Even though there were no trees, Purdue University forestry major Ben Hasse spent last fall traveling to research stations on Antarctica, the **frozen continent**.

“The experience was exceptional,” Hasse says. “I didn’t realize how lucky I was until I got there.”

From October 1998 to mid-January, Hasse worked with about 10 different research groups.

“I basically was an extra pair of hands to help cook, clean, set up camp, dig sample holes and dive tend,” Hasse explains. “The groups are all stripped to the bare minimum, so an extra pair of hands can really make a difference.”

Hasse traveled across Antarctica, visiting the South Pole, the Dry Valley and even a penguin colony. “I really got a Cinderella tour of Antarctica,” he says. “I saw a lot more than most researchers because I visited so many different places.”

Although Hasse jokes about Antarctica being the “harsh continent,” he’s not exaggerating. The world’s record-low temperature was recorded there at minus 128.6 F, and wind gusts can reach nearly 200 miles per hour.

“When you think of Antarctica, you think of the extreme cold, but while I was there, it was summer,” Hasse says. “When I left, it was warmer in Antarctica than it was when I arrived in Green Bay—by about 30 degrees!”

Hasse stayed at McMurdo Station, the United States’ largest research station on the continent. Temperatures at McMurdo averaged above 30 F—warm enough to wear just a sweatshirt and even break out his shorts. In the field, he stayed in tents, even spending a few nights in the snow.

Hasse spent an average of 10 to 12 days with a group before moving on to a new project. “I didn’t want to be just a tourist,” he says. “The people were phenomenal. They are some of the best researchers in the world, and I had the first-hand opportunity to work with them. But I couldn’t contribute anywhere near what I was getting from the experience.”

Although unsure about his future, Hasse says his Antarctic experience definitely will be a bonus. “Antarctica was an amazing place, and I would love to go back,” Hasse says. “But it definitely reaffirmed my love of trees because there were very few terrestrial plants.”

By Jane Houin
A decade ago, it might have seemed impossible, but this summer 10 Purdue Agriculture students not only studied abroad in Russia, but spent their time volunteering at a Russian orphanage.

“It all began over Christmas, when I saw some footage of an orphanage in Novgorod, Russia, on CNN,” says Michael Stitsworth, associate director of Purdue’s International Programs in Agriculture (IPIA). “While in Novgorod in February, we visited at the Pavlov Orphanage and asked how our students might be able to help.

The orphanage houses some 180 children, ranging in age from 7 to 16 years old. The Purdue students taught several informal classes, such as basic gardening, beginning computer skills, woodworking, recreation and beginning English.

“We’ve never had a study abroad program before that included an element of volunteerism,” says Zina Breschinsky, a professor of Russian in Purdue’s Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. “Their focus was still on academics, but volunteerism was a secondary activity.”

Stitsworth and Breschinsky provide leadership for Purdue Agriculture’s activities in Russia through IPIA.

Since leaving in June, the Purdue students studied Russian language, agribusiness and culture at Novgorod State University, which is located south of St. Petersburg in the town of Novgorod. After they completed eight weeks of classes, the students spent the ninth week doing educational travel.

“If all goes well with this project,” Stitsworth says, “we already have a second group of students in the pipeline who are studying Russian and who will continue their studies at Novgorod State next summer.”

You may have more to fear from home canning by novices than from Y2K computer crashes, a Purdue University specialist says.

Concerns about disruptions that might occur if computers crash at midnight on the last day of this year have prompted some people to think about canning food.

But Purdue Extension food safety and nutrition specialist Bill Evers says food preserved at home by inexperienced canners may be more of a threat than any Y2K problem.

“Some people want to preserve their own food because they think that all of the supply and food delivery systems will fail at 12:01 a.m. on New Year’s Day,” Evers says. “We feel that the chance of food poisoning from home-preserved food is greater than the unlikely chance of a collapse of the food delivery system.”

One problem could occur, though. “That’s if people panic and go out and buy everything off the shelf at the end of the year,” Evers says. “It is the same sort of panic that people show when they go overboard just before a storm.”

For those who are concerned about Y2K, he recommends common sense planning, such as laying in a few days’ supply of some dried foods. “If a person wants to, he or she could keep some dried milk, cereal, bread and a few containers of water.”

Some people have called and asked how to can water. “They seem to think they have to do something special to keep water in containers,” Evers says. “But all they need to do is have a clean container.”

By Steve Cain

Check out these URLs on Y2K

http://osu.orst.edu/extension/y2k/y2kpublic.html
http://www.agtr.lsu.edu/eden/resources.htm
http://y2k.com/
http://www.agcom.purdue.edu/AgCom/Pubs/cfs.htm#8
http://www.news-observer.com/daily/1999/03/24/biz06.html
Marshall County residents are exercising more, eating healthier foods and lowering their cholesterol thanks to Purdue Extension educator Karen Richey.

More than six million Americans suffer from symptoms of cardiovascular disease. But Richey wanted to prevent heart problems before they started. “It’s usually the people who have had a heart attack that want the information,” Richey says, “but I felt if I could also offer it to help prevent problems, it would be well worth the time and effort.”

Richey began offering a four-lesson program called “The Heart Healthy Living Series” in 1992. Of the 460 residents in this Northern Indiana county who have enrolled since then, 69 percent had elevated blood cholesterol levels. The others just wanted to avoid future heart trouble.

When Richey checked their progress six months after the program began, she found that 31 percent of participants had lower cholesterol levels. More than half were exercising more.

Nine out of 10 said they bought more low-fat foods, and more than three-quarters said they ate less fat.

“I have high blood pressure, and heart trouble runs in my family,” says participant Dina Bradley, “and I wanted to learn more to help myself. The course was very, very good.”

Richey teaches participants how to read food labels, then takes them to a grocery store where they learn to check labels while they shop. She also demonstrates heart-healthy exercises. Cardiologist John Bernero explains what poor habits can do to a person’s heart – graphically illustrating the problems caused by clogged arteries.

“The classes were packed,” Bradley says, “and from the questions I heard people asking, many knew nothing of what they were supposed to do before they came.”

By Rebecca Goetz
Whoever said you can’t teach an old dog new tricks must not have known about Indiana 4-H programs. Even though 4-H is nearly 100 years old, its programs continue to appeal to a new generation.

Last year, seven Indiana counties pilot-tested a new sport-fishing project. “The program teaches young people respect for the outdoors, gives them tools to promote environmental stewardship, introduces them to a lifelong sport and ultimately helps them catch fish!” says Randy Dickson, Extension educator in Marshall County. “The single most impressive part of this project is watching a kid catch his or her first fish.”

Two of the most noticeable skills the youth developed were patience and the ability to exceed their goal by nearly 25 percent. “Most youth and adults see the summer as ‘time off’ from reading,” says Extension educator Leanne Burrow. “This program encourages them to read; plus, reading is fun!”

Daviess County also launched an old program with a new twist. Three years ago, it started a 4-H Horse and Pony therapeutic riding program for children in conjunction with the Horse and Pony Club. The two clubs meet at the same time, but in separate groups with individualized activities, says Extension educator Jane Ann Beard.

Horses are provided or shared with other 4-H members. Therapeutic club members are taught many of the same horse-related skills, and they even participate in classes at the horse shows.

“Look to the future,” says Dickson. “4-H is growing to meet the needs of today’s youth.”

By Jane Houin

Popcorn king Orville Redenbacher, Brady Bunch mom Florence Henderson, and former U.S. Senator Birch Bayh: just a few of the familiar names of those who have participated in Indiana 4-H.

Who are some of the other Hoosier celebrities who also are past Indiana 4-H’ers?

- Garfield creator Jim Davis
- NASA astronaut Jerry Ross
- Comedian and talk show host David Letterman
- Jackson 5 band member Jermaine Jackson
- Former NBA star Kent Benson
- Former Secretaries of Agriculture Earl Butz and Cliff Hardin

Compiled by Nicole Lehe

If you are a 4-H alumnus, the National 4-H Council would like to hear from you. You can register online with the national 4-H alumni database at: http://www.fourhcouncil.edu