

# Edition

The newsletter for members of the  
Editors' Association of Canada, Toronto branch

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Program Report

## Good-bye City Life!

by Ken Weinberg

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**Kathryn Dean shares her passion for farms at the March meeting**

**I**t's a cold winter night, and the power's been off for hours. Being the dedicated editor that you are, that's not going to stop you from meeting your deadline. So you get bundled up in your sweater, fur coat, scarf, and fingerless gloves and work away by the glow of the miner's light on your head. You'd light the wood stove, but you're afraid of burning the house down. As soon as you're done, you'll drive ten miles down the road and use the library's high-speed Internet connection and send your client the changes. Hopefully, nothing will go wrong to make you late, like a frozen pipe, or a neighbour's calf getting stuck in your fence.

### ❖A Dream Life?

Does this sound like your idea of a bad dream? Well, it's everyday stuff for Kathryn Dean, our March meeting's speaker and rural-based editor-slash-farming activist.

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Actually, the air outside the Women's Art Association was unseasonably warm that night. Inside, 40 members and visitors listened attentively to Kathryn describe the trials and tribulations of her life after pulling up stakes and moving to greener pastures, literally, while maintaining a successful business as an editor.

Nowadays, it may not be easy for her to drop over to the nearby Starbucks to meet a colleague for a cuppa, but her 90-acre backyard has provided her with the means to help out the dairy farmer next door, and to start an herb and flower picking business. And if she does need a caffeine fix in a hurry, the cappuccino machine in her kitchen will do the trick.

Although her talk was filled with stories of bumps in the night, power surges, and the inconveniences of

ences; she's appeared before the Ontario Legislative Assembly to question the wording of agriculture bills; and she's provoked others to set up an Ontario farmland trust. And she bought a farm to save it for future generations.

"We need farms," she reminded us, "to improve air quality, and to provide a source of food we can count on." Although "bought the farm" is a euphemism for dying, she says we need to protect them for our own survival.

### ❖Editing versus The Earth

Her editing business took a back seat while all this was going on, but later, when she tried to return to editing, she found that her old clients had moved on.

*Her editing business took a back seat... When she tried to return to editing ... her old clients had moved on.*

working 1½ hours from TO, she sounded to me like she couldn't be happier.

Being raised on a farm, and getting vocabulary lessons while sorting fruit in the barn, it's no surprise that Kathryn has always had a fondness for the land and editing. What drove her out of the city to buy a farm and become an activist for farmland conservation was the rate of urban sprawl she witnessed all around her.

### ❖Keeping it green

"People were rewriting the landscape that I love, and they were doing a hack job," she told us. "We are losing an acre of farmland an hour to urban sprawl." And while most people wouldn't have a clue what to do about it, Kathryn was all action. She coordinated a seminar on farmland conservation in April, 2002, sponsored by the Centre for Land and Water Stewardship, University of Guelph, and Carolinian Canada; she's written on agricultural issues in local newspapers; she's spoken at and organized confer-

Networking provided a contact to an author, and before long, Kathryn was editing a book on farms with someone who shared her passion for farm trusts.

And then there's her own book, which will no doubt continue her effort to shed some light on the beauty and importance of farms. From her speech, I expect it to be full of colourful stories about the interesting people around her, including the "angels in coveralls" that occasionally come to her rescue, or 84-year-old Mr. Mack across the road, who always has a story to tell—that is when he's not looking after his 100 head of cattle.

Has this self-declared flake from Toronto succeeded in marrying culture and agriculture? "Let's say it's a work in progress." E

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[Click here to listen to the entire program on-line](#)