

**Department of Horticulture, 134A Plant Science Building, Cornell University,
Ithaca, NY 14853 607-255-4568/ Fax 607-255-0599 www.hort.cals.cornell.edu**

Message From The Chair By Marvin Pritts



Dear Friends and Alumni:

We have had one of the coldest and wettest summers on record in Ithaca. So, if you thought it was bad when you were a student here, this summer was worse! Actually, the temperatures were quite pleasant and the rain has yielded bumper crops of fruit (although not of the best quality). Last year, the Orchards exceeded \$0.5 million in sales, and we have the potential to do the same again this year. Unfortunately, our costs are high as well and we don't really make a profit from that operation. However, it is an excellent resource for teaching and research, and it gets our name out to the students (the dorms purchase about 23,000 gallons of Cornell cider each year). This fall, we expect more than 800 elementary school students to tour the Orchards, with grad students providing structured learning activities for them.

The manager of the Orchards, Hugh Ink, as well as the manager of Bluegrass Lane, Ron White, have retired. Because one of these people retired during the early retirement incentive program this summer, we cannot replace the position. So we are attempting to combine the management of both horticulture research farms under a single entity. This could work well as there are significant complementarities to the work load. As Ron's last official act on his last day of work, he cut the ribbon for the replacement trailer at Bluegrass Lane. We now have a very nice meeting space there that replaced a sagging, wet, smelly, old trailer that was barely holding together.

The prospect of combining operations and merging units has dominated administration's thinking these past several months. Because of the budget crisis facing the university, it is essential that we streamline operations as much as possible. In many cases, this means merging departments to save on administrative costs and the inevitable reduction in faculty numbers that will be coming with retirements. Scenarios have been proposed on how the college can be restructured, and these have been forward to the provost. The provost and president will decide what should happen and then seek approval from the board of trustees. Then, perhaps next spring, implementation of selected scenarios will begin.

For horticulture, it is almost a given that we will officially merge with the Department of Horticultural Sciences at Geneva. In fact, all sister departments at Ithaca-Geneva are planning to merge. It is also probable that the horticulturists will merge further with another group – perhaps crop scientists – although this has yet to be determined. And it has been mandated that we work closely with plant biologists and plant breeders to redesign and strengthen the curriculum, coordinate faculty hiring, and plan our expenditures together.

Working out the details of how all of this will play out will keep us busy for months (and years) to come!

The Department of Horticulture faculty continue to improve the undergraduate experience. This year, for the first time, all freshmen plant science students are enrolled in Career Explorations in the Plant Sciences. Not only do students research various careers, but they learn about their own temperament and how it matches with prospective occupations. They also learn about resources in the college and university, meet faculty, and participate in a service-learning project. We have also set aside a room to serve as an undergraduate student lounge. No longer will students graduate from the plant sciences without really knowing their fellow majors.

We are also enhancing the curriculum with different types of courses. This past spring, students in Hort 4940: *Experiential Garden-Based Learning in Belize* under the leadership of Marcia Eames-Sheavly went to Mayan villages of the Toledo District to conduct teacher training, install two school gardens, and teach garden-based learning activities with 140 children in two schools. The goal was to support feeding programs to help ensure food security.

Field trips and hands-on experiences continue to set our classes apart. For three days at the end of March, Dr. Miller's HORT 3100 course and Dr. Mattson embarked on a field trip to southeastern Pennsylvania and western New Jersey. The field trip was packed with stops including retail garden centers, the world-renowned Longwood Gardens, and large scale greenhouse producers. Although this is one of our longer field trips, many classes take trips around the local area during lab sessions.

Another example of enhancing the undergraduate experience is the addition of our new student winery. Susan Henry ceremoniously snipped a grapevine to open the CALS Teaching Winery April 1 before a large crowd of faculty, students, vintners and other guests. The \$900,000 facility, located at Cornell Orchards, will help prepare students for careers in New York's wine and grape industry. There are roughly 30 students enrolled in the new viticulture and enology undergraduate major.

This spring, David Wolfe addressed about 50 Congressional, executive branch and agency staff about agriculture, natural resources and climate change. This briefing was particularly timely because Congress is considering comprehensive legislation addressing climate change.

So, despite budget constraints, we are improving our courses and getting good exposure for our work. You can read more details about these activities (and see color photos) in our department newsletter at:

<http://hort.cals.cornell.edu/cals/hort/about/upload/2009spring.pdf>.

I hope you have an enjoyable holiday season. Please do not hesitate to write or email with your news so we can share it with other alums.

Sincerely,

Marvin Pritts
Professor and Chairman

Alumni Events



Thank you to everyone who attended the **Department of Horticulture's Annual Alumni Reception** on June 6, 2009. As always, we would like to hear from you. If you haven't sent us news about yourself recently drop us a line. (Send to: Sue Thompson, Alumni Coordinator, Department of Horticulture, 134A Plant Science Building, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853 or send e-mail sdt1@cornell.edu)



**Don't forget to send us your e-mail addresses.
Thank you. Sue Thompson (sdt1@cornell.edu)**

Introducing New Alumni

Ockert Frederick Coenrad Greyvenstein 2009 MS Studies on the in vitro culture and height control of ornamental *Plectranthus* .

Megan Schipanski May 2009 Ph.D. Nitrogen cycling in agroecosystems: the effects of soil fertility and plant species interactions on legume nitrogen fixation.

Jonathan Landsman August 2009 The quiet mission: raising awareness of conservation work at public gardens through citizen science programs .

Sergio Lopez Cuevas Ph.D. 2009 Effect of ground and foliar fertilization, irrigation, and crop load on yield and fruit quality at harvest and after cold storage of 'Honeycrisp' apple.

News From Alumni

Tracey Austin (BS 1985). Tracey spent time in Orlando Florida in February and saw classmates Susan Dinda Fischer '86 and Greg Fisher '86 (Chuck Fischer's son). They visited Disney together! Their kids hit it off immediately, and were sad we are so far apart! (tracey.austin@verizonwireless.com 73 Brickyard Rd., Lansing NY 14882)

Ruby Sue Beil (FOH 1999 MS; PhD 2007) Ruby joined the faculty at Lorain Community College in Elyria Ohio as a biology professor. She has teaching service learning/plant ecology – garden projects in her classes. Service Learning students and members of their Greenscaping Committee have designed and planted a Hummingbird Butterfly Habitat Garden, a Shade Glade, and a Children's Sensory Garden on the Lorain campus. The first gardens have opened the door to the development of a Master Landscape Plan for the college, which is centered on sustainability, biodiversity, and outdoor education. Currently they are seeking funding for the development of a short term certificate program in Sustainable Agriculture and planting of a Culinary Garden. Ruby also attended the American Horticultural Therapy Association conference last weekend hoping to gain some insights into the design of a Healing Garden. LCCC's Master Landscape Plan is themed on "A Campus within a Garden" and was directly inspired by the beauty of the Cornell campus and Plantations. Ruby wants to thank the Department of Horticulture and especially her advisor, Tom Whitlow, for providing her with the opportunities that have developed into such an awesome movement here at their humble community college campus. Also of particular inspiration were two courses I took, "Creating an Urban Eden" and "Plants and Human Well-being". (rbeil@lorainccc.edu)

Ed Bemis (FOH BS 1985) and Tina Rovito Bemis (FOH BS 1985)

The Bemis family was honored September 2009 by the



Massachusetts Horticultural Society with their Silver Medal for "noteworthy horticultural accomplishments in the horticulture industry." Additionally, Tina competed in an invitation only national merchandising Competition at the OFA Short Course in Ohio in July. It was a 45 minute timed competition, similar to the television show Iron Chef America. She made it to the final round and placed second overall against a very talented gentleman for Ohio. She had a great time, and did her home state proud.



Tina Bemis Lawn & Garden Retailer Magazine

Scott Creary (BS 2005) Scott is currently employed at Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens (Pittsburgh, PA) as the IPM Coordinator. (phillybugdude@hotmail.com).

Note: The Conservatory was featured prominently in the recent G-20 Summit where President Obama hosted a reception for world leaders.

Mark Czarnota (FOH PhD 2001) Mark is Associate Professor at the University of Georgia, Department of Horticulture (Griffin Campus). He is doing weed control work in Ornamentals, Christmas trees, and small fruits. Mark and his family live in the Georgia back woods

(Williamson), and love it! He built his own house, and has a 3 car garage / shop planned. Mark has been married to his wife Robin for 13 years in December. They have two children Zachary 7 and Zoe 3. He says it has been an interesting ride! Gardening and exercise have kept him grounded!! (University of Georgia, Department of Horticulture, Georgia Experiment Station, 1109 Experiment Street, Griffin, GA 30223-1797 mac@griffin.uga.edu)

Bill Doerler (FOH BS 1956) Bill retired from his certified Landscape Architect position in New Jersey. He started Doerler Landscapes in 1964, a design/build company, maintenance and construction, 80 employees. He now manages a nursery farm in Mercer Count New Jersey. (241 Cold Soil Road, Princeton, NJ 08540 PSDWKD@aol.com)

Marcia Eames-Sheavly (BS CALS, 1983; MPS CALS, 1999) Marcia is a Senior Extension Associate and Lecturer in the Department of Horticulture at Cornell University, teaching the course the Art of Horticulture. One of their recent projects in the class was creating a giant turf grass couch. "The turf grass couch not only emphasizes art, but it can also fit into a curriculum around plant science, horticulture, business management and insect pest management. For more pictures and information see <http://blogs.cornell.edu/hort/2009/09/09/class-builds-sod-sofa-at-cornell-plantations/> (Department of Horticulture, Plant Science Building, Room 169 , 607-255-1781, me14@cornell.edu)



Jason Koski/University Photography

Richard K. Field (FL/OH BS 1991) Richard and his wife Christine moved from Boston to Newport Beach, California two years ago, where they have recently purchased a house, and are enjoying landscaping their yard with the wide variety of Southern California flora. "I am planting several 12-15 foot royal palms this week...something that I never thought I would have the opportunity to grow while living on the East Coast and working as an international horticultural broker."

Richard's international business development consulting company has grown tremendously in the past several years. While International Subsidiary Development Inc. (www.subsidiarydevelopment.com) primarily focuses on Healthcare, Information Technology, and Life Science sectors, Richard has been able to stay current in the international Horticulture industry. He has successfully assisted several large European and North American companies in the Horticulture sector to become quickly and efficiently established in new markets via acquisitions, sales, marketing, and or operational development. His horticulture clients have ranged from a North American greenhouse shade and insulation company, to a leading European environmental and sports turf grass management company. (18822 Saginaw Dr. Irvine, CA richardkirkfield@yahoo.com)

Gina Fernandez - POM Ph.D. 1994 – Gina was busy this year teaching second graders at Swift Creek Elementary School in Cary, NC, all about strawberries. The project started last fall as collaboration between Gina, who is a small fruits specialist and associate professor of horticultural science at North Carolina State University and Swift Creek second grade teacher Megan Sedaghat. The second grade strawberry patch didn't get quite enough sun to produce lots of berries, but they have plans to move the whole operation to a sunnier site next season. The project was such a success that Liz Driscoll, CALS youth horticulture extension associate, is developing a strawberry curriculum with help from the N.C. Strawberry Association. The curriculum could be used in schools throughout the state, with help from Cooperative Extension agents. (170 Kilgore Hall, Dept. of Horticulture Science, Box 7609. NCSU, Raleigh, NC 26795, Gina_Fernandez@ncsu.edu)



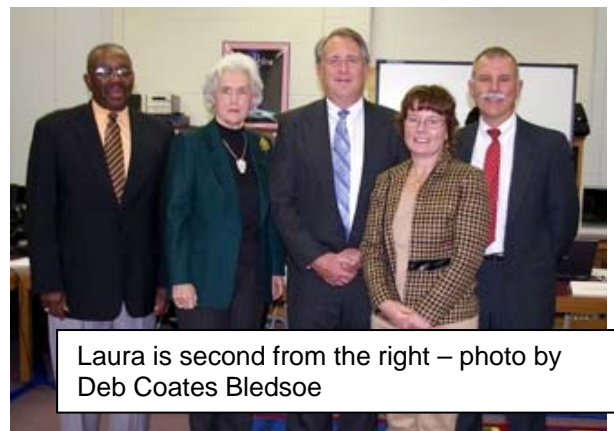
Photo by
Becky

Carl Haefner (FOH BS 1992) After spending the earlier part of his career serving urban communities in Philadelphia, PA and Newark, NJ at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and The Trust for Public Land, Carl recently relocated to New York's Finger Lakes and has opened up his own landscape company, Maplewood Garden Crafters LLC. (4191 E Lake Rd, Geneva, NY 14456, 315-577-2457, carl.haefner@gmail.com)

Douglas Hawes (FOH MS 1965) Doug is retired now. He has been teaching evolution to Seniors Active In Learning, SAIL, in Collin County, TX. Doug says this goes to show that an old dog can learn new tricks. He is still playing golf, or at least playing at it. (3517 Deep Valley Trail, Plano, TX 75023-7923 madhawes@verizon.net)

Kermit Huttar (FOH BS 1956) Kermit is still very involved with their local ambulance service. The fall will mark 10 years. Jane and Kermit enjoy canoe trips in Maine and hiking in Baxter State Park. He has climbed several mountains including Katahdin, which is the most demanding one day climb on the East Coast (now he's bragging at 75). (417 Dunham Pt. Rd. Deer Isle, ME 04627 – Kermhuttar@gmail.com)

Laura Minsk (FOH BS 1983) Laura became a Union County Board of Education member on Dec. 2, 2008. Laura reports that politics are a new adventure for her. She received an MS in Horticulture from Univ. of MN in 1993. Laura says she has used her education as Cooperative Extension Agent in Chesapeake, VA, then in marketing with Northrup King. She was a Gypsy Moth Coordinator and worked on the street tree program for Arlington Co, VA Parks and Recreation, later an Agriculture Consultant for Nursery and Greenhouse Operators in MD working on nutrient management regulations. (3616 Banyan Way Waxhaw, NC 28173, boonsboro@carolina.rr.com)



Laura is second from the right – photo by
Deb Coates Bledsoe

Wally Plachta (FOH MS 1982) Wally and his wife, Bev, are in their seventh year as the island managers of Pine Cay which is a 850 acre private island in the Turks & Caicos Islands. These islands are 90 miles east of Cuba and about 90 miles north of Haiti & the Dominican Republic. Pine Cay consists of 37 homes, a 13 room hotel (The Meridian Club), an airstrip, marina, and all the necessary support facilities including a staff of 45. It is still a low key, eco-friendly, beautiful island that has not succumbed to development. (Check us out at meridianclub.com.)

Wally reports they have been in the hospitality industry for about 30 years now, across the US and Caribbean, but he still manage to keep his hands in the soil. Wally has taught Horticulture & Botany classes at several universities & community colleges as an adjunct over the years and since their time in the Caribbean (1992) have been leading nature hikes for guests and local schools. Currently they are working with a team from Kew Gardens, trying to save native Caicos Pine, which has been infested with an introduced scale and subsequently with a fungus. Fortunately, the pines on our Cay are showing some resistance, so the Kew team is starting a nursery on a nearby island to germinate seeds collected from Pine Cay. (20590 Nanticoke Road, Nanticoke, MD 21840 tyaskin@hotmail.com)

Donald Rakow (FOH MPS 1977; PhD 1987) Don received the American Public Gardens Association (APGA) Service Award in June 2009. This award is reserved for an individual who has shown selfless service to the organization through various volunteer commitments. Don served as a member of the APGA Board, chaired several of its committees, written articles for *The Public Garden*, and has spoken at several national conferences. The Association's strength is based on its volunteers, and this is the APGA's highest honor for recognizing a long history of devoted service. Don has served as the director of Cornell Plantations since January, 1996, and is also an associate professor of landscape horticulture. (Plantation Ramin Admin Ctr 607-255-6139 dr14@cornell.edu)



Edwin Reidel (PhD 2006) Edwin is working as a research scientist for Nunhems, a Netherlands-based company that is the world's fourth-largest developer and producer of vegetable seeds. His base is a breeding station in Brooks, Oregon but he has global responsibilities for his assigned crops. By year's end he will have traveled to the Netherlands (twice) and South America, in addition to regular visits to locations in California, Idaho and Arizona. His position was created in response to a need for a more consistent supply of high-quality seed and his research is focused on production methods.

Edwin and his family chose to settle in McMinnville, Oregon. It is an attractive small city in the heart of the Willamette Valley's wine country (edwin.reidel@gmail.com.)

Greg Sandor (POM MS 1999) Greg is co-owner of Bridge Vineyards, which was selected to feature its 2007 estate chardonnay and 2003 estate merlot at the U.S. Golf Association Open in Bethpage, Long Island.. The wines were offered at corporate tents during the Open. Bridge Vineyard also recently opening a tasting room in Brooklyn which features wine from all over New York State. (greg@bridgevineyards.com)

Andy Senesac (VEG PhD 1985) Andy and his wife, Anne (Hedges) have been on Long Island for 25 growing seasons. Their three girls have all graduated from college and are busily pursuing their careers. Andy is working on Long Island as the weed science specialist for Cornell Cooperative Extension. In 2009, Andy was elected as a Distinguished Member of the Northeastern Weed Science Society. (afs2@cornell.edu).

Jeremy Stark (MPS Horticulture 2003) and I, **Jennifer Stark (BS Horticulture 2003)** gave birth to a son Zachary Lee Stark on April 18, 2009. Zachary spent his first summer helping his mom grow vegetables for farmers market and has already shown an interest in the perennials staged in the greenhouse for his fathers landscaping firm, Valley of the Flowers Landscaping Inc. (little_green_thumb@hotmail.com)



John Wott (FOH MS 1966, PhD 1968) John is enjoying retirement and is involved with three Seattle volunteer organizations, writing articles, compiling history of Washington Park Arboretum and Center for Urban Horticulture and leading garden tours, locally and internationally. He has 8 grand children and one great grandchild. (jwott10623@aol.com)

Memorial

Joseph Orsenigo (VEG Ph.D. 1953) died on June 7, 2009 in Belle Glade, Florida. He was an agronomist and manager of Acarigua Research Farm, Venezuela. In 1957 he worked at the University of Florida Everglades Experiment Station holding several position including horticulturist and professor of plant physiology. He retired in 1975. He was a member of the Florida Sugar Cane League in 1976 and retired as Vice President of Research in 1989. He received many awards for his contributions to agriculture in the EAAA sugar industry, and Florida.



Walter Saidak (VEG MS 1955, PhD 1958) died on Thursday, March 5, 2009 in Nepean, Ontario, Canada. Walter was retired as a Research Coordinator, Crops, Agriculture Canada, and Honourary Fellow of WSSA. He was involved in the start up of the Prostate Cancer Association of Ottawa and the establishment of Nepean Allotment Garden on Viewmont.

New Cornell Horticulture Blog

Looking for an easy way to keep up with what's going on in the Department of Horticulture? Check out the new Cornell Horticulture blog: <http://blogs.cornell.edu/hort/>

You'll find news about Department and other horticulture events, research updates, seminar videos and more – all peppered with pictures so you can see what you're missing.

This is one of many new blogs that are sprouting around Cornell. Visit the Cornell Turf grass Program blog (<http://blogs.cornell.edu/turf/>), for example, and you can listen to Dr. Frank Rossi's weekly podcast for turfgrass professionals.

Other fledgling Department of Horticulture blogs include High Tunnels, Garden-Based Learning, and Community Horticulture. And more are in the works. Find links to these and other new blogs as they come online at the Cornell Horticulture blog.

Craig Cramer
Communications Specialist
Department of Horticulture

Alumni Data Sheet

As always, we would like to hear from you. If you haven't sent us news about yourself recently, please fill out the form below and drop us a line. We can use short notes or longer pieces, or a simple address change.

**Please return to Sue Thompson, Alumni Coordinator, Department of Horticulture, 134A Plant Science Building, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853
or send e-mail sdt1@cornell.edu**

Name: _____

Home Address (Street, City, State, Zipcode) _____

Phone/Fax Number: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

Business Address: _____

Phone/Fax Number: _____ E-Mail: _____

Graduate Field:

Pomology Vegetable Crops Flor. & Ornamental Hort. Horticulture

Degree: BS MS MPS Ph.D. Non-Degree

Date Of Degree _____ Major Professor: _____

May we share your address information in our next Alumni Newsletter? _____

News To Share:

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