify common barriers, seek feasible solutions, and inspire action.



Stirling was particularly pleased by the momentum gained after the symposium. Findings of the event's workshop were presented at the 29<sup>th</sup> annual Guelph Organic Conference in late January.

A long-time activist and environmentalist, Stirling will broaden her contributions to community building in her new role as urban agriculture youth facilitator at Food Share (Toronto), Canada's largest community food security organization.

### Martha Gay Scroggins

As site coordinator of the Guelph Centre for Urban Organic Farming (GCUOF), Martha Gay Scroggins led symposium participants on a tour of the centre, which provides learning opportunities in year-round organic food production, food security and resource conservation.



Scroggins, who oversees teaching at GCUOF, finds her students are excited to find an approach to farming without chemical input. She first connected with Shannon Lee Stirling to provide materials and grow transplants for Backyard Bounty.

"The strong turnout at the symposium says something really important about what people are looking for," said Scroggins, "including a recognition of the importance of sustainable agriculture, and a growing interest in networking, learning and finding ways to get involved." ■

## Program NEWS

### New for 2010:

### Urban agriculture and horticulture certificate programs



People interested in sustainable urban agriculture and horticulture will soon have convenient, flexible training options, thanks to two new certificate programs developed through the efforts of OAC's department of Plant Agriculture, the Royal Botanical Gardens and U of G's Office of Open Learning.

The certificate programs in Sustainable Urban Agriculture and Sustainable Urban Horticulture, to be offered in September 2010, are designed to meet the learning needs of community gardeners, municipal planners, environmental advocates, conservationists and landscape designers. Each comprised of five online courses, the programs focus on the environmental, social and economic implications of sustainable agriculture and horticulture in our cities.

For more information, visit the program website at:  
[www.UrbanHort.ca](http://www.UrbanHort.ca). ■

### OMAFRA-funded HQP program provides support for graduate students – **APPLY NOW**

The OMAFRA-University of Guelph HQP Scholarship Program provides direct financial support for graduate students in research programs that conform to the themes and priorities outlined in the 2008-2012 OMAFRA-University of Guelph agreement.

Students who began their graduate studies in Fall 2009 or Winter 2010, as well as students who will begin in Summer or Fall 2010, are eligible to apply in the current round of funding. The scholarship requires a joint application from the student and the faculty advisor; scholarships for successful applicants will be paid through the students' departmental accounting system.

**The deadline for applications is March 15, 2010.**

For more information, visit:

<http://www.aps.uoguelph.ca/omafhqp/> ■

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## Program NEWS

### Partnership simplifies accreditation process for graduates

Students enrolled in the BSc(Agr) program can now tailor their program to create a fast-track to accreditation as Professional Agrologists (P.Ag.), thanks to a new initiative developed through OAC in conjunction with the Ontario Institute of Agrologists (OIA), the professional regulatory body for the practice of agrology in Ontario.

The announcement was made this past fall as part of Agrologist-in-Residence (AIR) week, which provides students with the opportunity to meet and network with practicing agricultural professionals.

Under the new program, students who complete two experiential education courses in the senior years of their BSc(Agr) studies will receive credit towards the completion of the Articling Agrologist program required for the P.Ag. designation. After completing one additional course offered through OIA, students will be qualified to apply for the professional designation without having to complete an articling period. ■



▲ **Bruce Hobin, OIA president; Claudia Escandon, OIA board director, Rene Van Acker, OAC associate dean, external relations; and Terry Kingsmill, OIA registrar, announced the new fast-track professional accreditation during Agrologist-in-Residence week.**

### First cohort of BBRM students prepares for 2010 graduation

A new chapter in the history of OAC and the University of Guelph is set to begin, as the first cohort of students in Canada's only Bachelor of Bio-Resource Management program prepares to complete the final requirements for graduation in Spring 2010.

"On behalf of OAC, I'm tremendously pleased to offer my congratulations to this select group of educational pioneers," said dean Rob Gordon.

"As the first graduating class of a new program with a unique, two-campus delivery approach, these students have already made a significant impact on the broader University of Guelph community, and will serve as ambassadors for the program for many years to come."

The four-year honours degree program, which features two years of study at one of U of G's regional campuses, followed by two years of study at the Guelph campus, is designed to prepare students for leadership roles in a growing number of biological resource-based industries.

Students who will complete the program in 2010 began their studies in the program's Environmental Management major at the Ridgetown campus in Fall 2006. In 2011, the second group of graduates will be joined by their peers in the Equine Management major, who began their studies at the Kemptville campus in Fall 2007. ■

## Research investment will improve seed quality

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Canada's dry bean industry will benefit from new research aimed at enhancing the quality and improving the global marketability of white and coloured beans. The federal government has announced it will contribute almost \$800,000 through the Developing Innovative Agri-Products (DIAP) program to research being led by Chris Gillard, a college professor at the Ridgetown campus. Industry associations, agribusiness and producers have provided an additional \$500,000 in support of the initiative, for a total of \$1.25 million.

According to Gillard, the objective of the research is to provide new environmentally and economically sustainable harvest-aid programs for dry beans to ensure top quality products for customers. Although growers often use a desiccant to control weeds and ensure uniform, rapid dry-down of beans, more research is needed regarding the effect of application timing and rate on crop yield and quality.

The Canadian research team includes researchers from the University of Guelph and the University of Manitoba as well as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Much of the research will be conducted in Huron, Perth and Middlesex counties where dry bean production is a large part of farm revenue. ■

## Prof recognized for outstanding service to agriculture industry



▲ **Rob Gordon, OAC dean, presents the Hilliard award to Peter Sikkema (right) at the Southwest Agricultural Conference, January 2010.**

**Dr. Peter Sikkema**, a weed management specialist and associate professor at OAC's Ridgetown campus, has been named the recipient of the T.R. Hilliard Distinguished Agricultural Extension Award for 2009. The award was presented to Sikkema by OAC dean Rob Gordon early in January, in conjunction with the annual Southwest Agricultural Conference held at Ridgetown.

A faculty member in Plant Agriculture since 2003, Sikkema has developed one of North America's largest field crop weed management programs and is described by his nominators as an exemplary mentor and leader. Among his innovative approaches to extension has been the development of a Weed Management website for producers and agriculture industry personnel to improve weed control and reduce the incidence of crop injury. For more information, visit: <http://www.ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca/weeds/>

The Hilliard award, first presented in 1983, was established by the OAC Alumni Foundation to recognize outstanding contributions to agricultural extension in the province of Ontario. Sikkema's nomination for the 2009 award was supported by a variety of grower groups, including the Ontario Soybean Growers, the Ontario Wheat Producers' Marketing Board, the Ontario White Bean Growers, the Ontario Coloured Bean Growers' Association and the Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers. ■

## Appointments

### OAC welcomes new advancement team

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**Paul Klosler**, an OAC alumnus with a wealth of experience in communications, marketing and agribusiness, began his new role as Senior Development Manager for the college late in November 2009. Klosler holds an MSc in Agricultural Economics from the U of G, as well as a BA in Business from Brock. He worked with CIBC's Agriculture Division as well as John Deere Credit before joining BASF's Crop Protection Division in 2002, where he served as national communications manager and customer development manager. Contact Paul at 519 824 4120 x 53768 or [pklosler@uoguelph.ca](mailto:pklosler@uoguelph.ca)



▲ **Paul Klosler and Morag Stewart**

**Morag Stewart** brings extensive event, volunteer management, and fund-raising experience to her new role as OAC's Alumni Advancement Manager, effective January 25, 2010. Stewart has worked on development initiatives for an array of non-profit organizations, including the Canadian Hearing Society, the CNIB, the Credit Valley Hospital Foundation and Easter Seals Ontario. In her spare time, she volunteers for Sunshine Dreams for Kids, the Canadian Hearing Society, Safe School Network and the United Way-York Region. Morag can be reached at 519 824 4120 x 54601 or [mostewar@uoguelph.ca](mailto:mostewar@uoguelph.ca). ■

## New book connects the pieces of rural Canada



▲ **At the November 27<sup>th</sup> book launch in SEDRD are (from left): John FitzGibbon, Wayne Caldwell, David Douglas, Karen Landman, and Jennifer Sumner.**

***Rural Planning and Development in Canada***, a new book that explores the complexities, perceptions and misperceptions of rural Canada and its landscape, was introduced on November 27 at a public launch and signing hosted by the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development (SEDRD).

Edited and co-authored by recently retired SEDRD professor, David Douglas, the book includes the work of 14 government and academic contributors, including SEDRD professors John FitzGibbon, Karen Landman and Wayne Caldwell, and sessional lecturer Jennifer Sumner.

The twelve chapters cover topics such as public policy, government and governance, the changing rural landscape, food security, social justice and community development. The final chapter outlines the challenges and opportunities for policy-makers, planners and other practitioners. ■

## OAC faculty among the most engaging

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Three OAC faculty members have been named as nominees for TVO's 2010 *Big Ideas Best Lecturer* competition, which celebrates the most engaging and intellectually stimulating lecturers in Ontario.

**Les Evans** (School of Environmental Sciences); **Maurice Nelischer** (School of Environmental Design and Rural Development); and **Andy Robinson** (Animal and Poultry Science) are among ten U of G faculty members nominated for the honour.

The competition allows students and the general public to nominate a professor at any of Ontario's post-secondary institutions. TVO staff and an independent jury review the submission videos to select 10 finalists whose lectures will air on TVO in March 2010. ■

## U of G students lead at 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Intercollegiate Animal Welfare Judging

OAC and OVC students excelled at the 9th Annual Intercollegiate Animal Welfare Judging competition held in November at Michigan State University, where students were challenged to assess the welfare of animals in production.

The U of G teams were coached by faculty members from the Campbell Centre for the Study of Animal Welfare: Ian Duncan and Tina Widowski (Animal and Poultry Science) and Derek Haley (Population Medicine, OVC). ■



^ **OAC's Animal and Poultry Science graduate team – Krysta Morrissey, Teresa Casey, Jenn Gailis, Puja Wahi – won the overall graduate student award.**



^ **The OVC team won the overall veterinary student award. Team members included OAC animal biology alumni Rebecca Egan and Kristen Reynolds, and team mates Robert Berger and Elyse Hauer.**



^ **Second place overall in the undergraduate division went to the OAC's team of students from Animal and Poultry Science (animal biology major) – Jessica Zaffino, Kait Link, Erin Phillips and Ekta Rattan.**

# Calendar of EVENTS - Winter 2010

## JANUARY

11	Classes Commence
12	Café Scientifique, <i>Is vaccination a game? H1N1 and the good of the whole.</i> Prof. Chris Bauch, the Diana Downtown (Guelph) 7:00 pm
16	16 <sup>th</sup> Annual Environmental Sciences Symposium
18-22	OAC Career Week
19	OAC Cocktails and Careers (formerly Breakfast with the Best)
21	Animal Science Society Career Night (Guelph), OVC Lifetime Learning Centre, Room 1707, 6:00-8:00 pm
22	GoodTimes Banquet
23-24	OAC Leadership Conference, <i>Growing Towards a Sustainable Future</i>
28-31	2010 Guelph Organic Conference

## FEBRUARY

5, 12, 13, 19, 24, 26	Vet Tech Applicant Testing and Tour Days, Ridgetown
9	Café Scientifique, <i>Ecotourism: More Harm Than Good</i> , Prof. Noella Gray, the Diana Downtown (Guelph) 7:00 pm
15-19	Reading Week
16-19	Winter Convocation
25	Journée d'information, Campus d'Alfred

## MARCH

5	Applicant Discovery Day, Kemptville
5-6	College Royal, Kemptville
9	Café Scientifique, <i>Food, Fuel and Chemicals: There's Plenty to Go Around</i> , Prof. Rob Nicol, the Diana Downtown (Guelph) 7:00 pm
16 & 19	Applicant Information Days, Ridgetown
20 & 21	College Royal
17-21	Canada Blooms, Direct Energy Centre, Toronto
26-27	52 <sup>nd</sup> Annual OAC Curling Bonspiel
28	Campus Days for Applicants, Guelph

## APRIL

9	Classes conclude
12-23	Examinations
28 & 29	Interaction for Grade 10/11 Students, Guelph
30	U of G Alumni Association Awards of Excellence – Deadline for nominations

## MAY

6	OAC Alumni Foundation 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, Creelman Hall, Guelph
17-20	Spring Academic Open House
25-27	Symposium: <i>Climate Change and the Implications for Plant Protection</i> , Guelph

## 2009 United Way campaign

OAC surpassed its 2009 United Way goal by collecting more than \$74,000 across its units and regional campuses in this year's U of G campaign that exceeded its half-million-dollar goal, raising more than \$517,000. ■

> **At the second annual university-wide idol competition, Tirth Vaishnav represented OAC, and along with other idol hopefuls, helped to raise \$3300 in pledges. Vaishnav, a spirited Bollywood dancer, is a first-year BSc (Animal Biology) student. He introduced his talents to the OAC community on October 16 at the OAC Fall Extravaganza that collected almost \$1000.**



# Congratulations!

- > **Dr. Terry Daynard** (OAC '65), former OAC faculty member and associate dean (research & innovation) has been named as an inductee into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame. Daynard was recognized for his visionary leadership, including his ability to create coalitions and partnerships to influence policy, innovation, growth and development for Ontario's agriculture industry. The induction ceremony will be held in June 2010.
- > **Joel Hemingway**, a master's student in Plant Agriculture working with Prof. Istvan Rajcan, has been awarded the 2009/2010 Seed of the Year Scholarship. Hemingway, who majored in agronomy as an undergraduate at OAC, is doing research on soybeans to identify particular lines with strong agronomic characteristics and high linoleic acid levels.
- > **Nicole Jarvis**, a graduate student in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, has been selected as the U of G Project Serve International Team Leader for Botswana on the theme of HIV/AIDS. This is a program in partnership with World University Service Canada (WUSC) starting April 2010.
- > **Dr. Gary Kachanoski**, former faculty member in Land Resource Science and recipient of the OAC Alumni Association Distinguished Faculty Extension Award (1992), was recently named as Memorial University's new president and vice-chancellor. Previously, Dr. Kachanoski served as vice-president (research), at the University of Alberta, where he currently is a professor and holder of the Bentley research chair (soil, water and environment). He assumes the new position as of July 1, 2010.
- > Plant Agriculture graduate students **Greg Perry** and **Kelli Durham** won the student awards for best oral presentation and best poster, respectively, at the biannual meeting of the Bean Improvement Co-operative (BIC) in Fort Collins, Colorado, October 25-28. The BIC was founded 52 years ago to promote the exchange of information and materials for the improvement of bean production worldwide, and includes members from 40 countries.
- > **Prof. Larry Schaeffer** (Animal & Poultry Science) has been awarded the 2009 Herman-von-Nathusius-Medaille, which recognizes scientific contributions to practical animal husbandry in Germany. This announcement coincides with Thomson Reuters Essential Science Indicators' selection of Schaeffer's article, *Strategy for Applying Genome-Wide Selection in Dairy Cattle*, as the most cited paper in the areas of genome selection.
- > **Prof. Jack Trevors** (Environmental Sciences) was recently made a Fellow of the Academy of Toxicological Sciences. Fellows are practising toxicologists and scientists who are recognized by their peers for their educational and professional experience and who have demonstrated achievement, proven ability and scientific expertise.
- > The Ontario Professional Planners Institute has established a scholarship to recognize **Prof. Wayne Caldwell** (Environmental Design and Rural Development) for his service and leadership as president of the institute. The scholarship will recognize a student member of the institute who is making an important contribution to food planning.

**Correction:** *Javaid Iqbal, who received the Innovative Leadership Recognition Award at U of G's Community Breakfast in September, is a Research Associate in OAC's Department of Plant Agriculture. Incorrect information appeared in our September 2009 issue. ■*

## Royal Winter Fair

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Students, staff, faculty and alumni participated as competitors, judges, speakers and ambassadors throughout the 87<sup>th</sup> Royal Agricultural Winter Fair held November 6 to 15 in Toronto. ■

< **OAC teamed with the Office of Research and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) at a display to promote cutting-edge research, education and innovation in life sciences, including bioproducts, food technology, DNA bar-coding and animal welfare. Visitors interacted with representatives from the Biodiversity Institute of Ontario and the Campbell Centre for the Study of Animal Welfare, as well as students and staff from OAC departments and regional campuses.**

## Tractor Tug rolls in funds for children's charity

Rain did not dampen the spirit of participants in the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Tractor Tug for Tots organized with the support of the Student Federation of OAC. On November 25, teams from the university community, the city of Guelph and surrounding areas pulled tractors 100 feet across a finish line on Reynolds Walk to raise more than \$8,000 for the Darling Home for Kids Foundation of Milton.

> **A team of faculty from the School of Environmental Sciences competes against the "Team Pulling to Graduate".**



## Axelrod renovation to boost environmental research and teaching

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A new project to renovate U of G's Axelrod building to create a state-of-the-art environmental teaching and research centre is now underway, thanks to federal and provincial funding totalling more than \$33 million. When completed, the building will showcase innovation and green technologies, and serve as home to the School of Environmental Sciences, the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development and components of the School of Engineering. ■



## In Memoriam

- > **George S. Atkins**, (OAC '39) died November 30 in Wiarton, Ontario. Atkins served as CBC's farm and gardening host through the 1950s and 60s, and founded Farm Radio International (formerly the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network) in 1979. Atkins received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from U of G in 1989 as well as the Alumnus of Honour Award in 2002.
- > Professor emeritus **John deMan**, the founding chair of the department of Food Science, died January 12. A PhD graduate of the University of Alberta, Prof. deMan taught there until joining U of G in 1968 as food science chair. He retired from U of G in 1990.
- > Professor emeritus **Beverley (Bev) Kay** of the School of Environmental Sciences died January 14 at the age of 67. A two-time graduate of OAC with a PhD from Purdue, Kay joined Guelph's soil science faculty in 1969 and served as chair of the department of Land Resource Science from 1983 to 1994.
- > **Prof. Ron Pitblado**, retired faculty member from the Ridgetown campus, passed away November 11. A graduate of U of G, he joined the Ridgetown campus in 1974 as a lecturer and researcher in vegetable pest management. He went on to hold positions including horticulture section head and associate director (academics) before being appointed acting director in 2004. ■