
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At the 2010 Annual General Meeting in Niagara, the OIA membership voted to amend OIA Bylaw Article 13 whereby the election of Board Members would now take place by a vote of the membership as a whole rather than just by those who were in attendance at the AGM. With the OIA's new website, we have been able to facilitate this year's election electronically. If you haven't done so already, please login in to your OIA member site and click on the eVote and cast your vote. You have up until noon on February 28 to submit your ballot. This is your opportunity to select whom you would like to see as the new members of the 2011-12 Board of Directors.

Personally, I chose not to let my name stand for a second, two-year term. I have been honoured to have the opportunity to have served as your President these past two years. It has allowed me to meet a number of you at various Branch meetings and at other events and to discuss issues that face the Institute and the profession of agrology. Although I am stepping down from the Board, I shall continue to be very active with the Niagara Branch and will offer my assistance to the OIA in whatever capacity that will be appropriate.

In the December POST I indicated that we would be meeting with Ernie Hardeman, MPP who is the Conservative Agricultural Critic. Vice-President Lianne Appleby, P.Ag. and I met with Mr. Hardeman in Woodstock on December 15. I am pleased to report that we had a reasonably good meeting with him. He asked both Lianne and I a number of questions about the profession of agrology, the Institute and what were are concerns about our current legislation. I am pleased to say that I felt that Lianne and I were able to provide answers to all of his queries. He offered no commitments but thanked us for meeting with him. This was another opportunity for us to tell our story to the province's politicians.

As I also mentioned in the December POST, this year's OIA Conference is being held in London April 8 and 9 at the Sheraton Four Points. The Western Branch and the OIA Board and staff have collaborated to put together what I feel will be another successful conference. I want to thank the Western Branch for accepting the challenge to be this year's host and I'll look forward to seeing you in London.

Respectfully submitted,



Bruce Hobin, M.Sc., P.Ag.
President

A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION YOU CAN KEEP: BECOME A MENTOR

By now you will have read and heard a lot about making and sticking to New Year's resolutions. Unfortunately, it is sometimes hard to keep to your resolution. If you need a resolution to inspire and motivate you, consider becoming a mentor of an Articling Agrologist.

Most of us can think of at least more than one person in our lives who served as an adviser, teacher or coach. The purpose of mentoring has long been held within the profession of Agrology. Without the guidance and coaching of an experienced professional the next generation of qualified practitioner is lacking. A key element of the mentoring relationship is to provide support and guidance to Articling Agrologists that expand networks of contact within the profession.

You have no obligation to get a person a job. What Articling Agrologists need are insights and access to professional networks that only a one-to-one professional connection with a mentor can offer.

For more information please contact Pat Joannie at the OIA office.

DEMAND FOR PROFESSIONALS HEARD AT THE CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL FARM SHOW

A number of OIA members stopped to say hello at the OIA exhibit at the Canadian International Farm Show. Members are pleased to see staff promoting our professional designations and our continued emphasis of stressing positive messages about professionals in practice is creating demand for member expertise and work!. It is clear that everything we read about consumer concern related to public health, food safety, economic growth of our ag sector, sustainable food supply and environmental stewardship is on the minds of the public during this provincial election year. A lot of media attention is being focused on agriculture. Professionals in practice are well positioned to contribute to achievement of provincial policy ends, as they do in most Canadian provinces. But here in Ontario it will require long awaited legislative reform of our 1960 Agrology Act to effectively achieve this public good.



Kouros Javidi, A.Ag., with OIA Project Manager, Pat Joannie

Judging by the accounts told to staff the public is especially concerned about the lack of professionalism and ethics in practice here in Ontario. People are seeing our magazine advertising and heard last year's radio spots. Increasingly, they are seeking accountable professionals who meet national competency standards.

We are seeing a demand for professionals that have achieved qualification assurance. For example, most members are very familiar with the Growing Forward Program. Under the Growing Forward Business Development Best Practices Suite, to be a qualified farm business advisor, one element on the list of qualifications shines through:

- Proof of membership in good standing with a professional organization which has a code of ethics or demonstrate successful completion of a course on professionalism and ethics within the last 5 years.

Qualification assurance as exists in most of Canada is being demanded here in Ontario.

“TO BE OR NOT TO BE”

To quote William Shakespeare, “to be or not to be that is the question”.

All OIA members, including OIA Board members, must be “to be”. We must be on the team at all times. It is a missed opportunity to promote the OIA and yourself when the designation is not on our business cards, not behind the credit line for articles written, when there is an opportunity to wear a P.Ag. pin or an OIA shirt and we do not take the opportunity to use free advertising.

I worked for many years in the media where the value associated with free advertising was recognized and an essential business component. In addition to the points mentioned, the OIA can also get free advertising by reaching out to the community as a leader on a particular issue of concern. This will get the profession and all professionals in practice some free advertising.

My concern is when P.Ag.s, T.Ag.s and A.Ag.s don’t use their designations to build recognition of our profession (membership). This is a leadership role for Board members and all OIA members.

I trust that we will all take the time to promote ourselves and the OIA and be on the team, “to be” and not miss any opportunity to highlight our professional capacity and public accountability.

Daniel J. Vautour, P.Ag.
OIA Board of Directors



During a guest speaker lecture at the University of Guelph, 4th year environmental science students learned about the use of photography as a communication tool and writing for the media from Daniel Vautour, P.Ag.

ONTARIO GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW, WINDSOR

Last month a number of P.Ag.s and T.Ag.s were present as exhibitors and speakers at the 2011 Ontario Golf Course Management Conference and Trade Show in Windsor. Here are a few of our OIA members in action:



Sean Jordan, T.Ag.



Kevin Falls, P.Ag.



*Tom Margetts, T.Ag.,
David Smith, P.Ag. and
Corrie Almack, P.Ag.*

DID YOU KNOW?

The OIA's new website offers more than eVote capacity and the ability to update your professional development log. Members can log on to see their invoice and pay that invoice directly on line. But what if you have forgotten your log in information? The OIA Member Portal provides you with the ability to retrieve your password and login information automatically.

IN MEMORIAM

Last month Robert "Bob" Wallace Anderson, P.Ag. passed away peacefully at Headwaters Health Care Centre in Orangeville. He was in his 70th year. A popular and enthusiastic member of the OIA and the Huronia Branch he served as both a mentor to many and as a past OIA Board member. Bob will be missed.