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The Leading Object: February 2009

John C. Owens

NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

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Perspectives

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in"



John C. Owens
NU Vice President and
Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

That quote from Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address, given March 4, 1865, has been much in my mind lately.

Partly because this February is the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth, and I'm a big Lincoln fan. And partly because it remains so applicable today.

Emotions often run high in times of great turmoil. Uncertainty can engender fear, and fear, anger.

Anger usually finds a target. In his time, it was Abraham Lincoln.

Slandorous attacks could have made him bitter and vindictive. Yet every day Lincoln made the choice to do the very best he knew how to do.

He once said of resentment, "Perhaps I have too little of it; but I never thought it paid. A man has no time to spend half his life in quarrels."

Today history recalls his kindness, his efforts at conciliation, and his storytelling.

Abraham Lincoln loved a good story. One I like concerns Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, who, furious at an officer, told Lincoln he'd give the man a piece of his mind in a letter. Lincoln encouraged him.

When Stanton read a scorching letter to Lincoln the president nodded. "That's a good one," he approved. Then Stanton wondered aloud how best to send it.

"Send it!" Lincoln exclaimed. "Why, don't send it at all. ... You have freed your mind on the subject, and that is all that is necessary. Tear it up. You never want to send such letters. I never do."

In 1862, in the midst of terrible times, Lincoln signed into law the Morrill Act, with its promise of education for continued on page 2

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*The Morrill Act of 1862
established a Land Grant University
in each state where
The Leading Object
would be instruction
in agriculture and related fields.*



February 2009

Students see diverse agricultural climate during visit to Tasmania

Most Americans probably have heard of the Tasmanian devil, but likely know little about Tasmania itself.

Thanks to a University of Nebraska–Lincoln study abroad class, College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources students know more about Australia's smallest state that sits as an island south of the continent.

Paul Read, professor in the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture, led a group of 15 students to Tasmania between Dec. 26 and Jan. 12.

"Tasmania is an incredibly diverse island in terms of its agriculture and natural resource base," Read said.

The trip with students was Read's third. Read first visited Tasmania in 2005–06, when he spent five months there on a faculty development leave.

As part of CASNR's AGRI 310 Study Abroad class, students were required to do pre-trip research, participate in orientation sessions, and upon return complete a report and participate in a public seminar.

Since it is surrounded by deep, cold water, Tasmania doesn't get extremely hot in the summer or cold in the winter, Read said. Historically sheep production was dominant but now there are significant



Paul Read, left, with professor Steve Wilson of the University of Tasmania, who served as host for UNL students during their winter break visit to Tasmania.

dairy, beef, and poultry operations. The island has numerous conventional crops such as wheat, barley, hay, and vegetables, but crops such as hops, opium poppies for medicine, and pyrethrum daisy as a source of natural insecticide, along with aquaculture, reflect its agricultural diversity.

The state also has a flourishing fruit industry, with rapidly developing grape growing and wine making, said Read, himself a viticulturist.

Read and the students flew to Sydney, Australia, before traveling to Tasmania, which has a population of 600,000 to 700,000. There they visited agricultural production facilities and farms, went to a Tasmanian devil conservation park to see the animals threatened by facial tumors, and learned about the area's history while

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Perspectives *(continued from page 1)*

common people. In doing so he, Justin Morrill and members of that Congress put in place something so unique, so vital to the nation's healing, and its future, that yet today you and I reap its benefits, as will our children's children.

"With malice toward none, with charity for all ..."

Within weeks of uttering those words, Lincoln was dead. The assassin's bullet that ended his leadership ended the possibility of the magnanimity and forgiving peace he so wanted to foster toward the South.

It did not end the legacy or the lessons we gain from Lincoln's life. While we do not control the circumstances of our time,

we, like Lincoln, each day make our choices as to who, and how, we will be in dealing with them.

This February — and everyday — is a great time to reflect on the wisdom and humor he left us in such quotes as these:

- "I am rather inclined to silence, and whether that be wise or not, it is at least more unusual nowadays to find a man who can hold his tongue than to find one who cannot."
- "How many legs does a dog have if you call the tail a leg? Four. Calling a tail a leg doesn't make it a leg."
- "If I were to try to read, much less answer, all the attacks made on me, this shop might as well be closed for

any other business. I do the very best I know how — the very best I can; and I mean to keep doing so until the end. If the end brings me out all right, what's said against me won't amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference."

He made a difference. A profound difference. It echoes in our world today.



Josiah receives prestigious partnership award

An initiative to prepare for the anticipated arrival of a pest that is expected to kill ash trees throughout Nebraska has earned national recognition for Nebraska's State Forest Service director Scott Josiah.

Josiah has received the prestigious Two Chiefs Partnership Award from the U.S. Forest Service and the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, and shares the award with Steve Chick, chief of the NRCS in Nebraska.

The award is named such because it comes from the two chiefs of the U.S. Forest Service and the NRCS. The award was given for the pair's work on the \$1.8 million Great Plains Tree and Forest Invasive Initiative.

"This national award is a huge recognition ... of the value, innovative nature, and impacts of this project and of the strength of the partnerships we continue to forge with the USFS, the NRCS and other organizations," Josiah said.

The four-state project was initiated in Nebraska in 2008 to prepare for the arrival of the emerald ash borer (EAB). The pest, which came to the United States from China, has been detected in Missouri and is expected to invade Nebraska, Josiah said.

EAB infests the tops of ash trees and lays eggs that hatch and burrow into the bark, cutting off circulation within the trees and killing them.

The forest service and the NRCS developed a multifaceted program in partnership with their counterparts in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Kansas. The program includes inventorying ash and other trees in rural and urban forests across all four states; developing monitoring and detection efforts; creating opportunities to use the wood generated by dead trees; and developing a readiness and response plan.

Nearly 30 million ash trees in Nebraska are expected to die from the EAB's invasion — 29 million of them in riparian forests where ash is common, Josiah said. About 700,000 ash trees are expected to be lost in urban areas. Damage estimates are expected to be in the billions, he said.

Developing the program was a major effort across the two forest services and the NRCS, Josiah said. Steve Rasmussen, forest service district forester, coordinates the project in the four states.

"It is a very proactive effort to respond to the problem," Josiah said.

— Lori McGinnis

Students see diverse agricultural climate in Tasmania *(continued from page 1)*

doing other sightseeing. They learned about the highly-developed fruit and vegetable industry, visited a 100-plus-acre lavender farm, and hiked a summit in Freycinet National Park, which overlooks Wineglass Bay.

"Wineglass Bay is considered one of the most beautiful beaches in the world," Read said.

The next study abroad trip will be in New Zealand, with Tasmania again scheduled in 2010. Participation in a trip is important for students as globalization increases, Read said.

"An international experience anywhere is beneficial to students because it gives them a global experience," he said.

— Lori McGinnis

Need to meet with the

Vice President/Vice Chancellor?
Drop-ins each Friday from 3-5 p.m.*
John C. Owens

NU Vice President for
Agriculture and Natural Resources
and Harlan Vice Chancellor of IANR

202 Ag Hall • (402) 472-2871

*Occasionally Dr. Owens will be called away on University business.

Editorial - Cheryl Alberts and Lori McGinnis • Layout - Anne Moore

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103 ACB, 0918; via e-mail (lmcginnis2@unl.edu) or via fax (402-472-0025).

College years convince Stone to work in agriculture

Joe Stone wanted to study business when he enrolled at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Living with roommates from rural Nebraska, however, convinced the Omaha native that agriculture was the field for him.

Stone, a 1984 UNL graduate and now president of Cargill Animal Nutrition, said those roommates helped him see that his passing interest in agriculture was actually his passion.

Stone had some agricultural influence because his father worked at ConAgra. He learned more about agriculture from his college roommates, who had backgrounds in beef cattle. That, along with a class he took, convinced him to switch his general business major to agricultural economics by the second semester of his sophomore year.

The class, taught by professor James Kendrick, focused on agricultural markets and futures trading. Kendrick, Stone says, “really stimulated a lot of thought about ag futures. It got me interested in commodity trading.”

So interested, in fact, that during his sophomore year he got involved in his own commodity trading, working with a company called Iowa Commodities.

He lost some money, but gained a better understanding of risk and risk management.

He joined Cargill upon graduation, working in a small grain elevator in Pennsylvania. After about a year he transferred to a regional office in Toledo, Ohio, where for two years he traded corn and soybeans in the eastern United States.

From there Stone moved back to Omaha and was put in charge of originating corn and soybean contracts for Cargill’s export facility in Seattle. After nine months he moved to Minneapolis, where he was in charge of corn trading west of the Mississippi River.

In 2001 the Stones moved to Geneva, Switzerland, where he was in charge of global protein trading for 4½ years. Stone returned to Minneapolis where he became director of marketing for Cargill Animal Nutrition. In March 2008 Stone became president of that division, which is a leading supplier of feed, feed premixes, and concentrates, and services to the global feed industry.

The division has 10,000 employees in 170 manufacturing facilities in 29 countries. Animal Nutrition is one of 77 divisions or business units within Cargill,

a 144-year-old company that currently has 160,000 employees in 67 countries.

While Stone believes the company is not immune from the economic problems facing many companies in the United

States today, the fact that Cargill is “the global leader in nourishing people ... helps us in times like this.” In fact, with projected future population increases, he added, the demand for Cargill’s services will only increase.

Stone said he is grateful to be working in the industry, and attributes his days at UNL with helping him get there.

“I was lucky I had a great adviser who was very helpful in making sure the classes I took fit with my interests,” he said. Kendrick’s class, he added was “instrumental in showing me the possibilities in the world of agriculture.”

– Lori McGinnis



Joe Stone

New doctor of plant health program is for practitioners

The creation of a new professional program in plant health within the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources is exciting for the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, and of interest nationally and internationally, program director Gary Hein says.

UNL is the first university in the Midwest and only the second university in the nation to offer this type of program. The University of Florida offers a doctor of plant medicine, and several universities around the world are beginning to look at this approach to educating plant practitioners.

“Offering this program demonstrates that UNL is an educational innovator in agriculture and plant health,” Hein said. “Because we are pioneering this program, we have the opportunity to create a program that can best serve Nebraska agriculture and other segments of plant management in the future.”

The College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources program will be different from other graduate programs in the plant sciences that lead to a master’s or Ph.D. degree in that it will educate practitioners rather than researchers, Hein said.

Students will be broadly educated in areas of agronomy, entomology, horticulture, plant pathology, and soil and weed sciences, and will be required through field internships to integrate this education into problem-solving and developing

plant management systems. Hein expects most students entering the program will have undergraduate degrees in one of these areas, although an undergraduate degree in most biology-related fields would be acceptable to get into the program.

“The graduates of this program will have increased opportunity to serve agriculture in Nebraska and beyond as high-level practitioners to address the increasing challenges of agriculture today and in the future,” Hein said.

“This advantage can impact all commodities produced in Nebraska from corn and soybeans to other less widely-grown crops and range/pasture, plus crops that may be in Nebraska’s future that relate to biofuels or other specialty crop production.”

The DPH program, which Hein expects will take three to four years to complete, will prepare students for a variety of careers, including those in plant health and management industries, crop consulting, extension education, and some state and federal agencies.

The program has support from the agricultural industry, which has been requesting it for some time, Hein said.

Anne Vidaver, professor of plant pathology who has been leading the effort to start the DPH program, said the industry and government have assured UNL that jobs will be available for those completing it.

– Lori McGinnis

Skipton, Clemente honored with Omtvedt Innovation Awards

Sharon Skipton, extension educator for water quality in the Southeast Research and Extension Center, and Thomas Clemente, head of the university's Plant Transformation Core Research Facility, received the 2009 Omtvedt Innovation Awards.

Skipton works with drinking water quality, onsite wastewater management, and healthy homes. She recently co-led a project to integrate all water-related extension, research, and teaching content into *water.unl.edu*, which has drawn viewers from more than 30 countries as well as the United States.

Instrumental in developing training seminars and distance delivery systems related to wastewater treatment and drinking water, Skipton also helped form the Nebraska Onsite Waste Water Association, or NOWWA, for industry professionals. She has co-authored nearly 40 publications and serves on a national eXtension Community of Practice leadership team.

Clemente is part of a team, headed by Donald Weeks of the Department of Biochemistry at UNL, that discovered a gene used to create broadleaf crops that tolerate spraying with widely used herbicides formulated with dicamba. Clemente's role was to insert the dicamba resistance gene into plant chromosomes, which in turn successfully imparted the dicamba resistance trait to the plant.

This herbicide resistance trait is significant because it provides farmers with an additional tool for effective weed management.



From left, John Owens, Sharon Skipton, Thomas Clemente, and Irv Omtvedt.

The dicamba-resistant technology is expected to become commercially available in commodity crops by 2013.

In addition, Clemente's lab has developed a novel set of soybeans with altered oil characteristics that are valuable for food, feed, and industrial applications.

Omega Eggs in 'Shape' magazine

IANR's Agricultural Research Division's Omega-3 enriched eggs have been cited in a national magazine.

The February issue of "Shape" mentions the UNL research in a short list of four reasons to eat more eggs. The magazine cites reports of UNL researchers that three Omega Eggs have the same amount of the important fatty acids as 3 ounces of salmon.

Omega Eggs are produced using a patented IANR management system. Interim department head and animal science professor Sheila Scheideler, who developed the program to produce the eggs, said she was excited to see them recognized.

"It reflects the broad audience we have garnered for our research on Omega Eggs here at UNL and the great consumer interest in eating healthy eggs," Scheideler said.

Gibson receives March Kudo award

Brenda Gibson, office associate with the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture, has been selected to receive the Board of Regents March Kudo award.

Gibson's duties include providing secretarial support to research, teaching, and extension faculty, and assisting with classroom and distance education.

Supporters wrote that Gibson "handles all aspects of her position with great confidence and professionalism" and "accepts new responsibilities with a smile."

The award will be presented at the March Board of Regents meeting.



Brenda Gibson

Exemplary Service Award goes to Wit

Leonard "Lannie" Wit Jr., turfgrass science manager in the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture, has been selected to receive the 2009 IANR Exemplary Service Award.

The award will be presented at an IANR awards luncheon on April 20. Wit will receive a cash award of \$500 and a plaque.

A letter supporting Wit's nomination said "in the turf industry, Lannie is considered as the person who makes the nationally respected University of Nebraska turf research center operate." Another wrote he is "a valuable source of inspiration, knowledge and experience that all of those who work with him and around him can appreciate."



Leonard Wit Jr.

Weiss in India on Fulbright

Wendy Weiss, professor of textiles, clothing and design and director of the Robert Hillestad Textiles Gallery at UNL, has won a Fulbright Scholarship grant from the U.S. Department of State.

Weiss is spending the spring semester conducting textile research at Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda in

Vadodara, Gujarat in India.

Weiss is the second IANR faculty member to recently win a Fulbright. Larkin Powell, associate professor in the School of Natural Resources, is working in Polytechnic of Namibia under a Fulbright.