

May 2007

## The Leading Object: May 2007

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## Perspectives

I do enjoy a good graduation, and I'm certain you also do.

I cannot imagine how anyone can watch bright young people march into a family- and friend-filled auditorium on a graduation morning such as we experienced this month at UNL in the Devaney Center, and march out again at the end of the ceremony, degrees awarded, and not feel his or her heart rise up. Same is true for those attending the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture's graduation ceremony at Curtis earlier that same week.

I look at those young people and I am excited for all that awaits them, all they will dream and do and be. There is so much promise in them. So much potential to be fulfilled.

When I looked around the Devaney Center at the people who helped bring them to this point — proud parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, friends, and faculty, I wanted to congratulate each of them also.

I couldn't get around to every family member and friend, but I can thank each of our IANR faculty and staff who helped bring these graduates to this point, and I do.

Thank you for all your efforts, all your encouragement, all the interest you show and all the knowledge you share to prepare our students for their careers.

Thank you for modeling so well how thoughtful, reasoning adults engage in civil debate, and contribute to their fields and their communities.

Thank you for sharing your excitement for discovery, knowledge, and lifelong learning in inclusive ways that help fan embers of understanding into high flame.

Thank you for helping our graduates plant their feet firmly on those paths that will make them future leaders and continued on page 2



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

# The Leading Object

*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.*



May 2007

## UNL Center Helps Develop National Drought Initiative

A center at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln is playing a leading role in the proposed establishment of a national initiative designed to help the United States better monitor, predict, prepare for, and lessen the effects of drought.

Donald Wilhite, Director of UNL's National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC) and a Professor in the School of Natural Resources, is one of three people leading a steering committee guiding the development of the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS).

Legislation has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate to create NIDIS, which would be within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration — a part of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

NIDIS would provide climate and water data to a broad group of users from agricultural producers to policy makers, including water and natural resource managers, Wilhite said.

Many sectors are affected by drought, including agriculture, forestry, transportation, energy, and recreation and tourism. NIDIS would benefit all of these sectors by providing access to better and more timely data and information, Wilhite said. NIDIS would provide these users with improved decision support tools.



Melissa Melvin

**Drought has severely lowered the level of Lake McConaughy in western Nebraska.**

"The range of users of water and climate information is incredible," he said. "We need to provide timely and tailored information for their specific needs."

While the NDMC is a focused research and outreach organization working on a wide range of drought issues, NIDIS would focus primarily on the delivery and management of data and information to improve management and policy decisions.

With the information, users could better prepare for drought and reduce its impact, as well as better manage natural resources, Wilhite said. For example, the information would help farmers better evaluate risk before planting, based on current and expected climate conditions.

The proposed creation of NIDIS has the enthusiastic support of the Western Governor's Association and several key continued on page 2

Perspectives continued from page 1

contributing members of society. Thank you for being people who will rejoice in their successes — people they'll come back and share those successes with, people to whom, in time, they may even entrust the college education of their own children.

We in the Institute are doubly blessed at graduation because we get to recognize our graduates and share in their future plans the day before commencement through the Salute to Graduates in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

What a treat that is, to focus on each student individually, to hear their plans, and learn what they considered the highlights of their time at UNL. Memories of study abroad, UCARE research, participation in campus activities, internships, friends, and so much more. Future plans for graduate

and professional schools, for marriage, for returning to the family farm and ranch, and so many other diverse and fulfilling careers.

Watching these new graduates enjoy the culmination of all their hard work to earn their undergraduate degrees, I thought of three statements from the "At Work" report of the independent study recently completed for IANR by the Battelle organization of Columbus, Ohio.

First, "IANR is focused on education, seeking to significantly enhance human capital, generate new scientists and well-educated practitioners, and promote lifelong learning across the state."

Second, "IANR emphasizes youth development and leadership, helping to provide the next generation of New Economy workers and leaders."

Third, "IANR is an institution focused on improving and sustaining Nebraska — improving its economy, preserving its environment, growing a skilled workforce, and contributing to continuing social sustainability and responsibility."

Watching our new alumni, listening to their plans, I thought of how all three of those statements are part of a rich and vital tradition here. Thanks to each of you who, through your contributions, builds and strengthens this tremendous tradition. You make a huge difference.



## UNL Center Helps Develop National Drought Initiative

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members of Congress, Wilhite said. Wilhite testified on behalf of the House and Senate bills. The Senate bill was introduced by Nebraska Senator Ben Nelson.

The House version passed the Science Committee and has moved to the floor for a vote, and "we hope the Senate bill will move through quickly as well," Wilhite said. Funding for NIDIS is in the President's 2007 budget.

Wilhite hopes that NIDIS will be up and running soon and that the benefits of the system will be seen in the next few years, although NIDIS will take longer to be fully implemented. The national office for NIDIS would be located in Boulder, Colorado.

"We want to do this for the nation because drought is one of the most costly natural disasters that we face," Wilhite said.

"The National Drought Mitigation Center expects to play a large role in this initiative. We want to be in on the ground floor."

The next step is for the steering committee to draft an implementation plan, which will be discussed at a drought meeting in Boulder in September.

The United States faces drought each year, and it has resulted in billions of dollars in impact each year since 1996, Wilhite said. Much of Nebraska is in the sixth or seventh consecutive year of drought.

"Drought is a huge issue because of the magnitude of the impacts that are occurring, which reflect our increasing vulnerability to the hazard," Wilhite said. "It affects all parts of the country and many economic sectors.

— Lori McGinnis

## Entomological Society Presents Awards

Members of the University of Nebraska—Lincoln Entomology Department received awards at the annual meeting of the North Central Branch of the Entomological Society of America in Manitoba, Canada, March 25-28.

Z B Mayo, Interim Associate Dean of the Agricultural Research Division and Interim Associate Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station, received the 2006 NCB C.V. Riley Award for outstanding contributions to the science of entomology.

Nicholas Aliano, a doctoral student, was presented the 2006 NCB graduate student scholarship. Andre Crespo and Leonardo Magalhaes received first and second place awards for paper presentations.

The UNL Linnaean Team was runner-up in the games competition. The quiz bowl competition focused on entomological knowledge. Both UNL and the first place team, North Dakota State University, will compete at the 2007 National ESA Meeting in San Diego, California, in December.

**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.

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## CASNR Alumna's Future Includes Working With Killer Whale

Adriel Husereau may be the only College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources alumna whose career includes working with a killer whale.

Husereau, who graduated in May with a bachelor's degree in animal science, was hired as a trainer for Shamu the killer whale at Sea World in San Diego. She started her job May 8.

Husereau, a native of Fullerton, California, said she didn't plan on going back to her home state, but when Sea World responded to her inquiry for a job, it was too good to pass up.

"This is my dream job," she said.

Sea World officials told Husereau she is the first and only person from UNL they have hired.

In order to qualify for the job, Husereau had to pass a rigorous swim test, then audition before a crowd of about 2,000 at the Sea World auditorium. She was one of only four people out of 120 to pass the swim test.

The test included carrying two 50-pound buckets of water without spilling a drop; a 150-foot underwater swim; a 30-foot dive to pick up a 2-pound weight; swimming 250 feet in two minutes; a 6-foot "show" dive; and pulling herself out of a pool onto her feet without touching her knees to the ground, "which is harder than it sounds."

If she faltered on even one of the steps, she would have been disqualified.

Husereau, a water polo player in high school, said she knew what the requirements for the job were and began training last October. She got a personal trainer and did strenuous workouts along with a lot of swimming. She also went on a diet to meet the required weight to become Shamu's trainer.

Passing the swim test didn't mean the hard work was over. Next she had to audition by reciting a memorized script to the crowd, informing them about killer whales.

Then, she had to perform a choreographed dance which had been demonstrated to her twice just 10 minutes earlier.

"It was a mix between a chicken dance and the Macarena," she said. "I think it was to see if I would get embarrassed in front of the crowd."

Sea World officials were impressed enough to give Husereau a formal interview before two curators. She and one other person were hired. Husereau will work exclusively with the whale.

Husereau credits her time at CASNR with helping her determine her career



**Adriel Husereau, a new animal science graduate, previously worked with seals. At Sea World she will work with a killer whale.**

direction. Her adviser, Animal Science Associate Professor Brian Reiling, helped her pick the right courses that made her realize she wanted to work with exotic animals, she said.

Sue Voss, CASNR coordinator of student development and events, helped her get an internship at Lincoln Children's Zoo. A zoo employee helped her get an internship at Sea Life Park in Hawaii.

CASNR, she said, "really helps you get focused on getting real-world experience."

At Sea World, Husereau will spend one year preparing to work with the killer whale before even getting into the water with one.

## Equestrian Camp Helps Promote New Animal Science Option



Brett Hampton

**A new equestrian camp for high school students will help promote the new equine science option in the Department of Animal Science.**

The equine science option in the Department of Animal Science is promoting itself through a new equestrian camp for high school students.

The camp will be offered June 6-9 and is expected to be attended by about 14 students from across Nebraska, said Kathy Potthoff, 4-H program coordinator. Participating students will learn about topics that are addressed in the equine science option such as horse care and management, as well as careers in the horse industry.

"Incorporating information about UNL's equine science option will allow participants to gain background for future careers," Potthoff said. "We want them to know that classes in equine science can be combined with any major."

Participants and their horses will stay on East Campus during the camp. They will take part in hands-on riding sessions.

The equine science option started last fall and the camp will provide good exposure to the option, Potthoff said.

## ReTree Nebraska Aims to Plant 1 Million Trees in One Decade to Raise Awareness

ReTree Nebraska, a 10-year cooperative initiative to raise public awareness about trees, plans to plant 1 million trees in one decade.

The purpose of the initiative is to increase awareness of the value of trees, reverse the decline in Nebraska's community tree resources, and improve the diversity and sustainability of trees in communities across the state, said Scott Josiah, State Forester and Director of the Nebraska Forest Service at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The forest service has conducted more than 200 community tree inventories since 1977 that show the state has lost nearly half its community forest resources since the late 1970s.

"In a largely agricultural and prairie state, community forests are absolutely

essential for contributing to and preserving Nebraska's good life," Josiah said.

"We all benefit every day from the efforts of thousands of people who planted and cared for trees in our cities and towns years ago. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to continue this tradition of tree planting so they can continue to enjoy the many benefits of a healthy community forest."

The initiative includes public education to teach about threats to trees, such as severe weather, drought, pests, and diseases.

ReTree Nebraska is led by the Nebraska Forest Service, Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, University of Nebraska Rural Initiative, UNL Extension, UNL's Department of Agronomy and Horticulture, and the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

## Cyril Bish Memorial Tree Planted

A tree was planted on East Campus last month in honor of Cyril Bish, who served 35 years as a county extension agent for UNL Extension.

The Cyril Bish Memorial Tree is a "Holden" shagbark hickory. It was planted on the north edge of Maxwell Arboretum near a prairie display on April 27.

Bish, who died last year, was dedicated to tree planting and landscape beautification efforts on East Campus.



## UNL NAMA Chapter Wins Top Award for the Third Straight Year

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's student chapter of the National Agri-Marketing Association was named outstanding student chapter at the recent national conference in Dallas. It was the third year in a row the chapter received the award.

The team was recognized over 32 other chapters.

"It was a nice shock," said Janae Althouse, who will serve as chapter president beginning next fall in her senior year. "We really worked hard to receive it for the third year in a row."

In addition to the outstanding chapter award, the group received one of two awards for outstanding chapter improvement. The University of Wisconsin received the other.

The outstanding chapter award was especially appreciated this year because the group is operating under new advisers, said Bonnie Hassler, a team member who graduated this month. Lance Cummins-Brown, an Agribusiness Coordinator, and Rosalee Swartz, Department of Agriculture Economics Director of Program &

Recruitment, took over as advisers in the last academic year.

Three chapter members also received scholarships. Althouse received the first-ever Eldon White Leadership and Scholastic Award; Jill Goetz received the agribusiness education foundation scholarship, and Melissa Williams received the Penton Media Scholarship.

Ten students made the trip to Dallas for the April 10-13 conference.

## New 4-H Camp to Teach Students About Science and Technology June 17-22

Middle school students will learn the latest in science and technology at a new six-day 4-H camp this summer.

The camp, June 17-22 at the Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center in Gretna, will feature robotics, Global Positioning Systems, and Geographic Information Systems programs. It is a pilot project funded in part by the National Science Foundation.

The camp is the first part of a three-year project to provide youth hands-on experi-

ences and career exploration in science, engineering, and technology.

Campers will get hands-on experience with building and operating robots, operating GPS receivers and operating aerial photography equipment. It is designed to help them explore careers in science, engineering, and technology.

Information and registration is available online at <http://4hset.unl.edu/itest/camp.php>.

## Educators Win Extension Technology Team Award

Extension Educators leading technology educational programs won the North Central Region Technology Team Award at the National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals annual meeting in Philadelphia.

Team members are: Tony Anderson, Leslie Crandall, Rob Eirich, Connie Hancock, Dennis Kahl, Tim Lemmons, Jenny Nixon, Phyllis Schoenholz, Dewey Teel, Allan Vyhnaek, Carroll Welte, and Deborah Wietzenkamp.