Professor’s gesture honors student’s life and career

by Tom Campbell

Purdue Professor Carole Lembi says she was just doing the right thing by stepping forward to complete Stewart Kees’ PhD after he died in 1997. But to Stewart’s widow and two small children, what Lembi did is the perfect gift they know they can never repay.

May 16, 1998, was a blistering hot day in central Indiana. It reminded Janice of a summer day in her native Mississippi. That’s where her thoughts were, with Stewart. With a heart still weighted down by the loss of her husband, Janice Kees took what felt like the longest walk of her life across the stage of the Elliott Hall of Music to accept Stewart’s posthumous PhD (only the eighth granted by the university since 1964).

Stewart didn’t really know his mother. She died when he was two years old. He was raised by his grandmother, Nettie Durr. Stewart called her Grandma DeDe. She brought him up to be a fine, southern gentleman, a man all of Vicksburg, Miss., could be proud of.

Grandma DeDe sent Stewart off to school, where he earned two degrees and was about to earn a third at the time of his death.

DeDe’s house was solid and clean, but small. When she died, Stewart got the house and started his own family. Joshua was born in 1993, and when Daniel followed in 1995, they had outgrown the only home Stewart had ever known.

Stewart and Janice began to look elsewhere. Besides, the house on Lane Street was not in one of Vicksburg’s finer neighborhoods. Stewart often fretted over the safety of his family. A neighbor had heard a prowler and warned the Kees family to keep doors locked tight and eyes wide open. Stewart kept a gun on the top shelf of the bedroom closet to protect what was his.

June 27, 1997, was like any other day for Stewart. Work all day at the Waterways Experiment Station (WES), then home, then back to the office to work on his research. His six-year quest was nearing an end. He had written a rough draft of the dissertation. Perhaps by Christmas, he hoped, people would be calling him Dr. Kees.

But before heading back to his research that evening, Stewart decided to check the gun. He reached up and pulled it down from the shelf by the barrel.

Janice was in the kitchen cooking supper. Good smells filled their three-bedroom home. “I just heard a pop,” she recalls. “Stewart staggered out to the kitchen and told me to call 911.”

The .22-caliber bullet had entered Stewart’s upper chest and traveled down to his heart. He fell against the refrigerator and died before paramedics could respond.

Carole Lembi, Purdue professor of botany and plant pathology, met Stewart at a conference in Orlando, Fla., in November of 1989. Seated next to him, Lembi overheard him say he was going to apply to graduate school at Cornell University.

Lembi became an on-the-spot Purdue recruiter. She knew a little about the civilian biochemist with the U.S. Army Engineers. Stewart already had earned degrees from Alcorn State (BS) and Tennessee State (MS) universities.

“I leaned over and said ‘Dr. Kees, if you are interested in graduate school, how about Purdue University?’” Lembi says.

Stewart was granted a leave of absence from WES and moved to West Lafayette in 1991 to complete his classwork. Janice, a high school biology teacher, took a job at a bank, then joined Purdue as a technician in Mary Alice Webb’s lab in the Botany and Plant Pathology Department while Stewart attended classes. Good job, good wife, two beautiful children, bright future. Stewart Kees had it all. Co-workers at WES described him as focused, driven, ambitious, a workaholic whose office lightswitch, much like Stewart himself, rarely rested in the off position.

Janice and Lembi each saw Stewart in the light of Kindness that radiated from within the man.

“He was just the kindest person I ever met in my life,” Janice recalls. “We only dated four months before we got married. We just knew we were meant for each other.”

No matter how bad Lembi’s day would start, Stewart had a way of making it better. “When he was on campus he would stick his head into my office every morning,” Lembi says with a laugh.

“He was always in such a good mood.” Lembi remembers Stewart and the almost lyrical way he started each day with a friendly good morning greeting.

“T miss that so much,” Lembi says.

Lembi went to Vicksburg when she heard the news of Stewart’s death. She wanted to do something to honor both Stewart’s life and his career. She wanted to do something to help Janice and her two small boys, Joshua, 5, and Daniel, 3, deal with their loss.

Lembi cared deeply for Kees and his family. If there was something she could do, perhaps it would even help her deal with the loss of someone who was more than a student. Stewart Kees was a dear, dear friend.

Theriot and Lembi shared a common thought.

“We saw Stewart in the light of a kindness that radiated from within the man.”

Janice and Lembi each saw Stewart in the light of kindness that radiated from within the man.

“As soon as the shock of Stewart’s death wore off, I began to think about his research,” Theriot says.

“I talked weekly with Stewart about his

continued on page 2
research, so I know how focused he was. Stewart advanced the state of technology in his area and the research needed to get out.”

Theriott and Lembi looked at Stewart’s research documents he kept at WES. He never took his work home. That was work, this was family. There was no crossing the line.

Like any first draft of a dissertation, there were a few holes that needed to be plugged and questions that needed to be asked and answered. But Lembi was impressed by what she saw. What if she could finish Stewart’s research for him? After all, he had dedicated six years of his life to earning that PhD.

That effort should be rewarded and put to use.

Joshua and Daniel Kees, deprived of a father by the accident, would someday know their father had earned a PhD. That would be significant.

“What Carole did was above and beyond the call of duty,” Theriott says. “She didn’t have to do this, but she loved Stewart. We all did. But Carole Lembi is an amazing person.”

Lembi downplays her role in the project.

“He took very good notes,” she says. “There were a few things that needed to be reanalyzed, but other than that, things were in pretty good shape.”

Lembi talked to members of Stewart’s PhD committee. She then went to Botany and Plant Pathology Department Head Ray Martyn, Dean of Agriculture Vic Lechtenberg, members of the Graduate Council and eventually, the Board of Trustees. Yes, they all said, it could be done.

“People told me that not everybody would do this,” Lembi says. “But I think it’s any major professor’s responsibility to do it. Stewart was a tremendous person, a tremendous role model, and I think it is important for his sons to realize that their father had a PhD.”

In October 1997, Lembi called Janice and revealed her plan. Lembi began working on Stewart’s dissertation in December. The work took up most of her time in January.

“Any time a student writes a thesis, you’re talking about an enormous effort and an enormous amount of time to put things together into the right format so that everything makes sense,” says Ron Coolbaugh, head of the Department of Botany and Plant Pathology while Kees was working on his PhD.

“For somebody to go back to another person’s research notebook and fish out the information into the right format for a thesis is practically unthinkable. Especially to be able to do that without him being here is an extraordinary effort on Dr. Lembi’s part. She’s an outstanding mentor to her students, both graduate and undergraduate.”

Janice Kees knows she is indebted to Lembi in a way she can never repay.

“I can’t find the words to thank her,” Janice says. “There is no perfect gift I can give Dr. Lembi to show her how I feel, just my unending gratitude. I can’t imagine a person doing all she’s done, it’s just been wonderful. I wish I could give her the world.”

Joshua and Daniel Kees were often asked to participate in services at the Wesley United Methodist Church in Vicksburg. When they would return to their pews, no matter how much their nerves revealed, Lembi was proud of what she saw. What if she could finish Stewart’s research for him? After all, he had dedicated six years of his life to earning that PhD.

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Joshua and Daniel Kees were often asked to participate in services at the Wesley United Methodist Church in Vicksburg. When they would return to their pews, no matter how much their nerves revealed, Lembi would greet them with a warm hug, saying, “I’m so proud of you.”

Janice had to fight back tears May 16th when she took that long walk across Eliott Hall of Music stage to receive Stewart’s degree from Purdue President Steven Beering.

“I had to do it for Stewart,” she says. “It was such a

 Connections

Professor and student travel PhD path together

by Tom Campbell

Karl Brandt was one of the first people to congratulate Carole Lembi after the U.S. Army Engineers presented her the Commander’s Award for Public Service earlier this summer.

The award was presented to Lembi after she stepped in to finish Stewart Kees’ PhD thesis following his accidental death in 1997.

Brandt, associate dean and director of Academic Programs for the School of Agriculture at Purdue was thrilled for Lembi, but he certainly wasn’t surprised when he heard what she had done for Kees and his family.

“The School of Agriculture has long had a tradition of hiring faculty who care a great deal about their students,” Brandt says.

“We want people like Carole Lembi teaching in front of our students, whether we are talking about faculty for students who are just starting out as freshmen, or faculty who are serving as mentors for graduate students. We pride ourselves on hiring faculty and nurturing them for that commitment.

“We believe that teaching is an integral part of each faculty member’s responsibility. Faculty members should teach, and they should be interested in extending the knowledge in their own discipline.”

Lembi was selected Outstanding Teacher in Agriculture in 1997. Taking an active role in securing a PhD for Stewart Kees and his family simply solidifies Lembi’s position not only as one of the finest teachers in the School of Agriculture, but on the entire Purdue campus.

“The effort that Carole has put forth is certainly substantial,” Brandt says. “It’s not easy to pick up the pieces of a dissertation that is partially completed, but it is the type of thing that a good faculty member would want to do.

“The kind of faculty members we want are the ones who build those special relationships with their students. The relationship between a graduate student and a major professor is particularly close.

“Carole has a way of fostering enthusiasm in her students,” Brandt adds. “In virtually every course she has taught, enrollment has increased in subsequent years. The fact that you care for students and you are there for them and you are willing to push them, that you have high expectations for them but you are willing to work just as hard for them as they work for you, those are traits that are common in good teachers.

“Carole knows her discipline and she knows how to involve her students in the learning process. She helps them learn how to learn.”

And in that process, a special bond is forged.

“Research is such an unpredictable initiative to begin with,” Brandt says. “You don’t know how it is going to turn out, you don’t know when it is going to end. You are feeling your way around throughout the entire process.

“You are designing experiments and testing hypotheses. You have to figure it all out for yourself. That learning process, where you are looking at the unknown, you have to be right there inside the graduate student’s mind looking for answers.”

According to Brandt, it’s the sharing of an intellectual quest that characterizes the graduate student-major professor linkage.

“It’s not something either does in isolation,” he says. “It’s something they share. The enthusiasm, as well as the disappointment when something doesn’t come out right. The frustration and the boredom of doing experiments over and over again trying to get consistent results, all of those uncertainties are wrapped up in a doctoral research project. And when it is all done, there is still the issue of writing it up so others can understand it.”

That’s when Carole Lembi stepped up to complete Stewart Kees’ work. Just like Karl Brandt knew she would.

confusing time. I was happy and sad all at once. Walking across that stage, I felt like my feet were made of lead.”

Joshua Kees watched quietly as his mother rose
Woodson appointed director of Agricultural Research Programs

by Tom Campbell

Randy Woodson sees the transition from head of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture to director of Agricultural Research Programs as a natural, albeit untimely career progression.

“A department head’s primary responsibility is to be innovative, create new opportunities for faculty and make sure faculty have the resources to be successful,” says Woodson, who joined the Purdue faculty in 1985.

“As director of research, I’ll try to do the same things for the broader picture of agriculture that I did for the Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture.”

Woodson, a native of Arkansas, replaced Bill Baumgardt as associate dean and research director July 1. Baumgardt retired in January after serving as director for 17 years.

“This came up sooner than I had hoped, but being research director is a great opportunity,” Woodson says. “Purdue is one of the strongest agriculture schools in the country, so there is no better place to be involved in administration for research.”

In less than three years as department head, Woodson, following the groundwork laid by his predecessor, Bruno Moser, directed the rebuilding of the Horticulture and Landscape Architecture Department, literally from the ground up.

Construction of the sparkling new, $7 million greenhouse project was completed this spring. During Woodson’s tenure, the department redesigned and remodeled the operations building adjacent to the greenhouses. Woodson also helped write a National Science Foundation grant application that brought $1 million into the department to buy new growth chambers.

Other changes Woodson helped direct may not be as easily noticeable, but are every bit as important to the continued growth of the department.

A new curriculum has been established to meet the growing demand for students in the field of landscape design. He refined and defined everything from what kind of student the department wants to recruit to what kind of student the industry expects the department to produce.

Woodson has done all of this while maintaining a research lab in Roy L. Whistler Hall of Agricultural Research. Restrictions on his time will make it difficult for Woodson to conduct his own research on the physiology of flowering plants while overseeing other projects, but he vows to find the time, even if it means burning the midnight oil.

Maybe I’ll just do my research on nights and weekends,” Woodson jokes.

“The reality is that over the long term, I probably won’t be able to keep a viable research program. But I’ve done it as a department head, which also isn’t the norm. I have graduate students and post doctorate students working now and I can’t just say it’s over.”

Woodson sees a distinct administrative advantage in keeping his lab operational.

“I think it is important for the director to have some working knowledge of research,” he says. “To be an advocate for research programs in the school, you have to understand the research programs.”

Woodson plans on being highly visible in his role as research director.

“I think it is critical that the faculty engage me and that I engage the faculty in conversations about research so that I am in a better position to help them identify funding sources and identify collaborators.”

According to Woodson, one of the biggest changes in research recently is that many scientists are attacking the same problem from many different directions.

“In the past, a lot of the research programs in science were largely based on the individual principal investigator, the single scientist working with his or her graduate students to solve problems,” Woodson says. “But increasingly, research problems have become so complex that one individual can’t tackle it alone. It has to be multidisciplinary; you have to solve problems by bringing scientists together from a variety of disciplines.”

Take, for example, the issue of animal waste.

“This involves animal scientists, engineers (both agricultural and civil), environmentalists, economists, all the kinds of disciplines that are necessary to tackle a problem that complex,” Woodson says.

“It is a research director’s challenge to try and help facilitate that, to point to opportunities, to bring the right people together and give them the incentive to find a solution.”

After a 30-month stint as department head, Woodson showed some initial reluctance toward making himself a candidate for the research director’s post.

“I had only been department head for two-and-a-half years, and I felt like I had just started to really get things going over there and I didn’t feel like I had finished what I had started in Horticulture and Landscape Architecture.”

But opportunity cannot read a calendar, and Woodson says he is excited about his new job responsibilities.

“It is a very important time,” he says. “There are some exciting new developments for funding in agriculture. The Senate passed the research title bill, which brings $120 million in new money into agriculture research at the federal level.”

Woodson may even be able to find a few dollars in there to keep the lights burning late at night in his own research lab.

Food Science Department ready to unveil new building

Faculty and staff have been moving into the new Food Science Building since July 18, and they are just about ready to show off the facility to the outside world.

Three separate dedication events are scheduled for the Purdue campus this fall, beginning with Parents’ Day on Sept. 19.

Food science students and their parents are invited to participate in a small ceremony, held in conjunction with the campus-wide Parents’ Day festivities, and tour the new building.

On Sept. 24, Purdue Agriculture says“thanks” to all fund-raisers and donors at 1:30 p.m. during a state dedication ceremony. Philip Nelson, department head, has invited Purdue President Dr. Steven Beauregard, Dean of Agriculture Vic Lechtenberg, Indiana Gov. Frank O’Bannon and Lt. Gov. Joseph Kernan to participate in the special dedication ceremony.

Guests are invited to tour the building from 2:15 to 4 p.m. that day.

All alumni with food science backgrounds are invited to tour the building during Homecoming festivities, scheduled for Oct. 24.
Connections has gone through many changes in its relatively short life. Connections, which is sent free of charge to about 40,000 alumni and friends of the School of Agriculture, was created in 1992.

We have been making minor changes every since. Recently, we’ve increased the number of Faculty and Staff Notes, added A Bit of History (archival photos depicting Purdue’s past), increased the use of photos and graphics, and added a column by Vic Lechtenberg, dean of Agriculture.

And more changes are on the way. Starting with this issue, we expanded the Class Notes section, to help readers stay in touch with School of Agriculture graduates. We will include stories about graduates we think you will be interested in reading.

This is your chance to tell us what you think about Connections. Why? Well, because this is your publication. We would like to know what you think is important. Tell us what you want to read.

We hope you will spend some time with this questionnaire, give us some straightforward answers, and include details wherever necessary.

If you have any questions, or would like to talk about the publication, contact Tom Campbell, Connections editor, (765) 494-8084, e-mail TC@aes.purdue.edu.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Send Survey to:
Tom Campbell
Agricultural Communication Services
1143 Ag Administration Building
Room 204
West Lafayette, IN 47907-1143

Survey Says...

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Less than 15 minutes  o
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What would you like to see covered in future issues?

Likely to read  o  Not likely to read  o
1. Faculty profiles
2. Stories on students/activities
3. Science and Research
4. Social or economic issues with alumni as sources
5. Higher education issues
6. Coverage of Alumni Association events
7. Alumni profiles

Do you find the design of the publication visually appealing?

yes  o  no  o

What would you change to improve the design?

shorter stories  o
more photos and graphics  o
different design (explain)
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How well does Connections fulfill the following objectives?

Highly agree  o  Moderately agree  o  Disagree
1. Provides alumni with current news and information
2. Discusses issues of interest to alumni
3. Fosters pride and promotes support of the School of Agriculture

Additional Comments: ____________________________________________________________
Presented to sorghum research group
School of Agriculture’s Interdisciplinary Team Award
Butler, professor of biochemistry.
Bruce Hamaker, associate professor of food science; and, posthumously, Larry Ibrahim, administrative assistant, Purdue International Programs in Agriculture; Axtell, Purdue’s Lynn Distinguished Professor of Agronomy; Gebisa Ejeta, Agriculture’s 1998 Interdisciplinary Team Award. Members of the team are John the Purdue sorghum breeding program have been given the Purdue School of
had to be put under armed guard.
On the Kampen Course, named for benefactor Emerson Kampen and family, Dye incorporated four different sets of tee boxes to accommodate everyone from the weekend duffer to the scratch player.
Length of the par 72 course is 5,205 yards from the gold tees, 6,181 yards from the silver tees and 6,777 yards from the white tees.
Dye added another set of tees, the blacks, that make the course 7,333 yards from No. 1 tee to No. 18 cup. As players and equipment get stronger and longer, Dye wanted to provide a length that can handle any golfer’s ability level, even the pros.
“For a course that is only 7 to 11 months old, I think the condition of the course is really good,” says golf course superintendent Jim Scott, BS’87.
“Once people get past how difficult it looks, many of them have told us how very fair the course is to play, as long as they play from the right tees.”
School of Agriculture’s Interdisciplinary Team Award presented to sorghum research group
by Stee Tally
In the early 1960s, when John Kennedy urged Americans to look to their better selves to solve the world’s problems, some researchers at Purdue decided there wasn’t anything they could do to stop the wars, political corruption, dictators or rampant poverty of Africa. But they decided they could do something to fight famine, which too often was the end result of these troubles. They set out to improve the genetics of some of the major food crops of the sub-Saharan regions of Africa, particularly sorghum.
Thirty-five years after the launch of the program, the fruits of their labor are literally coming to harvest in countries such as Chad, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Rwanda and the Sudan.
The improved crops have been so successful in Africa that some farmers there have struggled the seeds across hostile borders, and at some sites the seeds have had to be put under armed guard.
For their perseverance and years of hard work, the researchers involved with the Purdue sorghum breeding program have been given the Purdue School of Agriculture’s 1998 Interdisciplinary Team Award. Members of the team are John Axtell, Purdue’s Lynn Distinguished Professor of Agronomy; Gebisa Ejeta, professor of agronomy; John Sanders, professor of agricultural economics; Katy Ibrahim, administrative assistant, Purdue International Programs in Agriculture; Bruce Hamaker, associate professor of food science; and, posthumously, Larry Butler, professor of biochemistry.
People are willing to take such risks for the Purdue seed because sorghum is the primary food source for 300 million people in sub-Saharan Africa. Sorghum is able to withstand droughts and poor soils, and, as a crop indigenous to the region, it is widely available. According to Axtell, the people in Africa use the grain to make an array of products, including bread; a thick porridge, which is something like oatmeal; a thin porridge or gruel; and what he euphemistically calls in grant applications “thin fermented porridge,” otherwise known as beer.
The sorghum breeding program has benefited American farmers, too. Axtell says, by:
• Training students in crop genetics. One of the students who graduated from the program led a team that developed Pioneer hybrid 3394, one of the best-selling corn hybrids in U.S. history.
• Improving sorghum varieties that are grown in this country. Sorghum is an important livestock feed, particularly in the western states.
• Gaining knowledge of crop genetics. Because of a new field of biology, “genomics,” information learned about sorghum genetics can be applied to other cereal crops, such as corn.
“Sorghum is a much easier crop to work with than corn,” Axtell says. “It has one-third of the DNA per cell that corn has, so it is much easier to find important genes for crop improvement. The genes are in the same locations, though, so once we find an important gene in sorghum, we have a good idea where it is in corn.”
In late June, President Clinton signed the Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Reform Act. The bill charts the course for the nation’s agricultural research and creates a new, competitive grants program called “Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems.”
The new law calls for $120 million a year for the next five years for research in high priority areas including: agricultural genome, food safety, added value and new-use products, agricultural biotechnology, natural resource management, and farm efficiency and profitability. Highest priority for federal funding is given to projects that address national or multistate problems.
The bill’s emphasis on partnerships points the way to the future of agricultural research. Multistate and multi-institutional research projects are an effective way to pool resources and generate results that benefit a wider audience. Partnerships, whether they are between universities or between the university and private industry, provide an opportunity to share expertise, avoid duplication of effort and leverage federal dollars. The bill also emphasizes research that is relevant to clientele and user needs.
Agricultural and food system research is an important engine for economic growth. The new Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Reform Act points the way by providing federal funds for important priorities, but Indiana must also invest strategically to capture research benefits for the state’s agricultural and food related industry. Major technological changes are under way.
The future economic strength of this sector will depend on how well the state’s producers and processors perfect and adopt rapidly changing technology. State funding to adapt and capture the benefits of emerging technologies can help assure their success.

Kampen Golf Course carries warning from designer
by Tom Campbell
After years of discussion, planning and construction, the Kampen Golf Course opened to strong reviews earlier this summer and a warning from course designer Pete Dye.
“Unless you’re a glutton for punishment, don’t even think of playing from the black tees,” Dye says. “In fact, don’t even go back there for a look, it will just scare you.”
Dye transformed the arid and flat Purdue North Course into an intimidating, undulating layout where water or marsh comes into play on seven holes.
But Dye, who has designed several courses used for Professional Golf Association (PGA) Tour events, provided flexibility in the course to make it playable for golfers of every skill level.
“I think I had as much fun doing this course as any course I have ever designed,” says Dye, whose projects include Black Wolf Run, site of this year’s U.S. Women’s Open in Kohler, Wis.
On the Kampen Course, named for benefactor Emerson Kampen and family, Dye incorporated four different sets of tee boxes to accommodate everyone from the weekend duffer to the scratch player.
What you’ll pay when you play
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From the Dean of Agriculture...

Pete Dye struck the first official shot on the Kampen Course during a dedication round June 17.

Pete Dye
Computers, GIS help prevent groundwater contamination

by Becky Gatz

Surrounded by computer screens and hard drives, Bernie Engel creates and analyzes digital images that help keep Indiana's groundwater clean.

Engel, a Purdue University agricultural engineer, combined a computer model with geographic information systems (GIS) data from satellites to develop a plan to keep agricultural chemicals out of the groundwater, which supplies the drinking water for 60 percent of the state's population. For his work, Engel received the 1998 Research Award from the Purdue School of Agriculture on May 6.

His database and program are the first to pinpoint potential water problems field-by-field, and the first of their kind on the Internet (http://danpatch.ecn.purdue.edu/~nrapa/nutrient.html). That Web site still is under construction, but pesticide users eventually will be able to use it as they decide how much of a chemical is safe to use on each field.

The Office of the Indiana State Chemist used Engel's system to write the Indiana State Pesticide Management Plan. The plan identifies and protects parts of the state most likely to suffer water pollution from chemical spills or from excess pesticide or fertilizer applications. Other states are modeling their plans after Indiana's, says Engel, whose methods already are used by NASA's Kennedy Space Center, the U.S. Army, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the EPA.

As its name implies, groundwater lies below the earth's surface. It seeps slowly through layers of sand, soil or rock, pooling in places where people can pump it out for drinking, bathing, cooking or cooling off.

"Once it's contaminated, it's almost impossible to clean up," Engel says. So he looked for ways to protect it. From the start, Engel worked with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and the state chemist, because he wanted his research to meet their needs, as well as the needs of farmers.

Both agencies were eager to work with him after analyzing groundwater data assembled in 1995 by the U.S. Geological Survey, EPA and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Those studies found 18 pesticides and five pesticide breakdown products in 9 percent of the samples. Half the sampled wells had nitrate levels above 2 parts per million (ppm) — below the EPA action level of 10 ppm, but still a concern. The state was poised to act.

The State Chemist's Office and the Purdue Cooperative Extension Service are starting an educational campaign in high-risk areas, teaching residents how to protect their groundwater.

The next step, according to Engel, is to finish putting it all together on the World Wide Web site so that farmers can enter data such as where they live, what crops they grow and which pesticides they plan to use. The computer will know the farmer's soil type, 30-year weather history, geology, watershed and more, then will figure out if the farmer's management practices put his or her neighbors' drinking water at risk. Eventually, it could offer recommendations on the least risky pesticides and farming methods.

Purdue Agriculture prepares for Farm Progress Show

by Chris Sigurdson

An estimated 300,000 to 350,000 visitors will travel to Tipton County for the 1998 Farm Progress Show Sept. 29-Oct. 1 near Windfall, Ind., and specialists with Purdue's Cooperative Extension Service are busy preparing for the agricultural extravaganza.

One of the largest farm shows in the country with 600 vendors, the Farm Progress Show is an 80-acre tent city that suddenly appears each year in the middle of Midwest farm fields.

This year's presence will include an animal sciences tent, a mock house full of consumer exhibits, agricultural production and research exhibits, and a career tent for students considering college.

The production agriculture highlight will be a precision farming exhibit that incorporates a geographic information system, soil tests and other variables in a computer-aided crop management system. The project is led by Purdue agronomy Professor Lee Schweitzer, who has been collecting data in the Farm Progress field for most of the year.

There also will be evaluation plots for soybean cyst nematode resistance, biotechnology exhibits and a stage for crop marketing presentations and other topics.

Academic advisers from the schools of Agriculture, Consumer and Family Sciences, Veterinary Medicine and university admissions will be available to talk about careers in food and fiber industries, as well as majors and fields of study at Purdue.

The Breaking New Ground Resource Center will use a scale model farm to demonstrate barriers and solutions for farmers with disabilities. An aquaculture fish tank and a butterfly house also will be on display.

Purdue forestry specialists will show landowners how to get the most out of forest, both for timber and wildlife. The tour will take place on a privately owned woodlot adjoining the show site. Shuttles will take participants from the Purdue tents to the tour.

Strickland, Graveel earn teaching, counseling awards

by Christy D'Autault

Students come first for both R. Mack Strickland and John G. Graveel, the 1998 Outstanding Teacher and Outstanding Counselor for the School of Agriculture.

"If it wasn't for the students, I would be doing something else," says Strickland.

His teaching career began after he graduated from Purdue with a degree in agricultural education in 1979. After teaching high school agriculture for three years, Strickland returned to Purdue to get his PhD in agricultural engineering, and he has been here ever since.

Over the years, Strickland has taught a variety of courses to a variety of students, from undergraduates to teachers, Extension educators and farmers.

During the school year, Strickland teaches the popular Computer Applications in Agriculture, which he helped develop in 1985. The course helps undergrads improve their computer skills, and led to the use of computers in other agricultural courses.

Strickland reaches his less traditional students through summer short courses that run the gamut from welding to computers.

"People always say to me, 'You teach welding and computers?' and I tell them you have to fix them [computers] somehow."

Strickland enjoys his work with nontraditional students and sees a real need for continuing education. "They have to keep up-to-date also, and I enjoy helping them," he says. When he teaches, Strickland emphasizes the application of course material.

"I'm big on application, how we can use the information. People don't learn until they understand how they can apply the information," he says.

Like many professors, Strickland has an open-door policy. But he takes his dedication to his students one step further, giving his home phone number out in all of his classes. "Though I do worry about those who call me after midnight," he says with a laugh.

John Graveel knows what it is like to be a student at Purdue. He earned all three of his degrees from Purdue, and returned as an associate professor of agronomy in 1992. He is currently director of the Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences (NRSE) program.

Graveel believes that good counseling involves good listening. He takes the time to get to know students and their interests.

One of Graveel's former students wrote in his nomination, "In the three years I have known Dr. Graveel, he has made me feel as though I am part of an extended family within the Agronomy Department. As an advisor, he offered both sound academic and social counsel."

While Graveel always encourages students to challenge themselves, he steps back and lets students make their own choices.

"A good counselor advises and suggests," Graveel says. "However, ultimately it is the student who must make the final decision."

Graveel enjoys his work as a student counselor, and finds it very rewarding.

"The very best compensation for this activity is the handshake of gratitude or smile of appreciation one receives from someone whose life you've touched."
Entomology

The National Urban Pest Management organization selected Gary Bennett as recipient of the Arnold Mallis Distinguished Achievement Award. Bennett accepted the award in San Diego.

Pest Control Magazine has honored John V. Osmun as an inaugural member of the Hall of Fame.

Agronomy

Charles Rhykerd, PhD'57, received the Distinguished Grasslander Award from the American Forage and Grassland Council. A professor emeritus of agronomy, Rhykerd was cited for a lifetime of service to the forage and grassland segment of agriculture. The council also honored Jeff Volene as recipient of the Merit Award. Volene has earned recognition for work and productivity in forage management in research and teaching.

Richard H. Grant has been appointed professor effective with the 1998-99 academic year.

A soybean breeder at Texas A&M since 1981, Glenn Bowers is the department’s new soybean breeding and genetics professional. Bowers specializes in breeding soybeans for resistance to disease, insects and environmental stress.

Joe Yahner has become the second recipient of the State Health Commissioner’s Award for Excellence in Public Health. Yahner received the award for contributions in promoting, protecting and providing for the health of people in Indiana.

Agricultural Economics

Freddie L. Barnard, James M. Lowenberg-DeBoer and Kevin T. McNamara have been appointed professors effective with the 1998-99 academic year.

Animal Sciences

David E. Gerrard has been appointed associate professor effective with the 1998-99 academic year.

Matt Claeys is the livestock judging/beef Extension specialist. Claeys was a faculty member at North Carolina State University working with 4-H Youth and Extension animal husbandry.

Food Science

Richard H. Linton and John D. Floros have been appointed professors effective with the 1998-99 academic year.

The Purdue chapter of Gamma Sigma Delta presented the Award of Merit for agricultural research to Suzanne Nielsen. The award is given annually for significant contributions to Agriculture, Consumer, Family Sciences and Veterinary Medicine through research, teaching, Extension or administration.

Forestry and Natural Resources

Robert K. Swihart, BS '79, has been appointed professor effective with the 1998-99 academic year.

Harvey A. Holt was awarded the Meritorious Service Award from the Indiana Arborist Association (IAA). An association member since 1976, Holt currently serves as the IAA representative to the International Society of Arboriculture.

Biochemistry

Sandra S. Rossie, Jonathan H. LeBowitz and Harry Ciarrocchiou have been appointed associate professors effective with the 1998-99 academic year. All three have been assistant professors of biochemistry since 1991.

Horticulture and Landscape Architecture

Kashchandra G. Raghothama has been appointed professor effective with the 1998-99 academic year.

Matt Jenks is an assistant professor of landscape horticulture.

Randy Woodson has been elected vice president of the research division by the American Society of Horticultural Science. He is currently serving a two-year term.

Botany and Plant Pathology

The North Central Division of the American Phytopathological Society has presented Don Scott, BS '56, with the Distinguished Service Award for service to the science of plant pathology. The author of “Barns of Indiana,” a photography book, Scott recently retired after a 30-year career at Purdue in plant pathology.

Agricultural and Biological Engineering

Larry Huggins, PhD'66, is president-elect of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers (ASAE). He will be the organization’s president in 1999.

Agricultural Communication

Steven T. Doyle is an instructional and promotional video producer, replacing Randy Spears who is now distance learning coordinator for the department. Doyle has been a video producer since 1983.

Laura Hoelscher and Dave King each received the Gold Award from the Agricultural Communicators in Education (ACE) Critique and Awards competition. Joan Crow, Sharon Katz and Randy Spears earned Silver Awards and Mindy Jasmund, Russell J. Merzdorf (2), King, Chris Sigurdson, Vic Herr. BA ’92, and Eldon Fredericks each received Bronze Awards from the nearly 400 category entries.

Jane Wolf Brown, Mike Kerper and Troy Brown earned the Award of Excellence at the recent APEX '98 awards for publication excellence. “Location, Location, Location” won in the special purpose brochures, booklets and catalogs category.
would toss peanuts to the elephants and marshmallows to family trips to Chicago's Brookfield Zoo, where she fondly remembers marketing campaign when she said, “If it eats, we to finches and everything in between. For a third error of her marshmallow-tossing youthful ways. “That’s something that just makes me cringe.” But now she is getting a chance to make up for the effort of her marshmallow-tossing youthful ways.

Graffam Carlsen is one of only 11 exotic animal nutritionists at zoos in North America. Based in New York’s Bronx Zoo, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) hired Graffam Carlsen to help establish a program with zoos across the country, setting up nutrition programs for their animals.

Exotics are just about anything you don’t find on a farm,” says Graffam Carlsen, who began working with the WCS July 1, 1996. Aside from the five facilities maintained by the WCS in New York (Bronx, Queens, Prospect Park and Central Park wildlife centers, the Aquarium of New York) and a research facility in Georgia that boast more than 10,000 animals, Graffam Carlsen is working with five client zoos scattered across the country. Her day-to-day tasks are as diverse as the animals themselves.

Through mail, fax and phone conversations, Graffam Carlsen receives information from her clients. One zoo wants her to set up specifications for hay used to feed its animals. Another wants a diet evaluation for every animal in its zoo, from elephants to finches and everything in between. For a third client, she is monitoring a gorilla’s diet. Graffam Carlsen may have created her own marketing campaign when she said, “If it eats, we feed it.”

Graffam Carlsen may have created her own life a real zoo

Working in a zoo has been a lifelong dream for Wendy Graffam Carlsen. She fondly remembers family trips to Chicago’s Brookfield Zoo, where she would toss peanuts to the elephants and marshmallows to the polar bears. “As a nutritionist, I can’t believe I would feed marshmallows to those polar bears,” she admits now. “That’s something that just makes me cringe.”

But now she is getting a chance to make up for the error of her marshmallow-tossing youthful ways. Graffam Carlsen is one of only 11 exotic animal nutritionists at zoos in North America. Based in New York’s Bronx Zoo, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) hired Graffam Carlsen to help establish a program with zoos across the country, setting up nutrition programs for their animals.

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Graffam Carlsen has developed an affinity for creatures like the hedgehog. But she is learning other things about animals that deepen her commitment to the project. While working on a two-month program with hedgehogs, she learned that they indeed, have human characteristics. “You wouldn’t think a little pin cushion like a hedgehog would have too much personality,” she says. “I found that some of them want to be held and some of them just want to be left alone. I really believe in this concept of helping out other zoos. It’s frustrating for zoos to not have the money to put somebody in place when they really feel the need. I want to help other zoos in any way I can. It’s mind boggling, the amount of diversity we deal with every day.”

Unlike any other animal facility in the world, the WCS has an established database with more than 13,000 values for vitamins, minerals and other nutrients for blood and food. Graffam Carlsen uses this information, painstakingly developed over a 13-year span, to formulate diets that will help keep zoo animals healthy. Researchers in more than 50 countries, monitoring animal diets in the wild, contribute to this database.

“The best part of my job is being able to take people’s perceived animal nutritional problems and then help find answers,” Graffam Carlsen says. “We look at the historical diet of a particular animal and then apply current science to what they’ve already been doing.”

One example is the proboscis monkey, a folivore (leaf eater) that most zoos can’t keep because of its voracious appetite for leaves. “We would have to cut down every tree in New York just to feed them,” Graffam Carlsen says. “But we’ve been working toward a solution that provides them a pellet feed (a concentrate loaded with vitamins, minerals, protein and fiber), as well as a mixture of leaves, some greens like romaine lettuce and cabbage, and some produce, too.”

While at Purdue, Graffam Carlsen had ambitions of vet school. But her career path changed course when her application was rejected just one month prior to her graduation in 1989.

“I had no idea what I was going to do,” she says. “I was just so sure I was going to get into vet school.” When it didn’t happen, she went back to school, earned her master’s degree, and bought some time to rethink her future.

Mark Russell (one of Graffam Carlsen’s instructors) stepped in, put her in touch with several zoos (which eventually led to an internship at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C.) and helped launch her career.

“She was one of those rare students who seemed to know what she wanted to do from day one,” Russell remembers. “She always knew she wanted to work in zoos, so it’s really great to see her doing so well.”
for the department. Vickie J. Maris, BS'86, is a new communications specialist in Personnel Services, Purdue University. She also continues to operate her Conmemara pony farm in Battle Ground, Ind., coordinates the DPF Pony Pals Club for horse-crazy kids; and is a professional equine photographer.

Brenda (Fish) Paul, BS'87, owns and manages a stocker cattle and tobacco farm in Paris, Ky. She and her husband, Austin, have a son, Spencer.

Andrea McCann, BS'89, became academic advisor for the Agricultural Communication Department at Purdue on July 1. She had been a writer and editor for the department.

Michael Lent, SVM'91, is part owner of Pantano Animal Clinic, an AAHA accredited small-animal hospital in Tucson, Ariz. He and his family enjoy hiking and camping throughout Arizona.

Nicki Patti, BS'91, Schaumberg, Ill., is a recruiter for Scientific Staffing Inc. in Des Plaines, Ill. They are a recruiting/staffing firm dedicated to placing scientific personnel.

Christie (Gaus) Bielinski, BS'93, is a quality systems specialist for Baxter Healthcare's Renal Division in Chicago. She and her husband, Tom, celebrated the birth of their first child, Jonathon Arthur, on Feb. 1, 1998.

Samantha Starr, BS'98, is a herdsperson at Christensen Family Farms in Sleepy Eye, Minn., where she is residing.

Greg Thrush, BS'98, is farm manager at Thrush Farms in Garrett, Ind.

Guy B. Huber, BS'22, Warren, Ind., passed away May 9, 1998.


George Murphy, BS'39, Jasper, Ariz., passed away Dec. 6, 1997.


Lee W. Miller, BS'51, St. Petersburg, Fla., passed away March 20, 1998.

Dole Foods and Purdue grad are not just pineapples anymore

Give the Dole Food Co. credit. When an employee needs a little space, this $4 billion-a-year, multinational firm comes up with the space. In the case of Dole employee Jeannie Broderick Vana, BS '81, about 12,000 acres of the some of the most expensive real estate on the planet, on the Hawaiian island of Oahu, is being developed into new diversified crops like seed corn, alfalfa, tuberose, taro and coffee.

Dole is in the process of converting 1,000 acres of sugarcane into the development and production of a variety of fruit trees and tropical flowers. Some are common varieties like papaya, grapefruit, avocado and mango. Others are fairly exotic, like the litchi (pronounced ly-chee), a plum-like fruit, rambutan (a soft, hairy-spined cousin of the litchi) that is being test-marketed in the Chicago area; and longan, another relative of the litchi. Clearly, Dole isn't just pineapples anymore.

In fact, Dole recently moved several sales in its program to a leader in the floral industry, purchasing Sunburst Farms and its affiliates, the largest importer and marketer of fresh cut flowers in the United States. Dole also acquired Floramerica companies, the largest grower and exporter of flowers. Annual revenue from those companies is $100 million.

Broderick Vana learned firsthand about exotic locales and their equally exotic fruits at a young age. She was born in Middletown, N.Y. But her father's job as sales and marketing manager for the Indianapolis-based Eli Lilly and Co. landed the family in Australia, Hong Kong and the Philippines for six years, where tropical climates first put their spell on the globetrotting child.

The family eventually returned stateside, settling in Carmel, Ind. But her father's job as sales and marketing manager for the Indianapolis-based Eli Lilly and Co. landed the family in Australia, Hong Kong and the Philippines for six years, where tropical climates first put their spell on the globetrotting child. Dole's employee Jeanne Broderick Vana is challenging herself, too.

She has leased three acres of ground from Dole to work on varieties called ultra tropicals—very rare crops like mangosteens, bamboo shoots, water chestnuts, heart of palm, peppercorns and even red bananas.

Clearly, Broderick Vana is not just pineapples anymore, either.
Ag Ambassadors selected for 1998-99 school year

Eight students have been selected to represent the School of Agriculture for the 1998-99 school year as Ag Ambassadors.

Ag Ambassadors are a select group of volunteer students who give tours to visitors to the School of Agriculture, help host Agricultural Alumni Association events, and give presentations about career opportunities in agriculture to high school students.


Purdue students invent soybean-based ski wax

by Chris Sigurdson

From the flat, fertile farm fields of Indiana comes the latest innovation in alpine skiing — a soybean-based ski wax that’s kinder to the ski slopes because it’s petroleum free.

Invented by two Purdue University sophomores from Indianapolis, “Soy Ski Wax” replaces the paraffin in ski wax with soybean and canola oils. The wax earned food process engineering students Faye Mulvaney and Ryan Howard $2,500 each as part of an innovative uses for soybeans competition sponsored by Purdue’s Agonomy Department and the Indiana Soybean Development Council.

“The Innovative Uses for Soybeans” contest started in 1994 and has produced soybean crayons, a soy-based firestarter and edible birthday candles as annual winners. As part of the competition, the students were required to do a product search to make sure their idea was original, create the product formulation, test the wax to ensure it was comparable with existing products. They also had to create a marketing plan.

“We picked ski wax because of the tremendous growth in recreational skiing and snowboarding,” Howard says. “We thought the people who like being outdoors also would like a product that doesn’t harm the hill or end up in the water.

“You look at the resorts around Tahoe, and you know whatever is left on the hill is going to end up in the lake.”

Coming up with the ski wax idea was the easy part, they say. The challenge was developing testing equipment and procedures they could use to prove they had developed a superior product.

“If you don’t have the data, nobody will think you’re serious,” Mulvaney says. “I learned a lot about proper laboratory techniques and testing to make sure our conclusions were defensible. It was good experience.”

They found that measuring water-repellency was a good guide to how the wax would work on the bottom of a ski or snowboard. They refrigerated flat plates of polyethylene, then coated the surfaces with experimental soybean wax formulations and two commercial ski waxes. The students then compared how fast water droplets rolled off the plates.

Once they had a promising mixture, they built a complicated wheel with small skis that would run the wax over a surface over and over again, testing friction and durability. Each test would run for the equivalent of a kilometer. Designing the test equipment was as demanding as making the wax, says Bernie Tao, associate professor in agricultural and biological engineering who mentored the students along with assistant professor Anton Sumali.

“There is no existing equipment or procedures to test the friction coefficients of skis,” Tao said. “I think their equipment could end up being adopted by the ski industry.”

Tao says the testing wheel not only simulated a one-kilometer ski run at 35 miles per hour, it also was designed and wired to operate in a refrigerator, simulating real-world conditions.

The ski wax is about 30 percent soybean oil, Mulvaney said. One package of wax would cost about 25 cents to produce.

While Soy Ski Wax may not dramatically improve the domestic demand for soybeans, Indiana Soybean Development Council President Bill Peters says the invention demonstrates soybeans’ potential.

“Soybeans could replace all kinds of things we can’t even dream of today. This is just one more example,” says Peters, a soybean farmer from Sharpsville, Ind. “There will be more demand for soybeans if we can keep on finding new uses. Many things that aren’t renewable today could be.”
Alumni Association hopes e-mail directory will help students stay in touch

We know from the number of e-mail messages we receive in the Ag Alumni office that many of you are now on-line and prefer to receive communication electronically whenever possible.

We also know that many of you like to keep in touch with your classmates, or would like to re-establish contact with those you knew during your Purdue days.

The Ag Alumni Association is currently assembling an e-mail directory of our membership, which will be accessible through the School of Agriculture’s web page. The directory will include name, degree(s) and class year(s), e-mail address and a World Wide Web home page address (if you have one and would like to include it).

If you would like to be included, please send a note to Donya Lester at dcl@agad.purdue.edu including the above information, as well as a statement authorizing us to include this information in our electronic directory.

Please note that your authorization must be sent from the e-mail address that is to be included in the directory. Once the web address of this directory is established, it will be published in future editions of Connections and will be sent electronically to all alumni who have consented to inclusion.

Development Notes

Thrasher family establishes scholarship

George Thrasher, BS’52, MS’54, PhD 58, Crown Point, Ind., has established the Thrasher Family Award in Animal Sciences. By providing financial incentive for animal sciences majors, this award honors the lives and contributions to agriculture of Thrasher family members, while encouraging the academic and personal growth of students.

The Thrasher family raised Scotch Shorthorn beef cattle in Monroe County in southern Indiana. For many years, the Thrashers were involved in consigning cattle to the state breeder’s association shows and sales held on the Purdue campus.

Other members of the Thrasher family who have obtained degrees from Purdue Agriculture are: Donald BS’51, MS’55, PhD 57, (deceased) and Kent (George’s son) BS’88, MS’92, Crown Point, Ind. Thank you George Thrasher and family!

Terms of Endowment

Your financial support of Purdue Agriculture is a personal decision. Planning an endowment gift can be creative, challenging and rewarding.

Once you choose to make a gift, your giving program can be structured to fit your needs and financial goals. The university charges no investment or management fee.

A minimum of $20,000 will establish an endowment for Agriculture through any outright giving method using cash, securities, personal and real estate. The Purdue Endowment Fund has experienced tremendous growth over the past 10 years, ranking No. 1 in the Big Ten for the past three years and enjoying 25.3 percent growth in 1997.

This exuberant growth can be attributed to the intelligent asset allocation, skillful investment management and prudent spending policies linked to Purdue’s investment philosophy. The official policy defines Purdue’s investment objective as three-fold:

1. preservation of capital, 2. protection of capital from inflation, and 3. enhancement of capital through market appreciation.

Agricultural development professionals can help you choose the most beneficial gift asset and the best method for transferring it to Purdue Agriculture.

We’re “Growing Purdue Agriculture,” and we’d like your input. Call us with your inquiries: (800) 718-0094.

Purdue Award Committee looking for a few good people

Purdue University is seeking nominees for the annual Frederick L. Hovde Award of Excellence. The award is named after the Purdue president from 1946 to 1971, and is given to a current Purdue staff member who has contributed to the well-being and progress of rural Indiana. The $800 prize and plaque is presented by Indiana Farm Bureau Inc. in honor of Hovde’s 25 years of leadership in higher education in the state.

People in all schools, divisions and units of the university, including regional campuses and field staffs, as well as those based at the West Lafayette campus, are eligible. Nominations are being sought for staff members who exhibit outstanding classroom and counseling performance, outstanding research achievement, or outstanding extension education programs and services. Nominations of an eligible staff member can come from any individual or organization and should contain a brief (one page) supporting statement.

Submit nominations electronically to joy.pherson@ces.purdue.edu, fax to (765) 494-5876, or mail to: Hovde Award Committee, Purdue University, 1140 Agricultural Administration Building, Room 104, West Lafayette, IN 47907-1140. Hovde Award information also is available on the World Wide Web at http://www.anr.ces.purdue.edu/anr/HOVDE.html. Deadline for nominations is Sept. 1, 1998.

If you have questions concerning the award, or would like further information about a staff member you wish to nominate, contact David C. Petritz at (765) 494-8494.

Calendar

August 26
The Wabash Bash, Area IX golf outing and steak fry
Rocky Ridge Golf Club, Darlington, Ind.
Guest speaker is Purdue men’s basketball coach Gene Keady. Dinner tickets available at $25 per person. Proceeds support scholarships for Purdue ag students participating in international study programs.
Contact Gary Standiford, (765) 477-7106.

September 10
Eastern Indiana annual Alumni Roundup
Guest speaker, Wally Tyner, head of Agricultural Economics Department, Smith Auditorium, New Castle, Ind.
Contact Joe Russell, (765) 289-1330.

September 19
Ag Alumni Board of Directors meeting
West Lafayette, Ind.

Agricultural and Biological Engineering Alumni Gathering
West Lafayette, Ind.
Contact AH Heber, (765) 494-1214.

September 24
Food Science Building dedication
West Lafayette campus. See story page 3.

October 2-3
Horticulture and Landscape Architecture Alumni Reunion
West Lafayette, Ind.
The new greenhouses will be dedicated Oct. 3. Other alumni events are scheduled during the weekend.
Contact Robin Tribbett, (765) 494-1302 or e-mail at tribbett@hort.purdue.edu

October 23
Ag Dean’s Club Dinner
West Lafayette, Ind.
Contact John Palm, Office of Agricultural Development, (765) 494-8672, or e-mail at pap@agad.purdue.edu.

October 24
Animal Sciences Alumni Reunion
West Lafayette, Ind.
The reunion will include a pre-game luncheon and will be held in conjunction with Purdue’s Homecoming event.
Contact Donya Lester, (765) 494-8593 or e-mail at dcl@agad.purdue.edu.

Forestry and Natural Resources Alumni Tailgate Party
West Lafayette, Ind.
Pre-game cookout.
Contact Marty Brown, (765) 494-3590 or e-mail at mbrownF@fnr.purdue.edu.

Purdue vs. Illinois—Homecoming football game

November 24
Southwest Indiana “Goat Roast” District Meeting
Dubois County Fairgrounds, Jasper, Ind.
Contact Lisa Heffy Koester, (612) 963-6564.

January 22, 1999
Purdue Ag Fish Fry
Purdue Armory, West Lafayette, Ind.
Annual meeting of the Purdue Ag Alumni Association.
Contact Donya Lester, (765) 494-8593 or e-mail at dcl@agad.purdue.edu.
Rob Eddy, BS'87, MS'94, had one thing in mind when he took over as greenhouse manager for the Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture in January. "I want this to be the finest greenhouse facility in the country," says Eddy, who left a job with Dow AgroSciences to return to the West Lafayette campus. "When I interviewed for the job, I told the (Horticulture) department to give me five years to develop a greenhouse team that, coupled with the technology we have, will create the best greenhouse in the country."

One walk through the new facility (work was completed this summer) and it's easy to see Eddy's goal is well within reach. Wide-pane sections of glass mean less metal support structure and more exposure to the sun for plants growing in the 28,800-square foot greenhouses.

Pumps send clear water, fertilized water, purified water, even compressed air into the greenhouse units. "Each greenhouse has a microprocessor that measures temperature and humidity," Eddy says. "The weather station positioned on the roof measures light, temperature, humidity, rain, wind speed and direction, and it makes calculations as to whether to turn on the heat or cooling unit."

Each greenhouse is equipped with a shade screen, which reduces temperature by shading the crops, or holds the heat in the building on short winter days. Eddy says the computer integrated climate control system represents quite a change from the old greenhouse system. "By working with the weather station, the computer can anticipate heating and cooling needs before the temperature inside the greenhouses even changes."

This allows Eddy to better utilize his greenhouse staff. "The staff used to run around and open windows and turn on fans to help control the temperature," he says. "We can get better crops and more precise research this way because we know exactly what the temperature is in each greenhouse."

The Horticulture Department had been talking about a new facility for more than a dozen years. Actual construction took less than two years. Eddy says five new coolers are now in operation. Adding new growth chambers and two 900-square foot growth rooms will allow researchers to expose their plants to a temperature range from just above freezing to over 110 degrees Fahrenheit. And they won't have to open or close a single window to do it.

Purdue greenhouses aim to be the best...