

Nuffield Notes

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Canada 

Nuffield Scholars Meet in Cuba



Scholars and guests from across Canada as well as Alan and Anne Becket of England and Campbell and Isobel Tweed of Ireland used Cuba as their base for a learning experience as well as the site for the annual general meeting.

The group stayed at San Antonio del Banos, about an hour out of Havana. It was a typical Cuban resort frequented by the locals. The showers had solar heated water and the beds sun dried linens. Hotel meals,

predominantly starch and beans and chicken, with plenty of fruit, were consumed as we shared stories and created new friendships.

Our hosts, Glenn and Leta Ells had arranged several outings for the group. Humor needs no language and we all enjoyed the tour of the Museo del Humor. The visit to Bosque Martino del Ariguanabo, a dump turned conservation area, reminded us all of what one person with a passion and commitment can accomplish. Visits to some of the local families made many of us appreciate the rights and freedoms that we often take for granted. During the tour of Havana, you could see the contrast in architecture from the Moorish buildings of the 1700's to the lavish homes of the early 1900's to the Russian influenced buildings of the 1960's. Everywhere we went we saw classic cars and trucks, imported before the revolution.

In Cuba, farms are slowly coming back into the hands of the people and the farmers have united to form cooperatives. After government has taken their share of the crop, the group is able to sell the remainder. John Lohr, Nuffield '97 and his partners in Nova Scotia are working with one group to produce squash for them. We toured their fields of plantain, naranga, black beans, squash, and cassava as well as the packing shed.

All enjoyed the warmth and sunshine on a February day whether walking on the Malecon, Havana's seaside promenade or bathing in the crystal blue Caribbean or playing water games in the hotel pool.



Washing and packing squash for shipment to Nova Scotia on the production line built with Canadian dollars

Nuffielder Receives Order of Canada by John Lohr

On Feb 22 2008, Nuffield Scholar **Fred Walsh** received the Order of Canada from Governor General Michelle Jean. The award was given for a lifetime of conspicuous



community service. Fred was the Dept of Ag extension rep in Kings County, Nova Scotia for many years. He assisted and counseled many a farmer through life's problems. He is famous for a lifetime of near perfect recall of names and relatives. Fred lost his sight in one eye in a farm accident in 1960. As a result, he made the CNIB and farm safety a life passion. He continues to be active in Rotary, winning many awards for his contribution to the life of his club, Kentville Rotary. Fred is always quick to recognize the contribution to his success made by his wife Mary and is very proud of his six children. Fred has two sons, Waldo and Michael, to whom he has passed on his passion for apple farming and they now have farms next door to each other. As a very wise and experienced Ag rep, he felt each should have his own operation. Fred is an avid gardener and has a large garden, which threatens by times to overwhelm him. He has the wonderful practice of planting trees to mark special events. Therefore, the birth of a grandchild will occasion the planting of a tree and later the placing of a small plaque to commemorate the event. Fred planted a honey locus 50 years ago upon the arrival of my parents to Canada as they started their life in Canada working for Fred's father Waldo, then deputy Minister of Agriculture. There is also a blue spruce planted to commemorate Terry Fox and 10 cedars commemorating the 10 provinces. Fred is quick to credit the impact of the Nuffield Scholarship upon his life. "It was a great opportunity and I met so many wonderful people". Fred was away from home for 6 months and accomplished that rare Nuffield event of missing the birth of a child...in this case # 4

Waldo. Fred was most impressed by the sensible land use planning in the UK. "Agricultural land had been protected by zoning for 300 years. I brought that back and later sat on county council and had the support of the Dept of Agriculture and farmers to see Kings County adopt agricultural zoning bylaws". Fred saw many new agricultural ideas and helped introduce them into Nova Scotia.

Fred and his family have had a big impact in my family's life. I can say from personal experience that his greatest accomplishment is that, those who know him the best, love and appreciate him the most. *Well-done Fred, and thanks so much.*

Scholars News

Late last fall, **Ann Gordon** got a job offer that she couldn't refuse. She is Senior Project Manager for the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). Her portfolio includes projects in Afghanistan and Pakistan. She may also do some work in Tajikistan and the Ukraine in the near future. It is very exciting and rewarding and gives her an opportunity to use her agriculture, agri-food & rural development background in international development. Stay tuned as she racks up the travel tales and experiences!

After spending the last year and a half, living and travelling in Mexico and Chile, **Barb Stefanyshyn-Coté, NSch. 03** has stories to tell! On a quest to get a second language into the family, Barb and her husband John rented out their farm in Leask, Saskatchewan for two years, took their four kids and moved to two Spanish speaking countries. First they drove from Saskatchewan to Mexico, then Barb returned to fly her own plane first down to Mexico and then on a flight of a lifetime all the way to Chile. She has prepared a series of humorous, inspirational and informative presentations to share.

Don't forget Ontario's Summer Picnic

July 26, 2008. From 2:00 pm until ??

Megan and Dan Cornwell

325963 Norwich Rd Norwich,

call 519 468-5908 or email cornwell@oxford.net

From the Presidents' Desk



l-r Alphonsus, manager of the Cooperative, host Glenn Ells, Translator Carlos, and Nuffield President Wally Doerkson

Last fall I said that my first official job was to attend the Contemporary Scholars Conference in Calgary. Well the job just keeps getting better in that I “had to” attend the AGM in Cuba and the 08 CSC in Australia. I echo my comments from the last newsletter about feeling the enthusiasm of 50 newly minted Nuffielders. On one of the tour days at the CSC, 6 of the Aussie scholars from last year presented their reports and they were impressive. Just a note to the Canadian scholars, all these reports were on power point and contained 20 minutes of reporting and 10 minutes of questions from the audience.

Here are some of the highlights out of Cuba for me. There was the interaction of the group at meal times and on the bus rides. I observed people making an effort to sit with and talk to different people from time to time. That is a good Nuffield tradition. It was nice to see the co-operative that John Lohr and his partners do business with and to see Cuba from outside the usual tourist sights. It was great that some people had brought bags of medical supplies for the local hospital. It was good to meet Grant Ketcheson. Being able to spend time with our interpreters and learn about their lives was very interesting. Seeing the locals performing at the resort was another neat look into the Cuban culture. It was also invigorating to have at least part of our AGM outside.

We made a decision to run with part of the marketing plan that was presented to us last year by Iris Meck. The whole thing is going a little slower than I had anticipated, but the work that I have seen so far is excellent. It will be great exposure for us if the agriculture papers decide to

use this material. And if they do we will have a year of good news for our organization. Another decision out of our AGM was to do a one week tour to California next March. The intention is to meet up with the Global Focus Program for an evening or a day when it passes through there. While in Australia we heard of an Australian author and have read several of his books. Bryce Courtenay writes *The Power of One*. The thought is that it takes only one person to do one thing at one time for it to have an impact. Nuffield Canada is composed of tens of ones that can do one thing at one time to make a difference. I call upon the collective group for each one to do at least his or her one thing. That one multiplied can have a great effect. I raise my glass to a summer of ONE moments!

Si. Si. An Annual Meeting in the Sun

President Doerkson called the winter AGM to order as the airconditioning at Las Yagrumas Hotel, Cuba struggled to keep up with the heat and humidity. Rod Bradshaw, who has been reappointed as secretary, took notes over the two days of meetings.

Canada is pleased to host Global focus tours for international scholars. Plans were finalized for March in Ontario and assignments were made for Manitoba to host in June '09 and Atlantic in March '10

Much as people enjoyed the location, it was decided that the next annual meeting would be held in Manitoba in **November 27 -29, 2008**. Neil Reid has volunteered to organize an educational tour during the winter of 2009 in California.



NEW BOARD Back: Grant Ketcheson, Ian McPhadden, Mark Wales, Barry Cudmore, Joe Linell. Front: Rod Bradshaw, Jack Rigby, Wally Doerkson President, John Lohr and International President Campbell Tweed.

Harold Perry 2006 Scholar – Individual Study Tour



From Dec. 28 / 2007 – Apr. 3 / 2008 I traveled with my family through Argentina and Chile for the purpose of my individual study on the symbiotic relationship between soil biology and plants. Making a home base in a beach town in Argentina and later the Lake District in Chile I was able to travel to various farms and agricultural plants while my family enjoyed the attractions the country had to offer. Jill Clapperton, a prominent Canadian rhizosphere ecologist, provided my initial contacts. These contacts were then useful in developing a further list of resources. I was impressed with each of my visits. All were knowledgeable hospitable people who are enthusiastic about the future of soil microbes. In addition to enriching my knowledge and spirit in soil biology, the experience and bonding I shared with my lovely wife and children was a once in a life time opportunity and we will cherish our memories for years to come.

The highlights of my study experience include visiting Cesar Belloso member of the no-till farmers of Argentina and a popular speaker on the subject around the world and Carlos Crovetto in Chile, known as the grandfather of no-till farming, who wrote two books on the subject. Visiting Former chairman of Nuffield Ireland Jim McCarthy was also a real treat, check out this link www.farmersjournal.ie/2004/0417/news/currentedition/newsfeature.shtml. In the picture (top left) are Jim's staff and friends in one of his company's farmhouses six hours west of Buenos Aires. Bottom right: I am touring a companion crop experiment (soya bean and corn) at the Rogamoli family farm. Bottom left: my family and me at Perito Moreno Glacier in Patagonia. Jill and I had the fortune of attending Damien and Jess Smart's wedding in Australia in Oct – well worth the effort. Damien and I became mates on the Global focus Tour. Also at the wedding (top mid) were Peter Nixon with his wife, Brendan Smart, both past chairmen, and Jim Geltech CEO of Nuffield Australia.