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The Sower (CASNR Alumni newsletter)

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Fall 2006

## The Sower, Fall 2006

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# The SOWER

UNIVERSITY OF  
Nebraska  
Lincoln  
FALL 2006

**College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources Alumni Association**

## Wildlife Club Excels Through Professional Networking, Hands-on Learning

Members of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Wildlife Club know what it's like to soar with the eagles.

Just this past August, the club became an official student chapter of the National Wildlife Society, an association of wildlife professionals, said Larkin Powell, associate professor in the School of Natural Resources and adviser to the club.

"It makes the club members go beyond themselves to start networking with state and national professionals," Powell said. "It's going to pay off for the students and is a good sign that the club is respected nationally."

For past and present members, interaction with professionals and hands-on learning is what the club is all about. Matt Dollison, whose first job was as a wildlife biologist following graduation in December 2001, credits his success to the experiences he had as a Fisheries



*Members of the Wildlife Club conduct a prescribed burn northwest of Lincoln in December 2005. A prescribed burn, used to keep grasslands free of trees and shrubs, is one management technique students have conducted through hands-on learning. Members are, from left, Kelly Corman, Amanda Keep, Tom Buell, Ryan Walrath, Kent Fricke, Nick Dobesh, Phil Dobesh, Cody Adams and Trevor Schmidt.*

**Wildlife**

*continued page 3*

## Changes Lead Johnson to a Successful Future

When he left his hometown of Bloomfield, Neb., for college, Tim Johnson wanted to be a computer scientist and track star. Who would have guessed he would end up with a successful career at the Chicago Botanic Garden? It was after a beginning computer science course that he decided to switch routes, Johnson said.

Johnson credits his adviser, Jay Fitzgerald, for helping him find his interest in horticulture.

"I always had an interest in house plants and my grandpa had a big vegetable garden when I was younger. I would even mow the family yard and at one point I was mowing about ten other yards to make a little extra money," Johnson said. But it was the general horticulture

classes he took at the beginning of his college career that sparked his interest.

Johnson had to leave the track and field team due to shin splints his fresh-



*Tim Johnson, director of horticulture at the Chicago Botanic Garden, attributes his job to missing a Horticulture Club field trip while at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.*

man year, allowing for spare time to be used for hard work and studying, which paid off in the end. With more free time, he directed his energy toward the martial arts club, horticulture club and Pi Alpha Xi, a national honor society for floriculture, landscape horticulture and ornamental horticulture.

Away from his schoolwork, Johnson gained additional experience that has helped lead to his success. He spent a large amount of time working for Campbell's Nursery in Lincoln, where he sold to the public and built his people skills. Johnson later served as an intern at

**Johnson**

*continued page 4*





## Connections Key to CASNR, CASNRAA Success

Dear CASNR Alumni and Friends,

As I sit in my office with a cup of tea, on a cool fall morning, I'm cloaked in wonderful memories of my years at UNL, friendships made, lost and reconnected over the years and opportunities on the horizon.

As a graduate of the University of Nebraska—Lincoln and now employed at Midland Lutheran College in Fremont, Neb., I bleed red AND orange and own equal amounts of "Husker Red" and "MLC Orange" attire! My friends, colleagues, co-workers and I have great fun teasing each other about 'that other institution of higher learning in Nebraska.' I'm sure many of you, like me, are proud to show support for and wear the colors of two or more schools.

A friend of mine spoke recently at a college event and shared some comments that really hit home for me. I asked him if I could use them in this article and he said, "Really - I don't even remember what I said!" As a speaker at our opening convocation, he spoke of a connectedness to our college wherever we go. At an event or gathering, whether you know anyone there or not, you 'get the feeling' that you are connected to the people at the event. There's something in the air - you feel the excitement of something fun, exciting and wonderful happening. You're greeted at the door with a smile or two and welcomed to come in. Conversations are easy to begin and often start with "What year did you graduate?" "What was your major?" "What residence



Sheila O'Connor

hall did you live in?" "Do you remember Dr. \_\_\_\_'s class?" These events prove time and time again that there are no strangers in this world, only friends we have not yet met. I hope you feel a sense of connectedness and welcoming at every CASNRAA event you're able to attend. Whether at the career fair, football reunion, salute to graduates, board meeting or commencement, your board of directors wants you to know we're glad you are part of this great association, we're honored to be of service to you and we look forward seeing you again soon! You never know when you'll connect with fellow CASNR alums, potential or current students, and faculty or staff members. There is no place like Nebraska - wherever your travels take you, you're sure to find someone, somewhere with a connection.

Thank you for the privilege to serve you - it is indeed an honor to do so. I look forward to visiting with you at an upcoming event soon! If I can be of service at any time, please feel free to contact me at [oconnor@mlc.edu](mailto:oconnor@mlc.edu) or (402) 941-6524.

Regards,

Sheila O'Connor  
2006-07 CASNRAA President

## Your CASNR Alumni Association

Members of the CASNR alumni board of directors encompass a wide range of majors and professions in agriculture, natural resources and beyond. Remember that if you have comments, suggestions or ideas for your CASNRAA or its publication, call the CASNR Dean's Office at 1-800-742-8800, ext. 2541.

### CASNRAA Board of Directors

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#### Nominating

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#### Scholarship

Daryl Cisney, Brian Bosshamer

The Sower is produced by students in the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow, a CASNR club.

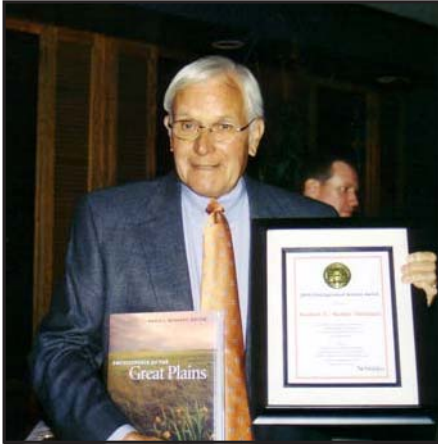
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### CASNRAA Alumni E-mail Address

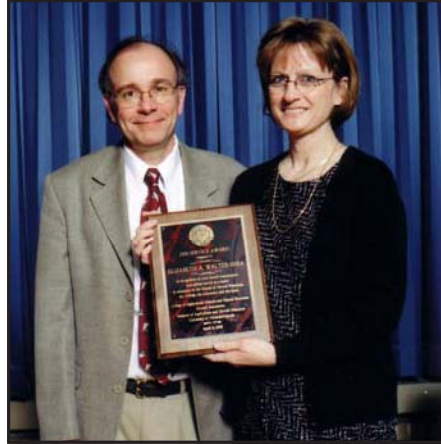
E-mail is increasingly important in staying informed, learning of events and receiving College news briefs. If the CASNRAA Alumni Association does not have your e-mail address, get in the loop by going to [www.casnr.unl.edu](http://www.casnr.unl.edu) and click on the banner "Alumni-Update".

### UNL Dairy Store Gets A New Look

The University of Nebraska—Lincoln Dairy Store has unveiled a new look and some new products. For information about the Dairy Store or their traditional cheese gift boxes, visit <http://dairystore.unl.edu/> or contact the Dairy Store at (402) 472-2828 or [dairystore@unl.edu](mailto:dairystore@unl.edu).



Former Nebraska governor Norbert Tiemann received the 2005 Distinguished Alumni Award. Tiemann graduated from the university with a Bachelor of Science degree in animal science before working with different organizations including Cooperative Extension, the Nebraska Hereford Association and the National Live Stock and Meat Board. He served as governor from 1966-1971 and now resides in Dallas, Texas.



The 2006 CASNR Alumni Association Service Award was presented to Dr. Elizabeth Walter-Shea. Walter-Shea, pictured here with her husband Pat Shea, has demonstrated outstanding service to CASNR through her dedication to the establishment of the School of Natural Resources. She volunteered as Teaching Coordinator when the school was formed in 1997 and has since dedicated her time and effort to both undergraduate and graduate students and research programs. Walter-Shea is a professor in the School of Natural Resources where she teaches four courses.



Dr. Kelly Lechtenberg, featured here with his wife Marcie, received the 2006 CASNR Alumni Association Achievement Award. Lechtenberg, who received a Bachelor of Science degree in animal science from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, a Ph.D. in ruminant nutrition and a DVM from Kansas State University, has since dedicated his time to research in the area of livestock health. He is co-owner of the Swine Biomedical Resource Centre and owner of a commercial cattle feeding operation. Lechtenberg is recognized for his exemplary service to CASNR, its alumni association and Nebraska agriculture.

## Wildlife

*continued from page 1*

and Wildlife major and member of the Wildlife Club.

"The most important thing I learned was that getting actual work experience while I was in school was crucial to my chances of getting a job once I was done," Dollison said. "All of the summer jobs that I worked while in school I heard about at Wildlife Club meetings."

Trevor Schmidt, a senior Fisheries and Wildlife major from Henderson, Neb., and president of the club, joined because of the opportunities to make connections within the field.

"I've enjoyed getting to know so many people, making friends and working with faculty," he said. "There's been a lot of time and energy put into the club."

Schmidt has been a key player in teaching hunter education in a partnership with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. The course, designed to encourage safe, responsible hunters

among youth, is one service project that gives members of the club an opportunity to work with wildlife professionals.

Since he became a hunter safety instructor in 2003, Schmidt has developed his own style of teaching. His methods, along with those of other instructors, get the students involved as much as possible.

"It's more effective to teach students when you can relate to them. They learn a lot more from hands-on activities as opposed to lectures," he said.

Despite the age gap, the same is true for members of the Wildlife Club. To enhance their learning experience, members exercise a broad range of skills in projects such as conducting prescribed burns and tracking deer, Powell said.

Jason Thiele, a junior Fisheries and Wildlife major from Clearwater, Neb., and public relations officer, agrees that getting his hands dirty is the best way to learn, and he wants to spread that idea to others.

"I'd like to see students join who aren't necessarily from rural backgrounds, and have the club appeal to non-majors," he said.

The club currently has about 25 members, but even though Powell would like to see numbers increase, he couldn't be more proud of the students now.

"Because the advisers of this club have so many teaching responsibilities, the members have learned to take charge, and if something is going to happen it's up to them to do it," Powell said. "It's fun to watch the students fall into that role and take on leadership positions."

In reference to the club's official membership to the National Wildlife Society, taking on those leadership roles and not being afraid to work hard has helped the Wildlife Club succeed, Schmidt said.

"We've gained some prestige," he said. "It marks our chapter a little higher than others."

—Kalee Olson



**College of Agricultural Sciences and  
Natural Resources Alumni Association  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Membership Contribution Form**

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Membership is open to alumni and friends of the college.

**Payment**  
 Please make your check payable to "UN Foundation" and send this form to:

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**Alumni Can Renew Online**

Now you can renew your membership, gift a new membership to a friend or start a new membership online and pay by credit card. If you prefer this method, go to <http://casnr.unl.edu> and select "Alumni" for options to either pay by check or pay by credit card. The annual membership is only \$20.

**Johnson**

*continued from page 1*

the Beatrice Development Center installing irrigation and landscaping.

Before graduating, Johnson participated in two more internships with Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, Ga., and the Williamsburg Foundation in Pennsylvania. "I sent out resumes across the United States to public gardens," Johnson said. "I was looking for a good fit for me rather than a job in Nebraska. I guess my job at the Chicago Botanic Garden is somewhat of an accident."

Because he wasn't able to attend a Horticulture Club field trip to the Chicago Botanic Garden, Fitzgerald dropped off his resume for him, Johnson said. Two interviews and a flight to Chicago later, he got the job.

Johnson has been with Chicago Botanic Garden for 21 years where he has worked his way from assistant gardener to director of horticulture. His responsibilities include budgets, quality control, media relations and education.

No matter what the task, whether with the Chicago Botanic Garden or his own landscaping business, communication is of utmost importance, Johnson said.

"Coming from a small town like Bloomfield, I would never think to end up in a city the size of Chicago," Johnson said. His hometown just doesn't compare to the streets of the Windy City. "Although I've moved away, I still try to make it back at least once a year to visit my family."

—Sarah Jensen

**Nebraska Academy/Advanced Scholars expands, seeks sponsors**

The Nebraska Academy/Advanced Scholars program offers introductory science-based college credit courses via distance education. Through this program select high school students in participating schools can earn college credit via Web-based courses while still in high school.

The Nebraska Academy, which was mentioned recently in the premier international education publication, the Chronicle of Higher Education, facilitates the transition from high school to college by allowing students to sample the workload of a college course. Courses in insect science, animal science, food science and technology and agriculture are offered by this college at present.

The program was pioneered in Grand Island and York with assistance from individuals, businesses and civic groups sponsoring \$125 scholarships to offset some of the student's cost. As the program is made available to students in Aurora, Hastings, Nebraska City, Scottsbluff, Omaha,

Waverly, Burwell and a number of other communities, additional sponsors are needed to make participation possible for students from all economic backgrounds.

Contributions of every size bring students closer to this unique educational opportunity. You can help with a tax deductible contribution of \$10, \$20, \$125 or any other amount. Make checks payable to the University of Nebraska Foundation and mail to Dean's Office, 103 Agricultural Hall, Lincoln, NE 68583-0702. Your local students thank you.

**Update E-Mail Address**

CASNRAA alumni should provide or update their e-mail address if they have not done so, according to Paul Horton, CASNR alumni development officer. He said that CASNRAA is using e-mail more frequently to notify members of upcoming events and to pass along news of CASNR events. Enter or update your e-mail address by going to <http://casnr.unl.edu> and click on the banner "Alumni-Update" (your e-mail address).

**CASNRAA**

Web site: <http://casnr.unl.edu/alumni>

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