

Canadian Farm Writers' Federation



2003 Annual Report

Canadian Farm Writers' Federation

Annual Meeting

7:15 am
Saturday, October 2nd, 2004
Holiday Inn, Windsor, ON

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Adoption of the minutes of the 2003 annual meeting
4. Business arising from the minutes
5. President's Report
6. Secretary-Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement
7. Conference Report
8. Awards Program Report
9. Senate Report
10. Regional Reports
11. IFAJ Report
12. Executive Elections
13. New Business
14. Adjournment

Canadian Farm Writers' Federation

Minutes of the Annual Meeting

Saturday, October 5th, 2003
Ramada Lodge Inn, Kelowna, BC

1. Welcome:

Clare Stanfield called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m.

2. Adoption of the Agenda:

John Morriss moved adoption of the agenda. Seconded by Myrna Stark Leader.
Carried.

3. Adoption of the minutes of the 2000 annual meeting:

Janet Kanters moved the minutes of the 2002 annual meeting be adopted as circulated.
Seconded by Kevin Hursh. Carried.

4. Business arising from the minutes:

None.

5. President's Report:

Clare discussed the executive's position about the Canadian Centre for Agricultural Communications. She recommended that members discuss this with Owen Roberts. The executive did give its approval in principle for the establishment of the centre at the University of Guelph. She noted that CFWF archive material could be housed at Guelph. She also discussed the proposed photography award for next year and thanked the committee that made recommendations leading to the implementation of this award. She acknowledged the excellent job Barb Glen did as newsletter editor over the past few years, noting that Barb is stepping down after one final newsletter later this fall. She also said Jane Robinson is stepping down from her position as awards co-ordinator and asked for volunteers to take on both the newsletter and awards jobs. She thanked David Schmidt and the rest of the B.C. team for organizing a fantastic conference.

6. Secretary-Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement:

In Hugh Maynard's absence, his daughter Stephanie gave a brief report of the financial state of the organization. Administration costs are down for several reasons, including e-mailing the newsletter and the fact the editor did not charge for her services. Income of \$3,387 was reported, and the organization has \$11,508 in the bank. Hugh's report noted that membership has decreased quite a bit, which may mean administrative costs will decline even further.

7. Conference Report:

Conference chair David Schmidt reported: "I think this year's conference was one of the best I've been at." There were 76 registrants and organizers were pleased with that response. He acknowledged the "phenomenal" support from the BC agriculture ministry and other provincial organizations and expected the conference will produce a surplus.

The next conference will be in Windsor, Ont., Sept. 30 to Oct. 4, 2004.

8. Awards Program Report:

Jane Robinson reported there were 171 entries, down about 15 from 2002. There were just a couple of non-member entries in the 12 categories. The press feature category continues to draw the most entries with 36 this year. There is still little interest in the broadcast categories. Blind judging continues to work well and compliance was good. Some entries were returned because they didn't fit the categories. Jane recommended the definition of agriculture used for the contest be changed to better reflect the industry in some parts of Canada. She said 80 to 90 percent of the judges were retained from last year. She also mentioned the recommendation that two new photo awards be introduced next year for news and feature photography. They will need to be named after someone, and need sponsors to pay for the prize money.

David Schmidt moved to change the wording re: the definition of agriculture and to adopt the two photo categories. Kevin Hursh seconded.

Question: Is this conditional on sponsorship money being raised? Jane reported there has already been interest.

Carried.

FYI, the original definition of agriculture was: "Agriculture" refers to the commercial production, processing and marketing of food in Canada. Eligible entries must cover some aspect of commercial-scale primary food production and/or agricultural business and/or public and private institutions that serve commercial-scale farmers.

"Agriculture" does not include home gardening, ornamental horticulture or hobby farming, defined here as an agricultural operation in which the producers' primary occupation in terms of income and labor is something other than commercial-scale food production. Other entry restrictions may apply in individual category descriptions.

The new definition is: "Agriculture" refers to the production, processing and marketing of food and fibre in Canada. Eligible entries must cover some aspect of primary food and fibre production and/or agricultural business and/or public and private institutions that serve farmers (as defined by the Government of Canada.)

"Agriculture" does not include home gardening. Other entry restrictions may apply in individual category descriptions.

9. Senate Report:

Tabled to the evening banquet.

10. Regional Reports:

Written reports contained in the handout.

11. IFAJ Report:

Owen Roberts said conference costs were lowered for the most recent conference. Attendees from Canada included Kieran Green from Canadian Federation of Agriculture and Shana Bailey from the Canadian Dairy Commission. First Line Seeds will continue to sponsor Canadian writers. Kate Klages, an Ontario freelancer, received sponsorship this year. Next year's sponsorship will go to a western writer. IFAJ is holding a photo contest as well. Mike Wilson, vice-president of IFAJ, told the conference that efforts are underway to make IFAJ a working journalists' organization. He thanked Owen for his work as IFAJ newsletter editor. He also talked about Green Week in Berlin, where IFAJ will discuss how it can do a better job for its members. Some discussion about when an IFAJ Congress will be held in the United States. Mike said 90 percent of the members are in Europe. He talked about sponsorship last year's organizers obtained to bring 11 Third World journalists to the event.

12. Executive Elections:

Owen Roberts chaired elections process.
BCFWA - Kate Glover nominated David Schmidt. Nico Human said that was fine, although he wants David to make sure his written report to next year's meeting is at least one word longer!
AFWA - Bill Owen nominated Clare Stanfield.
SFWA - Kevin Hursh nominated Karen Briere.
MFWBA - Trish Jordan nominated John Morriss.
ECFWA - Jane Robinson nominated Carol Pilley. Barry MacCormack nominated Allison Finnamore.
Members at Large: Hugh Maynard has agreed to stay on as the eastern representative.
Reg Norby nominated Janet Kanters for western rep.
David Schmidt seconded.
Carried.

13. New Business:

Code of Ethics

David Schmidt suggested that input from the ethics discussion to be held later in this conference be used to develop a code of ethics for CFWF. Discussion included the fact that people not at the conference need to be involved in this. Reg Norby moved that an adhoc committee be appointed, and the executive be mandated to appoint that committee. Wendy Holm seconded. Carried.

Endorsement Policy

Terry Hockaday expressed concern about the Centre for Agricultural Communications. He said CFWF should not endorse anything and the CFWF name should not be used for promotion. Discussion about what constitutes endorsement. Owen said several members are on the advisory board of this proposed program, and noted that members have long said there should be an ag journalism/communications program in Canada. David Schmidt moved CFWF recognizes the need for a professional agricultural communications program in Canada at the university level and encourages the development of such a program. Reg Norby seconded.
Discussion.
Carried.

Scholarship

Reg Norby talked about the AFWA proposal to establish a Frank Jacobs Scholarship in journalism. He said it will proceed under AFWA's leadership and he asked that CFWF give consideration to the idea. He moved that an endowment scholarship in the name of Frank Jacobs be initiated, and that it be a national scholarship. Janet Kanters seconded. Discussion. Some concern that members didn't have enough time to think about this. John Morriss moved it be tabled until the next annual meeting. Kevin Hursh seconded. Carried.

Other Business

Clare acknowledged the Sept. 19 passing of lifetime CFWF member Bill Morriss, father of John Morriss and former publisher and editor of the Manitoba Co-operator. She expressed condolences on behalf of CFWF.

14. Adjournment:

John Morriss moved adjournment.

Annual Reports

President's Report

Prepared by Clare Stanfield

As I begin to write this report, I can't help but look at the clock in the bottom right hand corner of my computer. I have 45 minutes exactly before I have to leave the office for the airport and the plane that will wing me eastward for CFWF 2004. Procrastinator? Maybe - I confess to creating a little self-induced pressure from time to time. But not this time.

No, this time it's just the frantic pace of the day job that has kept me from writing this sooner. And it puts me in mind of a president's report from a couple of years ago, written by Laurie Harris. In it she said how challenging it was to manage an organization based on volunteer participation. It's true. This year, it was difficult to get every member of the executive together for every meeting. People had stories to cover and deadlines to make. But we did manage to meet four times since the last AGM, we had some very interesting discussions and debates, we formed subcommittees to focus on particular tasks, and I think we did manage to accomplish some important things for our organization. And for a small group of hardy volunteers stretched across five time zones, that's not bad at all.

So what was your executive been up to this year? Well, there were a number of things, but we had two major items that we felt we really needed to work through to a point where we could bring the issues to the membership, and they were establishing a sponsorship and endorsement protocol for the CFWF and revising our traditional annual conference schedule.

By far, the most difficult issue we tackled was the sponsorship and endorsements protocol. This is potentially the most divisive issue we have dealt with as an organization in quite some time. Every CFWF member has their own idea as to what this group is about and what it can and should do within the larger ag community. And while I loathe the potential for hard feelings that this issue seems to generate, I welcome the debate, open discussion and a solid position that future executive members can turn to if they need it.

I can't emphasize enough how important this is. Recent history has shown that requests for endorsement and sponsorships are not easy on our group - we actually fight about this stuff, people get hot under the collar and no one winds up happy. The thing to keep in mind is that the executive council is a continuously rotating group of people - every one to two years there is a new president and new regional representatives - so it's difficult for this group to make decisions on sponsorship and endorsement requests without any firm guidelines, and that's what we were trying to do by developing a protocol - provide some guidelines for future executive councils. I am looking forward to a spirited debate at this year's AGM, but more, I am looking forward to a positive conclusion for this particular issue.

On a lighter note, just prior to this year's meeting in Windsor, the executive met to discuss our current pattern of annual conference rotations. This was prompted by a request from Alberta to take on CFWF 2005 - a year scheduled for Manitoba.

It's interesting, really. The typical east-west pattern is one we have maintained largely out of common courtesy and good will. It was never set in stone. It's not a rule. It's just what we've always done. But the AFWA's request shook all that up and made us think about it a little more consciously. We asked ourselves if it wasn't perhaps just a little burdensome for the EFCWA to have to pull a conference out of their sleeve every two years, and if it might be just be a little disenfranchising for the western associations to play host only once in every eight years. Hummmmm.

We asked around and sure enough, the EFCWA was pretty amenable to reducing their annual conference load, and the western associations were eager to have a chance to host more often. Hugh, the spreadsheet king, came up with a number of scenarios and voila! We may have a solution - a new conference rotation pattern that will see our national meetings be hosted by the East every three years and then spend two years in the West.

Personally, I think it's a great arrangement - one that's fair to all regional associations and one that's manageable. And I think it takes the CFWF forward in a very positive way. But that's just me, perhaps. Again, I'm looking forward to a lively discussion on this subject at the AGM in Windsor.

And finally, following up a suggestion from Mike Wilson in Kelowna last year, I did investigate the potential of a joint conference between the CFWF and the AAEEA. Mike was deeply impressed by the tour component of our conferences - he saw a lot of value in getting out into fields, processing plants and research stations to see agriculture at work in the practical sense. It's something he said that the AAEEA doesn't really do at their annual meetings, which are more focussed on professional development and educational seminars. He thought a joint conference might be beneficial to both organizations. If anyone is interested in pursuing this idea, or thinks their regional association could take something like this on, please get in touch with me and perhaps Mike's dream can still come true!!

I shouldn't have said "finally". We did discuss a number of other items this year - like naming the new photo awards and discussing the potential of a CFWF ethics policy - an item borne of last year's conference. These are ongoing topics that the new executive will tackle, along with other issues of the day as they arise. And I'm positive they will do an admirable job of it.

For myself, I am happy to have been able to serve the CFWF as president for the past two years. It's been interesting, that's certain. And it's cemented my faith in the power of the volunteer structure. A new executive is about to come in, and I urge you to voice opinions, raise issues and actively participate in this organization through them. I thank you for my time here - it truly has been a pleasure.

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Prepared by Hugh Maynard

Administration

The 2003 year was largely uneventful for the CFWF secretariat - the hum of paperwork was its usual stimulating self, but just as rewarding nonetheless. There are a couple of items worth noting:

Membership

It was mentioned last year that the number of members in CFWF had started to decline substantially, with paid membership down by nearly 30% (to 250 agricultural communicators) over the last three years. Regional associations have taken the recruiting message to heart and membership numbers are up by twenty five to 275. There is still some way to go before returning to the 325-350 range of the previous decade.

Finances

The Federation has been able to maintain a reasonable operational surplus due mainly to cost cutting measures. There is no more room for cuts and the decline in membership revenues highlights the need to seek more predictable revenues with which to serve the agricultural communications sector. However, with the current surplus, there is sufficient financial margin to invest in additional activity on a short-term basis (1-2 years); suggested areas of development activity might be the Farm Journalist or the awards program.

Conference Planning

One of the items considered by the Executive this year was an adjustment to the conference schedule, with a planned rotation of two years out west followed by one year in the east. The new two west/one east rotation will commence in 2005 with the following schedule:

2005	AB-SK
2006	MB
2007	EC
2008	BC
2009	AB
2010	EC
2011	SK
2012	MB
2013	EC
2014	BC
2015	AB
2016	EC and so on . . .

CFWF Financial Statement - 2003

		2002	2003 <i>Budget</i>	2003 <i>Final</i>
<u>INCOME</u>				
Awards	Fees	\$2,040	\$2,000	\$ 1,870
	Sponsors	\$7,000	\$6,800	\$ 7,600
Conference	Registrations	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
	Sponsors	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
	Other	\$3,807	\$3,000	\$ 3,435
Memberships		\$5,700	\$5,500	\$ 5,020
Interest		\$ 1	\$ 1	\$ 3
Other		\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
TOTAL INCOME		\$18,548	\$17,301	\$17,928
<u>EXPENSES</u>				
Administration	Sec.-Tres.	\$ 221	\$ 500	\$ 471
	Conf. calls	\$ 0	\$ 1,200	\$ 622
	Promotion	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
	Other	\$ 0	\$ 400	\$ 730
Awards	Administration	\$ 4,842	\$ 3,000	\$ 2,014
	Certificates	\$ 0	\$ 600	\$ 491
	Judging	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,125
	Prizes	\$ 6,700	\$ 7,200	\$ 6,800
	Travel	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
	Refunds	\$ 30	\$ 0	\$ 60
Conference	Expenses	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1,557
	Refunds	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Farm Journalist	Honourarium	\$ 0	\$ 1,000	\$ 0
	Newsletter	\$ 357	\$ 500	\$ 506
	Travel	\$ 0	\$ 1,000	\$ 0
Membership		\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
IFAJ	Fees	\$ 1,761	\$ 2,250	\$ 0
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$15,161	\$19,150	\$14,376
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TOTAL INCOME/EXPENSE		\$ 3,387	\$ (1,849)	\$ 3,552
Surplus/Deficit		\$ 7,978	\$ 11,508	\$ 11,508
Adjustment to 2001 statement		\$ 143		
Retained earnings		\$11,508	\$ 9,659	\$ 15,060

International Federation of Agricultural Journalists

Prepared by Owen Roberts

New leadership in the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) is committed to taking the organization in a direction that will make it increasingly meaningful to members. In September, president David Markey of Ireland, who was elected to the post at the annual congress in South Africa in March, brought executive members or their designates from two dozen countries together for two days of professional development. Central to this initiative was the creation of five committees charged with looking after IFAJ interests in professional development and education, finance and sponsorships, membership, communication, and congress host-country liaison.

Markey appointed chairs to each of these committees, including Owen Roberts of Canada (professional development and education), whose appointment as IFAJ vice-president of professional development and education was also confirmed. This is a new executive post, entrusted to Roberts to help support and coordinate professional development and education for IFAJ members around the globe. Other committee chairs are agricultural journalists from the U.S., Germany, the Netherlands, and Ireland.

Roberts's committee, which includes representatives from Austria, Italy, the U.S. and Belgium, is to act on a slate of professional development and education duties. These include surveying association executives to identify desirable professional development topics for members, helping deliver such topics either by providing instructors and speakers or financial support (a budget is being created for such activities now), advising on ways to improve the IFAJ photography contest and the new writing competition (the latter of which is open to one entry from each member country), helping facilitate the fledgling IFAJ journalists exchange program, and helping introduce IFAJ and its member associations to key college and university instructors involved in journalism education.

IFAJ is anxious to come to Canada for an annual congress (the last time member journalists assembled here was 1967). The organization sees Canada as a vital member, sending CFWF delegates to international congresses (Frances Anderson from Ontario and Ron Wall from Alberta attended this year's congress in South Africa), taking part in the IFAJ photo contest (six entries this year were from Canada; congratulations to Kathy Birt from PEI, for earning honourable mention) and taking a lead in IFAJ communication activities (the IFAJ website, listserv, and until this year, the newsletter, were all coordinated in Canada). Should CFWF decide to submit a proposal to host an IFAJ congress, IFAJ senior vice-president Mike Wilson, who attended last year's CFWF conference in Kelowna, has drawn-up guidelines for member nations interested in hosting a congress. They can be viewed on the IFAJ website www.ifaj.org. Congresses are booked until 2011, so if the will exists in Canada to host a congress, there's lot of time to plan.

Regional Reports

Alberta Farm Writers' Association

Prepared by Janet Kanters, Secretary

With a membership spread out across much of the province, networking opportunities within Alberta generally take place via e-mail. To that end, AFWA Sec/Treas Janet Kanters keeps AFWA members very well informed of what's going on within the AFWA and the CFWF via that medium. In addition, in December 1994, Kanters launched *Scoops*, a quarterly newsletter, which continues to inform AFWA members of news, views and events of the AFWA and CFWF. Full colour, high-resolution pictures round out the four- to six-page publication, which is also published on CFWF's Web site.

No matter the distance – AFWA members do meet in person at least once per year, during our Annual Tour and General Meeting. In 2004, another grand gathering of powerful people met in mid-June as a full one-third of our membership (which numbers 80) gathered in Okotoks for two action-packed days of no-nonsense investigative journalism.

Tour co-organizers and past-presidents Lee Hart and Larry Thomas launched the annual event with an opening reception at the Best Western Okotoks Lodge, sponsored by the Alberta Canola Producers Commission. 'Swag bags' filled with goodies from additional sponsors, including Alberta Express, Publish It!, Alberta Egg Producers, Chuck Greig, CFCW Radio and Adculture Group, were handed out to tour-goers. AFWA members toured the Nufarm ag chemical manufacturing plant, Big Rock Brewery, Agrium urea fertilizer plant, Saskatoon Berry Farm, Bar U Ranch National Historic Site and OH Ranch, and a special breakfast session with Alberta poultry representatives was held.

At the Annual General Meeting, Tamara Stecyk was appointed president for 2005, while Janet Kanters continues as secretary/treasurer. The membership in attendance discussed the possibility of proposing to host CFWF 2005 in Alberta, due to the fact it is that province's 100th anniversary, and the 50th anniversary of the AFWA and CFWF, which was founded by many AFWA members, including Frank Jacobs, Cliff Faulknor, John Schmidt, Ron McCullough and Alice Switzer.

Early in 2004, AFWA Honorary Member John Schmidt presented 65 years worth of farm columns to the CFWF Archives held by the McLaughlin Library at the University of Guelph. The columns were the basis for Schmidt's recent book, *John T. Schmidt's Beat: From Barnyards to Boardrooms*.

Saskatchewan Farm Writers' Association

Prepared by Bonnie Warnyca, Secretary

Feeder of men for harvest on our farm southeast of Montmartre and Field Editor with Grainews.

A quick look back

We held our Saskatchewan Farm Writers annual meeting in November during the 2003 Canadian Western Agribition in Regina. Over drinks and finger food we listened to Saskatchewan's Outstanding Young Farmer winners, Lionel and Melody Ector, a pair of young entrepreneurs from Elbow, Saskatchewan. They run a seed processing plant for specialty crops without the benefit of a great location. Overcoming such challenges was indeed fodder for future articles.

At the end of the meeting after the usual array of "housekeeping" duties the executive for 2004 was decided with Karen Briere as President, Lorne McClinton, Vice-President, Michael Raine, Treasurer and Bonnie Warnyca as Secretary.

In an attempt to get together at another venue during the year besides the Canadian Western Agribition and Western Canada Farm Progress Show we planned a working/social gathering in June prior to the Saskatchewan Stockgrower meetings in Assiniboia. We arrived at Martinson's Bed & Breakfast about ten miles southeast of Assiniboia on a Saturday night. Angela Hall, Bonnie Warnyca, Karen Briere, Glendalee Allan and Kevin Hursh were met with a beautiful evening feast prepared by our hostesses Judy (Martinson) Chubb and her cousin Trudy (Martinson) Ruzicka. Both ladies live on farms nearby but run the bed and breakfast in an attempt to keep the home farm fires burning. We had the run of this beautiful country five bedroom two-storey home complete with a hot tub and pool table. That evening by dim moonlight we ventured out into the cold and mist to challenge the slippery terrain surrounding the petroglyphs at St. Victor. With only one flashlight and the threat of a forty foot drop with each step we pondered the historic rock drawings and markings made by First Nations travelers hundreds of years before.

After Sunday breakfast we went off to visit with the Delormes of Delorme Seeds where we were welcomed into their home for coffee after a tour of the processing facility. Then it was off to a round table discussion with Barry Reisner, current President of the Canadian Seed Growers Association at Limerick, a visit and tour of Red Coat Bison and a final stop at Red Coat Feeders enroute back to our farm house. The following day we headed off to the Saskatchewan Stockgrower meetings where some of us stayed only the day while others spent two days at this event. We're already planning next year's trip in conjunction with the stock growers' meetings to be held in another southwestern Saskatchewan community.

Eastern Canadian Farm Writers' Association

Prepared by John Greig, President

The Eastern Canadian Farm Writers' Association is pleased to welcome CFWF members to Windsor.

Association members have worked hard over the past two years to bring the CFWF conference together. The CFWF conference has taken up much of the "farm writers" work that our members have done in the past year. Hence, there was no summer program or bus tour. However, the association did have its annual professional development seminars in the winter, including a foray into eastern Canada, as well as a successful annual meeting.

Two professional development seminars took place in Guelph and involved a panel on the future of agricultural freelancing as the first event. The second seminar was a writing clinic with the energetic Ed Cassavoy, a Toronto Star editor and past judge of CFWF award categories. An attempt was made to co-sponsor a seminar in Eastern Canada in co-operation with a local Periodical Writers Association of Canada chapter which attracted some interest in the organization.

The ECFWA annual meeting attracted more than 50 farm writers to the Halton Regional Museum, where speakers talked about foreign and human disease preparedness. Lydia Miljan, a University of Windsor professor talked about her book which came from a study in which she evaluated how the values of journalists compared to those of general society. Members also voted at the annual meeting to name two lifetime members: Murray Stewart and Jack Gilliland.