

# The AEC Department Review

Spring 2008

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## Computer lab opens in AEC department

by Stephen Noble

Agricultural education and communication students have a new computer lab equipped with some of the latest Apple iMacs available.

The AEC Department purchased the computers with funding provided by the Scientific Thinking and Educational Partnership less than a year ago, but faced the problem of inadequate space in which to arrange the computers.

STEP co-director and AEC professor Ricky Telg played a key role in the planning, purchasing and assembling of the AEC Teaching Lab, which is commonly referred to as the "Mac Lab."

"We were able to get 21 computers in Rolfs 406, but students were facing every direction," Telg said.

After the first trial-and-error run-through of the original room, it became apparent that the department would need to find a new room for the lab, Telg said.

"In the new lab, it is tight, but we were able to get all the computers in there and everyone is facing the same direction," Telg said.



AEC students talk to Bev Moseley, AEC graduate and editor of *The Land and Livestock Post* in Texas, via Apple's iChat software in the new AEC Teaching Lab. See related story on page 5.

The new lab, located in Rolfs 411, is just down the hallway from the old room and is almost the same size, but with a much better layout for arranging computers for a class, Telg said.

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## Loften inducted in Florida FFA Hall of Fame

Former AEC Department chair William Travis Loften was inducted to the inaugural Florida FFA Agriculture Hall of Fame in 2007.

Loften, who died in 2003 having reached his 100th birthday, was known during his lifetime as "Mr. Agricultural Education of Florida." Loften served as AEC chair from 1960 to 1975.

Prior to being named department chair, Loften was a vocational agriculture teacher, assistant state supervisor for vocational agriculture and a UF faculty member in the Agricultural and Extension Education

Department.

Loften retired in 1975, but he stayed busy with community work and by volunteering at the Alachua County vocational training school that was named in his honor: the W. Travis Loften Education Center.

His lifetime of service earned him many honors and awards. He was inducted into the Florida Vocational Association Hall of Fame in 1989 and the Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame in 1993.



Travis Loften

# DeGraw supports AEC academics

## She coordinates undergrad, grad & distance programs

by Jennifer Bensted

Working full time, going to school for a doctorate degree and still having time to participate in community service activities is a lot for one person to handle, but one University of Florida student and employee is managing to do it all.

Jodi DeGraw is the coordinator of academic support services for the University of Florida's Agricultural Education and Communication Department.

She joined the department in May 2005 after completing her bachelor's degree in agricultural operations management and master's in agricultural and biological engineering. She is currently working on her doctorate in higher education administration.

DeGraw is taking two courses each semester and working full time for the department.

"It will take me a little longer to finish my doctorate, but I like the experience of still working and applying what I am learning in school to my job," DeGraw said.

DeGraw aspires to one day be an academic administrator at the university level.

"I love working with the students," DeGraw said. "I could see myself being dean of students."

DeGraw's job as coordinator of academic support services involves many different roles. She helps Dr. Ricky Telg with the undergraduate program, Dr. Tracy Irani with the graduate program, Dr. Brian Myers with the distance master's program and has also been assisting Dr. Nicole Stedman with the department's leadership minor.

"She has really helped a lot with the leadership minor," Stedman said. "She has fielded several of students' questions and concerns which has helped me tremendously."

She creates all of the course



Jodi DeGraw (front) and her fraternal twin sister Dawn McKinstry enjoy spending time together.

schedules for the department and finds classrooms for the courses to be held. She also helps with registering students and registers all of the distance master's students herself, since their programs are completed online.

DeGraw also coordinates prospective graduate student visits, as well as participates in promoting the department at various events such as Gator Encounter, the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Career Fair, Santa Fe Community College Gator Day, State FFA Convention, and Freshman and Transfer Preview sessions.

Along with work and school, DeGraw likes to relax by working out.

"I love to run, and I love yoga," DeGraw said. "I also love horseback riding, but I don't have the time to ride as much as I used to."

DeGraw participates in different community service activities through the Junior League of Gainesville and also likes to read in her spare time.

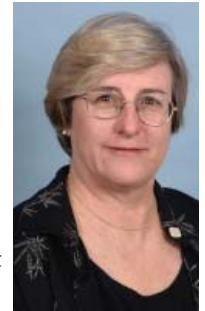
She has a fraternal twin sister, Dawn McKinstry, who also attended the University of Florida for her bachelor's and master's degrees.

"My sister and I both have dogs," DeGraw said. "My dog's name is Bumble, and my sister's dog's name is Bee; they are inseparable."

# Brodeur named PDEC coordinator

by Toccara Shaw

After 10 years of service in the Program Development and Evaluation Center, Cheri Winton Brodeur was appointed coordinator in August 2007.



Cheri Brodeur

PDEC, as a program within the Agricultural Education and Communication Department, is primarily responsible for assisting county and state UF Extension faculty members with the development and evaluation of their educational programs.

"We oversee the long-range planning for Extension once every four years," Brodeur said. "The federal government mandates that we find out what the critical needs are within the state by conducting grassroots listening sessions."

Brodeur has a background in journalism and private agricultural industry in international sales. She was a teacher of both secondary and post secondary education.

"In this position I am able to use everything from my previous jobs. It is a perfect blend," Brodeur said.

Brodeur received her doctoral degree in leadership from the AEC Department, specializing in complex organizations and team dynamics. She is considered one of three authorities in the area of Kirton's Adaptation-Innovation Theory in the United States, which is a theory that relates to how people solve problems, along with understanding the management of diversity.

"She has a great background in terms of Extension programming and the long-term vision to provide great leadership to the center," said Agricultural Education and Communication Department chairman Ed Osborne.

# AEC professor 'acts out' at Community Playhouse

by Jennifer Bensted

After 20 years of focusing on career and raising a family, one University of Florida professor has decided to rekindle his passion for musical theater.

"This year I made a conscious decision that I was going to do something fun for myself," said Agricultural Education and Communication professor Ricky Telg.

Telg was involved in several musical productions throughout high school but found little time for it after starting his career, getting married and raising his children.

His daughter, Beth, was involved in a musical production over the summer and her director approached him about auditioning for the musical "Oliver!" at the Gainesville Community Playhouse.

In response Telg said, "I don't think so. That's not me. I don't want to do that."

However, with some prodding from his wife and daughter, Telg agreed to audition if his daughter

would audition as well.

"I was very nervous," Telg said. "It was the first time I had done a real audition, so I wasn't sure what to expect, but my daughter helped me through the process."

The auditions were held in August 2007, and consisted of singing 16 measures of music, reading lines and performing a dance routine from the musical. Telg admitted to being fairly hesitant about learning the dancing portion of the musical.

He landed the role of Knife Grinder that included a brief singing solo, as well as the role of Bow Street Runner (police officer). His daughter was given the part of Strawberry Seller, also a singing role, and the two were often on stage together.



Ricky Telg (second from left) performs with his daughter Beth (far right) during a musical number in "Oliver!" in the fall at the Gainesville Community Playhouse. In this scene, he plays the Knife Grinder and Beth plays the Strawberry Seller.

After six weeks of rehearsing almost every day, "Oliver!" premiered Nov. 2, and the show ran for six weeks.

Several of Telg's students and coworkers went to see his performance.

"We were all really surprised," said Lisa Hightower, Scientific Thinking and Educational Partnership Program coordinator. "You just don't expect your professor to start singing and dancing on stage, especially in a funny hat. It took our breath away."

The reaction Telg received from students and coworkers was exactly what he was hoping for.

"Most people consider me to be pretty reserved, straight-laced and conservative," Telg said. "So to see me up there on stage is something that people just don't expect, and I kind of like that."

Although Telg spent a lot of time rehearsing and performing in "Oliver!," he was still very dedicated to his students.

"Dr. Telg would hand us back graded assignments and tell us he graded them while he was in the dressing room waiting to go on stage," said Stephen Noble, a communication and leadership development undergraduate student.

Telg wants to keep acting as a hobby and hopes to participate in at least one production a year.



Ricky Telg (in the middle in a red coat) and his daughter Beth (in front of Telg) also performed in Gainesville Community Playhouse's spring production of "Hello, Dolly!"

The AEC Review is produced each semester by students in AEE 4031 (fall) and AEE 4035 (spring).

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## Monaghan to join departmental faculty in June

by Morgan Taylor

Paul Monaghan will be a new faculty member in UF's Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, starting in June.

He will work with the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences' Center for Landscape Conservation and Ecology in the area of community-based social marketing.

"Social marketing is the idea that you can take marketing concepts and apply them to achieve socially desirable behavior changes," said Tracy Irani, the chair of the AEC search committee.

Irani said that Monaghan's focus is on community-based social marketing, which adds the element of one-on-one community interaction to the concept of social marketing. He will apply CBSM to issues focusing in the areas of



**Paul Monaghan (far left) at the graduation of two new citrus worker safety promoters. Monaghan will be a new AEC faculty member in June.**

environmental horticulture, landscape conservation and ecology.

"I am really excited about coming to UF and working with very serious issues affecting people statewide," Monaghan said.

He will work on both the consumer and industry sides by trying to

educate and persuade homeowners to adopt better landscape management practices.

The initiative of the center started with industry leaders.

"The focus of the center is on encouraging and assisting urban homeowners to use landscape friendly practices in their home landscapes," said AEC Department chair Ed Osborne.

Monaghan is one of eight new faculty members with the center. He will work with many areas in IFAS. The center's purpose is to protect Florida's natural resources through interdisciplinary programs.

Currently Monaghan is at the Florida Prevention Research Center at the University of South Florida. The center is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and specializes in social marketing.

## Hartmann attends conference in Peru

by Jennifer Bensted

To be the only person from the United States invited to speak at an agricultural event in Peru, set up a study-abroad program while attending and get to tour parts of the country afterwards is quite an opportunity.

Marta Hartmann, lecturer in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, was invited to speak in Lima, Peru, for Red de Acción en Agricultura Alternativa (RAAA). In English, this translates to The Working Network for Alternative Agriculture.

RAAA is an institution with an extensive democratic and social base that impacts politics to develop sustainable agriculture and conservation of the environment in Peru, she said.

"I was the only one from the United States invited to participate at this event," Hartmann said. "It was an honor."

Hartmann was asked to participate in the International Seminar on Extension Methodology for Participatory Innovation Development

(PID) for Rural Development in Latin America. Hartmann spoke about the role of universities, particularly the United State's land-grant system, in PID.

At this event professionals discussed issues on the development of social and technology innovation, as well as its implications on the conservation and management of agricultural biodiversity and natural resources.

The convention invited Hartmann and guests to visit a local farm to discuss the benefits of organic agriculture and sample some of the products from the farm.

She was able to sample organically raised cuy, a rodent in the hamster family, that is a popular dish in Peru.

"This is a traditional dish in Peru from the time of the Incas," Hartmann said. "It is delicious."

Hartmann ventured to Peru not only to speak at the RAAA convention, but also to initiate a study abroad program for University of Florida students. This will allow College of Agricultural and Life Sciences' students, particularly from the



**Marta Hartmann (center) attended a sustainable agriculture and conservation conference in Peru. She's pictured here with other conference attendees.**

Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, to study at the Universidad Nacional Agraria, Peru's main agricultural university.

"I am confident that the study abroad program will be successful once it is initiated," Hartmann said.

She also visited the historic Incan Machu Picchu. The Inca civilization developed the agricultural terrace, which fed the entire population and was watered by natural springs.

"I had to take a train, bus and then hike up the mountain, but it was well worth the journey," Hartmann said.

# ACLT members travel to workshop in Nebraska

by Micah Scanga

UF/Agricultural Communicators and Leaders of Tomorrow members joined almost 100 other agricultural communications students from around the country in Nebraska to improve their professional skills.

Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow representatives from 10 states gathered in Lincoln, Neb., for the two-day conference. Six representatives from UF/ACLT attended the conference.

Workshops at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln included an interactive presentation from Gallup. The presentation featured StrengthsQuest, a self-assessment instrument, which focuses on personality strengths instead of weaknesses.

"One of the things agriculture groups do very well is leadership



ACLT members traveled to Nebraska for a professional development conference.

development," said Gallup representative Irene Burkland. "There is a piece to agriculture that is very authentic and honest."

Speakers gave ACT members advice on how to communicate professionally in the field of agriculture.

"I like the point on how we need

to communicate more effectively," said ACLT junior Kati McWaters, "and that agriculture is progressing with technology and we need to be able to change and adapt to those new styles."

McWaters said the conference allowed students to network with peers.

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# AEC students bridge distance with videoconferencing

by Pam Kight

University of Florida students and a Livestock Publications Council member used computer videoconferencing to bridge a distance of more than 1,000 miles.

Students in Ricky Telg's Advanced Agricultural Communication Writing class used Apple's iChat software to hear and see LPC member Bev Moseley, editor of The Land and Livestock Post, in

Bryan, Texas.

Moseley is an agricultural communication graduate of the AEC Department.

Two cameras on the instructor's computer station allowed Moseley to see Telg on one camera and the students at their computer stations on the other.

Students were able to see Moseley on the classroom's two 46-inch television monitors, which are

connected to the instructor's computer.

The experience was similar to a long-distance lecture. Moseley told the UF students about her job responsibilities as editor of The Land and Livestock Post.

Students said it was encouraging to hear her talk about how much she loves her job and how the agricultural communication program at UF helped prepare her for her job.

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## Computer lab (from page 1)

While Telg had to concern himself with the Mac lab project, UF's STEP program coordinator Lisa Hightower provided help throughout the whole process.

"Over the 2007 holiday break, Dr. Telg and I moved all the computers and most of the furniture to my old office," Hightower said. "It took a lot of hours, as there were only two of us, but we got it done in time for the

spring 2008 semester."

The new lab incorporates 13 of the latest generation iMacs and nine of the previous generation.

"While the design and look of the iMacs are different between the two generations, the only technical difference is that the latest iMacs have 24-inch screens, whereas the older ones have 20-inch screens," Telg said. "Besides that, they have the exact same specs."

Before the summer semester in

2007, AEC students had to use the computer lab in McCarty Hall which is also used by many other departments.

The new Mac lab provides a central location for the AEC department to teach techniques in the latest versions of software programs, such as Photoshop, Dreamweaver, InDesign and Final Cut (video editing).

"What we are hoping to accomplish with the lab is to not just teach courses," Telg said. "We also want to use the equipment to train faculty and graduate students."

# Thakadu, family adjust to life in United States

by Kati McWaters

It has been nearly two years since one student left his homeland of Botswana to study at the University of Florida.

In August 2006 Olekae "O.T." Thakadu, along with his family, came to Gainesville so Thakadu could further his education in environmental communications.

Thakadu said he was hesitant about leaving Botswana and coming to the U.S.

"My wife was much more excited than I was," Thakadu said.

He said his wife was more optimistic about moving to a new country because she saw it as an adventure, but he said he saw it more as a necessity to further his studies. He is a doctoral student in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication.

Thakadu came to UF because the University of Botswana does not offer a doctorate program in environmental communications.

Thakadu studied for his master's degree at the University of Natal, in neighboring South Africa. None of the regional universities offered a doctorate degree in his field of interest. Beyond regional universities, Thakadu said he expanded his search to universities in Europe, Australia and the U.S.

Due to the unavailability of institutions offering doctorate programs in the field of environmental communications, the University of Botswana, a government-funded institution, offered Thakadu a four-year scholarship to study in the U.S. as part of a citizen-development program.

The University of Botswana and UF have a collaboration arrangement and work together on many projects.

Thakadu said he was worried about adjusting to a new university, and beginning a new life in a new environment.

"When I first arrived here, I did not have a car," Thakadu said.

Thakadu and his wife relied on



Okelae Thakadu and his two daughters shortly after they arrived in the U.S. Thakadu and his family took a 22-hour flight from Botswana to the U.S. so Thakadu could study environmental communication at the University of Florida.

a friend to give them a ride in her vehicle so they could tour the campus and purchase some essentials around town. He wanted to be courteous and give his friend some money to cover the cost of the gas they had used during their tour, so he handed her \$60 in U.S. money.

"I was not sure how much money I had given her," Thakadu said. "I had not figured out the exchange rate at that time, let alone the gas costs in the U.S."

The friend told Thakadu that he had given her too much money and gave him back \$50.

"I was lucky that she gave me back some of the money," Thakadu said.

One of the most difficult challenges Thakadu said he faced was dealing with unfamiliar American cuisine.

One American meal that Thakadu said he was not used too was barbecue.

"They [Americans] put sweet spices on their meat," Thakadu said.

He said he likes to eat his meat plain and salted, and he had never tasted meat that was covered in "sweet spices."

Thakadu said he knows now to ask in advance for his meat to be cooked plain when he goes to barbecues.

Thakadu said he relied on the kindness of others and social networks to help him adjust to his new surroundings.

Despite his bumpy transition into American culture, Thakadu said he enjoys attending UF.

"One of the amazing things about the U.S. is the coursework," Thakadu said.

He said he likes doing coursework because it better prepares him for his career.

He said it is a "good investment" for his current occupation as a Research Fellow with the University of Botswana.

Thakadu said he appreciates the opportunity to have coursework because he has held jobs before that did not provide any prior training. He said experiencing the workforce firsthand showed him how important it is to receive a good foundation.

Thakadu said he was impressed at how well American colleges prepare students for a career.

Traci Irani, Thakadu's academic advisor, said Thakadu has a lot of enthusiasm. She said he is an inspiration because he is thriving in an environment that is so different from where he grew up.

"I made one of the best decisions in coming to the U.S.," Thakadu said.

Irani said she is glad Thakadu chose to study at UF and feels that he will be able to apply the lessons learned at UF to his future work experiences in Botswana.

"I hope this experience of doing his Ph.D. work here will influence him when he goes back to Botswana," Irani said.

## 2007-08 Awards Received by Departmental Faculty, Staff and Students

### American Association for Agricultural Education - Southern Region

2nd Runner Up, Innovative Division: Lucas Maxwell  
1st Runner Up, Research Division: Matt Benge, Diane Mashburn, Amy Harder

Outstanding Poster, Research Division: Brian Myers, Anna Ball

2nd Runner Up (graduate student division): Shannon Arnold

2nd Runner Up (graduate student division): Ann De Lay  
Southern Region AAAE Outstanding Teacher Award: Anna Ball

Program Improvement Committee: Amy Harder

Research Committee: Nicole Stedman

Professional Development Committee: Tracy Irani

### Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, Ag Communication Section

Outstanding Research Poster: Katie Chodil, Courtney Meyers

Outstanding Student Research Paper: Courtney Meyers, Katie Chodil

Outstanding Professional Paper: Lisa Hightower, Ricky Telg, Courtney Meyers, Tracy Irani, Maria Gallo

### UF/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Superior Accomplishment Award: Rachel Harris

### University of Florida

Graduate Student Teaching Award: Ros Brain

### North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture

Southern Region Outstanding Teacher Award: Ricky Telg  
Graduate Student Teaching Award: Ros Brain, Ann De Lay

### Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Human Sciences

Outstanding Thesis Award: Katie Chodil

Gold Award, Web Site Category: Lisa Hightower, Ricky Telg, Tracy Irani

### Addy Award (Public Relations)

Award of Excellence: Lisa Hightower, Ricky Telg, Tracy Irani, Brian Myers, Courtney Meyers, Allison Eckhardt, Anna Warner, Katelyn Crow, Maria Gallo, Andrew Thoron

### College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

Graduate Student Teaching Award: Ros Brain

J. Wayne Reitz Medal of Excellence/Outstanding Senior Award Finalist: Brittney Saranko

E.T. York Medal of Excellence Finalist: Kelvin Moreno

CALS Horizon Award: Emily Eubanks (alumna)

CALS 2008-09 Ambassadors: Bernie LeFils, Keri Milligan, Brady Revels, Amie Taylor, Morgan Taylor

## Myers recognized as leader in education

AEC assistant professor Brian Myers has been recognized as one of the country's leading young professional educators.

Myers has been selected for inclusion in the Phi Delta Kappa 2009 Class of Emerging Leaders. He will receive a travel stipend, have the opportunity to publish for PDK and participate in special sessions for Emerging Leaders as a part of the annual PDK Summit.

The Emerging Leaders program annually honors 12 educators age 40 or younger for their outstanding professional accomplishments and future potential in educational leadership, research, and service.

Phi Delta Kappa International, the premiere professional association for educators, is dedicated to the promotion of high-quality, publicly supported education.

## Harris receives UF/IFAS award



AEC fiscal assistant Rachel Harris received the University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences' Superior Accomplishment Award at a UF/IFAS reception in late March. Pictured (l-r) are UF/IFAS Research dean Mark McLellan, Harris and UF/IFAS Senior Vice President Jimmy Cheek.

# AEC Department Photo Album



1: AEC faculty (including CALS dean Kirby Barrick, orange shirt) and graduate students stand on the staircase of Southfork Ranch, site of the "Dallas" TV series. AEC faculty and graduate students attended the 2008 Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists Conference in Dallas in February. Conference attendees visited Southfork.



2: Glenn Israel (left) and Shannon Washburn (right) enjoy the Faculty and Staff Appreciation Breakfast, sponsored by the AEC Graduate Student Association in April.



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